

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

Softball Rules Change Creates Penalty for Incorrect Lineup Cards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary Struckhoff

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 14, 2010) — One of three new rules changes by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules Committee outlines penalties for coaches who submit incorrect lineup cards. The changes, which were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors, will take effect with the 2010–11 school year.

Mary Struckhoff, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Softball Rules Committee, said the penalty was added to Rule 3–1–3 in an attempt to diminish some of the in–game confusion about lineup cards with wrong player/jersey number combinations. The new penalty states that a coach who submits an inaccurate card to the umpire will be issued a team warning upon the first name or number correction to the lineup card. A second change will result in the coach being restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game.

The committee referenced other team sports where accuracy in the roster and playing order are paramount. Softball is now included among those, and there will be a penalty for the confusion and delays that inaccuracies cause.

“Our coaches should be responsible for submitting accurate information,” Struckhoff said.

The new penalty does not affect the illegal substitution or batting-out-of-order rules.

Another rules change this year is to the interference rule (8-6-18), addressing a runner who has scored or been retired. The word “intentionally” has been removed from the rule, thus taking a player’s intent out of the ruling. The rules committee believes the change will make the rule easier to apply and more consistent with other rules.

“It’s nearly impossible for an umpire to know a player’s intent,” Struckhoff said. “Players sometimes get confused but if interference occurs, intentional or not, a penalty will apply.”

The rule now reads: “...After being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player’s opportunity to make a play on another runner. A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw may be considered a form of interference...”

The Softball Rules Committee also approved the new concussion rule recommended for all NFHS sports by the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. Rules 3-3-9 and 10-2-3k now state that any athlete who exhibits sign, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, including but not limited to loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, must be removed

from the contest immediately and shall not return to play before being cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

In addition, the change in the pitching distance approved last year becomes mandatory for the 2010–11 school year. Last year, the Softball Rules Committee voted to move the pitching distance in high school softball from 40 feet to 43 feet. State associations were given the option to implement the change in the 2009–10 school year, but it will be mandatory for all states as of August 1, 2010.

Following are major editorial changes made by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee:

- Reorganization of the glove rule, 1–4, and clarification that any gray, white or optic-colored marking that gives the appearance of the ball is not permitted.
- The exception of touching home was added to clarify the force-play reinstatement rule, 2–24–4.
- The padding requirements for guards, casts and braces were clarified in Rule 3–2–13.
- Rules 6–2–2 and 6–4–5 were clarified so that powdered resin or any comparable drying agent is permitted.
- The ball-rotation procedure was moved from 4–1–4 to new 6–5.

A complete listing of all rules changes approved by the committee is available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Athletics & Fine Arts Activities” on the home page, and select “Softball.”

Softball is the fourth-most popular sport for girls at the high school level, according to the 2008–09 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey, with 368,921

participants nationwide. The sport ranks third in school sponsorship with 15,172 schools sponsoring the sport.

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This press release was written by Arika Herron, a summer intern in the NFHS

Publications/Communications Department and a senior at Butler (Indiana) University.

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and Rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing Rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.5 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Bruce Howard or John Gillis, 317-972-6900
National Federation of State High School Associations
PO Box 690, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206
bhoward@nfhs.org or jgillis@nfhs.org