

Memorandum

PLEASE FIND BELOW THE MAJOR PORTIONS OF THIS MEMO--DELETED ITEMS WERE POLICY AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS FOR STATE ASSOCIATION STAFF MEMBERS--THE CCS HAS HAD THIS BAT INFORMATION POSTED ON OUR WEB PAGE SINCE 1999.

NANCY LAZENBY BLASER, CCS COMMISSIONER

To: State Association Executive Directors and Softball Administrators

From: Robert Kanaby, Executive Director
Mary E. Struckhoff, Assistant Director

Subject: Softball Bats

Date: March 6, 2002

The NFHS is receiving numerous calls on a daily basis (as perhaps you are as well), primarily from parents who were not made aware of the NFHS Bat Rule and feel it is creating a financial hardship on their family and on their child's softball program. Below you will find the evolution of this rule, so that you may understand the history and how this information was shared with each state association.

1998 The ASA approved a process whereby bats could be tested and approved under the "PERFORMANCE" portion of the rule. The bat performance standard has been developed and adopted to assist in "risk minimization."

Fall 1998 1999 NFHS Softball Rules Book Published and Distributed – Rule 1-3-5: "Beginning on January 1, 2000, all bats shall meet the ASA bat standard and such bats shall be labeled with the ASA approved certification mark."

1999 transparency script and illustrations distributed explaining the establishment of a bat performance rule (attachment A).

Fall 1999 2000 NFHS Softball Rules Book Published and Distributed – Rule 1-3-5: "All bats shall meet the ASA bat standard and such bats shall be labeled with the ASA approved certification mark, subject to the ASA "grandfather" policy (for further information check the ASA web site at www.softball.org)."

2000 transparency script and illustrations distributed explaining the 2000 rule (attachment B).

Spring 2000 Fax sent to State Association Executive Officers and Softball Administrators explaining a change in policy by the ASA and guidelines for states to follow regarding implementation of the NFHS Bat Rule (attachment C).

Fall 2000 2001 NFHS Softball Rules Book Published and Distributed – Rule 1-3-5: “All bats shall meet the ASA bat standard and such bats shall either be labeled with the ASA approved certification mark or be listed on the ASA web site (www.softball.org).”

Winter 2000 NFHS Web site posts 2001 NFHS Bat Rule information (attachment D). Indicates that “grandfathered” bats will become obsolete on January 1, 2002.

June 2001 NFHS Softball Rules Committee meets and is informed that ASA has changed its bat rule, permitting the continued use of the web “list.” NFHS committee passes an editorial change reinforcing that the web list and “grandfathered” bats will be obsolete, and that only bats with the permanent mark will be permitted (attachment E).

Fall 2001 2002 NFHS Softball Rule Book Published and Distributed – Rule 1-3-5: “All bats shall meet the ASA bat performance standard and such bats shall be labeled with the permanent ASA approved certification mark.”

2002 transparency script and illustrations for 2002 changes distributed reinforcing the implementation date of January 1, 2002 (attachment F).

Winter 2001 NFHS Web site updated containing current Bat Rule information (attachment G).

ASA Web site contains modified ASA rule permitting continued use of the “list,” as well as bats that “in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, were manufactured prior to 1995 and, if tested, would comply with the ASA bat performance standard then in effect” (attachment H).

In essence, what has happened is that ASA has “backed-off” enforcement of this rule as originally written and the implementation date for discontinuing the use of the “grandfathered” bats, and the NFHS Softball Rules Committee and staff has not. We believe ample time has been given to schools and programs to get in compliance with this rule.

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As reinforced today in an NFHS Softball Rules Committee conference call, the NFHS Bat Rule will **NOT** change or be modified at the national level. Many states have been preparing constituents for three years for this rule change and the enforcement date, and are not experiencing any problems. Disgruntled callers will be advised that the NFHS will not modify the rule and will be directed back to their school or state association.

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