



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

Changes in Pitching Delivery Requirements Approved in High School Softball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sandy Searcy

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 10, 2023) — Beginning next year, pitchers in high school softball will be allowed to disengage both feet from the playing surface if the pivot foot is not replanted prior to the delivery of the pitch. Previously, the pivot foot was required to remain in contact with the ground.

This modification to Rule 6-1-2c of the NFHS Softball Rules Book headlined a set of seven rules changes recommended by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee at the committee's June 11-13 meeting at the Conrad Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. All changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“When examining the survey responses, the NFHS Softball Rules Committee recognized that a majority of the membership were in favor of this change,” said Sandy Searcy, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the NFHS Softball Rules Committee. “An additional topic the committee discussed was whether a pitcher gains an advantage by having their pivot foot airborne vs. having it remain in contact with the ground. Our rules have traditionally allowed for flexibility to accommodate the differing skill levels of high school athletes. This change allows for exploration of different styles of pitching during student-athletes’ developmental stages.”

In another change, Rule 1-8-6 now permits electronic information to be transmitted to the dugout from anywhere outside of live ball area. This reflects current technology and still requires that electronic devices are used in the dugout but no longer stipulates where the video is recorded or how it is transmitted.

Beginning January 1, 2027, softball uniforms may display only the player's name, school name or nickname, school mascot and/or school logo as part of Rule 3-2-3. An additional uniform change for the 2024 season was approved in Rule 3-2-5, which more clearly defines what can be worn on the head to be consistent with other NFHS sports.

Changes to Rule 3-2-7 clarify where wristbands with a playbook/playcard attached can be worn. The equipment is only permitted to be worn on a player's wrist or arm, and pitchers must wear it on their non-pitching arm, prohibiting wristbands from being worn on the belt.

The NFHS Softball Rules Committee further clarified the list of approved and non-approved substances to be used as drying agents for the pitcher in Rule 6-2-2. The rule specifies that dirt is not considered a foreign substance and does not have to be wiped from the hand prior to contacting the ball. Acceptable use of drying agents under the supervision and control of the umpire includes powdered rosin or any comparable drying agent listed on USA Softball's certified equipment website.

A complete listing of the softball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Softball."

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, fast-pitch softball is the fifth-most popular sport for girls with 362,038 participants in 15,877 high schools nationwide. The survey also indicated an additional 6,602 participants in slow-pitch softball.

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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 performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing 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 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on

interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, 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 website at www.nfhs.org.

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