

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

**Equipment Rules Addressing Risk Minimization
Focus of 2019 Softball Rules Changes**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sandy Searcy

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 13, 2018) — Equipment rules designed to reduce risk of injury, as well as a clarification that the media area must be located in dead-ball territory, are among the high school softball rules changes for the 2019 season.

The four rules changes recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules Committee at its June 11-13 meeting in Indianapolis were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

With revisions in Rules 1-1-7, 2-22-4 and 5-1-1, the home team or game management may designate a media area in dead-ball territory if the facility dictates.

“Requiring the media area to be located in dead-ball territory minimizes risk and continues efforts to improve the safety of participants, officials, fans and other essential personnel,” said Sandy Searcy, NFHS director of sports and staff liaison for softball.”

In another risk minimization change, Rule 1-8-4 permits an eye shield to be worn attached to the face/head protection only if it is constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission. This change aligns with other softball equipment rules that currently prohibit tinted eye shields.

“The prohibition of tinted eye shields already exists in Rules 1-6-7 and 1-7-1,” Searcy said. “In an effort to promote risk minimization, tinted eye shields should be prohibited for defensive face/head protection.”

Among other rules changes was a clarification to Rule 1-5-2a, which permits a softball bat to have an adjustable knob, provided the knob is permanently fastened by the manufacturer. Any devices, attachments or wrappings that cause the knob to become flush with the handle are also permitted.

The final change approved by the committee in Rule 6 stipulates that the penalty for an illegal pitch is limited to the batter being awarded a ball. Previously, the batter was awarded a ball and all base runners were also awarded one base without liability to be put out.

“The new language creates more balance between offense and defense,” Searcy said. “In NFHS softball rules, the illegal pitch is designed to deceive the batter and, therefore, only the batter should receive the award.”

According to the 2016-17 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, there are 367,405 girls participating in fast-pitch softball at 15,440 schools.

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.”

This press release was written by Cody Porter, a graphic arts/communications assistant in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department.

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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 19,000 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 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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