

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Field Hockey Rules Changes Focus on Responsibilities of Coaches

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 6, 2012) – In an effort to emphasize coaches’ responsibilities, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Field Hockey Rules Committee revised several rules to reduce gamesmanship and improve sportsmanship.

Following the committee’s January 11-13 meeting in Indianapolis, 10 rule changes were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

To help reduce gamesmanship by coaches, two changes in Rule 4 were approved. First, when a team calls a third time-out, the coach must remove one field player for five minutes of elapsed playing time. The designated player may properly substitute with another field player but the team must still play short for five minutes.

In another effort to deter gamesmanship by coaches, the committee voted to delete Rule 4-3-2, which allowed a coach to request a time-out to review a possible misapplication of the rules.

“One thing that we have maintained in the history of all of our sports is that you can’t question an official’s judgment,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of educational services and staff liaison to

the Field Hockey Rules Committee. "An official's judgment is just that, and so removing the article eliminates some of that gamesmanship."

In addition, the committee stiffened the penalty for coaches' misconduct. On a third offense, the offending team must play one player short for the remainder of the game. For a flagrant foul, the head coach is removed and the team plays short.

In other rules changes, teams no longer will be allowed to substitute prior to a penalty corner. This change brings the NFHS rule in line with International Hockey Federation (FIH) rules.

Since the adoption of the self-pass two years ago, risk of injury on starting play has been reduced. As a result, the 7-yard distance from opponents has been reduced to 5 yards.

Two rules were approved to assist officials. First, Rule 2-1-3 now states that the officials may use personal wireless communication devices for officiating purposes during the game. This change will assist officials in having a better command, control and vision of the field. Second, Rules 5-2-1 and 5-2-2 were combined in an effort to simplify the restart procedure. This change also aligns NFHS rules with FIH rules.

The final change involves Rule 6-1-3, which will no longer disallow goals by illegal players because of equipment infractions.

With the changes ready for implementation, Hopkins believes that the sport is in a positive standing moving forward with the 2012-13 season.

"The rules are in a good place," Hopkins said. "We're in a good place with a longstanding, tradition-rich sport like field hockey. There shouldn't be that many tweaks to it. These changes just make it better for our level of competition. We want our athletes to enjoy the sport, graduate from high school, and - in some way, form or fashion - give back to the sport."

“I think all involved - coaches, officials and players - should feel comfortable that the committee always works towards the best interest of the young people we serve.”

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 “Field Hockey.”

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This press release was written by Shane Monaghan, an intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications and Events Departments. Monaghan is a graduate of Ball State (Indiana) University, where he specialized in sports administration.

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 11 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 Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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