



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Greater Skill, Athleticism Bring New Spirit Rules Changes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 2, 2006) — In response to the increasingly advanced skill level of high school spirit participants, several rules changes were made January 8-9 during the annual meeting of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Spirit Rules Committee in Indianapolis.

Rule 2-10-1 was modified to stipulate that the formerly illegal helicopter stunt is now legal, provided it meets all the following conditions:

- The rotation in the horizontal plane is not greater than 180 degrees.
- The flyer does not twist.
- The flyer is in a face-up position.
- There is a minimum of three tossers.
- There is a minimum of three catchers, at least one of whom must be in position to support the head, neck and shoulder area. This person(s) must be in position at the beginning of the toss and may not be involved in any other skill.

“There is sufficient time to allow a flyer to complete a 180-degree horizontal rotation when the toss is initiated by at least three tossers. Risk to the participants is minimized by the conditions required for the skill,” said Susan Loomis, liaison to the NFHS Spirit Rules Committee. “The sport is evolving,

and cheerleaders are becoming highly skilled athletes who can, through proper training and coaching, do more of these skills with a minimum of risk.”

As a means of addressing pendulums and pendulum-type stunts, Rule 2-8-6d now calls for a minimum of three stationary catchers who remain in their original positions, as opposed to the previous minimum of four catchers.

“Reducing the number of required catchers does not present unreasonable risk to the flyer, since all pendulums and pendulum-type stunts must begin from shoulder height or below,” Loomis said. “Additionally, cradles that involve more force are executed safely with three catchers.”

With the revision of Rule 2-11-1c,d,f, (the transitional stunt rule), the flyer must have at least two bases, with the exception of a single-base tick tock, provided that the flyer remains vertical. Also, the flyer and each bracer has a separate spotter, and the flyer is not released into a toss.

In Rules 2-8-2 and 2-10-2, “a top person, including the flyer in a toss, must not drop the head backward out of alignment with the torso. The head must remain in a neutral position with the eyes looking forward,” has been deleted. According to Loomis “dropping the head back out of alignment with the torso has not been shown to produce over-rotation or loss of kinesthetic awareness. The arch is still subject to the inverted flyer rule.”

Rule 2-8-3 has been changed to “a flyer must not be in an inverted position except for the following:

- During a forward suspended roll
- During a mount that begins from an inverted position on the performing surface to a non-inverted stunt shoulder height or below. It must include a base or spotter who protects the head/neck/shoulder area of the flyer.”

“These changes would allow a variety of low-level mounts that do not present unreasonable risk to participants,” Loomis said.

In another change, Rule 2-9-1a adds the word “single” to base stunt, so that it now reads “it begins from a single- or double base-stunt with the flyer standing at shoulder height or below.” The word “original” has been deleted from the Rule 2-9-1b, and now reads as “the flyer maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two bases.”

The exception regarding the showing of midribs for costumes worn by teams in character or novelty routines was removed from Rule 3-1-7 so that the midriff rule would apply equally to all spirit teams. Rules 2-1-7 and 3-1-7 will become effective with the 2006-07 school year.

Competitive spirit squads rank ninth in popularity in the 2004-05 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, with 84,416 girls participating last year. It ranks 10th for girls in school sponsorship with 3,482 schools offering spirit, which includes dance, drill and pom squads, in addition to cheerleading. An additional 2,115 boys in 504 schools are involved in spirit programs.

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