



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Use of Libero Player in High School Volleyball Takes Full Effect in 2006-07

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 31, 2006) — As the official implementation of the libero player in high school volleyball occurs during the 2006-07 season, the NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee, at its January 8-9 meeting in Indianapolis, incorporated all stipulations regarding the libero approved last year into the body of the NFHS Volleyball Rules Book.

Following are stipulations regarding the libero that will be incorporated into the 2006-07 rules book:

- The libero is a back-row player who is a passing and defensive specialist.
- In order to be used, the libero must be designated on the lineup sheet. If a libero is not designated on the lineup sheet, the team may not use a libero in that game.
- The libero is restricted to perform as a back-row player. He/she cannot serve, block, attack from anywhere if, at the moment of contact, the ball is entirely above the net.
- The libero must wear a specific uniform with a legal number.
- The libero may replace any player in a back-row position. The replacement is not counted as a substitution. The libero can only be replaced by the player whom he/she replaced.

A new section in Rule 10 was created to define when, how and where a libero replacement takes place; when the replacement is illegal; redesignation of the libero; proper procedures for handling exceptional substitutions; and disqualifications involving the libero. In various rules throughout the book, language was added to incorporate uniform numbering, location of the libero at the moment of serve, game administration and penalties involving unnecessary delay.

In other changes involving the libero, Rule 7-1-1b requires that the designated libero be identified on the team roster by listing an “L” before the uniform number of the libero.

Becky Oakes, who joins the NFHS staff February 1 and will serve as liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee, said that to assist schools in supplying libero uniform tops without excessive costs, the libero may have two uniform numbers. When listing the libero on the roster, the non-libero number is first, followed by the libero number (e.g., 15/L4). Oakes noted that the second number cannot be a duplicate of any other number on the roster.

Another change due to the addition of libero play is the creation of an assistant scorer position. The responsibility of the assistant scorer is to record libero replacements, and this individual will be located next to the official scorer at the scorer's table.

Besides the official introduction of the libero into the game next year, a change in Rule 12-2-6 will allow the head coach to stand in the libero replacement zone during any dead ball to instruct his or her players. The privilege is lost and the head coach must remain seated as outlined in Rule 12-2-5 if a card is issued to anyone on the team bench.

Oakes noted that coaches may only stand during a dead ball. Once the referee extends his or her arm in preparation to beckon for serve, the coach must be seated.

The rules committee determined a change was needed in the definition of a block, which now states "having a player close to the net who is reaching higher than the net and deflects the ball coming from an opponent." The previous definition created play situations in which officials were judging intent, and in some cases the action of a back-row player who was nowhere near the top of the net was considered to attempt a block and play was illegal, Oakes said.

Two changes were made in Rule 2 regarding the court. A note was added to Rule 2-1-4, which clarifies the flexibility for the centerline court marking to be a shadow line that designates the required 2-inch centerline. Rule 2-2-2 now states that cables, which are used to retract a ceiling-suspended net system and located only on one side of the net, are playable overhead obstructions.

Regarding uniforms, Rule 4-2-3f now states that the placement of numbers on the center front of the uniform top may now be located no more than 5 inches below the bottom edge of any neckline, ribbing, placket or seam. Oakes said that this change does not make any existing legal uniform illegal and does not change the requirement if the number is on the upper left/right of the jersey.

With a change in Rule 5-4-1d, the umpire shall verify that the lineup has been entered correctly on the scoresheet.

"Previously, errors have been made transposing the lineup from the coaches' lineup sheets to the official scoresheet," Oakes said. "Verification of the transfer of the lineup to the scoresheet by the umpire prior to the match will eliminate these mistakes."

Volleyball is the third-most popular sport for girls at the high school level, with 386,022 participants, according to the 2004-05 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey. It also ranks third in school sponsorship for girls with 14,526 high schools offering the sport. In addition, a total of 41,637 boys participated in volleyball in 2004-05 at 1,688 high schools.

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