



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Libero Player Approved for High School Volleyball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 28, 2005) — Use of the libero player in high school volleyball, effective with the 2006-07 season, was approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee January 9-10 at its annual meeting in Indianapolis. All volleyball rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The committee also approved use of the libero player for the 2005-06 season by state association adoption. A state association may permit use of the libero next season; however, all stipulations approved by the committee for use of the libero in 2006-07 will apply for those states electing to use the libero next season.

Specific stipulations approved by the committee for using the libero include:

- The libero must be designated on the lineup sheet prior to each game.
- The libero must enter the game after the starting lineup has been checked.
- A team may exercise one replacement per dead ball.
- The libero must enter and exit the game between the attack line and the baseline.
- The libero may be the team captain.
- The libero may be used as an exceptional substitution for an injured player if no other legal substitutions are available.
- The libero shall not replace a disqualified teammate.
- The libero shall not block or attempt to block.
- The libero shall not serve.
- The libero shall not set the ball using an overhand finger pass while in front of the attack line extended for an attack above the height of the net.

While the libero player has been approved for high school volleyball, use of the defensive specialist will be an option for an individual team's coaching staff. Since the use of the libero player is a coaching strategy, its use in a particular game is optional.

The libero is a back-row player and is not allowed to complete an attack from anywhere if the ball, at the moment of contact, is entirely above the height of the net. The libero wears a uniform in contrast to other members of the team, and is intended to be a player who specializes in defense and serve reception. The libero may replace a back-row player, except the person serving, without taking away from the team's allowed number of substitutions. Only one libero may be designated per game.

The libero player has been used at the international, collegiate and club levels for a number of years, and, this past year, 10 states experimented with its use at the high school level. Acting on positive feedback from these 10 state associations, the Volleyball Rules Committee agreed to approve its use across the board.

"The libero is used at all levels of volleyball," said Cynthia Doyle, assistant director of the NFHS and liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee. "It has improved the caliber of play, and it allows for greater on-court involvement by the team's best defensive player."

The committee approved two additional rules changes – one regarding the umpire's responsibilities with the lineup card and another clarifying the limitations of a back-row player.

Rule 5-4-3b (16) was revised to delete the requirement of the umpire to record illegal player equipment, uniform warnings, penalties and disqualifications for unsportsmanlike conduct on the lineup card.

"Although the umpire is required to use a lineup card to check the lineup, the umpire is no longer required to record illegal equipment or unsportsmanlike conduct violations on the card," Doyle said. "The umpire is required to report illegal equipment and unsportsmanlike conduct violations to the scorer, who records these violations in the official scorebook. The committee determined it was unnecessary to record this information on the lineup card."

Regarding a back-row player, Rule 9-5-4 was revised to state that if the ball is hit back into a back-row player whose hands are below the height of the net, it is ruled as the team's first hit/contact.

In addition, hand signal No. 2 in the Official Volleyball Signals was changed from an open hand to pointing a finger at the line.

Another rule that was passed by the committee last year takes effect this coming volleyball season. Beginning with the 2005-06 season, the standard official's uniform for high school volleyball will include an all-white, short-sleeved collared polo shirt, instead of an alternating black-and-white vertically striped,

knit shirt. Other requirements for the officials uniform remain the same: black slacks and solid black athletic shoes and black socks.

Volleyball is the third-most popular sport for girls at the high school level, with 396,322 participants, according to the 2003-04 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey. It also ranks third in school sponsorship for girls with 14,181 high schools offering the sport. In addition, a total of 40,093 boys participated in volleyball in 2003-04 at 1,683 schools.

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