

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Volleyball Rules Committee Illuminates Gray Areas in Protocol**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Becky Oakes**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 15, 2011) — The new high school volleyball rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee at its January 3-5 meeting were primarily administrative in nature and made to clarify various aspects of the game. The changes, which were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors, will take effect with the 2011-12 school year.

The most important changes dealt with net specifications. Under the new Rule 3-1-1, there may now be a white net sleeve, no wider than 3-3/8 inches, covering the top net tape. That sleeve, so long as it does not affect the height of the net, may have the school name, insignia, school mascot and/or advertising symbol placed along the top by way of a decal or professional printing.

Becky Oakes, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee, said the committee was trying to allow for the use of equipment that might be used in collegiate gymnasiums.

“The committee recognized the need for this change as the use of collegiate facilities by high school teams has increased,” Oakes said. “Also, the net sleeve will allow teams to promote school spirit and have another option for revenue.”

Changes to the same rule now provide a range for overall width and length of the net to accommodate both the standard measurements and metric measurements at collegiate facilities.

“The changes in net requirements accommodate our high schools when playing in collegiate facilities and do not require any new equipment or additional costs,” Oakes said.

Articles 9 and 10 were added to Rule 2-1 in order to define playable and non-playable areas. The two separate areas, alluded to in other rules, had not been clearly defined in the past.

The playable area includes the court and the unobstructed space outside the court’s boundary lines, and that unobstructed space must be visible to all team members and officials.

The non-playable area is the space located beyond the court and surrounding playable area, including walls, bleachers, anything part of or behind team benches, and any other areas the first referee identifies during the pre-match conference as unsuitable for play.

“The committee examined the way play is conducted in the gym and wanted to provide the definitions for consistency and fairness in play from facility to facility,” Oakes said.

Another administrative rule addition, Rule 1-3-3, explains the scoring protocol for a team playing with fewer than six players due to injury, illness or disqualification after the start of the match. A loss of rally/point is awarded each time a vacant position rotates to serve in the right back position.

The committee also expanded the use of Officials Signal No. 1, Illegal Alignment. The signal – a slow, circular motion with a straight arm pointed toward the court of the offending team – should now be used when a coach fails to submit an accurate lineup at the beginning of a set and play begins with a penalty.

“The purpose of this change is to increase communication with spectators,” Oakes said. “Before, if an inaccurate lineup was submitted at the beginning of a set, there was a loss of rally/point awarded to the opponent but no signal was provided to spectators as to why the set started with a point. Now things will be clearer.

“The committee cleaned up a number of areas in the rules and more clearly stated various protocols for all involved,” Oakes said, “and we also addressed equipment issues in ways that do not create any additional costs to schools.”

A complete listing of all rules changes approved by the committee is available on the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org). Click on “Athletics & Fine Arts Activities” on the home page, and select “Volleyball.”

Volleyball is the third-most popular sport for girls at the high school level, according to the 2009-10 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey, with 403,985 participants nationwide. The sport ranks fourth in school sponsorship with 15,382 schools sponsoring the sport. In addition, 50,467 boys participate in volleyball at 2,089 schools.

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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 fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine 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; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, 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](http://www.nfhs.org).

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