NFHS RULES CHANGES AFFECTING RISK
(1982-2025)

Baseball

1982 Batting helmets meeting NOCSAE Standard to be required in 1985.

Slippery tape on bat handles is illegal.

1983 Any player warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear a protective cup and a mask with a throat protector

Casts, splints or braces must be padded and there shall be no exposed metal or any other hard material. Prosthesis that is not dangerous will be permitted.

1984 Any on-deck batter is required to wear a batting helmet. Protective devices attached to a batting helmet must be approved by the state association.

Nontraditional playing equipment must be reviewed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee before it will be permitted.

A player who maliciously runs into a fielder is to be ejected and shall also be called out.

Metal cleats were prohibited.

1985 Devices or attachments that cause bat handles to become flush with the knob are illegal.

Only bats may be used in loosening up.

1986 Exterior warning label is mandatory on batting helmets.

Players in coaches' boxes required to wear a head protector.

Jewelry is prohibited. Medical-alert bracelets or medical-alert necklaces are legal if taped to the body.

1987 Bases with tapered edges are permitted.

On-deck circles should be placed 37' away from home plate if space permits. Otherwise, they should be placed a safe distance to the side and away from home plate.

1988 Bases designed to disengage their anchor systems for safety purposes are legal.

1989 Metal cleats are permitted.

By state association adoption, a double first base is permitted.

Baseball

1990 State association required to establish pitching limitations, i.e., how much and when a pitcher can pitch.

1991 Umpires prohibited from umpiring when mobility is restricted by equipment such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

1992 Any runner who scores or who is put out shall wear a batting helmet while the ball is alive and in live ball area.

Bats are restricted by weight to length.

1993 Non-adult bat/ball shaggers to wear batting helmets while in live ball territory.

Media prohibited from being in live ball area.

Players loosening up to bat shall remain in the area of the on-deck circle while pitcher is warming up.

1994 Blood rule adopted.

Diving over a fielder is prohibited.

1995 Bandannas are prohibited.

Tobacco or tobacco-like products are prohibited from being used by players, coaches and umpires.

1996 Any player warming up to the pitcher shall wear a head protector.

1997 Neither team shall leave its dugout or bench area while the pre-game conference is being conducted.

1998 On a force play, the runner shall slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases, or away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.

Team personnel who leave their positions or bench area for the purpose of fighting or physical confrontation shall be ejected.

1999 Beginning 2003, the catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard.
The coefficient of restitution (COR) for baseballs was established not to exceed .555.

2000 Bat standard was modified. The diameter shall be 2 5/8 inches or less and shall not weigh more than three ounces less than the length of the bat.

2001 Bat standard was modified effective January 1, 2003, that all non-wood bats must meet BESR standards, which includes the diameter shall be 2 5/8 inches or less and shall not weigh more than three ounces less than the length of the bat, the maximum ball exit speed shall not exceed 97 miles per hour and the bat must meet the moment-of-inertia requirement.

Baseball

2002 Umpires and coaches are permitted to use crutches, canes, wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Beginning January 1, 2003, catcher's helmets must have dual ear flaps in order to qualify for NOCSAE approval. All casts, splits and braces must be padded with at least one-half inch of closed cell, slow recovery rubber or other material of the same thickness and having similar physical properties.

2003 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2004 Catcher's helmet and mask combination must meet the NOCSAE standard. Any helmet or helmet and mask combination shall have dual ear flaps. A pitcher can wear a head or face protector as long as its entire cover shall have a non-glare surface.

2005 Beginning with the 2006 season, defensive players are allowed to wear face and eye protection

2006 Beginning in 2007, whenever team members are loosening up in an area that is not protected by a fence or other structure, other members of the team with a glove must be positioned between them and the batter to protect them from batted or thrown ball within the confines of the playing field. The umpire-in-chief's equipment is identified as required when he is behind the plate. He shall wear but not limited to; chest protector, face mask, throat guard, plate shoes, shin guards and protective cup if male.

2007 Recommended that if a dugout/bench is extended, then it should be extended toward the outfield on a line parallel to the foul lines. Several Points of Emphasis were drafted to bring attention to batters not be rewarded for allowing themselves to be hit by a pitched ball and encouraging coaches not to be out of the dugout/bench area sitting on an upside-down bucket, or chair.

2008 Several Points of Emphasis were drafted to bring attention to batters not be rewarded for allowing themselves to be hit by a pitched ball and encouraging coaches not to be out of the dugout/bench area sitting on an upside-down bucket, or chair. In addition, obstruction is addressed as an act that is not tolerated and the defensive team will be penalized.

2009 Adopted the new Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution effective January 1, 2012 that is a wood-like performance standard.

2010 Modified the bat rule involving composite baseball bats (effective 2010-11 school year) and defining the various components of baseball bats and the prohibition of altering bats. Clarified the use of hard and unyielding materials for injury padding purposes. Clarified the importance of identifying the sign, symptoms or behavior of a player who has suffered a concussion. The following Points of Emphasis were drafted: Rolling and Altering of Bats; Checking Bats and Other Equipment; Concussion Recognition and Management; and Lightning Safety.

2011 Placed a moratorium on composite barrel bats due to their lack of meeting the current Ball Exit Speed Ratio (BESR) performance standard.

2012 Disallowed the use of devices and/or practices that intentionally control the temperature of a non-wood bat. Committed to work with interested parties to develop a tamper-evident protocol by the 2012 annual NFHS Bas NFHS Baseball Rules Committee meeting. Require that a player that is bleeding is removed from the game until it has been covered and any blood on a player's uniform be cleaned or changed. On a dropped third strike with double first bases, a ball that rolls into foul territory, the fielder and base runner can exchange the bases base they normally are assigned to during normal play situations. The fielder can use the colored base and the base runner is permitted to use the white base.

Baseball

2013 Recommended that umpires that have blood on their equipment and or uniform be cleaned or changed. The new current Points of Emphasis were drafted: Malicious Contact, Coaching Attire and Umpire Authority and Enforcement.

2014 Reinforced through rule that batting helmets should meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture and that they are annually evaluated for cracks and broken earpieces/pads. In addition, batting helmets for offensive and defensive players shall not have a glare or mirror like surface. Points of Emphasis: Helmet care, Coach delaying the game by extending the time that the substitute pitcher has available to warm-up, Sportsmanship with players blocking the view of the umpire around home plate and coaches' post-game conduct.

Baseball

2015 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2016 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017 Clarified that a runner is allowed to slide through home plate in a straight line and not be in violation of the rule. This reduces the risk of the runner slowing his approach or beginning to slide earlier into home plate.

Modified the pitching restriction rule to be based on the number of pitches thrown in a game as opposed to the number of innings that a student pitches during a contest.

2018 Require that all manufactured baseballs meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture and be labeled on each ball.

(Effective January 1, 2019) Require that all manufactured catcher's chest/body protectors meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.

2019 Modified the implementation date that baseballs must meet the NOCSAE standard to January 1, 2020 that matches the same date as the scheduled body/chest protectors' implementation date.

Modified the requirement that the pitcher's foot has to be up against the pitcher's plate, which is problematic if the pitcher's mound is not in good condition. The current rule would possibly hurt the pitcher's lower extremities.

2020 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2021 **No NFHS Baseball Rules Changes made for 2021 since the 2020 season was not played because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2022 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2023 Added that eye shields shall not be attached to the catcher's mask after manufacture. Eye shields that are attached to the catcher's mask at the time of manufacture will be constructed of a molded rigid material and be clear without the presence of any tint. Tinted eyewear worn on the face and under the face mask is permitted.

2024 No risk minimization changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee for the 2024 baseball season dealing with risk minimization: Malicious Contact.

2025 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2026 Effective 2027, a double first base will be required by rule.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee for the 2026 baseball season dealing with risk minimization: Running Lane Awareness.

Softball

1982 Throat protector is required on catcher's masks.

1983 Coach shall be responsible for having male catcher wear cup.

Casts, splints and braces must be padded. Any equipment judged by umpire to be hazardous is illegal.

Slippery tape on bats is illegal.

Weighted attachments on the bat, including batting donuts, are illegal and shall not be used in loosening up.

1984 On-deck batters must also wear batting helmets.

Any player warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear a mask with a throat protector

When available, it is recommended that on-deck batters, batters and runners wear only those batting helmets carrying the NOCSAE stamp indicating it meets the NOCSAE standard.

If a protective device attached to a batting helmet is necessary, it must be approved by the state association.

1985 Batting helmets must be worn by any player occupying a coaches' box.

All jewelry, not just exposed, is prohibited.

On-deck batter, batter and runners shall wear batting helmet that carries the NOCSAE stamp.

1986 Bases may have tapered edges.

1987 Exterior warning label required on batting helmets.

Medical-alert bracelets or medical-alert necklaces not considered jewelry.

1988 On-deck circles shall be a safe distance to the side and away from home plate.

Bases designed to disengage their anchor systems for safety purposes are permitted.

1989 Plastic visors are prohibited.

1991 No catch is allowed if a player touches dead-ball territory before making a catch.

Umpires are prohibited from umpiring when mobility is restricted by equipment such as crutches, canes, wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

1992 Any runner who is put out shall wear a batting helmet while the ball is alive and in live ball area.

1993 Nonadult bat/ball shaggers to wear batting helmets in live ball territory.

Metal pitching toe plates are prohibited.

Softball

1994 (F.P) Nonadult warming up pitcher within confines of field required to wear a mask and throat protector.

Player may warm up with no more than two bats.

Blood rule adopted.

1995 Tobacco products are prohibited from being used by coaches, players and umpires.

1996 Bandannas are prohibited.

1998 Balls shall not be hit or thrown in the infield area (fair or foul territory) during the pre-game meeting.

Team personnel who leave their positions or bench area when a fight has broken out shall be ejected.

1999 The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard.

By state association adoption, the pitching distance in slow pitch softball when using a 12-inch ball shall be 50 feet.

Beginning January 1, 2001, the coefficient of restitution for slow and fast pitch softball shall not exceed .47.

Beginning January 1, 2001, the load force required to compress the ball .025 inches shall not exceed 525 pounds when such ball is manufactured in accordance with the ASTM test method of measuring compression-displacement of softballs.

2000 The required date for the catcher's helmet and mask combination to meet the NOCSAE standard has been extended to January 1, 2003.

Balls prohibited from being hit or thrown in live ball territory (fair or foul territory) during the pregame conference meeting.

Electronic communication devices added to the list of equipment prohibited for coaching purposes during the course of the game.

A fielder is prohibited from leaving the field of play with one or both feet after a catch is made.

2001 Requires a catcher to wear a head protection with double earflaps.

Beginning January 1, 2003, the catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard and have full ear protection (dual earflaps).

2002 New sub-article added indicating that players shall wear their uniforms properly and as designed.

Softball

2003 Effective January 1, 2004, the COR and compression for slow pitch softballs shall not exceed .44 and 375 lbs., respectively; the compression for fast pitch softballs shall not exceed 375 lbs. All softballs shall be marked with COR and compression.

2004 Effective January 1, 2004, the bat shall meet the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard.

2005 Effective January 1, 2006, all fast pitch-batting helmets shall be equipped with a NOCSAE approved face mask/guard.

2006 The head coach is now required to attend the pregame conference and verify the team is legally and properly equipped. Penalty has been established for non-compliance. First offense results in a team warning, subsequent offense results in the offender and the head coach being restricted to the dugout/bench.

If a participant intentionally removes a boundary line, a strike or ball shall be called on the batter for an infraction by the offense or defense, respectively. A team warning shall also be issued to the head coach. Any subsequent infraction will result in the head coach being restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.

Language added to clarify that softballs and bats may not be altered from their originally manufactured legal state by using any treatment or device.

A new article was added to clarify that players may wear face/head protection in the field.

(F.P.) Any non-adult warming up a pitcher at any location within the confines of the field shall wear an approved catcher's helmet and mask combination a mask and throat protector.

2007 Established guidelines for interference and obstruction when contact occurs between a base runner and a fielder on a non-controlled batted ball. A new definition for an “Initial Play” was also created.

2008 Players permitted to wear metal cleats and metal toe plates.

Requires the batter to take her position in the batter’s box within 10 seconds after the ball is required to the pitcher in the circle.

2010 Added to the softball specifications a requirement that the dynamic stiffness of softballs not exceed 7,500 lbs./inch when tested under current proposed ASTM test methods. Effective January 1, 2010.

Clarified that if an eye shield is worn attached to the catcher’s helmet, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.
POE – Reduction in obstruction/interference

Changed the female fast-pitch pitching distance to 43 feet effective with the 2010-11 academic year. NOTE: Individual state associations are permitted to adopt the 43-feet distance in 2009-10, if desired.

Identified and specified guidelines for each part of the bat, including: knob, handle/grip, taper, barrel and end cap. In addition, the rule clarifies that the taper must be a solid surface.
P.O.E. - Illegal pitch enforcement, Three-foot running lane and Non-traditional game equipment

Softball

2011 Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Changed that intent need not be the determining factor in ruling whether interference has occurred by a runner who has scored/been retired.

Clarified the padding requirements for guards, casts and braces.

P.O.E. - Team and Player Equipment; Field of Play

2012 Headwear requirements were revised and clarified.

A more severe penalty was added when a batter has used an altered or non-approved bat. In addition to an out being called on the batter, the batter and head coach will be ejected from the contest.

P.O.E. – Pitching; Legal Apparel and Equipment; On-Deck Batter/Location

2013 The softball glove/mitt not be entirely optic yellow and no optic yellow markings on the outside or inside of the glove/mitt resembling the appearance of the softball.

Identified when a hit batter is awarded first base and that she may not deliberately allow the ball to touch her in the batter's box.

Bench Personnel Conduct (Homerun Celebrations)

Risk Minimization (Sliding Injuries)

2014 Points of Emphasis: Player Safety and Equipment Check – Bats

2015 The batting helmet shall not have a glare or mirror-like surface.

The catcher's helmet shall not have a glare or mirror-like surface.

Points of Emphasis:
Interference
Obstruction

2016 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017 All exposed undergarments shall be a solid single color: black, white, gray or a school color. Multi-color undergarments and sleeves are a distraction and create a possible safety concern. This rule establishes solid color requirements similar to other NFHS sport rules.

All equipment shall be inspected by the umpire and is to be placed outside the dugout/bench prior to the start of the game. Placing all equipment in one location at one time is a more efficient method to conduct this inspection.

2018 Eliminated the rule that required umpires to inspect equipment prior to the start of the game.

Added language that provides umpires with the authority to allow a reasonable number of warm-up pitches to an incoming pitcher due to circumstances that require a pitcher to be removed by rule.

Softball

2019 The media shall be prohibited from being in live-ball area. The home team or game management may designate an area for the media in dead ball territory.

Defensive players are permitted to wear a shield on their face/head protection in the field, but it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

2020 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2021 **No NFHS Softball Rules Changes made for 2021 since the 2020 season was not played because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2022 No risk minimization changes for this year.

Two Points of Emphasis dealing with risk minimization: 1. Huddles Between Innings; 2. Guidance for Pitcher Utilization

2023 Removing the language prohibiting jewelry places the softball rules in line with other NFHS sports that have removed the restriction. Umpires still have the authority to rule on anything that is considered a distraction or increases risk to any player.

2024 The umpire may call (end) a game if playing conditions in or around the facility become unacceptable to safely continue the game. Provides rule justification when an umpire ends a contest due to unacceptable playing conditions to continue play in addition to weather.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Football Softball Committee for the 2024 softball season dealing with risk minimization: Unacceptable Conditions.

2025 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee for the 2025 softball season dealing with risk minimization: Situational Awareness.

2026 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

Basketball

1982 Modified movable-ring specifications.

1983 Extended player control foul to include airborne shooter.

1984 Added loss of ball to the penalty for flagrant personal foul.

A player may grasp the ring to prevent injury if fouled in the act of shooting or dunking.

1985 Allows any fouled player to grasp the ring to prevent injury.

1986 Allows use of 3 ½" x 6' rectangular backboard; adopted new padding specifications for rectangular backboards.

Basketball

1987 Technical foul for pregame dunking also is charged to the head coach.

1988 Allows each state association to approve artificial limbs.

1989 Basket interference to reach through the basket from below and touch the ball outside the cylinder.

1990 A player may not lift a teammate to secure a greater height.

1991 Basket ring must be secured by a ring-restraining device.

Any player may grasp the basket to prevent injury.

Unconscious player may not return in game without physician's written authorization.

Compression shorts may be worn.

1992 Injured player must be removed until next opportunity for such player to return.

State associations may approve headwear for medical reasons.

1993 A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has excessive blood on uniform must leave game to receive appropriate treatment.

1994 Referee is authorized to deal with safety concerns relative to fingernails and hair styles.

1995 Tobacco use prohibited.

Disqualification to leave bench area during a fight.

1996 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1997 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1998 Players may not lock arms or grasp a teammate to restrict movement of an opponent

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 Coach must verify that all players are properly equipped.

2001 Officials will address coaches and captains concerning good sportsmanship at the pre-game conference.

Twenty-second (20) time-outs increased to thirty (30) seconds.

Illegal contact on the backboard clarified by stating that a player shall not:
place a hand on the backboard or ring to gain an advantage while a try or tap is in flight or is touching the backboard or is in the basket or in the cylinder above the basket, intentionally slap or strike the backboard or cause the ring to vibrate.

b.

2001-02 The referee shall not permit any "team member" to wear equipment or apparel which, in his/her judgment, is dangerous or confusing to other players or is not appropriate. This includes the pre-game warm-up period.

Basketball

The playing of music/sound effects shall only be permitted during pre-game, time-outs, intermission and post game. The use of artificial noisemakers shall be prohibited.

2002-03 A player who is required to leave the game for blood or injury is permitted to remain in the game if the team calls a time-out and the situation can be corrected by the resumption of play.

2003-04 Further defined basket interference to include when a player pulls down a movable ring so that it contacts the ball before the ring returns to its original position.

A state association by adoption may institute a running clock when a specified point differential is reached at a specified time in the game.

Reduced the number of players permitted on marked lane spaces during free throws (not including the free-thrower) to four defensive and two offensive players, with the lane spaces closest to the free-throw line (and the shooter) remaining vacant.

2004-05 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2005-06 Prohibits a team member from removing his/her jersey and/or pants/skirt within the visual confines of the playing area. The penalty is a technical foul.

Changed the penalty for leaving the court for an unauthorized reason to a violation from a technical foul.

Clarified the definition of an intentional foul.

2006-07 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2007-08 Changed the warning horn for a 30-second time-out to be sounded with 15 seconds remaining.
Changed the replacement interval for a disqualified or injured player to 20 seconds, with a warning horn sounded with 15 seconds remaining.
Added that guards, casts, braces and compression sleeves must be worn for medical reasons.
Clarified that hard items worn on the head, such as barrettes and bobby pins, are prohibited.

2008-09 During a free throw, all players will move up one marked lane space, leaving the two spaces closest to the end line vacant. A new mark (2 inches by 8 inches) must be reapplied to the lane line near the free-throw line to designate the last 3-foot marked lane space.

POE – Reduction in rough play.

2009-10 A note was added to clarify when the 20-second interval begins to replace an injured player.

Clarified that any item, in the referee's judgment, that constitutes a safety concern is not permitted.

Clarified that a player leaves a marked lane space when he or she contacts any part of the court outside the marked lane space (36 inches by 36 inches).

Clarified that a player occupying a marked lane space must have one foot positioned near the outer edge of the free-throw lane line with the other foot positioned anywhere within the designated 36-inch lane space.

Basketball Points of Emphasis: – Closely guarded; Three-seconds (including rough post play); Guarding principles (block-charge); Free-Throw Administration

2010-11 Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Clarified the requirements for guards, casts and braces and that a protective face mask shall be worn molded to the face.

P.O.E.'s – Rules Enforcement; Perimeter Play; Closely-guarded Situations; Principle of Verticality

2011-12 P.O.E.'s – Sporting Behavior; Guidelines for Teaching and Officiating; Injury Data and Prevention

2012-13 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2013-14 The head coach may enter the court in the situation where a fight may break out or has broken out to prevent the situation from escalating.

2014-15 Excessive contact with an opponent while the ball is live or until an airborne shooter returns to the floor.

The following acts constitute a foul when committed against a ball handler/dribbler:

a. Placing two hands on the player.
b. Placing an extended arm bar on the player.
c. Placing and keeping a hand on the player.
d. Contacting the player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands.

2015-16 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2016-17 Non-playing personnel, e.g., spirit participants, media, shall remain outside of the playing area during a 30-second or less time-out during the game. Non-playing personnel shall stand outside the free throw lane lines extended toward the sidelines throughout the game. Making officials aware of the standards set for the spirit participants allows the official to manage them when they may not be in an appropriate place.

Players occupying marked free-throw lane line spaces may not enter the free-throw semicircle until the ball touches the ring or until the free throw ends. The addition of this information makes the rule complete and easy to understand.

2017-18 Point of Emphasis: Head covering worn for medical or religious reasons.

2018-19 Point of Emphasis: Stressed Concussion Recognition and Risk Minimization; General Guidelines for Skin Infections and Communicable Diseases; and Ankle Sprain Prevention.

2019-20 Mouth guards are permitted but no specifications listed in the rules book for the device. Specifications for the mouth guard use were added to the rules: 1. A tooth and mouth guard is intraoral, if worn; 2. Recommended that the protector be properly fitted, protecting the anterior (leading) dental arch; 3. State associations may deem the proctor as required equipment.
The head coach and any number of assistant coaches may enter the court to break-up a fight or to prevent the situation from escalating.

Points of Emphasis: Medical bracelets, regardless of the material it is composed of, must be taped to the arm with the medical information exposed.

Basketball

2020-21 When a coach has been removed from the game, this rule clarifies that if no other coach or school personnel are available, then the game is forfeited unless state association rules determine otherwise.

Points of Emphasis: Block/charge and clarification of international and flagrant foul.

2021-22 Allowed the wearing of religious headwear during competition that fits securely and is made of non-abrasive or soft materials, eliminating the requirement for prior authorization from the state association. Maintains the requirement for approval of protective head coverings worn for medical reasons.

2022-23 Allowed hair-control devices and adornments provided they are securely fastened close to the head and do not increase risk to the athlete, teammates and opponents.

2023-24 Eliminated the one-and-one for common fouls beginning with the seventh team foul in the half and established the bonus as an automatic two free throws awarded for a common foul beginning with the team's fifth foul in each quarter which eliminated a rebounding opportunity after the first shot of the one-and-one.

2024-25 Required a player who has been injured to be removed from the game if the coach is beckoned by the official, whether the coach enters the playing area or not, or if bench personnel (i.e., a coach or athletic trainer) enters the court without being beckoned. The coach may still use a time-out to continue assessment of the injury and keep the injured player in the game.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee for the 2024-25 basketball season dealing with risk minimization: Proper Procedures for Handling Blood.

2025-26 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee for the 2025-26 basketball season dealing with risk minimization: Contact on the Ball Handler.

Field Hockey

1982 A goalkeeper may wear a mask or mask-helmet if it is fiberglass, plastic or fiberglass/plastic coated.

Clarifies dangerous play, including hazardous stick usage and aerial balls.

1983 Allows goalkeeper to wear a throat protector if it is either a part of or attached to a mask.

States that after a player becomes injured, if that player is unable to play momentarily, she shall leave the field and the team may substitute for her.

Reinstated "sticks" as a foul.

Specifies that a free hit into the striking circle could not be above knee level.

1984 Clarify definition of "sticks."

1985 Requires field players to wear mouth protectors with no protruding parts.

Permits one team time-out per half.

Field Hockey

Requires goalkeeper to wear a full-face mask, cage mask or mask-helmet.

1986 If mouth protectors are attached to material which is worn around the neck, it must be tear-away material.

Specify protective devices worn on parts of the body other than the head/face must be padded with at least ¼" (closed cell, slow recovery) foam-rubber padding.

1987 Mouth protectors may not be attached to material worn around the neck.

1989 Stick shall be one piece and made of wood and/or fiberglass.

1990 Shin guards required for all players.

Field players may not play the ball while he/she is on the ground (including kneeling), if in the judgment of the official; it could lead to dangerous play.

1991 Establishes a "team line" 5 yards away from sideline; requires all team personnel to remain behind the team line.

1992 Goalkeeper required to wear full-face mask and chest protector.

1993 Goalkeepers required to wear full face mask/cage/helmet (covering entire head) and field hockey goalie gloves.

If field player wears face mask, it must be molded to the face and not attached to any hard, unyielding headgear.

1994 Cages on goalkeeper helmets must be rounded at all points.

1995 Goalkeeper required to wear throat protector.

Only legal strokes on a side-in or a long hit are a drive or push.

Hand stop prohibited.

1996 Specifically allow field players to wear eye protection and soft headgear, and goalkeepers to wear field hockey shoulder pads and elbow pads.

If the shot on goal is a drive, the ball must cross the goal line at a height of no more than 18 inches unless it touches the stick/body of a defender as it travels toward the goal.

1997 Only legal stroke on a 16-yard hit is a drive or a push.

On a center pass, side-in, 16-yard hit, long hit and free hit, the ball must move at least one yard before a teammate may play the ball.

When a side-in, 17-yard hit, long hit or free hit is taken between the 25-yard line and the end line, ALL players must be 5 yards away.

Penalty corner must be taken 10 yards outside the goal post.

Field Hockey

1998 Goalkeeper must wear a wrap-around type throat protector

Goalkeeper may wear foam hand protectors which are no more than 9 inches wide and 14 inches long.

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2001 Goalkeepers shall wear mouth protectors.

Sticks with metal components are prohibited.

Each state association may authorize the use of artificial limbs, which in its opinion are not more dangerous to players than the corresponding human limb and do not place an opponent at a disadvantage. If the prosthesis is hinged, the hinge shall be covered so that no hard or unyielding surfaces are exposed.

Equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.

2002 Goalkeepers may not play outside their own half of the field unless they are taking a penalty stroke.

2003 A face mask may be worn provided it is molded to the face and rounded at all points, without sharp edges. It shall not be attached to any hard, unyielding headgear (even if padded).

If the first shot on goal is a drive or hit, the ball must cross the goal line at a height of no more than 18 inches, unless it touches the stick or body of a defender and/or the stick of an attacker as it travels toward goal or had traveled more than 5 yards from the circle prior to the shot.

2004 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2005 Beginning with the 2006 season, a mouth guard must be a readily visible color other than white or clear

Effective January 1, 2007, the player's stick shall weigh no more than 23 ounces, not to exceed a bow of 25mm, and must pass through a 2-inch ring. Sticks with metal components are illegal.

A chest protector specifically manufactured for field hockey goalkeepers to be worn under the shirt

All approved eyewear must have a certification mark denoting it meets the ASTM F803 standard

2006 Sticks that are designed intentionally or unintentionally to cup, grasp or hold the ball other that the flat face curved end are prohibited. Chest protectors that are specifically manufactured for field hockey goal keepers to be worn under the shirt are mandatory. Protectors that provide additional coverage (examples would include the abdomen, sides and shoulders) may also be worn. Opponents on defense must position themselves 7 yards away from the attack during side-ins across the sidelines, free hits and endlines.

2007 New: All casts, splints and braces must be padded with at least ½" of all closed-cell, slow-recovery rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. No protective equipment shall have exposed metal or any other material. Each state association may authorize the use of prostheses which in its opinion are no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human body part(s) and do not place an opponent at a disadvantage.

Field Hockey

New: All goalkeepers shall wear tooth protectors, which may be attached to the facemask/helmet. A tooth protector shall be of any readily visible color, other than white or clear. A tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall include an occlusal (protecting and separating the biting surfaces) and a labial (protecting the teeth and supporting structures) portion and covers the posterior teeth with adequate thickness. It is recommended the protector be properly fitted: 1) Constructed from a model made from an impression of the individual's teeth or 2) Constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing the teeth into the tooth and mouth protector itself

2008 Effective January 1, 2009, the player's stick shall not exceed a bow of 25mm, which must be visible and permanently labeled on the stick. The player's stick shall weigh no more than 23 ounces and must pass through a 2-inch (5.1cm) ring. Goalkeepers, "(New rule) …d. May use their stick, protective equipment or any part of their body to push the ball away, deflect the ball (in any direction including over the end line) or to stop the ball. This permits a goalkeeper to use their hands, arms, or any other part of their body to move the ball away, but only as part of a goal- saving action;" In addition, goalkeepers' "(New rule) …o. Goalkeeper striking and/or kicking in an intimidating manner, playing the ball without the stick in her hand, or placing the ball after a hand stop of an aerial ball."

2009 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2010 Clarified the use of hard and unyielding items. Clarified how required equipment should be properly worn. Clarified the guideline for concussion management. Introduced the definition and technique of the of the new self-pass. The following Points of Emphasis were drafted: Concussion Recognition and Management; and Self-pass.

2011 All field players shall wear protective eyewear that meets the current ASTM standard. Any blood on a player, uniform or equipment must be dealt with appropriately. No shot on goal can be scored by an attacker from the penalty corner hit until the ball has left the circle and then is brought back into the circle. If the attacking team causes the ball to go across the end line, the game shall be restarted by a 16-yard hit. Legal strokes are a drive, push, or self-pass. The ball must move at least one yard before a member of the same team is allowed to play the ball. The 16-yard hit shall be taken in line with the spot where the ball crossed the end line and up to 16 yards from the inner edge of the end line. All opponents shall be 7 yards away. Mandatory use of protective eyewear for all field players that meet the ASTM 2713-09 standard.

2012 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2013 Legal strokes were updated to include drive, push, flick and scoop. Goalkeeper masks and helmets have been purchased and sent to the NOCSAE testing laboratory in Tennessee for review and determination for a consistent performance standard. In addition, a field hockey ball standard will also be developed in the process. Emphasis was placed on state association accommodations not to heighten the risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage. When a player is called for a misconduct violation, they will now be issued a green card which will require that they be removed from playing action for two minutes of elapsed playing time and the team will play short during that suspension period. The suspended player will be placed at the scorer's table near their sideline for adult supervision by their coaching staff. The requirement that the ball must move at least one yard before a member of the same team is allowed to play the ball (2011) has been removed. The requirement for all opponents to be 7 yards away (2011) has been reduced to 5 yards due to the fact that the self-pass allows the player with the ball to initiate the offense without hitting the ball to another teammate. In rule 10-2-7, when a penalty corner is taken and the first shot at the goal is higher than 18 inches, the official should immediately blow the ball dead and cease action. When state associations chose to make reasonable accommodations to students

Field Hockey

due to disabilities and/or special needs as well students with unique and extenuating circumstances should not fundamentally alter the sport, nor heighten the risk to the player/others or place opponents at a disadvantage. In the Officials' Guide, when a player from either team plays an aerial ball with their stick above their shoulder, a foul should be called immediately. Also, when a non-marking defender is struck by a lifted ball, the attack will be issued a penalty corner to discourage non-marking defenders to dangerously clutter the path to the goal with no purpose.

2014 Players are prohibited from chipping the ball high into the air in open play or from a free hit while not taking a shot on goal.

2015 Clarified that the head coach is responsible for the players being properly and legally equipped and that all eye protection shall be permanently labeled that it meets the current ASTM standard by January 1, 2019.

2016 Face masks are no longer permitted.

The rule change for 2015 (dealing with restarts for extended play penalty corners) eliminated the clear definitions for when a penalty corner, during regular play, is considered to be completed. The exception to the rule added in 2015 (dealing with restarts for extended play penalty corners) should apply to an injury during regulation play as well as extended play.

2017 Fouls include rough and dangerous play and unnecessary delay of the game

For deliberate fouls by the defense inside the 25-yard line, but out-side the circle, the official shall award a penalty corner.

Misconduct includes any player or team action which an official deems to be unsportsmanlike including disputing, appealing, protesting and/or reacting in a provocative or disapproving manner in an inappropriate way towards any decision made by an official or official entering the field of play for any reason without permission from the official and not respecting the 5-yard area off the sideline of the field outside of the designated team bench area and remaining behind a clearly marked restraining area.

2018 Updated and clarified ASTM labeling of goggles and what is permissible for athletes.

2019 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2020 In response to longstanding concerns regarding the wearing of goggles in high school field hockey, the NFHS Board of Directors approved a change in the eyewear rule that will take effect with the 2020 season. Rule 1-6-5 in the NFHS Field Hockey Rules Book, which currently states that "All field players shall wear eye protection that met the ASTM standard for field hockey (2713) at the time of manufacture," will now state that "Goggles may be worn by all field hockey players." With the change to the eyewear rule by the NFHS Board of Directors, Penalty Corner Masks may now be worn starting in 2020.

2021 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2022 Permits hair adornments provided they are secured and do not present a risk of injury to the player, teammates, or opponents.

2023 Defined loose equipment in the field of play as a foul and clarifies that throwing of equipment is a misconduct penalty. The rules clarify for officials on how to handle the penalty in the field of play or the circle.

2024 No risk minimization changes for this year.

Field Hockey

2025 Allows a wire-caged style face mask to be worn when defending a penalty corner.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Field Hockey Rules Committee for the 2025 field hockey season dealing with risk minimization: Defined Obstruction.

Football

1982 Pants required and knee pads over knees.

Jersey must fully cover shoulder pads.

Slippery or sticky substances are illegal on equipment or exposed part of body.

Tear-away jerseys are illegal.

Head coach must verify prior to the game that players are legally equipped.

1983 Yardage chain and down indicator rods must have flat ends and protective cap.

Spearing penalty same as other illegal helmet contact fouls.

Following fair catch interference, receiver can keep the ball plus the penalty from the spot of the foul.

1984 Hip pad must have tailbone protector.

Limited height of raised platform used to anchor cleats.

Restricted clipping to offensive linemen in the free-blocking zone.

Added first down to roughing passer penalty.

1985 Adopted specification for the face protector.

Prohibit player in motion from blocking below the waist in the free blocking zone.

Prohibit any player from positioning himself on the back or shoulders of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.

1986 Team must begin game with 11 players.

Helmet must have a visible exterior warning label regarding the risk of injury.

Allows use of a restraining line around the entire field.

New thigh guard specifications adopted.

1987 Tooth protectors must cover all upper teeth.

If worn, knee braces may not be worn over the pants.

Football No try if last play touchdown decides outcome of the game.

A foul if injured player does not stay out one play.

Three attendants allowed on field during a time-out.

1988 Any hard portion of knee brace which extends below the pants must be covered.

Use of ceramics for cleats is prohibited.

Deaf teams may use drum to establish cadence.

Open hand extend arm blocking is legal.

1989 Goal posts must be padded by 1990.

Face protector must have met NOCSAE standard in 1992.

Jersey may not be taped, tied to, altered to produce a knot.

State associations can adopt a point differential to terminate a game at halftime or thereafter.

1990 Support wrap may be used on forearm and hand.

If B fouls during a successful kick try, the penalty may be enforced from the succeeding spot.

Placekick holder on free kick is given protection.

1991 An unconscious or apparently unconscious player may not return to the game without written authorization from a physician.

1992 NOCSAE mark required on face mask.

Rib and back protectors must be fully covered by a jersey.

1993 Player who is bleeding has an open wound or excessive blood on uniform must leave game for at least one down to receive appropriate treatment.

1994 Allows hard material on forearm, hand, wrist cast/splint if padded to specifications and authorized by licensed medical doctor.

A substitute who enters the field during a fight is disqualified.

Officials' time-out authorized when heat/humidity create a health risk.

1995 Fighting defined, penalty is disqualification.

Second unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification.

Jewelry is illegal equipment.

1996 Require all hard surface shoulder pad attachments to be fully covered by a jersey.

Football A defensive player shall not charge directly into the snapper

1997 Prohibits use of eye shields which prevent visual examination of an injured player's eyes.

Unsportsmanlike foul if player or non-player uses tobacco or smokeless tobacco

The ball becomes dead immediately if the helmet comes completely off the player in possession of the ball.

Automatic first down for roughing the snapper.

State associations may authorize, through a licensed physician, use of a device to enhance efficiency of a required hearing aid.

1998 Prohibit the use of eye shields with less than 100% allowable light transmission.

No defensive player may use the hand(s) to slap a blocker's head.

1999 Clarified that is an eye shield is used, it must be clear.

2000 Made face-mask foul either 5 or 15-yard penalty

2001 Made contact with the kicker/holder either a 5 or 15-yard penalty

Restricted blocking in the free blocking zone

Officials will discuss sportsmanship expectations with coaches/captains

2002 Redefined clipping and added a definition and penalty for a block in the back

2003 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2004 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2005 Beginning in 2006 helmets shall be secured by 4 snaps and mouth guards shall be a color, not clear or white

2006 Removed the word "intentional" from the spearing definition

2007 A 4-inch wide broken restraining line, 2 yards from the sidelines and end lines around the outside of the football field is now required

A definition for a flagrant foul was with an emphasis on safety and sportsmanship was added

Three revisions dealing with illegal helmet contact were made to the existing rules and definitions by bringing them under one heading

The free-blocking zone for nine-, eight- and six-player football was reduced to a zone three yards either side of the spot of the snap and three yards behind each line of scrimmage

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2007 football season that addressed risk minimization - Blocking by the Offense and Defense, and Heat and Hydration.

Football The NFHS worked with the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) in mailing out a DVD entitled "Heads Up – Reducing the Risk of Head and Neck Injuries in Football" to an estimated 16,000 high schools across the country.

2008 Hip pads, tailbone protector, knee pads and thigh guards must not be altered from the manufacturer's original design/production. Shin guards, if worn, must meet NOCSAE specifications.
A hand pad is now defined as a covering for the hand which may have separate openings for each finger and thumb, is absent of any web-like material between the fingers and/or thumb, and not covering each finger and thumb.

The rules language for blood and a bleeding player was clarified

Four of the five Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2008 football season addressed risk minimization. MRSA and Communicable Skin Conditions; Purpose of a Football Helmet; Altering Legal Football Equipment; and Sideline Management and Control.

2009 The mandatory three-minute warm-up period begins immediately following the conclusion of the halftime intermission. The head coach of each team is responsible for his team being on the field for the warm-up period.

It is now illegal to grasp the opponent's chin strap.

The horse-collar tackle has been added to the list of illegal personal contact fouls, regardless of where it occurs on the field. It is illegal to grasp the inside back or side opening of the collar of the jersey or shoulder pads of the runner and subsequently pull the runner to the ground.

A restricted area has been defined where a maximum of three coaches may communicate with players and substitutes during dead-ball situations. The coaches must move into the team box before the ball becomes live. There will no longer be an allowance for three coaches to remain in an area adjacent to the sideline during play.

Four of the six Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2009 football season were: NFHS Guidelines on Handling Contests During Lightning Disturbances, Illegal Personal Contact, Blocking and Illegal Blocks, and Helmet and Face Mask.

2010 Concussion rule revised.

New football glove/hand pad standard implemented for the 2012 season.

Horse-collar clarified.

Penalty defined for unintentional contact between a nonplayer and an official in the restricted area.

Three of the six Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2010 football season were: Concussion Recognition and Management; Heat Illness and Hydration; and Illegal Helmet Contact.

2011 Thigh guard standard revised.

Chop block redefined.

Football Injury timeout conferences restricted to outside nine-yard marks.

Provisions for removal of injured players standardized.

Enforcement spot for roughing the passer revised.

Note added on reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2011 football season: Concussions, Contact Both to and With the Helmet, and Helmet Technology and Proper Helmet Fitting.

2012 Football gloves must meet the NOCSAE test standard starting in 2013.

Play cards must be worn on the wrist.

Blocking-below-the-waist rules revised.

Player required to be removed if helmet comes off during the down and it is not due to a foul.

Restrictions added to blocking on free kicks.

It is now illegal to grasp the tooth and mouth protector that is attached to the face mask.

Horse-collar rule modified to further clarify the direction the opponent is pulled.

Four Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2012 football season dealing with risk minimization: Concussions, Contact to and With the Helmet, Helmet Technology and Proper Helmet Fitting; Heat Acclimatization and Preventing Heat Illness; Hurdling; and Illegal Blocking Below the Waist.

2013 Football gloves must meet the NOCSAE test standard.

If the helmet comes completely off during subsequent dead-ball action related to the down, and is not directly attributable to a foul by the opponent, the player must leave the game for at least one down (unless half-time or overtime intermission occurs).

A new provision added to the existing rule stipulates the kicking team may initiate contact once the receiving team has initiated a block within the neutral zone on a free kick.

A new illegal personal contact foul was added and is charged to a player who initiates contact with an opposing player whose helmet has come completely off.

A new illegal participation foul was added for a helmet-less player that blocks, tackles or otherwise participates beyond the immediate action in which the player is engaged when the helmet came completely off.

Three Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2013 football season dealing with risk minimization: Prohibition on contact to and with the helmet; Reconditioning and recertification of football equipment; Free blocking zone enforcement – consistent enforcement of blocking below the waist.

Football

2014 Targeting definition and foul added. Continuing with the focus on risk minimization, the committee determined that taking aim at an opponent with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulder, to initiate contact above the shoulders with an intent that goes beyond making a legal tackle, a legal block or playing the ball is prohibited. Furthermore, the committee feels it is important to separate and draw specific attention to this illegal act.

The committee added the definition of a defenseless player in an attempt to continue concentrating on risk minimization. A defenseless player is a player who, because of his physical position and focus of concentration, is especially vulnerable to injury.

Two new provisions were added to adjust the free kick. One provision balances the kicking team's formation and the other limits the maximum distance of the run up for the kicking team.

Roughing the passer fouls now include all illegal personal contact fouls listed in Rule 9-4-3. These fouls against the passer now result in an automatic first down in addition to a 15-yard penalty

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2014 football season dealing with risk minimization: High School Football – State of the Game; Risk Minimization.

2015 Continuing the focus of risk minimization, the definition for the illegal helmet contact act of spearing was revised. Spearing is an act by any player who initiates contact against an opponent at the shoulders or below with the crown (top portion) of his/her helmet.

In a revision of the 2014 rule change regarding free-kick formations, the timing of the foul for not having at least four players on each side of the kicker now occurs when the ball is kicked.

With an emphasis on risk minimization, the unnecessary roughness provisions were expanded. No player or nonplayer shall make any other contact with an opponent, including a defenseless player, which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness.

An automatic first down is not awarded for a 5-yard incidental face mask penalty against the passer.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2015 football season dealing with risk minimization: Risk Minimization; Facilitating NFHS Football Rules.

2016 Completely clear or completely white tooth and mouth protectors are no longer prohibited.

Football gloves are now required to meet either the new SFIA specification or the existing NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture.

In a continued effort to minimize risk, the Committee made clipping in the free-blocking zone illegal.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2016 football season dealing with risk minimization: Risk Minimization; Legal and Illegal Blocks.

2017 A definition of a blindside block was created to reduce the risk of injury. Unless initiated with open hands, it is a foul for excessive and unnecessary contact when the block is forceful and outside of the free-blocking zone.

Football

A pop-up kick has been defined as a free kick in which the kicker drives the ball immediately to the ground, the ball strikes the ground once and goes into the air in the manner of a ball kicked directly off the tee. To reduce the risk of injury, these kicks will be penalized as a dead-ball free-kick infraction

In a continued effort to minimize risk, specific examples of a defenseless player have been developed.

The ball becomes dead when a prosthetic limb comes completely off of the runner.

Three Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2017 football season dealing with risk minimization: Responsibility on Players to Avoid Illegal Contact; Illegal Helmet Contact; and Proper Enforcement of Penalties for Violations of the Equipment Rules.

2018 Prior to the game, the head coach is responsible for verifying that the players are legally equipped and will not use illegal equipment. The penalty for a player who is not properly equipped has changed from a distance penalty against the team to removal of that player for at least one down. The penalty provisions for any use of illegal equipment remain unchanged and result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul charged to the head coach.

The committee clarified that defenseless player provisions do not apply to a passer until a legal forward pass is thrown. The passer continues to be a defenseless player until the pass ends or the passer moves to participate in the play.

In an effort to reduce re-kicks, further minimize risk and ensure that appropriate penalties are in place for all fouls, the committee has added an option for fouls committed by the kicking team during free and scrimmage kicks. The change would allow the receiving team all of the previous options as well as accepting the distance penalty at the end of the down.

Three Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2018 football season dealing with risk minimization: Proper wearing and use of required equipment; Blindside blocks and defenseless player; Enforcement of penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls.

2019 In an effort to decrease risk, tripping the runner is now prohibited. It is now a foul to intentionally use the lower leg or foot to obstruct a runner below the knees.

Grabbing the name plate area of the jersey of the runner, directly below the back collar, and pulling the runner to the ground is now an illegal personal contact foul.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2019 football season dealing with risk minimization: Proper procedures for weather delays; Free-blocking zone and legal blocking.

2020 The halftime intermission may be shortened by mutual agreement of opposing coaches if a weather delay occurs during the last three minutes of the second period.

2021 Blocking Below the waist now requires the block to begin immediately following the snap.

2022 A chop block has been redefined as an illegal combination block where contact is made above and below the waist.

Added a new exception that allows the passer to legally throw the ball away to conserve yardage.

Football

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2022 football season dealing with risk minimization: Targeting/Defenseless Player.

2023 Added a list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2023 football season dealing with risk minimization: Game Management

2024 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2024 football season dealing with risk minimization: Player Equipment and Enforcement.

2025 Effective 2026, a single tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth.

Effective 2026, a single tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall not include anything on it that is a health or risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Football Rules Committee for the 2025 football season dealing with risk minimization: Illegal and Improperly Worn Player Equipment and Defenseless Player / Targeting.

Girls Gymnastics

1982 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1983 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1984 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1985 Roundoff entry vaults illegal.

1986 Base mat (1 ¼" +/- ¼") and landing mat (3 ¾" +/- ½") for working area of the bars and landing area of vaulting required.

One-arm vaults illegal.

Minimum 3 ¾" +/- ½" of matting for landing area of bars and beam required.

Coach/spotter permitted between bars or by the beam.

Giving a gymnast a ten second warning after a fall from the bars before she must remount (total time is 30 seconds). This keeps the gymnast from remounting too quickly.

Warning on beam was extended to ten seconds before a gymnast's routine is deducted for overtime. Gives the gymnast more time to dismount safely.

1987 Salto skills not performed to a feet-first landing do not receive difficulty credit. Discourage gymnast from performing salto skills before they are ready.

Landing mat on vaulting must be secured to prevent slipping.

Girls Gymnastics

Working area and landing area on bars and beam and landing area of vault must be padded with a minimum of one base mat (1 ¼" +/- ¼") and one landing mat (3 ¾" +/- ½") or a single 5, 8 or 10" landing mat.

If vaulting board is used for mount on bars or beam, it must be moved as soon as the mount is completed.

1988 Salto skills not performed to a feet-first landing are void.

Beginning with 1991-92 season, entire area under beam must be padded with matting at least 6' wide and 4 ½" thick.

On floor when mat is new, it shall be at least 1" thick. Specify competitive area as being padded.

1989 Landing area on vaulting shall be a minimum of 18' x 6' and shall be padded with a minimum of one base mat (at least 18' x 1 ¼" +/- ¼") and one landing mat (3 ¾" +/- ½").

First vault voided for execution errors may not be repeated as the second vault.

Beginning with 1992-93, minimum width between uneven rails shall be 47.2" (120 cm).

1991 Entire area under the beam must be padded with at least one base mat (1 ¼" +/- 1 ¼") and one landing mat (3 ¾" +/- 3 ¾").

1992 Bars may be set to the gymnast's preference provided the low rail is not lower than 48" and the high rail is not lower than 88".

Rails shall be capable of spreading to at least 47.2" (1200mm).

1993 A gymnast, who is bleeding, has an open wound or an excessive amount of blood on her uniform may complete her current event performance, but must receive proper treatment before returning to competition.

A gymnast may mount bars or beam from a vaulting board provided the board is placed on the matting required for the working area and is removed after the mount is completed.

An area at least 12' long and 6' wide at each end of the beam not used for the dismount shall be matted. Beginning with the 1994-95 season, the matting shall include at least one base mat and one landing mat.

1994 An area at least 12' long and 6' wide at each end of the beam shall be matted with at least one base mat and one landing mat.

1995 When new mats are purchased, they must be 8 feet wide.

Specifically recommends that adequate space between event equipment be provided.

A spotting block may be used on the uneven events during high superior release, flight skills (excluding the mount and dismount).

Girls Gymnastics

1996 Permits the use of one 8-inch manufactured skill cushion on top of minimum matting requirements, the use of one 4-inch manufactured skill cushion on top of maximum matting or the use of a "sting" on any legal matting.

1997 Recommends that beam uprights be padded if such padding is available from the manufacturer.

1998 A specifically manufactured mat may be used around the front end of the board for the vaulting event.

1999 Participants shall not wear glitter during competition

A single sting mat (1 ½ inches thick, ± ½ inch) may be placed on the floor exercise mat provided the person placing and removing the mat does not enter the competitive area during a gymnast's performance.

2001 The ceiling should be a minimum of 19 feet high and shall be free of obstructions hanging directly over the competitive area of any event. A single manufactured 4-inch skill cushion may be placed in one location on the floor exercise mat for the landing of a superior, high superior or bonus high superior tumbling skill.

2002 By state association adoption, a vaulting table may be used in addition to the vaulting horse.

The host school shall mark the maximum dual-lock setting in red on the bars.

Spotter may be used on floor provided they stay on the outside of the mat.

2003 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2004 The top mat, including a sting mat, shall not be wider than any mat underneath it. When the landing area for vault, bars and beam is over a pit, the surface must provide for a solid landing and meet all other rules specifications. On bars and beam, there also must be a solid base for mounts.

2005 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2006 Board safety mat around the front and sides of the board is required for all roundoff entry vaults should be used for round off entry mounts on beam.

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited in the competitive area during competition.

Maximum matting thickness was increased to 16 inches.

A sting mat may be placed on the runway (not the board) provided it is no more than 2 inches thick.

Side horse is no longer a legal piece of equipment

There is no deduction for a coach may stand between the board and the vault table.

A spotter is required for all round off entry vaults

A spotter may facilitate a handspring vault during preflight or after flight. The deduction is 1.0.

2007 A round-off entry vault is void if it has both a salto and a twist in the after flight.

Girls Gymnastics

A manufactured hand placement mat may be used in vaulting for assistance in hand placement and extra cushioning. The mat may be 36 inches x 36 inches x 1 3/8 inches or 36 inches x 54 inches x 1 3/8 inches. A manufactured sting mat shall not be permitted to be placed on the runway for vaulting.

The pistons/pedestal (vertical uprights) of the vaulting table shall be padded with the manufacturer's protect padding.

The vault is void if a gymnast performs a vault without the pistons/pedestal of the vaulting table being padde

2008 Increased the thickness of legal matting upon which the vaulting board may be placed when executing a mount on beam or bars and increased thickness for mounting without the aid of the board.

Deleted skills no longer appropriate for high school girls gymnastics due to advancement of gymnasts' skills and change in equipment.

Added to medium skills on bars to increases choices for gymnasts at an average level to meet eight-skill requirement in routine. Also added to medium skills on floor exercise.

Revised Jump/Leap Chart to reflect a more natural progression of skills for the gymnast.

Emphasized proper precautions to prevent the spread of communicable disease and skin infection procedures.

POE included symptoms and care of concussions.

2010-12 Increased the fall time to 45 seconds on uneven bars and 30 seconds on the balance beam.

Stipulates competitive equipment shall meet rule specifications and such specifications shall not be waived by prior mutual consent of participating schools.

Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Updated and clarified the rules regarding braces, casts, padding and prostheses.

Specifies that the landing area on vault shall be a minimum of 18 feet by 8 feet and meet all other matting requirements beginning July 1, 2012.

Specifies that plywood is not permitted under the board for mounting purposes on bars and beam.

Specifies that the landing area on balance beam shall be a minimum of 12 feet by 8 feet beginning July 1, 2012.

2012-14 Increases the maximum matting thickness to 19 inches in vault, uneven bars and balance beam.

2014-16 Adjusted the value of various elements to fit the athleticism of the high school gymnast.

Girls Gymnastics	Clarified that only mats of thickness and width as specified in the rules can be used in competition.
	Revised the event requirements and composition categories in balance beam and floor exercise to better fit the skill-level of the high school gymnast.
2016-18	No rule changes pertaining to risk minimization.
2018-20	No rule changes pertaining to risk minimization.
2020-22	Specified procedure for securing the top landing mat in the vault.
	Specified that chalk may not be used on the runway.
2022-24	Added uniform modifications that reflect the current trends within the sport and across society, being more inclusive of participants cultural and religious beliefs without increased risk of injury.
	Added clear procedural guidance to the fall time in vault, uneven bars and beam stating that the time begins when the gymnasts is standing on her feet. This gives the gymnast time to assess their condition before the time begins.
2024-26	Placing chalk on the vault table is not allowed for risk minimization purposes. The rule used to read excessive chalk.
	In the vault, tape is NOT permitted on the hand placement mats.
	Clarified that a board may not be placed on an 8-inch skill cushion but a folded panel mat and a mount trainer mat may be placed on top of an 8-inch skill cushion.
Ice Hockey	
1982	Recommends the use of throat guards by goalkeeper for 1982-83 and requires their use for 1983-84.
	Requires that a player whose helmet is dislodged must skate immediately to his team's bench where he can be replaced by a substitute.
	Adds checking from behind as a penalty call and clearly delineates a fair-body check.
1983	Recommends that equipment for all players, including goalkeeper, shall include face masks which have met the HECC/ASTM F513-81 Eye and Face Equipment for Hockey Players Standard (required for 1985-86). Requires goalkeepers to wear throat guards.
	Stipulates that stick blades not be more than three inches or less than two inches wide at any point. This prevents players from sharpening ends of blades, thus preventing face mask penetration.
1984	Requires all players to wear helmets while in the players' box.
	Prevents attacking players from crossing the outer edge of the face-off circles to join a gathering of players after a stoppage of play (prevents fighting).

Ice Hockey Protects goalkeepers from slashing, jabbing or poking at the puck after goalkeeper has the puck covered and/or in possession.

Outlaws custom-made, contoured, fiberglass face masks for 1984-85.

1985 Requires all players, including goalkeepers, to wear face masks which meet the HECC/ASTM F513-81 Eye and Face Equipment for Hockey Players Standards.

Prohibits the wearing of exposed jewelry.

Requires that any injured player for whom play has been stopped must leave the ice and cannot return until play resumes.

1986 Requires that all players, including goalkeepers, wear an internal/external mouth protector which should cover all the remaining teeth or one jaw.

Prohibits the wearing of casts, braces and splints on the arms or hands made of hard and/or unyielding material, even if padded.

1987 Allow players to wear knee braces.

Allow goalkeepers to keep a water bottle at the goal cage to prevent dehydration.

Prevent players from participating in play if they possess more than one stick.

Assign either a minor or major penalty to players who make physical contact with an opponent after the whistle has blown.

Assign either a minor or major penalty to players who foul a goalkeeper in his crease or who has the puck covered.

1988 Recommends that goal frames do not have a metal deflector plate at the rear base or the goal frame (required for 1989-90).

1989 Require that goal frames have no metal deflector plate along the base of the goal frame back. Recommend that all players wear throat protectors.

Add the helmets (as well as face masks) must not be altered from original manufacturer's specifications.

Require that officials wear protective helmets.

1990 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1991 Requires all players to attach mouthguards to face mask. Mouthguard must be made of nontransparent material.

1992 Prohibit an unconscious player from returning to the ice without written authorization from a physician.

Stipulate that dental guards must be made of colored, nonclear material.

Recommend that players wear HECC/ASTM approved helmets (required for 1995-96).

Ice Hockey Require that a coach from each team be present for pregame warm-ups.

1993 Bleeding player rule adopted for all NF sports.

1994 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1995 Requires separate, attached throat guards for goalkeepers.

Require earplugs be worn with all helmets.

Require HECC approved helmets for all players.

Prohibit body-checking for girl's teams.

1996 Required whistle when helmet or face mask becomes dislodged.

Penalty for rough board play.

Penalty for body check when not controlling puck.

1997 No body checking from behind.

No head spear or head butt.

1998 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 The use of tobacco products is a game misconduct penalty.

No player shall butt-end or attempt to butt-end an opponent.

If a player leaves a bench during an altercation the penalty shall be game disqualification.

No player shall spear or attempt to spear an opponent.

2001 Require all students occupying exposed bench area to wear helmet with facemask meeting HECC/ASTM standards

Required equipment for goal keepers includes helmet with strap. The headgear should be fastened in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

Interference with an opponent not in possession of the puck is not permitted anywhere under any circumstances.

2002 A penalty shall be assessed to any player who intentionally or recklessly contacts a player in the head, including with the stick or by an illegal body check.

2003 The end of a hollow stick must be fully covered.

Ice Hockey No coach, manager or other team personnel, including players, shall intentionally touch, trip, hold, push or in any other way physically abuse or attempt to physically abuse, an official, before, during or after the game.

2004 Changed rules to read, "Subsequent player(s) shall not enter into a fight" and "Players not involved in a fight, shall, upon verbal signal from the referee, skate immediately to their respective team bench area, excluding goalkeepers."

2005 Added "padded hockey pants/hockey pants" to listing of protective equipment for which each player is responsible for wearing for all games.

2006 Added "Obstruction" defined as use of stick or body to interfere with an opponent away from play of the puck. Shall be penalized under this rule.

2007 Added "acceptable throat/neck protection" verbiage.

Deleted verbiage that stated "It is required that dental guards be attached to the face mask."

2008 Reworded: "acceptable throat/neck protection" verbiage.

2009 Added: All players are required to wear helmets with face masks while in the players' or penalty bench.

2010 Instituted concussion language that is consistent with all NFHS rules books and was approved by the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

Clarified mouth guard language. All players require a mouth guard.

Through the NFHS SMAC language was written for hard and unyielding items such as casts and extra padding.

"Recommend" that officials wear a face shield.

An official may call a penalty for "contact to the head".

2011 Tightened up language on "contact to the head" to deter hits to the head.

2012 Strengthened "Checking From Behind" language to deter the hits as well as educate coaches, players and officials.

2013 Passed rule to require officials to wear half face shield for the 2013-14 season.
Play shall immediately be stopped if a goalkeeper's glove(s) is displaced.

Strengthened "Checking From Behind" language to deter the hits as well as educate coaches, players and officials.

2014 Added language that penalizes hits on defenseless players (blind side hits).

First level penalty for Boarding increased to a 5-minute MAJOR penalty. Flagrant acts can result in either a MAJOR and MISCONDUCT or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

First level penalty for Checking From Behind increased to a 5-minute MAJOR penalty. Flagrant acts can result in either a MAJOR and MISCONDUCT or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

Ice Hockey

2015-16 Required equipment for players, other than goalkeepers, shall include an ice hockey helmet with chin straps which are securely fastened to the head, gloves, skates, full face mask, padded hockey pants/hip pads, shin pads, protective cup or pelvic protector, elbow pads, shoulder pads, stick and tooth and mouth protector. Shin, elbow, and shoulder pads must be worn under outer clothing. Recommended equipment includes a throat/neck protector.

PENALTY: First offense, MISCONDUCT. Returning to the game without correcting equipment, GAME MISCONDUCT**.**

2016-17 Direct contact to the head or neck area is a flagrant foul. Direct contact occurs when the initial force of the contact occurs to the head or neck area.

Indirect contact to the head or neck area shall be penalized. Indirect contact occurs when the initial force of the contact begins below the neck and progresses upward to the head or neck area.

Revised language within required equipment for goalkeepers to reflect current vocabulary to increase effectiveness for all constituents.

2017-18 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2018-19 Added language that a stick must be free of projections, and all edges shall be beveled.

Added language that goalkeepers shall wear pants or socks under leg pads to cover exposed skin.

2019-20 Added language clarifying that a player (only goalkeeper) may defend the goal cage during a penalty shot.

Helmet and face mask language was clarified and a note was added to include HECC compliance language.

2020-21 Changed penalty structure for when a skate is deemed dangerous per rule.

Added “laceration” to the recommended equipment section. Throat/neck laceration protectors are a recommended piece of equipment.

2021-22 Game action will now be stopped in the event a goalkeeper’s skate blade is broken or becomes displaced on the ice surface.

2023-24 No risk minimization changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee for the 2023-24 ice hockey season dealing with risk minimization: Player Safety / Dangerous Hits

2024-25 Neck laceration protectors are now a required piece of equipment for all players and goalkeepers.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee for the 2024-25 ice hockey season dealing with risk minimization: Neck Laceration Protectors; Overall Health and Safety.

Ice Hockey

2025-26 Language has been added to stop play when the puck rests on top of the goal netting. This will minimize sticks coming up high in attempt to knock the puck off the netting.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee for the 2025-26 Ice hockey season dealing with risk minimization: Players being properly equipped and promoting legal contact.

Soccer

1982 Requires that an injured player be replaced if time is stopped for the injury.

1983 Requires that an injured player be replaced if time is stopped for the injury if he or she is attended to on the field.

Clarifies cleat requirements. Official determines if cleats have developed a cutting edge.

1984 New restrictions on goalkeeper will reduce contact with opponents.

1985 Goalkeeper possession defined.

Goalkeepers allowed to wear a head protector of closed-cell, slow-recovering material that stays soft in its final form.

1986 Clarified and standardized the definition of a soccer shoe.

All hard casts are illegal even if padded.

Goalkeeper allowed to wear a soft-billed baseball type hat or visor to shield eyes from the sun.

1987 Adds hard “splits” to hard casts even if padded, etc.

1988 Shinguards will be mandatory beginning in the fall of 1990.

Ankle braces allowed if covered at least by a stocking.

1989 Shinguards must be worn under the stockings.

1990 Shinguards must be worn under the stockings and be commercially manufactured for that purpose.

Hearing aids and mouth protectors now legal.

1991 Coach is required to certify to the referee prior to the game that all players’ equipment meets the rules requirements.

1992 Requires noncaustic field marking material be used to mark lines.

Unconscious or apparently unconscious player cannot re-enter without physician’s written permission.

1993 Bleeding player rule adopted for all NF sports.

1994 A player leaving the team area to enter the field where a fight is taking place is disqualified.

Soccer

1995 If portable goals are used, they shall be securely anchored.

Allow casts and braces if properly padded and authorized by a physician to protect an existing injury.

1996 Responsibilities for determining playable conditions prior to and during games defined.

1997 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1998 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 Players may not alter shin guards, wear them where protection in not provided to the shin, or wear shin guards that are not the appropriate size.

2001 All participants in a game must wear shoes. Shoes with soles containing metal (aluminum, magnesium, titanium, etc.) leather, rubber nylon or plastic cleats, studs or bars, whether molded as part of the sole or detachable, are allowed as long as the referee does not consider them dangerous. Shoes shall not be altered in any way that makes them unsafe.

Types of equipment, which are illegal: knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless hinges are covered on all sides, and all of its edges are overlapped. Any covering (sleeve) recommended by the manufacturer may be worn.

Equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.

Jewelry shall not be worn except for religious or medical medals, which shall be taped to the body with the medical data visible.

If portable goals are used, they shall be adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted to the ground.

2002 The required player equipment includes a jersey, shorts, stockings, suitable shoes and shin guards which shall provide adequate and reasonable protection, be professionally manufactured, age-appropriate, not altered to decrease protection, and worn under the stockings.

2003 Shin guards must be worn with the bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle.

2004 Add the following to the existing rule: The vertical portion of the goal post may be padded with commercially manufactured material for soccer goals. This material shall be white, have a maximum thickness of one inch, be a minimum of 72 inches high and shall be properly secured.

Change “When an injured player(s) from either team is attended to on the field” with “When a player(s) from either team is injured:” and “The injured player(s) shall leave the field and may be replaced.”

Player equipment shall include shin guards that are age- and size- appropriate.

2005 Under illegal equipment, change knee braces made of hard unyielding material, to knee braces with exposed metal.

Soccer A protective face mask may be worn by a player with a facial injury. The mask may be made of a hard material, but must be worn molded to the face with no protrusions. A medical release for the injured player singed by a physician (MD/DO) shall be available at the game site.

2006 Beginning with the 2007 fall season, shin guards must meet the NOCSAE specifications

2007 Beginning with the 2008 fall season, shin guards must meet the NOCSAE specifications.

Head coaches will be cautioned if players are not properly equipped for play once the player enters the field of play.

2008 The field of play shall be rectangular, 100 to 120 yards long and 55 to 80 yards wide. The following minimal dimensions are recommended:

a. High Schools -110 yards by 65 yards;
b. Junior High Schools - 100 yards by 55 yards.

Inquire of each head coach whether each of his/her players is properly and legally equipped. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be determined by the head referee, or the center referee in a game officiated using the double-dual system of officiating.

Improperly equipped player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. Play shall not be stopped for an infringement of this rule except that the referee may stop play immediately where there is a dangerous situation.

The head coach shall receive the first caution issued (yellow card) for an illegally equipped player. All subsequent cautions (yellow cards) for illegally equipped player(s) shall be issued directly to the player(s) and not to the head coach.

Points of Emphasis **–** Shin guards, Team Areas, Knee Braces, Game Management, Pregame Responsibilities

2009 Beginning with the 2012 fall season, the NOCSAE seal and height range shall be permanently marked on the front of the shin guard.

Illegal equipment shall not be worn by any player. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment that are illegal include, but are not limited to, the following:
(g) ankle braces made of metal or unyielding materials, unless covered by a stocking or other suitable material. Ankle braces not made of metal or unyielding material may be worn outside a stocking.

Points of Emphasis – Unconscious Player, Ankle Braces, Shinguard Placement, Team Areas

2010 Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (Please see NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion).

Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm or shoulder unless covered, and must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick.

Artificial limbs, which in the judgment of the state high school association are no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human limb and do not place an opponent at a disadvantage, may be

Soccer permitted. Upper limb prostheses and above-knee leg prostheses are discouraged. Hinges shall be lateral and covered by suitable material. All permissible artificial limbs must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick.

Points of Emphasis – Concussion Management, Ankle and Knee Braces, Team Areas

2011 A player, coach or bench personnel shall be cautioned (yellow card) for:
a. entering or leaving the field of play (except through the normal course of play) without the permission of an official;
b. persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game;
c. objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by an official (dissent);
d. any incidental use of vulgar or profane language;
e. any use of video or audio communication with players or other persons to assist in coaching during the game or any intervals. Examples: Amplifying devices, wireless communication devices such as cell phones, headphones, personal digital assistant, etc.;
NOTE: A coach may engage in verbal communications with his or her own team during play.
f. unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to:
1. coaching outside the team area;
2. unnecessary delay (kicking, throwing the ball away on a free kick, etc.);
3. holding a shirt, short, etc.;
4. deliberate verbal tactics;
5. encroachment;
6. deliberate handball to stop an attack;
7. deliberate tactical foul;
8. faking an injury;
9. simulating a foul;
10. player who displays reckless play;
11. illegally equipped player, per 4.3.;
12. any delayed, excessive or prolonged act(s) by which a player(s) attempts to focus attention upon himself/herself and/or prohibits a timely restart of the game.
g. Use of any tobacco products at the game site during the period of the -jurisdiction of the officials.

PENALTY: A cautioned player shall leave the field and may be replaced. Should the team with the cautioned player elect to play shorthanded, the cautioned player may not re-enter nor be replaced until the next legal substitution opportunity.

New definition was added for RECKLESS PLAY – the player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent. A player who displays reckless play shall be cautioned.

Points of Emphasis – Concussion Management, Elbows, Player Equipment, Online Education

2012 When, in the taking of a penalty kick, there is an unusual situation that causes a temporary suspension of play before the ball is played or touched by another player, or before the ball hits the goalpost or crossbar, the kick is retaken. Previously, this would have resulted in a drop ball.

Points of Emphasis – Player Equipment, Equipment Changes, Goals, Concussion Management

2013 During a dead ball as the result of an injury, either or both coaches can now give coaching instruction to his/her team.

Points of Emphasis – Goalkeeper Injury, Required Equipment, Concussion Management

Soccer

2014 If the referee stops the clock for an apparent injury to a field player or goalkeeper, the field player or goalkeeper will have to leave the field. The field player may be replaced, and the goalkeeper must be replaced.
The jurisdiction of the officials shall begin on their arrival at the field of play and its immediate surroundings, which shall be no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the game.

Points of Emphasis – Sportsmanship, Communication, Concussion Management, Goalkeepers

2015 Since the clock is stopped when bench personnel are cautioned or disqualified, substitutes from both teams who have already reported may be beckoned by the referee and may enter the field of play. Previously, there was no provision for substitutes to enter the field of play during this type of stoppage. Allowing substitutes who have already reported to enter the field of play is consistent with substitution procedures, game management principles and commitment to student participation.

2016 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017-18 A player is permitted to wear soft padded headgear that meets the ASTM standard.

Point of Emphasis: Risk Minimization – Concussion Management, Shin Guards and Headgear

2018-19 Rule 4-2-10: Allows for the state association (or delegate) to permit the wearing of head coverings or wraps if criteria is met for medical/cosmetic and/or religious reasons.

2019-20 Allow for the wearing of a cochlear implant provided the device does not create a threat of injury.

Point of Emphasis: Prevention of knee injury.

2020-21 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2021-22 Clarified that wearing a head covering for medical or cosmetic reasons must be approved at the state association level with the request accompanied by a statement from a physician.

2022-23 Permits hair adornments that are secured to the head so as not to present a safety hazard to the player, teammates, or opponents.

2023-24 Clarified various foul categories and defines the seven direct free kick fouls to provide consistency in officiating.

2024-25 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee for the 2024-25 soccer season dealing with risk minimization: Official s Toolbox for Game Management.

2025-26

Education based soccer requires all players to be removed if the official beckons coach or health care provider onto the field of play.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee for the 2025-26 soccer season dealing with risk minimization: Player Equipment – Shinguards.

Spirit

1999 Participants wearing casts shall not be involved in stunts except a forward roll.

Spirit

The appropriate length of fingernails for all embers f a stunting squad means the nails are visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hand held in a vertical position.

2000 Dismounts to the performing surface from a prop higher than 3 feet shall have an assisted landing.

No skill without constant hand-to-hand contact shall be performed prior to landing on the performance surface.

2001 Clarify that an illegal position is any inverted position including the chorus line flip, if the head falls below the waist of the participant.

Stunts shall not be performed during a basketball or volleyball game when the ball is in play including free throws and player warn-up.

A coach shall not permit a team member to participate if in the judgment of the coach, the participant accessories including hair and nails, do not meet the NFHS rule or the spirit of the rule.

Add editorial that puts provisions of the book in effect for all spirit squad activities including practice, games, performances and competitions.

2002 A spotter is required for stunts in which the supporting arm(s) of the base(s) is fully extended above the head except for the double base vertical T-lift.

A swinging stunt in a downward direction is not permitted.

Tumbling over/under an individual or a prop is not permitted.

A twist that occurs during a toss shall not involve more than two complete rotations.

A twist performed on the performing surface (jump-twist-land) shall not involve more than two complete rotations.

2003 Stunts shall not be performed during a basketball or volleyball game when the ball is in play, including free throws. Spirit participants must not stunt on the court or sideline area during player warm-up if an alternate area is available.

Cheerleaders must not stand behind the free throw lane extended.

Backward dismounts to a cradle must have at least 3 catchers.

Forward face down dismounts are illegal.

A half pendulum must have a separate spotter <u>on the opposite side of the base(s)</u> from the catchers if the top person returns to a vertical position

In transitional stunts, physical contact must be maintained between the top person and the base(s).

2004 A forward roll is illegal from an airborne position, i.e., jump or dive

Spirit

A twist performed to a cradle must not involve more than two complete rotations except, when dismounting to a cradle from a side facing stunt,
2 ¼ rotations are permitted.

In transitional stunts, physical contact must be maintained between the top person and the base(s).

In transitional stunts involving a braced flyer, physical contact must be maintained between the flyer and the bases, except when:

a. The torso of the flyer remains upright (vertical)
b. The flyer has at least two bases and a spotter/catcher
c. There is a spotter for each bracer; and
d. The loss of contact with the bases does not significantly exceed the height of either stunt in the transition.

When the transitional stunt involves changing bases, the new base(s) must be to the side or in front of the person moving the stunt except when the top person remains upright (vertical) throughout the transition to the new base(s) with the person moving the stunt making no more than a half turn to face the new base(s).

A twist performed to a cradle must not involve more than two complete rotations except, when dismounting to a cradle from a side facing stunt,
2 ¼ rotations are permitted.

2005 The flyer does not become inverted.

The loss of contact is a continuous up and down movement that is not supported by the bracer(s) and does not pause at the top.

Basket tosses and other similar multi-base tosses are permitted only on appropriate mats, grass, rubberized and soft yielding surfaces.

A helicopter is legal provided all the following conditions are met:

a. The rotation in the horizontal plane is not greater than 180 degrees.
b. The flyer does not twist.
c. The flyer is in a face up position.
d. There are at least 4 bases who serve as both tossers and catchers.
e. At least one tosser/catcher must be in position to support the head, neck and shoulder area.

2007 2-1-4 When discarding props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material, or have corners or sharp edges, team members must gently toss or place the props.
Rationale: This rule reduces the risk of injury to a team member, spectator, or official.
2-1-7 The use of mini-tramps, spring boards, spring-assisted floors or any height-increasing apparatus is illegal for use during performances and competitions.
Rationale: These devices are by definition “height-increasing apparatuses” and should not be used for anything other than a teaching tool. High school safety rules are written with the understanding that the primary performance surface will be a gym floor, outdoor grass or track, or matted floor.
2-5-2 Bases of extended stunts must have both feet in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface.
Rationale: Adding this restriction will help ensure the stability of extended stunts.
2-8-3 Exceptions 1 and 2

Spirit In braced partner stunts/pyramids, at least one bracer of each pair must be at shoulder height or below.
Exception 1: The following extended stunts may brace any other extended stunt:

a. Chair
b. Multi-base dead-man lift
c. Multi-base straddle lift

Exception 2: Extensions may brace the stunts listed above and other extensions (except a totem pole.)
Rationale: Exception 1: As the variety of partner stunts and transitions increases, the role of the bracer must keep pace. Allowing these relatively stable extended stunts to brace an expanded number of extended stunts does not present unreasonable risk to participants. Exception 2: Extensions have a high center of gravity than the stunts listed in Exception 1 and should not brace extended stunts that are less stable.

2-9-1c (new)
A forward suspended roll is legal provided all the following conditions are met:

a. It begins from a stunt shoulder height or below.
b. In multi-base stunts, the flyer maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two bases or two posts.
c. In single-base stunts, the flyer maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two posts.
d. The bases control the flyer's dismount to the performing surface or cradle.

Rationale: In c, allowing a single base to also assist the flyer's dismount can cause a twisting rotation and an unsteadying landing on the performing surface.

2-10-1 e (new)
In all tosses:

a. The flyer must be directed vertically and caught by the original bases.
b. Participants must not pass over or under other participants
c. The catchers and spotter must remain in their original positions unless making adjustments for safety purposes.
d. The flyer must not become inverted (head below waist)
e. The flyer must not hold objects in her/his hands (e.g. poms, signs, etc.) Exception: Load-in tosses. (also called "tosses into partner stunts" or toss to hands, etc.")

Rationale: In (e), holding objects during a toss presents considerable risk to all participants, especially if safety adjustments become necessary. The exception for load-in tosses was added because the loss of contact in that type of toss is not high enough to present unreasonable risk to participants.

2008 2-1-14 A participant who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or uniform is changed before returning to participation.

In dismounts where a bracer is involved after the release of the flyer, all the following conditions must be met:

a. The flyer does not become inverted.
b. The flyer has at least two bases.
c. Each flyer and bracer has a separate spotter.
d. The loss of contact is a continuous up and down movement.
e. The flyer's center of gravity remains directly over the bases.
f. The flyer's weight is not supported by the bracer(s).
g. The bracers do not intentionally increase the height of the flyer.

2-8-2 b. flyer must not be in an inverted position except for the following:
a. During a forward suspended roll;

Spirit

b. When beginning a stunt from an inverted position on the performing surface, that goes directly to a non-inverted position shoulder height or below. This stunt must include a base or spotter who protects the head/neck/shoulder area of the flyer. This base or spotter must maintain contact with the flyer from the inverted position until the flyer is no longer inverted.

2-9-1 a. and d. a. The flyer begins from the performing surface or from a stunt shoulder height or below.
d. In suspended rolls from the performing surface, the flyer maintains continuous hand-to-hand contact with two bases.

2-12-1a. and i. Article 1 - In transitional stunts, physical contact must be maintained between the flyer and the base(s) except when ALL of the following conditions are met:
a. The flyer maintains hand-to-hand/arm contact with at least one bracer during the entire loss of contact with his/her base(s).
b. The flyer does not become inverted.
c. The flyer has at least two bases EXCEPT THAT a single-base tick tock is permitted when the flyer remains upright (vertical) throughout the stunt.
d. Each flyer and bracer has a separate spotter.
e. The loss of contact is a continuous up-and-down movement.
f. The flyer's center of gravity remains directly over the bases.
g. The flyer's weight is not supported by the bracer(s).
h. The flyer is not released to a toss.
i. The bracers do not intentionally increase the height of the flyer.

3-1-6 Pedini-style dance shoes and others with heels of sufficient height to raise the bottom of the foot off the floor.

2009 A twist to a cradle involving more than one rotation is permitted only on appropriate mats, grass, rubberized and soft-yielding surfaces. COMMENT: This change reflects the skill level in high school cheerleading and is consistent with the NFHS focus on risk minimization. NOTE: Non-twisting or single-twist cradles are permitted on any appropriate surface.

Toe/leg pitches to a jump or tumbling skill are illegal.

2010 Points of Emphasis:

Concussions are a common result of sports-related head injuries and carry the potential for serious complications if not managed correctly. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee has developed suggested guidelines for management of concussions which state that no athlete suspected of having a concussion should return to the same practice or contest even when symptoms have cleared within 15 minutes. That said, athletes should have medical clearance from an appropriate health official before returning to the activity. Spirit coaches should refer to the current NFHS Concussion Brochure available at the NFHS Web site (www.nfhs.org) under Sports Medicine Resources.

Double Downs/Twists – It has been stresses to spirit coaches that they are responsible for teaching and enforcing general risk management rules, identifying teams' ability levels, and following proper progressions in learning new skills. It is the NFHS's responsibility to revise the rules to minimize risk whenever trends indicate a continuation of poor execution of skills resulting in injuries. For this reason, the NFHS is calling attention to the fact that double downs/twists will no longer be allowed at the high school level after this year if coaches continue to allow athletes to perform this skill with improper technique. In order to retain double downs/twists in the future, it is imperative that coaches insist upon "perfection before progression" when allowing teams to stunt.

Spirit

2011 (2-4-6) A twist to a cradle is permitted only on grass (real or artificial) or a mat.

(2-8-11c) The top person begins from a cradle or the performing surface. Note: A slight downward swing to prepare for an upward swing is permitted.

(2-9-7) Airborne twisting tumbling skills are permitted only on grass (real or artificial) or a mat, with the exception of roundoffs and aerial cartwheels.
(2-10-2) Basket tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-base tosses are permitted only on grass (real or artificial) or a mat.

(2-10-7) Quick/load-in tosses that begin with the top person in weight-bearing contact with the performing surface and end in a stunt or pyramid are legal provided all the following conditions are met.
a. Same
b. Same
The top person does not twist during the release unless it is performed on grass (real or artificial) or a mat.
(2-12-2b) Add EXCEPTION: A backward leapfrog to a prone position is permitted provided there are at least two catchers and the top person maintains continuous hands-to-hands contact with the post throughout the transition. The original bases, post and catchers must remain stationary.

(3-5-9) When a prop used as a base has wheels, rounded surfaces (e.g. balls, barrels, etc.), or has a flat bottom covered with fabric and is moving, a spotter is required.

2-3-8 Adds wrist braces to the items of protective equipment that do not need additional padding
2-4-1b Specifies that a base must not hold any objects if her/his hands are primary support
2-4-8 By deleting this rule from the 2011 rules book, the rule no longer requires the spotter to have her/his hands extended toward the top person
2-4-6e Stipulates that a spotter's hands cannot be behind her/his back
2-4-8 Specifies that a spotter is required for single base shoulder level stunts
2-5 Adds a new section on inversions which includes some existing rules that have been moved into this section and some sections that are new
2-6-4 Stipulates the requirements that must be met when moving a top person from a vertical position to a face-up or face-down horizontal position
2-6-11 Specifies limited situations where single base extended stunts are allowed and the requirements for cradle dismounts from those stunts
2-6-12 Stipulates that partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm are allowed only on specified surfaces
2-7-2 Specifies that basket tosses, elevator tosses and other similar multi-base tosses are allowed only on specified surfaces
2-6-4c By deleting this rule from the 2011 rules book, a release twist during a quick toss is allowed on any appropriate surface

2012 2-7-4c Stipulates that the bases on a quick toss can apply upward force on any part of the body other than under the feet

2-6-7b By deleting this section of the rules from the 2011 rules book, bases are allowed to move as specified in rule 2-7-7e.

2-7-7e Specifies that both the top person and the base(s) may make up to a ¼ turn in a release transition stunt.

2-8-5 Allows swinging stunts to begin from below shoulder height

Spirit

2-9-8 Specifies that twists to a cradle can involve no more than one complete rotation eliminating double-downs

2-10-6 Specifies the surfaces on which airborne twisting tumbling skills are permitted
2-10-1 This redundant statement was deleted from the 2011 rules book as it is covered in other rules
2-11-1 Restates rule 2-9-8 which eliminates double-downs
3-4-1b Specifies the limited situations where inverted dismounts from props are allowed
Points of Emphasis:
Coaches' Responsibility: Minimizing Risk
Coaches' Responsibility: Education
Performance Surfaces
Double Downs

2013 Rule 1 Revises the definition for a bracer, cradle, extended stunt/position, log roll, release transition/release pyramid transition and suspended roll/flip. New definitions are added for downward inversion, loading position/load and open-pike position.

2-5 Revises and clarifies the rules regarding inverted partner stunts.

2-6-4 Clarifies the rules regarding stunts in which the top person is moved from a vertical position to a face-up or face-down straight body position.

2-7-1 Clarifies that a top person must be braced or cradled in all release stunts and tosses with the exceptions of a quick toss, helicopter or log roll.
2-4-3 Clarifies the role of the bracer by simply stating that a bracer must not provide primary support for a top person.

Points of Emphasis – Coaches' Responsibility: Minimizing risk; Coaches' Responsibility: Education; Overuse Injuries; Concussions; Performance surfaces and areas.

2014 Revises the definition for a roll, suspended roll, tumbling and stunt. A new definition is added for a foldover stunt. Clarifies that a lift is defined the same as a stunt/partner stunt.

Clarifies the use of supports, braces and soft casts and when padding is required for participation in stunts, pyramids and tosses.

Revises and clarifies the rules regarding inverted partner stunts.

Revises and clarifies the intent of the note for log rolls as an exception to the release transition rule.

Adds an exception to the rule prohibiting movement during dismounts.

Allows 1¼ rotation in a cradle regardless of the direction the stunt is facing.

Revises and clarifies the use of new catchers during dismounts.

Allows non-aerial tumbling over a person or prop on the performing surface.

2015 The committee made changes in the sections on inversions, non-release stunts, release stunts/tosses, suspended stunts and tumbling and points of emphasis on coaching responsibilities, risk minimization, concussions, application of rules in context of education-based athletics/activities.

Spirit 2-5 Inversions - Reorganized 2-5 to improve clarity. With a continued focus on risk minimization, a new Article 3 was added dealing with braced inversions in a pyramid.

2-6-4 Non-Release Stunts - Under current rules, face-up and face-down positions are allowed. This rule change also clarifies that participants can be transitioned to their sides as well as fronts and backs, which has proven to be of minimal risk to participants.

2-7-3b & 2-7-6a, b, f Release Stunts/Tosses - The top person in a quick toss can continue in transitional stunts with minimal risk. This rule change identifies the various skills used by participants before and after any release transition that must be in compliance with the *NFHS Spirit Rules Book.* This rules change also addresses coaches' responsibilities that are covered in other sections.

2-8-6 Suspended Stunts **-** Suspending a person face down with his/her arms and legs suspended backward above the torso increases risk. This rule addition clarifies what body positions are illegal in a suspended stunt and is necessary for risk minimization.

2-10-7 Tumbling **-** Airborne skills without hip over-head rotation may not involve jumping from a standing or squatting position backwards onto the neck, shoulders or hands. This rule refers to a type of entrance into the "kip-up/rubber band" skills. This rule addition eliminates skills that have risk to the head and/or neck.

The committee made changes in the sections on inversions, non-release stunts, release stunts/tosses, suspended stunts and tumbling and points of emphasis on coaching responsibilities, risk minimization, concussions, application of rules in context of education-based athletics/activities.

2016-17 Spirit Rules for inverted stunts was clarified as they are less restrictive and permit additional low level/low risk stunts without creating undue risk to participants.

Clarified that braced flips may start in a single-base stunt but still require two bracers in preps. The bracers may be on any side, including behind the top person which does not create any undue risk.

Removing the requirement for bracers of non-release, static stunts to be at shoulder height or below does not create undue risk.

Removing the ability for participants to jump unassisted directly onto the back of a base in a horizontal position is for risk minimization

Added a new rule on an inverted top person may pass through an extended position, but must not begin, end, pause, or stop in a static extended inverted position.

Added a new rule that was broken down into seven Articles, the stunts and releases that will not be permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom. This rule change minimizes risk for high school dancers who are generally not properly trained to execute higher level stunts that require lead-up skills and progressions.

Additional restrictions were added to the Spirit Rules for Dance/Drill/Pom teams that they must wear footwear that is appropriate for the activity they are participating in.

2017-18 In pyramids where one extended stunt braces another extended stunt the connection shall not be hand/arm to foot/leg.

Spirit When transitioning from a prop to a stunt/lift, the new bases shall be in contact with the top person before he/she leaves the prop.

2018-19 Required hands to be used in headstands, headspins, and headsprings.

2019-20 Signs and props may no longer be tossed from a stunt. A non-stunting person must be handed the prop to discard off of the performing surface.

Restricts participants wearing a walking boot or case from performing jumps or tumbling.

2020-21 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2021-22 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2023-24 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2024-25 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2025-26 Rule 1: General Risk Management - was redesigned.

New language added to prohibit a participant from landing or being caught in an inverted position in a stunt or pyramid from an unassisted airborne position.

New language added to clarify a top person must not be inverted during tosses to cradles.

New language added to clarify release from extended vertical position and to permit a release from a vertical position at prep level to land in a vertical or horizontal position.

Clarified exceptions for footwear for a roundoff.

Swimming & Diving

1981 Starting platforms required for all meets.

1982 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1983 Allow a racing start.

1984 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1985 Deleted option of three-meter diving.

1986 Noted that pools remodeled or built after January 1987, must have a 12-foot water depth measured two feet in front of the one-meter diving board.

If there is not written prior-mutual consent, events cannot be conducted where water depth, water conditions, starting platforms and backstroke flags do not meet rules specifications.

Newly constructed pools shall place inlets on the end walls at least 2’ 6” below the surface of the water.

1987 There should be at least 100-foot candles of lighting at the water level of all competitive pools.

Swimming & Diving

Permits a diver to correct an error in listing the position of a dive up to the time he or she actually performs the dive. This prevents a diver from attempting a dive he or she is not prepared to perform.

Beginning with the 1991-92 season in pools with water depth less than 3' 6" at the starting end, the starting platforms shall not be more than 18" above the water surface, or they shall be located at the deep end of the pool.

1988 Changed water depth to 4 feet in the 1988 revision above.

1990 Recall rope required in all meets.

Coaches cannot mutually agree to swim in a pool that does not meet rules specifications for water depth and/or starting platforms.

Adopted a more severe penalty (unsatisfactory dive) when a diver hits the board while performing a dive.

Starting end must have a water depth of at least 4' or the starting platforms shall not be more than 18" above the water surface.

1991 In pools with less than 3' 6" starting end, swimmers must start in the water.

1992 An individual event competitor, who is bleeding, has an open wound or an excessive amount of blood on the uniform may not participate in another race until proper treatment has been administered.

1993 When this occurs during a relay event (except the fourth swimmer), the race is stopped. The area and competitor shall be properly treated and the race re-swam after an appropriate recover period.

Starting platforms shall be securely fastened.

1995 Backstroker swimming submerged after the start or a turn must break the surface of the water by the 15-meter mark.

1996 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1997 Optical starting devices may now be at side OR end of pool

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2001 Competitor shall not wear jewelry (except religious/medical) and hair restraint devices must be worn in the hair to be considered legal.

Eliminate the option for an 18-in starting platform in pools with water depth from 31/2 to 4 feet. Water depth shall be a minimum of 4 feet if starting blocks are used.

2002 End walls are finished with a non-slip surface that extends no less those .8 meters (2 feet 71/2 inches below the water surface.

Eliminate the practice of standing during the backstroke.

Every diver should be allowed one or more warm-up dive.

For the backstroke start, swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end with both hands in contact with the end of the pool or the starting platform.

2003 The swimmer shall step into the water feet-first for any in-water start.

A diver may withdraw from the diving event by giving notice to the referee at a specific time, without being disqualified from other events.

A diver shall be disqualified if he/she fails two dives.

2004 Define a dive as beginning when the diver assumes a starting position and ending when the diver has passed below the surface of the water.

The NFHS does not perform scientific tests on any specific items of equipment to determine if the equipment poses undue risks to student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers.

When starting platforms are used, the minimum water depth for racing starts shall be measured from the end of the pool to a distance at least 16'5" (5 meters) from the end wall.

Proper distance for placement of backstroke flags for 25-yard pools is 5 yards, and for 25-meter pools is 5 meters.

When it is discovered during his/her dive, that a diver is wearing illegal attire or jewelry, he/she shall be disqualified from the event.

2005 When it is discovered that any competitor is wearing illegal attire or jewelry, he/she will not be permitted to participate in an event/dive until the illegal attire or jewelry is replaced or removed.

The referee has the authority to stop or suspend competition or suspend/terminate a contest whenever the elements require. Be familiar with the NFHS Lightning Guidelines on Page 7.

2006 POE addressed proper procedures for handling apparent concussions. (Rule interpreters meeting presentation on officials' role in risk minimization)

2007 Added a penalty of disqualification for a competitor in diving who enters the water without the diving referee's permission.
A diver may have his/her arms in the position of his/her choice for a forward dive starting position.

2008 Removed listing a recall rope for use in recalling a race. Although still legal this is not preferred method with the other alternatives available.

2009 Permits the competitor to place his/her feet on the end wall, out of the water at the backstroke start, as long as the feet, including the toes, are not above or curling over the lip of the gutter or pool edge.

Prohibits the use of a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition for use as the sounding device.

2010 Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Swimming & Diving

POE addressing concussion management.

POE addressing on-site shaving. Prohibited and responsibility of the coach to discuss with athletes.

POE addressing the wearing of jewelry. Prohibited during competition and warm-ups.

2011 Updated language for concussion management and clarified the requirements for casts, braces and supports.

Only in-water starts may be used when the water depth is less than 4 feet.

2012 Permits the use of tape to treat a medical condition as documented by an appropriate health-care professional.

2013 A swimmer in violation of the uniform rule no longer is required to "step down" from the starting platform before the race and is now merely disqualified at the end of the heat/race. This is more practical for penalty enforcement and no longer requires the field of swimmers to stand up and step off of the starting platform once in position, which is safer.

2014 Divers may wear tape or wraps for support and no longer have a limit to just the wrist.

Swimmers no longer step off the starting platforms after the referee/starter gives the command, "Stand up." Swimmers will be directed to step down only when unusual circumstances occur.
Divers shall be permitted at least two practice approaches, with or without water entry, immediately prior to the start of diving competition and between sessions. (This does not include between preliminaries and other rounds unless they are in separate sessions.)

2015-16 The prohibition of wearing jewelry in swimming and diving has been removed but the emphasis on the need to wear a medical alert with the alert visible remains.

Points of Emphasis focus upon risk minimization in the development of an individual school's warm-up procedures with reference to the NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Warm-up Procedures.

Points of Emphasis highlighted the need for proper coaching and mastery of techniques for event starts and turns to prevent unnecessary injuries while improving the individual swimmer's efficiency.

2016-17 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017-18 On relays, the second, third and fourth swimmers are prohibited from taking off from the top of the starting block wedge. Competitors must have at least one foot in contact with the starting platform in front of the starting block wedge during takeoff.

2018-19 Backstroke starting ledges are not permitted in high school swimming.

Options for starting platform malfunctions are provided, and direction for malfunctioning swimming equipment has been re-organized.

The referee shall conduct a pre-meet conference with the starter, the coach and the captain of each team for all non-championship meets.

Swimming & Diving

2019-20 A fulcrum, which can be moved and set at varying positions between 5 feet 1 inch and 7 feet 6 inches from the rear of the diving board, is required. The rule was updated to comply with current industry standards.

Point of Emphasis - Shallow Water Blackout

2020-21 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2021-22 Permits the application of temporary adhesives for divers. Allows divers to protect themselves from hand slippage, minimizing risks for the diver.

During championship meets, new language establishes when diving boards should be open for practice if breaks between sessions extend longer than ten minutes. Defines when diving boards shall be made available for practice during the break between sessions of a championship meet unless the meet director establishes specific guidelines prior to the start of competition.

One Point of Emphasis dealing with risk minimization: 1. Suggested Meet Warm-up Procedure

2022-23 Moves all language referencing end wall height to Rule 2-3-1 and establishes new nationally recognized standards for newly constructed or renovated facilities after January 1, 2023. The new specifications provide consistency for high school swimming and adheres to national trends.

Two Points of Emphasis dealing with risk minimization: 1. Diving Area Safety; 2. Provide Deck Space for Officials.

2023-24 Removes the language about some part of the body at or above the surface during a backstroke finish. The change aligns with national trends, allows the official to concentrate on the backstroke finish (wall touch), and may prevent lunging at the wall which reduces risk.

Removes dives 104A, 304A, and 402A from the Diving Table. When each dive is performed slightly short of vertical, the diver's head may be precariously close to the diving board. The risk of hitting the board in these cases is far greater than other dives on the table.

Adds a penalty for when a diver's head is too close to the diving board. The diving referee shall make the determination and inform diving judges to score the dive as unsatisfactory.

2024-25 A change in language brings Rule 4-4-2e in line with notification protocols when violations of Rule 3-3-2 are detected. When the violation involves improper suit coverage, a public announcement is not appropriate.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Committee for the 2024-25 swimming and diving season dealing with risk minimization: Athlete Well-Being; Backstroke Ledges.

2025-26 Permits the use of backstroke starting ledges if approved with state association adoption, in pools with a minimum of 6 feet (1.84 meters) measured from the starting end through 16 feet, 5 inches (5 meters) from the end wall.

Swimming & Diving

Clarifies the foot placement for relay participants starting from the deck. One foot must be positioned at the edge of the deck, and ancillary movement of the back foot is permitted prior to the start.

Track & Field

1982 Authorized warm-up jump in high jump or pole vault without bar in place.

Contemplated restricting the movement of the pole vault standards to 24" from plane of stopboard into landing area.

1983 Present rule allows crossbar to be moved 24" in either direction (leading to stall-outs and contributing to landing on runway side of planting box).

1984 Limits movement of pole-vault crossbar from the vertical plane of the stopboard to a maximum of 24" in the direction of the landing surface.

1985 Announced that beginning in 1987, a front pad, surrounding the pole-vault planting box would be required,

Authorized the use of a javelin with a rubber tip as an alternative to a steel tip.

1986 Requires a common cover over pole-vault landing pads made up of two or more sections.

1987 Requires a common cover over high-jump landing pad made up of two or more sections. Calls attention to diagram of discus throwing cage.

1988 Prohibited any type of somersaulting technique in the long jump.

1989 Recommended where conditions dictate a cage be provided around the discus circle.

Recommended where conditions dictate control ropes or a barrier, restricting traffic into the landing sectors of the throwing events be used.

Restricted the location of the crossbar in the pole vault, from a position 12" beyond the vertical plane of the top of the stopboard, up to a maximum of 24" beyond the vertical plane of the stopboard, in the direction of the landing pad.

1990 Announced that beginning in 1993 a discus cage will be required.

1991 Points of emphasis stressed safety in the throwing events and the landing areas of the pole vault and high jump.

1992 Required the use of a discus cage for the discus event.

1993 Recommended that only non-metal circular crossbars be used.

Mandated that a vaulter's weight shall be at below the manufacturer's pole rating.

1994 Required the removal or padding with 2" dense foam of hard or unyielding surfaces such as asphalt, concrete, metal or wood around the immediate area of the pole vault or high jump landing pads.

1995 Required coach to verify the vaulter will use a pole rated at or above the vaulter's weight.

Track & Field

1996 Prohibit metal crossbars

Training poles may not be used in warm up or competition.

Exposed projections on base of pole vault standards must be covered or padded.

1997 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1998 Hard surfaces extending out from beneath the sides and back of the high-jump landing pad shall be padded. Recommend hard surfaces be removed.

Providing liquid during a cross-country run is not considered an aid.

Taping the wrist is permissible.

Clarified hard surface between planting box and landing pad shall be padded.

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 No changes. Began discussions to increase the minimum size of the pole vault landing pad.

2001 Required the use of a 40-degree sector, with appropriate cage, when the discus is contested in the infield of the track.
Continued discussions to increase the minimum size of the pole vault landing pad.

2002 The referee is given the authority to determine that an event venue is unacceptable for competition.

No jewelry permitted.

Monitored ASTM's progress regarding new minimum pole vault landing pad dimensions.

Prior to the start of the meet, the head coach shall be responsible for verifying to the referee/starter that all his/her competitors are properly equipped.

2003 Adopt new dimensions for pole vault landing system. Also recommend standard marking system for runway, and promote the Preferred Landing Zone.

The games committee may designate a specific area for pole vault coaches.

Upon determining that the event venue does not meet the criteria set forth in the rules, the referee can declare that the event will not be contested.

Effective immediately, the overall size of the pole vault landing pad shall be 19'8" wide by 20'2" deep.

A minimum of 2-inch dense foam padding (box collar) shall be used to pad any hard and unyielding surface including between the planting box and all pads.

A mark or marker shall not be placed on the runway, but it is permissible to place markers at the side of the runway.

Track & Field Distance from the foul line or takeoff board may be adjusted to accommodate different levels of competition.

2004 By state association adoption, the games committee may designate the use of the 40-degree or 34.92-degree sectors in the shot and/or discus throw. It is believed that the tighter sector requires more control during the throw.

A contestant shall not be entered in more than four events, excluding relays.

Infraction for warming up without a coach or event official at the venue-shall lead to a warning, and if repeated, a disqualification from that event. If the incident recurs, the athlete will be disqualified from further competition in the meet as a penalty for unsupervised warm-up in throwing and jumping events.

2005 Prior to competition, the coach must verify that each of that school's pole vaulters meets the requirements. Note: Each state association shall determine its own procedure regarding coach's verification

2006 92-degree throwing sector required for shot put and discus.

Guidelines for possible layout for the discus cage were revised to reflect change to 34.92-degree sector. POE on zero point for the pole vault to enhance proper location of standards and landing pit. POE stressed safety markings for field events to minimize risk. POE addressed proper procedures for handling apparent concussions.

2007 The games committee has the authority to designate areas where coaches may observe and confer with competitors during competition.

Delete the foul for a competitor in the pole vault leaving the ground without breaking the plane and making contact with the landing pad or ground.

2008 A competitor in the shot put and discus may exit the ring to wipe hands, clean shoes etc. before starting his/her attempt but within the allowable time limit for the trial.

Clarified that etchings, serial numbers and other such markings relating to the characteristics of the pole shall not replace the required contrasting mark on the pole indicating the pole rating as determined by the manufacturer.

Implement inspector verifies poles are legal and if a pole has been altered it is not legal for competition.

Clarified that it is not a foul if the vaulter's feet leave the ground when stopping his/her approach and the vaulter's momentum causes the feet to leave the ground and return to the ground.

A bungee cord is not permitted for warm-ups in the pole vault.

POE, proper and consistent enforcement of rules throughout the season and educating volunteer workers of rules of events.

2009 For gun starts, only a closed barreled starter's pistol may be used.

Clarified the original intent to permit a competitor in the pole vault to abort the approach and in stopping plant the pole and momentum causes his/her feet to leave the ground without being considered a foul. It is a foul if a vaulter leaves the ground in an attempt and fails to clear the crossbar.

Track & Field

2010 All areas designated for the coaches to observe and confer with competitors shall be clearly identified and marked by the host meet management prior to the start of event competition.

Effective January 1, 2013, the crossbar shall be circular. Square with beveled edges or triangular crossbars shall no longer be legal for competition following the implementation date.

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee places a high priority on risk minimization for pole vault competitors. Meet management is responsible for providing a landing system, standards and runway that meet the rule requirements. Coaches are responsible for their competitors having legal vaulting poles and that the competitor's weight is at or below the manufacturer's pole rating. Officials are required to inspect each pole to verify that the poles used are legal. The committee has reaffirmed the requirements of Rule 7-5-3 that etchings, serial numbers, etc. that may appear on poles shall not replace the requirement of the manufacturer's pole rating in the minimum ¾-inch marking in a contrasting color on each pole either above or within the required 1-inch circular band marking the top handhold position. In order to preserve the integrity of the event and reduce risk of injury of the pole vault competitor, no person involved in the event: meet management, coach or officials, can disregard any requirements of the rules dealing with the landing system, standards, runway, vaulting poles or vaulter. The committee will be diligent in gathering information from experimentation and recognized studies to make certain the pole vault rules afford reasonable risk minimization for competitors. The committee will continue to seek information regarding developing safety equipment.

2011 Places a long-standing informal procedure within the rules for the state association and school to follow when an accommodation/modification of the rules for participation is made due to medical or religious reasons.

Updated and clarified the rules regarding braces, casts, padding and prostheses.

Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Changed the pole vault warm-up procedure for a competitor who has passed three consecutive heights and has not yet entered the competition.

POE addressing concussion management, casts, braces, prostheses and blood on uniform.

2012 Updated language for concussion management.

POE addressing safety around landing systems and throwing event safety.

Only legal implements shall be permitted for use in warm-ups and competition.

When feasible, it is recommended there be an obstacle-free zone on the inside and outside of the track.

Prohibits the use of the "cartwheel" technique in the event of shot put.

POE addresses the responsibilities of the head event judge to enhance event safety.

2013 Padding for pole vault planting box that meets the ASTM Specification Standard is permitted for use unless directed otherwise by the respective state high school association. (*Special meeting of Track and Field Rules Committee)

Track & Field

Pole vault plant box padding meeting the ASTM Specification Standard is required for the start of the 2014-15 track season and may be used immediately.

2014 Pole vault plant box padding meeting ASTM Specification Standard is required for the start of the 2014-15 track season.

Points of Emphasis will address safety in the hammer and weight throws and proper flagging in the throwing events.

2015 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2016 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017 When an appropriate health-care professional is not readily available to administer care to the injured/all athlete, it is no longer a foul if a participant assists the injured/ill competitor who is not able to continue a race.

Warm-ups in a field event shall not take place until the venue is declared open by the meet director and required supervision is in place. Once competition begins, except as scheduled, competitors shall not use venues or implements associated with the competition for warm-ups.

2018 Penalty was added to warm-up specifications for field events.

Point of Emphasis: Officials Safety and Recommendations in the Long Throws.

2019 Updated landing pit measurements in long jump and triple jump to bring in line with industry standards.

All long jump and triple jump pits constructed after 2019 shall be at least 23 feet (7 meters).

2020 During warm-ups, it is illegal to run backwards or in the opposite direction (non-legal direction) on horizontal jumps, pole vault, or javelin runways.

2021 **No NFHS Track and Field Rules Changes made for 2021 since the 2020 season was not held because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2022 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2023 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2024 The rules book will still read four events for each athlete, but the note gives flexibility to states to determine the number of events best suited for their state provided it does not exceed six events.

2025 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee for the 2025 Track and field season dealing with risk minimization: Managing Vertical Jump Landing Systems.

2026 Permit an appropriate health care provider designated by the games committee to be able to assess a downed competitor within the competition area for the purpose of determining the competitor's ability to continue without providing assistance.

Track & Field Standardized warm up times for athletes entering vertical jumps to make sure they are getting adequate opportunity to warm up after sitting for long periods in competition.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee for the 2026 track and field season dealing with risk minimization: Throw Safety – Shot Put, Discus and Javelin.

Volleyball

1982 Clarifies braces and supports are permitted on body parts other than on fingers, hands or forearms. Braces must be padded with at least 2 ½" foam rubber and supports cannot be hard, unyielding or abrasive. Specifies hair devices may be worn if made of soft material.

1983 Recommends that standards (including cranks) and cables be padded.

Recommends standards (including cranks), cables and referee's stand be padded with at least 1 inch of soft flexible material.

1984 Dangerous contact with floor cables, standards or referee's platform is illegal.

1985 Requires referee's stand and standards be padded to a minimum of 5 ½ feet with at least 1-inch padding. That guy cables be padded to a minimum of 5 ½ feet with at least ½ inch padding.

1986 Specify that the ball be whistled dead when the ball or a player enters a nonplayable area.

1987 Any exposed steel cable through bottom of net must be covered.

1988 Added rule that no liquid or powder substance is permitted on the court.

1989 Requires all hard, unyielding protective devices worn on body parts other than fingers, hands or arms to be covered.

Eliminated specific requirements for padding of approved artificial limbs.

Prohibits players from wearing undergarments or tights which extend below the uniform shorts without written medical authorization.

1990 Any exposed steel cable and/or metal tensioning device through bottom of net must be covered.

1991 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1992 Permits a player to wear a brace or guard on the elbow.

All unyielding frames on any brace must be padded.

Specifies that a player rendered unconscious or apparently unconscious cannot resume participation that day without written authorization from a physician.

1993 A player who is bleeding, has an open wound or has an excessive amount of blood on the uniform shall be removed from the game for proper treatment.

1994 A letter of approval from the state association must be made available to the officials when a player is wearing an artificial limb.

Volleyball

1995 Requires any exposed steel cable and/or metal tensioning devices through the top and bottom of the net to be covered.

The referee shall determine if supports, casts or braces are dangerous and must be covered to be legal.

1996 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1997 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1998 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1999 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2000 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2001 With the 2002-03 season, all uniforms must be free of hard and unyielding items such as buttons, zippers, snaps and fasteners.

2002 Prior to the match, officials shall meet with the head coaches and captains to discuss sportsmanship expectations. At this meeting, coaches shall verify that all their players are wearing legal uniforms and equipment.

Players shall not wear body paint or glitter on their hair, face, uniform or body.

2003 All uniforms must be worn the way the manufacture intended for them to be worn.

2004 By state high school association adoption, teams may play a best two-of-three game match in which a team is considered the winner of the match when it wins two games. All games shall be 25 points (no cap). The third game shall not be played unless it is necessary to determine the winner of the match.

A pre-match conference shall be conducted with the head coach.

Delete - Officials shall stop play when a player breaks the plane of a non- playable area.

Players may play a ball over a non-playable area if they have a body part in contact with a playable area at the time the ball is contacted. During the follow through, the player may enter a non-playable area after playing the ball.

Nets may be suspended from ceiling, not just attached to floor poles.

An exceptional substitution shall count as a team substitution if the team has not exhausted its 18 team substitutions.

2005 No risk minimization changes for this year. Point of Emphasis on warming up.

2006 No risk minimization changes for this year. (Rule Interpreters PowerPoint included emphasis on proper procedures for handling apparent concussions.)

2007 Specifies appropriate time for music and sound effect and prohibits the use of artificial noisemakers at all times.

Volleyball

2008 Through POE, emphasized the importance to have all those physically participating in warm-ups in appropriate footwear and not to be using cell phones or music devices in the warm-up area. This is the responsibility of the school coaching staff.

Emphasized proper precautions to prevent the spread of communicable disease and skin infection procedures

2009 The court and adjacent playable area must be flat, smooth and free of obstructions other than required equipment and padding.

2010 Updated and clarified the rules regarding braces, casts, padding and prostheses.

Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Places a long-standing informal procedure within the rules for the state association and school to follow when an accommodation/modification of the rules for participation is due to medical, special needs or religious reasons.

2011 Updated language for concussion management.

POE on the responsibility for the host school to provide a stable and properly padded official's platform.

2012 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2013 A special time-out may be called by the referee when a team has an injured/ill player, no time-outs remaining and no legal/exceptional substitutes available.

Either the first or second referee may stop play in the event of an injured/ill player.

Volleyball

2014	No risk minimization changes for this year.
2015	No risk minimization changes for this year.
2016	The width of a legal hair device worn in the hair or on the head is increased to no more than 3 inches in width. The size limit and material of what a player may wear in the hair or on the head preserves the integrity of the sport and risk minimization concerns.
2017-18	No risk minimization changes for this year.
2018-19	When a replay is signaled due to an injury/illness an exception has been added to allow the head coach to request a substitution or complete a legal libero replacement for the injured/ill player or take a team time-out(s) if the team has remaining time-outs. Points of Emphasis: Safety of the Referee Stands; and Best Practices for Warm-up Safety.
2019-20	No risk minimization changes for this year.
2020-21	Allow the use of a protective face mask made of hard material that is molded to the face during play.
2021-22	Allows the wearing of religious headwear during competition that fits securely and is made of non-abrasive materials, eliminating the requirement for prior authorization from the state association. Maintains the requirement for approval of protective head coverings worn for medical reasons.
2022-23	Allowed hair adornments provided they are securely fastened and do not increase risk to the athlete, teamr and opponents while eliminating the length restrictions of 2 inches for bobby pins, flat clips and flat barrettes.
2023-24	Allowed small, secured stud or post jewelry to be worn above the chin.
2024-25	No risk minimization rule changes for this year.
2025-26	No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

Wrestling

1982-83	Locking hands behind the back in a double arm bar from the control position as well as a neutral position is illegal. When a contestant competes in more than one match per day, there shall be at least one-hour rest between each match. This rule now covers multiple duals the same as tournaments.
1983-84	In order for an individual to wrestle in the 105-pound weight class, he must weigh at least 90 pounds. This article has been expanded to include all bleeding rather than just a nosebleed. Injury time shall not be counted for any bleeding. Neutral starting position changed to a 3-inch separation.

Wrestling The minimum weight for a 98-pound contestant is 83 pounds. Starting with the 1984-85 season, the maximum weight for the heavyweight contestant is 275 pounds.

1984-85 Five matches allowed per day with a 45-minute rest period between them.

Rubber, vinyl and plastic-type suits added to the list of devices used for weight reduction purposes.

1985-86 Unsportsmanlike conduct not during a match by a contestant and misconduct of a coach now carry a 1-point team deduction when there is removal from the premises.

1986-87 Tournament director, in consultation with available medical personnel and the coach of the injured contestant, shall determine the contestant's ability to continue in the tournament.
Adoption of new weight classes, which will be optional by state adoption for the 1987-88 season are 103-112-119-125-130-135-140-145-152-160-171-189 and 275.

1987-88 Deleted the rule which allowed a two-pound growth allowance on December 25, another pound allowance on February 1, and an additional pound on March 1.

Adoption of two additional illegal holds – the chin-wrench and leg block.

New weight classes made final.

1988-89 Growth allowances deleted.

Back bow listed as illegal hold.

Over scissor listed as illegal hold.

1989-90 No risk minimization changes for this year.

1990-91 Headlock in guillotine legal only after near fall criterion has been met.

Headlock is legal only when the arm is encircled at or above the elbow.

1992-93 When a contestant is rendered unconscious, written approval is required from a physician in order for him to continue competition in that event.

All bleeding, other than nosebleed, is now considered as injury time.

The rule addressing the use of medication has been deleted from the wrestling rules book and the taking of medication during a match is no longer a rules violation.

Back bow is illegal by application.

1993-94 Limit of three injury time-outs per match.

Injury time not counted for any bleeding.

Match stopped for any bleeding, open wound or excessive blood on uniform.

1994-95 No risk minimization changes for this year.

Wrestling

1995-96	New guidelines for weight control program.
	Use of tobacco prohibited.
	New guidelines for communicable skin disease control.
1996-97	Weight control program revised.
	Overscissors illegal when pressure applied against joint causing hypertension
	Figure 4 body scissor illegal.
	Five minutes is maximum time for bleeding.
1997-98	Weight control program updated.
1998-99	Quick weight reduction not allowed at any time.
1999-00	Weigh-ins must be at the site (Dual meets—1 hr to ½ hr; Tournaments—2 hrs to ½ hr)
	Two-pound growth allowance allowed after state certification date
2000-01	Shoelaces must be taped
	Use of tobacco by contestants or coaches is flagrant misconduct
2001-02	Random draw for determining first weight class to be competed in duals
	Modified weigh-in procedures for duals/tournaments
2002-03	Shaved head must meet the same requirements of a shaved face.
	Modified weigh-in procedure for duals/tournaments to limit the time to make weight
2003-04	Should a state body fat/hydrate test they need not use the 50% rule to determine weight class
	On-site physician may overrule previous skin condition as stated on form
	Assigned physician/medical staff shall determine whether a wrestler may continue to compete after evaluating the injury (Doesn't apply to an unconscious wrestler, as only a physician can give written permission to continue following an apparent concussion).
2004-05	No risk minimization changes for this year.
2005-06	Beginning with 2006-07 season, body fat/hydration evaluation shall be required.
	If an undershirt is allowed it shall be close fitting
	All pads must fit snugly. Suplays and Saltos are illegal.
	Competitors are restricted to a maximum of 2 lbs. when involved with consecutive days of competition.

Wrestling

2006-07 Overtime rule changed that will potentially increase the length of a match.

Hands to the face or eyes have been restricted.

2007-08 A clarification to the current communicable skin disease rule was made in that the current written documentation from a physician needs to be on an approved form from either the NFHS or a state association.

Each contestant who has braces or has a special orthodontic device on their teeth, shall now be required to wear a tooth and mouth protector that covers the teeth and all areas of the braces or special orthodontic device with adequate thickness.

Any coach of the contestant or the contestant now has the prerogative to default a match to the opponent at any time by informing the referee

A rule change was made to help clarify the exact procedure to follow when administering the second injury time-out.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2007-08 wrestling season that addressed risk minimization - Communicable Skin Conditions.

2008-09 A clarification was made of the existence of a boundary for the coaches' restricted zone on the corner of the wrestling mat.

A wrestler's hair in its natural state, in the front, shall not extend below the eyebrows.

The physician's release form for a wrestler to participate with a particular skin condition is now to be presented at the weigh-in unless a designated, on-site meet physician is present and is able to examine the wrestler immediately after the weigh-in.

A contestant may have documentation from a physician only indicating a specific condition such as a birthmark or other non-communicable skin conditions such as psoriasis and eczema, and that documentation is valid for the duration of the season. It is valid with the understanding that a chronic condition could become secondarily infected and may require re-evaluation.

A one-pound weight allowance was added in the event of a school closing due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, where wrestling practice(s) cannot take place due to school policies. The rule change also makes it clear as to who should be notified when weight allowance is justified.

A back flip from the standing position is now an illegal maneuver.

Unnecessary roughness is further defined to include a forceful slap to the head or face, and/or gouging or poking the eyes.

A new referee signal has been implemented to indicate when to start recovery time during a match.

The rules language for blood and a bleeding wrestler was clarified.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2008-09 wrestling season that addressed risk minimization - Grooming and Medical Checks

Wrestling

2009-10 If a designated, on-site meet physician is present, the physician may examine a wrestler for a communicable skin disease or any other condition, either immediately prior to or immediately after the weigh-in.

Meet administrators now have the option to weigh-in contestants by weight class or team(s) in tournaments.

One of the four Point of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2009-10 wrestling season was Communicable Disease – Coaches and Referees Responsibilities.

2010-11 Concussion rule revised.

Rear-standing, double-knee kickback was added to the list of illegal holds/maneuvers.

Male and female contestants will now be required to wear a suitable undergarment during weigh-ins.

Two of the three Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2010-11 wrestling season were: Concussion Recognition and Management; and Communicable Diseases.

2011-12 The boundary line is now inbounds.

The location of the referee during injury, blood or recovery time-outs has been clarified.

Wrestling weight classes revised.

Figure 4 Around the Head is now an illegal hold/maneuver.

Revisions were made in second injury time-out.

Note added on reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances.

Three of the four Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2011-12 wrestling season were: Concussion Recognition and Management; Communicable Diseases; and Injury Time-outs.

2012-13 Wearing wristbands, sweatbands or biceps bands will be considered illegal equipment resulting in a technical violation.

The rule on the one-piece singlet was updated. This change will also allow the t-shirt with no sleeves to be worn under the one-piece singlet when approved by the referee.

A new exception was added to the 30-second tiebreaker to eliminate the gap in the rule dealing with the second injury time out.

Two of the four Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2012-13 wrestling season were: Concussion Recognition and Management; and Slams.

2013-14 Beginning with the 2014-15 wrestling season, the hair cover shall be attached to the ear guards.

Wrestling Any contestant who has been authorized to wear an artificial limb, shall weigh-in with the artificial limb if the contestant chooses to wrestle with it on. Once a wrestler has weighed in with the artificial limb, it shall not be removed during competition.

Two of the four Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2013-14 wrestling season that address risk minimization were: Communicable diseases; and Skin checks and weigh-ins in multiple day events.

2014-15 The hair cover shall be attached to the ear guards.

Three of the five Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2014-15 wrestling season that address risk minimization were: Preventing false starts from creating injuries – preventative officiating; Hair coverings; and Cleaning wrestling mats and wrestling equipment.

2015-16 The duties of the referee before a dual meet begins each day were further clarified.
The duties of the referee before a tournament begins each day were expanded.

Four of the five Points of Emphasis that were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2014-15 wrestling season that address risk minimization were: Communicable Skin Conditions and Skin Checks; Biting; Slams; and the Body Scissors.

2016-17 Clarified that a rear standing arm trap is a potentially dangerous move and should be monitored closely by the official.

Strengthened the rule that when a defensive wrestler applies an illegal hold/maneuver, commits unnecessary roughness or unsportsmanlike acts during an imminent or near-fall situation, the offensive wrestler will be awarded a penalty(s) in addition to the near-fall points at the next stoppage of wrestling.

2017-18 Prohibit any off the scale activities that would promote dehydration, weight loss or weight gain.

Established that a straight-back Salto and Suplay are illegal moves.

Points of Emphasis: Off-the scale activities; Cleanliness – uniforms, pads; Braces – padded and covered; and Salto and Suplay illegality.

2018-19 Clarified that wrestlers can wear low-cut socks during the weigh-in process.

Clarified if a wrestler is injured because of an opponent's false start, then the wrestler should be accommodated with recovery time.

Points of Emphasis: An emphasis is placed on uniforms and pads that need to be washed after each use daily and proper disinfecting wrestling mats and other equipment prior to use. It was also shared that braces that do not permit normal movement of joints or restrict an opponent from applying normal holds/maneuvers are not allowed. In addition, any braces and/or supports that are hard, unyielding or abrasive need to be properly padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding.

2019-20 Clarified that a suitable undergarment shall be worn under a singlet and shorts designed for wrestling.

Clarified female wrestlers wear an undergarment that completely covers their breasts and that all wrestlers wear suitable undergarments that completely covers parts of the body.

Wrestling

Modified the current injury time-out rule that if a present health-care provider requests extended time to evaluate a wrestler who has injury to their head, neck, cervical column and or nervous system, that it not extend more than five (5) minutes. If a subsequent similar injury occurs in the same match, then the injured wrestler shall default the match.

Points of Emphasis: An emphasis is placed on compliance with the new rules requiring suitable undergarments for wrestlers for weigh-ins and competition. It was also recommended that assessing hydration status prior to body composition testing is the cornerstone of establishing accurate body fat percentage, fat free mass and a healthy minimum wrestling weight. Dehydration may significantly overestimate the percentage of body fat when assessing with skin calipers, bioelectrical impedance and the Bod Pod. There is also no evidence regarding the accuracy of ultrasound testing when determining body composition in dehydrated individuals.

2020-21 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2021-22 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2022-23 No risk minimization changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis dealing with risk minimization: Illegal, Harmful Holds and Maneuvers.

2023-24 No risk minimization changes for this year.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2023-24 Wrestling season dealing with risk minimization: Uniform Cleanliness and Covering or Concealing of a Skin Disease

2024-25 No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

Two Points of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee for the 2024-25 wrestling season dealing with risk minimization: Dangerous Maneuvers and Holds; Proper Terms: Default, Forfeit, Medical Forfeit.

2025-26

The rule for a leg block (cut-back) was further clarified and is still an illegal hold/maneuver.

Boys Gymnastics

1985-87 Coach, acting as a spotter, must be present throughout a gymnast's performance on the still rings.

Vaults requiring sideward landing are void.

Working area of all events except vaulting shall be padded with at least 1 ¼" +/- ¼" of matting.

1987-89 Landing area for rings, vaulting, parallel bars and horizontal bar shall be padded with at least one base mat (1 ¼" +/- ¼") and one landing mat (3 ¾" +/- ½").

1989-91 Coach, acting as a spotter, must be present throughout a gymnast's performance on high bar.

A gymnast may not pass through the vertical in a one-arm hang more than three times during a horizontal bar routine.

A coach, acting as a spotter must be present throughout a gymnast's performance on the still rings.

Boys Gymnastics

1991-93 During in a horizontal bar routine, except for the dismount an additional 8-inch skill cushion may be used.

1993-95 A gymnast who is rendered unconscious/apparently unconscious shall not resume participation that day without written medical authorization.

A gymnast, who is bleeding, has an open wound or an excessive amount of blood on his uniform may complete his current event performance, but must receive proper treatment before returning to competition.

1997-99 Total mat thickness may be 12 inches. A sting mat may be placed on top of maximum matting on any event except floor exercise.

2001-03 Total mat thickness on parallel bars was increased to 12 inches if it includes an 8-inch skill cushion. Total mat thickness on vault, still rings and horizontal bar was increased to 16 inches if it includes an 8-inch skill cushion. On floor exercise, one mat up to 4 inches thick may be placed in one location on the floor exercise mat for landing a D-skill.

During a still rings, parallel bars or horizontal bar exercise or vault, an additional 8-inch skill cushion may be used.

During a floor exercise routine, one mat up to 4 inches think may be placed in one location for a D-skill landing.

Gymnast passes through the lower vertical in a one-arm hang more than two times during an exercise, medium deduction each time.

2003-05 A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.

Athletic equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.

A spotter is permitted at the edge of the floor exercise mat for a D-value tumbling skill.

If the board is placed under the center of the parallel bars, it must be removed immediately after the mount is completed.

2005-07 Total matting for parallel bars shall be 12 inches or up to 8 inches on top of a manufactured platform.

An additional mat up to 8 inches thick may be used for mounting pommel horse, but not when remounting after a fall.

The use of the vault table is required beginning with the 2005-2006 season.

A safety collar is required when a roundoff-entry vault is performed. If it is not used, the vault performed is void.

A coach must be present to spot any roundoff-entry vault. The vault is void if the coach is not present.

Boys Gymnastics

If a gymnast balks, a 1.0 deduction is taken and he is given a second trial. If the gymnast commits a second balk, the vault is void.

2007-09 Recommended a change in thickness of newly purchased landing mats to accommodate the new minimum thickness being manufactured.

Require vaulting board to be available to all contestants throughout warm-ups.

The pistons/pedestal (vertical uprights) of the vaulting table shall be padded with the manufactured protective padding.

Specified the maximum thickness of the run-up strip shall be 1 inch thick (+/- ½ inch).

Only a manufactured hand placement mat may be placed on the run-up strip for vaulting and a manufactured sting mat shall not be permitted.
Deleted skills no longer appropriate for boys gymnastics, due to advancement of gymnast's skills.

Reclassified several skills to reflect current trend in boys gymnastics.

Emphasized proper precautions to prevent the spread of communicable disease and skin infection procedures.

2009-2011 Adjusted the matting requirements for the horizontal bar to meet the needs of the advanced skills of today's gymnast to minimize risk of injury.

Clarified that casts or splints on any body part(s) are prohibited.

A gymnast wearing a brace(s) which is unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production does not require any additional padding.

Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a gymnast who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion and protocol for returning to competition.

Updated the matting requirements in floor exercise when the state association adopts the longer mat of 60 feet up to 68 feet by a minimum of 6 feet.

2011-2013 No rules changes pertaining to risk minimization.

2013-2023 USA Gymnastics now prepares competition rules for NFHS.

Boys Lacrosse

2000 First year of publication

2001 Player's shoes must meet same standard as football shoes

Jewelry not permitted; medial or religious medals must be taped to body

2002 Cast must be padded and a physician's letter must be presented prior to contest.

Boys Lacrosse

Eye shield must permit 100% light transmission and they must be molded and rigid.

Game officials may call time-outs for unusual weather conditions.

2003 No jewelry permitted

An apparently unconscious player must have written permission before reentering the same contest

NFHS Lightning Policy included

2004 If ball retrievers are used, they must wear a lacrosse helmet and may not stand directly behind the goal.

2005 To prevent other defensive players from stepping in the goal when the goalie leaves the game to replace broken equipment, play should be suspended immediately if the goalie's stick or any of the other required goalie's equipment becomes broken or dislodged.

The color of tooth and mouth protectors must be of a readily visible color other than white or clear.

A goal will not be counted if the head comes off the stick on a successful shot.

Injured player must leave the game until the next allowable point of substitution.

2006 Clearly states that medical alert medals must be taped to the body, but may be visible.

2007 Clarifies that the designated goalkeeper's crosse must be used by the goalkeeper and that a properly equipped goalkeeper must be on the field at all times.

The jersey shall completely cover the shoulder pads.

A team shall begin the game with at least 10 players or it forfeits the game.

2008 Stipulates in the rules that the tooth and mouth protector can cover either the upper or lower teeth.

Clarifies that tinted eye glasses are allowed unless a player is also wearing a clear, molded and non-rigid helmet eye shield. Also defines an eye shield as a helmet eye shield to more clearly identify that the eye shield is attached to the helmet.

Stipulates that gloves must cover the fingers and palms and that gloves manufactured without a palm are not allowed.

2009 Revision to both rule 2-1-1 and 6-5-2t which defines a procedure and penalty should a team fail to have a legally equipped goalkeeper at the beginning of the game. This change was implemented to minimize risk for other defensive players by preventing them from stepping into the goal area to play goalkeeper without the proper equipment.

Revision adopted which specifies that a player receiving a pass cannot be checked unless the ball is within five yards of that player. This change minimizes risk for players receiving the pass.

Included a point of emphasis in the rules book stressing the importance of enforcing the rule regarding illegal body checking to minimize risk for players.

Boys Lacrosse

Included a point of emphasis in the rules book stressing the importance of enforcing the rule which requires that the end of the crosse have either a legal cap-plug or be properly and adequately taped to minimize risk for all players.

2010 Any suspension of play…. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (See NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion) This time-out is an official's time-out.

Items that, in the opinion of the officials, endanger that individual or other players. Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow or upper arm is prohibited unless it is necessary to protect an injury. If worn, it must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½ inch thick. Knee and ankle braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding.

2011 If the goalkeeper loses his stick with the ball in it within his goal crease, the whistle shall be blown and the ball shall be awarded to the defensive team laterally outside the goal area.

Revised the rule regarding stick specifications to require that all hollow crosse handles must have a plastic or rubber end cap manufactured for lacrosse.

Revised the procedure for an injured player returning to play following an injury timeout so that adequate time is taken to evaluate the player.

Further revised the rules regarding hits to the body to minimize risk.

Moved the rule regarding hits to the head/neck to its own section to better communicate that these actions are not allowed thereby minimizing risk of injury.

2012 Removed the stipulation that the ball must be made of rubber and allows it to be made of any elastomeric material as specified in the NOCSAE Lacrosse Ball Standard.

Adopted a more severe penalty for hits to head/neck.

Specified a more severe penalty for deliberately using the hands or fingers to play the ball and for grabbing the opponent's crosse during a faceoff.

Specified that a protective cup is recommended for all players.

2013 Revises the recommendation regarding the number of officials to be used in a game to indicate that a minimum of three officials should be used.

Stipulates that no more than three players on a team can be in the penalty area at any time. If more than three players on a team have been assessed penalty time concurrently, the additional penalized team members must wait in the bench area until the penalty time of one of the three players in the penalty area expires.

Revises the penalty for hits to the head/neck to a minimum of a two- to three-minute non-releasable penalty.

Boys Lacrosse

Stipulates that a body check that targets a player in a defenseless position is illegal and specifies a minimum two- to three-minute non-releasable penalty for this violation.

Adds an additional stick check procedure to ensure that the ball will roll out of the top end of the head.

Beginning in 2016, shooting strings and V channels must be within 4 inches of the top of the crosse.

Stipulates that a game cannot continue if a team has fewer than seven on-field players.

2014 Revises the restart procedure to specify that the ball may be restarted in the goal area or in the crease on a turnover to the defense. However, no restart shall take place with any player within 5 yards of the ball carrier.

The committee made changes in the sections on faceoff procedure, over & back, stick specifications/crosse prohibitions and points of emphasis on proper warm ups after halftime, contact, and helmet fitting & use during pre-game/practice times/halftime warm-ups.

1-6-1 Crosse Dimensions - Defined crosse dimensions and specifications at different locations to address issues with the ball being stuck in the crosse. This change in equipment will beginning in 2018 to allow for phased implementation.

1-8 Crosse Prohibitions - Expanded the crosse prohibitions. Specifically, the changes are intended to inhibit the use of pull strings and sidewall strings to lodge the ball in the crosse.

4-3-3 Face Off - By deleting ART. 3 through ART. 6 and adding this revised 4-3-3, the committee improved the process of the face off by clarifying the rules to create safer more consistent and fair play.

4-14-3 Over & Back - Added a new “over and back” rule to keep the ball in play in the offensive half of the field once possession has been established in the goal area.

2015 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2016 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017 No defensive player, other than a properly equipped goalkeeper, can enter his own crease with the perceived intent on blocking a shot or actin as a goalie. Penalty: Conduct foul on the defensive player. A second violation by the player will be enforced as releasable unsportsmanlike conduct.

Failure to wear the required mouthpiece (unless it comes out during play) is now a technical foul.

2018 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2019 Requiring a goalkeeper check protector include the NOCSAE ND200 standard.

Added “targeting” as a non-releasable foul with possible ejection.

Strengthened blindside hits penalties.

No longer allows players to exchange their crosses while having a live ball in their possession.

Boys Lacrosse

2020 Require all field players to wear shoulder pads that incorporate the NOCSAE ND200 standard.

2021 **No NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Changes made for 2021 since the 2020 season was not played because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2022 Require a protective cup or pelvic protector.

2023 Prohibits the use of heads that have protrusions or sharp edges.

2024 Requires that all equipment shall be worn as intended by the manufacture.

Requires properly worn helmets with all attachment points required to be securely connected. If a players loses their helmet, play is suspended immediately and the player must leave the field until the next dead ball. This is also a Point of Emphasis for 2024.

Added an additional penalty option for incidental contact to the head or neck.

Prohibited body checks during the faceoff while either player is in a crouched position.

2025 Added a player shall not make indirect contact to an opponent's head and/or neck. Indirect contact occurs when the initial force of the contact is to the body of the opponent then slides up to the head and/or neck area. PENALTY: A one-minute non-releasable foul. An excessively violent violation or an intentional slide up to the head and neck area may result in a longer non-releasable penalty or an ejection.

2026 Changed penalty for a player other than the properly equipped goalkeeper that enters the crease with the intent to block a shot to a personal foul for illegal equipment.

Added hooking, lifting, or pinning on opponent's body with the crosse as illegal actions describing a hold.

Established that the loss of a helmet is an illegal procedure.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee for the 2026 boys lacrosse season dealing with risk minimization: Properly Wearing Equipment and Personal Foul – Contact with the Head/Neck.

Girls Lacrosse

2019 First year of NFHS publication.

Beginning January 1, 2021 a chest protector designed for lacrosse that incorporates the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture must be worn by the goalkeeper.

All headgear must be properly worn and securely fixed with the chinstrap in place as intended for use.

The administration of goal circle fouls occurs at a dot.

Girls Lacrosse A penalty zone is established that must be cleared when a major foul by a defensive player occurs in the 8-meter arc.

Defensive players are allowed the inside/ball-side positioning on the adjacent hash for an 8-meter free position.

Point of Emphasis: Officiating of Rough and Dangerous Play.

2020 Clarified the dates for SEI certification requirements: All eyewear on the playing field must be SEI certified and listed on the SEI website starting January 1, 2020 and must bear the SEI mark for certification by January 1, 2025.

Established that equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.

Added language to expand a check to the head to include the neck as a major foul.

For a major foul by a defense player between the arc and the fan, the free position will be taken on the 12-meter fan closest to the spot of the foul, limiting potentially dangerous play in the critical scoring area.

Addressed repeated fouls in 2020 Point of Emphasis.

2021 **No NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Changes made for 2021 since the 2020 season was not played because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2022 Removed the requirement of shin protection for the goalkeeper while maintaining the option to wear shin protection creating consistency between girls and boys lacrosse. Additionally, there is no performance standard for shin protection.

Allowed goalkeepers to wear a clear, molded, and rigid helmet eye shield in combination with tinted or clear eyeglasses. Aligning eye shield and eyewear permissiveness and requirements to those of other NFHS rules codes.

Allowed face masks that are soft and non-abrasive to be worn for health and/or religious reasons while maintaining that protective molded face masks are not permitted.

Allowed players to wear hair ties and other soft, non-rigid items on the arm and clarifies that hair adornments such as beads can be worn in the hair as long as they are secured and do not endanger other players.

Allowed the wearing of religious and/or cosmetic headwear during competition that fits securely and is made of non-abrasive or soft materials, eliminating the requirement for prior authorization from the state association. Maintains the requirement for approval of protective head coverings worn for medical reasons.

2023 No risk minimization changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis dealing with risk minimization: Dangerous Use of Stick

2024 Required goalkeeper's thigh padding to be shorts or pants manufactured with integrated protective padding.

Girls Lacrosse

Reorganized tooth and mouth protector rules and eliminated restrictions related to color and graphics.

Allowed field players to wear compression shirts that meet the NOCSAE ND200 lacrosse standard under the uniform.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee for the 2023-24 girls lacrosse season dealing with risk minimization: Stick to Body Contact and Dangerous Play in the 8-Meter Arc

2025

Expanded the definition of a major foul for Illegal Stick Contact to include contact with the opponent's crosse when a player's crosse is held in a horizontal position.

Expanded the definition of a Rough/Dangerous Check to include checking an opponent's hand.

Two Points of Emphasis were addressed by the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee for the 2025 girls lacrosse season dealing with risk minimization: Managing Safe Play in the 8-Meter Arc; Offensive Fouls Inside the Critical Scoring Area.

2026

No risk minimization rule changes for this year.

One Point of Emphasis was addressed by the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee for the 2026 girls lacrosse season dealing with risk minimization: Identifying and Managing Fouls During Scoring Plays.

Water Polo

2010

Changed the guidelines and procedures for identifying and removing a player who exhibits signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

2011

Updated language for concussion management.

2012

If the pool depth is less than 2 meters (6.5 ft) in any portion of the course, players shall enter the water feet-first at all times.

2013

The referee should stop play as soon as possible for a player to replace his/her cap.

Should a state association make an accommodation for a player with a disability, such accommodation shall not allow a player to wear an otherwise illegal piece of equipment.

2014

Only swim caps are allowed to be worn under the water polo cap, unless an accommodation is requested of the state association, as the cap should conform closely to the head.

2015

No risk minimization changes for this year.

2016-17

No risk minimization changes for this year.

2017-18

No risk minimization changes for this year.

2018-19

Minimum and maximum dimensions for water polo facilities using floating goals and wall goals were defined.

Water Polo Girls and boys water polo ball pressure shall be inflated according to manufacturer specifications.

2019-20 No risk minimization changes for this year.

2020-22 The 5-meter line has been moved to a 6-meter line in these referenced rules. Note: The 5-meter reference still applies to penalty throws.

Players are now permitted to wear a soft padded cap but it must meet the requirements of Rules 1-20 through 1-24, and 2-4.

A player may leave the field of play at any time under the sideline.

2022-24 New language defining hair-control devices and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents are permitted. Clarifies adornments such as beads can be worn in the hair and aligns language with other NFHS rules codes.

2024-26 Removed the color restriction for the ball requiring yellow or gold. The ball must be of a color that contrasts with the colors of the players' caps and is clearly and safely visible. The change gives a team the ability to choose a ball suitable for its team's conditions, especially under night lighting.

Flag Football

2025-26 This was the first year for the NFHS Flag Football Rules Book and first ever set of new rules from the NFHS for Flag Football.

Effective 2026, a single tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth.

Effective 2026, a single tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) which shall not include anything on it that is a health or risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.

3/7/2026