

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

**New Rules for Dance Risk Minimization Among
High School Spirit Rules Changes**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 14, 2016) — Three new rules related to dance risk management were among the changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Spirit Rules Committee at its March 5-7 meeting in Indianapolis.

The 10 rules changes for high school cheer, dance, drill and pom for the 2016-17 season were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

With a growing number of high school students competing in dance and drill, the Spirit Rules Committee reorganized the rules book for 2016-17 to include a separate rule for dance risk management.

“Dance is evolving and more high school dance participants are doing stunts that previously were only done by cheerleaders,” said Susie Knoblauch, NFHS director of performing arts and sports and editor of the NFHS Spirit Rules Book. “Separating the book into different sections for cheer and dance will give people a clearer idea of the stunts allowed in each area.”

In an effort to minimize risk for high school dancers, tosses will not be permitted. Knoblauch said high school dancers generally are not adequately prepared to execute higher-level releases such as tosses.

In addition, two other stunts will not be permitted in an effort to minimize risk in high school dance. Stunts/lifts in which the bases support an extended top person under the feet will not be allowed, as well as braced release stunts, which includes release transitions and braced flips.

Among the changes in the cheer section of the Spirit Rules Book will be another new rule focused on risk minimization. Beginning next year, a participant shall not jump unassisted onto the back of a base who is in a horizontal position.

In addition to the aforementioned rules focused on risk minimization, the committee revised several rules to permit more creativity while not creating any additional risk for the participants.

The committee removed the requirement for bracers of non-release, static stunts to be at shoulder height or below, and lower-level non-braced transitions will be permitted. In addition, bracers will be permitted on any side, including behind the top. Braced flips are allowed from a single base but still require two bracers in preps.

Regarding braced inversions, the committee clarified that these stunts are legal when not braced. As such, two bracers are not necessary for non-flipping inversions.

Finally, a new rule regarding cheering on props as bases was added. In response to a growing number of cheerleaders standing on boxes at football games to cheer, the committee approved two limitations when cheering on props. The height of the prop must not exceed 3 feet, and jumps and/or stunts are not permitted on props.

A complete listing of all rules changes is available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page, and select “Spirit.”

According to the 2014-15 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, there were 125,763 girls involved in competitive spirit squads and about 40,000 in dance and drill programs. It is estimated that there are more than 400,000 participants overall in high school spirit programs, which includes sideline cheerleading.

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 16 sports for boys and girls at the

high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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