

High School Boys Lacrosse Rules Changes Seek to Minimize Risk of Injury

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kent Summers

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 18, 2010) — The definition of an illegal body check in high school boys lacrosse widens next season to include initiating contact directly to an opponent's head or initiating contact to an opponent's body that then follows through to the head.

This addition to Rule 5-3 was one of four changes made by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee at its July 27-28 meeting in Indianapolis. These changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“There were already some provisions in the rules that prohibited head-to-head contact but the committee wanted to remove checking with or to the head from the game,” said Kent Summers, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee. “Spearing – leading with the top of your head into another player – has been illegal for a number of years. Now, anytime a player initiates a check with his head or to his opponent's head, it is a violation.”

“The committee wants to minimize and hopefully eliminate head injuries from the game,” Summers said.

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee's clarification of concussion procedures, which is now part of all NFHS sports rules, was added to Rule 4-28-7. That rule now states that “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.”

In other changes, Rule 1-2-1 now stipulates that “if a field of play has a logo in the center or at any other part of the field of play, that logo should not obstruct the visibility of the required marks. A solid or shadow-bordered line is permissible.” The committee defines a shadow line as a line that designates the continuation of the required line by a border or outlines, at least ¼-inch wide.

“This has been a big problem,” Summers said. “The center of the field must be clearly defined so officials can correctly administer a face-off and can identify where to award the ball in certain situations.”

The final rules change allows contrasting colored piping, 1/8-inch wide or less, on uniforms. This rule was changed in 2008 to alleviate officials' confusion about contrasting-colored yokes. Piping does not pose this problem.

In addition to the four rules changes, the committee also specified eight editorial changes. The three most significant editorial changes are:

- 1-10-1b – Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow or upper arm are prohibited unless it is necessary to protect an injury. If worn, the area of the body 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.
- 4-3-5 – The official will sound the whistle promptly after readying the ball for play and stating the word "set." For hearing-impaired players, a reasonable accommodation for the "set" command and whistle sound will be provided.
- 5-6-3 – Slashing shall include striking an opponent on any part of the body with the crosse (including its cap end), except when done by a player in the act of passing, shooting or attempting to scoop the ball.

Boys lacrosse had 88,596 participants in 1,984 schools during the 2008-09 season, according to the High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS.

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This press release was written by Arika Herron, a summer intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department and a senior at Butler (Indiana) University.

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

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.5 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; and serves as a

national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.
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