

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Double Twists to Cradle No Longer Permitted in High School Spirit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susan Loomis/Kent Summers

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 27, 2012) — Effective with the 2012–13 season, a double twist to a cradle (double down) no longer will be permitted in high school spirit (cheer, dance, drill, pom).

This significant risk minimization ruling was one of 19 rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Spirit Rules Committee at its March 3–5 meeting in Indianapolis. The rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

With changes to Rules 2–8–9 and 2–10–2, a twist performed to a cradle must not involve more than one complete rotation except when dismounting to a cradle from a side-facing stunt or toss, which will permit $1\frac{1}{4}$ rotations. In these cases, the bases may make a one-fourth turn to catch the cradle.

“Data presented by the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee confirmed that the majority of head injuries in spirit are from body-to-body contact in stunts,” said Susan Loomis, editor of the NFHS Spirit Rules Book. “The committee recognizes that the primary body-to-body contact issues are presented during double-twisting dismounts. Prohibiting double twists to a cradle is consistent with the NFHS focus on risk minimization.

“Many of the other changes approved by the committee would be considered less restrictive and should allow for more creativity on the part of high school participants,” Loomis added.

Among those less-restrictive changes are several rules in a new section on Inversions. While allowing for more creativity and options, the committee believes these stunts do not increase risk of injury.

“These skills have been demonstrated to have a reasonable expectation for minimizing risk when given the specific limitations and conditions required for performance,” Loomis said.

Another less-restrictive change is the elimination of Rule 2-4-8, which previously required a spotter’s arms to be extended toward a top person in order to be in an alert, ready position. The committee agreed that there are a number of different ways for spotters to be alert and ready that don’t involve extending the arms and which don’t increase the risk of injury.

In other changes, the committee deleted rules regarding pendulums since they are now included in a set of rules regarding “horizontal” transitions. The

rules committee also voted to allow swinging stunts to begin from below shoulder height rather than specifically from a cradle.

One change was approved by the committee in Rule 3 – Dance/Drill/Pom Risk Management. New language was added to Rule 3–4–1 which permits forward rolls from props low enough that the top person can put both hands on the performing surface before dismounting.

A number of the rules changes approved by the Spirit Rules Committee bring NFHS rules in closer alignment with the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches & Administrators (AACCA) rules. In addition, in a similar spirit of cooperation, AACCA will be revising some of its rules in other areas to align with NFHS rules.

This was the final meeting for Loomis to serve as the NFHS spirit rules consultant. She has served in that capacity since the organization moved to Indianapolis in 2000 and followed a 10–year involvement on the committee as a member and chair. Kent Summers, NFHS director of performing arts and sports, will now serve as staff liaison and rules editor.

Competitive spirit squads constitute the ninth–most popular activity for girls at the high school level, according to the 2010–11 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS, with 96,718 participants nationwide. There are also 21,487 girls who participate in dance or drill teams, according to the same survey.

###

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 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; 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 Web site at www.nfhs.org.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Bruce Howard or John Gillis, 317-972-6900
National Federation of State High School Associations
PO Box 690, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206
bhoward@nfhs.org or jgillis@nfhs.org