

Libero Allowed to Serve in High School Volleyball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 30, 2007) -- The libero -- a back-row, defensive specialist in volleyball -- will now be able to serve in one position in the serving order in high school volleyball, effective with the 2007-08 season.

This was one of several changes made by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee at its January 7-8 meeting in Indianapolis. The rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Twenty-one states received permission to experiment with the libero serving this season, which was the first year for the full use of the libero in high school volleyball.

"This change creates an additional avenue for the libero to participate fully while in the back row," said Becky Oakes, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee. "The team may now receive full benefit of the libero being a defensive specialist by no longer requiring the player to sit out while another player serves. Many times, the libero is one of the better servers on the team, so this should enhance overall play."

Several other rules related to the libero were altered. The penalty for an illegal libero replacement found in the game will now be an alignment infraction rather than unnecessary delay. In Rule 8-1-5, a libero replacement shall not take place during a re-serve. In Rule 10-4, the libero replacement shall be completed prior to the whistle and signal for serve, and the libero can be replaced once a time-out is completed and all players have returned to the court.

Three changes were made in Rule 4 regarding player equipment and uniforms. A penalty was revised in Rule 4-1-6 to ensure that jewelry is not worn in warm-ups and competition to minimize the risk of injury.

Regarding uniforms, bare midriff tops will be prohibited and the uniform top shall be tucked in or hang below the waistband of the uniform bottom.

A change to Rule 4-2-4c will permit more than one color to be used in the trim surrounding the uniform number. A uniform will be in compliance with the rules if either the color of the trim completely surrounding the number or the number itself is in sharp contrast to the uniform top. The number may now be made clearly visible by the trim and/or the body of the number.

Regarding officials uniforms, the state association adoption to modify officials uniforms will be deleted from the body of the rules, effective with the 2009-10 season. Uniform requirements in Rule 5-2-1 consist of a white-collared polo shirt, black slacks, black shoes and socks.

"The state adoption was previously included because the uniform was in transition from the striped shirt, which is no longer prominent," Oakes said. "To provide for consistency in appearance for all officials, the state association adoptions will be removed from the rules."

In Rule 7, the method of submitting the lineup will be changed next year. The previous policy of submitting the lineup using a player floor position method will be replaced by listing the uniform numbers of the starting players in proper serving order.

"Scorers sometimes have a difficult time accurately transferring the order of the lineups to the scoresheet when the starters are listed in floor position, especially for the receiving team," Oakes said. "By listing numbers in serving order, the lineup coincides with the scoresheet and will minimize problems transferring the lineup to the scoresheet."

Regarding back-row play, a change in Rule 9-5-4 makes it illegal when a back-row player, on or in front of the attack line, contacts the ball completely above the height of the net and completes an attack.

In other changes, Official Signal No. 17 was changed to extend the arm in the direction of the team that will serve. There is no longer a need to signal point with rally scoring in high school volleyball, since each rally ends in a point. In Rule 1-8, the committee clarified when music and sound effects may be used and prohibits the use of artificial noisemakers at all times.

↳ According to the 2005-06 High School Athletics Participation Survey, volleyball is the third-most popular sport for girls at the high school level with 390,034 participants. In terms of the number of schools, volleyball ranks fourth for girls behind basketball, outdoor track and fast-pitch softball. In addition 42,878 boys participate in volleyball at 1,726 schools.

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 18,500 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7 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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