

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



Hair Adornment Use Clarified; Shot Clock Guidelines Adjusted in High School Rules

The allowance of hair adornments made of hard material has been clarified in high school basketball. Adornments made of hard material are permitted provided they are securely fastened close to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents.

This change to Rule 3-5-4d was approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Basketball Rules Committee at its annual meeting April 11-13 in Indianapolis. The recommendation was subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The committee adjusted the rule to be inclusive of hair styles while maintaining that the risk of injury to the athlete and others not be compromised.

“It was extremely important to the rules committee to create rules language that supported diversity of hair trends while minimizing the risk of injury to the athlete, teammates and opponents,” said Lindsey Atkinson, director of sports and liaison to the Basketball Rules Committee. “Creating educational tools through case plays and the annual NFHS Basketball Rules PowerPoint will be the focus of the committee.”

Adjustments were also made to the Shot Clock Guidelines in the Basketball Rules Book as states begin to implement its use by state association adoption this season. The committee reiterated that the Shot Clock Guidelines are strongly suggested, but not required.

In addition, the Shot Clock Guidelines were simplified to suggest a full reset of the shot clock after a ball is intentionally kicked or fisted. However, states may choose to institute a partial reset in these instances, if desired.

According to the latest updates, four states have adopted full use of the shot clock since last year’s rules changes: Iowa, Minnesota, Montana and Utah. Three others have adopted it for limited use: Nebraska, South Carolina and Florida. Ten state associations previously had implemented or approved a shot clock prior to the NFHS rule change: California, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Washington and the District of Columbia. Idaho has tentatively approved a shot clock with a second vote coming in June.

“High school basketball from a playing rules perspective is in a good place,” said Billy Strickland, executive director of the Alaska School Activities Association and chair of the Basketball Rules Committee. “The Committee spent a significant amount of time during our April meeting discussing

future rule proposals, an increase in physicality within the game and unsportsmanlike behavior by spectators, as well as the upcoming implementation of the 35 second shot clock in several states.”

The Basketball Rules Committee identified three points of emphasis for the upcoming season, including promoting good sportsmanship. The points also focus on reducing illegal contact in post-play, off-ball play and through hand checks. The third point of emphasis reminds officials to first address illegal uniforms, equipment and apparel directly with the head coach and not players.

A complete listing of the basketball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Basketball.”

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, a total of 540,769 boys participated in basketball in 18,617 schools, and 399,067 girls participated in the sport in 18,210 schools across the country. It is the third-most popular sport for boys and girls.