

Four Spirit Rules Changes Stress Risk Minimization

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 10, 2009) - Four rules changes that address minimizing risk to participants were approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Spirit Rules Committee at its January 11-12 meeting in Indianapolis. These revisions were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Heading the list of changes is a new restriction on the "double twist to a cradle" stunt. Beginning with the 2009-10 season, a twist to a cradle that involves more than one rotation will be permitted only on appropriate mats or grass, as well as rubberized and soft-yielding surfaces. This is the same restriction that was placed on basket tosses three years ago. "As with basket tosses, the double twist to a cradle, commonly known as the 'double down,' cannot be done on a basketball court, unless the stunt is done on an appropriate mat," said Susan Loomis, NFHS spirit rules liaison. "We would encourage participants to perform non-twisting or single-twist cradles, which are still permitted on any appropriate surface." Loomis said that this change reflects the skill level in high school cheerleading and is consistent with the NFHS' focus on risk minimization.

A change in Rule **2-10-5** clarifies the intent of last year's rule change permitting a forward suspended roll from the performing surface. The revised rule will state that toe/leg pitches to a jump or tumbling skill are illegal.

"There has been confusion between a toss and a pitch," Loomis said. "The committee believes that the change in language will help clarify this rule for coaches."

A "triple-base Swedish fall" was added to the list of exceptions in **Rule 2-4-7**, which requires a spotter for stunts in which the supporting arm(s) of the base(s) is (are) fully extended above the head. A "triple-base Swedish fall" will not require a spotter as long as all three bases face the flyer. "When all three bases face the flyer, the front base is in a better position of safety to protect the flyer if assistance is needed," Loomis said.

The final revision made by the Spirit Rules Committee is an addition to **Rule 2-6-2** regarding cradle dismounts. The revised **2-6-2b** will state: "For all cradle dismounts, the flyer must not hold props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material, and have corners or sharp edges."

In addition to the four rules changes, the committee adopted four points of emphasis for the upcoming season. The topics for next year are a) rules committee's responsibility, b) event security, c) coaches' responsibility and d) spring floors.