



Kentucky High School Athletic Association

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January 31, 2015

TO: KHSAA Member Schools
FR: Commissioner Julian Tackett
RE: Softball Face Protection

During its July, 2014 meeting, the Board of Control reviewed several items related to injuries to the face and head area in fastpitch softball. The review was prompted by a request from the Kentucky Medical Association that the KHSAA Board recommend the wearing of face protection by players at the first base, third base and pitching positions.

Both groups had considerable injury data to review. The data is available at <https://portal.ksba.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=4374&AgencyTypeID=1&BeginDate=7-1-2014&EndDate=7-31-2014>.

The NFHS Softball Playing Rule 1-8-4 states “Defensive players are permitted to wear face/head protection in the field (except as in 3-2-14) and as specifically required in 1-7. Face/head protection worn by the defenders shall have a non-glare outer surface.” This permissive language allows each player to make the determination as to wearing the protection or not. There is no specific manufacturing standard yet developed or product requirements, though a wide variety are available and many types are worn at other levels of fastpitch softball.

Based on the data available, and the experiences reported by specific coaches in the Commonwealth, the Board issued the following recommendation to the membership:

“That each member school representative make known to the participants in fastpitch softball, the NFHS rules allowance for the wearing of protective face masks for first base, third base and pitcher, and encourage each participant to use prudent judgment to make their choice in this decision (whether or not to wear the equipment) based on their specific situation.”

As we enter the 2015 season, please ensure that all competitors are aware of this allowance within the playing rules.