

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Rules Changes Approved in High School Spirit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: James Weaver

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 3, 2019) — Rules related to minimizing risk of injury to dance and cheer team members are among 29 rules revisions for the 2019-20 high school spirit season.

The rules changes were recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Spirit Rules Committee at its March 2-4 meeting and subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“We’re trying to create a safer environment for activities to occur in cheer and dance and make the rules book as clear as possible,” said James Weaver, director of performing arts and liaison to the NFHS Spirit Rules Committee.

Rule 3-3-3 was changed to make it consistent with other braced inversion rules. It now allows for the inverted person to be caught by new catchers as long as the new catchers remain close to the original bases, are in place before initiation of the inversion, and do not pose increased safety risk to the top person.

Rule 3-3-5 was changed to allow a braced front flip to be performed just as it is on the ground while using one bracer behind the top person holding both hands. Both of the top person’s hands/arms must be in continuous contact with a bracer and the bracer must be in a multi-base prep with a spotter. The top person must be to the side or in front of the bracer, and only one bracer is necessary.

This allows similar visuals for smaller teams and removes the need for an additional bracer to hold the wrist of the top person.

Another change related to inversions was made to Rule 3-3-6, which now restricts releasing from an inversion with a stunt that has twists at any level, even in the presence of a spotter. Previously, inversions could release with a stunt at prep level or below.

“This change affects how someone moves from upside down. This change is significant because of risks [associated with twists],” Weaver said.

Rule 2-1-5 now states that props made of hard material or sharp edges cannot be released by a top person and must be placed by someone on the ground. This reduces risk of injury from falling props.

In other changes, Rule 3-5-5 was revised to clarify the intent of the rule and better describe the connection between the bracer and the top person. Rule 4-3-3 was also changed to clarify that as long as someone is gripping, it is not important whether it is the top person or the bracer.

A complete list of spirit rules changes is located on the spirit page of the NFHS website, www.nfhs.org, under “Activities and Sports.”

According to the 2017-18 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, competitive spirit is the ninth-most popular sport for girls with 162,669 participants in 6,877 schools around the country.

This press release was written by Kirsten Adair, an intern at the NFHS Publications/Communications Department.

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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 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 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 website at www.nfhs.org.

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Spirit Rules Changes - 2019

By NFHS on April 23, 2019

spirit

1-Definitions: Dive Roll – An airborne forward roll where the feet of the performer are at or above the performer's waist prior to the hands making contact with the performing surface.

Rationale: Allows a slight point during a forward roll where the top person's hands and feet are off of the ground at the same time. The requirement that the feet remain at or below the waist remove the ability to do a swan dive type of roll.

1-Definitions: Switch Up Liberty – ~~A top person starts with one foot in a load, is tossed~~ A stunt in which a top person starts with one foot on the ground, is released, and lands in a Liberty on the other foot vertical stunt on one foot or both feet.

Rationale: A switch up skill can be performed to positions other than a liberty. Changing the label and the definition reflects the different body positions in which the top person can land.

2-1-5: ART. 5 . . . Performing surfaces and areas must be suitable for spirit activities. a. Surfaces and areas must be reasonably free from objects and/or impediments. b. Stunts and tumbling must be modified to be appropriate for the surface and/or area and in relation to other participants. ~~c. When discarding props that are made of hard material, or have corners or sharp edges, team members must gently toss or place the props.~~ c. When using props that are made of hard material or have sharp corners or edges: 1. A top person may not release the props to the ground. 2. A person on the ground must gently toss or place the props.

Rationale: Clarifies the disposal of signs and reduces risk by not having hard signs released from top persons in stunts.

3-1-8: ART. 8 . . . Supports, braces, soft casts, etc., that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding. Supports/braces that have been altered from the manufacturer's original design/production must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than one-half-inch thick if the participant is involved in partner stunts, pyramids or tosses. A participant wearing a plaster cast or a walking boot must not be involved in partner stunts, pyramids, ~~or tosses, jumps, or tumbling.~~

Rationale: Aligns with requirements for proper footwear.

3-2-7; 4-2-7: (P) ART 7. . .A spotter is required for extended stunts or transitions that stop in an extended position except for the following: a. Chair. b. Russian lift. ~~c. Torch~~ c. ~~d. Double-base split catch.~~ d. e. Double-base vertical T-lift.e. f. Triple-base stunts in which the top person is horizontal. ~~f. g. Triple-base suspended splits.~~ f. g. ~~h. Triple-base straddle sit, provided the top person has both hands in contact with a post.~~

Rationale: A torch is a prep level skill in which the top person's foot is in the hands of the base, which requires a spotter. Having torch in this list of exceptions contradicts rules 3-2-8 and 4-2-8. Allowing a triple-base straddle sit without the criteria for a post or a spotter is just as safe as a triple-base suspended split without a spotter and should not require additional stunt personnel for this skill as it does not cause an increased risk.

3-2-8; 4-2-8: (P) ART. 8. . .A spotter is required for ~~tosses to single-base shoulder stands~~ and single-base prep-level stunts in which the foot/feet of the top person are in the hands of the base and tosses to single-base shoulder stands.

Rationale: Reworded for clarification. The previous wording was unclear as to whether the spotter was required for these two skills or for "tosses to single based shoulder stands and tosses to stunts where the feet were in the hands". This clarifies that it is any time the feet are in the hands and also tosses to shoulders.

3-3-3: (P) ART. 3. . .Braced inversions in a pyramid that do not flip or roll are permitted provided the following conditions are met: a. The inverted top person shall have at least two bases or a base and a spotter. b. If the inverted top person is released the following conditions shall be met: 1. The skills/stunts before and after the release are permitted. 2. Each bracer is at prep level or below. If in a prep or shoulder stand, the bracer(s) shall have two bases or a base and a spotter. 3. The bracers do not provide primary support for the top person. 4. The top person and base(s) make no more than a ¼ turn around the bracer in a continuous movement. 5. The top person is caught by original base(s). When the catchers are not the original bases, the new catchers are in place when the transition is initiated, remain close to the original bases and are not part of any other skill. 6. The top person does not land in an inverted position. c. The top person ~~must maintain hand-to-hand/arm contact with a bracer~~ and at least one bracer maintains hand-to-hand/arm contact.

Rationale: Allows the inversion to be caught by new catchers becoming consistent with other braced inversion rules that were changed in 2018. This rule was inadvertently overlooked when the revision occurred last year. The criteria states the new catchers have to remain close to the original bases and must be in place prior to the initiation of the inversion and does not increase the safety risk to the top person. The revision in Rule 3-3-3c helps clarify the intent of the rule and more accurately describes the connection required between the bracer and the top person.

3-3-5: (P) ART. 5 . . . Braced flips in a pyramid are permitted provided all the following conditions are met: a. ~~The top person maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two bracers who are in multi-base preps with a spotter. Each arm is connected to/by a separate bracer. The top person is not behind the bracers. Both of the top person's hands/arms are in continuous contact with a bracer.~~ b. Each bracer must be in a multi-base prep with a spotter. c. The top person must be to the side of or in front of the bracer(s). Reletter remaining f. ~~The bases/catchers remain stationary except as necessary for safety adjustments.~~

Rationale: Safely allows similar visuals for smaller teams. This change allows a braced front flip performed just as it is on the ground, using one bracer behind the top person holding both hands (commonly called a "Baja".) This can currently be performed if another bracer is holding the wrist of the top person. That bracer is not necessary for this skill. Splitting out a, b, and c are editorial for clarity. (f) This rule is unnecessary with the change allowing the top person to change bases during the flip.

3-3-6; 4-3-6: (P) ART. 6 . . . In all other inversions: a. Inversions may release to the following provided there is a spotter: 1. Non-inverted dismounts with no more than a ½ turn. 2. Loading position with no more than ½ turn. 3. A stunt at ~~prep level or below any level with no twists.~~ b. In inversions where the base of support begins and remains below prep level, at least one person shall maintain contact with the top person until the top person is no longer inverted or his/her hands are on the performing surface. c. In inversions where the base of support begins at or passes through prep level: 1. At least two people on the performing surface shall be in a position to protect the head/neck of the top person., ~~one of whom must maintain contact with the top person's upper body (waist and above, which may include arms/hands) until the top person is no longer inverted or his/her hands are on the performing surface. The contact must be sufficient to stabilize/control the top person's position.~~ 2. Contact must be maintained between at least one base and the top person's upper body, (waist and above, which may include arms/hands) until the top person is no longer inverted or their hands are on the performing surface. The contact must be sufficient to stabilize/control the top person's position.

EXCEPTION: A foldover that begins at or below prep level and does not stop in an extended position is allowed. When the catchers are not the original bases, the new catchers shall be in place when the

inversion is initiated, remain close to the original bases and are not part of any other skill.

Renumber current 2 and 3

Rationale: (a) Inversions releasing to extended level pose no additional risk than to prep level. When landing in a prep level skill, proper technique is to catch the skill in an extended position and bring it to prep level while balancing. (c) A top person can be in an inverted position while in contact with one person as long as two people are in a position to protect the head, neck, and shoulder area.

3-3-7; 4-3-7: ART. 7 . . . An inverted top person must not hold objects (poms, signs, etc.) in his/her hands, except during a transition from an inverted position on the performing surface to a non-inverted stunt or from a prone position below prep level to a forward roll dismount.

Rationale: Allows the top person to hold objects while transitioning through an inverted position including from a prone position below prep level.

3-4-4: (P) ART. 7 . . . A top person may be moved from a vertical position to a horizontal position (~~straight body~~) or cradle position provided all the following conditions are met:

- a. The top person maintains contact with at least one original base, post or spotter.
- b. At least two catchers and/or bases catch the upper body of the top person.
- ~~c. The catchers must be to the side or front of the person(s) moving the top person.~~
- ~~d.~~ c. When the catchers are not the original bases, they remain close to the original bases and are in place prior to the movement to the horizontal position.
- ~~e.~~ d. When the catchers are not the original bases and the top person begins or passes through an extended overhead position, there are three catchers.

Delete 3-4-8, 3-4-9, 4-4-9, 4-4-10

Rationale: Both horizontal and straight body are redundant. C should be removed as pendulum type skills from an extended position have been allowed since 2015-16. Determining what is the side and front is sometimes difficult depending on the type of transition. This rule already includes criteria that new catchers must remain close to the original bases and are in place prior to the movement to the horizontal position, therefore making sure the top person is not transitioned to a horizontal position prior to the catchers being in place. We currently allow dismounts to new catchers and do not specify that the new catchers are to the side or front.

3-4-12; 4-4-5: (P) ART. 12 . . . A flip from the performing surface that lands in a partner stunt or cradle is not permitted.

Rationale: Redundant rule; it is a duplicate from the Tumbling rule 3-8-4 and 4-8-4.

3-5-4: (P) ART. 4. . . A switch ~~liberty~~ caught by the original bases is permitted as an exception to Articles 3-5-2 and 3-5-3.

Rationale: This change in terms from “switch liberty” allows the top person to land on both feet instead of just one. This clarification of the intent of the previous rule is that switch ups cannot be caught by new bases, but must be caught by the original bases.

3-5-5: (P) ART. 5. . . Release transitions are permitted provided all of the following conditions are met throughout the transition: a. The skills/stunts before and after the release are permitted. b. The top person ~~maintains hand-to-hand/arm contact with at least one bracer and at least one bracer maintains hand-to-hand/arm contact~~ except for the following skills, in which the top person may not change bases: 1. A non-braced top person in a vertical position at prep level or above may be released to a stunt at any level provided the top person remains vertical in a position where the upper body remains vertical and the legs are not in a seated/piked position. Vertical releases from an extended position to an extended position may not perform more than a ¼ twist. 2. A non-braced top person in a cradle position or horizontal position at prep level or below may be released to a loading position or stunt prep level or below. c. Each bracer is at prep level or below. If in a prep or shoulder stand, the bracer(s) shall have two bases or a base and a spotter. d. The bracers do not provide primary support for the top person. e. The released top person and base(s) make no more than a ¼ turn around the bracer ~~in a continuous movement in which the top person remains vertical over the base(s).~~ f. When the catchers are not the original bases, the new catchers are in place when the transition is initiated, remain close to the original bases and are not part of any other skill.

Rationale: (b) The revision helps clarify the intent of the rule and more accurately describes the connection required between the bracer and the top person. This does not change the intent of the rule. (b1) Clarifies what positions the top person can be in when performing the release. Allowing vertical releases to begin at prep or above allows more skills without increasing risk. The high to high release is further limited to only a ¼ rotation to allow a small pop to arabesque, but not a fully released high to high full around. (e) Is now aligned with rule 3-5-5 allowing a change of bases, but not requiring the top person to remain vertical over their original bases.

3-6-2; 4-6-2: (P) ART. 2 . . . Non-braced suspended splits that originate from or pass through prep level or above are permitted provided all the following conditions are met: b. The top person has both hands in contact with a base(s) once she reaches the full split position.

EXCEPTION: Top person may release one hand to grasp the hand of another base, post, or bracer to adjust his/her position.

Rationale: Allows a top person in a suspended split to release a base or a post in order to connect to a bracer.

3-6-3; 4-6-3: (P) ART. 3 . . . Braced suspended splits are permitted provided all the following conditions are met: a. The top person has at least two bases. b. The top person ~~has both hands in contact with the bracer(s) and at least one bracer maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact.~~ c. The top person and bracer(s) each have a separate spotter with the exception of bracers in shoulder sits or thigh stands. d. The bracer(s) maintain hand/arm contact with the top person until he/she is no longer in a split position.

Rationale: The connection wording change in (b) is in keeping with others submitted. (c) is unnecessary for a braced connection that doesn't release and is not required elsewhere in the rules. (d) Is unnecessary wording. The skill is performed with and without this requirement without issue and follows proper technique.

3-7-9: ART. 9 . . . In cradle dismounts where a bracer is involved after the bases release the top person, all the following conditions must be met: c. Each top person and bracer has a separate spotter with the exception of bracers in double based preps, shoulder sits or thigh stands. d. The bracers do not provide primary support for the top person and remain in place during the dismount. e. ~~The release is a continuous vertical up-and-down movement in which the top person remains over the original base(s). The top person makes no more ¼ around the bracer in a continuous movement.~~ f. When the top person is ~~not~~ released to new catchers, the catchers must be in place prior to the initiation of the release and are not part of any other skill. ~~g. Bases and remain in place during the dismount.~~

Rationale: (c) Allowing bracers to be in a double base prep without a spotter is safe. Currently, braced transitions are allowed with a bracer in a prep without a spotter. This would further a line releases and dismounts that involve a bracer. (e) This allows for a ¼ turn around the bracer to a cradle dismount, much like a release transition to a stunt. (f) Allowing the top person to be caught by new catcher who are in place

and not involved in any other skill prior to the initiation of the dismount does not increase safety risk for the top person, as this is allowed to a stunt in rule 3-5-5.

4-3-3: (P) ART. 3 . . . Braced inversions in a pyramid that do not flip or roll are permitted provided the following conditions are met: ~~c. The top person must maintain head-to-hand/arm contact with a bracer. c.~~ The top person and at least one bracer maintain a hand-to-hand/arm contact.

Rationale: The revision helps clarify the intent of the rule and more accurately describes the connection required between the bracer and the top person.

4-4-3: (P) ART. 3 . . . ~~A participant must not move over or be under a partner stunt or pyramid except when helping build, stabilize or dismount that partner stunt or pyramid. Partner stunts and pyramids may not pass over, under or through other partner stunts or pyramids.~~

Rationale: Dance only change, which allows a dancer to walk under a pyramid connection or a stunt provided they are not the required spotter and does not increase safety risk.

4-4-4: (P) ART. 4 . . . A top person may be moved from a vertical position to a horizontal or cradle position provided all the following conditions are met: ~~d. The catchers are to the side or front of the person(s) moving the top person. d. e.~~ When the catchers are not the original bases, they remain close to the original bases and are in place prior to the movement to the horizontal position.

Rationale: Pendulum type skills from an extended position have been allowed since 2015-16. Determining what is the side and front is sometimes difficult depending on the type of transition. This rule already includes criteria that new catcher have to remain close to the original bases and are in place prior to the movement to the horizontal position, therefore making sure the top person is not transitioned to an horizontal position prior to the catchers being in place. We currently allow dismounts to new catchers and do not specify where the new catcher have to be.

4-5-3: (P) ART. 3 . . . Non-braced release stunts and transitions are permitted: a. The top person must begin and end at prep level or below. The top person may begin and end in a vertical ~~or horizontal~~ position or a cradle.

Rationale: The current rule contradicts Rule 4-4-4b, a top person cannot be released to a horizontal position from prep level. This change removes the contradiction.