



2023-24
Fall Season

“Points of Emphasis”

August 24, 2023

NFHS Rules Changes – Hair Adornments, Religious Items, and Jewelry

The NFHS has adopted several rules changes concerning hair adornments, religious items, and jewelry across multiple sports for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year. Below is a summary of these changes. It is extremely important that all administrators, coaches, officials, and student-athletes are aware of these rules to ensure everyone's safety and a consistent understanding by all stakeholders. **All involved are encouraged to review the full rulebook prior to the season.**

NFHS Rules Changes – Hair Adornments, Religious Items, and Jewelry

Procedures

Prior to the start of the competition, it is the head coach's responsibility to ensure that his or her student-athletes are properly equipped by adhering to all NFHS uniform rules. If an official notices a violation of any NFHS uniform rule, the official should address the violation **with the head coach only** – the official is not to address the violation with the student-athlete or anyone else associated with the team. The head coach is responsible for working with the student-athlete to remedy the violation to the satisfaction of the official.

NFHS Rules Changes – Hair Adornments, Religious Items, and Jewelry

Hair Adornments

The NFHS has updated its rules to allow the use of hair adornments that are made of hard materials if they are securely fastened close to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates, or opponents.

Hair adornments are defined as anything decorative that could be worn on one's head, regardless if they are used to hold a hairstyle in place. Hair adornments include, but are not limited to, barrettes, beads, and bobby pins. Hair charms are considered jewelry and must follow the jewelry rules below.

Hair adornments are allowed in all sports. If the hair adornment becomes non-compliant during play, then the officials shall allow time to fix the hair adornment. If the hair adornment cannot be fixed immediately, then the student-athlete must leave the game to fix the hair adornment.

NFHS Rules Changes – Hair Adornments, Religious Items, and Jewelry

Religious Items

The NFHS has updated its rules to allow uniform flexibility to accommodate religious norms, such as the wearing of undergarments, head coverings and religious jewelry. Head covering worn for religious reasons must be made on non-abrasive, soft materials and must fit securely. Religious medals must be taped and worn under the uniform. Other religious jewelry, such as nose rings, are allowed in all sports but must not pose a safety risk to the player, teammates, or opponents. Accommodations should be made to allow religious jewelry to be worn.

The state association shall be notified, after the event, if there is a concern about a head covering, or any other covering, worn for religious reasons.

These changes are consistent with the “Religious Accommodations” section in NJSIAA’s Policies & Procedures.

School Uniform Modifications

Transgender Clarification:

Pursuant to NJ law and NJSIAA policy, the NJSIAA will approve all reasonable accommodations regarding uniforms as it relates to transgender student-athletes. If there are any questions regarding this on the day of the contest, officials are instructed to continue with the contest and notify the NJSIAA the following day.

All Accommodations:

- Must not violate the NFHS sports specific uniform rules
- Must match the existing uniform in terms of color and logos.
- Must not create an unsafe environment for all participants.



School Uniform Modifications

Schools may permit modifications of uniforms for hair adornments, cultural/religious reasons, jewelry, and transgender modifications **without an approval letter from the NJSIAA.**

Any concerns regarding the accommodations must be addressed through the coach, not the athlete.

Officials are instructed to continue with the contest and notify the NJSIAA if there are concerns the following day. No accommodation may create an unsafe environment for any participant.



Information Updates



- State tournament assigning:
 - preliminary rounds – By Local Assignor
 - Sectionals, Groups, MOC – By NJSIAA
 - Schools are to treat these rounds like a regular-season game regarding the assignment of officials.
 - The local assignor must be contacted ASAP as to the time and location of the game.
 - School/Coaches will not be permitted to request specific officials.
 - Any preferred or not preferred lists used during the regular season will not be used during the state tournament.
 - Only the conflict-of-interest form will be used to assign all tournament games. Assignors will be notified of this procedure.
 - Host schools must notify their assignors within a timely fashion prior to any change of game time and or site location.
 - If your local assignor will not be assigning the tournament games, please contact the regional or state assignor ASAP.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Conflict of Interest

- Currently employed in the district
- Previous employment in the district within the past 10 years
- A close relative employed in the district
- A child attending any school in the district
- A graduate of school within the past ten years

Officials that also coach the sport in which they officiate must be extremely aware of a possible conflict of interest



Information Updates



- Website/Handbook
- Communication / ZebraWeb Memos
- New Testing Platform
- NJSOA
- New Officials Program (\$300)
- Chapter Board Members Info
- No/Yes Lists
- Fan Behavior / Coaches Behavior
- Unsportsmanlike Report Form

Implicit Bias Training



In September 2019, NJSIAA entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the NJ Office of the Attorney General – Division of Civil Rights. This Memorandum required NJSIAA to provide implicit bias training to all registered NJSIAA officials.

To accomplish this requirement, NJSIAA will be hosting a series of workshops on implicit bias during the 2023-2024 school year. The workshops will be virtual and will be hosted on the Zoom platform. They should last no longer than one hour.

This workshop is required! No official will be eligible for post-season state tournament assignments without participating in the workshop. Similar workshops, like the NFHS course, will not be accepted.

This is a one-time-only requirement - it will not be a seasonal or annual requirement.

The following fall sports officials will need to complete this workshop: Cross Country, Field Hockey, Gymnastics, Soccer, Tennis, and Volleyball. If you are a football official that completed the NFL Implicit Bias Training, you are exempt from this workshop. All other football officials will need to take this workshop.

Registering of Officials

All officials, at all levels must be registered with the NJSIAA.

- Email must match with ZebraWeb email

All officials must complete a background check.

- Automatically sent after registration

All officials must complete the concussion in sports course on the NFHS Learn website. (After July 1)

All officials must pay appropriate NJSIAA fees, including the background check fee.

All officials must be in good standing with their chapter.

All officials must pass the NFHS test.

- All tests will close on the last day for that sport.
- All chapters must inform their members the date they want the test completed.



Registration for 2023-2024

Registration Reminders:

Registration will open on April 15, 2023.

Registration will close on March 31, 2024

All registered officials are covered by the NFHS Liability Insurance.

All eligibility requirements will expire on June 30th of each year.

Eligibility Reminders:

Concussion Certification – July 1, Chapters responsibility

Background Checks – Automatically sent

NFHS Test – 80% is passing

Member in good standing – Chapter's responsibility (may change)



Registration Fees

First Sport = \$65

- Registration = \$55
- Background Check = \$10

Each Additional Sport = \$35

- Registration = \$35
- Background Check = \$0

Late Registrations Fee (After March 31) = \$10



Eligibility Warnings



➤ Warning Procedure

1. The first warning email is sent to all officials that have not completed all eligibility checks three weeks before the NJSIAA opening day of that sport.
2. The second warning email is sent two weeks before the NJSIAA opening day of that sport.
3. Forfeiture of events will occur one week before the NJSIAA opening day for that sport.
4. All officials can be assigned to games up to the forfeiture date
5. All officials will turn orange once they receive a warning email, until they clear all their eligibility requirements.

Eligibility Warning Dates



Fall Season	1st Warning	2nd Warning	Removal of Assignments
Cross Country	08/17/2023	08/24/2023	08/31/2023
Field Hockey	08/17/2023	08/24/2023	08/31/2023
Football	08/04/2023	08/11/2023	08/18/2023
Gymnastics	08/17/2023	08/24/2023	08/31/2023
Soccer	08/17/2023	08/24/2023	08/31/2023
Tennis-Girls	08/15/2023	08/22/2023	08/29/2023
Volleyball-Girls	08/17/2023	08/24/2023	08/31/2024
Winter Season	1st Warning	2nd Warning	Removal of Assignments
Basketball	11/23/2023	11/30/2023	12/07/2023
Fencing	11/23/2023	11/30/2023	12/07/2023
Ice Hockey	11/16/2023	11/23/2023	11/30/2023
Swimming & Diving	11/16/2023	11/23/2023	11/30/2023
Track & Field-Winter	11/16/2023	11/23/2023	11/30/2023
Wrestling	11/23/2023	11/30/2023	12/07/2023
Spring Season	1st Warning	2nd Warning	Removal of Assignments
Baseball	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024
Lacrosse-Boys	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024
Lacrosse-Girls	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024
Softball	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024
Track & Field-Spring	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024
Tennis-Boys	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024
Volleyball-Boys	03/11/2024	03/18/2024	03/25/2024

Background Checks

BACKGROUND CHECK DISCLOSURE

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) requires all independently contracted officials to complete a criminal history background check annually. The background check will be ordered by the NJSIAA and submitted to an NJSIAA-approved consumer reporting agency (CRA). The NJSIAA will not accept criminal history background reports from other CRAs that were not ordered by the NJSIAA. Under New Jersey law, you have the right to submit a request to the CRA for a copy of any background check report that the NJSIAA has ordered about you.

BACKGROUND CHECK ADJUDICATION MATRIX

With the NJSIAA Comprehensive National Background Package, the NJSIAA approved background check company will be conducting their background checks using the NJSIAA adjudication matrix listed below:

Unlimited Scope:

- All Felonies
- Misdemeanors involving the following:
 - Sex crimes
 - Crimes involving minors

Seven (7) Year Scope:

- Misdemeanors involving drug related charges

Additional Information is located on NJSIAA website



Sportsmanship Statement

- Must be read at all levels (no choice – AG office mandate)
- Must be read in its entirety (no paraphrasing)
- Must be professional in the delivery
- Must be read to all members of the team regardless of the size of the team.
- PA announcers – different version
- The sportsmanship policy must be adhered to before, during and after the contest.



NEW Sportsmanship Statement

The NJSIAA requires officials to enforce all rules regarding unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and players. There will be no tolerance for any negative behavior, such as taunting, trash-talking and verbal, written, or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. Such behavior will result in being ejected from this event.

All participants must respect the game and respect their opponents.

All participants must respect the game, respect the officials, and respect their opponents.



DQ vs. Game Ejection

Disqualification Rule

Any student-athlete or coach disqualified before, during or after an interscholastic event for unsportsmanlike, flagrant verbal or physical misconduct will be disqualified from the next two regularly scheduled contests, except for football which will carry a one game disqualification.

Game Ejection

Definition of a game ejection is any player removed from a game for behavior that is not considered unsportsmanlike, and does not require a DQ report to be filed.



DQ Reporting

- Official/**Chapter Secretary** must contact the AD by noon of the next day. Acceptable forms of communication are email, talking to the AD at the game, or on the phone. Leaving a message is not acceptable.
- The online report must be sent within 48 hours from the completion of the game
- Take your time and get it right!
- In certain circumstances, officials are encouraged to use video (if available) to confirm the information is correct before filing the DQ with the NJSIAA.
- Schools will not be penalized for playing a player that eventually was disqualified within the 48-hour period.
- Official must notify the coach before they leave the facility that it was a DQ or in the case where multiple DQ's (fight) is possible, inform the coach and AD DQ's are coming.
- DQ is a DQ, officials are not permitted to change their mind after it is called
- DQ appeals will **NOT** be accepted by the NJSIAA
- Please remember to be signed into the website to enter a DQ



Video & DQ Reporting

The NJSIAA encourages officials to review any available video to assist in identifying the appropriate student-athlete/s or to correct a previously submitted disqualification.

Video must not be used to change the DQ ruling itself.

The NJSIAA reserves the right to review videos of egregious violations of our sportsmanship policy



Handshake

- We will approve schools choosing not to do the handshake because of COVID.
- Officials are not required to supervise the handshake.
- It is the schools/coaches' responsibility to supervise the handshake.



Officials Apparel

The NJSIAA is proud to announce our new exclusive supplier of officials' uniforms is Smitty out of Canton, Ohio. Smitty is a nationwide company with an outstanding product, serving many states as well as being the official manufacturer of the NFHS. The NJSIAA will not have a preferred vendor going forward. Not having a preferred vendor will be good for all officials as you may purchase any apparel from any provider across the country. I have provided a link below to the Smitty website. Their website will help you find all local vendors that will be selling Smitty apparel. smittyapparel.com

NJSIAA/Smitty rollout plan:

- The current officials' apparel supplied by Cliff Keen will continue to be sold until December 31st, 2021.
- Starting January 1, 2022, only Smitty apparel will be sold.
- Officials are required to wear Smitty apparel starting July 1, 2023.



Officials Logo

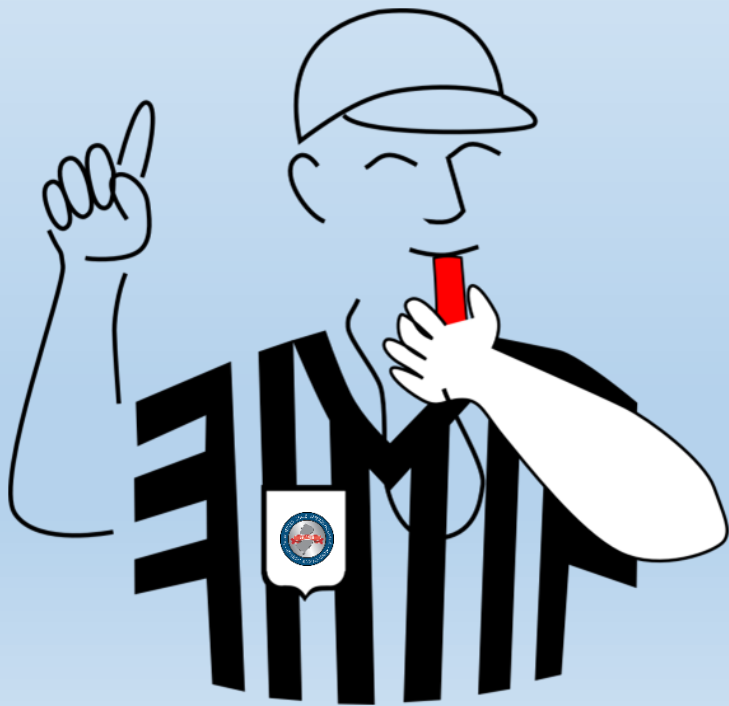
All officials (any level) that are registered with the NJSIAA must wear the approved NJSIAA logo on the chosen apparel (shirt/jacket). All officials must match if there are color options.

For those officials that wear hats during their contests; During the regular season, the hats can have either the NJSIAA logo or their chapters logo; During the tournament, all hats must have the NJSIAA logo.



Professional Development

Please visit the NFHSlearn.com for many free professional development opportunities.



Have a great year!!!

