

## Signal Sequence for Officials Altered in High School Volleyball

In an effort to improve the flow of play in high school volleyball, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee has altered the signal sequence for officials.

The committee approved this significant change to Rule 5-2-1, along with seven other rules revisions, at its January 7-9 meeting in Indianapolis. All changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Rule 5-2-1 now permits the fault-calling referee to indicate the result of a play-point or replay – followed by the nature of the fault. This change allows the scorer to immediately record the score and prepare for other responsibilities such as substitutions and recording time-outs. The committee said play is more consistent since there is no delay in knowing which team will have the next serve.

“By changing the signal sequence, this will allow the scorer to perform his/her duties of recording the score, then moving on to substitutions, in a much more timely fashion,” said Becky Oakes, director of sports and liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee. “This improves the overall opportunity for accuracy and keeping up with play by the scorer.”

Among the other rules changes for the 2013-14 season, four deal with officials procedures and mechanics. In Rule 5-3-4b, instead of reporting to the end lines at the end of a set, teams now will be directed to their appropriate team benches. In 5-3-4e, instead of reporting to the end lines at the end of a match, teams now will follow any local or state protocols.

Rule 5-3-4d clarifies the protocol and mechanics for the second referee to follow when conducting the coin toss for the deciding set, while Rule 5-3-4e states that the second referee shall initial the scoresheet for the final verification of match results.

“I would say that there was an overall trend – not only in rules changes, but editorial changes [as well] – that really focused in on mechanics and protocol of the officials,” Oakes said. “There were several protocols or mechanics that weren’t really addressed, and by not being addressed, there have been inconsistencies in how [the rules] were administered. This [inconsistency] led to other problems, complications or confusion during the match.”

Other changes to take effect in 2013-14 are the use of electronic communication devices. Devices are permitted during a match; however, they may not be used for any review of a referee’s decision. Rule 4-1-4 states that it is no longer an automatic violation for a towel to be tucked in a player’s uniform waistband. Also, Rule 5-1-1 states that all contest officials shall be secured by the host school. Line judges, unless determined otherwise by state association policy, shall be secured in the same fashion. Finally, Rule 11-4-2 grants a special time-out to be called by the referee when a team has an injured player, no time-outs remaining and no legal/exceptional substitutes available. This will impact only those teams with six players on the roster.