

Points of Emphasis

Why Rules Matter – The purpose of the NFHS Spirit Rules is to minimize risk to the spirit participants. For this reason, coaches must recognize why these rules were written and understand rule specifics. In order to continue the promotion of participant safety, coaches have a responsibility to read the rules book, including the situation rulings, to fully comprehend all rules in order to safely and correctly teach skills to athletes. To help athletes progress, coaches should be transferring their knowledge of the rules to participants to help build a foundation of rule awareness and safety. As role models, coaches are expected to follow all of the rules in the intent that they were written. Ignoring or interpreting rules to suit individual needs is not in the best interest of ensuring athletes' safety or minimizing their risk.

Progressions – As with any athletic activity, the coach is responsible for enforcing general risk management rules, recognizing a team's particular ability level, and ensuring that team members follow progressions. Only those skills mastered in practice by being consistently executed safely and correctly should be performed in public. Coaches are accountable for approving and documenting mastery of skills before allowing participants to progress to the next level or to perform skills in public. If trends continue in poor execution of skills, especially elite stunts such as double downs and basket tosses, the NFHS will be forced to review these stunts and minimize risk. Elite level stunts can be performed safely when appropriate progressions are followed and team members are properly trained and prepared.

Transitional Stunts with Loss of Contact - Bracers are becoming more active participants in transitional stunts, especially when the flyer loses contact with the bases. For this reason, coaches must be aware and teach bracer responsibilities for these stunts. In released transition stunts at least one bracer must maintain hand-to-hand/arm contact with the flyer during the entire loss of contact sequence. Holding onto a flyer's foot or uniform, for example, does not constitute contact in this situation. At the same time, bracers may not ever provide primary support for a flyer or intentionally increase a flyer's height. The intent of the bracers is to instead help guide the flyer. When performed correctly, the transitional stunt with loss of contact rule allows teams to execute visually exciting stunts while still maintaining the safety of the individuals involved.