

Electronic Communication by Players Clarified in High School Softball

BY NFHS ON July 9, 2025 | PRESS RELEASE, NFHS NEWS, SOFTBALL STORY, SOFTBALL

No player shall be allowed to transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface in high school softball. This new language in Rule 1-8-6 of the NFHS Softball Rules Book further clarifies the use of electronic devices and what is permitted in the sport after language was added last year to allow for electronic communication for coaching purposes.

This change was the highlight of the NFHS Softball Rules Committee's rules recommendations as a result of the committee's annual rules meeting held June 15-17 at The Alexander hotel in Indianapolis. The NFHS Board of Directors subsequently approved the rules changes to take effect next year.

"While increased media exposure has positively influenced the growth and visibility of softball, the committee determined that the potential risks associated with players transmitting or recording audio or video through devices during live play outweighed the benefits," said Sandy Searcy, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Softball Rules Committee. "As wearable technology continues to evolve, the committee believed it was essential to establish clear guidelines regarding the permissible use of such devices to ensure the safety and integrity of the game."

The proper uniform for an umpire was adjusted in Rule 10-4-2, noting that 'charcoal gray' slacks were allowed, instead of 'heather gray.'

"Manufacturers have ceased production of heather gray umpire pants, and this update will help guide umpires toward selecting pant options that are actively being produced and readily available," Searcy said.

Finally, the 2026 Softball Rules Book will include a reformatted Rule 8 for improved clarity and comprehension. Longer sections were separated, and additional article references were added to penalties and effects.

A complete listing of the softball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Softball."

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, 345,451 girls in 15,635 high schools played fast-pitch softball in 2023-24 making it the fifth-most popular girls sport, while an additional 6,107 girls participated in slow-pitch softball.