



# Ohio High School Athletic Association

Doug Ute, Executive Director

September 2, 2021

TO: Volleyball Head Coaches, Athletic Directors & Officials

FR: Emily Mason, Senior Sport Administrator – Volleyball

RE: NFHS Rule Memo – Hair Adornments

## **NFHS MEMO – HAIR ADORNMENTS**

The NFHS released a memo, which is included below, regarding the wearing of hair adornments that do not meet the requirements in *NFHS Rule 4-1-6*.

**NFHS Rule 4-1-6:** *Hair devices made of soft material and no more than 3 inches wide may be worn in the hair or on the head. Bobby pins, flat clips and flat barrettes, unadorned and no longer than 2 inches, are also allowed.*

The reason for the memo is the topic of hair adornment(s), typically beads, worn in the hair and being non-compliant by *NFHS Rule 4-1-6*—the Volleyball Rules Committee has received many inquiries on the topic.

**For OHSAA member schools, in the instance an athlete is found to be wearing a hair adornment(s) not meeting the requirements of *NFHS Rule 4-1-6*, the following steps may be taken by the officials to avoid disqualification or cutting out of secured hair adornments:**

1. Official shall notify the head coach of the rule violation as soon as the noncompliant hair adornment is identified.
  - a. If the adornment can easily be removed, it must be removed before the athlete can compete.
  - b. If the adornment cannot easily be removed, the athlete must secure the hair adornment(s) in a way that will not pose a risk to the athlete or their teammates.
2. The athlete will be allowed to compete in the match with the adornment removed or secured.

**NOTE:** the action items of numbers 3 and 4 that are listed in the NFHS memo are not necessary steps by the OHSAA

### **INTENT OF NFHS RULE 4-1-6**

Wearing hair adornments [of hard material], can lead to safety issue(s) due to the possible risk of injury caused from the hard adornments being swung into the athlete and/or their teammate. The intent of *NFHS Rule 4-1-6* is a safety measure to all participating players—if a hair adornment made of a hard material worn by an athlete, strikes a teammate, there is **possible risk of injury**.

### **SECURING HAIR ADORNMENTS**

The goal of the modified procedure is to have the player secure the beads/hair adornment(s) as tightly to the head as possible, to avoid the length of the swing [of the hair] with the adornments in the hair. Wearing hair adornments woven tight to the head are considered secure. If the beads/hair adornments are in the length of the hair, options to secure the hair may be to gather it into a bun close to the head, use any legal adornments by *NFHS Rule 4-1-6* (i.e., bobby pins, barrettes, no longer than 2 inches), or any other determined way to gather the hair closer to the head in a way that will not pose a risk.

## **Q & A's**

**Q: My player has beads at the end of their ponytail and they cannot be easily removed at the time of discovery by the official. What should she do?**

**A:** Secure the beads as tight to the head as possible, to avoid the length of the swing (ponytail) of the beads in the hair. Ideas are to gather it closer to the head (i.e., in a bun), or use any legal adornments by *NFHS Rule 4-1-6* (i.e., bobby pins, barrettes, no longer than 2 inches).

**Q: What is the rationale of hair adornments made of hard material not being compliant by *NFHS Rule*?**

**A:** The risk of injury the hard material may cause to the athlete and/or their teammates.

**Q: I am a volleyball official and observe a player has beads in their hair, which does not meet the requirements of *NFHS Rule 4-1-6*. What do I do?**

**A:** Follow the procedure:

1. Official shall notify the head coach of the rule violation as soon as the noncompliant hair adornment is identified.
  - a. If the adornment can easily be removed, it must be removed before the athlete can compete.
  - b. If the adornment cannot easily be removed, the player must secure the hair adornment(s) in a way that will not pose a risk to the athlete or their teammates.
2. The athlete will be allowed to compete in the match with the adornment removed or secured.

Thank you for your attention to this matter!



## Memorandum

**To:** NFHS Member State Associations  
**From:** Lindsey Atkinson, NFHS Director of Sports  
**Subject:** NFHS Volleyball Rule 4-1-6

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The 2022 NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee will be discussing rules language currently prohibiting the wearing of any hair devices that do not meet the requirements of Rule 4-1-6.

**Rule 4-1-6 . . .** *Hair devices made of soft material and no more than 3 inches wide may be worn in the hair or on the head. Bobby pins, flat clips and flat barrettes, unadorned and no longer than 2 inches, are also allowed.*

The current language prohibits the wearing of beads or clips that do not meet the above criteria. While both the NCAA and USA Volleyball have rules language that allows for these hair adornments, these items are noncompliant per NFHS rules.

The NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee is sensitive to how this rule is enforced. The committee strongly believes that equipment rule compliance begins with coach/player education and the responsibility to ensure all players are properly equipped falls directly on the head coach.

In the instance a player is found to be wearing a hair adornment(s) not meeting the requirements of Rule 4-1-6, the following steps may be taken by the officials to avoid disqualification or cutting out of secured hair adornments:

1. Official shall notify the head coach of the rule violation as soon as the noncompliant hair adornment is identified.
  - a. If the adornment can easily be removed, it must be removed before the athlete can compete.
  - b. If the adornment cannot easily be removed, the player must secure the hair adornment(s) in a way that will not pose a risk to the athlete or their teammates.
2. The athlete will be allowed to compete in that match with adornment removed or secured.
3. At the conclusion of the match, the state association shall be notified by the official.
4. The state association shall inform the athletic director/head coach that their team must be legally equipped to participate in the next match.

The NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee will be closely examining the current rules language in January in addition to the current penalty structure. If you have any questions or concerns related to Rule 4-1-6 do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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