

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

NFHS Lends Support to U.S. Department of Education Ruling on Participation in Sports by Disabled Athletes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 25, 2013) — As the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) is in full support of the policy of inclusion that underlies the guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for K-12 schools to provide opportunities for disabled students to participate on athletic teams.

In the most recent High School Athletics Participation Survey, the NFHS’ 51 member state associations and the 19,100 schools in those associations reported that almost 7.7 million boys and girls participate in high school sports. Bob Gardner, NFHS executive director, said even more individuals now will have the opportunity for that once-in-a-lifetime experience of high school sports.

“We believe in the values of participation for all students,” Gardner said. “Providing opportunities for disabled students adds value to their educational experiences.”

While the new OCR guidelines issued Friday do not ensure that a disabled student will be able to play on a school's competitive team, they do deal with five principles that schools must implement to provide modifications for a disabled athlete that would provide that individual the **opportunity** to play on a school's competitive team.

Although the implementation of these guidelines will be on an individual school basis throughout the nation, the NFHS, which writes playing rules for 16 high school sports, will be working with its membership to assist schools.

"The NFHS and our member state associations will work together with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to enhance participation opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities," Gardner said.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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