

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

NFHS Responds to Maryland Track Situation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 17, 2008) — Last Saturday, Juashuanna Kelly, a runner on the girls track team at Theodore Roosevelt High School in Washington, D.C., elected not to compete in the Montgomery Invitational indoor track and field meet in Maryland after meet officials advised her that she would need to replace her undergarment because it violated track and field playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS).

The NFHS issues the following statement regarding this incident:

“The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities, writes playing rules in 17 sports for boys and girls competition at the high school level, including track and field.

“Rule 4-3-1-d of the NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Book states that ‘Any visible garment(s) worn underneath the uniform top or bottom shall be a single, solid color and unadorned except for 1) a single school name or insignia no more than 2¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2¼ inches and 2) a single, visible manufacturer’s logo as per NFHS rules.’

“Using preventive officiating, meet officials at the Montgomery Invitational checked uniforms prior to the events to make sure they complied with NFHS uniform rules. Since Kelly’s one-piece undergarment was multi-colored (blue, orange, white), it was in violation of the uniform rules. The meet officials did not disqualify Kelly; they informed her she would have to replace the multi-colored undergarment with a single-colored undergarment, an option which she declined and, thus, did not compete.

“The head covering, which was a part of Kelly’s one-piece undergarment, nor the length of the undergarment were in violation of NFHS rules. She could have worn the same style of undergarment, with a head covering, as long as the undergarment was one color throughout the entire piece of clothing. The NFHS track uniform rule was put in place for consistency across the board and for ease in identifying runners at the finish line. Multi-colored undergarments cause greater identification problems for track officials.

“The track uniform is a point of emphasis by the NFHS this year in an effort to have more consistent and widespread enforcement of the rule. Because of her Muslim faith, there were reports that her uniform undergarment was ruled unacceptable on religious grounds. While Kelly’s faith requires her to cover all parts of the body except her hands and face, a single-colored undergarment with a hood would have been acceptable both from an NFHS rules standpoint as well as meeting the requirements of her Muslim faith.

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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 fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine 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 18,500 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; 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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