



NEPSAC

**New England Preparatory
School Athletic Council**

NEPSAC Sports Medicine Advisory Council (SMAC) Support Statement for Inclusion
October 6, 2022

Consistent with NEPSAC, SMAC supports and works toward creating diverse, equitable, and inclusive athletic opportunities for student athletes.

NEPSAC has made the following rule modification to the NCAA rule that governs "Articles & Jewelry".

Players may wear hair in styles associated with their race, religion, or culture, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, twists, locks, hijabs and headscarves. Items in hair that are considered permanent or semi-permanent, including, but not limited to, beads at the ends of braids, are permissible if they are secured to one's head or covered.

The National Federation of High Schools has recently made the following rule change to soccer and volleyball.

Allows hair adornments provided they are securely fastened close to the head and do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates, or opponents.

Rationale: *Creates inclusivity of hair styles while maintaining that the risk of injury to the athlete, teammates and opponents should not be compromised*

Based on the limited current available studies on the safety of hair adornments SMAC is unable to verify the safety of this rule modification as we cannot make sure or demonstrate that the rule is accurate or justified. SMAC is committed to creating safe and inclusive athletics for all students within NEPSAC and we will continue to review and revise this statement as research allows.

