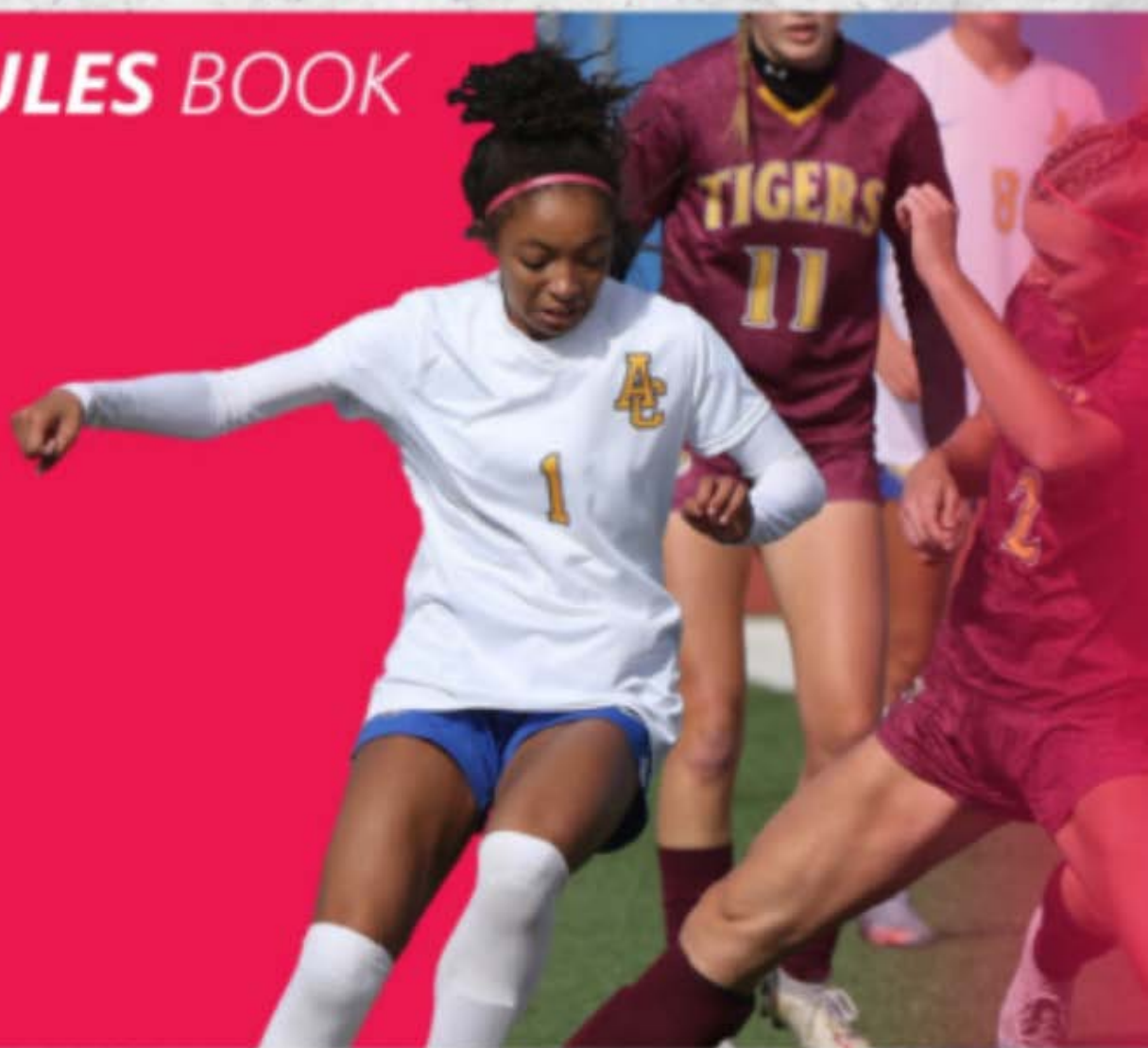


# SOCCER

////// **RULES** BOOK



2024-25



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# 2024-25 NFHS SOCCER RULES BOOK

**Dr. KARISSA L. NIEHOFF, Publisher**  
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**NFHS Publications**

To maintain the sound traditions of this sport, encourage sportsmanship and minimize the inherent risk of injury, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) writes playing rules for varsity competition among student-athletes of high school age. High school coaches, officials and administrators who have knowledge and experience regarding this particular sport and age group volunteer their time to serve on the rules committee. Member associations of the NFHS independently make decisions regarding compliance with or modification of these playing rules for the student-athletes in their respective states.

NFHS rules are used by education-based and non-education-based organizations serving children of varying skill levels who are of high school age and younger. In order to make NFHS rules skill-level and age-level appropriate, the rules may be modified by any organization that chooses to use them. Except as may be specifically noted in this rules book, the NFHS makes no recommendation about the nature or extent of the modifications that may be appropriate for children who are younger or less skilled than high school varsity athletes.

Every individual using these rules is responsible for prudent judgment with respect to each contest, athlete and facility, and each athlete is responsible for exercising caution and good sportsmanship. These rules should be interpreted and applied so as to make reasonable accommodations for athletes, coaches and officials with disabilities.

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**Published by the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS,**

**PO Box 690, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206;**

**Phone: 317-972-6900, [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).**

**Cover photo courtesy of South Dakota Public Broadcasting.**



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## 2024-25 Soccer Rules Changes

(For comments on the 2024-25 rules changes, see page 88)

**4-1-4d** — Clarifies there is no limitation on the color of tape or sock worn at or below the ankle under the competition sock. Any tape or similar material used above the ankle must match the sock's color.

**Rule 12** — Reorganized Fouls and Misconduct Rule for clarity and consistency of use. A new section was added addressing Stopping a Promising Attack, language was added to Denial of an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity that all conditions must be met for DOGSO to be applied, and the section on Ejections now lists the offenses by severity.

## 2024-25 Soccer Major Editorial Changes

3-4-3, 6-2-3, 12-5-1f(15)



## 2024-25 Points of Emphasis

### Official's Toolbox for Game Management

A referee's "toolbox" for game management consists of various skills, techniques and strategies they can employ to effectively officiate a match and maintain control over the players, coaches and game environment. Here are a few items in a referee's toolbox:

- **Communication:** Clear and effective communication with players, coaches and the officiating team is key. Referees can use verbal and non-verbal cues to convey decisions, instructions and warnings. Working constructively and in cooperation with game site administration is important to facilitating a positive game environment.
- **Game Control:** Referees use their authority to manage the tempo and flow of the game. They may intervene to calm tensions, prevent conflicts or address unsporting behavior. This can include issuing verbal warnings, cautions, ejections or temporarily suspending the game and working with administrators to deal with spectators or outside interference.
- **Development:** With the requirement to explain misconduct incidents to both coaches, an educational atmosphere is an important component of the high school game and officials should approach interactions positively with respect and professionalism. Officials should clearly and concisely state the specific nature of the misconduct fostering a positive learning environment in the face of difficult situations.
- **Adaptability:** Every game is different, and referees must adapt to changing circumstances. They may need to adjust their officiating style based on the level of play, the behavior of the players, or unexpected developments during the match.

By utilizing these tools effectively while managing emotions and remaining calm and composed, referees can promote fair play, ensure player safety, and contribute to a positive and enjoyable experience for everyone involved in the game.

### Stopping a Promising Attack

The inclusion of the considerations for a promising attack serves as a crucial clarification in the rules, specifically addressing what was previously referred to as "tactical fouls." While the considerations are clear for obvious goal-scoring opportunities, promising attacks may be more difficult to recognize. The strategy of tactically fouling with the aim to interrupt the attacking team's progress without necessarily denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity is a form of misconduct. Sections 7 and 8 in Rule 12 highlight the importance of discerning the nature of these types of tactical offenses for consistent and fair officiating.

Like DOGSO situations, fouls that stop a promising attack (SPA) might not be severe in nature, but the offense's impact on the attacking team's potential needs to be recognized and dealt with accordingly. Officials need to understand the nuanced dynamics of play and maintain a tactical awareness of the advancing phase of play to recognize SPA incidents. Referees are tasked with evaluating multiple factors to determine the promise of an attack, encompassing elements like player positioning, ball control, defensive presence, skill and the pace of the game. Importantly, any foul that unfairly stops or interrupts a promising attack is considered misconduct, warranting a caution and a yellow card for the offending



player. If SPA occurs within the offender's penalty area, and the foul is an attempt to play the ball, the player is not cautioned if the referee awards a penalty kick. In other SPA circumstances inside the penalty area (e.g., holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.) the offending player must be cautioned.

### **After a Goal**

After a goal is scored, officials must stay alert as there are several important considerations and tasks to manage. In addition to lower priority administrative tasks, officials must be vigilant after a goal for any signs of escalating tension or potential misconduct and address any issues promptly to prevent situations from escalating. Key aspects of concern include:

- Working as a team with other officials (i.e., lead assistant referee) to determine if the ball was, in fact, scored properly by wholly crossing the goal line, under the crossbar, and between the goal posts. The crew must ensure that the goal was legally scored and there were no infringements or violations during the buildup to the goal. This includes checking for any potential offside offenses by the attacking team that would prompt the goal to be disallowed.
- Observing players' reactions and behaviors after the goal to identify and address any unsporting actions or misconduct. This includes potential confrontations, dissent or provocative actions. If the team that scored is behind, it may try to quickly retrieve the ball from the goal or grab it out of the opponent's hands. The defense that was setting an offside trap may swarm around the assistant referee to argue about a non-call. These can be volatile situations and proactive officials will intervene quickly to make their presence known. Encourage attackers to return to their side of the field promptly or remind defenders the decisions of the officiating crew must be respected before their actions rise to misconduct. When behavior crosses the line, recognize it and deal with it firmly and fairly according to the rules.
- Monitoring player celebrations to prevent excessive or inappropriate behavior. While celebrating after a goal is allowable, which might include leaving the field, players cannot prohibit a timely restart with excessive or prolonged acts. This includes unsporting gestures, removal of shirts, taunting, or any actions that could incite the opposing team or spectators.
- Record keeping and beckoning in substitutes. The crew should include in their pre-game discussion how to maintain the game record while also managing players after a goal is scored. The crew should establish before the game who is responsible for keeping an eye on the field while another official is recording in their book. Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench provided they check-in. Officials need to be mindful of those substitutes which may trickle in and work together as a crew to recognize substitutes wanting to enter the game.

After a goal, there is much more to do than just adding a tally mark in the book. Officials should focus on the players, recognize situations that could lead to conflicts, be present and proactive in their responses, and deal with misconduct appropriately.



# Play Rulings

The situations contained in this book have been developed from actual questions which have been raised in administering the many thousands of interscholastic soccer games each year. The situations have been arranged by rule number. New or revised situations are shaded.

All interpretations have the approval of the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee, which consists of coaches, officials and athletic administrators active on the high school level. Each ruling has been given careful study and is intended to provide for fair, easily administered competition.

Additional interpretations may be received by contacting your state high school association. In case of doubt, the state association shall receive a ruling from the NFHS office.

Each state high school association adopting these rules is the sole and exclusive source of binding rules interpretations for contests involving its member schools. Any person having questions about the interpretation of NFHS rules should contact the rules interpreter designated by the respective state high school association. The NFHS is the sole and exclusive source of model interpretations of NFHS rules. State rules interpreters may contact the NFHS for model rules interpretations. No other model rules interpretations should be considered.

## DISCLAIMER – NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals, and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time. Please see pages 94-97 for these position statements.

## FACILITIES

Because facilities used for high school athletics come in many shapes, sizes and conditions, on-site event management may on occasion conclude that compliance with NFHS directives about event configuration is not feasible. Under all circumstances, on-site event management should utilize set-ups that minimize risk. If a given facility cannot be made reasonably hazard-free, the event should be relocated.

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# COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect and the student's welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors:

- **Coaches** shall be aware that they have a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- **Coaches** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- **Coaches** shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.
- **Coaches** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- **Coaches** shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct the program in harmony with the total school program.
- **Coaches** shall master the contest rules and shall teach the rules to their team members. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- **Coaches** shall exert their influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs and administrators.
- **Coaches** shall respect and support contest officials. Coaches shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
- **Coaches** should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
- **Coaches** shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give students special consideration.
- **Coaches** shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school association.



# OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS

Officials at an interscholastic athletic event are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all interscholastic officials.

- **Officials** shall master both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- **Officials** shall work with each other and their state associations in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- **Officials** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interaction with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public.
- **Officials** shall not use any form of alcohol or tobacco, or be under the influence (i.e., impaired by) a controlled or illicit substance(s), beginning with arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.
- **Officials** shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- **Officials** shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- **Officials** shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that student-athletes, coaches and the public hold for the profession.
- **Officials** shall, while enforcing the rules of play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes. Where appropriate, officials shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
- **Officials** shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.
- **Officials** shall maintain an ethical approach while participating in forums, chat rooms and all forms of social media.





# Rule **1** The Field of Play

## SECTION 1 SIZE OF THE FIELD

**ART. 1 . . .** The field of play shall be rectangular, 100 to 120 yards long and 55 to 80 yards wide. The minimum dimension that is highly recommended for high schools is 110 yards by 65 yards.

**NOTE:** Except as specifically stated within the rules, any dimensions or other information in diagrams of fields is suggested only; it is not required by NFHS rules. The construction and layout of all facilities used for high school competition are subject to any applicable laws and building codes, and to the sound judgments of the person in charge of the facilities.

## SECTION 2 MARKINGS

**ART. 1 . . .** The field of play shall be marked in accordance with the Soccer Field Diagram with non-caustic, distinctively colored material that is not injurious to the participants. Where games are played on a field marked for other sports, it is recommended markings which contrast in color to the other sport markings be used to indicate the soccer field areas.

**ART. 2 . . .** Boundary lines are a part of the field of play. Each line shall be 4 inches wide. The longer boundary lines are the touchlines, and the shorter boundary lines are the goal lines.

**ART. 3 . . .** A halfway line shall be marked across the field, equidistant and parallel to the goal lines.

**ART. 4 . . .** The center of the field of play shall be indicated by a spot 9 inches in diameter or other suitable mark; and, with this spot as the center, a circle with a 10-yard radius shall be drawn around it.

**ART. 5 . . .** A goal area shall be indicated on each end of the field of play by two lines drawn at right angles to the goal line, 10 yards from the midpoint of the goal line. These lines shall extend into the field of play for a distance of 6 yards. The ends of these lines shall be joined by a line parallel to the goal line. The lines are part of the goal area.

**ART. 6 . . .** A penalty area shall be indicated on each end of the field of play by two lines drawn at right angles to the goal line, 22 yards from the midpoint of the goal line. These lines shall extend into the field of play for a distance of 18 yards. The ends of these lines shall be joined by a line parallel to the goal line. The lines are part of the penalty area.

**ART. 7 . . .** A 2-foot penalty kick line or a penalty spot 9 inches in diameter shall be drawn on each end of the field of play at a point 12 yards from the midpoint of the goal line and extending 1-foot on each side of the undrawn centerline and parallel to the goal line.



**ART. 8 . . .** A penalty arc is the restraining line for penalty kicks and shall be indicated by using the center of the penalty kick line for drawing an arc with a 10-yard radius outside the penalty area.

**ART. 9 . . .** A corner area shall be indicated on each corner of the field of play by an arc with a radius of 1 yard from the intersection of the goal line and the touchline.

**ART. 10 . . .** A 1-yard-long hash mark may be made perpendicular to the goal line and touchline, situated 6 inches beyond, but not touching, outside the field of play 11 yards from each corner of the field to assist the officials in enforcement of encroachment during corner kicks.

**ART. 11 . . .** When markings become obscured by the elements during the course of a game, the markings shall be assumed to be present and decisions shall be rendered by officials to interpret original positions of the markings.

### **SECTION 3 CORNER FLAGS**

**ART. 1 . . .** The corner flag should be of a bright color, easily distinguishable from surroundings and approximately 2 feet long by 1 foot wide. It should be securely fastened to a post not less than 5 feet high with a non-pointed top, made of smooth, consistent and/or flexible material such as wood, plastic, or plastic foam. These flagposts shall be placed at each corner of the field of play and shall not be removed during the course of play. Similar flagposts may be placed opposite the halfway line at least 1 yard outside the touchline.

### **SECTION 4 GOALS AND NETS**

**ART. 1 . . .** The goals shall be placed on the goal line. Each goal shall consist of two upright posts between 4 inches and 5 inches in projected diameter placed an equal distance from the corner flags and 8 yards apart (inside measurement). The rear of each goal post shall be on the outer edge of the goal line. The tops of the posts shall be joined by a 4-inch, but not more than 5-inch horizontal crossbar, the lower edge of which shall be 8 feet from the ground. Soccer goals shall be white. No markings other than a single manufacturer's identification/logo may appear on the goal posts or crossbar.

Metal pipes of 3 to 4 inches in diameter may be used. If portable goals are used, the goals shall be adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted to the ground. If used on a football field, the front of the portable goals should be at least 2 yards in front of the base of the existing football goalposts.

The vertical portion of the soccer goal post may be padded with commercially manufactured material for soccer goals. This material shall be white, have a maximum thickness of 1 inch, be a minimum of 72 inches high and shall be properly secured. No markings other than a single manufacturer's identification/logo may appear on the goal post padding.



**ART. 2 . . .** Nets shall be attached to the posts and crossbar and be firmly fastened to the ground behind the goals. Each net shall be supported so that it will extend backward at the level of the crossbar for a distance of 24 inches from the crossbar. Nets may be multicolored; however, no markings other than a single manufacturer's identification/logo may appear on the net.

## **SECTION 5 OFFICIAL AND TEAM AREAS**

**ART. 1 . . .** There shall be marked areas for each team's bench, separated by an official area for entering substitutes, scorers and timers. These marked areas shall be at least 10 feet from the touchline. The state association shall be notified if team areas are not marked.

**ART. 2 . . .** The official area shall extend 5 yards on each side of the halfway line.

**ART. 3 . . .** The team areas shall extend from 10 yards on each side of the halfway line for a distance of 20 yards, and each area shall be marked by a solid line. Coaches, bench personnel and team members shall be restricted to the team area.

### **EXCEPTIONS:**

1. When teams are placed on the opposite sides of the field, each team area shall be located as specified above and shall be placed diagonally across from each other.
2. A team member may leave the bench area in order to warm up prior to becoming a substitute.

## **SECTION 6 SPECTATORS' AREA**

**ART. 1 . . .** Spectators shall be confined to areas at least 10 feet from the touchline, team/official area and goal line. No one shall be permitted directly behind either goal unless in bleachers.

## **SECTION 7 FIELD CONDITIONS**

**ART. 1 . . .** Up until the moment the game begins, it is the responsibility of the host institution or game management to judge whether or not the condition of the field, the elements and other conditions affecting the safety of the field of play allow for a safe game to begin. Once the game begins, and until it ends, the determination of whether or not a game may be safely continued shall be made by the referee.

---

# **SITUATIONS AND RULINGS**

## **RULE 1 — THE FIELD OF PLAY**

### **MARKINGS**

**1.2.1 SITUATION A:** The game is to be played on a field which is also used for football. The playing area and boundary lines for soccer are: (a) marked with white lines similar to the yard lines for football; (b) marked with contrasting colored material which is noninjurious to eyes or skin. **RULING:** In (a), if the referee



considers that the lines are not confusing, the game may be played. However, it is recommended that the soccer markings contrast with other field markings. In (b), the field is properly marked.

**1.2.1 SITUATION B:** A game is to be played on a field where the home team's logo obscures the halfway line and center circle. **RULING:** Illegal. The game may be played, however, the referee shall notify the state association following the game.

**1.2.4 SITUATION:** A referee inspecting the field prior to the game detects (a) center circle spot 9 inches in diameter; (b) an "X" intersecting the halfway line; (c) no mark other than the halfway line. **RULING:** (a) legal; (b) legal; (c) illegal.

**NOTE:** Referee should notify the state association of a deficiency, but should not delay the start of play.

**1.2.6 SITUATION:** Observation of the penalty-area line leads the referee to believe measurements are incorrect. Upon measuring, it is verified the measurements are not correct. **RULING:** The lines shall be used as marked, but the state association will be advised of the error with corrections to be made prior to the next game.

**1.2.10 SITUATION:** When inspecting field markings, the referee notices that hash marks are not present 11 yards from the touchline and perpendicular to the goal line. The referee determines that the game will not start until the hash marks are made. **RULING:** Incorrect decision. Although these marks may be made, the marks are not mandatory.

## GOALS AND NETS

**1.4.1 SITUATION A:** Referee observes that goal posts are placed (a) in front of goal line; (b) front edges are behind goal line; (c) rear edge on outer edge of goal line. **RULING:** Improper placement in (a) and (b) and should be brought to the attention of the proper authorities. Correct placement in (c).

**1.4.1 SITUATION B:** While inspecting the field prior to the game, the head referee detects that the portable goals in use are not securely anchored to the ground. **RULING:** The game will not start until the goals are properly secured.

**1.4.1 SITUATION C:** During a pregame field check, the referee observes that the goalposts have two 48-inch, commercially manufactured pads, one above the other, on each upright. The referee considers that the padding is safe and allows the game to proceed. **RULING:** Legal.

**1.4.1 SITUATION D:** During play, a goal gets moved back off the goal line (away from the field), and the entire ball passes beyond the goal line, but does not pass beyond the goal posts and under the cross bar because the goal is not in its proper position. A goal is awarded. **RULING:** Correct decision. The goal shall be assumed to be in the proper position.



**SPECTATORS' AREA**

**1.6.1 SITUATION:** The referee instructs game management to tell the spectators to remain 10 feet behind the touchline, goal line and/or team/official area, or the game may be terminated. **RULING:** Legal. (5-3-2e)

**FIELD CONDITIONS**

**1.7.1 SITUATION A:** Immediately prior to the start of the game, the home team's athletic director decides that the field is not playable and will not allow the game to begin. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**1.7.1 SITUATION B:** During the course of a game, a downpour occurs. The head referee or center referee suspends the contest. **RULING:** Legal. (5-3-2e)

## Rule 2 The Ball

**SECTION 1 SUPPLY**

**ART. 1 . . .** It is the responsibility of the home team to provide three or more official game balls of similar quality. If the home team cannot provide three balls, the referee shall choose game balls from those offered by both teams.

**SECTION 2 SPECIFICATIONS**

**ART. 1 . . .** Game balls shall be spherical, with a circumference of at least 27 inches but no more than 28 inches (0.68 to 0.71 meters). The weight of the balls at the start of the game shall be at least 14 ounces but no more than 16 ounces (396 to 453 grams).

**ART. 2 . . .** The outer casing of the ball shall be leather or other similar material that is weather resistant.

**ART. 3 . . .** The ball shall be inflated to the manufacturer's recommended pressure.

**ART. 4 . . .** If the ball becomes deflated during play, it is declared dead and the game is resumed by a drop ball at the spot where it was last played. If the ball becomes deflated within the goal area, then the ball is dropped subject to the provisions of 9-2. A ball that becomes deflated during a penalty kick results in retaken kick as per 14-1-7.

**ART. 5 . . .** The ball shall include the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The mark can be displayed in any of the following formats shown below. A current list of NFHS authenticated products can be found at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) under "Resources."





# Rule **3** The Players and Substitutions

## SECTION 1 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

**ART. 1 . . .** The game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of not more than 11 players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. Each team shall designate a team captain on the field who:

- a. is the team's representative;
- b. may address an official on matters of interpretation;
- c. may address an official to obtain essential information.

**ART. 2 . . .** A game shall not be started with fewer than seven properly uniformed players on each team. After the game is started, it may not be continued with fewer than seven players on either team. If a team has fewer than seven eligible players, the game shall be terminated and a forfeit shall be declared.

**EXCEPTION:** Should a team drop below seven players due to a player having to leave the field for a temporary equipment repair, minor injury, or due to a blood-rule situation, the official may suspend the game momentarily until the problem is corrected and then continue the game.

**ART. 3 . . .** Each team shall submit a team roster, containing the first and last names and numbers of all players, and substitutes, all bench personnel and all coaches, to the officials at least five minutes prior to the start of the contest. The game shall not begin until this is complete. Players, substitutes, numbers, bench personnel and coaches may be added to the roster after the start of play. Goalkeepers may have two numbers listed on the roster, a goalkeeper's number and a field player's number.

## SECTION 2 POSITION OF PLAYERS

**ART. 1 . . .** The team winning the coin toss shall have the option of:

- a. choosing which end of the field to defend; or
- b. taking the kickoff as per 5-2-2d(3).

**ART. 2 . . .** Teams shall exchange goal lines after each regular period and each overtime period.

## SECTION 3 SUBSTITUTIONS

**ART. 1 . . .** Time for Substitutions: either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench between periods.

**ART. 2 . . .** Time for Substitutions: either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench, provided the players report to the scorer's table or nearest official and are beckoned in as per 3-4-1a:

- a. when a goal is scored.
- b. when a player is injured:
  1. A coach or appropriate health-care professional may not enter the field without approval from a referee.



2. If the referee stops the clock and beckons a coach or appropriate health-care professional onto the field for an apparent injury to any player, the player shall leave the field. If the referee signals the clock to be stopped and the appropriate health-care professional or coach is not beckoned, the player does not have to leave the field.
3. The injured player leaving the field may be replaced from the bench. If the injured player is the goalkeeper, they shall be replaced by either a substitute or a field player.
4. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (including but not limited to loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion)
5. If the injured player is being replaced during a penalty kick situation, the substitute may not take the penalty kick.

**ART. 3 . . .** Time for Substitutions: either team may substitute an unlimited number of players, provided the players have checked in per 3-4-1d:

- a. on a goal kick;
- b. when a player from either team is cautioned (yellow card):
  1. The cautioned player shall leave the field but may be replaced from the bench.
  2. The cautioned player may not re-enter the game until the next legal opportunity for that team.
  3. Should the team with the cautioned player elect to play shorthanded, the cautioned player may not be replaced until the next legal substitution opportunity for that team.
  4. If the cautioned player is being replaced during a penalty kick situation, the substitute may not take the penalty kick.
- c. when a player from either team is ejected (red card):
  1. A team shall not substitute for a player who has been ejected except for the goalkeeper who is required by 3-1-1. When a team substitutes for an ejected goalkeeper, a field player shall be removed.
  2. If an ejected goalkeeper is being replaced during a penalty kick situation, the substitute may not take the penalty kick.
- d. when a player is required to leave the field because of improper equipment or communicable disease concerns:
  1. An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on the uniform or has blood on the body shall be directed to leave the field until the bleeding has stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition.
  2. The player shall leave the field and may be replaced from the bench.
  3. If the removed player is being replaced during a penalty kick situation, the substitute may not take the penalty kick.
- e. when bench personnel is cautioned or ejected.



**ART. 4 . . .** The team in possession of the ball may substitute an unlimited number of players (provided the substitutes have checked in per 3-4-1d):

- a. on a throw-in;
- b. on a corner kick.

**ART. 5 . . .** The team NOT in possession of the ball may substitute an unlimited number of players at a throw-in or corner kick if the team in possession of the ball is also substituting (provided the substitutes have checked in as per 3-4-1d).

**ART. 6 . . .** A substitute becomes a player when the substitute is beckoned onto the field of play, at which time the replaced individual is no longer a player.

**ART. 7 . . .** A team that elects or is required to play shorthanded for reasons other than misconduct may have the player(s) re-enter the game during a dead ball. The re-entry shall occur from the official area after being beckoned in according to 3-4-1a.

**ART. 8 . . .** A team which starts a game with fewer than 11 players, but at least seven players, may have its additional player(s) enter the game during a dead ball provided that the names of the additional players are on the team roster as per 3-1-3.

#### **SECTION 4 PROCEDURE FOR SUBSTITUTION**

**ART. 1 . . .** To request a substitution, a substitute who desires to enter the game shall report to the official's area, giving the jersey number and the number of the player being replaced.

- a. The substitute shall remain at the official's area until a referee beckons the substitute onto the field of play. When there is no separate scorer/timer, incoming substitutes shall report directly to the nearest official from the official area.
- b. A substitute may enter the field of play at the beginning of a period without being beckoned by the referee. After a goal is scored and when a player is injured and removed from the field, substitutes shall be beckoned.
- c. If entry is requested at any other time, the scorer shall require the timer to signal for the substitution immediately when there is a prescribed substitution opportunity.
- d. When an entry is taking place on a throw-in, a goal kick or a corner kick, the substitute(s) shall have reported to the official's area prior to the dead-ball situation.
- e. The player being replaced shall exit the field on the bench side unless the player is injured and unable to exit to that side.

**ART. 2 . . .** Entry onto the field of play by a substitute except at the beginning of a period is prohibited without the approval of a referee subject to provision in 3-4-1b.



**SECTION 5 GOALKEEPER CHANGE**

**ART. 1 . . .** The goalkeeper may change places with a player on the field whenever the clock is stopped or a substitution takes place, provided the uniforms are legal. Any time the goalkeeper is changed, a referee shall be notified.

**PENALTY:** Both players (goalkeepers) shall receive a warning at the next stoppage of play.

**SECTION 6 EXCESSIVE PLAYER SUBSTITUTIONS**

**ART. 1 . . .** When a team repeatedly substitutes to consume time, a referee shall order the timer to stop the time clock during such substitutions and shall notify the coach of the offending team. The repetition may be construed as unsporting conduct.

**SITUATIONS AND RULINGS****RULE 3 — THE PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS****NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

**3.1.1 SITUATION A:** Team A's coach decides to sacrifice defense and sends in a substitute for the goalkeeper in order to keep 11 players on the field. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** As long as there is a designated, properly attired goalkeeper.

**3.1.1 SITUATION B:** The referee observes that Team A has 12 players in the game (a) before the game is restarted following a goal by A2; or (b) after the game has been restarted following a goal by A2. **RULING:** In (a), the goal is disallowed and the game is restarted with a goal kick by Team B. However, in (b), the goal would stand. (5-1-2) **COMMENT:** In both instances, the appropriate player would be removed from the game and cautioned. The game is resumed according to how it was interrupted.

**3.1.3 SITUATION A:** A player who is not listed on the roster scores a goal. The goal is allowed. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Since players may be added to the roster after the start of play, a goal by a player who is not on the roster should be allowed and the player's name and number should be added to the roster.

**3.1.3 SITUATION B:** Team A begins the game with seven players. The rest of the team arrives after the game has begun and the coach writes the names on the roster and the players enter the game at the next stoppage of play after approval by the referee. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Players can be added as long as the players' names have been listed on the roster, even if the names are added after the beginning of the game. (3-3-8)

**SUBSTITUTIONS**

**3.3.2 SITUATION A:** Player A is injured while on the field and play is stopped. Both teams substitute three players from the bench without checking in before play resumes. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** Unlimited substitutions are permitted but the substitutes shall check in and be beckoned in by the referee. (3-4-1a)



**3.3.2 SITUATION B:** A goal is scored and Team A elects to substitute four players from the bench without being beckoned by the referee. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** All players shall report and be beckoned by the referee. (3-4-1a)

**3.3.2 SITUATION C:** The goalkeeper goes down after making a save and remains motionless for a few seconds, continuing to possess the ball. The official stops the clock to review the situation. The referee determines that play should continue. No attendants are beckoned and play is restarted with a drop ball. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Since no coach or medical personnel were beckoned on the field, the player may remain in the game.

**3.3.2 SITUATION D:** An attacker collides with the opposing goalkeeper and both appear to be injured. The referee stops the clock and beckons the coaches to attend to each player. Both players leave the field, but neither coach chooses to replace the injured players. **RULING:** Legal for field player, and illegal not to have a designated goalkeeper. (3-1-1)

**3.3.2 SITUATION E:** Players A2 and B2 hit heads in attempting to head the ball and both are injured. In the opinion of the referee, player A2 exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion. **RULING:** Player A2 shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

**3.3.2 SITUATION F:** Player A2 goes down and is apparently injured. Following a preliminary examination, the official stops the clock and beckons A2's coach or athletic trainer onto the field to attend the injured player, but the coach refuses to comply. **RULING:** The injured player shall be removed and may be replaced.

**3.3.2 SITUATION G:** Player A2 (a) is injured and attended to on the field; (b) is issued a yellow card for a cautionable offense. Although in both instances Player A2 shall leave the field, Team A coach elects to play one player short. **RULING:** Legal.

**3.3.2 SITUATION H:** Player A2 is injured. After examining Player A2, the referee stops the clock and beckons A2's coach or athletic trainer onto the field to attend to the injured player. (a) The athletic trainer for Team A attends to the injured player while Coach A gives instruction to players on the field; (b) Coach A attends to the injured player and gives instruction while walking out and back to the coaching area; (c) opposing Coach B calls team to the sideline and gives instruction to the team; (d) Coach A, while on the sideline, calls for a substitute for A2 and gives instruction to the substitute. **RULING:** Legal in (a), (b), (c) and (d).

**3.3.2 SITUATION I:** Player A2 leaves the field due to an injury and the team elects to play shorthanded. After the game has been restarted, (a) Player A12 replaces Player A2; (b) Player A2 re-enters the field. **RULING:** (a) Player A12 may enter the game only at the next legal substitution opportunity; (b) Player A2 may re-enter the field at the next stoppage of play. (3-3-7)

**3.3.2 SITUATION J:** Player A2 is injured during the course of play but manages to hobble across the touchline to avoid disrupting play and to allow the game to continue. At the next stoppage in play (not necessarily a stoppage for which



Team A would normally be permitted to substitute), the coach for Team A substitutes for Player A2 directly from the bench. **RULING:** Illegal, unless Player A2 has been ejected under the provisions of 12-9 that do not permit a substitution and provided that the other prerequisites for proper substitution have not been met.

**COMMENT:** An injured player leaving the field under one's own power would not be considered a violation of 12-9-1a.

**3.3.3 SITUATION A:** Team A substitutes an unlimited number of players that reported prior to (a) a player caution, (b) an injured player required to leave the field, (c) a player has blood on the uniform or (d) a bench personnel caution or ejection. **RULING:** Legal in (a), (b), (c) and (d).

**3.3.3 SITUATION B:** Player A fouls Opponent B in the penalty area, resulting in a penalty kick for Team B. Player A is ejected for receiving a second caution. Player B leaves the game due to an injury, or because of communicable disease concerns. (a) The substitute for Player B takes the penalty kick; (b) Player A is a goalkeeper and a substitute replaces the goalkeeper and a field player is removed. **RULING:** (a) Incorrect procedure. A substitute entering the game shall not take the penalty kick. (b) Correct procedure.

**3.3.3 SITUATION C:** Goalkeeper A fouls Opponent B in the penalty area resulting in a penalty kick for Team B. Goalkeeper A is ejected for committing serious foul play. **RULING:** Team A is permitted to substitute a goalkeeper from the bench but shall have a field player leave the field and a field player is removed. Team A shall play short due to the ejection (12-9-2) but shall have a goalkeeper (3-1-1).

**3.3.3 SITUATION D:** An official observes a direct free kick foul by the defense in the penalty area, blows the whistle, stops play and indicates a penalty kick; the official simultaneously indicates an injured player and issues a caution for persistent infringement to the player committing the foul. The coaches, having no players at the scorer's table, substitutes for the injured and cautioned player from the bench. **RULING:** Legal. The injured player and cautioned player shall be removed. The penalty kick shall be taken by a player who was a player at the time the whistle stopped play.

**3.3.3 SITUATION E:** Team A substitutes an unlimited number of players from the bench after (a) a caution, (b) an injured player is required to leave the field or (c) after a goal is scored. **RULING:** (a) Illegal; (b) legal and (c) legal providing the substitutes check in and are beckoned in by the referee.

**3.3.3 SITUATION F:** Player A2 is cautioned and issued a yellow card for misconduct and makes a profane remark to the referee: (a) the substitute has not been beckoned onto the field; (b) the substitute has been beckoned onto the field. **RULING:** (a) A2 is issued a red card and the team plays short; (b) A2 is issued a red card and the substitute is allowed to participate. (12-9-2)

**3.3.4 SITUATION:** Team A is awarded a corner kick. (a) Team A chooses to substitute a player(s) who has reported to the scorer; (b) Team B chooses to substitute a player(s) who has reported to the scorer. **RULING:** In (a) player(s) may enter; in (b) player(s) may enter provided that Team A is also substituting. (3-3-5)



**3.3.5 SITUATION:** Team A is awarded a throw-in. (a) Team A chooses to substitute a player(s) who has not yet reported to the scorer; (b) Team B, having had players report to the scorer, chooses to substitute. **RULING:** (a) Illegal, player(s) shall not enter; (b) Illegal unless Team A chooses to substitute. A player shall have reported to the scorer before the substitution opportunity occurs on a throw-in for either team. (3-3-4)

**3.3.7 SITUATION A:** Team A has elected to play shorthanded for reasons other than misconduct and (a) the player who left the field is permitted to return at the next stoppage of play and (b) the substitute for the player who left the field is permitted to enter the field at the next stoppage of play. **RULING:** (a) legal; (b) illegal.

**3.3.7 SITUATION B:** Team A is playing shorthanded with 10 players due to illegal equipment. (a) Player A2 runs onto the field during play; (b) player A2 enters the field of play during a stoppage with the permission of the referee; (c) player A2 enters the field at the next legal substitution opportunity. **RULING:** (a) Illegal; (b) illegal; (c) legal. (3-3-3)

### PROCEDURE FOR SUBSTITUTION

**3.4.1 SITUATION A:** Substitute A12 reports to the scorer as the kickoff takes place. Eight minutes elapse before the first opportunity for a substitution occurs. The referee beckons A12 on the field; however, A12 is withdrawn by the coach of Team A. **RULING:** Substitute A12 is now a player because A12 was beckoned onto the field by the referee; therefore, player A12 shall enter the game once beckoned. (3-3-6)

**3.4.1 SITUATION B:** After a goal is scored, coach for Team A sends substitute A2 directly into the game from the bench without reporting to the scorer for player A3. **RULING:** Illegal. (3-3-2)

### GOALKEEPER CHANGE

**3.5.1 SITUATION A:** A goalkeeper reports to the scoring table and, when the ball is dead, is beckoned onto the field by a referee. The goalkeeper immediately takes position without verbally notifying a referee. As soon as the new goalkeeper handles the ball, a referee awards an indirect free kick. **RULING:** Incorrect. When a referee beckoned the goalkeeper from the scoring table, this was sufficient "reporting or notifying" of a referee. The goalkeeper is dressed in a different uniform and could be recognized by this attire. A referee should not have stopped play.

**3.5.1 SITUATION B:** Substitute goalkeeper A12 enters the game and starts the second half but fails to notify the referee. **RULING:** The referee will give a verbal warning to goalkeeper A12 at the first stoppage of play.



# Rule 4 Player Equipment

The NFHS does not perform scientific tests on any specific items of equipment to determine if the equipment poses undue risks to student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers.

Each state association may, in keeping with applicable laws, authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. The accommodations should not fundamentally alter the sport, heighten risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage.

## SECTION 1 REQUIRED UNIFORM

**ART. 1 . . .** The required player uniform includes a jersey, shorts, socks, suitable shoes and shinguards.

- a. Equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn, except socks as in 4-1-4.
- b. Jerseys, shorts and socks of teammates shall be of similar color, design and pattern except for goalkeepers.
- c. Only those names, patches, emblems, logos or insignias referencing the school are permitted on the team jersey and/or shorts, as well as on visible undergarments and goalkeeper shorts/pants. The player's name may also appear on the team uniform.
- d. If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it shall be of a similar length for an individual and a solid-like color for the team.
- e. One manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference is permitted on the outside of each item except socks as in 4-1-4e. Logos/trademark or references may not exceed 2¼ square inches and may not exceed 2¼ inches in any dimension.
- f. One American flag, not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches, may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel. By state association adoption, to allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on the jersey without compromising its integrity.
- g. It is also recommended that male players wear a supporter and protective cup.

**ART. 2 . . . Jersey:** The visiting team shall wear solid white jerseys, and the home team shall wear dark jerseys (dark is defined as any color which contrasts with white).

- a. All jerseys, including the goalkeeper's jersey, shall be numbered with a different Arabic number. The number shall be:
  1. A solid contrasting color to the jersey (or shorts) and clearly visible;
  2. At least 6 inches in height on the back;



3. At least 4 inches in height on the front;
4. If a visible number is worn on the uniform bottom, it shall be the same number as on the uniform top.
- b. The goalkeeper jersey shall differ distinctly in color from that of any teammate or opposing field player.

**ART. 3 . . . Shorts:** Team shorts shall be similar in design, pattern and color.

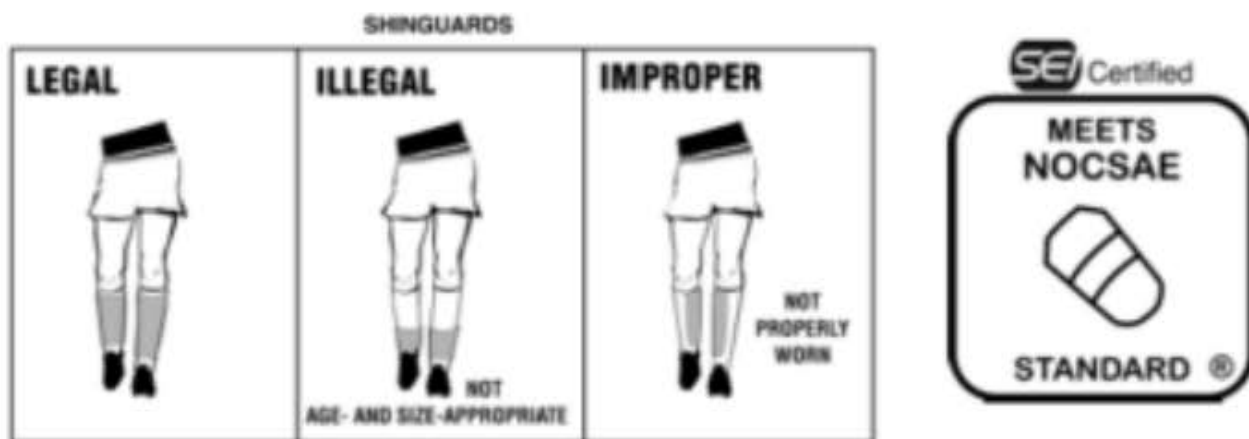
- a. The goalkeeper's shorts or pants are not required to be the same color as teammates.

**ART. 4 . . . Socks:** Socks may be modified:

- a. Shall both be the same color;
- b. Shall be solid white for the visiting team;
- c. Shall be a single dominant color, but not necessarily the color of the jersey for the home team;
- d. If tape or a similar material (stays/straps) is applied externally to the socks above the ankle, it shall be of similar color as that part of the sock to which it is applied;
- e. A manufacturer's logo/trademark appearing on both sides of the socks is legal;
- f. The goalkeeper's socks are not required to be the same color as teammates, but shall differ in color from the opposing field players.

**ART. 5 . . . Shinguards** shall:

- a. Provide adequate and reasonable protection;
- b. Be professionally manufactured, age and size-appropriate;
- c. Not altered to decrease protection;
- d. Be worn under the socks, and worn with the bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle (see illustrations regarding shinguards);
- e. Meet the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standards at the time of manufacture. The NOCSAE mark and height range shall be permanently marked on the front of the shinguard.



**ART. 6 . . . Shoes:** Shoes shall be worn by all participants in a game. Shoes with soles containing metal (aluminum, magnesium, titanium, etc.), leather, rubber, nylon, or plastic cleats, studs, or bars, whether molded as part of the sole or detachable, are allowed as long as the referee does not consider the shoes to be dangerous.



**NOTE:** When an illegally uniformed team is unable to correct the situation or cannot verify state association approval of the uniform, the game shall be played. The referee shall, however, notify the state association following the game.

## SECTION 2 OTHER EQUIPMENT

**ART. 1 . . .** It is recommended that team captains wear an upper arm band of a contrasting color. The captain's band, if worn, shall be worn on the upper arm.

**ART. 2 . . .** It is recommended that substitutes wear distinguishing pinnies when warming up outside of the team area.

**ART. 3 . . .** Hair-control devices and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present a risk of injury to the player, teammates or opponents are allowed.

**ART. 4 . . .** Sweatbands and/or hair-control devices may be worn on the head or wrist if made of soft material and do not pose risk to injury.

**ART. 5 . . .** All permissible artificial limbs shall be padded with a closed-cell, slow recovery foam padding no less than a ½-inch thick.

**ART. 6 . . .** Hearing aids worn in or behind the ears, including cochlear implants, are legal provided that the device does not create the threat of injury.

**ART. 7 . . .** A tooth and mouth protector (intraoral), if worn, shall:

- a. include an occlusal (protecting and separating the biting surfaces) portion;
- b. include a labial (protecting the teeth and supporting structures) portion;
- c. cover the posterior teeth with adequate thickness;

### NOTES:

1. It is recommended that the protector be properly fitted, protecting the anterior (leading) dental arch and:
  - a. constructed from a model made from an impression of the individual's teeth; or
  - b. constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing the teeth into the tooth and mouth protector itself.
2. State associations may deem a tooth and mouth protector required equipment.

**ART. 8 . . .** A protective face mask may be worn by a player with a facial injury. The mask may be made of hard material, but shall be worn molded to the face. A medical release for the injured player signed by an appropriate health-care professional shall be available at the game site.

**ART. 9 . . .** Soft-padded headgear is permitted.

### NOTES:

1. The use of soft-padded soccer headgear is permitted but not required. Schools, parents and students are free to make assessments relative to this piece of equipment for use. The relevant ASTM standard can be found at [www.astm.org/f2439-17e01.html](http://www.astm.org/f2439-17e01.html).
2. No headgear can stop athletes from suffering concussions, and all sports should be played, coached and officiated in recognition of that fact. (Appendix C, page 95)

**ART. 10 . . .** Head coverings worn for religious reasons shall not be made of abrasive or hard materials, and shall fit securely. Head coverings are not considered to be hair devices.



**ART. 11 . . .** Wearable technology devices shall be securely fastened and not present a risk to the player, teammates, or opponents. Devices may be worn on the shoes or on the body under the uniform but not worn on the arm.

**NOTE:** Medical appliances and/or medical devices are not considered wearable technology.

### **SECTION 3 ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT**

**ART. 1 . . .** Illegal equipment shall not be worn by any player. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment which are illegal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. projecting metal or other hard plates, or projections on clothing or person;
- b. head, arm, thigh or hip pads containing sole leather, fiber, metal or any unyielding materials;
- c. hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm or shoulder unless covered, and shall be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick;
- d. shinguards which have exposed sharp edges or that have been altered;
- e. spectacle guards;
- f. knee braces which are altered from the manufacturer's original design/production. Knee braces that are unaltered are legal and do not require any additional padding;
- g. ankle braces which are altered from the manufacturer's original design/production. Non-metal ankle braces that are unaltered are legal and may be worn outside a sock. Ankle braces of metal or unyielding material that are unaltered are legal if covered by a sock;
- h. hats, caps or visors.

#### **EXCEPTIONS:**

1. The goalkeeper may wear a soft-billed baseball type hat or soft-billed visor. If worn in conjunction with a head protector, it is to be worn outside and may not be attached to the head protector.
2. By state association adoption, players may wear soft and yielding caps during inclement weather. Caps shall be alike in color.

**NOTE:** The wearing of illegal uniforms or equipment is prohibited even though the coaches of both teams approve it.

**ART. 2 . . .** Jewelry shall not be worn except for religious or medical medals.

- a. A religious medal or other religious items shall be taped to the body and worn under the uniform.
- b. A medical alert shall be taped and may be visible.

### **SECTION 4 COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

**ART. 1 ...** Head coaches shall be responsible for ensuring that their team's players are properly and legally equipped (5-2-2d(4)).

**ART. 2 ...** The head coach shall receive the first caution (yellow card) issued to the team for an illegally equipped player (18-1-1w). All subsequent cautions (yellow cards) for illegal equipment shall be issued directly to the player and not to the head coach.



**PENALTY:** An illegally equipped player shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. The player shall be removed from the field at the time of the caution issued to the coach or player and may be replaced. The removed player, if not replaced, may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity for that team (3-3-3b).

**ART. 3 ...** Cautions are not issued for improperly equipped players (18-1-1x).

**PENALTY:** If not immediately correctable, improperly equipped players shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. The player may be replaced. The removed player, if not replaced, may re-enter at the next dead ball.

**ART. 4 ...** Play shall not be stopped for an infringement of this rule except when the referee may stop play immediately where there is a dangerous situation.

**ART. 5 ...** If a player is removed from the field for illegal or improper equipment and not replaced, the removed player may re-enter when allowed (4-4-2, 4-4-3) and only after reporting to an official who shall be satisfied the player's equipment and uniform are in order.

## SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

### RULE 4 — PLAYER EQUIPMENT

#### REQUIRED UNIFORM

**4.1.1 SITUATION A:** Prior to the game, the referee recognizes that members of Team A are wearing red shorts with visible apparel under the shorts (a) red compression shorts of similar length; (b) white compression shorts; (c) multicolored sliding pants. **RULING:** (a) legal; (b) legal; (c) illegal.

**4.1.1 SITUATION B:** Team A's goalkeeper is wearing a replica jersey from the Indianapolis Heat with the number 10 on the back. **RULING:** Illegal, any name, patch, emblem, or insignia that represents any soccer club, soccer association or sponsor(s), except for those that represent Team A's school are prohibited.

**4.1.1 SITUATION C:** Home Team A is wearing blue shorts. Three players of Team A are also wearing (a) visible blue arm sleeves; (b) visible blue leg sleeves. **RULING:** (a) and (b) legal.

**4.1.2 SITUATION A:** Team A, the home team, is wearing striped jerseys that have two members of Team A wearing visible light red T-shirts beneath the jerseys. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it shall be of similar length for an individual, all solid and of a like color for team members. (4-1-1d)

**4.1.2 SITUATION B:** Prior to the game, the referee recognizes that Team A has two goalkeepers, one with a red jersey and the number 15 on the back and front and one with a blue jersey with the number 15 on the back and front. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** The goalkeepers shall have different numbers and these should have been recorded on the roster.



**4.1.2 SITUATION C:** The visiting team has numbers in red on its shorts which match the numbers on their tops. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** A visible number worn on the uniform bottom shall be the same number as on the top.

**4.1.2 SITUATION D:** Player A2 desires to enter the game wearing (a) a jersey with the same number as a teammate already in the game; (b) a jersey similar (but not identical) to those of A2's teammates. **RULING:** (a) Illegal — if A2 is mistakenly allowed to enter, A2 shall leave the game when the duplication is discovered; (b) Legal, provided that the referee decides that the jersey provides sufficient contrast with the opponent's jersey.

**4.1.2 SITUATION E:** Team A arrives at the game site to play Team B and the officials observe (a) Team A does not have numbers on the jerseys; (b) Team A has one player wearing a different color shirt. Officials allow the game to be played. **RULING:** (a) Team A shall correct uniform problems if possible. If it is not possible for Team A to correct the problem, the game shall be played. The referee shall report the situation to the state association. (b) Player shall correct uniform problem before the player is allowed to participate in the game.

**4.1.2 SITUATION F:** Prior to the game, the referee recognizes that Team A (the visiting team) has (a) solid white jersey with blue numbers on the front and red numbers on the back; (b) a solid white jersey with multiple colored numbers on the front and back; (c) a white jersey with red-and-blue piping on the collar and cuffs of the uniform and blue numbers on the front and red numbers on the back. **RULING:** (a) Legal, if clearly visible; (b) Legal, if clearly visible; (c) Illegal.

**4.1.3 SITUATION:** During the game, the referee notices a goalkeeper wearing (a) shorts, (b) pants and (c) padded goalkeeper pants. **RULING:** Legal in (a), (b) and (c).

**4.1.4 SITUATION A:** Player A1 is observed by the referee to be wearing socks that have been modified by (a) cutting off the foot of the sock; (b) cutting or tearing small holes in the back of the sock exposing the calf; (c) cutting a hole in the front of the sock exposing the shinguard. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Legal; (c) illegal. **COMMENT:** Any visible material worn under the sock and above the ankle shall be of a similar color to the predominant color of the sock.

**4.1.4 SITUATION B:** Prior to the game, the referee recognizes that members of Visiting Team A are wearing white jerseys and socks of a gold color and Home Team B is wearing jerseys and socks of a blue color. **RULING:** Illegal, because the visiting team shall wear solid white jerseys (4-1-2) and solid white socks. The visiting team needs to put on white socks. If unable to correct, the game shall be played and the referee shall notify the state association following the game.

**4.1.4 SITUATION C:** Prior to the game, the referee recognizes that (a) the goalkeeper wears socks that match teammates; (b) the goalkeeper wears socks that match opposing field players. **RULING:** (a) Legal, (b) Illegal **COMMENT:** It is not required that the socks of the goalkeeper match their team's socks, but shall be a different color from the opposing teams socks.



**4.1.4 SITUATION D:** Player A from the home team enters the game wearing (a) two different colored socks; (b) striped socks, where one stripe is the dominant color (not white); (c) predominantly blue socks with the top quarter of the socks pale blue.

**RULING:** (a) Illegal; (b) and (c) legal. **COMMENT:** Both socks shall be the same, single dominant color. Only the home team's socks may be a color other than white.

**4.1.4 SITUATION E:** Player A enters the game wearing (a) white socks with white tape/stays/straps, (b) blue socks with blue tape/stays/straps, (c) red socks with black tape/stays/straps, (d) white socks with green tape/stays/straps, (e) red socks with white tape below the ankles. **RULING:** (a) legal, (b) legal, (c) illegal; (d) illegal; and (e) legal.

**4.1.4 SITUATION F:** Upon arriving at the field, the referee notices that the visiting team has a likeness of its school mascot on the team's socks. The referee informs the coach about the socks being illegal parts of the uniform because visiting team socks shall be all white and allows the game to be played. **RULING:** The official was correct and shall report the uniform violation to the state association. (4-1 NOTE)

**4.1.5 SITUATION:** Player A begins the game as required with legal shin guards under the socks. During the first half, the referee observes the player removing the shin guards and throwing the shin guards to the bench area. **RULING:** Illegal. Player A is illegally equipped.

**4.1.6 SITUATION:** The referee finds the player to be wearing (a) metal cleats; (b) plastic cleats; (c) baseball cleats; (d) track shoes with spikes; (e) turf shoes. **RULING:** (a) legal; (b) legal; (c) illegal; (d) illegal; (e) legal if the referee determined to be safe.

## OTHER EQUIPMENT

**4.2.2 SITUATION:** During play, bench personnel are required by officials to wear pinnies while warming up outside the team area. **RULING:** False. It is recommended.

**4.2.3 SITUATION A:** During team warmups, the officials notice a player on Team A wearing plastic beads at the end of long braids. The braids are (a) pulled back and secured in a bun with an elastic hair band; (b) free flowing, allowing the braids with beads to sway back and forth as the player moves. **RULING:** (a) legal; (b) Improper equipment. **COMMENT:** Hair-control devices and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present a risk of injury to the player, teammates or opponents are permitted. In (b), the official shall notify the coach of Team A and allow the player to correct the improper equipment by securing the beads to the head to minimize risk of injury.

**4.2.3 SITUATION B:** The referee observes player (a) A1 wearing beads in the hair that are wrapped into a bun and secured to the head; (b) A3 wearing commemorative ribbons in the hair; (c) A4 wearing a feather woven into the hair. **RULING:** Legal in (a), (b) and (c), **COMMENT:** Hair adornments that are secured to the head so as to not create a safety hazard to the player, teammates or opponents are legal.



**4.2.3 SITUATION C:** During the game, the referee observes player A2 wearing beads on the end of an unsecured ponytail. **RULING:** Improper Equipment. **COMMENT:** Player A2 is wearing improper equipment because the hard adornments are not secured to the head. The referee shall not stop play and address player A2's equipment at the next stoppage, unless the improper equipment presents a dangerous situation (4-4-4). If A2 can immediately secure the ponytail with beads, then A2 may do so and is not required to leave the field. If player A2 cannot immediately correct the improper equipment, then the referee shall instruct A2 to leave the field and no caution is administered (4-4-3). Player A2 may be replaced by a substitute. If Team A chooses to play short-handed, then A2 may re-enter at the next dead ball after reporting to an official who shall be satisfied that A2's ponytail with the beads has been secured to the head in compliance with the rule.

**4.2.4 SITUATION:** A2 is discovered on the field wearing a (a) sweatband on the head; (b) wrist sweatbands. **RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b).

**4.2.5 SITUATION A:** Substitute A12 comes on the field of play with (a) an artificial limb; (b) a knee brace. **RULING:** (a) and (b) are legal if the equipment complies with the rules. (4-3-1f)

**NOTE:** The artificial limb and/or knee brace are to be checked by the referee prior to the game.

**4.2.5 SITUATION B:** A player has an artificial limb that is padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½ inch thick. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** The artificial limb is padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½ inch thick.

**NOTE:** Each state association may have procedures in place for reasonable accommodations. Please check with your state office for these guidelines.

**4.2.6 SITUATION:** A player enters the game wearing a hearing aid or cochlear implant in the ear. **RULING:** Legal.

**4.2.7 SITUATION:** A player enters a game wearing an intra-oral mouth protector. **RULING:** Legal.

**4.2.8 SITUATION:** A player enters the game wearing (a) a hockey face mask to protect an injury; (b) a securely fastened insulin pump. **RULING:** (a) Illegal; (b) legal. **COMMENT:** In (a) a protective face mask can be worn provided it is molded to the face. In (b) the insulin pump may be worn provided that the referee determines that the insulin pump is not a hazard to the player or other players.

**4.2.9 SITUATION:** During pregame warmup, the referee observes A5 is wearing (a) soft-padded headband; (b) soft-padded headgear of an approved material; (c) a hijab, yarmulke or a skull cap beanie. **RULING:** (a) and (b) legal; (c) legal if worn for religious reasons. **COMMENT:** The use of a soft-padded soccer headband or headgear is permitted but not required. Head coverings worn for religious purposes do not require prior state association approval.

**4.2.11 SITUATION A:** A player enters the game wearing a (a) fitness tracker on the wrist, (b) workout heart rate monitor on the chest under the jersey, (c) pedometer integrated into the shoe, (d) vest with an integrated electronic perfor-



mance tracking system device under the jersey. **RULING:** Illegal in (a), even if covered. Legal in (b), (c) and (d). **COMMENT:** All wearable technology devices shall be secured, not worn on the arm below the shoulder, and cannot create a safety hazard to the player, teammates or opponents. Electronic performance tracking system devices are examples of wearable technology that may also communicate or transmit information. No electronic device may be used to communicate with the on-field players during the game as prohibited by 12-9-1e.

**4.2.11 SITUATION B:** A player enters the game wearing a diabetic monitoring patch on the upper-arm. **RULING:** Legal. Medical appliances/devices are not considered wearable technology and may be worn on the arm so long as they do not pose any risk of injury or hazard to the player, teammates or opponents.

### ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT

**4.3.1 SITUATION A:** The referee observes A7 wearing (a) a skull cap or cold weather beanie; (b) soft-padded protective headgear (Example: Full90); (c) soft-billed baseball cap; **RULING:** (a) legal; (b) legal; (c) illegal for field players but legal for the goalkeeper.

**4.3.1 SITUATION B:** A2 enters the game with an ankle brace made of hard material on the outside of the sock. **RULING:** Illegal. The athlete shall cover the brace with the sock. Ankle braces made of metal or unyielding material are legal if covered by a sock.

**4.3.1 SITUATION C:** A player from Team A is wearing a flak jacket, chest protector or properly padded body brace under the jersey. **RULING:** Legal, as long as there are no exposed sharp edges.

**4.3.1 SITUATION D:** (a) Team A has a goalkeeper wearing a head protector of approved substance, with an attached bill to shield the player's eyes from the sun; (b) goalkeeper wears a soft-billed hat over the head protector. **RULING:** (a) Illegal. Attached bills are not part of the approved head protector; (b) legal as long as hat is worn over the head protector.

**4.3.1 SITUATION E:** Team A appears on the field ready for play with faces and/or arms painted in an objectionable manner. **RULING:** Illegal. The referee will require that the objectionable markings be removed or covered before allowing participation.

**4.3.1 SITUATION F:** A player enters the game wearing (a) prescription glasses; (b) protective sport eyewear. **RULING:** Legal in (a). In (b), sport eyewear that is durable and lies flat to the face is legal. Note that game officials can declare any equipment illegal that is dangerous or confusing.

**4.3.2 SITUATION:** A player wears (a) an earring; (b) rubber band to hold the hair back and a 2-inch ribbon over the rubber band; (c) taped body jewelry; (d) a ring which cannot be removed; (e) a single colored 2-inch headband; (f) a medical bracelet taped but still visible on the wrist; (g) a medical medal worn on a chain around the neck with the medal taped to the body. **RULING:** (a) Illegal; (b) legal; (c) illegal; (d) illegal; (e) legal; (f) legal; (g) legal.



**COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

**4.4.1 SITUATION:** Prior to the start of the contest, the referee meets with the teams' head coaches and captains and after reciting a sportsmanship message asks both head coaches if their teams will be properly and legally equipped at the kickoff. Each coach answers in the affirmative. (a) After the contest has started, Player A is noticed to have a shinguard that has the NOCSAE seal indicating that the shinguard is undersized for the player's height; (b) after the second half starts, Player A is noticed to be wearing illegal jewelry; (c) during the course of play, a knee brace is dislodged by a collision between two players. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), Player A1 is removed from the field because of illegal equipment. The player may be replaced by a substitute. If the team chooses to play short-handed, Player A cannot re-enter until the next legal substitution opportunity for Player A's team. If it is the first offense for Team A, the coach of Team A is cautioned for the illegal equipment. If it is the second offense for Team A, Player A1 is cautioned. In (c), if the player can immediately correct the improper equipment, the player may do so and is not required to leave the field. If the player cannot immediately correct the improper equipment, the player is instructed to leave the field and is not cautioned. The player may be replaced by a substitute. If the team chooses to play shorthanded, the player may re-enter at the next dead ball after reporting to an official who shall be satisfied that the player's equipment complies with Rule 4.

**4.4.4 SITUATION:** During play, a referee notices that the straps on a previously approved knee brace have come loose while the player continues to play. A referee allows play to continue until the ball is out of play. **RULING:** Legal. By a referee's judgment, if an immediate dangerous situation does not exist, the referee can wait until the next stoppage in play before removing the player from the field for being improperly equipped or having the player secure the loose straps.

## Rule **5** The Officials

**SECTION 1 GENERAL**

**ART. 1 . . .** The game officials shall be a head referee and a referee (dual system of officiating), a head referee and two assistant referees (diagonal system of officiating) or a center referee and two side referees (double dual system of officiating) assisted by a timer, scorer and at least two ball holders. An additional fourth official can also be used for the three referee systems (see fourth official sample guidelines).

**NOTE:** If a state high school association chooses not to select one system, competing schools may do so by prior mutual agreement. Suggested mechanics are included in the back of this book for the dual, double-dual and diagonal systems of officiating.



**ART. 2 . . .** The jurisdiction of the officials shall begin on arrival at the field of play and its immediate surroundings (to begin official responsibilities), which shall be no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the game and end with the officials leaving the field of play and its immediate surroundings. The officials shall enforce the rules, and their decisions on points of fact are final. The officials can only correct a decision so long as the game has not been restarted. The officials retain clerical authority over the contest through the completion of any reports, including those imposing ejections, that are responsive to actions occurring while the referees had jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents that occur before, during or after the officials' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a contest is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play. Protests of NFHS rules are not recognized. The officials shall not use any form of alcohol, tobacco, or controlled or illicit substance(s) for non-medicinal purposes beginning with arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.

**ART. 3 . . .** The officials shall be dressed alike in the uniforms primarily consisting of:

- a. a shirt approved by the state association; in the event of a color conflict between the officials and the field players of either team, the officials shall change to a jersey of a color distinct from the field players of both teams;
- b. black shorts or long trousers;
- c. predominantly black shoes and black knee socks with white horizontal stripes;
- d. two whistles, yellow card, red card, stop watch, flipping coin, pencil and scorecard;
- e. a solid black cap, if worn;
- f. unless otherwise prohibited by the state association, electronic communication devices may be used by officials to communicate.

## **SECTION 2 PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES**

**ART. 1 . . .** Officials shall be in uniform at the site of the game no less than 15 minutes before the scheduled starting time. The head referee or center referee shall conduct a pregame conference briefly reviewing the duties of all officials.

**ART. 2 . . .** The head referee or center referee shall:

- a. inspect and approve the game balls, field of play and nets, inquire about local ground rules and determine if a fair game can be started;
- b. verify the assistant referees or side referees, ball holders, official scorer and timer;
- c. review specific duties with scorer, timer and assistant referees or side referees;



- d. conduct a pregame conference with the head coach and team captains to:
  1. review pertinent rules;
  2. address good sportsmanship;
  3. conduct a coin toss at least 5 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the game. The visiting team captain shall call the coin while it is in the air. The winner of the toss shall choose a goal to defend or to kickoff first. The loser of the toss shall be given the remaining choice.
  4. inquire of each head coach whether the players will be properly and legally equipped at the kickoff. Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be determined by the head referee, or the center referee.

**ART. 3 . . .** The referee, assistant referees or side referees shall:

- a. assist the head referee or center referee in inspecting the game balls and field of play;
- b. review duties and responsibilities with ball holders;
- c. assist with the pregame conference with team captains.

### **SECTION 3 DURING THE GAME**

**ART. 1 . . .** The officials shall:

- a. sound the whistle to stop, start or restart as necessary;
- b. when signaling, use the Official NFHS Soccer Signals. The referee also shall signal when the clock is to be stopped and confirm for the scorekeeper the players to be credited with goals;
- c. sound the whistle when the entire ball crosses a touchline or goal line unless it is obvious the ball is out of play;
- d. call out "play on" and, with an underswing of one or both arms, indicate a foul which was observed but shall go unpenalized because penalizing the offending team would give an advantage to the offending team. If the referee applies the advantage, which was anticipated but does not develop at that time, the referee shall penalize the original offense;
- e. hold a yellow card with arm fully extended above a referee's head and indicate the player or coach being carded and notify both coaches, the scorer and other official(s) of the nature of the misconduct (12-4);
- f. hold a red card with arm fully extended above a referee's head and indicate the player or coach being carded and notify both coaches, the scorer and other official(s) of the nature of the misconduct (12-4);
- g. If a player, coach or bench personnel is being ejected for a subsequent act of misconduct, the referee will show a yellow card indicating the subsequent caution followed immediately by showing a red card;
- h. signal the clock to be stopped or started;
- i. terminate or suspend the game for any infringements of the rules;
- j. confirm all scores with the scorer;
- k. not set aside or question decisions made by the other referee(s) within the limits of the referee's respective outlined duties;
- l. notify the captains when play is about to begin at the start of the game, following an intermission or time-out for injury.



**ART. 2 . . .** The head referee or center referee shall:

- a. determine whether a goal shall count if the officials disagree;
- b. have the authority to terminate a game when stated rule and conditions warrant;
- c. decide matters upon which the timer(s) or scorer(s) disagree;
- d. at the end of each half, check and approve the score;
- e. have the authority to suspend play or terminate the game whenever the elements, spectators or other causes require; (7-1-3)
- f. keep time and score of game when no other means are available;
- g. have the power to make decisions on any point not specifically covered in the rules;
- h. confirm or overrule the assistant referees' signals (diagonal system of control only);
- i. instruct the timer to correct the clock, when necessary.

#### **SECTION 4 AFTER THE GAME**

**ART. 1 . . .** The head referee or center referee shall:

- a. verify the score;
- b. report in writing any ejections and unusual incidents to the proper authorities.

## **SITUATIONS AND RULINGS**

### **RULE 5 — THE OFFICIALS**

#### **GENERAL**

**5.1.2 SITUATION A:** The home team has video equipment to tape and replay the game action. The coach (a) plays a tape to players after the game; (b) plays tape at halftime interval for coaching purposes; (c) asks referee to review tape for evidence in the case of a disallowed goal. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) Legal; (c) illegal. (12-5-1e)

**5.1.2 SITUATION B:** Approximately one-half hour prior to kickoff, the referee inspects the field and notices that neither portable goal is properly secured. The referee addresses the home coach and requests that the coach address the problem. **RULING:** Legal since the referee's authority exists as soon as the referee is in the immediate vicinity of the field.

**5.1.3 SITUATION:** (a) The official starts the game with a shirt that matches the goalkeeper of one of the teams, but not the field players. (b) The official starts the game with a shirt that matches the field players of one of the teams. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) illegal, the officials shall change the color of their shirts.

#### **DURING THE GAME**

**5.3.1 SITUATION A:** During a shot on goal, field player B2, in the penalty area, reaches out and deflects the ball with the hands, A2 kicks the free ball and (a) it goes into the goal; (b) does not go into the goal. **RULING:** In (a), award a goal and caution B2 for unsporting conduct; in (b) call handling, award a penalty kick, and ejects B2 for serious foul play. [12-5-1f(12), (13), (14); 12-6-1b; 14-1-1]



**5.3.1 SITUATION B:** Near the end of the first half, the visiting coach is cautioned by a referee for unsportsmanlike conduct. The coach continues to indicate, by gestures, dissatisfaction with the referee's decision. **RULING:** The coach shall be ejected and removed from the vicinity of the playing area. The coach shall be prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with the team members during the remainder of the game. Failure to comply shall result in termination of the game. The incident shall be reported in writing to the proper authorities by the head referee. (5-4-1b, 12-4-4)

**5.3.1 SITUATION C:** Player A2 is fouled just outside the opponent's penalty area. The referee signals visibly and verbally "play on." (a) A2 then stumbles and within a couple of seconds falls to the ground; (b) A2 keeps the ball and gets off a shot that sails wide of the goal; (c) A2 manages to continue and is immediately fouled again, this time within the penalty area. The referee whistles and awards a direct free kick from the point of the original foul. **RULING:** (a) correct. The advantage did not materialize and the foul shall be penalized; (b) incorrect. The advantage was gained even though the shot missed; (c) incorrect. Since the advantage was realized by allowing A2 to continue and A2 was then fouled within the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded to Team A.

**5.3.2 SITUATION A:** Due to (a) extremely humid conditions; (b) thunderstorms; (c) a power failure, the officials temporarily suspend play. **RULING:** Legal in a, b and c. Officials may suspend play due to the elements or emergencies. If the adverse conditions continue, see 7-1-3 for options.

**5.3.2 SITUATION B:** The game is terminated by the head referee due to a fight among players of both teams and (a) the team trailing started the fight; (b) the team leading started the fight; (c) the score is tied. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), no winner is declared by the official and all conditions regarding the incident shall be reported to the proper authorities in writing. (5-4-1)

**5.3.2 SITUATION C:** When an official timer is not available, the head referee will count down the last ten seconds of each period of play. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure.

**5.3.2 SITUATION D:** After Team A scores a goal the head referee notices that the clock was not stopped. The referee determines that there is a discrepancy between the official time and the scoreboard time and instructs the timer to correct the clock. **RULING:** Legal.

**5.3.2 SITUATION E:** Team A is awarded an indirect free kick for a foul just outside the penalty area. The referee fails to raise a hand to indicate an indirect free kick and Team A shoots the ball directly into Team B's goal. **RULING:** Improper. **COMMENT:** The referee failed to raise a hand indicating an indirect free kick; therefore, the team should be awarded a re-take of the indirect free kick. (13-3-4)



**5.3.2 SITUATION F:** A spectator or spectators have consistently interfered with game management. The head referee stops the match and (a) escorts the spectator(s) away from the field; (b) asks the game site manager to address the behaviors and asks them to stop; (c) terminates the match when the spectator(s) don't leave and the behaviors persist. **RULING:** (a) Illegal; (b) Legal; (c) Legal. **COMMENT:** Game management personnel are responsible for spectators and removal of individuals who interfere with play. Referees have the authority to suspend play or terminate the game whenever required.

### AFTER THE GAME

**5.4.1 SITUATION:** The head referee terminates the game due to an altercation. The head referee reports the termination in writing to the proper authorities. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

## Rule 6 Ball Holders, Timer and Scorer

### SECTION 1 BALL HOLDERS

**ART. 1 . . .** At least two ball holders shall be provided by the home team. If the home team cannot provide ball holders, the visiting team may.

**ART. 2 . . .** Ball holders are under the direct supervision of the official(s) whom shall assist by carrying an extra game ball and retrieving balls which cross boundary lines.

### SECTION 2 TIMER

**ART. 1 . . .** The home school timer shall be the official timer. However, by mutual agreement of opposing coaches or by state high school association adoption, the official time may be kept by the head referee.

**ART. 2 . . .** The official timer shall use a visible timing device. The official time may be kept on a stadium clock.

**ART. 3 . . .** The official timer shall:

- start or stop the timing device as per Rule 7-4;
- signal to the official(s) when substitutions are to be made;
- countdown verbally the last 10 seconds of each period of play to the nearest official;
- be aware of the position of the ball when it becomes dead;
- signal when time for a period has expired;
- signal the last two minutes of any period when applicable;
- signal the last two minutes before the end of the interval between the periods.



**SECTION 3 SCORER**

**ART. 1 . . .** The home school shall designate the official scorer. However, by mutual agreement of opposing coaches or by the state high school association adoption, the official score may be kept by the head referee.

**ART. 2 . . .** The scorer shall:

- verify that each team's complete roster (first and last name and number of each player and substitute, bench personnel and coaches) is submitted at least five minutes prior to the kickoff (3-1-3);
- record all scores;
- record the number and reason for all cautions (yellow cards) and ejections (red cards);
- after a substitute has reported to the scorer, have the timer signal to the official(s) the first time the substitution is possible;
- obtain the head referee's verification of the score.

**ART. 3 . . .** By state association adoption, a fourth official may be appointed to assume the duties of the scorer. The fourth official is under the jurisdiction of the head referee and performs those duties as assigned.

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## **Rule 7** Duration of the Game and Length of Periods

**SECTION 1 LENGTH OF PERIODS**

**ART. 1 . . .** Two equal halves of 40 minutes each shall be played unless, by state high school association adoption, four equal quarters of 20 minutes each are specified.

**ART. 2 . . .** Periods may be shortened by state high school association adoption, or if mutually agreed upon or in any emergency, by agreement of coaches or ordered by the head referee, provided it is determined to shorten the periods before the game or before the second half begins and all remaining periods are the same length.

**ART. 3 . . .** In the event a game is suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the head referee shall declare it an official game if one complete half or more of the game has been played, unless otherwise set forth by state association adoption. If less than one-half of the game has been played, the game may be rescheduled from the start, or restarted from the suspension of play according to state association adoption. (18-1-1tt)

**ART. 4 . . .** A period shall end at the expiration of time.

**EXCEPTION:** Play shall be extended beyond the expiration of a period, in regulation time and overtime, to permit a penalty kick to be completed.



**ART. 5 . . .** By state association adoption, a goal differential may be established whereby at the end of the first half if one team has gained the established goal differential or if it secures such differential during the second half, the game shall be ended.

## **SECTION 2 INTERVALS BETWEEN PERIODS**

**ART. 1 . . .** The halftime interval shall be 10 minutes unless opposing coaches mutually agree to a different length.

**ART. 2 . . .** The interval between the first and second quarters and the third and fourth quarters shall be a maximum of two minutes.

**ART. 3 . . .** Between each period teams shall exchange ends and alternate the kickoff.

## **SECTION 3 TIE GAMES**

**ART. 1 . . .** Regular-season games which are tied at the end of 80 minutes of play may be resolved by procedures adopted by state high school associations.

**NOTE:** No overtime procedures shall exceed 20 minutes of play during the regular season. See sample tie-breaking procedures on page 89.

**ART. 2 . . .** The interval between the fourth period or second half and the first overtime period (if permitted by state high school association rules) shall be five minutes. The interval between the first overtime period and a second overtime period shall be two minutes.

## **SECTION 4 TIME-OUT AND IN**

**ART. 1 . . .** The clock shall be stopped for an injury, for a penalty kick, for cautioning (yellow card), for ejections (red card), following the scoring of a goal and when a referee orders the clock to be stopped.

**ART. 2 . . .** The clock shall be restarted when the ball is properly put into play.

**ART. 3 . . .** The clock shall be stopped when a substitute by the team in the lead is beckoned onto the field in the final five minutes of regulation or overtime.

## **SECTION 5 PLAY**

**ART. 1 . . .** If a team refuses to play after being instructed to do so, the game is terminated and the referee shall report the situation to the state association.

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# **SITUATIONS AND RULINGS**

## **RULE 7 — DURATION OF THE GAME AND LENGTH OF PERIODS**

### **LENGTH OF PERIODS**

**7.1.3 SITUATION A:** (a) The referee terminates a game due to spectator interference with five minutes remaining in the first half and Team A leading 2-0. The referee declares Team A to be the winner. (b) The referee terminates a game due to misbehavior by the coach of Team B ten minutes into the second half. Team B is ahead



2-1. The referee declares Team A to be the winner because Team B caused the termination. **RULING:** Incorrect in both (a) and (b). The referee may not determine the outcome of a terminated game, but shall report the situation to the state association.

**7.1.3 SITUATION B:** At halftime, the referee suspends the game due to inclement weather. It is determined that the game is not able to be completed that day. The game is (a) considered completed, (b) rescheduled from the start, or (c) rescheduled from the point of suspension. **RULING:** Correct in (a); (b) and (c) are also permissible if adopted by the state association.

**7.1.4 SITUATION:** A penalty kick has been awarded (a) when time expires; or (b) with two seconds remaining in the game. The penalty kick is taken, but the ball is deflected by the goalkeeper, and is shot back into the goal by a teammate of the kicker. **RULING:** No goal is scored in (a), since the try ends when the kick is taken, the ball goes out of bounds or its momentum is spent. A goal is scored in (b), if the ball enters the goal prior to the expiration of time. (14-1-6)

### TIME-OUT AND IN

**7.4.2 SITUATION:** The referee whistles to indicate play to restart after a goal, at which time the timekeeper restarts the clock. **RULING:** Incorrect. The clock restarts when the ball is properly put into play, not when the whistle blows.

**7.4.3 SITUATION:** Team A is leading in the final four minutes of the second overtime. A2 checks in and enters the game as a substitute for A3. The referee stops the clock and beckons A2 onto the field. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The referee shall stop the clock once the substitute is beckoned onto the field in the final five minutes of regulation or overtime play. (3-4-3)

## Rule 8 The Start of Play

### SECTION 1 KICKOFF

**ART. 1 . . .** When the referee signals with a whistle, a kickoff shall initiate play at the start of each period and after goals.

**ART. 2 . . .** At the moment of the kickoff, all players, except the player taking the kickoff, shall be in their team's half of the field. Players opposing the kicker shall be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

**ART. 3 . . .** The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction. If the kickoff is taken improperly, it shall be retaken.

**ART. 4 . . .** After the kickoff, the ball may be played by any player except the one who kicked off. The kicker may not play the ball until it has been played or touched by another player on either team.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick awarded to the opponent at the spot of the foul.



## SITUATION AND RULING

### RULE 8 — THE START OF PLAY

#### KICKOFF

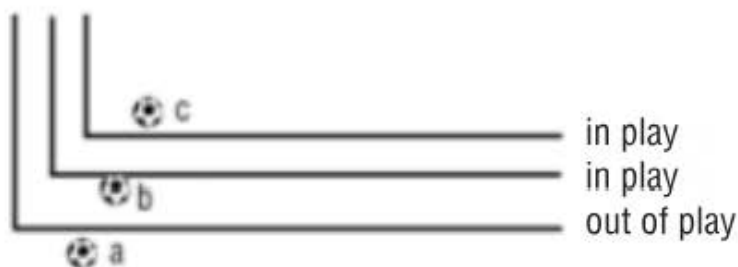
**8.1.3 SITUATION:** Team A prepares to kickoff and the ball is moved backward to a teammate. **RULING:** Legal, play continues.

## Rule 9 Ball In and Out of Play

### SECTION 1 BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

**ART. 1 . . .** The ball is out of play when:

- it has completely crossed a goal line or touchline, whether on the ground or in the air;



- the ball touches an official and remains on the field; and
  - a team starts a promising attack;
  - goes directly into the goal;
  - possession changes.

**ART. 2 . . .** The ball is in play at all other times, including:

- when it rebounds from a goal post, crossbar or corner flag post;
- when it touches an official on the field of play, except in 9-1-1b;
- until a referee sounds the whistle;
- when a drop ball touches the ground;
- when a player who has left the field in the normal course of play plays the ball while it is still on the field of play.

**ART. 3 . . .** The referee shall sound the whistle when needed to indicate that the ball is out of play or for a foul. As soon as the ball is in position to be played, it may be played without a second whistle. A second whistle is required to restart play for the taking of a penalty kick, after a substitution is made, after a caution, ejection, injury and after setting a wall prior to a free kick.



**SECTION 2 DROP BALL**

**ART. 1 . . .** The game is restarted with a drop ball:

- when the ball is caused to go out-of-bounds by two opponents simultaneously;
- when the ball becomes deflated;
- following a temporary suspension of play for an injury or unusual situation (except as noted in 14-1-7);
- when simultaneous fouls of the same degree occur by opponents;
- when the ball touches an official as per 9-1-1b.

**ART. 2 . . .** The ball should be dropped at the location where it became dead unless this is within the goal area, in which case it shall be dropped on that part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal line nearest the location where the ball was when play was stopped. If the ball was caused to go out of bounds by two opponents simultaneously, the ball is dropped 5 yards inside the boundary line to one player of the team in possession of the ball prior to the simultaneous touch, unless this is the goal area.

**ART. 3 . . .** The ball is dropped by an official from waist level to the ground. The referee drops the ball to one player of the team that last possessed the ball at the position where it was last touched by a player(s), an outside agent or match official. If when play was stopped, the ball was in the penalty area or the last touch, by either team, was in the penalty area, the ball is dropped to the defending team's goalkeeper with all opposing players outside the penalty area. In all cases, all other players shall remain at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.

**ART. 4 . . .** The ball shall touch the ground before it is played.

**ART. 5 . . .** The ball shall be dropped again if it touches a player before it touches the ground or leaves the field of play after it touches the ground without touching a player.

**ART. 6 . . .** If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with a goal kick if it enters the opponent's goal or a corner kick if it enters the team's own goal.

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**SITUATIONS AND RULINGS****RULE 9 — BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY****BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

**9.1.2 SITUATION A:** A pass by A2 to A3 strikes the referee (a) who is on the field of play; or (b) who is straddling the touchline, the ball being inbounds; or (c) who is off the field of play. The pass in both (a) and (b) is controlled by B2.  
**RULING:** In (a) and (b), play is restarted for Team A with a drop ball where the ball struck the referee. In (c), the ball left the field of play before striking the referee and play is restarted as dictated by the rules.



**9.1.2 SITUATION B:** An indirect free kick strikes an official while in the field of play and then (a) continues into the goal otherwise untouched; or (b) rebounds to a player who is onside and who then kicks it into the goal. **RULING:** In (a), restart with a goal kick. A goal cannot be scored after striking the referee and going into the goal without being touched by another player after touching the official. In (b), a restart with a drop ball should occur as a promising attack started after the referee was struck as per 9-2-3.

**9.1.2 SITUATION C:** Player B2 takes a direct free kick. An official, while (a) in the penalty area or (b) on the field but not in the penalty area, is struck by the ball which rebounds into the opponent's goal. **RULING:** In (a), no goal. Play is restarted with a drop ball to the goalkeeper. In (b), no goal and play is restarted for Team B where the ball struck the referee.

**9.1.3 SITUATION A:** A direct free kick foul has been committed outside the penalty area. The official sounded the whistle and signaled a direct free kick. The kicking team takes the kick quickly and scores, but the defenders claim the goal should not be counted because there was no second whistle. **RULING:** Goal counts. No second whistle is required.

**9.1.3 SITUATION B:** Team A is awarded a free kick. Player A requests an official to direct Player B to move away from the ball the required 10 yards. **RULING:** Correct procedure. (13-3-1)

**NOTE:** Play shall be restarted by a second whistle.

## DROP BALL

**9.2.1 SITUATION A:** The referee inadvertently sounds the whistle when the ball is (a) in the penalty area or (b) outside the penalty area. **RULING:** In (a), play is restarted with a dropped ball to the goalkeeper where the ball was when the whistle sounded and (b) play is restarted with a drop ball to the team which last played the ball where the ball was when the whistle sounded. (9-2-3)

**9.2.1 SITUATION B:** The ball becomes deflated. The referee stops play and restarts with a drop ball to the team that last played the ball at the spot where the ball was last played. **RULING:** Legal. (14-1-7)

**9.2.1 SITUATION C:** Player A2 kicks the ball forward and the ball is simultaneously played out-of-bounds by A3 and B3. The game will be restarted with a drop ball 5 yards from the boundary line to a player of Team A. **RULING:** Legal (9-2-2, 9-2-3). **COMMENT:** If the restart location is inside the penalty area, the ball is dropped to the defending team's goalkeeper.

**9.2.1 SITUATION D:** Player A2 kicks the ball forward and the ball is simultaneously played by A3 and B3, both of whom commit simultaneous fouls. The referee restarts play with a drop ball at the spot of the fouls for a player of Team A. **RULING:** Legal (9-2-2, 9-2-3). The game will be restarted with a drop ball for simultaneous fouls at the spot where the ball struck the opponents.

**9.2.2 SITUATION:** Player A2 kicks the ball forward and the ball is simultane-



ously played out-of-bounds by A3 and B3. What is the restart? **RULING:** A drop ball to a player from Team A shall be the restart. This drop ball shall be awarded 5 yards inside the field of play from the boundary line where it was simultaneously touched by A3 and B3.

**9.2.3 SITUATION A:** The referee inadvertently sounds the whistle with the ball in the penalty area. To restart play, the referee drops the ball to the goalkeeper, who picks it up after the ball touches the ground. **RULING:** Legal.

**9.2.3 SITUATION B:** The referee has ruled that a drop ball to Player A1 shall be used to restart the game following an unusual situation. Where must the Team B players be located? **RULING:** All Team B players shall be at least 4 yards from the ball until it is back in play.

**9.2.3 SITUATION C:** Player A kicks the ball while in the opponent's penalty area. The ball deflects off the referee in the penalty area and (a) goes into the goal, (b) goes to A2's teammate who then scores a goal, (c) the ball goes to defender B2, (d) goes directly back to A2 at the spot where A2 kicked the ball or (e) deflects to a spot where A2 now has a scoring opportunity. **RULING:** In (a), (b), (c) and (e), play is restarted with a drop ball to the goalkeeper on Team B where the ball touched the referee. In (d), play continues as there was no change in possession, no goal scored and no development of a promising attack.

**9.2.3 SITUATION D:** Attacking player A2 kicks the ball from either inside or outside the opponent's penalty area. The ball strikes the referee and deflects over the goal line and not into the goal. The referee restarts play with a goal kick. **RULING:** The ball remained in play after striking the referee but did not change possession, a promising attack did not develop and the ball did not enter the goal. The ball crossed the goal line and the restart is a goal kick.

**9.2.3 SITUATION E:** Defender B2, either inside or outside B2's penalty area, kicks the ball and it hits the referee and the ball is deflected over the goal line and not into the goal. The referee restarts the play with a corner kick. **RULING:** The ball remained in play after striking the referee but did not change possession, a promising attack did not develop and the ball did not enter the goal. Restart is a corner kick.

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## Rule 10 Scoring

### SECTION 1 GOALS

**ART. 1 . . .** A goal is scored when the entire ball passes beyond the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar provided it has not been deliberately thrown, carried or propelled by the hand or arm of a player of the attacking team.



**ART. 2 . . .** A goal MAY be scored directly from a:

- a. kickoff;
- b. direct free kick;
- c. goal kick;
- d. penalty kick;
- e. corner kick;
- f. goalkeeper's punt or drop-kick.

**ART. 3 . . .** A goal MAY NOT be scored directly from a/an:

- a. indirect free kick;
- b. throw-in;
- c. direct free kick into a team's own goal;
- d. goal kick into a team's own goal;
- e. corner kick into a team's own goal;
- f. kickoff into the kicking team's own goal;
- g. dropped ball;
- h. goalkeeper's throw into the opponent's goal.

## **SECTION 2 FORFEITS**

**ART. 1 . .** The score of a forfeited game shall be 1-0 if the game is not started, the score is tied or the offending team is ahead at that time. If the offending team is behind at the time of forfeit, the score at that time is the final score.

## **SECTION 3 WINNER**

**ART. 1 . .** The winning team is the team scoring the greater number of goals during the game.

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# **SITUATION AND RULING**

## **RULE 10 — SCORING**

### **GOALS**

**10.1.1 SITUATION:** The goalkeeper, while holding the ball within the goalkeeper's own penalty area, (a) throws the ball into the opponent's goal or (b) throws or drops the ball into the goalkeeper's own goal. **RULING:** In (a), no goal is awarded and play is restarted with a goal kick. In (b), a goal is awarded to the opposing team and play is restarted with a kickoff for the goalkeeper's team.



# Rule 11 Offside

## SECTION 1 OFFSIDE

**ART. 1 . . .** A player is in an offside position when nearer to the opponents' goal line than the ball, unless:

- a. the player is in the player's own half of the field of play; or
- b. the player is not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two opponents.

**NOTE:** The position of any part of the player's head, body or feet will be the deciding factor, not the player's arms below the bottom of the armpit.

**ART. 2 . . .** A player shall not be penalized for being in an offside position if the ball is received directly from a goal kick, a corner kick or a throw-in.

**ART. 3 . . .** It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position.

**ART. 4 . . .** A player is offside and penalized if, at the time the ball touches or is played by a teammate, the player in an offside position becomes involved in active play by:

- a. interfering with play or with an opponent; or
- b. gaining an advantage by being in that position.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick at the spot of infraction, subject to provisions in 13-1-3.

**ART. 5 . . .** A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent, who deliberately plays the ball (except from a deliberate save), is not considered to have gained an advantage.

- a. To deliberately play the ball, the player shall have time and space, and sufficient sight of the ball to control the ball with the possibility of:
  1. Passing the ball to a teammate; or
  2. Gaining possession of the ball; or
  3. Clearing the ball.
- b. A save is when a player stops, or attempts to stop, a ball which is going into or very close to the goal with any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless the goalkeeper within the penalty area).

## SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

### RULE 11 — OFFSIDE

#### OFFSIDE

**11.1.2 SITUATION A:** A defender on Team B, with the goalkeeper out of position, heads the ball out, but in doing so falls into the goal. A3 gets the ball and passes it to A2 who has only the goalkeeper to beat. **RULING:** The defender on Team B left the field during the normal movement of play. The defender cannot create an offside by stepping off the field. Therefore, A2 is not offside.



**11.1.2 SITUATION B:** A2, after having made a play on goal, leaves the field of play as a result of normal movement of play. A2 remains outside the field of play, which indicates A2 will take no further part in the attacking maneuver and A3 then scores a goal. **RULING:** Goal. A2 left the field during the normal movement of play and since no advantage was gained, A2 is not offside.

**11.1.2 SITUATION C:** An offensive player steps off the field to avoid being offside. **RULING:** Legal, if the player left the field for the sole purpose of not being offside. If, after leaving the field, the player distracts an opponent or assists a teammate, it is an infraction.

**11.1.2 SITUATION D:** A2 is in an offside position with only the goalkeeper between A2 and the goal. The ball is in possession of Team A at midfield in the offensive half of the field. A2 is just outside the penalty area and is making no attempt to enter into play. **RULING:** There is no violation, but if the ball should be played to A2, then an offside would be called.

**11.1.2 SITUATION E:** Player A2 attacks on the offensive half of the field. A2's teammates on the front line move into support positions. The defensive team uses an offside trap, putting A2's teammates in an offside position. Player A2 continues the dribble through the defense and scores. **RULING:** Goal. The players in the offside position did not participate in the play as A2 maintained possession of the ball.

**11.1.3 SITUATION A:** A2, in an offside position, receives the ball directly from (a) A3; or (b) B2 who is participating in a drop-ball situation. **RULING:** (a) offside; (b) not offside because ball was deliberately played by an opponent.

**11.1.3 SITUATION B:** While participating in a drop-ball, A is called offside by the official. **RULING:** A player participating in a drop ball cannot be called offside.

**11.1.4 SITUATION A:** A10, in an offside position, receives a ball that was deliberately played by B3. **RULING:** Not offside because the ball was deliberately played by an opponent.

**11.1.4 SITUATION B:** A10, in an offside position, receives the ball after it was saved and rebounded from the goalkeeper. **RULING:** Offside because the ball came from a deliberate save.

**11.1.4 SITUATION C:** A10, in an offside position, receives the ball from B5 playing near the post and trying to clear the shot attempt. **RULING:** Offside because the ball came from a deliberate save.

**11.1.4 SITUATION D:** A10, in an offside position, receives a header from B7 who had time and space to make a controlled play on the ball. **RULING:** Not offside. **COMMENT:** The player is not offside because the ball was deliberately played by an opponent, who had time and space to make a controlled play on the ball.

**11.1.4 SITUATION E:** A10 is in an offside position. B1 is a player in a wall defending a free kick. A2 kicks the ball which deflects off of B1 to A10. B1 made no attempt to play the ball. **RULING:** A10 is offside as B1 did not deliberately play the ball.

**11.1.4 SITUATION F:** A player in an offside position returns to the player's half of the field and receives the ball directly from a teammate. **RULING:** Offside.



## DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATING OFFSIDE

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PlayPics courtesy of REFEREE

### DIAGRAM 1 – OFFSIDE



#### Pass to a Teammate

A1 passes the ball to A2. A2 is offside because A2 is in front of A1 and is nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two opposing players when the ball was passed by A1.

### DIAGRAM 2 – NOT OFFSIDE



#### Pass to a Teammate

A1 plays the ball forward to A2 who is level with the second last defender. A2 is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two opposing players.



**DIAGRAM 3 – NOT OFFSIDE****Pass to a Teammate**

A1 plays the ball forward to A2 who is level with the second last defender. A2 is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players. Player A3, lying injured outside the penalty area, is in an offside position but would not be penalized since the player is not involved in active play.

**DIAGRAM 4 – NOT OFFSIDE****Pass to a Teammate**

A1 plays the ball to A2 who is level with the last two opponents. A2 is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not nearer the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players.



**DIAGRAM 5 – OFFSIDE****Pass to a Teammate**

A1 crosses the ball forward from outside the penalty area. A2 runs from Position 1 and collects the ball as it lands at Position 2. A2 is offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players and was involved in active play by interfering with the play when they touched the ball.

**DIAGRAM 6 – NOT OFFSIDE****Pass to a Teammate**

A1 passes the ball to A2 who runs from Position 1 to Position 2 to play it. A2 is not offside because at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not in front of the ball and was not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players.



**DIAGRAM 7 – OFFSIDE****Interpassing with a Teammate**

A1 plays the ball to A2 from Position 1 and runs forward to receive the return pass. A2 plays the ball to A1, who is now in Position 2. A1 is offside since at the moment the ball was played forward to A1 by A2, A1 was nearer the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players and was involved in active play by interfering with play when A1 touched the ball.

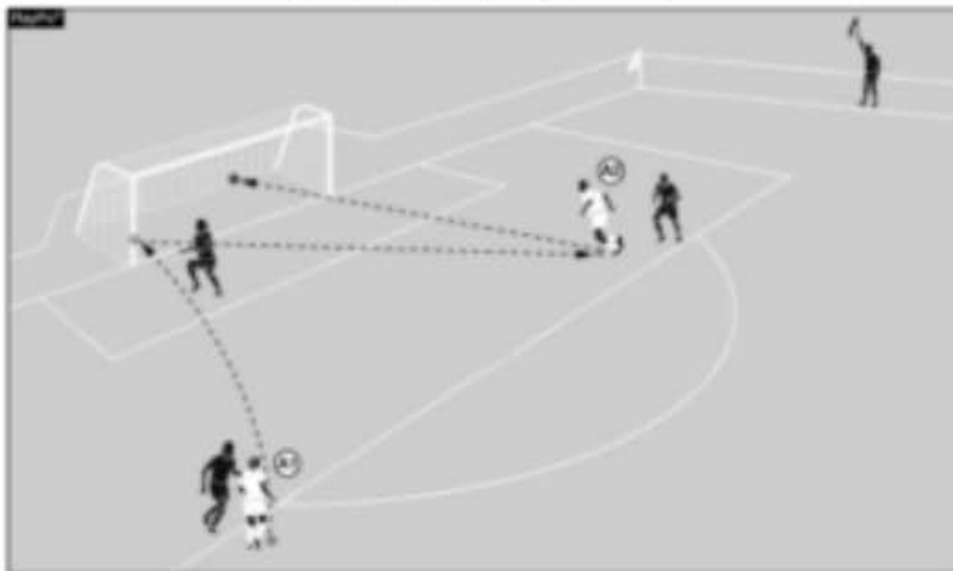
**DIAGRAM 8 – OFFSIDE****Interfering with an Opponent**

A1 shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. A2 is standing in front of the goal-keeper. The goal would not be allowed since A2, who is in an offside position, is involved in active play and is interfering with an opponent.



**DIAGRAM 9 – NOT OFFSIDE****Shot at Goal**

A1 shoots for goal and scores. Although A2 is in an offside position, this player is not involved in active play and the goal would be allowed.

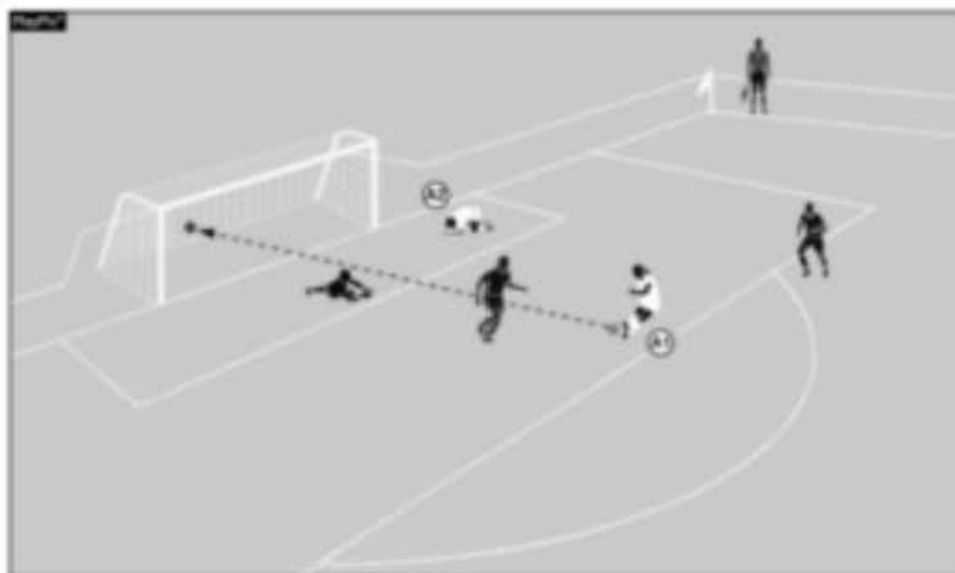
**DIAGRAM 10 – OFFSIDE****Ball Rebounding from Goal Posts or Crossbar**

A1 shoots for goal and the ball rebounds from the post to A2 who kicks the ball into goal. The goal would be disallowed since A2, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by A1, was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.



**DIAGRAM 11 – OFFSIDE****Shot Rebounds from Goalkeeper**

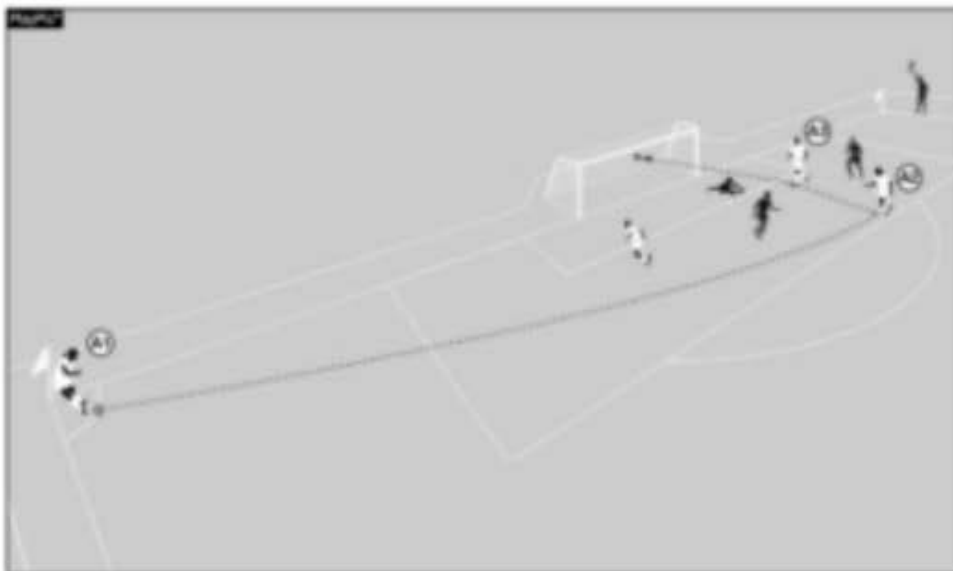
A1 shoots the ball at goal and the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper to Player A2. The goal is disallowed since A2, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by A1, was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.

**DIAGRAM 12 – NOT OFFSIDE****Not Interfering with an Opponent**

A1 shoots for goal and scores. Although A2 is lying injured in an offside position, this player is not involved in active play. The goal would be allowed.

**DIAGRAM 13 – OFFSIDE****Interfering with an Opponent**

A1 shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. A2, who is lying injured in the goal area and in the path of the ball, would be penalized for offside. By A2's presence, however accidental, A2 is involved in the active play and is interfering with an opponent.

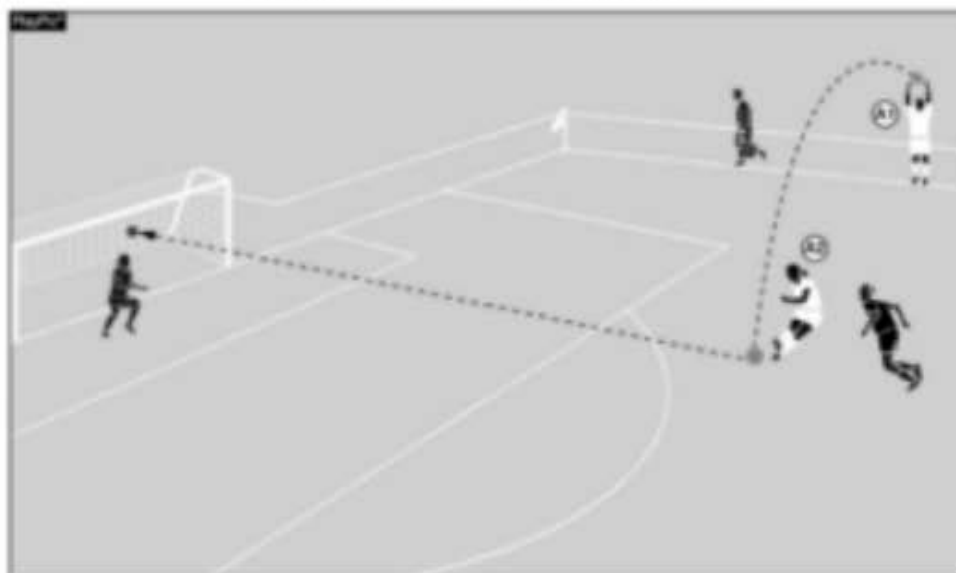
**DIAGRAM 14 – OFFSIDE****Corner Kick**

A1 takes a corner kick and the ball goes to A2. A2 shoots for goal and the ball is touched by A3 and enters the goal. The goal is not permitted since A3 was in front of the ball and there were not at least two opposing players between A3 and the goal line when it was last played by A2.



**DIAGRAM 15 – NOT OFFSIDE****Corner Kick**

A corner kick is taken by A1 and the ball goes to A2 who scores. Although there is only one opposing player between A2 and the goal line, the goal is allowed since a player is not penalized for being in an offside position if the player receives the ball directly from a corner kick.

**DIAGRAM 16 – NOT OFFSIDE****Throw-in**

A1 throws the ball to A2 who scores. The goal is allowed. Although A2 is in front of the ball and there is only one opposing player between A2 and the goal line, A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position because A2 received the ball directly from a throw-in.

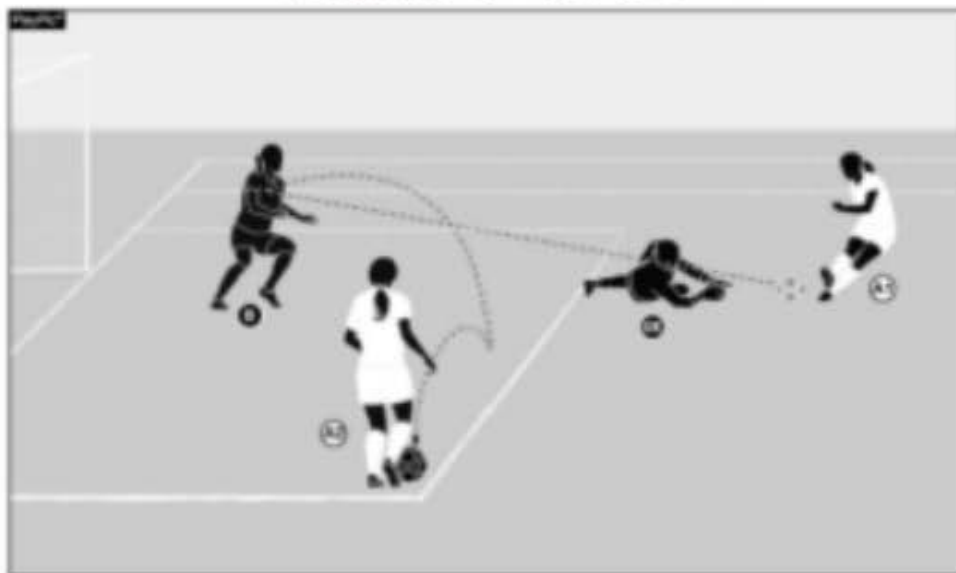
**DIAGRAM 17 – NOT OFFSIDE****Pass to a Teammate**

A2 plays the ball ahead of A1 who is in A1's own half. Although there are not at least two opposing players nearer their own goal line at the moment when A2 played the ball, A1 is not offside since a player cannot be offside in the player's own half of the field of play.

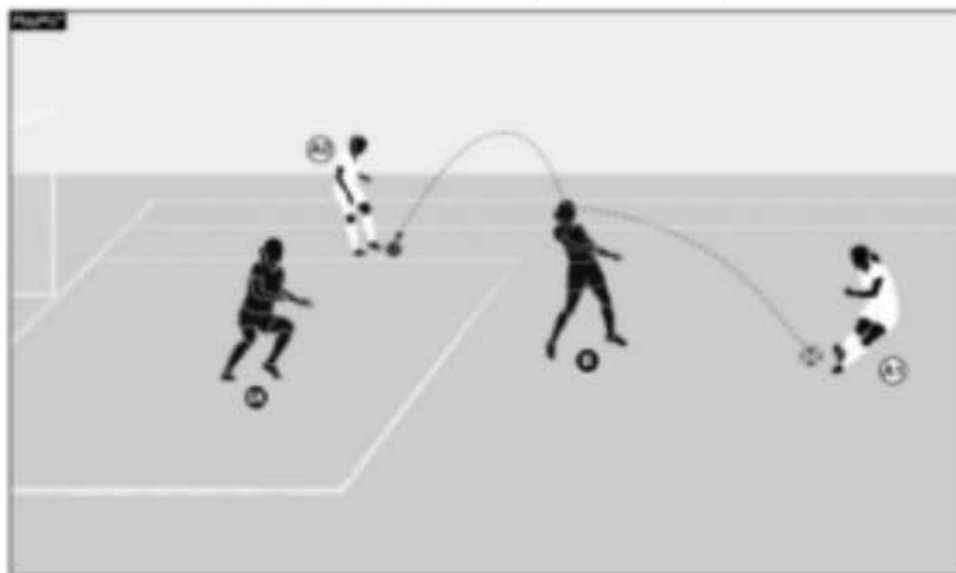
**DIAGRAM 18 – NOT OFFSIDE****Active Play**

The ball is intercepted by player A2, a teammate of the attacking player. It is transferred to another teammate, player A3, on the wing. Although the attacking player A1 is in an offside position, A1 would not be penalized since A1 is not involved in active play.



**DIAGRAM 19 – OFFSIDE****Shot On Goal with Goalkeeper Out of Position**

Player A1 takes a shot on goal. With the goalkeeper out of position, a defender (Player B1) makes a deliberate save and the ball rebounds directly to Player A2 in an offside position. Player A2 received the ball directly from a save and was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.

**DIAGRAM 20 – NOT OFFSIDE****Defender Making a Play on the Ball**

Player A1 passes the ball and a defender (B1) heads the ball directly to Player A2, who is in an offside position. A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position, however, because this player received the ball directly from a defender who had time and space to make a controlled play on the ball.

**DIAGRAM 21 – OFFSIDE**

A1 plays the ball toward A2. A2 is in an offside position and runs from the offside position into A2's own half of the field and plays the ball. Player A2 is offside as A2 was in an offside position when the ball was played. An indirect free kick is taken where A2 touched or played the ball.

**DIAGRAM 22 – NOT OFFSIDE**

A2 receives a goal kick in the attacking half of the field from A1. There are not at least two opponents nearer their own goal line when A2 receives the ball directly from A1. A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position since the player received the ball directly from a goal kick.



# Rule 12 Fouls and Misconduct

## SECTION 1 CONDITIONAL DIRECT FREE KICK FOULS

**ART. 1 . . .** A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offenses while the ball is in play, against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force.

**ART. 2 . . . Charge:** A player shall not unfairly charge an opponent.

- a. A fair charge is where players make shoulder-to-shoulder contact in an upright position, within playing distance of the ball, have at least one foot on the ground and the player's arms held close to the body.
- b. A player shall not charge into an opponent when neither player is within playing distance of the ball.
- c. A player shall not, in any manner, charge the goalkeeper in possession of the ball in the penalty area unless the goalkeeper is obstructing the player or dribbling the ball with the feet.
  1. Possession or control of the ball includes any time the goalkeeper has the ball trapped by either or both hands or when bouncing it to the ground or when releasing the ball into play;
  2. Outside the penalty area, the goalkeeper has no more privileges than any other player.

**ART. 3 . . . Jumps at:** A player shall not jump at an opponent.

**ART. 4 . . . Kicks or attempts to kick:** A player shall not kick or attempt to kick an opponent.

**ART. 5 . . . Push:** A player shall not push an opponent with the hand(s) or arm(s) extended from the body;

**ART. 6 . . . Strike or attempts to strike:** A player shall not strike or attempt to strike an opponent (including head-butt).

- a. A goalkeeper shall not strike an opponent by throwing or kicking the ball at an opponent or by pushing an opponent with the ball while holding it.

**ART. 7 . . . Tackle or Challenge:** A tackle is a specific type of challenge done with the feet. Normally, a player can fairly challenge an opponent or tackle the ball away from an opponent. Doing either of these two acts with contact that is unfair (i.e., careless, reckless or with excessive force) is a foul.

**ART. 8 . . . Trip or attempts to trip:** A player shall not trip, or attempt to trip, an opponent.

- a. This includes tripping or attempting to trip an opponent by use of the legs, or by stooping in front or behind an opponent in such a manner as to cause a fall or loss of balance.

**ART. 9 . . .** If an offense involves contact, it is penalized by a direct free kick.

- a. Careless is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. No further disciplinary sanction is needed.



- b. Reckless is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent and shall be cautioned.
- c. Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent and shall be ejected.

## SECTION 2 ADDITIONAL DIRECT FREE KICK FOULS

**ART. 1 . . .** A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the offenses in this section while the ball is in play.

**ART. 2 . . . Handling:** A player shall be penalized for deliberately handling, carrying, striking or propelling the ball with a hand or arm.

**EXCEPTION:** Goalkeeper when the ball is within the team's own penalty area.

- a. For the purposes of determining handling offenses, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit.
- b. A player shall be penalized for handling if the player scores in the opponent's goal directly from the hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper.
- c. A player shall be penalized for handling if the player scores in the opponent's goal immediately after the ball has touched the player's hand/arm, even if accidental.

**ART. 3 . . . Spitting:** A player shall not spit at an opponent.

**ART. 4 . . . Holding:** A player shall not hold an opponent.

## SECTION 3 INDIRECT FREE KICKS

**ART. 1 . . .** An indirect free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the offenses in this section.

**ART. 2 . . .** The goalkeeper in possession of the ball shall not be interfered with or impeded in any manner by an opponent. This includes the act of bouncing the ball or dropping the ball for a kick or attempting to throw the ball or tossing the ball in the air to re-catch. When goalkeepers put the ball on the ground, they relinquish privileges as goalkeepers.

**ART. 3 . . . Restrictions on the goalkeeper**

- a. **Six Seconds:** The goalkeeper has six seconds in which to release the ball into play from the moment the goalkeeper takes control of the ball with the hands when playing as a goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area.
  - 1. During that interval, the goalkeeper may hold the ball, bounce it, or throw it into the air and catch it. Once the ball has been released into play, the goalkeeper may not touch it again with the hands until it has been played or touched by another player of the same team outside of the penalty area, or by a player of the opposing team either inside or outside of the penalty area.
- b. **Repossession:** After releasing the ball from possession, a goalkeeper may touch or receive the ball with their hands only under the following conditions:
  - 1. The ball has been played or touched by another player of the opposing team inside or outside the penalty area;
  - 2. The ball has been touched by a member of the same team outside of the penalty area and not deliberately kicked or thrown to the goalkeeper. On any occasion when a player deliberately kicks the ball to the team's own goalkeeper, the goalkeeper is not permitted to touch it with the hands.



- c. A goalkeeper shall not touch the ball with the hands when receiving it directly from a throw-in by a teammate.

**NOTE:** Players may not use trickery. Example: Players may not flick the ball with the feet to their own head, chest, knee and then pass it to the team's own goalkeeper who touches it with the hands.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick awarded to the opponent at the spot of the violation, unless in the goal area.

- d. **Handling:** The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside their penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. However, if the violation is playing the ball a second time (with or without the hand/arm) after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper shall be cautioned if the offense stops a promising attack or ejected if the offense denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

#### **ART. 4 . . . Impeding**

- a. Impeding is the deliberate act of a player that moves into the path of an opponent to block, obstruct, slow down or force a change in direction when the ball is not within playing distance. Being in the way of an opponent is not an offense and is different than moving into the way.
- b. A player may legally place the body between opponents and the ball provided the ball is within playing distance. This player may legally be challenged from behind.

**ART. 5. . . Dangerous play:** A player shall not participate in dangerous play, which is an act an official considers likely to cause injury to any player. This includes playing in such a manner which could cause injury to self or another player, opponent or teammate.

### **SECTION 4 MISCONDUCT**

**ART. 1 . . .** Any of the actions by players, substitutes and bench personnel that results in a caution (yellow card) or ejection (red card) being issued. A player, substitute or bench personnel who commits misconduct either on or off the field of play, when the ball is in play or not, is disciplined according to the offense.

**ART. 2. . .** A cautioned player is shown the yellow card, shall leave the field, and may be replaced. Should the team with the cautioned player elect to play shorthanded, the cautioned player may not re-enter nor be replaced until the next legal substitution opportunity. (3-3-3b)

**ART. 3. . .** An ejected player is shown the red card, shall leave the field, and may not return or be substituted for, and the player's team shall play short (except as in 3-3-3c(1)). An ejected player or substitute is restricted to the team area.

**ART. 4 . . .** Coach responsibility:

- a. The head coach shall be responsible for ensuring that each of the player(s) on the team is properly and legally equipped. The head coach shall receive the first caution issued for an illegally equipped player.



- b. The coach may be cautioned or ejected either for team misconduct or for bench misconduct that cannot be attributed to a specific individual.
- c. A coach, or adult team personnel, who is ejected is shown the red card and shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from any contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. Failure to comply shall result in termination of the game.
- d. In the case of a coach being ejected from the field and assistant coach or other authorized school personnel is not available, the team shall forfeit the game.

**NOTE:** The rules committee strongly recommends that each state high school association adopt a policy wherein an ejected player, substitute, coach or other bench personnel under articles 2, 3, and 4 shall be barred from participating in the next contest(s).

### MISCONDUCT PENALTY CHART

	PLAYER	BENCH PERSONNEL	COACH
<b>Yellow Card</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must leave field until next legal substitution opportunity</li> <li>• May be substituted or play short</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substitute (nonplayer) remains in team area until next legal substitution opportunity</li> <li>• Other bench personnel remain in team area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains in team area</li> </ul>
<b>Red Card</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must leave field</li> <li>• May not return</li> <li>• May not be substituted; must play short</li> <li>• Restricted to team area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted to team area for substitutes or other students</li> <li>• Adult bench personnel must leave vicinity of playing area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must leave the vicinity of playing area</li> </ul>

### SECTION 5 CAUTION

**ART. 1 . . .** A player, substitute, coach or bench personnel shall be cautioned (yellow card) for:

- a. entering or leaving the field of play (except through the normal course of play) without the permission of an official;
- b. persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game;
- c. objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by an official (dissent);
- d. any incidental use of vulgar or profane language;

**NOTE:** By state association adoption, incidental use of vulgar or profane language may be an ejection (red card).

- e. any use of electronic communication devices with the on-field players during play. Examples: Amplifying devices, wireless communication devices such as cell phones, headphones, personal digital assistant, etc.;



**NOTE:** A coach may engage in verbal communications with the team during play.

- f. unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to:
  - 1. coaching outside the team area;
  - 2. unnecessary delay (kicking, throwing the ball away on a free kick, etc.);
  - 3. holding a shirt, short, etc.;
  - 4. deliberate verbal tactics;
  - 5. deliberately handling the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack;
  - 6. a foul that interferes with or stops a promising attack;
  - 7. faking an injury;
  - 8. simulating a foul;
  - 9. a player who displays reckless play;
  - 10. an illegally equipped player, per 4-4;
  - 11. any delayed, excessive or prolonged act(s) by which a player(s) attempts to focus attention upon themselves and/or prohibits a timely restart of the game;
  - 12. a player (other than a goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area) who deliberately handles the ball, attempting to prevent a goal, and the goal is scored;
  - 13. a player who commits a foul, attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO), and the goal is scored;
  - 14. a player who commits a foul against an opponent within the player's team penalty area in an attempt to play the ball that denies the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) and the referee awards a penalty kick;
  - 15. use of any form of alcohol or tobacco, or be under the influence of (i.e. impaired by) a controlled or illicit substance(s) beginning with the arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.
- g. encroachment.

**PENALTY:** A cautioned player shall leave the field and may be replaced. (see 12-4-2)

## SECTION 6 EJECTION

**ART. 1 . . .** A player, substitute, coach or bench personnel shall be ejected (red card) for:

- a. subsequent caution;
- b. a player (other than a goalkeeper within the team's own penalty area) deliberately handles the ball, attempting to prevent a goal and the goal is not scored;
- c. a player commits a foul outside the penalty area when attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO), and the goal is not scored;
- d. a player commits a foul, inside the penalty area, while not attempting to play the ball, denying the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) and referee awards a penalty kick;

- e. using insulting, offensive or abusive language or gesture;
  - 1. taunting – use of word or act to incite or degrade an opposing player, coach, referee or other individual;

**NOTE:** The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.

- f. committing serious foul play:
  - 1. any play in which the player commits one of the offenses punishable with a direct free kick (or penalty kick if the offense takes place by a defender in the penalty area) and uses disproportionate and unnecessary force against an opponent while playing for the ball (18-1-100);
- g. spitting at or biting an opponent, teammate or game official;
- h. leaving the team area to enter the field where a fight or altercation is taking place unless summoned by an official;
- i. exhibiting violent conduct.

**PENALTY:** An ejected player shall leave the field and may not return or be substituted for, and the player's team shall play short. (See 12-4-3)

## **SECTION 7 STOPPING A PROMISING ATTACK**

**ART. 1 . . .** A promising attack is an attack moving quickly toward the opposing team's goal with the promise or potential to become a clear goal-scoring opportunity for the attacking team. A promising attack can occur anywhere on the field.

**ART. 2 . . .** When determining if an attack is promising, the following considerations would include but are not limited to:

- a. distance between the offense and the goal;
- b. general direction of the play;
- c. likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball;
- d. location and number of defenders;
- e. attacking team is moving forward with pace (speed);
- f. open space in front of the player with the ball or the presence of other attackers who could receive the ball;
- g. player has the option to take on defender or pass to teammate;
- h. the attacker has assistance from teammates.

**ART. 3 . . .** Where a player commits an offense against an opponent within their own penalty area which interferes with or stops a promising attack and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is not cautioned if the offense was an attempt to play the ball; in all other circumstances (e.g., holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.) the offending player shall be cautioned.



**SECTION 8 DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)**

**ART. 1 . . .** Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO):

- a. When determining if an offense denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the following shall be considered and present for a DOGSO offense:
1. distance between the offense and the goal;
  2. general direction of the play;
  3. likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball;
  4. location and number of defenders.

**ART. 2 . . .** Where a player commits an offense against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned if the offense was an attempt to play the ball; in all other circumstances (e.g., holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.) the offending player shall be ejected.

**ART. 3 . . .** Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a deliberate handling offense, except a goalkeeper within their penalty area, the player is ejected wherever the offense occurs.

**ART. 4 . . .** If any element in article one is missing, the player cannot be ejected for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. However, this may indicate an attack is promising and additional factors should be considered.

**SITUATIONS AND RULINGS****RULE 12 — FOULS AND MISCONDUCT****CHARGE**

**12.1.2 SITUATION A:** Player A makes shoulder-to-shoulder contact with opponent B. Contact is made in an upright position with both feet on the ground and arms close to the body. (a) Player B is within playing distance of the ball; (b) neither player is within playing distance of the ball. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) illegal.

**COMMENT:** A player shall not charge into an opponent when neither player is within playing distance of the ball.

**12.1.2 SITUATION B:** Team B's goalkeeper places the ball on the ground and begins to dribble with the feet. Player A shoulder charges legally and gains control of the ball. **RULING:** Legal. (18-1-1e) **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper relinquished goalkeeper privileges when the ball was placed on the ground.

**12.1.2 SITUATION C:** Team B's goalkeeper and A2 simultaneously play the ball. (a) The momentum causes A2 to collide with the goalkeeper; (b) A2 deliberately elbows the goalkeeper. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) illegal, deliberate use of the elbow may also result in caution or ejection.



**STRIKING OR ATTEMPTS TO STRIKE**

**12.1.6 SITUATION:** The goalkeeper for Team A deliberately throws the ball which strikes opposing Player B who is standing outside the goalkeeper's penalty area. **RULING:** If the referee deems the strike as careless, reckless or committed with excessive force, then the referee may stop play and award Team B a direct free kick from where the ball struck Player B, or the referee may apply advantage. **COMMENT:** If in the opinion of the referee the contact was reckless, then the goalkeeper is cautioned (yellow card). If excessive force was used, then the goalkeeper is ejected (red card).

**TACKLING/CHALLENGING**

**12.1.7 SITUATION A:** Near midfield, Player A slides and tackles opposing Player B from behind causing the ball to go out of bounds. In the referee's opinion, Player A used excessive force which endangered Player B's safety. **RULING:** A direct free kick is awarded to Team B. Player A is ejected and shown the red card. **COMMENT:** Whether a player contacts the ball first or after the tackle is irrelevant if the offender uses contact with excessive force when challenging their opponent.

**12.1.7 SITUATION B:** A2 approaches B2 from outside B2's normal peripheral vision and executes a sliding tackle. **RULING:** Legal, if in the referee's judgment it is properly executed. (18-1-1qq)

**TRIPPING**

**12.1.8 SITUATION:** Player A2 trips B2 but B2 maintains control of the ball. **RULING:** Foul. The referee may stop play and award a direct free kick or invoke the advantage clause. (5-3-1d)

**HANDLING**

**12.2.2 SITUATION A:** A player, who is part of a wall in a free kick, moves the hands after the kick to protect the face from the ball. **RULING:** The hand movement is deemed to be a reflex action and is not considered to be deliberate handling. Protecting the head, face, groin or chest from a hard shot or pass using the hands or arms as a reflex is not considered deliberate and therefore not handling.

**12.2.2 SITUATION B:** A player who is in a defensive position during the taking of a free kick places hands or arms against any part of the body for protection. The offensive player kicks the ball which strikes the hands still in front of the body or arms over the chest. In both cases, the hands and arms are stationary. **RULING:** This is not handling because the ball struck a stationary hand or arm close to the body, in a natural position rather than a hand or arm playing the ball.

**12.2.2 SITUATION C:** A2 kicks a low hard pass to a teammate; (a) B2, a male player who is in the path of the ball, moves a hand to protect the groin and the ball touches the hand; (b) B2, a female player who is in the path of the ball, moves a hand to protect the chest and the ball touches the hand. **RULING:** Legal in both (a) and (b).



Protecting the head, face, groin and chest from a hard shot or pass using the hands or arms as a reflex is not considered deliberate and therefore not handling.

**12.2.2 SITUATION D:** A2 takes a shot on goal and goalkeeper B2 is outstretched on the ground and reaches outside the penalty area and touches the ball with the hand or arm. **RULING:** Illegal.

### RESTRICTIONS ON THE GOALKEEPER

**12.3.2 SITUATION:** After Team A's goalkeeper has gained possession of the ball by use of hands, the goalkeeper pushes or rolls the ball along the ground and then retrieves or touches the ball with a hand (a) before the ball is touched by any other player; (b) after the ball is kicked by opposing Player B. **RULING:** (a) Illegal and (b) legal. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper has relinquished possession of the ball after the initial push or roll. The goalkeeper cannot touch the ball again with their hand until it has been touched by another player. Team B is awarded an indirect free kick from where the goalkeeper touched the ball with their hand in part a.

**12.3.3 SITUATION:** An attacking player takes a shot on goal which (a) goes directly at the goalkeeper, who is able to make a save by deflecting the ball to the ground with their hands. The goalkeeper dribbles the ball with their feet to the edge of the penalty area and then picks the ball up with their hands. **RULING:** Legal. The goalkeeper is not considered to have gained possession of the ball with their hands from a deliberate save.

### IMPEDING

**12.3.4 SITUATION:** On an attack on goal by Player A2, A2 pushes the ball forward to move around opponent B2. B2 then moves between A2 and the ball, which is not within playing distance of either player. **RULING:** This is impeding and an indirect free kick is awarded to Team A at the spot of the foul.

### DANGEROUS PLAY

**12.3.5 SITUATION A:** Player A2 does a scissors kick during a game when (a) an opponent is within playing distance and A2's foot is, in the opinion of the official, dangerously high; (b) no player is within playing distance. **RULING:** In (a), indirect free kick given to the defending team since this is considered dangerous play; in (b), the play is legal since no player was within playing distance.

**12.3.5 SITUATION B:** Player A2 performs a diving header trying to score. In the process, a defender playing the ball kicks A2 in the head. **RULING:** Indirect free kick given to the defending team since A2's dive created the dangerous situation.

**12.3.5 SITUATION C:** Player A2 tries to tackle B2. In the process A2 raises a foot showing cleats to B2 and blocks the pass. **RULING:** Indirect free kick awarded because of A2's dangerous play.

**12.3.5 SITUATION D:** A2 plays the ball to A3 while lying on the ground. **RULING:** Legal, provided A2 did not create a danger to A3 or another player.



**12.3.5 SITUATION E:** Team A is awarded a free kick and multiple players from Team B line up for a wall at appropriate distance from the spot per the official, and then another player from Team B (the defending team) lays down behind the wall. Before allowing the play to start, the official instructs the player from Team B to stand up. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** A player may play the ball while on the ground providing the player's action does not create a danger to that player or any other player. Laying down behind the wall of defensive players creates a dangerous situation to both the player on the ground and those defending in the wall.

### SUBSTITUTE FOR MISCONDUCT

**12.4.3 SITUATION:** Player A4 is cautioned and shown the yellow card for the second time in the same game. The referee then ejects A4 and shows the red card. Team A's coach sends substitute A7 to replace A4. **RULING:** Illegal. A substitute is not permitted for an ejected player.

### CAUTION

**12.5.1 SITUATION A:** Player A2 is waiting to receive a ball in the air. Opponent B2, who is behind A2, shouts "I'll take it" in an obvious attempt to deceive A2 into thinking B2 is a teammate calling for the ball. **RULING:** Stop play, caution B2 for unsporting conduct and restart with an indirect free kick by Team A at the spot of the infraction.

**12.5.1 SITUATION B:** During the match, (a) A1 commits a foul in a reckless manner, (b) A1 is the second player from Team A observed with illegal equipment and (c) after scoring a goal, A1 celebrates excessively. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c), caution A1 for unsporting conduct. [12-1-3b, 4-4-2, 12-9-1f(12)]

**12.5.1 SITUATION C:** During the game, while the ball is in play, (a) Coach A talks on a cell phone, (b) Coach B records video using a tablet, (c) Player A1 wears an electronic heart monitor on the chest, under the jersey, (d) A2 wears a hearing aid, (e) Coach A communicated with player A3 using a wireless microphone/headphone system. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) legal; (c) legal; (d) legal; and (e) illegal and coach is shown the yellow card for misconduct per 12-9-1e.

**12.5.1 SITUATION D:** Player A, while attempting to play the ball, trips the attacking player in the penalty area, denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** The official awards a penalty kick to the opponents and issues a caution to Player A. (12-9-4b, 14-1-1)

**12.5.1 SITUATION E:** Player A2 dribbles in on goalkeeper B11 within the penalty area near the goal line. A2's maneuver causes B11 to fall down in A2's path as the ball is pushed past B11. A2 is held by B11 in the field of play and inside the penalty area after (a) A2 leaps over B11; (b) A2 goes around B11. **RULING:** The fouls in both (a) and (b) result in a penalty kick and the goalkeeper is ejected. (12-9-4b, 14-1-1)



**EJECTION**

**12.6.1 SITUATION A:** Player A2 is cautioned by the official and is leaving the field. Player B2 approaches player A2 and applauds in player A2's face and follows A2 off the field, continuing to applaud. **RULING:** Illegal. The official will eject B2 for taunting and not permit a substitution.

**12.6.1 SITUATION B:** Player A2 dribbles along the goal line into the penalty area. The goalkeeper comes out of the goal mouth to challenge A2. A2 pushes the ball by the goalkeeper and steps off the field to go around the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper then steps off the field and violently contacts A2 to prevent A2 from completing the play. **RULING:** The referee shall stop play, eject the goalkeeper for exhibiting violent conduct and restart play with a penalty kick. (12-1-3, 14-1-1, 18-1-1zz)

**12.6.1 SITUATION C:** A person within Team A's team area spits at the referee. **RULING:** The person, if identifiable, is ejected. If not identifiable, the coach is ejected (12-9-3b). The game is restarted with an indirect free kick to the opposing team from the point where the ball was when play was stopped.

**12.6.1 SITUATION D:** Player A2 has the ball in Team B's penalty area. Team B's athletic trainer directs foul language at the referee. The referee ejects the athletic trainer. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The referee should apply the advantage clause if there is a clear advantage to Team A (5-3-1d). At the next stoppage, the referee should eject the athletic trainer. If the referee stops play for the ejected athletic trainer, the game is restarted because of misconduct with an indirect free kick by Team A from the point where the ball was when the time was stopped, subject to 13-1-4.

**12.6.1 SITUATION E:** (a) Player A2, 30 yards from goal, has an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and is fouled from behind by Player B2. The foul does not involve unnecessary or disproportionate force. The referee gives advantage and Player A2 scores. (b) Player A2 shoots on goal. Fullback B2, standing on B2's defensive goal line, handles the shot, which goes to A2, who scores. (c) Player A2 shoots on goal. Fullback B2 standing on B2's defensive goal line, handles the shot, which continues into the goal. **RULING:** In all cases, Player B2 is not ejected for DOGSO, as the goal was scored from the advantage (5-3-1d). The referee should caution B2 in each case. In all cases, if the goal is not scored on the advantage, or if the referee stops play for the foul before the goal is scored, B2 is ejected under 12-6-1f(1).

**12.6.1 SITUATION F:** Between periods or during the halftime interval, a team member directs offensive, insulting or abusive language at an official. The team member is ejected. The team will be able to play with 11 players the next period. **RULING:** Legal. A team does not play short for a team member ejected during an interval between periods.



**12.6.1 SITUATION G:** With the game in progress, a fight breaks out between opposing players on the field. As the altercation expands to other field players, the assistant referee observes a substitute from the Team A bench entering into the fracas. After stoppage of the game and establishment of control by officials, the assistant referee informs the referee of the observance of the Team A substitute, also mentioning the assistant referee did not see the substitute actually throw a punch. **RULING:** The Team A substitute observed will be ejected for leaving the team area to enter into the altercation on the field.

**12.6.1 SITUATION H:** After entering the field of play, the referee finds two opposing players guilty of using abusive language and ejects the players from the game before it begins. **RULING:** Legal.

**12.6.1 SITUATION I:** Player A2, having been cautioned earlier in the game, commits a second cautionable offense. **RULING:** Stop play, show the yellow card, sequentially show the red card to disqualify A2 and do not permit a substitution for the ejected player.

**12.6.1 SITUATION J:** While the ball is in play, Player A9 standing outside their penalty area (a) spits at opponent B2 who is standing outside Team A's penalty area; (b) spits at opponent B2 who is standing inside Team A's penalty area; (c) spits at teammate A10; (d) spits at an official. **RULING:** The referee stops play and ejects A9 for misconduct. Play is restarted with (a) a direct free kick for Team B from where B2 was spat on; (b) a penalty kick for Team B; (c) an indirect free kick for Team B from where A10 was spat on; (d) an indirect free kick for Team B from where the referee was spat on.

### STOPPING A PROMISING ATTACK

**12.7.1 SITUATION:** Trailing by one goal, Player B10 gains possession of the ball on Team B's side of the field with open space to advance. B10 initiates a counterattack with a supporting number of teammates marked by an equal number of Team A's defenders. Opposing Player A9 pulls B10's jersey to slow B10's forward progress near the halfway line. **RULING:** Player A9 is cautioned for unsporting conduct because they stopped a promising attack. Team B is awarded a direct free kick from where the foul occurred. **COMMENT:** A promising attack can develop anywhere on the field. This is not DOGSO because of the number of defenders present. Therefore it is missing one of the four required considerations.

**12.7.3 SITUATION A:** Attacker A7 is dribbling the ball inside Team B's penalty area and is moving toward the goal with a promising attack. Multiple defenders are between A7 and the goal. The referee awards a penalty kick after defender B2 (a) pulls A7's jersey so Team B's goalkeeper can collect the ball; (b) carelessly pushes A7 off the ball; (c) carelessly trips A7 while attempting to play the ball. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), B2 is cautioned for unsporting conduct because they stopped a promising attack. Although a penalty kick was awarded, a caution is still issued because there was not an attempt to play the ball. In (c), B2 is not cautioned because there was an attempt to play the ball.



**12.7.3 SITUATION B:** Attacker A7 is dribbling the ball inside Team B's penalty area and is moving toward the goal with a promising attack. Multiple defenders are between A7 and the goal. The referee awards a penalty kick after defender B2 recklessly tackles A7 from the side while attempting to play the ball. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** B2 is cautioned for unsporting conduct because of reckless play regardless of interrupting A7's promising attack.

### **DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)**

**12.8.1 SITUATION:** With an obvious opportunity to score, attacker A3 is carelessly fouled outside Team B's penalty area by defender B8. The referee stops play and awards a direct free kick to Team A from the spot of the foul. B8 is ejected and shown the red card for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**12.8.2 SITUATION A:** Attacker A7 is dribbling the ball inside Team B's penalty area and is moving toward the goal with an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. The referee awards a penalty kick after defender B2 (a) pulls A7's jersey so Team B's goalkeeper can collect the ball; (b) carelessly pushes A7 off the ball; (c) carelessly trips A7 while attempting to play the ball. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), B2 is ejected for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. Although a penalty kick was awarded, B2 is still ejected because there was not an attempt to play the ball. In (c), B2 is cautioned because there was an attempt to play the ball.

**12.8.2 SITUATION B:** Attacker A7 is dribbling the ball inside Team B's penalty area and is moving toward the goal with an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. The referee awards a penalty kick after defender B2 uses excessive force to tackle A7 from behind while attempting to play the ball and ejects (red card) B2. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** B2 is ejected for committing serious foul play regardless of the denial of A7's obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

**12.8.3 SITUATION:** Team B's goalkeeper, B5, is caught out of position on a counterattack by Team A. Dribbling the ball, attacker A1 is moving toward the goal with only defender B12 between A1 and the goal. With an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, A1 shoots the ball toward the goal. B12 deliberately uses a hand/arm to stop the ball from entering the goal. B12's handball foul occurred (a) outside Team B's penalty area; (b) inside Team B's penalty area. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), B12 is ejected for denying a goal by deliberately handling the ball. Team A is awarded a direct free kick from the spot of the foul in (a) and a penalty kick in (b).

**12.8.4 SITUATION A:** Attacker A6 receives the ball inside the center circle. Opponent B3 challenges for the ball but is unsuccessful. A6 turns and starts running toward the goal with only the goalkeeper between A6 and the goal. As A6 approaches Team B's penalty area, B3 pulls A6's jersey from behind causing A6 to fall outside the penalty area. The official ejects B3 and shows the red card for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** All four considerations of a DOGSO offense were present.



**12.8.4 SITUATION B:** Attacker A6 receives the ball inside the center circle. Opponent B10 challenges for the ball but is unsuccessful. A6 turns and starts running toward the goal with Team B's goalkeeper and defender B8 between A6 and the goal. As A6 approaches Team B's penalty area, B10 pulls A6's jersey from behind causing A6 to fall outside the penalty area. The official ejects B10 and shows the red card for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Not all four considerations of a DOGSO offense were present – there were two defenders between A6 and the goal. B10 is guilty of stopping a promising attack and should be cautioned and shown the yellow card for unsporting conduct.

## Rule 13 Free Kick

### SECTION 1 DESCRIPTION OF A FREE KICK

**ART. 1 . . .** Free kicks shall be classified "direct" from which a goal may be scored against the offending team or "indirect" from which a goal may not be scored unless the ball is touched or played by another player of either team.

**ART. 2 . . .** All free kicks, with the exception of penalty kicks, may be taken in any direction. Free kicks are taken from the spot of the foul except for restarts for the reasons listed in 13-2-3 which are taken from the location of the ball when the referee stopped play. Free kicks resulting from fouls committed in the goal area are taken as described in 13-1-3 or 13-1-4. Indirect free kicks for offside (13-2-2b) are taken from the spot where the offending player interfered with play, interfered with an opponent or gained an advantage by being in that position.

**ART. 3 . . .** Any free kick awarded to the defending team within its own goal area may be taken from any point within the goal area.

**ART. 4 . . .** Any indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team within its opponent's goal area shall be taken from the part of the goal-area line which runs parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the offense was committed.

**ART. 5 . . .** Any player of the offended team may take a free kick.

**EXCEPTION:** Substitutes for cautioned, injured or bleeding players may not take the penalty kick when entering the game during a penalty kick situation.

### SECTION 2 WHEN AWARDED

**ART. 1 . . .** Direct free kicks are awarded and taken from the point of the infraction (Except as in 13-1-3 and 14-1-1):

- if a player spits at, kicks, strikes, attempts to kick or strike, or jumps at an opponent (12-1);
- if a player trips or attempts to trip an opponent (12-1);
- if a goalkeeper attempts to strike, strikes or pushes an opponent with the ball (12-1);



- d. if a player, other than the goalkeeper in the team's own penalty area, deliberately handles the ball (12-2-2);
- e. if a player pushes an opponent with the hand(s) or arm(s) extended from the body (12-1-5);
- f. if a player holds an opponent (12-2-4);
- g. if a player charges an opponent in a careless or reckless manner, or using excessive force (12-1-2);
- h. if a player charges an opponent while the opponent, in the act of playing the ball, has both feet off the ground (12-1-2);
- i. if a player charges the goalkeeper (12-1-2c);
- j. if a player, coach or bench personnel enters or leaves the field of play without permission of an official and interferes with play or an official (12-5-1a);
- k. if a player fairly charges into an opponent when neither is within playing distance of the ball (12-1-2b).

**ART. 2 . . .** Indirect free kicks are awarded and taken from the point of the infraction (except as in 13-1-3 and 13-1-4):

- a. if the ball is played next by the kicker following a kickoff (8-1-4), a free kick (13-3-3), a penalty kick (14-1-5), a goal kick (16-1-4), a corner kick (17-1-5), or by the thrower following a throw-in (15-1-4);
- b. if a player is penalized for being offside (11-1-4);
- c. if a player who is not in possession of the ball obstructs an opponent who is attempting to play the ball (12-3-4a);
- d. if a player kicks or attempts to kick the ball while it is in the possession of the goalkeeper (12-3-5);
- e. for dangerous play (12-3-5);
- f. if the goalkeeper takes more than six seconds before releasing the ball for play (12-3-3a);
- g. if the goalkeeper illegally handles the ball while in the goalkeeper's own penalty area after relinquishing possession of the ball (12-3-3b);
- h. if the goalkeeper touches the ball again with the hands while in the goalkeeper's own penalty area before it has been touched or played by another player (12-3-3b);
- i. if the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands while in the goalkeeper's own penalty area after it is deliberately kicked by a player to the team's own goalkeeper (12-3-3b);
- j. if the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands while in the goalkeeper's own penalty area when receiving it directly from a throw-in by a teammate (12-3-3c);
- k. if the game is stopped for misconduct of a player, and no other restart takes precedence (12-4-1, 12-4-2, 12-4-3, 12-4-4);
- l. spitting at a teammate or game official.

**ART. 3 . . .** The following indirect free kicks are taken from where the ball was when the referee stopped play: (Subject to restrictions in 13-1-3 and 13-1-4.)

- a. if a player, coach or bench personnel enters or leaves the field of play without permission of an official and does not interfere with play or an official (12-5-1);



- b. if the game is stopped because of misconduct by a person in the team and coaching area (12-4-1, 12-4-2, 12-4-3, 12-4-4).

**ART. 4 . . .** If a direct or indirect free kick goes untouched into a team's own goal, a corner kick shall be awarded to the opposing team. (10-1-3)

### SECTION 3 HOW TAKEN

**ART. 1 . . .** Players opposing the kicker shall be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked, unless the players are standing on their own goal line between the goal posts. If the free kick is awarded to the defending team in its penalty area, players opposing the kicker shall be outside the penalty area at least 10 yards from the ball and shall remain there until the ball is in play. Where three or more defending team players form a wall, all attacking team players must remain at least 1 yard from the wall until the ball is in play.

**PENALTY:** An official shall caution a player who fails to move the required distance away from the ball, the defensive wall when three or more defenders are in the wall, or engages in time-wasting tactics such as kicking or carrying the ball away after a free kick has been awarded to the opponent's team. (12-5-1)

**ART. 2 . . .** The ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground at the spot specified by the official. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

**ART. 3 . . .** The kicker may not play the ball until it has been touched or played by another player.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick awarded to the opponent from the spot of the foul.

**ART. 4 . . .** For indirect kicks, the referee shall signal an indirect kick (using Official NFHS Soccer Signals Rule 5-3-1b) by raising an arm above the head. This signal shall be maintained until the kick is taken and the ball touches another player or goes out of play. If the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect and the ball goes directly into the opponent's goal, the kick shall be retaken.

## SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

### RULE 13 — FREE KICK

#### DESCRIPTION OF A FREE KICK

**13.1.3 SITUATION:** Attacker A2 is penalized for obstructing the goalkeeper near the right goal post. **RULING:** An indirect free kick is awarded Team B and may be taken anywhere in the goal area.

#### WHEN AWARDED

**13.2.1 SITUATION A:** Player A3 in A3's own half of the field plays the ball to A5 who is in an offside position. A5 runs into A5's own half and plays the ball. Player A5 is declared offside. The free kick is taken from where A5 first touched the ball. **RULING:** Correct procedure.



**13.2.1 SITUATION B:** Player A1 is attacking in Team B's half of the field when a bench player from Team B steps on the field and trips Player A1. **RULING:** Direct free kick from the spot of the infraction and caution the player from Team B.

**13.2.2 SITUATION:** Player A2 is in an onside position. Player A3 is in an offside position in the center circle. Player A4 plays the ball toward Team B's penalty area. Both A2 and A3 run toward the ball. (a) Player A3 is the first to touch the ball; (b) player A2 is the first to touch the ball and A3 was not involved in the play. **RULING:** (a) Player A3 is declared offside and the restart is at the point where A3 touched the ball; (b) no offside penalty, Player A2 was in an onside position when the ball was played by A4.

**13.2.3 SITUATION:** Substitute A4 is warming up outside Team A's team and coaching area and verbally dissents a referee's decision. The referee stops play, cautions A4 for dissent (12-9-1c), and restarts play with an indirect free kick for team B from where the ball was located when play was stopped. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

### HOW TAKEN

**13.3.1 SITUATION A:** During a free kick A2 steps over the ball, and then A3 kicks the ball. **RULING:** Legal.

**13.3.1 SITUATION B:** Team A is attacking in Team B's half of the field about 35 yards from Team B's goal. A Team B player non-violently trips a Team A player who has possession of the ball. The referee whistles for the foul and quickly signals for a direct free kick to be taken by Team A. A Team A player sees an advantageous situation for a quick kick and takes the kick within two seconds of the whistle. A Team B player is standing 3-4 yards from the ball and moving backwards toward the required distance when the ball strikes the player. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Play shall continue.

**13.3.1 SITUATION C:** The defending team is awarded a free kick inside its own penalty area. The team elects to take a quick kick and kicks the ball before all of the attackers have cleared the penalty area. The ball leaves the penalty area, travels at least 10 yards and (a) is intercepted by an attacker who plays it to a teammate who is onside and still in the penalty area; (b) rebounds from a defender to one of the attackers who is onside and still in the penalty area. **RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b).

**13.3.1 SITUATION D:** On a free kick awarded to the defending team inside its penalty area, (a) an opponent who remains inside the penalty area when the ball was put into play deliberately touches or challenges for the ball; (b) an opponent enters the penalty area before the ball was put into play and touches or challenges for the ball. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Illegal. The free kick is retaken.

**13.3.1 SITUATION E:** After being awarded an indirect free kick, (a) Player A1 steps on top of the ball and A2 kicks the ball into Team B's goal, (b) Player A1 kicks the ball and it moves and A2 kicks the ball into Team B's goal. **RULING:** (a) No goal because the ball was not in play after A1 stepped on top of the ball, a goal kick is awarded to Team B; (b) Legal goal.



# Rule 14 Penalty Kick

## SECTION 1 PENALTY KICK

**ART. 1 . . .** A penalty kick shall be awarded when a foul, which ordinarily results in the awarding of a direct free kick, occurs within the offending team's penalty area.

**ART. 2 . . .** All players except the kicker and the opposing goalkeeper shall be within the field of play but outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from and behind the penalty mark until the ball is kicked.

**ART. 3 . . .** The opposing goalkeeper shall stand with at least one foot on or in-line with the goal line, facing the kicker, between the goal posts, and shall not be touching the goal posts, crossbar or nets until the ball is kicked. Lateral or forward movement is allowed, but the goalkeeper is not permitted to come off the line with both feet until the ball is in play.

**ART. 4 . . .** The ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground from the spot or any place on the penalty mark. To be in play, the ball shall be moved forward. The player taking the penalty kick is permitted to use a stutter-step or a hesitation move provided there is no stopping and there is continuous movement toward the ball. Failure to kick the ball as specified shall be considered a violation by the attacking team and the appropriate penalties shall apply. Stutter-stepping is not an interruption in movement.

**PENALTY (Articles 2, 3 and 4):** Infringement by the defending team is not penalized if the goal is scored. If a goal is not scored on the penalty kick, it is retaken. If there is an encroachment by the attacking team and the ball enters the goal, the goal does not count and the kick shall be retaken. If there is an infringement by the attacking team and the ball does not go into the goal, the kick is not retaken. If the ball rebounds into play or is deflected out of bounds by the goalkeeper, the game shall be stopped and restarted with an indirect free kick for the defending team at the location of the encroachment. If the ball is saved and held by the goalkeeper, play shall continue. In cases where players from both teams are guilty of infringements, the kick shall be retaken regardless of the outcome of the kick. If the ball is not kicked forward, an indirect free kick shall immediately be awarded to the defending team from the penalty mark.

**NOTE:** A player who starts the penalty kick approach and does not kick the ball shall be cautioned, and the kick will be retaken by another player.



**PENALTY KICK SITUATIONS: (14-1-2, 14-1-3 and 14-1-4)**

Result of Penalty Kick	No Violation	Violation by Attacking Team Only	Violation by Defense Only	Violation by Both
Enters Goal	Goal	Retake	Goal	Retake
Goes Directly Out-of-Bounds	Goalkick	Goalkick	Retake	Retake
Rebounds into Play from Goal/Goalkeeper	Play Continues	Indirect Free Kick	Retake	Retake
Saved and Held by Goalkeeper	Play Continues	Play Continues	Retake	Retake
Deflected Out-of-Bounds by Goalkeeper	Corner Kick	Indirect Free Kick	Retake	Retake
Ball Not Kicked Forward	Indirect Free Kick for the Defending Team			

**ART. 5 . . .** After the penalty kick is properly taken, the ball may be played by any player except the one who executed the penalty kick. The kicker may not play the ball until it has been touched or played by another player on either team.

**PENALTY: Indirect free kick awarded to the opponents from the spot of the foul.**

**ART. 6 . . .** If the ball touches the goalkeeper before passing between the goal posts, when a penalty kick is taken at or after the expiration of time, it does not nullify any goal. If necessary, play may be extended so that the penalty kick may be taken. If a penalty kick is taken after the expiration of time (**7-1-4 EXCEPTION**):

- (a) only the kicker may play the ball and the kicker may only play the ball once;
- (b) the ball is in play until its momentum is spent, it goes out of bounds, or is retouched by the kicker.

**ART. 7 . . .** After the penalty kick is properly taken, if there is an unusual situation that causes a temporary suspension in play before the ball is played or touched by another player, or before the ball hits the goalpost or crossbar, the penalty kick shall be retaken.

## SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

### RULE 14 — PENALTY KICK

#### PENALTY KICK

**14.1.2 SITUATION:** Team A has been awarded a penalty kick. As the players are lining up for the kick, the referee notices a player from Team B lined up five yards from the goal line. The referee delays the taking of the kick and moves the player back behind the penalty mark. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**14.1.4 SITUATION A:** A2, taking a penalty kick, kicks the ball forward, but a teammate rushes up and kicks it into the goal. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Provided the second kicker did not encroach into the penalty area prior to the original kicker's first touch.

**14.1.4 SITUATION B:** A2, taking a penalty kick, approaches the ball and then stops abruptly. A2 then (a) kicks the ball and scores; (b) kicks the ball over the goal; (c) kicks the ball and it rebounds from the goalkeeper; (d) kicks the ball and it is saved and held by the goalkeeper; (e) kicks the ball and it is deflected over the goal line by the goalkeeper. **RULING:** In (a), retake the kick; (b) goal kick; (c) indirect free kick for defending team; (d) play continues; (e) indirect free kick for defending team.

**14.1.4 SITUATION C:** A3 taking a penalty kick, stutter steps on the approach and then continues to kick the ball into the goal. **RULING:** Legal. The restart is a kickoff.

**14.1.4 SITUATION D:** Player A4, taking a penalty kick, does not kick the ball forward. **RULING:** Illegal. An indirect free kick is awarded to the defending team from the penalty mark.

**14.1.6 SITUATION:** Player A2 takes a penalty kick in (a) tie-breaking kicks from the penalty mark; (b) after time has expired. The goalkeeper attempts a save, and the ball continues to bounce or roll into the goal. **RULING:** It is a goal in both (a) and (b) because the ball is in play until its momentum has been spent, it goes out of bounds, or it is retouched by the kicker.

**14.1.7 SITUATION:** Player A2 takes a penalty kick, but before the ball touches another player, or before the ball hits the crossbar or goalpost; (a) a dog runs on the field and stops the ball; (b) the ball bursts; (c) a spectator throws an object that stops or deflects the ball. **RULING:** In all situations (a), (b) and (c), retake the kick regardless of the outcome of the kick.



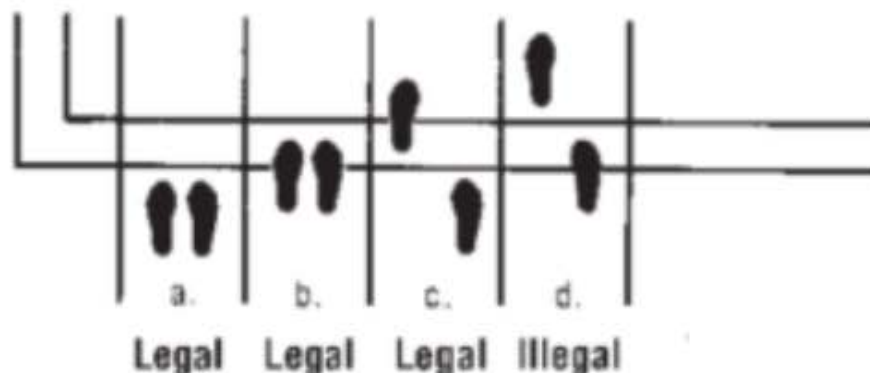
# Rule 15 Throw-In

## SECTION 1 THROW-IN FROM THE TOUCHLINE

**ART. 1 . . .** A throw-in shall be awarded to a team when the ball last touched a member of the opposing team before the entire ball passes beyond the touchline either in the air or on the ground. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

**ART. 2 . . .** The ball shall be thrown in any direction from the point where it crossed the touchline by a player who is facing the field of play and has both feet on the ground on or behind the touchline. The thrower shall use both hands (unless a physical impairment would limit use to one hand) and shall deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous movement.

**PENALTY:** Throw-in awarded to the opponent from the spot of the offense.



**ART. 3 . . .** While a throw-in is being taken, an opponent shall neither interfere with nor in any way impede the actions of the thrower, and shall stand at least two yards from the point at which the throw-in is being taken.

**PENALTY:** An official shall administer a caution for unsporting conduct.

**ART. 4 . . .** On a throw-in, the ball is playable when it has left the hands of the thrower and any part of it breaks the plane of the touchline. After the throw-in, the ball may be played by either team. The thrower may not play the ball until it has been touched or played by another player.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick awarded to the opponent from the spot of the infraction.

**ART. 5 . . .** If, on the throw-in, the ball fails to enter the field of play before it touches the ground, the ball is awarded to the opponent at the spot of the infraction.

## SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

### RULE 15 — THROW-IN

#### THROW-IN FROM THE TOUCHLINE

**15.1.2 SITUATION:** During the throw-in, the following happens: (a) A2 lifts the back foot from the ground while throwing the ball; (b) A2 takes a run up to the touchline and releases the ball with both feet on the ground; (c) A2 has one foot off the playing field and one foot on the touchline during the throw-in; (d) A2 throws to a teammate only 3 feet away. **RULING:** (a) Illegal; award a throw-in to Team B; (b) legal; (c) legal; (d) legal.

**15.1.3 SITUATION:** As player A2 begins to take a throw in, Player B2 rushes to get directly on the touchline at the point where the throw-in will be made. **RULING:** Illegal. A player may not interfere with or impede the actions of a thrower and cannot be within 2 yards of the thrower. Player B2 shall be issued a caution by the referee for unsporting conduct.

**15.1.4 SITUATION:** A throw-in by Player A2 (a) hits the touchline and bounces into the field of play; or (b) hits or breaks the plane of the touchline and goes out of the field of play; or (c) lands outside the touchline and bounces into the field of play; or (d) does not hit or break the plane of the touchline but remains outside. **RULING:** In (a) a legal throw; play continues; in (b) legal; award throw-in to Team B; in (c) and (d) illegal; award throw-in to Team B.

## Rule 16

## Goal Kick

### SECTION 1 GOAL KICK

**ART. 1 . . .** A goal kick shall be awarded to the defending team when the entire ball crosses the goal line, excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, either in the air or on the ground, having last been touched or played by the attacking team. A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

**ART. 2 . . .** Players opposing the kicker shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

**ART. 3 . . .** Once spotted, the ball shall be kicked from the ground from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

**ART. 4 . . .** After the goal kick is properly taken, the ball may be played by any player except the one who executes the goal kick. The kicker may not play the ball until it has been touched by another player.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick awarded to the opponents from the spot of the foul.

**ART. 5 . . .** The goalkeeper shall not pick up the ball to put it into play.



## SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

### RULE 16 — GOAL KICK

#### GOAL KICK

**16.1.1 SITUATION:** Team A is awarded a goal kick. After the ball is properly placed, player A7 takes the goal kick and kicks the ball directly into their own goal.  
**RULING:** No goal is awarded and play is restarted with a corner kick for Team B.

**16.1.2 SITUATION A:** On a goal kick, (a) an opponent was inside the penalty area when the ball was put into play and does not interfere with the goal kick; (b) an opponent while leaving the penalty area but still inside when the ball was put into play receives the ball directly. **RULING:** (a) and (b) legal.

**16.1.2 SITUATION B:** On a goal kick, (a) an opponent who remains inside the penalty area when the ball was put into play deliberately touches or challenges for the ball; (b) an opponent enters the penalty area before the ball was put into play and touches or challenges for the ball. **RULING:** (a) and (b) illegal. The goal kick is retaken.

**16.1.3 SITUATION:** A4's shot misses wide right and crosses the goal line.  
**RULING:** Goal kick may be taken anywhere in the goal area. Once the ball is placed by the kicking team, the ball cannot be moved from one spot to another.

## Rule 17 Corner Kick

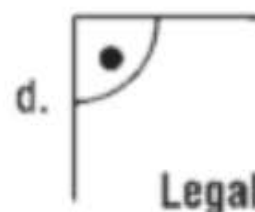
#### SECTION 1 CORNER KICK

**ART. 1 . . .** A corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team when the entire ball passes over the goal line, excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, either in the air or on the ground, having last been touched or played by the defending team. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

**EXCEPTION:** A corner kick shall be awarded to the opposing team when a free kick goes untouched into a team's own goal by the kicking team. (13-2-4)

**ART. 2 . . .** Players of the defending team shall be at least 10 yards from the corner arc until the ball has been kicked.

**ART. 3 . . .** The ball shall be kicked from the ground within the corner arc including on the lines, nearest where the ball left the field of play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. Failure to kick the ball as specified shall result in a rekick.



**ART. 4 . . .** An offensive player who is not offside during the corner kick may be put in an offside position during a subsequent play.

**ART. 5 . . .** After the corner kick, the ball may be played by any player except the one who executed the corner kick. The kicker may not play the ball until it has been touched or played by another player.

**PENALTY:** Indirect free kick awarded to the opponent from the spot of the foul.

## SITUATION AND RULING

### RULE 17 — CORNER KICK

#### CORNER KICK

**17.1.3 SITUATION:** Team A is awarded a corner kick. After the ball is properly placed, player A9 takes the corner kick and kicks the ball directly into their own goal. **RULING:** No goal is awarded and play is restarted with a corner kick for Team B.

**17.1.5 SITUATION:** A2 takes a corner kick, which hits the goal post and rebounds. A2 plays it again before it has been touched by another player. **RULING:** Illegal; indirect free kick to the opponent.

## Rule 18 Definitions

### SECTION 1 DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS

**ART. 1 . . .** Alphabetical list of definitions:

- ADVANTAGE** – A discretionary judgment which allows an official to permit play to continue rather than stopping play to administer the foul. This concept is based on the premise that the foul did not put the offended team at a disadvantage, or the foul, if called, may take away a favorable opportunity for the offended team. The foul may be subsequently called if the advantage does not materialize.
- BENCH PERSONNEL** – Anyone within the team area.
- CARELESS** – When a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. No disciplinary sanction is needed beyond awarding a direct free kick.
- CAUTIONED PLAYER** – A player notified by an official that the player's activities are not in the best interest of the contest. Such player shall be shown a yellow card and shall leave the field and may be replaced.



- e. CHARGE – An act by a defensive player employing body contact to cause an offensive player to lose or give up possession of the ball. A fair charge shall have all the elements present which are set down in the rules. An unfair charge has one or more of those elements absent.
- f. DEAD BALL – A term used to indicate a time when the ball is out-of-play. A goal can never be scored while the ball is dead. A restart can never be changed due to what occurs during a dead ball.
- g. DEFENSE (DEFENDING TEAM) – Team not in possession of the ball. A team remains on defense until it establishes possession of the ball.
- h. DELIBERATE ACT – A deliberate act is one in which a player chooses to act, regardless of the outcome of that action. This deliberate act is neither reaction nor reflex. A deliberate action may result in the opponent benefiting from the action (e.g., a deliberate, but misplayed ball that goes directly to an opponent). A reaction or reflex may result in that player benefiting from action (e.g., a ball inadvertently contacting the arm and falling directly to the player's feet).
- i. DELIBERATE FOUL – A purposely planned act done to disrupt the game and to gain an advantage through the unfair act.
- j. DRIBBLER – A player in control of the ball who attempts to move the ball by periodic touches with the feet.
- k. DROP BALL – A method by which play is restarted. An official drops the ball to the ground. When the ball strikes the ground, it is in play.
- l. EJECTED PLAYER – A player barred from further participation in the game. Such player shall be shown a red card and shall not be replaced during the game.
- m. ENCROACHMENT – The act, by one or more defenders, of advancing within 10 yards of the ball prior to the taking of a free kick.
- n. EXCESSIVE FORCE – Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent and shall be ejected.
- o. FORFEIT – The loss of a game because of termination under Rule 3-1-2 or for other reason as determined by the proper authority.
- p. FOUL – A rule infraction by a player on the field of play during play, for which a free kick is awarded to the player's opponents.
- q. FREE KICK – A method by which a dead ball becomes live. The ball is placed on the ground and, while motionless, it is kicked unchallenged in any direction prior to being touched by another player. The ball is in play when it has been kicked and moves. Simply tapping the top of the ball with the foot or stepping on the ball are not sufficient. There are two types of free kicks – "direct" from which a goal may be scored against an opponent without a second player touching the ball and "indirect" in which a goal may not be scored unless the ball is touched or played by another player of either team.



- r. **GAINING AN ADVANTAGE BY BEING IN THAT POSITION** – A player who plays a ball that rebounds to the player off a goal post or the crossbar after having been in an offside position, or a player who after being in an offside position plays a ball that rebounds to the player off an opponent, who has not deliberately played the ball or made a deliberate save.
- s. **GOAL LINE** – Shorter boundary lines. The entire line is within the field of play.
- t. **GOALKEEPER** – The only designated player of each team who may handle the ball within the team's own penalty area.
- u. **HAND/ARM** – The upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit.
- v. **HANDLING** – Deliberately playing the ball with one's hand or arm (18-1-1u). The hand or arm shall move toward the ball or the hand or arm shall be carried in an unnatural position before an infraction of the rule can be charged.
- w. **ILLEGALLY EQUIPPED** – A player not wearing equipment required by rule or wearing an item/items not allowed by rule.
- x. **IMPEDE** – The deliberate act by a player that moves into the path of an opponent to block, slow down or force a change in direction when the ball is not within playing distance. Being in the way of an opponent is not an offense and is different than moving into the way.
- y. **IMPROPERLY EQUIPPED** – A player wearing legal equipment that is being worn incorrectly or becomes illegal during play.
- z. **INTERFERING WITH AN OPPONENT** – Preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or movement of challenging an opponent for the ball.
- aa. **INTERFERING WITH PLAY** – Playing or touching the ball passed or touched by a teammate.
- bb. **KICKER** – A player who attempts to, or does, kick the ball.
- cc. **LIVE BALL** – A term which indicates that the ball has been legally kicked or thrown by a player, or dropped by an official and is in play.
- dd. **MISCONDUCT** – Any of the actions by players, substitutes and bench personnel that results in yellow or red cards being issued.
- ee. **OFFENSE (ATTACKING TEAM)** – Team which is in possession of the ball.
- ff. **OFFSIDE** – An infraction which occurs when an official judges a player in an offside position to be involved in active play by interfering with play or with an opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in an offside position.
- gg. **PARRYING** – The deliberate attempt by the goalkeeper to control and/or deflect the ball down or out with the hands or arms.
- hh. **PASS** – The movement of the ball from one player to another by foot, head or other portion of the body (other than the hand).
- ii. **PENALTY KICK** – A kick awarded to a team because an opponent was charged with a direct free kick offense within the team's own penalty area.



- jj. **PLAYER** – A team member who occupies a position on the field of play during the actual playing time limits of the game, beginning with the opening kick-off and ending with the conclusion of the game, excluding intervals between periods. A substitute becomes a player after being beckoned onto the field of play by an official, at which point the replaced individual is no longer a player.
- kk. **PLAYING DISTANCE** – The distance between the player and the ball which the official judges to be adequate to control the ball. It will seldom exceed two steps (six feet).
- ll. **POSSESSION** – A live ball controlled by a team, player or a goalkeeper. A controlled ball is one which may be passed, thrown, dribbled or shot on goal by a player.
- mm. **RECKLESS PLAY** – A player has acted with disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent. A player who displays reckless play shall be cautioned.
- nn. **SCISSORS-KICK** – A maneuver in which a kicker's feet leave the ground with the feet usually at a higher elevation than the head. The ball may be kicked over the kicker's head in a single motion.
- oo. **SERIOUS FOUL PLAY** – A tackle or challenge that endangers the safety of an opponent, uses excessive force or brutality shall be sanctioned as serious foul play resulting in an ejection. Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side, or from behind using one or both legs, with excessive force or endangers the safety of an opponent is guilty of serious foul play.
- pp. **SHIELDING** – Movement by a player in control of the ball (within playing distance) designed to prevent an opponent from gaining possession or prevent an opponent from tackling the ball.
- qq. **SLIDING TACKLE** – A maneuver in which one or both feet slide on the ground in an attempt to tackle the ball which is in possession of an opponent.
- rr. **SUBSTITUTE** – A team member who has properly reported to enter the game. A substitute becomes a player when beckoned onto the field of play by an official.
- ss. **SUBSTITUTION** – The replacement of at least one player by a substitute.
- tt. **SUSPENDED** – A term which indicates that a game has been interrupted by the referee because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play but are not the fault of the participants or spectators. Examples of such conditions include inclement weather, power failure, or other emergency affecting playing conditions.
- uu. **TACKLE** – The use of the feet to take a ball away from a player in control.
- vv. **TACTICAL FOUL** – A tactical foul is committed to stop a promising attack or deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

- ww. **TERMINATED** – A term which indicates that a game has been ended by the referee for action of the participants or spectators such as refusal to play or disorder. The status of the game, which may include forfeiture, shall be determined by proper authority.
- xx. **THROW-IN** – A method by which a dead ball becomes live. A player throws the ball using both hands (unless a physical impairment would limit use to one hand). The ball shall be delivered from behind and over the head in one continuous movement, while both feet are on the ground on or behind the touchline and the player shall be facing the field.
- yy. **TOUCHLINE** – Longer boundary lines. The entire line is within the field of play.
- zz. **VIOLENT CONDUCT** – Violent conduct occurs when a player uses or attempts to use excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball. Violent conduct also occurs when a player, substitute, or bench personnel commits a violent act against anyone, regardless of whether contact is made, or if the ball is in or out of play. In addition, a player who, when not challenging for the ball, deliberately strikes an opponent or any other person on the head or face with the hand or arm, is guilty of violent conduct unless the force used was negligible.
- aaa. **WARNING** – A verbal admonition to a coach or player for conduct not in the best interest of the game. Repeat warning(s) necessitates an official caution.



## STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS

State associations may individually adopt specific coverage in the following:

1. Commemorative or memorial patches may be worn on the jersey for special occasions, not to exceed 4 square inches. (4-1-1f)	10. Shortened periods. (7-1-2)
2. Players may wear caps in inclement weather. (4-3-1 EXCEPTION 2)	11. Suspended games. (7-1-3)
3. Artificial limbs. (4-2-5)	12. Goal differential. (7-1-5)
4. Systems of officiating. (5-1-1)	13. Overtime procedure. (7-3-1)
5. Officials' shirt color. (5-1-3)	14. Ejected player barred from competition. (12-4-4 NOTE)
6. Time kept on the field. (6-2-1)	15. Sample tie breaking procedure.
7. Score kept by referee. (6-3-1)	16. Incidental use of vulgar or profane language. (12-5-1d)
8. Fourth official as scorer. (6-3-3)	17. Sample fourth official/duties.
9. Four equal quarters rather than halves. (7-1-1)	

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCTING MIDDLE LEVEL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION

Interscholastic competition at the middle school/junior high level can make valuable contributions to educational programming, provided the sport is properly organized, supervised and regulated. Students in this particular age group have unique physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs. In order to minimize risk of injury, it may be necessary to modify regulations to offer meaningful competition for different groups.

These recommended modifications are for middle school/junior high competition. State associations may adopt additional modifications and/or use other rules codes for middle school/junior high competition.

### SIZE OF THE FIELD

The field of play shall be rectangular and is recommended to be 100 yards long by 55 yards wide for the middle level/junior high school competition.

### LENGTH OF PERIODS OF PLAYED

It is recommended that middle level/junior high schools play 30-minute halves or four equal quarters of 15 minutes each.

## COMMENTS ON THE 2024-25 RULES CHANGES

**4-1-4d (Revised)** — This rule change allows players to cut their socks as long as any material used to hold that sock in place is same color as the predominant color of the team sock. At or below the ankle, there is no limitation on the color of the tape or other materials.

**12 (Revised)** — This rule has been reorganized for clarity and to eliminate duplicate language. Sections were rearranged to enhance ease of reference and a new section was added addressing Stopping a Promising Attack (SPA). The new Section 6 Ejections is now an ordered list of offenses by severity to allow state high school associations more flexibility for determining post-game sanctions for misconduct. Finally, an article was added to clarify that all necessary conditions must be met for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to be applicable.





# OFFICIAL SOCCER SIGNALS



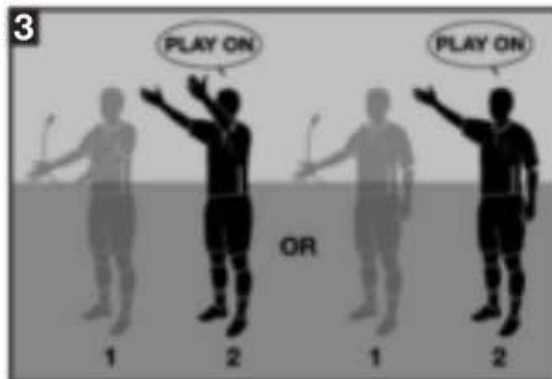
**1**  
**Direct free kick/  
Throw-in**

(Point in the direction  
of the kick or throw)



**2**  
**Indirect free kick**

(Hold until kick is  
taken and touched)



**3**  
**Play on**



**4**  
**Timeout**



**5**  
**Wind-up to  
start clock**



**6**  
**Penalty kick**  
(Point to spot)

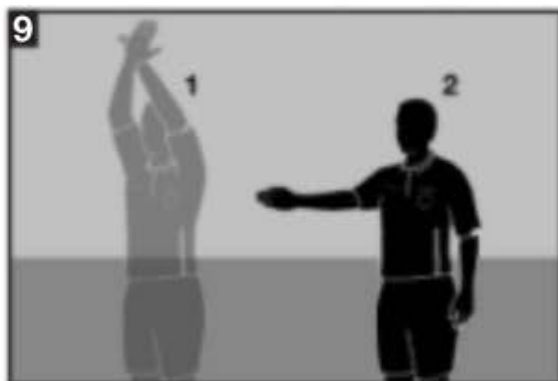
**Goal kick**  
(Point to goal area)



**7**  
**Caution/  
Ejection**



**8**  
**Corner kick**  
(Point to corner)



**9**  
**Goal**



## ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS



### Throw-in

(The flag should not be brought across the body. Appropriately, the flag should be switched to the appropriate hand.)



### Substitution

(Hold the flag above the head as shown until acknowledged by the referee, then return the flag to the side.)



### Foul

(1. Hold the flag vertically until acknowledged by the referee; 2. Wave flag; 3. Point the flag in the direction where the free kick will take place.)



### Corner kick

(Assistant referee should point to the nearest corner.)



### Goal kick

(Assistant referee should point to the goal area.)



### Stop play – Offside

(Assistant referee should indicate he/she has seen an offside with the right arm.)



### Offside free kick

(When the referee stops play, the assistant referee indicates position on the far side of the field.)



### Offside free kick

(When the referee stops play, the assistant referee indicates position near the center of the field.)



### Offside free kick

(When the referee stops play, the assistant referee indicates position on the near side of the field.)



## SAMPLE TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURE

Individual state high school associations may adopt this or other tie-breaking procedures. Unless otherwise stated, the rules of the game apply.

### A. Tie Game Procedure:

When the score is tied at the end of regulation time, the referee will instruct both teams to return to the respective team areas. There will be five minutes during which both teams may confer with their coaches, and the head referee will instruct both teams as to proper procedure.

1. There shall be two, full 10-minute overtime periods.

**NOTE:** Not sudden victory.

- a. A coin toss shall be held as in Rule 5-2-2d.
  - b. At the end of the first 10-minute overtime period, teams shall change ends.
  - c. There shall be a two-minute interval between periods.
2. If, at the conclusion of the two 10-minute overtime periods a tie still exists, there shall be two five-minute, sudden-victory overtime periods.
    - a. A coin toss shall be held as in Rule 5-2-2d.
    - b. At the end of the first sudden-victory period, teams shall change ends.
    - c. There shall be a two-minute interval between periods.
  3. If the score still remains tied, all coaches, officials and team captains shall assemble at the halfway line to review the procedure as outlined below:
    - a. The head referee shall choose the goal at which all of the kicks from the penalty mark shall be taken.
    - b. Each coach will select any five players, including the goalkeeper, on or off the field (except those who may have been ejected) to take the kicks.
    - c. A coin toss shall be held as in Rule 5-2-2d. The team winning the toss shall have the choice of kicking first or second.
    - d. Teams will alternate kickers. There is no follow-up on the kick.
    - e. The defending team may change the goalkeeper prior to each penalty kick.
    - f. Following five kicks for each team, the team scoring on the greatest number of these kicks shall be declared the winner.
    - g. Add one goal to the winning team score and credit the team with a victory. An asterisk (\*) may be placed by the team advancing to indicate the advancement was the result of a tie breaker system.
  4. If the score remains tied after each team has had five kicks:
    - a. Each coach will select five different players than the first five who already have kicked to take the kicks in a sudden-victory situation, wherein if one team scores and the other team does not score, the game is ended without more kicks being taken. If a team has fewer than ten available players at the end of the first set of kicks from the penalty mark due to either injuries or an ejection, the coach must use all players who have not participated in the first five kicks. The coach may choose additional players from the first five kickers to ensure that five different players participate in the second set of kicks.
    - b. If the score remains tied, continue the sudden-victory kicks with the coach selecting any five players to take the next set of alternating kicks. If a tie still remains, repeat 4-a.



5. During all tie-breaker penalty kicks, the ball remains alive until its momentum is spent, it goes out of bounds, or it is retouched by the kicker.
6. For the final game, co-champions may be declared if a tie still exists at the end of regulation time, two 10-minute periods, and two five-minute sudden victory overtime periods.
7. Unless participating in the kicks as a kicker or goalkeeper, team members, coaches and other bench personnel shall remain in a designated area as determined by the state association.

**NOTE:** In tournament situations, a game may be rescheduled from the start, or restarted from the point of the suspension according to state association adoption.

#### **B. Misconduct Procedures:**

##### **1. Cautioned Players**

- a. One of the five players listed to take a kick is cautioned after taking the kick. That player is not eligible to kick again until one complete set of five kicks has been completed beyond the set of kicks in which the caution was issued.
  - (1) Player "X" is one of the first five kickers, and is cautioned after taking the kick. Player "X" is not eligible to kick again until the set beginning with the 11th kick.
  - (2) Player "Y" is one of the second set of five kickers and is cautioned after taking the kick. Player "Y" is not eligible to kick again until the set beginning with the 16th kick.
- b. One of the five players listed to take a kick is cautioned before the player takes the kick. That player is not eligible to kick until the next set of five kicks. Another eligible player not listed in that set of kicks shall take the cautioned player's original turn.
- c. When a goalkeeper is issued a caution during any set of five kicks, the goalkeeper cannot re-enter until the next opponent completes the kick. A substitution is permitted for the cautioned goalkeeper.

##### **2. Ejected Players**

- a. Any player, including the goalkeeper, who is ejected may not participate any further. If that player's kick is not already completed, an eligible substitute is permitted.





# MISSION STATEMENT

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves its members by providing leadership for the administration of education-based high school athletics and activities through the writing of playing rules that emphasize health and safety, educational programs that develop leaders, and administrative support to increase participation opportunities and promote sportsmanship.

## CORE BELIEFS AND VALUES

### WE BELIEVE

Student participation in education-based high school athletics and activities:

- Is a privilege.
- Enriches the educational experience.
- Encourages academic achievement.
- Promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship.
- Prepares for the future in a global community.
- Develops leadership and life skills.
- Fosters the inclusion of diverse populations.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and safe competition.
- Encourages positive school/community culture.
- Should be fun.

### THE NFHS:

- Serves as the national authority that promotes and protects the defining values of education-based high school athletics and activities in collaboration with its member state associations.
- Serves as the national authority on competition rules while promoting fair play and seeking to minimize risk of injury for student participants in education-based high school athletics and activities.
- Promotes lifelong health and safety values through participation.
- Develops and delivers impactful, innovative and engaging educational programs to serve the changing needs of state associations, administrators, coaches, directors, officials, students and parents.
- Provides professional development opportunities for member state association staffs.
- Promotes cooperation, collaboration and communication with and among state associations.
- Collects and provides data analysis in order to allow its membership to make informed decisions.



# SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORTS

## COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION INCLUDE:

- **Headache** or "pressure" in head;
- **Neck pain**
- **Dizziness**
- Dazed or stunned or vacant appearance;
- Confusion about assignment or position;
- Forgetfulness;
- Uncertainty of game, score, or opponent;
- Clumsy movements;
- Slow response to questions;
- Mood, behavior or personality changes;
- Can't recall events prior to or after hit or fall;
- Nausea;
- Balance problems or dizziness;
- Double or blurry vision;
- Sensitivity to light or noise;
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy;
- Concentration or memory problems;
- Emotions of "not feeling right" or "feeling down."

Activate the Emergency Medical System or Call 9-1-1 if, after a blow, or jolt to the head or body, an athlete has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other;
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up;
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away;
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination;
- Repeated vomiting or nausea;
- Convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching);
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation;
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously. Consider activating EMS for prolonged loss of consciousness.

## SUGGESTED CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT:

1. No athlete should return-to-sport (RTS) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional as soon as possible.
3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
4. After medical clearance, RTS should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTS based upon return of any signs or symptoms at rest, while doing school work or with physical activity.

For further details, please see the "NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports" at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).





## EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

1. Each NFHS sports rules committee is responsible for recommending the official playing rules to the NFHS Board of Directors for adoption. The committee is NOT responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in interscholastic sports. Equipment manufacturers are responsible for the development of playing equipment that meets the specifications established by the committee, and that is otherwise of good design and quality. The NFHS urges manufacturers to work with the various independent testing agencies to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the NFHS nor the applicable NFHS sport rules committee certifies the safety of any sport equipment. Non-compliant equipment is inappropriate for use in competition under NFHS sports rules. While the committee does not regulate the development of new equipment and does not set technical or scientific standards for testing equipment, the committee may, from time to time, provide manufacturers with guidance as to the equipment-performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede to protect and maintain that integrity.
2. Each NFHS sport rules committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in sports equipment submit the equipment to the applicable NFHS sport rules editor and/or rules committee for review before production.
3. Protective headgear is required by NFHS rules in some sports and is permissive in others. Hard helmets can decrease the incidence of certain head trauma, such as skull fractures and subdural hematomas. Soft headgear may protect against cuts and bruises to the scalp and forehead. Coaches, athletes and parents/guardians should review the manufacturers' warnings about proper usage and performance limits of such products. **No helmet or headgear can eliminate the risk of concussion and all sports should be played, coached and officiated in recognition of that fact.**





## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS HYGIENE, SKIN INFECTIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The transmission of infections such as Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and Herpes Gladiatorum, blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza and COVID-19 can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.

### UNIVERSAL HYGIENE PROTOCOL FOR ALL SPORTS:

- Shower immediately after every competition and practice, using liquid soap and not a shared bar soap;
- Wash all workout clothing after each practice, washing in hot water and drying on a high heat setting;
- Clean and/or wash all personal gear (knee pads, head gear, braces, etc.) and gym bags at least weekly;
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others;
- Refrain from full body and/or cosmetic shaving of head, chest, arms, legs, abdomen, and groin;
- Students should clean hands with an alcohol-based gel or soap and water before and after every practice and contest to decrease bacterial load on the hands;
- Covering up coughs and sneezes in the bend of the elbow instead of the hand;
- Stay home from school and athletic participation if frequent cough, diarrhea, vomiting or fever.

### INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:

- Students must notify a parent/guardian and coach of any skin lesion prior to any competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional must evaluate all concerning skin lesions before returning to practices or competition;
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of the infection. All shared equipment shall be properly cleaned/disinfected prior to use;
- Coaches, officials, and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on "time until return to competition." Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state or local guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

### BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:

- A student who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on a uniform, or has blood on their body, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity;
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers must wear gloves and use Universal Precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash from contaminating themselves or others;
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water. Skin antiseptics (e.g., isopropyl alcohol) or moist towelettes may be used if soap and water not available;
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning;
- Blood on an opponent's uniform during competition or teammate's uniform during practice should be cleaned at that time by wiping with a disinfectant such as isopropyl alcohol;
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

### OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:

- Make certain that students, coaching staff, and medical staff are current on all required vaccinations (MMR, Hepatitis B, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Hepatitis A). COVID-19 vaccine and yearly influenza vaccine are strongly encouraged;
- During times of outbreaks, follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as State and local Health Departments.

For more detailed information, refer to the "Blood-Borne Pathogens," "Infectious Mononucleosis" and "Skin Conditions and Infections" sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.





## GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

### PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
  - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen\*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
  - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed\* prior to resuming play.
  - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning\* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
  - d. When independently validated lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning\* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

*\* – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.*

4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.

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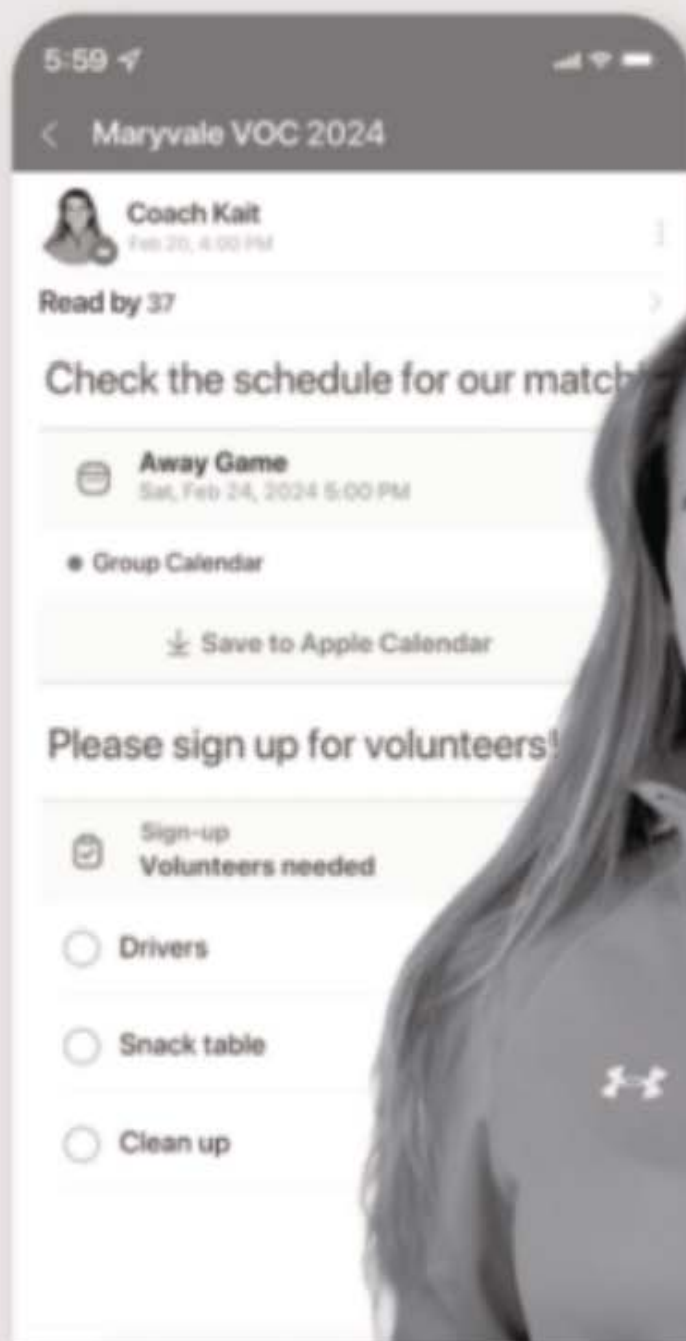
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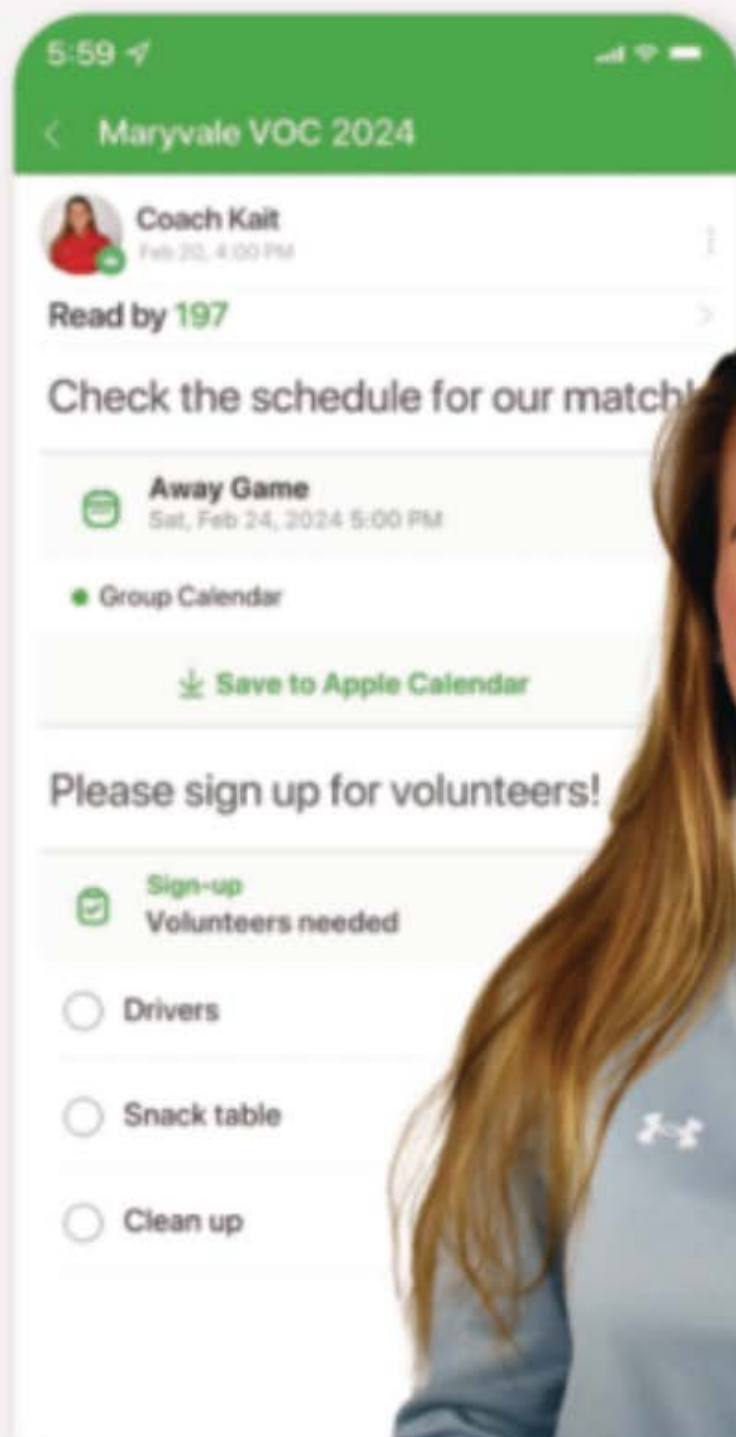
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