



2025-26 NFHS SOCCER RULES CHANGES



SUBSTITUTIONS

3-3-2b and 3-2-2c (NEW)



1. The referee may stop the clock to check on a player who appears to be injured.
2. If the referee beckons sideline personnel to attend to an injured player, the injured player must leave the field. **This includes a keeper.**
3. If the clock was stopped, but the referee did not beckon anyone onto the field, the player may remain in the game.



PLAYER EQUIPMENT

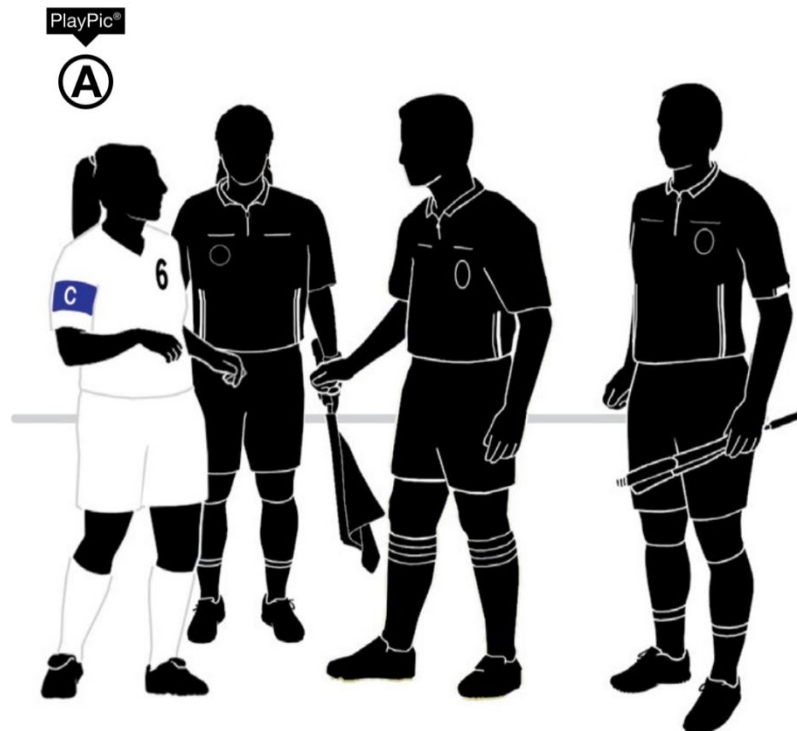
4-1 Article 2.3



- 4" number on the front of the player
 - Can be on shorts or jersey
- This includes the keeper

SPEAKING TO OFFICIALS

7-2-4 (NEW)

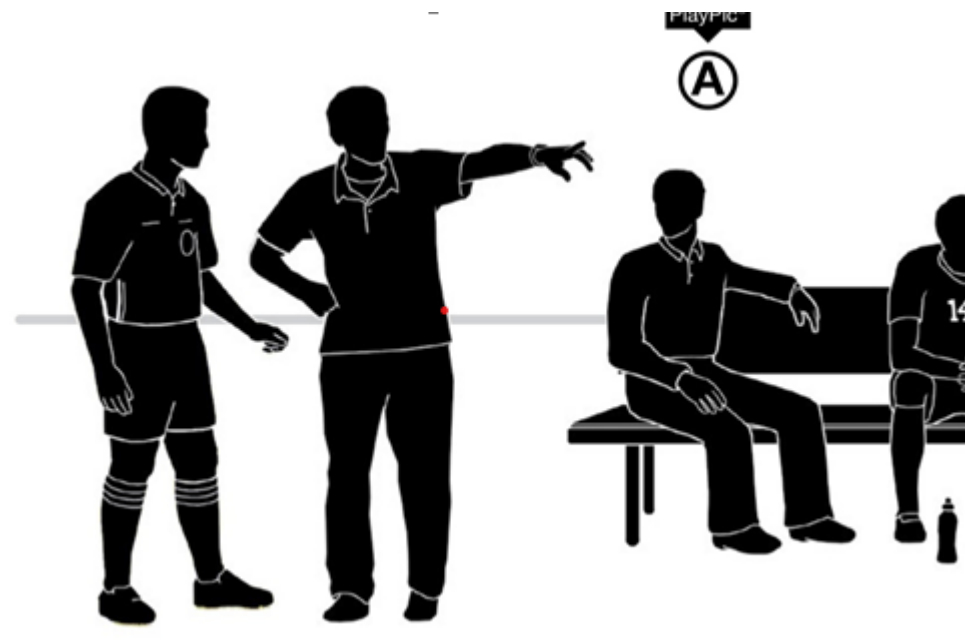


- No coach, player, substitute or other team personnel other than the team captain shall approach or speak to the officials during an interval between periods, unless beckoned by the official.

MISCONDUCT AND NFHS POINT OF EMPHASIS

12-4-4

- Head coach is responsible for the conduct of their team, including all bench personnel in the team area.
- The head coach may be warned, cautioned or ejected for misconduct committed by bench personnel in the team area in addition to any cautions or ejections that are issued to the sanctioned offender.





REVIEW





OFFSIDE 11-1-5 (REVIEW)

To deliberately play the ball, the player must have time and space, and sufficient sight of the ball to control the ball with the possibility of:

1. Passing the ball to their teammate; or,
2. Gaining possession of the ball; or
3. Clearing the ball

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).

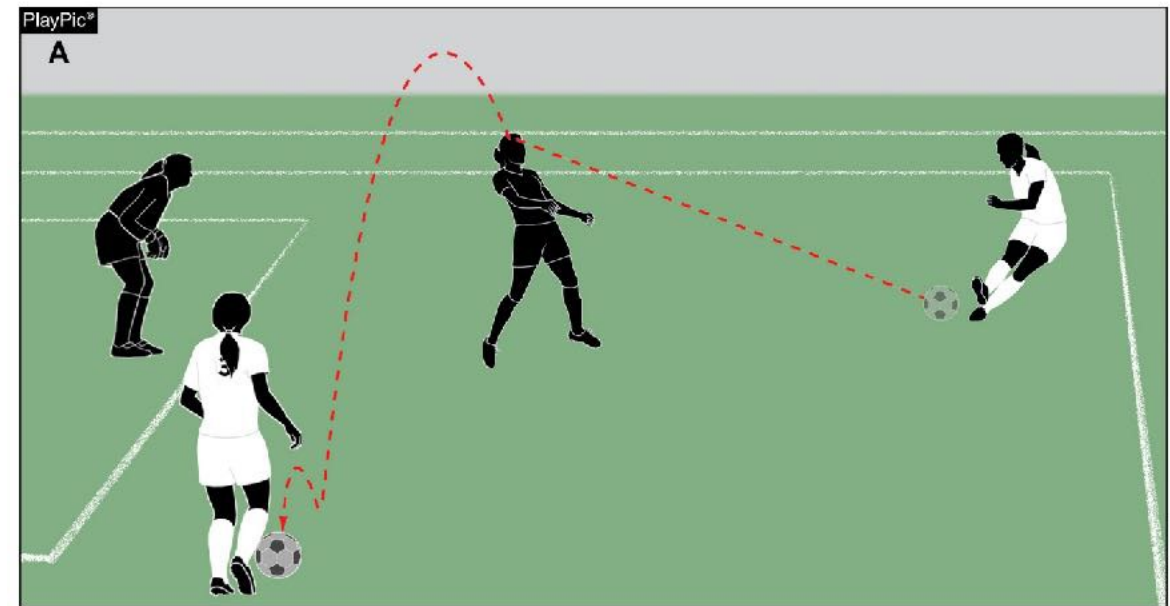


OFFSIDE

11-1-5 (REVIEW)

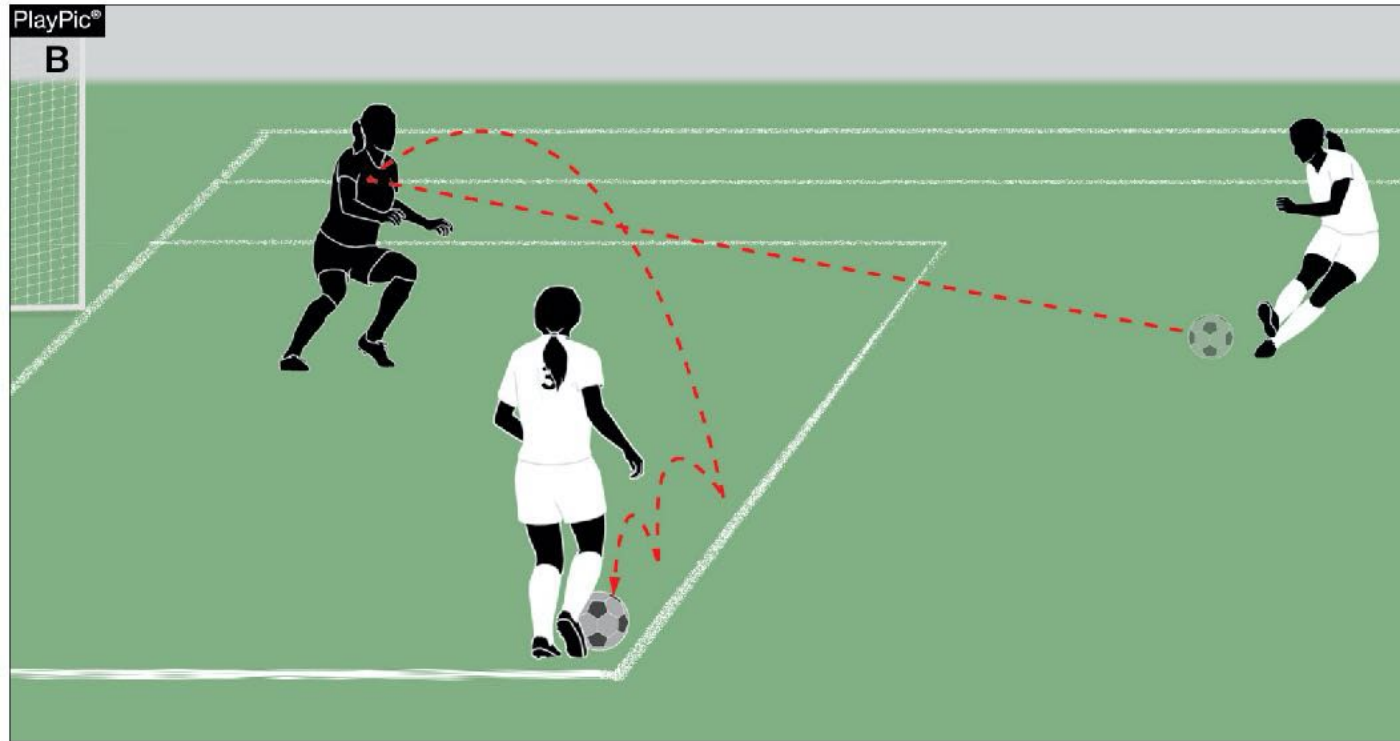
A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent, who deliberately plays the ball (except from a deliberate save), is not considered to have gained an advantage.

In PlayPic A, the second attacker is to be ruled offside because the ball merely glanced off the defender's head (not a deliberate play).



OFFSIDE – deflection off a defender who did not deliberately play the ball

OFFSIDE 11-1-5 (REVIEW)



In PlayPic B, the goalkeeper makes a deliberate save. White #3 has committed an offside offense.



FOULS

12-1-1 thru 3 (REVIEW), 18-1-1

This new section defines the seven direct free-kick fouls that must at least rise to the level of careless in order to be called a foul.

Those offenses are (If committed against an opponent):

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip





HANDLING 12-3-2, 3 (REVIEW)



Handling continues to be defined by the armpit. The upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit.

Attacker 8 is not guilty of handling.

HANDLING

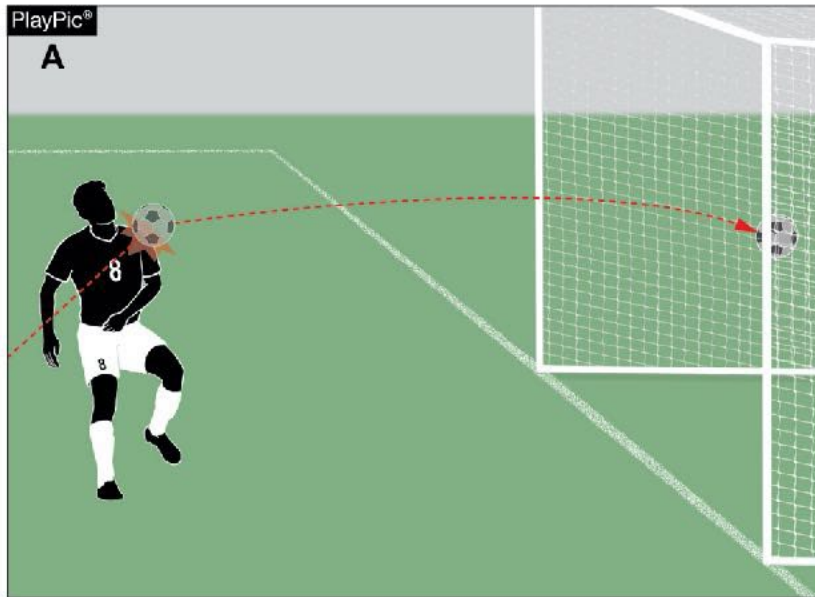
12-3-2, 3 (REVIEW)



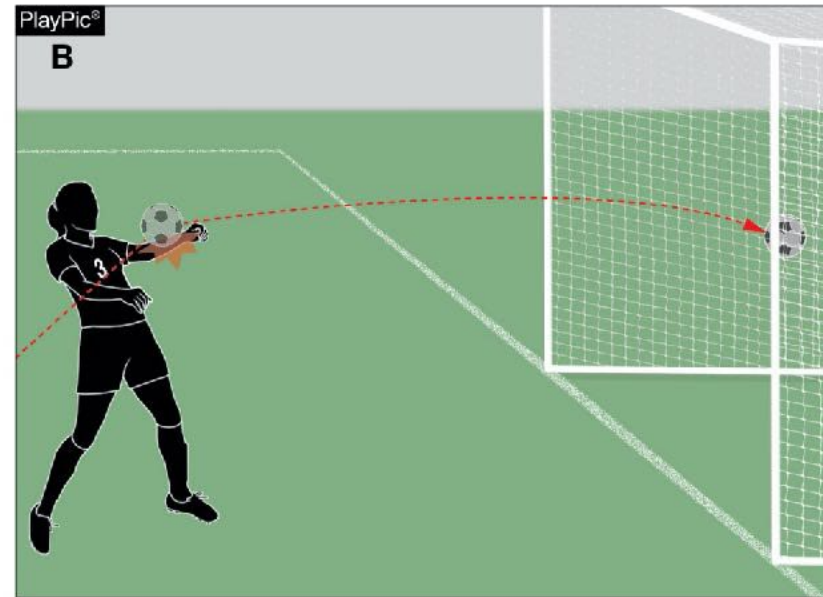
These new articles stipulate a goal cannot be scored if a player (including the goalkeeper) is guilty of handling, even if accidental. The handling is penalized. This is clearly handling even if accidental.

HANDLING

12-3-2, 3 (NEW)



- In PlayPic A, attacker #8 is not guilty of handling, the goal is scored.



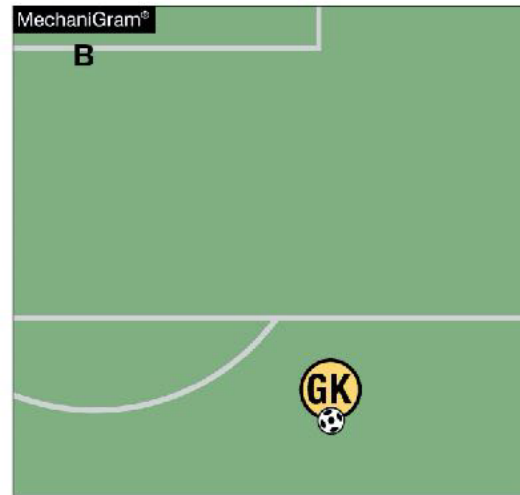
- In PlayPic B, attacker #3 cannot legally score a goal, solely focusing on the handling situation presented, even if handling is ruled accidental, a direct free kick is awarded to the defending team.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE GOALKEEPER

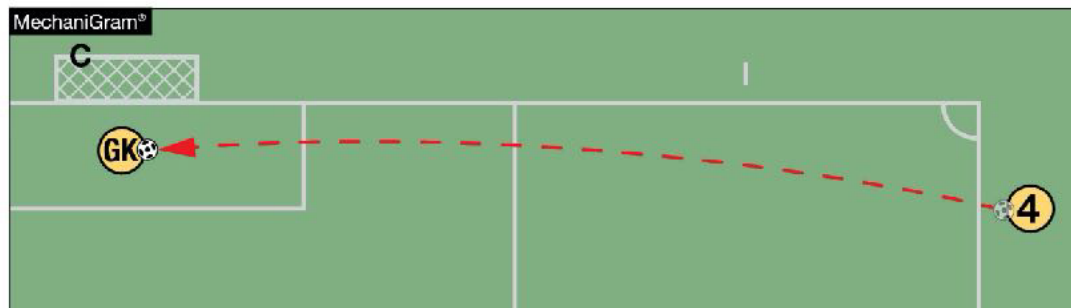
12-8-5



Double Touch



Handling Outside the Penalty Area



Throw-in by Teammate

- The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. (PlayPic B)
- If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside the penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. (PlayPics A and C)



RESTRICTIONS ON THE GOALKEEPER 12-8-5

If the violation is playing the ball a second time after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper must be cautioned if the offense stops a promising attack or disqualified if the offense denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO).





MISCONDUCT

12-9-4

Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) defined.

To determine if an offense meets the DOGSO criteria, the following must be considered:

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.





DOGSO INSIDE/OUTSIDE THE PENALTY AREA

DOGSO offenses committed *OUTSIDE* the penalty area where a goal is not scored are sanctioned with a disqualification (12-9-2d(3)).

If a defender commits a DOGSO foul *INSIDE* their penalty area resulting in a penalty kick:

- If the offender was attempting to play the ball, they are cautioned (12-9-1f(15)).
- For all other offenses (e.g., holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.) the offender is disqualified (19-9-2d(4)).

DOGSO offenses committed by deliberately handling the ball (other than the goalkeeper) and a goal is not scored are sanctioned with a disqualification, regardless of where the handling occurred (12-9-2d(2)).





MISCONDUCT EXAMPLES

12-9-4

Scenario ONE:

If a player carelessly slide tackles their opponent, which is a play on the ball, denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity, they will be disqualified for DOGSO if this foul is located outside the penalty area: the offender is disqualified per 12-9-2d(3), their team must play short-sided, and play restarts with a direct free kick.

If committed inside the penalty area, they are cautioned for unsporting conduct and a PK is awarded per 12-9-1f(15).





MISCONDUCT EXAMPLES

12-9-4

Scenario TWO:

If a player tackles their opponent using excessive force inside the penalty area, the offender is disqualified for serious foul play. Even though their foul, may also be a DOGSO inside the penalty area from a play on the ball, the nature of the foul rises to the level of disqualification per 12-9-2d(1).

The offender is disqualified for serious foul play, a penalty kick is awarded, and the offender's team must play short-sided.





MISCONDUCT EXAMPLES

12-9-4

Scenario THREE:

A defender, other than the goalkeeper, who deliberately handles the ball and stops a goal from being scored will always be disqualified for DOGSO regardless of where the handling offense occurs per 12-9-2d(2), provided the other considerations of DOGSO apply.





NEW/REVISED DEFINITIONS

18-1-1

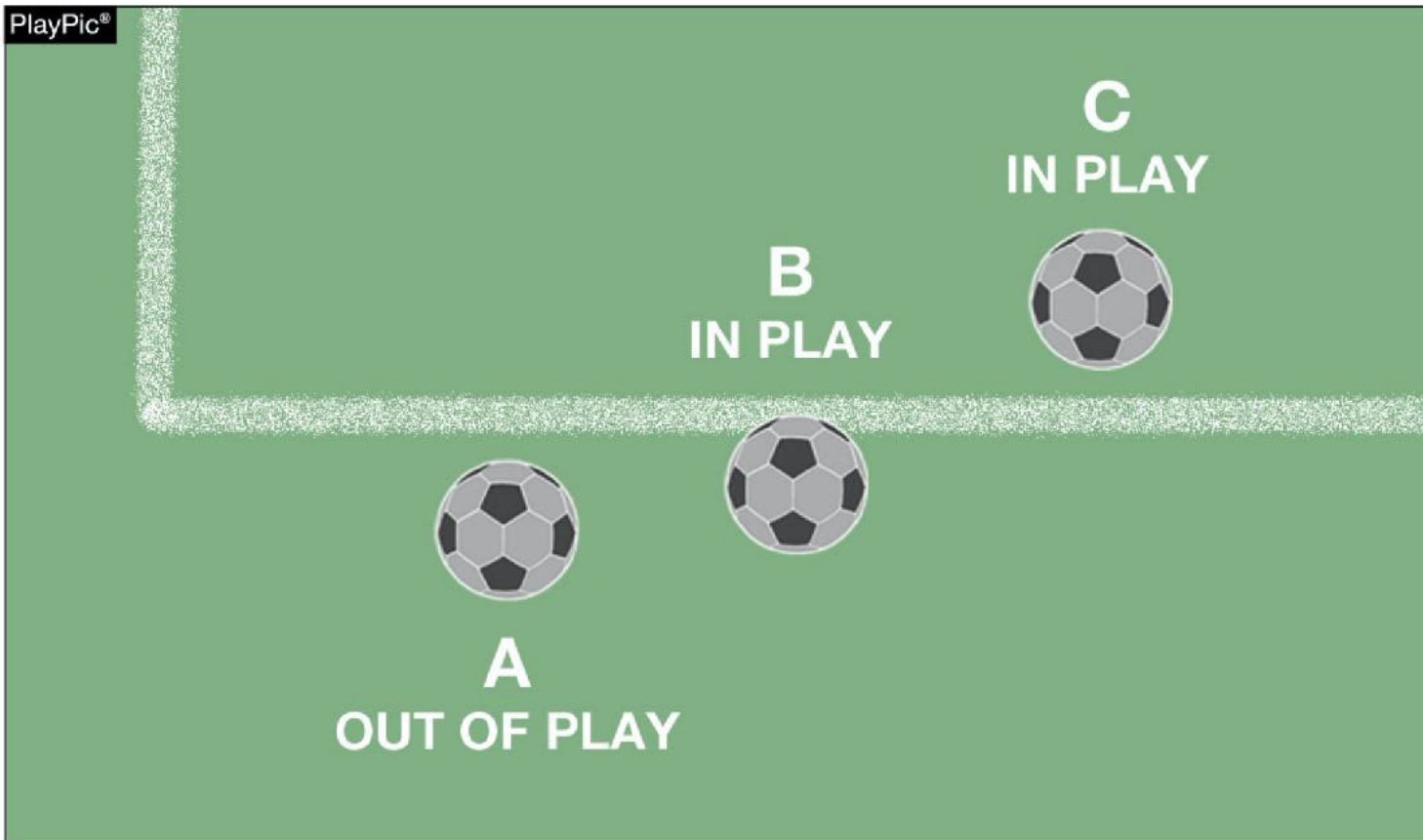
A total of five definitions were added or revised to Rule 18-1-1.

The terms **Careless, Excessive Force, Serious Foul Play** and **Tactical Fouls** were added to the Rules Book.

The term **Violent Conduct** was revised.



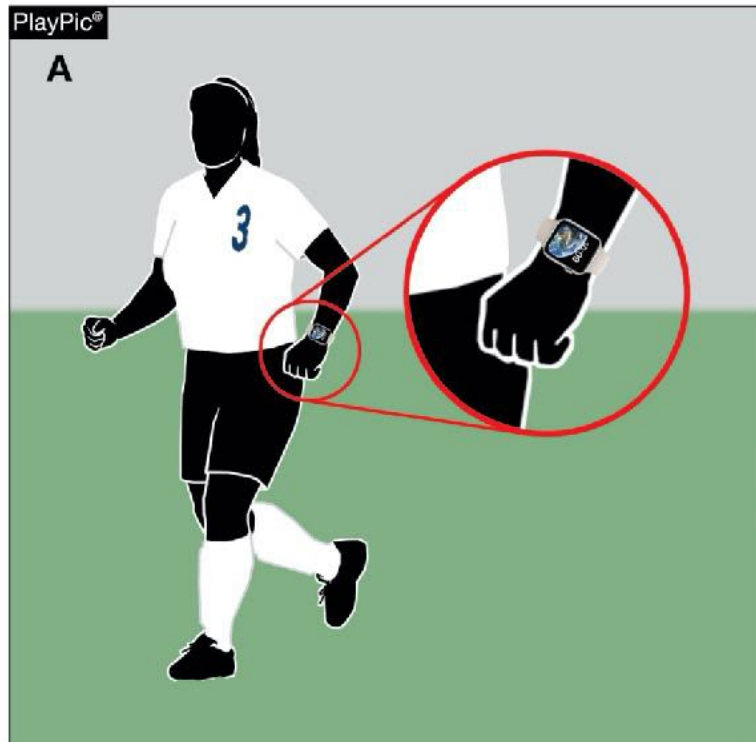
IN PLAY AND OUT OF PLAY 9-1-1 (A & B)



The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed a goal line or touchline, whether on the ground or in the air.

This diagram was moved in the Rules Book to better align with the corresponding text.

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY



ILLEGAL – cannot be worn on wrist
(below shoulder)



LEGAL – worn on the shoe

- Wearable technology is permitted in certain instances.
- Coaches and officials must review the Rule Change to Rule 4-2-12 (earlier in this presentation).



DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)

Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO) is an egregious attempt to prevent opponents from scoring.

For a player to be sent off for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity the following four criteria must be present:

1. Distance between the offense and the goal (the offense must be near the goal).
2. General direction of play (the attacking players are generally headed toward the goal).
3. Likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball (the player must have or been able to control the ball in order to score).
4. Location and number of defenders (If another defender, including the goalkeeper is in a closed enough position to make a lawful tackle or attempt a save then this criteria is not met).

If any element is missing, the player cannot be sent off for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.





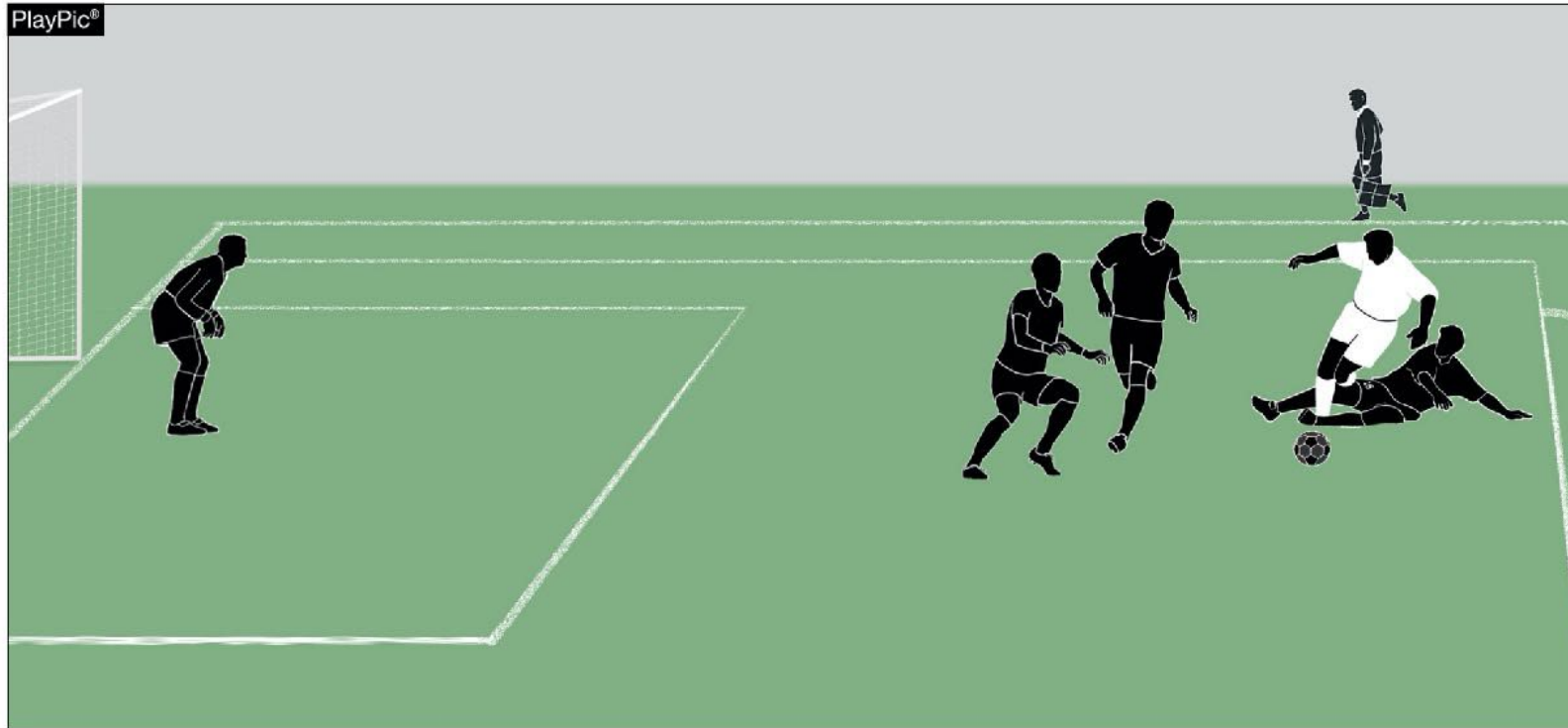
DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)

Questions to ask when judging on the four considerations:

- Where does the offense occur on the field?
- Did the foul occur inside or outside the penalty area?
- What is the distance between the offense and the goal?
- What is the direction of play?
- Does the player have control of the ball?
- Can the player gain control of the ball?
- How many defenders are involved in the situation?
- Where are the defenders located?
- Does the offense lead to a direct free kick or an indirect free kick?
- If no offense were to occur, would the player have an obvious opportunity to score a goal?
- Does the player deliberately handle the ball to deny the opposing team a goal?
- Was the offender attempting to play the ball?



DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)



- In this PlayPic, the referee must consider all questions from the previous slide.
- Based on the information available - NOT DOGSO.
Correct, given that three players remain to defend.

DENYING AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)



Remember – Offenses which deny a goal-scoring opportunity are not limited to a foul that would result in a direct free kick or penalty kick.

Offenses may include fouls that would result in an indirect free kick.

SUBSTITUTION



- When do substitutions typically occur?
 - Throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, after goal, half time, injury.
- Replaced player – exits field on bench side unless unable to do so.
- Substitutes must be beckoned by the referee.

MIAA RULES HANDBOOK 2023-2025



- 78.1.3 Shin Guards must be worn by all players during contests and practices.
- 78.1.4 Soccer players are not allowed to wear shoes with metal cleats, or any metal on the cleat.
- 78.1.5 Mouth guards are highly recommended for all soccer players while on the field.
- 78.1.6 The home team shall wear dark jerseys and socks, and the visiting team shall wear white or light jerseys and socks.
- 78.2.1 All leagues/conferences must conduct a pre-season meeting for all head coaches to review sportsmanship goals and objectives.



MIAA RULES HANDBOOK 2023-2025



- 78.2.4 Any player who receives a yellow card shall be replaced and shall not re-enter the contest until the next opportunity for substitution occurs.
- 78.2.5 A player committing a second yellow card infraction in the same contest receives a red card. There are no exceptions. *It should be reported as only a red card (not two yellows or a yellow and a red).*
- 78.2.10 *For purposes of obtaining tournament eligibility:*
 -no team may exceed four (4) red or seventeen (17) TOTAL cards during the regular season
 - Any team whose players receive collectively more than three fighting penalties during the regular season shall not qualify for the MIAA tournament
- 78.2.14 A deliberate (intentional) handball to prevent a ball from entering the goal is a red card offense. The offender will be suspended from the remainder of that contest and only the next regularly scheduled contest.



MIAA RULES HANDBOOK 2023-2025



- 78.2.16 Any team whose players/coaches receive collectively five (5) yellow and/or red cards in a contest (including pre and post game) will result in immediate termination of the contest and result in forfeiture by the offending team.
- 78.2.17 The home team must complete the infraction score sheet IF any infraction is given. The official must review and sign off on the information at the end of the game. The home team should keep this form for the remainder of the year. Each school is then required to enter all VARSITY infractions online through the MIAA Soccer Infraction reporting form found on the MIAA Soccer page. A hard copy of any coach/student disqualification form must be sent to the MIAA. (Sub varsity level score sheets should be filed and maintained at the local level).



MIAA RULES HANDBOOK 2023-2025



- 78.2.18 Game officials will not receive compensation unless they remain present at the conclusion of the soccer contest until the student athlete handshake is completed.
- 78.2.20 For all Varsity soccer contests, the home team must assign an adult contest manager, other than a member of the soccer coaching staff, to be responsible for all aspects of administration of the contest.
- 78.2.22 The MIAA Taunting policy must be reviewed by game officials with the captains and coaches in a meeting before each contest.



MIAA RULES HANDBOOK 2023-2025

SPORTSMANSHIP



- 78.2.2 Regarding “incidental” use of vulgar or profane language, the referee MUST caution (yellow card) a player/coach who uses incidental vulgar or profane language.

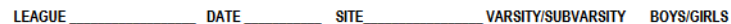
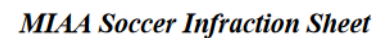




MIAA TIMEOUT RULE

- 78.2.23 Each team will be allowed a one minute time out per half and each extended time period. The timeout may be called by the coach or any player on the field during an offensive restart.
- One per half
- Unlimited subs after timeout
- Called by team owning the restart
- Called by either team after a card, goal, injury, dropped ball
- Non-cumulative
- No timeouts in shootouts
- Injured player may return upon either team calling a timeout
- Cautioned player may not return until next legal substitution





HOME SCHOOL VISITOR SCHOOL

SCORING BY HALF			
PERIOD	1	2	TOTAL
VISITOR			
HOME			

[illegible]

** If a red card is issued, the official must fill out a coach/student contest disqualification form on site (MIAA Rule 49.1).

*** Schools must report score through Arbiter and all infractions must be submitted through the MIAA formstack infractions

INFRACTION CODE		
Place Appropriate Code No. Under Infraction Box Above		
1	Delay of game	Y
2	Encroachment	Y
3	Tactical handball foul	Y
4	Equipment violation	Y
5	Persistent infringement	Y
6	Dissent	Y
7	Incidental vulgar or profane language	Y
8	Holding, kicking, tripping, pushing (specify)	Y
9	Faking an injury or foul (specify)	Y
10	Subsequent caution	R
11	Excessive celebration	Y/R
12	Violent conduct (specify)	R
13	Serious foul play	R
14	Insulting, offensive, or abusive language	R
15	Taunting	R
16	Other (specify)	Y or R

KEY:	
Y	Yellow Card offense. Offending player MUST be Substituted
R	Red Card offense. Excluded player CANNOT be replaced

MIAA ONE-YEAR SUSPENSION

Note: Each of the following (A & B) require a one-year suspension. Please circle ONLY if this is a violation of:

A. Rule 49.6 ("...physically assaults an official")
B. Rule 49.7 ("...willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent")

Comments:

GAME OFFICIALS-SIGNATURE REQUIRED			
	Name (PLEASE PRINT)	Phone #	Initials
REFEREE (1)			
REFEREE (2)			

Updated May 4, 2022



NEW MIAA INFRACTION SHEET





33 Forge Parkway, Franklin MA 02038

TEL: (508) 541-7997
FAX: (508) 541-9838
E-mail: miaa@miaa.net

STUDENT CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION FORM

Reference MIAA Rule 49

NOTE TO GAME OFFICIALS: All disqualifications must be explained in writing immediately after the contest. Present this completed form to the contest site manager.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED: (1) The site manager is responsible for having these forms available for officials at the game site. (2) The suspending official shall notify the scorer, the person in charge, and the coach of each team at the time the student is disqualified from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct. Failure of the official to do so **does not** exempt a student from the penalty required by the rule. At the conclusion of the contest, the official must complete the form and give it to the site manager. (3) The site manager is responsible for sending copies to the Principal and Athletic Director of each school involved and to the MIAA Executive Director.

SPORT: GENDER:
LEVEL:
SITE: DATE OF INCIDENT:
Home Team: VS. Visting Team:
SCHOOL OF STUDENT SUSPENDED(include city/town):
STUDENT SUSPENDED:
Uniform # First & Last Name: Grade:

DESCRIPTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSING DISQUALIFICATION OF THE PLAYER:

One form is to be completed for each athlete disqualified. Please describe circumstances causing disqualification from the athlete in the space provided. **Violation called:**

There are no exceptions for any player disqualified from a contest under Rule 49. He/she must be suspended from the next contest that is **part of their regular season schedule or in tournament play** (in baseball, ice hockey, and soccer the penalty is two contests) unless it falls under one of the rules below:

I. Please check if the violation was for fighting, punching or kicking an opposing player, or spitting at someone

a. ☐ Rule 49.3.1 (2 game suspension)

II. Each of the following (a and b) requires a ONE-YEAR SUSPENSION in all sports.

Please check **ONLY** if this is a violation of:

a. ☐ Rule 49.6 ("... physically assaults an official.")

b. ☐ Rule 49.7 ("... willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent.")

Rule 49.13 Any student athlete who is disqualified (see Rule 49.3) from any interscholastic contest must complete the National Federation Sportsmanship on-line course -- "Sportsmanship", before reestablishing eligibility. This course is free. The "certificate of completion" must be submitted to the school athletic director.

SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL GIVING PENALTY:

PRINT NAME: DATE:

Revised: 6/19/2020



STUDENT CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION FORM





33 Forge Parkway, Franklin MA 02038

TEL: (508) 541-7997
FAX: (508) 541-9838
E-mail: miaa@miaa.net

COACH CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION FORM

(Reference MIAA Rule 49)

SPECIAL REPORT FROM ATHLETIC OFFICIAL/COACH

All disqualifications must be explained in writing immediately after the contest by the official and coach on separate forms to the Athletic Director and the Principal of the school. There are no exceptions for any coach expelled from a contest. If the game official fails to file his/her report, the coach is still bound by the suspension. He/she must be excluded from the next contest *that is part of their regular season schedule or in tournament play*. Disqualifications from ice hockey, soccer and baseball are for the next two contests.

REPORT FROM: ☐ Game Official ☐ Coach

DATE OF INCIDENT:

SPORT:

GENDER:

LEVEL:

CONTEST BETWEEN: Home HS: & Visiting HS:

EXCLUDED COACH: Name: / School:

SPECIFIC INCIDENT BEING REPORTED (with appropriate explanations included):

There are no exceptions for any coach disqualified from a contest under Rule 49. He/she must be suspended from the next contest *that is part of their regular season schedule or in tournament play* (in baseball, ice hockey, and soccer the penalty is two contests) unless it falls under the rule below:

- The following requires a **ONE-YEAR SUSPENSION in all sports.**

Please check **ONLY** if this is a violation of: ☐ Rule 49.6 ("... physically assaults an official.")

DATE: SIGNED: POSITION:

PRINT NAME: PHONE:

Procedures to be followed:

- Person in charge of each contest is responsible for having these forms available.
- At the conclusion of the contest, the **official and coach must each complete a separate form and give it to the person in charge of the contest.**
- The person in charge of the contest is responsible for sending both copies within 24 hours of the competition to the:
 - Principal of each school involved
 - Athletic Director of each school involved
 - Executive Director of MIAA
- The principal or athletic director of the coach must forward immediately all copies of the official's and coach's report to the school superintendent.

Revised: 6/19/2020



COACH CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION FORM

