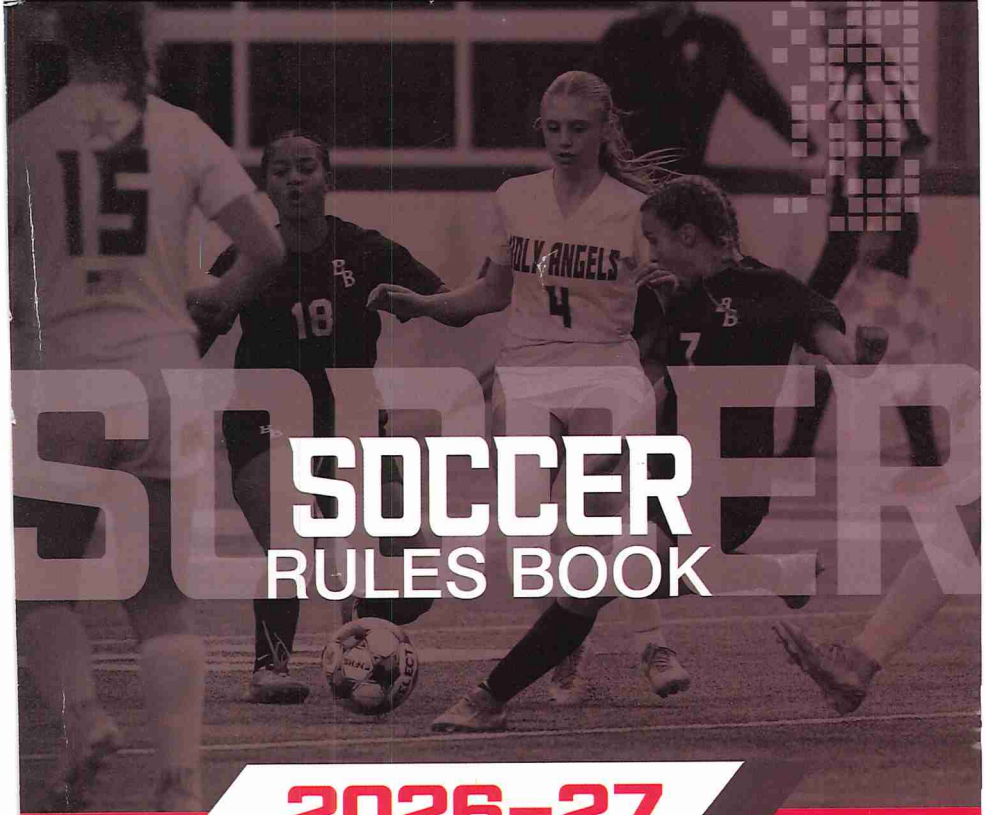

SOCCER
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2026-27

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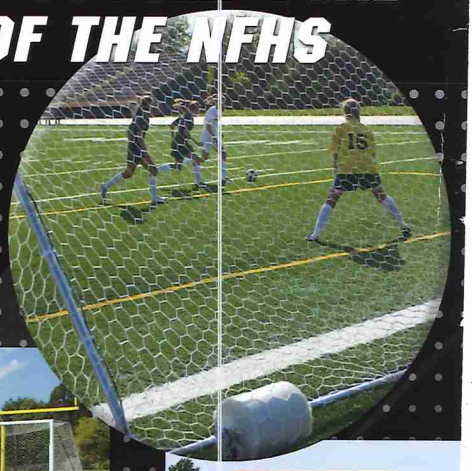













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2026-27 NFHS SOCCER RULES BOOK

Julie Cochran, Editor
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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2026-27 Soccer Rules Changes

(For comments on the 2026-27 rules changes, see page 98)

4-4-1c — Clarifies that dark socks must be worn by the home team.

4-2-7d,e (NEW) — Offers guidance on appropriate tooth and mouth protector elements.

4-2-11a, b, c NOTE 2 (NEW) — Prohibits players from wearing audio or video devices while participating in a match.

5-3-1f-j — Change updates the officiating procedures for issuing yellow and red cards by removing the term carded in favor of consistent terminology already used in the rules book; cautioned and ejected.

8-1-2 — Clarifies when a kickoff should be retaken, specifically when not all players are on their half of the field.

12-1-2c — Emphasizes the importance of goalkeeper safety when in possession of the ball and improves clarity for consistent officiating purposes.

12-2-3 — Adds biting to direct free kick fouls.

12-3-1, 12-3-2, 12-3-3 — Extends goalkeeper possession limit and adjusts the penalty when the time limit is exceeded.

12-3-5 — Clarifies considerations of dangerous play.

12-3-6, 12-3-7 (NEW) — Offers flexibility for officials when addressing verbal offenses by categorizing them as indirect free kick fouls.

12-6-1b (1-4) (NEW) — Adds language to provide additional guidance regarding DOGSO.

13-1, 13-2, 13-3 — Reorganizes free kick restart procedures into distinct categories, clarifying when, where and how free kicks are awarded and taken, while incorporating guidance for situations involving outside agents, off-field offenses, thrown objects, and unauthorized field entry or exit.

Rule 14 — Encroachment is now penalized only when it clearly impacts the kick outcome, and goalkeepers receive a warning for a first offense rather than an immediate caution. Deceptive movements and stutter-stepping remain permitted during the run-up, but feinting after the approach is completed is prohibited. The penalty chart is also updated and reformatted for clarity.

2026-27 Soccer Major Editorial Changes

4-1-2, 4-1-3, 4-1-3d, 12-3-1

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.

RULES

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 105-108 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.

2026-27 Points of Emphasis

Properly Marked Fields

Administrators, coaches and officials must prioritize the proper marking of team areas and the maintenance of the 10-foot buffer around the field's boundary lines to ensure a safe and professional environment for student-athletes. The Soccer Field Diagram in Rule 1 requires a minimum of 10 feet of space beyond the field boundary lines for spectators, fencing or any objects. Any safety concerns should be identified by officials and brought to the attention of administrators or coaches for remediation.

Team areas extend 10 yards from each side of the halfway line for a total length of 20 yards and set back 10 feet from the touchline. On multi-use fields, football lines can provide a visual landmark: team areas extend from the 40-yard line to the 20-yard line. By rule, team areas must be clearly designated and marked by a solid line. Defining these spaces is essential for maintaining bench decorum, as all coaches and bench personnel are required to remain within these restricted areas during the contest. Properly marked areas allow officials to effectively manage the sidelines and ensure that personnel do not interfere with the game or the activities of the officiating crew. When conducting pregame safety inspections, officials should identify any missing team area markings and work with administrators or coaches to place cones as temporary boundaries. Any violations of Rule 1-5-3 must be reported to the state association.

Shared Professionalism and Bench Accountability

High school soccer serves as an extension of the classroom, requiring both officials and coaches to uphold the highest standards of composure and integrity. As adult leaders in education-based environment, everyone involved must contribute to a calm, respectful atmosphere that prioritizes student-athletes. Professional communication should remain non-threatening and conversational, as raising one's voice, displaying frustrations or acting in a provocative manner only escalates conflict and distracts from the educational mission of high school athletics. When all participants prioritize a calm, cool and collected demeanor, they ensure the focus remains on the student-athletes and maintaining a respectful, professional and safe environment for competition.

In situations involving misconduct, education-based principles require that interactions between coaches and officials remain brief, respectful and focused on facts. When a caution or ejection is issued, officials are trained to advise the head coach of the sanction using appropriate rules book language, such as "unsporting conduct" or "dissent." Both parties share responsibility for ensuring communication remains professional. Officials must deliver information calmly and clearly and coaches must receive it without arguing, complaining or displaying unsporting dissent.

Any dissent or inappropriate conduct during these conversations should be addressed firmly and professionally by officials as maintaining order and respect is essential to the learning environment. Coaches are accountable for their behavior and must support the educational goals of high school athletics by modeling emotional control and sportsmanship. When both coaches and officials uphold these shared standards, the result is a safe, respectful and developmentally appropriate environment for student-athletes.

Managing Goal Celebrations

Celebrating after scoring a goal is an integral part of the game of soccer. Reacting with joy is permissible provided it is not excessive and not accompanied by taunting. Officials should recognize that high school soccer is a players' game, and allowing student-athletes to celebrate success contributes to a positive educational environment. To this end, players are allowed to celebrate, and it is a reality that it takes some time to express emotions. Luckily, the clock is stopped after a goal and it also takes time for the defending team to regroup and

collect themselves before their kickoff. Celebrations may include leaving the field momentarily, which is permissible so long as players make a prompt return to the playing field. Engaging in rehearsed or choreographed celebrations should be discouraged by officials. The line between allowable celebration and misconduct is crossed when a player or team prevents a timely restart by delaying excessively or by taunting their opponents or fans.

Illegal actions occur when celebrations become prolonged, excessive or serve to focus attention upon the individual rather than the game. This is especially true if celebrating players ignore requests by the official to return to their half of the field. Any act that prohibits a timely restart is considered unsporting conduct and requires the official to intervene and issue a caution (yellow card). Examples include jumping over retention flagging or barriers, climbing perimeter fences, or removing one's jersey. Officials must stay vigilant following a goal, observing players to ensure that no taunting or other provocative gestures occur that could create a serious situation. By using preventive officiating to discourage time-wasting and holding players accountable for delayed restarts, officials maintain the flow of the game and uphold the spirit of safe and fair competition.

Penalty Kick Offenses and the Concept of Impact

For the 2026-27 season, Rule 14 has been revised to clarify that encroachment during a penalty kick is only penalized if the offense has a clear impact on the play. For the defending team, impact occurs if an encroaching defender clearly distracts the kicker or if they play a rebounding ball or challenge an attacker to prevent a goal-scoring opportunity. For the attacking team, impact constitutes clearly distracting the goalkeeper or if an encroaching attacker plays the ball or challenges a defender to score or create a scoring chance. If players from either team enter the penalty area or arc early but have no effect on the kicker, goalkeeper, or the immediate play, officials should allow the result of the kick to stand without penalty.

Officiating these offenses on a penalty kick requires officials to judge the consequence of the encroachment alongside the outcome of the kick. Encroachment by the defending team is never penalized if the goal is scored. If the kick is missed or saved and the defense encroached with impact, the kick is retaken. If the attacking team encroaches with impact and a goal is scored, the goal is disallowed and the kick is retaken; if they encroach with impact and miss, the restart is an indirect free kick for the defending team. Goalkeepers who encroach and impact the kicker or make a save shall receive a warning for the first offense in a game, with cautions reserved for subsequent infractions. While kickers are permitted stutter-steps and hesitation moves during their run-up, once the approach to the ball is complete, feinting to kick the ball is an act of unsporting conduct that shall be cautioned and is enforced on the first and every subsequent occurrence.

Identification of the NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls

The NFHS Authenticating Mark ensures easy identification of inflated and non-inflated balls used in interscholastic competitions for which the NFHS writes playing rules. All such balls are required to display the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The use of conforming equipment is essential to the integrity of contests played under the NFHS rules. This mark helps to promote a level playing field by ensuring consistency in the equipment being used. The mark allows for the development of more sophisticated standards in balls and clearly communicates to administrators, coaches and officials that these standards are being met.

Non-compliance with these requirements will be reported to the state association for potential penalties following the contest. Administrators and coaches play a pivotal role in making sure all inflated and non-inflated balls meet these specifications. They must instill the importance of proper equipment use through consistent reinforcement during the pre-competition certification meeting and throughout the season. Game officials must also remain vigilant and report any non-compliant balls to the state association office.

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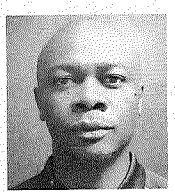

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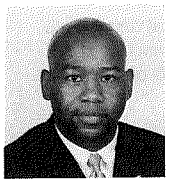

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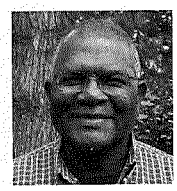

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COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

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.

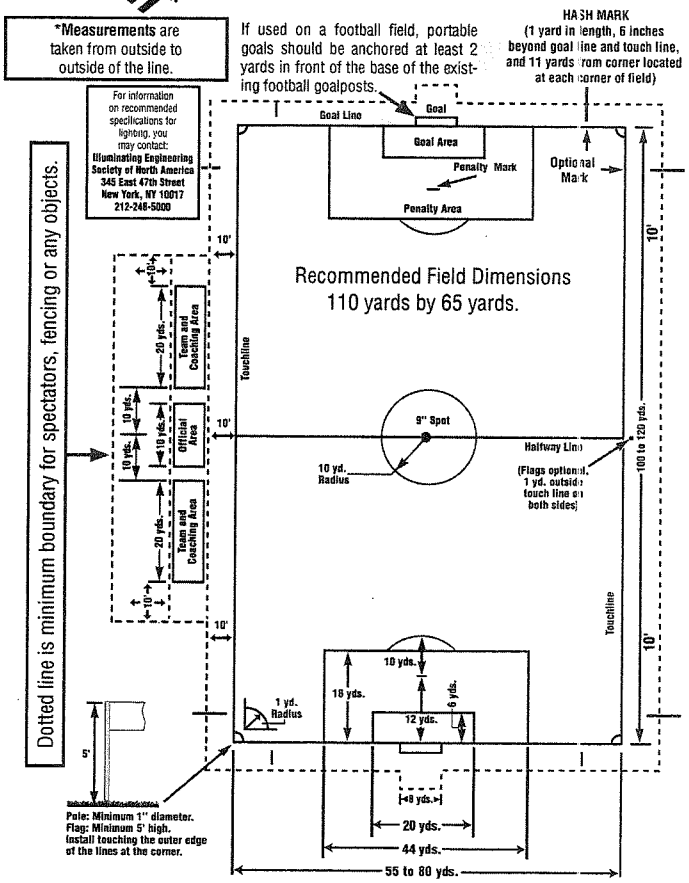


OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS

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.

Soccer Field Diagram



NOTE: An engineered natural turf soccer field should have a minimum of one-and-one-half percent (1.5%) slope for fields which are surface drained. For natural turf fields with a sub-surface drain system the slope should be no less than one (1.0%) percent. For synthetic turf fields with a sub-surface drain system the slope should be no less than one half of one (0.5%) percent. Slope is measured from center to side. For consulting services, contact Design Architects, 816-842-5200.

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 that markings 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 that 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.

TEAM AREA

1.5.1 SITUATION: While inspecting the field before the game, the officials discover team areas are not marked. **RULING:** Cones or some other temporary marker should be positioned to adequately delineate the team areas before the game is played. **COMMENT:** The state association shall be notified if team areas are not properly marked.

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 a retaken kick as per 14-1-8.

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 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 . . . Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench between periods.

ART. 2 . . . Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench, provided the players report to the official's area 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 beckons a coach or appropriate health-care professional for an apparent injury to any player, the player (including the goalkeeper) 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)
c. when the game is temporarily suspended.

ART. 3 . . . 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.
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.
   2. When a team substitutes for an ejected goalkeeper, a field player shall be removed.
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.

e. when bench personnel are 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 is a rostered member of a team who is not a current player. A substitute becomes a player when the substitute is beckoned onto the field of play, at which time the player being replaced is no longer a player and becomes a substitute.

ART. 7 . . . If a player is being replaced during a penalty kick situation, the substitute may not take the penalty kick.

ART. 8 . . . 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. 9 . . . 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. (3-3-9)

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. **RULIIIG:** 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 on the ground for a few seconds, continuing to possess the ball. The official stops play and the clock to review the situation. The referee determines that play should continue. No appropriate health-care professionals 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. If an appropriate health-care professional had been beckoned on for the goalkeeper, the goalkeeper would have to come out of the game like any field player.

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. The referee stops the clock, both players are dazed and the referee beckons for an appropriate health-care professional from both teams. Both players leave the field. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Neither player shall return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

3.3.2 SITUATION F: A goal is scored for which the referee stops the clock. The defending goalkeeper, A8, appears injured. With the clock already stopped for the goal, the referee beckons a trainer onto the field to assess A8. The trainer determines that A8 is not injured and shows no signs of a concussion. The referee requires A8 to leave the field and allows a substitute goalkeeper to replace A8. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Regardless of the reason the clock is stopped, if a coach or medical personnel are beckoned on the field by the referee to assess a player, that player must be removed from the field of play. This includes goalkeepers who must be replaced by either a field player or a substitute.

3.3.2 SITUATION G: With the ball in play, two opposing players collide and appear to be injured. The ball crosses the touchline and goes out of play. Without stopping the clock, the referee beckons the trainer onto the field to assess the injured players. The trainer determines that neither player is injured and they do not require treatment. The referee allows both players to remain in the game because the clock was not stopped. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** The clock is to be stopped for an injury as per 7-4-1. The referee's omission to stop the clock does not negate the requirement for players to leave the field if a coach or appropriate health-care professional is beckoned onto the field. The head referee or center referee has the authority per 5-3-2i to instruct the timer to correct the clock to adjust for the time lost from the injury assessment.

3.3.2 SITUATION H: Player A2 goes down and is apparently injured. The referee stops play to check on A2. Since A2 appears to have a leg injury, the referee stops the clock and beckons A2's coach or athletic trainer onto the field to attend the injured player. A2's coach or athletic trainer (a) refuses to enter the field; (b) enters the field and tends to A2's injury; (C) enters the field and deems A2 only slightly injured and able to keep playing. **RULING:** In (a), (b), and (c), Player A2 shall leave the field and may be replaced. **COMMENT:** Regardless if the coach comes out onto the field, the official beckoned for the coach to attend to the injured player so the player must leave the field of play. The coach may play shorthanded or substitute for the player. If the team elects to play shorthanded and it is deemed the player who came off the field is able to play, then that player may re-enter at the next dead ball.

3.3.2 SITUATION I: An away team player is down on the field, and the referee briefly allows play to continue for their team to take a shot on goal. The ball goes out of play for a goal kick to the home team. Before the restart, the home team's athletic trainer enters the field without being beckoned to attend to the injured away player. **RULING:** Illegal, a coach or appropriate health-care professional may only enter the field with permission from the referee. (1-5-3, 12-5-1a) **COMMENT:** If the referee observes the player to be injured to such a degree that the referee would have beckoned on a coach or athletic trainer, then the player must leave the field of play as if the athletic trainer had be beckoned. In which case, the referee should also remind the athletic trainer to wait for the proper signal before entering the field. If the referee determines that the athletic trainer entered the field as a ploy or a gamesmanship tactic to force the away team player to leave the field, then the player should not be required to leave the field and the referee should warn or caution the athletic trainer for their misconduct.

3.3.2 SITUATION J: 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 shorthanded. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** In (a), A2 may re-enter at the next dead ball. In (b), A2 may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity for that team.

3.3.2 SITUATION K: Player A2 is injured. 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 their team area; (c) opposing Coach B calls Team B to the sideline and gives instruction; (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 L: 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. (3-3-8)

3.3.2 SITUATION M: 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:** Legal, provided the substitute properly reports and is beckoned by an official as per 3-4-1a. **COMMENT:** An injured player leaving the field under one's own power would not be considered misconduct as in 12-5-1a.

3.3.2 SITUATION N: Before restarting play with a free kick, the referee temporarily suspends the game for a 2-minute water break. During the break, the home team sends a substitute to check-in. The referee beckons on the substitute. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Although substitutions are not normally allowed during a free kick, either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench while the game is temporarily suspended, provided the substitutes properly report and are beckoned onto the field.

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: 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 (12-6) but shall have a goalkeeper (3-1-1).

3.3.3 SITUATION C: Player B2 recklessly fouls opposing Player A7. The official awards a direct free kick to Team A. After beckoning on a coach or athletic trainer to attend to an injured A7, the official cautions and shows the yellow card to B2 for unsporting conduct. Both team's coaches, having no players at the official's area, substitute for injured Player A7 and cautioned Player B2 respectively from the bench. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** The injured player and cautioned player shall be removed and may be replaced.

3.3.3 SITUATION D: 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 E: 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. (12-6)

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 official's area; (b) Team B chooses to substitute a player(s) who has reported to the official's area. **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 official's area; (b) Team B, having had players report to the official's area, 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 official's area before the substitution opportunity occurs on a throw-in for either team. (3-3-4)

3.3.7 SITUATION A: The referee awards a penalty kick to Team A. Player A5 leaves the field due to an injury. Substitute A1 reports to the nearest official to replace A5. The referee beckons A1 onto the field. Player A1 takes the penalty kick. **RULING:** Illegal. A1 may not take the penalty kick. **COMMENT:** An incoming substitute during a penalty kick situation cannot take the penalty kick regardless of the reason the player they replaced left the field.

3.3.7 SITUATION B: Inside its penalty area, Team B's goalkeeper, B4, denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity by tripping opposing player A10 while attempting to play the ball. The referee awards a penalty kick to Team A and cautions B4 for unsporting conduct. B4 leaves the field and is replaced by substitute goalkeeper, B8. B8 defends the penalty kick awarded to Team A. **RULING:** Legal.

3.3.8 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.

3.3.8 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 official's area 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 official's area 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. The school's name, nickname, logo, mascot, and/or the player's name are permitted on the uniform top and/or bottom.
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 unique Arabic number. The number shall be:
   1. A solid contrasting color to the jersey and/or shorts and clearly visible;
   2. At least 6 inches in height on the back of the jersey;
   3. At least 4 inches in height on the front of the jersey and/or shorts;
   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's 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.

b. Shorts may be numbered as outlined in 4-1-2a.

c. Both team may wear shorts of a similar color.

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 dark color, but not necessarily the color of the jersey for the home team, and dark is defined as any color which contrasts with white;

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.

NOTE (ARTS. 1-4): When an illegally uniformed team (i.e. jersey, shorts, or socks failing to comply with color requirements) is unable to correct the situation or cannot verify state association approval of the uniform, the game shall be played. The referee shall notify the state association following the game.

ART. 5 . . . Shinguards shall:

a. Provide adequate and reasonable protection;

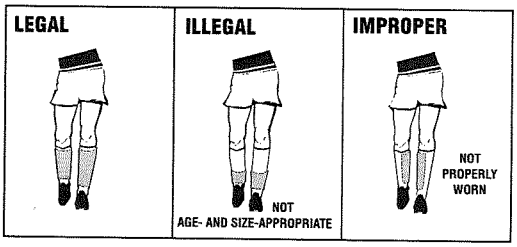
b. Be professionally manufactured, age and size-appropriate;

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.

SHINGUARDS





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.

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;
d. not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth; and
e. not include anything on it that is a health or risk issue and can pose a danger to themselves or other players.

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.
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 106)

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.

a. Examples of permissible wearable technology items include electronic performance and tracking devices, heart-rate monitors, biometric recording or transmitting devices, pedometers, etc.
b. Players shall not wear audio (microphone) or video (camera) devices on the field.
c. The use of electronic communication devices (e.g., amplifying devices, wireless communication devices, headphones, etc.) with players on the field is prohibited.

NOTES:

1. Medical appliances and/or medical devices are not considered wearable technology.
2. State associations may also have policies in place to further address the use of electronic devices.

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. 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 . . . A player wearing legal equipment that is being worn incorrectly or becomes illegal during play is improperly equipped. Cautions are not issued for improperly equipped players.

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.

4.1.2 SITUATION G: The home team is observed to be wearing primarily black jerseys with (a) white stripes; (b) white side panels; (c) white sleeves; (d) light gray sleeves; (e) thin white piping outlining the collar or hem. **RULING:** (a), (b), (c) and (d) illegal; (e) legal. **COMMENT:** The home team shall wear dark jerseys, and dark is defined as any color which contrasts with white. Inclusion of white jersey components is not permitted.

4.1.2 SITUATION H: The away team is observed to be wearing primarily white jerseys with (a) light gray stripes; (b) black piping; (c) gray sleeves; (d) a visible striped pattern; (e) a sublimated or other manufactured method to create a patterned appearance. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** The visiting team jersey shall be solid white.

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 dark 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) white socks. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c) illegal. **COMMENT:** Both socks shall be the same, single dominant dark color.

4.1.4 SITUATION E: Home team 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), (c) and (d) Illegal; (b) and (e) legal.

4.1.4 SITUATION F: A visiting team player enters the game wearing (a) white socks with white tape/stays/straps, (b) white socks with green tape/stays/straps. **RULING:** (a) legal, (b) illegal.

4.1.4 SITUATION G: 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)

4.1.4 SITUATION H: The home team is observed to be wearing primarily dark socks (a) that are equally striped with yellow (bumble bee patterned); (b) with a patterned design containing white accents; (c) that are camouflaged patterned; (d) that are tie-died with multiple colors. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** The home team's socks must be a single dominant dark color, and dark is defined as any color which contrasts with white.

4.1.5 SITUATION: Player A begins the game as required with legal shinguards under the socks. During the first half, the referee observes the player removing the shinguards and throwing the shinguards 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 (a) intra-oral tooth and mouth protector; (b) a tooth and mouth protector with a spinner; (c) a tooth and mouth protector with a pacifier-style ring. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) and (c) illegal.

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 performance 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 12-5-1f.

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.

4.2.11 SITUATION C: As the officials enter the field during pre-game warm-up, a player is seen using a recording device. The referee notifies the head coach that recording devices are not permitted on the field once the game begins. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

4.2.11 SITUATION D: During the game an official observes (a) player A1 wearing recording glasses; (b) player A2 wearing a clip-on microphone; (c) substitute A3 using a cell phone to livestream from their team area. **RULING:** (a) and (b) illegal; (c) legal.

4.2.11 SITUATION E: During the game, Team A head coach is using radio communication to communicate with the press box. **RULING:** Legal.

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 A: 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.

4.4.1 SITUATION B: During the first half, player A10 appears to have conspicuously small shinguards. At the next stoppage, the referee delays the restart to inspect A10's equipment. Neither shinguard has the NOCSAE seal. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** Shinguards without the NOCSAE seal are illegal and not permitted. Rule 4-1-5a requires shinguards to provide adequate and reasonable protection. A shinguard's safety is not under the purview of the player, coach, or official. What consti-

tutes "adequate and reasonable" is solely determined by NOCSAE, and Rule 4-1-5e requires all shinguards to have the NOCSAE seal. Shinguards that appear properly sized, conforming to the uniform appearance compared to other players, may be reasonably assumed by officials to be legal, even without having to inspect every shinguard for the NOCSAE logo. However, shinguards that appear suspiciously small, or look undersized compared to other players, require closer scrutiny. Once examined by the official, the legality of the shinguard is determined only by the visible presence of the NOCSAE seal marked somewhere on the shinguard.

4.4.4 SITUATION A: 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.

4.4.4 SITUATION B: While dribbling with the ball, player A1's shoe falls off their foot. A1 then shoots the ball into the goal. The referee awards the goal, and before the kickoff, asks A1 to correct their equipment. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Officials do not have to stop play immediately when an equipment violation is discovered, including illegal and/or improper equipment. Only if the equipment issue presents a dangerous situation to the player should play be stopped. If play is allowed to continue during such a situation, and an illegally or improperly equipped player scores, then the goal is not nullified because of an equipment violation.

4.4.4 SITUATION C: Player A2 and opponent B7 are challenging for control of the ball. During shoulder-to-shoulder contact, A2's shoe accidentally falls off their foot. Both players continue to fairly challenge each other for the ball. The referee stops play and directs A2 to correct their equipment. The referee awards Team B an indirect free kick. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Officials do not have to stop play immediately when an equipment violation is discovered, including illegal or improper equipment. However, if the equipment issue presents a danger, play should be stopped immediately. If play is stopped for an improperly or illegally equipped player, then it is considered dangerous play by the player with the equipment issue. The restart is an indirect free kick for the opposing team, taken from where the player became illegally or improperly equipped. If the player is readily able to correct their improper equipment, they are not required to leave the field. If play was stopped for an illegally equipped player, then the player must leave the field of play, and either the illegally equipped player or their head coach is cautioned.

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 in the NFHS Soccer Officials Manual).

NOTE: If a state high school association chooses not to select one system, competing schools may do so by prior mutual agreement. Suggested mechanics may be found in the NFHS Soccer Officials Manual 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.

a. The officials shall enforce the rules, and their decisions on points of fact are final.
b. The officials can only correct a decision so long as the game has not been restarted.
c. 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.
d. 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.
e. Protests of NFHS rules are not recognized.
f. 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. apply advantage by calling 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. verbally warn through gesture or admonition a player, substitute, coach or bench personnel for conduct, actions, or behaviors that are not in the best interest of the game. Repeated or blatant offenses should result in a caution or ejection;

f. hold a yellow card with an arm fully extended above a referee's head and indicate the player, substitute, coach or bench personnel being cautioned;
g. hold a red card with an arm fully extended above a referee's head and indicate the player, substitute, coach or bench personnel being ejected. If the reason for the ejection was receiving a second caution in the same game, the referee shall show a yellow card indicating the subsequent caution, followed immediately by showing a red card;
h. direct any player shown a yellow or red card to leave the field of play;
i. notify both coaches, the scorer and other official(s) of the nature of the misconduct after showing a yellow or red card to a player, coach or bench personnel;
j. signal the clock to be stopped or started;
k. terminate or suspend the game for any infringements of the rules;
l. confirm all scores with the scorer;
m. not set aside or question decisions made by the other referee(s) within the limits of the referee's respective outlined duties;
n. 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. (12-5-1f)

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. [12-5-1g(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:

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

a. 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);
b. record all scores;
c. record the number and reason for all cautions (yellow cards) and ejections (red cards);
d. after a substitute has reported to the scorer, have the timer signal to the official(s) the first time the substitution is possible;
e. 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.

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.

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.

ART. 4 . . . 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.

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 102.

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.

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. (14-1-7)

INTERVALS BETWEEN PERIODS

7.2.4 SITUATION A: During the halftime interval, an assistant coach asks the referee if they can add a player to their roster. The referee beckons the coach to the official area to update their roster. **RULING:** Legal. (3-1-3)

7.2.4 SITUATION B: During the halftime interval, the officials are approached by (a) a player, not a captain, who starts to complain about a call; (b) a team captain who asks about a clarification on a call; (c) a member of the home team's bench personnel who offers the crew refreshment; (d) a coach who wants to argue about a missed offside call. **RULING:** Illegal in (a) and (d). Legal in (b) and (c). **COMMENT:** A player (other than the captain), substitute, coach, or bench personnel that confronts an official during an interval period without permission may be warned or cautioned for misconduct as per 12-5-1b.

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.

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. If all players, except the player taking the kickoff, are not on their half of the field, the kickoff shall be retaken.

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 offense.

SITUATION AND RULING

RULE 8 — THE START OF PLAY

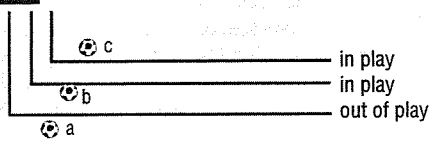
KICKOFF

8.1.2 SITUATION: Team A is preparing to take the kickoff. After the official's whistle and before Player A1 kicks the ball, teammate A2 runs into the opponent's half of the field. **RULING:** Illegal, the kickoff shall be retaken.

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 (dead ball) when:

a. it has completely crossed a goal line or touchline, whether on the ground or in the air;
b. the ball touches an official and remains on the field; and
   1. a team starts a promising attack;
   2. goes directly into the goal;
   3. possession changes.

ART. 2 . . . The ball is in play (live ball) at all other times, including:

a. when it rebounds from a goal post, crossbar or corner flag post;
b. when it touches an official on the field of play, except in 9-1-1b;
c. until a referee sounds the whistle;
d. when a drop ball touches the ground;
e. 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:

a. when the ball is caused to go out-of-bounds by two opponents simultaneously;
b. when the ball becomes deflated;
c. following a temporary suspension of play for an injury or unusual situation (except as noted in 14-1-8);
d. when simultaneous fouls of the same degree occur by opponents;
e. 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.

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. (13-3-6) **COMMENT:** Play shall be restarted by a second whistle.

9.1.3 SITUATION C: Team A is awarded a free kick. The referee delays the restart for an injury, requiring a second whistle before the ball may be put into play. Before the referee whistles for the restart, Player A2 kicks the ball. **RULING:** Illegal. Play shall be restarted by a second whistle. **COMMENT:** A2 may be warned or cautioned for their actions which may constitute unsporting conduct. Regardless of the subsequent actions, the ball was not in play, and the game must be restarted with the original restart: a free kick for Team A.

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.

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 simultaneously 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 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.

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.

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 by playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a teammate; or
b. interfering with an opponent by:
   1. preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision; or
   2. challenging an opponent for the ball; or
   3. clearly attempting to play a ball which is close when this action impacts on an opponent; or
   4. making an obvious action which clearly impacts the ability of an opponent to play the ball; or
c. gaining an advantage by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:
   1. rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar, match official or an opponent; or
   2. been deliberately saved by any opponent.

PENALTY: Indirect free kick at the spot of infraction, subject to provisions in 13-2-3a.

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. A deliberate play on the ball is when a player chooses to act, regardless of the outcome of that action. A reaction or reflex is not a deliberate play.
b. 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.
c. 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, A10 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.

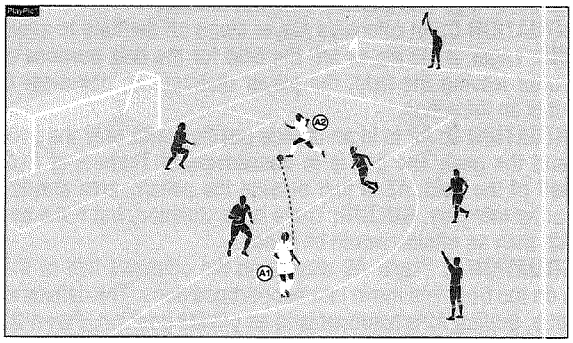
11.1.4 SITUATION E: A10 is in an offside position. B1 is a player in a wall defending a free kick. A2 kicks the ball which deflects off of B1 to A10. B1 made no attempt to play the ball. **RULING:** A10 is offside as B1 did not deliberately play the ball.

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

PlayPics courtesy of REFEREE

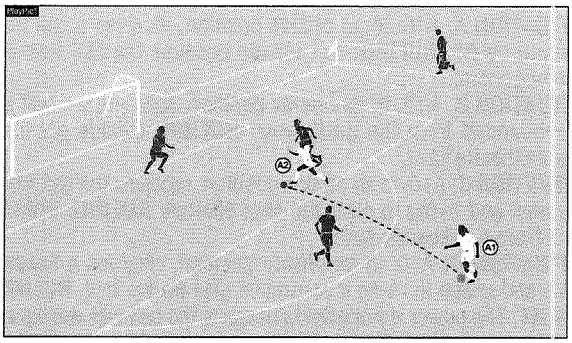
DIAGRAM 1 – OFFSIDE



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.

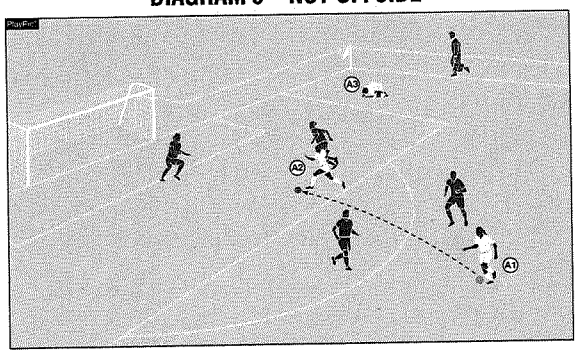
DIAGRAM 2 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

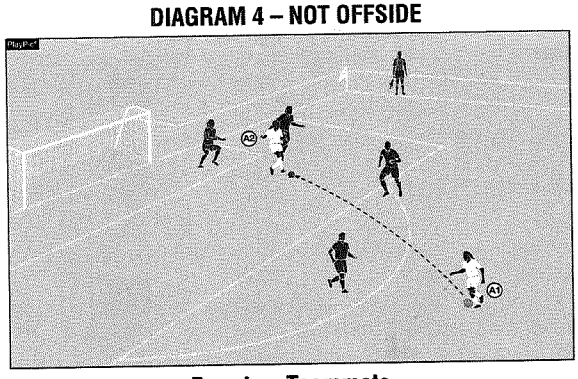
DIAGRAM 3 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

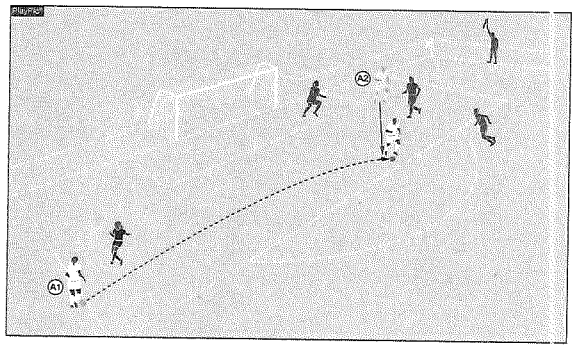
DIAGRAM 4 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

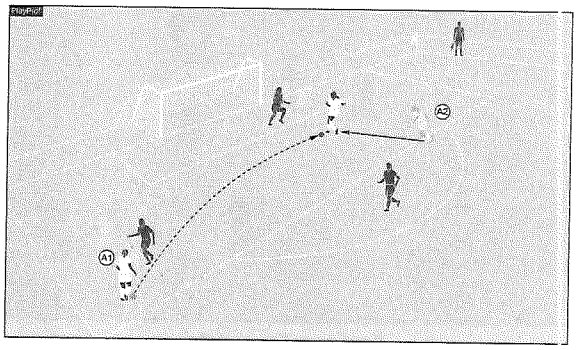
DIAGRAM 5 – OFFSIDE



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.

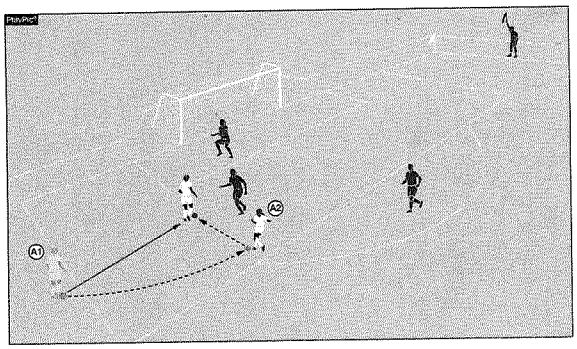
DIAGRAM 6 – NOT OFFSIDE



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 an offside position since 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.

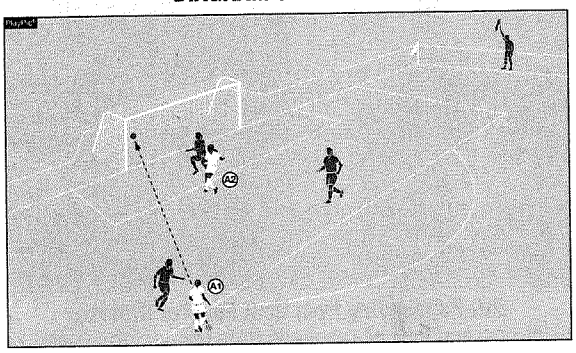
DIAGRAM 7 – OFFSIDE



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.

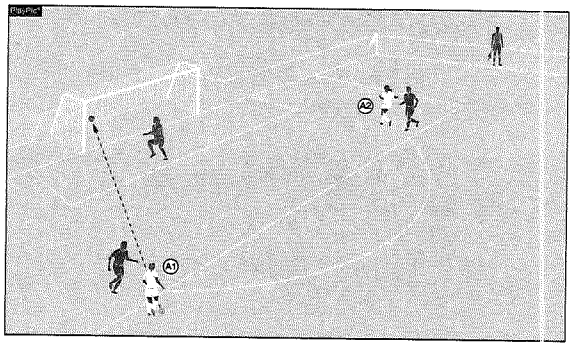
DIAGRAM 8 – OFFSIDE



Interfering with an Opponent

A1 shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. A2 is standing in front of the goalkeeper. 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.

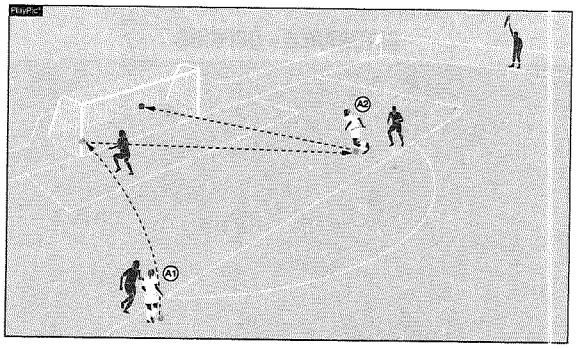
DIAGRAM 9 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

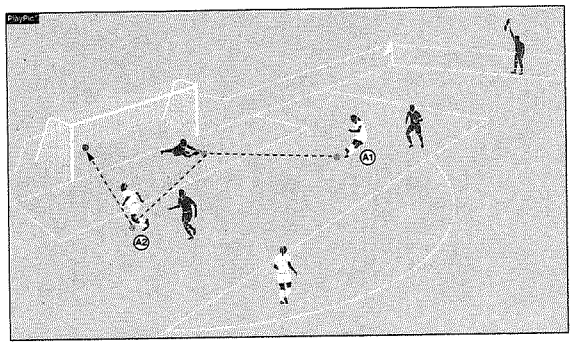
DIAGRAM 10 – OFFSIDE



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.

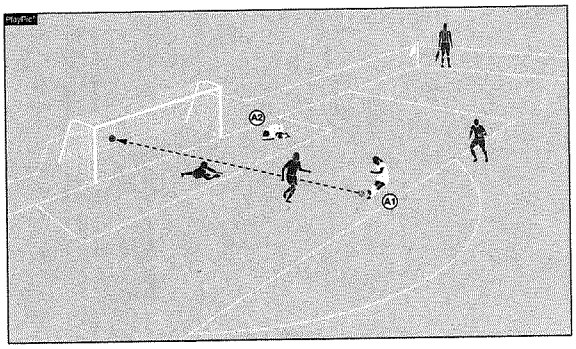
DIAGRAM 11 – OFFSIDE



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 offsides position when the ball was last played by A1, was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.

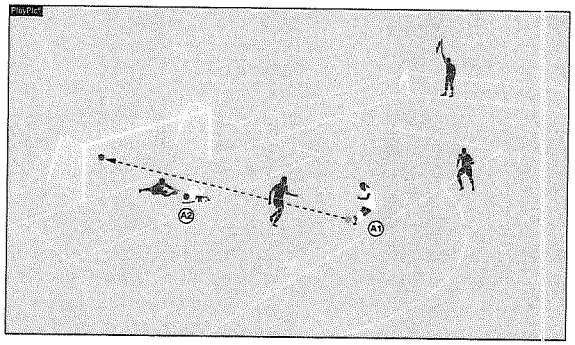
DIAGRAM 12 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

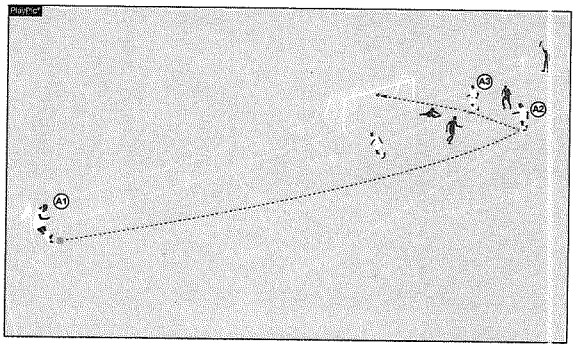
DIAGRAM 13 – OFFSIDE



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.

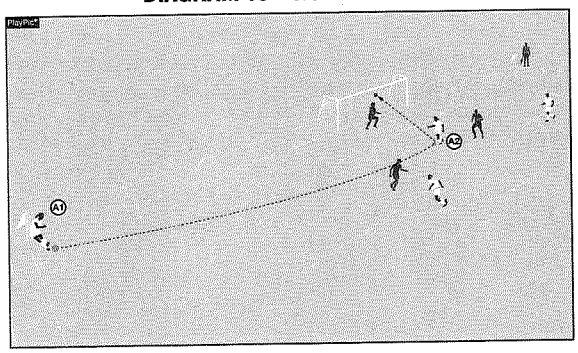
DIAGRAM 14 – OFFSIDE



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.

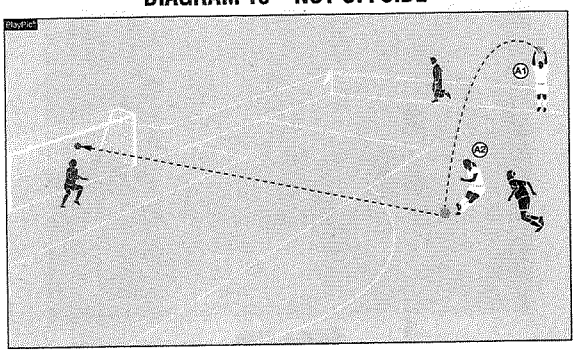
DIAGRAM 15 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

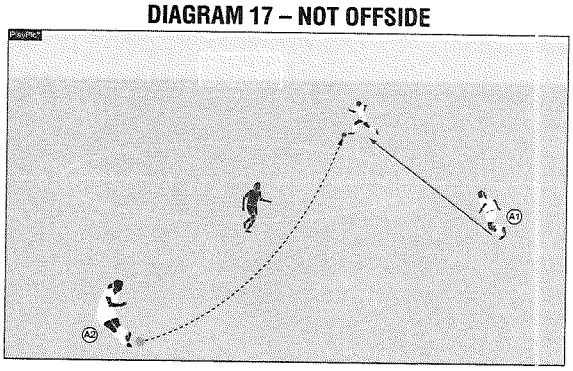
DIAGRAM 16 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

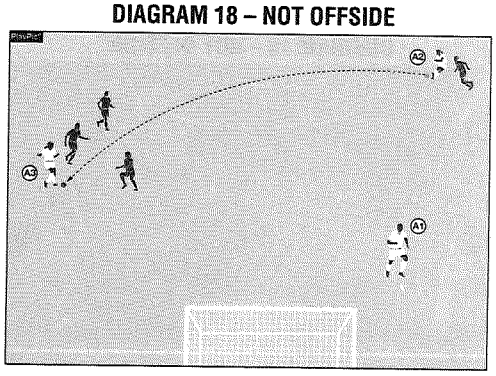
DIAGRAM 17 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

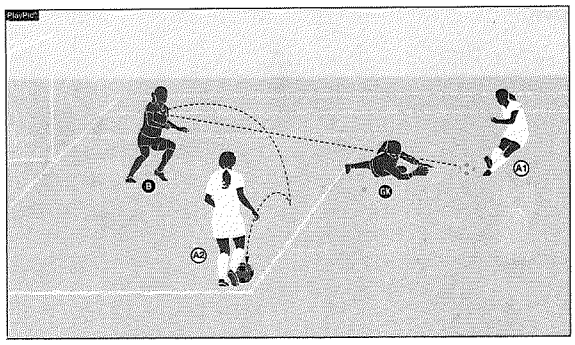
DIAGRAM 18 – NOT OFFSIDE



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.

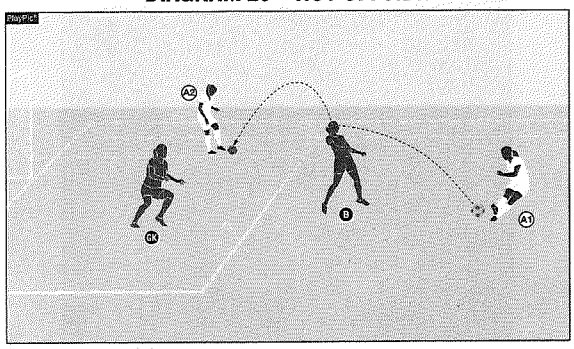
DIAGRAM 19 – OFFSIDE



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.

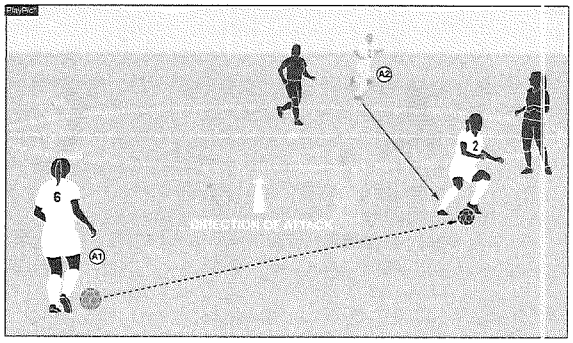
DIAGRAM 20 – NOT OFFSIDE



Defender Making a Play on the Ball

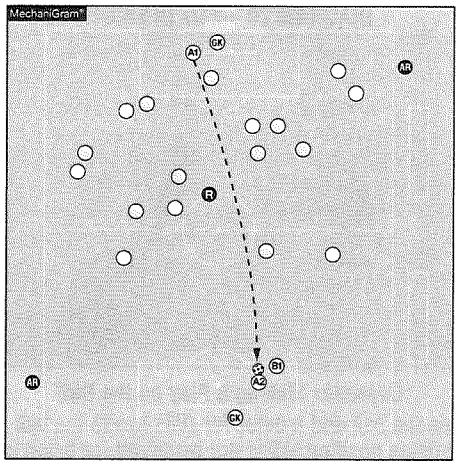
Player A1 passes the ball and a defender (B1) heads the ball directly to Player A2, who is in an offside position. A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position, however, because this player received the ball directly from a defender who had time and space to make a controlled play on the ball.

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 in this section 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 charge into, or challenge, an opposing goalkeeper who is controlling the ball with their hands as in 12-3-2a. Outside the penalty area, the goalkeeper has no more privileges than any other player.

NOTE: Playing distance is the distance to the ball which allows a player to touch the ball by extending the foot/leg or jumping (or jumping with arms extended for goalkeepers.) Playing distance depends on the speed and physical size of the player; judgment of which ultimately falls to the official.

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. Not every touch of a player's hand/arm with the ball is an offense. A deliberate handball is one in which a player chooses to act, regardless of the outcome of that action, and is neither a reaction nor a reflex.
c. It is an offense if a player touches the ball with their hand/arm when it has made their body unnaturally bigger. A player is considered to have made their body unnaturally bigger when the position of their hand/arm is not a consequence of, or justifiable by, the player's body movement for that specific situation. By having their hand/arm in such a position, the player takes a risk of their hand/arm being hit by the ball and being penalized.
d. 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.
e. 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 or Biting: A player shall not spit at or bite anyone listed on a roster (player, substitute, coach or bench personnel) or a game official.

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 while the ball is in play.

EXCEPTION: If the goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands for longer than eight seconds before releasing the ball (12-3-3a), the opposing team is awarded a corner kick.

ART. 2 . . . Goalkeeper interference: A player shall not prevent the opposing goalkeeper from releasing the ball from their hands nor kick, or attempt to kick, the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it.

a. The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball with the hand(s)/arm(s) when:
   1. The ball is between the hands or between the hand and any surface (e.g., ground, own body, goal post) or by touching the ball with any part of the hands or arms;
   2. Holding the ball in an outstretched open hand;

3. Bouncing the ball on the ground or throwing the ball in the air, including bouncing or throwing the ball as part of kicking or punting the ball.

b. When the goalkeeper puts the ball on the ground, they relinquish their privileges as goalkeeper.

ART. 3 . . . Restrictions on the goalkeeper: The following are violations if committed by the goalkeeper inside their penalty area:

a. **Eight Seconds:** The goalkeeper shall not control the ball with their hand/arm as in 12-3-2a for more than eight seconds before releasing the ball.
   1. The referee determines when the goalkeeper has control of the ball and when the eight-second possession time limit begins.
   2. The referee shall signal the remaining five seconds (using Official NFHS Soccer Signals, Rule 5-3-1b) by raising an arm above the head and indicating the number of seconds left with their fingers. Violations of this rule are still enforced even if the referee fails to provide a visual signal.

b. **Repossession:** After releasing the ball from their control as in 12-3-2a, the goalkeeper shall not touch the ball again with their hand/arm until the ball has touched another player.

c. **Handling:** The goalkeeper shall not touch the ball with their hand/arm, unless they have clearly kicked, or attempted to kick, the ball to release it into play, after:
   1. The ball has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate; or
   2. Receiving the ball directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

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

d. 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 (shielding) 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, or which prevents a nearby opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury.

ART. 6 . . . Verbal offenses: A player shall not use deliberate verbal tactics; dissent by word or action; taunt any individual; use language, gestures or actions that are offensive, insulting or abusive; or commit other verbal offenses.

ART. 7 . . . Misconduct and other offenses: If the game is stopped because of misconduct committed by a player, substitute, coach, or other bench personnel, and no other restart takes precedence, then the opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick.

SECTION 4 MISCONDUCT

ART. 1 . . . Misconduct is any action 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 head coach shall be responsible for the conduct of their team, including the conduct of all bench personnel in the team area.
    1. 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.
    2. The head coach may be warned, 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
Yellow Card	• Must leave field until next legal substitution opportunity • May be substituted or play short	• Substitute (nonplayer) remains in team area until next legal substitution opportunity • Other bench personnel remain in team area	• Remains in team area
Red Card	• Must leave field • May not return • May not be substituted; must play short • Restricted to team area	• Restricted to team area for substitutes or other students • Adult bench personnel must leave vicinity of playing area	• Must leave the vicinity of playing area

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. confronting an official during an interval period without permission;
NOTE: Per 7-2-4, team captains do not require permission to speak to officials during an interval period.
c. persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game;
d. objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by an official (dissent);
e. 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).
f. 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.
g. 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.

h. encroachment (failing to respect the required distance or infringing on the position requirements during any restart).

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 denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO), resulting in a free kick, and the goal is not scored, by:
   1. deliberately handling the ball (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area);
   2. committing a direct or indirect free kick offense outside their penalty area;
   3. committing an indirect free kick offense inside their penalty area;
   4. committing a direct free kick offense inside their penalty area, while not attempting to play the ball (e.g., holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.).
c. 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.

d. 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;

2. A tackle or challenge that endangers the safety of an opponent or uses excessive force or brutality must be sanctioned as serious foul play.
3. 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.

e. spitting at or biting an opponent, teammate or game official;
f. leaving the team area to enter the field where a fight or altercation is taking place unless beckoned by an official;
g. exhibiting violent conduct:
   1. Violent conduct occurs when a player uses or attempts to use excessive force or brutality against an opponent when not challenging for the ball.
   2. 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.
   3. 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).

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 (SPA)

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. **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 (a maneuver in which one or both feet slide on the ground in an attempt to tackle the ball that is in possession of an opponent). **RULING:** Legal, if in the referee's judgment it is properly executed.

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 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 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 A: 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.

12.3.2 SITUATION B: Goalkeeper A4 is holding the ball with their hands, and throws the ball to punt it down the field. Before the goalkeeper kicks the ball, player B2 challenges the goalkeeper. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball while bouncing or throwing the ball as part of kicking or punting the ball. Team A is awarded an indirect free kick.

12.3.3 SITUATION A: 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. In (a), Team B is awarded an indirect free kick from where the goalkeeper touched the ball with their hand.

12.3.3 SITUATION B: The goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands for longer than 8 seconds. **RULING:** Illegal, the opposing team is awarded a corner kick. **COMMENT:** If the goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands for longer than eight seconds before releasing the ball, the opposing team is awarded a corner kick.

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.

MISCONDUCT

12.4.4 SITUATION A: After already warning Team B's head coach to control their assistants in the team area, the referee hears an assistant coach for Team B directing abusive language across the field. The referee ejects the identified assistant coach per 12-6-1c and cautions Team B's head coach for unsporting conduct per 12-5-1g. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Head coaches are responsible for the behavior of their rostered personnel inside their team area. While the misconduct of using abusive language is sanctioned to the identified individual, the head coach is additionally cautioned for failing to address their team's behavior, especially after being warned as in this situation.

12.4.4 SITUATION B: Dissent is publicly directed to the referee originating from Team A's team area. The referee could not identify the offender. The referee cautions Team A's head coach for unsporting conduct as per 12-5-1g. **RULING:** Legal.

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. (12-1-9b, 4-4-2, 12-6)

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 12-6.

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. (12-8, 14-1-1)

12.5.1 SITUATION E: During the halftime interval, the officials are approached by Player A7 who is a team captain. A7 confronts the officials about multiple missed calls in the first half, objects to many of the officials' decisions, and brings the crew's integrity into question by asking the crew to "call it both ways." **RULING:** Illegal, A7 shall be cautioned for dissent. **COMMENT:** Although a team captain may approach an official during an interval period (7-2-4), their responsibility of being a captain extends to them only the additional ability to address an official on matters of interpretation or to obtain essential information (3-1-1). At no time are team captains permitted to commit misconduct (e.g., unsporting conduct, dissent, etc.).

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. (12-6-1g, 14-1-1)

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 (12-4-4). 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 13-2-3b.

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 12-6-1d(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 eject 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.

12.6.1 SITUATION K: 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. (12-8, 14-1-1)

STOPPING A PROMISING ATTACK (SPA)

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 TYPES OF A FREE KICK

ART. 1 . . . Free kicks shall be classified as direct, from which a goal may be scored directly against the opposing team, or indirect, from which a goal may not be scored unless the ball is touched or played by another player on either team.

NOTE: "Directly" means that after the free kick is properly taken, the ball enters the goal without being touched by any other player.

a. On a direct free kick, if the ball is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, then a goal is awarded.
b. On an indirect free kick, if the ball is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, then a goal kick is awarded to the opposing team, except as in 13-3-10 when the indirect free kick is retaken.
c. On any free kick, if the ball is kicked directly into a team's own goal, then a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

ART. 2 . . . A penalty kick is a special type of free kick with modifications and differing procedures included in Rule 14.

SECTION 2 WHEN [illegible] AWARDED

ART. 1 . . . Free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player, substitute, coach or bench personnel who commits an offense for which play is stopped.

a. If the ball is out of play, play is restarted according to the previous decision.
b. Physical offenses committed by a player on the field of play against a player, substitute, coach or bench personnel on either team or a game official result in a direct free kick or penalty kick.
c. All verbal offenses are penalized with an indirect free kick.
d. If play is stopped for an offense committed by a substitute, coach or bench personnel inside the field of play, then play is restarted with a free kick as in 13-2-4.
e. If play is stopped for an offense committed against an outside agent, inside or outside the field of play, play is restarted with a dropped ball per 9-2-2, unless an indirect free kick is awarded for leaving the field of play without permission as in 13-2-5.

NOTE: An "outside agent" is any animal, object, structure, etc. as well as any person who is not a game official and not listed on the team rosters (players, substitutes, coaches, or bench personnel).

f. If play is stopped for an offense committed outside the field of play, a free kick is awarded as in 13-2-6. If the offense was against:
   1. An opposing player, substitute, coach, bench personnel or game official, then a direct free kick or penalty kick is awarded;
   2. A player, substitute, coach or bench personnel of the offender's own team, then an indirect free kick is awarded.

ART. 2 . . . Free kicks are taken from the location on the field of play where the offense occurred, unless otherwise specified.

a. Direct free kicks awarded to the attacking team for an offense committed within the offending team's own penalty area result in a penalty kick.
b. If a direct free kick offense begins outside the offender's penalty area and continues inside the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded.
c. For offenses involving striking or the throwing of an object, the free kick is awarded at the position where contact occurred or would have occurred. If this location is off the field of play, then the free kick is awarded as in 13-2-6.
d. Indirect free kicks awarded for an offside offense are taken from where the offender became involved in active play (i.e., the location on the field where the offender interfered with play, interfered with an opponent, or gained an advantage).

ART. 3 . . . If the location of the free kick is inside the goal area:

a. Any free kick awarded to the defending team inside its own goal area may be taken from anywhere within the goal area.
b. Indirect free kicks awarded to the attacking team for an offense committed within their opponent's goal area are taken from the nearest point on the goal area line, which runs parallel to the goal line.

ART. 4 . . . If, while the ball is in play, a player, substitute, coach or bench personnel enters or re-enters the field of play without permission or commits an offense on the field:

a. If they interfere with play or a game official, then a direct free kick or penalty kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location on the field where the interference occurred.
b. If they touch the ball while it is still in play, but when the ball is clearly leaving the field without the offender creating an unfair impact, then an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location where the offender touched the ball, and there is no disciplinary sanction.
c. If there is no interference and they commit no other offense, but play is stopped for their entry/re-entry, then an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location on the field where the ball was positioned when play was stopped.

ART. 5 . . . If play is stopped for a player leaving the field of play without permission, the indirect free kick is located at the point on the boundary line where the player left the field.

ART. 6 . . . If, while the ball is in play, an offense occurs outside the field of play, then play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offense occurred. For direct free kick offenses, a penalty kick is awarded if this location is inside the offender's penalty area.

SECTION 3 HOW TAKEN

ART. 1 . . . Any player on the team for which a free kick is awarded may take the kick.

ART. 2 . . . The ball must not be moving. It must be stationary on the ground at the location specified by the official.

a. A whistle from an official to restart play is not required on every free kick.
b. If the official delays the restart (e.g., injury, misconduct, game management, etc.), then a whistle is required and the free kick is not allowed to be taken until after the referee signals for the restart.

PENALTY: The kick is retaken.

ART. 3 . . . Free kicks may be taken in any direction.

ART. 4 . . . On a free kick, the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

a. The ball is "kicked" when a player makes contact with the ball using their foot and/or ankle.
b. The kicker may take a free kick by lifting or rolling the ball with one foot or both feet simultaneously.
c. Feinting, or pretending to kick the ball, on a free kick to deceive or confuse opponents is permitted.
d. On a free kick, tapping the ball without it clearly moving does not put the ball into play.
e. The official determines whether the ball clearly moves or not.

PENALTY: If the ball is not put into play properly, the kick is retaken.

ART. 5 . . . Opposing players shall not interfere with a free kick and cannot deliberately prevent the kick from being taken quickly (e.g., carrying, throwing or kicking the ball away, tactically stalling by confronting an official, standing in front of the ball, etc.).

PENALTY: The offender is cautioned for unsporting conduct.

ART. 6 . . . Until the ball is in play, all opposing players must remain at least 10 yards away from the ball.

a. Opponents may be closer than 10 yards before the ball is kicked, if they are located on their own goal line and between the goal posts.
b. If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance, play may be allowed to continue if:
   1. Advantage can be applied; or
   2. The team awarded the free kick took the kick quickly, and the opposing player intercepts the ball while not interfering with the kick.

PENALTY: The offender is cautioned for encroachment and the kick is retaken.

ART. 7 . . . If a free kick is awarded to the defending team inside its own penalty area, opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play, in addition to remaining the required minimum distance of 10 yards away from the ball.

a. Opposing players who were inside the penalty area before the free kick was taken or who entered the penalty area before the ball was put into play, cannot deliberately touch or challenge for the ball.
b. If the free kick is taken and opponents are inside the penalty area because they did not have time to leave, play is allowed to continue.

PENALTY: The offender is cautioned for encroachment and the kick is retaken.

ART. 8 . . . Where the opposing team forms a defensive wall of three or more players, players of the team awarded the free kick must remain at least 1yard away from the wall until the ball is in play.

NOTE: A defensive "wall" refers to three or more defending players who deliberately position themselves close together, side-by-side, to block or impede a free kick, typically between the ball and the goal. A wall exists only once the defenders intentionally take up a grouped position and is not created by incidental proximity.

PENALTY: The offending attacker is cautioned for encroachment and the defending team is awarded an indirect free kick taken from where the encroachment occurred.

ART. 9 . . . Once the ball is in play, the kicker cannot touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player on either team.

a. If the kicker violates this provision by deliberately touching the ball with their hand/arm, then it is considered a direct free kick offense (handball), except for goalkeepers inside their penalty area.
b. It is permissible for the player taking the free kick to properly take the kick and deliberately kick the ball at an opponent to play the ball again, so long as the kicker does not do so in a careless or reckless manner and does not use excessive force.

PENALTY: Indirect free kick taken from where the kicker touched the ball again. If the offender commits a handball offense, a direct free kick or penalty kick is awarded.

ART. 10 . . . For indirect free kicks, the referee shall signal that the kick is indirect by raising an arm, straight up and above their head (using Official NFHS Soccer Signals per 5-3-1b).

a. This signal shall be initiated after awarding the indirect free kick and before the kick is taken.
b. The official maintains the signal until the kick has been properly taken and the ball touches another player, goes out of play, or it is clear that a goal cannot be scored directly.
c. If the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect and the ball goes directly into the opponent's goal, the indirect free kick shall be retaken.

SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

RULE 13 — FREE KICK

DESCRIPTION OF A FREE KICK

13.1.1 SITUATION A: Team A is awarded a direct free kick. Player A1 kicks the ball directly into (a) the opponent's goal; (b) their own goal. **RULING:** (a) Goal, restart with a kickoff for Team B; (b) No goal, restart with a corner kick to Team B.

13.1.1 SITUATION B: Team A is awarded an indirect free kick. Player A2 kicks the ball directly into (a) the opponent's goal, (b) their own goal. **RULING:** (a) No goal, restart with a goal kick for Team B; (b) No goal, restart with a corner kick to Team B.

WHEN AND WHERE AWARDED

13.2.1 SITUATION A: Player B2 kicks the ball over the touchline. While a teammate retrieves the ball, player A1 recklessly pushes B2 in retaliation. The referee cautions A1 for unsporting conduct and awards a throw-in to Team A. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** While A1 is sanctioned for misconduct, the offense occurred while the ball was already out of play. The original decision to restart play with a throw-in remains unchanged.

13.2.1 SITUATION B: Player A2 uses an unfair verbal tactic to deceive an opponent. The referee stops play, addresses A2's conduct, and awards an indirect free kick to Team B from where A2 was located when A2 committed the offense. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

13.2.1 SITUATION C: While the ball is in play within the center circle, a spectator runs onto the field and is punched by player A3. The referee stops play, has the spectator removed, and ejects A3 for violent conduct. Play is restarted with a drop ball to the team last in possession located where the ball was positioned when play was stopped. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

13.2.1 SITUATION D: While the ball is in play, player A4 leaves the field of play and strikes (a) substitute B2 who is located in Team B's team area; (b) substitute A2 located in A4's own team area. **RULING:** (a) direct free kick; (b) indirect free kick. **COMMENT:** The free kick is awarded to Team B and taken on the boundary line closest to where A4 committed the offense.

13.2.2 SITUATION A: Defender B2 challenges opposing attacker A1. B2 begins holding A1's jersey outside the penalty area. A1 continues moving forward. (a) As both players enter the penalty area, B2 continues to pull on A1's jersey causing A1 to fall to the ground. (b) B2 lets go of A1's jersey while still outside the penalty area and A1 then stumbles inside the penalty area and falls to the ground. **RULING:** (a) Penalty kick; (b) direct free kick.

13.2.2 SITUATION B: Player B3 standing outside their penalty area throws a shoe at opponent A4 who is located inside Team B's penalty area. **RULING:** Penalty kick.

13.2.2 SITUATION C: Player B4 standing inside their penalty area throws a shoe at the ball. The shoe strikes the ball outside the penalty area. **RULING:** Direct free kick from where the shoe struck the ball.

13.2.2 SITUATION D: Player A3 controls the ball in their own half of the field. Teammate A5 is located in an offside position when A3 passes the ball forward. A5 runs into their own half of the field and collects the ball. The referee stops play for A5's offside offense and awards Team B an indirect free kick located from where A5 touched the ball. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

13.2.4 SITUATION A: Player A1 is attacking in Team B's half of the field near the halfway line when a substitute from Team B steps on the field and trips Player A1. **RULING:** Direct free kick from the spot of the offense.

13.2.4 SITUATION B: Player B1 miskicks the ball, which is clearly going out of play for a throw-in. While the ball is still on the field of play, very close to the touchline, the coach from Team A stops the ball with their foot in an attempt to help their team quickly restart play. The referee stops play, reminds the coach to wait until the ball is completely out of play next time, and awards Team B an indirect free kick from where the coach touched the ball. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

13.2.4 SITUATION C: Team A elected to temporarily play shorthanded after player A2 is removed from the field to address an injury. While the ball is in play, A2 re-enters the field without permission. The nearby assistant referee signals by raising the flag. The referee stops play and confirms with the assistant referee that A2 re-entered the field without permission and did not interfere with play. The referee addresses A2's conduct and awards an indirect free kick to Team B taken from where the ball was located when play was stopped. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

13.2.6 SITUATION: Substitute A4 is warming up outside Team A's team area and verbally dissents a referee's decision. The referee stops play, cautions A4 for dissent, and restarts play with an indirect free kick for Team B located on the boundary line nearest to where A4 committed the offense. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

HOW TAKEN

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

13.3.4 SITUATION B: 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.

13.3.5 SITUATION: Team A is awarded a direct free kick. Opposing player B9 (a) deliberately stands in front of the ball to prevent a quick kick; (b) picks up the ball and walks away with it; (c) kicks the ball away. **RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c) illegal. **COMMENT:** Player B9 may be warned or cautioned for blatant, repeated or subsequent offenses.

13.3.6 SITUATION A: 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.

13.3.6 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 carelessly 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.

13.3.7 SITUATION: 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).

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 per 13-2-2 or outside the field of play per 13-2-6.

ART. 2 . . . All players, except the clearly identified kicker and the defending goalkeeper, shall be within the field of play, outside the penalty area, and at least 10 yards away from and behind the penalty mark until the ball is kicked.

a. Encroachment by the defending team is not penalized if the goal is scored. If a teammate of the defending goalkeeper encroaches before the ball is kicked, the encroachment offense is penalized only if:
   1. The encroachment clearly impacts the kicker; or
   2. The encroaching defender plays the ball or challenges an attacker for the ball and in doing so prevents the attacker from scoring, attempting to score, or creating a goal-scoring opportunity.

b. Encroachment by the attacking team is not penalized if there is no impact. If a teammate of the kicker encroaches before the ball is kicked, the restart depends on if the ball enters the goal; the encroachment offense is penalized only if:
   1. The encroachment clearly impacts the goalkeeper; or
   2. The encroaching attacker plays the ball or challenges a defender for the ball and then scores, attempts to score, or creates a goal-scoring opportunity.

c. Encroachment by both teams is not penalized if there is no impact. If both teams encroach as in 14-1-2a and 14-1-2b, then the encroachment offense is penalized regardless of the outcome of the kick unless a player commits a more serious offense (i.e., illegal feinting as in 14-1-4).

d. Players may be warned or cautioned for blatant, repeated or subsequent encroachment offenses.

PENALTY: If the defending team or both teams commit an offense, the penalty kick is retaken. If the attacking team commits an offense and the ball enters the

goal, the penalty kick is retaken; otherwise, if the ball does not enter the goal, an indirect free kick is awarded to the defending team from the penalty mark.

ART. 3 . . . Before the kick, 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. Lateral or forward movement is allowed, but the goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, in-line with, or behind the goal line when the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper may not unfairly distract the kicker.

a. Goalkeeper offenses, including encroachment, are not penalized if the goal is scored.
b. If the goalkeeper commits an offense before the ball is kicked, the offense is penalized only if:
   1. The offense clearly impacts the kicker and the ball does not go into the goal; or
   2. The goalkeeper makes a save or prevents the ball from entering the goal.
c. If the goalkeeper's offense results in the penalty kick being retaken, the goalkeeper is warned for the first offense in the game and cautioned for any subsequent offense.

PENALTY: Retake the penalty kick.

ART. 4 . . . The ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground from the spot or any place on the penalty mark and only after the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken. The ball is in play when it has been kicked and clearly moves.

a. Any player of the offended team may take a penalty kick, except incoming substitutes per Rule 3-3-7.
b. Once the referee whistles for the kick to be taken, only the identified kicker may take the penalty kick. If a different player kicks the ball, the wrong kicker is cautioned for unsporting conduct.
c. On the approach to the ball, the player taking the penalty kick is permitted to use a stutter-step or hesitation move.
d. Once the kicker has completed their approach, the ball must be kicked. The kicker is not permitted to feint to kick the ball after the run-up. Feinting to kick the ball shall be considered unsporting conduct and the kicker is cautioned.
e. The kicker must kick the ball forward.
f. If both the goalkeeper and the kicker commit an offense at the same time, then the kicker is cautioned.

PENALTY: Indirect free kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty mark.

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

Offense		Outcome of the Penalty Kick	
		Goal	**No Goal**
Defender Encroaches	Impact	Goal	Retake
	No Impact	Goal	No retake
Attacker Encroaches	Impact	Retake	Indirect free kick
	No Impact	Goal	No retake
Both teams encroach	Impact	Retake	Retake
	No Impact	Goal	No retake
Goalkeeper offends	Impact	Goal	Retake (GK is warned or cautioned)
	No Impact	Goal	If saved: retake (GK is warned or cautioned) If not saved: no retake
Kicker offends	Wrong kicker	Indirect free kick (wrong kicker is cautioned)	
	Illegal feinting	Indirect free kick (kicker is cautioned)	
	Ball kick backwards	Indirect free kick	
Goalkeeper and kicker offend at the same time		Indirect free kick (kicker is cautioned)	

ART. 5 . . . After the penalty kick is properly taken, the ball may be played by any player except the one who took 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 offense.

ART. 6 . . . The penalty kick is completed when, after the kick has been properly taken, the ball stops moving, goes out of play or into the goal, or the referee stops play for any offense.

ART. 7 . . . If necessary, play may be extended so that the penalty kick may be taken and completed (7-1-4 EXCEPTION). If a penalty kick is taken after the expiration of time:

a. Only the kicker may play the ball and the kicker may only play the ball once;

b. The penalty kick is completed when, after the kick has been properly taken, the ball stops moving, goes out of play or into the goal, is played by any player (including the kicker) other than the defending goalkeeper, or the referee stops play for an offense by the kicker or the attacking team. The ball is in play until its momentum is spent, it goes out of bounds, or is retouched by the kicker.
c. If the ball touches the goalkeeper and it still has momentum that results in the ball continuing into the goal, it does not nullify the goal, even if time has expired, since the penalty kick is not completed until the ball stops moving or is caught and held by the goalkeeper.
d. If a defending team player, including the goalkeeper, commits an offense and the penalty kick is missed or saved as in 14-1-2 or 14-1-3, the penalty kick is retaken.

ART. 8 . . . After the penalty kick is properly taken, if there is an unusual situation that causes a temporary suspension in play or the ball becomes defective before the penalty kick is completed, the penalty kick shall be retaken.

SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

RULE 14 — PENALTY KICK

PENALTY KICK

14.1.1 SITUATION: While the ball is in play, defender B4 challenges attacker A1. Their momentum causes both players to leave the field over the goal line while the ball remains in play. Two yards from the goal and outside the field of play, B4 pulls A1's jersey causing A1 to fall to the ground. The referee stops play, cautions B4 for unsporting conduct, and awards a penalty kick to Team A. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** If while the ball is in play, a player commits an offense against an opponent outside of the field of play, then play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offense occurred. For direct free kick fouls, a penalty kick is awarded if this location is inside the offender's penalty area (13-2-6).

14.1.2 SITUATION A: 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.

14.1.2 SITUATION B: Player A1 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, defender B8 enters the penalty area early and (a) A1 kicks the ball into the goal; (b) A1 kicks the ball over the crossbar, unaware of B8's encroachment; (c) A1 is not affected by B8's encroachment and A1 kicks the ball which deflects off the goalkeeper over the crossbar; (d) A1 is not distracted by B8's encroachment and kicks the ball at the goalkeeper who catches the ball. The referee does not penalize the encroachment. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the encroachment is not penalized because there is no impact, and play is restarted with a (a) kickoff; (b) goal kick; (c) corner kick; in (d), play continues.

14.1.2 SITUATION C: Player A2 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, defender B7 enters the penalty area early and (a) A2 is distracted by B7 and kicks the ball into the goal; (b) A2 is distracted by B7 and kicks the ball over the crossbar; (c) A2 is affected by B7 and kicks the ball which is caught and held by the goalkeeper; (d) B7 collects the ball that rebounds off the goal post after A2's kick; (e) B7 challenges opponent A10 for the ball after A2's kick rebounds off the goalkeeper. **RULING:** Legal in (a); illegal in (b), (c), (d), and (e). **COMMENT:** In (a), the encroachment is not penalized because there was no impact, and play is restarted with a kickoff. In (b), (c), (d), and (e), the encroachment is penalized because the infringement impacted play, and the penalty kick is retaken.

14.1.2 SITUATION D: Player A3 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, teammate A6 enters the penalty area early and (a) A3 kicks the ball into the goal without A6 impacting the goalkeeper; (b) A3 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who is unaware of A6's encroachment and the goalkeeper deflects the ball into the goal; (c) A3 kicks the ball over the crossbar; (d) A3 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who is unaware of A6's encroachment and the goalkeeper deflects the ball over the crossbar; (e) A3 kicks the ball that is caught and held by the goalkeeper. The referee does not penalize the encroachment. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the encroachment is not penalized because there is no impact, and play is restarted with a kickoff in (a) and (b); (c) goal kick; (d) corner kick; in (e), play continues.

14.1.2 SITUATION E: Player A4 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, teammate A5 enters the penalty area early and (a) A4 kicks the ball into the goal while the goalkeeper was distracted by A5; (b) A4 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who is aware of and affected by A5's encroachment and the goalkeeper deflects the ball into the goal; (c) A5 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who is aware of and affected by A5's encroachment and the goalkeeper deflects the ball over the crossbar; (d) A5 collects the ball that rebounds off the goal post after A4's kick; (e) A5 challenges opponent B12 for the ball after A4's kick rebounds off the goalkeeper. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the encroachment is penalized because the infringement impacted play. In (a) and (b), the penalty kick is retaken. In (c), (d) and (e), an indirect free kick is awarded to Team B.

14.1.2 SITUATION F: Player A5 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, players from both teams enter the penalty area early but have no impact on the goalkeeper or kicker and (a) A5 kicks the ball into the goal; (b) A5 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who deflects the ball into the goal; (c) A5 kicks the ball high over the crossbar; (d) A5 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who deflects the ball over the crossbar; (e) A5 kicks the ball that is caught and held by the goalkeeper. The referee does not penalize the encroachment. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the encroachment is not penalized because there is no impact, and play is restarted with a kickoff in (a) and (b); (c) goal kick; (d) corner kick; in (e), play continues.

14.1.2 SITUATION G: Player A6 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, players from both teams enter the penalty area early impacting the goalkeeper and kicker and (a) A6 kicks the ball into the goal; (b) A6 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who deflects the ball into the goal; (c) A6 kicks the ball and misses the goal; (d) A6 kicks the ball toward the goalkeeper who deflects the ball over the crossbar; (e) A6 kicks the ball that is caught and held by the goalkeeper; (f) a player who encroached collects the ball that rebounds off the goal post after A6's kick and shoots on goal; (g) a player who encroached challenges an opponent for the ball after A6's kick rebounds off the goalkeeper. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the encroachment is penalized because the infringement impacted play, and the penalty kick is retaken.

14.1.3 SITUATION A: After the referee whistles for the penalty kick to be taken, but before the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper (a) shuffles side to side, staying in-line with the goal line; (b) straddles the goal line with one foot behind the goal line and one foot in front of the goal line; (c) steps forward with one foot and keeps their back foot on the goal line; (d) steps forward with one foot and raises their back foot maintaining it above and in-line with the goal line; (e) jumps backward standing with both feet behind the goal line to get a running start; (f) jumps forward standing with both feet in front of the goal line. **RULING:** Legal in (a), (b), (c) and (d). Illegal in (e) and (f). **COMMENT:** The spirit of the game requires the goalkeeper to have both feet on/above the goal line until the ball is put into play. Standing with both feet behind the goal line should not be allowed as it enables a running start to defend the kick. Likewise, coming forward off the goal line with both feet is not permitted as it creates an unfair advantage. Goalkeeper encroachment is only penalized if the ball does not enter the goal and the infringement impacts the kicker or the goalkeeper makes a save.

14.1.3 SITUATION B: Team A has been awarded a penalty kick. Before the referee whistles for the kick to be taken, the defending goalkeeper (a) stands directly in front of the penalty mark overseeing the kicker positioning the ball; (b) stands on the goal line with their back to the kicker; (c) shakes the goal posts rattling the goal frame; (d) jumps up and down on the goal line shouting; (e) jumps up and down on the goal line waiving their arms. **RULING:** Illegal in (a), (b), (c) and (d); legal in (e). **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper may not unfairly distract the kicker including delaying the kick, intimidating the kicker, or touching the goal posts, crossbar or net. The goalkeeper may be warned or cautioned for blatant, repeated, or subsequent offenses. This behavior must be discouraged by the referee before whistling for the kick to be taken. If the goalkeeper unfairly distracts the kicker during the penalty kick and the goal is not scored, the kick is retaken.

14.1.3 SITUATION C: Player A1 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper encroaches and (a) A1 kicks the ball into the goal; (b) A1 is unaffected by the goalkeeper and kicks the ball which deflects off the goalkeeper and enters the goal; (c) A1 is clearly distracted by the goalkeeper and kicks the ball which deflects off the goalkeeper and enters

the goal. The referee awards the goal. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the goalkeeper's encroachment is not penalized, even if the kicker was impacted, because the ball entered the goal. Even if the goalkeeper had been previously warned for encroachment, they are not cautioned for this trivial offense. Play is restarted with a kickoff.

14.1.3 SITUATION D: Player A2 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper encroaches and clearly impacts the kicker, A2, who kicks the ball (a) over the crossbar; (b) which deflects off the goalkeeper over the crossbar; (c) which is caught and held by the goalkeeper. The referee orders the penalty kick to be retaken. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper's encroachment is penalized because it impacted the kicker and the ball did not enter the goal. The goalkeeper is warned for the first encroachment offense in the game and cautioned for any subsequent offense.

14.1.3 SITUATION E: Player A3 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper encroaches. A3 is focused on the ball and does not notice the goalkeeper's encroachment. A3 shanks their shot, kicking the ball high over the crossbar. The referee awards a goal kick to Team B. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper's encroachment is not penalized because it did not impact the kicker and the goalkeeper did not make a save or prevent the ball from entering the goal. Even if the goalkeeper had been previously warned for encroachment, the goalkeeper is not cautioned for this trivial offense.

14.1.3 SITUATION F: Player A4 takes a penalty kick and runs up to the ball. Before the ball is kicked, the defending goalkeeper encroaches. A4 is focused on the ball and does not notice the goalkeeper's encroachment. A4 kicks the ball which (a) deflects off the goalkeeper over the crossbar; (b) is caught and held by the goalkeeper. The referee orders the penalty kick to be retaken. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Even though the goalkeeper's encroachment did not impact the kicker, the goalkeeper (a) prevented the ball from entering the goal or (b) made a save. The goalkeeper is warned for the first encroachment offense in the game and cautioned for any subsequent offense.

14.1.3 SITUATION G: In the first half, the referee orders a penalty kick to be retaken because of encroachment by goalkeeper, A99, and the referee warns the goalkeeper about coming off their line early. In the second half, A99 defends against another penalty kick. Before the ball is kicked, A99 jumps forward with both feet well in front of the goal line and makes a diving save. The referee stops play, cautions A99 for encroachment, and requires A99 to leave the field of play. Team A substitutes from the bench to replace A99 with a backup goalkeeper to defend against the retaken penalty kick. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper is warned for the first encroachment offense in the game and cautioned for any subsequent offense.

14.1.4 SITUATION A: Team A is awarded a penalty kick and identifies A1 as the kicker. The referee whistles for the penalty kick to be taken. A1's teammate, A9, runs up and kicks the ball. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** Player A9 is cautioned and shown the yellow card for unsporting conduct. Play restarts with an indirect free kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty mark.

14.1.4 SITUATION B: Player A2, taking a penalty kick, kicks the ball forward. Teammate A5 then rushes up and kicks the ball into the goal. **RULING:** Legal, provided A5 did not encroach into the penalty area prior to the A2 putting the ball into play.

14.1.4 SITUATION C: Player A3, taking a penalty kick, (a) stutter-steps on the approach and then continues to kick the ball into the goal; (b) starts the approach, abruptly stops for a brief pause, and then continues the run-up and kicks the ball into the goal. **RULING:** (a) Legal; (b) illegal. **COMMENT:** Stutter-stepping in the run-up is permitted as long as there is continuous forward movement.

14.1.4 SITUATION D: Player A4, taking a penalty kick, runs up to the ball. After A4 completes their approach to the ball, A4 pretends to kick the ball and the goalkeeper dives to the ground. A4 then kicks the ball (a) into the goal; (b) over the crossbar; (c) which deflects off the goalkeeper over the crossbar; (d) which is saved and held by the goalkeeper. **RULING:** Illegal. **COMMENT:** In all cases, the defending team is awarded an indirect free kick from the penalty mark. Player A4 is cautioned and shown the yellow card for unsporting conduct. A warning to the kicker is not necessary because feigning to kick the ball is an act of unsporting conduct that must be sanctioned with a caution (yellow card).

14.1.4 SITUATION E: Player A6, taking a penalty kick, approaches the ball and feints to kick the ball after completing their run up to the ball. At the same time, the defending goalkeeper encroaches off the goal line. A6 then kicks the ball into the goal. The referee disallows the goal, cautions A6 for unsporting conduct, and awards the defending team an indirect free kick from the penalty mark. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** It is rare for the kicker and goalkeeper to offend at the same time. In such cases, the goalkeeper's offense is attributed to the kicker's more severe offense of illegal feinting. A warning to the kicker is not necessary because feigning to kick the ball is an act of unsporting conduct that must be sanctioned with a caution (yellow card).

14.1.4 SITUATION F: 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.

14.1.5 SITUATION: Player A1 takes a penalty kick. After the referee whistles for the kick to be taken, A1 runs up and kicks the ball forward. (a) A1's kick does not go very far and A1 immediately kicks the ball again before it touches another player and the ball enters the goal; (b) the ball rebounds from the crossbar or goal post and A1 kicks the ball into the goal; (c) the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper and A1 kicks the ball into the goal. **RULING:** Illegal in (a) and (b); legal in (c). **COMMENT:** In (a) and (b), play is restarted with an indirect free kick to the defending team from where A1 touched the ball a second time. In (c), play is restarted with a kickoff.

14.1.7 SITUATION A: The referee stops play to award a penalty kick and signals the clock to be stopped. The clock shows two seconds remaining in the first half. After the kick is properly taken, the clock resumes when the timer sees the ball move. The ball rebounds off the crossbar soaring high into the air. The horn blows indicating time has expired while the ball still has momentum. After a few seconds, the ball lands and then bounces backward into the goal. The referee awards the goal and ends the first half. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Per 7-1-4, play shall be extended beyond the expiration of a period to allow for a penalty kick to be taken and completed. Since the ball was still moving with momentum when time expired, play is extended until the penalty kick is completed.The penalty kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play, goes into the goal, is touched by any player (except for the defending goalkeeper), or the referee stops play for an offense by the kicker or attacking team.

14.1.7 SITUATION B: The referee awards a penalty kick to Team A as time expires in the second half. Play is extended to allow the penalty kick to be taken and completed. A1 is the identified kicker. After the referee whistles for the kick to be taken, A1 kicks the ball forward. (a) The ball rebounds off the crossbar and teammate A8 kicks the ball into the goal; (b) the ball rebounds off the goalkeeper and A1 kicks the ball into the goal; (c) the goalkeeper deflects the ball over the crossbar; (d) A1 kicks the ball into the goal, but player A8 encroached before the ball was kicked and distracted the goalkeeper. In all cases, no goal is scored, and the referee ends the game. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Play is extended to allow the penalty kick to be completed per 7-1-4, even if the clock shows no time remaining. The penalty kick is completed once (a) the ball touches another player, except for the defending goalkeeper; (b) the ball is touched again by the kicker; (c) the ball goes out of play; or (d) the referee stops play for an offense by the attacking team.

14.1.7 SITUATION C: The referee awards a penalty kick to Team A as time expires in the second half. Play is extended to allow the penalty kick to be taken and completed. The kick is properly taken and kicked forward. The goalkeeper attempts a save, but the ball rebounds off the goalkeeper and bounces back into the goal. The referee awards a goal and ends the game. **RULING:** Correct procedure.**COMMENT:** The penalty kick is not completed if touched by the goalkeeper. The penalty kick is completed once the ball stops moving and expends its momentum, goes out of play, or goes into the goal, even if time has expired and play is extended for a penalty kick as per 7-1-4.

14.1.7 SITUATION D: Play is extended after the end of the game for a penalty kick to be taken and completed. After identifying the kicker and ensuring the goalkeeper is properly positioned, the referee orders all other players to return to their team area for the kick to be taken. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Play is extended and the game does not end until the penalty kick is completed. Per 14-1-2, during a penalty kick, all players (except the clearly identified kicker and the defending goalkeeper) shall be within the field of play, outside the penalty area, and at least 10 yards from and behind the penalty mark until the ball is kicked. The referee cannot clear the field of all other players nor can teams elect to pull their players off the field until the game ends.

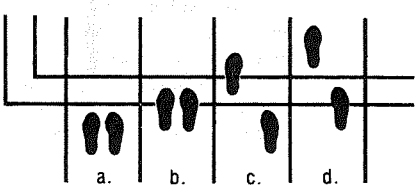
14.1.8 SITUATION: Player A2 takes a penalty kick, but before the penalty kick is completed; (a) a dog runs on the field and stops the ball; (b) the ball bursts from A2's kick; (c) the ball burst after touching the crossbar; (d) a spectator throws an object that stops or deflects the ball. The referee orders the penalty kick to be retaken. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In all situations, the penalty kick is retaken 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.



Legal Legal Legal Illegal

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

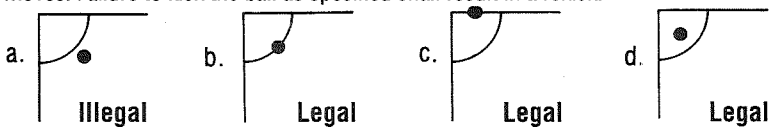
ART. 1 . . . A corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team when the entire ball passes over the goal line, excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, either in the air or on the ground, having last been touched or played by the defending team. A goal may be scored directly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

EXCEPTIONS:

1. 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. (13-1-1c)
2. A corner kick shall be awarded to the opposing team when the defending goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands for longer than eight seconds. (12-3-3a)

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, or where the goalkeeper was positioned when penalized per 12-3-3a. 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.

SITUATIONS AND RULINGS

RULE 17 — CORNER KICK

CORNER KICK

17.1.3 SITUATION A: 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.

17.1.3 SITUATION B: Team A is awarded a corner kick. Before taking the kick, Player A5 removes the corner flag. **RULING:** Illegal. The flag must be replaced and the corner kick is retaken.

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.

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. (12-5-1e)
8. Fourth official as scorer. (6-3-3)	**17.** Sample fourth official/duties. (6-3-3)
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 2026-27 RULES CHANGES

4-4-1c — This change clarifies that visiting teams must wear white socks and home teams must wear dark socks where dark is defined as anything contrasting with white.

4-2-7d, e — The purpose of a tooth and mouth protector is to protect the teeth. This change aligns with all NFHS rules books on what is a proper fitted tooth and mouth protector.

4-2-11a, b, c — This change prohibits athletes from wearing any audio or video device capable of recording, transmitting, or live streaming during a match, ensuring competitive integrity and privacy of game communication. The language is intentionally aligned with existing all NFHS rules books for consistency across high school sports.

5-3-1f-j — This change updates the officiating procedures for issuing yellow and red cards by removing the term "carded" in favor of consistent terminology already used within the rules book; specifically, "cautioned" for yellow cards and "ejected" for red cards. The revision also expands the scope of those subject to cards to explicitly include substitutes and bench personnel alongside players and coaches. Redundant and repeated language has been reorganized into distinct sub-articles to improve clarity and readability.

8-1-2 — Clarification on the restart of a kickoff is provided for instances when players other than the kicker are not in their own half of the field, and the restart is retaken.

12-1-2c — This change consolidates and clarifies the rule regarding charging or challenging a goalkeeper in possession of the ball, replacing redundant language with a reference to the shared definition in 12-3-2a, without materially altering when such a charge is permitted or prohibited.

12-2-3 — Language has been incorporated to include biting as a direct free-kick offense.

12-3-1, 12-3-2, 12-3-3 — This change reorganizes goalkeeper restrictions for clarity, extends the possession time limit from six to eight seconds, and changes the penalty for exceeding that limit from an indirect free kick to a corner kick, providing officials with clearer authority while applying a less severe punishment that better reflects the spirit of the game.

12-3-5 — Dangerous play includes actions that prevent a nearby opponent from playing the ball out of fear of injury, broadening the definition to better reflect how the rule is applied in practice.

12-3-6, 12-3-7 — The addition adds verbal offenses as an indirect free kick foul, giving officials greater flexibility in addressing such conduct and treating verbal offenses as fouls at a minimum while allowing them to rise to the level of misconduct depending on the circumstances. The new misconduct article establishes that any stoppage of play due to misconduct by a player, substitute, coach or bench personnel is restarted with an indirect free kick when no other restart takes precedence.

12-6-1 — The change consolidates and simplifies the DOGSO ejection criteria into four clearly defined categories, removing redundant language and eliminating references to "attempted" DOGSO since intent is not a factor in the determination, while aligning the language with existing terminology used elsewhere in Rule 12.

13-1, 13-2, 13-3 — This change reorganizes Rule 13 to improve clarity by breaking free kick restart procedures into distinct categories, specifying correct restart locations, and providing officials with clearer guidance. The revision also incorporates restart procedures for situations involving outside agents, off-field offenses, thrown objects, unauthorized field entry or exit, and offenses occurring outside the field of play.

Rule 14 — The revision changes penalty kick procedures so that encroachment is penalized only when it has a clear impact on the kick outcome. Goalkeepers will now receive a warning for a first encroachment offense rather than an immediate caution. Deceptive movements and stutter-stepping during the run-up remain permitted, but feinting after the approach is completed is strictly prohibited. In cases where both the kicker and goalkeeper offend simultaneously, the kicker is penalized. The penalty chart has also been updated and reformatted for clarity.

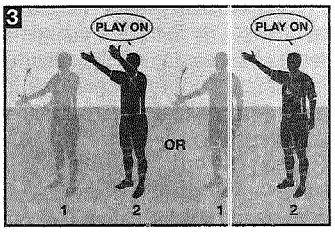
OFFICIAL SOCCER SIGNALS



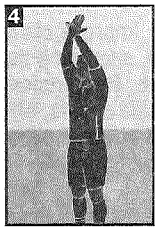
Direct free kick/ Throw-in
(Point in the direction of the kick or throw)



Indirect free kick
(Hold until kick is taken and touched)



Play on



Timeout



Wind-up to start clock



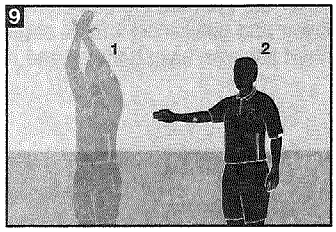
Penalty kick
(Point to spot)
Goal kick
(Point to goal area)



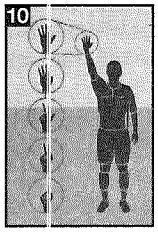
Caution/ Ejection



Corner kick
(Point to corner)



Goal



5-second countdown

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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.)



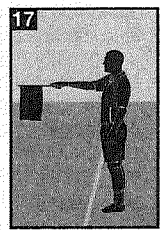
Goal kick
(Assistant referee should point to the goal area.)



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.)

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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*.

Revised and Approved October 2023



EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

Each NFHS sports rules committee is responsible for recommending official playing rules to the NFHS Board of Directors for adoption. The NFHS is not responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in interscholastic sports.

Equipment manufacturers are responsible for developing products that meet the specifications established by the applicable rules committee and that reflect sound design and quality standards. The NFHS strongly encourages manufacturers to work with independent testing agencies to help ensure the production of safe equipment.

Neither the NFHS nor any NFHS sports rules committee certifies the safety of sports equipment. Equipment that does not comply with NFHS rules is not appropriate for use in NFHS competition.

While rules committees do not regulate the development of new equipment or establish technical or scientific testing standards, they may provide guidance to manufacturers regarding equipment performance levels that are consistent with the sound traditions of the sport. The committee reserves the right to intervene when necessary to protect and maintain that integrity.

- NFHS sports rules committees encourage manufacturers planning innovative equipment changes to submit those products to the appropriate NFHS sport rules editor and/or committee for review prior to production.
- Protective headgear is required by NFHS rules in some sports and permitted in others. Hard helmets may reduce the incidence of certain head injuries, such as skull fractures and subdural hematomas. Soft headgear may help protect against cuts and bruises to the scalp and forehead.

Coaches, athletes, and parents/guardians should carefully review manufacturers' warnings regarding proper use and the performance limitations of protective equipment. **No helmet or headgear can eliminate the risk of concussion. All sports must be played, coached, and officiated with that understanding.**



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 Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (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. If not immediately available, consider using soap and water wipes to cleanse all exposed body surfaces to reduce the presence of infectious agents.
- 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, coaches, referees 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.

Revised and Approved in April 2025



GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

It is important that state associations continue to educate their member schools on the importance of having an established Lightning Policy/Plan in place for all outdoor high school sports and activities and for indoor swimming pools and that this Policy/Plan is current, practiced and executed.

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 association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign a specific staff member to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests. This staff member is charged with suspending outdoor activities and determining when to resume activities. Any individual following these guidelines shall not be challenged.
2. Develop an emergency action 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 going outdoors and 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 will begin.
   d. If available, data from a nationally connected network for lightning detection network should be monitored closely when storms are possible or during lightning delays. Play shall be suspended when lightning is within a 10-mile radius of the event and will not be resumed until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last lightning within the 10-mile radius. However, never depend on the reliability of any detection device if the sky looks threatening, you hear thunder, or see lightning*. Visual and audio indications of a storm 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.

Revised and Approved October 2024





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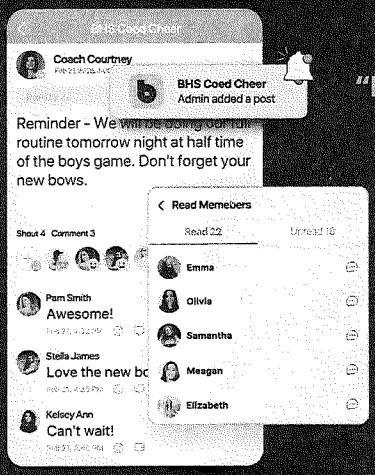

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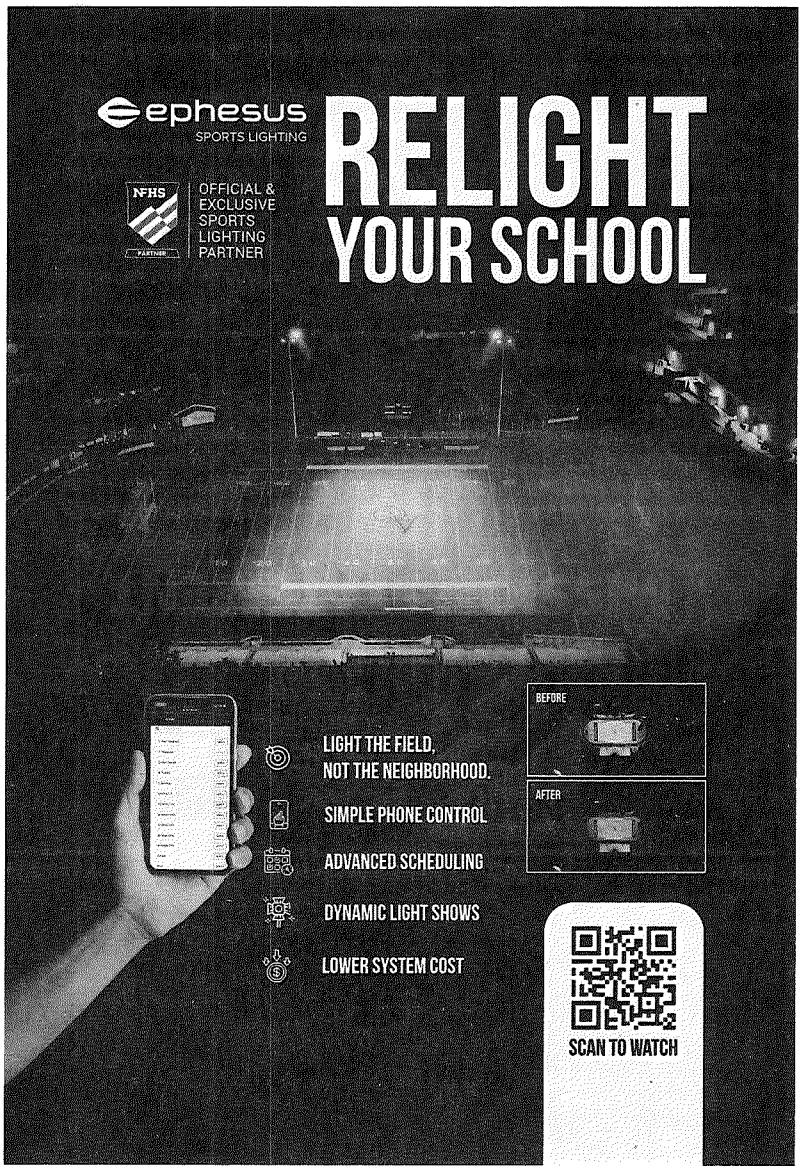
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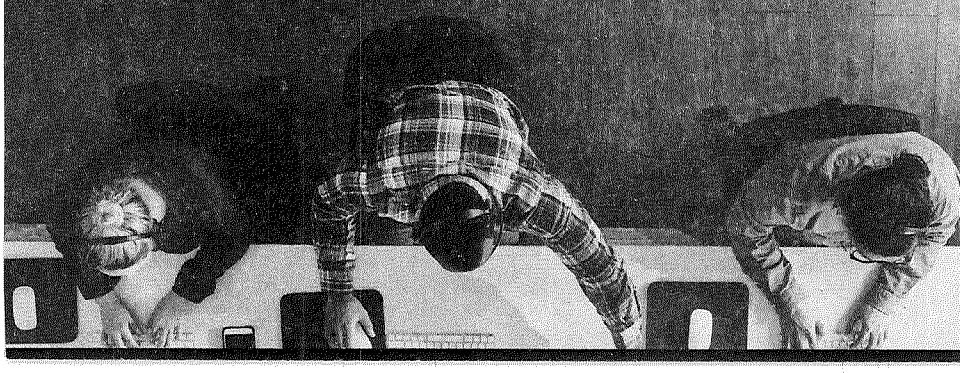

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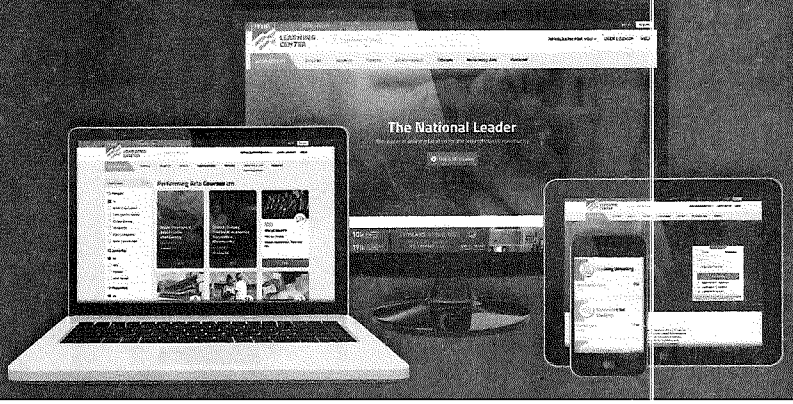

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