

## 2006-07 Points of Emphasis

1) Player Equipment (Eyewear) – The NFHS Soccer Rules permit the use of eyewear. Eyewear may be worn for eye protection or as prescription glasses. Sport eyewear is manufactured to protect the eyes without causing injury to the player(s) wearing them or to other players. Any equipment, which in the opinion of the referee is dangerous or confusing, is illegal. Coaches are responsible for their players being in legal equipment and must confirm such when verbally asked by the referee.

2) Participant Conduct – Good sporting behavior and appropriate conduct need to be displayed by everyone in the team area prior to, during, and after the game. Coaches have tremendous influence over players and spectators by the words they use and the behavior they display. Officials reinforce good sporting behavior by communicating effectively with players and coaches and enforcing the rules.

3) End of Game Procedures for Officials – Officials must verify with their state association or the proper authority the role they play after the final whistle. The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee has extended the officials' jurisdiction to the immediate surroundings; this may differ from one site to another. Extending officials' jurisdiction to the immediate surroundings is in no way an invitation to delay their exit from the site of the competition. Once the final whistle blows, unless instructed otherwise by the governing authority, the official should verify the score and exit the site of the competition. It is imperative that officials report in writing any disqualifications or unusual incidents to the proper authority.

4) Game Supervision/Management – Proper supervision and pre-planned procedures are critical to proper game management. The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee has encouraged state associations to require contest supervision by individuals other than the coach for soccer games. Host schools should develop a game management plan which includes the following: greeting the game officials, storage of officials' gear, providing dressing rooms if available, and development of an exit strategy after the final whistle. The committee believes this will reduce unsporting behavior of players, coaches, and spectators as well as keep the school informed of unusual incidents.

5) Field Markings – Fields are to be marked according to the rules. Properly sized team and officials' areas need to be marked. The NFHS provides a diagram of the field of play and its immediate surroundings in the rules book. It is important to note that the most common and most effective placement for the team and officials' area is depicted in the diagram. With the team and officials area on the same side of the field, it allows for easier communication between game officials and coaches and more consistent handling of substitutions by the referee.

6) Reporting Incidents – Officials must report game disqualifications and unusual incidents to the proper authorities. This includes unsporting behavior by players, coaches, and spectators prior to, during and after the contest. The proper authorities may include the state athletic/activity association, a league commissioner, or a school administrator. Without a written report, the proper authorities cannot follow-up with those parties involved or determine the appropriate consequences for any inappropriate actions.

7) Handling Apparent Concussions – The action plan for handling apparent concussions states that if one suspects that a player has a concussion, the following steps should be taken: 1) remove athlete from play; 2) ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional and do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself; 3) inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion; and 4) allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from an appropriate health-care professional.

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## Soccer Rule Changes 2006-07

4-1-1: Beginning with the 2007 fall season, shinguards must meet the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) specifications.

4-1-1f: If visible apparel is worn under shorts, it shall be of a similar length, all alike and of a solid color (delete, "the same basic color of the uniform shorts").

4-1-1g: One manufacturer's logo/trademark "or reference" is permitted on the outside of each item...

4-2-8 New: A protective face mask may be worn by a player with a facial injury. The mask may be made of a hard material, but must be worn molded to the face with no protrusions. A medical release for the injured player signed by a physician (MD/DO) shall be available at the game site.

5-1-2: The jurisdiction of the officials shall begin 15 minutes prior to the start of the game and end with they are leaving the field of play and its immediate surroundings.

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## 2006-07 Comments on the Rules

4-1-1: Over the past five years, attempts to clarify the coverage, placement and size of shinguards on players within the text of the rule has fallen short. Beginning with the Fall 2007 soccer season, players will be permitted to wear only shinguards that meet the National Operating Committee for the Safety of Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) specifications. Shinguards that meet the standard will have a permanent seal or mark visible on the front of the equipment. Each manufacturer whose shinguards meets the standard will be required to indicate the height of the player that would be permitted to wear that specific equipment. Coaches should be certain that every player has shinguards with the NOCSAE seal and that the player meets the height requirement posted by the manufacturer on the equipment. During the pre-game inspection, officials need only ask the coaches if their players are legally and properly equipped according to NFHS Soccer Rules.

4-1-1f: The new rule clarifies that compression shorts or garments under the short are no longer required to be the same basic color of the uniform. As long as the undergarments are of a solid color and all are alike, they are legal. It is difficult to purchase this type of undergarment in colors other than black and white. Officials on the committee did not feel that undergarments that were a different color than the uniform would be a problem.

4-1-1g: This change prevents a manufacturer from adding to the uniform any verbiage or mark other than the logo/trademark. Such things as the line of apparel or words to describe a manufacturer's theme would not be permitted. This clarifies that only one logo/trademark may appear on each piece of the uniform.

4-2-8 New: Prior to this rule, face protection of any kind was declared illegal. Manufacturers have now developed protection for the face that is safe to the player wearing it and to other players. The committee is concerned that players would play without protection, putting them at serious risk. This new rule allows players to play as long as they have a medical release from a physician (MD/DO). Officials still have the authority to declare any equipment illegal if it is dangerous or confusing.

5-1-2: Officials are often confronted by coaches, players and spectators prior to contest. This rule change permits officials to caution or disqualify coaches and players 15 minutes prior to the start of play. After the game is over, jurisdiction continues until they leave the immediate surroundings of the site. Once the officials leave the immediate surroundings, they should not caution or disqualify coaches or players but instead, should file a written report with the proper authorities. In the sport of soccer, it is imperative that officials exit the immediate surroundings as soon as possible without delay. Delaying one's exit may provide coaches, players, and spectators the opportunity for inappropriate contact with officials.

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## 2005 NFHS Soccer Rules Interpretations

**SITUATION 1:** If a game is terminated by the referee due to fighting, regardless of the score at the time, does the official have the authority to declare a winner? **RULING:** No. The matter must be reported to the state association, which will declare a winner. (7-1-3)

**SITUATION 2:** May the head coach send an assistant coach to the pregame conference with the head referee and captains to review pertinent rules, conduct the coin toss and verify that players are properly equipped? **RULING:** No. The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee now requires that the head coach attend this meeting and is not permitted to send an assistant coach. (5-2-2)

**SITUATION 3:** A player has a knee brace. She has a signed note from her orthopedic surgeon and a note from her athletic director. May the referee determine that the knee brace is dangerous and not allow her to play even though the girl was allowed to play last weekend wearing the same brace? **RULING:** Yes. The referee has the authority to determine whether equipment is dangerous or confusing. (5-2-2d 3)

**SITUATION 4:** Many school districts are building multi-use, artificial turf facilities primarily for soccer, football and track. May soccer goals be placed on the end line of the football field even if they are not two yards in front of the football goal posts? **RULING:** No. **COMMENT:** Rule 1-4-1 states that "portable goals...if used on football fields should be anchored at least 2 yards in front of the existing football goal posts."

**SITUATION 5:** Can a team substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench after a) a caution, b) an injured player who is required to leave the field of play or c) after a goal is scored? **RULING:** In a) and b), a team may not substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench but may substitute for the cautioned/injured player. In c), either team may substitute an unlimited number of players. (3-3-1, 3-3-2)

**SITUATION 6:** Under NFHS rules, must the player actually touch the ball to be judged offside for "interfering with play?" **RULING:** No. **COMMENT:** The high school game does not require that the player touch the ball in this situation. (11-1-3; Diagrams 8, 12, 13)

**SITUATION 7:** Both teams have players checked in at the scorer's table prior to a dead-ball substitution opportunity (injured player). Once the dead-ball substitution opportunity occurs and the referee beckons the players onto the field, must these players enter the field of play? **RULING:** Yes. (3-4-1a)

**SITUATION 8:** Are prescriptive sunglasses legal for play? **RULING:** Yes. (4-2-1)

**SITUATION 9:** May a team use a navy-and-white striped jersey as both home and away uniforms? **RULING:** No. **COMMENT:** There is no predominant color, and the home jersey must be light and away jerseys dark. (4-1-1)

**SITUATION 10:** Are sounding devices by spectators illegal? **RULING:** No, however, most state associations have regulations for tournament play that prohibit specific types of noise makers. **COMMENT:** If the sounding device is causing confusion on the field among officials or players, the official(s) has the authority to suspend play or terminate the game under 5-3-2g.

**SITUATION 11:** May player benches, scorer's tables, fencing, bleachers or any objects be placed within 10 feet of the touch line or goal line? **RULING:** It is recommended that a 10-foot minimum boundary exist between the playing field and any object. (Soccer Field Diagram)

**SITUATION 12:** May a soccer game be played on a football field where all markings are in white? **RULING:** Yes, however, the NFHS recommends that the soccer markings contrast in color to the football markings. (1-2-1)

**SITUATION 13:** Can schools purchase nets with the name or mascot of the school stenciled on it? **RULING:** Yes. (1-4-2)

**SITUATION 14:** Neither team has substitutes at the scorer's table when a player becomes injured. Can either team substitute an unlimited number of players? **RULING:** No, however, the injured player may be substituted for from the bench. (3-3-2b)

SITUATION 15: Can schools put players' names on the backs of their jerseys? RULING: Yes, as long as the name doesn't obstruct the player's number. (4-1-1j)

SITUATION 16: May players other than the goalkeeper wear gloves? RULING: Yes, however, if in the opinion of the referees gloves are dangerous or confusing, they are illegal. (4-2-1)

SITUATION 17: Are warm-ups with multiple logos permitted to be worn by bench players or coaches? RULING: Yes. (4-1-1)

SITUATION 18: If a player is wearing shinguards no less than 2 inches above the ankle, are they legal even though the shinguard covers only half the shin? RULING: No. COMMENT: Shinguards must also be age- and size-appropriate and provide adequate protection. (4-1-1)

SITUATION 19: Are nose guards designed to protect a broken nose legal? RULING: No. (4-2-1)

SITUATION 20: Is it legal to wear a guard over eye glasses? RULING: No. (4-2-1)

SITUATION 21: Are padded headbands made of soft material legal for field players? RULING: Yes, as long as the product does not contain any hard or unyielding material. (4-2-3)

SITUATION 22: Are officials mandated by rule to use the official NFHS Soccer Signals in a contest? RULING: Yes. (5-3-1b)

SITUATION 23: Is it permissible for officials to wear a shirt with the USSF logo on it? RULING: Yes, if permitted by the state association. (5-1-3)

SITUATION 24: Is it mandatory for the head referee to address coaches and players prior to the game about good sportsmanship? RULING: Yes. COMMENT: The NFHS has instituted this practice in all sports. (5-2-2).

SITUATION 25: A player from Team A and Team B are involved in misconduct at the halfway line while Team A is in possession of the ball on the 18-yard line near Team B's goal. RULING: Allow the play to exhaust its momentum and then card both players for their actions. COMMENT: Since it is an on-the-field infraction, by rule we should go to the spot of the fouls and restart with a drop ball. (12-8-1, 2, 3)

SITUATION 26: The coach from Team A, whose team is in possession of the ball, is cautioned for unsporting conduct. RULING: Restart with an indirect free kick for the opponent from the spot of the ball. (13-2-2L)