

2017-18 NFHS SOCCER RULES CHANGES

4-1-1d If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it shall be a solid color matching the predominant color of the respective garment. Visible arm compression sleeves shall be a similar length, all alike and of a solid color matching the predominant color of the jersey. Visible leg compression sleeves shall be of a similar length, all alike and of a solid color matching the predominant color of the shorts 4-1-1D

Rationale: Players often wear compression shorts which are longer than the short or jersey. They should be of the same color. This rule addition is needed to maintain consistency with current uniform rule requirements and color restrictions.

4-2-1 Deleted

Exception: 1 Rationale: With the adoption of the change related to the use of headgear as opposed to only headbands, this exception is no longer necessary.

4-2-9 A soft padded headgear that meets the ASTM standard is permitted.

Rationale: This allows for the newer headgear styles that are currently in the market to be used that are not just headbands.

5-1-3f Unless otherwise prohibited by the state association, electronic communication devices may be used to communicate with crew members.

Rationale: This rule allows, but does not require, the use of common communication devices that are currently available and affordable. This will permit officials to utilize such equipment and improve communication allowing for a better officiated game, if permitted by the state association.

8-1-3 The ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground in the center of the field of play and may clearly move in any direction.

Rationale: Requiring that the ball move forward on the kickoff is meaningless in the modern game.

10-1-3f A goal may not be scored directly from a kickoff into the kicking team's own goal.

Rationale: This change retains consistency with the concept that a team cannot score against themselves from a free kick, as provided in 10.1.3 c, d and e.

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

Rationale: The current rule also does not identify where indirect free kicks for offside are taken. This change makes it clear.

14-1-4 The ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground from the spot or any place on the penalty mark. To be in play, the ball shall be moved forward. The player taking the penalty kick is permitted to use a stutter step or a hesitation move provided there is no stopping and there is continuous movement toward the ball. Failure to kick the ball as specified shall be considered a violation by the attacking team and the appropriate penalties shall apply. Stutter-stepping is not an interruption in movement.

Rationale: This addition of these sentences clarifies that the stutter step is allowed.

2017-18 SOCCER POINTS OF EMPHASIS

RISK MINIMIZATION

Concussions continue to be a focus in soccer at all levels of competition. The NFHS has been at the forefront of national sports organizations in emphasizing the importance of concussion education, recognition and proper management.

Discussion of proper concussion management at all levels of play in all sports has led to the adoption of rules changes and concussion-specific policies by multiple athletic organizations, state associations and school districts. Coaches and game officials need to become familiar with the signs and symptoms of concussed athletes so that appropriate steps can be taken to safeguard the health and safety of participants.

There continues to be concern from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) about the cumulative effects of non-concussive blows to the head and body in practice and games. Research data is showing that there are significant impacts to the head when athletes are constantly “heading” the ball and in “free ball” situations where multiple players are positioning for control of the ball.

SHINGUARDS- Shinguards are one part of several required pieces of soccer equipment. Coaches need to make sure to follow the requirements for properly fitting. Verifying that the shinguards are not altered by the athlete, are worn under the sock, and are worn with the bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle. More importantly, the shinguard is required to be age- and size-appropriate. Coaches need to make sure that the required shinguard properly fits the respective player based on his/her age and size.

HEADGEAR- Though not required equipment, soft-padded headgear is allowed to be used by any soccer player. The SMAC emphasizes that there is no research or data available that shows that wearing soft- padded headgear prevents or lessens the possibility of a concussion. The determination regarding wearing soft-padded headgear is entirely up to the individual or school district. Schools, parents and students are free to make their own assessments relative to this piece of equipment. The relevant ASTM standard can be found at www.astm.org/Standards/F2439.htm.

REFEREE COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK

Active and effective communication among referees and with coaches and team captains is critical to ensure successful game management. Conducting a meaningful and thorough pre-game with the head coach, captains, and referee crew provides an opportunity to review important rule changes, ensure players are legally and properly equipped, discourage rough play and emphasize a zero tolerance for the use of offensive or abusive language or gestures. Advancements in electronic communication devices will afford opportunities to improve communication among referees during the run of play.

RESTARTS

KICKOFF- At the kickoff, the ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground in the center of the field of play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction.

PENALTY KICK- Once the kicker starts his/her approach toward the ball, he/she may not stop his/her movement. A stutter step is permitted, however, continuous movement toward the ball is required.

LOCATION OF OFFSIDE RESTART-Indirect free kicks for offside are taken from the spot where the offending player interfered with play, interfered with an opponent or gained advantage by being in that position.