

PLAY. PERFORM. COMPETE. TOGETHER.

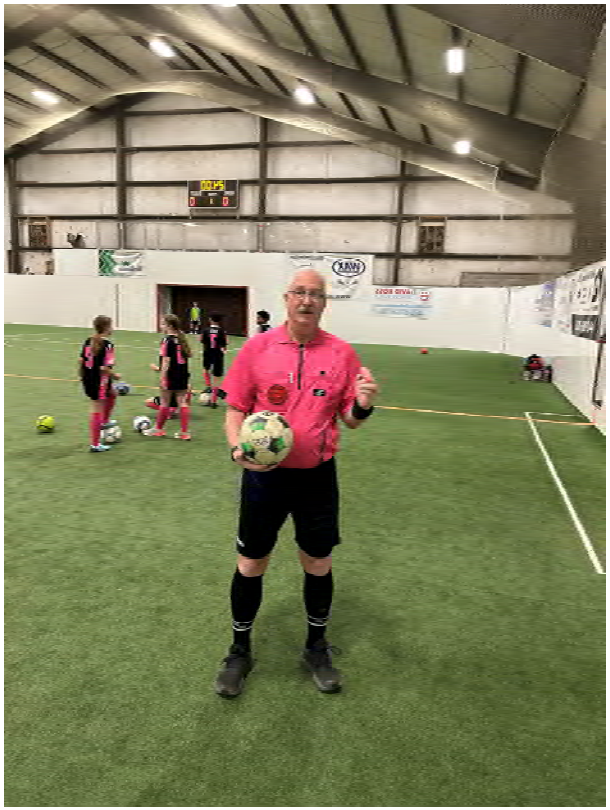
2026-27 MPSSAA Soccer Rules PowerPoint



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Hello Again!





Ross Burbage, Narrator
MPSSAA Soccer Rules Interpreter

The staff in the English Department recommend starting a paper or presentation with this…..



Statistics!

- At the last annual accounting, there were 760 registered and certified MPSSAA soccer officials.

- That's the third most officials for MPSSAA sports, slightly behind football at 780, and all sports trail basketball with 1,320. (Not surprisingly, these sports with still-not-enough officials are those sports that officiate both girls and boys playing that activity during the same season.)

Dealing The Cards

- Fall ’24 MPSSAA had 159 red cards issued in boys soccer and 26 red cards in girls soccer.
- Fall ’25 MPSSAA had 202 red cards issued in boys soccer and 38 red cards in girls soccer.
- The most oft send-off reason was “foul and abusive language.”

Uniforms

- Rulebook page 25 “The visiting team will wear solid white jerseys….”
- Socks “shall be solid white for the visiting team.”
- Illegal uniforms must be documented in game reports.
- Here is a picture from the MPSSAA Finals 2025 at UMBC →

What's Wrong With This Picture?



Reminder From Years Past

- I’m going to reprint page 7 from the 2021 online rules clinic as the assigning bodies for some leagues/jurisdictions have changed but the formal Standards Of Competition Contract have not ---

- “If a public school within MPSSAA plays a private school, the rules must be NFHS and the officials must be MPSSAA certified regardless of who is the home team or even at a neutral site.”

What Does This Mean?

- Whenever a MPSSAA public school plays a private school, the head coaches must be part of the pre-game coin toss and conference. Uniform illegalities still get reported. If the game finishes regulation with a tied score, two ten-minute golden goal overtimes are to be played.

Just Because It's A World Cup Year…

- A lot of great soccer has just been played here in the United States. As soccer referees and soccer fans, we watch, we root on our favorites and, as referees, we scrutinize the officials' decisions. For the upcoming MPSSAA season, we need to be mindful to play the NFHS High School Rules and to not confuse what we're doing with the FIFA Laws.



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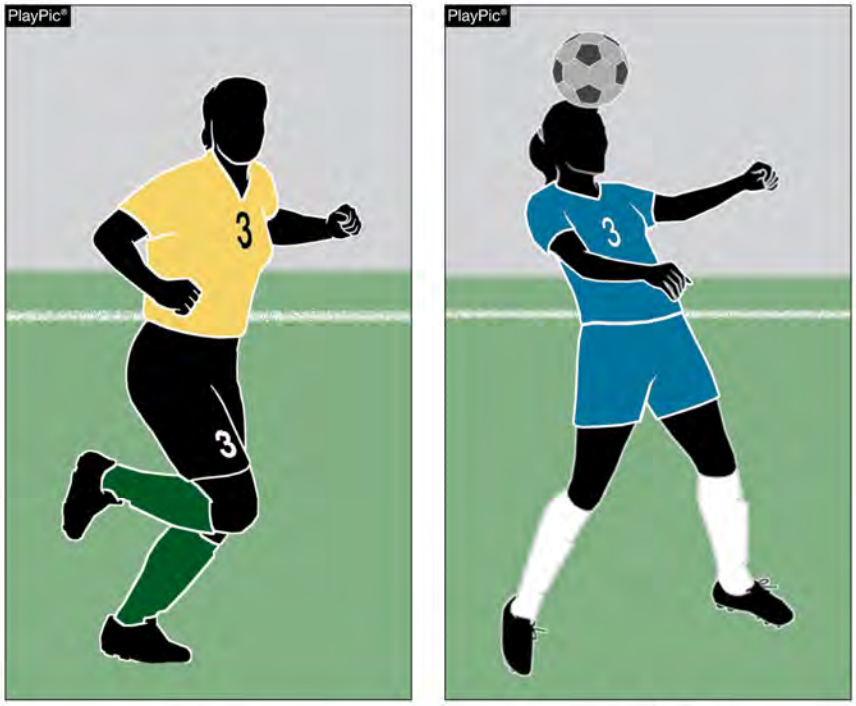
2026-27 NFHS Soccer PowerPoint

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2026-27 NFHS Soccer Rules Changes



REQUIRED UNIFORM RULE 4-1-4c

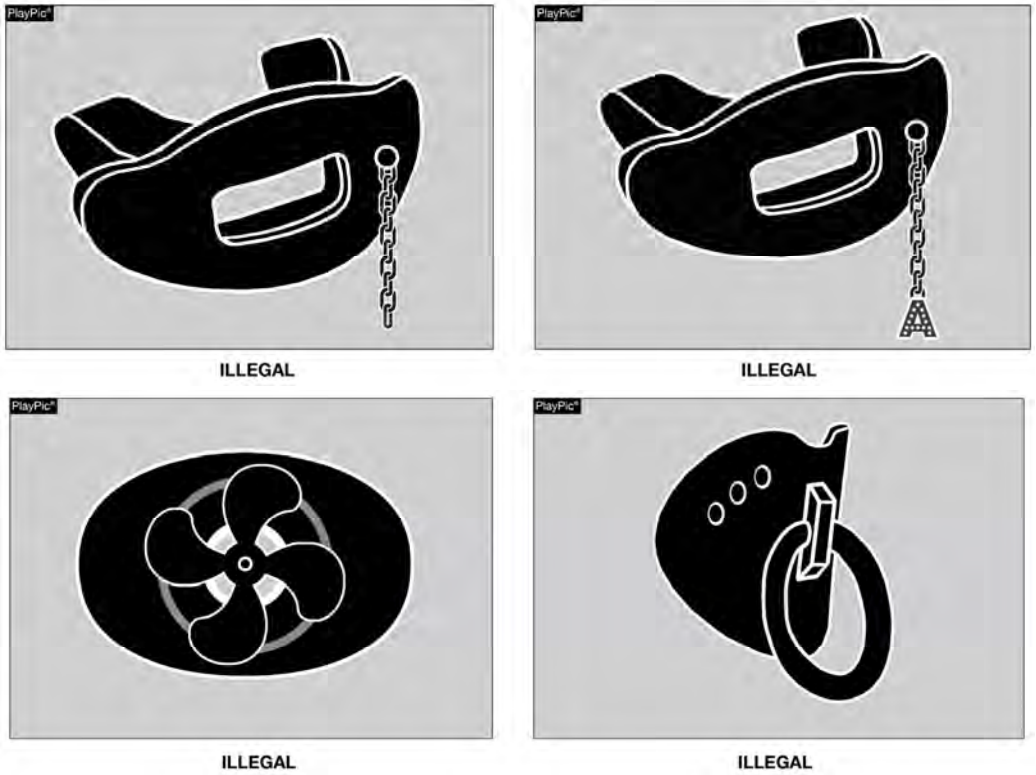


LEGAL ILLEGAL

Home team socks shall be a single dominant dark color, but not necessarily the color of the jersey for the home team. Dark is defined as any color which contrasts to white.

RULES CHANGES

TOOTH & MOUTH PROTECTOR RULE 4-2-7d



Tooth and mouth protectors, if worn by players, should not serve any function other than to protect the teeth or mouth.

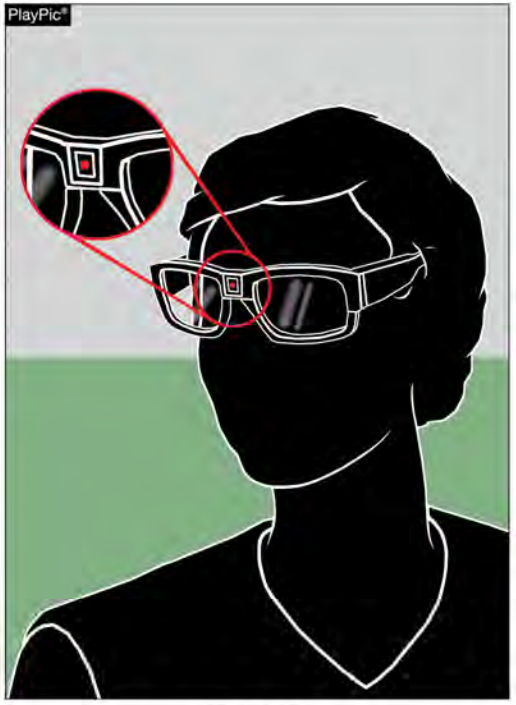
WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY
RULE 4-2-11a thru c



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

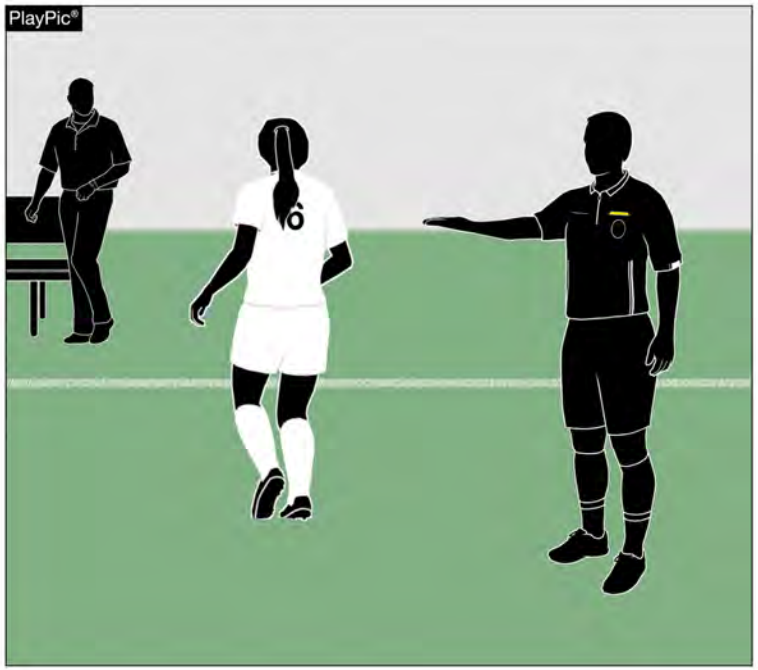
Players are not permitted to wear any type of audio or video device to record, transmit or livestream, aligning with other NFHS rules books.

State associations may further restrict electronic devices.

RULES CHANGES

THE OFFICIALS
RULE 5-3-1f thru j



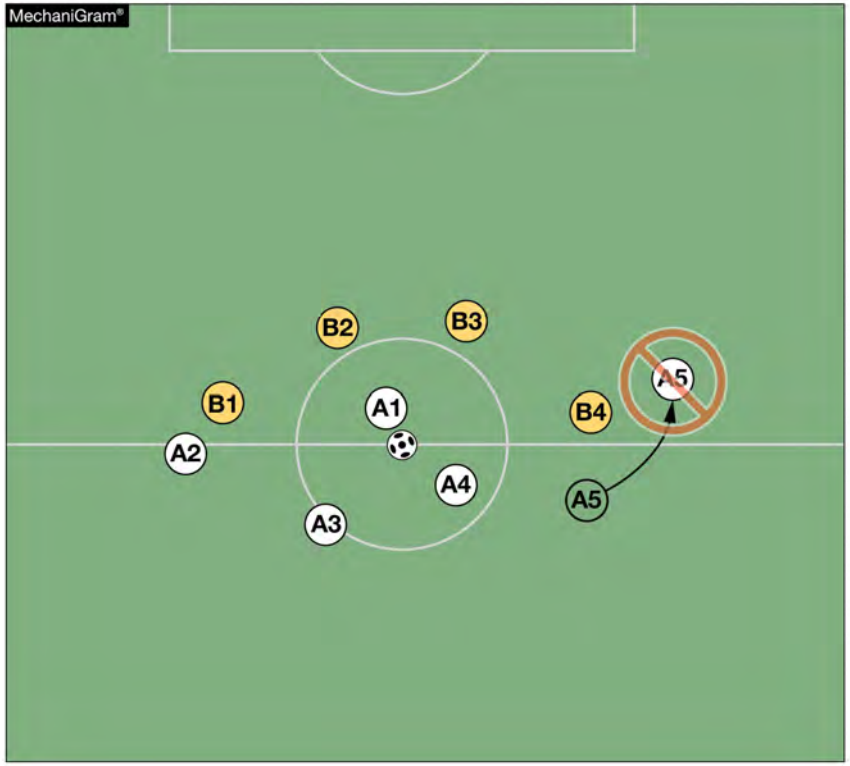


Added clarification in Rule 5, for the officials' responsibilities to now include directing any player shown a yellow or red card to leave the field of play.

The official must 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.

RULES CHANGES

KICKOFF
RULE 8-1-2



All players, except the player taking the kickoff, must be on their half of the field otherwise the kickoff shall be retaken.

IS IT SAFE TO GO BACK ON THE PITCH?



BITING
RULE 12-2-3

Biting was incorporated into direct free kick fouls.

A player shall not spit at or bite anyone listed on a roster or a game official, otherwise a direct free kick foul will be awarded.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT
RULE 12-1-2c



A player shall not charge into, or challenge, an opposing goalkeeper who is controlling the ball with their hands.

Penalty: Direct Free Kick

Outside the penalty area, the goalkeeper has no more privileges than any other player.

GOALKEEPER INTERFERENCE
RULE 12-3-2



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.

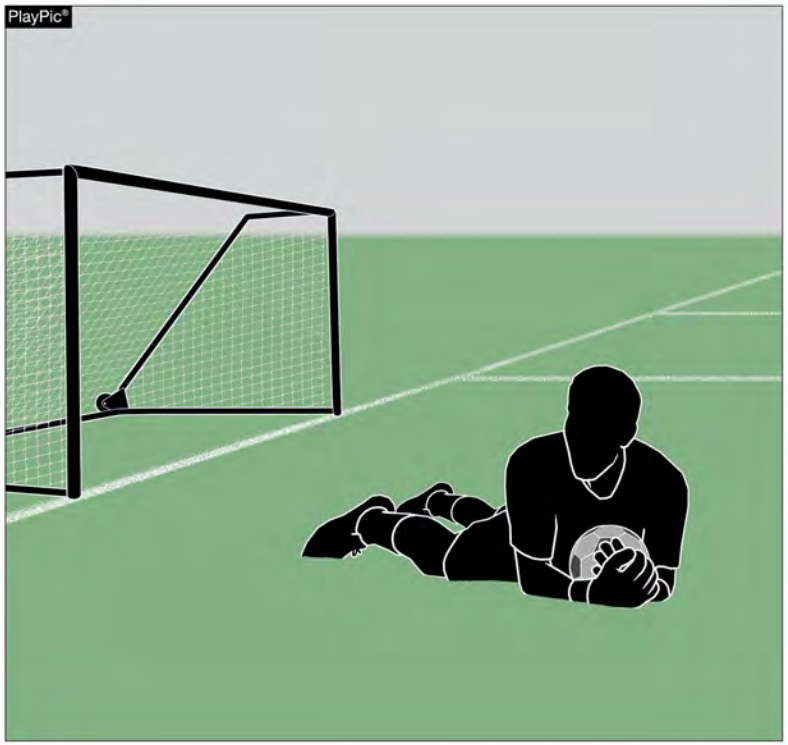
Penalty: Indirect Free Kick

RULE 12-3-2a

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.

GOALKEEPER
RULES 12-3-1, 12-3-3a and 17-1-1, 3

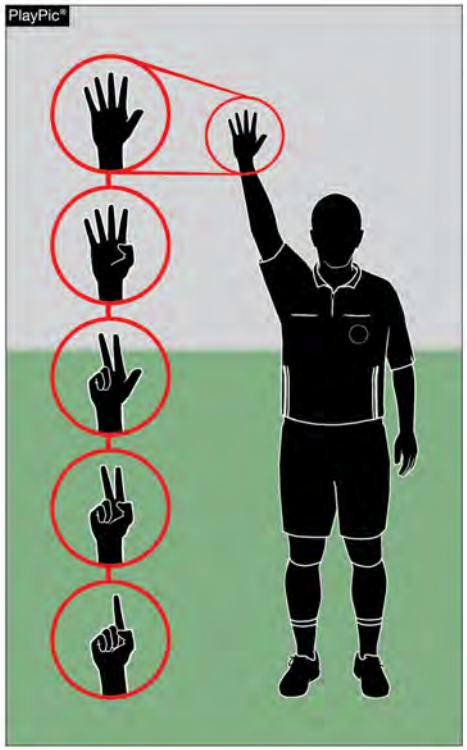


After controlling the ball with their hands/arm, the goalkeepers will now have 8 seconds instead of 6 seconds to release the ball.

The referee determines when the 8 second count begins.

Penalty: A corner kick will be awarded if the goalkeeper holds the ball longer than 8 seconds, replacing the previous indirect free kick restart.

GOALKEEPER
RULES 12-3-3a(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.

INDIRECT FREE KICKS
RULE 12-3-5

Clarifying language was added to considerations for dangerous play.

Dangerous play now explicitly includes actions preventing a nearby opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury.

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.

VERBAL OFFENSES
RULES 12-3-6, 12-3-7

Rules 12-3-6 was added to include verbal offenses as IDFK.

This gives officials more flexibility when disciplining verbal offenses: they are now considered fouls at a minimum and may rise to the level of misconduct depending on the circumstances.

Rule 12-3-7 Address if the game is stopped for misconduct and no other restart takes precedence; then it will restart with IDFK.

RULES CHANGES

DOGSO EJECTIONS
RULE 12-6-1b (1-4)

Revisions clarify and simplify language surrounding Denying an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO) ejections.

Redundant wording was removed and references to intending to deny a goal or goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) were eliminated.

The updated structure provides clear situations for which denying a goal or obvious goal-scoring opportunity is penalized with an ejection.

FREE KICK RESTARTS
RULES 13-1 THRU 13-3

Revisions clarify procedures for restarts on free kicks by breaking the rule into distinct categories.

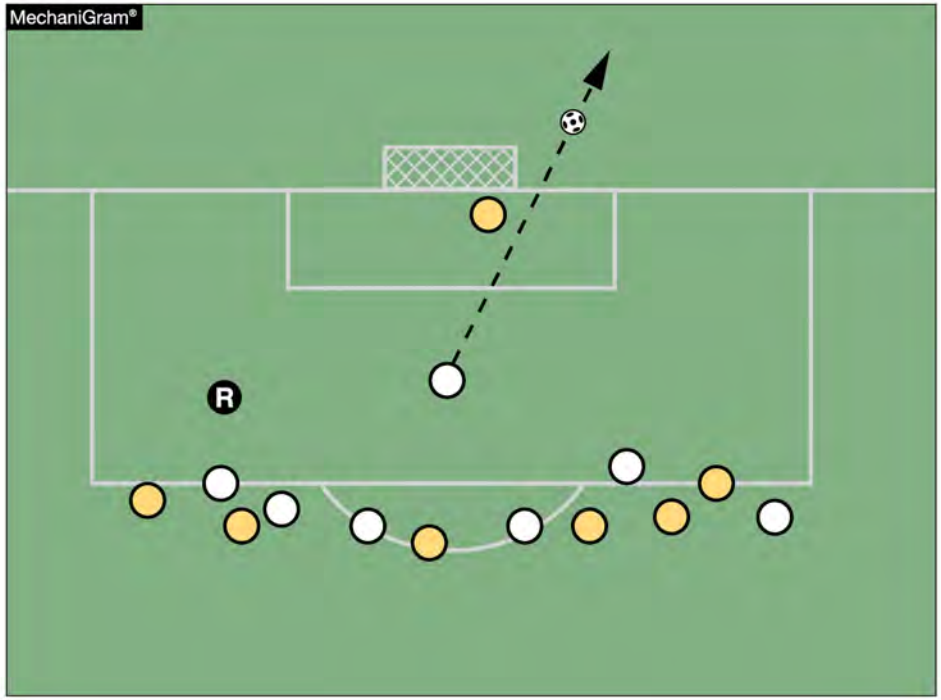
The update outlines when and where free kicks are awarded, how they are to be taken, and the correct restart locations.

It also incorporates restart procedures for scenarios involving outside agents, offenses off the field, thrown objects, individuals entering the field illegally, players leaving the field without permission, and offenses outside the field of play.

RULE 13-2
When and Where Awarded

1. Free Kicks are the restarts for fouls
2. Free Kicks are taken from where the offense occurred with exceptions
3. Free Kicks taken inside the goal area
4. Outside interference, entering and re-entering the field
5. Players leaving the field
6. Offenses outside the field of play

PENALTY KICK
RULE 14-1-2 – ENCROACHMENT

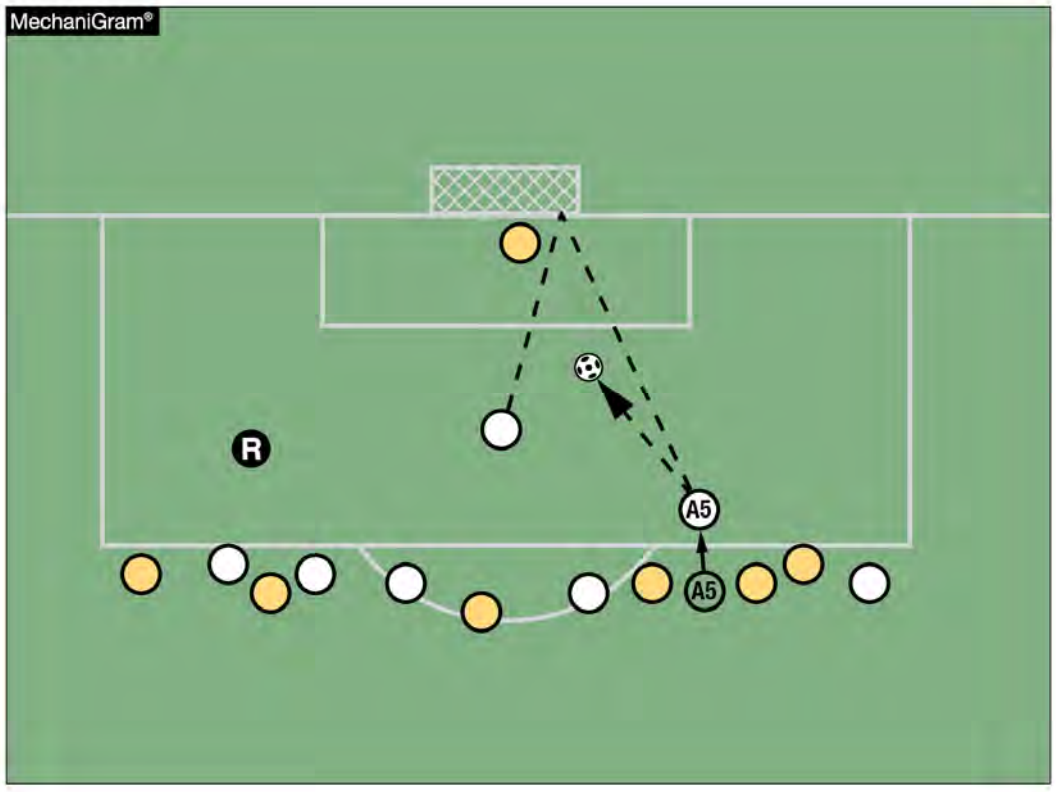


No Impact

Encroachment is penalized only if the offense has a clear impact on the penalty kick.

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.

RULE 14 -1-2

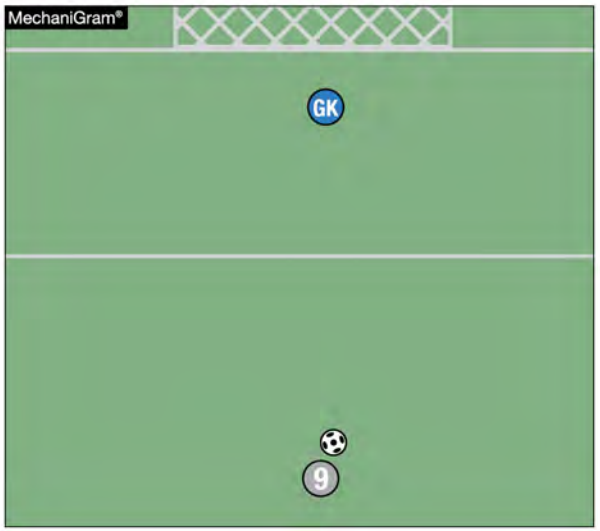


Impact

Encroaching attacker A5 impacts the play.

Penalty: The defending team is awarded an indirect free kick from where A5 kicked the ball.

PENALTY KICK
RULE 14-1-3 – GOALKEEPER ENCROACHMENT







Goalkeepers will now receive a warning for a first offense rather than an immediate caution.

Cautions are reserved for subsequent infractions.

PENALTY KICK
RULE 14 – KICKER FEINTING

Deceptive movements and stutter-stepping by the kicker during the run-up continue to be allowed.

However, feinting (or pretending to kick the ball) once the approach to the ball is completed is strictly prohibited.

This is an act of unsporting conduct that shall be cautioned and is enforced on the first and every subsequent occurrence.

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PENALTY KICK RULE 14 Penalty Chart

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

Offense		Outcome of the Penalty Kick: Goal	Outcome of the Penalty Kick: 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 kicked backwards	Indirect free kick	
Goalkeeper and kicker offend at the same time		Indirect free kick (kicker is cautioned)	



2026-27 NFHS Soccer Editorial Changes

EDITORIAL CHANGES

PLAYER EQUIPMENT
RULE 4-1-2

All jerseys, including the goalkeeper's jersey, shall be numbered with a different, unique Arabic number.

If a visible number is worn on the uniform bottom, it shall be the same number as on the uniform top.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT
RULE 4-3-3



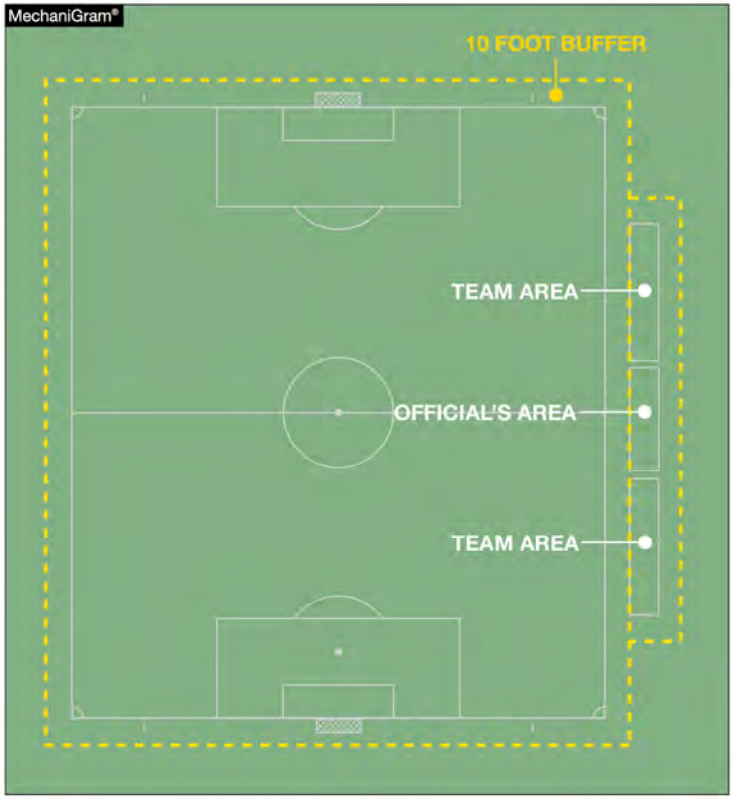


Both teams may wear shorts of a similar color.



2026-27 NFHS Soccer Points of Emphasis

PROPERLY MARKED FIELDS



- Administrators, coaches, and officials must prioritize proper marking of team areas and the maintenance of the 10-foot buffer around the field boundary lines.
- Team areas extend 10 yards from each side of the halfway line for a total length of 20 yards, set back 10 feet from the touchline.
- Team areas must be clearly designated and marked by a solid line. When markings are missing, officials should 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.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

NFHS AUTHENTICATING MARK ON GAME BALLS



- The NFHS Authenticating Mark ensures easy identification of balls used in interscholastic competitions. All such balls are required to display the NFHS Authenticating Mark.
- This mark helps promote a level playing field by ensuring consistency in equipment and clearly communicates that standards are being met.
- Administrators and coaches play a pivotal role in making sure all balls meet specifications through consistent reinforcement during pre-competition meetings.
- Game officials must remain vigilant and report any non-compliant balls to the state association office.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

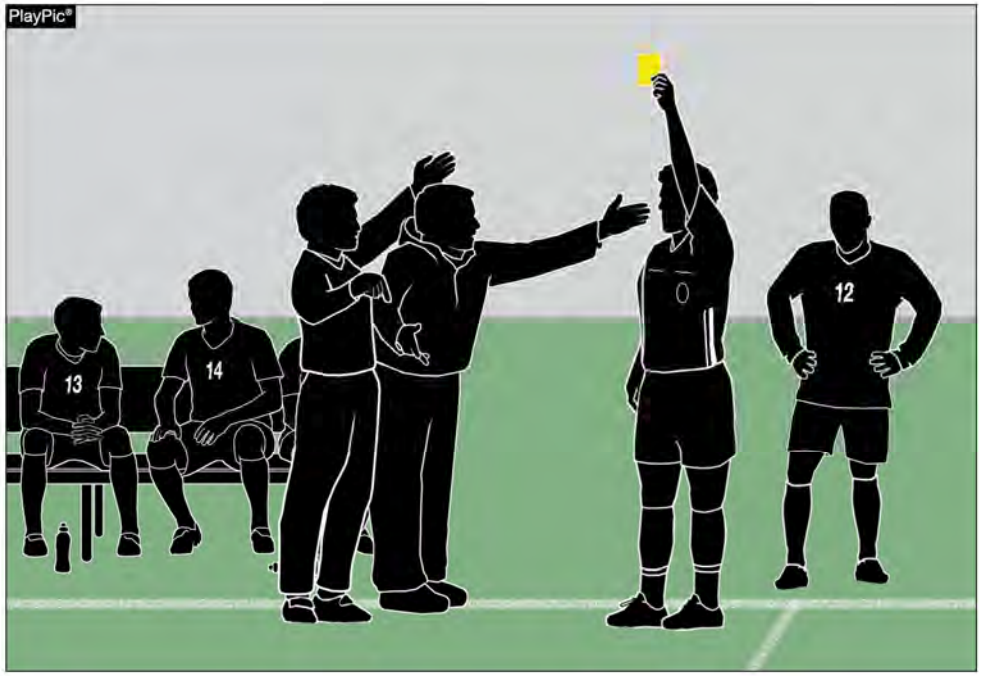
SHARED PROFESSIONALISM AND BENCH ACCOUNTABILITY



- High school soccer serves as an extension of the classroom, requiring both officials and coaches to uphold the highest standards of composure and integrity.
- Professional communication should remain non-threatening and conversational. Raising one's voice, displaying frustrations or acting in a provocative manner only escalates conflict.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

SHARED PROFESSIONALISM AND BENCH ACCOUNTABILITY



- When a caution or ejection is issued, officials advise the head coach using appropriate rulebook language. Both parties share responsibility for ensuring communication remains professional.
- Any dissent or inappropriate conduct should be addressed firmly and professionally. Coaches are accountable for their behavior and must model emotional control and sportsmanship.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

MANAGING GOAL CELEBRATIONS



- Celebrating after scoring a goal is an integral part of soccer. Reacting with joy is permissible provided it is not excessive and not accompanied by taunting.
- Players are allowed to celebrate and may leave the field momentarily, provided they make a prompt return to the playing field. Rehearsed or choreographed celebrations should be discouraged.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

MANAGING GOAL CELEBRATIONS



- The line between allowable celebration and misconduct is crossed when a player or team prevents a timely restart by delaying excessively or by taunting opponents or fans.
- Examples of misconduct include jumping over barriers, climbing fences, or removing one's jersey. Any act that prohibits a timely restart is unsporting conduct and requires a caution.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

PENALTY KICK OFFENSES AND THE CONCEPT OF IMPACT

- Encroachment during a penalty kick is only penalized if the offense has a clear impact on the play.
- 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.
- Goalkeepers who encroach and impact the kicker shall receive a warning for the first offense, with cautions reserved for subsequent infractions.
- While kickers are permitted stutter-steps during the run-up, feinting once the approach is complete is unsporting conduct that shall be cautioned on every occurrence.

Thank You

National Federation of State High School Associations

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More MPSSAA Soccer Information

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Thank You, Producer Dave James

