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Soccer Comments on the Rules - 2026-27

BY NFHS ON MAY 18, 2026 | RULES, SOCCER

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.

4-2-11 a, 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 rule 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: he 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.



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