

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Eight Rules Changes Approved in High School Soccer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Theresia Wynns

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 29, 2019) — Rules related to improperly equipped players and procedures for dropping the ball are among eight rules changes in high school soccer for the 2019-20 season.

The rules changes were recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Soccer Rules Committee at its January 28-30 meeting and subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“While there are not any substantial revisions to the rules this year, I believe coaches and players will be pleased with the changes we have made,” said Theresia Wynns, NFHS director of sports and officials education.

Rule 4-3 will now specify that an improperly equipped player will not require teams to play shorthanded. The improperly equipped player will be asked to leave the field when the ball is not in play if the issue cannot be resolved immediately on the field, and the player may be replaced.

Once the offending player is properly equipped, he or she can report to an official. If the player was not replaced, he or she may re-enter the game at a dead ball. Infringement of the rule will not cause the game to be stopped unless a referee determines the situation is dangerous.

The rule was changed because the penalty for an improperly equipped player was more severe than the punishment for illegal equipment. The rule change ensures both infractions are handled equally.

With regard to the dropping of the ball in Rule 9-2-3, any number of players, including the goalkeeper, may now contest a dropped ball, and the referee cannot decide who may contest a dropped ball or determine its outcome.

Two new articles were added to Rule 9-2 to further clarify a dropped ball. Article 5 states the ball should be dropped again if it touches a player before hitting the ground or if it leaves the field after hitting the ground without touching a player. Article 6 states that if a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, the play must be restarted with a goal kick if it entered the opponent's goal or a corner kick if it entered the team's own goal.

Rule 9-2-1c was amended to remove the provision that if a team is in clear possession of the ball, the game will not be restarted with a drop ball. The rule now states the only time a game will not be restarted with a drop ball following temporary suspension of a player, injury or unusual circumstances is when the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball.

A change to Rule 9-3 eliminates free kick opportunities by replacing an indirect free kick with a drop ball if the ball was not in the goal area and in possession of the goalkeeper during cases of temporary suspension due to injury or an unusual situation.

An addition was made in Rule 3-4-3 to state that the clock should be stopped when the leading team makes a substitution within the last five minutes of the second period. The new rule is meant to prevent coaches in the lead from wasting time and running the clock when no plays are being made.

The final change was to Rule 5-3-1d that now allows officials to call out "play on" with an underswing of one or both arms.

"Our game is in pretty good shape," Wynns said. "There will be a few changes this particular year, but the rules revisions that have been made will not change the game for the most part."

A complete list of soccer rules and changes can be found on the NFHS website, www.nfhs.org under "Activities and Sports".

According to the 2017-18 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, soccer is the fifth-most popular sport for boys with 456,362 participants in 12,393 schools across the country. Soccer is the fourth-most popular sport for girls with 390,482 participants in 12,007 schools.

This press release was written by Kirsten Adair, an intern at the NFHS Publications/Communications Department.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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Soccer Rules Changes - 2019-20

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soccer

3-4-3 NEW: The clock shall be stopped when a substitute by the team in the lead is beckoned on the field in the final five minutes of the second period only.

Rationale: Rule affected by change in 7-4-3.

4-3: Improperly Equipped Players (18-1-1u)

Cautions will not be issued for improperly equipped player(s).

If not immediately correctable, improperly equipped player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. The player(s) may be replaced. The removed player(s), if not replaced, may re-enter at the next dead ball only after reporting to an official, who shall be satisfied the player's equipment and uniform are in order. Play shall not be stopped for an infringement of this rule except that the referee may stop play immediately where there is a dangerous situation.

Rationale: The change corrects an injustice. For the far more serious infringement of illegal equipment, the offending team does not play shorthanded. For the less serious offense of improper equipment, they are required to play shorthanded. The change addresses this inequity.

5-3-1d: The officials shall:

(d) call 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.

Rationale: This change permits the use of one arm to signal advantage.

7-4-3 NEW: 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 the second period only.

Rationale: Coaches in the lead will make multiple substitutions in the later stages of the match. This tactic is being used as a time-wasting ploy. Adding this rule will help the game to be decided by the players and not a coach who is wasting time when in the lead. These substitutes are usually players from the far side of the field that take more time off the clock. This addition would stop this practice.

9-2-1: 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 temporary suspension of play for an injury or unusual situation and a goalkeeper is not in possession of the ball
- d. when simultaneous fouls of the same degree occur by opponents.

Rationale: This rule changes the awarding of a free kick to a drop ball thereby possibly creating a scoring opportunity for a team underserving.

9-2-3: The ball is dropped by an official from waist level to the ground. Any number of players may contest a dropped ball (including the goalkeepers); a referee cannot decide who may contest a dropped ball or its outcome.

Rationale: This addition helps to provide clarity in the application of this rule.

9-2-5 NEW: 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.

Rationale: This addition helps to avoid confusion and allow the rule to be more equitable under the circumstances.

9-2-6 NEW: 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.

Rationale: This addition helps to avoid confusion and allow the rule to be more equitable under the circumstances.

9-3: In case of a temporary suspension due to injury or any unusual situation the game shall be started by a drop ball at the point where the ball was when the play was suspended (except as noted in 14-1-7), provided the ball was not in the goal area and not in the possession of the goalkeeper. 12-8-2

Rationale: This change will eliminate free kick opportunities that often create scoring opportunities that are not deserved.

Points of Emphasis

1. Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Injury Prevention.
2. Pre-game Communication Between the School Administration and Game Officials.
3. Official's Communicating Misconduct with Coaches.