

2024-25 Soccer Preseason Bulletin

Rules, Revisions, and Interpretations



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2024-25 NFHS SOCCER RULES CHANGES

4-1-4d — Clarifies there is no limitation on the color of tape or sock worn at or below the ankle under the competition sock. Any tape or similar material used above the ankle must match the sock's color.

Rule 12 — Reorganized Fouls and Misconduct Rule for clarity and consistency of use. A new section was added addressing Stopping a Promising Attack, language was added to Denial of an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity that all conditions must be met for DOGSO to be applied, and the section on Ejections now lists the offenses by severity.

EDITORIAL CHANGES

3-4-3, 6-2-3, 12-5-1f(15)

2024-25 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Official's Toolbox for Game Management

A referee's "toolbox" for game management consists of various skills, techniques and strategies they can employ to effectively officiate a match and maintain control over the players, coaches and game environment. Here are a few items in a referee's toolbox:

- **Communication:** Clear and effective communication with players, coaches and the officiating team is key. Referees can use verbal and non-verbal cues to convey decisions, instructions and warnings. Working constructively and in cooperation with game site administration is important to facilitating a positive game environment.

2024-25 POINTS OF EMPHASIS CONTINUED

- **Game Control:** Referees use their authority to manage the tempo and flow of the game. They may intervene to calm tensions, prevent conflicts or address unsporting behavior. This can include issuing verbal warnings, cautions, ejections or temporarily suspending the game and working with administrators to deal with spectators or outside interference.
- **Development:** With the requirement to explain misconduct incidents to both coaches, an educational atmosphere is an important component of the high school game and officials should approach interactions positively with respect and professionalism. Officials should clearly and concisely state the specific nature of the misconduct fostering a positive learning environment in the face of difficult situations.
- **Adaptability:** Every game is different, and referees must adapt to changing circumstances. They may need to adjust their officiating style based on the level of play, the behavior of the players, or unexpected developments during the match. By utilizing these tools effectively while managing emotions and remaining calm and composed, referees can promote fair play, ensure player safety, and contribute to a positive and enjoyable experience for everyone involved in the game.

Stopping a Promising Attack

The inclusion of the considerations for a promising attack serves as a crucial clarification in the rules, specifically addressing what was previously referred to as “tactical fouls.” While the considerations are clear for obvious goal-scoring opportunities, promising attacks may be more difficult to recognize. The strategy of tactically fouling with the aim to interrupt the attacking team's progress without necessarily denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity is a form of misconduct. Sections 7 and 8 in Rule 12 highlight the importance of discerning the nature of these types of tactical offenses for consistent and fair officiating.

Like DOGSO situations, fouls that stop a promising attack (SPA) might not be severe in nature, but the offense's impact on the attacking team's potential needs to be recognized and dealt with accordingly. Officials need to understand the nuanced dynamics of play and maintain a tactical awareness of the advancing phase of play to recognize SPA incidents. Referees are tasked with evaluating multiple factors to determine the promise of an attack, encompassing elements like player positioning, ball control, defensive presence, skill and the pace of the game. Importantly, any foul that unfairly stops or interrupts a promising attack is considered misconduct, warranting a caution and a yellow card for the offending player. If SPA occurs within the offender's penalty area, and the foul is an attempt to play the ball, the player is not cautioned if the referee awards a penalty kick. In other SPA circumstances inside the penalty area (e.g., holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.) the offending player must be cautioned.

2024-245 POINTS OF EMPHASIS CONTINUED**After a Goal**

After a goal is scored, officials must stay alert as there are several important considerations and tasks to manage. In addition to lower priority administrative tasks, officials must be vigilant after a goal for any signs of escalating tension or potential misconduct and address any issues promptly to prevent situations from escalating. Key aspects of concern include:

- Working as a team with other officials (i.e., lead assistant referee) to determine if the ball was, in fact, scored properly by wholly crossing the goal line, under the crossbar, and between the goal posts. The crew must ensure that the goal was legally scored and there were no infringements or violations during the buildup to the goal. This includes checking for any potential offside offenses by the attacking team that would prompt the goal to be disallowed.
- Observing players' reactions and behaviors after the goal to identify and address any unsporting actions or misconduct. This includes potential confrontations, dissent or provocative actions. If the team that scored is behind, it may try to quickly retrieve the ball from the goal or grab it out of the opponent's hands. The defense that was setting an offside trap may swarm around the assistant referee to argue about a non-call. These can be volatile situations and proactive officials will intervene quickly to make their presence known. Encourage attackers to return to their side of the field promptly or remind defenders the decisions of the officiating crew must be respected before their actions rise to misconduct. When behavior crosses the line, recognize it and deal with it firmly and fairly according to the rules.
- Monitoring player celebrations to prevent excessive or inappropriate behavior. While celebrating after a goal is allowable, which might include leaving the field, players cannot prohibit a timely restart with excessive or prolonged acts. This includes unsporting gestures, removal of shirts, taunting, or any actions that could incite the opposing team or spectators.
- Record keeping and beckoning in substitutes. The crew should include in their pregame discussion how to maintain the game record while also managing players after a goal is scored. The crew should establish before the game who is responsible for keeping an eye on the field while another official is recording in their book. Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench provided they check in. Officials need to be mindful of those substitutes which may trickle in and work together as a crew to recognize substitutes wanting to enter the game.

After a goal, there is much more to do than just adding a tally mark in the book. Officials should focus on the players, recognize situations that could lead to conflicts, be present and proactive in their responses, and deal with misconduct appropriately.



2024-25 PIAA Adoptions & Modifications

Adopt the 2024-25 NFHS Soccer Rules Book and continue to utilize the pre-2011-2012 NFHS Official Soccer Signals.

Modify Rule 5-1-1, to use either a head referee and a referee or a center referee and two side referees.

Modify Rule 5-1-1 NOTE: to use either the dual or the double-dual officiating system.

Modify Rule 12-6-1 and adopt the "Soft Red" for fouls identified as misconduct.

Adopt Rule 7-1-1, length of periods, play two equal halves of forty minutes at the senior high school level (varsity and junior varsity) of competition.

Adopt Rule 7-1-3, In the event a Contest must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the head referee shall declare it an official Contest if one complete half or more of the Contest has been played. If less than one-half of the Contest has been played, the game shall be restarted from the suspension of play. In the event a winner must be determined for regular season tournament or to advance during a post season Contest, the Contest shall be resumed at the point of suspension.

Adopt Rule 7-1-5, running clock after goals, except for injuries, or as determined by the official, at all levels (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition, when one Team gains a 6-goal differential over its opponent during the second half.

Modify Rule 3-4-3, if Rule 7-1-5 is implemented during the second half (running clock after goals), if the team in the lead substitutes during the last 5 minutes of the half, the clock will not stop and continue to run.

Adopt Rule 7-3-1, tie Games, as follows: Senior high school varsity soccer Regular Season Contests which are tied at the end of 80 minutes of play shall be resolved by playing two "sudden victory" overtime periods of ten minutes each; (overtime periods may not be shortened by mutual consent).

Modify Rule 12-8-1 PENALTY, to provide for a 5-minute playing time sit out following the issuance of a yellow card to a player, with the opportunity for that player's Team to substitute for that player.

Modify the Sample Tie Breaking Procedure for senior high school varsity soccer Regular Season Tournaments and Postseason Contests, as set forth in the NFHS Soccer Rules Book, to provide for two sudden victory overtime periods of 15-minutes each. If the score remains tied, proceed to the penalty kick procedure.

PIAA Championship Contests which are tied at the end of 80 minutes of play shall be resolved by playing two sudden victory overtime periods of 20-minutes each. If the score remains tied, proceed to the penalty kick procedure.

2024-25 PIAA Adoptions & Modifications

Any coach and/or adult Team Personnel removed, ejected or disqualified from a Contest who refuses to leave the competition area (out of sight and sound) as directed by the Contest Official will result in a forfeiture of the Contest.

This policy has been adopted by the PIAA Board of Directors in an effort to address poor acting adults who refuse to abide by the applicable rules book and to show support of PIAA officials.

Officials who encounter situations that involve this policy must report the occurrence to the PIAA Officials Department the next business day.

ACCIDENTAL HANDLING

Accidental handling is defined and should be considered using the following definition and criteria:

- Accidental is: (1) The attacker did not see the ball; (2) The attacker had no time to avoid contact with the ball (3) The attacker's arms were in a position or moving to it that is normally expected for the situation (think a falling player putting their arms out to protect themselves while falling). A reflex action to protect the face, neck, chest, or groin is NOT considered a deliberate handling offense.

Here are the outcomes in the case of an accidental ball-to-hand/arm contact by a member of the attacking team:

- Ball goes directly into goal. No goal, handling foul by the attacking team.
- Ball drops to the attacker's feet (attacker maintains possession), and the attacker immediately scores a goal. No goal, handling foul by the attacking team.

All other cases of accidental ball-to-hand/arm contact by a member of the attacking team that leads to a goal: Goal is allowed. Cases include:

- Ball deflects directly to an attacker's teammate, and the teammate immediately scores a goal? Good goal, no handling offense.
- Ball drops at the attacker's feet (attacker maintains possession), the attacker passes to a teammate, the teammate scores. Good goal.
- Ball drops at the attacker's feet (attacker maintains possession), the attacker shoots but does not score, but during the same sequence of play, a goal is scored (e. g., on a rebound). Good goal.
- Ball drops at the attacker's feet (attacker maintains possession), the attacker continues to advance toward goal with more than 2-3 touches, shoots and scores. Good goal.

PIAA BY-LAWS - DISQUALIFICATIONS: ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8**Section 8. Disqualification From Next Contest(s). General Rule. Preamble**

Sportsmanship is a core principle in interscholastic athletics. Actions which are unethical and/or intended to demean, embarrass, intimidate or injure opposing contestants, Teams, spectators and/or officials are considered unsportsmanlike and will not be tolerated since they are contrary to the purposes of PIAA and convey lessons incompatible with the reasons why high school sports exist.

A. Mandatory Disqualification. One Game Suspension. Any Coach, team personnel and/or contestant who is disqualified from a Scrimmage, Interschool Practice, and/or Contest by a state high school association-recognized and/or registered official in that sport for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant misconduct is disqualified from Coaching and/or participating for the remainder of the day and in all Contests on the next Contest day of the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition from which the Coach and/or contestant was previously disqualified. For a Coach, participation in the next Contest includes any contact by the Coach with members of the Team, including other Coaches, between the time that the Team arrives at the Contest site and the conclusion of the last Contest of the day. The Principal must direct the Coach not to attend all of the Contest(s).

B. Supplemental Disqualification. Two Game Suspension. Any Coach, team personnel and/or contestant who, is ejected from a Scrimmage, Interschool Practice, and/or Contest by a state high school association recognized and/or registered official and a component of the ejection is any of the following actions: confronting an official, coach, or contestant; physically contacting an official, coach, or contestant; directing foul or vulgar language/gestures toward an official, coach, contestant or spectator(s); using ethnic or racially insensitive comments: will be disqualified from coaching and/or participating for the remainder of the day and for the next two (2) Contests including all Contests on the next two (2) Contest days of the same level (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition from which the Coach, team personnel and/or contestant was previously disqualified. For the purposes of this provision, the jurisdiction of the official(s) to apply and enforce this rule begins upon the official's arrival at the Contest site and ends when the official (or the last of the team of officials) leaves the Contest site. The Contest site is defined as premises on which the competition surface is located and includes the entirety of the premises and parking areas.

When the Supplemental Disqualification implicates a contestant, and in addition to the two (2) Contests disqualification, the contestant may not return to competition representing the contestant's school until the contestant completes the NFHS Sportsmanship program at NFHSLearn (online) and provides a certification of completion of this program to the student's Principal and the Principal submits the certification to the PIAA District Sport Chairman. A Coach and/or Team personnel disqualified under this provision may not return to competition representing the Coach's/Team personnel's school until the Coach/Team personnel complete the NFHS Sportsmanship program and Teaching and Modeling Behavior program at NFHSLearn (online) and provides a certification of completion of these two programs to the Coach's/Team personnel's Principal and the Principal submits the certification to the PIAA District Sport Chairman.

A disqualification under this provision supersedes a disqualification under A. above. A PIAA District Committee may, at its discretion, convene a hearing to address any and all disqualifications and may provide additional penalties as warranted by the circumstances.

NOTE: What this means for officials is that any disqualification that previously only applied to contests now apply to scrimmages as well. Officials ejecting persons from scrimmages must now submit the DQ form for these additional instances also.

EXAMPLES OF DISQUALIFICATION PROVISION OF ARTICLE XIII, SECTION 8

The Supplemental Ejection is not designed for violations of "Rules of the Game" The one game sit out penalty still remains for those actions that do not fit the Supplemental Ejection policy. PIAA Board of Directors has given officials an additional tool to use, if warranted, to curb bad behavior. This could aid in the recruitment and retention of officials. Officials should not concern themselves with the penalty. School administration will handle that.

A few examples:

- **Situation:** After the basketball game has concluded and the officials are in the locker room, varsity head coach Jones begins to bang on the door and use profanity toward the officials.
 - **Ruling:** The coach's actions would merit a Supplemental Disqualification. The crew chief must file the Supplemental Disqualification report within 24 hours on Coach Jones who must sit out the next two varsity contests. The crew chief must also make contact with Coach Jones' athletic director immediately or immediately after leaving the contest site to inform them that the Supplemental Disqualification was issued on Coach Jones.
- **Situation:** During a junior varsity soccer game a player from team A commits a handball violation in the penalty area denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity.
 - **Ruling:** The referee awards a penalty kick to Team B and properly issues a red card and escorts the player from Team A to the sideline. The referee also informs the coach of the reason for ejection. The referee must file the Disqualification Report within 24 hours and the player must sit out the next junior varsity contest.. This is a standard one game sit out disqualification penalty.
- **Situation:** In the third inning of a baseball game the head coach disagrees with a safe/out call and charges onto the field while yelling profanities at the umpire.
 - **Ruling:** The umpire must eject the head coach and inform them that they are being assessed a Supplemental Disqualification. The crew chief must file the Supplemental Disqualification report within 24 hours on Coach Smith who must sit out the next two junior varsity contests.
- **Situation:** During the boys varsity soccer match, Player A1 is taken down with a legal tackle by Player B1. Player A1 feels that a foul should have been called and jumps from the ground and yells at the nearest official saying, "Hey Ref, you suck."
 - **Ruling:** The official must immediately issue a red card and eject Player A1. The official must then inform Player A1's head coach of the ejection and the fact that it is a Supplemental Disqualification due to the foul language directed at the official. The ejecting official must file the Supplemental Disqualification report within 24 hours on the player who must sit out the next two varsity contests.
- **Situation:** After the volleyball match has concluded and the officials are walking through the school lobby to get to their cars a parent confronts the officials and uses profanity toward them.
 - **Ruling:** The officials must not engage the parent in discussion and should continue to their vehicle, if possible. Upon reaching their vehicles the crew chief must immediately contact the host school's athletic director and inform them of what occurred. The officials do not retain jurisdiction under the Supplemental Disqualification in this instance. It does not apply to fans, only coaches and contestants. School athletic administrators must take action to prevent this type of occurrence in the future.
- **Situation:** After the varsity football game has ended and the officials are gathering at the 40 yard line to proceed to the locker room, the head coach rushes on to the field and confronts the crew about calls made that evening. The coach while using foul and abusive language contacts one of the officials.
 - **Ruling:** The crew chief must inform the head coach that he is being assessed a Supplemental Disqualification for his actions. The crew chief must file the Supplemental Disqualification report within 24 hours on the head coach who must sit out the next two varsity contests.

Final Point:

- **Question:** On the new 2 game DQ is it going to be the officials' decision if it's a 2 game DQ or the PIAA's after reviewing the report?
 - **Answer:** As with the previous 1 game DQ, it is always the decision of the official to eject but the actions of the player or coach will be the deciding factor whether the Supplemental DQ is used.
 - The official really has no decision to make. If the actions are what is listed in the Supplemental Disqualification then the penalty is 2 games, the decision will be made for them by the actions of the offender.
 - The official will not have the ability to choose between the two different disqualifications. The choice will be made for them.

RULE 2-2: THE BALL - SPECIFICATIONS

ART. 1 ... Game balls shall be spherical, with a circumference of at least 27 inches but no more than 28 inches (0.68 to 0.71 meters). The weight of the balls at the start of the game shall be at least 14 ounces but no more than 16 ounces (396 to 453 grams).

ART. 2 ... The outer casing of the ball shall be leather or other similar material that is weather resistant.

ART. 3 ... The ball shall be inflated to the manufacturer's recommended pressure.

ART. 4 ... If the ball becomes deflated during play, it is declared dead and the game is resumed by a drop ball at the spot where it was last played. If the ball becomes deflated within the goal area, then the ball is dropped subject to the provisions of Rules 9-2-2 and 9-2-3. Ball deflated during a penalty kick results in retaken kick.

ART. 5 ... The ball shall include the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The mark can be displayed in either format shown below. A current list of NFHS authenticated products can be found at www.nfhs.org under "Resources."

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Emergency Action Plans for Officials Chapters

Officials' chapter officers should be aware of emergency exits, AED devices, and other emergency items in the event a chapter member needs medical assistance or emergency action needs to be taken during a chapter or mandatory rules meeting.



ARRIVAL AT THE SITE

Cooperation with Contest management begins with timely arrival at the Contest site. Nothing makes administrators and coaches more nervous at the onset of a contest than not knowing whether the officials are going to show up.

Start the game off right by communicating your arrival time at the site with the athletic administrator. Show up, where possible, at least thirty minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff. It will go a long way in helping your credibility as a quality official.

As a result of a motion made during the June 2021 meeting of the Officials' Council, District 3 Male Officials' Representative Bill McHale made a motion to allow white on shoes worn by all PIAA registered officials. This motion was approved by the Officials' Council and brought to the PIAA Board of Directors for a vote on July 14, 2021. On that date, the Board of Directors, in an effort to provide officials with additional opportunities to purchase comfortable shoes, approved this motion unanimously.

OFFICIALS' UNIFORM

1. The PIAA Official's Emblem must be worn on the upper left sleeve of the official's standard shirt when officiating in all PIAA sponsored games.
2. All PIAA-registered officials must wear identical uniforms during a contest.
3. Required uniform for soccer officials:
 - **Shirt** - Long or short sleeved alternating black and white 1-inch vertically striped shirt with a black collar or pro style black shirt, or a long or short sleeved Neon Yellow collared shirt. All officials must dress alike.
 - **Shorts** - Black (long trousers, culottes or skirt may also be worn).
 - **Stockings** - Long black with three white stripes at the top.
 - **Shoes** - Solid Black or Predominantly Black with some white, cleaned, and shined.

The wearing of jewelry (except wedding bands and medical-alert bracelets) and wrist watches (except as a required timing device) is prohibited. Smoking, including e-cigarettes and any type of vaping product, and/or tobacco chewing is prohibited. Obviously, use of alcoholic beverages prior to game assignments is prohibited.

PIAA sports' officials may display an American flag (maximum size 2 by 3 inches) on the right sleeve of their uniform shirt approximately three inches down from the shoulder seam. This will be the same position the PIAA official patch is displayed on the left sleeve.

PIAA Approved Officials Jerseys



Shirt: Long or short sleeved alternating black and white 1-inch vertically striped shirt with a black collar or pro style black or yellow shirt. All officials must dress alike.



POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF EYE SHADE

The use of eye shade must be worn as a single, solid stroke under the eye. There shall be no numbers, words, logos, symbols or other detail located in the eye shade. The eye shade shall not extend below the cheek bone and extend no further than the width of the eye socket. Players having eye shade that does not meet the standard are to remove it or comply with the PIAA interpretation before participation in the game. If the players do not comply, the officials may impose unsportsmanlike conduct type penalties as determined by their respective rules code.

PIAA CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY FOR ALL SPORTS

PIAA has a written policy regarding conflict of interest. This policy is in all of our post regular season officiating contracts and is contained in the PIAA Athletic Officials' Manual for all officials to view.

An official will remove themselves from a contest if they find that they have any personal association with any of the competitors or coaches on any team, with the competitors' school, or with the competitors' community, such as being a relative of a competitor, or being an employee or a relative of a competitor in the competitors school district, or a resident of the competitors' community.

COMMENT: Officials accepting assignments for contest at their local school where they live, or have a relative competing, place themselves in a compromising position in the performance of their duties as a registered official. Every decision and judgment is open to criticism and places the official in a compromising position where it brings into question the integrity and actions of the official. This is an indefensible position for the official and assignments of this nature are not to be taken or accepted by PIAA registered sports' officials. Extreme cases of emergency and situations that may be completely unavoidable are the only exceptions to this policy.

2024-25 SOCCER SCHEDULE

First Practice Date	August 12
First Inter-School/Scrimmage Date	August 17
First Regular Season Play Date	August 25
Last Regular Season Contest Date and District Deadline	November 2

PIAA Soccer Championships:

First Round	November 5
Quarterfinals	November 9
Semi-Finals	November 12

PIAA Soccer Championships - Bobby Rahal Toyota Field, Cumberland Valley HS, Mechanicsburg

2A & 4A Boys & Girls	November 15
1A & 3A Boys & Girls	November 16



PLAY RULINGS

The situations contained in this book have been developed from actual questions which have been raised in administering the many thousands of interscholastic soccer games each year. The situations have been arranged by rule number. New or revised situations are shaded.

All interpretations have the approval of the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee, which consists of coaches, officials and athletic administrators active on the high school level. Each ruling has been given careful study and is intended to provide for fair, easily administered competition.

Additional interpretations may be received by contacting your state high school association. In case of doubt, the state association shall receive a ruling from the NFHS office.

POLICY REGARDING THE WEARING OF AN AMERICAN FLAG AND EITHER A COMMEMORATIVE PATCH OR A MEMORIAL INSIGNIA ON CONTEST JERSEY/SHIRT/TOP

An American Flag, not to exceed 2 by 3 inches, and either a commemorative patch or a memorial insignia, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on a Contest jersey/shirt/top provided neither the flag nor the patch or the insignia interferes with the visibility of the number.

Questions/Situation From The Convention

“Can bench personnel receive a Soft Red Card?”

- Bench personnel **CANNOT** receive a soft red card for misconduct. Any member identified as bench personnel can receive a Caution for misconduct. If the person receiving the caution is a player and this is a second Caution, the player will be shown the second Yellow Card followed immediately by the single Red Card. That player must remain in the technical area until the end of the contest, is no longer eligible to play in any contests the remainder of that day and must sit out the next contest day at the same level (unless the misconduct is considered a Supplemental Ejection). If the person receiving the second caution is an adult, they will be shown the second Yellow Card followed immediately by a Red Card. That person must leave the contest area and be out of sight and sound and can also be responsible if the misconduct rises to the criteria for a Supplemental Ejection.

“What happens if the Coach is Ejected and there are no other Coaches available?”

- If a disqualification and ejection of a coach leaves a team without supervision by a coach approved by both the Principal and the Athletic Director, the contest shall be forfeited to that team's opponent.

www.piaa.org/officials

VIOLATION OR CANCELLATION OF SPORTS OFFICIAL'S CONTRACT BY A PIAA MEMBER SCHOOL

If a PIAA member school violates or cancels a contract with an official, the District Committee or the Board of Directors, within their respective jurisdictions, may require a school so violating or so canceling to pay to the offended official the fee or fees for the Contest or Contests which have been provided in the official contract. The failure of a PIAA member school to live up to the terms of the contract is considered a violation of the Constitution and By-Laws of PIAA

Comment: It has been brought to our attention on numerous occasions that officials have lost assignments or games because a school or assignor has "double booked" the contest. Officials are reminded that unless there is a written contract executed between the parties, they have no claim to any type of reimbursement from the offending school(s). Many schools have made a "good faith" effort to the officials to get them an additional assignment in the future or offer a scrimmage to pick up the lost fees. However, officially, without a written, signed, properly executed contract between the official(s) and the school(s), there is no recourse for the officials. In this day of technology it is not very hard for assignors, or schools, to execute these contracts. This is part of an assignor's responsibility. Officials should request contracts from their assignors or schools for both parties protection.

RECOMENDATION OF A WRITTEN CONTRACT

PIAA member schools should enter into written (paper or electronic) contracts with the officials retained by the schools or assigned by an assignor to officiate regular season contests. The terms of such contracts must not violate the PIAA Constitution and By-Laws, Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations. Registered sports officials are independent contractors and therefore, are NOT employees of PIAA, the school, or the assignor.

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PIAA SPORTSMANSHIP MESSAGE

****This message shall be read to the head coach and captains prior to each contest officiated by a registered PIAA official. This message shall be enforced by contest officials and its enforcement shall include a strict and swift enforcement when unsportsmanlike actions involve demeaning remarks or actions that may be related to the racial or ethnic background of any party.****

PIAA requires all registered sports' officials to enforce the sportsmanship rules for coaches and contestants. Actions meant to demean opposing contestants, teams, spectators, and officials are not in the highest ideals of interscholastic education and will not be tolerated. Let today's contest reflect mutual respect. Coaches please certify to the contest official(s) that your contestants are legally equipped and uniformed according to NFHS rules and PIAA adoptions, or will be at the kick off. Good luck in today's contest.

The proper procedure is head coaches and captains MUST attend the pre-game reading of the sportsmanship message. Coaches must certify to the contest officials their team is legally equipped and in compliance with NFHS Soccer Rules. The reading of this message will have the coaches verbally confirm aloud their teams' adherence to compliance with equipment and safety rules. This confirmation is not only the adherence to contest rules, but also assists in alleviating the legal liability concerns for the officials if the teams subsequently violate the proper equipment provisions of the contest rules.

SPORTSMANSHIP - PIAA POINT OF EMPHASIS

- PIAA Officials must be aware of racially insensitive remarks between player during contests.
- If heard by a PIAA Official, it must be addressed immediately and firmly.
- Ejections should be strongly considered when faced with this type of infraction.
- If an official fails to hear the remark but it is reported to them by a player, the official must approach the potentially offending team's head coach and report to that head coach what they were told.

Concussion Information

It's not surprising that a study revealed that player-to-player contact is the most frequent injury mechanism leading to concussions. See:

<http://www.usnews.com/news/sports/articles/2015/07/13/rough-play-is-riskier-than-heading-in-youth-soccer-study>

There are rules in place to help reduce such contact. Active enforcement of pertinent provisions of Rule 12: Fouls and Misconduct, can help minimize the incidence of such concussions. The following is a list of notable sections under Rule 12:

1. Rule 12, Section 1, Article 1—A player shall not jump at an opponent.
2. Rule 12, Section 4, Article 1—A player shall be penalized for charging an opponent in a dangerous or reckless manner, or using excessive force.
3. Rule 12, Section 6—A player shall not participate in dangerous play, which is an act an official considers likely to cause injury to another player.
4. Rule 12, Section 8, Article 1(f)(10)—A player shall be cautioned (yellow card) for (f) unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to: (10) [a] player who displays reckless play.
5. Rule 12, Section 8, Article 2(a) and (d)—A player shall be disqualified (red card) for (a) exhibiting violent conduct [or] (d) committing serious foul play.

The NFHS, PIAA, and the statewide rules interpreter encourage you to keep the elements of Rule 12 and its various provisions relating to player-to-player contact in mind as you officiate. Emphasizing these provisions will help control aggressive or unsportsmanlike player-to-player contact and as a result, help minimize the incidence of concussions in high school soccer.



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND SKIN INFECTION PROCEDURES

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The transmission of infections such as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Herpes Gladiatorum, blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.



INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:

- Athletes must be told to notify a parent or guardian, athletic trainer and coach of any skin lesion prior to any competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional should evaluate any skin lesion before returning to competition.
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of infection.
- Coaches, officials and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on "time until return to competition." Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state or local guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:

- An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity.
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers need to wear gloves and take other precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash from contaminating themselves or others.
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water.
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning.
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:

- Appropriate vaccination of athletes, coaches and staff as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- During time of outbreaks, follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as State and local Health Departments.
- For more detailed information, refer to the Infectious Disease and Blood-borne Pathogens" and "Skin Disorders" sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

NFHS OFFICIAL SOCCER SIGNALS

Although NFHS has authorized different officials signals, PIAA will continue to use the following in ALL matches:

Direct Free Kick



1 Direct free kick
(points in direction of kick)



2 Kicking



3 Tripping



4 Holding



5 Handling



6 Pushing



7 Striking
(back and forth)



8 Jumping at



9 Reckless or
dangerous
charging

Indirect Free Kick



10 Indirect
free kick



11 Offside



12 Goalkeeper vio-
lation or second
touching



13 Dangerous Play



14 Obstruction

General



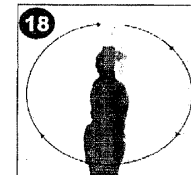
15 Play On



16 Dead Ball



17 Timeout



18 (Wind-up to
start clock)



19 Penalty Kick
(point to spot),
Goal Kick
(point to goal
area)



20 Goal



21 No Goal



22 Caution/
ejection



23 Corner Kick
(point to spot)

GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
 - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
 - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d. When independently validated lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

*– At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.
4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.

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