

MHSA Soccer Study Club Topics 2023 Season

Thirteen soccer study clubs are provided. Except for Topic #1, they do not have to be used in the order in which they appear in this handout. Pools should select the topics that are most relevant to their area at any given time.

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Topic 1: Current Information

Background

This year's NFHS Soccer Rules Book several changes as listed below. Also, concussion management and other safety issues continue to be points of emphasis.

Activity – Part A – 2023 NFHS Soccer Rule Changes

3-3-2b (2,3) (NEW): Permits the referee to stop the clock to review game situations at any time without negatively impacting a player's ability to remain in the game.

Rationale: This rule change affords the ability for the referee to stop the clock and review situations without negatively affecting a player's ability to remain in the game. However, once the referee beckons medical professional or coach onto the field to further assess, the player must leave the field of play.

3-3-7: Clarifies where a player should re-enter the game to avoid confusion.

Rationale: This rule change clarifies that a player should re-enter the game from the official area at midfield. This avoids potential confusion as to who is or is not in the game.

3-4-1e (NEW): Clarifies players should exit the field on the bench side unless unable to do so due to injury.

Rationale: To assist the officials in the managing of substitutions, players should exit the field from the bench side when the substitute(s) are beckoned on by the referee unless the player(s) is unable to do so because of an injury. This avoids unnecessary interaction with opposing teams and fans and minimizes the potential for unsporting behavior.

4-2-11 (NEW): Defines how wearable technology devices may be worn.

Rationale: Sets a national standard for wearable technology. This change clarifies that these devices may be worn as a part of the shoe and/or under the uniform but not worn on the arm. Coaches and players are still not permitted to utilize technology to communicate during the game.

Rule 4 Reorganization: Adjusts the structure of the uniform rule to offer clarity.

Rationale: The reorganization of the uniform rule breaks up the rule into bite-size pieces that are easier for coaches and officials to apply.

11-1-5 (NEW): Defines deliberately playing the ball to clarify the existing rules.

Rationale: Defines the criteria for deliberately playing the ball when determining an offside infraction.

12-1-1 thru 3 (NEW), 18-1-1: Clarifies various foul categories and defines the seven direct free kick fouls /to provide consistency.

Rationale: The new article in Rule 12 and added definitions to Rule 18 define the seven direct free kick fouls and provide consistency for officials interpreting misconduct.

12-3-2, 3 (NEW): Clarifies that neither accidental nor deliberate hand/arm contact can result in a goal.

Rationale: The new articles eliminate the necessity for the referee to determine if the hand/arm contact was accidental or deliberate. Now, neither accidental nor deliberate contact with the hand/arm result in a goal for greater consistency and ease of interpretation.

12-8-5 (NEW): Offers clarity regarding goalkeeper handling not permitted outside and inside the penalty area.

Rationale: Adding language and direction for officials regarding goalkeeper handling outside the penalty area and inside the penalty area when they are not permitted to handle the ball.

12-9-4(NEW), 12-8-1f(14, 15), 12-8-2d (3,4): Defines considerations of denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO).

Rationale: This rule defines the considerations of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to provide additional consistency and clarity for referees.

Activity – Part B – 2023 NFHS Soccer Points of Emphasis

Wearable Technology – Allowed in Montana

Technology companies are making massive strides in developing and marketing wearable devices for student athletes. Wearable sports technologies are being used to monitor athletic training, in-game performance, and recovery after an injury. The availability of wearable technologies that allow individuals to monitor a variety of body functions, including but not limited to, heart rate, blood pressure, pace and distance traveled are readily available and cost effective. Nearly all these wearable technologies can both transmit and receive collected data from other mechanisms. This data can be used to evaluate how the body is performing, and the user can adjust as needed based on that data. While there are many different types, styles, and functions, the technology can only be worn as a part of the shoe and/or under the uniform and not worn on the arm or below the level of the shoulder.

Coaching and Team Area Decorum.

Good sport conduct is the behavior appropriate of coaches, players and bench personnel. This includes every individual who is in the team area during a game. Coaches set the tone for the contest with their display of sportsmanship. Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches and other bench/sideline personnel. A positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved. Inappropriate bench behavior shows a clear lack of respect.

Examples of inappropriate bench decorum include but are not limited to:

- Kicking or throwing objects in reaction to a decision.
- Entering the field of play to dissent a call or confront an official or player.
- Acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner.
- Arguing calls consistently.
- Engaging in a verbal or physical confrontation with the opposing coaching staff or players.
- Confronting or arguing with spectators.
- Referees are reminded that they are expected to manage this type of behavior.

Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO)

Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO) is an egregious attempt to prevent opponents from scoring. Although Rule 12 describes the various sanctions in place when an opponent is denied an obvious goal scoring opportunity, the rules have not offered guidance or criteria for DOGSO in the past. For a player to be sent off for denying and obvious goal-scoring opportunity the following four criteria must be present:

- Distance between the offense and the goal (the offense must be near the goal).
- General direction of play (the attacking players are generally headed toward the goal).
- Likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball (the player must have or been able to control the ball in order to score).
- Location and number of defenders (If another defender, including the goalkeeper is in a closed enough position to make a lawful tackle or attempt a save then this criteria is not met).
- If any element is missing, the player cannot be sent off for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. When you are considering the criteria above here are some questions to ask yourself.

What is the distance between the offence and the goal?

- Does the player have control of the ball?
- Can the player gain control of the ball?
- What is the direction of play?
- How many defenders are involved in the situation?
- Where are the defenders located?
- Does the offence lead to a direct free kick or an indirect free kick?
- If no offence were to occur, would the player have an obvious opportunity to score a goal?
- Does the player deliberately handle the ball to deny the opposing team a goal?
- If the offense occurred inside the penalty area, was the offence an attempt to play the ball?
- Offenses which deny a goal-scoring opportunity are not limited to those punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick. Referees are reminded that these offenses may include fouls for which the restart is an indirect free kick.

Substitutions

Managing substitutions is one of the many tools an official has to manage the game. Generally, substitutions are made prior to a throw-in, a corner kick, after a goal, at halftime or because of an injury. If a player is being replaced, the player shall exit the field on their bench side unless the player is injured and unable to exit to that side of the field. By exiting on their team bench side, the player does not have to walk in front of stands, or behind opponent's goal, or an opponent's bench.

If a player is injured and a team elects to play shorthanded while the injured player is being evaluated this is a coach's choice. Injured players may be attended to anywhere off the playing field but if the player is cleared to play they must re-enter from the official's area on the bench side of the field when beckoned by the referee.

Activity – Part C – 2023 NFHS Soccer Rules Interpretations

SITUATION 1: Team B No. 3 was asked to leave the field to correct improper equipment. The player exits the field on the end line and runs back on the field after fixing the improper equipment. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** The player must exit the field on the bench side unless the player is injured.

Additionally, all re-entries shall occur from the official area after being beckoned on by the official. (3-3-7, 3-4-1e)

SITUATION 2: Team A attacker, (a) uses a shoulder to deflect the ball into the opponent's goal, (b) uses a forearm to deflect the ball into the opponent's goal, (c) has the ball accidentally deflects off their arm into the opponent's goal. The referee declares all to be a goal for Team A. **RULING:** Correct procedure for (a); incorrect procedure for (b) and (c). **COMMENT:** For the purposes of determining handling, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. Additionally, a player is penalized for handling if the player scores a goal directly from their hand or arm – even if it is accidental. In (b) and (c), the ball hit below the armpit in both cases and even though (c) was accidental, neither goal would stand. In (a), the player deflected the ball from their shoulder above the armpit so the goal would stand. (12-3-1, 12-3-2)

SITUATION 3: Team B goalkeeper (a) loses track of their location and accidentally picks up the ball outside the penalty area, (b) catches a ball off a throw-in from a teammate in the penalty area, (c) mis-kicks a goal kick and runs and picks up the ball in the penalty area with no other player around. The official awards a direct free kick in (a) and an indirect free kick in (b) and (c). **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside the penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. If the violation is playing the ball a second time after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper must be cautioned if the offense stops a promising attack or disqualified if the offense denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO). In this scenario there was no opponent around, so DOGSO was not considered. (12-3-3, 12-8-4, 12-8-5)

SITUATION 4: Player No. 3 from Team B tackles the opponent with excessive force inside the penalty area. The referee disqualifies the player for serious foul play. A penalty kick is awarded, and the offender's team must play short-sided. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The foul may also be a DOGSO inside the penalty area; the nature of the foul rises to the level of disqualification. [12-1-3c, 12-9-2d(1), 12-9-4]

SITUATION 5: Team A is awarded a free kick and multiple players from Team B line up for a wall at appropriate distance from the spot per the official, and then another player from Team B (the defending team) lays down behind the wall. Before allowing the play to start, the official instructs the player from Team B to stand up. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** A player may play the ball while on the ground provided the player's action does not create a danger to that player or any other player. Laying down behind the wall of defensive players creates a dangerous situation to both the player on the ground and those defending in the wall. (12-7-1)

SITUATION 6: Player No. 6 from Team A carelessly slide-tackles an opponent right outside the penalty area, denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity. The referee disqualifies the player and issues a red card to No. 6 and restarts play with a direct free kick. **RULING:** Correct procedure. [12-9-2d(3), 12-9-4]

Activity- Part D - Listed below are key sections of the MHSA Handbook for soccer season:

Soccer goal differential language for

- Class AA When a team is winning by:
 - 8 goals, they will reduce their number of players playing from 11 to 10.
 - 9 goals, they will reduce their number of players playing from 10 to 9.
 - 10 goals, the contest ends.
 - If at any time the goal deficit decreases, then the winning team may put a player back into the game for the 2021-22 season.

- Class A When a team is winning by:
 - 10 goals, the contest ends

Behavior improvement plan:

All member schools with soccer programs are subject to the Soccer Behavior Improvement Plan. The objectives of the plan are listed on this slide:

- To improve the overall soccer experience for players, coaches and fans.
- To reduce the incidents of negative behavior and the number of cards issued for unsporting behavior.
- To ensure that all MHSA activity participants and coaches are held to similar standards of conduct, specifically in terms of sportsmanship.

This year, we are making a major change to the BIP – with the main focus of the plan to address behavior fouls and issues – not all yellow cards.

The previous rule stated - Any student or coach who receives three yellow cards in three separate games for any reason (except for a coach who receives a card for an illegally equipped player) will serve a one-game suspension. This year component of the BIP reduces the yellow cards from 3 to 2 but focuses on the “behavior” yellow cards. This will state:

- Two (2) yellow cards in two separate games to any one player or coach for any of the following 12-8 yellow cards misconduct will result in a 1 game suspension for player or coach that is caution accordingly. These are the yellow cards that are currently considered “team cards:”
 - Dissent [(12-8-1c) yellow]
 - Attention seeking/taunting [12-8-1f-12 (yellow)]

Officials should include all cards on their reports again this season. This rule will remain the same for players and coaches regarding red cards.

(b) One red card in a game to any one player or coach for any of the following 12-8 misconduct sending off will result in a 1 game suspension (in addition to loss of playing time in the game from which they are ejected).

- Inappropriate or offensive language/gestures [12-8-1d and 12-8-2f (red)]
- Attention seeking/taunting [12-8-2b (red)]
- Violent conduct [12-8-2a (red)]
- Fighting [12-8-2g (red)]

Cards will clear at the end of regular season play. A separate accumulation of two cards will apply to post-season.

This remaining part of the rule will remain the same rule will remain the same as in the past:

- Accumulation of cards in a single game – four or more cards in any one game will result in an MHSA review of the game.
- Accumulation of cards in a particular program – ten or more of the cards (identified above as behavioral yellow and all red) in any program (for a single gender) will result in a one-game suspension for the head coach.
- Cards will clear at the end of regular season play. A separate accumulation of two cards will apply to post-season.
- Any player who is issued 2 yellow cards in one game or a straight red card in a game is disqualified from further play in the match and cannot be replaced.

Topic 2: Concussion Management

In April 2013, the Montana Legislature passed the Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes Act. Review the current MHSA Rules and Regulations regarding concussion/serious injury:

Section (4) CONCUSSIONS/SERIOUS INJURY REQUIREMENTS AND RETURN TO PLAY

A. Return to Play:

In accordance with the Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes Act, an athletic trainer, coach, or official shall remove a youth athlete from participation in any organized youth athletic activity at the time the youth exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion. The youth cannot return to play until he/she is evaluated by a licensed health care professional and receives written clearance to return to play from the licensed health care professional.

In addition, the MHSA also requires that an athletic trainer, coach, or official shall remove a student-athlete from participation in any MHSA activity at the time the student exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a serious injury. The student cannot return to play until he/she is evaluated by a licensed health care professional and is cleared by a licensed health care professional, although written clearance is not required for serious injury other than concussion unless mandated by the local school district.

B. MHSA Policy in Accordance with State Legislation:

Each (high) school district in this state offering organized youth athletic activities shall adopt policies and procedures to inform athletic trainers, coaches, officials, youth athletes and parents or guardians of the nature and risk of brain injuries, including the effects of continuing to play after a concussion.

(Sections C and D pertain to schools)

E. Officials Education and Awareness:

Each MOA or non-MOA official who works MHSA contests must take the NFHS Concussion in Sports course each year. That course must be taken after June 1st for the subsequent school year and must be completed before officiating scrimmages or contests. Schools using non-MOA officials for sub varsity games must verify those officials have completed training.

Review the language in **Substitutions, Rule 3, Section 3.**

It is the officials' responsibility to monitor play and to observe players and situations for safety and fair competition.

It is not the officials' responsibility to diagnose concussions. Officials who observe possible injuries or health-related concerns should stop play and tell the coach to evaluate the player.

Review the information presented in the rules clinic:

Officials, coaches and administrators are being asked to make all efforts to ensure the safety of athletes who participate in MHSA activities. In regard to players experiencing possible concussions or other serious injuries during MHSA contests or practices, the following procedures will be implemented:

Officials' Responsibilities:

- Officials must complete the online *Concussion in Sport* course.

- Officials are asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors of a concussion and other possible serious injuries. If there is a player that exhibits signs and symptoms of an injury/serious illness, officials will make coaches aware of the injured player and call an injury time out.
- The official should notify the coach by making the following statement:
 - *“Coach, you need to take a look at this player; he/she is exhibiting signs and symptoms of an injury.”*
- Once the official notifies the coach, it is now the coach’s responsibility.
- The official does not need to view written permission for an athlete to return to play nor does the official need to verify the credentials of the appropriate health-care professional. These responsibilities belong to the coach.
- Ultimately, the decision to return an athlete to competition rests with the coach, after the affected player is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

Concussion Resource Information

Various information and resources are available on the MHSA website. Visit www.mhsa.org and proceed to the Sports Medicine page from the link on the home page.

Topic 3: Officials' Exit Strategy

Background

NFHS Soccer Rule 5-1-2 outline the officials' jurisdiction.

Activity

Review the sample plan below. Establish a specific timeline for your local pool, then follow-up by having your pool coordinator communicate the plan to the local administrators. Variations might occur for weather, levels of play (varsity, jv, freshman), emergencies etc.

Minute	Activity
>60	Field prepped, goals/flags in place, lines drawn clearly, benches out
-60 to -50	Teams and officials arrive and begin warming up
-50 to -40	Officials inspect field & meet with school administrator to discuss crowd control, emergency plans, game exit plan, sign for checks etc.
-40 to -25	Officials conduct pre-game instruction/review
-25	Officials greet visiting coach, exchange rosters
- 20	Officials greet home coach, get game balls, exchange roster & meet/instruct ball handlers
-10	Captains and coaches meet with officials to review rules, inquire about equipment, conduct coin toss & conduct sportsmanship talk
-5	National Anthem or pledge of allegiance (optional)
-3	Introductions of visitors and home
-1	Officials and players take the field
Kick Off	AR even with 2 nd to last defender, bench personnel seated or pinnies, balls in bags
Halftime	Officials meet at center circle, leave field as a team. Discuss game issues
Kick Off	AR even with 2 nd to last defender, bench personnel seated or pinnies, balls in bags
Game Ends	Officials meet at center circle, leave field as a team. Go to neutral spot and do not engage in a postgame handshake with teams. Confirm scores, cautions issued. Leave field complex as a team (when possible)
W/in 24 hrs	Referee send report to MHSA of cards or issues (cc to home/away school administrator)

Exiting the Field

- Discuss as a pool what things should be considered when developing an exit plan for each field.
- Examine each field where varsity and sub varsity games will be held in your area. Look for natural exit paths that would avoid contact with bench or fans.
- Develop routes and plans for each area and suggest to pool members that they follow the agreed upon route and procedure.
- Have referee bags located in a "neutral area" perhaps in cars parked away from the fan parking area.

- If 4th officials are used, delegate responsibility to the 4th to gather referee gear and meet up with the team at the predetermined location.
- Discuss how you will handle exceptions to the plan (like 2 games back to back where some members of the officiating team need to remain to work the next game and others need to leave.)
- Inform the site administrators of your plan and get input from them. Your plan should have the officials meeting at mid field and leaving directly from there, avoiding the request for a postgame handshake with the players. Ask the site administrator to inform both benches that you will not be available after the match.

Topic 4: Game Reports

Background

The Soccer Behavior Improvement Plan adopted by the MHSA Executive Board is in effect. This study club is designated as rules review and discussion of reporting relevant items to MHSA/MOA.

Activity

1. Review NFHS Rule 12, Section 8 – Misconduct found on pages 58-65 of the NFHS rules book. Officials are asked to discuss best practices and strategies for applying the rules of the game consistently, particularly those rules involving good sporting behavior.
2. As a group, discuss the requirements for game reports to be submitted to the MHSA/MOA.
 - a. **An Electronic form has been developed – please submit your game reports electronically this year.** Brian Michelotti is the MHSA contact listed on the bottom of the form). [Click Here](#) for a link to the electronic game report.
 - b. **The report will be sent to Brian Michelotti and automatically to the home and away school administrator.**

All cards and unusual situations must be reported to the MHSA office, including but not limited to:

- **All yellow cards** (please include the specific rule reference of the misconduct). Even though the BIP has been changed to track Behavioral Yellow cards, we still would like all cards reported.
- **All red cards** (please include the specific rule reference of the misconduct). Red Cards need to be reported to the MHSA office as soon as possible.
- Any improper or illegal uniform situations (refer to study club #4)
- Any game situation in which a field barrier was not apparent
- Any unusual situation about which the MHSA/MOA should be aware

MHSA Soccer Behavior Improvement Plan

Last Revised: June 2023

The MHSA Executive Board has implemented the following additional administrative penalties for soccer. These penalties are in **addition** to the ejection penalties as outlined in the MHSA By-Laws, Article VIII, Section (2) General Penalties and do not contradict the published NFHS Soccer Rules.

Component 1: <u>Cards per Individual</u>	<p>Two (2) yellow cards in two separate games to any one player or coach for any of the following 12-8 yellow cards misconduct will result in a 1 game suspension for player or coach that is caution accordingly. These are the yellow cards that are currently considered "team cards:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissent [(12-8-1c) yellow]• Attention seeking/taunting [12-8-1f-12 (yellow)] <p><u>Interpretations:</u></p> <p><i>If an individual who already has one yellow cards receives two <u>more</u> yellow cards in a single game, he/she will serve a one-game suspension, which will clear only two of the three cards. The third yellow remains as part of the active card count for that individual.</i></p> <p><i>Following the first suspension, <u>two</u> yellow cards in <u>two</u> separate games for behavioral yellow cards reason (except for a coach who receives a card for an illegally equipped player) will serve a one-game suspension for that individual.</i></p> <p><i>Individual yellow cards during the regular season will not carry into the post season. However, if a penalty is incurred during the last regular season game, that penalty must be served in the post season.</i></p> <p><i>In post season play, any student or coach who receives <u>two</u> yellow cards in <u>two</u> separate games for any reason (except for a coach who receives a card for an illegally equipped player) will serve a one-game suspension.</i></p>
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Rationale:	This provides a means of addressing the major behavioral cards given to individual students or coaches.
Definition of a one-game suspension:	<p>A student (coach) who plays (coaches) only sub-varsity soccer will serve a one-game suspension at the sub-varsity level.</p> <p>A student (coach) who plays (coaches) sub-varsity and varsity soccer will serve a one-game suspension at both the sub-varsity and varsity level, regardless of the level of play at which the yellow cards were issued.</p> <p>A student (coach) who plays (coaches) only varsity soccer will serve a one-game suspension at the varsity level and may not participate in a sub-varsity contest in any way until the varsity suspension is served.</p>

Component 2: <u>Cards per Program by Gender</u>	<p>If any program (gender) accumulates ten cards for any of the following violations the head coach will serve a one-game suspension at the varsity level. The specific violations include any of the following under NFHS Soccer Rules, 12-8 Misconduct:</p> <p>Dissent [12-8-1c (yellow)] Inappropriate or offensive language/gestures [12-8-1d (yellow) and 12-8-2f (red)] Attention seeking/taunting [12-8-1f-12 (yellow) and 12-8-2b (red)] Violent conduct [12-8-2a (red)] Spitting [12-8-2e (red)] Fighting [12-8-2g (red)]</p>
Rationale:	This penalty provides a means of addressing systemic issues within an entire program. This penalty makes the head coach accountable for behavior, regardless of the individuals who are receiving cards. In addition, it ensures that the administration is informed of violations that are largely preventable and often times have little to do with playing rules.
Definition of a one-game suspension:	The head coach will serve a one-game suspension at the varsity level and may not assist in a sub-varsity contest in any way until the varsity suspension is served.

Component 3: <u>Cards per Game</u>	If in any single game four or more yellow and/or red cards are issued to the students and/or coaches of one team for any reason (except for a coach who receives a card for an illegally equipped player), the school will be required to respond in writing to the game report submitted by the official. The reports will be reviewed by the Executive Director and the school(s) will be subject to penalty at the Executive Director's discretion.
Rationale:	This component provides a means of addressing those game situations in which regard for behavior becomes secondary to regard for winning. While unusual, there have been games in which one team has accumulated four or more cards that are issued because of behavior or playing rule violations.

Component 4: <u>Sideline Barriers</u>	Rules and Regulations, Section (34) Crowd Control, item L requires that schools erect sideline barriers for soccer fields during all contests. Unless soccer contests are conducted in stadiums, soccer field barriers must be placed at least fifteen (15) feet from the touchline on the spectator side. If the facility layout or structure does not allow for the minimum fifteen feet, the maximum possible distance will be used. A painted line on the grass is not an acceptable barrier for this purpose.
Rationale:	In consideration of spectator behavior as well as safety of the assistant referee, a standard minimum distance between the field and the spectators should be consistent for all high school contests (whenever feasible).

Component 5: <u>MOA Commissioner Action</u>	The MOA Commissioner will develop mandates for officials in enforcing the NFHS soccer rules and adhering to the tenets of high school participation. This includes emphasis on the published rules, as well as focusing on participation and sportsmanship as essential components of school-sponsored competition. Certain behaviors that are considered inappropriate in high school activities will be prohibited, i.e. officials, coaches and/or students addressing one another by first name while on the field of play.
Rationale:	Reinforcement of the education-based message is key to the success of the previous components.

Topic 5: Procedures for Addressing Player Equipment

Background

Equipment and uniform issues are ongoing, as evidenced by the number of major editorial changes that refer to uniforms. This was a study club in previous years, but a review is certainly in order, especially if your pool has new officials.

Activity

Review the applicable rules for player equipment, coaches' responsibilities, and the role of the official.

Rule 4-1-1 Required Equipment (page 25 of the NFHS rules book)

ART. 1 . . . The required player equipment includes a jersey, shorts, socks, suitable shoes and shinguards. The shinguards shall provide adequate and reasonable protection, be professionally manufactured, age- and size-appropriate, not altered to decrease protection, worn under the socks, and are worn with the bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle. (see illustrations regarding shinguards). Shinguards must meet the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) specifications. The NOCSAE seal and height range shall be permanently marked on the front of the shinguard. Equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn. It is also recommended that male players wear a supporter and protective cup.

Rule 4-3 Coaches' Responsibilities (pages 24-25 of the NFHS rules book)

Each head coach shall be responsible for ensuring that each of his/her players is **properly** and **legally** equipped.

Illegally Equipped Players (18-1-1-u page 76)

The head coach shall receive the first caution issued (yellow card) for an illegally equipped player. All subsequent cautions (yellow cards) for illegally equipped player(s) shall be issued directly to the player(s) and not to the head coach. Illegally equipped player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. 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. The player(s) must be removed and may be replaced at the time of the caution to the coach or player(s). The removed player(s) may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity only after reporting to an official who shall be satisfied the player's equipment and uniform are in order.

Improperly Equipped Players (18-1-1-v page 76)

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.

Rule 3-1-3 Players and Substitutions (pages 17-20 of the NFHS rules book)

Each team shall submit a team roster, containing the names and numbers of all players, and substitutes, all bench personnel and coaches to the officials at least five minutes prior to the start of the contest. The game shall not begin until this is complete. Players, substitutes, numbers, bench personnel and coaches may be added to the roster after the start of play. Goalkeepers may have two numbers listed on the roster, a goalkeeper's number and a field player's number.

The head referee or center referee shall inquire of each head coach whether each of his/her players is properly and legally equipped at the kickoff.

1. Obtain rosters from coaches or other personnel. Every individual who will occupy the team area must be listed on the roster. Roster must include the height of each player. A sample roster has been posted on the MHSA website. This form is strongly recommended, but not required provided that the information is complete.

2. Captains and coaches meet with officials to review rules, inquire about equipment, conduct coin toss & conduct sportsmanship talk.
3. If officials have concerns about a particular player or players, the officials may ask to view the shinguard for the appropriate NOCSAE stamp. If the NOCSAE stamp is present and appropriate for the student's size, the shinguard is LEGAL and play may proceed provided that the shinguard is worn PROPERLY.
4. Report any unusual situations to the MHSA/MOA using the forms posted on the MHSA website.

Topic 6: Dual Referee Mechanic

Background

The two referee (DUAL) mechanic continues to be used throughout the country at the high school and collegiate level.

Although Montana has adopted the diagonal system of soccer officiating, MOA Rules and Regulations allow for the use of the dual mechanic, provided the following conditions are met:

1. **The dual mechanic is used ONLY for sub-varsity contests.**
2. The dual mechanic is used ONLY after every attempt has been made to assign three officials or in the event that an official does not show up for a particular contest.
3. There is no gender-bias in assignment of the dual mechanic. Dual mechanic usage must be comparable between boys and girls contests.
4. If one of the three assigned officials have not arrived or is injured at varsity game time, MHSA may provide a variance for varsity games, provided permission is obtained PRIOR to the contest. The event manager/AD must contact Mark Beckman or Scott Wilson to obtain permission.

Brian Michelotti [406-431-7245] or Amy Bartels [406-250-9714].

No varsity game may use fewer than three officials without prior authorization.

Activity

It is imperative that each official not only familiarize himself or herself with the Dual Mechanic (pages 86-97 of the rule book) but also practice this mechanic in a scrimmage setting. This approach will help insure proper use of the system if circumstances require its use.

Each referee functions as a “lead” or “trail” referee, depending on the situation. In addition to calling fouls/misconduct, the 2 referees must also cover all boundaries normally handled by Assistant Referees and be positioned to observe and penalize offside violations.

Have the pool discuss placement and responsibilities of Lead and Trail at various situations including:

1. Start of match
2. Goal Kick
3. Corner Kick
4. Penalty Kick
5. Offside
6. Substitutions
7. Goals
8. Throw-ins
9. End of period

Following this study club, work with local high schools to schedule some practice scrimmages (only one school can be involved in scrimmage situations). Have the entire pool attend the scrimmages and take turns functioning in the dual mechanic. Critique each other.

Topic 7: Fourth Officials

Background

In Montana, not all officials' pools are large enough to have the opportunity to use fourth officials (or perhaps not on a regular basis). As a result, when the opportunity to use a fourth does arise, not everyone has had enough experience to execute the fourth official's duties.

Activity

A sample list of fourth officials' duties has been added to the NFHS Soccer Rules Book. Review the duties as a pool. Even if you rarely use fourth officials, those duties are part of many post season contests, so this study club presents an occasion for discussion of that role.

Refer to pages 104-106 of the current rules book.

Topic 8: Fitness

Background

Soccer is arguably the most physically demanding of all high school sports and proper proximity to play (within 15-20 yards) demands a high level of fitness on the part of the center referee as well as the assistant referees. At some point it may be a requirement to pass a fitness test, as it is for NISOA (National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association) and upper levels of USSF. Start now by getting in the habit of having the entire pool take the fitness test and record the results. The test was updated in March of 2017.

Activity

Have the entire pool take the NISOA fitness test and record the results. Use results for assigning and discuss ideas to improve. A copy of a description of this test sequence is attached. Simply administer the tests so your referees know how they stack up against their local peers. Later you will be able to show them how they rank against collegiate officials.

Suggest taking the test prior to the first games or shortly thereafter and when testing, take the distance run first.

NISOA PROPOSED PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE TEST

This is the procedure for testing the soccer referee to evaluate his/her fitness level at the elite national or international level soccer referee based upon the findings of the leading researchers in the field of Soccer Referee Physiology.

Physical Performance Test for Renewing/New NISOA Members

The physical performance test for NISOA Renewing/New members is identical to the current test for US Soccer Grade 6 referees. In fact, NISOAs strongly recommends chapters accept test results from members who have taken and passed the US Soccer Grade 6 test for the current registration period and exempt them from chapter testing.

Event 1: Repeated Sprint Test

- Participants run six consecutive 40 meter sprints followed by a recovery period after each sprint (while walking back to the start line).
- Dynamic start with the front foot on a line that is 1.5 meters away from the electronic timing gates at the starting position.

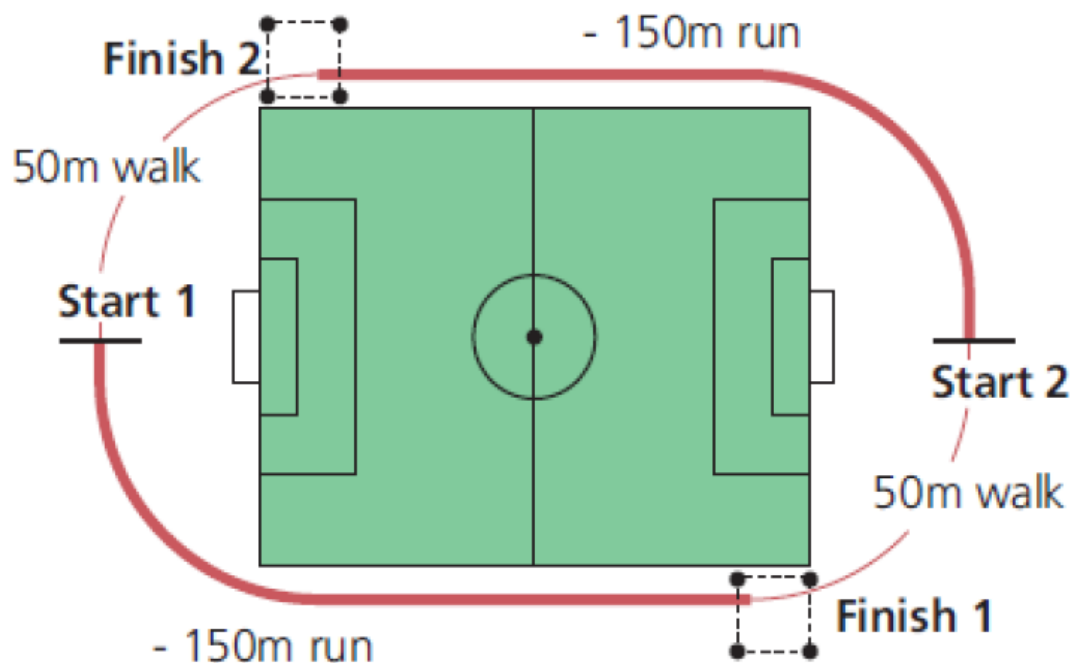


- The 'start' gate is placed at 0m and the 'finish' gate at 40m. The 'start line' is marked out 1.5m before the 'start' gate.
- Referees line up at the start with their front foot touching the 'start line'. Once the test leader signals that ready, the referee is free to start.
- Referees receive a maximum of 60 seconds recovery between each of the 6 x 40m sprints. During recovery, referees must walk back to the start.
- If a referee falls or trips, they should be given an additional trial (one trial = 1 x 40 m).
- If a referee fails one trial out of the six, they should be given a seventh trial immediately after the sixth trial. If they fail two trials out of seven, the match official has failed the test.

The maximum allowed time for each sprint is 9.0 seconds.

Event 2 Interval Test

- Referees must complete 20 x 150m run / 50m walk intervals. This equates to 10 laps of a 400m athletics track. A lap consists of two 150 meter runs with two 50 meter recovery walks. Each run must be accomplished within 45 seconds. The walk interval shall be 45 seconds.
- Referees must start from a standing position. They must not start before the whistle. On the whistle, referees are allowed to start running.
- At the end of each run, each referee must enter the 'walking area' before the whistle (45 seconds). The walking area is marked out with a line 1.5m before and 1.5m behind the 150m line.
- If a referee fails to place a foot inside the walking area on time, they should receive a clear warning from the test leader. If a referee fails to place a foot inside the walking area on time for a second occasion, they should be stopped by the test leader and informed that they have failed the test.



CONCLUSION

THESE TESTS:

1. Are recommended tests that should be given to the soccer referee.
2. Are based upon the different activity levels that a referee will encounter during the 90- minute soccer match.
3. Will evaluate the fitness levels in all aspects of the match, forward running at low, medium, high and maximal speeds.
4. Will evaluate the agility of the referee in backward and sideways movement as well as the agility/mobility movements in making the transitions that are required on the field.

Topic 9: Rules Comparison: NFHS/NCAA/FIFA

Background

Many officials work a variety of levels throughout the year. With so many teams to cover, it's not unforeseeable that mistakes can occur when moving from one level to another.

Activity

Review the rules comparison of NFHS and NCAA Rules and FIFA Laws.

Topic 10: Evaluating Knowledge of the Game (Rules Exam)

Background

Most officials work in a variety of rules' venues: club, high school and college. Oftentimes officials are working all three venues in the same weekend! Use a study club opportunity to review the rules that are specific to high school.

Activity

Take the following NFHS Soccer Rules Exam Part II. Discuss the significant rules differences among club, high school and collegiate rules.

Place an emphasis on the use of signals. The use of signals is mandatory.

Topic 11: Safety

Background

Aside from winning and losing, the coaches, players and parents all hope for the same outcome: a safe and healthy game experience. The officials play a significant role in achieving that outcome.

Activity

1. Refer to page 31 for the Pregame Responsibilities of the Officials. Being familiar with the field of play and its surrounding areas is one of the most important ways to ensure safety.
2. Weather: you know the saying about Montana weather. The high school soccer season will begin with temperatures in the 90's and end in the 40's (hopefully no lower!). Officials need to be cognizant of weather factors that affect the field of play, the players, and the officials themselves. Discuss ways to minimize the impact of varying weather conditions on players and on the officials' crew.
3. Discuss ways to help minimize the risk of injury to officials. Experienced officials should mentor newer officials about physically preparing for the game situations.
4. The NFHS has provided a free online course titled, "Heat Illness Prevention." Although geared toward coaching, this course gives a 20-minute overview of minimizing risk for students when participating outside in the heat and might be of interest to officials. This course highlights the importance of hydration and understanding the best methods to acclimate students to warm temperatures. For more information, please visit nfhslearn.com or contact the MHSO office.

12. Procedures for Post Season

Background

Overtime procedures and other issues that do not apply to regular season games take effect during the post season.

Activity

Post Season Competition

Review Montana's tiebreaker before post season

By state association adoption, a winner shall be determined in all playoff/tournament games with overtime play as follows:

a. There shall be two full ten-minute overtime periods (not sudden victory). A coin toss shall be held, and the winner shall choose a goal to defend or to kick off first. The loser of the toss shall be given the remaining choice. At the end of the first ten-minute period the teams shall change ends.

b. If the score remains tied after both ten-minute overtime periods, proceed to kicks from the mark. Kicks from the mark should be administered as outlined on pages 85-86 of the National Federation Soccer Rules Book.

RESOURCES

Need game reporting forms?

The game reporting forms are all online. Refer to the MOA page or the soccer page of the MHSA website: www.mhsa.org.

Need to refer to the MHSA or MOA handbooks?

A copy of the complete MHSA Handbook is available online. Go to the MHSA website: www.mhsa.org and click on Handbook. Some of the sections that might be of use are:

Rules and Regulations – includes Return to Play rules as well as the coaching rule, which might affect officials who also coach the sport.

Soccer – includes the general rules governing the administration of high school soccer in Montana.

MOA – includes the general rules for members of the Montana Officials Association.

Need national resources?

The website for the National Federation of State High school Associations contains a variety of information. Navigate to www.nfhs.org for more information. For concussion, heat and other soccer-related courses, visit www.nfhslearn.com.