

2023-24 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.