

**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.

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| <p><b>Component 1:</b><br/><b><u>Cards per Individual</u></b></p> | <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"> <li>• Dissent [(12-8-1c) yellow]</li> <li>• Attention seeking/taunting [12-8-1f-12 (yellow)]</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Interpretations:</i></b><br/><b><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></b></p> <p><b><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></b></p> <p><b><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></b></p> <p><b><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></b></p> |
| <p><b>Rationale:</b></p>  | <p>This provides a means of addressing the major behavioral cards given to individual students or coaches.</p>   |
| <p><b>Definition of a one-game suspension:</b></p>                | <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>  |

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| <p><b>Component 2:</b><br/><b><u>Cards per Program by Gender</u></b></p> | <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)]<br/>         Inappropriate or offensive language/gestures [12-8-1d (yellow) and 12-8-2f (red)]<br/>         Attention seeking/taunting [12-8-1f-12 (yellow) and 12-8-2b (red)]<br/>         Violent conduct [12-8-2a (red)]<br/>         Spitting [12-8-2e (red)]<br/>         Fighting [12-8-2g (red)]</p> |
| <p><b>Rationale:</b></p>   | <p>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.</p>  |
| <p><b>Definition of a one-game suspension:</b></p>                       | <p>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.</p>  |

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| <b>Component 3:</b><br><u>Cards per Game</u> | <p>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.</p> |
| <b>Rationale:</b>                            | <p>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.</p>  |

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| <b>Component 4:</b><br><u>Sideline Barriers</u> | <p>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.</p> |
| <b>Rationale:</b>                               | <p>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).</p>   |

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| <b>Component 5:</b><br><u>MOA Commissioner Action</u> | <p>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.</p> |
| <b>Rationale:</b>                                     | <p>Reinforcement of the education-based message is key to the success of the previous components.</p>   |