

PRESEASON GUIDE

SOCER



2012

No More 'Soft Red' Cards

There will be no more "soft red" cards in high school soccer games. The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee, which met in Indianapolis Jan. 23-25, passed that significant rule change and it was approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

From the fall 2012 season forward, a red card to a player results in the team playing one player short for the remainder of the game. Several states were already using that as a state association administrative rule difference.

Matching the ruling of the two other major rules-making bodies (FIFA and NCAA), a player who is shown the second caution in the same game will be disqualified with a red card and the team will play the remainder of the game without replacing the disqualified player. They will play shorthanded.

There can still be substitutions. If two, including the disqualified player, go off the field at the time, only one can come on. If four go off, then three come on.

There are new mechanics to follow when you issue a subsequent yellow card to the same player in the same game, commonly known as the "second yellow." So that players, coaches and fans know that the player is being disqualified as a result of a second yellow (as opposed to a straight red for something like violent conduct or serious foul play), first show a yellow card. Then, lower that card to waist level, grasp your red card and raise it ▶

Bryan Hulen, Seattle, issues a yellow card. If a player receives a second caution, show the second yellow card and then the player is to be disqualified with a red card and, as a result of a new rule change, may not be replaced.



► ‘Soft Red’

over your own head (12-8-2c, 5-3-1g). Ask the disqualified player to step off the field — no replacement.

All other card mechanics remain the same — if you expect retaliation, get the card up quickly. If you do not sense the opponents will retaliate, draw the player away from the crowd, turn the player’s back toward the official scorer (or your dual partner, if there is no scorer) and you move to a location where you can observe the most possible players on the field, say what words you need to say to the player, record the information such as “kick, reckless, two cautions and 48th minute.”

Play 1: B2 was cautioned in the 11th

minute of play. To prevent a breakaway goal, B2 now uses excessive force to kick A9’s leg. **Ruling 1:** Stop the clock, call Team A’s coach and the appropriate health care professional onto the field to tend to A9. Draw B2 away from the other players and display a red card only. That is not a case of a second yellow, but rather a “straight red.” Ask the disqualified B2 to step off the field.

Play 2: B14 is at the scorer’s table, having reported to substitute at the next opportunity when B3 commits a reckless challenge, earning his second yellow card that game. **Ruling 2:** Stop the clock, show a yellow card to B3, lower that card and show a red card to B3, and then ask B3 to step off the field. If team B’s coach still wishes to substitute,

beckon B14 onto the field and make sure the player being substituted for goes off.

Play 3: During the first half, A6 was shown the yellow card for excessive celebration after scoring his first goal. A moment before halftime, A6 put the ball in the net, but was ruled offside and the goal was not counted. The halftime whistle blows and A6 approaches the assistant referee that raised the offside flag and loudly dissents. **Ruling 3:** The guidance in 12.8.3 Situation F still applies. Using the definition of a player (18.1.1c), there are no “players” between periods of during the halftime interval, so while A6 is still shown a second yellow card and disqualified, team A will field 11 players to start the second half. □

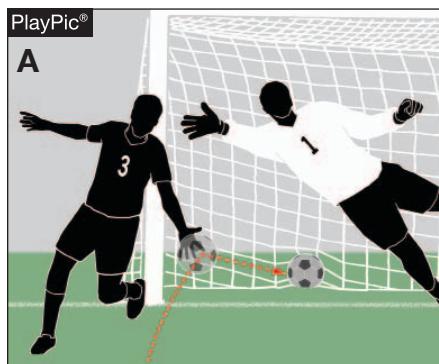
Goal: Yellow, No Goal: Red

Whether via advantage or a failed attempt to handle a ball on an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, if the ball enters the net for a valid goal, the defender is punished by a yellow card (12-8-2f 13; 12-8-2d 1). Previously found in Rules 12-8-3d 1 and 12-8-3d 2, in the past, any intentional hand ball by a player to stop a goal would result in a disqualification — even if the attempt at the goal was unsuccessful.

Play 1: In PlayPic A, B3 handles the ball in an attempt to stop the shot but the ball continues into the net. **Ruling 1:** Since a goal was the end result of that shot, stop the clock, award the goal, caution B3, ask B3 to step off the field (there may be a substitution or team B may play short) and restart with a kickoff.

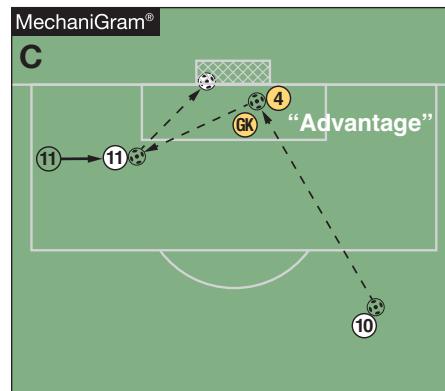
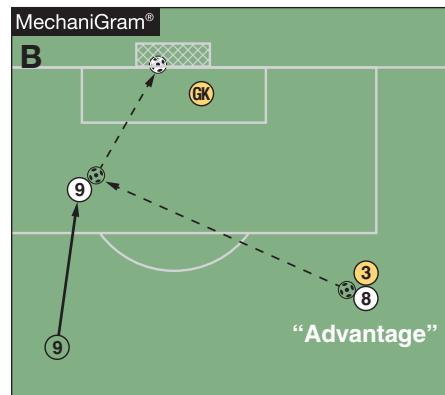
Play 2: In MechaniGram B, defender 3 fouls number 8 during a clear goal-scoring opportunity. But since the ball moves forward toward an onside number 9, the referee declares, “Play on! Advantage!” and number 9 taps the ball into the net. **Ruling 2:** Stop the clock, award the goal, disqualify B3 with a red card and restart with a kickoff. Misconduct other than intentional handling results in a red card even if the goal is scored.

Play 3: In MechaniGram C, defender number 4 handles the ball and keeps number 10’s shot out of the net. The



rebound goes to number 11, the referee thinks there might be an advantage and withholds the whistle as number 11 scores into an open net. **Ruling 3:** Stop the clock, award the goal, caution B4, ask B4 to step off the field (there may be a substitution or team B may play short) and restart with a kickoff.

Play 4: B5 is chasing A9 who has only keeper B1 to beat for an open shot on goal. B5 holds A9’s jersey and as A9 is falling, A9 gets off a weak shot that goes wide of the goal. **Ruling 4:** Display the red card to B5 for serious foul play. Team B will play one player short. □



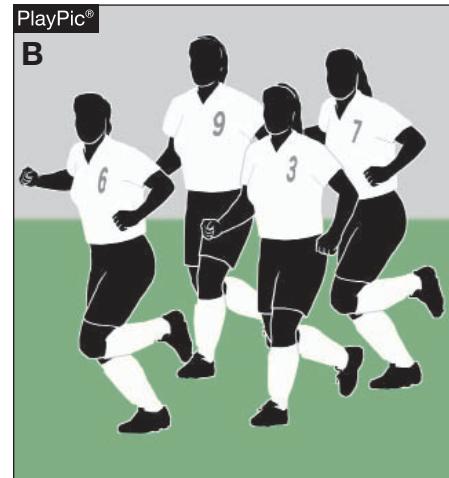
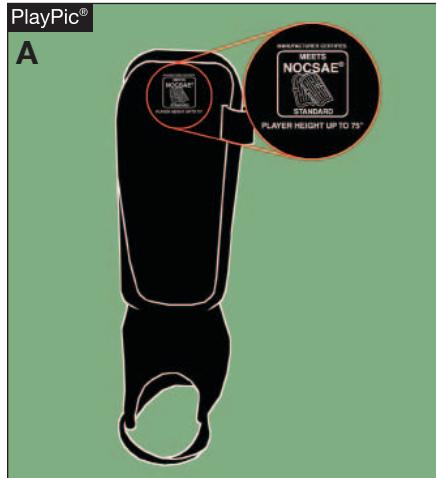
POINT OF EMPHASIS

NOCSAE Label Required on Shinguards

For several years, there has been a requirement for all shinguards to have a NOCSAE label. Beginning with the fall 2012 season, that NOCSAE seal (PlayPic A) must be *permanently marked on the front of the shinguard* (4-1-1). The days of "... but the label fell off last week" are gone.

Referees, don't go on a witch-hunt! If the coaches have verified that their players are legally equipped, they probably checked. But, if you have a doubt that the 6'2" player with the three-inch shinguards meets requirements, then check to make sure that player has the proper size guards. Inspect the unusual, not the routine.

The white jerseys and socks requirement (PlayPic B) remains a year off (4-1-1b). Before making the purchase, athletic directors might forward a photo or sample jersey to your state association and see if it will meet its standard.



Play: During a cursory pregame inspection, the referees see that 6'2" B5 is wearing a three-inch shinguard.

Ruling: Ask the coach to be in attendance and have the coach ask B5 to roll down the socks so the referees

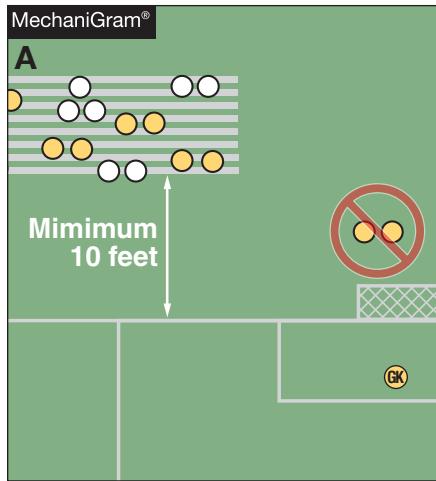
can see the height range indicated on the guard. If it is an illegal guard, inform the coach and B5 that B5 cannot participate wearing those guards. There is no punishment until B5 takes part in the game wearing illegal equipment. □

A Focus on the Field of Play

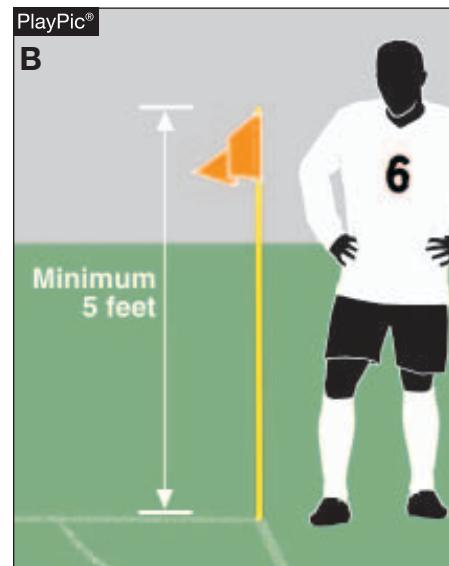
An editorial change made the height of a corner flag *at least* five feet (PlayPic B) rather than exactly five feet. There are many aspects of Rule 1 that will help teams and officials minimize risk, such as properly marked fields (to include continuous halfway lines).

Those people not associated with the game should remain well clear of the touchlines and goallines (MechaniGram A). If there are bleachers at the ends of the field, parents and fans may be in the bleachers. Ball persons and the momentary pass-through of a photographer should not interrupt play or draw the players' attention away from the field. However, fans may not stand directly behind the goal nets at either end of the field.

Administrators should occasionally glance at both ends of the field to make sure those areas remain clear and parents, fans and players from a prior (or upcoming) game are not distracting players during the game (1-2, 1-3, 1-6).



Play: During the referees' pregame field inspection, the two referees notice there are no lines marking the spectators' area, but there is a rope strung between stanchions on the side opposite the team benches. **Ruling:** The only criterion is the "spectators shall be



confined to an area at least 10 feet ..." and the rope barrier is perhaps more effective than a line. Allow the game to start. □

How to Manage Coaches When a Player is Hurt

By Carl P. Schwartz

Rule 3-3-1c 1 is clear, unmistakable and offers no exceptions: "During the time a coach or appropriate health-care professional is permitted on the field by the referee to attend to an injured player, coaching instruction shall not be given to any player on either team." See "No Coaching During an Injury" on p. 9.

Several times over the past years, the committee has considered altering that rule. They point out what actually takes place during an injury — the trainer is out dealing with A6, the coach stays in the team area and tells A14 to report to the official scorer, then as A6 and the trainer walk off the field, the coach yells, "A9, when A14 moves to outside left, you move up into midfield." To some, that constitutes "coaching," and some Team B coaches will ask referees to sanction the Team A coach for those words.

Let's vary the facts to the other extreme. As soon as A6 hits the ground and you stop the clock and call for the trainer, the Team B coach calls the entire squad to the touchline, pulls out a clipboard and starts diagramming plays. When your nearby assistant referee (or dual partner) gently reminds the coach that she can't coach during an injury, she loudly proclaims, "I can coach my team any time I want." Ask the team to return to the field, remind the coach of the limitation about not coaching during an injury and ask her to return to the team area. If she voices objections or continues to coach, caution as needed.

Middle ground. B4's injury is fairly serious and it's going to be two to three minutes before play can restart. Team A's coach, losing 2-1, wants to silently get word to his team to start a series of overlapping runs — if he yells it out loud, Team B hears and makes adjustments. So the coach calls over A6 and A11, explains what he wants and tells them to pass the word. A smart assistant referee who overhears those



Referee Shelle Ventresca, Indianapolis, waits with an injured player as the appropriate health-care personnel attends to her. Coaches are not permitted to use such injury stoppages to "coach" their players.

words will remind the coach that he or she is not to coach during an injury.

You can make a mountain out of a molehill by an unwise word while trying to enforce the restriction. If that single point becomes more than

that or when multiple players become involved, then an obvious infraction is taking place and that needs your attention.

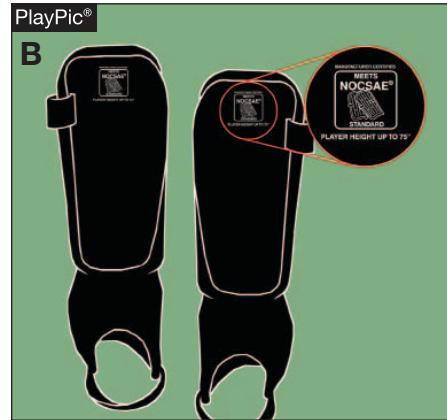
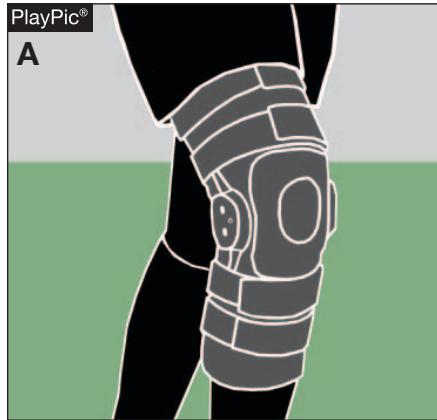
Carl P. Schwartz is Referee's soccer coordinator. □

POINT OF EMPHASIS**Ensure Player Equipment is Safe**

Player equipment rules begin with the players wearing only legal equipment. Coaches, as the adults of their teams, must work with their players and officials to ensure that player equipment is safe and legal (4-1, 4-2). Officials must also emphasize player safety and legal equipment throughout the match. That is a repeat point of emphasis from last year.

Wearing the proper equipment (PlayPics A and B) can actually start the first day of practice to begin the season. If one assistant coach were to check to make sure all jewelry, string bracelets, baseball caps, etc., are off, and all required equipment (shinguards, braces) are on, there should be no difficulties once the regular-season starts. It will probably take a week to 10 days for the habit to form, but once all the players get used to wearing only what they can wear during a game, it's easy.

Coaches, if you have any doubt about the legality of any piece of equipment, ask a referee during a preseason scrimmage or practice game. Referees, if you rule a particular piece of equipment illegal, let your officials association leadership



know about it so they can support your choice and spread the word to the other officials in your group. There is no need to frustrate a team, coach or player with "The referee last week let us wear it (use it, etc.)."

Play: Before the first pre-season game, Team A's coach and player A14 approach the referees to ask if A14's knee brace is legal. The referee examines the brace closely, calls both partners over for them to see it and asks if they think it is

acceptable. All three agree it is. The referee uses a smart phone to take a photo of the brace. Days later, the referee shows the photo during an association training session. **Ruling:** Excellent technique by that referee. A future referee could still determine the brace is dangerous, but given the veteran's experience and the knowledge that player has been playing regularly in that brace might sway the less-experienced referee to make the wise choice. □

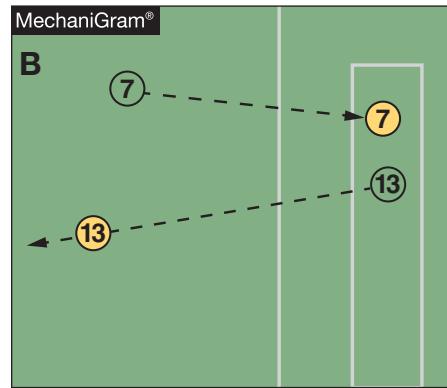
Substitutions From the Bench

After a goal is scored (PlayPic A), Team A's coach sends substitute A13 directly into the game from the bench, without reporting to the scorer, for player A7 (3-4-1b).

That is one of three times that a substitute (from the bench) may enter the field to replace a player without the referee's beckon (MechaniGram B) — others being at the *start of a period* or *to replace an injured player*.

Play 1: Team A's coach says, "Mike, no Neil, get in there now and play hard defense" — and both enter the field, but only one player departs. Play restarts.

Ruling 1: The referee made a mistake by letting that happen. Since both entered the field and took part in the game, either A13 (Mike) or A14 (Neil) is going to be shown the yellow card. Whichever player is shown the card must depart the field.



Play 2: Team B's coach says, "Nancy, we've just got a one-goal lead. Go in and protect it." Both Nancys on the team enter the field with only one player departing and take part in play until an assistant

referee points it out to the referee. **Ruling 2:** The officials erred by allowing play to restart with team A having an extra player. One of the Nancys will be shown a yellow card and be asked to return to the bench. □

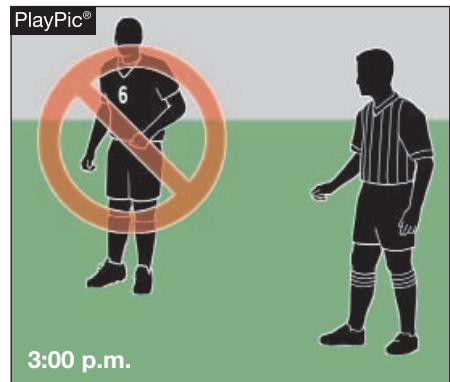
POINT OF EMPHASIS

Concussion Management Remains Important

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee noted an increase in reported and diagnosed concussions in the 2010-2011 National High School Sports Related Injury Surveillance Study. The position of the NFHS Sports Medicine Committee is that no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day after suffering a concussion (3-3-1c 3). It is a repeat point of emphasis from last year.

Available on www.nfhs.org, there is a great deal of information about concussions, the rates at which they happen in practice, in competition, to male players and to female players.

There has been a major emphasis on concussions in various sports and



levels. Players, parents, coaches and administrators face a growing list of requirements levied on them by state

legislators and school boards — learn them, know them and follow them. □

Is the Field Safe for Play?

By Vince DeFranco

It's Saturday morning. You wake up to head out to referee after a long night of steady rainfall, followed by a strong cold front coming through. It's happened to most officials. You may think to yourself, "Do I really have to referee in *this* weather?" You get in your vehicle, drive to the high school tournament and upon going out to the field, you come across a surface that has you scratching your head, saying to yourself, "I can't believe the owner of this field hasn't closed it."

The challenge. If you're doing post-season play, teams may have gone a

good distance to get to the game. They stand to be put at considerable expense both in time and money should the game get cancelled due to poor field conditions. Regardless of the situation, you must make a fair and accurate decision regarding a cancellation, for risk minimization and the enjoyment of the participants.

Wet field. On wet playing surfaces, it is imperative that players have enough traction so that when they make a cut, they don't slip and fall. When fields are muddy, not only should the players be wearing longer studs, so should the referee. If you cannot jog around the field to warm up without

slipping, then how are the players going to be able to move safely at game time?

On pitches that are in poorer-than-average shape, you will find a good amount of standing water. Puddles are not reason alone to suspend a match, however location and size of puddles can affect your decision. If players cannot predict when they will be able to stop and plant their feet, they might pull muscles and twist ankles, which is not the safest field for them to be playing on. Standing water in one or both goal-mouths affects fairness. Suspension should be a consideration. Water that has drained to the field edges might be a minor consideration.

Anthony Vasoli, a FIFA assistant referee who frequently works top-level professional games in the U.S. and internationally, as well as NFHS playoff games in Minnesota and Illinois, says, "In order to determine if a drenched field of play is acceptable and safe, the following method works quite well: Take a soccer ball and drop it to the ground from chest level on several locations on the field of play. If the ball does not bounce back up at all — merely splashing down or worse, floating — at

QUICK TIP

Don't interfere with the attacker's right to take a quick free kick. Your first priority is to get out of the player's way and allow them the chance to get the ball in play. If you walk or run to the spot of the foul and gesture the defenders back, you are actually favoring the defense by allowing them the time needed to set their defense. **If the attackers ask you to supervise the kick, then step in forcefully.** Tell the attackers to wait for your restart signal, quickly move the defenders back the appropriate distance and resume a good position where you have an overview of play. Whistle for the restart. That whole process should only take about 15 seconds.

several locations on the field, the field is probably too wet to play on safely."

Keep your assistant referees in mind, too — that is one reason to practice using the right-wing/left-back diagonal system. Since your assistants cannot vary their position like the referee can, you should be well-versed in how to operate effectively in a "reverse" diagonal, so they don't have to slog through the mud of the previous games.

Hot weather. High school competition authorities may dictate mandatory water breaks in hot weather or they may shorten halves or take similar measures. What if no such authority exists? Use common sense — give players and your referee team the necessary means to hydrate. Don't forget to stop the clock. Many leagues make judgments based on a heat index chart (combination of temperature and humidity), which is often color-coded in green, yellow and red.

Cold weather. When the weather is cold, how cold is too cold? Obviously if it is snowing and you can no longer see the markings, consider suspending.

Or, if it has snowed but is not presently snowing, use brightly colored spray paint for critical markings. In general, games are played in the cold, but if the participants can no longer feel body parts, it's time to abandon. Again, many leagues consult a wind chill index (combination of outside temperature and wind).

Ice. Icy fields are perhaps the most dangerous for all concerned. Starting, stopping and falling all present dangers. If yesterday's matches "chewed up" a grassy field and overnight temperatures froze the turf, do not play on a field with rough, jagged ridges in several places.

Wind. Referees need to keep a few things in mind on windy days. As always, make certain portable goals are anchored securely. Second, can a free kick be taken without the ball rolling because of the wind? If that cannot happen (or you can't devise a workaround like tiny piles of sand), the game needs to be abandoned.

Dusk/fog. If you have a match scheduled without lights, check what

time the sun sets before you leave from home or work. Considering clouds, matches can typically be played from 10-30 minutes after sunset before you will need to suspend action. Knowing that before the game, and knowing that the game could not play full halves, discuss with coaches your decision to shorten the halves to get the game in two equal-length halves (7-1-2). If you must suspend the match due to insufficient daylight, include those details in the match report (time in game at suspension, score at the time, etc.). NFHS contests become official games if at least one half was played (7-1-3).

If you can't tell the color difference between the teams' jerseys from halfway across the field (even though you won't be judging play from there), then the conditions are not adequate for the match to continue. Consider what type of sightlines your assistants have to put up with as well.

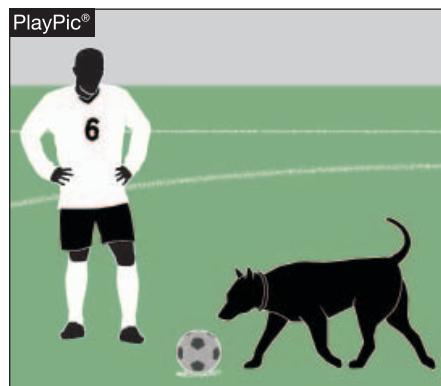
Vince DeFranco is from Chicago. He is a 15-year veteran and works youth, high school and amateur contests. □

Retake Penalty Kick if Suspended for Unusual Situation

When in the taking of a penalty kick, there is an unusual situation that causes a temporary suspension of play before the ball is played or touched by another player, or before the ball hits the goalpost or crossbar, the kick is retaken (14-1-7 [New]). Previously, that would have resulted in a drop ball, regardless if the ball went into the goal or not.

"As an example, if the ball deflated immediately after a penalty kick was taken and play was suspended, the player now will have the opportunity to attempt the penalty kick again," said Mark Koski, NFHS director of sports and events and liaison to the soccer rules committee.

If the ball bursts or the interference occurs *after* the ball rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar or goalkeeper — or it has been legally played in any other manner — a dropped ball shall be given where the ball was when the interference



occurred or where last played before it burst, unless that is inside the goal area. That change also affects Rule 9-3.

It does not matter what happens to the ball after contact with whatever caused the unusual situation — in the net, outside the goalposts or back to the kicker. It is a rekick.

The list of unusual situations is far too long to list — in two minutes the committee members sounded out two dozen or more. It's not wind, not rain, not a mosquito. Unusual situations include: 10-point buck, snake, toddler, dog (see PlayPic), angry parent, etc. But if it doesn't belong on a soccer field during a soccer game, it's an unusual situation.

Play 1: The referee sets up a penalty kick with keeper B1 on the goalline, all other players outside the penalty area, penalty arc and behind the penalty mark. A8 is identified as the kicker and the referee blows the whistle for the kick to proceed. The kick is taken and on its flight toward the goal, the ball strikes a seagull and goes wide of the net. **Ruling 1:** Retake the penalty kick.

Play 2: Similar to play 1, but the ball enters the net. **Ruling 2:** Retake the penalty kick. □

Bring Out Sportsmanship

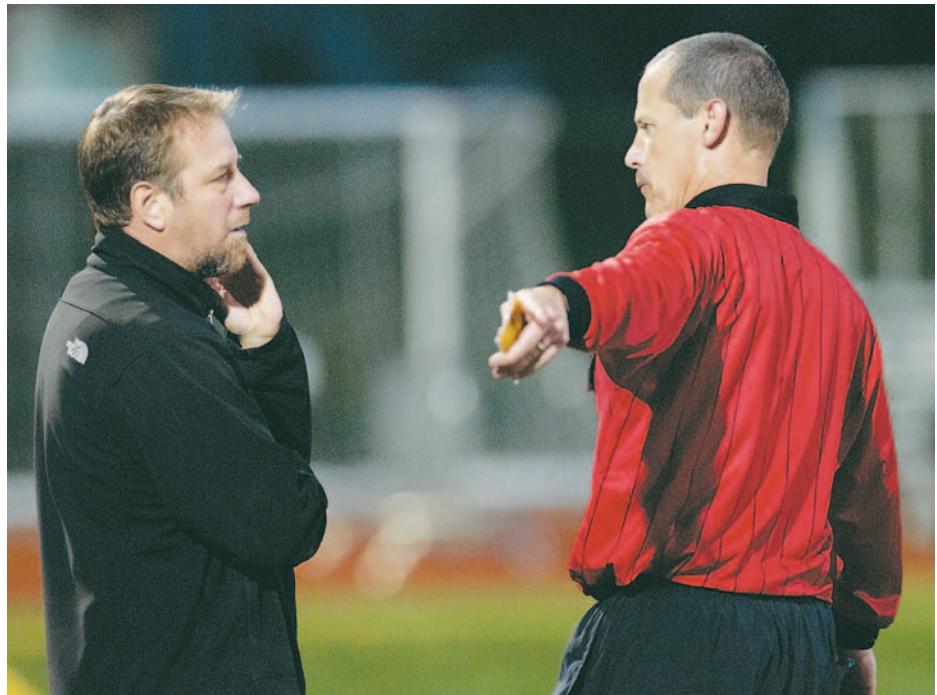
By Fred Stroock

The NFHS Code of Ethics says a coach should work with the referees to create an environment that is healthy for the student-athlete. Further, a coach shall respect and support officials. At the high school level, coaches are often teachers at the schools they represent, which generally ensures proper behavior on their part. There are certainly some coaches who choose to make the referees' life as difficult as possible. So how do officials manage the game to encourage coaches' good sportsmanship?

First, do the things that are required of all good officials: 1) Be professional (arrive on time, wear appropriate clean uniforms, spend an equal amount of time with both coaching staffs); 2) make sure you are fit enough to handle the assigned game (if you're close to play, coaches have a hard time complaining about calls); and 3) know the rules, particularly those that are unique (review all the differences noted in the *NFHS Soccer Rules Book*; be prepared to appropriately handle substitutions; know how to deal with special situations such as injuries, penalty kicks and equipment violations). When the referee performs well in those areas, he gains the coach's confidence from the moment he walks on to the field. On the other hand, if the referee fails to act credibly in those areas, he gives the coach an easy excuse to verbally express any frustrations.

Coaches' conduct can affect the referee's match control. That may start with gamesmanship when the coach and referees meet before the game. The coach who makes an effort to compliment the referee on his performance in a previous game, or the coach who indicates the referee at his previous game called way too many fouls and hurt the flow of the game, is only trying to influence your decisions when the game begins. Politely ignore such comments and move on with your pregame responsibilities.

Although coaches are permitted to direct verbal instructions toward their players, some may also express their opinion about the referee's calls or non-calls. Infrequent comments that do not



David Augustavo, Shoreline, Wash., discusses a play with a coach. Officials can promote sportsmanship by acting professionally when dealing with coaches.

rise to the level of dissent can typically be ignored. The referee's concentration needs to be on the game itself, whenever possible. If such comments become more frequent and more critical, especially if comments begin to affect how the players react to the referee's decisions, then some action needs to be taken. Some referees may get by with a simple hands-down signal from the field or by running past the bench during dynamic play and saying to the coach that you have heard him and now it's time to stop.

If the comments continue, then it's time to come over to the bench during a stoppage and issue a strong verbal warning. Don't make statements you won't back up. If you indicate that the next time you have to come over, it will result in a card — then make sure it does, in fact, result in a yellow or red card.

Test. Remember, the coach is often looking to see what the referee's tolerance is for such verbal criticism. Be prepared for the verbal attacks to come from bench personnel other than the head coach (assistant coach, trainer,

strength coach, stat keeper). That allows the head coach to evaluate how the referee reacts to such attacks without putting himself in jeopardy of receiving a card for dissent. It's a test — and referees need to pass it. Otherwise, such criticism begins to come from players and spectators, threatening game control.

Good officials are preventive and proactive in dealing with challenging situations on the field. Develop an assortment of verbal and non-verbal means to control sideline outbursts. Think about them before the game begins. Whether it's strong body language or firmly delivered comments ("You made your point" or "That's enough"), be prepared to use those tools when needed in the game. Don't hesitate — and act with confidence.

Pattern. Some coaches are well-known for their strong dissent that starts from the opening whistle. That type of coach expects to influence your decisions and the actual game via a constant harangue. Referees must put an end to such behavior early on. Be brief and to the point. Give the coaches a chance to express their view but then it's

your turn—the dialogue is over at that point. Remind the coach of the emphasis you put on good sportsmanship at the pregame meeting. Asking for the coach's help may also be a means to end the discussion: "Coach, we want a fair and safe game for both teams, and I'm sure you want to see the same result. Thanks for your help." Very confident referees might get by with some humor: "Coach, I hope you have a good assistant because it looks like you don't want to be around very much longer." (Some laugh at that comment, but others get more vocal—know your audience.)

NFHS rules give referees the authority to show cards to coaches and other bench personnel. Use that as a tool to show you "mean business." If the coach fails to respond positively to your

initial requests and warnings, caution. If the referee condones that continued behavior, then the verbal criticism continues. On the other hand, a caution to the coach often gets everyone focused on the game. If the comments continue and are clearly heard by players and spectators, and most importantly, if the comments become personal, then disqualify the coach for offensive, abusive or insulting behavior. That might not be a pleasant conversation—but failing to take that action most likely results in losing match control.

The vast majority of coaches love the game, do their best to prepare their teams to compete successfully and are mostly concerned with allowing the players to demonstrate their skills and teamwork. Those coaches typically

respect the officials responsible for making sure the game is fair and safe. But referees still must be prepared to face those coaches who can be a destructive force and who exercise poor sportsmanship.

Plan ahead, think through how you will handle those situations, learn from your mistakes and use techniques you have seen other referees perform successfully. The end result will be a game where the players, not the coaches or referees, deservedly receive the full attention of all those present at the game.

Fred Stroock, a referee for over 40 years, officiated some of the earliest AYSO games in Torrance, Calif. A USSF, college and high school instructor and assessor, he currently serves as Director of Instruction for 1,800 high school referees in Southern California. □

POINT OF EMPHASIS

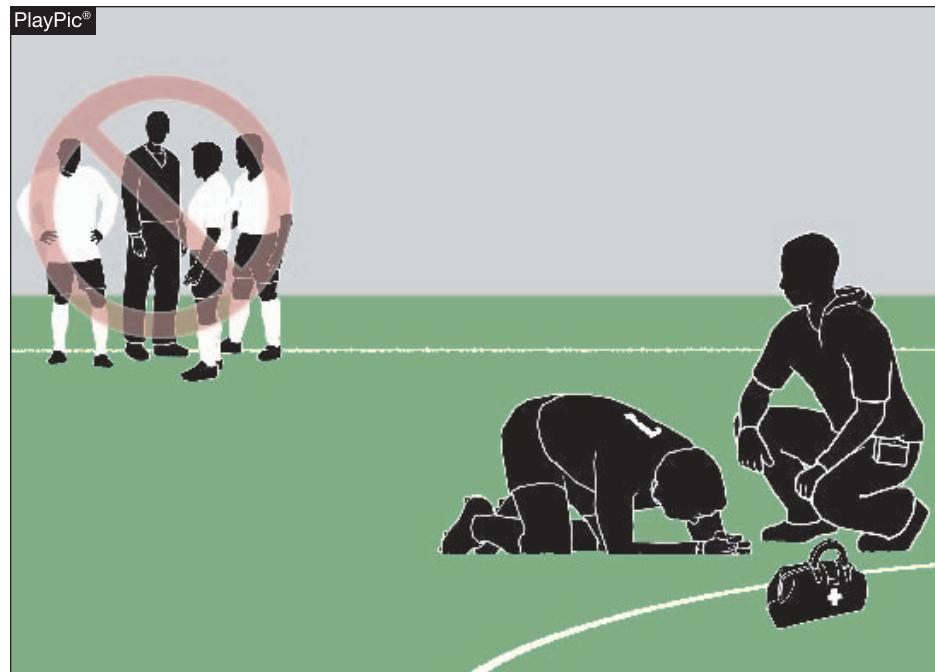
No Coaching During an Injury

When a coach or appropriate health-care professional is called onto the field to attend to an injured player, neither coach shall give instruction to their players (3-3-1c 1).

The 2011 NFHS Preseason Guide addressed the "coaching during an injury" issue. Yet, the committee members still saw coaches taking advantage of an injury to a player to give instructions. As a result, it is a point of emphasis this season.

Players *may* come to the touchline to hydrate. Coaches *may* offer instructions to the substitute that is about to replace the injured player.

Play 1: B3 is injured in the 22nd minute. Team B's coach and one health-care professional tends to B3 and Team A's coach calls her four defenders to come to the touchline and begins drawing on a hand-held whiteboard. The dual referee on that side makes eye contact with the coach and shakes her head (as if to say, "Not permitted.") The coach continues to speak with all four defenders. **Ruling 2:** The referee has discretionary power to caution team A's coach (12-8-1f) but is more likely to step closer to the coach, ask the players to resume their defensive positions and speak directly to the coach



about not coaching during an injury. Preventive refereeing is a positive step, if it works.

Play 2: A9 is seriously injured with a compound fracture. The ambulance is

called and the referees realize it will be a 20-plus-minute delay. **Ruling 2:** In the rare case of an extended injury, referees have discretionary power to allow coaches to speak with their teams. □

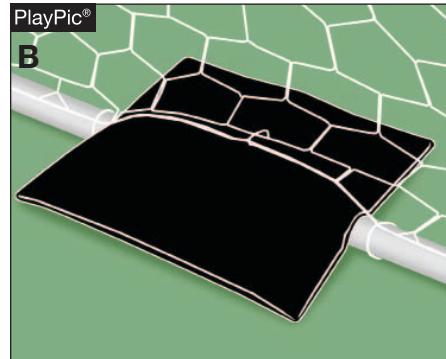
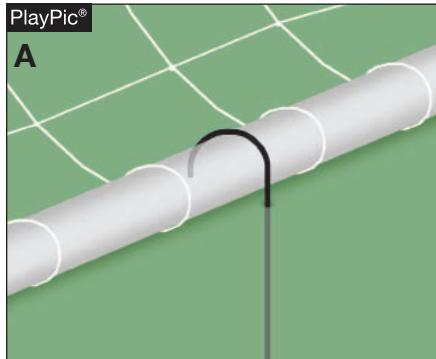
POINT OF EMPHASIS

Secure the Goals

Administrators, coaches and officials are reminded that all soccer goals shall be adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted to the ground (PlayPics A and B) for the safety of all involved (1-4-1).

Never far from the minds of officials or administrators, goal safety remains paramount. Not during an NFHS contest, but there was one death in 2011 and another in 2012 from a goal tipping over and killing a child. It is vital and required that goals be adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted. Coaches, check! Referees, double check!

Play: During a pregame inspection,



the referees see neither goal is adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted.

Ruling: The game *may not begin* until both goals are properly secured. □

Review the 2011 Rule Changes

In addition to studying the new rules for 2012, officials should take a look at the rule changes made for the 2011 season. Following each rule change, there is a series of three numbers, which are the percentages of satisfactory responses to each rule change by coaches, officials and state associations.

- Players with illegal equipment shall be removed on the first caution, which is given to the coach, and cannot re-enter until the next legal substitution

opportunity (83/87/100).

- The penalty for excessive goal celebration by a player was changed from disqualification (yellow and red cards) to a caution (yellow card) (81/91/84).
- In Rule 12-8-1f, unsporting conduct includes a player who displays reckless play and an illegally equipped player. Both are penalized by a yellow card (91/94/100).
- With the addition of "reckless play" as an unsporting conduct violation, the committee approved a definition to include in Rule 18: Reckless play occurs when "a player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent" (94/93/100).
- Goalkeepers now may wear pants

instead of shorts, as long as they comply with manufacturer's logo requirements (98/95/95).

- It is recommended that substitutes wear distinguishing pinnies when warming up outside of the team area (79/92/84).
- Goalkeepers now may have two numbers listed on the roster — a goalkeeper's number and a field player's number (92/92/97).
- A ninth signal was added to the Official Soccer Signal chart to signal a goal. It is a two-part signal. The preliminary signal is to whistle and signal to stop the clock. Then, after lowering your arms, point (either arm) one arm toward the center circle, indicating the location of the next restart (83/79/95). □

Online Education Available

The NFHS website (www.nfhslearn.com) offers coaches and officials online educational opportunities. Those include rule changes, situational videos, tactical and technical instructions and management skills. The situational videos are excellent training aids for officials at all experience levels and can be utilized for group training clinics. □

QUICK TIP

Stress eye contact. Repeatedly, stress eye contact between the referee and assistants. A quick glance lets everyone know you are functioning as a team, and that you are on the same page. Without eye contact, it gets lonely out there for 90 minutes. The mind starts to wander and concentration falls off. **If the assistants know they will get some reinforcement at nearly every stoppage, they stay focused.** If you're on top of your game, they may smile or give you a thumbs up. If you are loose and confident they may attempt some childish prank or discreet signal to get you to laugh. If there are problems, they may be able to communicate that quickly with a gesture.

Officials' Clerical Authority Extended

The officials retain *clerical authority* over the contest through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the referees had jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents that occur before, during or after the officials' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a contest is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play (5-1-2).

All sports. The statement reflects the combined efforts of the NFHS Rules Review Committee to deal with all sports. While the referee's jurisdiction ends when they step outside the confines

of the field (or court or diamond), the realities are that officials must go home, fill out the paperwork and file their reports.

Given the hundreds or thousands of reports nationwide each year, there are going to be errors. There are going to be facts that are known but are not part of the formal report. The referee's report may differ from that of both coaches and several credible witnesses.

State associations may have to overturn a referee's decision based on a predominance of evidence or a newly revealed video.

Association training. As the postgame reports become more

and more vital to keep schools and officials out of the court system, some associations have training sessions on report writing. For example, after a brief lecture about "The 7 most effective tips for report writing," a three-minute film clip is shown once. Association members are broken down into teams of three and given 20 minutes to write an effective report about what they have just witnessed. Association leaders and veteran referees read each groups' report and give feedback. That session closes with the leaders and veterans pointing out trends about what the group did well and where there were problems with the reports. □

Use 'Appropriate Health-Care Professional'

Wording of "athletic trainer" and "MD/DO" is changed to "appropriate health-care professional" to allow each association to follow state law (3-3-1c 1, 4-2-8).

Each state issues certifications and licenses for health-care professionals. The NFHS cannot write a single rule that

is going to comply with the changing legislative requirements and medical licensing requirements for all states. School administrators need to know what is applicable in your state and should pass that information along to coaches and parents — then comply with state law. □

Athletic Trainer

MD/DO

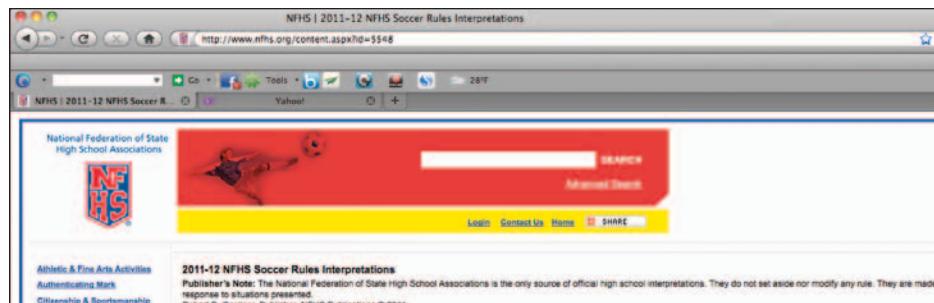
Appropriate Health-care Professional

Interpretations Available on NFHS.org

If you have ever wondered about how a ruling you gave on the field compares to what you *should* have called, you have a resource. Particularly with rule changes made in the last few seasons, there is an official website that offers authoritative national interpretations about plays brought to the attention of the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee.

Your state may have a different written interpretation, and you should follow that. But if your state is silent on an issue, and the NFHS has issued an interpretation, use that as guidance.

On the nfhs.org, go to the link on the far left side of the page labeled



"Athletic and Fine Arts Activities." The next page will list a series of sports and activities on the far left, so you should scroll down until you find "soccer." Let that page refresh and just to the left of

center, you will see a link to "NFHS Soccer Rules Interpretations." Click on that link and any new interpretations will be available. □

Award a Corner Kick

A corner kick shall be awarded to the opposing team when a free kick taken from outside the penalty area goes untouched into a team's own goal (17-1-1).

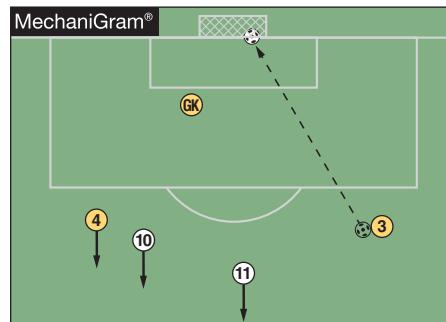
Surprising even some experienced soccer people, when a team takes a free kick, it cannot score against itself. So for a direct free kick, indirect free kick (or the extremely unlikely corner kick from 110 yards away), a team cannot score against itself.

Play 1: In the MechaniGram, number 3 wants to get the ball across the field to number 4 on a free kick. Not trusting his own leg strength, he figures a ball back to the keeper can be one-touched over to number 4. Since the ball is outside the penalty area, it is in play as soon as the ball is kicked and moves. A ball that was

in play enters the goal. **Ruling 1:** A team cannot score directly against itself on a free kick, so it is not a valid goal. Since a defender caused the ball to go over the goalline, the restart is a *corner kick*.

Play 2: Similar to play 1, except the restart is an indirect free kick from that location, with the same result. **Ruling 2:** A team cannot score directly against itself and no one can score directly from an indirect free kick. Since a defender caused the ball to go over the goalline, the restart is a corner kick.

Play 3: Similar to play 1, but the free kick was taken from inside the penalty area. **Ruling 3:** Rekick, since the ball was never in play. It not only has to be kicked and move, it must also clear the penalty area before it is in play. That is true for



both goal kicks and free kicks.

The word *directly* has been used a lot. If the ball touches the keeper or any other player, even by accident, and goes in the goal, it is a valid goal as long as the kick is taken from outside the penalty area. □

Soccer Injury Rates Continue to Decrease



Boys' and girls' soccer injury rates have continually decreased over time based on National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study.

As high school sports participation continues to increase in the U.S., the number of sports injuries have the potential to increase. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the NFHS Sport Rules Committees use information from the National High

School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIO™) to monitor rates and patterns of sports injuries among high school athletes. High School RIO™ has collected its sixth year of soccer exposure and injury data.

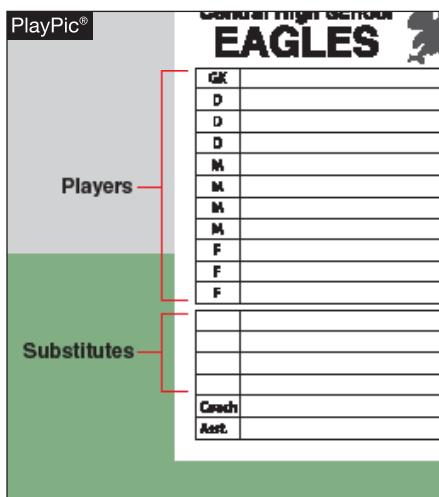
High School RIO™ data shows that both boys' and girls' soccer have the highest injury rates among the gender comparable sports (soccer, basketball and baseball/softball) of the original study sports under surveillance. Football and boys' wrestling are the only two sports with higher injury rates than boys' and girls' soccer of the nine sports under surveillance. Additionally, boys' and girls' soccer injury rates have dropped significantly over the past six years and about half of all soccer injuries return to play in less than one week. Ankle sprains/strains are by far the most common injury in soccer representing 16.2 percent of all boys' and 21.7 percent of all girls' injuries.

Understanding such patterns of injury is one important tool when considering a new rule change and keeping risk minimization as a priority in the efforts to keep soccer athletes as safe as possible.

If you are interested in more information on the High School RIO™ Study or interested in becoming a reporter for boys' and/or girls' soccer, please visit <http://injuryresearch.net/rioreports.aspx> for summary reports or send an email to highschoolrio@nationwidechildrens.org. □

List Substitutes on Rosters

An editorial change correctly pointed out that the team roster submitted at least five minutes prior to the start of the contest needs to list all players, coaches, bench personnel *and substitutes* (3-1-3). There is a distinction between an on-field player and an on-the-bench substitute. The team roster (see PlayPic) shown correctly breaks out the starting 11 players from those who might later substitute into the contest, as well as listing the names of the coaches and any bench personnel. □



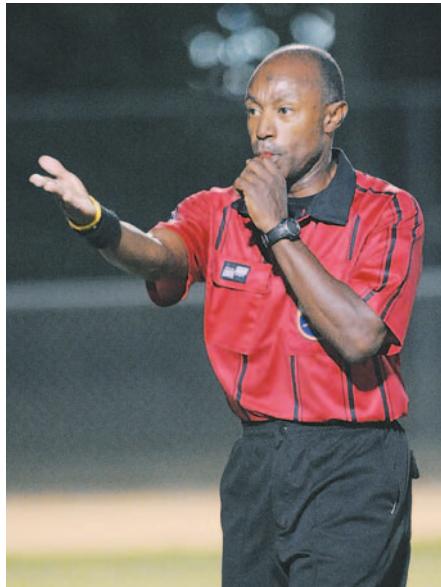
Whistle a New Tune

By Kristen Sheppard

Level your whistle sell your calls. The whistle should let the players, coaches and spectators know what the call will be — even before the signal is given. For “light” fouls and a quick restart, it is a simple tweet. For harder fouls, blow the whistle harder. When a player needs to be shown a red card, spit should be flying out of the whistle and everyone should know what is about to happen. Proper whistle use can stop retaliation. If coaches can guess what is coming due to your technique, it should save you some grief.

Whistles give referees presence on the field — and a voice above the excess noise. Whether the whistle is being used to gain attention or to make the call, tone, pitch and strength are three components heard in every whistle.

1. Tone is your voice. Were the player’s actions intolerable or do they suggest a quick restart? A strong blast or a tweet? How do you feel about the contact that just occurred? If the contact was unacceptable, let everyone know through the whistle. Unlike your whistle, your voice is not loud enough to reach everyone near the field. If it is not a



Errol Daniels, Fayetteville, N.C., blows his whistle for substitutes. Your whistle is a tool. Use it to your advantage.

defining moment, then a sharp blast may be all that is required to let the players know of your presence on the field.

2. Pitch is the attention grabber. If the whistle is loud enough and shrill enough,

the players’ attention may be yours for a second. That second allows an opening for your signal. Some referees carry more than one type of whistle — using different whistles depending on the foul. That offers a difference in pitch and helps players make distinctions in your calls. If the same whistle pitch is always used for a yellow card, then it will be like classical conditioning. Everyone will know what is coming before the card is shown.

3. Whistle strength is the most important. The strength of the whistle does not simply include loudness, but also duration. How long a whistle blast lasts can tell a lot about what is coming. Loud and long blasts usually coincide with a minimum of a direct free kick — sometimes accompanied by a card. Shorter blasts often encourage play to continue quickly — nothing serious occurred in the play that needed to be addressed publicly.

No situations are exactly the same, so there is no reason for a monotone whistle. Variation is required. You are a sole authority on the field. The whistle is your tool.

Kristen Sheppard, Midland, Mich., has officiated for eight years. □

Jersey and Socks Color Requirements

By Joe Manjone

Beginning in the fall of 2013, high school home teams shall wear solid white jerseys and solid white socks. There have been many questions concerning that rule, especially why that rule was passed and what does “solid white” require.

The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee passed the rule after years of responses to the annual questionnaire indicating that the current rule that requires the home team to wear light-colored jerseys was a problem. What was light color to one school was a dark color to another school — and color conflict problems resulted. In the same questionnaire, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the rule should be changed to require the home team to wear white jerseys.

In considering changing to white

jerseys, the rules committee was advised by other sports’ rules committees to adopt a solid white rule, because having something less than solid white such as white with trim, white with stripes or white body has resulted in interpretation problems for those committees.

The rule that goes into effect in the fall of 2013, therefore, requires the home team jerseys and socks to be *solid* white.

The only additions to the jersey that do not have to be white are the numbers, the manufacturer’s logo which may not exceed two-and-one-quarter square inches, an American flag not to exceed four square inches, the name and/or logo of the school and the player’s name.

The socks also must be solid white, but a manufacturer’s logo of not more than two-and-one-quarter square inches may appear on both sides of the socks.

Visiting teams must continue to wear dark jerseys and socks. Dark is considered any color that contrasts with white. Striped jerseys are permitted for visitors as long as the predominant color is not white.

Also, another rules change reminder concerning jerseys is the requirement that effective in fall of 2012, the goalkeeper’s jersey must have a number on the front and on the back. The size of the goalkeeper’s numbers is to be the same as those of the field players. The goalkeeper’s number is to be different than any of the field players’ numbers or numbers worn by other goalkeepers on the same team. That change was made to assist in the identification of the goalkeeper. That number is to be on the team roster.

Joe Manjone, Ed. D., Silverhill, Ala., just completed his four-year term as chair of NFHS Soccer Rules Committee. □

Card Accumulation

By Patrick Duffy

Besides being a referee, I have administrative responsibilities. I have had to deal with issues related to card accumulation by players and coaches.

There are good reasons that many leagues, the NCAA and some state associations have penalties for those who accumulate too many cards. However, the results *after* a game in terms of suspensions, etc., are none of the referee's business, in the same way that we don't favor a team that is "supposed" to win or hold back a red card to a player from a team so he or she can play in the next game. Control *today's* match, not the future.

Caution accumulation penalties exist to send a message to the player who is out of control. A player who is cautioned

in three consecutive games is just as much out of control as one who receives a disqualification (for two cautions) in a single game. They are showing no respect for the game, never mind the opponents.

One of my friends is the vice president of a men's league. He had a player tell him, "I got a yellow card because the ref doesn't like me." He replied, "You've gotten six cautions this season. It isn't the referee." Unfortunately, some players and coaches think: "We'll take the cautions. It just shows we're playing hard."

In practice, then, those players and coaches are one step ahead of the referees who look on cautions as simply warnings. "I can do *that* to the other team until the referee tells me to stop," i.e., gives me a caution. That is as insidious as the team that has multiple players fouling another

team's star player. Since knowledge of that thinking is not available to the referee (we don't interview players), the league/tournament has to take steps to control it.

Other referees might say that the leagues and coaches should be responsible for dealing with players who have a problem following the *NFHS Soccer Rules Book*. I agree, and the accumulation policies (including sitting out for a red card) are the way that the leagues do that. As far as coaches, it is an inherent conflict of interest to expect them to penalize their own players for misconduct. The coaches want the players to play next week, and a full 80 minutes at that. That's why the leagues have to act — to protect the game. *Patrick Duffy, Beaverton, Ore., is the State Rules Interpreter for Oregon and a member of the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee.* □

Get a Deeper Understanding of the Rules

By Carl P. Schwartz

Noted soccer author Stanley Lover is among those who believe officials should understand why rules are written. A chapter in Lover's book *Soccer Match Control* goes into detail about the rules, but highlights include understanding the basic principles of safety, equality and enjoyment; how rules are "grouped" and the concept of spirit of the game. His rule groupings include "components" group (rules 1, 2, 3, 4), "authority" grouping (rules 5, 6), "rules of play" grouping (rules 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) and the "technical" grouping (rules 11, 12).

You can study the rules vertically

rather than just read rule-by-rule and look for patterns. Where are all the two-touch violations? There are 15-plus places in the rules that dictate an indirect free kick other than in Rule 12 — how many can you find? Other than Rule 12, where else do the rules suggest or dictate a caution?

NFHS. For a decade, I've had insight into how NFHS rules are made. As a non-voting guest at the meeting, I see the ebb and flow of the decision and the rationale. Winnowing the 40-60 proposals down to a few rule changes is a demanding process.

At the base of it all is the NFHS concept that sports should be an extension of the classroom. Their principles include risk minimization, participation, honoring the traditions of the sport and balancing offense and defense. While the rules are written for varsity competition, they are used for both varsity and sub-varsity.

Write a test question. Rather than simply knowing a rule, you should understand each rule at the analysis and comprehension level. Try writing rules questions and share them with your association for your monthly meetings.

Some out. Some earlier rules have been written out of the book. Referees used to have to judge that a ball traveled a full circumference before it was put into

play. That was inconsistently enforced for so minor a point, so it was deleted. A ball going to an offside player, if touched by a defender, reset the offside decision. So, if you were a lazy dolt, stood there and didn't touch the ball, you were rewarded with a whistle. If you energetically played the game and rather than controlling that pass to the offside player, it glanced off your leg, you rewarded the offside-positioned attacker. That is gone.

Test of time. Some rules are a valid part of the game. Banning a second-touch at restarts assures a player doesn't randomly start dribbling a ball and surprising everyone that it is now in play. The requirement of a two-handed throw-in is to prevent a routine event from becoming an offensive threat against goal.

Evolution. In the 1960s and '70s, there were many 0-0 and 1-0 games. It was common an attacker with space on the flank would be defended with an NFL-style cross-body block near the penalty area. So, "uses disproportionate and unnecessary force" and denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity became part of the game. The game is much safer, free-flowing and enjoyable now.

Carl P. Schwartz is Referee's soccer coordinator. □

QUICK TIP

The season is about to begin — **get in shape mentally.** Devote some time to the *NFHS Soccer Rules Book*. Handle the paperwork for the first few games of the season. Close any dates with your assigner where there are conflicts. Meet with your mentor and develop two or three goals for this season.

Official, Team and Spectator Areas

By Joe Manjone

As will be pointed out by the rules to follow, there must be at least 10 feet of unobstructed area around the entire soccer field. If there are obstructions, closer than 10 feet, they should be moved, removed, covered or padded to eliminate any possibility of injury should a player or official contact them. Examples of items that must be moved or removed are team benches and scorer's/timer's tables and spectator boundary areas such as fences or ropes. Items that could be covered or padded are drainage ditches or grates, metal or cement running track curbing or a tree growing within 10 feet if the field.

Rule 1-5-1. There shall be designated specific areas for each team's bench, separated by an official area for entering substitutes, scorers and timers. Those areas shall be at least 10 feet from the touchline.

- Note that the team bench and the official area where the scorers and timers are located must be at least 10 feet from the touchline.

- The area where substitutes stand must also be at least 10 feet from the touchline.

- If those are not 10 feet from the touchline, they must be moved before the match can start unless your state association has approved them being closer.

Rule 1-5-2. The official area shall extend five yards on each side of the halfway line.

- That is the area where the scorers and timers sit and from where the substitutes enter. Please note that the entire official area must be at least 10 feet from the touchline. That area should be marked with a solid line as indicated on the soccer field diagram on page 9 of the rulebook.

Rule 1-5-3. The team areas shall extend from 10 yards on each side of the halfway line for a distance of 20 yards and each area shall be marked by a solid line. Coaches, bench personnel and team members shall be restricted to the team area. When teams are placed on the opposite sides of the field, each team area shall be located as indicated



Enrique Gutierrez, San Fernando, Calif., observes action near the touchline and a team bench. Officials must make sure the entire team area is at least 10 feet from the touchline.

above and shall be placed diagonally across from each other.

- The entire team area must be at least 10 feet from the touchline. Move the teams back if it is not.

- The team area must be marked by a solid line. Warn the home team and file a report with your with your state association if a team area is not marked with a solid line.

- Make certain that coaches, substitutes and other bench personnel stay within the confines of the team area. If they do not, a first warning and then a caution should be employed.

- When benches are placed on opposite sides of the field, they are to be placed diagonally in order to facilitate substitutions.

Rule 1-6. Spectators shall be confined to areas at least 10 feet from the touchline, team/official area and goal line. No one shall be permitted directly behind either goal unless seated in the bleachers.

- Please note that spectators must be 10 feet from the touchline. As indicated in rule 1-6, if spectators get closer than 10 feet the game may be

terminated. It is also very important to note that spectators must remain at least 10 feet behind and to the side of the team areas and official areas.

- Spectators should not be permitted closer than 10 feet to these areas. Again, the game may be terminated if spectators are permitted closer than 10 feet.

As an official, you are responsible for the safety of the players. Not enforcing the rules and permitting official or team areas or spectators or any other obstruction to be closer than 10 feet to the touchline puts players in jeopardy of being injured. If a player is injured because you did not enforce the rule, you may be liable and may be sued for damages — plus your negligence may have been responsible for a serious injury to a player. Please do not be negligent — enforce the 10-foot rule.

Follow the procedures in every high school game you work, and make certain your partners do the same.

Joe Manjone, Ed. D., Silverhill, Ala., just completed his four-year term as chair of the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee. □

Should You Limit Your Assignments?

By Bill Faucett

Of course, it's possible to do fewer than four games a day! You tell the assignor what you're willing to do, and he or she can use you — or not use you. You don't do the players a service if you abuse your body and can't give your best.

The first year I refereed, I put myself in situations where I did up to nine games a day during a tournament. I looked at my game log recently and saw one insane three-day weekend where I did 22 U-16 to U-18 matches. I was in pain that year and my enjoyment of refereeing suffered.

I now resent tournament organizers and regular-season assignors who fail

to understand the physical limitations of referees. We're viewed as a piece of equipment, in some cases, and that problem persists because too many referees are willing to put up with it. Last weekend, I had a set of three games in the cold and by the last one, my focus wasn't where it should be — even though I was fine physically. It isn't just physical fatigue that will cause performance to suffer.

Particularly in a tournament situation (but still true in a regular-season) I don't think a lack of referees is the problem. I think it is over-ambitious assignors trying to fit warm bodies into slots.

Schools host tournaments to raise funds. I understand that and the value

they provide. When a school or district hosts a 20-team tournament over a holiday weekend and an assignor expects you to work with two other referees on one field for a whole day — with no breaks, it's excessive.

You are an independent contractor when you referee. You are free to work as much or as little as you want. As long as you meet the requirements laid out by the state high school association to recertify for your grade, the number of games you work is up to you.

Take care of yourself. If you aren't looking out for yourself, no one else will. *Bill Faucett is a youth and high school referee from Collingswood, N.J. □*

It's Your First Time Working the Playoffs

By Patrick Duffy

Different states have various ways of handling playoffs and the assignments for them. Regardless of the way it works in your area, some day you may get that first playoff assignment. Will you be ready for that?

While that is a big honor, it is not a refereeing vacation. Whether you are traveling to an out-of-town site or doing a game locally, how you do and what you do will be under the microscope the entire time, both on and off the field. What you do off the field can lose you assignments and the respect of others.

Bring every color and sleeve length of shirt, both styles of socks, the appropriate referee warmup and shoe polish. Someone thinks you are, or have the potential to be, one of the top referees in your state. Not everyone gets that opportunity, so look the part. You want people to think you've been here before. A professional first impression will go a long way.

Give the game everything you have. Of all games, that is the time to do a first-class job. Take care of the details before the game. When do you need to arrive? When do you need to leave? Early is

on time. Just "on time" is late. Late is unacceptable. Will you be traveling with the rest of the crew or on your own? Will the crew be other officials you normally work with? Do you have cell phone numbers for everybody on the crew?

Part of being prepared for the game is getting the rest you need. That means that you must get your rest the night before the game. I would strongly discourage consumption of alcohol within 24 hours before the game. If you show up with any odor of alcohol, regardless of the source, people will assume you are intoxicated. If you smoke or chew, do not bring it with you into the site. You will just be creating problems for yourself, your crew and your assignor.

Every playoff assignment is an honor. There are a lot of referees who never get a playoff game. That means that you accept the assignments you are given, without complaint or comment, other than "Thank you!" Yes, even if its fourth official on the small-schools girls' game. Maybe you feel this game or that assignment is below you. So what? It probably is. A playoff game is not going to be a "stretch" assignment for an official. The assignor wants to be absolutely sure the officials

can handle the game. That means you will probably be doing games below your usual assignment level.

If you have not served as a reserve official at least 10 times, and that is your playoff assignment, you should carefully review the *USSF Guide to Procedures*. That will tell you the basics about how to handle the assignment. The crew is counting on you to handle that duty well, so each of them can focus on the areas for which they are responsible. Done poorly, the fourth official can make the game a nightmare for the other officials.

If you are traveling to a site where there will be other officials, don't just hang around with the people you already know. That is an excellent opportunity to meet new people and learn from them about how they handle problems (even if it's how *not* to handle a situation.) However, try to restrain yourself from talking about the big games you've done. You may find that others have done even bigger games.

Patrick Duffy, Beaverton, Ore., is the State Rules Interpreter for Oregon and a member of the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee. Thanks to Colorado's Michael McGee, who supplied a number of suggestions. □



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