

To: All NMAA Athletic Directors, Soccer Coaches and Soccer Referees

From: Joe Butler, Assistant Director
Dana Pappas, Commissioner of Officials

Subject: 2013 Soccer Points of Emphasis and Clarification

Date: September 24, 2013



Several years ago, the NMAA developed a statewide rules interpreters program for all sports. The purpose of the rules interpreters program is to assist our officials in the consistent application of rules throughout the state and to ensure that coaches and officials are on the same page relative to soccer rules. In addition, the individuals serving as rules interpreters will be the go-to contacts for rules interpretations for our coaches and officials. Their contact information is supplied at the end of this memo.

The points of emphasis for the 2013 soccer season are listed below. We have separated the document into NMAA Specific Rules and Policies, NMAA Sport Specific Points of Emphasis and NFHS Rules and Points of Emphasis. We have waited until a few weeks into the season and are addressing items that have come to the attention of our office:

NMAA SPECIFIC RULE AND POLICY REMINDERS

TRACKING YELLOW CARDS, RED CARDS AND INCIDENT REPORTING:

The responsibility for tracking all yellow cards and red cards will now be that of the NMAA. Game officials must file a Game Report Form within 24 hours of completion of a contest or by 10:00 a.m. on Monday for games on Friday and Saturday to report all cautions and disqualifications issued during a contest. In addition, officials may utilize the Supplemental Game Report Form to report other issues as noted. These may be incidents of a positive or negative nature and are described on the body of the form. Both forms are attached for your use.

PRE-AND POST GAME:

Pre-game discussions between referees, players and coaches should be brief, succinct and should emphasize our shared responsibility for sportsmanship. It is customary for referees to wait after the game for a post-game handshake with players. However, officials should use their discretion and leave the field immediately if the game atmosphere necessitates it.

LIGHTNING POLICY (REMINDER):

The following procedures will be put in place for handling contests lightning disturbances from the 2013-2014 NFHS Soccer Rulebook (page 112, Appendix E):

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

Proactive Planning

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby shelters.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
 - b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Hold periodic review for appropriate personnel.

NOTE: These lightning delay procedures are for all contests, varsity, sub-varsity and mid school.

GAME INTERRUPTION POLICY REMINDER (NMAA Handbook, Section 7.10.2)

In the event that a game must be interrupted because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play (i.e. lightning, darkness, power outage etc..) the head official/referee shall declare it an official game if one complete half, or more, of the game has been played; based upon the NFHS definition of a regulation game.

If less than one half of the game has been played, and it is a district game/post season game, the game must be rescheduled from the point of interruption/suspension of play.

If less than one half of the game has been played, and it is a non-district game, the participating schools must mutually agree to reschedule the game from the point of interruption/suspension of play or the game will be considered a non-game.

Note: If one complete half or more of the game has been played in a post-season game, it will be left up to the discretion of the tournament director and or the NMAA Executive Director to determine if the game is played to its entirety.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT (REMINDER):

Recognition and proper handling of players with possible concussions continues to be a Point of Emphasis with information available at the NMAA website (http://www.nmact.org/concussion_information/), clinics, NFHS rulebooks, Preseason Guide, and other publications, and online courses. SB1, passed during the 2010 session of the New Mexico Legislature, established safety protocols and education programs to be followed by schools.

The following are ***mechanics for officiating a concussion*** in any and all sports, in concert with the NFHS Concussion Management Guidelines and additional information provided by the National Association of Sports Officials:

- 1) When a student-athlete displays possible signs and symptoms of a concussion as listed in the NFHS rulebook (p. 106), stop the game and visit with the athlete in question. You may want to get the closest ARs involved with you in this process.

- 2) Check the student-athlete's behavior against the list of signs and symptoms. If signs or symptoms are present, remove the student-athlete from the contest. Remember that an athlete does not have to be unconscious to have sustained a concussion.
- 3) Avoid discussing the cause with anyone, including coaches, players and fans. The atmosphere of the game may be tense. The officials' attention should be on the injured player.
- 4) Do not render first aid to athletes and do not attempt to move them under any circumstance (if they are on the ground).
- 5) Do not tell the coaches that you are removing the player because he/she has a concussion. Simply tell the coach, "I need you to take a look at Player X." If the coach does ask why, you can state that the player exhibited one of the signs and symptoms (i.e., dizziness, disorientation, headache, nausea, etc.). Do not state that you think the player has a concussion because then you are crossing the line into a diagnosis.
- 6) Note the jersey number of the athlete, the time at which he/she was removed from the game and (if applicable) the time of re-entry into the game.
- 7) During the removal of an athlete from a contest, continue to supervise both teams, benches and keep the athletes separated.
- 8) The decision for a player to return to play falls on the appropriate health care professional and the head coach. The liability for returning an athlete to play is on the school personnel. Do not offer opinions about an athlete's ability to reenter the game and do not ask questions about the medical personnel. What happens on the sidelines after you remove a player who is displaying signs and symptoms of a concussion is out of your control. Just note who you removed and when and if the player returned so that you have the necessary documentation should questions arise. Leave return to play decisions to the appropriate individuals on the sideline.
- 9) Should the same player, having returned to play, once more exhibit the symptoms of concussion, repeat the above process.

TIE GAME PROCEDURE FOR ALL VARSITY CONTESTS:

The tie game procedure for all regular season district and non-district games can be found in NMAA Handbook Section 7.17.1J.

Procedures for Varsity contests are as follows:

- 1) If the game is tied upon completion of two forty-minute halves of play, a maximum of two ten-minute **sudden victory** overtimes will be played to determine a winner. Should the two overtime periods not determine a winner, Kicks From the Penalty Mark will be held, in conformance with the procedures in the NFHS Soccer Rulebook, until a winner is determined.
- 2) If the score remains tied after each team has had five kicks from the penalty line:
 - a. Each coach selects five different players than the first five who have already kicked to take the kicks in a sudden victory situation, the teams kicking in the same order as determined by the coin toss. If one team scores and the other team does not score, the game is ended without further kicks being taken.
 - b. If the score remains tied, continue the sudden victory kicks with the coach selecting any five players to take the next set of alternating kicks. If a tie still remains, repeat step #3

for regular season contests and other applicable games in which a winner must be determined through a progression.

Managing Kicks From The Mark

- 1) The only people allowed at the center circle are the five selected to take the kicks from the mark. After everyone is brought to the center to explain the game procedures, only the five taking the kicks will remain at the center. Everyone else retires to their respective team areas. After the first round of kicks, if additional kicks are necessary, the first five kickers retire to the team area and the next five come to the center circle.
- 2) Once it is determined that a team has won and that the other team cannot catch up, no further kicks need to be taken.
- 3) The coach can pick any players off the bench for subsequent kicks from the mark after the first round of kicks.
- 4) There must be 10 different kickers for the first two sets of kicks. After the first two rounds of kicks, a coach can choose to repeat kickers from the initial 10 or can choose from his/her players on the bench.

FROM NMAA SOCCER SPORT SPECIFIC COMMITTEE

NMAA HANDBOOK CHANGE (7.17.3B) – YELLOW CARD ACCUMULATION RULE AND “CLEAN SLATE”:

The soccer sports specific committee directed the following change in the yellow card accumulation rule. This change was sent to and passed by the NMAA Commission and NMAA Board of Directors. The Handbook now states, “The yellow card accumulation will now extend through the first round of the state playoffs. Starting with the 2013-2014 season, players will receive a ‘clean slate’ beginning with the quarterfinal round of the state tournament.”

POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR THE 2013-2014 SEASON:

- 1) NMAA 7.17.10 (Officials) – It is recommended that three officials be utilized for varsity contests, whenever possible.
- 2) Dual Participation (NMAA 7.3.1) – Concurrent participation in a high school program and a club program, during the high school season, is not encouraged. If it occurs, with the permission of the school administration, players are subject cumulatively to the JV/Varsity soccer game limitations as set forth in the NMAA Handbook. This also applies to 8th grade students playing on high school teams.
- 3) NFHS Uniform Rule (NFHS 4.1) – Where a team is not in accord with the new uniform rule, officials should allow the game to continue and should utilize the new Supplemental Game Report Form to report the infraction.

NFHS POINTS OF EMPHASIS AND RULES REMINDERS

UNIFORM RULE – VARSITY LEVEL ONLY (NFHS 4.1.1)

- 1) Jerseys and socks of the opposing teams shall be of contrasting colors and, in the event of a similarity of color, the home team shall be responsible for making the necessary changes.
- 2) The home team shall wear solid white jerseys and solid white socks and the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys and dark socks.

- 3) If tape of similar material is applied externally to the socks, it must be of similar color as the part of the sock to which it is applied.

COACHING ON THE FIELD DURING AN INJURY (NFHS 3.1.1c)

Coaches and players can communicate during the stoppage of play for an injury. The coach or appropriate health care professional must have the permission of the referee before entering the field; team may now huddle and receive coaching instruction during the stoppage.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES (NFHS 12.8.1e)

The use of communication devices is now allowed in the bench area. These devices, however, cannot be used to communicate with athletes during the game, nor can they be used to review an official's call.

SUBSTITUTES (NFHS 3.3.2)

Before they enter the field, substitutes must be beckoned onto the field by the referee, except at the start of a period.

INTENTIONAL FOUL ON AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (NFHS 3.1.1c)

An unsuccessful attempt to deny an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity by a foul is now unsporting conduct and a caution.

FREE KICK (NFHS 18.1.1N)

On a free kick, the ball has not been properly kicked into play when a player merely taps or steps on the top of the ball with his/her foot. The ball must now also move.

ROSTERS (NFHS Rule 3-1-03)

Because goalkeeper jerseys must now contain a number on them, rosters may contain two numbers for goalkeepers, one a goalkeeper jersey number and one a field player's jersey number.

MISCONDUCT RULES (NFHS Rulebook 12-8-2c, 5-3-1g (Second Caution)):

When a player receives a second caution, he/she will be disqualified. He/she will be shown first the yellow card and then the red card and he/she will NOT be replaced. His/her team will play short for the remainder of the game.

PLAYER UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT:

It is the responsibility of the head coach to ensure that all of his/her players are properly and legally equipped for each contest. The head coach assumes that responsibility through signing off on the materials on the NMAA District Clinic online. Clarification on several often asked questions about player equipment is provided below.

- 1) Medical Equipment – A doctor's note is no longer needed for casts, braces and splints. The only item which needs a doctor's note is a protective face mask. Protective face masks may be worn by a player with a facial injury. The mask may be made of a hard material but must be worn molded to the face with no protrusions. A medical release for the injured player signed by a physician shall be available at the game site (4-2-8).

- 2) Ankle & Knee Braces – Knee and ankle braces which are altered from the manufacturer’s original design/production are illegal. Knee and ankle braces that are unaltered do not require any additional padding. Ankle braces may be worn **outside** a stocking (4-2-1G). Please note that players do not need to wear a sleeve over a knee brace if the brace seems to be safe. Officials should use discretion in this matter and if the brace does not present a safety issue, do not concern yourself with the use of a sleeve.

As in the past, a team’s first caution for an illegally equipped player is given to the coach. In a revision to the rules, the player concerned must be removed at the time of the caution. He/she may be replaced by a substitute from the bench or one who has previously reported and may not return until the next legal substitution opportunity for that team. This caution to the coach is for Unsporting Conduct.

EXCESSIVE AND PROLONGED CELEBRATION:

When one or more players celebrate a goal, the referee will make one of five determinations:

- 1) The players conducted themselves according to the rules of competition and in concert with the tenets of good sportsmanship. No action is necessary.
- 2) The players celebrate excessively but stop upon receiving a verbal warning from the referee. No further immediate action is necessary, but a confirming warning may be issued to the coach if time before the kickoff allows. Subsequent occurrences of similar behavior by members of the same team must be sanctioned.
- 3) The players are guilty of unnecessary delay and cautioned for Unsporting Conduct when they aggressively seek to collect the ball from the hands of an opponent in the mistaken belief that they are speeding up the restart (the clock has, in fact, stopped). These incidents normally occur near the end of a period when the team who has scored needs another quick goal. Referees are, therefore, normally able to anticipate and prevent these situations from escalating to this point.
- 4) Celebrations that represent, in the opinion of the referee, “a delayed, excessive or prolonged act by which he or she attempts to focus attention upon him or herself and/or prohibits a timely restart of the game,” are now considered a separate form of Unsporting Conduct for which a caution is issued. This is no longer a “Yellow/Red” offence that results in the player being disqualified but replaced. Circumstances under which the referee must caution a player include:
 - a. They do not stop upon the referee issuing a verbal warning;
 - b. They remove their shirt or cover their head with it;
 - c. A theatrical or choreographed act. The referee will issue a caution to all players involved – but the time necessary to orchestrate such an act is invariably enough time also for the referee to intervene to prevent it from occurring.
- 5) When a player is guilty of taunting (“use of word or act to incite or degrade an opposing player, coach, referee or other individual”), either during a goal celebration, at the end of a game, or at any other time, he/she must be disqualified, shown the red card and is not replaced. A celebration which is directed at any way toward an opponent, the opponents’ team and coaching area or spectators will be considered taunting and will be shown a red card.

GOALKEEPER INJURIES:

If a goalkeeper is treated on the field for an injury, he/she must be substituted. Referees should hesitate before bringing someone on the field to tend to a goalkeeper, unless it is a serious or obvious injury in order to allow a team's goalkeeper of choice to continue playing. Gesture to a coach to wait before he/she comes on the field. If a trainer enters the field without being beckoned, politely ask them to return to the team area until summoned. AR1 should facilitate this process.

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF EMPHASIS:

- 1) "Elbows". Without explicitly stating it in these terms, NFHS is asking referees to prevent and penalize the dangerous and illegal use of elbows using the same parameters as set out in USSF's "Contact Above the Shoulder" position paper that is posted at a number of websites.
- 2) Handling. Pursuant to Rule 12-2, "A player shall be penalized for deliberately handling, carrying, striking or propelling the ball with a hand or arm." The NFHS wishes to emphasize that handling offenses should only be called when the player's action is deliberate.
 - 1) A player, who is part of the wall during a free kick and maintains his/her hands and arms stationary relative to body is not deemed handling. If he/she moves his/her hands or arms to protect him/herself and the ball strikes the hand or arm, that is handling.
 - 2) If the ball strikes the hand or arm of a player who "makes him/herself bigger" by extending his/her hands or arms, that is handling.

The soccer rules interpreters for the 2013 season are:

Central Region:

Jeff Eschenburg (District Rules Clinician)

Cell: (505) 453-1306

Email: jesch404@aol.com

Northern Region:

Joe Fawcett

Cell: (505) 469-0624

Email: JJoeF@aol.com

Southern Region:

Nigel Holman

Home: (505) 216-0632

Work: (575) 646-4033

Cell: (575) 621-5437

Email: nholman@nmsu.edu

If you have rules questions, you are asked to call or email the individual in your region of the state for clarification and interpretation. Thank you for your attention to this information. If you have questions or if you need additional information on the rules interpreters program, please feel free to contact us. Have a great season!