

To: All NMAA Athletic Directors and Soccer Coaches

From: Dana Sanchez, Commissioner of Officials  
Robert Zayas, Assistant Director

Subject: Soccer Clarifications and Interpretations for the 2009 Season  
from the NMAA Soccer Rules Interpreters

Date: August 18, 2009

As you may already know, the NMAA has developed a statewide rules interpreters program for all sports for the first time this year. 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 four 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.

Our office staff met with the soccer interpreters last week and the group came up with a number of items for clarification and emphasis. They are as follows:

**LIGHTNING POLICY:**

The following procedures will be put in place for lightning disturbances or other weather related issues (NMAA Handbook 7.17.1E):

- E. **Inclement Weather** – If less than one half of the game has been played, the game will be replayed from point of interruption. The head referee should note who had possession of the ball, on what particular part of the field.

**Lightning Delay Procedures (Guidelines for Officials):**

- 1) Use the NFHS Rulebook as a guide to implement lightning delay procedures (NFHS Soccer Rulebook 5-3-2e). *The head referee shall have authority to suspend play or terminate the game whenever the elements, spectators or other cause require.*
- 2) From the NFHS Rulebook, “When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.”
- 3) Adhere to the 30-minute rule before resuming play, regardless of the point of interruption (first or second half).
- 4) Communicate with host school administration, visitor administration (if present), and with head coaches of both teams as conditions or decisions change.
- 5) Attempt to finish contests, if at all possible, once lightning disturbances subside.
- 6) Contests can be delayed up to two hours using the 30-minute rule.
- 7) After a two hour delay, it is ultimately the responsibility of the game officials in communication with the host site administration as to whether to suspend the contest or extend the delay additionally.

- 8) Officials should contact Robert Zayas, NMAA Director of Soccer (505-977-5386) or Dana Sanchez, NMAA Commissioner of Officials (505-977-5388) for clarification if needed.

***NOTE: The lightning delay procedures (specifically relative to delaying for up to two hours) are for varsity contests only. Sub-varsity or junior high contests are at the discretion of game officials and host site administration.***

### **TIE GAME PROCEDURE:**

The tie game procedure for all regular season district and non-district games can be found in NMAA Handbook Section 7.17.1J. It is 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, a shoot-out will be held, in conformance with the procedures in the NFHS Soccer Rulebook, until a winner is determined. This applies to all regular season district and non-district contests held in New Mexico.
- 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.

### **Clarification on Tie Game Procedure:**

- 1) The only people allowed at the center circle are the five selected to take the kicks from the mark. After the coaches/captains are brought to the center of the field to review the tie game procedures with officials, only the five taking the kicks are allowed to stay at the center. Everyone else retires to their respective team areas after the procedures are explained. 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. If a team has fewer than 10

players, the coach will use five players in the first round and then four new players plus one from the prior round to make the second five.

***NOTE: This is a departure from FIFA rules. There is no requirement for the goalkeeper to take a kick from the mark under NFHS rules. If you coach or officiate FIFA and NFHS, please note this rules difference.***

### **PLAYER UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT:**

As a reminder, 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. Please note that teams need not be formally lined up for an equipment check prior to games. Clarification on several often asked questions about player equipment is provided below.

- 1) Splints, casts and braces - If a player is wearing a splint, cast or brace, the coach must have a doctor's note for that individual. No exceptions! If a player arrives wearing a splint and he/she removes it to play, the player will be disallowed from participation.
  - a. Shin guards - As a reminder, by 2012, the NOCSAE seal must be stamped on the shin guards.
  - b. For Coaches: Shin guards are to be two inches above the ankle (no higher). If players are taping shin guards high, they will be asked to remove them and re-tape them. Failure to comply results in a yellow card to the coach for illegally equipped participants.
- 2) Jerseys - Players need to start every period of play with their jerseys tucked in and all subs should have their shirts tucked in. As a guideline, shirts shall be tucked in at the beginning of every period of play and subs' shirts shall be tucked in prior to entering the field.
- 3) Hair Control Devices - NO bobby pins or metal barrettes and no hard plastic devices are legal. However, if a player is wearing ribbons or other soft hair control devices, if they are not posing a danger to the player or his/her opponent and they are worn as a symbol of school spirit, they are legal.
- 4) Face or Body Paint- Face paint or other decorative paint is permissible as long as it is not inappropriate or objectionable in any way. If the paint is in the promotion of school spirit and is not unsportsmanlike, it will be allowed.
  - a. NFHS Rulebook (page 25), 4.2.1 Situation B - Team A appears on the field ready for play with faces and/or arms painted in an objectionable manner.  
RULING: Illegal. The referee will require that the objectionable markings be removed or covered prior to allowing participation.
- 5) Items Worn on Players' Wrists - If a player wears an extra hair band or rubber band on their wrist for their hair, it is permissible. Pieces of yarn or "Livestrong" type bracelets are deemed as illegal equipment.
- 6) Home Jerseys and Stockings - It is the responsibility of the home team to switch jerseys if the visitor shows up to a game in white. The visiting team has an equal responsibility to wear dark colors, but in the event of an issue, the game should be played and the official should report the incident to the NMAA office.

- 7) Soccer Balls – If a ball is being used without the NFHS Authenticating Mark, allow the team to play but send a game report to the NMAA office informing them that the balls did not have the NFHS mark.

**CLARIFICATION OF “DISSENT”**

Dissent can be clarified as comments by coaches, players or bench personnel that contain any one of the three “P’s” – Personal, Provocative or Public. If comments by coaches, players or bench personnel contain any of these elements, the result will be a card for dissent.

The soccer rules interpreters for the 2009 season are:

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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!