

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 16, 2010) — The official signals used for high school soccer have been modified to reflect common practice. This was one of 11 changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Soccer Rules Committee at its January 25–27 meeting in Indianapolis. The rules changes subsequently were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The committee approved a reduction in the number of signals from 23 to eight, effective with the 2010–11 season. The eight signals that were retained are the most common signals used by officials at all levels of play.

“The reduction in the number of signals simplifies the process for officials and standardizes soccer signals across the board,” said Mark Koski, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Soccer Rules Committee. “The committee believed it was time to make a change since officials would not have to learn any new signals and many of them work at other levels.”

Two changes regarding uniforms were approved with a two-year lead time for implementation. Beginning in the fall 2012 season, the home team will be required to wear solid white jerseys and socks. Previously the wording was “white or light” jerseys and socks. The committee made this change to better differentiate between the home and visiting teams.

In addition, effective in fall 2012, goalkeepers will be required to have a number on the back of their jerseys and the front of their jerseys or shorts that is different than any other number used by other players on the team.

Another uniform change, which takes effect this coming season, states that only names, patches, emblems, logos or insignias referencing the school are permitted on the team uniform.

A significant change in the substitution rule was approved for high school soccer. Beginning next year, a team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench when a player is injured and removed from the field. Previously, unlimited substitution was only permitted between periods and when a goal was scored.

The committee made one change regarding throw-ins. So as not to interfere or impede the player attempting a throw-in, the opponent shall stand at least two yards from the point at which the throw-in is being taken. The resulting penalty for a violation is a caution for unsporting conduct.

Following are other changes made by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee:

- A significant editorial change that will affect all sports requires that any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, including but not limited to loss of consciousness, headache,

dizziness, confusion or balance problems, must be removed from the contest immediately and shall not return to play before being cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

- Two equipment rules were modified. In Rule 4-2-1 regarding illegal equipment, item “c” was rewritten as follows: “Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm or shoulder, unless covered and must be padded with a closed cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick.” In Rule 4-2-5, the revised language is as follows: “All permissible artificial limbs must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick.”
- An addition to Rule 5-3-2 clarifies that the referee has the authority to correct the clock when an error is detected.
- In Rule 18-1-1, added a definition for misconduct as follows: “Any of the actions by players, substitutes and bench personnel that result in yellow and/or red cards being issued.”

In addition, the committee adopted the following Points of Emphasis for the 2010-11 season: concussion management, ankle and knee braces, NFHS Code of Ethics, NFHS Soccer Signals, online education, team areas and throw-in encroachment.

Soccer is the fifth-most popular sport for boys and girls at the high school level. According to the 2008-09 High School Athletics Participation Survey, 383,824 boys are involved in soccer and 344,534 girls participate in the sport.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and Rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing Rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.5 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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