

SOCCER

2022-23 PRESEASON GUIDE

2022-23 NFHS Rules Changes

Hair Beads Now Legal in Most Instances in NFHS Play

The expanded allowance of hair adornments when the adornments do not present a safety hazard to the player, teammates or opponents highlights the six rules changes recommended by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee at its Feb. 6-8 meeting in Indianapolis. The changes were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Taking over for Theresia Wynns, who retired after a 50-year career in education, is Julie Cochran, who adds liaison to the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee and soccer rules editor to her duties.

"Each year this committee works diligently in order to adopt rules changes that are appropriate to interscholastic sports and improve soccer at this level," said Dr. Stan Latta, NFHS Soccer Rules Committee chair.

The changes are listed in the order of their perceived importance.

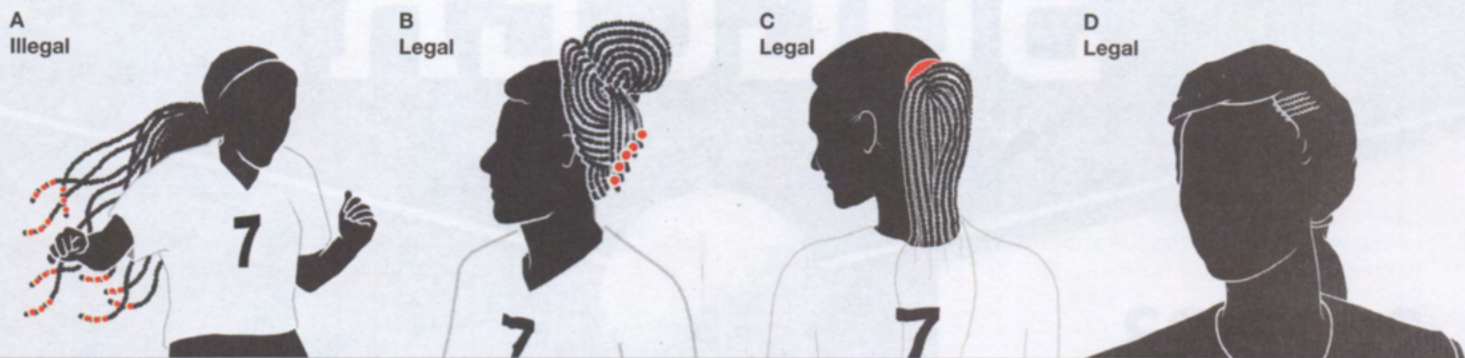
Other Equipment 4-2-2

The rule has been modified to indicate "Hair control devices and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened to the head and do not present a risk to the player and opponents are allowed. The rationale for this change is to enhance participation among players who would otherwise be penalized for wearing hair adornments based on their cultural or religious beliefs.

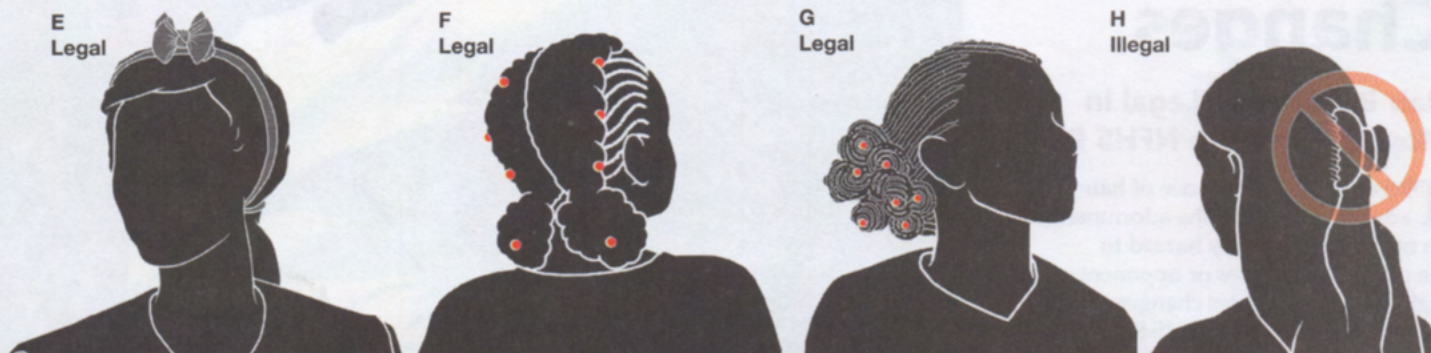
Play 1: A1 has long hair that extends down the back. At the end of A1's hair are beads (PlayPic A). The referee ▶



Beginning in 2022-23 for NFHS play, a goalkeeper's throw that enters the opponent's goal can no longer score a goal for the throwing team. However, a ball released by goalkeeper into the team's own goal remains a goal for the opposing team.



In PlayPic A, the player cannot participate with the hair adornments worn in the current position since the adornments are not securely fastened to the head. In PlayPics B and C, the hair adornments worn are securely fastened to the head. In PlayPic D, the hair-control devices worn are securely fastened and are legal.



In PlayPics E, F and G, the hair adornments worn are securely fastened. In PlayPic H, the hair-control device is not securely fastened to the head.



In PlayPic I, the player cannot participate with the hair adornments worn in the current position since the adornments are not securely fastened to the head. PlayPic J shows how those adornments could be made legal by securely fastening them to the head. The hair adornments in PlayPic K similarly could be made legal by securely fastening them to the head as shown in PlayPic L.

▶ rules the beads are dangerous and instructs Team A's coach that A1 cannot participate with the beads until they are secured to the head. **Ruling 1:** The referee's ruling is correct. **Comment:** Hair control devices are legal providing the official deems the device does not present a safety hazard. Securing the beads to the head would bring the player in compliance (PlayPic B and C).

Play 2: A1 has long hair tied in a bun. In A1's hair are (a) bobby pins (PlayPic D), (b) hair beads (PlayPic G), (c) barrettes, or (d) a claw hair clip (PlayPic

H). The referee rules the hair adornments are dangerous and instructs Team A's coach that A1 cannot participate with the hair adornments in their current state.

Ruling 2: The referee's ruling is incorrect in (a), (b) and (c). These hair adornments/

control devices are permitted as long as they are securely fastened to the head. The referee's ruling is correct in (d). Any hair control device/adornments that extend and protrude from the hair are not permissible. ▶

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► **Handling 12-2, Offside 11-1-1, Definitions of Playing Terms 18-1-1s**

A change to the definition of hand/arm subsequently affected how handling and offside are to be ruled. Now, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. For handling, the hand is defined as anything below this line. In determining offside, the player's head, body or feet will be the deciding factor, not the player's arms below the bottom of the armpit.

Length of Periods 7-1-3

This change clarifies that state associations can determine when a game becomes "official" when there is a suspension of play. Unless otherwise adopted, the referee shall declare a game as official if one complete half or more of the game has been played.

Goals 10-1-1, 10-1-2f, 10-1-3h NEW

A goalkeeper's throw can no

longer score a goal into the opponent's goal. However, a goalkeeper's throw (typically an accident) can still score a goal when the ball enters the team's own goal. That goal remains a score for the opponents.

Penalty Kick 14-1 PENALTY

When the ball is not kicked forward on a penalty kick, the kick will not be retaken. The defending team will be awarded an indirect free kick from the penalty mark. A stutter step or hesitation move remains permissible provided there is no stopping and there is continuous movement towards the ball. Instead, this change focuses on the direction in which the ball is kicked. These situations have been updated in the Penalty Kick Situations chart.

Corner Kick 17-1-2, 17-1-3

While the distance players must remain during a corner kick is the same at 10 yards, how it is measured has been

changed. Now, players of the defending team shall be at least 10 yards from the corner arc until the ball has been kicked. Previously, the distance was measured from the ball, which could fluctuate based on its position with the corner arc. The ball is to be placed within the corner arc, including on the lines, on a corner kick.

Editorial Changes

The rules committee made a significant editorial change to Rule 4-1-1 so it provides an easier flow and understanding. With the exception of socks, all equipment shall not be modified from its manufactured state. Regardless, players must still be properly equipped and the requirements have not changed. Rule 11-1-6 was amended to clarify a player must actually gain an advantage to be ruled offside since every player on the field is "seeking to gain" an advantage, which was the old verbiage of the rule. □

2022-23 NFHS Points of Emphasis

The NFHS adopted four points of emphasis for the 2022-23 season:

Sportsmanship

Good sporting behavior is one of the fundamental ingredients to the continued success and enjoyment of education-based high school sports and activities. In fact, in the 103-year history of organized high school sports in the United States, good sportsmanship has been one of the most important outcomes of high school activity programs.

NFHS playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship. Participation in these programs should promote respect, integrity and sportsmanship. However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved in these programs must be doing their part.

The NFHS is concerned that unsporting behavior in education-based athletics has increased across all sports. As a result, the NFHS has made sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis for the 2022-23 school year.

Sportsmanship, or good sporting behavior, is about treating one another with respect and exhibiting appropriate

behavior. It is about being fair, honest and caring. When these types of appropriate behavior occur, competitive play is more enjoyable for everyone.

Coaches set the tone at athletic contests with their display of sportsmanship. If these individuals act in a sportsmanlike manner, their behavior sets the tone for players, spectators and others. If coaches, however, are complaining constantly about the decision of contest officials, spectators are more likely to do the same.

There must be a collaborative, working relationship between contest officials and game administration to promote good sportsmanship and safely conduct the contest. Everyone has their roles to play in creating a positive, sportsmanlike atmosphere at contests.

Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches and other bench/sideline personnel. A positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved.

Contest officials, however, should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Once the contest begins, school administration

is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators. A proactive approach by school administration includes monitoring the behavior of spectators and intervening as needed.

If spectators are using demeaning or profane language at officials – or at others in the stands – those individuals should be removed from the contest by school administration.

In recent years, a heightened level of unsportsmanlike behavior has been occurring by spectators at high school sporting events, and it must be stopped. The use of demeaning language, or hate speech, by students, parents and other fans must cease.

High school sports and other activities exist to lift people up, not demean or tear people down. The goal is to treat everyone fairly and treat each other with respect. Any speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning or hurtful will not be tolerated.

High schools must establish a culture that values the worth of every single person – both players on the school's team and players on the opposing team. There must be a no-tolerance policy regarding ►

- ▶ behavior that shows disrespect for another individual.

Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity. It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in education-based activity programs.

Strategic Time-Wasting Techniques

To ensure fair and equitable play, officials must be aware of potentially illegal time-wasting techniques which may be used to waste time or gain an unfair advantage. Some examples to consider:

Goalkeepers holding the ball for longer than 6 seconds before releasing the ball into play

Once the ball has been placed for a free kick moving the ball to a different location

Delaying the restart on free kicks or throw ins. Players may take unnecessary time to set up a free kick or throw in by stopping to re-tie their shoe or adjust their shin guard or uniform.

Changing kickers late in the game when taking free kicks or corner kicks.

Changing players late in the game to take the throw in.

Substituting at every opportunity late in the game (before the 5-minute

rule applies). Officials should use their best judgement and know their available options, including issue a verbal warning, stop the clock, and/or issue a caution to deal with these techniques. Recognizing and immediately dealing with these tactics will ensure fair play.

Penalty Kick

The player taking the penalty kick is permitted to use a stutter step or a hesitation move provided they do not stop their approach to the ball and there is a continuous movement toward the ball. To be in play, the ball must be kicked forward. If the ball is not kicked forward the penalty shall be an Indirect Free Kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty mark. Infractions by either team are covered by the chart in the rules book.

Dissent

Rule 12-8-1c states that objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by an official is dissent. However, simply disagreeing with an official's decision isn't always dissent and/or sanctioned by a yellow card. There are several factors to consider in each situation. Referees should evaluate potential dissent by asking if the display is public, personal, or provocative. Expressions of frustration or

disappointment or private dissatisfaction not directed at anyone can usually be handled by a verbal warning or private discussion with the player. Continual public complaining, prolonged and repeated actions, or personally directed comments towards the referee of their decision must be dealt with and should be cautioned.

Beyond dissent gestures or language that are inappropriate, foul and abuse directed at an opponent, teammate or official, threaten physical harm, and/or taunting must be dealt with immediately and result in a disqualification to that player. These same considerations should be considered when dealing with coaches or any other individuals in the team area.

This is a summary of the 2022-23 NFHS soccer rules changes and points of emphasis. Preventative officiating has a place in every sport. Mentoring programs are an excellent way for younger officials to learn and veteran officials to review their methods. Every interscholastic soccer official should thoroughly review the rules book on a regular basis and become a student of the rules. Also, every interscholastic soccer official should review the NFHS Officials Code of Ethics and adhere to each statement in that section of the rules book. □

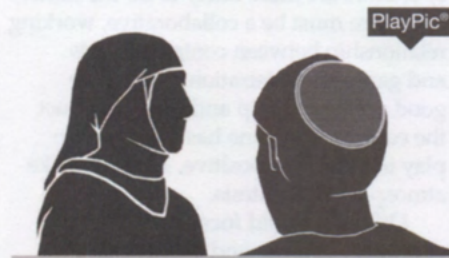
Flashback: NFHS 2021-22 Rules Changes

Religious head coverings are permitted without state association approval in high school soccer. The NFHS adopted two rules changes for the 2021-22 incorporated into Rule 4, Player Equipment.

Religious Head Coverings (4-2-10 NEW)

The new rule indicates that "Head coverings worn for religious reasons shall not be made of abrasive or hard materials: and must fit securely." This change allows student-athletes to express their religious beliefs without requiring state approval.

Play 1: Before the match starts, the



referee notices A1 is wearing a head covering that appears to be worn for religious reasons. The referee requires team A's head coach to provide written documentation from the state association.

Ruling 1: Team A is no longer required

to provide any approval documentation from the state association. The referee must allow the player to participate unless the head covering poses a danger to the player or to other players.

Play 2: Before the match starts, the referee notices A2 is wearing a head covering that appears to be worn for religious reasons. A2's head covering is held securely with two bobby pins.

Ruling 2: A2's head covering — worn for religious reasons — is legal and may be secured with bobby pins provided they are not dangerous. Team A is not required to provide any documentation that the covering was approved by the state association. ▶

► Medical/Cosmetic Head Coverings (4-2-11 NEW)

The second rule change is the addition of 4-2-11 which indicates that head coverings worn for medical or cosmetic reasons require proper approval and documentation from the state association (or designee). The player is required to provide a physician's statement to the state association. In addition, the head covering cannot be abrasive, hard or dangerous to any other player and must be attached "in such a way it is highly unlikely that it will come off during play."

Play 3: Before the match starts, the referee notices A3 is wearing a helmet made of polyethylene foam (concussion headgear). When asked, team A's head coach does not have any supporting documentation from the state association. **Ruling 3:** A3 cannot participate with the helmet as head coverings worn for medical reasons require state association approval.

The key difference between these

two changes is religious head gear is permitted without state approval. Any other head gear being worn for medical or cosmetic reasons must have a document from the state association or designee on official stationery or an original signature from the designee and at the match site that authorizes the wearing of the head gear. It is noted that in some states, the state rules interpreter is authorized by the state association to grant these approvals and that is why the signature of the designee must be an original.

The above two rule changes appear simple. However, the referee or head referee must make sure the proper procedure is followed. The referee must not request a document when a religious head gear is worn but yet must make sure proper documentation is at the match for a head gear worn for medical or cosmetic reasons. There cannot be any confusion on these matters. A player should never be denied the opportunity to participate in the match because he or she is wearing a head gear for

religious reasons and the referee denies participation because of the lack of documentation.

The referee must make sure that any head gear, either for religious, medical or cosmetic reasons is not dangerous. If the referee is certain that the head gear can cause injury to the player or other players, the equipment is dangerous and cannot be worn or the player cannot participate. One example of when this may occur is when a player is wearing a religious head piece that is secured with metal clips. The clips are dangerous and the player should not be permitted to play. Another example is if the head gear has a hard bill which can be dangerous to other players. Again, the player should not be allowed to play. The referee must always make sure that no player is participating in the match wearing any item that is dangerous. However, the referee must not overstep his or her duties and declare an item dangerous when it is clearly a religious covering that is normally worn by all members of that particular religion. □

Drop It Like It's Hot

The NFHS addressed the 2019-20 drop ball puzzle by clarifying and simplifying the rules that apply to drop ball restarts. Overall, the rules committee adopted the procedures previously made by the International Board (IFAB).

The drop ball restart is described in rules — Rule 2, The Ball, and Rule 9, The Ball In and Out of Play. The change to Rule 2 explains how to restart the game if the ball were to become defective. The change to this rule is subtle. Soccer referees know exactly what to do to restart the game after a new ball has been selected — drop the ball.

But more recently, a reference from Rule 9 has been added to Rule 2 and that reference is most important. Rule 9-2-3 indicates that the referee now drops the ball to one player of the team in last possession at the spot it was last touched. So, if the ball becomes defective, the referee drops it to the last team in possession. In addition, Rule 9-2-3 also indicates that if the ball was last touched in the penalty area, the game will be restarted with a drop ball to the

defending goalkeeper with all opposing players positioned outside the penalty area but in all cases all other players are to be at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.

PlayPic™



Several situations and rulings are now in the rulebook to assist with the understanding of the rule. Moving quickly to Rule 9, Ball In and Out of Play, the referee can understand that the rules committee spent a great deal of time refining the drop ball which now includes what to do if the referee is struck by the ball. This NFHS rule is now consistent with other soccer playing agencies and is probably familiar to many officials. Below is a quick review of this change.

If the official (almost without exception the referee, but it is possible for an assistant referee or alternate official when they are on the touchline) is struck by the ball, it remains on the field and one of the following occurs:

1. A team starts a promising attack.
2. The ball, after striking the official, goes directly into the goal.
3. Possession changes — the ball is out of play and the referee restarts the game with a drop ball to the team in last possession; unless the ball was in the penalty area, then it is dropped to the defending goalkeeper. ►

► A special note is necessary. If the referee was struck by the ball while on the field outside of the penalty area and the ball goes directly into the goal, a goal kick is not awarded. Rather, officials now are instructed to drop the ball to the opposing team from where the ball struck the referee.

The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee

also previously clarified the drop ball restart for the following situations:

- Inadvertent whistle.
- Defective ball.
- A referee is struck by the ball.
- When play is stopped for injury or other situations.
- The ball leaves the field due to being kicked by two players simultaneously.

Here is a unique thought that provides very simple advice: Get out of the way! It's not just that simple is it? Do referees get hit with the ball? Sure they do, and now they know what to do if and when that happens. A simple review of current rulings and situations should suffice. □

Barometric Balance

Gauge Pressure on the Pitch, Respond with Rule 12

In fouls and misconduct (rule 12), a foul is an offense penalized by a free kick, whereas misconduct is a behavior penalized by disciplinary action. Not all fouls rise to misconduct.

Myth: Defenders are not automatically exempt from penalties for foul tackles by shouting, "I got the ball first," which itself could constitute misconduct (dissent). Fouls and misconduct are not always linked together. They require referee discretion (rule 5).

Fouls: In and of itself, tackling to win the ball is not a foul. Even when executed fairly, possession may change with only trivial contact between opponents: no foul. Fair tackles become foul tackles when direct free kick (DFK) offenses are committed, usually kicking or tripping. Some foul tackles do not impede the flow of play: "Play on!" Some foul tackles, although unintended, disrupt play: Sorry, DFK! When players make unfair tackles with intentions other than winning the ball (tactical) or cynical (unsafe): Not soccer, misconduct: DFK plus yellow or red card!

Misconduct: A referee just correctly whistled a foul tackle and everyone dissents. Players, coaches (and perhaps the referee) are not satisfied with awarding only a DFK. "Red!" demands the offended team. "Yellow!" appeals the guilty side. The referee must quickly decide which color card is justified but is seeing orange. Why? A caution seems too lenient, whereas reduction to 10 players seems too harsh. What guidance is available to shade the referee's judgment other than saying, "You'll know it when you see it?"



Mourad Khallaf, Lynnwood, Wash., is shown working with a player on the field. Khallaf's goal is to gauge the player's "air pressure," or temperament and respond according. Having a feel for the match will go a long way in determining fouls and misconduct.

Penalty Speak. Penalties for fouls and misconduct are colorized using the look of ill-gotten gain from foul play: 1. Over-aggressively attempting to win the ball; 2. Overtly delaying run-of-play to increase the number of defenders behind the ball; 3. Hastily negating an opponent's skill/speed because one team lacks

both; 4. Contemptibly reacting out of frustration after real or imagined injustices; 5. Premeditatedly sending a message to intimidate; 6. Rashly retaliating after fair-but-physical play; and 7. Ruthlessly whacking (soccer term) to even the score (not the number of goals). The next situations are intended to illustrate proper ►

► penalties in the interest of increasing consistency.

Purpose: If a challenge to win the ball results in some unavoidable contact, penalty is typically DFK/no card. If a challenge to win the ball results in contact that was avoidable or needless, consider DFK/yellow. If a challenge is not to win the ball and contact is made, think DFK/red.

Opportunity: If the ball is winnable, an unfair tackle with attendant contact typically earns DFK/no card. As the ball becomes less winnable and contact harsher, consider DFK/yellow. If the ball is not winnable and contact is made indiscriminately, upgrade to DFK/red.

Timing: If an unfair tackle occurs when the ball is within playing distance of an attacker, the typical decision is DFK/no card. If an unfair tackle occurs just after an attacker passes/shoots, consider DFK/yellow. If an unfair tackle occurs well before the ball arrives or after it leaves, so should the defender, DFK/red.

Approach: If a defender unfairly tackles in the space around the ball in front of an attacker, this is typically DFK/no card. If a defender unfairly tackles from the side with an undercutting motion, consider DFK/yellow. If challenge is from behind and point of contact is not the ball, consider a DFK/red.

Leading: Incidental horizontal contact to the foot/ankle at ball-level with a knee-bent, studs-away sweep is commonly a DFK/no-card scenario. Direct contact to the foot/ankle off-horizontal with a knee bending and studs-showing sweep trends toward DFK/yellow. Any contact over the ball with one/both knees locked, leg(s) straight and studs-exposed requires DFK/red.

Trailing: If the trail leg is not involved (tucked underneath) during an unfair tackle, it's usually DFK/no card. If the lead foot hits the ball and the trail leg stays in a low, fixed position but still kicks or trips, consider DFK/yellow. If the lead foot hits the ball with the trail leg lifting or suspended to deceptively kick or trip, trend toward DFK/red.

Pace and Proximity: If a defender tackles upright, close-in and with a smooth, slow motion in-sync at the pace-of-play, probably DFK/no card. If

a defender dives feet-first into challenge a few strides away with a motion faster than the pace of play, consider DFK/yellow. If a defender goes to the ground many strides away from the ball in an accelerating, sliding motion toward an attacker and makes contact or not, probably DFK/red. In all these situations, remember to consider the look of ill-gotten gain from foul play.

Discretion-based decisions on fouls and misconduct depend upon attitude and approach; degree and distance; space and timing; and self-control and chaos. The referee may not know until afterward what influence he or she had on match control. Did a timely whistle, DFK and no-card/card reduce the number, slow the frequency, or lessen the severity of foul play? Did removing a player prevent injuries or fights? Review these lessons learned.

One often-expressed complaint is that reducing the number of players on a team "decided the result." This is

illogical because not removing a player has the same effect.

Options: When trying to allow a beautiful game to flow, but tackling gets ugly, the green light of advantage turns off and the whistle sounds. If DFKs are insufficient, the yellow light of slow down glows. If players don't respect opponents, the game or officials, the red stop light flashes.

Do players committing orange-colored misconduct deserve continuing to play? One tool perhaps not used enough to maintain game control when no value is returned from a first caution is to issue the second (and only up to two!). Fair refereeing is having the courage to issue the second yellow (which equates to red), if and when deserved.

How fouls and misconduct are dealt with must be black or white and yellow or red, respectively. With better understanding, more consistently colored decisions will result. □

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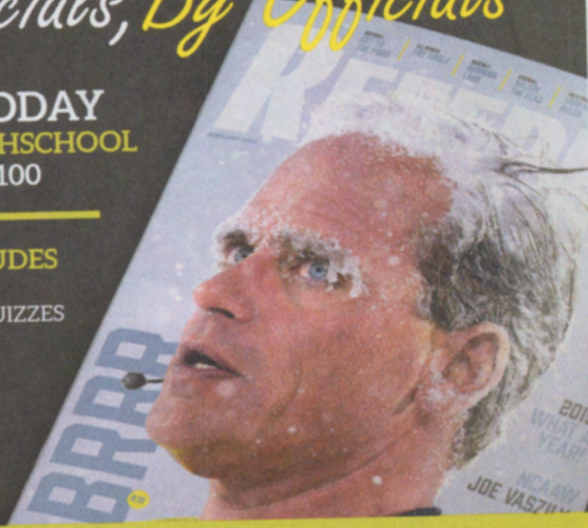
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Imagine the Possibilities

At least four possible situations are present here — and each offers the officiating team an opportunity to make the right call depending on field location, dynamics of the play, and which player is the attacker or defender. Consider that ...

▶ AS A DEFENDER

If the player in white is a defender in her defensive third, the center referee can whistle for holding and award a direct free kick for white. If the center referee's angle is blocked, the assistant referee can make the call and immediately signal direction.

▶ ATTACKER NEAR HALF-WAY LINE

If the player in white is an attacker approaching the halfway line, the center referee can play advantage and let play continue — or bring it back if the advantage doesn't materialize.

▶ ATTACKER IN THE ATTACKING THIRD

If the player in white is within the attacking third, the center referee can play advantage or whistle the tactical foul and show the yellow card.

▶ ATTACKER IN THE PENALTY AREA

If the player in white is in the penalty area, the center referee can whistle the foul, award a penalty kick and — depending on the presence of all four Ds — issue a red card to the defender for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.



Soccer Injury Surveillance Study

As high school sports participation in soccer continues to increase in the United States, the number of sports injuries may also increase. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) 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 is currently collecting the 17th year of sports exposure and injury data.

Among the nine sports included in the original sample of High School RIO for which national estimates are constructed (i.e., football, boys' and girls' soccer, girls' volleyball, boys' and girls' basketball, wrestling, baseball, and softball), girls' soccer continues to have one of the higher injury rates, ranking 2nd overall and 2nd in competition (note, COVID-19 may have affected these results). The overall injury rate in boys' soccer was 5th out of the nine



sports included in the original sample. The most common injury diagnosis for both boys' and girls' soccer during the 2020/21 academic year was ankle sprain/strain (boys': 17%; girls': 22%). Injury mechanisms were similar between boys' and girls' soccer, with contact with another person as the most common competition-related injury mechanism (boys': 53%; girls': 40%) and acute no contact as the most common practice-related injury mechanism (boys': 34%; girls': 29%). Fractures in boys' soccer (40%) and dislocations/subluxations in girls' soccer (33%) had the greatest proportion of injuries with a time loss of greater than 21 days.

Both boys' and girls' soccer injury rates have remained relatively stable throughout the study period. Concussion rates have significantly increased over

the study period for both boys' and girls' soccer. In 2020/21, girls' soccer players had a higher concussion rate than boys, with girls' soccer having the 2nd highest concussion injury rate among the nine original sample sports.

The COVID-19 Pandemic remains a challenge for high school sports due to extended absences and altered training schedules. Understanding patterns of injury in soccer, both in general and related to the ongoing pandemic, is one important tool when considering injury prevention efforts to keep soccer athletes as safe as possible.

If you are interested in more information about the High School RIO Study or you are a certified athletic trainer who is interested in becoming a reporter for soccer, please email the High School RIO team at highschoolrio@datalyscenter.org. Please visit <https://www.datalyscenter.org/rio-annual-reports/> to access the annual summary report referenced above. □

Kicks: All But Throw-ins Resume From the Ground in NFHS

When high school soccer emerged in the 1950s, balls going out of play over the touchline were placed on the touchline at the out-of-bounds spot and kicked back into play. However, in the late 1960s that changed. Throw-ins rather than kicks are now utilized to get these balls back in play.

It is noteworthy that the old "kick-in" method was used by some leagues during COVID-19 as a mitigation strategy.

Other kicks utilized for high school play eight decades ago — kickoffs, direct kicks, indirect kicks, penalty kicks, goal kicks, and corner kicks — have

gone through modifications but remain included in today's high school game. NFHS rule changes involving these kicks are the focus of this article.

The kickoff for high school games for many years was similar to an American football kickoff: The kicking team would kick the ball far downfield to gain an advantage of having the ball deep in the opponent's territory or scoring a goal. This was a result of the kicking team having to remain behind the halfway line and kick the ball forward. Kickoff strategy then shifted to a short kick forward so that another attacking player could cross the midfield line, play and

move the ball forward or kick it back to a teammate. However, the kickoff strategy has changed again as the rule (8-1-2) now allows the player taking the kickoff to be in the opponent's half of the field and kick the ball back to a teammate. The opponents of the kickoff team have always been required to remain at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

Direct kicks allow a goal to be scored directly from the kick, while indirect kicks require the touching of a teammate or opponent of the kicker to score a goal. A listing of infractions resulting in direct kicks and indirect kicks is provided ▶

▶ in Rule 13. That is an essential rule for a referee to know and understand, so a constant review of this rule is recommended. It is also most important when an indirect free kick is awarded, the referee hold the hand straight up until the ball is kicked and touched or played by another player.

The most common direct kick violations in today's high school game are illegal charges, pushes, trips, kicks and deliberately handling the ball. This is unlike high school soccer in the 1970s and 1980s when there was more heading of the ball, and the major violation was illegal jumping at the opponent. A direct kick violation, illegal handling has had recent modifications resulting in fewer free kicks. A reflex action of the hand or arm and moving the hand or arm to protect the body are no longer considered illegal handling (12-2 Sits.). The referee must now judge if the contact with the hand or arm was a result of the hand or arm being in a position that made the body larger. An offense can also be charged if the referee decides a hand held on the body occurred intentionally to make contact with and direct the ball.

The major indirect kick violation was and is currently offside. The indirect free kick is taken from the point of the infraction.

The penalty kick is a direct free kick that is awarded when a direct kick foul occurs within the offending team's penalty area. All players except the kicker and goalkeeper must remain 10 yards from and behind the penalty mark. Recent high school rules changes



Simply tapping the top of the ball with the foot or stepping on the ball is not "putting it in play." The ball is in play when it has been kicked and moves.

have decreased the restrictions on the kicker and goalkeeper. The kicker is now permitted to use a stutter step or hesitation move as long as there is continuous movement toward the ball. In the past, the goalkeeper was required have both feet on the goalline until the ball was kicked. However, a 2020-21 rule change allows the goalkeeper to have only one foot on or in line with the goalline. In addition, the goalkeeper is not permitted to touch the goalposts, crossbar or nets until the ball is kicked (14-1-3).

A goal kick is a restart and a goal can be scored directly from a goal kick. The high school goal kick rule had a significant change in 2020-21. The ball no longer has to clear the penalty area to be in play. It is in play when it is kicked and moves (16-1-3). Opponents of the kicker must still remain outside the penalty area and the kicker cannot play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

Corner kicks are another restart that can result in a goal. The high school corner kick rule dictating when the ball is in play has also undergone modifications during recent years. Currently, the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves (17-1-3). Previous rules for the ball to be in play included the ball having to move its circumference; the ball having to leave the corner kick area; and the ball just being touched by the kicker. Again, the kicker cannot play the ball a second time until it is touched or played by another player. This includes the ball rebounding from the goalpost back to the kicker.

High school soccer has changed a great deal since the 1950s when very few schools had teams and soccer was not a recognized NFHS sport. High school soccer (athletes, equipment, facilities) has improved greatly since the 1950s. In order to maintain the high school sport goals of education, safety and participation, high school soccer rules, as reviewed above, were modified and will continue to be modified as needed in order to maintain the high school sport goals. □

Tactics From Coaches to Sway Your Decision-Making

All soccer officials, no matter how long or what level they have officiated, have heard the verbal jabs and comments from the coaching staff. That's true whether it's a game to which they've been assigned, or in ones they were sent to observe. While soccer may be unique, especially at the amateur level, in allowing that discourse to occur,

here are some ideas that may help the beginner or seasoned official deal with coaches in a positive and proactive manner.

First, let's be clear. Coaches or staff complaining during a match are not always wrong. Everyone can respect those who may have seen the event from a better angle and may have years

of experience to support their opposing view. When offered in a respectful manner without harsh criticism or loud complaint, an official's usual response is, "The coach may have something there." Listening without reacting is a good habit to adopt. Referees can put the comment into their match databank and see if there is something they need to improve or fix. ▶

► But what do referees do if the complaint (valid or not) escalates to the point where it begins to interfere with their concentration and match management? The following are some ideas from a book titled, *Dealing With People You Can't Stand*, by Dr. Rick Brinkman and Dr. Rick Kirschner. It would be a good idea for officials to visit their local bookstore and pick up a copy since it would be well worth it. Officials should not misunderstand the intent of that reference — officials can stand most coaches — but what should be done when they get out of line?

The book has a chapter titled, "Bringing Out the Best in People at Their Worst." It identifies several personality traits that we often see in people and gives pointers on how to work with them to achieve better results. Soccer officials will probably identify with some of the examples at their matches. This column will not address all the examples from the book, but there are some that may come to mind from the last match you worked.

What follows is a brief definition of the type and how it applies to a soccer match.

The Tank

Confrontational, pushy and aggressive.

This type "runs over" to the official to get a point across. These coaches are more prevalent at the entry levels of the game. Many have limited knowledge of the nuances of how officials manage a match and have a "book" view of how things should be done. That very narrow perspective of what referees can and cannot do limits their understanding and makes them unable to expand beyond one controversial call or no-call.

The Tanks may be the ones who want to have a "chat" with the referee after the match to point out his or her mistakes. Understand, those moments after a match (at all levels of the game) are not helpful — for either party.

Dealing with the Tank: Do not take it personally. The Tank's objective is to make a point known, even if it is baseless in fact. The book suggests holding your ground. Then, as politely as possible, re-state the object of discontent: "If I am hearing you correctly, you felt the last call was a trip in the area and should have been a penalty." That helps to get the Tank



Sofia Trujillo, Woodinville, Wash., displays confidence as she runs while working a recent match. This confidence will make it harder for coaches to attempt to sway her decision-making. While not a failsafe with all coaches, this poise will go a long way with most.

focused and affirms you understand.

Once re-stated, you have three options to consider: admit a mistake if there was one, briefly state how from your angle it was possible to see it another way or briefly indicate what you can do next time to make it better. Nothing will change the call (especially if the match is over), but at least you get the Tank thinking he or she has made some progress with you — even though you will probably make the same call the same way in the next 200 matches. Just remember, you have the final say. Then move away or go on to the next restart.

The Sniper

Sarcastic, rude comments, rolls the eyes, goal is to make the official look foolish.

These types are harder to ferret out as their comments may be under the breath, or meant to elicit reactions from players, assistants or parents closer to them than the referee. They may speak out as the assistant referee is patrolling in an effort to get affirmation from the assistant referee.

Dealing with the Sniper: Seasoned officials have learned the best response that can be used as an assistant referee when the coach is in that official's ear is easy: "Coach, I'm sorry, I did not see it, I was concentrating on offside." It is doubtful a coach will come back and tell the assistant referee to stop concentrating on offside.

As the referee, the options to deal with a Sniper type are: Turn the spotlight on the offender to bring the offender out of hiding. Use the simple word: "Stop." By bringing the offender out of hiding, the referee is sending the message, "I heard you." That does not mean it is time for confrontation, rather it may just be a "look" or "nod" or acknowledgement that the referee understands and will work on whatever the issue may be. That simple phrase can stop the Sniper cold.

The Grenade

While usually calm, the explosion is lurking, takes everything out in one blast, the "Attention Getter" of that group.

Often, there may be other factors of pent-up anxiety these types bring along with someone to the match. Experienced coaches know how to vent respectfully, the Grenade just "goes off" and often regrets doing so almost immediately after. A referee can also suspect the coach that has been mild-mannered throughout the game and suddenly goes off, has an ulterior motive. Referees need to be able to examine what happened before the explosion to cause the "pin to be pulled."

Dealing with the Grenade: The referee needs to take charge and get the attention shifted to the coach's misbehavior. The book adds: "Aim for their heart" and "reduce their intensity." If the referee needs to stop play, a long slow walk over to the bench is advised. Really slow. Depending on the playing rules used for the match, the referee might have the authority to stop the clock so the referee has plenty of "time" to address that situation. Instead of going face-to-face with the Grenade, step to the side with both the referee and coach facing the ►

► field, and keep your speaking tone matter of fact and calm. It is a good suggestion for the near assistant referee to come up and be a witness to the discussion (cover that in the pregame).

Calmly but firmly advise the outburst cannot continue and apply the appropriate misconduct card if necessary. Another suggestion is that if the Grenade is the assistant coach, the referee should remind the head coach of the responsibility to control the team's bench (and all personnel occupying the area).

The Know-It-All

Very low tolerance for correction, seldom in doubt/authoritative.

Officials should have the greatest respect for coaches in matches assigned.

The job of a coach is getting harder every year due to changing societal norms. Referees are under similar pressure no matter what venue or age group. The Know-It-All can lose that perspective if the coach feels that influence matters and the official is an easy target.

Dealing with Know-It-Alls: Personality is not going to work if the official tries to "out-know" them. Rather, appeal to their knowledge by asking questions or probing for insights of what they saw or feel. Next, do not invalidate comments. Go on asking for input such as: "I can understand how you saw it that way, but I'm wondering if there is another way of seeing it?"

Then be quiet and give some time for a response and build on that. Speaking in

hypothetical terms allows the Know-It-All to give additional input and leaves a win-win option open for them.

In closing, these are key options available to manage a match. Everyone agrees that knowledge is power and the more ideas a referee can add to a databank, the better off the referee will be. If the referee has the right personality, the referee might be able to use humor as a defusing skill with players and coaches. That technique can be very useful. If a referee attempts to utilize humor, the referee must be very careful in doing such. Remember that everyone involved in the game is in it together and everyone needs the others to help to continue to learn and grow. □

No Defined Number Defines Persistent Infringement

Persistent infringement of the rules is one of the tools in the referee's match-control kit. When used properly, penalizing for persistent infringement can be used to maintain both the safety and fairness of the match.

NFHS rules define persistent infringement as "persistently infringing upon any of the rules of the game."

To better understand how to use the persistent infringement tool, the following are examples of when to penalize for persistent infringement:

Play 1: B1 is a starter in the match and has a reputation as a playmaker and top scorer. Team A clearly knows this and has been targeting B1 every time she is in possession of the ball. The fouls in this case are carefully executed to be careless, so the referee correctly blows the whistle and issues the direct free kick restart. Ruling 1: After the second foul ►

Steve Lane, Garden Grove, Calif., can manage a match successfully if he deals with players who consistently violate, or infringe, the rules of the game. This may require a discussion with a player to avoid such offenses escalating into persistent infringement.



► on B1 by A2, the referee should look at the context of the fouls — where are the fouls happening and against whom? Some preventive officiating here with A2 can prevent future issues. A quick discussion before the restart by the referee with A2 about the foul could resolve the matter. “Number 2, that’s your second foul against B1. You need to change your behavior.” If another foul against B1 occurs, the referee now has more than enough information to call the foul, stop the clock, where applicable, and issue the caution to the offending player for persistent infringement.

Most officials can recognize this situation since it establishes a clear pattern. One player is singled out and repeatedly fouled by the opponents. Failing to recognize and address this pattern of fouls can result in players taking actions into their own hands through retaliation. It is vital that officials address such a pattern of fouls early in the match. The sooner the offending player can be warned, the better the chance the violations can be reduced.

Play 2: The referee observes A1 taking the ball into team B’s half. As A1 moves 10 yards into team B’s half heading for the goal with team B’s entire defensive line in front of her, the referee observes B2 initiate a careless foul that causes A1 to fall to the ground. The foul is called and a direct free kick is awarded. A few minutes later, A3 dribbles the ball into team B’s half. This time B4 trips A3 and a direct free kick is awarded. The referee now realizes that when an opponent brings the ball into team B’s half, the player will be fouled. Ruling 2: This is another form of persistent infringement. The rules do not indicate the same player must be fouled. They also do not indicate the same person must commit the foul, although one could see how that would make calling this offense easier.

Persistent infringement is simply a matter of repeated offenses. That means the referee must be aware of the foul and the location to discern a particular pattern. This may be beyond the simple multiple-fouls-against-a-single-player approach.

Play 3: B1, while trying to tackle the ball away, carelessly executes a slide tackle on A2 in team A’s defensive half, missing the ball and taking A2 to the ground. The referee addresses this with a direct free kick to team A at the point


of the foul. A few minutes later, B1 is challenging A4 shoulder to shoulder for the ball. B1 carelessly trips A4 as he tries to maneuver and strip the ball away. Ruling 3: Although the same offender is involved, there is no persistent infringement in this case. The shoulder charge was legal and the trip was an isolated incident.

The rules indicate that persistent infringement is for any offenses — not just fouls. While it can be used for repeated bad throw-ins, referees should be thinking what they are getting for their caution. A lack of skill in executing a throw-in should not normally be punished. Persistent infringement should be utilized for fouls and offenses where there is a discernable impact to the match.

All officials can recognize fouls and deal with them appropriately. In addition to calling the foul, the referee must be able to recognize when and how persistent infringement is occurring. This will greatly assist in match control.

In summary, persistent infringement does not have to be committed by a single player or against the same individual. It simply must represent a pattern of fouls, with no particular number, in which the offending player or players have infringed the rules of the game. Further, there is no requirement that the referee must “warn” players of their risk of a caution due to their actions. Preventive officiating could help establish a better rapport with the players and may resolve the matter. However, it is not a necessary step before a caution is administered.

Persistent infringement must be in the referee’s mind at all times so when it occurs in a match, the referee will be able to both better recognize and sanction the misconduct. Referees must recall the following when they observe a foul; who and where was it, and then look for the patterns. This simple approach will allow the referee to best use this tool to maintain the spirit of the match. □



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Taunting: Easy to Identify? Maybe

Taunting, a part of rule 12, is a judgment call and the referee is the judge along with the assistant referees and in some cases, fourth official/alternate official. The NFHS Rules Book defines taunting as “the use of word or act to incite or degrade an opposing player, coach, referee or other individual.” The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean offers under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin. For NFHS, it is an ejection.

It is possible that a player is being taunted and the referee is unaware of it. The opponent speaks to the player at a level that only the two individuals can hear. If a player asks the referee to watch out for a player who is saying a few things, the referee should consider adjusting position so the referee can listen. Preventive officiating by a quick

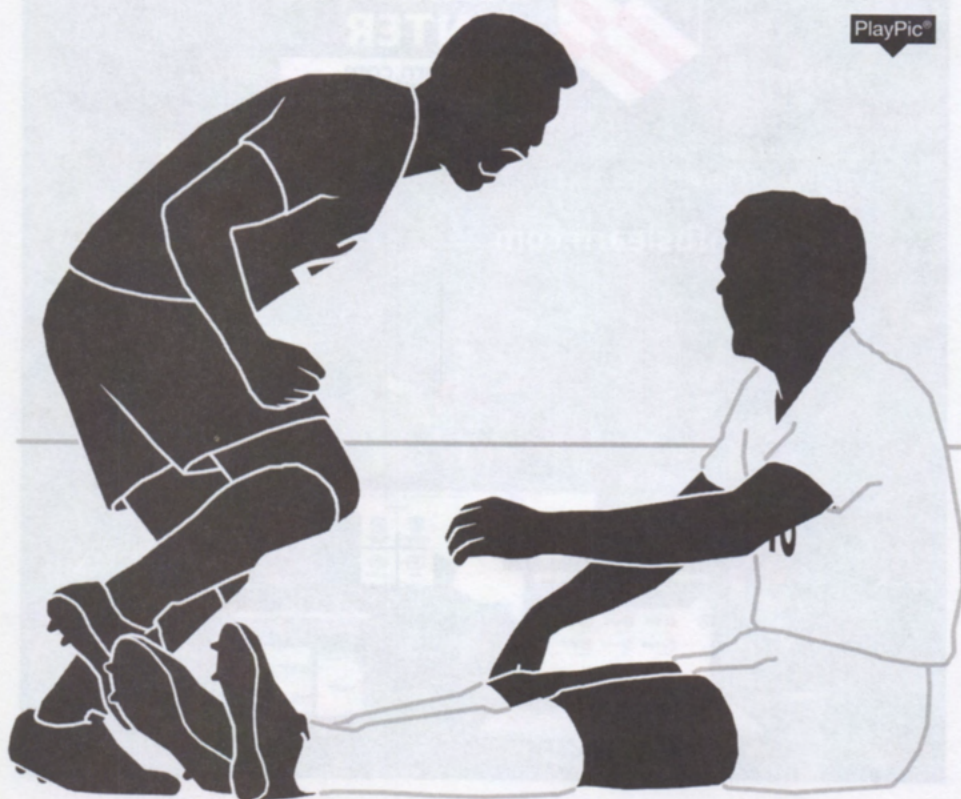
word during play to that particular player might resolve the issue. The player may claim innocence, but at least that player has been put on alert. People management is a great tool for all officials and can help prevent problems from escalating.

Some taunting can be quite visible to all. After scoring a goal, a player climbs onto a perimeter fence, removing their jersey, covering their head or face with a mask or a similar device and even gesturing or acting in a way that is offensive to the match, will draw a yellow or red card. The referee must do the job required. Another example is a player clapping hands in front of an opponent when the opponent is whistled for a foul. Some taunting is not seen or heard by all; teasing, insulting language and or saying something offensive (you can imagine what is being said) to a player are used to take them off

their game. Another way is to taunt the referee crew with constant questions in an intimidating manner and insult their decision making, challenging each call and mocking them when the crew tries to explain a call made against a team. This conduct and lack of respect for the game must be dealt when it initially occurs. It does not matter if the captain or star of team is cautioned or ejected during the first few minutes of the match. If taunting occurs, it must be dealt with each and every time.

The most severe type of taunting is when a player uses abusive language or harassment that refers to an opponent’s race, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, etc. This is totally unacceptable and must be dealt with. There are no exceptions. The player must be ejected from the match immediately.

The above scenarios and problems have been observed by almost every official. The rules are clear and when the referee identifies a potential problem or a real problem, the referee must use the authority to do what needs to be done to get the match under control. If a player uses offensive language, it is a disrespect for the game and to those on and off the field. Every referee wants the match to start and end with 22 players. However, if a player exhibits behavior that is so unacceptable (taunting), the player must be ejected. □



- Contest officials should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Instead, school administration, or in their absence, the home team’s head coach is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators.
- The NFHS is concerned about unsporting behavior inhibiting the recruitment and retainment of officials.
- In addition, an environment with demeaning language, taunting and/or hate speech directed at players does not further the mission of education-based activity programs.

Use the Fourth (Rule)

Rule 4 in the NFHS Soccer Rules Book provides specific information about player equipment. Although the rulebook indicates it is the head coach's responsibility to ensure all the players are properly and legally equipped, the entire referee team should use the pregame time to look over players' equipment and, if necessary, perform preventive officiating by advising the head coach that there is a problem with players' equipment or uniforms. This eliminates the problem of stopping play when the players are on the field and issuing a caution to the head coach for the player-equipment problem.

The most important factor to remember in Rule 4 is that "illegal equipment shall not be worn by any player. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the referee, is dangerous or confusing." The head referee has the final say on whether equipment is dangerous or not. Players, coaches or school administrators cannot overrule a referee decision on this matter.

One example of dangerous equipment happens when a player approaches the referee and states that he or she just had his or her ear pierced and cannot remove the earring. The player states that he or she will place tape over the earring and that should eliminate the dangerous situation. When the referee states that the earring is dangerous and the player cannot wear it, the player claims that he or she taped it over for the last game and it was allowed. A referee cannot fall into this trap. The earring is dangerous and is not permitted. If a ball strikes the earring and the post is driven into the neck, there could be a serious injury.

A necklace is another example of dangerous equipment and cannot be worn. An opponent can get his or her finger stuck in the necklace and create a situation where the necklace wraps around the player's neck resulting in breathing problems. A religious necklace can be worn as long as it is taped under the uniform.

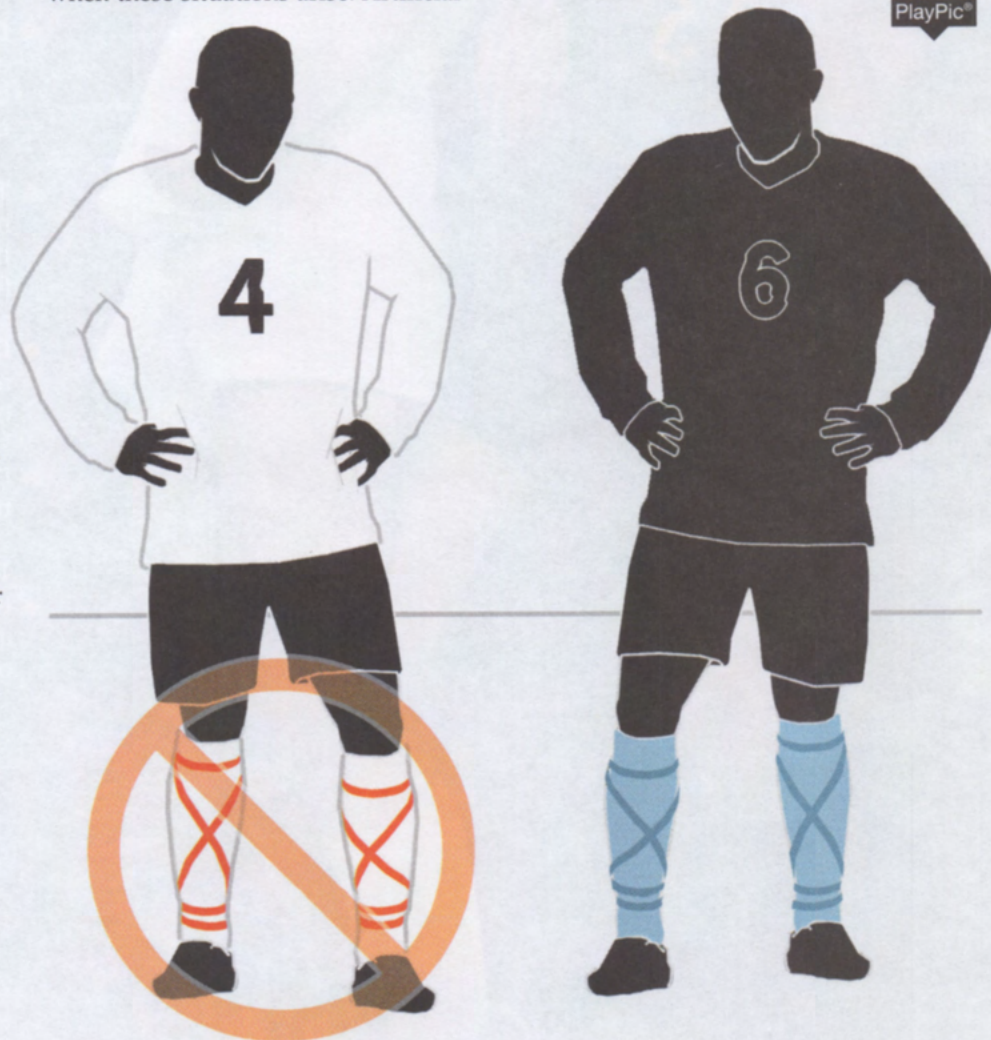
It is most important for the referee

to be cognizant of the entire rule about equipment. For example, a goalkeeper enters the game with a jersey that has a six-inch number on the back. So far, this is a legal jersey. However, it is a replica jersey of an MLS team and has the team name on the front. Is the jersey legal? No. A jersey may not have any insignia that represents a soccer club.

Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities can result in exceptions to the playing rules. These accommodations must be made at the state level. The head referee must be aware of what is allowed when these situations arise. Artificial

limbs are permissible as long as they are properly padded with a slow recovery closed-cell foam padding of not less than 1/2-inch thick. Hearing aids are legal provided they do not create the threat of injury. These are just two examples of what can be done to accommodate an individual with a disability.

In summary, while it is the head referee's responsibility to determine if an item of equipment is dangerous, it is up to the entire referee team to know all the aspects of Rule 4 and ensure that no one is injured because of illegal equipment. □



Note: If tape or similar material (Straps) is applied externally to the socks, it must be similar color as the part of the sock it is applied.