



**NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATIONS**

**2021-22 SOCCER RULES CHANGES and POINTS OF EMPHASIS  
(includes rationale and comments)**

**RULES CHANGES**

<p><b>4-2-10 NEW HEAD COVERINGS</b></p>	<p><b>ART. 10...</b><u>Head coverings worn for religious reasons shall not be made of abrasive or hard materials; and must fit securely.</u></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> This rule addition will allow student-athletes to express their religious beliefs through the wearing of headwear without the approval from the state</p>
<p><b>4-2-11 NEW ARTICLE HEAD COVERING</b></p>	<p><b>ART. 11...</b>In addition to the above permitted uses, state associations (or designee) may on an individual basis permit a player to participate while wearing a head covering for medical or cosmetic reasons if it is required by a licensed physician. A physician’s statement is required before the state association can approve a covering which is not abrasive, hard or dangerous to any other player and which is attached in such a way it is highly unlikely that it will come off during play.</p>

**MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES**

<p><b>RULE 13-3-2 Free Kick – How Taken</b></p>	<p>The ball shall be kicked while it is stationary on the ground at the spot specified by the official. <b><u>The ball is in play when it is kicked, and it moves.</u></b></p>
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**POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

<p><b>CORRECT FIELD MARKINGS AND APPROPRIATE</b></p>	<p>It is important that games are played on fields marked in a consistent manner, and players wear uniforms according to NFHS rules. If a field is improperly marked and/or if a team wears an illegal uniform the referee shall contact the state association, who will work with school administrators to make appropriate changes. In addition, during pregame communication with school administration, game officials are also encouraged to communicate these corrective actions directly to administrators.</p> <p>a. Fields must be marked in a consistent manner (MechaniGram A), and players must wear uniforms according to NFHS rules (PlayPic A). The home team wear must wear darker colored jerseys and the visiting team must wear white jerseys. Players should wear equipment as it is intended to be worn (PlayPic B) shinguards as an example.</p> <p>b. Referees should report to the school and the state office designee noncompliance on the part of field markings and inappropriate uniforms.</p>
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<p><b>UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIWR, HARD PLAY AND A FOUL</b></p>	<p>Soccer is a contact sport and understanding the differences between fair and hard play and a foul that is either reckless or serious is important to ensuring fair play and the safety of the players. When a player acts with disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent, he/she should be cautioned for reckless play. When a player uses disproportionate and unnecessary force against an opponent, he/she could be disqualified for serious foul play.</p> <p>It is critical coaches teach players about their own safety and the safety of their opponents, and officials recognize the differences between reckless and serious and the corresponding penalties. Safety, fair play and sportsmanship should be emphasized in the pregame meeting. Communication between officials, coaches and captains should continue throughout a match, especially as the intensity increases. And when reckless or serious foul play occurs, officials should deal with the situation immediately – this kind of play should not be tolerated.</p> <p>Referees are encouraged to engage in continuing education to improve their ability to distinguish between fair play and fouls.</p>
<p><b>EDUCATION-BASED SOCCER</b></p>	<p>High school athletics is education-based, and some mechanics of our game are intentionally different from other levels of soccer. The pregame meeting, for example, is a time for officials to communicate expectations to both coaches and captains. This REQUIRED meeting for both head coaches and captains should cover pertinent rules, sportsmanship, the coin toss, and properly and legally equipped players. This meeting is a purposeful start to an education-based interscholastic match.</p> <p>Mechanics of the NFHS high school soccer game may differ from those of other playing codes because of the need to teach. Coaches and referees should be teaching student-athletes in every phase of the competition in everything that is done.</p>