

**NFHS Soccer Rules will govern play for any rules not covered in these rules.

1. The Game, Field, Players, and Equipment

A. The Game

1. Each team consists of seven (7) players. A team may start, or continue with a minimum of five (5) players.
2. Each captain may address the referee for matters of rule interpretation.

B. Start of the Game

1. Before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting in which he/she will designate which captain shall call the toss of the coin. The captain winning the toss will opt to do one of the following:
 - a. To kick off
 - b. Which side of the field they wish to defend
2. At kick-off, all players must be on their respective halves of the field.
3. All opposing players must be a minimum of ten yards away at kickoff.
4. At the start of the second half, the team which did not kickoff to start the game will receive the kickoff.

C. The Field

1. Games will play on a smaller field, which is 100 yards long and 40 yards wide.
2. Smaller goals that fit the size of the field will be used.
3. The referee is part of the field of play.

D. Restrictions on Goalies

1. Goalkeepers may not roll the ball and then pick it up. Upon gaining possession of the ball, goalies have 6 seconds to kick or throw the ball.
2. Goalkeeper may not partake in activities, which are intended to delay the game. Penalty: Indirect kick.
3. Goalkeeper may not use his/her hands to receive a throw-in.

E. Equipment

1. An official soccer ball approved by the IM Department will be used.
2. No jewelry, hard or sharp objects may be worn.
3. Only soccer cleats, turf shoes or athletic sneakers are permitted. No metal cleats.
4. No hats are allowed except for the goalkeeper.
5. Team uniforms are required. Teams will assign themselves a different color when they sign-up. These colored shirts will be required before regular season begins. If a team shows up without enough players with same colored shirts, they will receive a forfeit. Teams are also to bring an alternate colored shirt for playoffs. **Note:** All goalkeepers must have a different color than their team and their opponents. They are also not allowed to wear yellow due to the officials wearing that color.
6. All questions or equipment eligibility should be directed to the IM Supervisor.
7. All cautions (yellow cards) for illegally equipped player(s) shall be issued directly to the player(s).
 - a. Illegally equipped player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. Play shall not be stopped for an infringement of this rule except where the referee may stop play immediately where there is a dangerous situation.
 - b. The player must be removed and may be replaced at the time of the caution to the coach or player(s).
 - c. The removed player(s) may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity only after reporting to an official who shall be satisfied the player's equipment and uniform are in order.

2. **Timing Factors and Substitutions**

A. Timing

1. Games will consist of two twenty-minute halves, and a three-minute halftime.
2. When the referee signals, the game shall begin with a kickoff.
3. There are NO time-outs permitted in soccer.
4. The clock will run continuously for both halves except for injury, penalty kick, after the scoring of a goal, disqualification, or protest.
5. Overtime is a 5-minute sudden death period (Golden Goal). If the game is still tied, then a shootout will occur.
6. The shootout will be done by 4 players that are on the field at the end of the overtime. Players will alternate with the opposing team until a winner. If the game is still not decided after the 4th player, the team may choose any other player on the field to kick. This will continue until everyone has kicked at least once (then it will start over from the 1st kicker and in order from the previous round) or until a winner is decided.

B. Substitutions

1. Unlimited substitutions may enter the game under the following conditions:
 - a. On any goal kick.
 - b. On a team's own throw-in/corner kicks (if offense subs, the defense may then also sub).
 - c. After a goal has been scored.
 - d. During halftime.
 - e. When a player has been cautioned (yellow carded). The player must leave game until next substitution opportunity (unless the team has no subs)
 - f. When a goalkeeper has been ejected.
 - g. When a player has been ordered off for equipment change.
 - h. In the event of an injury.
2. All subs must enter and leave at midfield.
3. If a team subs due to caution or an injury, the opposing team has the right to sub the same number of players before play resumes.

3. **Scoring**

- A. One point is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line beneath the goal bar and between the goal posts.
- B. A goal may be scored from a direct kick, penalty kick, corner kick, drop ball, goalkeeper's throw/punt, and during regular play.
- C. The game will be called of mercy rule when a men's, women's or a co-rec team's winning by 4 points at the 10 minute mark in the 2nd half.

4. **General Game Rules**

A. General Rules

1. Off-sides in intramural soccer will not be called.
2. No player (except the goalie) will be permitted to intentionally use hands at any time. Self protection is excluded from this rule. Penalty: Direct kick.
3. Slide tackling is strictly prohibited. Slide tackling will be called when a player slides feet first or head first into the ball or a player whether on offense or defense unless it occurs where no one is within playable distance. Goalies may not come out to stop a ball feet first, but may slide headfirst.
 - a. Penalty: 1st violation – yellow card and a direct kick, unless it occurs inside the goal box then a penalty kick will result. 2nd team violation – yellow card to offending player and a penalty kick. 2nd violation for a player will result in a red card and a penalty kick.
 - b. Exception: If flagrant contact is made during a slide tackle, an ejection will result immediately.

B. Clarifications

1. Red and yellow cards will be used during matches.
 - a. Yellow cards are a warning on an illegal play.
 - b. Red cards are an ejection.
 - c. If a player receives two yellow cards they are ejected. A player needs not receive two yellow cards in order to be ejected. Upon discretion of the officials, a player may receive only a red card.
 - d. For every red card (ejection), the team must play a player down for the rest of the game.
 - e. All cards issued to a team, including those for sideline misconduct will be assessed to the team captain.
 - f. Each team may receive the equivalent of 2 yellow cards and on the 3rd, the team will be forfeited. Also, 1 direct red card = 2 yellow cards.
 - g. Direct kicks: a free kick in which a goal can be scored directly.
 - h. Indirect kicks: a free kick in which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by a player other than the kicker.

C. Throw-ins

1. A throw-in will occur when the opposing team last touches or plays the ball before the entire ball passes beyond the touchline either in the air or on the ground.
2. Opponents shall not interfere in any way to impede the actions of the thrower and must stand at least two (2) yards from the point of the throw in Penalty: Caution.
3. The ball may be thrown in any direction from the spot where it crossed the touchline by a player who is facing the field of play and has both feet on the ground and be on or behind the touchline. The thrower shall use both hands with equal force and shall deliver the ball from behind the head in one continuous motion.
4. The thrower may not touch the ball until played by another player. Penalty: Indirect kick.
5. A throw that never comes inbound will result in a change of possession at the spot of the original throw.

D. Kicks

1. Free kicks
 - a. All free kicks, with the exception of kickoff and penalty kick may go in any direction.
 - b. Any free kick awarded to the defending team within its own goal area may be taken from anywhere in the goal area.
 - c. Any indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team within its opponent's goal area shall be taken from the part of the goal area line which runs parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the offense was committed.
 - d. Any player of the offended team may take a free kick
 - e. The player taking the free kick may not touch the ball until another player has.
 - f. Players opposing the kick shall be at least ten yards away.
2. Corner Kicks
 - a. A corner kick is awarded to the attacking team if the ball is last touched by the defending team before going out of play over the goal line.
 - b. The ball shall be kicked from the ground in the corner arc nearest the spot where the ball went out of play.
3. Goal Kicks
 - a. A goal kick is awarded when the ball goes out of play over the goal line and was last touched by the attacking team.
 - b. Players opposing the kicker shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball has cleared the penalty area.
 - c. The goal kick must clear the penalty area before it is put in play. If it does not, a re-kick shall occur.

4. Penalty Kicks
 - a. A penalty kick is awarded for slide tackling and any foul resulting in a direct kick which occurs within the offending team's goal area.
 - b. All players are to be out of the penalty box and at least 10 yards behind the penalty mark. (Exception: Kicker and Goalie)
 - c. The goalkeeper's heels are required to stay on the line until the ball is kicked, goalkeeper may move laterally along the line prior to the kick.
 - d. Ball shall be kicked with the ball stationary at the penalty mark. Shot must be taken without any broken strides/hesitations while moving towards the ball, if violation, a re-kick is taken.
 - e. After kick any player may make a play on the ball, except the kicker in which it must be touched by another player first.

5. **Fouls, Misconduct, Penalties, and Advisory Board**

A. Fouls and Misconduct

1. A player shall not spit, kick, strike, or attempt to do the proceeding. Penalty: Direct kick.
2. A player shall not attempt to trip an opponent by the use any part of their body. Penalty: Direct kick.
3. A goalkeeper shall not strike or attempt to strike an opponent by pushing or kicking the ball at the opponent or by pushing an opponent while holding the ball. Penalty: Direct kick.
4. An opponent shall not push or hold an opponent with the arms or extended body. Penalty: Direct kick.
5. An opponent may not put their hands on a player in order to reach for the ball. Penalty: Direct kick.
6. A player shall not charge an opponent in a reckless and careless manner. An allowable charge is when both players make shoulder to shoulder contact in an upright position, with the ball in playing distance, having one foot on the ground and their arms held close to their bodies. Penalty: Direct kick.
7. A player shall not recklessly charge or flagrantly foul the goalkeeper in possession of the ball. Penalty: Direct kick.
8. No player may interfere with the goalkeeper in the process of kicking or throwing the ball. Penalty: Direct kick.
9. A player shall not charge into an opponent when neither player is within playing distance of the ball. Penalty: Direct kick.
10. The deliberate act of a player, not in possession of the ball, shielding an opponent from the ball is not permitted. Penalty: Direct kick.

B. Dangerous Play

1. A player shall not participate in play which an official considers likely to cause injury to self or another player (opponent or teammate). Penalty: Indirect kick.
2. A player, coach or bench personnel shall be cautioned (yellow card) for:
 - a. Entering or leaving the field of play (except through the normal course of play) without the permission of an official
 - b. Persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game
 - c. Objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by an official (dissent)
 - d. Any incidental use of vulgar or profane language
 - e. Unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to:
 1. Unnecessary delay (kicking, throwing the ball away on a free kick, etc.
 2. Holding a shirt, short, etc
 3. Deliberate verbal tactics
 4. Encroachment
 5. Deliberate handball to stop an attack

6. Deliberate tactical foul

7. Faking an injury

8. Simulating a foul

9. Player who displays reckless play

10. Illegally equipped player

11. Any delayed, excessive or prolonged act(s) by which a player(s) attempts to focus attention upon himself/herself and/or prohibits a timely restart of the game.

3. RECKLESS PLAY – A player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent. A player who displays reckless play shall be cautioned.

C. Summary of Penalties

1. Penalty kick

- a. Slide tackling (second team offense or first offense inside the goal box)
- b. Any direct kick foul that occurs within the offending teams goal area.

2. Direct kick

- a. Tackling or pushing while playing the ball, or any attempt to do so.
- b. Following a red card
- c. Charging the goalkeeper or another player

6. **Co-Rec Modifications**

- 1. The minimum amount of players to avoid a forfeit is 6, the maximum is 8, 4 males/4females. For 7 players, 4males/3 females or 4 females/3 males. For 6 players, 3 males/3 females, 4 males/2 females or 4 females/2males.