

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Illegal Equipment Violations Revised in High School Soccer**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 15, 2011) — In an effort to treat all illegal equipment violations the same in high school soccer, players with illegal equipment shall be removed on the first caution, which is given to the coach, and cannot re-enter until the next legal substitution opportunity.

This revision in high school soccer rules for 2011-12 was one of nine changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Soccer Rules Committee at its January 24-26 meeting in Indianapolis. The rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Since the coach receives the first caution for an illegally equipped player, Rule 4-3 previously allowed a player who had been removed but not cautioned to re-enter during a dead ball. Beginning next season, all removed players will re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity.

In Rule 12 (Fouls and Misconduct), the rules committee changed the penalty for excessive goal celebration by a player from disqualification (yellow and red cards) to a caution (yellow card), and added two other examples of unsporting conduct in Rule 12-8-1f, which are penalized by a yellow card.

Unsporting conduct now will include a player who displays reckless play and an illegally equipped player, as well as excessive goal celebration, which is defined as 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.

“The committee agreed that disqualifying a player for excessive goal celebration is too severe,” said Mark Koski, NFHS assistant director and staff liaison to the Soccer Rules Committee. “Actions that would constitute taunting and/or offensive language or gestures, however, are still punishable by disqualification.”

With the addition of “reckless play” as an unsporting conduct violation, the committee approved a definition to include in Rule 18. Reckless play occurs when “the player has acted with complete disregard of the danger to, or consequences for, the opponent.”

Two revisions were approved with regard to player equipment. Rule 4-1-1 now clarifies that goalkeepers may wear pants instead of shorts, as long as they comply with manufacturer’s logo requirements. Also, a new article will be added to Rule 4-1 as follows: “It is recommended that substitutes wear distinguishing pinnies when warming up outside of the team area.” The committee approved the recommendation to help the officials distinguish players who are warming up outside the team area from active field players.

In other changes, goalkeepers now may have two numbers listed on the roster – a goalkeeper’s number and a field player’s number. Also, all players’ numbers must now be listed on the roster. The committee also added a ninth signal to the Official Soccer Signal chart to signal a goal.

In addition to the changes approved by the rules committee, last October the NFHS Board of Directors voted to delay implementation of Rule 4-1-1b regarding uniforms until fall 2013. The rule now will read, “Beginning with the **2013** fall season, the home team shall wear solid white jerseys and solid white socks, and the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys and socks.” The rule, which was adopted by the committee in January 2010, was due to go into effect in fall 2012.

Soccer is the fifth-most popular sport for boys and girls at the high school level. According to the 2009-10 High School Athletics Participation Survey, 391,839 boys are involved in soccer and 356,116 girls participate in the sport.

## **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 7.6 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](http://www.nfhs.org).

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