

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**More Communication Opportunities for High School Soccer  
Coaches with Players**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mark Koski

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 7, 2013) — Clarifying when and how coaches can communicate with players highlighted the high school soccer rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Soccer Rules Committee at its January 21-23 meeting in Indianapolis. These changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Effective with the 2013-14 season, coaches and players can communicate during a stoppage of play for an injury. Rule 3-3-1c(1) still requires a coach or appropriate health-care professional to have the approval of the referee before entering the field; however, teams may now huddle and receive coaching instruction during the stoppage, which previously was prohibited.

Another change in regard to communication involves electronic devices. While using electronic communication devices to communicate with on-field players is still prohibited, the use of electronic devices on the sideline is allowed.

“If a coach is on the bench and wants to use a tablet-type device to video and then at halftime show the players the rights and wrongs, they are able to do that,” said Mark Koski, NFHS director of sports and events and liaison to the Soccer Rules Committee.

Koski said the previous rule banned all communication devices, including cell phones, from the sideline. If such devices were found, a caution could have been issued.

Another of the seven rules changes involves the intentional fouling of a player who has an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. The new rule states that if a player commits a foul while attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the goal is scored, that player will be issued a yellow card. If the foul is considered serious foul play, however, the player will still be issued a red card.

If a goal is not scored, the player who committed the foul will be issued a red card.

“The committee doesn’t want to penalize a team twice for the same play by having the goal scored against them, then to lose a player,” Koski said. “On the other hand, when a red card is issued when the shot is missed, the team is still suffering just a single blow.”

Revisions to two rules now require players to check in with the scorer/timer — or the referee if there is not a scorer/timer in place — prior to entering the game when a goal is scored or when a player is injured and removed from the field. After checking in, the player must wait until he or she is beckoned onto the field by the referee.

“This rule helps with game organization and allows officials to know who the players of record are,” Koski said.

At the start of the half, the players can enter the field of play without being beckoned by an official.

Another rules change for 2013-14 involves uniforms, specifically the use of tape on socks. Rule 4-1-1c requires both socks to be the same color and consist of a single dominant color. The change results in the use of tape that is applied outside of the sock, which now must be a similar color to the area of the sock to which it is applied.

The Soccer Rules Committee also approved a change to the definition of the “Free Kick.” The committee agreed that just tapping the top of the ball was not “putting it in play.” For the ball to be considered “in play,” it must be kicked and move.

Soccer is the fifth-most popular sport for boys and fourth among girls at the high school level. According to the 2011-12 High School Athletics Participation Survey, 411,757 boys are involved in soccer and 370,975 girls participate in the sport.

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*This press release was written by Jason Haddix, a 2013 spring intern in the NFHS Publications Department. He is a senior at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis studying journalism and medical imaging.*

**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 performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing 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 16 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; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, 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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