2012-13 Soccer Rules Changes

12-8-1f(13) (new) and 12-8-2d(1): There is a change in the penalty for an intentional hand ball by a player – other than the goalkeeper in the penalty box – who attempts to prevent a goal from being scored. If the goal is prevented, the penalty remains a disqualification of the player; however, if the goal is scored, the penalty will now be a caution to the player who deliberately handled the ball.

12-8-2c: When a player receives a second caution in the same game, he/she will be disqualified with a red card and the team will now play the remainder of the game without replacing the disqualified player (play shorthanded). The yellow and red card that was previously given for the second caution has been eliminated.

14-1-7 (new): When, in the taking of a penalty kick, there is an unusual situation that causes a temporary suspension of play before the ball is played or touched by another player, or before the ball hits the goalpost or crossbar, the kick is retaken. Previously, this would have resulted in a drop ball.

2012-13 Soccer Editorial Changes

Soccer Field Diagram: Change flag height to “minimum” 5’ high.

3-1-3: Each team shall submit a team roster, containing the first and last names and numbers of all players, substitutes, all bench personnel and all coaches, to the officials at least five minutes prior to the start of the contest. The game shall not begin until this is complete. Players, bench personnel and coaches may be added to the roster after the start of play. Goalkeepers may have two numbers listed on the roster, a goalkeeper’s number and a field player’s number.

3-3-1c1: A coach or appropriate health-care professional may not enter the field without approval from a referee. During the time a coach or appropriate health-care professional is permitted on the field by the referee to attend to an injured player, coaching instruction shall not be given to any player on either team.

3-4-1b: A substitute may enter the field of play after a score, when a player is injured and removed from the field or at the beginning of a period without being beckoned by the referee.

4-2-8: A protective face mask may be worn by a player with a facial injury. The mask may be made of hard material, but must be worn molded to the face with no protrusions. A medical release for the injured player signed by an appropriate health-care professional shall be available at the game site.

5-1-2: The jurisdiction of the officials shall begin 15 minutes prior to the start of the game and end with their leaving the field of play and its immediate surroundings. They shall enforce the rules, and their decisions on points of fact are final. The officials can only correct a decision so long as the game has not been restarted. The officials retain clerical authority over the contest through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the referees had jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents that occur before, during or after the officials’ jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a contest is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play. Protests of NFHS rules are not recognized. The officials shall not use video replays to assist in any decision. The officials shall not use any tobacco products during this period.

5-3-1g – Notes: 1: If a player, coach or bench personnel is being disqualified for a subsequent act of misconduct, the referee will show a yellow card indicating the subsequent caution followed immediately by showing a red card.

9-1-3: The referee shall sound the whistle when needed to indicate that the ball is out of play or for a foul. As soon as the ball is in position to be played, it may be played without a second whistle. A second whistle is required to restart play for the taking of a penalty kick, after a substitution is made, after a caution, disqualification, injury and after setting a wall prior to a free kick.

12-1-2 Situation: Player A2 trips B2 but B2 maintains control of the ball. RULING: Foul. The referee may stop play and award a direct free kick or invoke the advantage clause.

12-4-3: The goalkeeper in possession of the ball shall not be interfered with or impeded in any manner by an opponent. This
includes the act of bouncing the ball or dropping the ball for a kick or attempting to throw the ball or tossing the ball in the air to recatch. When goalkeepers put the ball on the ground, they relinquish their rights as goalkeepers.

14-1-3: The opposing goalkeeper shall stand on the goal line, between the goal posts, until the ball is kicked. Lateral movement is allowed, but the goalkeeper is not permitted to come off the line by stepping or lunging forward until the ball is in play.

PENALTY (ARTICLES 2 AND 3): Infringement by the defending team is not penalized if the goal is scored. If a goal is not scored on the penalty kick, it is retaken. If there is an infringement by the attacking team and the ball enters the goal, the goal does not count and the kick shall be retaken. If there is encroachment by the attacking team and the ball does not go into the goal, there is no rekick. If the ball rebounds into play or is deflected out of bounds by the goalkeeper, the game shall be stopped and restarted with an indirect free kick for the defending team at the location of the encroachment. If the ball is saved and held by the goalkeeper, play shall continue. In cases where players from both teams are guilty of infringements, the kick shall be retaken regardless of the outcome of the kick.

17-1: EXCEPTION: A corner kick shall be awarded to the opposing team when a free kick taken from outside the penalty area goes untouched into a team’s own goal.

Dual-Officiating System (Pregame Conference): NOTE: A reserve official may be assigned to a tournament in order to assure game officiating continuity in the event one of the assigned officials is unable to officiate as assigned. When a reserve official is assigned, the tournament authority will clearly state the officiating position to be assumed by the reserve official in the event a head referee or referee is unable to officiate. The reserve official is under the jurisdiction of the head referee and performs those duties assigned by the head referee. The reserve official’s normal station is at the table inside the officials’ area during play.

Dual-Officiating System (Penalty Kicks): Deleted arrow in center circle of diagram.

Diagonal-Officiating System (Free Kick at the Halfway Line): Align AR1 with the second to last defender.


Rules Comparison: The 2012-13 rules book will contain an updated comparison of the major differences among NFHS and NCAA rules and FIFA laws.

2012-13 Soccer Points of Emphasis

Player Equipment: Enforcement of player equipment rule (4-1 and 4-2) begins with the players wearing only legal equipment. Coaches, as the adults of their teams, must work with their players and officials to ensure that player equipment is safe and legal. Officials must also emphasize player safety and legal equipment throughout the match.

Equipment Changes: It is now required that the NOCSAE seal and height range shall be permanently marked on the front of the shinguard. Goalkeepers are now required to have numbers on the back of their jersey and on the front of their jersey or pants/shorts. 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.

Coaching During an Injury: When a coach or appropriate health-care professional is called onto the field to attend to an injured player, neither coach shall give instruction to his or her players. The coach may give instructions to a substitute who is entering the game during this stoppage. The rationale for this is to make sure that no advantage is given to the team of the non-injured player.

Goals: Schools, coaches and officials are reminded that all soccer goals shall be adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted to the ground for the safety of all involved.

Concussion Management: The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee has noted an increase in reported and diagnosed concussions in the 2010-2011 National High School Sports Related Injury Surveillance Study. The position of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee is that no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day after suffering a concussion. Studies have shown medical professionals that the school-aged brain does not recover quickly enough for an interscholastic athlete to return to activity in such a short time. No athlete should return to sport or other at-risk participation when symptoms of concussion are present and recovery is ongoing. Please see the “NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion” at www.nfhs.org for further information. (See NFHS Soccer Rules Book Page 106)