

# 2025 VPA SOCCER GUIDE

<b>2025 VPA SOCCER GUIDE</b>	<b>1</b>
SEASON INFORMATION	1
Season Dates and Schedule Limits	1
Required Coach Certifications	1
Preseason Training Regulations	2
Scrimmages and Jamborees Defined	2
RULES AND REGULATIONS	2
2025- Rules Changes:	2
Governing Rules	2
Card Monitoring and Ejection Policies	3
NFHS Points of Emphasis	3
Player and Coach Ejections	3
Equipment Recommendations	4
Overtime Procedures (Regular Season)	4
Tournament Participation	4
Pre-Game Conference	4
Running Clock Rule	4
TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES	4
Tournament Qualification	4
Field Requirements and Equipment	5
Tournament Overtime Procedures	5
Game Interruption Procedures	5
Finals Requirements	5
Heat Acclimatization	5
Section 5: Exercise Acclimatization	8
Protest Procedures	9

## SEASON INFORMATION

### Season Dates and Schedule Limits

- **Season Duration:** Opens August 14th for all divisions (boys and girls) and concludes November 1st (weather dependent)
- **Maximum Contests:** 14 games per school, excluding VPA-sanctioned playoffs

### Required Coach Certifications

- **Concussion Education:** All coaches must complete the NFHS concussion education program before the first practice (renewed every two years)
- **AED/CPR Training:** All coaches must have AED/CPR education and training with their school's Emergency Action Plan (renewed every two years)

## Preseason Training Regulations

### 1. Double Practice Sessions:

- Cannot exceed 3½ hours total (maximum 2 hours for one practice, 1½ hours for the other)
- Minimum 3-hour rest period between practices for recovery and hydration
- No active training during rest periods (classroom meetings permitted)
- No consecutive days of double training sessions
- Cannot begin until after the 5th practice per the [Heat Acclimation Guidelines](#) (pg 56).

### 2. Scrimmages and Practice Requirements:

- Scrimmages may be held at any time with no minimum practice requirement
- Teams must complete 10 practices before their first regular-season game

## Scrimmages and Jamborees Defined

**Scrimmage Definition:** A learning situation, not a competitive event

- Limited to 20% of maximum regular season games (until end of regular season)
- Postseason scrimmages allowed (not counted in the 20% limit)
- No admission charges (public attendance permitted)
- Not bound by regular game length regulations (individual players cannot exceed regular season game playing time)
- Scores kept only by quarter/period/inning/half, not as a regular game

**Jamboree Definition:** A scrimmage involving three or more teams

- Schools may use the equivalent of 2 scrimmages at a jamboree/round robin

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

### 2025- Rules Changes:

**7-2-4 (NEW):** Prohibits a coach or team personnel other than the team captain from speaking with a referee during interval between periods, unless beckoned by a referee.

**12-4-4:** A misconduct penalty may be given to the head coach if team or bench misconduct occurs.

### Governing Rules

- National Federation Soccer Rules are official for all interscholastic soccer among VPA member schools, with variations noted in this guide
- Games stopped before completion of first half must be replayed entirely
- Rescheduling of games to be conducted between schools (VPA Executive Director and Soccer Committee Chair will mediate if agreement cannot be reached)

### Card Monitoring and Ejection Policies

- Schools and coaches should monitor accumulated yellow/red cards and develop team policies

- Any team with more than two ejections (of the 2-game variety) must meet with the Activities Standards Committee before entering or continuing tournament play
- VPA will maintain centralized tracking of red and yellow cards
- **Ejected players** must leave the playing field if there is school staff supervision available, and if they must remain on the bench due to lack of supervision, they are prohibited from participating in the post-game handshake line. If an assistant coach is available, they shall supervise the ejected student-athlete.

## NFHS Points of Emphasis

- Coaches are responsible for reviewing Points of Emphasis (page 78) and Rules Changes (pages 2-3) in the NFHS Soccer Rules Book
- Recommended pre-season meeting with officials to explain new and current rules

## Player and Coach Ejections

### Two-Game Suspensions:

- Applies to: Verbally harmful conduct, malicious physical contact (including fighting), or taunting
- No substitute allowed for ejected player
- Player or coach is suspended for the current game plus the next two contests
- DOGSO situations involving Serious Foul Play or Violent Conduct would still result in a two-game suspension.

### One-Game Suspension:

- When a player receives a second caution (yellow card) in the same game
- Player is disqualified with a red card
- Team plays remainder of game without replacing the disqualified player

### Current Game Suspension:

- Ejection from current game only
- If goal is scored despite the handball, a yellow card is given instead
- Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO) that includes a deliberate handball, a foul outside the penalty area, or a foul inside the penalty while not attempting to play the ball." Rule 12-6- Art.1-a,b,c and Rule 12-8 Art. 1,2,3,4. DOGSO situations involving Serious Foul Play or Violent Conduct would still result in a two-game suspension.

### Appeals:

For soccer red card appeals, schools must provide new and compelling evidence that clearly contradicts the on-field official's decision in order for any suspension to be overturned. The burden of proof rests with the appealing school to demonstrate that the official's call was demonstrably incorrect based on evidence not available during the match.

## Equipment Recommendations

- **Mouthguards:** Recommended for all players to cover upper molars and front teeth
- Recommended for all practices and competitions at all levels (freshman, JV, varsity)

## Overtime Procedures (Regular Season)

- Five-minute mandatory timeout after regulation time
- Two 10-minute sudden victory overtime periods
- If teams remain tied after both overtime periods, a tie is declared

## Tournament Participation

- Open to all VPA member schools in 2025

## Pre-Game Conference

- Coaches, officials, and team captains will meet to discuss game procedures and expectations

## Running Clock Rule

- Implemented Fall 2021: In the 2nd half, if there is a 5-goal deficit, the clock will continue to run unless there is a severe injury

# TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES

## Tournament Qualification

- Teams must complete at least an eight-game schedule with three different schools

## Key Dates:

<b>2025</b>	<b>Boys Soccer</b>
1st date to practice	August 14, 2025
1st date to play	August 29, 2025
Last date to play	October 18, 2025
Last Day to Enter Games	October 18, 2025
Pairings Posted	October 20, 2025
Playdowns	Oct. 21/22, 2025
Quarterfinals	Oct. 24/25, 2025
Semi-Finals	Oct. 28/29, 2025
State Finals	November 1, 2025

## Field Requirements and Equipment

- Minimum field size: 100 yards x 60 yards (must meet Federation Rule Book regulations)
- Schools with unsuitable fields must provide an approved backup field

- All playoff games must use the Select Royale Soccer Ball

## **Tournament Overtime Procedures**

For all tournament games where a winner must be determined:

1. Five-minute mandatory timeout after regulation
2. Maximum of two 15-minute sudden victory overtime periods (11-on-11)
3. Teams switch ends after first overtime period with a 2-minute break
4. If still tied: Penalty kick shootout
  - Each team selects five players for alternating penalty kicks
  - Order determined by coin toss
  - If still tied, additional rounds of five kicks until a winner is determined

## **Game Interruption Procedures**

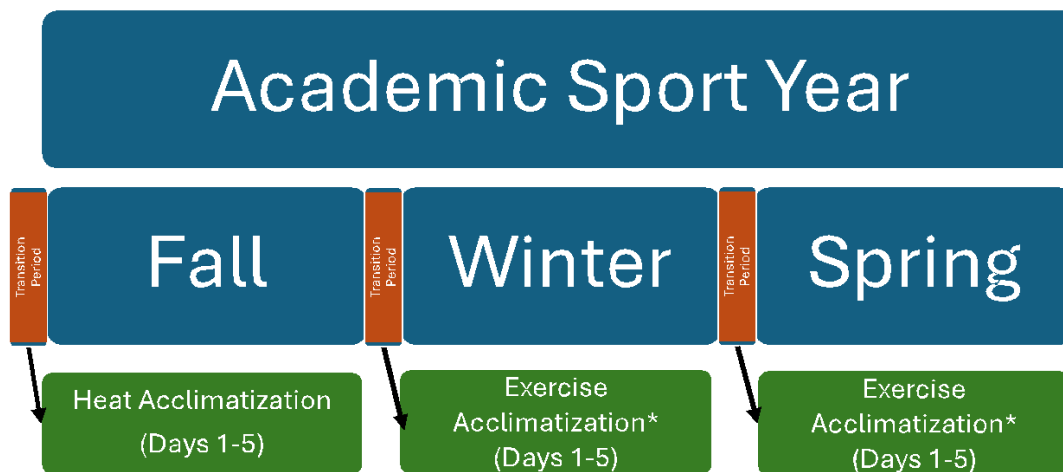
- Game interrupted before completion of 1st half: Replayed entirely
- Game interrupted during 2nd half: Resumed from point of suspension (unless both teams agree to finalize the current score)

## **Finals Requirements**

- Each school must provide two ball persons to run the sidelines
- Tournament director determines whether games will be played or continued in case of inclement weather

## **Heat Acclimatization**

**(Fall 2025)**



\*Transition period is defined as: The first 5 days of any new conditioning cycle or new physical activity

\*Additional Transition Periods may be needed for individual athletes throughout the course of the season due to sickness or injury\* (including but not limited to return to sport from any circumstance that has caused a removal from sport for 14 or more consecutive days. For example: an athlete is sick and has been removed from sport for  $\geq 14$  days OR an athlete is returning from surgery ( $\geq 14$  days away from organized practice).

Reference: Caterisano A, Decker D, Snyder B et al. CSCCa and NSCA joint consensus guidelines for transition periods: safe return to training following inactivity. Strength and Conditioning Journal. 2019;3(4):1-23.

### Heat Acclimatization (Days 1-5)

- **During the first five (5) days of any athlete's participation, it is required that participants do not engage in more than one practice per day.** Student-athletes who begin practice with a team after the start of official practice will be required to follow this same five (5)-day procedure. An official practice is defined as one continuous period of time in which a participant engages in physical activity.
- It is required that each practice be no more than three hours (3 hours) in length. On days when two practices are conducted, it is required that either practice not exceed three (3) hours in length and student-athletes not participate in more than five (5) total hours of practice activities on these days, Warm-up, stretching, and cooldown activities are included as part of the official practice time.
- A walk-through is permitted during Days 1-5 of the acclimatization period. However, a 3-hour recovery period is required between the end of practice and the start of the walk-through or vice-versa. A walk-through is not permitted on days that have two (2) official practices.
- The first two (2) days of practice are restricted to helmets only, days 3-5 can introduce shoulder-pads with shorts and then beginning day six (6) of practice, full gear can be utilized and body-to-body contact is permitted.
- Student-athletes who begin practice with a team after the start of official practice will be required to follow this same 6-day procedure. During the initial five (5) days, the use of arm shields, tackling and blocking dummies, sleds and other devices can be used for instructional purposes, however, deliberate body-to-body contact is prohibited.
- Beginning Day six (6) it is required that any double practice days must be followed with a single practice day, so that there are not two consecutive days

with double practices. This means that a day consisting of two practices should be followed by a day with only one practice. On a day consisting of two practices, the two practices must be separated by at least three (3) hours of continuous rest in a cool environment. One walk-through session may be added to a day with a single practice session, with a minimum of three (3) hours of continuous rest time between the practice and walk-through.

Area of Practice Modification	Practices 1-5		Practices 6-14
	Days 1-2	Days 3-5	
# of Practices Permitted Per Day	1		2, only every other day
Equipment	Helmets only	Helmets & Shoulder Pads	Full Equipment
Maximum Duration of Single Practice Session	3 hours		3 hours (a total maximum of 5 hours on double session days)
Permitted Walk Through Time (not included as practice time)	1 hour (but must be separated from practice for 3 continuous hours)		
Contact	No Contact	Contact only with blocking sleds/dummies	Full, 100% live contact drills

## Section 5: Exercise Acclimatization

(Days 1-5)

- Conditioning periods should be phased in gradually and progressively to minimize risk of injury during transitional periods. **The first 5 days of any new conditioning cycle or new physical activity** (including but not limited to return to sport from any circumstance that has caused a removal from sport for 14 or more consecutive days) are referred to as transitional periods. If no previous strength and conditioning history exists, default to the most conservative workload from other athletes.
- New conditioning activities should be phased in gradually, especially during the early stages of a conditioning period.
- See the Progressive introduction of strength and conditioning example:

Week	Reduction From Previous Peak Conditioning*	Reps	Work: Rest Ratio	EXAMPLE (sprint/drill based)	
				Sprint/Rep Time (will vary by athlete)	Rest time (varies by rep time)
1	50%	5	1:4	10 seconds	40 seconds
2	30%	7	1:3	10 seconds	30 seconds
3	20%	8	1:2	10 seconds	20 seconds
4	10%	9	1:2	10 seconds	20 seconds
5	none	10	1:1	10 seconds	10 seconds

\*If no previous strength and conditioning history exists, default to the most conservative workload from other athletes.

- Exercise and conditioning activities should be consistent with daily training objectives and are not permitted to be used as discipline/punishment or put the student athlete's physical, social, or psychological health at risk.
- All exercise and conditioning activities are required to have appropriate supervision (ie. coach trained and rehearsed in CPR/AED with education on the prevention of sudden death in sport, or an athletic trainer on site).



## Protest Procedures

*The policy establishes a clear dispute resolution process for school activities, beginning with principals attempting to resolve issues directly before escalating to league or VPA officials. For VPA-sponsored activities, protests are handled by designated observers or officials, with specific procedures for filing protests during activities. If a school principal wishes to appeal a ruling, they must contact the VPA office within 24 hours, and any protest of the VPA office's decision must be made within 24 hours by telephone. A protest committee consisting of Association leadership makes final decisions on escalated disputes, with alternates appointed when committee members have conflicts of interest.*

School Sponsored Activities unfortunate circumstances and misunderstandings can and should be resolved between the Principals/Headmasters of the schools involved. If the Principals/Headmasters of the schools involved are unable to arrive at a resolution to the problem, a principal will:

- Notify the President of the league in writing, filing a copy with the Assistant Executive Director of the VPA.
- If the dispute is not league related, the Assistant Executive Director (or their designee) will be available to mediate the disagreement.
- VPA Sponsored Activities in all activities sponsored by the VPA, athletic and non-athletic, the following will be the procedure for handling protests and grievances:
- Any protest relative to any aspect, other than the actual activity, will be settled by the observer. Should there be no observer assigned or present the host administrator will make the necessary decisions.
- Any protest relative to the activity will be settled by the chief official. If no official has been designated as chief official by the Council, the referee or the official so designated by the playing rules will be considered the chief official. In any athletic activity where protest procedures are provided in the playing rules, these procedures will be followed. Only playing rules of the rule book/guide governing that activity being played are protestable.
- The director of any activity or the coach of any team desiring to protest the actual activity or game must notify the chief official, referee, umpire, and the opposing coach that the contest is going on under protest. If a protest has not been as outlined in the rulebook or guide, no protest may be lodged.
- Should the principal of any school wish to appeal the ruling, based on the misapplication of a rule made by the chief official, observer, or host principal, the Principal must contact the VPA office within 24 hours. The Executive Director/Assistant Executive Director will conduct an investigation requiring written reports, if deemed necessary, and will render a decision.
- Any protest to be made of a decision by the VPA office shall be by telephone communication within twenty-four (24) hours. It will be The Executive Director/Assistant Executive Director's responsibility to contact the other

members of the protest committee and to obtain statements from all concerned.

The following will constitute the protest committee:

- The President of the Association
- The President-elect of the Association
- The Executive Director of the Association or his/her designee
- The Chairman of the Activities Standards Committee
- The Chair of the Sports Specific Committee involved
- Alternates shall be appointed by the President to serve in place of any of the principals listed above whose school is involved in the protest or grievance or who have any conflict of interest.
- The decision of the protest committee shall be final.