

PSOA HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER INFORMATION 2023-24

To provide consistency within PSOA, this document outlines some important high school rules. It also covers additional administrative tasks we need to perform, as well as how we want to present ourselves at every contest.

Rules

- **Ball touches an official and remains on the field** – Restart with a drop ball if a team starts a promising attack, the ball goes directly into goal, or if possession changes.
- **Caution/Disqualification**
 - 1) **Caution – Yellow Card** – A cautioned player must leave the field and cannot return until the next legal substitution opportunity for their team. The cautioned player may be replaced or the team may elect to play short until a legal substitution opportunity.
 - 2) **Disqualification – Red Card** – A disqualified player must leave the field and cannot be replaced. Exception: A team does not play short for a team member disqualified during an interval between periods.
 - 3) The referee or AR should notify the coaches of the reason for the card. Notify (not a lengthy discussion or argument) and get the game restarted.
- **Clock Stoppage** – Whistle, signal and stop the clock: when a goal is scored, when awarding a penalty kick, when issuing a yellow or red card, when the leading team subs in the final 5 minutes of regulation time or overtime, or as deemed necessary.
- **Corner Kick** – Defenders must be at least 10 yards from the corner arc until the ball has been kicked.
- **DOGSO** – Offenses which deny a goal-scoring opportunity are not limited to those punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick. These offenses may include fouls for which the restart is an indirect free kick.
- **Drop Ball** – The referee drops the ball to one player of the team that last possessed the ball at the position where the ball was last touched by a player(s), an outside agent, or official. If, when play was stopped, the ball was in the penalty area or the last touch, by either team, was in the penalty area, the ball is dropped to the defending team's goalkeeper, with all opposing players outside the penalty area. In all cases, all other players must remain at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a drop ball.
- **Free Kicks** – When 3 or more defending players form a wall, all attackers must remain at least 1 yard from the wall until the ball is in play. A player may not lay down behind a wall of defensive players as it creates a dangerous situation. A free kick taken by the defending team in its penalty area is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- **Goalkeeper** – The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside the penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. If the violation is playing the ball a second time after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper must be cautioned if the offense stops a promising attack or disqualified if the offense denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO).
- **Goal Kick** – The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- **Handling** – For the purposes of determining handling, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. Neither accidental nor deliberate hand/arm contact can result in a goal.
- **Injured Player** – The referee may stop the clock for an apparent injury to a field player/goalkeeper. If the referee beckons sideline personnel to attend to an injured field player/goalkeeper, the field player/goalkeeper must leave the field. If the referee does not beckon anyone onto the field, the field player/goalkeeper may remain in the game. If the field player/goalkeeper leaves the field, the field player may be replaced, and the goalkeeper shall be replaced by either a substitute or a field player. If the injured player is being replaced during a penalty kick situation, the substitute may not take the penalty kick.
- **Kickoff** – The ball may be kicked in any direction. The kicker may be in the opponent's half.

- **Offside** – A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent, who deliberately plays the ball (except from a deliberate save), is not considered to have gained an advantage. To deliberately play the ball, the player must have time and space, and sufficient sight of the ball to control the ball with the possibility of 1) passing the ball to a teammate; or 2) gaining possession of the ball; or 3) clearing the ball. A save is when a player stops, or attempts to stop, a ball which is going into or very close to the goal with any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless the goalkeeper within the penalty area).
- **Penalty Kick** – The kicker may stutter step, but must make continuous movement toward the ball. The ball must be kicked forward – if not, indirect free kick to the defending team. The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, in line with, or behind the goal line until the ball is kicked.
- **Referee Signals** – Use all proper signals in the high school rule book. Additional signals between the referee and ARs to help with game administration are allowable as long as they don't cause confusion. If the referee fails to signal a free kick as indirect, and the ball goes directly into the opponent's goal, the kick is retaken.
- **Throw-In** – If the ball does not enter the field of play, the throw-in is given to the opponent.
- **Use of Whistle** – A second whistle is required to restart play for: taking of a penalty kick, after a substitution is made, and after a caution, disqualification, injury or encroachment.

Concussion Management

- Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

Field

- **Goals** – **MUST** be secured to the ground for safety reasons. **DO NOT** start/continue a game unless secured.
- **Spectators** – Can be on either side of the field, but must remain 10 feet from the touchline, team and official areas, and the goal line. No one is allowed directly behind the goal unless in bleachers.
- **Team & Official Areas** – Should be marked in accordance with NFHS guidelines. While it may not be feasible at all fields to have the exact dimensions marked, coaches and players need to stay a reasonable distance away from the sideline at all times for the safety and concentration of the officials.

Substitution

- Substitutes must always enter the field through the official area at midfield. Substitutes must exit the field on the bench side, unless unable to do so because of an injury.
- A substitute becomes a player when they are beckoned onto the field of play, at which time the replaced individual is no longer a player.
- A team that elects or is required to play shorthanded for reasons other than misconduct may have the player(s) re-enter the game during a dead ball.
- A team which starts a game with fewer than 11 players, but at least 7 players, may have its additional player(s) enter the game during a dead ball provided that the names of the additional players are on the team roster.
- During any penalty kick situation, a substitute (due to injury, bleeding, or disqualified goalkeeper) may not take the PK.
- **Improperly Equipped** – A player wearing legal equipment that is being worn incorrectly or becomes illegal during play. Do not caution. Player must leave the field if problem not corrected, and the player may be replaced.
- **Illegally Equipped** – A player not wearing equipment required by rule or wearing an item(s) not allowed by rule. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the referee, is dangerous or confusing. The player must leave the field. Caution the coach for the first offense. Caution player(s) for subsequent offense(s).

Equipment

- **Casts** – Must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick; A medical release form is not required.
- **Hair Adornments** – Hair adornments, such as beads, may be worn in the hair if they are secured to the head and do not present a risk of injury to the player, teammates or opponents.

- **Head Covering** – State associations may allow a head covering (not abrasive, hard, or dangerous) for medical/cosmetic or religious reasons.
- **Headgear** – A soft-padded headgear is permitted (any color and does not have to match teammates).
- **Jewelry** – None allowed, except for religious or medical medals, which must be taped under the uniform. A medical alert bracelet must be taped, and the medical information may be visible. Taping over jewelry (earring, nose ring, bracelet, etc) is **NOT** acceptable. All jewelry must be removed – no exceptions!
- **Knee Braces** – Do not need a medical release. Do not need a protective sleeve as long as brace is unaltered.
- **Player Jerseys** – The home team shall wear dark jerseys, and the visiting team shall wear solid white jerseys.
- **Shin Guards** – Must be NOCSAE approved and protect the shin, be age and size appropriate, and the bottom edge must be no higher than 2 inches above the ankle.
- **Socks** – Both socks shall be the same color, with the home team wearing dark socks (not necessarily the color of the jersey) and the visiting team wearing solid white socks. If tape or similar material is applied externally to the socks, it must be of similar color as that part of the sock to which it is applied. If cut socks are worn, the underneath sock must be a similar color to the cut sock if the underneath sock is visible. The socks of the goalkeeper are not required to be the same color as his/her teammates but shall differ in color from the opposing field players.
- **Visible Apparel** – If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it shall be of a similar length for an individual, and a solid like color for the team.
- **Wearable Technology** - These devices may be worn as a part of the shoe and/or under the uniform but not worn on the arm. Coaches and players are still not permitted to utilize technology to communicate during the game. Note: Medical appliances/devices are not considered wearable technology and may be worn on the arm so long as they do not pose any risk of injury or hazard to the player, teammates or opponents.

Administrative

- **Arrive Early** – Referee jurisdiction begins when you arrive at the field, no later than 15 minutes before game time. For PSOA that means 15 minutes early, dressed and ready to go!
- **Ball Holders** – The home team should provide 2 ball holders. They are under the supervision of the referee.
- **Coin Toss** – The winner chooses to take the kickoff or which end of the field to defend.
- **Game Stoppages** – The school administrator determines (up to game time) if the match will start. The referee determines if it will continue after the start. However, always err on the side of safety, and if you have an administrator telling you they think the game should be suspended or ended, then do it.
- **Length of Halves** – Varsity: 40 minutes, JV: 35 minutes, Middle School: 30 minutes.
- **Lightning/Severe Weather** – When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, suspend play and take shelter immediately. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin. Note: Under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue play. Use lightning detection information if available.
- **Mercy Rule** – The eight-goal mercy rule shall be in effect for all public-school varsity & JV matches. The eight-goal mercy rule provides that if, at any time after the midpoint of the second half of play, one team leads by eight or more goals, the match shall be terminated. This is not optional. You must stop the game if the mercy rule criteria have been met. Teams may not choose to continue playing. For private schools, check with the coaches before the match starts to see if they are playing with the mercy rule.
- **Overtime (Regular Season)** – **ALL** public-school varsity games (not just district games)
 - 1) If a tie exists in regular season play, the teams shall play two five-minute overtime periods. At the end of the first overtime period, teams shall change ends of the field. If a tie still exists, the game shall be recorded as a tie.
 - 2) JV and middle school games – No overtime.
 - 3) Private schools – Check with the coaches before the match starts.
- **Pregame Conference** – With head coaches and team captains. Review any rules, discuss sportsmanship, toss the coin, and ask the coaches if the teams will be properly and legally equipped. The head coaches shall be present for the entire pregame conference. Do not dismiss them early.

- **Postgame** – Leave the field as a team as soon as the game is over! Your jurisdiction ends when you leave the field of play. Please do so immediately to avoid issues. Do not stay on the field to shake hands with the teams/coaches, answer questions from players/coaches, or to observe the postgame team handshakes.
- **Public School vs Private School** – In cases where a public school is playing a private school, the home team's rules regarding the mercy rule and overtime are in force.
- **Referee Uniform** – All officials will wear the same color shirts. Yellow is the primary color. Wear the new round or rectangular-shaped VHSL badge.
- **Rosters & Team Areas** – Coaches are required to submit a team roster to the officials prior to the start of the contest. The roster must include all players/substitutes (with numbers), bench personnel and coaches. Additional names may be added to the roster after the start of play. The only people allowed in the team area during the game are those listed on the roster. If you notice that there are additional people in the team area (fans, friends, etc), please stop the game and remind/warn the head coach that only those on the team roster are allowed in the team area. It is the responsibility of the head coach to manage this and the head coach can be cautioned (yellow card) if the situation persists.
- **Site Administrator** – Seek out the school representative that is your point of contact for any incidents. Most of the time it is the Athletic Director or home team coach.
- **Spectator Issues** – The home school site administration is responsible for dealing with spectator issues. NFHS Rule 5.3.2.e states: "The head referee or center referee shall have the authority to suspend play or terminate the game whenever the elements, spectators or other causes require". Officials should **never** engage with the spectators. The appropriate protocol is as follows:
 - 1) Before the game, make sure to determine who the home school site administrator is.
 - 2) If a spectator issue arises, stop (suspend) the game and request that the home school site administrator deal with the issue.
 - 3) If the issue still persists, stop (suspend) the game again and request that the home school site administrator remove the offending spectator(s).
 - 4) If all else fails, you have the authority to terminate the game.
- **Suspended/Interrupted Matches** – In the event a regular season game must be suspended by the head referee because of conditions that make it impossible to continue play:
 - 1) It is an official match if one complete half or more of the match has been played and one team is ahead.
 - 2) At any point after completion of the first half if the score is tied, resume the match from the point of interruption unless both teams agree to the tie.
 - 3) If less than one complete half of the match has been played, resume from the match from the point of interruption.
- **Timer/Scorekeeper** – If the home school has a timekeeper, discuss their duties before the match, and have a system worked out to correct the clock if needed. Per VHSL, stop the clock with 2 minutes remaining in each period, and the referee will keep the official time.

Game Reports

- Don Samuels is the PSOA High School Commissioner (psoa.hs.commissioner@gmail.com; 757-532-1887). Steve Kinney is the PSOA High School Assigner (psoa.kinney@gmail.com; 804-815-4655). Don must report **ALL** red cards to the VHSL and both schools within 24 hours. Ejections should be included in your Arbiter game report, but you must also let Don and/or Steve know asap via email, text or phone call that the ejection took place. Please provide a narrative describing the circumstances that resulted in the ejection – who (name and number), when and why the person was ejected. Please be specific and provide the appropriate misconduct rule(s) from the NFHS rules book.
- **Arbiter** – Please enter your game report into Arbiter as soon as possible after the game. Make sure to include any yellow or red cards in your report. Please be specific and provide the appropriate misconduct rule(s) from the NFHS rules book. Additionally, report any issues with fields, coaches, spectators, etc. so we can get the issue resolved quickly.
- **Sportsmanship** – For all games (varsity, JV & middle school), put the sportsmanship score (0-10) for each team in the game report.