

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Dropped Ball Procedure Amended in High School Soccer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 25, 2020) – Beginning next season, changes to the conditions and procedure for restarting play with a dropped ball will take effect in high school soccer.

The dropped ball procedure was among 15 rules changes made by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee at its January 20-22 meeting in Indianapolis and subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

When a ball is caused to go out of bounds due to a simultaneous touch, Rules 9-2-2 and 9-2-3 now stipulate a referee will restart play with a dropped ball to one player of the team that last possessed the ball before going out of play. Previously, simultaneous touch resulted in any number of players contesting a dropped ball to restart play.

Additionally, if play is stopped with the ball 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.

A dropped ball is also used when a ball is deemed out of play due to touching an official, remaining on the field and resulting in one of three scenarios. Rule 9-1-1b states that if a ball

touches an official and remains on the field, it will be deemed out of play if it 1) creates a promising attack for a team, 2) goes directly into the goal, or, 3) changes possession.

“The committee felt it was unfair for the ball to touch an official, remain on the field and give an advantage to either team in any of the three situations outlined,” said Stan Latta, chair of the Soccer Rules Committee.

Three rules changes to Rule 16 address when players may enter the penalty area and play a ball after a goal kick. The rules now state a ball is in play when it is kicked and moves, at which point opposing players may enter the penalty area and play the ball. Previously, opposing players remained outside the penalty area until the ball cleared the penalty area and the goal kick was retaken if it failed to exit the penalty area.

“The changes in Rule 16 will allow for a faster restart and alleviate the tendency to waste time,” said Theresa Wynns, NFHS Director of Sports and Officials and liaison to the Soccer Rules Committee.

Rule 14-1-3 clarifies goalkeepers’ positions during a penalty kick. Defending goalkeepers shall stand with at least one foot on or in-line with the goal line and the goalkeeper shall not be touching the goal posts, crossbar or nets. Forward movement is allowed provided both feet don’t come off the line until the ball is in play.

A complete listing of the soccer rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Soccer.”

According to the 2018-19 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, soccer is the fifth most popular high school sport for boys with 459,077 participants in 12,552 schools nationwide. Soccer is the fourth most popular sport for girls with 394,105 participants in 12,107 schools.

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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 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 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including almost eight 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 website at www.nfhs.org.

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