

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

Shinguard rule tweaked in high school soccer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Koski

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 16, 2009) — In an ongoing focus on risk minimization in high school soccer, an addition to the shinguard policy has been approved.

A year after requiring shinguards to meet National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standards, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Soccer Rules Committee will now require the front of the shinguard to be permanently marked with the NOCSAE seal and height range, effective in fall 2012.

The delay in implementation is to allow manufacturers to supply these types of shinguards to retailers. There is also an emphasis on placing the shinguard no higher than two inches above the ankle to minimize risk of injury.

The revised shinguard policy was one of four rules changes approved by the Soccer Rules Committee at its January 26–28 meeting in Indianapolis. The rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“As is always the case, the Soccer Rules Committee is most concerned about minimizing the risk of injury for student-athletes,” said Mark Koski, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Soccer Rules Committee. “The requirement of the NOCSAE seal and height range on the front of the shinguard by 2012 is a good example of that. The committee wants to make sure that players are protected in the best way possible.”

“Joint” ankle braces have made technological leaps in safety over the past decade. Because many “joint” ankle braces are designed to be worn over stockings or other material, Rule 4-2-1g has been amended to allow players to wear braces outside the stocking, provided they are not made of metal or other hazardous material. Any braces made of metal or other hazardous material must still be worn under a stocking.

“The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee recommended updating this rule based on the advances made in ankle braces,” Koski said. “This change reflects our flexibility as far as the safety of the players goes.”

A change in Rule 3-1-3 will allow any member of the team to deliver the team roster to the officials at least five minutes prior to the start of the contest. Previously, the coach was required to submit the roster, but since coaches are very busy prior to the start of the game, they are now allowed to delegate the task.

The final change requires that the officials must be dressed in matching uniforms distinctly different from only the field players of both teams. This permits the referee to possibly wear a shirt similar to one of the goalkeepers’ shirts, as long as it’s unlike the field players’ uniforms.

In addition to the rules changes, points of emphasis for the 2009-10 season include unconscious player, NFHS Code of Ethics, NFHS Soccer Signals, ball holders, team areas, ankle braces and shinguard placement.

Soccer is the fifth-most popular sport for boys and girls at the high school level. According to the 2007–08 High School Athletics Participation Survey, 383,561 boys are involved in soccer and 346,545 girls participate in the sport.

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This press release was written by Paige Flynn, a spring semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department and a sophomore at Butler (Indiana) University.

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 fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine 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 nearly 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including almost 7½ million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, 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.

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