August 19, 2026

NFHS Soccer Weekly Rule Interpretations

Welcome to the beginning of the 2026-27 school year and the NFHS soccer season. We are excited about the upcoming fall season and look forward to sharing weekly interpretations with you this year to keep us all aligned.

As the new school year begins, there are a few important items to share with officials across the nation. As referees you do more than enforce the rules, you uphold the spirit of the game. Interscholastic soccer is fast, dynamic and meant to flow and every rule exists to ensure play remains safe, fair and fun.

Managing the match requires discretion. Soccer officials have authority to let play continue through minor or doubtful infractions and to apply advantage when it benefits the fouled team. Always remember that interscholastic soccer requires its own tailored approach and what works at the professional or collegiate level isn't always fright for our student athletes.

Please keep in mind the 2026-27 Points of Emphasis the 2026 Soccer Rules Committee developed (click here for full wording).

1. **Properly Marked Fields**: Before a match, officials should identify any missing team areas and work with host school administrators or coaches to place cones or temporary boundaries before the state of the game.

2. **Shared Professionalism and Bench Accountability**: Interscholastic soccer serves as an extension of the classroom, requiring both officials and coaches to uphold the highest standards of composure and integrity. As adult leaders in education-based environment, everyone involved must contribute to a calm, respectful atmosphere that prioritizes student athletes.

3. **Managing Goal Celebrations**: Celebrating after scoring a goal is an integral part of the game of soccer. Reacting with joy is permissible provided it is not excessive and not accompanied by taunting.

4. **Penalty Kick Offenses and the Concept of Impact**: Rule 14 has been revised to clarify that encroachment during a penalty kick is only penalized if the offense has a clear impact on the play.

5. **Identification of the NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls**: All soccer balls are required to display the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The use of conforming equipment is essential to the integrity of contests played under the NFHS rules.

As you step onto the pitch this fall, thank you for your dedication to the game, our schools, and most importantly, the student athletes. Your leadership, consistency, and professional judgment set the tone for a successful season. Best of luck this year and have a safe, rewarding, and fantastic 2026–27 season!