

Coaches,

Good luck to you and your teams this season. As the season is upon us, I wanted to point out a few items that will be of interest to you because of rule changes as well as points of emphasis brought forth by the National Federation of HS Soccer.

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Securing Goals:

The goals must be secured on "each side" by a stake/bracket in the ground. The use of sandbags, book bags or any other weighted item placed on the goal frame is no longer a sufficient means of securing the goal. For artificial turf fields, the goal needs to be tied to the football goal post on each side of the soccer goal or staked into the turf so that it cannot fall forward.

**** Note:** Because this is a safety issue, the game cannot be started until the goal is secured properly.

Benches:

The placement of the benches has changed. The benches are no longer permitted at half field. The benches are now required to be diagonal from each other on opposite sides of the field. The first choice is to place them on the opposite side of where the Assistant Referee is running up and down the touchline. The second choice is to have them on the same side of the touchline as the Assistant Referee. The 3rd choice for now, is to have the benches on the same side of the field.

Technical Area:

The technical area should coincide with the choice of the bench placement. The benches must be located at least 10 feet back from the touchline. The coach cannot stand any closer to the touchline than this 10 foot minimum. If 10 feet is not available, then the bench should be placed on the track. In this case the coach must remain on the track while coaching. For additional specifics on the technical area, please refer to the 2007 - 2008 National Federation HS Soccer Rule Book.

Match Reports / Coach Feedback:

The purpose of this form is for use as a teaching and improvement tool. Your feedback positive and negative is imperative to improving our game. Your feedback on the form does not go directly to the official that worked your match. It is reviewed by the President and Bill Freeman. I receive all the feedback from the coaches and follow up with the referee's / coaches involved as appropriate.

To make this process easier, we have made a change to the information required. You no longer need a match number to submit the form. The head referee should hand you this form before they leave the field for every Varsity match. If an official does not have a coaches feedback card, then you can simply go to MASRA.NET and go to the Coaches Referee Evaluation Form section. All you need are the names of the 2 teams playing, the date of the match and the officials names. If you do not have the names of the officials, you can still submit the form and we will determine who worked the match. In addition, we have changed the rating scale to be in line with other organizations in soccer.

Sportsmanship:

There is renewed emphasis on sportsmanship of the players and coaches by the National Federation of HS Sports. Please emphasize with your players that they should focus solely on playing. Keep in mind that Taunting in North Carolina is now a straight Red Card and requires that the team play short. As a coach, please conduct yourself in a positive and professional manner from within the technical area.

Caution for Illegal Equipment:

As I am sure you are all aware, there has been a dramatic change to the prescribed sanction for illegal equipment. The referee should be inspecting your players and speaking to you before each match concerning whether your team is legally equipped. Once the match begins, for any player that is sent off the field for illegal equipment, the head coach will also receive a caution. The coach can receive a 2nd caution during the match for having a player on the field with illegal equipment and thus would be disqualified from the match and required to leave the field/stadium. Illegal equipment that is included but not limited to include jewelry and shin guards. In addition, not correctly wearing your uniform (shirt tails not tucked in) could be deemed as illegal equipment and result in a caution to the head coach. Below for your information is a clarification from the National Federation on officially licensed shin guards.

DATE: Friday, August 10, 2007

SUBJECT: Approved Shin Guards

The NFHS just completed its annual soccer rules interpreter's meeting in Indianapolis on Monday. It was brought to my attention that one of the PowerPoint slides stated that NOCSAE approved shin guards would become effective in "2008." Please be advised that shin guards must have the approved NOCSAE seal or label by the "fall of 2008" for the 2008-09 school year.

For those states that play spring soccer please advise your schools that they must comply by the spring of 2009, not 2008. There will be an interpretation confirming this on the NFHS website as well. Let me know if you have questions.

Please let me know if you need any other information. Have a safe and successful season!

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