

August 9, 2026

Reminder sheet:

RULE 1: The Field

Arrive early enough to check the field, make sure the Goal Posts are anchored (if not do NOT start game) and padding on the posts is allowed (check rules for padding requirements)

Team areas SHOULD BE on the same side of the field, in a clearly marked “team area”

Rule 2: The Ball

Always check the game balls supplied by the home team (air pressure). NFHS logo shall be on the ball. Balls approved for 2025 need an (NFHS Logo)

Rule 3: The Players

Get a roster from the coaches, or team personnel **IF EXCHANGED**. Read substitution rules, before the game. Players wishing to substitute must have “checked in” prior to the referee beckoning them onto the field, during NORMAL substitution opportunities (except between periods), after a stoppage of the clock for an injury, or to replace a cautioned player

ENTER AND EXIT FROM THE BENCH SIDE MID POINT OF THE FIELD
(unless injured and unable to)

ANY Player injured and the CLOCK is STOPPED, DOES NOT HAVE to leave the field UNLESS the trainer or coach has been beckoned onto the field for treatment (but may be replaced by a player off the bench), either team may ALSO substitute an unlimited number of players “FROM THE BENCH” after “check in” during the time that the clock is stopped to care for and injured player (But must be BECKONED ONTO THE FIELD BY THE REFEREE

NEW Players may be substituted “from the bench” during a Temporary Stoppage” (water break) but must check in with the Referee.

Rule 4: Players Equipment

Shin guards must start 2” above the ankle, and have the NOCSEA seal. Hard cast must be covered with ½ inch of slow recovery form padding (NO Dr. release is required).

- Approved hair control devices and allowances for properly secured “beads” and cultural hair styles
- **NEW stockings can be cut but any underlying materials (from the ankle down) Does NOT HAVE TO MATCH sock color (including TAPE AT THE ANKLE)**
- **All jerseys INCLUDING the goalkeeper must have numbers on back (6”) and 4” on the front of the jersey OR Shorts**
- **VISITING team SOLID WHITE Jerseys & Socks (except keeper)**

Referees are required to enforce proper/appropriately sized SHINGUARDS for all participants. This statement is critical to all OFFICIALS and COACHES (pg 35 .4.4.1)

"However, shin guards that appear suspiciously small, or look undersized compared to other players, REQUIRE closer scrutiny. Once EXAMINED by the official, the legality of the shin guard is determined ONLY by the visual presence of the NOCSAE seal marked somewhere on the shin guard."

- **Deal with inappropriate shin guards BEFORE the match starts, then enforce "illegal" equipment penalties as they occur during the match.**
- If a player enters the game ILLEGALLY EQUIPPED, and an official discovers that discrepancy, the coach will be cautioned for the 1st offence (yellow card). For subsequent illegal equipment offences, the player will get the caution.
- The non-cautioned player (coach gets card) must depart the field (AND MAY BE REPLACED AT THE TIME OF THE CAUTION TO THE COACH) and become legal and return to play at the next substitution opportunity. A Cautioned player may not return to play until after completing the mandatory 5-min sit out period.
- An IMPROPERLY equipped player that can't immediately correct equipment, must leave the field (and may be substituted for OR team can play short), and make adjustments, and may return to play (after inspection) at the next STOPPAGE of play if playing short, OR be replaced at the next substitution opportunity.
- Sweatbands and/or HAIR CONTROL DEVICES (and adornments) may be worn in the hair, securely fastened and not a risk to others. Sweatbands and/or hair control devices may be worn, and on the wrists if soft material and not pose a risk of injury.
- Medical head coverings must still have a Dr. release.
- Wearable technology devices must be securely attached, not a risk to safety, and worn UNDER the uniform (or on the shoe) but NOT on the arm/wrist. Note: medical devices are not considered wearable technology but need Dr. letter (insulin pumps /sugar monitors)

Rule 5: The Official

Look the part (dress alike), arrive on time, call your partner in advance, have a pre-game discussion, use signals, keep time, READ THE RULES !!

THE LATEST VERSION (on the bulletin) SPORTSMANSHIP MESSAGE MUST BE READ TO THE CAPTAINS AND HEAD COACHES PRIOR TO THE START OF THE GAME AT **ALL LEVELS OF PLAY!!**

A Yellow approved PIAA referee jersey but all crew members must be dressed alike.

Rule 6: Ball Holders, Timers, Scorer

A score board if used runs to the end of the time set. Also keep time on the field as a back up. Check with the clock operator for proper stops & starts. (Ref may correct errors with the clock)

Countdown last 10 seconds of the period

Rule 7: Duration of Game, Length of Periods

Know the game length Varsity 2x40min, JV 2x36min, Jr.H, 2 equal halves, game complete if “one complete half or more” is played, 10 minute ½ time, overtime if required is sudden victory . Discuss a lightning procedure in advance of the game.

FOR ALL VARSITY GAMES. OVERTIME PERIODS HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED DURING THE REGULAR SEASON.

The clock shall be stopped in the final 5 minutes of the match when a substitute for the team in the lead is beckoned onto the field.

PIAA has adopted a “mercy rule” for ALL LEVELS of play. Once a team reaches a 6 goal lead at half time or in the 2nd half, the clock shall NOT stop after the scoring of a goal (by either team) for the remainder of the match (clock will stop for injuries), and No stoppage for team in lead substitute in the remaining 5 min.

NEW:7.2.4 B Prohibits a coach or team personnel, players, or bench personnel, OTHER THAN THE TEAM CAPTIAN, from speaking with the Referee during the interval between periods Unless beckoned by the official. violations may be a warning or caution.

Rule 8: Start of Play

Team winning toss gets choice, all players on proper side of field (except the kicker), whistle to start play. **BALL MAY GO IN ANY DIRECTION.** A goal may NOT be scored into kicking teams’ goal from a kickoff. **Players must remain in their half (except the kicker) until the ball is put into play otherwise retake the kickoff and reset the clock if necessary.**

Rule 9: Ball in and Out of Play

Out of play when “totally” over the touch or end line or when the official blows the whistle to stop play. Read rules for restarts and team possession, or drop ball, ball strikes referee. Ball in play when it’s kicked and moved. Ball does not need to leave the penalty area on any free kick to be in play.

Rule 10: Scoring

Know when goals may or may not be scored from the restarting of play. Free Kicks, Direct or indirect.

Rule 11: Offside

BE IN POSITION, make sure player is involved in active play. The restart is where the player became involved in active play, interfered with play or an opponent, or gained an advantage by being off side (**EVEN IF IT’S IN THEIR OWN 1/2 OF THE FIELD**)

NEW Definition of Deliberate Play:

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**

Rule 12: Fouls and Misconduct

- If a player receives a caution, that player must leave the field (and may be replaced with a player from the bench) and is not eligible for return until AFTER a 5-min period of time has elapsed.

Stop clock, remove cautioned/ ejected player (substitute(s) either team IF checked in, otherwise ONLY substitute for cautioned player from bench) restart with proper protocol. **READ THE RULES on Fouls & Misconduct.**

Handball zone is measured from the bottom of the armpit to the fingertips.

NEW!!! Goalkeeper possession (8 Seconds) referees shall use a visual signal with their hand raised above their head with fingers displaying the remaining seconds 5-4-3-2-1. The referee will determine when the 8 second count shall commence (goalkeeper in clear control). If the ball is not released within the 8 second period, a corner kick will be awarded to the opponents. Violations of this rule are still enforced EVEN IF THE REFEREE FAILS TO PROVIDE A VISUAL SIGNAL.

PIAA has continued using the “Soft RED Card” this season. For **ON FIELD PLAYERS** receiving a 2nd caution in the match, the referee will display BOTH the Yellow and Red cards simultaneously. The player is required to leave the field for the remainder of that match, and **MAY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR**. **The referee is NOT REQUIRED to file a RED CARD REPORT TO THE STATE for a “Soft Red” card.**

FOR SUBSTITUTES that receive a second caution (on the bench with a caution or committing 2 cautionable offenses while on the bench will receive the **SECOND** yellow card followed by a RED card and remain in the team area. A State Report is required to be filed.

FOR COACHES that receive a 2nd caution will have the yellow card displayed (first) and followed by the RED card (they must leave the FIELD area) and a State Report is required to be filed.

A player shall be penalized for handling if they score in the opponent’s goal directly from THEIR hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper.

A player shall be penalized for handling if they score in the opponent’s goal immediately after the ball has touched THEIR hand/arm, even if accidental.

IF the goal keeper handles the ball when not permitted (pass back, throw in by teammate) an indirect free kick is awarded (no disciplinary sanction), however if the violation is for playing the ball a second time (with the hand or arm) after a **RESTART** before it has touched another player, the goalkeeper must be cautioned **IF** the offense stops a promising attack, or ejected if the offense denies an opponent or the opposing team an obvious goal scoring opportunity. Either way the **RESTART** is an IFK.

NEW: 12.7.1 / 12.8.1 READ AND BE FAMILIAR WITH THE CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING IF A SPA (stopping a promising attack or DOGSO has occurred.

12.7.1 PLAYERS MAY NOT LAY DOWN BEHIND THE WALL. INSTRUCT THE PLAYER TO STAND UP PRIOR TO STARTING PLAY.

The punishment for TAUNTING is a straight RED card and no substitution is permitted. The Coach may be cautioned or disqualified for team misconduct, or bench misconduct that cannot be attributed to a specific player. Supplemental red card is reported when a component of the ejection includes foul or vulgar language, and or contact with a player coach or official.

NEW DQ POLICY

Any Coach and/or adult Team Personnel removed, ejected or disqualified from a Contest who refuses to leave the competition area (out of sight and sound) as directed by the Contest Official will result in a forfeiture of the Contest.

When faced with this type of situation PIAA wants all officials to finish the contest they are working, if possible. When submitting the DQ report just mention that the coach failed to leave the premises. I will then alert the PIAA District involved and alert them of the potential forfeiture due to the coach's failure to leave. PIAA officials do not have the authority to order a forfeiture.

Rule 13: Free Kick (READ entire FREE KICK section which has been re-written)

Restart properly, Direct or Indirect (use proper signal) know WHERE the restart should be taken. Remember if you stop play to issue a caution for MISCONDUCT on the field or ILLEGAL entry (by coach or player who INTERFERES with play), the restart is taken at the SPOT where the misconduct occurred. If you stop play to deal with misconduct OFF the field or ILLEGAL ENTRY that does NOT involve interference with play, the restart is an Indirect free kick to the Non-offending team at the spot where the ball was when play was stopped. Verbal Offenses punished with an Indirect Free Kick (non-offending team) at the spot of the verbal offense, or boundary line nearest where the offense occurred if the offense was from off the field. Advantage CAN NOT be played if an improperly taken free kick goes to the opponents (it must be retaken).

DROP BALL TO GOALKEEPER when the goalkeeper is in possession or the ball is in the penalty area and play is stopped because of injury, outside interference, unusual event, or inadvertent whistle. Ball DOES NOT need to leave the penalty area before it is "in play", The BALL MUST BE KICKED AND CLEARLY MOVE to be "in Play"

Rule 14: Penalty Kick RE-READ the PK section & chart.

Stop Clock, follow kick protocol in rule book pages 84-86 (chart). Kicker must make one continuous movement to the ball ("stutter stepping IS PERMITTED") zig-zags OK! Any infringements by the kicker (or attacking team) are punished by a RE-KICK ONLY IF A GOAL IS SCORED AND THE INFRINGEMENT HAD AN IMPACT ON SCORING THE GOAL(no impact NO re-kick), both teams encroach BUT NO IMPACT goal stands, IMPACT, re-kick. READ THE CHART ON PAGE 86 (if the kicker STOPS they MUST be cautioned, and cannot take the kick again) Substitutes may NOT take a penalty kick.

If the Goalkeepers offense results in the Penalty kick being retaken, the goalkeeper is WARNED for the 1st offense and cautioned for any subsequent offenses.

Rule 15: Throw in

Remember that improper throws, or throws that never enter the field, or a throw “from a location other than the location where the ball went into touch, the referee should stop play and award a throw-in to the other team.” Allow for proper substitutions if the players have “checked in”. Defensive players MUST be at least 2 yards back from the point where the throw will be taken, and may not interfere with the thrower. THERE IS NO TIME REQUIREMENT FOR THROW

IN use timewasting protocol (stop clock/ caution IF necessary)

Advantage CAN NOT be played if an improperly taken throw in goes to the opponents.

Rule 16: Goal Kick

Ball DOES NOT have to leave the penalty area before it is “in play”. Attackers must leave the PA prior to the kick (if the kicking team wishes to play a quick kick the attackers may still be inside the PA, and play continues.

Opponents who remain inside the PA or opponents who enter the PA prior to the taking of the goal kick MAY NOT interfere or challenge the goal kick (kick retaken)

Rule 17: Corner Kick

Keep opposing players 10 yards from the Corner Arc, allow subs to EITHER team IF the kicking team wishes to sub (provided the players have “checked in” prior to the ball out of play.

If the ball is not released by the goalkeeper within the 8 second period, a corner kick will be awarded to the opponents

