

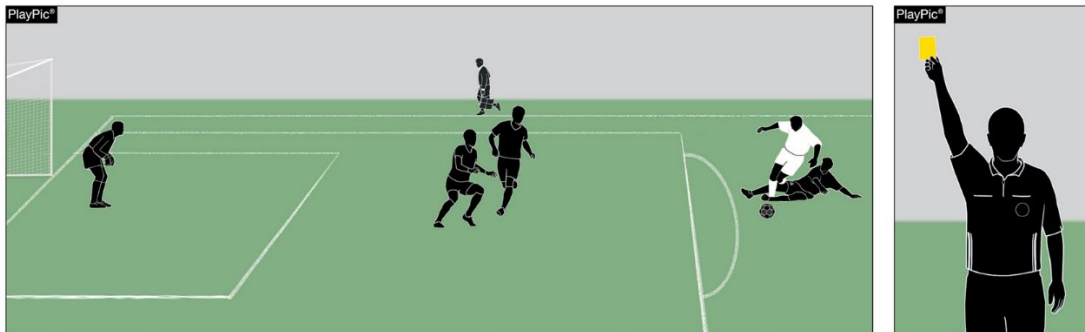


October 1, 2025

NFHS Soccer Weekly Rule Interpretations

SPA and DOGSO: The following can be found in the 2025-26 NFHS Rules Book. They were developed to illustrate potential situations concerning Stopping a Promising Attack and Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity.

Stopping a Promising Attack: A promising attack is an attack moving quickly toward the opposing team's goal with the promise or potential to become a clear goal-scoring opportunity for the attacking team. A promising attack can occur anywhere on the field.



SITUATION 1: Trailing by one goal, Player B10 gains possession of the ball on Team B's side of the field with open space to advance. B10 initiates a counterattack with a supporting number of teammates marked by an equal number of Team A's defenders. Opposing Player A9 pulls B10's jersey to slow B10's forward progress near the halfway line. **RULING:** Player A9 is cautioned for unsporting conduct because they stopped a promising attack. Team B is awarded a direct free kick from where the foul occurred. **COMMENT:** A promising attack can develop anywhere on the field. This is not DOGSO because of the number of defenders present. Therefore it is missing one of the four required considerations. [12-7-1]

SITUATION 2: Attacker A7 is dribbling the ball inside Team B's penalty area and is moving toward the goal with a promising attack. Multiple defenders are between A7 and the goal. The referee awards a penalty kick after defender B2 recklessly tackles A7 from the side while attempting to play the ball. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** B2 is cautioned for unsporting conduct because of reckless play regardless of interrupting A7's promising attack. [12-7-3]

Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO): When determining if an offense denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the following shall be considered and all must be present for a DOGSO offense:

1. distance between the offense and the goal;
2. general direction of the play;
3. likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball;
4. location and number of defenders.



SITUATION 3: Attacker A7 is dribbling the ball inside Team B's penalty area and is moving toward the goal with an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. The referee awards a penalty kick after defender B2 uses excessive force to tackle A7 from behind while attempting to play the ball and ejects (red card) B2. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** B2 is ejected for committing serious foul play regardless of the denial of A7's obvious goal-scoring opportunity. [12-8-2]

SITUATION 4: Team B's goalkeeper, B5, is caught out of position on a counterattack by Team A. Dribbling the ball, attacker A1 is moving toward the goal with only defender B12 between A1 and the goal. With an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, A1 shoots the ball toward the goal. B12 deliberately uses a hand/arm to stop the ball from entering the goal. B12's handball foul occurred (a) outside Team B's penalty area; (b) inside Team B's penalty area. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), B12 is ejected for denying a goal by deliberately handling the ball. Team A is awarded a direct free kick from the spot of the foul in (a) and a penalty kick in (b). [12-8-3]

SITUATION 5: Attacker A6 receives the ball inside the center circle. Opponent B3 challenges for the ball but is unsuccessful. A6 turns and starts running toward the goal with only the goalkeeper between A6 and the goal. As A6 approaches Team B's penalty area, B3 pulls A6's jersey from behind causing A6 to fall outside the penalty area. The official ejects B3 and shows the red card for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** All four considerations of a DOGSO offense were present. [12-8-4]

SITUATION 6: Attacker A6 receives the ball inside the center circle. Opponent B10 challenges for the ball but is unsuccessful. A6 turns and starts running toward the goal with Team B's goalkeeper and defender B8 between A6 and the goal. As A6 approaches Team B's penalty area,

B10 pulls A6's jersey from behind causing A6 to fall outside the penalty area. The official ejects B10 and shows the red card for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Not all four considerations of a DOGSO offense were present – there were two defenders between A6 and the goal. B10 is guilty of stopping a promising attack and should be cautioned and shown the yellow card for unsporting conduct. [12-8-4]