



2025-26 BOYS & GIRLS SOCCER SOCCER RULES SUPPLEMENT

This is a supplement to the 2025-26 NFHS Soccer Rules Book

SOCCER SEASON LIMITATIONS

First Practice/Tryouts may commence as follows:

Fall: The 16th Monday before Thanksgiving (Aug. 11, 2025).

Spring: Second Monday after March 1 for all sports (March 9, 2026).

First Competition may commence as follows:

Fall: After 3 days of practice for team and not before 4 calendar days (Aug. 15, 2025). This is earlier than usual because of the shorter season.

Spring: After 7 days of practice for team and not before 9 calendar days (March 18, 2026).

Number of Competitions: A high school may have any number of soccer teams but no team or individual is to exceed 18 contests in addition to MHSAA tournament games. An athlete may participate in three halves on the same day, including on two different levels (JV/Varsity, for instance). Teams may have two multi-team tournaments count as one contest (two full games or 180 total minutes allowed; see provisions in MHSAA Handbook, Reg. II, Section 10).

Scrimmages: Teams may participate in a total of four (4) scrimmages, and all are to be held before the team's last contest.

Regular Season Overtimes: Overtime play is not allowed in the regular season. There are two exceptions: overtimes can be played in a league's end-of-season bracketed tournament, and shootouts are allowed in multi-team tournaments.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Do not ignore severe weather conditions. Be prepared to abandon a game if necessary. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard and the contest is suspended, play may resume when lightning has been absent from the sky and thunder has not been heard for 30 minutes. See the Officials Guidebook (online at MHSAA.com) and the MHSAA Handbook for length of game delay policies for regular season contests.

MHSAA RECOMMENDED GAME PROCEDURES

1. It is highly recommended that a school administrator or designee (an employee of the school district but not a soccer coach) attend all regular season games, particularly when there are known strong rivalries. **This is REQUIRED during all MHSAA tournament games.** Notify the officials and coaches of the opposing team of whom and where the person will be throughout the event. Urge leagues to adopt this policy.
2. Leagues and school districts are encouraged to conduct preseason meetings for players, parents, and coaches in all sports to emphasize good sportsmanship, safety, liability concerns, risk management, and rules of the game. Such meetings should take place in each sport in a separate meeting. Encourage officials to be invited to speak at preseason meetings.
3. An authorized representative of the host school shall greet the officials upon their arrival. The host school principal, principal's designee or game administrator must indicate to the head official or center referee his/her location should a situation develop where his/her assistance is needed during a contest. The contest coaches should not serve as the principal's designee or game administrator. The expectation is that the principal's designee or game administrator will take positive action to maintain an atmosphere of good sportsmanship within the spectator seating area.

PERSONNEL, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

1. The TEAM AREAS AND OFFICIALS AREA must be marked so that the areas can be identified.
2. No soccer games, freshman through varsity shall be started without compliance with National Federation rules requiring an adult or responsible/knowledgeable scorekeeper who will record goals scored, cautions issued, and disqualification of players or coaches.
3. The home school timer shall be the OFFICIAL TIMER. A scoreboard clock is official time.
4. The OFFICIALS AREA shall be equipped with a scorekeeper, score sheet, table, chair, and sounding device for substitutions.
5. By National Federation rulebook standards, two BALL HOLDERS are required.
6. Enforce a 10-foot distance from the touchline for spectators. It is recommended that a rope, fence or other means is used to keep spectators the required distance away from the touchline.

PLAYER UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

1. The visiting team shall wear solid white jersey tops and stockings and the home team shall wear dark jersey tops and stockings.
2. If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it shall be of a similar length, all alike, and of a solid color.
3. Goalkeepers must have numbers on the back of the jersey and on the front of the jersey or pants/shorts. The goalkeeper's sock color must be different from the field players of his/her opponents.
4. Both stockings shall be the same color. If tape or similar material (stays/straps) is applied externally to the socks, it must be of similar color as that part of the sock to which it is applied.
5. Shoes must be worn.
6. At MHSAA tournament games, the higher-seeded team is the home team and, therefore, will wear dark jerseys and stockings. If the District host is the lower-seeded team, it is considered the visiting team and will wear white. It can, however, use its traditional home bench, locker room, and scoreboard position.

TAUNTING - HANDBOOK REGULATION V, SECTION 3

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is - conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include but are not limited to, 'trash talk'; physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game; reference to sexual orientation; 'in the face' confrontation by one player to another; standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player.

TAUNTING IS A FLAGRANT UNSPORTSMANLIKE OFFENSE

In all sports, officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike offense that EJECTS the offending contestant or bench personnel from that contest/day of competition (and also the next day of competition). A warning may be given but is not required before ejection.

At all MHSAA tournament venues, tournament management may give spectators one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt others are to be ejected by security.

MHSAA ADOPTIONS OF NATIONAL FEDERATION OPTIONS

The following NF options will be used in Michigan:

1. Two 10-minute full overtime periods (no golden goal) and penalty kick shootouts will be used in the MHSAA postseason tournament. Overtimes and shootouts are NOT allowed in the regular season unless it is an end-of-season bracketed league tournament or if it is a multi-team tournament (shootouts only).
2. The clock shall be stopped when a substitute by the team in the lead is beckoned onto the field in the final five minutes of regulation or overtime.
3. Players are allowed to wear soft and yielding ski caps during inclement weather. Caps must be alike in color.
4. The officials' jurisdiction extends to a soccer field's immediate surroundings and is defined as the officials' locker rooms and parking sites and the areas between the soccer field and them.
5. Required Official's Uniform: The interscholastic soccer official's shirt shall be yellow, red, black, green or blue. The color chosen will be not similar to either team's jerseys; and if there is a conflict, the officials will change. All officials at the game shall wear the same color shirt, regardless of the style. Socks can have either two or three stripes.
6. Authorization for players to compete while wearing a legally padded cast must be in writing from an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner. This is contrary to the NFHS Rules Book, and this is not a new interpretation.
7. See below: Completed Game vs Suspended Game

GOAL DIFFERENTIAL RULE

During the regular season, the goal differential rule must be used FOR ALL VARSITY GAMES and all MHSAA tournament games. A game is ended when a team is ahead by 8 goals or more any time after the first half is completed. When the lead is 8 goals or more in the first half, there will be a running clock at all times. Do not stop the clock for goals, cautions, injuries, **or anything else**.

For any non-varsity games, the goal differential rule MAY be used by league or conference adoption or mutual agreement of the competing teams. Notice of the use of this option to the game officials is required before the start of the game.

COMPLETED GAME VS. SUSPENDED GAME

During the regular season, if conditions make it impossible to finish any game, the head referee shall declare it a completed game if one complete half or more of the game has been played.

The score at the time of the suspension of play will be the final score, ties included (NF Playing Rule 7-1-3). Otherwise, it is a suspended game, and its resumption may be determined by athletic directors in accordance with MHSAA Handbook Regulation II-11-D. In almost every case, the game is resumed from the point of suspension; this game does not count against the 18-game season maximum or the 3-game weekly maximum.

For MHSAA tournament games, a match is complete when 60 minutes of the allotted 80 have been played, and one team is ahead in the score. If fewer than 60 minutes have been played and one team is behind by only one goal, then the game is suspended. If a team is behind by more than one goal, then the regular season game completion rules are in effect. If the game goes to overtime, the entirety of the OT must be completed.

If an MHSAA tournament match has been suspended, it can be resumed from its point of suspension on the next available day. The host athletic director will arrange the time for the resumption of the suspended game after consultation with the athletic directors of the participating school teams.

MULTI-TEAM TOURNAMENTS

A student or team may participate in a multi-team tournament where the event counts as one of 18 regular season contests. The event format could consist of up to two full 80-minute games, or a format in which the total allowable playing time for any team is no more than 180 minutes (with a maximum of 30-minute halves). For the “three half” rule, an athlete may participate in no more halves than what is being played by the school’s highest team level in the tournament that day.

A NOTE ABOUT GAMES v SCRIMMAGES: Unless specifically noted in the game contract, event flyer, or communication with the host administrator, multi-team tournament matches are considered games, NOT scrimmages. Scrimmages require an altered clock, admission cannot be charged, results cannot be promoted, and awards and trophies are not given to players and teams.

The following provisions apply for multi-team tournaments:

- a. A student or team is allowed a maximum of two multi-team tournaments in its regular-season schedule, each tournament counting as one of the 18 games of allowed competition.
- b. Multi-team tournaments can only be held on days not followed by school.
- c. Tie games may only be resolved by a shoot-out method; no overtime could be played.
- d. If a student or team participates in an interscholastic multi-team tournament, that student or team shall participate in no more than two regulation games or interscholastic scrimmages that week, Monday through Sunday, in addition to the multi-team tournament.

REMOVING TEAMS FROM THE FIELD - REGULATION V, SECTION 3[A]

If a team is removed from the field in protest, the game is forfeited to the opponent, and the coach and principal must appear before the Executive Committee of the MHSAA to indicate why additional action should not be taken. This is for all contests. The officials and opponents may be required to attend.

MHSAA TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

1. At all MHSAA Soccer Tournament games, the school principal, athletic director, or other non-coaching faculty member of the school, with a letter of authorization from the school principal, must **BE PRESENT AND IDENTIFY** himself/herself to the game management. By Representative Council action of May 2000, the start of the game will not be delayed; however, schools not complying will face MHSAA administrative disciplinary action.
2. All teams are seeded via the MPR formula. The MHSAA will conduct the draw on the Sunday 10 days prior to the start of Districts and will post the draws on MHSAA.com.
3. First Round District games are scheduled the Wednesday-Friday prior to the District Final. By mutual agreement, First Round games could be played on Monday or Tuesday. Semifinals and Finals will be played from Monday-Saturday the following week (Tuesday-Saturday in the spring).
4. In the fall, fields without lights may not play doubleheaders.
5. Artificial turf surfaces may be used for all levels of MHSAA tournament games. If the hosting school can make arrangements, a competing school may practice on the host artificial turf field if the competing school has not already played on an artificial turf field that season.
6. Regional & Semifinal Competition - If schools competing in Regional & Semifinal play are more than 200 miles from the host one way, the MHSAA may become involved in selecting a neutral site or modifying the time of the originally scheduled contest between the affected competing schools.
7. Regional, Semifinal and Final Tournament officials will be selected by MHSAA staff with the concurrence of the Soccer Officials Selection Committee.
8. Vuvuzela horns are prohibited at MHSAA Soccer Tournament games.
9. Tournament management is to contact the MHSAA office if a school withdraws or fails to show up for scheduled competition after the draw is completed for team sports or the pairings, heat assignments or flights are determined for individual sports of the first level of the MHSAA tournament in that sport. The MHSAA staff person responsible for the sport will request from the school principal a written explanation for the no-show/withdrawal. If the reason is determined to be unacceptable by MHSAA Staff, the MHSAA Executive Director will place the school on probation for the next two school years. A second offense

within the two-year probationary period will cause the school to be prohibited from tournament play in that sport for the two years following the second offense.

10. The use of three officials is required during all MHSAA tournament games.

MICHIGAN POWER RATING (MPR)

MPR is used to seed all teams in each District. MPR is also being used in basketball, ice hockey, volleyball and lacrosse. MPR is calculated using 25% of the team's winning percentage, plus 50% of its opponent's winning percentage, plus 25% of its opponent's opponent's winning percentage. Only scores reported to MHSAA.com are used to calculate MPR. MPR only looks at results between opponents entered into the MHSAA postseason tournament. Games played against out-of-state teams, junior varsity teams, non-school club teams, and any other non-MHSAA tournament participants, are not included. MPR does not use the specific scores of a game or the margin of victory in a game. The location of a game is not included in the MPR formula, and the formula weighs games at the beginning of the season the same as scores at the end of the season.

Wins, losses and ties in multi-team shortened-game tournaments count, as long as the games were at least 40 minutes long. Forfeits are counted as wins and losses. Teams must have at least eight results on their schedule to be eligible for one of the two seeds.

SHOOTOUT PROCEDURE

When the score is tied at the end of regulation time, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team areas. There will be five minutes during which both teams may confer with their coaches, and the referee will instruct both teams as to proper procedure.

1. There shall be two, full 10-minute overtime periods. (No Golden Goal)
 - a. A coin toss shall be held as in Rule 5-2-2d.
 - b. At the end of the first 10-minute overtime period, teams shall change ends.
 - c. There shall be a 2-minute interval between periods.
2. If the score still remains tied, all coaches, officials and team captains shall assemble at the halfway line to review the procedure as outlined below:
 - a. The head referee shall choose the goal at which all shots from the penalty mark shall be taken. **Only officials and players taking kicks shall be on the field.**
 - b. Each coach will select any five players, including the goalkeeper, on or off the field (except those who may have been disqualified) to take the kicks.
 - c. A coin toss shall be held. The team winning the toss shall have the choice of kicking first or second.
 - d. Teams will alternate kickers. There is no follow-up on the kick.
 - e. The defending team may change the goalkeeper prior to each penalty kick.

- f. Following five kicks for each team, the team scoring on the greatest number of these kicks shall be declared the winner.
- g. Add one goal to the winning team score and credit the team with a victory. An asterisk (*) may be placed by the team advancing to indicate the advancement was the result of a tiebreaker system.

3. If the score remains tied after each team has had five kicks:

- a. Each coach will select five different players than the first five who already have kicked to take the kicks in a sudden-victory situation, wherein if one team scores and the other team does not score, the game is ended without more kicks being taken.
- b. If the score remains tied, continue the sudden-victory kicks with the coach selecting any five players (except disqualified players) to take the next set of alternating kicks. If a tie still remains, repeat 3-a.

If players are cautioned during the shootout, use the Misconduct Procedures listed at the end of the Tie-Breaking Procedures in the NFHS Soccer Rules Book.

DISCIPLINARY PENALTY PROCEDURES

Yellow Card Caution:

A cautioned player shall leave the field and may be replaced. The cautioned player may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity (NF Playing Rule 12-8-1).

Yellow/Red Card Disqualification (yellow card shown, then red card):

For a subsequent caution, a player, coach or bench personnel should be shown a yellow card and then an immediate red card and be disqualified for the remainder of the game, all subsequent competitions that day, and is also INELIGIBLE for the next day of soccer competition. If a player receives a red card, he/she may NOT be substituted for, so the team will play short-handed.

Red Card Ejection:

If a player, coach or bench personnel receives a red card (displayed alone), they shall be denied participation for the remainder of that game, all subsequent competitions that day, and are also INELIGIBLE for the next day of soccer competition. If a player receives a red card, he/she may NOT be substituted for, so the team will play short-handed. **The penalty for a straight red is the same as the penalty for a second yellow-then-red.**

COACHES & OFFICIALS PROCEDURES FOR NEXT GAME INELIGIBILITY:

- 1. It is the responsibility of the coach to withhold himself/herself or that player from the next day of soccer competition.

2. It is the responsibility of the coach to notify the athletic director that he/she or the player is being withheld from the next day of soccer competition.
3. It is the responsibility of the referee to notify the school both by phone and in writing (Officials Report Form obtained from MHSAA.com) of the player/coach who was ejected and under what circumstances.
4. It is the responsibility of the referee to notify the MHSAA in writing (Officials Report Form obtained from MHSAA.com) of the player/coach who was ejected and under what circumstances.

ROSTER / FOUR-GAME MINIMUM

The maximum player roster size for the MHSAA tournament is 25. An exception can be made for teams that have carried more than 25 for the entire season. The roster can change from game to game. In addition, a maximum of 6 additional coaches and/or team personnel are allowed to be in the team area.

To be eligible to compete in the MHSAA Tournament, a student must have participated as a team member in that sport in at least four games with his/her school team against other MHSAA member school teams. The Soccer Participating Schools Tournament Information (PSTI) document includes a procedure for waiving individual students.

LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP

The Limited Team Membership rule (Reg. I, Sect. 12) prohibits students from competing with non-school teams in the same sport during the high school season. Schools should never knowingly violate MHSAA Regulations, but exceptions have been made to this rule for girls soccer due to the overlap of club/school soccer in the spring season. The MHSAA encourages kids to participate in high school soccer, whether it be for the first time or after returning from a club experience, thus it has allowed some intentional violations of this rule in specific situations. If a student participates in a club team event after practicing with the high school team, the violation must be reported by the school and the student becomes ineligible for a minimum of the next three dates of competition. A second violation would likely make the student ineligible for the remainder of the season.

The Limited Team Membership rule was amended in 2020-21 to allow a girls soccer player to participate in scrimmage competition during the SPRING season at up to two college ID camps. These camps must be held at a college facility during the season and sponsored by that college. In the past girls could go to these spring events, but they could NOT participate in scrimmages; they CAN participate in scrimmages now. The rule is unchanged for the boys.

2025-26 NFHS PLAYING RULES CHANGES

These rules have changed in the 2025-26 rules book. For additional rule information, and to read the Major Editorial Changes, please refer to the 2025-26 NFHS Rules Book.

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| 3-3 & 3-2 | Removes redundant language and permits substitutions during a temporarily suspended game. |
| 3-3-2b(2) | Clarifies that an injured player must leave the field if the referee beckons a coach or appropriate health-care provider. |
| 4-1-2 | Clarifies that a number is required on the front of the jersey and/or shorts. |
| 7-2-4 | Prohibits a coach or team personnel other than the team captain from speaking with a referee during the interval between periods, unless beckoned by a referee. |
| 12-4-4 | A misconduct penalty may be given to the head coach if team or bench misconduct occurs. |
| Rule 18 | Elimination of Rule 18. Incorporating the definition into their corresponding rules while expanding the index to serve as a quick reference tool to streamline the rules, improve clarity, remove unnecessary duplication and eliminate conflicting definitions. |

MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES

3-3-2b(5), 3-3-3b(4), 3-3-3c(2), 3-3-3d(3), 3-3-7, 4-1-1c, 4-1 Notes, 4-1-3b, 5-1-2, 13-1-5

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Education-Based High School Athletics
2. Courage, Character and Consistency
3. Team Areas and Bench Decorum
4. Player Equipment (Shinguards)