

## **Additional signals for fouls, clarifications of existing rules top changes in high school soccer**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Tim Flannery

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 11, 2002) — Additional signals for fouls and a revision in the shinguard component of Rule 4 were among the rules changes approved by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee at its February meeting in Indianapolis. The rules revisions, along with some clarifications and adjustments, will go into effect with the 2002 soccer season.

Tim Flannery, NFHS liaison to the Soccer Rules Committee, said that better clarification was needed in a few areas in the NFHS Soccer Rules Book. “We hope the new language will help officials and coaches clarify some of the questions they have encountered in the past regarding these rules.”

The major change for 2002 was the addition of signals for fouls to the Official Soccer Signals chart in the Soccer Rules Book. The signals added for this season include holding, kicking, obstruction, pushing and tripping, and others. The rationale for these additions is to have more complete signals for better communication and education of those involved.

“Coaches and spectators at soccer games would ask themselves, ‘What did the referee call?’” Flannery said. “They knew something occurred, but no official signal was made to indicate the foul. With the addition of the new signals, now people at the games will know what call the official made.”

The aforementioned signals technically are not new to the Soccer Rules Book. The 1994-95 edition of the Rules Book included these signals, but they were removed the following year. Flannery is

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pleased to see them return. “We’re excited about the additions,” Flannery exclaimed. “We think they will improve the communication between officials and coaches, and likely will improve the communication among the officials and players as well.”

The other significant change to the Rules Book was the revision to Rule 4-1-1 regarding the use of shinguards and how they should be worn. Rule 4-1-1 now states that, “The required player equipment includes a jersey, shorts, stockings, suitable shoes and shinguards which shall provide adequate and reasonable protection, be professionally manufactured, age-appropriate, not altered to decrease protection, and worn under the stockings.”

The additional points in the rule with regard to the shinguards are that they are to provide “adequate and reasonable protection,” and that they need to be “age-appropriate.” Flannery said that players were wearing shinguards on the sides of the lower leg, rather than in the front of the lower leg where the shin is located and where the equipment is designed to be worn. He added that, prior to these changes, the problem was that players were wearing smaller shinguards than were necessary to properly cover their shins, mainly because they don’t enjoy wearing them. In addition, Flannery said that players were wearing shinguards over the stockings, which prompted the rule change to require them to wear them under the stockings.

Rule 12-8-1 now includes a section on “faking an injury.” The rationale is that it needs to be indicated as a cautionable offense under 12-8-1(f). According to Flannery, officials will need to err on the side of caution. If a collision or other potentially dangerous play occurs, the officials need to stop play, check those directly involved for injuries, and then make a judgment on whether or not a player or players involved are faking an injury. If a player is injured, then the proper steps need to be taken to care for the injured player before play can resume. If it is determined that a player is faking an injury, then the

officials need to follow the proper disciplinary action found under Rule 12.

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The NFHS Soccer Rules Committee continued to stress the Points of Emphasis on sportsmanship, improving the communication between coaches and officials and players and officials, and properly addressing severe weather conditions that arise during the soccer season. Specifically, the committee addressed the concern regarding lightning, and the continuing education on those in charge at soccer games to take the proper steps of safety precautions in severe weather situations.

In terms of participants, soccer ranks No. 5 in popularity for both boys and girls, with 332,750 boys and 292,086 girls playing the sport, according to the 2000-01 Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS.

The numbers show an increase in participation for both boys and girls from the 1999-2000 survey. In 2000-01, 2,706 more boys and 21,813 more girls participated in the sport of soccer.

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