

The following rules provided by Montana State Intramural Sports are not meant to be all encompassing. NFHS Soccer Rules will govern play. These rules last updated: Summer 2024

Section 1: The Game

- Brief Overview
 - Each team will be made up of six (6) players on the field.
 - Slide tackling is not permitted at any time.
 - Offside positioning will NOT be enforced.
 - A regulation game will consist of two 15-minute halves with a 3-minute halftime
- The Field
 - Fans must be on the opposite side of the field from the players' benches.
 - Team Captains are responsible for controlling their fans and discouraging harassment/heckling towards Officials and Supervisors
 - It is asked that players and fans allow officials at least 5 yards along the sidelines to reduce potential injuries and allow officials room to complete their assignments.
 - Interfering with an Official or Supervisor can result in a penalty.
- Beginning Play
 - Captains' Meeting
 - Before play starts, each team's captain must meet with the Officials.
 - Follow the Officials' instructions and ask any desired rule clarifications at this meeting.
 - The coin toss (below) will occur to determine possession and field position
 - Coin Toss
 - Either a coin toss or even/odds game will determine the first choice.
 - The visiting team captain will be designated to make the call.
 - The captain winning the toss or game shall choose one of the following options:
 - Choose to kick-off in the first or second half.
 - The remaining captain will choose which side of play to defend in the first half.
 - Choose which side of play to defend in the first half.
 - The remaining captain will choose between kicking-off in the first or second half.
 - Upon completion of the coin toss, teams will assume their respective sides and play will begin with a kick-off from midfield

Section 2: Equipment and Attire

- Equipment Provided
 - A regulation outdoor soccer ball will be provided for play.
 - Players may use their own outdoor balls if both captains and the Officials agree prior to play.
- Illegal and Required Equipment
 - Shoes
 - Athletic shoes are REQUIRED for play.
 - Shoes with rubber or rubber-like synthetic cleats are acceptable; cleats shall not contain any metal spikes
 - Attire
 - It is required that teams wear uniformly colored shirts to help distinguish one team from another.
 - Teams will pick their color in Fusion Play during registration and should wear that color all season.
 - Goalkeepers must wear a distinguishing colored shirt the differs from the color worn by their teammates. Goalkeeper pennies can be provided by Intramural Staff
 - It is suggested teams also bring an alternating color (white for dark team colors, black for light colors) in case team colors are too close.
 - Players must wear athletic shorts or pants and shirts. Jeans are not permitted.
 - No jewelry, baseball hats, hoods, wristbands, watches, rings, belts or handwarmers, headbands or bandanas with exposed knots, or anything that would be considered potentially harmful may be worn.
 - Intramural Supervisors have the authority to declare what constitutes legal and/or illegal equipment/attire.
- Recommended Equipment
 - Shin guards are highly recommended but not required.

Section 3: Players

- Team Composition
 - Each team will be made up of 6 players on the field.
 - 5 players will play field positions, 1 player will be designated as the goalkeeper
 - All teams are required to have a goalkeeper to play.
- Minimum Team Requirements
 - Games may start with a minimum of 4 players.
 - **Co-Ed Modification:** A minimum of 2 men and 2 women, and no more than 4 of any gender for a single team.
 - There shall not be a gender difference of more than 2 at any time.
 - Once the game has started, it may not continue with fewer than the min. number of eligible players on either team.
 - The game shall be terminated, and a default (results in a loss) shall be declared if a team has fewer than the minimum number of eligible players due to any reason, including, but not limited to:

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- A player being required to complete documentation due to misconduct.
- An injured player being attended to or no longer able to continue.
- Club Sports Players
 - A maximum of 2 **total** club sports participants can be on each team's roster, regardless of gender.
- Substitutions
 - Teams may substitute after scored goals, on throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, and other stoppages of play when the referee allows it.
 - A player wishing to enter into the game as a substitute must report to the center field line and wait for the approval of the referee to enter the field of play.
 - Players arriving late must first sign-in with the Intramural Supervisor before entering play.

Section 4: Timing

- Periods
 - A regulation game will consist of two 20-minute halves.
 - The clock will not stop and will be managed by the officials.
 - Halftimes will be a maximum of 5 minutes long and teams will switch sides at the start of the second half.
- Timeouts
 - Teams will not receive any time-outs
 - Injury timeouts may be determined only by the Officials and/or a Supervisor.
- Overtime
 - When the time limit is reached in the regular season, there will be NO Overtime.

Section 5: Scoring

- Goals
 - A goal is scored only when the entire ball has passed completely over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided no infraction of the rules has occurred during this process.
 - Goals cannot be scored directly from throw-ins or indirect kicks.
 - The clock does not stop after a scored goal.
 - After a scored goal, play resumes with the opposing team kicking off from the center of the field.
- Mercy Rule
 - If at any time during the final 5 minutes of the second half a team is ahead by 5 goals or more, the game shall be ended.
- Forfeit Score
 - In the event of a Forfeit, a score of 1-0 will be given.
 - Double Forfeits will result in a score of 0-0.
 - Any team the Forfeits their game will receive a 3 for Sportsmanship.

Section 6: Free Kicks and Restart Rules

- Kick-Off
 - On kick-off, the ball can be played in any direction.
- 10 Yard Rule
 - The 10 yard rule pertains to all dead ball situations, excluding throw-ins.
 - Players must stand at least 10 yards away from the ball.
 - If the defensive player's goal is closer than 10 yards, the ball shall be played 10 yards from the goal, in line with the place of the penalty.
- Throw-Ins
 - Should the ball go out of play, play is restarted with a throw-in from the nearest spot.
 - The boundary lines are considered in play; the ball must completely cross over the line to be out of play.
 - To be considered legal, the person throwing in the ball:
 - Must be facing the field of play.
 - Have both feet on the ground.
 - Use both hands.
 - Deliver the ball over the head in one continuous motion.
 - A score cannot be awarded from an untouched throw-in.
 - If the ball does not enter the playing field plane, a re-throw will be awarded. If the ball enters the playing field plane, but does not land inbounds, it becomes a turnover, and a throw-in is awarded to the opposing team.
 - Illegal throw-ins will result in loss of possession and a throw in for the opposing team. Flip throw-ins are considered illegal throw-ins.
- Indirect and Direct Kicks
 - Indirect kicks must be touched by another player before a goal may be scored; the following kicks are indirect kicks:
 - Goal kicks
 - Goalie violations
 - Offsides
 - Stoppage due to dangerous play

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- This includes sliding in traffic, provided the slide is NOT an attempt to slide tackle, high kicks, or any other play that an Official rules as dangerous that does not result in contact with another player.
 - Direct kicks may be scored without being touched by another player; the following are direct kicks:
 - Kick-offs
 - Penalty kicks
 - Hand Ball penalty
 - Corner kicks
- Goal Kicks
 - The defensive team is awarded a goal kick when the offensive team last contacts a ball that crosses the defense's goal line boundary.
 - The ball must travel outside the penalty area before it may be played by anyone of either team.
 - Infractions of this rule result in a re-kick.
 - The ball must be kicked from a stationary position and may be kicked within the goal area.
- Corner Kicks
 - The offensive team is awarded a corner kick when the defensive team last contacts a ball that crosses the defense's goal line boundary.
 - The ball must be kicked from a stationary position.
 - Goals may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- Penalty Kicks
 - Shall be awarded if, in the Official's opinion, a scoring opportunity was nullified by an infraction located inside the penalty area.
 - Penalty kicks will be taken from the penalty marker located in the penalty box.
 - After the kick, any player but the kicker can touch the ball.
 - The ball must go forward on a penalty kick.

Section 7: Goalkeeper Rules

- Goalkeeper Privileges
 - A goalkeeper may carry, strike, or propel the ball with the hands or arms.
 - Opposing players may not charge, interfere, or impede a goalkeeper's possession of the ball.
 - The goalkeeper's privileges do not extend outside of the penalty box. Thus, a goalkeeper cannot use their hands outside of the goal box.
 - Goalkeepers are not allowed to slide feet first to obtain possession of the ball from a player; however, they may hit the ground and dive for the ball.
- Ball Possession
 - A goalkeeper who takes control of the ball with their hands must release the ball within 6 seconds of obtaining it.
 - Should the goalkeeper take control of the ball with their hands for longer than 6 seconds, an indirect free kick at the location of the offense is awarded to the opposing team.

Section 8: Slide Tackling

- Slide Tackling Definition
 - A slide tackle is a maneuver in which one or both feet slide on the ground in an attempt to tackle the ball (whether contact is made or not) while an opponent has possession of the ball or while an opponent is attempting to gain possession of the ball (this includes loose 50-50 balls).
 - Slide tackling is not permitted. Goalkeepers cannot slide with their feet.
- Slide Tackling Enforcement
 - Slide tackling infractions will be called at the Official's discretion and will result in an automatic yellow card.
 - Slide tackling will result in a direct free kick.
 - Players lying on the ground may not play the ball if other players are within contact distance. This is considered a dangerous play and will result in an indirect free kick.

Section 9: Misconduct and Penalties

- Violation Resulting in a Yellow Card
 - Persistent rule infringement throughout the game.
 - Player shows dissent by word of mouth or action to decisions given by the Official.
 - Player is guilty of any incidental vulgar or profane language.
 - Player is guilty of unsporting conduct.
 - Slide tackling.
 - Improper substitution.
 - Player commits a hand ball in the goal box.
 - Illegal equipment.
 - Attempting a Bicycle Kick
- Violation Resulting in a Red Card
 - Player is guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play.
 - Player uses abusive language or gestures towards a player or Official.

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- Player persists in misconduct after a caution.
- Ejection
 - Any player receiving two yellow cards during one game will be ejected and must leave the playing field.
 - Any player receiving one red card during one game will be ejected and must leave the playing field.
 - Ejected players must meet with the Intramural Supervisor to fill out information and will then be required to attend a misconduct meeting with the Senior Coordinator of Competitive Sports before they can play in the next game.

Section 10: Official Game and Overtime

- Official Game
 - If a game has reached halftime and inclement weather stops play, the game will be over, and its score will be considered official.
 - If a game has not yet reached halftime and inclement weather stops play, the game will be considered cancelled.
 - Cancelled games will not count toward playoff qualification.
 - Cancelled games will only be made up if time and space permits.
- Overtime
 - During league play, there are no overtime periods and games will result in a tie.
 - During the playoffs, a 5-minute overtime period will be played until the first team scores (the “golden goal”).
 - If no goal is achieved in this 5-minute period, a shootout, taken from the penalty kick location, will occur with the following rules:
 - 1 goalie and 5 field players will be selected for the shootout
 - The 5 players from each team then take alternating penalty kicks in a 5 kick shootout.
 - **Co-Ed Modification: Shooters must alternate male/female or female/male.**
 - If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, the same players shall again alternate penalty kicks, in the same order, until the tie is broken by one team scoring when the other fails to score.
 - Officials will choose the side of field for the shootout. A coin toss will determine who shoots first.