

FHSAA
Soccer Rules Modifications
2024-25 Edition

**Edited and annotated by the
North Florida Soccer Officials Association**

Updated August 2024

NFSOA Annotation: The numbers at the beginning of each section refer to the NFHS rule number that is modified by FHSAA. If there are any conflicts between the rule modification as written by FHSAA and the NFSOA annotations or comments, the FHSAA rule as written shall prevail. All NFSOA comments and annotations are shown in italics.

NFHS Soccer Rules, as modified by the FHSAA, are the official rules for all soccer games. The following modifications have been adopted by the FHSAA.

NFHS Rule 4-1-1(e). Compression/bicycle shorts

FHSAA Modification: Compression/bicycle shorts may be worn under the uniform bottom in accordance with the National Federation rule. Such shorts, however, may not be worn in lieu of the uniform bottom.

NFSOA comment: Clarifies that compression shorts are not an acceptable substitute for uniform shorts

NFHS Rule 6-2-1. Timekeeping

FHSAA Modification: The official time will be kept by a contest official on the field, and if the stadium clock is available, it is unofficial.

NFSOA comment: Reverses the NFHS rule book which states that the scoreboard clock is official. Referees should ensure the stadium clock is reasonably in sync with the referee's watch, as players expect the scoreboard to be accurate.

NFHS Rule 7-1-1. Length of halves for sub-varsity games

FHSAA Modification: Sub-varsity may play two 30-minute halves upon mutual agreement of opposing schools.

NFSOA comment: "Sub-varsity" means junior varsity and middle school games.

NFHS Rule 7-1-2. Length of halves for varsity games

FHSAA Modification: Varsity shall play 40-minute halves and periods may not be shortened.

NFSOA comment: Reverses the NFHS rule that allows varsity games to be shortened by mutual agreement of the head coaches.

NFHS Rule 7-1-3. Weather/Darkness impacts to games

FHSAA Modification: A soccer game that has completed one-half or more of play is an official game. A game that has been called because of weather or darkness prior to the first half being completed is a suspended game and, if played, shall restart from the point of suspension. (See also the FHSAA “Policy on Inclement Weather.”)

NFSOA comment: The NFHS Rule leaves the decision of whether to replay or restart a suspended game to the state association. FHSAA will restart from the point of suspension.

NFHS Rule 7-1-5. Mercy Rule

FHSAA Modification: Eight (8) goal differential attained at end of the first half or secured at any point during the second half terminates the game. If an eight (8) differential is reached at any time during the first half, the game clock shall continue to run after goals are scored. Once the game clock starts running due to an eight-goal differential, the game clock must continue to run for the duration of the game.

NFSOA Comment: This is commonly known as the “Mercy Rule”.

NFHS Rule 7-3-1. Games that end with score tied

FHSAA Modification: Regular season games that are tied at the end of regulation play will end as a tie. Games in invitational tournaments that are tied at the end of regulation play may be resolved using the overtime procedure. The overtime procedure shall be used in the FHSAA State Soccer Series.

NFSOA comment: No overtime is played in regular season games. For in-season tournaments, e.g. the Gateway Conference tournament, the overtime procedure detailed on page 89 of the rule book (“Sample Tie-Breaking Procedure”) is adopted by FHSAA. In summary, teams play two 10-minute halves to completion. If the game is still tied, the standard kicks from the mark procedure is used to determine a winner. Note: schools hosting invitational tournaments during the regular season may use this entire overtime procedure or go directly to penalty kicks

NFHS Rule 7-3-2. Overtime periods

FHSAA Modification: There will be a five-minute interval between the second half and the first of the two overtime periods and a two-minute interval between the overtime periods.

NFSOA comment: these details were left to state associations, so FHSAA is making clear the procedure to be followed.



Timeouts.

FHSAA Modification: There shall be a one-minute timeout in each half for re-hydration of players and for coaches to deal with player situations. Players shall remain on the field and there shall be no delay in substitution. Substitutes may enter per NFHS Rule 3-3-1. The timeout shall occur when there is stoppage immediately prior to or after the 20-minute mark at the discretion of the referee when there is no immediate offensive scoring opportunity.

NFSOA comment: This is commonly referred to as the “water break” rule. Water breaks are required in all games, without regard to weather conditions.

Card System for Misconduct.

FHSAA Modification: Administration of the Card System for Misconduct in all contests must be administered as according to the NFHS Soccer Rulebook.

NFSOA comment: FHSAA included this apparently redundant instruction to clarify that a prior FHSAA misconduct procedure was abandoned beginning with the 2024-2025 season.

NFSOA Comment: Ties are allowed in regular season games. The following rule defines the overtime procedure for tournaments and playoffs.

Overtime Procedure. The overtime procedure to be used in the Florida High School State Championship Series, as well as invitational tournament games, is as follows (Note: schools hosting invitational tournaments during the regular season may use this overtime procedure or go directly to penalty kicks:

- (a) Following a five-minute interval, there shall be **two (2)** 10-minute overtime periods. A coin toss as specified in NFHS Rule 5-2-2(d)(3) shall be held in advance of this overtime period. After the end of the first 10-minute overtime period the teams shall change ends of the field and a second 10-minute overtime period shall be played after a two-minute interval. The team with more goals at the conclusion of the second overtime shall be declared the winner of the contest.
- (b) If a tie still exists following the second overtime period, the head coaches and team captains for both teams will meet with the officials at the halfway line to review the procedure for penalty kicks as follows:
 - (1) The referee will choose the goal at which all of the kicks from the penalty line will be taken.
 - (2) 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 penalty kicks.
 - (3) A coin toss will be held as in NFHS Rule 5-2-2(d)(3). The team winning the toss will have the choice of kicking first or second.
 - (4) Teams will alternate kickers. There is no follow-up on the kick.
 - (5) The defending team may change the goalkeeper prior to each penalty kick.
 - (6) The team scoring the greatest number of these kicks will be declared the winner.
 - (7) 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 tie-breaker system.
- (c) If the score remains tied after each team has had five penalty kicks:
 - (1) 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. If a team has fewer than 10 available players at the end of the first set of kicks from the penalty mark due to either injuries or disqualification, the coach must use all players who have not participated in the first five kicks. The coach may choose additional players from the first five kickers to ensure that five different players participate in the second set of kicks.
 - (2) If the score remains tied, continue the sudden victory kicks with the coach selecting any five players to take the next set of alternating kicks. If a tie remains, repeat 4.10.1.1.4 (c)(1)
- (d) The Misconduct Procedure as listed in **12-9** in the NFHS Rules Book shall be in effect during the penalty kick phase of overtime.

Suspended Contest. A suspended contest shall be resumed from the point of interruption under the provision of NFHS Rule 7-1-3.

NFSOA comment: If a game is suspended before completion of the first half, it will be restarted from the point where the game was suspended. Referees who work a suspended contest are reminded to send a report to the assignor with all of the relevant details of the game, including:

- *Time remaining in the first half when the game was suspended*
- *Score*
- *Which team is attacking each goal*
- *Which team kicked off to the start the game*
- *Any misconduct cards shown, including the team, player number and reason for the card*
- *How the game should be restarted and from where on the field the restart should take place*