



Oregon School Activities Association

25200 SW Parkway Avenue, Suite 1
Wilsonville, OR 97070
503.682.6722 <http://www.osaa.org>



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To: Athletic Directors and Head Soccer Coaches

From: Katie Hartman, Assistant Executive Director
katieh@osaa.org | 503.682.6722 x239

Subject: 2026-27 Soccer Reminders

Included within this memo are reminders regarding OSAA policies and NFHS rules specific to soccer that each coaching staff should review as we begin a new season. The links provided will take you directly to more detailed information regarding that specific reminder. Each school offering soccer should have received one copy of the NFHS Soccer Rules Book from the OSAA, and if your Athletic Director has your email address listed on the OSAA website under your school, you will be able to have one NFHS eBook of the rules. If your school didn't receive your copy, please let me know. Feel free to contact me if you have questions and best of luck this season!

GENERAL INFORMATION

OSAA Soccer Plan Book

<http://www.osaa.org/soccer>

The 2026 OSAA Soccer Plan Book is available on the OSAA website. This plan book contains information regarding important season dates, NFHS rules information, OSAA soccer rules and policies, state championship information and qualifications, etc.

Game Ball

Schools are reminded that according to the NFHS Soccer Rules, soccer balls must include NFHS stamps to be legal for high school competition. This includes all levels of play (Varsity, JV, JV2, Frosh). For the regular season, any brand of soccer ball is legal provided it has the required marks. At no time are soccer balls required to have an OSAA stamp. During the OSAA state playoffs, teams are required to use the Wilson Vivido.

2026-27 NFHS Rule Changes

See the [NFHS website](#) for a complete list of changes.

Please note the uniform requirements dealing with socks and contrasting colors. [jerseys and socks](#)

2026-27 NFHS Points of Emphasis

Properly Marked Fields	- Administrators, coaches, and officials must prioritize proper marking of team areas and the maintenance of the 10-foot buffer around the field boundary lines. - Team areas extend 10 yards from each side of the halfway line for a total length of 20 yards, set back 10 feet from the touchline. - Team areas must be clearly designated and marked by a solid line. When markings are missing, officials should work with administrators or coaches to place cones as temporary boundaries. - Any violations of Rule 1-5-3 must be reported to the state association.
NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls	- The NFHS Authenticating Mark ensures easy identification of balls used in interscholastic competitions. All such balls are required to display the NFHS Authenticating Mark. - This mark helps promote a level playing field by ensuring consistency in equipment and clearly communicates that standards are being met. - Administrators and coaches play a pivotal role in making sure all balls meet specifications through consistent reinforcement during pre-competition meetings.

	Game officials must remain vigilant and report any non-compliant balls to the state association office.
Shared Professionalism and Bench Accountability	- High school soccer serves as an extension of the classroom, requiring both officials and coaches to uphold the highest standards of composure and integrity. - Professional communication should remain non-threatening and conversational. Raising one's voice, displaying frustrations or acting in a provocative manner only escalates conflict. - When a caution or ejection is issued, officials advise the head coach using appropriate rulebook language. Both parties share responsibility for ensuring communication remains professional. - Any dissent or inappropriate conduct should be addressed firmly and professionally. Coaches are accountable for their behavior and must model emotional control and sportsmanship.
Managing Goal Celebrations	- Celebrating after scoring a goal is an integral part of soccer. Reacting with joy is permissible provided it is not excessive and not accompanied by taunting. - Players are allowed to celebrate and may leave the field momentarily, provided they make a prompt return to the playing field. Rehearsed or choreographed celebrations should be discouraged. - The line between allowable celebration and misconduct is crossed when a player or team prevents a timely restart by delaying excessively or by taunting opponents or fans. - Examples of misconduct include jumping over barriers, climbing fences, or removing one's jersey. Any act that prohibits a timely restart is unsporting conduct and requires a caution.
Penalty Kick Offenses and the Concept of Impact	- Encroachment during a penalty kick is only penalized if the offense has a clear impact on the play. - Encroachment by the defending team is never penalized if the goal is scored. If the kick is missed or saved and the defense encroached with impact, the kick is retaken. - Goalkeepers who encroach and impact the kicker shall receive a warning for the first offense, with cautions reserved for subsequent infractions. - While kickers are permitted stutter-steps during the run-up, feinting once the approach is complete is unsporting conduct that shall be cautioned on every occurrence.

OSAA Adopted Soccer Interpretations

<http://www.osaa.org/soccer>

The 2026-27 NFHS Soccer Rules Book will be used in Oregon with these clarifications (which are also included in the Soccer Planbook).

Overtime Policy

No overtime is allowed during pre-season or regular season matches. This also includes no kicks from the penalty mark. Matches that are tied at the end of regulation time will be considered a draw. NOTE: The OSAA State Championship tie breaking procedures shall be used in all district playoffs, play-ins, OSAA playoffs and championship matches.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and Safety Information

<http://www.osaa.org/health-safety>

The OSAA website contains a variety of information regarding heat and hydration, lightning safety, air quality, and concussion management. This page contains links to informational items that all coaches should familiarize themselves with as practices begin.

Pre-Event Safety Timeout

Prior to the start of each contest (at all levels) the site supervisor and/or home head coach shall gather the following personnel to review these questions; Site Supervisor, Coaches, Officials, and Medical Personnel.

- ✓ Who is the onsite contact for each school?
- ✓ Is there a qualified medical professional present? If not, who will lead in case of an emergency?
- ✓ Is there an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the venue? Who calls 911 and who meets the ambulance (and where)?
- ✓ Where's the nearest AED?

Sportsmanship Information

Pre-Match Meeting

Participants: Officials, Coaches, Captains, and Game Manager

The purpose of the pre-match meeting is to establish positive relationships and create a collaborative environment before competition begins. Officials will lead the meeting by facilitating introductions, setting expectations for the match, and reinforcing the shared commitment to sportsmanship, communication, and respect.

Post-Match Handshakes

Teams are encouraged to participate in a formal post-match handshake line to reinforce sportsmanship and demonstrate respect for one another at the conclusion of competition. We recognize that, in certain situations, the circumstances or tenor of a match may make a formal handshake inadvisable. In those cases, the decision to participate will be left to the discretion of the coaches, with the well-being of all participants as the primary consideration.

Heat Index Alerts

<http://www.osaa.org/heat-index>

ADs and coaches should subscribe to heat alerts through the OSAA website. Alerts are sent about 11am daily when the forecasted heat index in your area is high. If an alert is received, OSAA policy requires that schools check the actual heat index within one hour prior to the start of practice to determine if modifications must be made. If no alert is received, no further action is required by the school that day.

New Synthetic Turf Field – Heat Guidance

<http://www.osaa.org/heat-index>

The OSAA's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) has produced guidance for use of turf fields when it's warm outside. Synthetic turf field surface temperatures can reach up to 200 degrees Fahrenheit, which not only increases the risk of heat illness, but may cause burns to exposed skin. Radiant heat from the synthetic surface can have a "heat island" effect that may not be accounted for if Heat Index is checked by local Zip Code.

The following guidelines should be considered when practicing, working out, or playing contests on synthetic turf from May 1 through September 30 when the outdoor temperature exceeds 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperature should be measured on-site within one hour of the start of the event and monitored for the duration of the event.

1. If outdoor temperature is greater than 80 degrees Fahrenheit coaches should be aware of increased risk and observe athletes for signs of heat illness. Additional rest, water, and shade breaks should be utilized as needed.
2. If outdoor temperature is greater than 90 degrees Fahrenheit consider avoiding the use of synthetic turf fields between peak sun times of noon to 3pm.
3. If outdoor temperature is greater than 95 degrees Fahrenheit consider moving all practices, workouts, and contests to natural grass fields.

Air Quality Guidelines

<http://www.osaa.org/health-safety/air-quality>

It's important to review the updated [Air Quality Guidelines](#), which were revised in July 20264. These guidelines, created in consultation with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the cancellation, suspension and/or restarting of practices and contests based on poor air quality. ***Schools should also refer to OHA's [Oregon Air Quality Activity Guide for Children and Youth](#).*** The policy still allows schools to participate in practices/contests up to an AQI of 150. Cancellation is required for outdoor events when AQI reaches 151 (red). The policy suggests schools consider the impact of elevated AQI lasting for multiple days and the impact of prolonged exposure for athletes and staff on multiple practice session days when making decisions.

Lightning Safety Guidelines

<https://www.osaa.org/docs/handbooks/osaahandbook.pdf#page=96>

The OSAA has made a concerted effort to educate member schools and officials associations regarding the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. Once thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, all personnel, athletes and spectators should evacuate to available safe structures or shelters.

Proactive Planning:

- 1) Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
- 2) Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safe areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated area.
 - a) A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium, or library. An alternate safer place for the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
- 3) Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a) Recognition. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
 - b) Thirty-Minute Rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least thirty minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c) Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d) When lightening detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning detection device.
- 4) Review annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
- 5) Inform student athletes of the lightning policy at start of season.

Practice Model

<https://www.osaa.org/docs/handbooks/osaahandbook.pdf#page=109>

The Practice Model requires athletes to have a minimum of five days of actual practice prior to participation in a jamboree or interscholastic contest. Please familiarize yourself with this policy. Notable requirements contained in the policy include:

- ✓ Prohibition on consecutive days of multiple practice sessions
- ✓ A teaching session as one of the practice sessions on the first two multiple practice days (the intensity, duration and pace of all practice components in a teaching session shall be modified from a normal practice session)
- ✓ Maximum of one hour of weight training before or after practice on a single practice session day

UNIFORMS / PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Coach Responsibilities for Player Equipment

As the adult leader of the team, each head coach shall be responsible for ensuring that each of his/her players is properly and legally equipped. The head coach shall receive the first caution issued (yellow card) for an illegally equipped player. All subsequent cautions (yellow cards) for illegally equipped player(s) shall be issued directly to the player(s) and not to the head coach. An illegally equipped player shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. Play shall not be stopped for an infringement of this rule except where the referee may stop play immediately where there is a dangerous situation. The removed player(s) may re-enter at the next legal substitution opportunity only after reporting to an official who shall be satisfied the player's equipment and uniform are in order. This is meant to place some responsibility on the player as well as make sure that the illegal equipment has been rectified.

Shinguard Permanent Marking Requirement

The NOCSAE seal and height range shall be permanently marked (branded, embossed, etc.) on the front of the shinguard.

Goalkeeper Jerseys Must Have Numbers

Goalkeepers must have a number on the front of their jerseys or shorts/pants and on the back of their jerseys. Goalkeepers may wear the same-colored socks as their teammates, but the goalkeeper's socks must differ in color from the opposing field players.

FIELD MARKINGS, OFFICIALS, SECOND CAUTIONS

Team Benches

Oregon has adopted that the benches for both teams shall be on the same side of the field.

Markings

Both the official and team areas should be marked. These areas shall be at least 10 feet from the sideline. The official area shall extend 5 yards on each side of the halfway line. This area is used for entering substitutes, scorers and timers. The team areas shall extend from 10 yards on each side of the halfway line for a distance of 20 yards. Coaches, bench personnel and team members shall

be restricted to this area. Anyone allowed in the team area should be listed on the team roster. We understand that it is not always possible, particularly when the benches are set on the track around the field or the game is in a public park but appreciate efforts to properly mark this area. Cones or tape can be used if painting a line isn't feasible.

Room for Referee

The assistant/dual referee needs space outside the touchline in order to effectively monitor game action. We don't want any tripping or collisions on the sidelines with referees and team personnel. Home game management and coaches are encouraged to take the necessary steps to keep this from happening.

Spectators

Spectators shall be confined to areas at least 10 feet from the touch line, team/official area and goal line. No one shall be permitted directly behind either goal unless seated in bleachers.

Officials – Host School Responsibilities

Remember that a game manager shall be designated by the host school for all contests. It's a good idea for the game manager to introduce themselves to the officials upon arrival. A member of the coaching staff of the home team is not eligible to serve as game manager during a varsity contest at which he or she is coaching. A coach of a sub-varsity team may act as the game manager at a sub-varsity contest at which he or she is coaching.

1. The game manager shall wear easily recognizable identification, shall be physically present and / or readily accessible by phone, and shall be responsible for:
 - a) Designating reserved parking for officials as close as possible to the contest site; where available if requested by the commissioner of the Local Association providing the officials
 - b) Designating dressing facilities for officials where available if requested by the commissioner of the Local Association providing the officials;
 - c) Monitoring and responding to inappropriate crowd conduct during and after the contest; and
 - d) Providing an escort to the designated dressing facilities or vehicle for officials following each contest unless that offer is declined. ***(This is especially important at fields where officials must walk through the spectator area when leaving the field.)***

Ejection Policy

<https://www.osaa.org/docs/handbooks/osaahandbook.pdf#page=79>

We have clarified the language in the OSAA Handbook to reflect current practices. Ejection reports will be submitted to the schools within 48 hours of the contest's competition, and Principals or their authorized representative must appeal an ejection suspension to the Assistant Executive Director in charge of the sport within 48 hours of receiving the ejection report.

As a reminder an ejected player shall be required to complete the online NFHS course, "Sportsmanship", within seven calendar days of the ejection report being finalized. Should a player fail to complete the course requirement within the time limit stipulated in this policy, the ejection suspension shall be reinstated, and the player shall be ineligible to play until the requirement has been fulfilled. Should an ejected player participate in a contest during the reinstated period of suspension specified in the Regulations that action shall be considered use of an ineligible participant and shall result in forfeiture of that contest and other penalties as determined by the Executive Board.

There has also been revisions to clarify out of sight and sound: The coach must leave the confines of the playing area and grandstands and shall be allowed no further direct or indirect contact with the team until the contest is completed. In order to avoid direct or indirect contact, the coach must be "out of sight and sound" of the team. "Out of sight" means the ejected coach cannot view the contest, cannot communicate with their team, and may not be anywhere in the facility where they can be seen by any participants (player, coaches, officials) until the officials have left the facility. "Out of sound" means the ejected coach cannot hear or be heard by any participants (player, coaches, officials), including all forms of direct or indirect communication, until the officials have left the facility.

In the event of a player being ejected from a contest for the use of discriminatory language and/or fighting or leaving the team box during a fight, that participant's suspension period shall be doubled.

OSAA RANKINGS INFO

Adding Contests to Schedules vs. Teams More Than One Classification Away After September

Remember that results from contests added to a team's schedule after a certain date each season (Fall – September 16) **vs. a team more than one classification away** shall not be included in the rankings.

Adding Any Contest to Schedules After September 30

Results from contests added to a team's schedule after a certain date each season (Fall – September 30) shall not be included in the rankings. NOTE: Contests not affected by this policy include bracketed contests at tournaments, league tiebreakers, and district/league tournaments.

Tracking Out of State Opponents

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/osaainfo/ManagingOutOfStateRecordsInstructions.pdf>

Varsity teams are required to update their schedule and results through the OSAA website throughout the season. Schools are also required to track records of out of state opponents. Each Oregon school is ultimately responsible for making sure their own schedule and results are accurate, including the records of their out of state opponents.