

Oregon School Activities Association

Soccer Bulletin #2

2026

The season has gotten off to a relatively slow start this year, with quite a few teams not having played a single game yet. After Labor Day things will get crazier. We have already had a number of games with four, five, six or more cards. If your game is looking like that, the best way to handle it is to start calling more fouls. What you allow, you encourage. Draw the line a little tighter and most players will get the message. Those who don't will have earned their card(s). Let me be clear, though. I am not telling you to give fewer cards so the game looks cleaner. Instead, change player behavior.

Especially early in the season, you will encounter some players with the tiny shin guards. They are not, of course, legal. They do not have the NOCSAC emblem on them and they are too small. They also don't provide any reasonable level of protection. Look at the shin area, before the game, and ask to see the shin guard if they look too small or there doesn't appear to be a shin guard under their sock. If they are in the game when you notice it, at the next stoppage, stop the clock and check the shin guard. The tiny ones are illegal, not improper, because they are not the type of shin guard required by the rules.

Sometimes, you give a card during the game, get home to write your game report and find out that there is no player with that number on the roster. After the game, before the leaving the field, check the roster. If there's no player with that number, ask the coach for the player's name. If you forget to do this, you can still try to find the name by visiting the OSAA website, which has a roster of players on the team. If you gave a card when you are using the dual system, be sure to check the rosters after the game. R2 can take a photo with their phone of the rosters that R1 has.

Please remember the eight second rule. I know it's new but we all have to be doing this. If the ball is in play and the keeper has even a finger on the ball, the eight second count starts. When you get to five, raise the arm and count out loud, loud enough for the keeper to hear it. Note that the NFHS rule says that the count starts as soon as the keeper has possession, which means any part of their body in contact with the ball. The eight count starts at that point, even if the keeper is on the ground.

This time of year there may be thunder and lightning during a game. Please recognize that this can happen while the game is going on. If the coaching staff and/or game manager tells you that there is lightning, please stop the game immediately, even if you didn't hear/see it yourself. We cannot resume the game until 30 minutes has passed since the last lightning flash. The game manager and coaches are responsible for evacuation of the field. You must go

to a safe place, normally a building or your vehicle. Under covered stands is NOT safe. Please work with the game manager about whether the game can resume, when it can resume and how much warm up time you and the teams will need.

We are not tolerating offensive, insulting or abusive language. “Oh, they were just excited.” “I’ve heard all of those words before.” Sorry, there is no excuse for that language in high school sports. Controlling the language is an important part of keeping players in control of themselves. And discriminatory language is still happening out there far too often. You know the procedure. If it is reported to you and you didn’t hear it, stop the game and have the coaches talk to their teams.

And, in case you think you are being too tough on the teams, anchored goals, nets and rosters are required. If you don’t have all of them, and the home team is unable to provide them, there’s no game. All of this, of course, has to be in your game report.

Be safe out there.

Patrick Duffy
OSAA State Soccer Rules Interpreter