

Comparison of Selected Minnesota Youth and High School Soccer Rules

This document compares rules that differ significantly between the youth and high school codes used in Minnesota. “Youth” refers to IFAB’s *Laws of the Game* as modified by MYSA. “High School” refers to the *NFHS Soccer Rules Book* as modified by MSHSL. **Red font indicates changes for 2020.**

For a comparison of unmodified IFAB, NFHS, and NCAA rules, see: *A Comparative Study of Rules and Laws : 2020 Soccer Guide* by Don Dennison (available online).

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Topic	Youth	High School
Terminology (Use correct terminology, especially when writing match and incident reports)	Laws Send Off Dropped Ball Match Extra Time Sanction Technical Area Abandoned Match Impeding the progress of an opponent	Rules Disqualification Drop Ball Game Overtime Penalty Team Area Terminated Game Obstruction
Goals and nets	No equivalent provision in youth rules. Nets may be attached to the goals. Padded goal posts are not authorized.	If used on a football field, the front of portable goals should be at least 2 yards in front of the base of the football goalposts. Nets shall be attached to the goals. The vertical portion of goal posts may be padded with commercially manufactured material. Pads shall be white, have a maximum thickness of one inch, and be a minimum of 72 inches high and properly secured.
Team and spectator areas	Marked technical areas and spectator areas are preferred but not required. When possible, technical areas for both teams will be on the same side of the field, with spectators seated on the opposite side.	Team areas shall be marked, separated by an official area. These areas shall be at least 10 feet from the touchline. Officials should notify MSHSL if team areas are not marked. Spectators shall be confined to areas at least 10 feet from the touchline.
Game ball(s)	One required; more may be used if available. Any ball used must meet the requirements of Law 2.	Three or more of similar quality.

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Team rosters	<p>Prior to the start of each MYSAs competitive match, the referee must check in players, coaches, and managers using the Affinity Sports online system.</p> <p>Roster limits vary with the ages of players and apply during both regular season and postseason play.</p> <p>Coaches may not add players to the roster after play begins.</p>	<p>At least 5 minutes prior to the start of the contest, each team shall submit to the officials a roster containing the first and last names and numbers of all players and substitutes and first and last names of all coaches and other bench personnel. MSHSL does not require that teams use a specific roster form.</p> <p>Teams may roster a maximum of 22 players, two student managers, and four coaches for the state tournament.</p> <p>Coaches may add players to the roster after the start of play.</p>
Team captains	<p>The captain has no special status or privileges but has a degree of responsibility for the behavior of the team.</p>	<p>The captain is the team's representative and may address an official on matters of interpretation and to obtain essential information.</p>
Substitution opportunities	<p>All ages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitutes may enter from the bench between periods, after goals, and when the referee stops play for injuries. • They must be ready to enter at the halfway line prior to other stoppages. <p>Under 12 and younger teams may substitute an unlimited number of players during any stoppage of play.</p> <p>U13 and older teams may substitute an unlimited number of players:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between periods (either team) • after a goal (either team) • prior to a goal kick (either team) • prior to a throw-in (team with possession; if they sub, opposing team also may sub) • when the referee stops play for injuries (either team) 	<p>Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench between periods.</p> <p>Either team may substitute an unlimited number of players from the bench, provided that they report to the scorer's table or nearest official and are beckoned in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after a goal • when a player is injured and removed from the field <p>Teams may substitute an unlimited number of players provided that they have checked in and are waiting at the halfway line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior to a goal kick (either team) • prior to a throw-in (team with possession; if they sub, opposing team also may sub) • prior to a corner kick (team with possession; if they sub, opposing team also may sub) • when a player is required to leave the field because of communicable disease concerns • when the referee stops play to caution or disqualify a player or bench personnel (either team)
Substitutions after injuries	<p>A team may leave an injured player on the field, substitute the injured player, or remove the injured player and play shorthanded.</p>	<p>If the referee stops the clock for an apparent injury to a field player or goalkeeper, the field player or goalkeeper must leave the field. The field player may be replaced, and the goalkeeper shall be replaced by either a substitute or a field player.</p>

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Substitutions after misconduct	<p>A team may leave a cautioned player on the field, remove the player and play shorthanded, or substitute the player at the next substitution opportunity.</p> <p>A player sent off during an interval between periods may not be replaced.</p>	<p>A cautioned player shall leave the field but may be replaced from the bench. The cautioned player may not re-enter the game until the next legal substitution opportunity for his/her team. If the team elects to play shorthanded, the cautioned player may not be replaced until the next legal substitution opportunity for that team.</p> <p>A player disqualified during an interval between periods may be replaced.</p>
Substitutions before penalty kicks	No equivalent provision in youth rules.	Teams may substitute only for injured or cautioned players or disqualified goalkeepers during a penalty kick stoppage. A substitute who replaces an injured, cautioned, or disqualified player during a penalty kick stoppage shall not take the penalty kick.
Substitution procedures	<p>A player being substituted must leave by the nearest point on the boundary line unless the referee indicates that the player may leave directly and immediately at the halfway line or another point (e.g., for safety/security or injury).</p> <p>A substitute shall enter the field of play only at the halfway line, after the player being replaced has left the field, and after receiving a signal from the referee.</p>	<p>No equivalent provision in high school rules.</p> <p>A substitute shall report to the scorer or, in the absence of a scorer, to the nearest official, and remain at the halfway line until an official beckons him/her to enter the field of play.</p>
When substitutes become players	A substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play. From that moment, the substitute becomes a player and the player that he or she replaced ceases to be a player.	A substitute becomes a player when he or she is beckoned onto the field of play, at which time the replaced individual is no longer a player.
Goalkeeper change	Any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that the referee is informed and the change is made during a stoppage in the match. Sanction for unauthorized goalkeeper change: warning or caution, at the referee's discretion.	The goalkeeper may change places with a player on the field whenever the clock is stopped or a substitution opportunity occurs, provided that the uniforms are legal. Any time the goalkeeper is changed, a referee shall be notified. Penalty for unauthorized goalkeeper change: warning for both players.
Excessive substitutions	The referee adds time at the end of the period when a team substitutes frequently in an attempt to waste playing time.	When a team repeatedly substitutes to consume time, the referee shall order the timer to stop the clock during such substitutions and shall notify the coach of the offending team. Repetition may be construed as unsporting conduct.

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Player uniforms	<p>The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and the officials. In case of color conflict (as determined by the referee), the home team must change to an alternate color.</p> <p>Each goalkeeper must wear colors that are distinguishable from the other players and the match officials. If the two goalkeepers' shirts are the same color and neither has another shirt, the referee allows the match to be played.</p> <p>Players must have their own numbers on jerseys with no numbers being shared by players on the same team.</p> <p>Equipment must not have any political, religious, or personal slogans, statements, or images. Players must not reveal undergarments that show political, religious, or personal slogans, statements, or images.</p>	<p>The home team shall wear dark jerseys and socks (dark is defined as any color which contrasts with white), and the visiting team shall wear solid white jerseys and solid white socks.</p> <p>Jerseys, shorts, and socks of teammates (except for the goalkeeper) shall be of similar color, design, and pattern.</p> <p>Goalkeeper jerseys shall differ in color from those of teammates and opposing field players. The socks of the goalkeeper need not be the same color as those of his or her teammates, but shall differ in color from those of the opposing players.</p> <p>All jerseys, including the goalkeeper's jersey, shall be numbered on the back with a different Arabic number at least 6 inches in height and on the front (jersey or short) with the same number, which shall be at least 4 inches in height. Numbers shall be of contrasting color to the jersey (of shorts) and clearly visible.</p> <p>Only those names, patches, emblems, logos, or insignia referencing the school are permitted on the team jersey and/or shorts, as well as on visible undergarments and goalkeeper pants. The player's name also may appear on the team uniform. Exceptions: one manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference on the outside of each item, and/or an American flag on each item, and/or a commemorative or memorial patch on each item.</p>
Visible undergarments	<p>Undershirts must be a single color which is the same as the main color of the shirt sleeve or a pattern/colors which exactly replicate(s) the shirt sleeve.</p> <p>Undershorts/tights must be the same color as the main color of the shorts or the lowest part of the shorts.</p>	<p>If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it shall be of a similar length for an individual and a solid, like color for the team.</p>
Arm bands	<p>No equivalent provision in youth rules.</p>	<p>It is recommended that team captains wear arm bands of a contrasting color. If used, they shall be worn on the upper arm.</p>
Shinguards	<p>Shinguards must be made of a suitable material to provide reasonable protection, and must be covered by the socks.</p>	<p>Shinguards shall provide adequate and reasonable protection, be professionally manufactured, age- and size-appropriate, not altered to decrease protection, worn under the stockings, and worn with the bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle.</p>

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Other protective equipment	<p>A player will be allowed to wear a cast only if, in the opinion of the referee, it is well-padded and will not constitute a risk of injury to the player or others.</p> <p>Non-dangerous protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks, and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material is permitted.</p>	<p>Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm or shoulder must be covered and padded with closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½ inch thick.</p> <p>Knee and ankle braces that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding.</p> <p>The use of soft-padded soccer headgear is permitted but not required. Goalkeepers may wear head protectors made of closed-cell, slow-recovery rubber or similar material.</p> <p>A protective face mask may be worn by a player with a facial injury. The mask may be made of hard material, but must be worn molded to the face with no protrusions. A medical release signed by an appropriate health-care professional must be available at the game site.</p>
Hats, caps, and head coverings	<p>Goalkeepers may wear hats provided they are safe in the opinion of the referee. Hats must be functional: bills or visors must face forward.</p> <p>Players may wear stocking caps during cold weather. Caps must lie flat against the head and must not have straps, tassels or other protruding devices or parts.</p> <p>Head covers such as hijabs must be black or the same main color as the shirt, with players of the same team wearing the same color. A player's head cover must not be attached to the shirt and must not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player.</p>	<p>Goalkeepers may wear soft-billed hats or visors. If worn in conjunction with a head protector, it is to be worn outside and may not be attached to the head protector.</p> <p>Players may wear soft and yielding caps during inclement weather. Caps must be alike in color.</p> <p>Head coverings and other uniform or equipment items not covered by NFHS rules or Minnesota State High School League adoptions require prior written approval from the League office, on MSHSL letterhead, signed by League staff, and presented to the referee prior to the start of the game.</p>
Hair control devices	<p>Hair control devices that are elastic, flexible, and soft are allowed. Prohibited items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hair control devices that are hard, edged, or made of breakable materials; • beads or other decorative devices woven into or affixed on the hair; <p>bandanas and other devices tied with knots.</p>	<p>Hair control devices may be worn if made of soft material and not for adornment. Prohibited items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bandanas; • sweatbands with players' names and/or numbers.
Jewelry	Religious jewelry is not permitted.	A religious medal or string must be taped to the body and worn under the uniform if possible.

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Eyeglasses	Eyeglasses must be secured to the head with a strap.	Players may not wear spectacle guards.
Inspection and illegal equipment	<p>Officials formally inspect players' equipment before the start of the match.</p> <p>If a player wears or uses unauthorized/dangerous equipment or jewelry, the referee instructs the player to remove or correct the item(s). If the player is unable or unwilling to comply, the referee must order the player to leave the field. A player who refuses to comply or wears the item(s) again must be cautioned.</p>	<p>Officials casually observe players during warm-up activities and note any illegal or improper equipment. During the pregame conference, the referee asks each head coach if his or her players will be properly and legally equipped at the kickoff.</p> <p>The head coach shall receive the first caution for an illegally equipped player, who must leave the field and may be replaced. All subsequent cautions for illegally equipped players shall be issued directly to the players and not to the head coach.</p>
Referee certification requirements and officiating systems	<p>All officials assigned to MYSA games must be certified by USSF. Games count only if at least one certified referee officiates. Club lines are permitted when fewer than three certified officials are available at the field.</p> <p>A single referee is permitted for younger teams. The diagonal system of control (DSC) is required for older teams. One whistle in all cases; the dual system is not authorized.</p> <p>Officials who are young enough to play may not serve as referees for their own or older age levels unless they have written permission from the State Youth Referee Administrator. This restriction does not apply to assistant referees.</p>	<p>Varsity matches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All officials must be certified by MSHSL. No varsity game will start with only one official. It is not a legal game unless there are at least two officials. Schools may not agree to play with one official. • Officials may use the diagonal system or the dual system. <p>Subvarsity matches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials do not have to be certified by MSHSL. • Officials may use the diagonal system, the dual system, or the single referee system.
Referee uniforms	<p>Officials shall dress alike in uniforms consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yellow shirt (alternate colors: black, red, blue, or green) • black shorts • black stockings with white stripes or USSF logo • black shoes <p>Referees may wear caps as long as they do not endanger the safety of officials or players. Caps should be consistent with the referees' uniforms and not conflict with the uniform colors worn by either team. Caps may not bear any commercial marks or logos.</p>	<p>Officials shall dress alike in uniforms consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yellow shirt (referees may wear another color as long as crew members match. SCMSOA recommends green.) • black shorts or long trousers • black stockings with horizontal white stripes • predominantly black shoes • solid black cap, if worn

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Referee authority	<p>The referee’s authority begins when he or she enters the field of play and ends when the game is completely over and the teams have left the field.</p> <p>The referee has no power to declare a forfeit but shall terminate the match if either of the teams cannot field at least seven players to start or continue the game.</p>	<p>The jurisdiction of the officials shall begin on their arrival at the field of play and its immediate surroundings, which shall be no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the game, and end when they leave the field of play and its immediate surroundings. (MSHSL recommends that officials arrive 20-30 minutes prior to the start of the game. The “immediate surroundings” include the parking lot.)</p> <p>The referee shall declare a forfeit if either of the teams cannot field at least seven players to start or continue the game.</p>
Decisions regarding field conditions, threatening weather, etc.	<p>Prior to the start of a match, the entity (city, school district, church, etc.) that owns or controls the field may determine whether or not to allow the game to be played.</p> <p>Once a match begins, the referee determines whether to postpone, suspend, or terminate the game.</p> <p>MYSA’s weather policy applies.</p>	<p>Prior to the start of a contest, the host school is responsible for determining whether or not conditions present a threat to the safety of participants and spectators, and will determine whether or not the contest will begin.</p> <p>Once a contest begins, the officials have the authority to postpone or suspend play due to unsafe weather conditions. The host school’s Superintendent or his or her designee also may suspend or postpone a contest once it has begun.</p> <p>In other words, once a contest begins, either the officials or school authorities may postpone or suspend a contest, and neither party can overrule the other. When in doubt, err on the side of safety.</p> <p>MSHSL’s competition index for heat and cold and the League’s policy regarding lightning and threatening weather apply.</p>
Referee signals	The referee uses hand signals to indicate restarts and advantage.	The referee uses hand signals to indicate restarts, advantage, start clock, time out, and stop clock/goal.
Match and incident reports	Referees must use Affinity Sports software to submit online match reports after all competitive games.	Reports are not required after routine games. Referees must use MSHSL’s online form to report ejections, serious injuries, problems with facilities, and other unusual incidents.
Ball holders	No equivalent provision in youth rules.	Varsity games shall not start without at least two ball holders.
Timer	The referee serves as the official timekeeper.	The home school timer shall be the official timer and shall use a visible timing device. The referee shall instruct the timer to correct the clock when necessary. The referee shall keep the official time when no other means are available.

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Scorer	The referee serves as the official scorekeeper.	The home school shall designate the official scorer. The referee shall keep score when no other means are available.
Duration and timekeeping	<p>Matches consist of two equal halves, which vary in length depending on the ages of the players.</p> <p>The halftime interval is 5 minutes unless otherwise agreed by the referee and opposing coaches.</p> <p>The clock counts up and runs continuously. The referee adds time at the end of each period for all time lost through excessive substitution, injury, time-wasting, disciplinary sanctions, or other cause. The amount of time added is at the discretion of the referee.</p>	<p>Varsity matches: two equal halves of 40 minutes. Subvarsity matches: two equal halves of up to 40 minutes.</p> <p>The halftime interval is 10 minutes unless otherwise agreed by opposing coaches.</p> <p>The clock counts down. The clock shall be stopped for injuries, penalty kicks, cautions, disqualifications, following the scoring of goals, and when a referee orders the clock to be stopped. The clock shall be stopped when a substitute for the team in the lead is beckoned onto the field in the final five minutes of the second period. The clock shall be restarted when the ball is properly put into play.</p>
Complete/official game	A game shall be complete when the first half and at least 50 percent of the second half have been played.	If less than one half of the game has been played, the game will be replayed from the start of the game.
Tie game – regular season	All tie games during the regular season remain tied, with no extra time.	Regular season games that end tied after regulation time shall be decided by two complete 5-minute overtime periods. There is no sudden victory. If games are still tied, they shall remain tied.
Tie game – tournament	<p>Group play: any of various tie-breakers (head-to-head competition, goal differential, etc.) as specified by tournament organizers.</p> <p>Knockout rounds: two equal periods of extra time and/or kicks from the penalty mark, as specified by tournament organizers.</p>	A 20-minute sudden victory overtime period will be played. Teams will change ends after 10 minutes of play. Teams do not go to their benches; coaches do not talk to captains; play should be continued immediately. If a tie still exists, proceed to kicks from the penalty mark.
Kicks from the penalty mark	<p>Only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes extra time when appropriate, are eligible to take kicks from the penalty mark.</p> <p>When a team finishes the match with a greater number of players than their opponents, they shall reduce their number to equate with that of their opponents.</p>	<p>Players on or off the field (except any who were disqualified) are eligible to participate in the kicks.</p> <p>No equivalent provision in high school rules.</p>
Coin toss	Team captains participate in the coin toss. Coaches may be present but are not required to do so. The referee may address sportsmanship but is not required to do so.	Head coaches and team captains must be present. The referee addresses sportsmanship and inquires whether players are properly and legally equipped.

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Dropped ball	<p>A dropped ball is the restart when the referee stops play and the Laws do not require another restart.</p> <p>All other players of both teams must remain at least 4 meters (4.5 yards) from the ball until it is in play.</p>	<p>The game is restarted with a drop ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the ball is caused to go out of bounds by two opponents simultaneously when the ball becomes deflated following a temporary suspension of play for an injury or unusual situation when simultaneous fouls of the same degree occur by opponents when the ball touches an official as per 9-1-1b <p>All other players must remain at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.</p>
Scoring by goalkeepers	<p>If the goalkeeper throws the ball directly into the opponents' goal, the referee awards a goal kick.</p>	<p>A goal may be scored directly from a goalkeeper's throw, punt, or drop-kick.</p>
Heading	<p>Heading is prohibited for Under 11 and younger players.</p>	<p>No equivalent provision in high school rules.</p>
Dangerous play	<p>Dangerous play includes actions that endanger opponents or self, but not teammates.</p>	<p>Dangerous play includes actions that endanger opponents, self, or teammates.</p>
Trickery to circumvent prohibition against direct kick to goalkeeper	<p>Caution (yellow card) for the offending player and indirect free kick for the opposing team.</p>	<p>Indirect free kick for the opposing team.</p>
Taunting	<p>Caution (yellow card) or send off (red card) depending on the nature and severity of the offense.</p>	<p>Disqualification (red card).</p>
Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO)	<p>When a player in his/her own penalty area commits an offense that denies the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the offense is holding, pulling, or pushing; or the offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball; or the offense is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g., serious foul play, violent conduct, etc.). <p>In all of the above circumstances, the offending player is sent off.</p>	<p>A player shall be cautioned (yellow card) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committing a foul, attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, and the goal is scored; committing an offense against an opponent within his/her team penalty area in an attempt to play the ball that denies the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick. <p>A player shall be disqualified ((red card) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committing a foul outside the penalty area when attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, and the goal is not scored; committing a foul inside the penalty area, while not attempting to play the ball, and the goal is not scored.

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Notification after misconduct	No equivalent provision in youth rules.	The referee must notify the coaches of both teams, the scorer, and the other officials of the reasons for cautions and disqualifications.
Misconduct attributed to coaches	If a team official commits an offense and match officials cannot identify the offender, the referee warns, cautions, or sends off the senior coach present in the technical area.	The referee may caution or disqualify a coach for team misconduct or for bench misconduct that cannot be attributed to a specific individual.
Misconduct during subvarsity matches	No equivalent provision in youth rules. No equivalent provision in youth rules.	The referee should report misconduct that occurs during subvarsity matches to the appropriate school AD, not MSHSL. Disqualifications (red cards) issued to players during subvarsity games do not affect their eligibility to participate in varsity matches.
Suspended players	The Affinity Sports online system identifies suspended players during team check-in. The referee does not allow suspended players to participate.	The score book shall indicate when a player was ejected in a previous match. Officials shall check the varsity and JV score books prior to the start of each game. Use of an ineligible player shall result in automatic forfeiture. The referee must report the violation to the MSHSL office.
Penalty kick	If, before the ball is in play, the kicker or a teammate of the kicker infringes the Laws of the Game and the ball does not enter the goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the referee stops play and restarts the match with an indirect free kick to the defending team, from the place where the infraction occurred. <p>If the kicker and the goalkeeper offend at exactly the same time, the kicker is penalized.</p>	If there is an infringement by the attacking team and the ball does not go into the goal, there is no rekick. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the ball goes directly over the goal line, play shall restart with a goal kick. If the ball rebounds into play or is deflected out of bounds by the goalkeeper, the game shall be stopped and restarted with an indirect free kick for the defending team at the location of the infraction. If the ball is saved and held by the goalkeeper, play shall continue.
Throw-in	If the ball touches the ground before entering the field of play, a player of the same team repeats the throw-in from the same location.	If the ball fails to enter the field of play, the referee awards a throw-in to the opposing team from the same location.
Corner kick	Opponents must remain at least 10 yards from the corner arc until the ball is in play.	Players of the defending team shall be at least 10 yards from the ball until it has been kicked.