

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 2023

Section 1: League Format

- Overview
 - The league will consist of four regular season games.
 - Participants can choose which day of the week and what time they play their regular season games by selecting a division in their desired league via scheduling on Fusion Play.
- Playoff Format
 - Following league play, a single elimination tournament will be played.
 - In order to make it into the playoffs, teams must have...
 - A greater than or equal to .500 winning percentage for the regular season
 - An average of 2.75 or higher sportsmanship rating.
 - Playoff seeding will be based on season performance and sportsmanship ratings.
- Rosters
 - Teams will be allowed to add additional players to their rosters during the season and through the end of the regular season. Once playoffs start, you can not add more players to your roster. Rosters cannot exceed 18 players.
- Location
 - Teams will have a designated field assignment on Fusion Play. Games will take place at the Lambert Grass Fields.
- Supervision
 - All participants must present a valid CatCard or government photo ID to the supervisors to participate.
 - **Game Time is Forfeit Time.**
 - All participants must be signed in and "ready to play" with the minimum number of players to avoid a forfeit.
 - An Intramural Supervisor will provide oversight and aid with the operations of the sport
 - Please alert the Intramural Supervisor if assistance is needed.

Section 2: The Game

- Brief Overview
 - Each team will be made up of 9 players on the field.
 - Slide tackling is not permitted at any time.
 - Offside positioning will be enforced.
 - A regulation game will consist of two 20-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime
- The Field
 - Fans must be on the opposite side of the field from the players' benches.
 - 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 rock ,paper, scissors 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 3: Equipment and Attire

- Equipment Provided
 - A regulation outdoor soccer ball will be provided for play.
 - Players must warm up with their own soccer balls.
 - 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.



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- Shoes with rubber or rubber-like synthetic cleats are acceptable; cleats shall not contain any metal spikes
- Attire
 - Teams are responsible for wearing uniformly colored shirts to help distinguish one team from another. The Intramural Sports staff will have jerseys available. The first team to arrive will be the home team. If there is a color discrepancy, then the away team will wear jerseys.
 - Goalkeepers must wear a distinguishing colored shirt that differs from the color worn by their teammates.
 - 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 4: Players

- Team Composition
 - Each team will be made up of 9 players on the field.
 - 8 players will play field positions, 1 player will be designated as the goalkeeper
 - All teams must have a goalkeeper to play.
- Minimum Team Requirements
 - Games may start with a minimum of 7 players.
 - **Co-Ed Modification:** A minimum of 3 men and 3 women, and no more than 5 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:
 - 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 3 **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 the game as a substitute must report to the center field line and wait for the referee's approval to enter the field of play.
 - Players arriving late must first sign in with the Intramural Supervisor before entering play.

Section 5: 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 Intramural Supervisor.
- Overtime
 - When the time limit is reached in the regular season, there will be NO Overtime.

Section 6: 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



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- 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 that Forfeits their game will receive a 2 for Sportsmanship.

Section 7: Free Kicks and Restart Rules

- Kick-Off
 - At 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 the 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
 - 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
 - Side Tackling
- 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 on 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 8: Goalkeeper Rules

- Goalkeeper Privileges
 - A goalkeeper may carry, strike, or propel the ball with the hands or arms.

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- 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 offense's location is awarded to the opposing team.

Section 9: Offside

- Offside Definition
 - Offensive players are considered offside if they are nearer to their opponent's goal line than the second to last defender (the goalkeeper is considered a defender) when the ball is played in their direction.
 - Offside can only be enforced in the attacking half of the field.
- To be considered in an offside position, a player must be involved in the play.
 - Involved means "actively participating in the play or seeking to gain an advantage by being in an offside position."
 - It is possible to be in an offside position and not be penalized if the player is not involved in the play.
- Offside Enforcement
 - Should an offensive player's position be ruled offside by an Official, the opposing team receives an indirect free kick at the offside infraction.

Section 10: Slide Tackling

- Slide Tackling Definition
 - A slide tackle is a maneuver in which one or both feet slide on the ground 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 or an attempted slide tackle is illegal. Goalkeepers cannot slide with their feet.
- Slide Tackling Enforcement
 - Slide tackling infractions will be called at the Official's discretion
 - Slide tackling without contact is an automatic yellow card.
 - Slide tackling that involves contact or is deemed dangerous will result in a red 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 11: 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.
 - 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.
 - Players that get ejected do not get a substitute.
 - 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 12: Official Game and Overtime

- Official Game



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- 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 the field for the shootout. A coin toss will determine who shoots first.

Section 13: Sportsmanship

- Minimum Rating
 - Teams/Participants must receive an average of 2.75 sportsmanship rating during league play to be eligible for the playoffs.
 - Sportsmanship ratings will range between 0-4 with detailed explanations available in the Participant Handbook.
- Officials
 - The game's officials will determine sportsmanship ratings for each of the game's teams.

Section 14: Protests

- Eligibility Protests
 - If a player is believed to be ineligible (please see our Participant Handbook for more details), the game may be played under protest.
 - Please contact the Intramural Supervisor prior to the game's start to file a protest form.
- Rule Interpretation Protests
 - Rule interpretation questions must be declared immediately after the play in question.
 - Rulings involving judgment MAY NOT be protested.
 - Team captains must announce this protest to the Intramural Supervisor, and both captains will be required to fill out information on the protest form.