

Rule 12 Fouls and Misconduct

SECTION 1 FOULS

ART. 1 . . . Direct and indirect free kicks and penalty kicks can only be awarded for offenses committed when the ball is in play.

ART. 2 . . . A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offenses against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force.

- a. charges;
- b. jumps at;
- c. kicks or attempts to kick;
- d. pushes;
- e. strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt);
- f. tackles or challenges;
- g. trips or attempts to trip;

ART. 3 . . . If an offense involves contact, it is penalized by a direct free kick.

- a. Careless is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. No further disciplinary sanction is needed.
- b. Reckless is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent and must be cautioned (12-9-1f(10)).
- c. Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent and must be disqualified (12-9-2d(1)).

SECTION 2 SPITTING, KICKING, STRIKING, TRIPPING AND JUMPING

ART. 1 . . . A player shall not kick, attempt to kick, strike, attempt to strike, spit at, or jump at an opponent.

ART. 2 . . . A player shall not trip, or attempt to trip, an opponent. This includes tripping or attempting to trip an opponent by use of the legs, or by stooping in front or behind an opponent in such a manner as to cause a fall or loss of balance.

ART. 3 . . . A goalkeeper shall not strike or attempt to strike an opponent by throwing or kicking the ball at an opponent or by pushing an opponent with the ball while holding it.

PENALTY: Direct free kick.

SECTION 3 HANDLING

ART. 1 . . . A player shall be penalized for deliberately handling, carrying, striking or propelling the ball with a hand or arm. For the purposes of determining handling offenses, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit.

EXCEPTION: Goalkeeper when the ball is within the team's own penalty area. (12-8-1)

ART. 2 . . . A player shall be penalized for handling if they score in the opponent's goal directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper.

ART. 3 . . . A player shall be penalized for handling if they score in the opponent's goal immediately after the ball has touched their hand/arm, even if accidental.

PENALTY: Direct free kick.

SECTION 4 HOLDING, PUSHING

ART. 1 . . . A player shall not hold or push an opponent with the hand(s) or arm(s) extended from body.

PENALTY: Direct free kick.

SECTION 5 CHARGING

ART. 1 . . . A player shall be penalized for charging an opponent in a careless, or reckless manner, or using excessive force. An allowable fair charge is where players make shoulder-to-shoulder contact in an upright position, within playing distance of the ball, have at least one foot on the ground and the player's arms held close to the body.

ART. 2 . . . A player shall not, in any manner, charge the goalkeeper in the penalty area unless the goalkeeper is obstructing the player or dribbling the ball with the feet.

- a. An official shall disqualify, without caution, any player who flagrantly fouls the goalkeeper in possession of the ball. Possession or control of the ball includes any time the goalkeeper has the ball trapped by either or both hands or when bouncing it to the ground or when releasing the ball into play;
- b. Outside the penalty area, the goalkeeper has no more privileges than any other player.

PENALTY: Direct free kick (Article 1 and Disqualification for 2a).

ART. 3 . . . The goalkeeper in possession of the ball shall not be interfered with or impeded in any manner by an opponent. This includes the act of bouncing the ball or dropping the ball for a kick or attempting to throw the ball or tossing the ball in the air to recatch. When goalkeepers put the ball on the ground, they relinquish privileges as goalkeepers.

PENALTY: Indirect free kick.

ART. 4 . . . A player shall not charge into an opponent when neither player is within playing distance of the ball.

PENALTY: Direct free kick.

SECTION 6 OBSTRUCTION

ART. 1 . . . Obstruction is the deliberate act of a player that moves into the path of an opponent to block, slow down or force a change in direction when the ball is not within playing distance. Being in the way of an opponent is not an offense and is different than moving into the way.

PENALTY: Indirect free kick.

ART. 2 . . . A player may legally place the body between opponents and the ball provided the ball is within playing distance. This player may legally be challenged from behind.

SECTION 7 DANGEROUS PLAY

ART. 1 . . . A player shall not participate in dangerous play, which is an act an official considers likely to cause injury to any player. This includes playing in such a manner which could cause injury to self or another player (opponent or teammate).

PENALTY: Indirect free kick.

SECTION 8 RESTRICTIONS ON THE GOALKEEPER

ART. 1 . . . From the moment the goalkeeper takes control of the ball with the hands when playing as a goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area, the goalkeeper has six seconds in which to release the ball into play. During that interval, the goalkeeper may hold the ball, bounce it, or throw it into the air and catch it. Once the ball has been released into play, the goalkeeper may not touch it again with the hands until it has been played or touched by another player of the same team outside of the penalty area, or by a player of the opposing team either inside or outside of the penalty area. (Subject to 12-8-3, 12-8-4)

ART. 2 . . . A goalkeeper shall not deliberately parry the ball and then touch it again with the hands before it has been played or touched by another player of the same team outside of the penalty area, or by a player of the opposing team either inside or outside of the penalty area. (Subject to 12-8-3, 12-8-4)

ART. 3 . . . On any occasion when a player deliberately kicks the ball to the team's own goalkeeper, the goalkeeper is not permitted to touch it with the hands.

ART. 4 . . . A goalkeeper shall not touch the ball with the hands when receiving it directly from a throw-in by a teammate.

NOTE: Players may not use trickery to circumvent Articles 3 and 4. Example: Players may not flick the ball with the feet to their own head, chest, knee and then pass it to the team's own goalkeeper who touches it with the hands.

PENALTY: Indirect free kick awarded to the opponent at the spot of the violation, unless in the goal area.

ART. 5 . . . The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside their penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. However, if the violation is playing the ball

a second time (with or without the hand/arm) after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper must be cautioned if the offense stops a promising attack or ejected if the offense denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

SECTION 9 MISCONDUCT

ART. 1 . . . A player, coach or bench personnel shall be cautioned (yellow card) for:

- a. entering or leaving the field of play (except through the normal course of play) without the permission of an official;
- b. persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game;
- c. objecting by word of mouth or action to any decision given by an official (dissent);
- d. any incidental use of vulgar or profane language;
NOTE: By state association adoption, incidental use of vulgar or profane language may be a disqualification (red card).
- e. any use of electronic communication devices with the on-field players during play. Examples: Amplifying devices, wireless communication devices such as cell phones, headphones, personal digital assistant, etc.;
NOTE: A coach may engage in verbal communications with the team during play.
- f. unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to:
 1. coaching outside the team area;
 2. unnecessary delay (kicking, throwing the ball away on a free kick, etc.);
 3. holding a shirt, short, etc.;
 4. deliberate verbal tactics;
 5. encroachment (18-1-1m);
 6. a deliberate handball to stop an attack;
 7. a deliberate tactical foul (18-1-1vv);
 8. faking an injury;
 9. simulating a foul;
 10. a player who displays reckless play (18-1-1mm);
 11. an illegally equipped player, per 4-4 (18-1-1w);
 12. any delayed, excessive or prolonged act(s) by which a player(s) attempts to focus attention upon themselves and/or prohibits a timely restart of the game;
 13. a player (other than a goalkeeper within the goalkeeper's own penalty area) who deliberately handles the ball, attempting to prevent a goal, and the goal is scored;
 14. a player who commits a foul, attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO), and the goal is scored (12-9-4);
 15. a player who commits a foul against an opponent within the player's team penalty area in an attempt to play the ball that denies the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) and the referee awards a penalty kick. (12-9-4)
- g. Use of any tobacco products or electronic cigarettes at the game site during the period of the jurisdiction of the officials.

PENALTY: A cautioned player shall leave the field and may be replaced. Should the team with the cautioned player elect to play shorthanded, the cautioned player may not re-enter nor be replaced until the next legal substitution opportunity. (3-3-3b)

ART. 2 . . . A player, coach or bench personnel shall be disqualified (red card) for:

- a. exhibiting violent conduct (18-1-1zz);
- b. taunting – use of word or act to incite or degrade an opposing player, coach, referee or other individual;

NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.

- c. subsequent caution;
- d. committing serious foul play:
 1. any play in which the player commits one of the offenses punishable with a direct free kick (or penalty kick if the offense takes place by a defender in the penalty area) and uses disproportionate and unnecessary force against an opponent while playing for the ball (18-1-100);
 2. a player (other than a goalkeeper within the team's own penalty area) deliberately handles the ball, attempting to prevent a goal and the goal is not scored;
 3. a player commits a foul outside the penalty area when attempting to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (**DOGSO**), and the goal is not scored (12-9-4);
 4. a player commits a foul, inside the penalty area, while not attempting to play the ball, denying the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (**DOGSO**) and referee awards a penalty kick. (12-9-4)
- e. spitting at an opponent, teammate or game official;
- f. using insulting, offensive or abusive language or gesture;
- g. leaving the team area to enter the field where a fight or altercation is taking place unless summoned by an official.

PENALTY: A disqualified player must leave the field and may not return or be substituted for, and the player's team must play short. The disqualified player is restricted to the team area. Disqualified team members who are not players are restricted to the team area and may not enter the game. Disqualified adult team area personnel must leave the vicinity of the playing area.

ART. 3 . . . Coach responsibility:

- a. The head coach shall be responsible for ensuring that each of the player(s) on the team is properly and legally equipped. The head coach shall receive the first caution issued for an illegally equipped player. (3-4)
- b. The coach may be cautioned or disqualified either for team misconduct or for bench misconduct that cannot be attributed to a specific individual.
- c. A coach who is disqualified shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from any contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. Failure to comply shall result in termination of the game.

NOTE: The rules committee strongly recommends that each state high school association adopt a policy wherein a disqualified player or coach disqualified under articles 2 and 3 shall be barred from participating in the next contest(s).

ART. 4 . . . Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO):

- a. When determining if an offense denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the following must be considered and present for a DOGSO offense:
1. distance between the offense and the goal;
 2. general direction of the play;
 3. likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball;
 4. location and number of defenders;
- b. Where a player commits an offense against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned if the offense was an attempt to play the ball [12-9-1f(15)]; in all other circumstances (e.g. holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball, etc.) the offending player must be disqualified. [12-9-2d(4)]
- c. Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a deliberate handling offense, except a goal-keeper within their penalty area, the player is disqualified wherever the offense occurs.

MISCONDUCT PENALTY CHART

	PLAYER	BENCH PERSONNEL	COACH
Yellow Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must leave field until next legal substitution opportunity • May be substituted or play short 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute (nonplayer) remains in team area until next legal substitution opportunity • Other bench personnel remain in team area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains in team area
Red Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must leave field • May not return • May not be substituted; must play short • Restricted to team area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted to team area for substitutes or other students • Adult bench personnel must leave vicinity of playing area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must leave the vicinity of playing area