**Soccer Points of Emphasis - 2018-19**

By NFHS on March 01, 2018

http://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/soccer-points-of-emphasis-2018-19/

**1. Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity:**  The penalty associated with a player who denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity has been amended. In an effort to make the penalty better fit the infraction, now when a player commits an offense against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned if the offence was an attempt to play the ball. Formerly, this player was disqualified and penalty kick was awarded. In circumstances where there was no attempt to play the ball, the player is still disqualified.

In evaluating whether there has been an obvious goal scoring opportunity, officials are encouraged to consider the following:

* Distance between the offense and the goal (the offense must be near the goal)
* General direction of play (the attacking players are generally headed towards the goal)
* Likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball (the player must have or be able to get control of the ball in order to score)
* Location and number of defenders (not more than one defender between the attacking player and the goal, not counting the player that committed the foul and the defenders must be able to challenge the attacking player)

If any of the above considerations are missing, it is not an obvious goal scoring opportunity.

**2. Excessive Player Substitutions:** Concern has been expressed in situations where teams make excessive substitutions towards the end of a game in an effort to waste time.  According to Rule 3-6, a referee has the discretion to stop the clock during the substitution so that this time is not lost.  Further, the referee may consider this unsporting conduct and a caution may be issued to the coach of the offending team.

**3. Referee Mechanics for Indirect Free Kicks:** When a team is awarded a free kick, it is important that the referee correctly utilize the NFHS Official Soccer Signals and properly signal so the teams know whether the kick is direct or indirect.  This is especially important if the free kick is near the opponent’s goal.  For an indirect free kick, the referee must raise one arm vertically and maintain that position until the ball is touched by a second player.   It is critical players know what type of free kick is occurring so the team taking the kick can properly execute the kick and the team defending know whether a goal may be scored directly from the kick. For indirect free kicks, if the ball enters the goal directly from the kick, the restart is a goalkick.