



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS



2008 SOCCER GUIDE

(INTERSCHOLASTIC EDITION)

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Based Upon:

- ***NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules – 2008-2009***
- ***National Federation Soccer Rules Book – 2008-2009***
- ***[USSF] FIFA Laws of the Game – 2007/2008***
And Other Authorized Supplemental Materials



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Revised September 2, 2007

PREFACE:

Many High School officials officiate soccer matches using Rules and Laws of soccer organizations and rule-making bodies other than the NFHS. As is to be expected, officials on occasion have some confusion regarding a specific rule or interpretation. For these reasons a study guide is needed for the officials to have easy references to the differences between High School Federation, NCAA and FIFA Laws and Rules. Over the past twenty-five years the more significant rules have been brought generally into conformity by the three groups. Nevertheless, there are distinct differences in language and interpretation that still exist and each group has adopted specific rules that are believed to be more appropriate for their players and their ages.

This guide is not an all-inclusive listing of each difference between the sets of Rules and Laws, but rather only lists the more important differences where such differences exist. Many technical and administrative rules such as player eligibility and accumulated cautions do not generally and directly concern the referee but rather the match administrators and have therefore been omitted from this study.

The guide has been designed by the author for easy reference and many officials have carried this guide in their kit or in their cars for quick review prior to a match. It is also useful as a teaching aid for High School entry level and in-service clinics.

The comparisons are in tabular form following the particular topic and are in order of the specific Laws or Rules to which they are relevant except for the listing on page 3 which compares general Topics not referred to in specific Rules or Laws and several miscellaneous topics which are referred to on page 14.




It should be noted that the three sets of Rules and Laws are constantly changing and the different bodies publish their changes at different times of the year. Generally the FIFA Laws are published in May and take effect the following July. The NCAA Rules are enacted early in the year, but are not normally published until early or mid summer. High School Federation rule changes are enacted by their Rules Committee early each year and are distributed in early summer. Beginning this year, the NCAA Rule Book will only be published every other year. Accordingly, this guide is current only up to the date of its publication and includes all rules changes for the year as presently known by the authors. If any errors are noted, it would be appreciated if they are brought to attention of Don Dennison at donsar@comcast.net



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

TOPIC ABOUT THE RULES AND LAWS	HIGH SCHOOL FEDERATION 	NCAA-NISOA 	FIFA – USSF 
Terminology - (It is important to use the proper terminology, especially in writing game reports if required)	Rules Disqualification Drop Ball Game Overtime Penalty Coaching and Team Area Terminated Game Reserve Official	Rules Ejection Drop Ball Game Overtime Penalty Coaching and Team Area Terminated Game Alternate Official	Laws Send Off Dropped Ball Match Extra Time Sanction Technical Area Abandoned Match 4 th Official
Where the Rules or Laws are Employed	Most public high and intermediate schools and some private schools	NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA, NIRSA and NCCAA	International matches, professional leagues, most club and semi-pro matches, and some private schools
Interpretations	Play rulings in the book are interpretations approved by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee. Member state associations of the NFHS independently make decisions regarding compliance with or modification of the playing rules for the student athletes in their respective states. The Rules describe 3 possible systems of mechanics that may be used; The Dual Officiating System, the Diagonal System and the Double-Dual System	Approved Rulings (A,R.) appearing in the Rule book are official decisions of the NCAA. The secretary rules editor can be contacted for interpretations (pg 6). Generally it is preferable to first go through the NISOA Rules Interpreter. The NCAA Rules Book does NOT contain the description of standardized procedures for the allowed System of Mechanics. NISOA describes the Diagonal System of Control for its members in other publications.	Decisions of the Int'l F.A. Board are official interpretations. Additional Interpretations in the U.S. can be obtained initially through the State Director of Instruction (SDI). The USSF Advice to Referees and Questions and Answers on the Laws of the Game are also official sources in the U.S. The diagonal system of control (DSC) is described in other FIFA and USSF publications.



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

TOPIC	HIGH SCHOOL FEDERATION	NCAA-NISOA	FIFA - USSF
<p><u>FIELD OF PLAY</u> 11 Yd. Encroachment Hash Mark</p> <p>Penalty Kick Mark Goal Nets</p> <p>Coaching and Team Area</p> <p>Padded Goal Posts</p> <p>Goal Post Placement</p> <p>Field Conditions for play to start and continue</p> <p>Games played indoors</p>	<p>RULE 1</p> <p>Optional</p> <p>2 foot line or 9" diameter spot Mandatory</p> <p>20 yds long and 10' from touchline Caution to coach who leaves this area R1, Sec. 5. Should be on same side of field – if not, benches should be diagonally opposed</p> <p>A white commercially made pad at least 72" in height and a max. of 1" thick may be placed on the vertical posts</p> <p>Rear of each goal post shall be on the <u>outer</u> edge of the goal line. R 1, Sec. 4, Art. 1</p> <p>Prior to start of game, host institution representative determines; thereafter determination is made by referee R 1 Sec. 7</p> <p>No provision</p>	<p>RULE 1</p> <p>Mandatory</p> <p>Same as HS Same as HS</p> <p>Same size as HS. Caution to coach who leaves the area <u>after</u> a first verbal warning and IFK where ball was if game stopped. Ejection for 3rd offence. R 1, Sec. 12</p> <p>Not Sanctioned</p> <p>Goal lines must be the same width as the goal posts and crossbars</p> <p>Determination made by referee</p> <p>Match may be played indoors if outside field is unavailable and field is proper size</p>	<p>LAW 1</p> <p>Optional</p> <p>penalty spot (no fixed size) Not mandatory</p> <p>Not specified in the Laws, but mentioned in the Additional Instructions for Referees, ARs and 4th Officials (Pg.61)</p> <p>Not Sanctioned</p> <p>On the center of the goal line</p> <p>Same as NCAA</p> <p>No provision</p>
<p><u>THE BALL</u> Number of Balls</p>	<p>RULE 2</p> <p>3 or more of similar quality. Must have NFHS logo displayed, supplied by home team or referee can select from visitor if unavailable. At least 2 ball holders.</p>	<p>RULE 2</p> <p>3 or more identical. Max. of 6 and at least 4 ball persons at least 10 yrs. old</p>	<p>LAW 2</p> <p>1 required, others may be used if available. For major international matches – FIFA marking required USSF – up to 6 suggested</p>



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

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<p><u>PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES</u> Team Roster</p> <p>Substitutions When?</p>	<p>RULE 3 REQUIRED to be presented to referee 5 mins. before game time. Names may be added to roster after the start of play</p> <p><u>Either team:</u> End of period; goal; goal kick(players must have already reported to scorer) caution (player must go out), injury (must leave if treated or referee deems player injured; disqualification (but not for disqualified player), blood on player or uniform-all unlimited in number.</p> <p><u>Team in possession:</u> Throw-in or corner kick (if sub, other team may also sub).Players must have reported to scorer prior to the time ball went out of play).</p>	<p>RULE 3 REQUIRED to be presented to referee, scorekeeper and other coach 15 mins. prior to game time. Copy given to referee should not show total cautions and ejections.</p> <p><u>Either team:</u> End of period; goal; goal kick; player instructed to leave for equipment change (other team may sub equal number); injury or caution (only players involved – other team may sub like number)</p> <p><u>Team in possession:</u> throw-in or corner kick (if sub, other team may also sub. Players must have reported to scorer prior to time ball went out of play); Goal keeper ejected: (team plays short but may put in a goal keeper – no sub allowed for other team</p>	<p>LAW 3 Names of subs given to referee prior to match. No other roster requirement. No more than 6 in National A Team matches</p> <p>At any stoppage with permission of referee. (many local leagues have set times for subs).</p> <p>At any stoppage of play with the permission of the referee. Many youth leagues have set times for substitutions</p>
<p>When substitute become a player of record</p>	<p>When beckoned onto the field</p>	<p>When beckoned on by the referee during the first 85 mins of game. During last 5 mins., when referee signals the clock to stop if leading team substitutes</p>	<p>When substitute enters the field (must be at the halfway line)</p>



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

TOPIC	HIGH SCHOOL FEDERATION	NCAA-NISOA	FIFA - USSF
Restrictions on substitutions	When given a yellow and red card for delay; excessive acts to focus attention on the player or a subsequent caution; player is disqualified but may be subbed for.	During first half and in each overtime period- no reentry. One reentry in second half. (R3 Sec. 5). GK is allowed one reentry each period and each OT	Player replaced may not return to the match. (This Law differs in many local competitions and youth matches)
Changing Goal Keeper with field player	Whenever clock is stopped or at a substitution time with permission of referee. Warning to both players for a violation. Field player may change with goal keeper only at any substitution time or when the clock is stopped, with referee permission	During any stoppage with referee's permission. Verbal warning to the players at next stoppage. No sub from bench for GK during penalty kick.	During any stoppage with referee's permission. Caution both players for violation when ball is out of play. Field player may change positions with goal keeper at any stoppage with permission
<u>PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT.</u>	RULE 4	RULE 4	LAW 4
Casts and Facemasks	Hard casts or splints must be padded. Facemask may be worn by player with facial injury. It must be molded to the face with no protrusions; player must have a medical release at the game site signed by a physician for either cast or mask	Casts permitted if covered and not considered dangerous by referee. Facemasks not permitted	Referee's discretion – check for safety and require padding if cast is hard or dangerous. Soft facemask permitted if approved by referee of the referee
Uniform numbers	6" number on back of jersey (GK excluded) and 4" number on front of jersey or shorts	8" number on back of jersey and 4" number on front of jersey, <u>including</u> Goal Keeper	Nothing specified in the Laws



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

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Visible apparel under uniform and stockings	If worn under shorts, all on team must be alike & of similar length and solid color. If under jersey, all alike, similar length & of a solid color. Socks must be of a single dominant color.	Visible apparel worn under shirt or shorts should be a solid color that matches the dominant color of the garment (recommended R 4, Sec. 2d)	Any visible undergarment (shirt or shorts) must be same main color as the uniform shirt or shorts. Shirts must have sleeves
Uniform Colors	Home team – white or light jerseys and stockings; visitors, dark jerseys and stockings	Home team has responsibility to insure that their uniforms contrast to those of the visitors	Nothing specified, but no political, religious or personal statements allowed.
Shirts tucked in Goal Keeper's Jersey and Color	Mandatory Must differ from all other players and the officials except can be same color as other Goal Keeper	Not specified – generally required Jersey must differ from all field players and socks must differ from opponents	Same as NCAA Same as High School Federation
Jewelry	Not permitted – Except for medical or religious medals which must be taped under uniform. Medical alert bracelet must be taped and visible	Not permitted – Except “Medic Alert” bracelets or necklaces, if taped to body. Penalty-clock stopped, player leaves field (no sub allowed)	Not permitted
Shinguards	NOCSAE logo stamp required	Same as H.S. Fed	Shinguards required – no standard specified
<u>THE REFEREE</u>	RULE 5	RULE 5	LAW 5
Referee System	DSC, Dual (2 referee) or Double Dual (3 referee)	Diagonal System of Control (DSC) shall be used	DSC only
Forfeit or Terminate	Forfeit if less than 7 players, however if below 7 due to equip. problem, minor injury or blood wait for treatment or correction. Can terminate if team refuses to play, no cross bar, etc.	Power to forfeit if coach will not end discussion or leave field, or team refuses to return to field within 3 mins.; ejected player reenters as a sub. If team not on field within 15 mins of game time it is declared “no contest”. Ref, can suspend game. If terminated less than 70 mins into game, - it is declared - “no contest”. Forfeit if team does not supply roster prior to beginning of match	Referee has no power to declare forfeit but may suspend or terminate a match



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

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Authority Begins and Ends	Begins 15 min. prior to start of game and ends when officials leave the field and its Immediate surroundings.	Begins 30 min. before scheduled game time and ends when officials leave the game site after signing the score book.	Not specified but by custom begins when officials enter the field area and ends when they leave.
Referee Uniform	As set by the State Associations. Black shorts or long trousers, black stockings with white stripes Solid black cap may be worn	Solid black or gold, orange, blue or black with white-all except solid black in a checked grid pattern. Socks – black with 3 bands of white, gold, orange or blue. All dressed alike. Cap permissible. Shoes should be mainly black	USSF – Shirts- Gold, black, red, green or blue, all with vertical stripping. Socks – black with three white top bands or solid black with USSF logo. Caps not specified, but generally permitted if conditions warrant in club matches
Whistles and hand signals	Whistle used for kickoff, penalty kicks, and to signal play stoppage such as fouls, injuries, substitutions and to signal restart after substitutions, injuries and time stoppage. Also when a card is given and on encroachment. Discretionary when ball goes out of play. Special hand signals mandatory for all fouls, time out and goals	Whistles, same as High School Other whistles discretionary. The only recognized hand signals are for advantage, indirect and direct free kicks, clock stopped, goal and corner kicks and penalty kicks, all by pointing to the spot and giving direction.	Whistle used for kickoff, penalty kick, restarts and stoppages as necessary Signals are the same as NCAA except no specific time out signal.
Time Keeping	Referee keeps time only by agreement of the coaches or state association-otherwise home team controls clock.	Backup to home team clock which is official unless there is a malfunction. Match ends when timekeeper's signal sounds	Referee keeps official time.
Pre-game Conference	Head coach presence required - Address sportsmanship and inquire of coach if players are properly and legally equipped.	Nothing specified at coin toss	Same as NCAA



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

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<u>THE A.R. and OTHER OFFICIALS</u>	RULE 6 No significant difference between The three sets of Rules and Laws. Timekeeper and scorekeeper are listed	RULE 6 A scorer and timer are listed and alternate official may be used. Once score sheet is signed and released for publication, coaches, players and other personnel bear burden of the infractions.	LAW 6 =====
<u>DURATION OF GAME</u> Length of Periods	RULE 7 2-40 min. periods or 4-20 min quarters Overtime allowed by state assoc., up to 20 mins. max. sudden victory may be permitted by state	Rule 7 2-45 min. periods. In regular season, 2-10 min. sudden victory overtimes. For post-season tournaments see R. 7.1.2 which includes kicks from the penalty mark.	LAW 7 2-45 min. periods plus allowance for time lost due to subs, injury, time wasting, etc. Local rules of competition allow for 2 full overtime periods not to exceed 15 mins. each as well as kicks from the penalty mark. No "golden goal".
Official Game	Official if one half has been played. If suspended during the first half, state assoc. determines if game is to be rescheduled from the beginning or from the point of suspension	A suspended game of less than 70 mins. is declared "no contest". If at least 70 mins have been played the governing authority may declare it official	If less than full time is played, the match must be replayed in its entirety unless the local rules of competition state otherwise
Half-time and Overtime (OT) Intervals	10 mins. for half time unless otherwise agreed by the coaches. Between end of game and first OT period – 5 mins. Between OT periods – 2 mins.	15 mins. for half time, 10 or less by prior consent of coaches and officials. OT – same as HS Fed.	Players are entitled to a halftime interval if desired, not exceeding 15 mins.
Clock Stops	Goal, Penalty kick, yellow and red cards and at discretion of referee (injury, time wasting, etc.)	Same as H.S. Fed. plus when subs are made in the last 5 mins of match by team that is leading. Also TV timeouts as specified	Referee discretion, e.g. serious injury, time wasting, substitutions. Clock does not stop but time is "added on"
<u>START OF PLAY</u> Coin Toss – winner	RULE 8 Choice of goal or kick off. Same procedure for 1st overtime	RULE 8 Same as High School Federation	LAW 8 Must choose goal to attack. Loser of toss always kicks off
Drop Ball	Where ball was when play stopped and 5 yds. from touchline. If in goal area, drop on 6 yd line nearest to location of stoppage. Must be dropped between 2 opposing players	Same as HS Fed. but does not require 2 opposing players and need not be 5 yds. from touchline.	Same as NCAA



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

TOPIC	HIGH SCHOOL FEDERATION	NCAA-NISOA	FIFA – USSF
<u>BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY</u> Restart after injury, inadvertent whistle, etc. Drop Ball	RULE 9 If one team is in clear possession, indirect free kick, otherwise drop ball. Must be dropped between 2 opposing players	RULE 9 Same as FIFA. No requirement as in HS Fed.	LAW 9 Dropped ball where play was stopped by referee. Same as NCAA
<u>SCORING</u>	RULE 10 No differences between the three sets of Rules/Laws	RULE 10 ====	LAW 10 ===
<u>OFFSIDE</u> Meaning of “nearer to opponent’s goal line”	RULE 11 The position of any part of head, body or feet, will be the deciding factor, not the player’s arms	RULE 11 Same as HS Federation	LAW 11 Same as HS Federation
<u>VIOLATIONS AND MISCONDUCT</u> Caution-Reasons (Yellow Card)	RULE 12 Entering or leaving field w/o referee permission; persistent infringement of rules; dissent; incidental profane language; unsporting conduct (includes taunting); delays restart; encroachment on free kicks and corner kicks; Coach and bench personnel CAN be carded. (yellow or red) also use of video or communication, etc. to assist in coaching; use of tobacco at game site. Unsporting conduct includes coaching outside of box, faking injury, simulating a foul. Cautioned player must go off, if subbed for, may return at next opportunity to sub. Coach may be	RULE 12 Entering or leaving field w/o referee permission; persistent infringement of rules; dissent; incidental profane language; unsporting conduct (includes taunting); delays restart; encroachment of free kicks and corner kicks; coach can be cautioned for 2 nd infraction of coaching outside of team area.	LAW 12 Unsporting behavior (includes removing jersey when celebrating a goal and simulating any action to deceive referee), dissent, persistent infringement of laws, delays restart, encroachment on free kicks and corner kicks, enters, re-enters or leaves the field without referee permission. Coach and bench personnel CANNOT be carded, but can be sent off without show of card



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

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<p>Ejection-Reasons (Red Card)</p> <p>Charging Goalkeeper</p>	<p>cautioned for team or bench misconduct that cannot be attributed to specific player Coach cautioned if player enters illegally equipped – thereafter player w/ illegal equipment caution</p> <p>Delayed or excessive acts to focus attention on player or prohibits timely restart; 2nd caution; violent conduct; taunting; serious foul play; hand ball to prevent goal (even if ball does not go into goal); foul against an opponent who is moving toward goal with an obvious opportunity to score; spitting at an opponent, teammate or official; using offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures; leaves bench when a fight is taking place. Coach and bench may be carded.</p> <p>Keeper cannot be charged in his penalty area unless dribbling ball with his feet or obstructing</p>	<p>Serious foul play; violent conduct; fighting; spits at anyone; denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by handling or any offense punishable by a free kick; uses abusive, threatening or obscene language, behavior or conduct; receives a 2d caution.; 3rd occurrence of coaching outside of team area. Coach and bench may be carded</p> <p>May not be charged or interfered with while in possession of ball within his penalty area</p>	<p>Serious foul play (includes any tackle which endangers safety of opponent); violent conduct; spits at anyone; denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by handling or any offense punishable by a free kick; uses offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures; receives a 2nd caution. Red card <u>cannot</u> be shown to coach or non-player but they may be sent off.</p> <p>May be fairly charged if going for the ball other than with his/her hands. May not be charged while holding ball, or having possession of the same</p>
<p><u>FREE KICKS</u></p> <p>Direct free kick Offenses</p> <p>TOPIC</p>	<p><u>RULE 13</u></p> <p>Spitting, kicking or attempt to kick, striking or attempt, tripping or attempt, , jumping at, handling ball, holding, pushing, charging violently, violently fouling goalkeeper while in possession</p>	<p><u>RULE 13</u></p> <p>Basically the same as HS Federation, but does not specifically mention charging an opponent while the opponent in the act of playing the ball, has both feet off of the ground ; also assaulting an official and using</p>	<p><u>LAW 13</u></p> <p>Basically the same as NCAA, but specifies also tackling an opponent to gain possession of ball by making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.</p>



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

	HIGH SCHOOL	NCAA-NISOA	FIFA - USSF
	of ball in the penalty area, all against an opponent. Specifies charging an opponent while the opponent in the act of playing the ball, has both feet off of the ground.	blood to assault anyone.	
Indirect free kick offenses	Playing ball a 2 nd time before it is played or touched by another player at kickoff, throw-in, free kick, corner kick, goal kick or penalty kick; GK holds ball more than 6 secs.; sub at improper time or without being beckoned by referee; persons other than players and ARs entering field without referee permission; dissent; unsporting behavior or inappropriate language; dangerous play; offside; charging when ball is not within playing distance; interfering with goalkeeper before release of ball; illegal obstruction; leaving field without referee permission; goalkeeper receives ball in the hands deliberately kicked or thrown by teammate; goalkeeper handles ball after relinquishing possession; use of tobacco; when game is stopped for injury or unusual situation and one team has clear possession of the ball. If game is stopped for misconduct of player, coach or bench and no other restart takes precedence, an IFK is awarded. Spitting at team mate or game official	Same as High School Federation and additionally, improper coaching from the touchline after verbal warning	Dangerous play, impedes progress of opponent, prevents goalkeeper from releasing ball, commits any offense not sanctioned by a direct free kick for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player; goalkeeper takes more than 6 secs. before releasing ball; touches ball again with hands after releasing goalkeeper touches ball with hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by teammate, or handles the ball on a throw in to him by team-mate, offside. Assault on official.



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

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<p>PENALTY KICKS Ball Placement</p> <p>Stutter stepping or faking by the kicker</p>	<p>RULE 14 On the 9" spot or 2 foot line</p> <p>Not permitted – Caution and retake</p>	<p>RULE 14 Same as High School Federation</p> <p>Same as High School Federation</p>	<p>LAW 14 On the penalty spot</p> <p>Permitted – no infraction</p>
<p>Player taking kick infringes or team-mate encroaches and ball does not go into goal</p> <p>Kicks from Penalty mark/spot (tiebreaker)</p>	<p>Goal kick or corner kick if tapped over goal line by GK. If ball rebounds into play, an indirect free kick is given to defenders.</p> <p>No player reduction if other team is playing short.</p>	<p>Same as High School Federation</p> <p>Same as High School Federation but coach not allowed in center circles</p>	<p>Indirect free kick to defending team</p> <p>If one team is playing short, other team must reduce number Coach not permitted on the field. Each team must have same number of kickers.</p>
<p>THROW-IN Position of Defenders</p> <p>Ball never enters field</p> <p>Throw-in by impaired player using only one hand</p> <p>Use of "stickum" on hands</p>	<p>RULE 15 No restriction on position, but cannot move to interfere</p> <p>Throw-in awarded to opponent</p> <p>Legal – One-handed throw-in allowed in such cases</p> <p>Nothing specified in rules</p>	<p>RULE 15 Same as High School Federation</p> <p>Throw-in retaken</p> <p>Not allowed</p> <p>Not permitted</p>	<p>LAW 15 All must stand no less than 2 meters from the point of the throw-in</p> <p>Same as NCAA</p> <p>Same as HS Fed.. See USSF Advice to Referees § 15.3</p> <p>Same as High School Federation.</p>
<p>GOAL KICK Moving ball in goal area after it is spotted</p>	<p>RULE 16 Once spotted, ball should not be moved to another part of goal area</p>	<p>RULE 16 No prohibition unless considered as time wasting</p>	<p>LAW 16 Same as NCAA</p>



National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

TOPIC CORNER KICK	HIGH SCHOOL FEDERATION RULE 17 No significant differences in the three sets of Rules and Laws	NCAA-NISOA RULE 17 ====	FIFA - USSF LAW 17 ====
MISCELLANEOUS 2 nd Caution Mechanics for Displaying Cards Post-game score verification Foul indicated by Assistant Referee Articles worn by officials Future Requirements	Display yellow and red cards <u>simultaneously</u> in the same hand, except for coaches or bench personnel, in which case a yellow card is shown followed by a red card as in NCAA Head referee must verify score Flag held vertically overhead until referee acknowledges and then a slight circular wave of the flag is made Officials should not wear anything that is not allowed to be worn by players (watches and caps excepted) None known	Display red card only All officials must sign the score sheet. Thereafter all statistics are final Flag held vertically overhead with a slight circular wave Same as High School Federation Rule Book to be published every other year	Display yellow and red cards <u>sequentially</u> Nothing specified. Rules of competition may require verification of score Same as NCAA Same as H.S. Fed, however in senior and professional leagues, caps are not usually worn FIFA is experimenting with a ball-embedded micro-chip to indicate a goal and also the use of additional ARs stationed behind each goal to assist in penalty area calls.

Amended March 13, 2008



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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RULES AND LAWS

