



September 9, 2026

NFHS Soccer Weekly Rule Interpretations

Rule 13 Free Kick Scenarios

Rule 13 clarifies the procedures for restarts on free kicks by breaking the rule into distinct categories, outlining when and where free kicks are awarded, and detailing how they should be taken. It also specifies the correct restart locations and provides guidance for officials on managing these situations. Additionally, the update incorporates restart procedures for scenarios involving outside agents, offenses occurring off the field, thrown objects, individuals entering the field illegally, players leaving the field without permission, and offenses that occur outside the field of play.

SITUATION: While the ball is in play, a rostered person within Team A's team area spits at the referee who is standing inside the field of play near the team benches. **RULING:** The person, if identifiable, is ejected or spitting (12-6-1e). If not identifiable, the head coach is ejected (12-4-4). The game is restarted with a direct free kick. **COMMENT:** If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute, coach, or bench personnel commits an offense or interferes with play or a game official, then a direct free kick or penalty kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location on the field where the offense/interference occurred. [13-2-4a]

SITUATION: While the ball is in play within the center circle, a spectator runs onto the field and is punched by player A3. The referee stops play, has the spectator removed, and ejects A3 for violent conduct (12-6-1g). Play is restarted with a drop ball to the team last in possession located where the ball was positioned when play was stopped. **RULING:** Correct procedure. [13-2-1e]

SITUATION: Defender B2 challenges opposing attacker A1. B2 begins holding A1's jersey outside the penalty area. A1 continues moving forward. (a) As both players enter the penalty area, B2 continues to pull on A1's jersey, causing A1 to fall to the ground. (b) B2 lets go of A1's jersey while still outside the penalty area, and A1 then stumbles inside the penalty area and falls to the ground. **RULING:**(a) Penalty kick; (b) direct free kick. [13-2-2b]

SITUATION: Player B4, standing inside their penalty area, throws a shoe at the ball. The shoe strikes the ball outside the penalty area. **RULING:** Direct free kick from where the shoe struck the ball. [13-2-2c]

SITUATION: A dog runs onto the field after play has already started while Team A is in possession of the ball in their offensive third of the field. The referee stops play while game management corrals the dog. The referee restarts play with a drop ball for Team A where they had possession when the dog ran onto the field. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** If play is stopped for an offense committed against an outside agent, inside or outside the field of play, play is restarted with a dropped ball per 9-2-2, unless an indirect free kick is awarded for leaving the field of play without permission as in 13-2-5. In this situation, no offense is committed by a rostered individual and the referee stops play for the unusual situation presented by the outside agent entering the field. This, the game is started with a drop ball as in 9-2-1c. **NOTE:** An “outside agent” is any animal, object, structure, etc. as well as any person who is not a game official and not listed on the team rosters (players, substitutes, coaches, or bench personnel). [13-2-1e]