

Player Equipment Violations in 2025

Background

- There are two areas of concern:
 - A player missing required legal equipment (e.g., no knee pads at all) or wearing illegal equipment (e.g., a tinted visor)
 - A player failing to wear legal equipment properly (e.g., knee pads that do not cover the knees)

Missing Required Legal Equipment or Wearing Illegal Equipment

- **This is the reason for the question to the Head Coach in the pregame meeting: “Coach, are all of your players legally equipment in accordance with National Federation Rules?”**
- **Historically, there has been rules support for an automatic UNS foul on the Head Coach if the Head Coach answers “yes” and this proves to be incorrect (Rule 9-8-1h).**

Failure to Wear Legal Equipment Properly

- **A player is sent out of the game for either reason, but, historically, the penalty options for failing to wear legal equipment properly have been less clear.**
- **Delay of Game under Rule 3-6-2e.**
- **UNS against the Head Coach under Rule 9-9-5 for making a travesty of the game.**

- But how many violations did it take to get to a UNS foul?
- And no one really wanted to call it.
- This resulted in the guidelines we adopted last season.
- But two questions remained:
 - Is there rules support for the guidelines on failing to wear legal equipment properly?
 - Do we treat the two equipment issues the same?

- **The TSSAA submitted a proposal, but the Rules Committee could not agree.**
- **Recognizing the issues, however, the National Federation did produce Case Play 1.5.5, to give state associations some flexibility in how to interpret the Rules in these situations.**
- **Therefore, the TSSAA now has the following procedure:**

- We now treat all equipment violations the same.
- Therefore, a player missing required legal equipment or wearing illegal equipment, or a player wearing legal equipment improperly, are addressed under the same procedure.
- Do we still ask the equipment question to the Head Coach in the pregame meeting?
- **ABSOLUTELY YES!**

Approved Equipment Violation Process

For the first stoppage in play to remove player(s) who are no longer entering substitute(s), after the game clock is stopped, send the player(s) out and the applicable LOS official gives the Head Coach a courtesy warning; there is no flag and no penalty yardage.

For the second stoppage in play to remove player(s) who are no longer entering substitute(s), after the game clock is stopped, throw a flag, send the player(s) out and the applicable LOS official gives the Head Coach an official warning; there is no penalty yardage but R gives the sideline warning signal [arms extended with motion to the sideline) due to the flag.

[This signal does not count as a sideline warning for sideline interference purposes even though the same signal is used.]

For the third stoppage in play to remove player(s) who are no longer entering substitute(s), after the game clock is stopped, throw a flag, send the player(s) out and assess a delay of game penalty; the applicable LOS official advises the Head Coach that the next violation will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul against him.

For the fourth stoppage in play (and any subsequent stoppage in play) to remove player(s) who are no longer entering substitute(s), after the game clock is stopped, throw a flag, send the player(s) out and assess a UNS foul against the Head Coach, which counts as one of the two UNS fouls that will result in ejection of the Head Coach.

Sideline officials need to work to intercept a substitute coming into the game who is not properly equipped, missing legal equipment or wearing illegal equipment and tell him to return to the bench area.