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To: Athletic Directors and Soccer Coaches
From: Mike Wallmark, Associate Executive Director
Subject: Shin Guard Reminder for the 2008 Season

Please review this information with your soccer coaching staff.

In 2006, the NFHS soccer rules committee adopted a requirement that will go into effect this school year that shin guards meet certain safety standards. This is a safety issue that also has potential liability implications.

Under the new rule in effect for the first time this fall, shin guards must have an emblem on them that indicates that they have been approved by NOCSAE. (National Operating Committee for Standards in Athletic Equipment.) This emblem may be embossed on the front of the shin guard or it may be on a tag attached to the shin guard. This mark or tag will also indicate the height of players for whom that size of shin guard is appropriate. Therefore, there really are two requirements to the rule: the NOCSAE emblem on the shin guards and the correct size of shin guards for that player. The requirement for the NOCSAE emblem is new but the requirement for the correct size is not. However, the required size is now an engineering calculation, rather than the judgment of the coach and/or referee. This should reduce problems in this area.

By NFHS rule, the coach is the person primarily responsible for student-athletes wearing legal equipment in a proper manner. If the referee becomes aware that one or more players are not wearing legal shin guards, the referee is required to penalize the coach and/or players. Referees have been instructed to only look for the NOCSAE emblem and the sizing specified on the shin guard if the shin guard being worn under the player's sock appears to be too small. Then, and only then, will the referee ask the player to roll down their sock to show them the NOCSAE emblem, and the size of that shin guard. If the NOCSAE emblem is missing or if the player is too tall for those shin guards, the player will not be able to play until the shin guards are replaced with legal shin guards.

Questions should be directed to Patrick Duffy, OSAA Soccer Rules Interpreter, at patd@amgearpdx.com.