



September 12, 2025

NFHS Field Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations
Rule 8-2-1 Penalties 2 & 3 – Goalkeeper Uniform Violations

Purpose

This interpretation provides guidance on how to enforce goalkeeper uniform and equipment violations consistently under Rule 8-2-1 Penalties 2 & 3.

Rules Involved

- **Rule 8-2-1: Misconduct:** A goalkeeper is subject to misconduct penalties if improperly or illegally equipped.
- **Penalty 2:** If a goalkeeper is suspended for a uniform jersey violation, the coach shall remove one field player for the suspension, and the goalkeeper may remain in the game.
- **Penalty 3:** If a goalkeeper is disqualified or suspended for any reason other than a jersey violation, the coach shall remove one field player for the suspension, and the offending goalkeeper shall be replaced by another fully outfitted goalkeeper.

Clarification (Official Guidance)

1. Uniform jersey violations (e.g., color conflict with field players, missing number, or other jersey-related issues):
 - If the goalkeeper is suspended, the team must remove one field player for the duration of the suspension.
 - The goalkeeper is allowed to remain in the game once the jersey issue is corrected.
2. Other equipment or misconduct violations (e.g., missing throat protector, illegal helmet, deliberate misconduct):
 - If the goalkeeper is suspended or disqualified, the team must remove one field player for the suspension.
 - The offending goalkeeper must be replaced by another goalkeeper who is properly and fully equipped.
3. Safety is the priority – any violation that compromises protective equipment must be corrected immediately.

Officiating Mechanics

1. Stop play immediately if the goalkeeper is found to be improperly equipped.
2. Identify the type of violation (jersey issue vs. other equipment/safety violation).
3. Apply the correct penalty:
 - Jersey violation → Penalty 2 (goalkeeper stays, one field player removed).
 - Other violations → Penalty 3 (goalkeeper replaced, one field player removed).
4. Restart play with the appropriate penalty (free hit or bully, depending on the situation when play was stopped).

Game Scenario, Ruling & Explanation

- **SCENARIO:** During play, the umpire notices that the goalkeeper's jersey is the same color as her field players, making her indistinguishable. The official stops play and requires the coach to remove one field player for the duration of the suspension. The goalkeeper may remain in the game once the jersey issue is corrected. Play restarts with a free hit for the opponent. **RULING:** Correct Procedure **COMMENT:** This is a jersey violation. Penalty 2 applies — the goalkeeper may stay in the game after correction, but the team still plays short due to the suspension.
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- **SCENARIO 2:** The umpire discovers that the goalkeeper is not wearing a throat protector during a penalty corner. Play is stopped immediately. The goalkeeper is suspended under Rule 8-2-1, Penalty 3. The coach must remove one field player and replace the goalkeeper with another fully outfitted goalkeeper. Play restarts with a free hit for the opponent outside the circle. **RULING:** Correct Procedure **COMMENT:** This is a safety equipment violation, not a jersey issue. Penalty 3 applies — the goalkeeper must be replaced by a properly equipped goalkeeper, and the team also loses a field player during the suspension.