

In 2005, the Canadian Soccer Association released a memorandum (*CSA Policy on Law 4 / 2005*) concerning players' equipment. The NLSA Referee Committee has reviewed this document and we support its recommendations, with a few minor changes. These policies will be enforced in all NLSA tournaments (Challenge Cup, Jubilee Trophy, and minor and senior Provincial Tournaments). Regions are strongly encouraged to adopt these policies for their individual leagues.

MEMORANDUM LAW 4

Player's Equipment, including the use of non-compulsory equipment

Introduction

This memo summarizes CSA policies designed to reduce inconsistencies in rulings over player's equipment. All referees are expected to follow these policies in all matches played under the direct supervision of the CSA. Other criteria may apply in A-league games or international (FIFA) competitions and referees must be guided accordingly. The CSA strongly recommends that Provincial/Territorial Associations adopt these principles to help to even further reduce the possibility of inconsistencies in the application of this law.

Background

The Laws of the Game stipulate that:

- **"A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player" (Law 4)**
- **Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks, knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight, padded material is not considered dangerous and is therefore permitted. (FIFA)**
- **New technology has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the players themselves and for other players. Referees should show tolerance when authorizing their use. This applies particularly to younger players." (FIFA)**
- **It is the referee's responsibility to inspect players compulsory and non-compulsory equipment before each and every match, as well as that of substitutes when they first enter the field of play to take part in a match. (Law 5)**

Source: CSA

Source: FIFA

1. Jewelry

- No item of jewelry of any sort will be allowed on the field of play, even if it is 'taped'. i.e., covered.
- Game officials must set an example by removing all personal jewelry before entering the field of play (watches are obviously allowed for game officials).
- The rule of thumb should be 'if it can be seen, it's a problem'.
- **Earrings:** no earrings of any kind are acceptable. The practice of taping is no longer acceptable.

- **Facial rings:** any kind of jewelry around the eyes, nose or any other part of the face must be removed.
- **Bracelets:** all bracelets (including metal, rope, fabric ...) must be removed.
- **Medic Alert bracelets:** may be worn but must be covered or padded in order to be safe for all players.
- **Necklaces:** all necklaces must be removed.
- **Body piercing;** any body piercing not visible to the referee is not of concern. Should the piercing becomes visible the referee will ensure it is removed.
- **Watches:** players are not allowed to wear any kind of watches.
- **Beaded Hair:** if a player is wearing hair beads the hair must be tied in a bun or covered by a tightly fitting hair net. Loose beaded hair is not to be allowed.
- **Wedding rings:** must be removed. The sole exception is a smooth wedding band which the referee is convinced cannot be removed, and which poses no danger to any player. It is recommended that teams advise players to have such rings removed before reporting for the match. If, exceptionally, the ring cannot be removed, it must be adequately padded.

2. Headwear

- **Hats:** no hats are allowed on the field of play, except for goalkeepers using one as an eye shade. **(Tight fitting hats will be permitted for goalkeeper use in cold weather, at the discretion of the referee).**
- **Bandanas:** no bandanas are allowed.
- **Sweat bands:** no sweat bands are allowed.
- **Head protectors:** only those permitted by FIFA are allowed.
- **Spectacles:** are allowed if they are sports spectacles and are safe for the players themselves and for other players. Materials such as metal or glass are not accepted. **(NLSA will not enforce this rule for now. Prescription glasses are permitted to be worn so long as they are safe and secure.)**

3. Orthopedic supports, e.g., knee braces

- FIFA Circular 863 states that the vast majority of commercially manufactured supports are safe to use.
- These items pose less of a hazard than players accidentally banging heads, for instance.
- The major concern is not the ‘hardness’ of the equipment alone, rather it should be whether any part of it can cut or wound another player.
- Any support must be safe for all players, and adequately padded if necessary.

4. Casts

(The NLSA prohibits players with casts of any kind. Furthermore, the NLSA does not allow players’ with splint(s) to play either.)

5. Footwear

- Referees are also to incorporate a footwear inspection into the pre-match safety check of players’ equipment.
- Poorly maintained studs or blades on the sole of the boot can constitute a danger.

- When inspecting footwear, officials are to be alert to the possibility of the edge of the blades or studs developing rough areas on either the plastic or metal used in their construction.
- These burrs can become very sharp and have been the cause of lacerations to opponents.
- A referee who is concerned over the condition of blades or studs should refuse their use until such time as the unsafe condition has been removed.

6. Jerseys

- All jerseys must have sleeves.
- The players may not roll the sleeves up or tie them at the shoulder level.
- A player who removes his/her jersey to celebrate a goal will receive a caution for unsporting behaviour.

7. Disciplinary actions

- The player(s) will be instructed to remove the dangerous item.
- A player who, after having been told to remove jewelry, wears it again will receive a caution.
- If play is stopped to administer a caution the restart shall be an indirect free kick taken from the place where the ball was located when play was stopped.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this approach will help everyone to make sure that all players are able to take part in the game while paying due attention to their own safety and that of their opponents.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Martin Batterson, Director of Officials at martinbatterson@gmail.com or the NLSA office (576-0601).