DROP BALL ISSUES

Several questions have come up regarding the new rule change with regard to the Drop Ball. Rule 9.2.1.c states “The game is restarted with a drop ball following a temporary suspension of play for an injury or unusual situation and a goalkeeper is not in possession of the ball.” The restart is different this year than in years past where a team in possession when play was stopped would have an INDFK as the restart. Some points to consider:

- Possession by the goalkeeper can mean ball in hand OR ball at his/her feet
- Any number of players may participate in a drop ball situation and the official cannot determine who participates.
- Unlike other restarts, there is **NO TWO TOUCH RULE** when executing a drop ball. Meaning once the ball touches the ground the ball is now live, if Player A1 first plays the ball to an open space and the ball is not touched by any other player, Player A1 may still play the ball. Similarly, if a player is participating in an uncontested drop ball situation, once the ball touches the ground that player may dribble the ball before passing it. If a goalkeeper is participating in an uncontested drop ball situation outside the penalty area, once the ball touches the ground the goalkeeper may dribble the ball into the penalty area and pick it up.
- Rule 9.2.6 states: “If a drop ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with a goal kick if it enters the opponent’s goal or a corner kick if it enters the team’s own goal.” This new wording would prevent a goal from being scored if in an uncontested drop ball situation, a player gained possession, dribbled the ball down the field and took a shot on goal and the ball entered the goal. It would also negate a goal if a goalkeeper dribbled the ball into the penalty area and punted the ball down the field and the ball entered the goal without being touched by another player.

9.2.6 should be interpreted that during a restart where a drop ball is executed, the ball must be touched by at least two players before a goal can be scored. Similarly, if only one player has touched the ball after a drop ball restart and the ball enters the opponents goal the correct restart is a goal kick for the opposing team. If the ball enters the player’s own goal with only one player having touched the ball the correct restart is a corner kick.