

MEMORANDUM

TO: Miami Valley East League Coaches, Players, and Parents
From: Miami Valley East Board of Directors
Date: April 29, 2021
Re: Law 4 – The Players' Equipment



Each year some confusion arises among the MVE League constituents about the application of Law 4 regarding allowed and prohibited player equipment. The MVE Board has discussed these issues and determined that clarification of the Law's requirements and unwritten intent was needed so that the players, parents, coaches, and Referees were better informed, which would hopefully lead to improved understanding and consistency among all the Clubs in its application.

Following a review of the Law the Board of the MVE League has developed the following guidelines, interpretations, and minor modifications to the items stipulated in the FIFA Law 4. The expectation is that all Clubs will inform their participants, coaches, and Referees of Law 4 and of this Memorandum from the MVE League Board. It is also understood that ultimately, the final decision of determining what is safe and unsafe to wear rests with the Referees of each match. It is hoped that these interpretations and guidelines as presented will enhance everyone's knowledge of what the FIFA Law 4 states.

EVERYONE IS REMINDED THAT THIS LAW AND OSYSA LIABILITY COVERAGE APPLIES TO ALL ON-FIELD TEAM EVENTS, INCLUDING PRACTICES AND SCRIMMAGES.

COACHES ARE REQUIRED TO REVIEW LAW 4 WITH THE PLAYERS AND THEIR PARENTS AS SOON AS PRACTICES BEGIN TO HELP FOSTER A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THESE REQUIREMENTS;

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment

- **All participants and parents are reminded that the specifics of Law 4 apply to practices and scrimmages as well as formal matches in order for liability coverage to be in force.**
- **Prior to any game the Referees shall inspect the players' equipment and prevent any player whose equipment does not conform to the requirements of this Law from playing until the player complies.**
- **It is the responsibility of the coach to assure that each player complies with Law 4 – The Players' Equipment and is prepared to play prior to the team inspection by the Referees.**
- **Coaches shall inform the Board of any player who has sustained an injury on or off the field resulting in medical treatment that includes the wearing of a cast, splint or other external medical device as described below.**

1. Safety

- a. A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous
- b. All players and substitutes must be inspected before the start of the match
- c. The Referees shall monitor all substitutes entering the game at the half line to help assure there is compliance to safety standards. If a player is wearing or using unauthorized or dangerous equipment or wearing jewelry, the Referee shall order the player to:
 - i. remove the item
 - ii. leave the field of play at the next stoppage if the player is unable or unwilling to comply or cannot complete the removal in a timely fashion

d. A player who refuses to comply or wears the item again may be cautioned

2. Compulsory Equipment

a. Shirt

- i. Shirts must have sleeves – tied up sleeves are not permitted
- ii. All players of a team shall wear the same color shirts; exceptions are at the discretion of the Referee
- iii. The goalkeeper must wear a color different than that of both teams and the Referee
- iv. It is the responsibility of the home team to change to a different color if the two teams normally wear the same color
- v. Numbers on shirts are required, and must be different for each player; however, when a team must wear alternate shirts because of a color conflict, such shirts need not be numbered
- vi. For an unresolved color conflict, the Referees may permit the game to proceed

b. Shorts

- i. All players of a team shall wear the same color shorts; exceptions are at the discretion of the Referee
- ii. Goalkeepers may wear tracksuit bottoms or similar pant

c. Shin guards

- i. Shin guards must be made of a suitable material to provide reasonable protection and covered entirely by the socks
- ii. A player whose shin guard is lost accidentally must replace it as soon as possible and no later than when the ball next goes out of play; if before doing so the player plays the ball and/or scores a goal, the goal is awarded

a. Socks

- i. All players of a team shall wear the same color socks; exceptions are at the discretion of the Referee; socks of two different colors are not permitted
- ii. Tape or any material applied or worn externally must be the same color as that part of the sock it is applied to or covers

b. Shoes

- i. shoes that are made by well-known manufacturers and designated as soccer footwear
- ii. Gym shoes
- iii. Any type of shoe having any number of cleats (rubber, plastic, metal) that have no sharp edges
- iv. Shoes shall be properly tied (or otherwise appropriately fastened)

3. Other Equipment

a. *A player may use equipment other than what is compulsory provided that its sole purpose is to protect him physically and poses no danger to him or any other player*

b. Legal equipment includes non-dangerous protective items such as:

- i. Soft headwear such as knit caps
- ii. Goalkeeper soft-billed cap
- iii. Goalkeeper safety helmet made of foam or other soft material that is properly fitted and fastened
- iv. Goalkeeper gloves
- v. Soft generic gloves
- vi. Soft arm, wrist, and elbow protectors
- vii. **Any type of hard cast, splint, or brace, regardless of location on the body, that is sufficiently padded so as not to risk injury to the player or anyone else, so long as the player does not play in a dangerous manner and is approved by the Referee**

- viii. Air casts or splints
- ix. Face masks > not face shields
- x. Hearing aids
- xi. Eyeglasses, with or without strap
- xii. Contact lenses
- xiii. Warm-up suits, hooded sweatshirts, sweat pants and similar soft apparel, but the player's shirt must be worn on the outside, while the shorts and socks may be covered
- xiv. Hair control devices made of soft or elastic material without a knot > Elastic sweatbands around the head are preferred over popular elastic wraps that tie
- xv. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces > must be secured against the body with tape**
- xvi. Religious symbols, etc > must be secured against the body with tape**

c. Head covers

- i. Religious headwear that covers the head is permitted
- ii. Other headwear (including knit caps but excluding goalkeepers' caps) must:
 1. be black or the same main color as the shirt (provided that the players of the same team wear the same color)
 2. be in keeping with the professional appearance of the player's equipment not be attached to the shirt
 3. not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player (e.g. opening/closing mechanism around neck)
 4. not have any part(s) extending out from the surface (protruding elements)

4. Illegal/unsafe equipment includes the following examples:

- a. All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are not permitted and must be removed > **Using tape to cover jewelry is not permitted**
- b. Hair control devices secured with metal clasps or a knot > bandanas secured with a knot are not permitted
- c. Hard wooden, plastic, or metal beads woven into the hair
- d. shin guards with exposed sharp edges
- e. Watches
- f. Any type of hard cast or splint, regardless of location on the body, that is not wrapped or protected with a suitable padding nor approved by the Referee**
- g. Arm, wrist, leg, knee, or ankle braces made of metal or other hard material that are not wrapped or protected with a suitable padding nor approved by the Referee
- h. Cleats (rubber, plastic or metal) with sharp or jagged edges
- i. Foreign objects in the mouth (such as gum or ice), other than internal orthodontic devices
- j. Hard helmets
- k. Faceguards or face shields

5. PUNISHMENT: For any infringement of Law 4:

- a. The player shall be instructed by the Referee to immediately:
 - i. adjust his (or her) equipment, or
 - ii. obtain missing equipment, or
 - iii. leave the field of play to do so, if correction on the field is deemed to be impractical
- b. A player who has been instructed to leave the field of play shall not return without first reporting to the Referee, who shall determine that the player's equipment is in order
- c. The player shall only re-enter the game at a moment when the ball has ceased to be in play and only with the Referee's permission