



MEMORANDUM

January 26, 2021

VIA EMAIL

TO: Conference Commissioners, Directors of Athletics, Head Men's and Women's Soccer Coaches and Senior Woman Administrators.

FROM: Ken Andres, Secretary-Rules Editor
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.

Mike Singleton, Chair
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Preseason Men's and Women's Soccer Reminders for the
2021 Spring Season.

Although this soccer season will be different for many institutions and conferences, the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee would like to bring your attention to the following items as you prepare for your spring soccer season. The 2020-21 season will be the first year using the 2020 and 2021 NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Book, which can be downloaded as a PDF [here](#). The PDF reflects rules corrections and additions made since the printing of the hardcopy.

1. **COVID-19 Rules Change/Waivers:** As communicated previously, the Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee and Playing Rules Oversight Panel approved the following rules change and waivers for 2020-21 due to COVID-19:
 - a. Rules Change – Rules 12.7.4.2, 12.7.4.8.2 and 12.8.1.1 – Enhance the spitting at or biting an opponent or any other person penalty to a two-game suspension and categorize it as a violent behavior II red card. **Add coughing at an opponent or any other person to this rule and also categorize it as a violent behavior II red card. All ejection and suspension rules related to violent behavior II will apply, including a two-game suspension for the first offense.**
 - b. Waiver – Rule 1.12.2 – Allow the coaching and team area to be extended beyond 20 yards from the five-yard neutral zone measured from the halfway line in both directions, if available.
 - c. Waiver – Rule 5.5.2 – If using a paper official NCAA box score, allow the referee to visually/verbally verify the information is correct rather than requiring a signature (this is the same process for electronic box scores).
2. **Artificial Crowd Noise Interpretation:** Due to COVID-19, institutions may have restrictions on fan attendance at games during the 2020-21 season. Therefore, the Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee issued an interpretation permitting piped-in artificial crowd noise during the 2020-21 season with five stipulations. This interpretation may be viewed [here](#).

N a t i o n a l C o l l e g i a t e A t h l e t i c A s s o c i a t i o n

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3. Other Rules Changes: As a reminder, the Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee and Playing Rules Oversight Panel also previously approved a number of rules changes for the 2020 and 2021 seasons through the normal two year rules cycle that may be viewed by clicking [here](#).
4. Penalties for Illegal Participation: Knowing in some cases it has been many months since your last soccer game, institutions are reminded that pursuant to Rule 12.8, ejected and suspended personnel, including players, coaches and team personnel, cannot participate in the next regularly scheduled game(s) and suspensions carry over from the previous playing season. In this case, the previous playing season could be the fall 2019 or fall 2020 season. Depending upon the reason for the suspension, the suspension period may include more than one game. This rule also applies to transfer student-athletes.

As a reminder, the penalty on a head coach for participating or allowing an ejected or suspended player or assistant coach to illegally participate in a game was enhanced beginning with the 2018 season. The enhanced suspension for the head coach applies in all instances when illegal personnel participates in a game, including red card or yellow card accumulation suspensions. Note that the appropriate penalty will be imposed regardless of the circumstances and even if the mistake was made unintentionally or if there was a lack of knowledge of the rules. To assist in ensuring ejections and suspensions are appropriately served, the NCAA Soccer Red Card Depository will continue to track red cards issued and send notifications to conferences and institutions alerting the conference commissioner, director of athletics and head coach when a red card has been issued. Division I conference soccer administrators are also included on the email.

5. ArbiterSports Center Circle Registration: Head coaches are again encouraged to register on the [NCAA Soccer Center Circle](#). It continues to be free for head coaches and houses rules interpretations, clarifications, announcements and updates issued during the season. Officiating updates, clarifications and videos are also posted to Center Circle. If you registered last year, you would need to re-register this year to continue having access to all of the important information.

Should you have any rules questions, please contact Ken Andres, NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Secretary-Rules Editor, at kandres.ncaasre@gmail.com; or 856-816-1687.

Thank you for your attention to this information and good luck this season.

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cc: Division I Conference Soccer Administrators
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee
NCAA Registered Soccer Referees
Selected NCAA Staff Members