



NCAA Soccer Points of Emphasis 2022 Season

The NCAA has established national points of emphasis for men's and women's soccer, which are effective for the 2022 soccer season. In cooperation with the National Coordinator of Officials and the Secretary-Rules Editor, feedback was solicited from conference coordinators in identifying current trends that should be more consistently enforced. These are not rules changes but rather rule and interpretation reminders for officials on what they should pay special attention to. Our goal is to establish a more consistent application nationally as well as from conference to conference.

Collegiate soccer officials will focus on four new points of emphasis for the 2022 season. There will be training videos in each area forthcoming as we get closer to the start of the season

1. **Controlling Overly Aggressive and Rough Play.** Referees should be focused on student-athlete safety with the objective of consistently punishing 100% of reckless tackles and challenges. Referees should penalize egregious and repeated instances of teams and individual players playing in an overly aggressive and rough play manner with a caution for unsporting behavior rather than attempting to manage these types of plays. Repeated offenses of careless acts should be penalized with a caution for persistent offenses.
2. **Stopping a Promising Attack (SPA).** The goal is to correctly punish instances of stopping a promising attack (SPA). In determining if a SPA offense exists, referees should consider if a player's ability to exploit speed, space and attacking options were unfairly denied to them due to a foul. A blatant "cynical" hold is considered SPA and shall be penalized regardless of the speed, space and options criteria. If the referee plays the advantage for a SPA offense for which a caution would have been issued had play been stopped, the player is not cautioned.
3. **Differentiating Between Violent Behavior I and II and Fighting.** Referees are reminded that violent behavior II and fighting ejections must match the definitions for those offenses. Ejectionable physical behavior that falls short of these definitions should be considered violent behavior I. Violent behavior II is an unwarranted excessive act or use of force, which is malicious and so extreme and severe that it places a participant in danger of physical injury. Fighting is a deliberate strike or punch or an attempt to strike or punch in a malicious manner. The clear intent of the VBII and fighting rule is to eliminate conduct that presents a serious risk of injury and has no place in college soccer. Both are punished with a 2-game suspension.
4. **Coaching and Team Area Decorum.** Coaches, players and bench personnel must behave in a responsible and professional manner. Officials will focus on enforcing good sportsmanship and a high level of decorum within the coaching and team areas. "Over the top" unprofessional behavior includes actions which show a clear lack of respect for game officials or the opposing team. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Kicking or throwing objects in reaction to a decision.
 - Entering the field of play to dissent a call.
 - Acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner.
 - Multiple bench personnel arguing a call at the same time.
 - Engaging in a verbal or physical confrontation with the opposing coaching staff.

Referees are reminded that they are expected to punish this type of behavior.