



**NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations**  
**2022 Season, Volume 5**  
**Rich Grady, Secretary-Rules Editor**

This update includes issues addressed up to October 31, 2022. Volumes 1-4 may be viewed on [Center Circle](#) under Rules of the Game or the NCAA playing rules [website](#) under Updates.

1. **Caution Accumulation.** With postseason beginning, please make sure that all coaches, administrators, and officials are aware of the accumulation rules for cautions (yellow cards). Players or coaches who have less than five (5) yellow cards entering postseason will not be subject to suspension for caution accumulation until their eighth (8) yellow card. Players or coaches who have received five (5) or more yellow cards during the regular season will be suspended for caution accumulation after receiving their eighth (8) yellow card (regular and postseason combined). Players and coaches who are suspended for reaching the eight (8) yellow card threshold are subject to further suspension for accumulation for each two (2) yellow cards received thereafter (i.e., totals of 10, 12, etc.)
  - a. **Example 1:** A player concludes the regular season with 3 yellow cards. That player is subject to suspension during the postseason only when the combined regular and postseason accumulation reaches 8 yellow cards.
  - b. **Example 2:** A player concludes the regular season with 6 yellow cards. The player will be suspended if they accumulate 2 additional yellows in the postseason to reach the combined total of 8.
  - c. **Example 3:** A player concludes the regular season with 7 yellow cards. The player will be suspended if they accumulate 1 additional yellow card in the postseason. Following the 8<sup>th</sup> yellow card of the season, individuals are subject to suspension for every 2 additional yellow cards they receive.
2. **Timing and End of Period Scenarios.** Misconduct committed with time remaining in the match can and should be appropriately punished by the officials, and the game clock corrected to reflect the proper time. If the timekeeper errs, or it is not possible to stop the clock in time, the referee can order time put back on the clock. Video review is available for this purpose.
3. **Postseason Playing Rules.** Postseason play begins with conference tournaments that select the automatic qualifier for the NCAA tournament. Officials need to be aware of the following:
  - a. **Overtime.** Two, full ten-minute periods, played to completion. Overtime is no longer sudden victory. Please review Rule 7.1.1.
  - b. **Clock stoppage for substitutions.** Any time the team leading the game substitutes during the last five minutes of the second overtime, the clock must be stopped.
4. **Penalty Kick Tiebreakers.**
  - a. **Number of kickers.** Teams must designate 10 kickers and a goalkeeper, or 10 kickers, one of whom is the goalkeeper. This does not change, regardless of whether one or both teams have had players ejected during the game.
  - b. **Which goal to use.** Unless there are field or weather considerations, the referee will toss a coin to determine which goal will be used for the kicks.

- c. **Replacing the goalkeeper.** Reminder that the goalkeeper can only be replaced if injured or ejected during the tiebreaker. In that case, a new goalkeeper from the bench can be used.
  - d. **Warnings/Cautions.** Officials are reminded that cautions and warnings from the game do carry over to the penalty kick tiebreakers in NCAA competition. NCAA playing rules do not permit the use of video review to determine potential infringements on penalty kicks, so officials should only call violations that are clear and obvious with the naked eye.
5. **End of Game Situations.** Officials need to be aware that in postseason play, the potential exists for each game to be the last one that a team plays during the season. Officials must be prepared for emotions to be high and for misconduct to result at or after the conclusion of the game. Proactive and preventive officiating will go a long way to defusing these situations.
6. **Bench Decorum.** While it is against the rules for coaches to approach officials in between periods or for them to show video to officials in order to challenge calls, neither of these offenses is an ejectable offense according to NCAA rules. Coaches may be cautioned for dissent or for unsporting behavior, but they should not be ejected for this unless it is also accompanied by abusive or threatening language or they have been previously cautioned.