



## NCAA Soccer Points of Emphasis 2023 Season

The NCAA has established national points of emphasis for men's and women's soccer, which are effective for the 2023 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 points of emphasis for the 2023 season, which are carried over from 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.** Officials should be focused on student-athlete safety with the objective of consistently punishing 100% of reckless tackles and challenges. Officials 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. Correctly Identifying and Punishing Stopping a Promising Attack.** Officials should punish instances of stopping a promising attack (SPA). In determining if a SPA offense exists, officials 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 official plays the advantage for a SPA offense for which a caution would have been issued had play been stopped, the player should not be cautioned.
- 3. Correctly Identifying Violent Behavior I, Violent Behavior II, and Fighting Infractions.** Violent Behavior I (Rule 12.7.4.8.1) is an unwarranted excessive act or use of force when not challenging for the ball. The punishment for this is an ejection and *one-game* suspension. Violent Behavior II (Rule 12.7.4.8.2) 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. These acts may include, but not limited to, head butting, elbow to the face or head, stomping, kicking a defenseless person, or hair pulling (Spitting, biting, or coughing on must be VB II). This behavior results in an ejection and a *two-game* suspension. Fighting (Rule 12.7.4.9) is defined as a deliberate strike or punch or an attempt to strike or punch another player, official, coach, or bench personnel in a *malicious* manner. This behavior results in an ejection and a *two-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. Officials are reminded that they are expected to punish this type of behavior.