



MEMORANDUM

August 8, 2023

VIA EMAIL

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

FROM: Timothy Cupello, chair
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.

Rich Grady, secretary-rules editor
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Soccer Playing Rules Reminders for the 2023 Season.

As a new playing season approaches, we would like to remind you of a few important items for the 2023 season. The 2023 season will be the second year using the 2022 and 2023 NCAA Soccer Rules Book, which can be downloaded as a PDF [here](#). The 2022 and 2023 major rules changes and 2023 points of emphasis are available on the NCAA soccer playing rules [website](#) under Updates and NCAA Center Circle at [RQ+](#). As rules questions and interpretations are issued throughout the 2023 season, they also will be available on the NCAA soccer playing rules website and Center Circle.

1. Points of Emphasis for the 2023 Season: The following points of emphasis will be in place for the 2023 season. More information is available on the NCAA soccer playing rules website and NCAA Center Circle linked above.
 - Controlling Overly Aggressive and Rough Play.
 - Correctly Identifying and Punishing Stopping a Promising Attack.
 - Correctly Identifying Violent Behavior I, Violent Behavior II, and Fighting Infractions.
 - Coaching and Team Area Decorum.
2. Expanded Postgame Protest Procedure (Rule 5.8.1): The NCAA will continue to utilize the postgame protest procedure that was first implemented last season, which was expanded to include a review of violent behavior II and fighting red cards. This is in addition to the other two situations that may be protested – player identification and illegal participation by ejected or suspended student-athletes, coaches and team personnel. **In order for a violent behavior II or fighting red card to be reviewed, the protest, including video of the incident, must be submitted by the conference office or coordinator of officials.** The scope is limited to

changing a violent behavior II or fighting red card (two-game suspension) to a violent behavior I red card (one-game suspension). The Soccer Protest Form is available [here](#).

3. Video Review Experimental Rule: The American Athletic, Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, and Sun Belt Conferences have been approved to experiment during all regular season conference games and the conference tournament. The Big 12, Southeastern, Southland, and Western Athletic Conferences have been approved to experiment during the conference tournament only. **The experimental rule is not approved for non-conference play** (even if the game takes place between teams from two conferences that are experimenting) **or for the NCAA Tournament**. The experimental rule situations are in addition to the six currently permissible video review situations outlined in Rule 5.7.3. Consistent with other uses of video review, indisputable video evidence, in the judgment of the officials, must be present for the call on the field to be overturned. Officials should officiate the game to the best of their ability without thinking about video review when making initial decisions on the field. More information is available on [Center Circle](#) under Rules of the Game.
4. Box score verification: Officials are required to confirm the information in the box score with the official scorer before leaving the site of competition. This is imperative in order to make sure that the correct individuals are charged with any disciplinary cards that have been given.
5. Center Circle Registration on RQ+: The NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee will continue to utilize the Center Circle central hub to distribute rules clarifications, announcements and interpretations. Officiating updates and clarifications also are posted to Center Circle throughout the season. The Center Circle central hub is now available at www.refquest.com. Commissioners, DI conference administrators and head coaches should have received an email from RQ+ inviting you to join the Center Circle central hub and create a password. If you did not receive this email or have additional staff/coaches who would like access, please click the NCAA Center Circle central hub link above and register at no cost.
6. While the 2023-24 International Football Association Board (IFAB) Laws of the Game included an update with respect to the definition of the ball being deliberately played by an opponent negating a potential offside, this update was already used in NCAA play for the 2022 season, so there will be nothing new for the 2023 season. As a reminder, the difference between deliberate play and deflection is clarified as follows:

“A deliberate play is when a player has control of the ball with the possibility of passing the ball to a teammate, gaining possession of the ball, or clearing the ball. If the pass, attempt to gain possession, or clearance by the player in control of the ball is inaccurate or unsuccessful, this does not negate the fact that the player deliberately played the ball. Indicators that a player was in control of the ball and thus deliberately played it include: the ball travelled from distance and the player had a clear view of it; the ball was not moving quickly; the direction of the ball was not unexpected; the player had time to coordinate their body movement; a ball on the ground is easier to play than one in the air.”

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Video clips illustrating the new guidance can be found [here](#).

Should you have any rules questions, please contact Rich Grady at ncaasoccersre@gmail.com or 847-644-1206.

Thank you in advance for your support and have a great season.

TC/RG:af

cc: NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee
NCAA Registered Soccer Officials
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Conference Coordinators
Selected NCAA Staff Members