



NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations
2023 Season, Volume 1
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This update includes issues addressed up to August 21, 2023.

1. **Video review.** There are several clarifications regarding Rule 5.7.3.6 (determining whether a foul occurred inside the defending team's penalty area). First, the language here refers to determining the location of a foul that was called on the field by the officials. It does not mean that video review can be used to identify and punish a foul that was not called on the field by the officials.

If the referee calls a direct free kick and issues an ejection for DOGSO, but video review shows that the foul took place inside the penalty area, the correct outcome should be a penalty kick and a yellow card for DOGSO within the penalty area if the foul satisfies those criteria.

If the referee calls a penalty kick and issues a caution for DOGSO with an attempt to play the ball, but video review shows that the foul took place outside the penalty area, the correct outcome should be a direct free kick and a red card for DOGSO.

The rationale for this is that the referee has already made the determination of whether DOGSO applies, but the nature of that DOGSO changes based on the location of the foul.

2. **Distinguishing between a direct free kick for charging illegally (Rule 12.1.10) and an indirect free kick for charging illegally (Rule 12.2.11).** A direct free kick is awarded for illegal charging when the safety aspects of the rule are violated. A fair charge is one that is non-violent, and requires both players to be upright, have at least one foot on the ground, and have their arms close to their body. If any of these criteria are violated, a direct free kick should be awarded. Rule 12.2.11 deals with charges that satisfy the safety requirements above, but the ball is not within playing distance. In this case, an indirect free kick should be awarded.
3. **Exhibition matches and suspensions.** Per Rule 12.8.4, suspensions incurred from the previous season as a result of caution accumulation or ejections, whether in the regular season or postseason, can only be served in regular season matches. This means that individuals who are suspended in the final match of the previous season are eligible to compete in exhibition matches, but they must serve their suspension from the previous season in the appropriate number of regular season matches. Individuals who are ejected in exhibition matches are not required to serve a suspension, however, conferences may have specific policies on ejections and suspensions during exhibition matches.
4. **Playing rules must be followed.** Per NCAA bylaws, all intercollegiate competition must be conducted in accordance with the playing rules. If a game is only countable for team-championship selection purposes for one team, that does not mean that the substitution re-entry restrictions or any other rule can be waived for either team.

5. **Clarification regarding offside interpretation.** The NCAA is NOT adopting the new IFAB offside experiment where there must be daylight between the attacker and the defender in order for a player to be considered offside. NCAA rules in this regard are the same as last year.
6. **Cards to players not listed on the roster.** According to Rule 3.2.2, if it is discovered during a game that a player is not listed on the roster, the player must be removed from the game and is not eligible to participate further in that game. Recently, two questions were posed about how to handle cards given to players in this scenario.
 - a. Scenario 1: A player is ejected and it is then discovered that they are not listed on the roster. Ruling: Assuming the player was in the game at the time of the ejection, the team will play short and the red card will count against the player's record.
 - b. Scenario 2: A player is cautioned and it is discovered that they are not listed on the roster. Ruling: Remove the player from the game, allow a replacement, and the player will be charged with a yellow card on their season accumulation record.