



NCAA Soccer Points of Emphasis 2024 Season

The NCAA has established national points of emphasis for men's and women's soccer, which are effective for the 2024 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 rules 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. There will be training videos in each area forthcoming as we get closer to the start of the season.

- 1. 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. Actions which show a clear lack of respect for game officials or the opposing team will not be tolerated, and officials are reminded that they are expected to punish this type of behavior with a yellow card (caution) or red card (ejection) as appropriate. The following will be emphasized: The coaching area is in front of the team area and must be properly marked with either cones or lines. The team area also must be properly marked with cones or lines. The substitutes should remain in the team area behind the coaching staff. Coaches and substitutes should direct their remarks to their own team and not address opponents or officials. Coaches who leave the coaching and team areas to engage in dissent or confrontations with the opposing team or coaching staff are at risk of ejection under Rules 12.7.7.1 and 12.7.7.2.
- 2. Video Review Expanded.** After the successful implementation of an experimental rule last season, video review has been expanded this year to include penalty kicks (whether called or not called on the field), direct red card situations (whether issued or not on the field), determining the proper decision in situations involving stopping a promising attack or denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity and determining whether a goal should be disallowed for an offside offense. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the use of video review is encouraged for Divisions I, II and III of NCAA Soccer. The referee will meet with game administration staff at least 30 minutes before kickoff to confirm if video review equipment is available and that the equipment is in good working order.
- 3. Proper Implementation of Substitution Rules.** Officials are reminded to ensure that the proper procedure for players entering and exiting the game must be followed in accordance with Rule 3.8. Officials must be ready to stop the clock for substitutions in the final 15 minutes of the second half when the game is tied or when the team in the lead makes a substitution. Division 1 men's substitution rules are different from Division I women's, Division II and Division III. Officials must know the rules for the match they are officiating. *(Note: In a men's games where one of the teams is from Division I and the other is not, the substitution rules for the home team's Division shall be followed unless the teams mutually agree otherwise.)* Officials should confirm which substitution rules will be used before the game begins.

- 4. Correctly Identifying Violent Behavior I, Violent Behavior II and Fighting Infractions.** Violent Behavior I (Rule 12.7.9.1) 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 12.7.9.2) 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 12.7.10.1) is 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. In the case of Fighting and Violent Behavior II, the referee is required to inform the player(s), head coach(es), and the official scorekeeper, who shall record on the official NCAA box score form that an ejection for Violent Behavior II or Fighting has been issued. Referees are encouraged to use video review when needed to ensure that offenses for Violent Behavior I, Violent Behavior II and Fighting are properly adjudicated.
- 5. Reckless Fouls/Excessive Force Fouls.** It is important to remember that players are student athletes, and their safety is always the top priority. With that in mind, the following definitions are important. A foul is reckless when a player acts with disregard for the danger or consequences to an opponent. A caution is required for unsporting behavior. A foul involves excessive force when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent. An ejection is required for Serious Foul Play, Violent Behavior I or Violent Behavior II.
- 6. Editorial Rewrite of NCAA Soccer Rules Book.** In addition to the NCAA Rules Changes made for 2024, the NCAA Rules Book has undergone a series of editorial revisions to document prior rulings of the Secretary-Rules Editor and to clarify language where possible. As such, it is recommended that all stakeholders of NCAA soccer (players, coaches, officials, administrators, etc.) take the time and read the revised 2024 NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Book.