



**NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations**  
**2024 Season, Volume 1**  
**Rich Grady, Secretary-Rules Editor**

This update includes issues addressed up to August 19, 2024.

1. **Rules Book Clarifications/Corrections.** Please note the following clarifications/updates.
  - a. **Rule 3.5.2.** For Division 1 Men only, a team must have a substitution moment remaining in order to use the reentry option, unless it is to return a goalkeeper who was substituted for under Rule 3.7.
  - b. **Rule 3.8.7.** For Division 1 Men only, players will not be charged with a substitution entry or the team charged with the use of a moment if the coach changes their mind about when to make a substitution. This will mirror the professional rules on which this concept is based, so that teams are only charged with substitutions when it takes place.
  - c. **Rule 9.3.2.** The underlined language should be inserted following this statement; “In case of temporary suspension of play due to an injury, striking an official as in 9.2.3 or any other cause, there shall be a dropped ball.” “If play was suspended with the ball in the penalty area or was last touched in the penalty area, it shall be dropped for the goalkeeper. If play was suspended with the ball outside the penalty area, it shall be dropped for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the location where the ball was last touched, provided it was not in the penalty area. If play was suspended as the result of the ball striking an official or other object outside the penalty area, it shall be restarted with a dropped ball for a player of the team that last touched the ball, at the location where the ball struck an official or other object on the field of play. In all cases, the ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped: (1) the ball was in the penalty area; or (2) the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area. The ball is in play when it touches the ground; however, if the ball is played before it touches the ground, the referee shall drop it again.”
  - d. **Rule 12.1.5.** The final sentence of this section should read: “An ejection is required unless Rule 12.4.9 applies.”
  - e. **Rule 12.3.1.2.Note.** Should read as follows: “Goalkeepers cannot be guilty of stopping a promising attack or denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity in this situation unless the handling is also a violation of 12.3.2.6.”
  - f. **Rule 12.4 Cautions.** The following cautions are noted elsewhere in the rules book, but should editorially be added here as well:
    - i. Reckless fouls (Rule 12.1.2)
    - ii. Unsporting behavior (Rule 5.6.4)
2. **Religious head coverings.** Please note that Rule 4.5.3 specifically permits players to wear religious head coverings, provided they are not considered dangerous to any player.
3. **Hydration Breaks.** Hydration breaks are mandatory when the threshold is met. In addition, please note the following:
  - a. Additional hydration breaks may be taken at the discretion of the referee.
  - b. Decisions on delaying or postponing the start of a game due to weather conditions (including, but not limited to heat) are at the discretion of the institution and/or conference.

- c. Officials should work in consultation with the appropriate host institution personnel and not make unilateral decisions.
  - d. Playing rules (duration of game and substitution restrictions) cannot be waived by mutual agreement.
- 4. **IFAB Changes.** The NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee did not adopt the IFAB changes to DOGSO handling and penalty kick encroachment. While these may be added at a later date, they are not currently in effect, and even the professional leagues in the United States that are currently playing will not adopt these changes until their next season.
- 5. **Team and Coaching Areas.** Teams and conferences dealing with field dimensions that make it impossible to mark the team and coaching areas properly should proactively contact the National Coordinator of Officials, John Collins ([ncaasoccerofficials@gmail.com](mailto:ncaasoccerofficials@gmail.com)), and the Secretary-Rules Editor, Rich Grady ([ncaasoccersre@gmail.com](mailto:ncaasoccersre@gmail.com)), to problem solve.