



**NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations**  
**2024 Season, Volume 3**  
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This update includes issues addressed up to September 9, 2024.

1. **Correctly identifying who has committed misconduct.** So far this season, there have already been seven successful protests for mistaken identity. The errors have fallen into two different categories:
  - a. The officials issue the card to the incorrect player during the match, especially in games without video review. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring, officials should maintain focus on who has committed the misconduct. Most mistakes occur when the guilty player quickly leaves the vicinity of the incident and another player who is standing close by winds up with the card.
  - b. The official scorer has incorrectly recorded the information and the officials have not corrected the box score. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring, officials should follow the correct procedure for showing a card; including, isolating the player so that the scorekeeper can identify who is being shown the card. Following the game, it is imperative that officials verify the information in the box score, confirming both the number and the team of any players or other team personnel who were issued cards during the match.
2. **Ejection Reports.** Officials should make sure that the conduct described in the ejection report matches the corresponding incident. When there are discrepancies in the report, that undermines the credibility of the officiating team.
3. **Substitutions and Clock Management.** In Division I men's games where a substitution moment pass is being used to document the use of a moment, teams should have the pass completed prior to asking for the substitution. If everything goes smoothly and there is no undue delay, the clock should continue to run unless it is required to stop by rule. If there is an excessive delay, officials should stop the clock so that playing time is not unfairly consumed or manipulated.
4. **Injured players attended to on the field.** Under Rule 5.6.7.1 Injuries to field players, "If medical personnel are beckoned to attend to the player(s), the referee shall instruct the player(s) to leave or be removed from the field of play. The team may elect to substitute for the injured player(s) at this time. If the team elects not to substitute, the injured player(s) may reenter the game (after being beckoned by the referee) during the run of play or at any stoppage of play, including times for normal substitutions." There is no exception to allow injured field players to remain on the field after being attended to if a card was issued on the play. Instead, this is a free substitution for the team that does not require the use of a moment (DI Men) or count as an entry (everyone else).
5. **Substitutions (non-DI Men).** When players have checked in prior to the ball going out of play, they must enter the game at the next available opportunity or else they are charged with a substitution entry. Officials must refrain from asking coaches if they want to delay the substitution to a more appropriate restart, as this practice is contrary to NCAA soccer rules.

**6. Substitutes entering the field during goal celebrations.** The joy of celebrating a goal is an important part of the game; however, officials are expected to exercise discretion and good judgment in deciding when to issue a yellow card for the offense of entering the field without permission during the goal celebration. Cautions are expected when the offense is egregious, such as:

- Substitutes running all the way across the field to the far touchline.
- Substitutes running near opposing players.
- Substitutes running a significant distance onto the field.
- The entire bench goes onto the field (in this case, pick an individual to caution).

Cautions are not normally expected when:

- Substitutes are a few yards onto the field and no opponents are nearby.
- The celebration is at or near the corner flag closest to their coaching and team area on the bench side touchline

In all cases, taunting or ridiculing of the opposing team should not be tolerated, regardless of where it occurs.