



NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations
2024 Season, Volume 5
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This update includes issues addressed up to October 29, 2024.

1. **Substitutes Entering the Field While Celebrating a Goal.** Rule 1.12.5 states: “No person(s) other than the players legally in the game are allowed on the field of play without permission from the referee.” Rule 12.4.1 lists entering the field without permission as a cautionable offense. Please note the final sentence of 12.4.1, “This includes substitutes and bench personnel who leave the coaching or team area, consistently fail to remain within the coaching or team area, and/or enter the field without permission.” [This clip](#) from a recent match illustrates the problem. [Here](#) is another clip of a similar incident.

While the officials noted the actions of the substitutes in both clips, they applied the wrong punishment according to the rules. In both cases, the head coach was issued a yellow card. In the second clip, the head coach was ejected because this was their second caution of the match. NCAA rules require the caution(s) to be given to the person who committed the offense. There is no provision under NCAA rules to caution a head coach for actions committed by players, substitutes or other team personnel. In the cases above, each of the substitutes who ran onto the field should be cautioned. There is a difference between substitutes celebrating with players at the corner flag nearest to their bench and substitutes running all the way across the field or through the other team’s bench area to celebrate. Cases of the latter two examples must be punished.

2. **Card Accumulation and Suspensions.** Please see the following for a concise explanation of accumulation thresholds. If conferences or teams are in any doubt about a situation, they should contact the Secretary-Rules Editor immediately.
 - a. Regular season accumulated cautions (Rule 12.5):
 - Five (5) cautions in one season = suspension from the next regularly scheduled game.
 - Three (3) additional cautions in one season (8 total) = suspension from the next regularly scheduled game.
 - Each two (2) additional cautions (10 total, 12 total, etc.) = suspension from the next regularly scheduled game.
 - Suspensions carry over to postseason (conference tournament/NCAA tournament) and/or the next season if the team doesn’t participate in postseason.
 - b. Postseason accumulated cautions (Rule 12.6). *Note: Regular season caution accumulation carries into postseason (conference tournament/NCAA tournament):*
 - Eight (8) cautions from regular and postseason combined = suspension from the next postseason game (or the first regularly scheduled game of the following season).
 - If a player enters postseason with four (4) or fewer cautions, they are not required to serve a suspension until they reach their 8th caution.

- Each two (2) additional cautions (10 total, 12 total, etc.) = suspension from the next postseason game (or the first regularly scheduled game of the following season).
- Cautions do not carry an immediate ejection even if a threshold listed above is met during the game. Players are permitted to continue playing for the entirety of that game.
- A second caution issued to a player in the same game results in a red card, which requires immediate ejection.

c. Ejections

- All red card ejections = immediate ejection and at least a one (1) game suspension.
- Red card ejections for violent behavior II (Rule 12.7.9.2) and fighting (Rule 12.7.10) = immediate ejection and a two-game suspension. (The length of suspension is appealable).
- Red card ejections for assaulting a referee (Rule 12.7.11) = immediate ejection and a three-game suspension.
- A second red card ejection in the same season (regular season and postseason combined) results in an additional game suspension, and the same applies to each successive ejection thereafter (Rule 12.8.1).
- Two (2) red card ejections in the same season for violent behavior II, fighting or referee assault (or any combination) will result in suspension for the remainder of the season (Rule 12.8.1.3).
- All suspensions must be served during the next postseason game(s) or the first regularly scheduled game(s) of the following season).

3. Overtime Rules for Postseason.

- a. There will be a maximum of two ten-minute sudden-victory overtime periods. Teams will change ends after the first overtime period. If a goal is scored, the game is over.
- b. The clock will stop on all substitutions during overtime.
- c. Players who are substituted during any overtime period may not return during that period unless one of the exceptions in Rule 3.7 applies
- d. *For Division 1 Men Only:* Teams will retain any unused substitution moments from regulation time. Each team will receive an addition moment for use during overtime. This is one moment for all of overtime, not one moment per overtime period.

4. Penalty Kick Tiebreakers.

- a. Any non-ejected player on the roster may be selected to participate.
- b. Teams must designate either: 10 kickers and a goalkeeper who will not kick, or 10 kickers including the goalkeeper. *Note: This designation is the same regardless of how many ejections may have occurred during the game.*

- c. Once designated, the goalkeeper can only be replaced if injured or ejected. The replacement will be from any of the eligible players on the roster.
- d. Unless there are weather or safety considerations, the choice of which goal to shoot at shall be by the toss of a coin.
- e. Teams will only eliminate a kicker from the order if there is an ejection to the opponent during the tiebreaker
- f. If the game is still tied after all 10 kickers from each team have participated, teams may change the order of kickers for the next set of kicks.
- g. Video review may only be used to determine if the ball completely crossed the goal line. It may not be used to determine the legality of actions by the kicker or the goalkeeper.
- h. All warnings and cautions given during regulation and overtime carry over to the tiebreaker.