



NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations
2025 Season, Volume 1
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This update includes issues addressed up to August 28, 2025. Additional video examples can be found on the NCAA Soccer Center Circle Central Hub on RQ+ in the 2025 NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations Volume 1 document.

1. **IFAB Changes.** The NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee has adopted the IFAB changes to DOGSO handling and penalty kick encroachment for the current season. Detailed guidance for these changes can be found [here](#). Please note that the new eight second rule adopted by IFAB **is not** approved for use in NCAA soccer. Even the professional leagues in the United States that are currently playing will not adopt this change until next season. Officials should continue to enforce the six second rule (12.3.1.1) as they have done in the past. Officials are encouraged to be proactive and, where possible, warn before penalizing under 12.3.1.1.
2. **Players Deliberately Leaving the Field.** Players are permitted to leave the field briefly without asking permission during the course of play provided they return in a timely manner. Examples include an attacker who steps off the end line to avoid being called offside, a player who runs beyond a boundary line after dribbling or passing the ball past an opponent, or a player who has fallen to the ground. Players are not permitted to deliberately leave the field in order to deceive an opponent and gain an unfair advantage.
3. **Fitness/Strength and Conditioning Coaches.** Rule 1.12.3 requires coaches, players and bench personnel to remain inside their coaching and team areas with exceptions for players who are warming up in preparation for subbing into the game. Coaches may be with the players outside the team area to assist in stretching and physical preparation. While outside the coaching area, these coaches must refrain from coaching the players who are in the game or from engaging in comments to the officials or the opposing team.
4. **Errors on Ejection Reports.** Officials must make sure they select the proper team when submitting ejection reports. Ejections have incorrectly been attributed to institutions who were not involved in the game. In addition, officials must make sure that the institution selected matches the write up in the narrative. For example, the dropdown menu shows the ejection as a player from school A, when the narrative lists the player from school B. Ejection reports automatically generate emails to coaches, athletics department administrators and conference office personnel, so it is imperative that the reports are done accurately.
5. **Violent Behavior I vs. Violent Behavior II.** The ruling on protest #1 for this season has generated some debate. Rule 12.7.10.2 states, "Violent behavior II 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 are not limited to, head butting, elbow to the face or head, stomping, kicking a defenseless person, hair pulling, spitting at, coughing at/on or biting an opponent or any other person." With the exception of spitting, coughing at or biting, which are always Violent Behavior II by rule,

the other acts mentioned as examples are not automatically Violent Behavior II. The Violent Behavior II designation is reserved for actions that premeditated and put the opponent at a significant risk of injury.

6. **Video Review.** Video Review is a valuable tool to assist in game control. Early in the season, some trends that need to be addressed have become apparent.
 - a. **Overreliance on Video Review.** The intent of video review is to prevent major errors. It is not to re-referee the game. The emphasis must be on getting the decision on the field correct prior to going to review. If a decision is obvious, going to review in order to placate the coaches unnecessarily delays the game and opens up the possibility for further dissent.
 - b. **Pregame Communication with Coaches.** Officials must be cognizant that not all games will have video review. Early in the season, especially in non-conference games, officials should inform both coaches whether or not video review will be used for the game. There is no requirement that the coaches agree, as Rule 5.7.1 requires the use of video review if the equipment is available. However, it is considered a best practice to make sure that all parties are aware that video review is being used.