



2025 Soccer Rules Changes

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Men’s and Women’s Soccer Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. All rules changes are effective with the 2025 season.

Rule	Recommendation and Rationale
	Rule 12
Ejections 12.7	<p>To eliminate red cards for non-deliberate ball handling in the penalty area that denies a goal or goal scoring opportunity. Inside the penalty area, red cards are reserved for deliberate, cynical handling.</p> <p><i>Note: There are no changes to how this will be interpreted outside the penalty area.</i></p> <p>Rationale: To align with new IFAB Laws of the Game. Non-deliberate handball offences are usually the result of a player attempting to play fairly, so when a penalty kick is awarded for such offences, the same philosophy should apply as for offences (e.g., fouls) which are an attempt to play the ball or a challenge for the ball (i.e., DOGSO offences result in a yellow card and SPA offences result in no card). Deliberate ball handling remains a red-card offence when a penalty kick is awarded, as it is similar to holding, pulling, pushing or not attempting to play the ball, etc.</p>
	Rule 14
Infringements 14.3	<p>To amend encroachment by teammates of the kicker or goalkeeper during a penalty kick is only punished if it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Directly impacts an opponent, orb. plays the ball or challenges an opponent for the ball and then scores or prevents a goal, attempts to score or prevent a goal, or creates or stops a goal-scoring opportunity. <p>Rationale: To align with new IFAB Laws of the Game. Player encroachment can be difficult to detect and manage. Encroachment rarely affects the outcome of the kick, the same principle should apply to player encroachment as to goalkeeper encroachment (i.e., it is penalized only if it has an impact).</p>