



## 2025 MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCCER RULES BOOK SIGNIFICANT EDITORIAL CHANGES

*Note: The rules listed below are major additions/clarifications that have been part of interpretations or custom but have not appeared in the rules book. There have been many minor editorial changes to clean up language and eliminate wordiness.*

Rule	Change	Description
3.5.2	Clarification	<u>Exception: 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.</u>
3.7.3	Interpretation	<u>Note: Neither the opposing coach nor the game officials need to know the specific medical condition. The physician's statement covered above is sufficient documentation.</u>
3.8.7	Clarification	<u>Exception: 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 chooses not to make a substitution after potential substitutes have reported to the nearest official.</u>
5.6.7.1	Clarification	<i>Injuries to field players.</i> 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. <u>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.</u> If a team elects not to substitute and the player is unable to return, the substitute may enter at the next stoppage of play. If the referee signals the clock to be stopped to assess a player's injuries and it is determined that medical personnel are not beckoned, the player(s) does not have to leave the field.

9.3.2	Interpretation	After temporary suspension of play: 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. <u>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.</u> 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. In all cases, all other players (of both teams) must be at least 5 yards away.
12.1.5	Correction	Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity. Fouls that stop a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity. Factors to consider in whether an obvious goal scoring opportunity exists include: the distance from goal; the general direction of the attack; the likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball; and the location and number of defenders. An ejection is required unless <u>Rule 12.4.9</u> applies.
12.3.1.2 Note	Correction	Note: 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 Rule <u>12.3.2.6</u> .
12.4	2025 Rules Change	<u>12.4.9 Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offense against an opponent in the penalty area where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offense that was an attempt to play the ball;</u>

		<p><u>12.4.10 Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a non-deliberate handling offense;</u></p> <p><u>12.4.11 Stopping a promising attack. This includes situations where:</u></p> <p><u>12.4.11.1 The opponent has speed, space and options to exploit,</u></p> <p><u>12.4.11.2 The foul is blatant or cynical in nature, or</u></p> <p><u>12.4.11.3 One or more elements of denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity are not present.</u></p> <p><u>Note 1: In situations where the referee applies advantage, the promising attack is still considered to be present, and the referee shall not return to issue a caution when play stops.</u></p> <p><u>Note 2: In situations where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offense where the defender was attempting to play the ball, no caution shall be issued for stopping a promising attack because the penalty kick has restored the promising attack.</u></p> <p><u>12.4.12 Unsuccessfully attempting to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity. Note:</u>  <u>If the referee plays advantage in a denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity situation, the punishment is downgraded to a caution, which shall be issued when the ball next goes out of play;</u></p> <p><u>12.4.13 Fouling an opponent in a reckless manner (Rule 12.1.2);</u></p> <p><u>12.4.14 Exhibiting unsporting behavior (Rule 5.6.4).</u></p>
12.7	2025 Rules Change	<p><u>12.7.2 Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by handling the ball outside the penalty area in violation of 12.2.8;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.3 Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately or cynically handling the ball inside the penalty area in violation of 12.2.8 (except a goalkeeper within their own penalty area);</u></p> <p><u>12.7.4 Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity outside the penalty area to an opponent whose overall movement is toward the offender's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.5. Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offense against an opponent in the penalty area where the referee awards a penalty kick if;</u></p>

		<p><u>12.7.5.1 The offense is holding, pulling or pushing.</u></p> <p><u>12.7.5.2 The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball.</u></p> <p><u>12.7.5.3 The offense is one that is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g., serious foul play, violent behavior I or II, etc.).</u></p> <p><u>12.7.6 Playing the ball a second time after a throw-in, goal kick or free kick to deny an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.7 Engaging in hostile or abusive language, gestures or harassment that refers to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national origin;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.8 Engaging in other abusive, threatening or obscene language, behavior or conduct, including;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.8.1 Leaving the coaching or team area to argue with game officials.</u></p> <p><u>12.7.8.2 Entering the opponent's coaching or team area in an aggressive or confrontational manner.</u></p> <p><u>12.7.9 Receiving a second caution in the same game;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.10 Committing Violent behavior I and II;</u></p> <p><u>12.7.10.1 Violent behavior I is an unwarranted excessive act or use of force when not challenging for the ball. It may be against anyone (for instance, opponent, teammate, official or spectator), the behavior may be on or off the field of play, and the ball may be in or out of play.</u></p> <p><u>12.7.10.2 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. See Rule 12.8.1.1 for suspension requirements (two games for first offense).</u></p> <p><u>12.7.10.2.1 The referee shall inform the player(s), the head coach(es) and the official scorekeeper, who shall record on the official NCAA box score form, that an ejection for violent behavior II has been issued.</u></p>
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14.2.1	Clarification	<p><u>14.2.1 The penalty kick shall be taken from any place on the penalty line or spot. Only those players legally in the game at the time the penalty kick is awarded may take the penalty kick.</u></p>
14.3.1	2025 Rules Change	<p>14.3.1 Defending team.</p> <p><u>14.3.1.1 For encroachment by a teammate of the goalkeeper, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not resulted only if the encroachment clearly impacted the kicker; or the encroaching player plays the ball or challenges an opponent for the ball.</u></p> <p><u>14.3.1.2 For an infringement by the goalkeeper, the kick shall be retaken if the ball is saved by the goalkeeper. If the goalkeeper commits an infringement but the kick misses the net or rebounds from the post or crossbar, the kick shall only be retaken if the goalkeeper's actions clearly impacted the kicker.</u></p> <p><u>PENALTY—(14.3.1.1 to 14.3.1.2)—The referee should not stop play for violations of 14.3.1.1 or 14.3.1.2 until after the penalty kick is completed and it clear that a goal has not been scored. If a goal is scored, the infraction shall be ignored.</u></p>
14.3.2	Clarification	<p><u>PENALTY—(14.3.2.1 to 14.3.2.3)—The referee shall stop play as soon as the violation occurs and award defending team an indirect free kick from the penalty spot.</u></p>

14.3.4.2	2025 Rules Change	<u>14.3.2.4 If a member of the attacking team enters the penalty area or the restraining arc before the kick is taken, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has resulted only if the encroaching player's actions clearly impacted the goalkeeper. If a goal has not resulted, play shall be stopped and a free kick awarded to the defending team from the spot where the infringement occurred only if the encroaching player clearly impacted the goalkeeper, plays the ball, or challenges an opponent for the ball.</u>