NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations
2026 Season, Volume 7
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This update includes issues addressed up to November 18, 2026. Additional video examples can be found on the NCAA Soccer Center Circle Central Hub on RQ+ in the 2026 NCAA Soccer Rules Questions and Interpretations Volume 7 document.

1. **Kicker Behavior During Penalty Kick Tiebreaker.** Rule 12.4.5 still applies during the tiebreaker. Any player who engages in taunting or ridiculing another player must be cautioned. Here are multiple examples from a recent NCAA tournament game:
   a. In this example, the kicker advances into the goal area and taunts the goalkeeper after scoring.
   b. In this example, there is no need for the kicker to walk an additional 10 yards to confront and ridicule the goalkeeper.
   a. In this example, the kicker walks directly toward the goalkeeper and engages in a disrespectful manner.
   b. In this example, the kicker walks all the way to the goal line to confront the goalkeeper.

   Each of these examples should have resulted in a caution to the offender. Unfortunately, only two of the four actions were cautioned. These actions are being done to unnerve the goalkeeper and gain an unfair advantage. Contrast the above examples with the winning kick from the same match. As soon as the ball goes in the goal, the player immediately runs to celebrate with their team. Officials are expected to be vigilant, proactively explain the expectations, and enforce the rules.

2. **Goalkeeper Behavior During Penalty Kick Tiebreaker.** Goalkeepers are expected to take their position on the line and not cause undue delays. The same expectations regarding taunting apply to them.
   a. In this example, the goalkeeper deliberately kicks the ball away after the kicker has placed it. This is an egregious act designed to intimidate and disconcert the kicker. The goalkeeper is correctly cautioned. However, the behavior after saving the kick, which included running past the kicker while screaming at them and gesturing, was not addressed properly. This should have resulted in a second caution and an ejection.
   b. Goalkeepers are also not permitted to act in a way that unfairly distracts the kicker. When this occurs prior to the kick, the referee can shut down the kick before it is taken to correct the behavior and then permit the kick to proceed normally. In this example, the movement of arms and feet is perfectly acceptable. The screaming at the kicker is not appropriate. Because a goal is scored, the goal will count. In this example, the kick is unsuccessful, and the kick should be retaken, as the goalkeeper's actions will be presumed to have impacted the kicker. In both cases, the goalkeeper should be cautioned for unsporting behavior.