



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISIONS II AND III MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCCER RULES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 3-5, 2026, ANNUAL MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2026 and 2027 seasons. The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee requests approval from the Divisions II and III Playing Rules Oversight Panel:

a. Field Dimensions (Rule 1.1).

- (1) Recommendation. Increase the maximum width of the field of play from 75 yds to 80 yds.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This aligns with the International Football Association Board (IFAB) maximum suggested width for international matches.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Field Markings and Measurements – Commercial Logos (Rule 1.3.6).

- (1) Recommendation. Permit up to four (4) commercial logos (two in each half of the field), not larger than 15-foot-by-15-foot square, on the field provided they are not in the penalty area and do not obscure any required field markings.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. To increase revenue opportunities for institutions and to align with other NCAA sports that permit commercial advertising on the playing surface.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

c. When Substitutes Are Allowed (Rule 3.4.2).

- (1) Recommendation. Permit substitutions at any time the clock is stopped. *Note: This is currently permitted for Division I men.*
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This will help speed up the game by allowing substitutions at a time when the game is already stopped.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

d. Permissible Equipment (Rule 4.5.7).

- (1) Recommendation. Devices for the collection of data may be worn on the wrist or arm if properly taped down and padded.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This will expand opportunities for data collection while also making sure the devices are not considered dangerous to any player.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Varies depending on types of equipment.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

e. The Referee – Discretionary Power (Rule 5.6.7).

- (1) Recommendation. If a player from each team seeks medical evaluation or is treated on the field after a penalty kick has been awarded, both players can remain on the field.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This avoids a situation where a forward who might otherwise take the kick is forced to leave the game after seeking medical evaluation or treatment while the goalkeeper can remain.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

f. Video Review (Rule 5.7.1).

- (1) Recommendation. Permit the following changes to Video Review procedures as follows:
(1) Referees can initiate a review at any time for timing issues or for the ball crossing the endline; (2) All other reviews will require a coach's challenge; (3) Each team will have two challenges per match; and (4) If a team is out of challenges, the referee can initiate a review on their own during the last 10 minutes of regulation or in overtime
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This will eliminate uncertainty over when a review should take place and will reduce unnecessary reviews. Coaches will have more control over the decision to review a play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

g. Video Review (Rule 5.7.3).

- (1) Recommendation. Permit the addition of the following offenses by the attacking team as reviewable play situations: (1) A foul prior to the scoring of a goal; (2) A foul or an offside prior to the award of a penalty kick or the issuing of a red card for Denial of an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity; (3) and Offside prior to the scoring of a goal.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Increases fairness and aligns with current practice under IFAB.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

h. Timekeeper (Rule 6.3.5).

- (1) Recommendation. During the last 15 minutes of the second half, when there is a margin of five (5) or more goals, the clock will only stop for serious injuries and video reviews. Normal timing rules will resume if the margin drops below five (5) goals. *Note: This does not apply for Division I men.*
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This will avoid unduly prolonging the game when games have become non-competitive.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

i. Inclement Weather Policy, Expiration of Time (Rule 7.8).

(1) Recommendation. Unless agreed to by the teams or determined by the governing sports authority, no game may be started if more than three hours have elapsed between the scheduled start time and the all clear being given. Once the all clear is given, teams shall have adequate warm up time. Once a game has been started and suspended, no game may be resumed the same day if more than three hours have elapsed between the first suspension of play and the all clear being given for the first and all subsequent delays unless the teams or the governing sports authority have agreed to a longer waiting period. The teams and/or governing sports authority may agree to resume a suspended game at a later date. If teams have hard departure deadlines necessitated by travel considerations, these shall be communicated to the governing sports authority as soon as possible.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This extends the window for teams to resume games the same day and allows for more games to be completed.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

j. Goalkeeper Delay (Rule 12.3.1.1).

(1) Recommendation. If goalkeepers hold onto a live ball for more than eight (8) seconds, a corner kick will be awarded. *Note: The official will visually and verbally count down the last five (5) seconds.*

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This will reduce the amount of time consumed by goalkeepers holding onto the ball. This aligns with IFAB in terms of the count and the penalties for violations.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

k. Cautions (Rule 12.4.3.1 & 12.4.3.2).

(1) Recommendation. Cautions shall be issued to the head coach when: (1) Multiple substitutes run through the opposing team's bench area or illegally enter the field beyond the immediate vicinity of the touchline during the celebration of a goal; (2) and Misconduct punishable by a caution takes place in the coaching or team area and the individual offender cannot be located. Cautions shall be issued to assistant coaches and other bench personnel when they argue with officials.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Improve accountability for poor behavior and reduce dissent.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

l. Accumulated Cautions (Rule 12.5.1.1).

(1) Recommendation. All yellow cards issued to bench personnel during a game shall be charged against the head coach for the purposes of accumulation. *Note: During a game, a head coach is not penalized for cards given to assistants, but the totals after the game shall reflect the accumulation of all cards to the coaching staff.*

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This will encourage head coaches to ensure that their assistants are behaving appropriately.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

m. Ejections - Violent Behavior II, Fighting and Referee Assault (Rule 12.7.10, 12.7.11, & 12.7.12).

(1) Recommendation. While these rules remain in place, the determination will now be made after the game by a committee of NCAA Soccer Officiating staff rather than be the referee on the field. The referee's job will simply be to issue the red card and describe the incident. The committee will examine the report and video and decide if the criteria for Violent Behavior II, Fighting, or Referee Assault have been met.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This will lead to greater consistency and accuracy. Referees will no longer have to decide in the moment and will not have to go to video review to determine how to categorize an ejection.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

n. Suspensions and Illegal Participation (Rule 12.8).

(1) Recommendation. Permit the following penalty for failure to serve a suspension: (1) Two game suspension for the individual; (2) Two game suspension for the head coach; (3) and Forfeit of each game that the suspended individual improperly participated in.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Encourages greater accountability and restores a team consequence for failure to serve a suspension.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

o. Suspensions and Illegal Participation (Rule 12.8.1).

(1) Recommendation. Each ejection carries its own penalty, but additional games will not be added for each subsequent ejection beyond the first.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Eliminates a rule that was excessively punitive. Conference and institutions may still choose to impose penalties beyond the ones imposed by rule.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** Brandon Koons, chair of the Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee, welcomed the committee and invited guests and thanked them for their time.
2. **Review schedule, agenda and committee operations.** The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee reviewed the meeting schedule, agenda and operations manual, which included the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, the federated rules process for Division I, Division II and Division III, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines. The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee was reminded of the directive of PROP from 2014. This directive encourages all to strongly consider providing at least a one-year delay for institutions, particularly those with members from Division II and Division III, before implementing any rules changes that have financial or facility implications.
3. **Approval of the 2025 NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee annual meeting report and the December 17, 2025, videoconference report.** The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee approved the December 17, 2025, report as written. The 2025 NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee annual meeting report was provided as informational.
4. **Joint meeting of Division I Men's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, Division I Women's Soccer Rules Subcommittee and Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.**
 - a. **NCAA Sport Science Institute Injury Surveillance.** The Division I Men's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, Division I Women's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, and Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee heard a report from the NCAA Sport Science Institute Injury Surveillance and the Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention. This report included information on injury rates, injury distributions and injury mechanisms.
 - b. **National Federation of State High School Associations report.** The Division I Men's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, Division I Women's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, and Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee heard a report from the NFHS, which included areas of potential rules changes for the next season and the state of the sport for participants and officials for the federation.

- c. National coordinator of officials report.** The Division I Men's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, Division I Women's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, and Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee received a report from the national coordinator of officials.
- d. Active official report.** The Division I Men's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, Division I Women's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, and Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee received a report from the active official.
- e. Secretary-rules editor report and trends report.** The Division I Men's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, Division I Women's Soccer Rules Subcommittee, and Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee received a report from the secretary-rules editor, including a review of statistics from the 2025 NCAA soccer season which includes data from previous seasons.
- 5. Review 2026 and 2027 rules proposals, 2025 rules survey results, committees' feedback and editorial change proposals.** The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee reviewed and considered several rules proposals as noted above in the Action Items section of this report.
- 6. Future annual meeting and videoconference schedule.** The next videoconference is scheduled for March 18, 2026, at Noon eastern time. The next videoconference is scheduled for March 18 at Noon Eastern time.
- 7. Selection of chair.** The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee tabled the selection of the chair until a future meeting.
- 8. Other business.** No other business was discussed.
- 9. Adjournment.** The Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee adjourned at 12:00 p.m. Eastern time on February 4, 2026.

Committee Chair: Brandon Koons, Otterbein University, Ohio Athletic Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Stanley Broaden, Championships and Alliances, Playing Rules and Officiating

NCAA Divisions II and III Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee February 3-5, 2026, Annual Meeting
Attendees:
Sarah Arsenault, Gannon University.
Rich Grady, secretary-rules editor.
Kate Harney, Vermont State University-Johnson.
Brandon Koons, Otterbein University.
Jack Shafer, Widener University.
Kim Sutton, California State University, Chico.
Rob Walker, Saint Martin's University.
Matthew Wolf, Bethany College (West Virginia).
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Parick Brtitz, South Atlantic Conference.
Kody Campbell, The Datalys Center.
Avinash Candran, The Datalys Center.
Julie Cochran, National Federation of State High School Associations.
John Collins, national coordinator of officials.
Daniel Radford, active official.
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
Stanley Broaden.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
LaGywn Durden, Greg Johnson, Mallory Mickus and Alyssa Rice.