



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCCER RULES COMMITTEE  
MARCH 16-18, 2020, ANNUAL MEETING TELECONFERENCE**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative items.**

- **None.**

**2. Nonlegislative items.** The NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2020 and 2021 seasons. The committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) for the following items:

**a. Coaching and Team Areas (Rule 1.12.4).**

(1) Recommendation. To allow members of the official coaching staff to communicate with each other via electronic devices.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To allow members of the official coaching staff, per NCAA bylaws, to communicate with each other whether on-site or at another location. It is almost impossible to enforce this rule as currently written with today's technology.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**b. Video Review (New Rule 5.7.3.5).**

(1) Recommendation. To allow video review to be used to correct timing issues.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Timing issues can be a game critical event and easily corrected with the use of video review. This is the fifth situation that could be reviewed.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**c. Protest (Rule 5.8.1).**

- (1) Recommendation. To limit a postgame protest to only situations involving player identification or illegal participation by ejected or suspended student-athletes, coaches and team personnel.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Soccer is one of only a few sports that allows a postgame protest. While the protest rule was well-intended when it was implemented in 2007, over the years the process has been used to complain about the officiating in a game and question calls based on referee judgment. Prior to the 2019 season, the rules committee produced an educational video to remind the membership that protests may only be filed for specific reasons. Unfortunately, once again about 70 percent of filed protests were based on referee judgment and therefore not valid. Limiting the protest to only those situations listed above will still allow player eligibility situations to be corrected.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**d. Restarts (Rules 9.3.2.1 through 9.3.2.4).**

- (1) Recommendation. To change the restart procedures for when a ball is in and outside the penalty area. All other players (of both teams) must be at least five yards away from the player taking the restart. Also requires a drop ball if the ball touches a referee (or another match official) and goes into the goal, team possession changes or a promising attack starts.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To align with IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game and add consistency at the various levels of play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**e. Accidental Handball (Rule 12.1.7.1).**

- (1) Recommendation. To delete the current language and replace with: It is an offense if a player gains possession or control of the ball after it has accidentally touched their hand or arm and then immediately: (1) scores in the opponents' goal; (2) creates a goal-scoring opportunity; or (3) scores in the opponents' goal directly from their hand or arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To align with IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game and add consistency at the various levels of play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**f. Violent Behavior I and II and Fighting (New Rules 12.7.4.2.2 and 12.7.4.2.3 and Rule 12.7.4.9.1).**

- (1) Recommendation. To redefine the fighting rule and create a violent behavior I and II red card to better categorize violent actions. The penalty for a violent behavior I red card remains an immediate ejection and one-game suspension. The penalty for both a fighting and violent behavior II red card is an immediate ejection and a two-game suspension.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Violent acts such as head butting, elbow to the face or head, stomping, etc. were previously categorized as fighting, but have been recategorized into a violent behavior II red card with the same penalty (immediate ejection and two-game suspension). By recategorizing these acts into a violent behavior II red card, fighting is now more traditionally defined and will hopefully cause less confusion.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**g. Free Kicks – How Taken (Rules 13.2.2 and 13.2.3).**

- (1) Recommendation. Where three or more defending team players form a wall, all attacking team players must remain at least one yard from the wall until the ball is in play. An attacking player could not participate in a wall with the opposing team. When a free kick is awarded to the defending team in the penalty area, the ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving the penalty area.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To align with IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game and add consistency at the various levels of play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**h. Penalty Kicks – How Taken (Rule 14.2.3).**

- (1) Recommendation. Until the ball is kicked, the opposing goalkeeper shall remain on the goal line with at least part of one foot touching or in line with the goal line, facing the kicker, and between the goal posts without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net, and is permitted to move laterally (that is, from side to side).
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To align with IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game and add consistency at the various levels of play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**i. Goal Kick – How Taken (Rules 16.2.1, 16.2.2 and 16.2.3).**

- (1) Recommendation. The ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving the penalty area. Players of the team opposing that of the player taking the goal kick shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is kicked.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.

- (3) Rationale. To align with IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game and add consistency at the various levels of play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

- 1. Welcome and announcements.** The chair welcomed the committee and thanked them for their time and flexibility with conducting the annual meeting via teleconference instead of in-person. It was noted that the PROP liaison for men's and women's soccer would be participating in a portion of the meeting to hear the discussion.
- 2. Review schedule, agenda, committee operations manual and Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) directive.** The meeting schedule and agenda were reviewed. The committee also reviewed the committee operations manual, which included the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines. The committee was reminded of the directive of PROP from 2014. This directive encourages all rules committees to strongly consider providing at least a one-year delay for Divisions II and III institutions before implementing any rules changes that have financial or facility implications.
- 3. Approval of Nov. 26, 2019, teleconference report.** The committee reviewed and approved the Nov. 26, 2019, teleconference report as written.
- 4. NCAA Injury Surveillance Program data and report.** The committee heard a presentation on the soccer injury data provided by the Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention. Injury rates and injury distributions (by body part, diagnosis, mechanism of injury, injury activity and injury position) have all remained the same over time. The committee requested additional information on injury rates in overtime games and games following overtime games, the breakdown of injury rates by season segment, and whether it is possible to track injury rates during set pieces. Datalys will review the injury data and send a revised report, if appropriate.
- 5. PROP report.** The committee reviewed the report from PROP's annual meeting in January. In response to the topic on the NCAA bylaw that requires the same playing rules for all three divisions, the committee discussed the concept of identifying administrative rules that could potentially differ by division when appropriate. The committee noted that it is supportive of exploring this concept and thought substitutions could be considered administrative. NCAA

staff informed the committee that Steve Card, PROP liaison to the committee, would be participating in a portion of the meeting to hear the discussions.

- 6. National coordinator of officials report.** The committee heard a report from the national coordinator of officials, which included a note that 2019 clinic attendance doubled from 2018, an update on planning for the upcoming clinics, information on the continued collaboration, communication and educational efforts being made with the other officiating groups, and the plan for compiling video clips on potential rules changes to use for education for the upcoming seasons.
- 7. Secretary-rules editor report.** The committee heard a report from the secretary-rules editor and reviewed a summary on the 581 formal rules inquiries received during the season. The majority of the inquiries were on Rules 5 (video review/protest) and 12 (ejections/suspensions), which is consistent with past years. The committee also reviewed the 49 protests received this season. Seven of the protests were granted. As part of the review of the protests, the committee discussed the educational video that was produced before the start of the 2019 season that was intended to remind the membership on what was a valid protest. Since the majority of filed protests were once again denied based on referee judgment, the committee took action to change the protest rule to limit postgame protests to only situations involving player identification and illegal participation by ejected or suspended personnel. In addition, the committee discussed whether it would be feasible for the secretary-rules editor to review red cards or video of certain situations to ensure the correct call was made similar to how it is done in the professional leagues. The secretary-rules editor and committee agreed it would not be feasible for the secretary-rules editor to review all 1,400 red cards nor should that precedent be set. However, the committee did note that institutions and conferences continue to have the ability to impose additional penalties once a game has ended. The secretary-rules editor also reviewed other rules that the committee should discuss as part of its review of potential rules changes.
- 8. United Soccer Coaches report.** The committee heard a report from the United Soccer Coaches, which focused on statistics related to overtime and golden goal.
- 9. National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) report.** The committee heard a report from the NFHS on the 15 rules changes approved by the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee and NFHS Board of Directors.
- 10. Statistical trends and red card data.** The committee reviewed the statistical trends, which included year-to-year comparative data on goals, assists, overtime/tie games, yellow and red cards, and fouls. As part of this review, the committee discussed the elimination of overtime during the regular season and how this may impact selections.

- 11. Review of 2019-20 rules survey results.** The committee reviewed the 2019-20 rules survey results in conjunction with discussion on corresponding rules change proposal. The committee noted it was pleased that 75 percent of head coaches responded to the survey.
- 12. Review of rules proposals and discussion items.** The committee reviewed and considered 126 rules proposals. The committee approved nine major rules changes for the 2020 and 2021 soccer seasons, as noted above in the Action Items section. The major rules changes included changes to accidental handballs, free kicks, penalty kick and goal kicks to align with the IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game, allowing members of the official coaching staff to communicate with each other via electronic devices whether on-site or at another location, allowing video review to be used to correct timing issues, limiting the postgame protest procedure to only situations involving player identification or illegal participation by ejected or suspended personnel, and redefining the fighting rule and creating a violent behavior I and II red card to better categorize violent actions. The committee also reviewed: 1) suggested editorial changes to the current rules book, 2) a letter from a Division II conference on concerns about the significant penalty on a head coach for illegal participation by ejected or suspended personnel (Rule 12.8.1 Penalty 1), 3) a history of protests since 2009 as part of its discussion on changing the protest rule, and 4) a comparison of ejection and suspension rules in soccer and other sports as part of its discussion on violent behavior I and II and fighting red cards. As part of the committee's review of the comparison of ejection and suspension rules, the committee noted soccer rules seem to be the "harshest" in that an ejection is always followed by a suspension. The committee stated it would like to include eliminating the mandatory one-game suspension for certain red cards on the fall 2020 rules survey. Other survey items include: 1) requiring players in the bench area to be seated unless warming up, 2) allowing non-coaches (statisticians, trainers, etc.) who are off-site to communicate with coaches during the game, 3) allowing the clock to be stopped in the last two minutes of the game for any foul committed by the winning team, 4) eliminating overtime during the regular season (also survey student-athletes on this topic), and 5) the use of a different color of card for violent behavior II, fighting and referee assault since those actions have additional suspension requirements.
- 13. Future annual meeting and teleconference dates.** The committee scheduled a teleconference April 10 to discuss the comment period results. The committee scheduled its 2021 annual meeting for March 15-16 in Indianapolis.
- 14. Secretary-rules editor hiring process.** The committee was updated on the timeline for replacing the current secretary-rules editor when his term expires Aug. 31, 2022. As part of the committee's request to PROP to extend the current secretary-rules editor's term to 2022, it also requested a two-year shadow period for the incoming secretary-rules editor. Therefore, the search will begin summer 2020 with the replacement being announced before the fall 2020 soccer season. It was noted committee members may be requested to serve on the hiring team.

**15. Selection of chair.** The committee tabled the selection of chair decision until the April 10 teleconference.

**16. Other business.** The outgoing committee members were recognized and thanked for their service to the committee and the Association.

**17. Adjournment.** The committee adjourned Wednesday, March 18, at 3 p.m. Eastern time.

*Interim Committee Chair:* Mike Kemp, University of Nebraska Omaha, The Summit League  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Ashlee Follis, Championships and Alliances

| <b>NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee<br/>March 16-18, 2020, Annual Meeting Teleconference</b> |
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| <b>Attendees:</b>   |
| Ken Andres, secretary-rules editor.   |
| Nikki Ayers, Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges.  |
| Tiffany Christian, College of William & Mary.   |
| Hope Clark, Young Harris College.   |
| Mike Kemp, University of Nebraska Omaha.  |
| Tony McCall, Regis University (Colorado).   |
| Kevin Sherry, Louisiana Tech University.  |
| John Trask, University of Wisconsin-Madison.  |
| <b>Absentees:</b>   |
| Mike Singleton, Washington and Lee University.  |
| <b>Guests in Attendance:</b>  |
| Steve Card, Western Washington University.  |
| Avinash Chandran, Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention.                               |
| Ryan Cigich, national coordinator of officials.   |
| Rob Kehoe, United Soccer Coaches.   |
| Christina Unkel, active official.   |
| Theresia Wynns, National Federation of State High School Associations.                                    |
| <b>NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:</b>  |
| Ashlee Follis.  |
| <b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>  |
| LaGwyn Durden and Greg Johnson.   |