



MEMORANDUM

August 11, 2021

VIA EMAIL

TO: NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Conference Commissioners, Directors of Athletics,
Senior Woman Administrators and Head Coaches.

FROM: Tiffany Christian, chair
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee

Rich Grady, secretary-rules editor
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Soccer Playing Rules Reminders for the 2021 Season.

With the 2021 season rapidly approaching, the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee would like to bring your attention to the following items:

1. Passing of Ken Andres, Longtime Secretary-Rules Editor: Ken Andres, who served as NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Secretary-Rules Editor since 2011, passed away on June 24. Prior to his appointment as secretary-rules editor, Ken was a longtime referee and served in many leadership roles with NISOA. Ken was a recognized leader in the soccer world and will be remembered for his knowledge of the game, teaching abilities and the relationships he built. He has been inducted into many Halls of Fame, including the NISOA/National Soccer Hall of Fame, which further shows his passion and dedication to intercollegiate soccer. Ken's passing is a true loss for intercollegiate soccer and he will be deeply missed. Rich Grady assumed the position of NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Secretary-Rules Editor on July 19. See below for Rich's contact information.
2. COVID-19 Rules Change/Waivers: The Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee and Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) approved extending the following COVID-19 rules change and waivers from the 2020 season to the 2021 season.
 - a. Rules Change – Rules 12.7.4.2, 12.7.4.8.2 and 12.8.1.1 – Enhance the spitting at or biting an opponent or any other person penalty to a two-game suspension and categorize it as a violent behavior II red card. Add coughing at an opponent or any other person to this rule and also categorize it as a violent behavior II red card. All ejection and suspension rules related to violent behavior II will apply, including a two-game suspension for the first offense.
 - b. Waiver – Rule 1.12.2 – Allow the coaching and team area to be extended beyond 20 yards from the five-yard neutral zone measured from the halfway line in both directions, if available.

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- c. Waiver – Rule 5.5.2 – If using a paper official NCAA box score, allow the referee to visually/verbally verify the information is correct rather than requiring a signature (this is the same process for electronic box scores).
3. Rules Book Corrections/Changes: The 2020 and 2021 Rules Book Corrections/Changes document has been updated to reflect PROP’s approval of increasing the maximum size of commemorative, memorial, conference and institutional logos/patches and national flags from 2¼ to 4 square inches. The full list of corrections/changes may be viewed [here](#).
4. Handball Clarifications/Interpretations: The Men’s and Women’s Soccer Rules Committee clarified handball interpretations for the 2021 season. For the purposes of determining offside offenses, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. Not every touch of a player’s hand/arm with the ball is an offense. A player is penalized for deliberately touching the ball with their hand or arm. A player will be penalized for touching the ball with their hand/arm when it has made their body unnaturally bigger. A player is considered to have made their body unnaturally bigger when the position of their hand/arm is not a result of, or justifiable by, the player’s body movement for that specific situation.
5. Other Interpretations: Due to COVID-19, institutions may have continued restrictions on fan attendance at games during the 2021-22 season. Therefore, the interpretation permitting piped-in artificial crowd noise will be extended to the 2021-22 season with five stipulations. An interpretation on an injured player during the tiebreaker period has also been issued. These interpretations may be viewed [here](#). This document will be updated throughout the season as new interpretations are issued.
6. Penalties for Illegal Participation: Knowing in some cases it has been many months since your last soccer game, institutions are reminded that pursuant to Rule 12.8, ejected and suspended personnel, including players, coaches and team personnel, cannot participate in the next regularly scheduled game(s) and suspensions carry over from the previous playing season. In this case, the previous playing season could be the fall 2019, fall 2020 or spring 2021 season. Depending upon the reason for the suspension, the suspension period may include more than one game. This rule also applies to transfer student-athletes.

As a reminder, the penalty on a head coach for participating or allowing an ejected or suspended player or assistant coach to illegally participate in a game was enhanced beginning with the 2018 season. The enhanced suspension for the head coach applies in all instances when illegal personnel participates in a game, including red card or yellow card accumulation suspensions. Note that the appropriate penalty will be imposed regardless of the circumstances and even if the mistake was made unintentionally or if there was a lack of knowledge of the rules. To assist in ensuring ejections and suspensions are appropriately served, the NCAA Soccer Red Card Depository will continue to track red cards issued and send notifications to conferences and institutions alerting the conference commissioner,

NCAA MEMORANDUM

August 11, 2021

Page No. 3

director of athletics and head coach when a red card has been issued. Division I conference soccer administrators are also included on the email.

7. ArbiterSports Center Circle Registration: Head coaches are again encouraged to register on the [NCAA Soccer Center Circle](#). It continues to be free for head coaches and houses rules interpretations, clarifications, announcements and updates issued during the season. Officiating updates, clarifications and videos are also posted to Center Circle. If you registered last year, you would need to re-register this year to continue having access to all of the important information.

Should you have any rules questions, please contact Rich Grady, NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Secretary-Rules Editor, at ncaasoccersre@gmail.com or 847-644-1206.

Thank you in advance for your support.

TC/RG:af

cc: Division I Conference Soccer Administrators
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee
NCAA Registered Soccer Referees
Selected NCAA Staff Members