



MEMORANDUM

August 24, 2020

VIA EMAIL

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

FROM: Mike Singleton, chair
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee

Ken Andres, secretary-rules editor
NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Soccer Playing Rules Reminders for the 2020-21 Academic Year.

Although this soccer season will be different for many institutions and conferences, the Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee would like to bring your attention to the following items as you prepare for your fall or spring soccer season:

Rules Change/Waivers for the Fall 2020 Season due to COVID-19: As communicated previously, the Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee and Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) approved the following rules change and waivers for the fall 2020 season due to COVID-19. The rules committee and PROP will continue to monitor any additional developments and make adjustments as appropriate.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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).

Commemorative/Memorial Patches: PROP also approved allowing commemorative/memorial patches and nameplates on the uniform for all sports to acknowledge student-athletes may want to use the uniform to express support of racial and social justice. More information, including allowed patches/nameplates and size restrictions, is available [here](#).

Other Rules Changes: As a reminder, the rules committee and PROP also previously approved a number of rules changes for the 2020 and 2021 seasons through the normal two-year rules cycle

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that may be viewed by clicking [here](#). The rules committee would like to draw your attention to the following rules changes in particular:

- Rule 1.12.4 – Members of the official coaching staff, who are eligible to participate, are permitted to communicate with each other via electronic devices whether on-site or at another location.
- Rule 5.7.3.5 – Video review may be used to correct timing issues.
- Rule 5.8.1 – A postgame protest is limited to only situations involving (1) player identification; or (2) illegal participation by ejected or suspended personnel.
- Rules 9.2.3 to 9.3.2.3 – Restarts and dropped balls were changed to align with IFAB procedures.
- Rules 12.7.4.2.2, 12.7.4.2.3 and 12.7.4.9.1 – Redefined fighting and created 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 (and a red card for spitting at, coughing on, or biting an opponent or any other player per the COVID-19 rules change outlined previously) is an immediate ejection and a two-game suspension (for the first offense).
- Rules 13.2.2 and 13.2.3 – Free Kicks. When three or more defenders form a wall, all attacking players must remain at least one yard from the wall until the ball is in play. When a free kick is awarded to the defending team in the penalty area, the ball is in play when it is kicked.
- Three additional rules changes were made to align with IFAB (FIFA) Laws of the Game.

2020 and 2021 Rules Books: Each conference and institution should have received a complimentary hardcopy of the 2020 and 2021 Men’s and Women’s Soccer Rules Book. The electronic version of the rules book, which may be downloaded for free, will be updated within the next week to reflect rules corrections and additions made since the printing of the hardcopy. To view the updated electronic version and to order additional hardcopies of the rules book, please visit www.ncaapublications.com.

ArbiterSports Center Circle Registration: Head coaches are encouraged to register for the ArbiterSports Center Circle website to view rules clarifications, announcements and interpretations issued during the season. Officiating updates and clarifications are also posted to Center Circle throughout the season. Registration continues to be free for all head coaches and can be accessed through the following steps:

1. Access Center Circle by clicking [here](#).
2. Click on the “Registration” tab.
3. Click on the “Coaches” icon.
4. Proceed through the registration process.
5. If you have any registration issues or questions, please contact ArbiterSports at success@arbittersports.com.

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Should you have any rules questions, please contact Ken Andres, NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Secretary-Rules Editor, at kandres.ncaasre@gmail.com or 856-816-1687.

Thank you in advance for your support.

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