



SOCCKER

UPDATED APRIL 24, 2025
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2024 AND 2025
RULES BOOK

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CONCUSSION

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2024 and 2025 NCAA MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOCCER RULES

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



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NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee

The chart below lists the members of the committee who voted on and approved the rules included in this edition of the book. This information is being included for historical purposes.

Name	Institution	Term Expiration
Josh Berlo	University of Denver	8-31-28
Brandon Bianco, chair	Denison University	8-31-25
Amy Calabrese	University of Louisville	8-31-27
Eric Crawford	Georgia Southwestern State University	8-31-27
Rich Grady*	Secretary-Rules Editor	8-31-25**
Brandon Koons	Otterbein University	8-31-26
Michael Seabolt	Missouri State University	8-31-28
Courtney Sirmans	Miami University (Ohio)	8-31-26
Kim Sutton	California State University, Chico	8-31-26

* Non-voting member

**Eligible for reappointment

For a complete and current listing of the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee, please go to ncaa.org/playingrules.

Contact information for the secretary-rules editor and national coordinator of officials is available on [Page 8](#).

Major Rules Changes for 2024 and 2025

Listed below are references to rules that were significantly altered from the last edition of the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Book. Rules changes are identified by a shaded background.

Ball Pressure (Rule 2.1.3). Eliminates the ball pressure psi specifications and requires ball pressure to conform to the manufacturer's recommendations printed on the ball.

Game Roster (Rules 3.2.1 and 6.3.4). Requires the game roster, with starting players designated, to be given to the opposing coach, referee and scorekeeper not later than 15 minutes before game time.

Stopping the Clock (Rules 3.8.8 and 6.3.5.4). Requires the clock to be stopped on all substitutions if the game is tied or if the leading team makes a substitution in the final 15 minutes of regulation play and all of overtime.

Video Review (Rules 5.7.3.7, 5.7.3.8, 5.7.3.9 and 5.7.3.10). Expands video review to include (1) all potential penalty kick situations, (2) all straight red card situations (an ejection for two yellow cards is not reviewable), (3) denial of obvious goal-scoring opportunities situations, and (4) any potential offside violation in goal-scoring situations.

Postseason Overtime (Rule 7.2.1). Reinstates sudden victory (golden goal) during postseason overtime.

The following rules changes apply to Division I men's competition only.

Substitutions (Rule 3.4.3). Allows teams six moments to make substitutions in a game.

Substitutions (Rule 3.4.3). Allows substitutions to occur during any stoppage of play.

Substitutions (Rule 3.5.1 Exception). Eliminates reentry in the second half for field players and makes all periods the same (no reentry).

MAJOR RULES CHANGES FOR 2025

Ejections (Rule 12.7). Eliminates red cards for non-deliberate handling in the penalty area that denies a goal or goal scoring opportunity. Inside the penalty area, red cards are reserved for deliberate, cynical handling.

Infringements (Rule 14.3). Amends encroachment by teammates of the kicker or goalkeeper during a penalty kick is only punished if it directly impacts an opponent (1) by playing the ball or challenging an opponent for the ball and then scores or prevents a goal; or (2) attempts to score, prevents a goal or creates or stops a goal-scoring opportunity.

Significant Editorial Changes

Note: The rules book was rewritten and reorganized to eliminate approved rulings (A.R.s) and incorporate language into the appropriate rules. The rules listed below are major additions/clarifications that have been part of interpretations or custom but have not appeared in the rules book. There have been many minor editorial changes to clean up language and eliminate wordiness.

Rule	Change
1.9.6	Interpretation
1.12.1 and 1.12.2	Clarification
2.2	Clarification
2.3 Exception	Clarification
3.1 PENALTY	Interpretation
3.6	Clarification
5.7.4.5	Clarification
6.2	Alternate official changed to fourth official
6.3.5.8 and 6.3.5.9	Clarification
7.6.2	Clarification
12.1.1 to 12.1.5	Clarification
12.2.4	Clarification
12.2.8	Interpretation from 2023
12.3.1.2 Note	Clarification
12.4.5 Note	Clarification
12.4.10 and 12.4.11	Clarification
12.7.7.1 and 12.7.7.2	Interpretation

For a complete and current listing of the Interpretations and Clarifications, please go to [ncaa.org/playingrules](https://www.ncaa.org/playingrules) and then click [Soccer Rules of the Game](#).

The Rules

The NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules have been designated as either administrative or conduct rules. Typically, administrative rules are those dealing with preparation for competition. They may be altered by prior written mutual consent of the competing institutions. Conduct rules are those that pertain directly to the competition. These rules may not be changed by mutual consent. All NCAA member institutions are required to conduct their intercollegiate contests according to these rules. In the 2024 and 2025 Men's and Women's Soccer Rules, the administrative rules are Rules 1.1.4, 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.8, 4.2.5, 5.4.5, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4.2, 10.4.3, 10.5 and 10.6. All other rules are conduct rules.

Rules violations requiring the filing of the NCAA Red Card/Ejection Form refer to the report that must be submitted electronically within 24 hours after the completion of the game through the NCAA website (ncaa.org/playingrules) and then click [Soccer Rules of the Game](#)). See Rule [12.7](#) for more information.

The NCAA Protest Form is also housed on the NCAA website (ncaa.org/playingrules) and then click [Soccer Rules of the Game](#)). See Rule [5.8](#) for more information.

STATEMENT OF SPORTSMANSHIP

The NCAA promotes good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Profanity, racial or sexist comments, or other intimidating actions directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the site of competition.

GOVERNING SPORTS AUTHORITY

References to game authority or governing sports authority throughout the rules book generally refer to directors of athletics of the participating institutions, conference commissioners or any other office that has jurisdiction over the game in question. **Governing sports authorities may not alter the rules of conduct as stated in this book (for example, rescinding violations and misconduct rules before, during and after a contest and altering overtime procedures to accommodate a conference's postseason tournament).** For NCAA championships, the respective NCAA committee is the game authority.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The secretary-rules editor is the sole interpreter of the NCAA soccer playing rules. Those seeking requests for documentation of disability (see [Appendix D](#)) or religious accommodations, rule exceptions, interpretations or clarifications of the soccer rules may contact:

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RULE 1

The Field of Play

1.1 DIMENSIONS

1.1.1 The field of play shall be rectangular, with a length of 115-120 yards and a width of 70-75 yards. The optimum size is 120 yards by 75 yards.

1.1.1.1 Facilities used as a college soccer field before 1995 need only to be rectangular, the width of which shall not exceed the length. Resurfacing the playing field does not change this exemption.

1.1.2 If the field dimensions are smaller than recommended, it is the responsibility of the home team to notify the visiting team prior to the date of the game regarding the actual playing dimensions.

1.1.3 A team is not required to play on a field that is not in compliance with the rules. However, the teams can agree to play the game by mutual consent. It is recommended that teams agree on any changes in facility issues before confirming contests or signing game contracts.

PENALTY—The game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.1.4 *Indoor Facility.* It is permissible to conduct collegiate soccer games in an indoor facility provided the dimensions are in compliance with Rule 1.1.

1.1.4.1 Balls striking any part of the upper edifice shall result in a dead ball. Play shall be restarted with a drop ball to the opponent of the team that last touched the ball prior to it striking the edifice from where the ball was last touched. If the ball was last touched by the attacking team inside the penalty area, play shall be restarted by dropping the ball for the goalkeeper. If the ball was last touched by the defending team inside the penalty area, play shall be restarted by dropping the ball to the attacking team outside the closest penalty area boundary line to where the ball was last touched.

1.2 BOUNDARY LINES

The field shall be marked with distinctive lines, in accordance with the Plan of Field diagram on [Page 10](#), the longer boundary lines being called the touchlines and the shorter the end lines. The end lines shall meet at the corners and shall extend from touchline to touchline. The goal lines shall be that part of the end line that extends completely across the area between the goal posts. The touchlines shall extend the entire length of the field. The home team is responsible for proper marking of the field.

PENALTY—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.3 FIELD MARKINGS AND MEASUREMENTS

1.3.1 All lines, which are part of the areas they define, shall be the same width and measure not less than 4 inches nor more than 5 inches in width.

PENALTY—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.3.2 Measurements shall be taken from the outside of the line to the outside of the line with which it interfaces. However, when measuring the width of the goal and penalty areas, the measurements shall be taken from the inside of the goal post to the outside of the 6- and 18-yard lines, respectively.

1.3.3 In the case of a field that is playable but on which, during the course of the game, the lines and markings have become invisible due to snow or other such conditions, the lines and markings shall be assumed to be present and decisions rendered accordingly.

1.3.4 All lines shall be clearly marked but may not be of a form (for example, grooves, curbs or other items) that could prove dangerous to players.

1.3.5 NCAA, team or conference logos, names or abbreviations, and non-commercial logos (e.g., players' names or numbers for senior day) are permitted on the field provided they are not in the penalty area and do not obscure any required field markings.

1.3.6 Two commercial logos (one in each half of the field), not larger than 15-foot-by-15-foot square, are permitted on the field provided they are not in the penalty area and do not obscure any required field markings.

PENALTY—(1.3.2 to 1.3.6)—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.4 HALFWAY LINE, CENTER CIRCLE

A halfway line shall be visibly marked across the entire field of play. The center of the field shall be indicated by a suitable mark, and a circle with a 10-yard radius shall be marked around it.

PENALTY—If there is no halfway line marked, and it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).) If the halfway line is not visible across the entire field, and it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.5 GOAL AREA

At each end of the field of play, two lines shall be drawn at right angles to the end line, 6 yards from the inside of each goal post. These shall extend into the

field of play for a distance of 6 yards and shall be joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area enclosed by these lines shall be called a goal area.

PENALTY—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7.](#))

1.6 PENALTY AREA

1.6.1 At each end of the field of play, two lines shall be drawn at right angles to the end line, 18 yards from the inside of each goal post. These lines shall extend into the field of play for a distance of 18 yards and shall be joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. Each of the spaces enclosed by these lines shall be called the penalty area.

1.6.2 At each end of the field, a 2-foot line or 9-inch spot shall be placed at a point 12 yards from the midpoint of, and parallel to, the goal line. The line shall extend 1 foot on either side of the undrawn center line. The spot shall extend 4½ inches on either side of the undrawn center line. The penalty kick may be taken from any position on this line or spot.

1.6.3 Using the center of this penalty-kick mark, describe a 10-yard arc outside the penalty area and closing on the penalty-area line. This is the restraining line for penalty kicks.

PENALTY—(1.6.1 to 1.6.3)—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7.](#))

1.7 CORNER AREA, HASH MARK

From each corner, a quarter circle, having a radius of 1 yard, shall be drawn inside the field of play. In addition, a hash mark 1 yard in length, situated 6 inches beyond (but not touching) the field of play and 11 yards from the touchline shall be marked perpendicular to the end line at each corner of the field. (See Plan of Field, [Page 10.](#))

PENALTY—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7.](#))

1.8 CORNER FLAGS

1.8.1 A flag on a post not less than 5 feet high and having a nonpointed top shall be placed at each corner; a similar flag post may be placed opposite the halfway line on each side of the field of play, at least 1 yard outside the touchline.

1.8.2 The post shall be approximately 1½ inches in diameter. The corner flag shall not be removed for any purpose during the game. The flag shall be of some bright color, easily distinguishable from the surroundings, and shall be about 2 feet long by 1 foot wide and securely fastened to the post or staff.

1.8.3 The flag post shall be implanted in the ground or shall rise from a pylon that measures not more than 8 inches across at its base, providing the post

itself rises directly above the center of the intersection of the touchline and end line.

- 1.8.4 It is permissible to have the institution, conference or NCAA name or logo on corner flags.

PENALTY—(1.8.1 to 1.8.4)—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.9 GOALS

- 1.9.1 The goals shall be anchored, secured or counterweighted. The goal posts, which shall be superimposed on end lines of the same width and depth, shall consist of two posts, equidistant from the corner flags and 8 yards apart (inside measurement), joined by a horizontal crossbar of similar material, the lower edge of which shall be 8 feet from the ground.

PENALTY—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

- 1.9.2 The width or diameter of the goal posts and crossbar shall not be less than 4 inches nor more than 5 inches, and the same as the width of the goal line.

- 1.9.3 The back edge of the goal post must align with the outermost edge of the end line.

- 1.9.4 The posts and crossbar may be square, rectangular, round or elliptical in shape, and shall be painted white.

- 1.9.5 No markings other than a single manufacturer's identification/logo of appropriate size may appear on the goal posts or the crossbar.

- 1.9.6 On fields where a combination football/soccer goal is used, the ball is considered out of play if it touches any part of the football structure that extends above the frame of the soccer goal. On fields where there is a separate football crossbar that is even with the end line for soccer, the ball is considered out of play if it touches any part of the football crossbar.

PENALTY—(1.9.2 to 1.9.6)—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

1.10 GOAL NETS

- 1.10.1 Nets shall be attached to the uprights and crossbars and secured behind each goal.

- 1.10.2 The goal nets shall be properly and firmly secured and put in order before every game, and care taken that there are no holes or possible openings for the ball to escape. The nets shall be properly supported so that the top of the net will extend backward on a level with the crossbar for a distance of about 2 feet.

- 1.10.3 Nets may be multicolored and include the institution, conference or NCAA name or logo. Additionally, a single manufacturer's identification/

logo of appropriate size may appear on the net. Further, banners shall not be hung from the goals or nets.

PENALTY—(1.10.1 to 1.10.3)—If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7.](#))

1.11 DISPLACED CROSSBAR, GOAL POST

If any part of the goal becomes displaced during the game, play shall be suspended, and every effort shall be made to repair or replace the goal. If, in the referee's opinion, it cannot be repaired to its original condition within a reasonable period of time, the game shall be suspended. When the goal is repaired or replaced, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball where it was when play was suspended; or, if the ball was in the penalty area, it shall be dropped for the goalkeeper.

1.12 COACHING AND TEAM AREAS

1.12.1 There shall be a coaching area marked parallel to the touchline and situated at least 5 feet from the touchline beginning at least 5 yards from the extension of the halfway line and extending 20 yards toward the corner flag on that end of the field. The coaching area shall have a depth of at least 5 feet.

1.12.2 There shall be a team bench area marked parallel to the touchline and beginning at least 5 yards from the extension of the halfway line and extending 20 yards. The line marking the back edge of the coaching area shall be considered the front edge of the team bench area.

PENALTY—(1.12.1 to 1.12.2)— If it cannot be corrected before the start of competition, the game shall begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7.](#)) In the absence of lines, cones shall be used to demarcate the boundaries of the coaching and team areas.

1.12.3 Coaches, players and bench personnel shall remain inside their respective coaching and team areas. **Exceptions:** (1) *Players warming up in preparation to enter the field of play are permitted to use the area that extends beyond the respective area nearest their bench and opposite their opponent's areas. (See [Rule 4.1.6.](#))* (2) *Athletic trainers and coaches may enter the field only if instructed to do so by the referee; however, it is not permissible to provide coaching instruction to any player(s) while attending an injured player(s).* (3) *A member of the coaching staff who is listed on the game roster is permitted to view the game from the press box or other suitable areas.*

PENALTY—Caution or eject as appropriate and restart play by an indirect free kick from the location of the ball (if in play) at the time of the infraction. Exception: Nearest point outside goal area if ball was in goal area when infraction occurred.

1.12.4 Members of the official coaching staff who are eligible to participate are permitted to communicate with each other via electronic devices, tablets, dry erase boards or other coaching aids during the game.

- 1.12.4.1 Electronic devices may not be used to question decisions made by game officials.
- 1.12.4.2 Coaches who are ejected or serving a game suspension are not permitted to communicate with other members of the coaching staff via electronic devices or any other means of communication.
- 1.12.4.3 Drones may not be used at any time from the beginning of warmups through the conclusion of the game.
- 1.12.5 No person(s) other than the players legally in the game are allowed on the field of play without permission from the referee. Athletic trainers and coaches may enter the field only if instructed to do so by the referee.
- 1.12.6 No coach, player or team representative other than the team captain shall approach or speak to the center referee during an interval between periods, unless summoned by the center referee.

Note: This does not prohibit the coach from approaching an assistant referee or the fourth official on the sideline in a sporting and timely manner.

PENALTY—(1.12.5 to 1.12.6)—Warn, caution or eject as appropriate.

1.13 PHOTOGRAPHERS' LINE

There shall be a designated photographers' area. (See Plan of Field, [Page 10](#).)

1.14 SCOREKEEPER'S/TIMEKEEPER'S TABLE

If the scorekeeper and timekeeper are not located in a press box, they shall be placed at a table on the same side of the field as the team benches, situated equidistant between the two team benches and at least 10 feet (whenever possible) from the touchlines.

1.15 SPECTATOR RESTRAINING LINE

All spectators should be behind a rope, fence or some form of demarcation that is a minimum of 20 feet (whenever possible) from the touchlines and end lines.

1.16 SCOREBOARD AND CLOCK

It is recommended that an electronically controlled clock and scoreboard, which can be seen by spectators and both benches, be provided and maintained in proper working order. (See [Rule 6.3.1](#).)

1.17 LIGHTING

The field should be uniformly and adequately lighted. Lighting engineers shall be placed in charge of this important factor when planning new installations. Please consult the latest version of the NCAA Broadcasting Manual at ncaa.org for specific lighting standards.

1.18 GRADING, SLOPE OF FIELD

- 1.18.1 The rules of conduct in the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules do not specify, nor do they legislate, matters pertaining to the areas surrounding the field of play, or the slope or grading of playing facilities.
- 1.18.2 The following guidelines appear to be generally accepted standards for new facilities: It is preferable that surfaced drained native soil grass fields have a slope of 1.5% from the center of the field toward the touchlines. For vertically draining sand-based grass fields and synthetic turf fields, it is preferable that they slope at less than .75% from the center of the field toward the touchlines. Architectural engineers shall be consulted with reference to the actual height references that pertain to grading percentages or broken-back construction.

RULE 2

The Ball

2.1 DIMENSIONS

- 2.1.1 The circumference of the ball shall not be more than 28 inches nor less than 27 inches.
- 2.1.2 The weight of the ball at the start of the game shall not be more than 16 ounces nor less than 14 ounces, and the weight shall not exceed 16.75 ounces even when wet and used.
- 2.1.3 The ball pressure shall conform to the manufacturer's recommendation printed on the ball.

2.2 STYLE, SHAPE AND MATERIAL

The ball shall be spherical, the outer casing of which shall be leather or approved synthetic, and no material shall be used in its construction that might prove dangerous to players. There are no restrictions on the color of the ball. Not fewer than five balls, furnished by the home team, shall be available for use in a game, and the balls shall be identical in size, make, grade and color. If the home team is unable to furnish balls that meet the requirements above, the referee may obtain the appropriate number of game balls from the visiting team.

PENALTY—The game shall not begin and the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)

2.3 DEFECTIVE BALL

In the event the game ball becomes defective, the referee shall suspend play, replace the ball and restart the game by dropping the ball where it was when play was suspended; or, if the ball was inside the penalty area, it shall be dropped for the goalkeeper. **Exception:** *If the ball becomes defective during the taking of a penalty kick, at a kickoff, corner kick, goal kick, free kick or throw-in, the restart shall be retaken. For the purposes of this rule, restarts include kickoffs, free kicks, penalty kicks, goal kicks, corner kicks and throw-ins.*

RULE 3

Players and Substitutes

3.1 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

The game shall be played by two teams of 11 players each, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. A minimum of seven players are required to start and finish a game. If a player is ejected prior to the beginning of the game, the team will still play with 11 players and the ejected player(s) may be replaced on the game roster. The NCAA playing rules do not limit the number of players who may dress for or participate in a game, although such limitations may be imposed by a conference or by an NCAA Championships Committee during NCAA postseason.

PENALTY—If a team plays with more than the permitted number of players, the extra player(s) shall be removed from the field and cautioned. Play shall be restarted with an indirect free kick to the non-offending team from the place the ball was when play was stopped, subject to the restrictions in [Rule 13](#), unless the ball was out of play when the extra player(s) was discovered, in which case the original restart will apply. In cases where a goal is scored by the team with the extra player(s), the goal shall be disallowed if the offense is discovered before the subsequent kickoff is taken. If the offense is not discovered until after the kickoff is taken, the goal counts.

3.2 GAME ROSTER

3.2.1 Not later than [15](#) minutes before game time, each team shall submit an official NCAA game roster to the official scorekeeper, [referee and opposing coach](#). The roster shall include:

3.2.1.1 Designated starters;

3.2.1.2 Names and jersey numbers of all players (it is recommended that once assigned, each player retain the same number throughout the season);

3.2.1.3 The name(s) and number(s) of the suspended player(s) and date(s) of the suspension(s); and

3.2.1.4 The total number of cautions and ejections of all players, coaches and other bench personnel from the beginning of regular season. **Exception:** *The copy given to the referee shall not include the information listed in Rule 3.2.1.4.*

PENALTY—The game shall not begin until the appropriate information is provided.

- 3.2.2 Anyone in the team and coaching areas must be identified on the game roster. Individuals not listed on the game roster are not eligible to participate in that game, including any overtime periods or penalty kick tiebreaker.

Note: If during the game there is a question about whether a player is listed on the game roster, officials shall confer with the official scorekeeper and both coaches to make a determination.

PENALTY—If it is determined that a player is not listed on the roster, the player, who may be replaced, shall be instructed to leave the game and is not eligible to further participate in that game, overtime periods or tiebreaker. The referee shall file a written report with the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7.](#))

- 3.2.3 If a player's name appears on the roster with an incorrect number, a correction to the number, with no penalty imposed, may be made when the discrepancy is discovered. Any goals or assists recorded by the player incorrectly numbered will stand.
- 3.2.4 If a player whose name is not listed on the roster scores a goal, that player shall be removed from the game, and the goal nullified regardless of when the discrepancy is discovered, provided the discovery occurs before the end of the game. If the discovery is made during an overtime period, the goal scored during regulation will be nullified and the opposing team declared the winner. If the discovery is not made until after the conclusion of the game, the final score will remain as it was at the conclusion of the game.

3.3 NUMBER OF SUBSTITUTES

Either team may substitute up to 11 players at a time under the conditions set forth in Rule 3.4.

3.4 WHEN SUBSTITUTES ARE ALLOWED

See [Rule 3.4.3](#) for substitution rules for Division I men.

- 3.4.1 Substitutes must have reported to the official scorer or nearest official and remained near the halfway line prior to the ball going out of play in order to substitute on a:
- 3.4.1.1 Goal kick;
 - 3.4.1.2 Team's own throw-in (the opposing team also may substitute if their substitutes have checked in prior to the ball going out of play); or
 - 3.4.1.3 Team's own corner kick (the opposing team also may substitute if their substitutes have checked in prior to the ball going out of play).
- 3.4.2 Substitutes may enter the game without checking in prior to the ball going out of play:
- 3.4.2.1 After a goal has been scored;
 - 3.4.2.2 Between periods;
 - 3.4.2.3 When a player has been cautioned (In the case of a player(s) being cautioned, the coach may only substitute for the player(s) cautioned. If such a substitution is made, the opponent shall have the opportunity to make an equal number of substitutions at that time.);

- 3.4.2.4 When a goalkeeper has been ejected (In the case of a goalkeeper being ejected, their team shall play short, and the coach may substitute for the ejected goalkeeper only. If a substitution is made, a field player shall be removed, and the opposing team shall not substitute at that time.);
- 3.4.2.5 When a player has been instructed to leave the field for an equipment change (Only the player(s) with the equipment problem may be replaced. The opponent may replace an equal number of players at the same time.);
- 3.4.2.6 In the event of an injury (In the event of an injury, only the injured player(s) may be replaced. The opponent may replace an equal number of players at the same time.); or
- 3.4.2.7 When a player has a permanent medical condition as per Rule 3.7.3 (When notified by the documented player, a coach or the primary athletics health care provider that the player requires a substitute for medical reasons related to the identified condition, the referee shall stop the game and permit a substitution.).
- 3.4.3 For Division I men only, each team is permitted six substitution moments during a game. A moment may be used during any stoppage of play, and up to 11 players per team may be substituted for in each moment per Rule 3.3. If a team is only substituting players under the exceptions of Rule 3.7, that shall not count as a moment. If a normal substitution is made at the same time as one under the exceptions of Rule 3.7, that shall count as a moment. For postseason overtime games, each team shall retain any unused moments from regulation play and receive one additional moment. Substitutions during intervals between periods do not count as a moment.
- PENALTY—(3.4.1 to 3.4.3)—If it is discovered that a team substituted at an improper time, or did not have a moment remaining (Division I men only), the referee shall stop play, caution, send to the bench and charge with a substitution the player(s) who entered illegally. The players who were substituted for illegally shall return to the game. Play will start with an indirect free kick from the location of the ball at the time the infraction was discovered if play was stopped to deal with the illegal substitution. If the ball was in the goal area, the indirect free kick shall take place on that part of the goal area line that runs parallel to the goal line nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.**

3.5 REENTRY CONDITIONS - SUBSTITUTES

- 3.5.1 *Field Players.* Field players are not permitted to reenter the game in the same period after being substituted for in the first half, the first overtime period and the second overtime period. Field players are permitted one reentry into the game after being substituted for in the second half. Each overtime period is considered a separate half, so a field player who is substituted for in the first overtime period may participate in the second overtime period.

First half: no reentry.

Second half: one reentry.

First overtime period: no reentry.

Second overtime period: no reentry.

Exception: *For Division I men only, a player who has been substituted for may not reenter the game in the same period unless it is for one of the exceptions listed in Rules 3.5.2 or 3.7. This includes overtime, where each 10-minute period is counted as a separate period with no reentry.*

3.5.2 Goalkeepers. Goalkeepers are permitted one reentry after being substituted for in each period of play, including each overtime period. Goalkeepers who move from that position to become a field player and are then substituted for are not eligible for the goalkeeper reentry. Once the original goalkeeper changes positions, the rule for the new position applies.

First half: One reentry.

Second half: One reentry.

First overtime period: One reentry.

Second overtime period: One reentry.

Exception: *For Division I Men only, a team must have a substitution moment remaining in order to use the reentry option, unless it is to return a goalkeeper who was substituted for under Rule 3.7.*

3.6 REENTRY CONDITIONS - TEAM PLAYS SHORT

Field players who left the field as a result of equipment issues (except violations of Rule [4.1](#), [4.3](#) or [4.4](#)) or for illness/injury that are not substituted for (team plays short) may reenter the game (after being beckoned by the referee) during the run of play or at any stoppage of play, including times for normal substitutions, provided they have received clearance from appropriate personnel. The player may reenter from the halfway line on the side of the field where they were removed.

3.7 REENTRY EXCEPTIONS

3.7.1 Players whose injury was caused by an opposing player who was cautioned or ejected in conjunction with the injury may be substituted for and reenter the game in any period at any of the allowable times for normal substitutions. If the team chooses not to substitute for the injured player, the player must still leave the field and may return under the conditions in Rule 3.6. Neither the injured player nor the substitute shall be charged with a substitution.

3.7.2 Players with a bleeding injury, blood on the uniform or signs of a concussion (see [Appendix C](#)) must be removed and may be substituted for. If a player leaves the game for displaying concussion-like symptoms, that player must be cleared by the team physician or their designee according to the concussion management plan. Student-athletes diagnosed with a concussion shall not return to activity for the remainder of that day. (See Appendix C.) If they are substituted for, neither the injured player nor the substitute shall be charged with a substitution. The injured player may return to the game at any of the allowable times for normal substitution, provided they have received clearance from the appropriate medical personnel and this clearance has been communicated to one of the officials. However, if the injured player returns and replaces a player other than the original substitute, that player shall be charged with a substitution.

3.7.3 A player who has a permanent medical condition with the potential to produce serious injury or death through sustained physical exertion (e.g., sickle cell trait) may be substituted at any time when medically necessary and reenter the game without the limitations imposed by Rule 3.5, which limits reentry. This exception may not be used more than one time by an individual student-athlete in a single competition. For example, a player could be substituted in the first half under this provision and return to the game later in that half.

3.7.3.1 To be eligible for this medical reentry exception, the team physician must confirm the medical condition, its potential for producing serious injury or death, and the need for the player to be exempt from Rule 3.5. If the condition is established by a duly licensed physician other than the team physician, documentation must be provided to, and approved by, the institution's team physician. Prior to the start of any game, the primary athletics health care provider or designee (e.g., coach) shall present documentation to the game officials and opposing coach that establishes that the player has been granted a medical exception to the reentry rule.

3.7.3.2 When notified by the documented player, a coach or the primary athletics health care provider that the player requires a substitute for medical reasons related to the identified condition, the referee shall stop the game and permit a substitution. Neither the player nor the substitute shall be charged with a substitution. However, if the documented player replaces a player other than the original substitute, that player shall be charged with a substitution. The documented player may reenter the game (after being beckoned by the referee) at any stoppage of play or at any of the allowable times for normal substitution, provided they have received clearance from the institution's primary athletics health care provider.

Note: Neither the opposing coach nor the game officials need to know the specific medical condition. The physician's statement covered above is sufficient documentation.

3.8 SUBSTITUTES ENTERING THE GAME

3.8.1 When the ball is out of play, the scorekeeper or the fourth official shall indicate that a substitution is desired by using a horn or other noise-producing instrument that is distinct from the referee's whistle.

3.8.2 The referee shall beckon the substitute(s) onto the field as soon as they acknowledge the signal from the timekeeper or fourth official.

3.8.3 Substitutes entering the game do not have to remain at the halfway line until the player they are replacing has departed.

3.8.4 Unless the departing player is injured and cannot leave the field unassisted, the departing player shall leave the field at the halfway line on the bench side of the field.

3.8.5 The substitute becomes a player of record at the moment the referee beckons them onto the field.

3.8.6 The player being replaced remains a player of record until they have left the field. If either the substitute or the player they are replacing is ejected during the substitution process, that team shall play short.

3.8.7 If the coach chooses not to have the substitute enter the field after they are beckoned by the referee, the substitute does not have to enter the game at that time, but they shall be charged with a substitution entry.

Exception: *For Division 1 Men only, players will not be charged with a substitution entry or the team charged with the use of a moment if the coach chooses not to make a substitution after potential substitutes have reported to the nearest official.*

3.8.8 During the final 15 minutes of the second half and during all overtime periods, the timekeeper shall stop the clock as soon as the referee beckons the substitute(s) onto the field if the game is tied or if the leading team substitutes.

3.8.9 If the ball goes out of play prior to the clock going below 15:00 in the second half, the clock shall not stop on the substitution even if the restart of play would occur with less than 15:00 on the clock.

3.8.10 If a substitute enters the field while the ball is in play without the referee's permission, the referee must stop play (not immediately if there is no interference with play or an official or if an advantage develops), caution the substitute and restart the game with a direct free kick from the position of the interference if the substitute interfered with play, or with an indirect free kick from the position of the ball when play was stopped if there was no interference.

3.9 CHANGING GOALKEEPERS

3.9.1 The referee shall be notified when a goalkeeping change is made, either by another player on the field changing places with the goalkeeper or by substitution from the team bench. In the latter case, the referee beckoning on the new goalkeeper is considered notification that a goalkeeping change has been made.

3.9.2 Provided it occurs during stoppage of play, the referee is notified and all other rules pertaining to uniform dress (see [Rule 4.1](#)) are satisfied, a teammate on the field of play may change positions with the goalkeeper.

3.9.3 Provided the referee is notified in advance, a teammate on the field may change places with the goalkeeper for the taking of a penalty kick; however, a goalkeeper substitution from the bench is not permitted.

RULE 4

Players' Uniform and Equipment

4.1 UNIFORMS

- 4.1.1 A field player's uniform shall consist of a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings (including traditional socks or leg sleeves with the feet removed), shinguards and shoes. (See [Rule 4.3.1.](#)) All field players of a team shall wear matching uniforms.
- 4.1.2 Goalkeepers shall wear jerseys that distinguish them from all field players on both teams and stockings that distinguish them from their opponent's field players.
- 4.1.3 Shorts may differ in color from that of the stockings and jerseys but shall be matching in color and uniform in style with teammates. Both teams may wear shorts of a similar color.
- 4.1.4 It is required that any visible garment worn under the jersey or shorts be a solid color. The same color must be worn by all team members wearing undergarments. It is recommended the undergarment match the dominant color of the respective garment.
- 4.1.5 It is the prerogative of the home team to select uniform colors. However, in the event of a conflict, it is the responsibility of the home team to wear jerseys and stockings in clear contrast to those worn by the visiting team.
- 4.1.6 Substitutes standing within the team area or warming up outside the coaching and team areas shall wear colored jerseys/vests that distinguish them from all other field players.
- 4.1.7 Numerals are required on the front and back of the jersey, and no two teammates may wear the same number. For the purposes of this rule, 0 and 00 are considered different numbers, but 01 and 1 are not.
- Note: Numbers on shorts are optional.*
- 4.1.8 Numerals at least 8 inches in height that are easily distinguishable from the predominant background color(s) and pattern shall be worn on the back of each player's (including goalkeeper's) jersey.
- 4.1.9 Numerals at least 4 inches in height that are easily distinguishable from the predominant background color(s) and pattern shall be worn on the front of each player's (including goalkeeper's) jersey.
- 4.1.10 In accordance with NCAA bylaws, an institution's uniform and/or any item of apparel worn by student-athletes during the conduct of the institution's competition (including warmups before the player enters the

game, and apparel worn during postgame celebrations and pre- or postgame press conferences) may contain only a single manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark on the outside of the apparel (regardless of the visibility of the logo or trademark). The logo or trademark must be contained within a four-sided geometrical figure (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) that does not exceed 2¼-square inches. Such an item of apparel may contain more than one manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark on the inside of the apparel provided the logo or trademark is not visible.

- 4.1.11 If an institution's uniform or any item of apparel worn by a student-athlete in competition contains washing instructions on the outside of the apparel or on a patch that also includes the manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark, the entire patch must meet the size restrictions in Rule 4.1.10.

PENALTY—(4.1.1 to 4.1.11)—Any player not conforming shall not be permitted to play until they are compliant with the rule. If the infraction is recognized when the ball is in play, the player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field when the ball is next out of play, at which time the referee shall stop the clock. Provided they have not been substituted for, any player who had been instructed to leave the field may reenter the game no sooner than the next stoppage play, and then only if the referee confirms that the player's uniform is compliant.

4.2 PERMISSIBLE UNIFORM MARKINGS

- 4.2.1 It is permissible to have the institution's name, nickname or mascot on the front and/or back of the uniform, and the player's name on the back of the jersey. As authorized by the institution or conference, it is permissible to have other names/words intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events or other causes on the back of the jersey/uniform where the player's name is traditionally located. The names/words may vary by team member.
- 4.2.2 It is permissible to have the national or state flag of the institution on the front or sleeve of the jersey or shirt. The flag may not exceed 2¼ square inches.
- 4.2.3 It is permissible to have an institutional and conference logo/patch on the front or sleeve of the jersey or shirt. The logo/patch may not exceed 4 square inches.
- 4.2.4 As authorized by the institution or conference, it is permissible to have a commemorative/memorial patch (e.g., names, mascots, nicknames, logos and marks intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events or other causes) on a jersey or shirt as long as the patch does not interfere with any required markings. The patch may not exceed 4 square inches. While not all team members are required to wear a commemorative/memorial patch, the patch must be identical for those who choose to wear the patch.
- 4.2.5 It is recommended that a special armband (which shall be displayed on the upper arm) be worn that distinguishes the team captain(s) from other players on their team.

4.3 REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

4.3.1 Shoes shall be worn by all participants in a game. Shoes with soles containing aluminum, leather, rubber, nylon or plastic cleats, studs or bars, whether molded as part of the sole or detachable, are allowed as long as the referee does not consider them dangerous.

4.3.2 Players shall wear shinguards under the stockings in the manner intended, without exception. The shinguards shall be professionally manufactured, age and size appropriate, and not altered to decrease protection. The NCAA requires players to wear shinguards that meet the standards established by the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).

PENALTY—(4.3.1 and 4.3.2)—It is mandatory that player equipment complies with the foregoing standards. If the referee considers any equipment liable to cause injury to another player, the player not conforming shall not be permitted to play until they are compliant with the rule. If the infraction is recognized when the ball is in play, the player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field when the ball is next out of play, at which time the referee shall stop the clock. Provided they have not been substituted for, any player who had been instructed to leave the field may reenter the game no sooner than the next stoppage play, and then only if the referee confirms that the player's uniform is compliant.

4.4 PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

4.4.1 A player shall not wear anything that is dangerous to himself or any player.

4.4.2 A player shall not wear jewelry of any type whatsoever. This includes earrings, chains, charms, watches, hair clips, bobby pins, tongue studs or bracelets of any type. Covering jewelry with tape is not acceptable.

Exception: *Medical alert bracelets or necklaces may be worn but must be taped to the body.*

PENALTY—(4.4.1 and 4.4.2)—It is mandatory that player equipment complies with the foregoing standards. If the referee considers any equipment liable to cause injury to another player, the player not conforming shall not be permitted to play until they are compliant with the rule. If the infraction is recognized when the ball is in play, the player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field when the ball is next out of play, at which time the referee shall stop the clock. Provided they have not been substituted for, any player who had been instructed to leave the field may reenter the game no sooner than the next stoppage play, and then only if the referee confirms that the player's uniform is compliant.

4.5 PERMISSIBLE EQUIPMENT

- 4.5.1 Knee braces with any metal parts are permissible provided no metal is exposed.
- 4.5.2 Casts are permissible if they are covered and the referee does not consider them dangerous.
- 4.5.3 Headgear, headbands and hats (goalkeepers only) are permissible provided they are not considered dangerous to any player. This includes religious head coverings, soft knit caps, hair control devices that are securely fastened and soft-billed baseball style caps for goalkeepers.
- 4.5.6 Prostheses may be worn as long as the equipment is well padded to protect not only the affected player, but also their opponents. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard shall be properly padded.
- 4.5.7 Players may wear a device for the purpose of monitoring and accumulating data, which can be used during the game. Devices that are visible outside the uniform are subject to referee examination.
- 4.5.8 Mouth guards that are worn entirely inside of the mouth are permissible.
- 4.5.9 Protective face guards that have no sharp edges and are worn molded to the face.

PENALTY—(4.5.1 to 4.5.9)—It is mandatory that player equipment complies with the foregoing standards. If the referee considers any equipment liable to cause injury to another player, the player not conforming shall not be permitted to play until they are compliant with the rule. If the infraction is recognized when the ball is in play, the player(s) shall be instructed to leave the field when the ball is next out of play, at which time the referee shall stop the clock. Provided they have not been substituted for, any player who had been instructed to leave the field may reenter the game no sooner than the next stoppage play, and then only if the referee confirms that the player's uniform is compliant.

RULE 5

The Referee

5.1 NUMBER

5.1.1 The diagonal system of control with a referee and two assistant referees shall be used. A fourth official may also be assigned.

5.1.1.1 If an assigned referee fails to appear or becomes injured and a fourth official is assigned, either the senior assistant referee or the fourth official shall assume the role of referee, and the game shall proceed with a referee and two assistant referees. If an additional official acceptable to the assignor is available and both teams agree to the selection of the substitute official before the game begins or play restarts, then the substitute official shall fill the vacant position. If injured, the original referee may fill the position of fourth official if they are physically able to do so. If the assigned referee arrives after the game begins, they may fill the fourth official's role, if it is vacant. Once the game begins, it shall continue under the control of the officials who started the game unless a change is necessitated by injury.

5.1.1.2 If an assigned referee fails to appear or becomes injured and a fourth official is not assigned, the senior assistant referee assigned to the game shall become the referee and shall try to obtain the services of a replacement assistant referee acceptable to the assignor to fill the open assistant referee position. If no replacement is found, then the two assistant referees shall operate the dual-referee system of control. If the game begins under the dual-referee system of control and the assigned referee then appears, they shall assume the role of assistant referee and the remainder of the game shall be governed by the diagonal system of control with the senior assistant referee serving as the referee.

5.1.1.3 If an assigned assistant referee fails to appear or becomes injured and a fourth official is assigned, the fourth official shall assume the vacant assistant referee position, and the game shall proceed with a referee and two assistant referees. If an additional official acceptable to the assignor is available and both teams agree to the selection of the substitute official before the game begins or play restarts, then the substitute official shall fill the vacant fourth official position. If injured, the original assistant referee may fill the position of fourth official if they are physically able to do so. If the assigned assistant referee arrives after the game begins, they may fill the fourth official's role, if it is vacant.

5.1.1.4 If an assigned assistant referee fails to appear or becomes injured and a fourth official is not assigned, the referee shall try to obtain the services of a replacement assistant referee acceptable to the assignor to fill the

open assistant referee position. If no replacement is found, then the two remaining officials shall operate the dual-referee system of control. If the game begins under the dual-referee system of control and the assigned assistant referee then appears, they shall assume the role of assistant referee and the remainder of the game shall be governed by the diagonal system of control with the senior assistant referee serving as the referee.

- 5.1.1.5 If none of the assigned officials appear and teams can agree on the selection of replacement officials, the game shall be played. In such case, a game can be played with one, two or three officials depending on the agreement of the teams.

5.2 UNIFORM

All officials shall dress in the NCAA-established soccer officials' uniform, black shorts and socks, and shoes that are predominantly black. The color and style of the uniform shall be alike for all officials and shall be in contrast to those worn by the field players of the competing teams. It is permissible for officials to wear a cap. More information is available on the NCAA website (ncaa.org/playingrules) and then click [Soccer Rules of the Game](#).

5.3 EQUIPMENT

Referees may use equipment that is reasonable and necessary to officiate the game, including electronic communication devices and field-marking sprays.

5.4 JURISDICTION

- 5.4.1 An official's jurisdiction shall begin when they arrive at the site of the competition and shall end when the official leaves the site of the competition. The site of the competition is defined as the field, locker rooms, parking areas and the surroundings generally associated with athletics facilities.
- 5.4.2 The referee, whose decision is final, so far as the result of the game is concerned, shall enforce the rules and decide any disputed point.
- 5.4.3 The referee's power of penalizing shall extend to offenses committed when play has been suspended or when the ball is out of play. The referee shall, however, refrain from penalizing in cases in which they are satisfied that by doing so an advantage would be given to the offending team. When the referee observes a foul that is not to be penalized, the referee shall call out the words "play on" and signal accordingly to indicate that the foul has been acknowledged. However, if the advantage does not materialize, the referee shall then blow the whistle and award a free kick. The referee may caution or eject after allowing advantage, subject to the limitations of [Rule 12](#). In such cases, the caution or ejection shall be administered when play is stopped.
- 5.4.4 When signaling, the referee shall use the "Official Referee's Signals." (See [Appendix A](#).)
- 5.4.5 It is recommended that all officials remain on the field of play after the completion of the game until postgame duties have been completed.
- 5.4.6 The rules of conduct, including game times, substitutions and overtime procedures, shall not be altered by the referee or by mutual consent of the institutions.

5.5 DUTIES

5.5.1 Pregame duties shall include:

- 5.5.1.1 Arriving at the game site a minimum of 30 minutes before kickoff;
- 5.5.1.2 Surveying field conditions for safety purposes;
- 5.5.1.3 Inspecting the field markings;
- 5.5.1.4 Inspecting the goals and nets;
- 5.5.1.5 Inspecting the team benches and timekeeper's table (if located between team benches);
- 5.5.1.6 Inspecting corner flags;
- 5.5.1.7 Inspecting game balls;
- 5.5.1.8 Inspecting players' uniforms and equipment;
- 5.5.1.9 Obtaining both team rosters; and
- 5.5.1.10 Confirming if video review equipment is available. If available, video review will be used per Rule 5.7.

PENALTY—(5.5.1.1 to 5.5.1.10)—Violations involving field conditions, uniforms, equipment or other items shall be reported immediately to the appropriate governing sports authority and, if possible, necessary changes or repairs shall be made before the contest.

5.5.2 Postgame duties shall include:

- 5.5.2.1 Reviewing and visually/verbally verifying the official NCAA paper or electronic box score to ensure the score, cards and disciplinary actions are accurately recorded; and
- 5.5.2.2 For all ejections, electronically completing and filing the NCAA Red Card Form located on the NCAA website (ncaa.org/playingrules) and then clicking [Soccer Rules of the Game](#) within 24 hours of completion of the game. For the completion and filing of the NCAA Red Card Form, the referee may request a printed or electronic copy of the box score.

5.6 DISCRETIONARY POWER

The referee has discretionary power to:

- 5.6.1 Suspend the game whenever, by reason of the elements, interference by spectators or other cause, such action is deemed necessary. A suspended game may be resumed should conditions allow. If the suspended game is not resumed the same day, the referee shall file a report with the appropriate governing sports authority (see [Page 7](#)) for later administrative action. (See Rules [7.7](#) and [7.8](#).)

- 5.6.1.1 When the WetBulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is equal to or greater than 86 degrees Fahrenheit, hydration breaks of not less than two minutes around the 25-30-minute marks during the first half, and 70-75-minute marks during the second half are required. The WBGT measurements should be taken by appropriate host personnel before the game and again throughout the game. Appropriate host personnel will instruct the officials if the threshold for mandatory hydration breaks is met. The referee is responsible for informing the head coaches and

implementing the hydration breaks. Additional hydration breaks are permissible at the discretion of the referee.

- 5.6.1.2 If a game is suspended by the referee because of the elements, interference by spectators, grave disorders, the lack of an available coach or institutional representative following the ejection of a coach or other causes, the referee has no authority to decide that either team is disqualified. The status of the game shall be determined by the appropriate governing sports authority (see [Page 7](#)).
- 5.6.2 Reverse a decision or rescind a card as a result of crew consultation, their own judgment, or the use of video review as long as play has not restarted following the original decision.
- 5.6.3 During the last five minutes of regulation play, use discretion on whether to stop the clock when the losing team is issued a caution or ejection. The intent of this rule is to prevent incentivizing the losing team from committing misconduct in order to stop the clock. If a member of the winning team engages in time-wasting behavior to prolong the issuance of a card when the referee has chosen not to stop the clock, the referee shall then stop the clock in response to the time-wasting behavior.
- 5.6.4 Caution any player, coach or other bench personnel for misconduct or unsporting behavior (persistent infringement on any of the rules of the game) and, if the behavior persists, eject that individual from the game. When cautioning a player, coach or other bench personnel, the referee shall display a yellow card and indicate the appropriate person. Cautions and ejections may be issued between periods and after the conclusion of the game. Any ejection to a player of record will result in that team playing short.
- 5.6.4.1 If a player commits two infringements of a different nature at the same time, the more serious offense shall be penalized.
- 5.6.4.2 Multiple Cards to the Same Player. If a previously cautioned player, coach or other bench personnel commits a second cautionable offense, the referee shall display a yellow card followed immediately by a red card. When ejecting a player, coach or other bench personnel, a red card shall be displayed. See Rule [12.7.4](#) and [PENALTY](#).

Note: For statistical purposes, any individual receiving two cautions in the same game will be charged with one yellow card and one red card for accumulation purposes.

- 5.6.5 Terminate the game if:
- 5.6.5.1 In their judgment, a coach prolongs a discussion with an official or refuses to leave the field at the request to do so;
- 5.6.5.2 A team refuses to return to the field of play within three minutes after being ordered to do so by the referee; or
- 5.6.5.3 A player ejected earlier in the game reentered the game as a substitute and is later detected as an illegal substitute.

PENALTY—(5.6.5.1 to 5.6.5.3)—The game is terminated and a forfeit is awarded to the opposing team. See [Rule 7.6.2](#).

- 5.6.6 Declare a “no contest” when a team without prior notification is not on the field and prepared to play within 15 minutes after the contracted starting time, unless evidence of extenuating circumstances can be provided.

5.6.7 Stop the game and the clock because of injury.

5.6.7.1 *Injuries to field players.* If medical personnel are beckoned to attend to the player(s), the referee shall instruct the player(s) to leave or be removed from the field of play. The team may elect to substitute for the injured player(s) at this time. If the team elects not to substitute, the injured player(s) may reenter the game (after being beckoned by the referee) during the run of play or at any stoppage of play, including times for normal substitutions. There is no exception to allow injured field players to remain on the field after being attended to if a card was issued on the play. Instead, this is a free substitution for the team that does not require the use of a moment (DI Men) or count as an entry. If a team elects not to substitute and the player is unable to return, the substitute may enter at the next stoppage of play. If the referee signals the clock to be stopped to assess a player's injuries and it is determined that medical personnel are not beckoned, the player(s) does not have to leave the field.

Note: If the athletic trainer has been ejected and no suitable certified medical authority or replacement is available, the referee shall ensure that the athletic trainer is within a reasonable distance to be summoned in the event of an emergency.

5.6.7.2 *Injuries to goalkeepers.* Goalkeepers are subject to the restrictions in Rule 5.6.7.3.

5.6.7.3 *Bleeding, blood on uniform or signs of concussion (all players).* Summon medical personnel to escort or remove the player(s) from the field of play. The player(s) may reenter the game after the injury has been properly treated, medical clearance has been given, the uniform has been evaluated by appropriate medical personnel for potential issues and changed, if necessary, and permission has been granted by the referee. (See [Rule 3.6.](#))

5.6.8 Stop the game and the clock when a player has been instructed to leave the field for an equipment change or jewelry violation.

5.6.9 Stop the game, stop the clock and direct the game management personnel to remove whistles, air horns, electronic amplifiers and any other items that are not permitted from the spectators' areas.

5.6.9.1 It is permissible for bands to play at any time during the game.

5.6.9.2 It is permissible for musical instruments and artificial noisemakers to be used at any time during the game.

5.6.9.3 Artificially amplified or prerecorded music can only be played prior to the game, during intervals between periods, or any time the clock is stopped. If amplified or prerecorded music is played when not permitted, the referee shall direct the game management personnel to ensure compliance.

5.7 VIDEO REVIEW

5.7.1 Video review will be used if the referee confirms that video review equipment is available. (See [Rule 5.5.1.10.](#)) During the game, video review can be initiated by the referee only.

5.7.2 In order to use video review, the review equipment must be available at the scorekeeper's table or field level. There is no specific equipment required as

long as it demonstrates the video in a manner that can be used by the referee. Indisputable video evidence, in the judgment of the referee, must be present for the call on the field to be overturned.

5.7.3 Video review is permissible in the following specific situations:

5.7.3.1 Determining whether the entire ball passed over the goal line, which includes end of period timing issues;

5.7.3.2 Identifying players for disciplinary matters;

5.7.3.3 Determining whether a fight occurred and identifying all participants;

5.7.3.4 Determining whether violent behavior I or II occurred and identifying all participants;

5.7.3.5 Correcting timing errors;

5.7.3.6 Determining if a direct free kick foul called against the defending team took place in the penalty area;

5.7.3.7 Determining if an offense punishable by a penalty kick has occurred;

5.7.3.8 Determining whether a straight red card (not a second caution) should have been issued (the referee can upgrade the call to a straight red card or downgrade it to a yellow card or a free kick);

5.7.3.9 Determining the proper punishment in cases of stopping a promising attack or denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity (the referee can examine the validity of the decision to call a foul or not and whether the play meets the criteria for denial of an obvious goal scoring opportunity or stopping a promising attack); and

5.7.3.10 Determining whether a goal should have been disallowed for an offside offense. This includes plays where the call on the field resulted in an offside call or a goal being awarded.

Note: If the referee has blown the whistle for an offside offense before the ball enters the goal, the play is then not reviewable.

5.7.4 Video review procedures:

5.7.4.1 Video reviews must take place prior to the restart of play, with the exception of player identification issues, which may take place at any time. If video review confirms that the caution was given to the wrong player, any necessary corrections shall be made before continuing play.

5.7.4.2 If the referee is unsure if a goal has been scored, they should allow play to continue until the goal-scoring opportunity or attacking team's advantage is completed, the ball goes out of play or an infraction occurs and then stop the game. Any cautionable or ejectable offense(s) committed prior to the stoppage shall be punished appropriately. **Exception:** *The referee initially determines that a goal has not been scored and a player is guilty of denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. If video review determines that the goal was actually scored, the card given for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity shall be canceled.*

5.7.4.3 If video review confirms a goal, award the goal, reset the clock to the time the goal was scored and restart with a kickoff. If video review confirms no goal, restart the game based upon the reason for the stoppage (i.e., throw-in, corner kick, goal kick or free kick). If the game was stopped with the ball in play on the field of play, restart with a drop ball

at the spot where the ball was located at the time of stoppage, unless the stoppage occurred while the ball was in the penalty area. In that case, restart with a dropped ball for the goalkeeper.

5.7.4.4 If the referee initiates a video review for fighting or violent behavior, they can review any misconduct directly involved with the fighting or violent behavior incident and assess appropriate penalties against any individual(s) involved. If the referee issues a red card for fighting on the field and then discovers during video review that the actions of the player do not constitute a fight, they shall rescind the red card and punish the player appropriately for any offense committed.

5.7.4.5 During a video review, the referee may only review and change calls involving the reviewable aspects of the play as per Rules 5.7.3.1 through 5.7.3.10 and Rule 5.7.4.4. Calls involving a non-reviewable aspect of the play may not be changed.

5.7.4.6 Video reviews for issues of timing may be conducted after the clock has expired and the appropriate adjustments to the clock made if warranted after video review.

5.8 PROTESTS

5.8.1 A protest may be filed by an authorized representative of an involved institution or governing sports authority providing it relates to: (1) Player identification; (2) Illegal participation by ejected or suspended student-athletes, coaches and team personnel; or (3) A violent behavior II or fighting red card. Protests shall not be considered for any other reason, including referee judgment, the accuracy of a game official's decision or errors made by a game official.

5.8.1.1 For (3), the Protest Form and video of the incident must be submitted by the conference. The secretary-rules editor and designated committee will review the violent behavior II or fighting red card and either uphold the original suspension or reduce the offense to a violent behavior I red card. In no case will the red card be rescinded or the mandatory minimum one-game suspension be waived.

5.8.2 A protest shall be filed electronically with the secretary-rules editor by completing and submitting the Protest Form located on the NCAA website (ncaa.org/playingrules) and then click [Soccer Rules of the Game](#)) within 48 hours of the completion of the game.

5.8.3 For any issue involving a possible scorekeeper error, the referee and authorized representatives of the teams shall confer and make a determination based upon the available information at the game site.

5.8.4 All decisions by the secretary-rules editor are final and not subject to appeal.

RULE 6

Other Officials and Their Duties

6.1 ASSISTANT REFEREES

Two assistant referees shall be appointed, whose duties (subject to the referee's decision and supervision) shall be to:

- 6.1.1 Indicate when the ball is out of play;
- 6.1.2 Indicate which side is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in;
- 6.1.3 Indicate when a player may be penalized for being in an offside position;
- 6.1.4 Indicate when a substitution is desired; and
- 6.1.5 Assist the referee (subject to the referee's decision and supervision) to control the game in accordance with the rules by:
 - 6.1.5.1 Indicating to the referee any breach of the rules that the referee may not have seen;
 - 6.1.5.2 Helping with pregame and postgame duties, including (but not limited to) inspecting player equipment, field, game balls, game reports and other items;
 - 6.1.5.3 Keeping track of the halftime interval, and notifying the referee and teams three minutes before the start of play;
 - 6.1.5.4 Giving an opinion on any point on which the referee may request; and
 - 6.1.5.5 Using the "Official Assistant Referees' Signals" when signaling. (See Appendix B.)

6.2 FOURTH OFFICIAL

- 6.2.1 A fourth official may be assigned to a competition. When a fourth official is assigned, the governing sports authority (see [Page 7](#)) shall clearly state the officiating position they will assume in the event that one of the referees or assistant referees is unable to officiate.
- 6.2.2 The fourth official is under the assigned referee's jurisdiction and performs duties that include:
 - 6.2.2.1 Supervising the timekeeper and scorekeeper;
 - 6.2.2.2 Managing substitutions and treatment of injuries;
 - 6.2.2.3 Alerting teams that three minutes remain in the halftime interval;
 - 6.2.2.4 Assisting the referee and assistant referees as needed with the control of the game; and

6.2.2.5 Assisting in the control of bench personnel and the coaching and team areas.

6.2.3 The fourth official shall remain standing near the halfway line between the coaching and team areas during play, unless other duties have required their presence elsewhere.

6.3 TIMEKEEPER

6.3.1 When an electronically controlled scoreboard clock is visible to both benches and spectators, it shall be used as the official timepiece. The clock may count up or down. There shall be one official timekeeper designated by the home team.

Note: It is recommended that someone other than team personnel perform this function.

6.3.2 Before the game, the referee shall instruct the timekeeper, who is subject to the referee's jurisdiction, as to their duties. The referee shall arrange with the timekeeper an understandable series of signals covering timeouts (including television timeouts), substitutions, termination of playing periods and out of bounds.

6.3.3 The timekeeper shall control the timing device and keep track of playing time.

6.3.3.1 In the event that the official timing device malfunctions or there is no electronically controlled scoreboard clock visible to both benches and spectators, the referee on the field shall become the timekeeper.

6.3.4 The timekeeper shall be responsible for managing the timing sheet used in pregame administration for both regular-season and postseason contests. Language to be included in the regular timing sheet is: At 15 minutes, game rosters shall be exchanged; at 10 minutes, teams clear the field and then captains and officials meet for coin toss. Officials, coaches and players are introduced. National anthem is played, if applicable; and at 0:00, game begins.

6.3.5 The timekeeper shall stop the clock when the referee signals for any of the following reasons:

6.3.5.1 For a television timeout;

6.3.5.2 Because a player has been instructed to leave the field for an equipment change;

6.3.5.3 To assess a player's injuries or when the athletic trainer is beckoned onto the field;

6.3.5.4 When a substitute(s) from the leading team, or either team when the game is tied, is beckoned onto the field in the final 15 minutes of the second period or during any overtime period;

6.3.5.5 When a goal is scored;

6.3.5.6 When a penalty kick is awarded;

6.3.5.7 When a player is carded (**Exception:** *During the last five minutes of regulation play, the referee has discretion on whether to stop the clock when the losing team is issued a caution or ejection.*);

6.3.5.8 When the referee addresses an issue involving participant conduct; or

- 6.3.5.9 When the referee believes that time wasting is occurring.
- 6.3.6 The timekeeper shall start the clock when the ball is kicked and moves at the beginning of the game. Following all stoppages of the clock, the clock shall be restarted when the ball is properly put back into play.
- 6.3.7 When the ball is out of play and a substitution is permitted, the timekeeper shall signal the referee by horn or other noise-producing instrument that is distinct from the referee's whistle.
- 6.3.8 The timekeeper shall call out audibly using a public-address system or to the nearest official the last seconds of playing time in any period, from 10 to zero.
- 6.3.9 The timekeeper shall signal for the termination of the period when time has expired. If the scoreboard clock has an automatic horn, the timekeeper does not have to manually sound a signal if the horn functions properly. If there is no automated horn, the timekeeper shall sound a horn manually when time expires. The expiration of time is the moment the timekeeper's signal begins, regardless of the position of the ball. If no horn sounds, the period will end when the clock reaches zero or 0:00.0 (and/or 45:00/90:00/10:00/10:00).

6.4 SCOREKEEPER

- 6.4.1 There shall be one official scorekeeper designated by the home team.
- Note: It is recommended that someone other than team personnel perform this function.*
- 6.4.2 The official scorekeeper shall record team lineups, including starters, player substitutions and names of the referees and assistant referees assigned to the game. The scorekeeper shall record team scores, shots, goalkeeper saves, cautions and ejections, penalty kicks, corner kicks, goals and assists, offside, fouls and infractions, the date, weather/field conditions, attendance, team names and team records, and the status of the game if suspended.
- 6.4.3 The official scorekeeper shall obtain the signatures or other forms of verification of all of the officials on the official NCAA box score form or an 8½-by-11-inch computer-generated scoresheet with complete game information after the game is completed, thus verifying cards issued, ejection reports and the official score of the game. This shall become the official record of the game.
- 6.4.4 If the scorekeeper determines that a substitute is not eligible to enter the game, the scorekeeper shall instruct the timekeeper to signal the referee, assistant referee and/or fourth official by horn or other noise-producing instrument that is distinct from the referee's whistle that the player is not eligible to enter the game. The referee shall suspend the game, approach the scorekeeper's table (if at field level) and/or the field representative (mandatory if the scorekeeper is in an elevated press box), obtain the information and instruct the player to return to the bench area. The game shall be restarted accordingly. (See [Rule 3.8](#).)
- 6.4.5 Once given, and once the scoresheet is signed, or electronically verified, and released for publication, coaches, players and bench personnel bear the burden of the infractions unless a successful protest is filed. (See [Rule 5.8.1](#).)

6.4.6 The official scorekeeper shall file the official scoresheet with the NCAA for every game.

Note: Each team is responsible for uploading the box score on the NCAA statistics site for home games or contests at a neutral site or against non-NCAA opponents. Note that an electronic version of the scoresheet with an official's signature does not also need to be emailed to the NCAA.

6.5 BALL PERSONS

It is recommended that a minimum of four ball persons, appropriately positioned and at least 10 years of age, be provided for the duration of the game. Further, it is recommended that ball persons wear colored jerseys that distinguish them from all field players. Each ball person's duty is to assist in ball retrieval to avoid delay. All ball persons shall be instructed by and are under the direct supervision of the game officials.

RECOMMENDED TIMING SHEETS

NCAA Regular-Season Pregame Schedule

Clock	Activity
60:00*	Teams may begin warmup on the field in front of their bench.
<i>*Begin clock 60 minutes before game starting time.</i>	
30:00	Referee inspects game balls.
15:00	Game rosters exchanged.
10:00	Teams clear field.
	Captains and officials meet for coin toss.
	Introduction of officials, coaches and players.
	1. Officials.
	2. Visiting coaches and team.
	3. Home coaches and team. National anthem. Teams shake hands; designated away team moves to shake designated home team's hands.
0:00	Game begins.
Halftime	15:00—Start immediately when first half ends
0:00/45:00	Kickoff • Second half

NCAA Postseason Pregame Schedule

- 60:00* Teams may begin warmup on the field in front of their bench.
**Begin clock 60 minutes before game starting time.*
- 30:00 Referee inspects game balls.
- 15:00 Game rosters exchanged.
- 10:00 Teams clear field.
 Captains and officials meet for coin toss.
 Public-address welcome.
 Introduction of officials, coaches and players.
1. Officials. (In center circle)
 2. Visiting team nonstarters, followed by starters.
 (All to midfield, in front of bench)
 3. Home team nonstarters, followed by starters.
 (All to midfield, in front of bench)
- National anthem. Teams shake hands; designated away team moves to shake designated home team's hands.
- 0:00 Game begins.
- 45:00 Kickoff • First half
- Halftime 15:00-17:00—Start immediately when first half ends
- 0:00/45:00 Kickoff • Second half
- Overtime Procedure**
- 5:00 Intermission starts immediately when regulation time ends.
- 10:00 First overtime period.
- 2:00 Intermission starts immediately when first overtime ends.
- 10:00 Second overtime period.
- 5:00 Intermission starts immediately when second overtime ends.
- Penalty-Kick Procedure (See [Rule 7.3.](#))**

RULE 7

Duration of the Game

7.1 LENGTH OF GAME

7.1.1 The duration of the game shall be two periods of 45 minutes. For live telecasts, a timeout that may not exceed two minutes in length may be taken after the 23rd minute of each half before a throw-in near the halfway line of the field or before a goal kick.

7.1.2 Regular-season games that are tied at the end of the regulation 90 minutes shall be considered complete and recorded as a tie.

7.1.2.1 If a regular-season tournament has a winners' bracket and a losers' bracket, a game that is tied at the end of regulation play shall be recorded as a tie and the penalty kick tiebreaker may be used to determine advancement.

Note: If a penalty kick is awarded for a foul that occurred prior to the expiration of time, play shall be extended beyond the expiration of any period, in regulation time or overtime, to permit a penalty kick to be taken.

7.2 OVERTIME

For postseason games, which include conference tournaments and NCAA tournament games, the following procedures shall be used when a game is tied after the regulation 90 minutes.

7.2.1 Up to two sudden-victory overtime periods of 10 minutes each shall be played. The first team to score wins the game.

7.2.2 A coin toss called by the visiting team will determine choice of ends of the field or the kickoff before the start of the first overtime period. Teams shall change ends of the field to start the second overtime period.

7.2.3 If the score still is tied at the end of the second overtime period, the game shall be recorded as a tie, and the tiebreaker procedure of taking kicks from the penalty-kick line or spot, as set forth in Rule 7.3, shall be used to determine advancement. **Exception:** *The winner of the penalty kicks during the national championship game only shall be declared the winner for all purposes, including the record.*

7.2.3.1 If a postseason game tied after the regulation 90 minutes is suspended due to the elements or other reasons, the governing sports authority shall determine when the game shall be resumed from the point of interruption.

7.3 PENALTY-KICK TIEBREAKER

- 7.3.1 Only players who are listed on the official NCAA game roster and who have not been ejected during the game shall be eligible to participate in the tiebreaker.
- 7.3.2 Each team shall designate either: (a) 10 different kickers, one of whom may be the goalkeeper; or (b) 10 different kickers and a goalkeeper who will not participate as a designated kicker in the tiebreaker procedure.
- 7.3.3 Each team shall also designate a goalkeeper to defend against the kicks. Once the goalkeeper is designated, they shall not be replaced unless injured or ejected, and their replacement may be from any of the eligible players listed on the official NCAA game roster for that game. Injuries leading to replacement of the designated goalkeeper shall be determined by the attending medical personnel in concert with the governing sports authority. (See Page 7.) However, the injured goalkeeper is eligible to return if physically able.
- 7.3.4 The kicking order shall be at the discretion of the kicking team.
- 7.3.5 If any of the designated players, except for the goalkeeper, are ejected during the tiebreaker, the game will continue with the remaining designated players; and the opposing team, if desired, shall have the option to reduce or adjust its kicking order to avoid being penalized or placed at a disadvantage if the No. 1 kicker from the offending team ends up kicking against the No. 10 kicker from the nonoffending team.
- 7.3.6 If the designated player ejected is the goalkeeper, their replacement may be from any of the eligible players listed on the official NCAA game roster for that game. The game will continue with the remaining designated players.
- 7.3.7 Designated kickers are the only personnel permitted on the field and are required to be in the center circle when not kicking. The goalkeeper not defending against a kick shall stay on the field of play at the intersection of the penalty and goal area lines behind the assistant referee. Coaches, nonparticipating players and all other bench personnel shall remain beyond the touchline in the coaching and player area.
- 7.3.8 Unless there are other considerations (e.g., field conditions, safety concerns), the referee tosses a coin to decide the goal at which the kicks will be taken. Once the kicks have begun, this decision may only be changed for safety reasons or if the goal or playing surface becomes unusable. The visiting team shall call the coin toss, the winner of which elects to kick first or last. Each team shall take an initial series of five kicks, if necessary, alternately. In all games except the national championship game, the team scoring the greater number of goals shall advance to the next round.
- 7.3.9 If the score still is tied after each team has taken five kicks, kicks shall continue alternately in the same order until a team has one more goal in the same number of kicks.
- 7.3.10 Each kick shall be taken by a different player until all 10 designated kickers have kicked once. If the kicks continue beyond that number, the order of the initially designated kickers may be changed.

- 7.3.11 The referee shall administer the taking of the kicks. One assistant referee shall act as the goal judge and one assistant referee shall record the kickers and monitor the nonparticipants. If a fourth official is used, they shall remain at the halfway line between the benches to monitor the coaching and team areas.

Note: The tiebreaker kicks shall be administered in accordance with [Rule 14.2](#).

7.4 HALFTIME AND OVERTIME INTERVALS

- 7.4.1 The halftime interval shall start immediately when the first half ends and be 15 minutes, which may be extended in postseason competition by the games committee. The interval may be shortened by mutual consent of the coaches and officials.
- 7.4.2 For postseason games, the interval between the end of regulation play and the first overtime period shall be five minutes and start immediately when regulation time ends. The interval between the first and second overtime periods shall not exceed two minutes and shall start immediately when the first overtime ends.

7.5 END OF GAME

The end of the game shall occur after time has expired and the referees or teams have left the site of competition.

7.6 NO CONTEST AND FORFEIT

- 7.6.1 When a scheduled game is terminated before it begins, it is recorded as “no contest.” Neither team is credited with a win or loss, regardless of the reason why the game was terminated.
- 7.6.2 If a game is terminated by the officials during play for violations of Rule 5.6.5, the following procedures shall apply. If 70 minutes have not been completed, the statistics shall not count, and all cards are voided, except for violent behavior II, fighting and referee assault red cards, which are subject to the associated penalties in [Rule 12](#). The final score of a game under these circumstances shall be recorded as 1-0 to the nonoffending team. If 70 minutes have been completed, and the nonoffending team is in the lead, the score of the game when terminated becomes the final score. If the offending team is leading or the game is tied, the final score shall be recorded as 1-0 to the nonoffending team. If 70 minutes have been completed, all statistics, including cards, shall count and the appropriate penalties shall be served.

7.7 SUSPENDED GAME

- 7.7.1 A suspended game is considered a temporary action (because of elements or other causes) with intent to resume at some later time or date. In all cases of suspended games, the referee shall file a report with the governing sports authority detailing the reason the game was suspended and the score and time remaining at the time the game was suspended.
- 7.7.2 If the suspended game is resumed, whether the same day or at a later date, it shall be resumed from the point of interruption and all statistics will carry over to the resumed game, including cards.

- 7.7.3 If the conditions leading to a suspended game persist and the game is not resumed, the game shall be considered “no contest” if it has not progressed to 70 minutes. A “no contest” does not count, and all normal statistics are nullified except for violent behavior II, fighting and assault on referee red cards, which are subject to associated penalties in [Rule 12](#).
- 7.7.4 If the game progressed to 70 minutes, it will be considered complete, the result shall stand and all statistics, including cards, shall count.
- 7.7.5 If an institution competes in another game(s) before the resumption of the suspended game, any suspension(s) earned in the intervening game(s) will not apply to the resumed game. Players and coaches eligible for the original game will remain eligible for the resumed game.
- 7.7.6 Players or coaches who reach a card accumulation threshold that would result in a suspension in the first part of a suspended game shall serve their suspension in the next regularly scheduled game following the conclusion of the original game. The player or coach remains eligible for the continuation of the suspended game and for any intervening games between the original game and the date of resumption until the game is completed.

7.8 INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY, EXPIRATION OF TIME

- 7.8.1 The purpose of the inclement weather policy is to provide information to those responsible for making decisions about suspending and restarting games based on the presence of lightning. The NCAA provides detailed guidance on lightning (and other environmental hazards) in the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook. Please consult the latest version of this handbook, which is available at NCAA.org.
- 7.8.2 No game may be started more than three hours after the originally scheduled start time unless the referee has been notified and the new start time mutually agreed upon before the start of the game by the teams or determined by the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).)
- 7.8.3 Once a game has been started and suspended, it must be restarted not later than three hours after the originally scheduled start time unless mutually agreed upon before the start of the game by the teams or determined by the governing sports authority. (See [Page 7](#).) The teams and/or governing sports authority may agree to resume a suspended game at a later date.

RULE 8

Start of Play

8.1 COIN TOSS

- 8.1.1 At the beginning of a game, the visiting team shall call the coin toss. The team winning the toss shall have the choice of ends of the field or the kickoff.
- 8.1.2 At the beginning of the first overtime period, the visiting team shall call the coin toss and the procedures for choosing ends of the field or the kickoff as set forth in Rule 8.1.1 shall be followed.

8.2 KICKOFF

- 8.2.1 At the referee's signal (whistle), the game shall be started by a player kicking the ball. The ball may be kicked in any direction and must clearly move.
- 8.2.2 Every player, except the player kicking the ball, shall be in their half of the field, and every player of the team opposing that of the kicker shall remain at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked off.

PENALTY—(8.2.1 and 8.2.2)—The kick must be retaken. If repeatedly kicked off improperly, see [Rule 8.2.5 PENALTY](#).

- 8.2.3 A goal may be scored directly from the kickoff. *Exception: An own goal cannot be scored directly from the kickoff.*
- 8.2.4 The kicker shall not play the ball again after they have kicked off until it has been touched by another player.

PENALTY—Indirect free kick.

- 8.2.5 The game is started only when the ball is properly kicked off. If the ball is not properly kicked off, the ball again shall be placed on the kickoff mark and properly kicked off.

PENALTY—Any player who kicks off improperly, willfully encroaches on the 10-yard distance or willfully moves beyond their halfway line shall be warned and, on repetition, cautioned.

8.3 AFTER A GOAL

After a goal is scored, the ball shall be taken to the center of the field and kicked off under the same conditions as when the game is started (see [Rule 8.2](#)), by the team against which the goal was scored.

8.4 CHANGE OF ENDS

- 8.4.1 Teams shall change ends of the field at the start of the second half, and play then shall start with a kickoff by a member of the team opposite to that of the team taking the kickoff at the start of the game.
- 8.4.2 If overtime is necessary in postseason games, a coin toss called by the visiting team shall determine choice of ends of the field or the kickoff before the start of the first overtime period. Teams shall change ends to start the second overtime period.

RULE 9

Ball In and Out of Play

9.1 IN PLAY

- 9.1.1 The ball is in play at all times from the start of the game to the finish, including when it touches an official on the field of play, rebounds from a goal post, crossbar or corner flag post into the field of play, except those circumstances in Rule 9.2.
- 9.1.2 In any instance when play is restarted with a free kick, corner kick, or goal kick or kickoff, the ball must clearly move as a result of the first player kicking the ball for it to be in play.
- 9.1.3 When play is restarted with a throw-in, the ball is considered in play when it has been legally released and broken the outer edge of the touchline before hitting the ground.
- 9.1.4 Misconduct committed before the ball is back in play on a restart may be punished with a caution or ejection as appropriate, but the nature of the restart does not change.

9.2 OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play in the following circumstances:

- 9.2.1 When it has completely crossed a boundary line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- 9.2.2 When the game has been stopped by the referee.
- 9.2.3 When the ball touches an official, remains on the field of play and:
- 9.2.3.1 goes directly into the goal;
 - 9.2.3.2 team possession changes; or
 - 9.2.3.3 a promising attack starts.

9.3 RESTARTS

A ball out of play is put back in play in the following ways:

- 9.3.1 After crossing a boundary line: When the ball crosses a touchline or end line, a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick or kickoff is used to put it in play.
- 9.3.2 After temporary suspension of play: In case of temporary suspension of play due to an injury, striking an official as in 9.2.3 or any other cause, there shall be a dropped ball. If play was suspended with the ball in the penalty area or was last touched in the penalty area, it shall be dropped for the goalkeeper. If play was suspended with the ball outside the penalty area, it shall be dropped for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the location where the ball was last touched, provided it was not in the penalty

area. If play was suspended as the result of the ball striking an official or other object outside the penalty area, it shall be restarted with a dropped ball for a player of the team that last touched the ball, at the location where the ball struck an official or other object on the field of play. In all cases, the ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped: (1) the ball was in the penalty area; or (2) the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area. The ball is in play when it touches the ground; however, if the ball is played before it touches the ground, the referee shall drop it again. The ball is in play when it touches the ground; however, if the ball is played before it touches the ground, the referee shall drop it again. In all cases, all other players (of both teams) must be at least 5 yards away.

- 9.3.3 If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with a goal kick if it enters the opponent's goal, or a corner kick if it enters the player's own goal.

RULE 10

Scoring

Note: Scrimmages and exhibitions, including alumni games, do not count toward season statistics and card accumulations.

10.1 METHOD OF SCORING

- 10.1.1 A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has passed over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided it has not been intentionally thrown, carried or propelled by hand or arm by a player of the attacking side, except as otherwise provided by these rules.
- 10.1.2 If a defending player deliberately handles the ball in an attempt to prevent a goal, it shall be scored a goal if it goes in the goal prior to any whistle being sounded.

10.2 SCORING PLAYS

For statistical purposes, the point value of scoring plays shall be two points for a goal and one point for an assist.

10.3 SHOTS

- 10.3.1 A shot is an attempt that is taken with the intent of scoring and is directed toward the goal. Each shot results in one of five possibilities:
- 10.3.1.1 a goal;
 - 10.3.1.2 a save;
 - 10.3.1.3 it is blocked by another player;
 - 10.3.1.4 it is goes high over the crossbar; or
 - 10.3.1.5 it is wide of the goalposts.
- 10.3.2 A cross is a long kick from a wide position into the penalty area in front of the goal. The intent of a cross is to set up a scoring opportunity for an attacking player.
- 10.3.3 A save occurs when the goalkeeper stops a shot that otherwise would have gone into the goal. This includes catching, kicking, batting, parrying, or otherwise blocking the ball from going in. A goalkeeper who intercepts a cross is not credited with a save.

10.4 GOALS

- 10.4.1 A goal is awarded when the entire ball completely crosses the goal line under the crossbar and between the posts, provided that:
- 10.4.1.1 No other violation of the rules has occurred;
 - 10.4.1.2 The ball has not struck an outside agent prior to entering the goal;

- 10.4.1.3 Time has not expired before the ball completely crosses the goal line;
 - 10.4.1.4 No official has sounded the whistle before the ball completely crosses the goal line; and
 - 10.4.1.5 The ball has not been kicked or thrown directly into a team's own goal from a restart.
- 10.4.2 When a defender plays the ball into their team's goal, the goal is not credited to an individual opponent, but is recorded as an "own goal."
- 10.4.3 An attacking player whose shot or pass is deflected into the goal by a defender or is mishandled by the goalkeeper and allowed to cross into the goal shall receive credit for a shot and a goal, provided the momentum of the shot carried the ball into the goal.

10.5 ASSISTS

- 10.5.1 An assist is awarded for a pass leading directly to a goal. Not more than two assists may be credited on any one scoring play. Players receiving assists are credited with one point for statistical purposes.
- 10.5.2 If a scoring play consists of two consecutive passes without a defender gaining control of the ball, two assists may be awarded, provided the second player does not have to elude a defender to make the final pass. Both passes must have a direct influence on the outcome of a goal scored. If the second player needs to elude a defender before passing to the goal-scorer, credit only that assist.
- 10.5.3 No assist is awarded when a player gains control from the defensive team and scores.
- 10.5.4 No assist is awarded on a penalty-kick goal.
- 10.5.5 A corner kick, throw-in or free kick leading to a goal each counts as a pass in awarding assists.
- 10.5.6 A player cannot receive credit for an assist on a goal that the player also scores.
- 10.5.7 If an attacking player's shot hits a post or crossbar and bounces back into the field of play and, before a defender can touch the ball, another attacker shoots the ball into the goal, credit the player whose shot hit the post or crossbar with an assist.
- 10.5.8 If an attacking player shoots and the goalkeeper or defender blocks the shot but cannot control the ball, and a second attacking player immediately knocks the rebound in for a goal, credit the player who took the first shot with an assist.

10.6 GOALKEEPER SAVES, SHUTOUTS

- 10.6.1 When a game is tied after regulation and overtime periods, and a penalty-kick situation determines a winner, each goalkeeper will be charged only with goals allowed before the penalty-kick procedure.
- 10.6.2 A goalkeeper is credited with a shutout only if they play the entire game. If two or more goalkeepers participate in a game in which no goals are allowed, all goalkeepers who played shall receive a combined shutout.

10.7 WINNING THE GAME, GAME-WINNING GOALS

- 10.7.1 The team scoring the greater number of goals shall be designated the winner.
- 10.7.2 During the regular season, if no goals or an equal number of goals are scored, the game shall be considered a tie.
- 10.7.3 In postseason games in which the tiebreaker procedure described in Rule 7.1.1 is used, the game shall be recorded as a draw and the team that wins the penalty-kick tiebreaker shall advance to the next game. **Exception:** *National championship game.*
- 10.7.4 A game-winning goal for statistical purposes is the goal that is one more than the opposing team's final total.

RULE 11

Offside

11.1 OFFSIDE POSITION

It is not an offense to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if:

- 11.1.1 any part of their head, body, or feet are in the opponent's half (excluding the halfway line);
- 11.1.2 they are nearer to the opponent's end line than the ball; and
- 11.1.3 they are nearer to the opponent's end line than the second to last opponent or the last two opponents.

Note: The hands and arms of all players, including goalkeepers are not considered. For the purposes of determining offside position, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. Anything above the bottom of the armpit is considered the body and not the arm.

11.2 WHEN OFFSIDE

A player shall be declared offside and penalized only if, at the time the ball touches or is played by a teammate, the player is in an offside position and then:

- 11.2.1 interferes with an opponent by:
 - 11.2.1.1 preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision;
 - 11.2.1.2 challenging an opponent for the ball;
 - 11.2.1.3 clearly attempting to play a ball which is close to an opponent when this action clearly impacts an opponent; or
 - 11.2.1.4 making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball.
- 11.2.2 interferes with play by touching or playing a ball that was passed or touched by a teammate; or
- 11.2.3 gains an advantage by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:
 - 11.2.3.1 rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar, official, or opponent; or
 - 11.2.3.2 been deliberately saved by an opponent.
- 11.2.4 A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately plays the ball, including by deliberate handball, is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent. A save occurs when a player stops, or attempts to stop, a ball that is going

into the goal, or is very close to it, using any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless the player is a goalkeeper within the penalty area).

PENALTY—Indirect free kick from the point of the infraction, notwithstanding the requirements of [Rule 13](#).

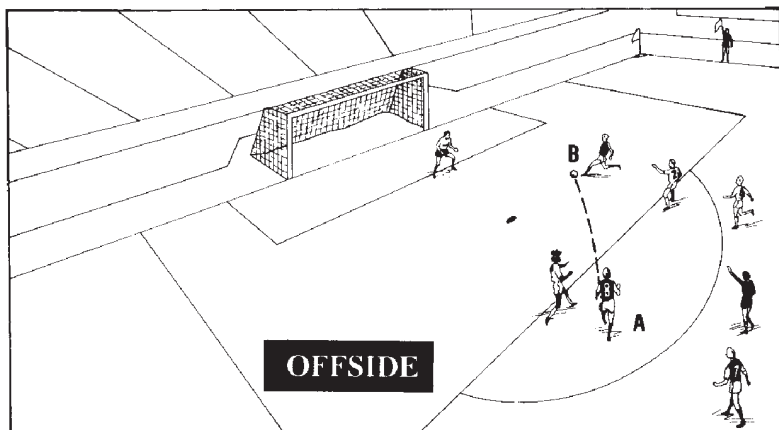
11.3 WHEN NOT OFFSIDE

A player shall not be declared offside by the referee under the following situations:

- 11.3.1 Merely for being in an offside position;
 - 11.3.2 If the player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in; or
 - 11.3.3 If the player receives the ball from a deliberate play from a defender (except a save). A deliberate act is one in which a player chooses to act, regardless of the outcome of that action. This deliberate act is neither a reaction nor reflex. A deliberate play occurs when a player has the opportunity to:
 - 11.3.3.1 pass the ball to a teammate;
 - 11.3.3.2 gain possession of the ball; or
 - 11.3.3.3 clear the ball.
- If the pass, attempt to gain possession or clearance by the player in control of the ball is inaccurate or unsuccessful, this does not negate the fact that the player 'deliberately played' the ball. Indications that a player has deliberately played the ball include: (1) the ball traveled from a distance and the player had a clear view of it, (2) the ball was not moving quickly, (3) the direction of the ball was expected, (4) the player had time to coordinate their body movements, (5) a ball on the ground is easier to control than a ball in the air.
- 11.3.4 An attacking team player may step off the field to avoid being penalized for offside, but if, upon leaving the field, the player then distracts an opponent or assists a teammate, the player is guilty of an offside offense. If the player reenters from the goal line and becomes involved in play before the next stoppage in play or before the defending team has played the ball towards the halfway line and outside its penalty area, the player is considered to be positioned on the goal line for the purposes of offside.
 - 11.3.5 When a defensive player leaves the field of play deliberately or does so in the normal run of play. However, the defensive player who deliberately steps off the field of play shall be cautioned for misconduct. (See [Rule 3.7.3](#).) A defender who leaves the field of play, deliberately or in the normal run of play, is considered to be on the end line for the purpose of determining offside position until the next stoppage of play or until the defending team has played the ball towards the halfway line and it is outside the penalty area.
 - 11.3.6 If an attacking player remains stationary between the goalposts and inside the goal as the ball enters the goal, a goal shall be awarded unless the player commits an offside offense or a Rule 12 offense, in which case they shall be penalized and play restarted with the free kick appropriate for the offense.

DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATING OFFSIDE POINTS

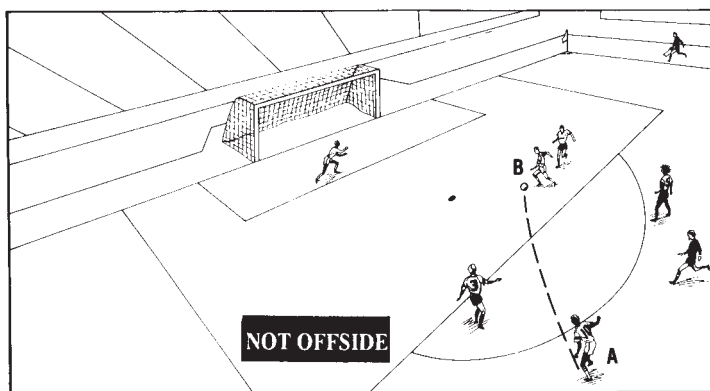
OFFSIDE—Diagram 1



Pass to a Teammate

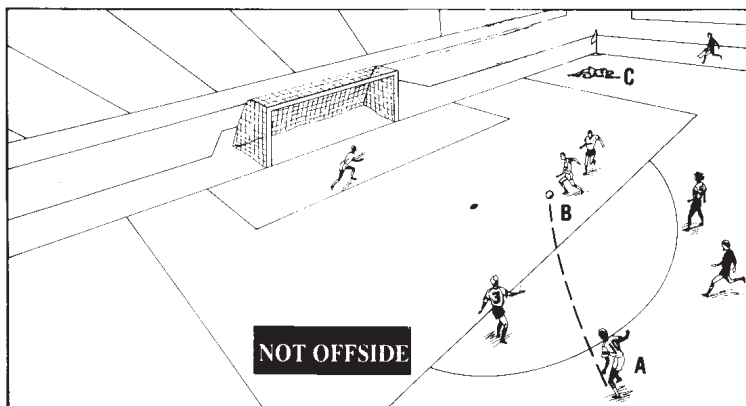
A passes the ball to *B*. *B* is offside because they are in their opponent's half of the field, in front of *A*, and there are fewer than two of their opponents closer to their opponent's end line when the ball was passed forward. Note: Even is onside.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 2

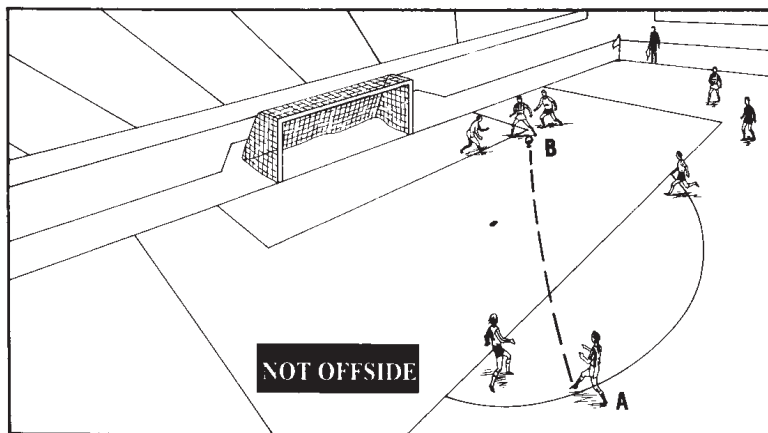


Pass to a Teammate

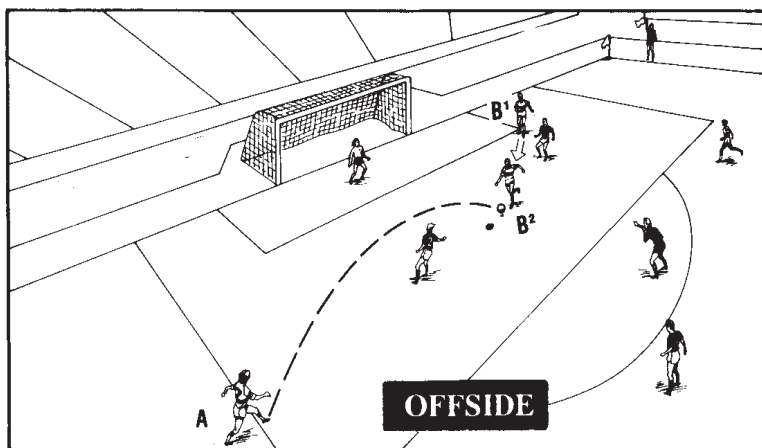
A plays the ball forward to *B*, who is even with the second-to-last opponent. *B* is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played forward, there are at least two of their opponents closer to their opponent's end line than *B* was. Note: Even is onside.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 3**Pass to a Teammate**

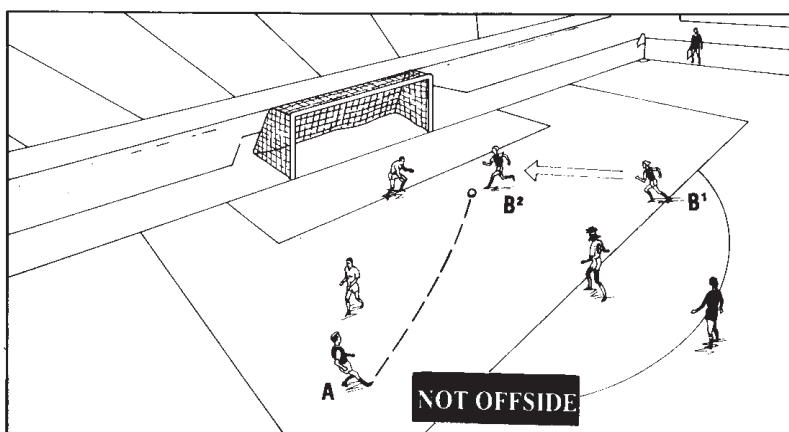
A plays the ball forward to **B**, who is even with the second-to-last defender. **B** is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played forward by **A**, there were at least two of their opponents closer to their opponent's end line. **C**, who is lying injured outside the penalty area, is in an offside position but shall not be penalized since they are not involved in active play. Note: Even is onside.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 4**Pass to a Teammate**

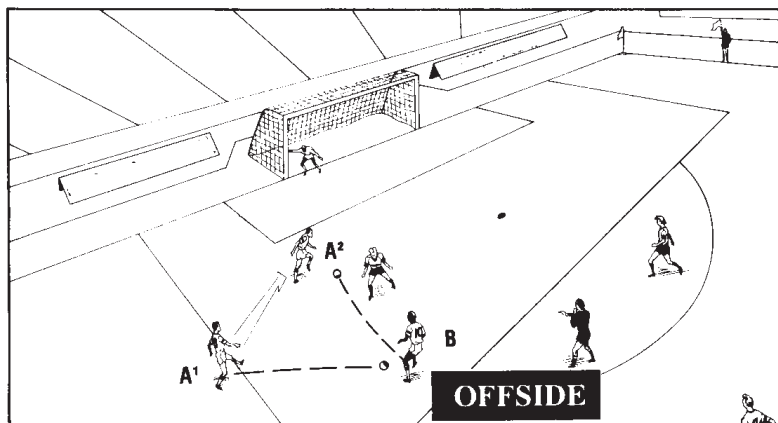
A plays the ball to **B**, who is even with the last two opponents. **B** is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played forward by **A**, there are at least two of their opponents closer to the opponent's end line. Note: Even is onside.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 5**Pass to a Teammate**

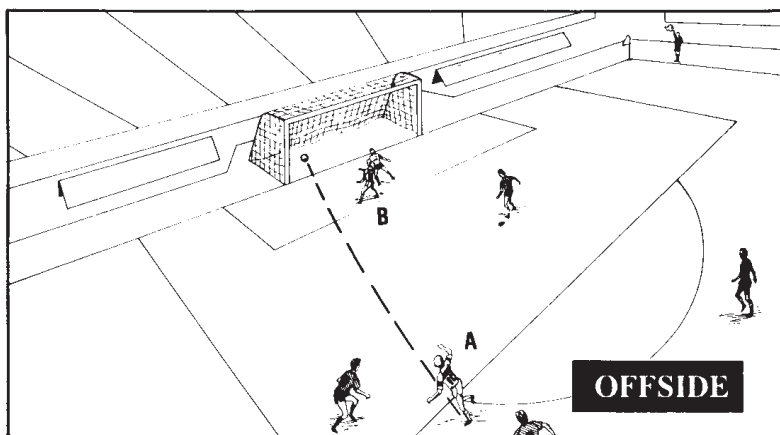
A crosses the ball forward from outside the penalty area. **B** runs from Position 1 and collects the ball as it lands at Position 2. **B** is offside since, at the moment the ball was played by **A**, they were closer to their opponent's end line than the second-to-last defender and were involved in active play. The Assistant Referee should raise their flag and the referee should penalize them at the moment they touch the ball.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 6**Pass to a Teammate**

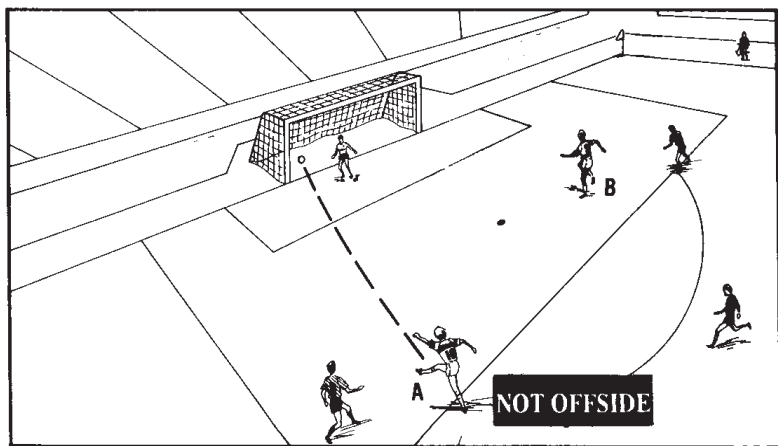
A passes the ball to **B**, who runs from Position 1 to Position 2 to make a play on the ball. **B** is not offside because at the moment the ball was played by **A**, **B** was not in an offside position since they were not in front of the ball and there were at least two opponents closer to the opponent's end line. Note: Even is onside.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 7**Interpassing With a Teammate**

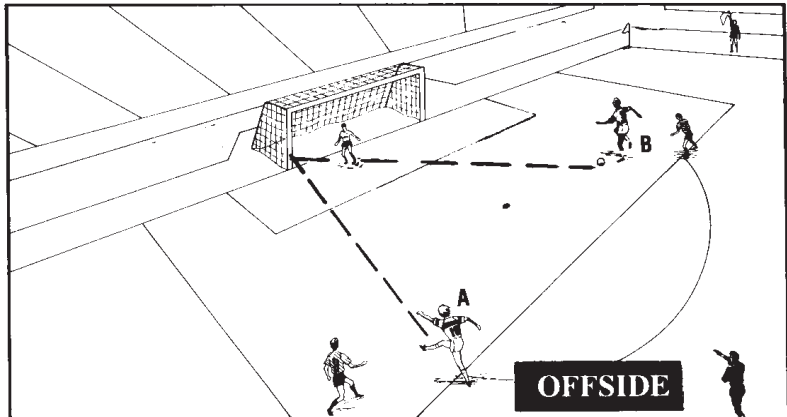
A plays the ball to **B** from Position 1 and runs forward to receive the return pass. **B** plays the ball to **A**, who is now in Position 2. **A** is offside since at the moment the ball was played forward to them by **B**, they were closer to their opponent's end line than the second-to-last defender and was involved in active play.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 8**Interfering With an Opponent**

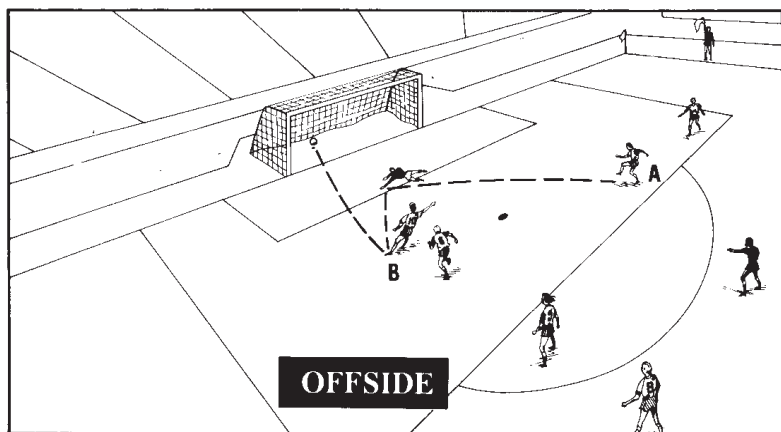
A shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. **B** is standing in front of the goal-keeper. The goal shall not be allowed since **B**, who is in an offside position, is involved in active play and is interfering with an opponent.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 9**Shot at Goal**

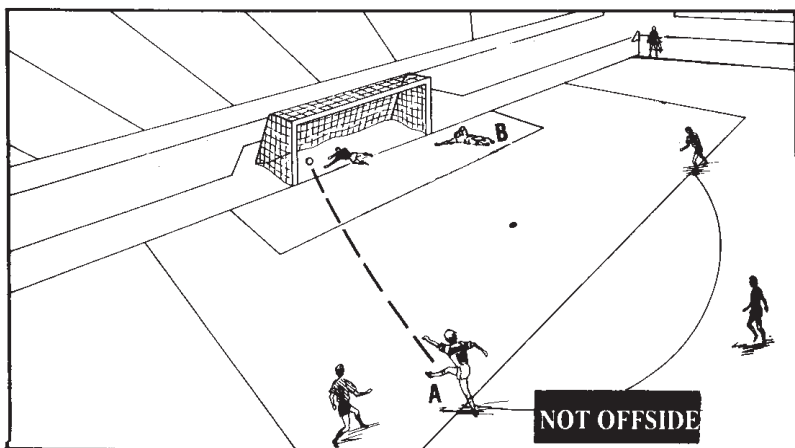
A shoots for goal and scores. Although **B** is in an offside position, they are not involved in active play, and the goal shall be allowed.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 10**Ball Rebounding From Goal Posts or Crossbar**

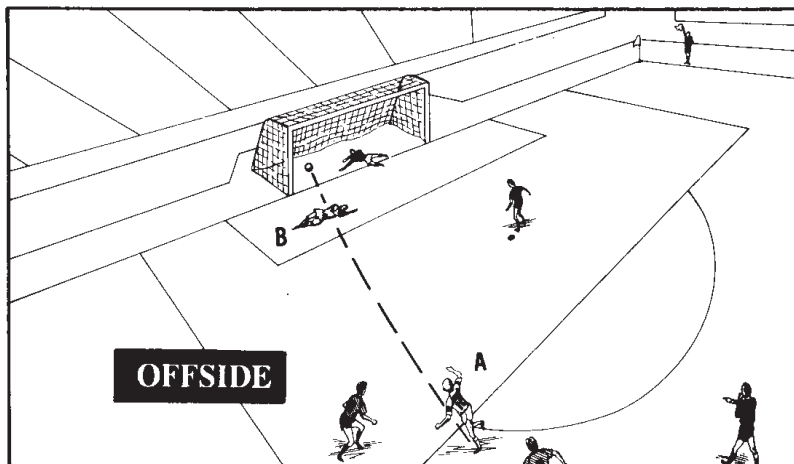
A shoots for goal and the ball rebounds from the post to **B**, who kicks the ball into goal. The goal shall be disallowed since **B**, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by **A**, was involved in active play by being in that position.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 11**Shot Rebounds From Goalkeeper**

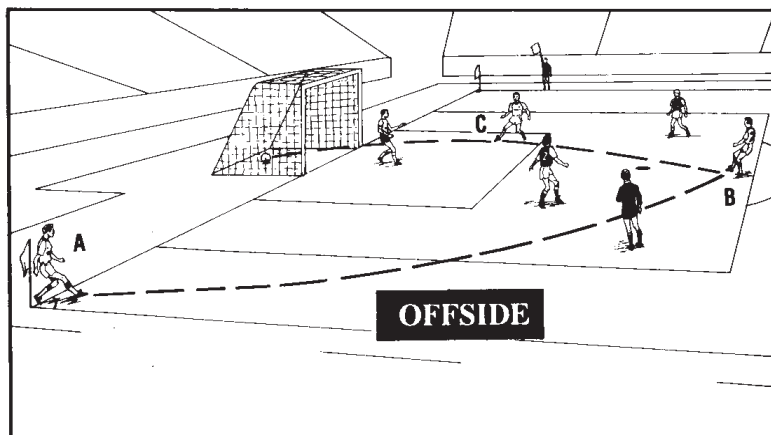
A shoots the ball at goal and the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper to **B**, who kicks the ball into goal. The goal is disallowed since **B**, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by **A**, was involved in active play by receiving the ball from a save by an opponent while being in that position.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 12**Not Interfering With an Opponent**

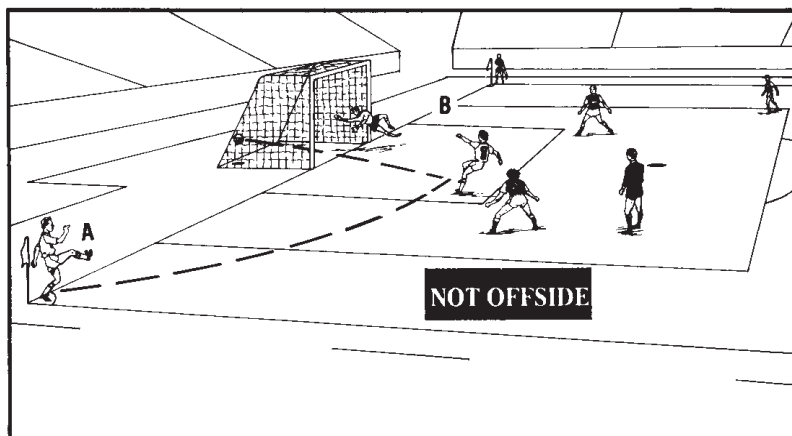
A shoots for goal and scores. Although **B** is lying injured in an offside position, they are not involved in active play. The goal shall be allowed.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 13**Interfering With an Opponent**

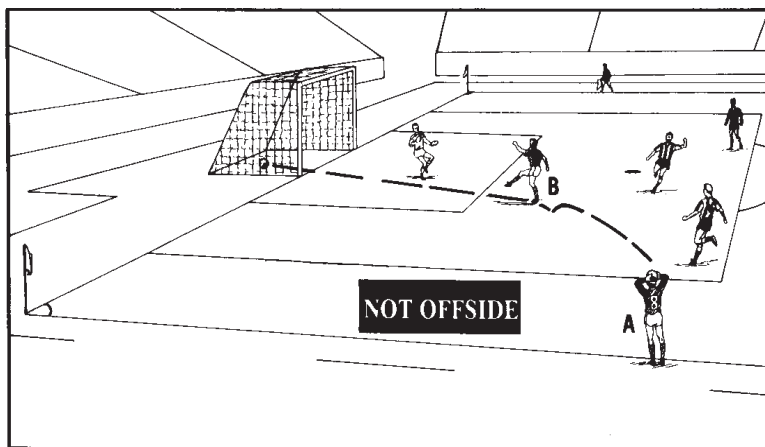
A shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. **B**, who is lying injured in the goal area and in the path of the ball, shall be penalized for offside. By their presence, however accidental, they are involved in active play and are interfering with an opponent.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 14**Corner Kick**

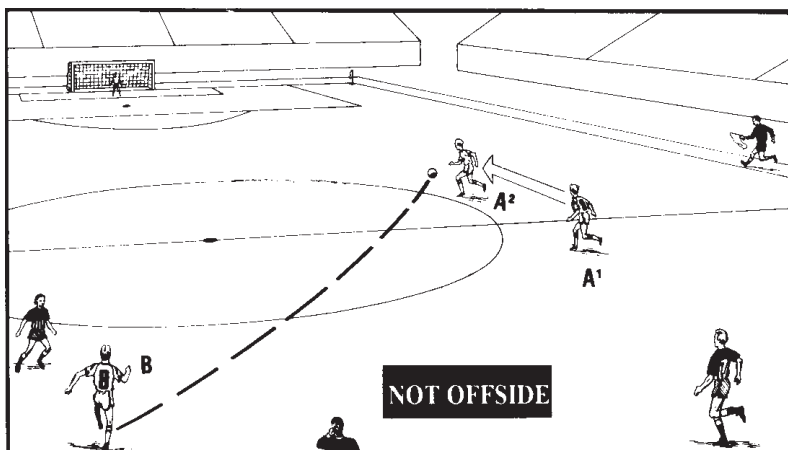
A takes a corner kick and the ball goes directly to **B**. **B** shoots for goal. The ball is touched by teammate **C** and enters the goal. **C** is offside. The goal must be disallowed since **C** was closer to their opponent's end line than at least two of their opponents when the ball was played forward. Note: Even is onside.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 15**Corner Kick**

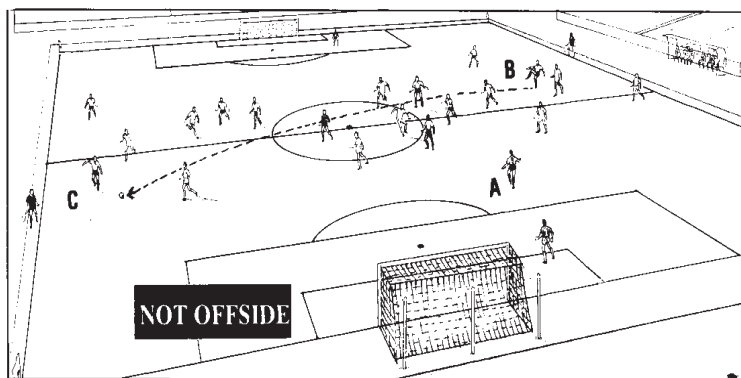
A takes a corner kick and the ball goes directly to **B**, who scores. Although **B** has only one opponent between them and the end line, the goal is allowed since a player cannot be offside if they receive the ball directly from a corner kick.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 16**Throw-In**

A throws the ball to **B**, who scores. The goal is allowed. Although **B** is in front of the ball and there is only one opponent between them and the end line, they are not offside because a player cannot be offside if they receive the ball directly from a throw-in.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 17**Pass to a Teammate**

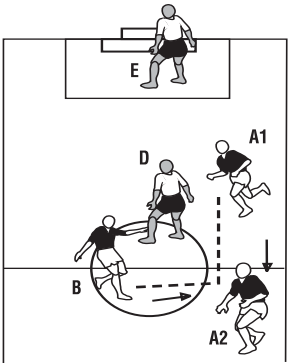
B plays the ball ahead of **A**, who is in their own half of the field of play at Position 1. Although there are not at least two opponents closer to their own end line at the moment **B** played the ball, **A** is not offside since a player cannot be offside in their own half of the field of play.

OFFSIDE—Diagram 18**Active Play**

The ball is intercepted by **B**, a teammate of the attacking player. It is played to another teammate, **C**, on the wing. Although the attacking player **A** is in an offside position, they shall not be penalized since they are not involved in active play.

Diagrams 1-18 reprinted with permission from the U.S. Soccer Federation and the National Federation of State High School Associations.

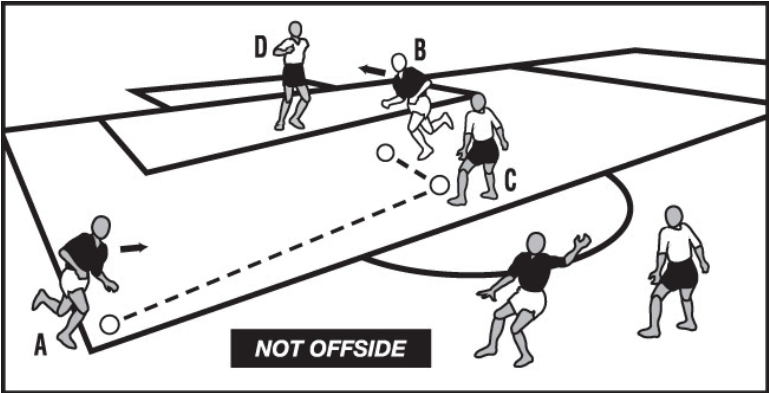
OFFSIDE—Diagram 19



Offside When Ball is Played

If **A** is in the opponent’s half of the field of play (Position 1) and is in an offside position when **B** last played the ball, **A** cannot put themselves offside by moving back into their half of the field of play (Position 2).

OFFSIDE—Diagram 20



Deliberate Play

This is a deliberate play by the defender, even though the ball went directly to an attacker in an offside position.

RULE 12

Fouls and Misconduct

12.1 FOULS

Free kicks can only be awarded for offenses that are committed when the ball is in play. Fouls are defined and classified as follows:

- 12.1.1 Careless. A foul is careless when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration for the opponent when committing the action. No disciplinary sanction is required.
- 12.1.2 Reckless. A foul is reckless when a player acts with disregard for the danger or consequences to an opponent. A caution is required.
- 12.1.3 Excessive Force. A foul involves excessive force when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent. An ejection is required.
- 12.1.4 Stopping a Promising Attack. A foul committed that prevents the opponent from taking advantage of speed, space and options to create a dangerous attack, or a blatantly cynical foul to stop an attack. A caution is required.
- 12.1.5 Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity. Fouls that stop a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity. Factors to consider in whether an obvious goal scoring opportunity exists include: the distance from goal; the general direction of the attack; the likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball; and the location and number of defenders. An ejection is required unless Rule 12.4.9 or 12.4.10 applies.

12.2 DIRECT FREE-KICK OFFENSES

A direct free kick shall be awarded if a player commits any of the following offenses against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- 12.2.1 Charging an opponent;
- 12.2.2 Jumping at an opponent;
- 12.2.3 Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent;
- 12.2.4 Pushing an opponent;
- 12.2.5 Striking or attempting to strike an opponent;
- 12.2.6 Tackling an opponent; or
- 12.2.7 Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.

A direct free kick also is awarded if a player commits any of the following offenses:

12.2.8 Handling the ball; For the purposes of determining handball 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.

12.2.8.1 It is an offense if a player:

12.2.8.1.1 Deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm toward the ball;

12.2.8.1.2 Scores in the opponent's goal directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper;

12.2.8.1.3 Scores in the opponent's goal immediately after the ball has touched their hand/arm, even if accidental; or

12.2.8.1.4 Touches 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 consequence of, or justifiable by, the player's body movement for that specific situation. By having their hand/arm in such a position, the player takes a risk of their hand/arm being hit by the ball and being penalized.

12.2.8.2 The offenses in Rule 12.2.8.1 apply even if the ball touches a player's hand/arm directly from the head or body (including the foot) of another player who is close.

12.2.8.3 Except for the offenses in Rule 12.2.8.1, it is not an offense if the ball touches a player's hand/arm:

12.2.8.3.1 Directly from the player's own head or body (including the foot);

12.2.8.3.2 Directly from the head or body (including the foot) of another player who is close;

12.2.8.3.3 If the hand/arm is close to the body and does not make the body unnaturally bigger; or

12.2.8.3.4 When a player falls and the hand/arm is between the body and the ground to support the body, but not extended laterally or vertically away from the body. Note: This does not apply to the goalkeeper within their penalty area.

12.2.9 Holding an opponent;

12.2.10 Impeding an opponent by making contact;

12.2.11 Biting, coughing on or spitting at an opponent or using blood on a uniform or from a bleeding or oozing injury to assault an opponent;

Note: A violent behavior II ejection is required.

12.2.12 Throwing an object at the ball, an official or an opponent; or

12.2.13 Assaulting a referee or game official. (See Rule 12.7.12)

All direct free kicks awarded to the attacking team in the penalty area are penalty kicks. (See Rules 14.1 and 14.2.)

12.3 INDIRECT FREE-KICK OFFENSES

An indirect free kick shall be awarded for any of the following offenses:

12.3.1 Goalkeeper Violations (inside the penalty area):

12.3.1.1 Taking longer than six seconds to release the ball from their hands;

12.3.1.2 Using their hand or arm to control the ball after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate. In a situation in which the ball is kicked by a teammate in any manner with the apparent intention of allowing the goalkeeper to take possession, the goalkeeper shall be penalized once the ball is touched by the hands. The goalkeeper may not receive a pass from the foot of a teammate outside the penalty area and then dribble the ball into the penalty area and subsequently pick the ball up with their hands. If the ball is deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate and the goalkeeper attempts to play the ball with their feet but miskicks the ball, the goalkeeper may subsequently use their hands to play the ball if they are inside the penalty area;

Note: Goalkeepers cannot be guilty of stopping a promising attack or denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity in this situation unless the handling is also a violation of Rule 12.3.2.6.

12.3.1.3 Using their hand or arm to control the ball after a teammate legally throws in the ball in their direction. If the ball is deliberately thrown in to the goalkeeper by a teammate and the goalkeeper attempts to play the ball with their feet but miskicks the ball, the goalkeeper may subsequently use their hands to play the ball if they are inside the penalty area; or

12.3.1.4 After releasing the ball from their hands, using their hand or arm to touch the ball before it has been: (1) touched by a member of the opposing team anywhere on the field, or (2) any ball played by a teammate in violation of Rule 12.3.1.2.

PENALTY—(12.3.1.1 to 12.3.1.4)—Indirect free kick from the point of infraction subject to the overriding considerations of Rule 13.2.5.

12.3.2 Other Violations:

12.3.2.1 Playing in a dangerous manner;

Note: This is only an indirect free kick if no contact is made with the opponent. If contact is made, the offense is punishable by a direct free kick.

12.3.2.2 Impeding an opponent without contact;

12.3.2.3 Interfering with the goalkeeper attempting to release the ball;

12.3.2.4 Playing the ball when the goalkeeper has control of the ball with their hand(s). A goalkeeper is considered in control of the ball with the hand(s) when: (1) the ball is held between the hands or between the hand and any surface (e.g., ground, goal posts, own body, etc.), (2) holding the ball in the outstretched open hand; or (3) bouncing it on the ground or throwing it in the air to kick or punt the ball;

12.3.2.5 Using a deliberate trick to circumvent Rule 12.3.1.2. A player may pass the ball to their own goalkeeper using the head, knee, chest, thigh, etc. However, if a player uses trickery in any form (for instance, flicking the ball with the foot in order to head it to the goalkeeper), the player is guilty of unsporting behavior. The referee shall caution the player and award the opposing team an indirect free kick from the point of infraction subject to the overriding provisions of Rule 13.2.5;

- 12.3.2.6 Playing the ball a second time after a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, kickoff or throw-in before the ball is touched or played by any other player. This applies to all players, including goalkeepers. If the violation stops a promising attack, the offender must be cautioned. If the violation denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the offender must be ejected;
- 12.3.2.7 Verbal violations, including dissent, incidental profane language, abusive language or illegal coaching;
- 12.3.2.8 Entering or leaving the field without permission;
- 12.3.2.9 Improper substitutions;
- 12.3.2.10 As an attacker, standing closer than one yard to a defensive wall of three or more players when a free kick is taken;
- 12.3.2.11 Offside;
- 12.3.2.12 Charging (non-violently, consisting of a nudge or contact with the near shoulder, when both players are in an upright position) when the ball is not within playing distance; or
- 12.3.2.13 Any offense for which play is stopped to issue a caution or ejection where a different restart is not specified by the rules. If play is stopped to caution a nonparticipating player for unsporting behavior committed off the field while the ball was in play, the game shall be restarted by an indirect free kick, against the offending player's team, given from the point where the ball was when the infraction occurred, subject to the overriding provisions of Rule 13.2.5.

12.4 CAUTIONS

Any player, coach, team representative or participant listed on the official roster shall be cautioned and shown a yellow card for committing any of the following offenses:

- 12.4.1 Entering the field without permission after the game has started or leaving or returning to the field of play (except through the normal course of play) without first reporting to the referee or assistant referee. This includes substitutes and bench personnel who leave the coaching or team area, consistently fail to remain within the coaching or team area, and/or enter the field without permission;
 - 12.4.2 Persistently infringing upon any of the rules of the game;
 - 12.4.3 Showing dissent by word of mouth or action to decisions made by officials;
 - 12.4.4 Using profane language in an incidental manner (i.e., not directed at someone);
 - 12.4.5 Engaging in taunting or ridiculing another player, bench personnel, officials or spectators or excessive celebration;
- Note: Removal of the jersey is not automatically considered to be a cautionable offense.*
- 12.4.6 Engaging in simulation (falsifying contact) to deceive the referee or exaggerating the severity of contact;

- 12.4.7 Delaying the restart of play by kicking, throwing, carrying the ball away from the location of the restart or by taking an excessive amount of time to put the ball back into play following a restart;
- 12.4.8 Failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick, dropped ball or throw-in;
- 12.4.9 Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offense against an opponent in the penalty area where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offense that was an attempt to play the ball;
- 12.4.10 Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a non-deliberate handling offense;
- 12.4.11 Stopping a promising attack. This includes situations where:
 - 12.4.11.1 The opponent has speed, space and options to exploit;
 - 12.4.11.2 The foul is blatant or cynical in nature; or
 - 12.4.11.3 One or more elements of denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity are not present.

Note 1: In situations where the referee applies advantage, the promising attack is still considered to be present, and the referee shall not return to issue a caution when play stops

Note 2: In situations where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offense where the defender was attempting to play the ball, no caution shall be issued for stopping a promising attack because the penalty kick has restored the promising attack.

- 12.4.12 Unsuccessfully attempting to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity.
 Note: If the referee plays advantage in a denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity situation, the punishment is downgraded to a caution, which shall be issued when the ball next goes out of play;
- 12.4.13 Fouling an opponent in a reckless manner (Rule 12.1.2); and
- 12.4.14 Exhibiting unsporting behavior (Rule 5.6.4).

12.5 ACCUMULATED CAUTIONS — REGULAR SEASON

- 12.5.1 Any player(s), coach(es) or other bench personnel who has received a total of five cautions in one season shall be suspended and shall not participate in the next regularly scheduled game, including postseason games. Three additional cautions (a total of eight for the season) shall result in a one-game suspension. Each two additional cautions beyond the eighth shall result in a one-game suspension.
- 12.5.2 If the total is reached in the final regular-season game of the season, the player(s), coach(es) and/or bench personnel shall not participate in the first postseason game and/or the first regularly scheduled game of the next season if their team does not participate in postseason play.

Note: Cautions issued during a suspended game shall stand as a matter of record if the game is resumed on the same or a subsequent date. If the game is not resumed and remains a no contest, cautions shall not be charged to an individual's record.

PENALTY—(12.5.1 and 12.5.2)—See Rule 12.8.1 PENALTY 1 and 2 for illegal participation as a result of an accumulated caution suspension.

12.6 ACCUMULATED CAUTIONS — POSTSEASON

12.6.1 Caution accumulation will carry over into postseason play, which includes conference tournaments and the NCAA tournament.

12.6.2 Players or coaches participating in postseason play will receive a one-game suspension when a total of eight cautions have been accumulated. Further, each two additional cautions beyond the eighth shall result in a one-game suspension. Players or coaches who have not yet accumulated five cautions for the season will not be suspended if they receive a fifth caution during the postseason, as the total for suspension increases to eight. Players or coaches who have accumulated more than five cautions during the regular season will still be subject to suspension upon the accumulation of their eighth caution.

12.6.3 If the total is reached in the final postseason game of the season, the player(s), coach(es) and/or bench personnel shall not participate in the first scheduled game of the next season.

PENALTY—(12.6.2 and 12.6.3)—See [Rule 12.8.1 PENALTY 1 and 2](#) for illegal participation as a result of an accumulated caution suspension.

12.7 EJECTIONS

For all ejections, the referee shall electronically complete and file the Red Card Form located on the NCAA website (ncaa.org/playingrules) and then click [Soccer Rules of the Game](#)) within 24 hours of completion of the game. (See [Page 7](#).)

Any player, coach, team representative or participant listed on the official roster shall be ejected and shown a red card for committing any of the following offenses:

12.7.1 Serious foul play involves making a tackle or challenge for the ball that endangers the safety of an opponent or uses excessive force or brutality. It must be against an opponent, while the ball is in play, between players competing for the ball, and a direct free-kick foul;

12.7.2 Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by handling the ball outside the penalty area in violation of 12.2.8;

12.7.3 Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately or cynically handling the ball inside the penalty area in violation of 12.2.8 (except a goalkeeper within their own penalty area);

12.7.4 Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity outside the penalty area to an opponent whose overall movement is toward the offender's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick;

12.7.5. Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offense against an opponent in the penalty area where the referee awards a penalty kick if;

12.7.5.1 The offense is holding, pulling or pushing.

12.7.5.2 The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball.

12.7.5.3 The offense is one that is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g., serious foul play, violent behavior I or II, etc.).

12.7.6 Playing the ball a second time after a throw-in, goal kick or free kick to deny an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity;

12.7.7 Engaging in hostile or abusive language, gestures or harassment that refers to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national origin;

12.7.8 Engaging in other abusive, threatening or obscene language, behavior or conduct, including;

12.7.8.1 Leaving the coaching or team area to argue with game officials.

12.7.8.2 Entering the opponent's coaching or team area in an aggressive or confrontational manner.

12.7.9 Receiving a second caution in the same game;

12.7.10 Committing violent behavior I and II;

12.7.10.1 Violent behavior I is an unwarranted excessive act or use of force when not challenging for the ball. It may be against anyone (for instance, opponent, teammate, official or spectator), the behavior may be on or off the field of play, and the ball may be in or out of play.

12.7.10.2 Violent behavior II is an unwarranted excessive act or use of force, which is malicious and so extreme and severe that it places a participant in danger of physical injury. These acts may include, but are not limited to, head butting, elbow to the face or head, stomping, kicking a defenseless person, hair pulling, spitting at, coughing at/on or biting an opponent or any other person. See Rule 12.8.1.1 for suspension requirements (two games for first offense).

12.7.10.2.1 The referee shall inform the player(s), the head coach(es) and the official scorekeeper, who shall record on the official NCAA box score form, that an ejection for violent behavior II has been issued.

Note: The clear intent of violent behavior II is to eliminate conduct that presents a serious risk of injury and has no place in college soccer. The key differentiators of an act or conduct that reach the level of violent behavior II are premeditation, malice and severity.

12.7.11 Engaging in fighting;

12.7.11.1. A fight is defined as a deliberate strike or punch or an attempt to strike or punch another player, official, coach or bench personnel in a malicious manner. See Rule 12.8.1.1 for suspension requirements (two games for first offense).

12.7.11.2 A player, coach or bench personnel shall be ejected if they are guilty of fighting or leave the coaching area to participate in an altercation.

Note: If leaving the team area while an altercation is in progress is the only violation, then the ejection is considered violent behavior I. Making contact with an opponent during the altercation elevates the offense to a fighting red card and two-game suspension.

12.7.11.3 A coach or team representative who leaves the coaching area in an attempt to restore order during an altercation shall not be punished. If, however, instead of restoring order, they participate in the altercation, they shall be ejected for fighting.

12.7.11.4 The referee shall inform the player(s), the head coach(es) and the official scorekeeper, who shall record on the official NCAA box score form, that an ejection for fighting has been issued.

12.7.12 Assaulting a referee;

12.7.12.1 Referee assault is defined as deliberate physical contact with game officials or any threat of physical intimidation or harm. These acts include, but are not limited to, pushing, shoving, spitting, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact. See Rule 12.8.1.2 for suspension requirements (three games for first offense).

12.7.12.2 The referee shall inform the player(s), the head coach(es) and the official scorekeeper, who shall record on the official NCAA box score form that an ejection for referee assault has been issued.

Note: Ejections issued during a suspended game shall stand as a matter of record if the game is resumed on the same or a subsequent date. If the game is not resumed and remains a no contest, ejections are only charged to an individual's record if they are for fighting, violent behavior II or referee assault.

PENALTY—(12.7.1 to 12.7.12)—A player, coach or other bench personnel ejected from the game must leave the venue, be out of sight and sound and is prohibited from any communication or contact, direct or indirect, with the team, coaches and/or bench personnel until the completion of the contest, including the overtime periods. *Exception: The athletic trainer is permitted to be in the designated spectator area if they are ejected.* If the ejected individual(s) is a player of record in the game at the time of the ejection, the player, who cannot be replaced, shall leave the game and their team shall play short. All ejections also result in a subsequent game(s) suspension as outlined in Rule 12.8.

Note: An institution or conference may impose a more severe penalty for misconduct in addition to the minimum penalty required by the playing rules, but in no case may an institution or conference lessen the penalty that is required by the playing rules.

12.8 SUSPENSIONS AND ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION

12.8.1 A player, coach or bench personnel ejected from a game under Rules 12.7.1 to 12.7.12 cannot participate in the next regularly scheduled game, including postseason games, or, if the offense occurs in the final game of the season, in the first scheduled game of the next season. Each successive red card ejection shall result in an additional one-game suspension. For example, a second red card shall result in a two-game suspension, a third red card shall result in a three-game suspension, etc.

12.8.2 A player, coach or bench personnel ejected from a game for violent behavior II or fighting under [Rule 12.7.10.2](#) or [Rule 12.7.11](#) cannot participate in the next two regularly scheduled games (one game for the red card ejection and one additional game for violent behavior II or fighting), including postseason games. A player, coach or bench personnel ejected for violent behavior II or fighting a second time (or one of each) in the same season shall not compete for the remainder of the season, including postseason games. If the first violent behavior II or fighting ejection in a season occurs after any non-violent behavior II or non-fighting ejection, the result is a three-game suspension (two games for the second red card ejection and one additional game for violent behavior II or fighting).

12.8.3 A player, coach or bench personnel ejected from a game for assault on a referee under [Rule 12.7.12](#) cannot participate in the next three regularly scheduled games (one game for the red card ejection and two additional games for referee assault), including postseason games. Game suspensions for assault on a referee are in addition to suspensions resulting from other card accumulations.

12.8.4 Any player, coach or team representative who receives two (2) ejections for violent behavior II ([Rule 12.7.10.2](#)), fighting ([Rule 12.7.11](#)) or referee assault ([Rule 12.7.12](#)), or any combination of the above shall be suspended for the remainder of the season.

PENALTY 1—(12.8)—If an ejected or suspended player, assistant coach or other bench personnel illegally participates in any game: (1) the original term of suspension for the player, assistant coach or other bench personnel shall be doubled, and (2) the head coach shall be suspended for double the term of the enhanced suspension for the player, assistant coach or other bench personnel. For the penalty on a head coach illegally participating, see Rule 12.8.1 PENALTY 2.

Note: Those seeking confirmation on meeting suspension requirements are encouraged to contact the NCAA soccer secretary-rules editor with any questions.

PENALTY 2—(12.8)—If an ejected or suspended head coach illegally participates in any game, the head coach shall be suspended for four (4) games. For the penalty on an assistant coach illegally participating, see Rule 12.8.1 PENALTY 1.

12.9 SERVING A SUSPENSION

12.9.1 A player or non-coach bench personnel serving a game suspension(s) may be in the team area, provided they are not in uniform.

12.9.2 A player serving a game suspension(s) may not participate in any pregame activities.

PENALTY—(12.9.1 and 12.9.2)—See [Rule 12.8 PENALTY 1](#).

12.9.3 A coach serving a game suspension(s) shall not be in the venue from one hour before the scheduled start of the game until 30 minutes after the completion of the contest. During the suspension, the coach must be out of sight and sound and is prohibited from any communication or contact,

direct or indirect, with the team, coaches and/or bench personnel until the completion of the contest, including the overtime periods.

12.9.4 A coach serving a game suspension(s) may participate in any pregame activities up until one hour before the scheduled start time.

PENALTY—(12.9.3 and 12.9.4)—See [Rule 12.8.1 PENALTY 1](#) for assistant coach or [Rule 12.8.1 PENALTY 2](#) for head coach.

12.9.5 Scrimmages and exhibition games (including alumni games), scheduled or unscheduled, do not qualify as games with reference to ejected or suspended personnel. Moreover, if the next regularly scheduled game is not played for any reason (i.e., no contest), the game shall not satisfy the game requirements for suspended personnel. Suspended personnel shall serve their game suspensions in an actual contest. Cautions and ejections earned in scrimmages or exhibition games do not count for season accumulation purposes, and no suspensions shall result from ejections in such games. A regularly scheduled game is an intercollegiate contest considered countable for team championship selection purposes. Games against service teams, professional teams, semiprofessional teams, amateur teams, two-year colleges, club teams, foreign teams and four-year teams against whom competition is considered exhibition or noncountable in nature for championship play, do not qualify as regularly scheduled games.

12.10 CARD ACCUMULATION EXAMPLES AND RULINGS

Note: It is not possible for any player to accumulate more than one yellow card (caution) in a single game. (See [Rule 5.6.4](#).)

Yellow Cards—Regular Season

Example A: A player enters a game with three yellow cards, receives a caution and later in the game is cautioned again. The referee shows the yellow followed by a red card and ejects the player. **Result:** The player now has accumulated four yellow cards and one red card and shall serve a one-game suspension for the red card.

Example B: The player from Example A serves a game suspension and returns only to receive a caution and, later in the same game, receives a second caution. The referee shows the yellow followed by a red card since it was the second in the same game to the same player. **Result:** The player now has accumulated five yellow cards and two red cards and shall miss the next three games.

Explanation: The player shall sit one game for accumulating five yellow cards (see [Rule 12.5.1](#).) and two additional games for accumulating two red cards. (See [Rule 12.8.1](#).)

Additional Yellow Cards and Fighting Red Cards

Example C: The player in Examples A and B satisfies the three-game suspension requirement only to receive a yellow card in each of the next two games in which they play. The card accumulation now stands at seven yellows and two reds. The player enters the next regular-season game and receives a caution and later is ejected for fighting. **Result:** Player misses the next five games.

Explanation: The player receives one game for accumulating the eighth yellow card of the season, two games for the fighting red card, and two additional games for the third ejection of the season.

12.11 USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The use of tobacco by student-athletes, or team or game personnel (e.g., coaches, athletic trainers, managers and game officials), is prohibited during competition. Any student-athlete, or team or game personnel, who uses tobacco during competition shall be immediately disqualified (ejected) for the remainder of that competition. This disqualification (ejection) does not have an accompanying suspension.

Sample Accumulation Charts

Scenario A1			REGULAR SEASON	
Situation	Penalty	Explanation		
A1 has accumulated 4 yellow cards and receives 1 red card.	Immediate ejection and 1-game suspension.	Suspended 1 game for the red card ejection.		
A1 receives two yellow cards in the same game, which equals 1 yellow card and 1 red card. Totals: 5 yellow cards and 2 red cards.	Immediate ejection and 3-game suspension.	Suspended 1 game for 5 th yellow card plus additional 2 games for 2nd red card ejection of the season.		
A1 receives 6 th , 7 th and 8 th yellow cards in each of the next 3 games. Totals: 8 yellow cards and 2 red cards.	1-game suspension after 8 th yellow card.	Suspended 1 game for accumulation of 8 th yellow card during the regular season.		
A1 receives 1 fighting red card. Totals: 8 yellow cards and 3 red cards (1 fighting).	Immediate ejection and 4-game suspension.	Suspended 3 games for 3 rd red card ejection of the season plus additional game for fighting red card.		
Scenario B1			REGULAR SEASON	
Situation	Penalty	Explanation		
B1 has accumulated 4 yellow cards and receives 2 yellow cards in the same game, which equals 1 yellow and 1 red. Totals: 5 yellow cards and 1 red card.	Immediate ejection and 2-game suspension.	Suspended 1 game for 5 th yellow card plus additional game for red card ejection.		
B1 receives 6 th , 7 th and 8 th yellow cards in each of the next 3 games. Totals: 8 yellow cards and 1 red card.	1-game suspension after 8 th yellow card.	Suspended 1 game for accumulation of 8 th yellow card during the regular season.		
B1 receives 1 fighting red card. Totals: 8 yellow cards and 2 red cards (1 fighting).	Immediate ejection and 3-game suspension.	Suspended 2 games for 2 nd red card ejection of the season plus additional game for fighting red card.		

Scenario C1 REGULAR SEASON			Situation	Penalty	Explanation
			C1 receives a red card in an exhibition game.	Suspension is not mandatory.	Cards received during an exhibition game do not count against player's accumulation and do not qualify as games with reference to ejected players.
			C1 receives a red card. Totals: 1 red card.	Immediate ejection and 1-game suspension.	Suspended 1 game for 1 st red card ejection of season.
			C1 receives a fighting red card. Totals: 2 red cards (1 fighting).	Immediate ejection and 3-game suspension.	Suspended 2 games for 2 nd red card ejection of the season plus additional game for fighting red card.
Scenario D1 POSTSEASON			Situation	Penalty	Explanation
			D1 has accumulated 4 yellow cards and 1 red card during the regular season and has served the 1-game suspension before the postseason.	D1 served the 1-game suspension for the red card.	Regular-season scenario for D1.
			D1 receives a caution in the 1 st postseason game. Totals: 5 yellow cards and 1 red card.	No penalty.	The card accumulation threshold increases to 8 yellow cards in the postseason.
			D1 receives 6 th , 7 th and 8 th yellow cards in each of the next 3 games. Totals: 8 yellow cards and 1 red card.	1-game suspension after 8 th yellow card.	The card accumulation threshold increases to 8 yellow cards in the postseason.

RULE 13

Free Kicks

13.1 TYPES

- 13.1.1 A free kick is taken to resume play after play has been stopped by the referee for any of the offenses listed elsewhere in the rules. The kick is taken by a member of the team against which the offense is committed and is taken from the point where the infraction occurred, unless otherwise specified in the rules. If a team takes a free kick and the ball goes directly into their own goal without touching another player, a corner kick shall be awarded.
- 13.1.2 *Direct free kick.* A direct free kick is one from which a goal can be scored directly from the kick against the offending team without the ball touching another player.
- 13.1.3 *Indirect free kick.* An indirect free kick is one from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been touched by a player other than the kicker before going into the goal. If the ball is touched by a player on either team before going into either team's goal, a goal shall be awarded. If a free kick is awarded for an offense punished by an indirect free kick, but the referee fails to indicate that the kick is indirect, and the ball is played directly into the opposing team's goal, the kick shall be retaken. If the free kick touches another player before entering the goal, a goal shall be awarded, notwithstanding the referee's failure to properly signal the nature of the restart.

13.2 HOW TAKEN

- 13.2.1 The ball may be lifted with the foot as long as all other aspects of the kick are legal. When a free kick is taken, no player of the opposing team shall encroach within 10 yards of the ball until it is in play, unless the player is standing on their goal line, between the goal posts. The kick shall be retaken if a player is within 10 yards of the ball and intentionally interferes with the kick. If a player tries to slow the game by standing or moving closer than 10 yards from the ball, the player shall be cautioned.
- 13.2.2 The attacking team may take the free kick as soon as the ball is stationary and in the proper position, unless the referee has instructed them to wait for a whistle. The ball may be kicked in any direction. The ball is in play when it has been kicked and it has clearly moved. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player. When three or more defending team players form a wall, all attacking team players must remain at least 1 yard from the wall until the ball is in play. An attacking player can participate in a wall with the opposing team, as long as there are less than three opponents in the wall. If, when a free kick is taken, an attacking team player is less than 1 yard from a wall formed by

three or more defending team players, an indirect free kick is awarded to the defending team.

PENALTY—(13.2.1 to 13.2.2)—Indirect free kick from the point of infraction.

- 13.2.3 When a free kick is awarded to the defending team in their penalty area, the ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played before leaving the penalty area. The goalkeeper may not receive the ball into their hands from a teammate's free kick. If the goalkeeper plays the ball with their hands, the game is restarted with an indirect free kick to the opposing team. All opponents shall be outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from the ball, or the kick shall be retaken, unless the team taking the free kick puts the ball in play before the opponents have had an opportunity to leave the penalty area.
- 13.2.4 Any free kick awarded to the defending team within its goal area may be taken from any point within the goal area.
- 13.2.5 Any indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team within its opponent's goal area shall be taken from a point on that part of the goal area line that runs parallel to the end line nearest where the offense took place.

RULE 14

Penalty Kicks

14.1 WHEN TAKEN

- 14.1.1 A penalty kick is awarded for any infringement of the rules by the defending team within the penalty area that is penalized by a direct free kick. The ball must be in play when the infringement is committed in order for a penalty kick to be awarded.
- 14.1.2 A penalty kick may be awarded regardless of the location of the ball if the violation by the defending team is committed within the penalty area. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.
- 14.1.3 A penalty kick is not awarded for offenses that call for an indirect free kick, regardless of where or by whom the offense is committed.

14.2 HOW TAKEN

- 14.2.1 The penalty kick shall be taken from any place on the penalty line or spot. Only those players legally in the game at the time the penalty kick is awarded may take the penalty kick.
- 14.2.2 When the penalty kick is being taken, all players (except the kicker and the opposing goalkeeper) shall be within the field of play, but outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from and behind the penalty line or spot.
- 14.2.3 Until the ball is kicked, the opposing goalkeeper:
- 14.2.3.1 shall remain on the goal line between the goal posts with at least part of one foot touching or in line with the goal line;
 - 14.2.3.2 shall face the kicker;
 - 14.2.3.3 shall refrain from touching the goal posts, crossbar or goal net; and
 - 14.2.3.4 may be permitted to move laterally (that is, from side to side) along the goal line.

PENALTY—(14.2.3.1 to 14.2.3.4)—First offense—warning; second offense—caution; third offense—second caution (ejection/red card).

- 14.2.4 The player taking the penalty kick is permitted to use a stutter step or a hesitation move, but may not come to a complete stop and must maintain continuous motion toward the ball.

PENALTY—Caution to the kicker and an indirect free kick to the defending team.

- 14.2.5 The player taking the kick shall kick the ball forward in order for it to be in play. Backheeling is permitted provided the ball moves forward.

PENALTY—If the ball is not kicked forward, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the defending team from the penalty spot.

14.2.6 The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player. If the ball hits the goal posts or the crossbar and rebounds into play, the kicker still shall not play the ball until it has been touched by another player.

PENALTY—If the ball is kicked a second time before it has been touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot where the infraction occurred.

14.3 INFRINGEMENTS

14.3.1 *Defending team.*

14.3.1.1 For encroachment by a teammate of the goalkeeper, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not resulted only if the encroachment clearly impacted the kicker; or the encroaching player plays the ball or challenges an opponent for the ball.

14.3.1.2 For an infringement by the goalkeeper, the kick shall be retaken if the ball is saved by the goalkeeper. If the goalkeeper commits an infringement but the kick misses the net or rebounds from the post or crossbar, the kick shall only be retaken if the goalkeeper's actions clearly impacted the kicker.

PENALTY—(14.3.1.1 to 14.3.1.2)—The referee should not stop play for violations of 14.3.1.1 or 14.3.1.2 until after the penalty kick is completed and it clear that a goal has not been scored. If a goal is scored, the infraction shall be ignored.

14.3.1.3. The referee should not stop play for violations of 14.3.1.1 or 14.3.1.2 until after the penalty kick is completed. If a goal is scored, the infraction shall be ignored; but if a goal is not scored, the kick shall be retaken if the kick is saved or if the goalkeeper's infraction clearly impacted the kicker.

14.3.2 *Attacking team.*

14.3.2.1 If a player other than the identified kicker takes the penalty kick, play shall be stopped and an indirect free kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty spot.

14.3.2.2, If the kicker fails to kick the ball forward, play shall be stopped and a free kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty spot.

14.3.2.3 If the kicker feints illegally, play shall be stopped and a free kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty spot.

PENALTY—(14.3.2.1 to 14.3.2.3)—The referee shall stop play as soon as the violation occurs and award defending team an indirect free kick from the penalty spot.

14.3.2.4 If a member of the attacking team enters the penalty area or the restraining arc before the kick is taken, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has resulted only if the encroaching player's actions clearly impacted the goalkeeper. If a goal has not resulted, play shall be stopped and a free kick awarded to the defending team from the spot where the infringement occurred only if the encroaching player clearly impacted the goalkeeper, plays the ball, or challenges an opponent for the ball.

14.3.2.5 If the player taking the kick is guilty of unsporting behavior other than illegal feinting prior to taking the kick, the referee shall stop the kick, caution the kicker, and then allow the kick to proceed.

14.3.3 *Both teams.*

14.3.3.1. If players from both teams enter the penalty area or restraining arc before the kick is taken, the penalty kick shall be retaken regardless of the outcome of the original kick.

14.3.3.2. If the kicker feints illegally and the goalkeeper fails to keep one foot on or above the goal line prior to the kick being taken, the kicker shall be cautioned and an indirect free kick awarded to the defending team from the penalty spot.

14.4 END-OF-TIME VARIATIONS

14.4.1 If a penalty kick has been awarded with little or no time remaining on the clock, the period shall not end until one of the following occurs, irrespective of the actual time showing on the clock:

14.4.1.1 The whole of the ball crosses the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar;

14.4.1.2 The ball deflects into the goal from the cross bar and/or goal post(s);

14.4.1.3 The ball touches the goalkeeper and enters the goal;

14.4.1.4 The ball clearly is saved and held by the goalkeeper;

14.4.1.5 The ball passes over the end line outside the goal post(s);

14.4.1.6 The movement of the ball has ceased; or

14.4.1.7 Any player, including the kicker, touches the ball after it has been saved by the goalkeeper or has hit the post or crossbar and time has expired.

14.4.2 If the ball touches the goalkeeper before passing between the posts and completely over the goal line when a penalty kick is being taken at or after the expiration of time, it does not nullify a goal.

14.4.3 If necessary, play shall be extended at the end of any period of play to allow a penalty kick to be completed.

14.4.4 If a penalty kick is taken after the expiration of time, only the kicker and the goalkeeper may play the ball, and the kicker shall not be permitted to kick the ball a second time even if it rebounds from the goalkeeper.

14.4.5 A penalty kick awarded when there is no time remaining will only be retaken under the following circumstances:

14.4.5.1 When the ball is stopped on its progress to goal by an outside agent; or

14.4.5.2 Violations of Rules 14.3.1, 14.3.2.4, 14.3.2.5 or 14.3.3.1.

14.4.6. The penalty kick will be considered completed and there shall be no retakes for violations of Rule 14.3.2.1, 14.3.2.2, 14.3.2.3 or 14.3.3.2.

Penalty Kick Infringements/Infractions		
	Kick Results in a Goal	Kick Results in a No Goal
Encroachment by attacker	Impact — Penalty is retaken No impact — Goal	Impact — Indirect free kick to defending team No impact — Play continues
Encroachment by defender	Impact — Goal No impact — Goal	Impact — Penalty is retaken No impact: Play continues
Encroachment by both attacker and defender	Impact — Penalty is retaken No impact — Goal	Impact — Penalty is retaken No impact — Play continues
Infringement by goalkeeper	Goal	Saved — Retake and goalkeeper is warned Not saved — Retake only if kicker clearly impacted
Infringement by goalkeeper and kicker at the same time	Indirect free kick to defending team and caution to kicker	
Ball kicked backward	Indirect free kick to defending team	
Illegal feinting by kicker	Indirect free kick to defending team and caution to kicker	
Wrong kicker	Indirect free kick (caution wrong kicker)	

RULE 15

The Throw-In

15.1 WHEN TAKEN

A throw-in is taken to put the ball back into play after it has passed completely over a touchline, either on the ground or in the air. (See Rule 9.3.1.)

15.2 HOW TAKEN

Note: The player taking the throw-in may not use stickum or adhesive material of any kind (including gloves with an adhesive surface) to enhance the grip on a throw-in.

15.2.1 The thrower, at the moment of delivering the ball, shall face the field of play, and part of each foot shall be either on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline. The thrower shall use both hands equally and shall deliver the ball from behind and over their head. Kneeling to throw the ball is prohibited. A somersault or flip throw-in is permissible as long as all the other requirements have been met.

15.2.2 The throw-in shall be taken from within one yard of the point where the ball crossed the touchline, being thrown in any direction by any player (including the goalkeeper) of the team opposite to that of the player who last touched the ball.

PENALTY—(15.2.1 and 15.2.2)—If the ball is improperly thrown in, the throw-in shall be taken by a player of the opposing team.

15.2.3 All opponents shall be a minimum of two yards from the point on the touchline where a throw-in is attempted. An opponent who moves closer than two yards in an attempt to interfere with the throw-in shall be cautioned. The ball shall be in play from the throw as soon as it enters the field of play. Any throw-in that does not enter the field of play before bouncing results in a throw-in for the opponent from the original spot of the throw-in.

15.2.4 A goal may not be scored directly into either goal from a throw-in. If a throw-in goes directly into the opponent's goal, play shall be restarted with a goal kick to the opposing team. If a throw-in goes directly into a team's own goal, play shall be restarted with a corner kick to the opposing team.

15.2.5 The thrower shall not play the ball a second time before it has been touched by another player.

PENALTY—Indirect free kick from point of contact subject to the overriding provisions of Rule 13.

15.2.6 A player may throw the ball against an opponent and legally play the rebound. If, however, the ball is thrown in a reckless manner, the thrower shall be cautioned. If the ball is thrown using excessive force, the thrower

shall be ejected. In both cases, play shall be restarted with a direct free kick to the opposing team from where the ball struck the opponent, subject to the overriding provisions of Rule 13.

15.2.7 Goalkeepers may not use their hands to play a ball thrown in by a teammate.

PENALTY—Indirect free kick from the point of contact subject to the overriding provisions of [Rule 13](#).

RULE 16

The Goal Kick

16.1 WHEN TAKEN

A goal kick is taken by a member of the defending team when the ball passes completely over its end line (except when a goal is scored), either in the air or on the ground, having last been touched by a member of the attacking team.

16.2 HOW TAKEN

16.2.1 The ball does not need to leave the penalty area in order for it to be in play. It is considered in play once the kick is taken and the ball clearly moves.

16.2.2 Players of the team opposing that of the player taking the goal kick shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is kicked, unless the team taking the goal kick puts the ball in play before the opponents have had the opportunity to leave the penalty area.

PENALTY—Retake the goal kick.

16.2.3 The goalkeeper shall not receive the ball into their hands from a goal kick.

16.2.4 The kicker may not play the ball a second time before it has touched another player. If such second touching also constitutes stopping a promising attack or denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity, it shall be considered misconduct and punished appropriately under Rule 12.

PENALTY—(16.2.3 and 16.2.4)—Indirect free kick from the point of infraction.

16.2.5 A goal may be scored directly against the opponent from a goal kick.

16.2.6 A player who receives the ball directly from a goal kick is never guilty of an offside offense.

RULE 17

The Corner Kick

17.1 WHEN TAKEN

A corner kick is taken by a member of the attacking team when the ball passes completely over the end line (except when a goal is scored), either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by a member of the defending team.

17.2 HOW TAKEN

17.2.1 A member of the attacking team shall take a kick from within the corner arc at the nearest corner flag post. The flag post may not be removed. The ball is in play once it has been kicked and clearly moves.

17.2.2 Players of the defending team shall not approach within 10 yards of the corner arc until the ball is kicked and clearly moves.

PENALTY—Retake the corner kick and ensure the defenders are at least 10 yards from the corner arc.

17.2.3 The kicker shall not play the ball a second time after the ball is in play until it has been touched by another player. If the ball hits the goal post and rebounds toward the kicker, that player still shall not play the ball until it has been touched by another player.

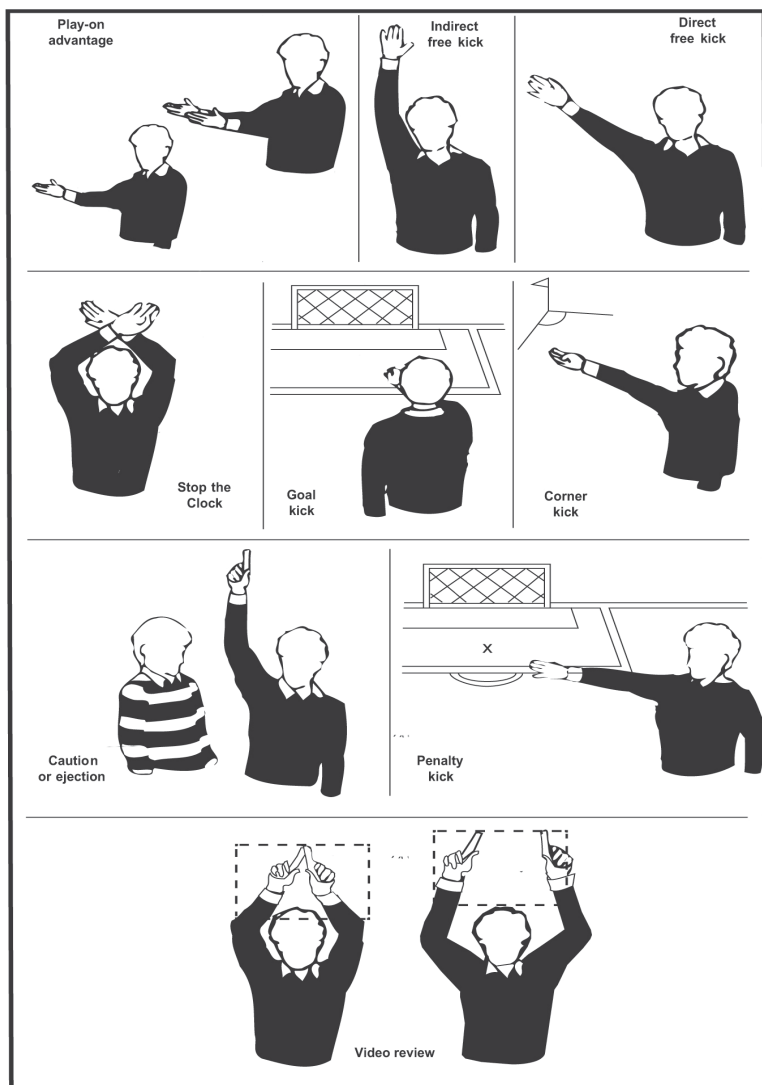
PENALTY—Indirect free kick from the point of infraction.

17.2.4 A goal may be scored directly against the opponent from a corner kick.

17.2.5 A player who receives the ball directly from a corner kick is never guilty of an offside offense.

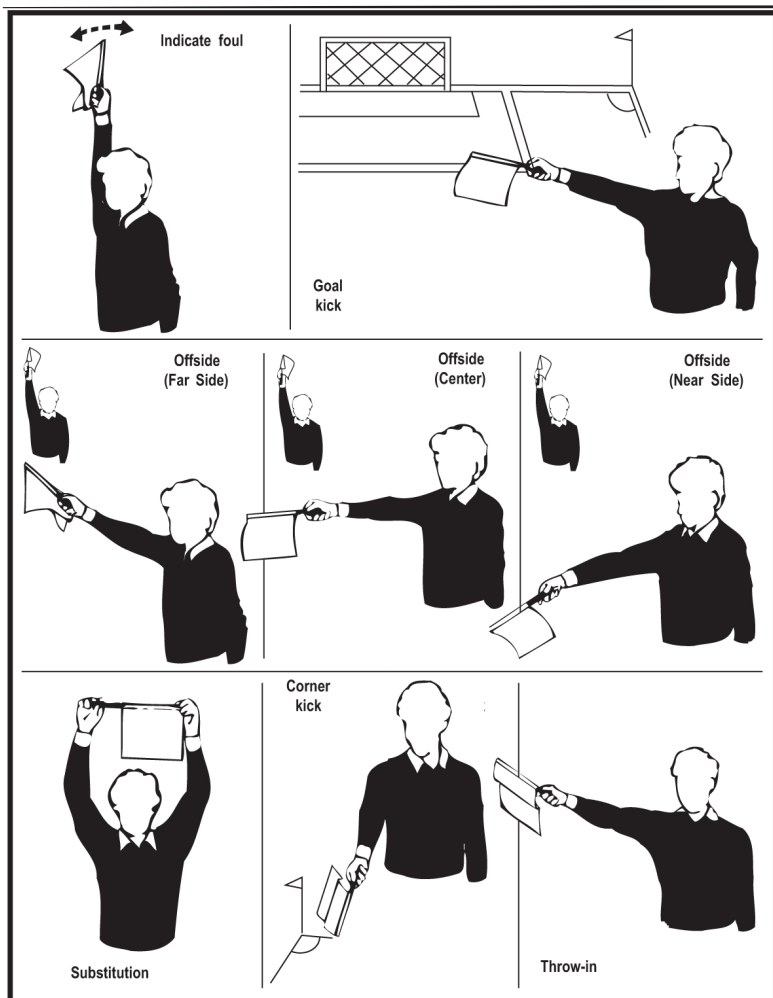
Appendix A

Official Referee's Signals



Appendix B

Official Assistant Referees' Signals



Appendix C

Concussions

REVISED APRIL 2023

Sport-related concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct blow to the head, neck or body resulting in an impulsive force being transmitted to the brain that occurs in sports and exercise-related activities.

Game officials are often in the best position to observe student-athletes after they have had a blow to the head or body, and may be the first to notice the behaviors that indicate a concussion may be present. An official may observe the following behaviors by a student-athlete with a suspected concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Appears confused or incoherent.
- Shakes head.
- Stumbles; has to be physically supported by teammates.
- Moves clumsily or awkwardly.
- Shows behavior or personality changes.

Student-athletes with a suspected concussion must be removed from competition so that a medical examination can be conducted by the primary athletics healthcare provider (i.e., athletic trainer or team physician).

Importantly, a game official is not expected to evaluate a student-athlete. Instead, if an official notices any behavior that suggests a concussion, the official should stop play immediately and call an injury timeout so that an appropriate medical examination can be conducted. A simple guide to the official's role is: "When in doubt, call an injury timeout."

A student-athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, must be removed from practice or competition and may not return to sport activity on that day. The athlete must undergo medical evaluation and follow a return-to-learn/return-to-sport protocol under the supervision of the team physician, and may not return to sport until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that student-athletes can receive appropriate medical evaluation.

IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:

1. **Remove the student-athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of concussion if the student-athlete has experienced a blow to the head. Do not allow the student-athlete to just "shake it off." Each student-athlete will respond to concussions differently.

2. **Ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated immediately by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury. Call an injury timeout to ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated by one of the primary athletics healthcare providers.
3. **Allow the student-athlete to return to play only if the primary athletics healthcare provider has determined that the student-athlete did not suffer a concussion.** Allow athletics medical staff to rely on their clinical skills and protocols in evaluating the student-athlete to establish the appropriate management.

Additional information and details regarding concussions can be found at [ncaa.org/sports/health-safety](https://www.ncaa.org/sports/health-safety).

Appendix D

Accommodations for Student-Athletes with Disabilities

The NCAA encourages participation by student-athletes with disabilities (physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full extent of their interests and abilities. An NCAA member institution will have the right to seek, on behalf of any student-athlete with a disability participating on the member's team, a reasonable modification or accommodation of a playing rule, provided that the modification or accommodation would not:

1. Compromise the safety of, or increase the risk of injury to, the student-athlete with a disability or any other student-athlete;
2. Change an essential element that would fundamentally alter the nature of the game; or
3. Provide the student-athlete an unfair advantage over the other competitors.

To request any such modification or accommodation, the member's director of athletics, or their designee, must submit a rule waiver request, in writing, to the secretary-rules editor. Such written request should describe:

- a. The playing rule from which relief is sought;
- b. The nature of the proposed modification or accommodation;
- c. The nature of the student-athlete's disability and basis for modification or accommodation; and
- d. The proposed duration of the requested modification or accommodation.

Additionally, each request should be accompanied by documentation evidencing the student-athlete's disability (e.g., a medical professional's letter). Upon receipt of a complete waiver request, the secretary-rules editor will consult with NCAA staff, the applicable sport/rules committee, other sport governing bodies, and/ or outside experts, to conduct an individual inquiry as to whether the requested modification or accommodation can be made. In making this assessment, the NCAA may request additional information from the member institution. The secretary-rules editor will communicate the decision in writing (which may be via email) to the requesting member institution. If the request is granted, the member institution should be prepared to provide the written decision to the officiating staff, opposing coach(es), and tournament director (if applicable) for each competition in which the student-athlete will participate. NCAA members are directed to consult Guideline 2P of the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook for further considerations regarding participation by student-athletes with impairment.

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