



## 2017 Major Rules Changes for Men's and Women's Soccer

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. They will be in effect for the 2017 season.

Rule 8.2	<p>At the referee's signal (whistle), the game shall be started by a player kicking the ball <del>into the opponent's half of the field</del>, <u>which can be kicked in any direction</u>. Every player, <u>except the player kicking the ball</u>, shall be in his or her 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.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Currently, NCAA rules require the kickoff to go forward. This verbiage change will be consistent with the FIFA Laws of the Game and allow the kickoff to go in any direction.</p>
Rules 9.1, 9.3.2 and 17.2	<p>In any instance when play is restarted with a free kick, the ball must clearly move as a result of the first player touching the ball to be in play.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Currently, NCAA rules require the ball to be touched or traveled forward to be in play. This verbiage change will be consistent with the FIFA Laws of the Game and require the ball to clearly move on restarts.</p>
Rules 12.5.5, 12.5.6 and new 12.5.7	<p>12.5.5 Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball, <u>wherever the offense occurs</u>.</p> <p>12.5.6 Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity <u>outside the penalty area</u> by an offense punishable by a <u>direct free kick</u> <del>or a penalty kick</del>.</p> <p>12.5.7 Denies the opposing team an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offense against an opponent in the penalty area and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <u>The offense is holding, pulling or pushing;</u></li><li>2. <u>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; or</u></li><li>3. <u>The offense is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.).</u></li></ol> <p><u>In all the above circumstances the player is issued a red card.</u></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Currently, NCAA rules require that if a defender commits any direct free kick offense resulting in denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity, the referee must issue a red card. This may lead to an excessively harsh punishment referred to as "double jeopardy" where a penalty kick is awarded and the defender is also issued a red card. In 2016, FIFA changed its Law to allow the referee discretion to issue a caution in certain circumstances, depending on the nature of the foul. The committee recommends this rule change to align with the FIFA Law and fundamental fairness to avoid an excessively harsh penalty.</p>