

Frequently Asked Questions for Playing Rules

What is a playing rule?

Playing rules cover what happens on the field, court, pool, pitch, mat, track, slope, course or rink when an official and an opponent are present. Scrimmages, practice sessions and non-traditional season competitions are not subject to NCAA playing rules.

When will I get my rules book?

Head coaches and conference commissioners receive complimentary rules books each year. The books are mailed as soon as possible after printing. Rules books may be purchased online at www.ncaa.org or by calling 888/388-9748.

Where do I find the field/court diagrams?

Each rules book contains this information. The rules book for each sport for which the NCAA writes playing rules is linked the previous page you viewed. Please note that the specifications in the rules books cover the minimum facility expectations to host a regular-season contest. The championships committees are permitted to require more stringent facility specifications for hosting their post-season events. Please consult the championships handbook for more information about championships hosting requirements.

Who do I contact for a playing-rules interpretation?

The secretary-rules editor for each sport is the national-rules interpreter. If you e-mail the staff liaison for the sport for which you are interested in an interpretation, the information will be requested from the secretary-rules editor.

What is the NCAA's role in assigning officials?

The NCAA assigns officials for its championships only. Regular-season officials are selected, trained and assigned by the conference office, institution or local assigning body.

Can my team wear a memorial/commemorative patch?

The following are the rules for placing memorial patches on uniforms for specific sports where such rules exist. For sports not listed, there are no rules regarding placement, content or size; however, it is important in each sport that no patches obscure anything on the uniform that is necessary for the play of the game, nor compromise any safety equipment. Size restrictions listed in the respective manuals apply to manufacturer logos, not commemorative patches.

Football: The American flag on the jersey is a legal insignia. As such, it may not exceed 16 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram), including any additional material (e.g., patch).

The American flag either on the helmet or anywhere else on the uniform is not restricted to 16 square inches or 1 1/2 inches in diameter as mentioned in Rule 1-4-4-g. If a school chooses to display the flag other than on the jersey, it is expected that it will do so within reason.

There essentially are two different rules regarding the size of a memorial insignia.

If a memorial insignia takes the shape of a patch or decal with the words World Trade Center/Pentagon, images of the structures, the numbers of the four flights or some other appropriate recognition, it would be designated as legal on the jersey in Rules 1-4-3-b and c. Consequently, it falls under the 16 square inches in area restriction.

Such an insignia also would be legal elsewhere on the uniform with no size restriction. It is expected, however, that anything placed elsewhere would be done reasonably.

If a memorial insignia focuses on one individual, Rule 1-4-4-g is in order and the insignia should not exceed 1 1/2 inches in diameter. If the insignia contains numbers, it should be placed where it cannot be confused with the uniform numbers on jerseys, helmets or pants.

Men's and Women's Basketball: A commemorative/memorial patch or ribbon is permitted within the 4-inch side insert of the game jersey, anywhere on the game pants, anywhere on warm-up suits or on the shoulder strap of the game jersey. If the commemorative/memorial patch or ribbon is on the shoulder strap of a game jersey, it shall be sewn on or attached with Velcro. No restriction is placed on what such a patch may say, its shape or its size.

Soccer: "A commemorative patch may be permitted on a jersey or shirt. The entire patch must be contained within a four-sided geometrical figure (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) that does not exceed 2 1/4 square inches."

Are artificial noisemakers allowed?

The following are the references to artificial noisemakers in NCAA playing rules books.

Baseball: "All music, chants or crowd-cuing messages must stop when the batter steps into the batter's box. Music, noise and cheers, as well as use of the LED/Matrix boards, may be used at the following times:

1. Before the start of the game;
2. Between innings;
3. During pitching changes;
4. As the batter is heading towards the batter's box; and
5. After the game.

... Audio (music, organists, etc.) may not be played in a manner that may incite spectators to react in a negative fashion to umpires' decisions or to visiting players."

Basketball: "The playing of musical instruments and/or amplified music and the use of artificial noisemakers while the game is in progress shall be prohibited."

