



UNDER
THE
STRIPES

FOOTBALL

RULES REFERENCE

COLLEGIATE OFFICIALS QUICK GUIDE
CURRENT NCAA / CCA / NAIA CONTEXT

CODE & GENDER APPLICATION

NCAA football rules are not gender-specific. Verify conference and NAIA modifications.

Study aid only. Always use the current official rulebook, interpretations, mechanics manual, state or conference adoptions, bulletins and assignment instructions.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS

REAL OFFICIALS. REAL CONVERSATIONS. REAL IMPACT.

UNDER THE STRIPES NETWORK | VERIFIED JULY 23, 2026

1. Know Which Authority Controls

Topic	Collegiate reference
Rules authority	NCAA sport rulebook, approved interpretations and bulletins.
Mechanics authority	Use the current CCA manual when issued for the sport, plus NCAA coordinator/conference mechanics. CCA is not a separate playing-rules code.
NAIA layer	Most NAIA championship sports use an NCAA rules foundation with NAIA-approved modifications. Check the current NAIA sport manual and host-conference instructions.
Assignment control	The assigner/conference may prescribe crew size, replay availability, timing protocols, uniforms, reports and mechanics without rewriting the playing rule.

Pregame authority check

Topic	Collegiate reference
Code	Confirm NCAA, NAIA or another governing code.
Edition	Confirm rulebook year, interpretations and recent bulletins.
Mechanics	Confirm current manual, crew size, rotations and conference exceptions.
Technology	Confirm clocks, replay/challenge, headsets and approved communication.
Administration	Confirm rosters/lineups, timing personnel, reports and protest procedure.

2. Core Contest Reference

Topic	Collegiate reference
Game	11 players; four 15-minute quarters.
Series	Four downs to gain 10 yards.
Timing	40/25-second play-clock system; clock-start rules vary by result, administrative stoppage and final-minute provisions.
Targeting	Rule-based elements include prohibited contact, indicators and defenseless-player status; replay consequences depend on available review.
Overtime	NCAA tiebreaker procedure applies unless the governing authority publishes an approved modification.
Replay	Replay authority, equipment and conference process must be confirmed before kickoff.

High-priority officiating focus

Topic	Collegiate reference
Targeting	Report the act, point of contact, indicator and defenseless status; follow review/reporting protocol.
Penalty enforcement	Confirm foul status, basic spot, exceptions, clock impact, loss of down and automatic first down.
Substitutions	Recognize replacement process, late substitution, defensive response and deception issues.
Timing	Crew must communicate play clock, game clock and next-start status after every administrative interruption.

3. Differences and Assignment Notes

Topic	Collegiate reference
Gender	Same NCAA football code for all participants.
NAIA	NCAA foundation; check the current NAIA football manual and conference policies.
CCA	Annual crew mechanics for collegiate football; not a playing-rule source.
Conference	Crew size, communication devices, replay and supplemental mechanics can vary.

Postgame self-review

Topic	Collegiate reference
Rule	Which ruling needs a rule/case-book check before the next game?
Mechanic	Did positioning, coverage and communication match the current manual?
Crew	What information improved or delayed the final decision?
Reports	Were ejections, fights, protests, replay issues and unusual incidents reported on time?

Official reference path

Topic	Collegiate reference
NCAA Playing Rules	https://www.ncaa.org/championships/playing-rules/
NCAA Publications	https://www.ncaapublications.com/
NAIA Rules & Policy	https://www.naia.org/membership/legislative-and-policy/
NAIA Sport Resources	https://www.naia.org/membership/resources/coaches-corner/
CCA manuals	Access the current authorized manual through the collegiate officiating/central hub or publisher.