

2026 College Football: Rule Changes & CFP Bids

A one-page reference for fans, coaches, and booster clubs

2026 RULE CHANGES

Targeting ladder	1st DQ: play next game. 2nd DQ: miss 1st half. 3rd DQ: miss full game.
Offensive PI	OPI drops from 15 yards to 10 yards.
Helmet comms	Coach-to-player in-helmet comms now allowed in ALL divisions.
Helmet attachments	Guardian Cap / soft-shell covers allowed if all helmets match.
Sponsor patches	Up to 2 patches in the regular season, 3 in the postseason. 4 sq in max each.

HOW TO MAKE THE 12-TEAM PLAYOFF

Field	12 teams.
Auto bids	5: the 4 power champs (SEC, Big Ten, ACC, Big 12) + highest-ranked Group of Six champ.
At-large	7 spots. Notre Dame must earn one (no reserved slot).
Seeding	Straight seeding: top 4 overall seeds get first-round byes.
First round	Seeds 5-12 play at the higher seed's home site; then bowls.
Pac-12	Now in the Group of Six pool, not a power conference.