

# BAFA rule changes 2015

24<sup>th</sup> January 2015 (minor revision to 3-3-2 - 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015)

Changes agreed for adoption in 2015.

## 1 Introduction

IFAF statutes require all member federations to play by IFAF rules, so our ability to change these is limited. However IFAF rules:

1. now incorporate everything that has in recent years been a BAFA variation from NCAA rules
2. allow national federations to adapt Rule 1 to meet local needs and circumstances, provided no adaption reduces the safety of the players or other participants, and we take advantage of that to allow (for example) 90-yard fields and reduced end zones that are our solution to using rugby pitches and the like
3. allow competitions to adjust for
  - a. the age group of the participants
  - b. the gender of the participants
4. provide competition authorities the right to amend certain specific rules listed in the introduction to the rulebook
5. (new for 2015) permit national federations to restrict 4 above so that the same regulations apply to all competitions under their jurisdiction

## 2 Rule changes

Rule	Change	Notes
Introduction	Some administrative rules allow competitions to stipulate in their regulations what course of action is to be followed. <b>(A National Federation may decide the policy for all competitions under its jurisdiction.)</b>	Emphasise that if a national federation wishes to adopt regulations (on certain designated rules only) that apply in all competitions under its jurisdiction, it may do so.
1-4-5-c-2	Numerals not in contrast with the jersey: Clarification of 2014 Interpretation  Add paragraph <i>d</i> to Rule 1-4-5-c  <b><i>d. Teams wearing jerseys that do not conform to this rule will be asked to change into legal jerseys before the game and before the start of each quarter until the jerseys are changed. PENALTY - Officials shall charge a team timeout at the start of each quarter until the jerseys are changed</i></b>	Introduces specific penalty for teams wearing illegal jerseys.
1-4-10 Exception 2	Add:  <b><i>A device for transmission of data specifically and only for the purposes of health and safety.</i></b>	Permit monitoring devices on players.

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Rule	Change	Notes
1-4-11-c	Amend: 2. Permit camera on <b>any official</b> (not just umpire). Add: <b>4. A team videographer may be in the team area as one of that team's credentialed individuals.</b>	It was arbitrary that only the umpire could wear a camera. Teams may also video the game from within the team area. 1-4-11-c-2 is a difference from NCAA.
2-27-6	Clarification of an airborne player Amend paragraph <i>b</i> of Rule 2-27-6 <b>b. An airborne player is a player not in contact with the ground because he leaps, jumps, dives, launches, etc., in other than normal running action.</b>	See also the change to 2-27-15,
2-27-14-b	Classify receiver of a backward pass as a Defenseless Player Amend to read: "b. A receiver attempting to catch a <b>forward</b> pass <b>or in position to receive a backward pass...</b> "	Give similar protection to receivers of a backward pass.
2-27-15	<b>New Article 15 to Rule 2-27:</b> Player Out of Bounds and In Bounds <b>ARTICLE 15. a. Out of Bounds</b> <b>1. A player is out of bounds when any part of his body touches anything other than another player or a game official on or outside a boundary line.</b> <b>2. An out-of-bounds player who becomes airborne remains out of bounds until he touches the ground in bounds without simultaneously being out of bounds.</b> <b>b. In Bounds</b> <b>1. An inbounds player is a player who is not out of bounds.</b> <b>2. An inbounds player who becomes airborne remains in bounds until he is out of bounds.</b>	Clarification of Inbounds and Out-of-Bounds Player. An airborne player's status in/out of bounds is now determined by where he took off from, not where he lands.
2-27-16  Note this is not new to BAFA. It was previously BAFA Rule 13-8-6.	Add: <b>a. A coach is a person subject to the rules who, while in the team area or coaching box observes the game and/or gives instructions to players and substitutes.</b> <b>b. A player/coach is regarded as being a coach when in the team area or coaching box and as a player or substitute otherwise.</b> <b>c. Each team shall designate a coach as its head coach, and so identify him on the roster form and to the Referee.</b>	Necessary to distinguish whether a player/coach would be subject to the 2 x UC disqualification rule. Not in NCAA.

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Rule	Change	Notes																					
3-1-3  Note this is not new to BAFA. It was previously BAFA Rule 13-8-3	Add: <b>Competitions may adopt regulations to forego the tiebreaker system if the scores are tied at the end of a regular season game. In that event, the game shall be terminated and the result shall stand as a tie.</b>	Some national federations or particular competitions may want to allow ties. Difference from NCAA.																					
3-2-1  Note this is not new to BAFA. It was previously BAFA Rule 13-8-4.	Add: <b>Competitions may adopt regulations to vary the playing time in a game to 60, 48, 40 or 32 minutes, provided the four periods are of equal length.</b>  Add: <b>c. It is strongly recommended that game management schedule the kickoff time no later than four hours before darkness (defined as the time of local sunset or the time at which any artificial lights must be switched off).</b> <b>d. If a game (delayed by five or more minutes) kicks off less than 3½ hours before darkness, playing time shall be limited to a maximum of 48 minutes.</b> <b>e. If a game (delayed by five or more minutes) kicks off less than 3 hours before darkness, playing time shall be limited to a maximum of 40 minutes.</b>	Some national federations or particular competitions may want to play 15-minute quarters, or set a lower maximum time for games. Standardisation of procedures for shortening the game when it kicks off late. Does not apply if the game is scheduled late. Does not apply if artificial lighting is available (unless it must be switched off at a specific time). Difference from NCAA.																					
3-2-4	40-second clocks will be used even when there are no stadium clocks (or the stadium clocks are defective).	Adopt NCAA 40/25-second clock in all games. An official on the field will keep the 40-second clock and signal when 10 seconds remain. In the <i>Manual of Football Officiating</i> the clock responsibilities will become: <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>3-man</th> <th>4-man</th> <th>5-man</th> <th>6-man</th> <th>7-man</th> <th>8-man</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Game</td> <td>LJ</td> <td>LJ</td> <td>LJ</td> <td>FJ</td> <td>FJ</td> <td>FJ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Play</td> <td>R</td> <td>R</td> <td>BJ</td> <td>SJ</td> <td>BJ</td> <td>BJ</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		3-man	4-man	5-man	6-man	7-man	8-man	Game	LJ	LJ	LJ	FJ	FJ	FJ	Play	R	R	BJ	SJ	BJ	BJ
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3-3-2	<p>Add:</p> <p><b>If the margin in the score is more than 34 points, a running clock will apply. The clock will stop only for reasons marked * below. For other events listed here, the clock will keep running. Competitions may adopt regulations to</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. forgo the rule in the first half of a game; or</li> <li>2. reduce the score margin below 34 points.</li> </ol> <p>The asterisked clock rules are:</p> <p>d-5: charged timeout</p> <p>d-6: ball becomes illegal</p> <p>d-7: violation of mandatory/illegal equipment</p> <p>d-12: period ends</p> <p>e-4: complete penalty</p> <p>e-5: injury timeout</p> <p>e-7: measurement</p> <p>e-10: coach's conference or replay challenge</p> <p>e-11: media timeout</p> <p>e-12: discretionary timeout</p> <p>e-17: either team commits a dead-ball foul</p>	<p>Some competitions or authorities allow a "running clock" when the score reaches "blowout" proportions. This rule standardises that.</p> <p>If the margin drops to 34 or less, normal clock rules resume.</p> <p>It is hoped that competitions will experiment with the appropriate number of points (but no more than 34) and report back on its effectiveness.</p> <p>Difference from NCAA.</p>
3-3-8-b  Note this is not new to BAFA. It was previously BAFA Rule 13-8-5.	<p>Amend:</p> <p>Unless a visual game clock is the official timepiece, the referee also shall inform each field captain and head coach when <b>two minutes or less</b> of playing time remain in each half. He may order the clock stopped for that purpose. <b>If the game clock is running at 2'00 and the ball is dead, the clock shall be stopped and the two-minute warning given then. If the ball is live at 2'00, the two-minute warning shall be given after the ball becomes dead.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The play clock may be interrupted for this purpose, and shall then be reset to 25 seconds.</b></li> <li>...</li> <li><b>3. Competitions may adopt regulations that even if a visual game clock is the official timepiece, a two-minute warning shall still be given.</b></li> </ol>	<p>Standardise the two-minute warning procedure so (like the NFL) it cannot occur before 2'00. The old rule was interpreted inconsistently.</p> <p>Secondly, a competition may wish to <i>always</i> have a two-minute warning so that, for example, games played in stadiums with game clocks have the same clock-stopping opportunities as those without.</p> <p>Difference from NCAA.</p>

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Rule	Change	Notes
3-2-4-c-13 and 3-3-9	After a Team B helmet comes off in the last minute of a half, set the play clock to 40 seconds.	This makes the rule consistent with Rule 3-3-5 for injuries. The common procedures of 10-second subtractions for fouls, injuries and helmets coming off have been moved to a new Rule 3-4-5. Difference from NCAA.
3-5-3-c	Amend Rule 3-5-3-c: "If officials do not detect the excessive number of players until during the down or after the ball is dead, <b>or if Team B players have entered the field just before the snap but have not been in the formation</b> , the infraction is treated as a live-ball foul."	Clarify the circumstances under which more than eleven players on defense will be a live-ball foul. Late Team B excess substitutions are treated as live-ball fouls.
6-3-11	Amend: If a scrimmage kick untouched by Team B after crossing the neutral zone is batted in Team B's end zone by a player of Team A, it is a violation for illegal touching (Rule 6-3-2). The spot of the violation is Team B's 20-yard line. <b>This is a special case of batting in the end zone and is not a foul.</b>	There is no foul if Team A bats a scrimmage kick in Team B's end zone.
7-2-5	Amend: When a backward pass or fumble comes to rest inbounds and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and: <b>(a) If in advance of the spot of the pass/fumble, the ball belongs to the passing/fumbling team at the spot of the pass/fumble.</b> <b>(b) If behind the spot of the pass/fumble, the ball belongs to the passing/fumbling team at the dead ball spot.</b>	No cheap touchdowns when nobody secures a backward pass or fumble in the end zone. Instead it is treated like a fumble out of bounds. Difference from NCAA.
9-1 penalty statement, 7-3-12 and 10-2-2-e	Personal Fouls by Team B on Pass Plays--Clarification of Enforcement Addition to 9-1 Penalty statement <b>For Team B personal fouls during a legal forward pass play (Rules 7-3-12 and 10-2-2-e): Enforcement is at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of possession during the down. If the pass is incomplete or intercepted, or if there is a change of team possession during the down, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot.</b> New article Rule 7-3-12 <b>Team B Personal Fouls During Legal Forward Pass Play</b> <b>Penalties for personal fouls by Team B during a completed legal forward pass play are enforced at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone. If the pass is incomplete or intercepted, or if there is a change of possession during the down, the penalty is enforced at the previous spot. (Rule 9-1 Penalty)</b>	All Team B personal fouls on pass plays now have penalty enforcement like roughing the passer was previously. This means a foul before or during the pass can be tacked on to the yards achieved by a completion.

Rule	Change	Notes
	<p>New Rule 10-2-2-e:</p> <p><b>For Team B fouls during a legal forward pass play:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Penalty enforcement for Team B for personal fouls is at the end of the last run when it ends beyond the neutral zone and there is no change of team possession during the down. (Rule 7-3-12)</b></li> <li>2. <b>If the pass crosses the neutral zone and Team B commits a contact foul against an eligible receiver beyond the neutral zone before the ball is touched, the penalty includes an automatic first down. (Rule 9-3-4-e)</b></li> </ol>	
9-1-3 and 9-1-4	<p>Add:</p> <p><b>The 15-yard penalty is not enforced if the Instant Replay Official reverses the disqualification.</b></p>	<p>If replays decides the action was not targeting, there will be no yardage penalty enforced, unless the action was still a personal foul (e.g. roughing the passer).</p>
9-1-3 and 9-1-4 and 2-35-1	<p>Amend Rule 9-1-3 to read:</p> <p>"No player shall target and <b>make forcible</b> contact against an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet."</p> <p>Amend Rule 9-1-4 to read:</p> <p>"No player shall target and <b>make forcible</b> contact to the head or neck area..."</p> <p>Amend 2-35-1 to read:</p> <p>"Targeting" means that a player takes aim at an opponent for purposes of attacking with <b>forcible contact</b> ..."</p>	<p>Replaces the wording "initiates contact".</p> <p>The aim is to judge targeting based on the force of the contact rather than its initial location.</p>
9-1-9	<p>Low hits on passers</p> <p>Add new paragraph <i>b</i>. (The current article becomes paragraph <i>a</i>.)</p> <p><b>When an offensive player is in a passing posture with one or both feet on the ground, no defensive player rushing unabated shall hit him forcibly at the knee area or below. The defensive player also may not initiate a roll or lunge and forcibly hit this opponent in the knee area or below. [Exceptions. (1) It is not a foul if the offensive player is a ball carrier or simulated ball carrier not in a passing posture, either inside or outside the tackle box. (2) It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle. (3) It is not a foul if the defender is not rushing unabated or is blocked or fouled into this opponent.]</b></p>	<p>An addition to the roughing the passer rule. Note that a pass doesn't have to be thrown for this to be a foul.</p> <p>It is not a foul to tackle around the legs – the foul is for hitting forcibly at or below the knee.</p>

Rule	Change	Notes
9-2-7 Note this is not new to BAFA. It was previously BAFA Rule 13-8-2.	Add: <b>The referee may require game management to remove any person from the playing enclosure who he believes poses a threat to the safety of persons subject to the rules or the officials, or whose behaviour is prejudicial to the orderly conduct of the game. The referee may suspend the game (Rule 3-3-3-a) while this takes place.</b>	A catch-all rule that gives authority to the referee to have any person removed from the stadium for these specific reasons. If during a tournament, we would expect the tournament director (as game management) to be consulted on this. Difference from NCAA.
9-6-2	Deleted	Redundant because of other rules.
11-2-1	Amend: The game shall be played under the supervision of four, five, six, seven or <b>eight</b> officials.	Allow 8-man crews Difference from NCAA (though they permit it as an experiment).
12-3-2-e	Amend Rule 12-3-2-e <b>e. Pass ruled forward or backward when thrown from behind the neutral zone.</b> 1. If the pass is ruled forward and is incomplete, the play is reviewable only if <b>the ball goes out of bounds or</b> if there is clear recovery of a loose ball in the immediate continuing action after the loose ball. If the replay official does not have indisputable video evidence as to which team recovers, the ruling of incomplete pass stands.	Include Backward Pass Out of Bounds as a reviewable play.
12-3-2-f	Add: <b>f. Location of the passer when he is obviously in the field of play and a ruling of intentional grounding would result in a safety by penalty.</b>	Allow Intentional Grounding to be reviewable in clearly obvious situations when the penalty results in a safety.
12-3-3-j and k	Add: <b>j. Catch or recovery of a loose ball in the field of play or an end zone.</b> <b>k. Forward fumble that goes out of bounds with respect to a first down.</b>	Include recovery of a loose ball and fumbles near the line to gain as reviewable plays.
12-3-5	Add: <b>f. National federations may adopt regulations to permit review of:</b> <b>1. Any player disqualification.</b>	Allow replay to review any foul that led to a player disqualification. If halftime video review is also approved (Rule 12-8), then all disqualifications may be so reviewed. Difference from NCAA.

Rule	Change	Notes
12-8	<p>Add:</p> <p><b>Half-time video review</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p><b>ARTICLE 1.</b> Competitions may adopt regulations to permit disqualifications in the first half to be reviewed at half time.</p> <p><b>Source and location</b></p> <p><b>ARTICLE 2.</b> The video source(s) and the location of the review will be determined prior to the game through mutual agreement of the teams and the Referee. The review will normally take place in the officials' private secure location (e.g. their changing room).</p> <p><b>Process</b></p> <p><b>ARTICLE 3.</b> a. As soon as possible during the intermission between halves the Referee will be provided a video of the play(s) in question for his review.</p> <p>b. The Referee will review the video to determine whether the disqualification is reversed. The decision of the Referee is final.</p> <p>c. The criterion for reversal is the same as in Rule 12-7-1.</p>	<p>Sets out the procedure for a half-time video review.</p> <p>In NCAA rules, this is embodied in the penalties for rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4, which are the only disqualifications they allow to be reviewed. If a federation decides to allow it, then under IFAF rules <i>all</i> disqualifications can be reviewed this way.</p>

### 3 Other rules

1. A separate document lists the variations adopted for 9-on-9 football.
2. A separate document sets out the rules for flag football (not available yet).

### 4 Editorial changes

#### 4.1 Consolidation

1. Consolidate the common material in Rules 3-3-5, 3-3-9 and 3-4-4 concerning 10-second subtractions into new Rule 3-4-5.

#### 4.2 Definitions

1. Rather than "runner", use "ball carrier or simulated ball carrier".
2. Rather than "passer", use "forward passer".
3. Rather than "blocking zone", use "free blocking zone".