

RULE 13

Standards for Game Management

SECTION 1. Medical Provision

Healthcare practitioners

ARTICLE 1. BAFA defines three levels of healthcare practitioner:

- a. An emergency first-aider (EFA) is defined to be someone who:
 1. Holds a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) (or NQF or QCF or Scottish/Welsh equivalents) Level 3 first aid qualification.
- b. A first-aid trained therapist (FTT) is defined to be a professional practitioner who meets the requirements below.
 1. The person must:
 - (a) Be a graduate in an appropriate discipline.
 - (b) Be a registered member of an appropriate professional body.
 - (c) Possess professional indemnity insurance (particularly if they are working outside the NHS).
 - (d) Hold a RQF Level 3 or higher first aid qualification.
 2. Persons in the following categories who also have appropriate experience and training in immediate care (as represented by a RQF Level 3 first aid qualification) are likely to meet the requirement:
 - (a) Doctor registered with the GMC.
 - (b) Nurse registered with the NMC.
 - (c) Physiotherapist registered with the HCPC.
 - (d) Paramedic registered with the HCPC.
 - (e) Sports rehabilitator registered with BASRaT.
 - (f) Sports therapist who is a full member of the Society of Sports Therapists, the Sports Therapy Association or the Sports Therapy Organisation.
 - (g) Osteopath registered with the GOC.
 - (h) Chiropractor registered with the GCC.
- c. An immediate care practitioner (ICP) is defined to be someone who meets the criteria for a first-aid trained therapist, plus:
 1. They are a HCPC-registered paramedic or have a qualification from a course endorsed by the *Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care* (either Commercial and voluntary courses [fphc.rcsed.ac.uk/course-endorsements/commercial-and-voluntary-courses] or Corporate organisations [fphc.rcsed.ac.uk/course-endorsements/corporate-organisations]).

Minimum Medical Requirements

ARTICLE 2. The minimum medical facilities during a game are:

- a. # At least the minimum number of healthcare practitioners at each level or higher specified in the following table:

Level	ICP	FTT	EFA
National Programme	1		1 per team
Adult NL	1		1 per team
U19	1		1 per team
U16	1		1 per team
College	1		1 per team

1. Any role can be performed by a volunteer within the club or someone hired for the purpose. No role can be performed by a squad member. An EFA may be a coach.
 2. If a game is played between teams from different levels, the highest level of the participating teams applies.
 3. The lead ICP or FTT must have carried out a risk assessment (or agreed to game management's) and determined that they are competent and equipped to carry out emergency life saving.
- b. # A suitable first aid kit, approved by the lead ICP or FTT must be available.
- c. # A telephone capable of use to summon the emergency services must be available (**A.R. 13-1-2:II**).

NOTE: Available means at the side of the field, ready immediately and fit for use.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Minimum medical requirements not met.**

Approved Ruling 13-1-2

- I. If the game is suspended because of lack of medical provision, how long do you wait before abandoning the game? **RULING:** Rule 13-5-8-c applies: "The referee shall wait for a reasonable time to permit the problem(s) to be rectified. However, if it becomes clear that the game cannot continue, the referee shall abandon the game and notify game management." A reasonable time would be at least 30 minutes but probably not longer than an hour unless there was a clear indication that a resumption was imminent. Of course don't wait 30 minutes if it is obvious that a restart is never going to be possible.
- II. A mobile telephone is available, but due to poor reception conditions a reliable signal cannot be obtained. **RULING:** The game cannot proceed until either another mobile telephone with a better signal is found, or a working land-line telephone inside the stadium is available. [Cited by 13-1-2-c]

Medical Requirement Administration

- ARTICLE 3. a. # Game management is responsible for the provision and suitability of medical facilities that meet the requirements of Rule 13-1-2.
- b. # The senior game management representative shall certify to the referee prior to the game that the medical requirement has been met.
- c. Game management must inform the referee if at any stage during the game the medical requirement ceases to be met. The game will then be suspended (Rule 3-3-3-b).

Concussion protocol

- ARTICLE 4. a. A participant suspected of concussion by an official must leave the game to undergo concussion assessment (see Appendix C). The participant may not return until a professional practitioner has cleared them of a concussion diagnosis. This decision should be communicated to an official by the professional practitioner.
- b. A participant diagnosed with concussion (or suspected of concussion but not cleared by a professional practitioner) may not return to play or practice until they have completed the BAFA Graduated Return to Play protocol.

PENALTY – Unsportsmanlike conduct. 15 yards. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules. Automatic disqualification. [S27 and S47: UC-OTH/DSQ].

Approved Ruling 13-1-4

- l. The home team is responsible for game management and provides a suitable professional practitioner to meet the requirements of Rule 13-1-2. The away team also provides a professional practitioner. During the game, an away-team player leaves the field to undergo concussion assessment, and is assessed by both professional practitioners. (a) Both practitioners agree the player is not concussed. (b) Both practitioners agree the player is concussed. (c) The practitioners disagree: the home-team practitioner believes that they are not concussed; the away-team practitioner believes they are concussed. (d) The practitioners disagree: the away-team practitioner believes that they are not concussed; the home-team practitioner believes they are concussed. **RULING:** (a) No problem. The player may return to the game. (b) No problem. The player may not return to the game. (c) Although the practitioners disagree, the away team would follow their practitioner's assessment and the player would not return. (d) Although the practitioners disagree, the away team would be bound by the home-team practitioner's assessment (since they are the "official" medical provision) and the player would not return. It is hoped that disagreements between practitioners like this would not arise, or would be resolved professionally, but in rare cases there has to be a rule that can resolve it.

SECTION 2. Changing Facilities**Changing Rooms**

- ARTICLE 1. a. # Game management must provide changing rooms for the home team, the visiting team and the officials. These changing rooms must be separate and access to one should not be via another.
- b. # Each room must be large enough to accommodate the appropriate number of people, and must be available two hours prior to the scheduled kickoff time. The officials' changing room must accommodate at least the size of crew normally assigned to the game.
- c. # Seating for an appropriate number of people must be provided, and each room must not be unreasonably dirty, cold, wet or noisy. Washing (preferably shower) and toilet facilities are **mandatory within the changing rooms or within close proximity**. An appropriate number of coat hooks should also be provided.
- d. # Where the standard of the two teams' changing facilities is different, the visiting team must be provided the higher standard one (unless the visiting team head coach agrees otherwise).

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Changing room not provided, not separate, not large enough, or without appropriate seating.**
- **Changing room unreasonably dirty, cold, wet or noisy.**
- **Lack of washing or toilet facilities.**
- **Visiting team not given higher standard changing facilities.**

Security and Access

ARTICLE 2. # Changing rooms should be secure, i.e. either the occupants should be provided with a key to the room, or a responsible member of the game management assigned to lock and unlock the room as required by the occupants. Game management must inform the occupants if they are aware of any threat to the security of items left in the changing room.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Changing rooms not secured.**

SECTION 3. Stadium Clocks**Minimum Standards for Game Clocks**

ARTICLE 1. □ A stadium game clock is not mandatory but where provided must meet the following requirements:

- a. It must be visible from all areas of the pitch. More than one clock is permissible.

- b. It must count downwards. A clock that only counts upwards must not be used.
- c. The stadium clock operator shall have control of the game clock via an effective system, and they shall be situated in a place from which they can see the entire playing surface including end zones.
- d. The clock controls must allow the following:
 1. Starting and stopping the clock.
 2. Setting the time to any value.
 3. Correcting of errors.
 4. Turning it off in case of malfunction.
- e. The clock shall be maintained regularly and checked for accuracy before each game.
- f. If a stadium game clock is provided, and the following criteria are satisfied, then the clock shall be used:
 1. The stadium clock shall comply with the minimum standards set out above.
 2. A competent operator shall be provided who has no duties during the game other than to operate the game clock (**Exception:** if the stadium game clock can be operated remotely by an official on the field).
 3. There shall be a means of communication between the on-field timekeeper and the stadium clock operator.

Minimum Standards for Play Clocks

ARTICLE 2. □ 40/25-second clocks are not mandatory (overrules Rule 3-2-4-b) but where provided must meet the following requirements:

- a. At least two clocks must be provided, situated at either end of the ground and visible to players in the field of play and end zones. The rules specify that if one clock is not working then the other must be turned off.
- b. Clocks must count downwards.
- c. A competent operator shall be provided who has no duties during the game other than to operate the play clocks (**Exception:** if the stadium play clocks can be operated remotely by an official on the field).
- d. There should be a separate control box for the play clock.
- e. The control box for the play clock must allow the following:
 1. Starting and stopping the clock.
 2. Reset to 25 seconds.
 3. Reset to 40 seconds.
 4. Turning it off should malfunction occur or for game situations such as crowd noise delay, end of quarter, etc.
- f. If 0 seconds is reached the clock shall stop there automatically without counting further.
- g. The clock shall be maintained regularly and checked for accuracy before each game.

Procedures for Operating Game Clocks

ARTICLE 3. a. The stadium game clock shall show the official time. It is up to the on-field time keeper, sideline assistant and stadium clock operator to work as a team to ensure that it always shows the correct time.

- b. # The stadium clock (if it is working properly) shall be used as the official time piece. An unofficial stadium clock must not be used.

- c. # If the clock malfunctions or if the operator is inadequate, the Referee should order the clock turned off and the game time kept only on the field. If this becomes necessary, the Referee must inform both head coaches, and an incident report made.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Stadium clock malfunctions.**
 - **Stadium clock operator is inadequate.**
- d. Proper briefing of the stadium clock operator(s) is of paramount importance before any game.
- e. The stadium clock operator shall start the clock on their positive knowledge it should start by rule or on the referee's signal, and stop it on their own positive knowledge that the clock should stop by rule or on the signal of an official.
- f. If the clock is stopped in error, the stadium clock operator must restart it immediately.
- g. The on-field timekeeper should ordinarily correct the stadium clock only after instances where a significant error has occurred.

Procedures for Operating Play Clocks

ARTICLE 4. # If play clocks are provided and they meet the specified standards, they shall be used and shall be the official 40/25-second timers. Unofficial 40/25-second timers must not be used.

Instructions to Stadium Game Clock Operators

ARTICLE 5. Prior to the game, an official shall inform the stadium clock operator of the length of the periods, and instruct them that:

- a. The clock should start on the referee's winding signal, or when the ball is snapped (whichever happens first). The clock must not be started if any other official gives a winding signal (*Exception:* during a free kick).
- b. The clock stops if any official gives a stopping the clock signal, or if a touchdown is scored, a safety conceded, a touchback declared, a field goal attempt scores or fails, or a forward pass is declared incomplete. Each of these latter signals stops the clock in its own right. The stadium clock operator shall stop the clock on their own positive knowledge that the clock should stop by rule.
- c. If the on-field timekeeper wants the time displayed to be adjusted, they shall either:
1. Order a correction (potentially via an assistant) using a radio or phone line (if provided).
 2. Use agreed signals during a time out or other convenient pause in the game.
 3. Ask the referee to use their radio-microphone to announce a correction.

Instructions to Stadium Play Clock Operators

ARTICLE 6. Prior to the game, an official shall instruct the play clock operator that:

- a. The play clock should start a 40-second count when an official signals the ball dead, unless the clock was stopped for one of the reasons set out in Rule 3-2-4-c.
- b. The play clock should be reset to 25 seconds when the referee signals (one open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion). The play clock should then be started whenever the referee gives either the ready for play signal or a winding the clock signal simultaneously with blowing their whistle.
- c. If, before the play clock reaches zero, the ball is snapped, kicked, or any official blows their whistle, the time shall be reset immediately to 40 seconds and the clock shall not continue to count down.
- d. If the clock winds down to zero before the ball is snapped or kicked, it must be left showing 0 until the delay of game penalty is completed, and then reset to 25 seconds.

- e. Unless at least one play clock is operative at each end of the ground, the one(s) at the other end must be turned off immediately.

SECTION 4. Game Personnel

Officials' Assistants

- ARTICLE 1. # a. Game management shall be responsible for providing 30 minutes prior to the kickoff, a minimum of five persons to act as officials' assistants (ball persons and chain crew).
1. ∇ The competition authority may specify regulations as to the provision of officials' assistants. Irrespective of any competition regulations, it remains the responsibility of Game Management to ensure that the officials' assistants are made available to the officials.
- b. The officials' assistants shall be appointed to the following duties:
1. Down box operator.
 2. Stake operator #1.
 3. Stake operator #2.
 4. Ball person #1.
 5. Ball person #2.
 6. Chain clip operator (if six or more).
 7. Alternate line to gain stake operator (if seven or more).
 8. Alternate down box operator (if eight or more).
 9. Ball person #3 (if more than three balls are to be used).
 10. Ball person #4 (if more than three balls are to be used).
- c. # It is mandatory that persons under the age of 14 years must not be used as officials' assistants. Teams are recommended to appoint a regular crew of assistants who will be available to do these jobs for every game.
1. Officials' assistants under the age of 18 remain the responsibility of game management at all times, and must be supervised by a responsible person appointed by game management.
- d. □ It is desirable that officials' assistants be attired with brightly coloured vests to enable them to be distinguished on the sideline.
1. Down box operators: red.
 2. Stake operators and chain clip operator: 3-inch black and yellow stripes.
 3. Ball persons: dark blue with red diagonal stripes front and back.
- e. When provided with an inexperienced crew of assistants, the officials are recommended to use the best individual as down box operator, the next two best as stake operators, and the next two best as ball persons.
- f. Where only five assistants are available, the down box operator shall also perform the duties of the chain clip operator. Alternate operators are optional.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- Any officials' assistant under age 14.
- Fewer than 5 officials' assistants provided.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- Officials' assistants provided later than 30 minutes before kickoff.
- Officials' assistants changed during the game.

Approved Ruling 13-4-1

- i. Competition regulations state that the away team must provide at least one officials' assistant. At the scheduled kickoff time, no assistant has been provided by the away team. **RULING:** The game cannot start without a minimum of 5 officials' assistants and it will be up to Game Management to find the away team's contributor. Normally, if the kickoff is delayed for game management reasons, we would penalise the home team 10 yards for delay of game. However, because the delay is due to the away team not providing their personnel, this is regarded as one of the "circumstances beyond the control of the home management" that mean the penalty is waived (Rule 3-4-1-b).

Water Carriers

- ARTICLE 2. a. Persons carrying liquid refreshment for use or consumption by players shall only be permitted on the field of play with the permission of the referee. (The referee may delegate the authority to give this permission to other officials if they so wish.)
- b. The water carrier may only provide refreshment and must not communicate coaching information to players. Water carriers shall only be permitted on the field during charged team timeouts, two-minute warning timeouts, injury timeouts or between periods. It is a contravention of rule 9-2-1 for a water carrier to be on the field at any other time or without permission or to communicate with players.
 - c. At other times when the ball is dead, a player may go to the team area for refreshment (but the water carrier must stay outside the sideline).

Liaison with Game Personnel

- ARTICLE 3. a. Prior to the kickoff, the officials shall carry out their pre-game duties including speaking to the following personnel:
1. Head coach of each team – to obtain coaches' certification and names/numbers of captains.
 2. Chain crew and ball persons – to brief them as to their duties.
 3. Public address announcers – to ensure familiarity with officials' signals, to ascertain what announcements are to be made and if and when [any ceremonies are scheduled \(e.g. playing the National Anthem, observing a minute's silence\)](#).
 4. Clock operator (where provided) – to ensure familiarity with officials' signals and to be briefed on the mechanism to be used to correct errors on the stadium clock.
 5. Medical personnel – to ascertain their location.
- b. # Game personnel must be available to speak to the officials in the period between 30 and 10 minutes prior to the start of the game.

Stewards

ARTICLE 4. # Game management shall be responsible for providing stewards to remove unauthorised persons from the team areas and within the limit lines.

Game management and competition authority

- ARTICLE 5. a. Game management is defined to be the BAFA organisation and associated personnel responsible for the arrangements and facilities for a BAFA game. This is normally the home team unless the competition authority stipulates otherwise.
- b. A competition authority is defined to be the BAFA organisation and associated personnel responsible for administering a competition.

SECTION 5. Cancellation, Suspension, Abandonment and Forfeiture of Games

General Principle

ARTICLE 1. a. # The referee shall be the sole arbiter in respect of decisions as to whether to cancel, delay, suspend or abandon the game. However, they shall consult their fellow officials, and at all times keep game management and, where appropriate, both head coaches informed of the reason(s) for the cancellation, delay, suspension or abandonment, and, in the case of a delay or suspension, the likely duration.

1. The referee shall take into account, where available, the opinions of the senior medical person present and the senior groundsperson present where their expertise is relevant to the decision made.
 2. Where one or more subsequent games are to be played later the same day at the same venue, or the game is part of a multi-team tournament, the referee shall also take into account, where possible, the opinions of the head coaches of each of the other teams involved.
- b. # The referee shall make every effort to play the game at the place and time scheduled, but if circumstances do not permit play to proceed they shall not hesitate to carry out the procedures specified here.

STOP, REPORT – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended.

• **Circumstances do not permit play to proceed.**

- c. Once the referee has made the decision to cancel or abandon a game, that decision shall only be reversed by mutual agreement of the referee and opposing head coaches. This includes agreement to change field at the same venue or change kickoff time. A change of venue or a change to the date on which the game is played must in addition have the agreement of the relevant competition authority.

Team Arrival

ARTICLE 2. a. # The game shall not be cancelled if both teams have arrived at the ground prior to the scheduled kickoff time (even though they may not be ready to start at that time). In case of dispute, the scheduled kickoff time shall be defined to be the kickoff time notified to the referee.

- b. Where the kickoff is delayed because of the late arrival of a team, the offending team shall be penalised on the opening kickoff under rule 3-4-1-a. The referee may waive the penalty for circumstances beyond either team's control. (Note: delays due to foreseeable traffic hold-ups, navigational difficulties, late departures, required stops, etc. are not to be considered as being beyond a team's control.)

Game Management

ARTICLE 3. # The referee shall delay the start of the game until such time as:

- a. The goal posts have been adequately padded according to rule.
- b. The match balls have been obtained and checked.
- c. The chain set has been obtained and checked.
- d. The officials' assistants have been briefed.
- e. The minimum medical requirement is met.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

• **Start of game delayed.**

The Field

ARTICLE 4. Rule 1-2-9-c authorises the referee to effect any improvement to the field surface deemed necessary for proper game administration. Rule 1-2-8-b authorises the referee to order the removal of any obstructions within the playing enclosure that constitute a hazard. The referee must delay the start of the game until such time as these tasks are complete. A delay caused by circumstances under the control of the game management shall be considered a contravention of rule 3-4-1-b.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Field not ready for play.**

Game Supervision

ARTICLE 5. a. # Rule 11-2-1 requires that a game be supervised by a minimum of four officials (three in exceptional circumstances such as injury or delay in travel).

- b. # The referee (or the senior official present who shall act as the referee in the appointed referee's absence) must delay the start of the game until three or more officials are present. If three or more officials are present at the scheduled kickoff time then the game shall proceed, even if more officials are expected to arrive shortly thereafter. Officials who arrive late shall be assimilated into the crew at the referee's discretion.
- c. Ø If fewer than three officials are available, persons, currently registered with BAFA, who meet the minimum officiating requirement (as defined in Rule 13-8-6-e) (attending the game as spectators or in another capacity) may be appointed officials with the agreement of the referee and the head coach (or their designated representative) of each team.
- d. # If one or more officials become incapacitated and the size of the crew drops below three then the referee (or senior official if the referee is incapacitated) must suspend the game.
- e. The competition authority may define a time before which any notification by BAFRA that it cannot assign officials to the game imposes a requirement on game management to arrange alternative officials.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Fewer than three persons who meet the officiating requirement (game management reason).**

STOP, REPORT – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended.

- **Fewer than three persons who meet the officiating requirement (BAFRA reason).**

REPORT –

- **Any appointed official not present or is incapacitated.**

Approved Ruling 13-5-5

- i. Only two qualified officials turn up to a game. The following volunteer to be appointed to assist them in officiating the game: (a) a spectator who holds a BAFRA certificate of competency and is registered with BAFRA and BAFA; (b) a spectator who holds a BAFCA level-1 certification and is registered with BAFCA and BAFA; (c) a coach of one of the participating teams who holds a BAFCA level-1 certification and is registered with BAFCA and BAFA; (d) a spectator who used to hold a BAFRA certificate of competency but is no longer registered with BAFA; (e) a spectator who used to be a BAFCA level-1 certified coach but is no longer registered with BAFA; (f) a sideline assistant of one of the participating teams who used to hold a BAFCA level-1 certification but is no longer registered with BAFCA; (g) a sideline assistant of one of the participating teams who used to hold a BAFRA certificate of competency but is no longer registered with BAFRA. **RULING:** In cases (a), (b) and (c), the individual may be appointed as an official with the agreement of the referee and the head coach of each team. In cases (d), (e), (f) and (g), the individual **MAY NOT** be appointed - only persons who are currently registered with BAFA as an official or coach meet the minimum officiating requirement (Rule 13-8-6-e).

Weather

ARTICLE 6. a. American football is a game designed to be played in any weather conditions except those that are judged hazardous to participant or spectator safety (e.g. lightning).

b. # The referee must delay the start of the game or suspend a game in progress if, **in their judgement, conditions are** hazardous to the safety of the participants or spectators.

REPORT –

- **Hazardous weather conditions.**

Procedure for Delaying the Start of a Game

ARTICLE 7. a. If the referee delays the start of the game due to any of the reasons above, or for any other reason(s), they shall:

1. Notify game management of the reason(s) for the delay.
2. Wait at least one hour before cancelling the game, unless it is clear or becomes clear that the problem(s) will not be rectified (e.g. away team telephones to say it is not coming, or necessary equipment to improve the pitch surface is not available), then the referee shall immediately cancel the game without further delay.
3. Cancel the game if it is not started within 60 minutes of the scheduled kickoff time (or a specified longer period agreed unanimously by both head coaches and the referee).

Procedure for Suspending the Game

ARTICLE 8. a. The procedure for suspending the game is stipulated in Rule 3-3-3.

b. The referee must suspend the game under the following circumstances:

1. If all match balls are illegal.
2. If the chain set is inoperative.
3. If one or more officials' assistants become unavailable or are dismissed due to incompetence.
4. If the medical cover drops below the minimum level.
5. If the field surface makes proper game administration impossible or an obstruction becomes a hazard.
6. If fewer than three officials are able to supervise the game, due to injury or for any other reason.
7. If weather conditions become hazardous to participants or spectators.
8. If the behaviour of any person is prejudicial to the orderly conduct of the game.
9. For any other reason which poses a hazard to participant or spectator safety.
10. For any other contingency not covered by the rules.

c. The referee shall wait for a reasonable time to permit the problem(s) to be rectified. However, if it becomes clear that the game cannot continue, the referee shall abandon the game and notify game management.

d. The referee shall abandon the game if it is not resumed within 60 minutes (or a specified longer period agreed unanimously by both head coaches and the referee).

Competition Notification

ARTICLE 9. a. The referee must make a report to BAFA of all forfeits, cancellations and abandonments and all delays and suspensions of more than five minutes duration. Shorter delays and suspensions may be reported at the referee's discretion.

b. The competition authority may define regulations for revising a score if awarding a game by a score of 1-0 is manifestly unfair to the offended team.

REPORT –

- **Game forfeit, cancelled or abandoned.**
- **Game suspended for more than 5 minutes.**

SECTION 6. Miscellaneous

Access to Officials

- ARTICLE 1. a. # Members of the game management staff, members of the press with enquiries, squad members and coaches shall only be allowed into the officials' changing room with the expressed permission of the referee (or in their absence the senior official present). This applies before, during and after the game.
- b. # The referee shall be available after the game to answer questions on rules and interpretations. The referee shall not be available to answer questions on judgement calls. Questions addressed to other officials shall be redirected to the referee.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Unauthorised access to officials' changing room.**

Public Address Announcers

- ARTICLE 2. a. # Announcers must cooperate with the officials by not criticising judgement calls made by the officials. Whether the official gets a good view of the play or not, they can only call what they see.
- b. # In order to ensure fairness to both teams, announcers must not describe the play to the advantage or disadvantage of either team, especially while the ball is live.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Infractions by public address announcers.**

Ceremonies

- ARTICLE 3. a. Team announcements should be completed before the start of the coin toss ceremony.
- b. If game management wishes, the toss of the coin at the start of the game may be performed by an individual or attended by a small group of persons. (This is not to be considered a contravention of rule 3-1-1.) Such persons shall not, however, be permitted to perform a kickoff.

SECTION 7. Sanctions

Authority to impose sanctions

ARTICLE 1. # BAFA may impose sanctions on teams for breaches of mandatory game management rules.

- a. # Sanctions shall be applied to the team responsible for game management (*Exception:* Rule 1-4-5-b-1).
1. No sanctions shall be applied if neither of the participating teams in a game is responsible for the management of the game.
 2. No sanction shall be applied if the breach is beyond the reasonable control of game management. Game management is expected to make contingency plans for all breaches that reasonably can be foreseen, and shall be liable if the contingency plan does not exist or cannot be implemented without good reason.
- b. # No sanction will be applied if the breach is rectified before the designated kickoff time.
- c. # Sanctions shall only apply in competitive games.

Possible sanctions

ARTICLE 2. # a. BAFA may impose any of the following sanctions for a game management breach (or any combination of these):

1. A warning about future breaches.
 2. A monetary fine.
 3. A restriction on the use of the venue where the breach occurred.
 4. Cancelling (or abandoning, if started) a game.
 5. Deduction of competition points or the award of the game.
- b. # The sanction of warning about future breaches may only be applied for a first offence in a season of a particular breach.
- c. # The sanction of deducting competition points or awarding a game may only be applied in cases where there is evidence that the integrity of the game was compromised (e.g. a team did something to cheat).
- d. # The referee must cancel the game (or abandon the game, if started) in cases where a sanction so specifies, and a mandatory breach is not rectified within the time limit (if specified).

SECTION 8. Status of BAFA games

BAFA game

ARTICLE 1. # a. The following are categorised as BAFA games and subject to these rules:

1. A regular season or playoff game played by teams in leagues or other competitions affiliated to or [registered with](#) BAFA.
 2. Any other game played in Great Britain where at least one of the teams is affiliated to or [registered with](#) BAFA or one of its member organisations.
 3. Any "all-star" or exhibition game played in Great Britain involving persons [registered with](#) BAFA.
- b. [A BAFA game requires adherence to all parts of Rule 13-8-6.](#)

Controlled scrimmage

ARTICLE 2. # a. A controlled scrimmage is defined as a playing event between squad members representing the same club or two or more different clubs provided that:

1. No gate money is taken.
 2. The score is not published.
 3. It is not part of any competition.
 4. The primary purpose is the training and/or evaluation of players.
- b. A controlled scrimmage may be played under the supervision of licensed coaches.
- c. With the mutual agreement of the head coaches, the playing rules may be modified in ways that do not reduce the safety of the participants.

Age groups

ARTICLE 3. ∇ The competition authority may define the maximum and/or minimum age for squad members in its competition.

Licensed coach

ARTICLE 4. # A coach is defined as licensed if, at the time of the game:

- a. They are registered with BAFA.
- b. They are registered with BAFCA.
- c. They hold public liability insurance for coaching.

Licensed official

ARTICLE 5. # An official is defined as licensed if, at the time of the game:

- a. They are registered with BAFA.
- b. They are registered with BAFRA.
- c. They hold public liability insurance for officiating.

Playing games

ARTICLE 6. # A BAFA game may not commence, nor proceed if suspended, unless:

- a. All squad members meet any age group requirements defined by the competition authority (Rule 13-8-3).
- b. The squad members, coaches and other persons in the team area of each BAFA-affiliated team are registered with BAFA.
- c. ∇ Each team has, at the field, at least the minimum number of squad members defined by the competition authority. *Exception:* A competition minimum only needs to be met at the scheduled kickoff time; thereafter the minimum is the normal number of players specified in Rule 3-5-3.
- d. ∇ Each BAFA-affiliated team has, at the field, at least the minimum number of licensed coaches defined by the competition authority. All coaches must hold a BAFCA Level 1 or higher qualification. The competition authority may also define a minimum number of coaches qualified at or higher than a particular BAFCA qualification level. *Exception:* A competition minimum only needs to be met at the scheduled kickoff time; thereafter the minimum number is one at Level 1.
- e. There are at least the minimum number of officials specified in Rule 11-2-1 who are licensed and meet the minimum officiating requirement. All officials must hold either (a) a BAFRA certificate of competency; (b) a BAFRA qualification; or (c) a BAFCA Level 1 or higher qualification **AND (from 2028) a BAFA Coach Officiating certificate of competency.**
- f. The referee has declared the field safe and ready to play.
- g. The minimum medical requirements (Rule 13-1-2) are met.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **BAFA game requirements not met.**

Participants risk not being fully covered by BAFA's insurance policy if this is violated.

Participant not on roster

ARTICLE 7. a. # No player, squad member, coach or other person in the team area who is not on their team's roster form may participate.

PENALTY – Disqualification [S47].

- b. # A head coach may request a coach's conference with the referee if they believe an opposition player, squad member, coach or other person in the team area is not on the roster (Rule 3-3-4-e). If the person is on the roster, the coach's team shall be charged a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. **(A.R. 13-8-7:I-IV)**

Approved Ruling 13-8-7

- I. After the ball is dead, a Team B player requests a coach's conference because their coach believes that A99, who participated in the previous down, is not on their team's roster. **RULING:** The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify them. If A99 is on the form, charge Team B with a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. [Cited by 13-8-7-b]
- II. A Team A player leaves the field and A99 enters the field to replace them and communicates with a teammate or an official, enters the huddle, or is positioned in an offensive formation. A Team B player requests a coach's conference because their coach believes that A99 is not on their team's roster. **RULING:** The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify them. If A99 is on the form, charge Team B with a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. [Cited by 13-8-7-b]
- III. During a down, an official observes player A99 who they believe is not on their team's roster form. **RULING:** Referee's timeout when the ball is dead. The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify them. If A99 is on the form, the game continues. [Cited by 13-8-7-b]
- IV. After the ball is dead, a Team B player requests a coach's conference because their coach believes that A18 and A99, who participated in the previous down, are not on their team's roster. After checking the roster form, the referee discovers that A18 is on the form but A99 isn't. **RULING:** Disqualify A99. Team B will not be charged for the coach's conference since at least part of their appeal was upheld. (Rule 13-8-7-b) [Cited by 13-8-7-b]

Period between games: teams

ARTICLE 8. # a. No game shall take place if, at its kickoff time, fewer than 36 hours have elapsed since the end of the last game played by either team. **Exceptions:**

1. Any flag football game.
2. A suspended game that is resumed.
3. Where a series of games is played on the same day, the series will count as a single game provided the total playing time is not more than the equivalent of:
 - (a) 60 minutes (excluding extra periods) with a game clock run according to Rule 3, or
 - (b) 90 minutes in a small-sided game with a continuous clock.
4. Where an explicit waiver in writing has been provided by the Chair of the BAFA Rules Committee.

Period between games: officials

ARTICLE 9. a. # Where two games are scheduled at the same venue and one or more officials are scheduled to officiate both games, there shall be a minimum interval between the scheduled kickoff of the two games.

1. If the first game is scheduled with 15-minute quarters, the second game shall be scheduled to kickoff no sooner than 3½ hours after the scheduled kickoff time of the first game.
 2. If the first game is scheduled with 12-minute quarters, the second game shall be scheduled no sooner than 3 hours after the scheduled kickoff time of the first game.
 3. If the first game is scheduled with 10-minute or 8-minute quarters, the second game shall be scheduled no sooner than 2½ hours after the scheduled kickoff time of the first game.
- b. # If the first game of a double header finishes less than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time of the second game, the start of the second game shall be delayed to allow a minimum interval of 30 minutes between the two games.
- c. If one or more officials on an officiating crew is scheduled to officiate games at two different venues, the interval between the scheduled kickoff times shall be increased by the normal, expected travel time between the two venues plus 30 minutes.
- d. # This rule does not normally apply to small-sided football. ✕