

BAFA rule changes 2017 (incorporating IFAF changes)

Changes agreed for adoption in 2017.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
1.	1-4-5-a-2	Mascot name allowed on jersey	Add it to the list of items permitted on a jersey
2.	1-4-5-c-2, 3-4-2-b-2	These rules relate to charging a team a timeout as a penalty/violation. They now make clear that a delay of game penalty (5 yards) is applied if a team has no timeouts remaining.	For consistency.
3.	1-4-6-d	Allow advertising on helmets	Make explicit that advertising on helmets is allowed.
4.	2-3-1-a	Definition of blocking now requires intentional contact	Important clarification. The full consequences of this are unclear, but if for example a player dives at an opponent to make a tackle but misses and hits another opponent in the back of the legs, this would not be clipping because clipping is a block and a block now requires intent.
5.	2-3-7	Low-blocking zone deleted	Consequence of the changes to Rule 9-1-5. The rule that used the low-blocking zone now uses the tackle box as its reference point.
6.	2-16-10	Change to paragraph a: (New language is in bold italics) “A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the snapper’s legs, and with either (1) at least one player seven or more yards behind the neutral zone; or (2) a potential holder and potential kicker five or more yards behind the neutral zone in position for a place kick. For either (1) or (2) to qualify as a scrimmage kick formation, it must be obvious that a kick will be attempted. ”	This clarification of the definition of a scrimmage kick formation reinforces the intent of the rule that allows exceptions to the numbering rule when a team apparently is going to punt or attempt a field goal. The NCAA wording requires 10 yards for a punt formation and seven yards for a field goal, but we acknowledge that in IFAF football, those distances are not always met so we have adopted closer distances.
7.	2-19-2	When in doubt principles on forward/backward pass or pass/fumble do not apply in games using a Video Judge.	Important point that emphasises that the officials must think slightly differently if there is a video judge. Where a play can be reviewed, when in doubt the officials should work to the ruling that regards the ball as still alive.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
8.	2-27-12	Disqualified Player and Coach ARTICLE 12. a. A disqualified player is one who is declared ineligible for further participation in the game. b. A disqualified Player or Coach must leave the playing enclosure under the escort of team personnel before the next play after his disqualification. He must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision for the duration of the game.	Clarification. Consequence of change to Rule 9-2-6.
9.	2-27-14	Add new paragraph <i>j</i> : “j. A ball carrier who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first.”	A sliding ball carrier is now protected under the defenseless-player portion of the targeting rules.
10.	3-1-1	Add new (to IFAF) paragraph a: "1. Prior to the game, during warm-ups, teams must remain in an agreed separate half of the field, normally the half up to the line 5 yards from midfield to their left, looking from their team area towards the field. Delete from existing 3-1-1-c (which will be renumbered 3-1-1-d) the words "in the area between the nine-yard marks and its sideline or". Change "nine-yard marks" to "sidelines" in two places in the second sentence.	The first part states how teams are to be kept apart during warm-ups. The second part denies teams the opportunity to attempt to intimidate their opponents by marching onto the field during the coin toss.
11.	3-3-7	Delete paragraphs b and c	Old paragraph b made timeouts shorter in live-televvised games (only). Old paragraph c allowed a head coach to designate a timeout as being of only 30 seconds duration. Both these are complications that we do not need in IFAF football.
12.	3-4-3	Insert this sentence before the last sentence of the paragraph: “If the game clock is stopped only to administer the penalty for a foul by the team ahead in the score inside the last two minutes of a half, the game clock will start on the snap, at the option of the offended team. (Exception: Rule 3-4-4)”	Provides consistent application of the authority of the referee in circumstances where the game clock is most critical. The exception verifies that the ten-second runoff rule takes precedence.

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13.	3-5-2	Team B allowed to match up on substitutions "When Team A sends in its substitutes, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped until Team B has been given an opportunity to substitute."	Makes the existing rule applicable to all Team A substitution situations, not just those where Team A also rushes quickly to the line of scrimmage.
14.	6-3-13 and 10-2-4	Penalty option: Safety for Team A fouls in its end zone.	Clarification that penalties in the end zone on kicking plays can result in a safety.
15.	7-3-2-h	Intentional grounding exception: passer must retain possession	Clarifies that the intentional grounding exception only applies to the passer if he controls the snap/backward pass AND retains possession of the ball through to the point when he throws the pass.
16.	9-1-2-c	Delete the Exception. Add the following: "Tripping is intentionally using the lower leg or foot to obstruct an opponent below the knees. (Rule 2-28)"	Tripping the ball carrier is now illegal. This affords the ball carrier the same protection from tripping that other players have had for many years.
17.	9-1-3	Rule 9-1-3 now reads: "ARTICLE 3. No player shall target and make forcible contact against an opponent with the crown (top) of his helmet. The crown of the helmet is the portion of the helmet above the level of the top of the facemask. This foul requires that there be at least one indicator of targeting. When in question, it is a foul."	Clarify definition of the crown of the helmet.
18.	9-1-3 and 9-1-4	Element of targeting must be present for there to be a foul.	Clarifies that for there to be targeting, the player must take aim at an opponent in a way that goes beyond normal play. This includes a launch, crouch, leading body part or lowered head. Some officials have been regarding any forcible contact with the opponent's head or neck area as a targeting foul. This change emphasises that the action must go beyond normal play for it to be illegal enough to warrant disqualification.

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19.	9-1-6	<p>Changes to paragraph a: (New language is in <i>bold italics</i>)</p> <p>“a. Team A prior to a change of team possession:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The following Team A players may legally block below the waist inside the <i>tackle box until they leave the tackle box or</i> until the ball has left the <i>tackle box</i>: (a) players on the line of scrimmage completely <i>inside the tackle box</i> and (b) stationary backs who are at least partially inside the tackle box and at least partially inside the frame of the body of the second lineman from the snapper. 2. <i>Except as in paragraph 3 (below)</i>, players not covered in paragraph 1 (above) while the ball is still in the <i>tackle box</i>, and all players after the ball has left the <i>tackle box</i>, are allowed to block below the waist only if the force of the initial contact is directed from the front. “From the front” is understood to mean within the clock-face region between “10 o’clock and 2 o’clock” forward of the player being blocked. 3. Players not covered in paragraph 1 (above) may not block below the waist toward the <i>line through the</i> original position of the ball at the snap <i>until the ball carrier is clearly beyond the neutral zone</i>. 4. Once the ball has left the <i>tackle box</i> a player may not block below the waist toward his own end line.” 	<p>Simplifies and clarifies the rule about blocking below the waist.</p> <p>Note that the “low-blocking zone” is no longer defined, and everything is now with reference to the tackle box. This reduces by one the number of "zones" an official has to monitor. The tackle box is also slightly narrower than the low-blocking zone, so the change gives more protection to Team B players outside the tackles.</p> <p>The change to paragraph 3 clarifies the rule regarding the crackback block. In the past, the rule has not been specific about when crackback blocks below the waist became legal. Now they become so once the ball carrier is clearly beyond the neutral zone.</p>
20.	9-1-9-b	<p>Change to Exception (2): (New language is in <i>bold italics</i>)</p> <p>“It is not a foul if the defender grabs or wraps this opponent in an attempt to make a conventional tackle <i>without making forcible contact with the head or shoulder</i>.”</p>	<p>This clarifies last year's rule change prohibiting most low hits on the passer. It will now be a foul if the defender makes forcible contact with his head or shoulder at or below the passer's knees, even if this is part of attempting a tackle.</p>

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21.	9-1-15	<p>Change rule to: "All players are prohibited from grabbing the inside collar of the back or the side of the shoulder pads or jersey, or grabbing the jersey at the name plate or above, and pull the ball carrier or simulated ball carrier toward the ground. This does not apply to a ball carrier or simulated ball carrier (including a potential forward passer) who is in the tackle box.</p> <p>Note: It is not necessary for a player to pull the opponent completely to the ground in order for the act to be illegal. If his knees are buckled by the action, it is a foul, even if the opponent is not pulled completely to the ground."</p>	<p>To increase safety, we have adopted essentially the NFL horse-collar tackle rule because it gives players more protection than the current NCAA one.</p> <p>It gives extra protection to players whose knees buckle though they are not pulled completely to the ground. It also covers grabbing the player's jersey near the collar (i.e. around the name plate).</p>
22.	9-2-2-d	<p>Remove "and the team's next game" from the penalty.</p> <p>Change penalty to: "PENALTY—Disqualification for the remainder of the game [S27 and S47]. Administer as a dead-ball foul; 15-yard penalty enforced at the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules."</p>	<p>IFAF has no other penalties that are carried forward to the next game.</p>
23.	9-2-2-d, 3-3-6,	<p>Remove "Team timeout. VIOLATION—Rules 3-3-6 and 3-4-2-b [S23, S3 or S21]"</p>	<p>The old rule had a double penalty: 15-yards AND a timeout. That is too much.</p>
24.	9-2-6, 2-27-12	<p>Change in paragraph a (New language is in bold italics) "a. Any coach, player, or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game shall be disqualified." Add new paragraph c: "A coach disqualified from the game must leave the playing enclosure within a reasonable amount of time after the disqualification and must remain out of view of the field of play for the remainder of the game." Title becomes "Disqualified players and coaches"</p>	<p>A coach can now be disqualified for two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls.</p> <p>Strengthens the coach's accountability for sideline behaviour and brings football in concert with other sports.</p>
25.	10-2-5	<p>Penalty enforcement: Scoring plays</p>	<p>Clarifies that 15-yard penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls on touchdowns carry forward to the try or kickoff.</p>

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26.	10-2-7-b	During extra periods, a live-ball foul treated as a dead-ball foul is not cancelled.	Clarification.
27.	12	Replace the whole of Rule 12 by a new "Video Judge" rule.	<p>Old Rule 12 permitted a replay official to review a specified range of situations that may occur in a game and rule on their correct outcome. We believe it is now time to give the off-field official a new role in advising the on-field officials of evidence that is available from video.</p> <p>The rationale for this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAA replay was designed at a time when communication between the on-field officials and replay official was limited. Modern radio technology makes two-way communication much easier. We should take advantage of that. • Modern technology makes the provision of video much easier. Replay does not have to be limited to games where there is full-scale television coverage. • If there is a stadium screen, the on-field officials should be able to take advantage of any view they can see on it. • We do not want to delay the game unnecessarily, but there is increasing pressure from fans and media for us to get the call right. • We need to make sure that replay is equally available to both teams – it cannot be under the sole control of the home team, for instance. • What we have adopted is not new. Something similar has been used successfully for several years in both codes of Rugby football.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
28.	13-1-1	<p>Changes to the minimum medical requirement.</p> <p>The following professions have been added to the list of acceptable medical personnel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports rehabilitator registered with BASRaT. • Sports therapist registered with the Society of Sports Therapists. • Sports massage therapist registered with the Sports Massage Association. • Osteopath registered with the HCPC. • Chiropractor registered with the HCPC. <p>Whatever profession, the practitioner must hold a NQF Level 3 or higher first aid qualification. For some professions this is a mandatory part of their professional training. For others, the individual must have acquired a suitable qualification by other means.</p> <p>The professional practitioner must have carried out a risk assessment and determined that they are competent and equipped to carry out emergency life saving.</p> <p>A suitable first aid kit, approved by the professional practitioner above (or the lead practitioner, if there is more than one), must be available.</p>	<p>The general characteristics are that the person meeting the medical personnel requirement must:</p> <p>(a) Be a graduate in an appropriate discipline.</p> <p>(b) Be a registered member of an appropriate professional body.</p> <p>(c) Possess professional indemnity insurance.</p> <p>(d) Hold a NQF Level 3 or higher first aid qualification.</p>
29.	13-1-3	<p>New concussion protocol.</p> <p>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 must be communicated to the referee by the professional practitioner.</p> <p>b. A player 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.</p>	<p>Our full concussion protocol closely follows those of other sports, including soccer and rugby.</p> <p>A participant who is confirmed as having a concussion diagnosis will be subject to a graduated return to play protocol.</p>