

BAFA rule changes 2018 (incorporating IFAF changes)

This list contains all BAFA rule changes adopted for 2018. It also lists some of the most significant editorial changes. Ordered by importance to teams (ITT) and importance to officials (ITO).



1 Rule changes

#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change	ITT	ITO
1.	1-4-4-d	Add: "Furthermore, the pants and knee pads must cover the knees."	Safety. Knee pads are now required to cover the knees.	5	5
2.	1-4-7-m	Add: "Equipment that has been modified in a way that reduces the protection of the player wearing it."	Safety rule. Equipment is designed to prevent injuries to the players who wear it. If any player alters the design of any equipment, it may not be effective for its designed purpose.	5	5
3.	9-1-11-b	Foul for leaping or hurdling in kick-block attempt no longer requires landing on a player.	Safety and to discourage leaping.	5	5
4.	4-1-3-r	Add to when the ball becomes dead: "When a ball carrier obviously begins a feet-first slide."	Adds an extra situation when the ball becomes dead. Aligns with NFL rules.	4	4
5.	6-1-2-b-2	After the ready for play on a free kick: "All players on the kicking team, except the kicker in his kicking motion and the holder for the purposes of holding the ball, must remain behind their restraining line."	Brings free kicks into line with scrimmage plays. Team A can now be penalised for a "false start" kick.	4	4
6.	1-4-7-d, 9-2-2-e	Treat cleats more than ½-inch long like any other illegal equipment foul.	The penalty for this (disqualification) is out of all proportion to the foul, which carries no more stigma than any other illegal equipment issue. Since other equipment issues do not even warrant charging a timeout, this penalty is extreme. This should be treated like other equipment problems: the player should be sent from the field until the problem is fixed.	3	3
7.	1-2-5-e	Allow advertising on goal post padding.	Advertising helps clubs support their finances	3	1
8.	1-2-1-n	Add minimum height for indoor stadium of 90 feet.	Indoor games are not specifically covered in the rules. 90 feet is based on the height of the scoreboard at AT&T Stadium (Dallas Cowboys). Sets the standard, but National federations may adapt it if necessary.	2	2

#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change	ITT	ITO
9.	1-2-1-o	If played in a stadium with a retractable roof, game management shall decide 90 minutes before kickoff whether to play the game with the roof open or closed. The roof must be closed if (from 90 minutes before the game until the end of the game) precipitation or lightning is within the vicinity of the stadium, the temperature drops below 40°F (4°C), or wind gusts are greater than 40 miles per hour (64 km/h). Once the roof is closed, it is not allowed to be reopened during the game.	Not currently covered in the rules. We choose to follow NFL practice on this.	2	2
10	3-3-2 Exception 3	Add: "limit the running clock rule to use after an elapsed time no later than 2 hours 15 minutes after kickoff, but only in games that are broadcast live;"	The running clock rule has been generally welcomed as a means of shortening a blowout game and as such providing a major boost to player safety when the teams are mismatched. There was concern that TV would be reluctant to televise a game that might be over very quickly. Therefore, for those games only, the running clock rule could be limited by the National Federation to use after an elapsed time no later than 2 hours 15 minutes after kickoff.	1	1

2 Editorial changes

#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change
1.	1-4-11-a-2	Add: "Motion pictures, any type of film, facsimile machines, videotapes, photographs, writing-transmission machines and computers may be used by coaches or for coaching purposes any time during the game or between periods."	Make explicit that IFAF rules allow technology (e.g. tablet computers or smartphones) to be used in the team area.
2.	1-4-11-b	Add: "including the use of any communication equipment (e.g. mobile phones or radios) for voice, text, image or any other type of message from inside or outside the playing enclosure by or to any person subject to the rules."	Clarify the type of communication inside the team area. Prohibits the team having communication with anyone outside the stadium (playing enclosure).
3.	3-3-2, 3-4-4	Add: "NOTE: This rule supersedes Rule 3-3-2-f (snap supersedes referee's signal) but does not supersede Rule 3-3-2-g (running clock)."	Clarifies the 10-second runoff rule. This supersedes all game clock rules except for the running clock.
4.	6-3-2-d	Add: "Illegal touching on a try results in no score. Illegal touching in an extra period results in team possession ending."	Clarification. The previous wording was slightly ambiguous and led some people to believe that Team A could score despite their illegal touching of a kick.
5.	8-3-2-a	Add: If a running clock is in force and time in the 4 th quarter expires in the interval after a touchdown is scored and prior to the try, the try shall not be attempted.	Makes clear that a running clock game is over in the scenario where time did not expire during the down where a touchdown was scored, but did so subsequently in the dead ball period before the try was attempted.
6.	9-1-6	Add Approved Rulings that illustrate legal/illegal blocks below the waist by Team B.	All of the current approved rulings are for Team A players initiating it.

#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change
7.	9-2-1-b	Coaches may not leave coaching box to protest officiating	Bench decorum. Makes explicit something that many officials would already have regarded as unsportsmanlike conduct.
8.	9-2-5	Sideline personnel must be behind coaching line	Bench decorum. Makes explicit what many people regarded as the threshold for sideline interference.