



BAFA
British American Football Association

Flag Football Rules 2010

Introduction

The International Federation of American Football has recently introduced a set of rules for flag football. The BAFA Flag Working Party had input into the formulation of these rules, and recommended to the BAFA Rules Committee that IFAF rules be used for all flag football games played in Britain from 1st March 2010.

These rules represent a major step forward in that, unlike BAFA's 2009 rules, they have been designed to stand alone. They can be issued and used in most situations without reference to the contact football rules, and have been designed to be as clear and simple as possible.

Changes from 2009

The rules are mostly the same as the ones that have been used in Britain for some years; however, there are a few changes from BAFA's 2009 rules.

Limit lines (field diagram)

IFAF rules mandate a safety area around the field, which should be marked if at all possible.

Forward progress (Rule 2-5-2)

Forward progress is now defined by where the ball was when the ball carrier was deflagged. Previously, this was defined by the ball carrier's downfield foot.

Play clock (Rule 3-2-3)

The play clock is now 25 seconds from the Referee's ready-for-play signal. Previously, it was 30 seconds.

Pass interference (rule 7-3-3)

Offensive pass interference is now a 10-yard penalty (or half the distance to the goal line), enforced from the previous spot. The ball is still placed at the spot of the foul with an automatic first down for defensive pass interference, except that if the foul occurred in the end zone, the ball is placed on the 2-yard line.

10-yard penalties (Rule 9-1 and 9-2-1)

Contact fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct are now 10-yard penalties, in order to emphasise the severity of the penalty.

Blitzer's right of way (Rule 9-1-1-g)

Any player who is eligible to blitz may establish an unimpeded right of way to the quarterback if, before the snap, they clearly raise one arm above their head. Offensive players must avoid them as long as they are heading towards the quarterback.

British amendments to IFAF Rules

Additionally, the IFAF rules allow National Federations (such as BAFA) to make changes for their competitions. All games in BAFA-affiliated competitions shall be played with the following changes:

Field dimensions (Rule 1-1-1)

The field of play (i.e. between the goal lines) shall be 60 yards long and 25 yards wide with 10-yard end zones. This may be reduced to a minimum of 50 yards long by 20 yards wide if the size of the facility does not permit a full-sized field and safety zone.

Down box, scoreboard and pylons (rule 1-1-1)

The use of a down box, scoreboard and pylons is very strongly recommended. However, they are not mandatory for British games.

Rosters & mixed-gender teams (rule 1-1-1)

There shall be no limit to the number of participants who may appear on a British roster. Competitions may allow the entry of mixed-gender teams.

The ball (rule 1-2-1)

Adult teams who wish to participate in IFAF-sanctioned competition are strongly advised to use leather balls when they are in possession, because these are the only balls that will be allowed in IFAF games. However, they are not mandatory for British games.

Design of flags (Rule 1-3-1-c)

If necessary, teams may use flags of the Velcro type. However, it is very strongly recommended that teams obtain and use popper flags if at all possible.

Head coverings (Rule 1-3-2-b)

Players may wear an entirely soft head covering to protect their head from the elements. However, any head covering that has any stiff or rigid part is illegal equipment.

Game timing and number of timeouts (Rules 3-2-1 and 3-3-2)

At their discretion, competitions may vary the duration of the game and the number of timeouts.

Questions and feedback

Questions regarding the interpretation of the flag rules may be addressed by email to the Chair of the BAFA Rules Committee at rules@bafa.org.uk.

Note that both IFAF and BAFA are looking to improve the rules; both in the way in which the game is played, and editorially in the way the rules are expressed in writing. Suggestions in either of these regards are welcome, also to the above email address.

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Chair, BAFA Rules Committee
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