

# **BAFA Flag football rules 2015**

12<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## **1 Introduction**

The International Federation of American Football has recently introduced a new set of rules for flag football. IFAF 2015 rules are to be used for all flag football games played in Britain from 1st March 2015.

## **2 Changes from 2013**

Important changes compared to the 2013 version are:

- Definition for Fumble added and ruled different to passes.
- Coin toss option added.
- New penalty for Pass Interference.
- Illegal contact fouls get an automatic first down if by defence.
- Keeping the flag as unsportsmanlike act added.
- New Signal for illegal participation.

A couple of editorial changes have been made, and the new drawings for Officials signals were taken.

The Interpretations are revised and some examples have been added, others have been deleted.

The most significant change is the definition of a fumble and a separate ruling. So a fumble is no longer penalized but the ball is dead when it hits the ground or is caught by a teammate.

The winner of the coin toss has now the option to start with the ball in the first or second half.

The penalty for Pass Interference is changed to 10 yards from the basic spot. Additionally a loss of down if by Offense and an automatic first down if by defence. Half the distance rules apply.

The penalty for all illegal contact fouls is strengthened with an automatic first down if by Defence.

A new penalty is added, the player has to leave a pulled flag near the place where it has been pulled or return it immediately to the opponent player.

## **3 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:

### **3.1 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.

### **3.2 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.

### **3.3 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.

### **3.4 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.

### **3.5 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.

### **3.6 Mouthpiece (Rule 1-3-1-d)**

Adult competition the mouthpiece is strongly recommended, all other competition it is mandatory.

### **3.7 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.

### **3.8 Game timing and number of time outs (Rules 3-2-1 and 3-3-2)**

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

## **4 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@britishamericanfootball.org](mailto:rules@britishamericanfootball.org).

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.

Jim Briggs, Chair, BAFA Rules Committee

Martin Cockerill, BAFA flag rules lead