

BAFA Flag football rules 2017

7th March 2017

1 Introduction

The International Federation of American Football has recently introduced a new set of rules for flag football. IFAF 2017 rules are to be used for all flag football games played in Britain from 1st March 2017.

2 Changes from 2015

Important changes compared to the 2015 version are:

- The reference to Tackle Football has been deleted; the Flag Rule Book is a complete one and can stand alone.
- One-coloured flags, contrasting to all colours of the pants, will give Defense a fair chance to avoid contact.
- Coin toss procedure changed. The winner can choose to start the first or second half. The side will be determined by the team not starting the first half. Same procedure at Overtime.
- Overtime will have only one period (2 series) from the middle. Afterwards, it will be a 1-point-try shoot out.
- The clock will also stop in the last 2 minutes when a fumble strikes the ground.
- Encroachment, disconcerting signals and illegal blitz signal becomes a dead ball penalty, like touching the ball. This will avoid plays with fouls before the snap and where it is not clear if Right of Way has to be given or not.
- The 7-second count will start with the snap.
- Unsportsmanlike acts will be enforced as dead ball fouls because they have no effect on the outcome of the play.

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 30 yards wide with 10-yard end zones. This may be reduced to a minimum of 50 yards long by 25 yards wide if the size of the facility does not permit a full-sized field and safety zone. The length should always be twice the width.

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 is 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.

Although the rules mandate flags must be of one colour only, the manufacturer's name is an allowable exception to this.

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.

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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