



FOOTBALL RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS

2025 EDITION

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ISBN: 978-1-326-62415-6

Foreword

The rules are revised each year by IFAF to improve the sport's level of safety and quality of play, and to clarify the meaning and intent of rules where needed. The principles that govern all rule changes are that they must:

- be safe for the participants;
- be applicable at all levels of the sport;
- be coachable;
- be administrable by the officials;
- maintain a balance between offense and defense;
- be interesting to spectators;
- not have a prohibitive economic impact; and
- retain some affinity with the rules adopted by NCAA in the USA.

IFAF statutes require all member federations to play by IFAF rules, except in the following regards:

1. national federations may adapt Rule 1 to meet local needs and circumstances, provided no adaption reduces the safety of the players or other participants; BAFA takes advantage of that to allow (for example) 90-yard fields and reduced end zones that are our solution to using rugby pitches and the like;
2. competitions may adjust the rules according to (a) the age group of the participants and (b) the gender of the participants;
3. competition authorities have the right to amend certain specific rules (listed on page 40);
4. national federations may restrict the above so that the same regulations apply to all competitions under their jurisdiction.

These rules apply to all contests involving BAFA-affiliated teams and take effect from 1st March 2025. (**Exception:** Competitions that began before 1st March 2025 will continue to use 2024 rules until the end of their competition). [Friendly fixtures played on or after 1st March will use these rules, though accommodations may be made for BUCS teams to continue to play to previous uniform or field marking rules until 31st May.](#)

BAFA has established a Rules Committee to discuss and decide future changes to this book. The Committee is also our liaison to IFAF on rules matters. You may make suggestions for changes at any time, but to be eligible for consideration for the following year they must be received by 31st August.

Dr Jim Briggs (Editor)
on behalf of the
BAFA Rules Committee

Those who find it necessary to write to the editor for interpretations of rules or play situations will receive prompt replies if they number their questions and send them to rules@britishamericanfootball.org by email.

The editor would like to thank the following people who assisted in the production of this edition of the rulebook:

Amir Brooks (Great Britain), Dan Cass (Great Britain), Eva Cloots (Belgium), Edo Cohen (Israel), John Cooper (Great Britain), Robert Cornwell (Great Britain), Erik De Boeck (Belgium), Frank Eissa-Barroso (Great Britain), Will Fazackerley (Great Britain), Dan Harries Davies (Great Britain), Perttu Hautala (Finland), Jonathan Husband (Great Britain), Radek Janhuba (Finland), Mark Looi (Australia), Andrew Lovell (Great Britain), Ali May (Great Britain), Gerry Mellough (Great Britain), Paul Mercer (Australia), Richard Moger (Great Britain), Dave Moore (Great Britain), Cedric Palmans (Belgium), Peter Parsons (Great Britain), Euan Paterson (Great Britain), Jack Rogers (Great Britain), Hubert Romanczyk (Poland), Mark Schofield (Great Britain), Paul Sutton (Great Britain), Begum Kubra Tokyay (Turkiye), Liam Wooton (Great Britain), Ozan Emre Yazici (Turkiye)

Cover image by Betty Brooks

Table of Contents

Rules changes.....	4
Points of emphasis	7
The Football Code.....	10
BAFA Regulations	13
1 Basic principles	13
2 Registration	17
3 Code of conduct	20
4 Regulations on organisations	27
5 Game regulations	30
6 Competition complaints and appeals	31
7 Procedures for regulatory cases	32
8 Procedures for appeals	34
9 Grievance procedure	36
Rules and Interpretations	40
Rule 1 — The Game, Field, Players and Equipment.....	42
Rule 2 — Definitions	63
Rule 3 — Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions	83
Rule 4 — Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds.....	106
Rule 5 — Series of Downs, Line to Gain	112
Rule 6 — Kicks.....	116
Rule 7 — Snapping and Passing the Ball	131
Rule 8 — Scoring.....	148
Rule 9 — Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules.....	158
Rule 10 — Penalty Enforcement	181
Rule 11 — The Officials: Jurisdiction and Duties	190
Rule 12 — Instant replay	191
Rule 13 — Standards for Game Management	196
Summary of penalties	211
Officials' Signals.....	223
Appendix A — Guidelines for Game Officials for Serious On-Field Player Injuries	226
Appendix B — Guidelines for Game Officials and Game Management To Use Regarding Lightning.....	227
Appendix C — Concussions	229
Appendix D — Field Diagrams	231
Appendix E — Equipment: Additional Details	238
BAFRA Terms and Conditions	244
Index of Rules and Interpretations	251