



**British American Football Association**

**7 v 7 Contact Football  
Game Rules**

**Sapphire Sevens  
Female Football**



**January 2016**

## BAFA Sapphire Sevens – 7 v 7 Contact Football Game Rules

### General Principle

ARTICLE 1. 7-on-7 football shall be played under the rules of 11-a-side contact football with the following changes. Where a rule is in conflict with 11-a-side rules or clearly does not apply, the 7-on-7 rule takes precedence.

### The Game

ARTICLE 2. a. The game shall be played between two teams of no more than 7 players each. The minimum number of players in a squad and the number of those permitted to be in uniform may be specified by the competition authority.

b. A team may legally play with fewer than 7 players, but a foul for an illegal formation occurs if the following requirements are not met:

- Team A must have at least three players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 legally positioned on their scrimmage line when the snap starts;
- One other Team A player may (if desired) be in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap;
- [Sapphire Sevens Competition Rule: The snapper must be between the other two ineligible players];
- No eligible Team A player may be positioned between any two ineligible players;
- There are no restrictions on all other Team A players, providing that they are on their side of the neutral zone;
- Team B players are not restricted by position, providing that they are on their side of the neutral zone.

### Supervision

ARTICLE 3. The game shall be played under the supervision of two or more officials.

### The Field

ARTICLE 4. a. The field of play (area between the goal lines) shall be a rectangular area of length 50 yards and width 35 yards. So long as the field remains a rectangular area, competitions may:

- (i) specify a variation in the standard length for all games played in the competition by shortening the length by up to 10 yards. [Sapphire Sevens Competition Rule: Standard length is 40 yards, but may be increased by up to 6 yards to take advantage of existing lines on the playing field]
- (ii) permit fields to be shortened by up to 10 yards if necessary to fit in the playing enclosure.

b. The end zones shall be 10 yards. This may be varied to a minimum of 8 yards if necessary to fit into the playing enclosure.

c. The goal line, the end lines, the sidelines and the midfield line are the only lines permitted on the field.

d. Two sets of hash marks 10 yards apart are recommended. If no hash marks are present, all snaps will occur from the centre of the field. [Sapphire Sevens Competition Ruling: All snaps will be from the centre of the field]

e. 24 inch lines positioned 2 yards from the goal line and 5 yards from the goal line and equidistant from each sideline are recommended.

### Goals

ARTICLE 5. There shall be no goal posts.

### Line to gain

ARTICLE 6. There shall be no line to gain indicators. The use of a down box is recommended.

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### **The ball**

ARTICLE 7. The ball shall be that mandated by the competition authority and shall be appropriate for the age group and gender of the competing teams. Teams may use their own footballs when they are in possession, provided that they are legal. [Sapphire Sevens Competition Ruling: The standard ball will be the Wilson TDY Youth sized ball in leather or composite surface. Similar sized and predominantly tan coloured youth balls may be used]

### **Kicks**

ARTICLE 8. There shall be no kicking of the football. If the ball is punted, place-kicked or drop-kicked, it is dead. If a loose ball is kicked it remains live.

### **Game clock**

ARTICLE 9. The game clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the duration of the game.

### **Play clock**

ARTICLE 10. The play clock is any device under the direction of the appropriate official used to time the 40/25 seconds between end of the previous play or the ready for play signal and the ball being put in play.

### **Start of each half**

ARTICLE 11. Each half shall start with a snap from the offensive team's 5-yard line.

- a. Before the game, the Referee shall toss a coin at midfield, in the presence of not more than two captains from each team and another game official, first designating the captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss.
- b. The winner of the coin toss has first possession. The loser chooses which end of the field to defend in the first half and shall have first possession in the second half. There is no possibility to defer a choice to the second half.

### **Playing time**

ARTICLE 12.

a. The total playing time (excluding extra periods) shall be 30 minutes divided into two halves of 15 minutes each. The half-time interval shall be 5 minutes [Sapphire Sevens Competition Ruling: Playing time shall be 40 minutes divided in to two halves of 20 minutes. In any round where teams are scheduled to play a single game each the game time may be increased by the Competition Management up to but not exceeding 80 minutes].

b. The clock shall start on the first snap of the game.

c. Outside the last two minutes of a half, the clock shall normally only be stopped for charged team timeouts, penalty enforcements, and changes of possession. The clock shall continue to run after a scoring play until the try down has been completed. The referee shall declare and charge himself with a timeout if an injured player requires one. He may also declare and charge himself with a timeout if a delay of game foul is committed or for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules.

d. After a charged team timeout, change of possession or referee's time out after a delay of game foul the clock starts on the snap. After any other timeout, the clock starts on the ready-for-play signal.

e. When the ball is dead and two minutes or less remain in a period, the referee shall order the clock stopped (if necessary) to inform the head coach and field captain of each team. The play clock may be interrupted to give the two-minute warning. The game clock shall start on the snap.

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- f. After the two-minute warning, normal game timing rules apply. Refer to Rule 3.
- g. Competition authorities may adopt regulations for either normal game timing or a running clock (as defined in (a) to (e) above) for the entirety of the game, and may choose to vary the duration of the game. In either case, the referee shall still issue the two-minute warning.

### **Timeouts**

ARTICLE 13. a. Each team is entitled to two charged team timeouts during each half. During extra periods, each team shall have one charged timeout per period. Charged timeouts may not be retained into the succeeding half or extra period.

- b. Charged timeouts shall last no more than 60 seconds.

### **Putting the ball in play**

ARTICLE 14. The officials shall make the ball ready for play consistently throughout the game. The play clock will start its countdown from either 40 seconds or 25 seconds, by rule depending on circumstances. A foul for illegal delay occurs if the play clock is at :00 before the ball is put in play

### **PENALTY -**

**Dead-ball foul. Five yards from the succeeding spot.**

- a. 40-Second Clock.

- 1. When an official signals that the ball is dead, the play clock shall begin a 40-second count.

- b. 25-Second Clock. If the officials signal the game clock to be stopped for any of the following reasons, the play clock shall be set at 25 seconds. In these circumstances the play clock starts when the referee declares the ball ready for play:

- 1. Penalty administration.
  - 2. Charged team timeout.
  - 3. Injury timeout for a player of the offensive team only. The play clock is set to 40 seconds for an injury to a player of the defensive team.
  - 4. Team B is awarded a first down.
  - 5. Start of each half.
  - 6. Start of a team's possession series.
  - 7. Other administrative stoppage.

### **Downs**

ARTICLE 15. Team A has four downs to progress to the midfield line. If successful, they shall have a new series of four downs to score.

- a. At the start of a half, the team with the right to start the half takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- b. After a try down, the team that conceded the touchdown takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- c. After a safety, the team that scored the points takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- d. After a touchback, the team awarded the touchback takes possession at its own 5-yard line.
- e. If Team A fails to achieve the line to gain after fourth down, Team B shall take possession at its own 5-yard line.

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### Numbering and formations

ARTICLE 16. No two players of the same team shall wear an identical number during any scrimmage down.

b. Team A must have at least three players legally positioned on their scrimmage line wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 when the snap starts. One other player may (if desired) be in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap. All Team A players wearing jerseys numbered 1 through 49 or 80 through 99 are eligible. No Team A eligible player may be positioned between any two Team A ineligible players. [**Sapphire Sevens Competition Rule: The snapper must be between the other two ineligible players**]; There are no other restrictions on the position of the other players, provided they are on their side of the neutral zone.

### PENALTY -

**Illegal procedure. Five yards from the previous spot.**

### Forward passes

ARTICLE 17. Team A may make one forward pass during each down before team possession changes, provided the pass is thrown from a point in or behind the neutral zone. Any Team A player may throw a forward pass.

a. No player shall throw an illegal forward pass as defined by Rule 7-3-2 (Exception: Rule 7-3-2-f does not apply if a running clock is in force).

### Scoring

ARTICLE 18. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown	6 points
Safety (points awarded to opponents)	2 points
Successful Try Touchdown (from 2-yard line)	1 point
Successful Try Touchdown (from 5-yard line)	2 points
Successful Try Touchdown (scored by Team B)	2 points
Safety during try (point awarded to opponents)	1 point

NOTE: The try will be from the 2-yard line unless the captain or coach of the scoring team informs the referee that it will be from the 5-yard line. This option must be chosen before the ball is made ready for play.

### Personal fouls

ARTICLE 19. No person subject to the rules shall commit a personal foul before the game, during the game or between periods.

a. There shall be no clipping at any time. (Exception: Against the runner)

b. There shall be no blocking below the waist at any time. (Exception: Against the runner.)

### Blocking in the back

ARTICLE 20. Blocking in the back is permitted as per Rule 9-3-3-c and Rule 9-3-4.

### Holding

ARTICLE 21. There shall be no holding at any time. (Exception: Against the runner)

### 15-yard penalties

ARTICLE 22. There are no 15-yard penalties. All penalties that in 11-on-11 football carry a 15-yard penalty shall carry a 10-yard penalty in 7-on-7 football.

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### Penalty enforcement

ARTICLE 26. Any penalty may be declined. Disqualified players must leave the game. Penalty enforcement shall follow the principles laid down in Rule 10

### Relocated by penalty

ARTICLE 27. When an accepted penalty moves the ball over a marked line on the field:

- a. If the goal line is the line to gain and enforcement of a Team A penalty moves the ball back across the midfield line, the goal line remains the line to gain.
- b. If the midfield line is the line to gain and enforcement of a Team B penalty moves the ball across the midfield line, the goal line becomes the new line to gain and Team A is awarded a first down by distance.

### Enforcement on Try Down

ARTICLE 28. On the try:

- a. No accepted penalty shall change the value of the points which may be scored for a successful touchdown by Team A.

### Sportsmanship

ARTICLE 29. a. There is no room for any acts of deliberately illegal tactics or blocking, "cheap shots" or any unsportsmanlike act by a player or coach. Foul play will not be tolerated. A player who persistently or flagrantly commits personal fouls shall be disqualified.

#### **PENALTY -**

**Players or squad members in uniform who commit persistent personal fouls or one flagrant personal foul shall be disqualified.**

- b. "Trash talking" (any talking which is deemed offensive, insulting or abusive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators) or any other act of unsportsmanlike conduct is strongly discouraged. The officials are the sole arbiters of language or gestures that is offensive, insulting or abusive.

#### **PENALTY -**

**10 yards from the succeeding spot. Players or squad members in uniform who commit two unsportsmanlike fouls or one flagrant unsportsmanlike foul shall be disqualified. Coaches who sanction the use of unfair tactics, or who violate these sportsmanship rules, shall be disqualified.**

- c. Any person disqualified from a game will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Any person subject to the rules may be disqualified and may not participate further in the game in any official capacity.

### Rosters

ARTICLE 30. Both teams shall submit roster forms for any game they play in, subject to the regulations of the competition. A common roster for games played in a tournament format is acceptable if allowed by competition regulations. The roster must clearly state the names and (where required) registration numbers of all team coaches, and indicate who is the head coach. A player may appear on the roster under more than one jersey number to enable the player to change number during the game (informing the referee when they do so). Persons subject to the rules who are required to appear on the roster form and do not shall be disqualified upon discovery.

#### **PENALTY -**

**Disqualification**

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### Extra periods

ARTICLE 31. If the score is tied after two periods, leagues or tournaments may mandate the use of extra periods. If not, the game is over and the result stands as a tie. Extra periods shall be based on the NCAA tiebreaker system detailed in Rule 3-1-3 with the following modifications.

[Sapphire Sevens Competition Rules: during all rounds except the last there will be no extra periods and games may finish in a tie. If the final round games utilize a ‘knock-out’ or ‘final decider’ game structure then Extra periods shall be played. Competition management will decide the process].

a. The referee shall toss a coin at midfield in the presence of no more than two field captains from each team and another game official, first designating the field captain of the visiting team to call the coin toss. The winner of the toss may not defer their choice and shall choose one of the following options:

1. Offense or defense to start the first series of the first extra period.
2. Which end of the field shall be used for both series of that extra period.

b. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods.

c. An extra period shall consist of two series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap from the midfield line.

d. Each team has four downs to score. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead and the series is over. Team A may only have a new series of downs if Team B commits a foul that mandates an automatic first down.

e. Beginning with the third extra period, team scoring a touchdown must attempt a two point try. A one point try by Team A (although not illegal) will not score a point.

f. Extra periods will continue to be played until there is a winning team.

g. The team scoring the greater number of points during the regulation and extra periods shall be declared the winning team.

### Points of emphasis for teams converting from 5 v 5 contact football

- There is no ‘no-run zone’ in 7 v 7 football. The offense may run or pass on any play from any position on the field.
- On PAT plays from either the 2 yard line (1 pt), or 5 yard line (2 pt), the offense may pass or run.
- The quarterback, or other offensive player legally receiving the snap, is eligible to run with the ball and cross the line of scrimmage.
- There is no requirement for the offense to have any eligible players on the Line of Scrimmage covering the ineligible players. All the eligible players may be in the backfield. Similarly, the offense may put all eligible players on the LoS.
- As in other formats of football, the offense is allowed one eligible player to be ‘in motion’ at the snap. This player may start from the LOS but must step away from the LOS on starting motion in such a way as not to simulate the start of the play.
- Defenders may be aligned anywhere on their side of the line of scrimmage.
- All defenders are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage once the ball is snapped.