



Flag football rules 2013

Introduction

The International Federation of American Football has recently introduced a new set of rules for flag football. IFAF 2013 rules are to be used for all flag football games played in Britain from 1st March 2013.

Changes from 2010

Important changes compared to the 2010 version are:

- Restrictions for pants, shirts and flags added.
- Protectors which endanger other players are illegal.
- Definition of player crossing the scrimmage line has been added.
- Definition of Forward pass play is extended.
- Momentum is limited between the 5-yard and goal line.
- Illegal (forward and backward) pass is enforced from the spot of foul.
- Jumping, diving and flag guarding are not making the ball dead and enforced from the spot of foul with a loss of down.
- Illegal kicking a pass has been added.
- Illegal participation has moved to R 9-2-2 as a 5 yard penalty.
- R 10-2-4-b (“dirty hands principle”) is deleted.
- On scores only 10 yard penalties by the non-scoring team will be carried over.
- The information about the duties of the officials is reduced to a minimum.

Additionally the Interpretations got some more examples and a lot of editorial changes have been made.

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 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.

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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