

RULE 13

Standards for Game Management

SECTION 1. Changing Facilities

Changing Rooms

- ARTICLE 1. a. • Game management must provide changing rooms for the home team, the visiting team and the officials. These changing rooms should be separate and access to one should not be via another.
- b. • Each room must be large enough to accommodate the appropriate number of people, and must be available two hours prior to the scheduled kickoff time.
- c. • Seating must be provided, and each room should be clean, warm, dry and quiet. Washing (preferably shower) and toilet facilities are desirable. An adequate number of coat hooks should also be provided.

REPORT & SANCTION – Leagues may define sanctions for breaches of the following rule(s):

- **Changing rooms not provided, not separate, not large enough, or without seating.**

Security and Access

ARTICLE 2. • Changing rooms should be secure, i.e. either the occupants should be provided with a key to the room, or a responsible member of the game management assigned to lock and unlock the room as required by the occupants. Game management should inform the occupants if there is any threat to the security of items left in the changing room.

REPORT & SANCTION – Leagues may define sanctions for breaches of the following rule(s):

- **Changing rooms not secured.**

SECTION 2. Stadium Clocks

Minimum Standards for Game Clocks

ARTICLE 1. □ A stadium game clock is not mandatory but where provided must meet the following requirements:

- a. It shall be visible from all areas of the pitch. More than one clock is permissible.
- b. It must count downwards. A clock that only counts upwards shall not be used.
- c. The stadium clock operator shall have control of the game clock via a proper panel, and he shall be situated in a place from which he can see the entire playing surface including end zones.
- d. The clock controls must allow the following:
 1. Starting and stopping the clock.
 2. Setting the time to any value.
 3. Correcting of errors.
 4. Turning it off in case of malfunction.

- e. The clock shall be maintained regularly and checked for accuracy before each game.
- f. If a stadium game clock is provided, and the following criteria are satisfied, then the clock shall be used:
 1. the stadium clock shall comply with the minimum standards set out above;
 2. a competent operator shall be provided who has no duties during the game other than to operate the game clock;
 3. there shall be a means of communication between the on-field time keeper and the stadium clock operator.

Minimum Standards for 25-second Clocks

ARTICLE 2. 25-second clocks are not mandatory (overrules Rule 3-2-4-b) but where provided must meet the following requirements:

- a. At least two clocks shall be provided, situated at either end of the ground and visible to players in the field of play and end zones. The rules specify that if one clock is not working then the other shall be turned off.
- b. Clocks shall count downwards.
- c. A separate operator shall be provided to run the 25-second clock.
- d. There should be a separate control box for the 25-second clock.
- e. The control box for the 25-second clock must allow the following:
 1. Starting and stopping the clock;
 2. Reset to 25 seconds.
 3. Turning it off should malfunction occur or for game situations such as crowd noise delay, end or quarter, etc.
- f. If 0 seconds is reached the clock shall stop there automatically without counting further.
- g. The clock shall be maintained regularly and checked for accuracy before each game.

Procedures for Operating Game Clocks

ARTICLE 3. a. The stadium game clock shall show the official time. It is up to the on-field time keeper, sideline assistant and stadium clock operator to work as a team to ensure that it always shows the correct time.

- b. The stadium clock shall not be used as an unofficial time piece.
- c. If the clock malfunctions or if the operator is inadequate, the Referee should order the clock turned off and the game time kept only on the field. If this becomes necessary, the Referee must inform both head coaches, and an incident report made.

REPORT & SANCTION – Leagues may define sanctions for breaches of the following rule(s):

•Stadium clock malfunctions or operator is inadequate.

- d. Proper briefing of the stadium clock operator(s) is of paramount importance before any game.
- e. The on-field time keeper shall start the clock only on the Referee's signal (even if incorrect by rule) and stop it as soon as the ball becomes dead (and the clock should stop by rule).
- f. If the clock is stopped in error, an official shall restart it immediately.
- g. The on-field time keeper should ordinarily correct the stadium clock only after instances where a significant error has occurred.

Procedures for Operating 25-second Clocks

ARTICLE 4. If 25-second clocks are provided and they meet the specified standards, they shall be used and shall be the official 25-second timers. Unofficial 25-second timers shall not be used.

Instructions to Stadium Game Clock Operators

ARTICLE 5. Prior to the game, an official shall inform the stadium clock operator of the length of the periods, and instruct him/her that:

- a. The clock should start on the Referee's winding signal only, or when the ball is snapped (which ever happens first). The clock must not be started if any other official gives a winding signal (*Exception:* during a free kick).
- b. The clock stops if any official gives a stopping the clock signal, or if a touchdown is scored, a safety conceded, a touchback allowed, a field goal attempt scores or fails, or a pass is declared incomplete. Each of these latter signals stops the clock in its own right.
- c. If the on-field time keeper wants the time displayed to be adjusted, he shall either:
 1. Order a correction by asking an assistant to use the walkie-talkie or phone line (if provided).
 2. Use agreed signals during a time out or other convenient pause in the game.
 3. Ask the Referee to use his radio-microphone to announce a correction.

Instructions to Stadium 25-second Clock Operators

ARTICLE 6. Prior to the game, an official shall instruct the 25-second clock operator that:

- a. The 25-second clock should be started whenever the Referee gives either the ready for play signal or a winding the clock signal simultaneously with blowing his whistle.
- b. If, before the 25-second clock reaches zero, the ball is snapped, kicked, or any official blows his whistle, the time shall be reset immediately to 25 seconds, and the clock shall not continue to count down.
- c. If the clock winds down to zero before the ball is snapped or kicked, it must be left showing 0 until the delay of game penalty is enforced, then reset to 25 seconds.
- d. There are two instances in the game when the 25-second clock does not run:
 1. After a crowd noise delay – the Referee gives no signal when the ball is declared ready for play – the 25-second clock should remain at 25 seconds or be temporarily turned off.
 2. If the game clock is running with less than 25 seconds left in any quarter, the 25-second clock shall not run.
- e. If one of the two 25-second clocks becomes inoperative, the other one must be turned off immediately.

SECTION 3. Game Personnel

Officials' Assistants

ARTICLE 1. •a. Game management shall be responsible for providing 30 minutes prior to the kickoff a minimum of five persons to act as officials' assistants (ball persons and chain crew).

- b. The officials' assistants shall be appointed to the following duties:

1. Down box operator
 2. Stake operator #1
 3. Stake operator #2
 4. Ball person #1
 5. Ball person #2
 6. Chain clip operator (if six or more)
 7. Alternate line to gain stake operator (if seven or more)
 8. Alternate down box operator (if eight or more)
 9. Ball person #3 (if more than three balls are to be used)
 10. Ball person #4 (if more than three balls are to be used)
- c. • It is mandatory that persons under the age of 14 years shall not be used as officials' assistants. Teams are recommended to appoint a regular crew of assistants who will be available to do these jobs for every game.
- d. □ It is desirable that officials' assistants be attired with brightly coloured vests to enable them to be distinguished on the sideline.
1. Down box operators: red.
 2. Stake operators and chain clip operator: 3-inch black and yellow stripes.
 3. Ball persons: dark blue with red diagonal stripes front and back.
- e. When provided with an inexperienced crew of assistants, the referee is recommended to use the best individual as down box operator, the next two best as stake operators, and the next two best as ball persons.
- f. Where only five assistants are available, the down box operator shall also perform the duties of the chain clip operator. Alternate operators are optional.

REPORT & SANCTION – Leagues may define sanctions for breaches of the following rule(s):

- **Officials' assistants under age 14.**
- **Fewer than minimum number of assistants provided.**
- **Officials' assistants provided later than 30 minutes before kickoff.**

Water Carriers

- ARTICLE 2. a. Persons carrying liquid refreshment for use or consumption by players shall only be permitted on the field of play with the permission of the referee. (The referee may delegate the authority to give this permission to other officials if he so wishes.)
- b. The water carrier may only provide refreshment and may not communicate coaching information to players. Water carriers shall only be permitted on the field during charged team timeouts, two-minute warning timeouts, injury timeouts or between periods. It is a contravention of rule 9-2-1 for a water carrier to be on the field at any other time or without permission or to communicate with players.
- c. At other times when the ball is dead, a player may go to the team area for refreshment (but the water carrier must stay outside the sideline).

Liaison with Game Personnel

- ARTICLE 3. a. Prior to the kickoff the officials shall carry out their pre-game duties including speaking to the following personnel:
1. Head coach of each team – to obtain coaches' certification and names/numbers of

- captains.
2. Chain crew and ball persons – to brief them as to their duties.
 3. Public address announcers – to ensure familiarity with officials' signals, to ascertain what announcements are to be made and if and when the National Anthem is to be played.
 4. Clock operator (where provided) – to ensure familiarity with officials' signals and to be briefed on the mechanism to be used to correct errors on the stadium clock.
 5. Medical personnel – to ascertain their location.
- b. • Game personnel must be available to speak to the officials in the period 30-10 minutes prior to the start of the game.

Stewards

ARTICLE 4. • Game management shall be responsible for providing stewards to remove unauthorised persons from the team areas and within the limit lines.

SECTION 4. Cancellation, Suspension and Abandonment of Games

General Principle

- ARTICLE 1. a. The referee shall be the sole arbiter in respect of decisions as to whether to cancel, delay, suspend or abandon the game, however he shall consult his fellow officials, and at all times keep game management and, where appropriate, both head coaches informed of the reason(s) for the cancellation, delay, suspension or abandonment, and, in the case of a delay or suspension, the likely duration.
- b. The referee shall make every effort to play the game at the place and time scheduled, but if circumstances do not permit play to proceed he shall not hesitate to carry out the procedures specified here.

REPORT – The circumstances of any cancellation, delay, suspension or abandonment.

Team Arrival

- ARTICLE 2. a. • The game shall not be cancelled if both teams have arrived at the ground prior to the scheduled kickoff time (even though they may not be ready to start at that time). In case of dispute, the scheduled kickoff time shall be defined to be the kickoff time notified to the referee.
- b. Where the kickoff is delayed because of the late arrival of a team, the offending team shall be penalised on the opening kickoff under rule 3-4-1-a. The referee may waive the penalty for circumstances beyond either team's control. (Note: delays due to traffic holdups, navigational difficulties, etc. are not to be considered as being beyond a team's control.)

Game Management

- ARTICLE 3. • The referee shall delay the start of the game until such time as:
- a. the goal posts have been adequately padded according to rule;
 - b. the match balls have been obtained and checked;
 - c. the chain set has been obtained and checked;
 - d. the officials' assistants have been briefed;

e. the minimum medical requirement is met.

PENALTY – 10 yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 3-4-1-b) [S7 and S21].

The Field

ARTICLE 4. Rule 1-2-9-b authorises the referee to effect any improvement to the field surface deemed necessary for proper game administration. Rule 1-2-8-a authorises the referee to order the removal of any obstructions within the playing enclosure that constitute a hazard. The referee shall delay the start of the game until such time as these tasks are complete. A delay caused by circumstances under the control of the game management shall be considered a contravention of rule 3-4-1-b.

PENALTY – 10 yards from the succeeding spot (Rule 3-4-1-b) [S7 and S21].

Game Supervision

ARTICLE 5. a. •Rule 1-1-4-a requires that a game be supervised by a minimum of three officials.

- b. •The referee (or the senior official present who shall act as the referee in the appointed referee's absence) shall delay the start of the game until three or more officials are present. If three or more officials are present at the scheduled kickoff time then the game shall proceed, even if more officials are expected to arrive shortly thereafter. Officials who arrive late shall be assimilated into the crew at the referee's discretion.
- c. Ø If fewer than three officials are available, suitably qualified persons attending the game as spectators or in another capacity may be appointed officials with the agreement of the referee and the head coach (or his designated representative) of each team.
- d. •If one or more officials become incapacitated and the size of the crew drops below three then the referee (or senior official if the referee is incapacitated) shall suspend the game.

REPORT – Fewer than three officials.

Weather

ARTICLE 6. a. American football is a game designed to be played in any weather conditions except those that are judged hazardous to player, official or spectator safety (e.g. lightning).

- b. •The referee shall delay the start of the game or suspend a game in progress if conditions are construed to be hazardous to life or limb of the participants or spectators.

REPORT – Hazardous weather conditions.

Procedure for Delaying the Start of a Game

ARTICLE 7. a. If the referee delays the start of the game due to any of the reasons above, or for any other reason(s), he shall:

1. notify game management of the reason(s) for the delay;
 2. wait at least one hour before cancelling the game.
- b. However, if it is clear or becomes clear that the problem(s) will not be rectified (e.g. away team telephones to say they are not coming, or necessary equipment to improve the pitch surface is not available), the referee shall immediately cancel the game without further delay.

Procedure for Suspending the Game

- ARTICLE 8. a. The procedure for suspending the game is stipulated in Rule 3-3-3.
- b. The referee shall suspend the game under the following circumstances:
1. if all match balls are illegal;
 2. if the chain set is inoperative;
 3. if one or more officials' assistants become unavailable or are dismissed due to incompetence;
 4. if the medical cover drops below the minimum level;
 5. if the field surface makes proper game administration impossible or an obstruction becomes a hazard;
 6. if fewer than three officials are able to supervise the game, due to injury or for any other reason;
 7. if weather conditions become hazardous to players, officials or spectators;
 8. if player or crowd behaviour does not permit orderly conduct of the game;
 9. for any other reason which poses a hazard to player, official or spectator safety;
 10. for any other contingency not covered by the rules.
- c. The referee shall wait for a reasonable time to permit the problem(s) to be rectified. However, if it becomes clear that the game cannot continue, the referee shall abandon the game and notify game management.

REPORT – Game abandoned.

League Notification

ARTICLE 9. The referee shall make a report to the appropriate league of all cancellations and abandonments and all delays and suspensions of more than five minutes duration. Shorter delays and suspensions may be reported at the referee's discretion.

REPORT – Game suspended for more than 5 minutes.

SECTION 5. Miscellaneous

Access to Officials

- ARTICLE 1. a. •Members of the game management staff, members of the press with enquiries, players and coaches shall only be allowed into the officials' changing room with the expressed permission of the referee (or in his absence the senior official present). This applies before, during and after the game.
- b. •The referee shall be available after the game to answer questions on rules and interpretations. The referee shall not be available to answer questions on judgement calls. Questions addressed to other officials shall be redirected to the referee.

REPORT & SANCTION – Leagues may define sanctions for breaches of the following rule(s):

- Unauthorised access to officials' changing room.

Public Address Announcers

ARTICLE 2. a. •Announcers must cooperate with the officials by not criticising judgement calls made by the officials. Whether the official gets a good view of the play or not, he can only call what he sees.

- b. • In order to ensure fairness to both teams, announcers must not describe the play to the advantage or disadvantage of either team, especially while the ball is live.

REPORT & SANCTION – Leagues may define sanctions for breaches of the following rule(s):

- **Infractions by public address announcers.**

Ceremonies

ARTICLE 3. a. ☐ Team announcements should be completed before the start of the coin toss ceremony.

- b. ☐ If game management wishes, the toss of the coin at the start of the game may be performed by an individual or attended by a small group of persons. (This is not to be considered a contravention of rule 3-1-1.) Such persons shall not, however, be permitted to perform a kickoff.

SECTION 6. Sanctions

Authority for leagues to impose sanctions

ARTICLE 1. ∇ Leagues may impose sanctions on teams for breaches of mandatory game management rules.

- a. Sanctions shall be applied to the team responsible for game management (*Exception:* Rule 1-4-3-a).
1. No sanctions shall be applied if neither of the participating teams in a game is responsible for the management of the game.
 2. No sanction shall be applied if the breach is beyond the reasonable control of game management. Game management is expected to make contingency plans for all breaches that reasonably can be foreseen, and shall be liable if the contingency plan does not exist or cannot be implemented without good reason.
- b. ∇ Leagues may impose a time limit (normally in relation to the kickoff time) for the rectification of breaches, after which a sanction shall be imposed. The sanction may be imposed earlier if it is clear or becomes clear that the breach will not be rectified within the time limit. No sanction shall be imposed if the breach is rectified within the time limit.
- c. Leagues must publish a list of sanctions before the start of the season to which they relate.
- d. ∇ Leagues may determine whether sanctions shall only apply in competitive games, or whether they shall also apply in non-competitive games organised by teams.

Possible sanctions

ARTICLE 2. a. Leagues may impose any of the following sanctions for a game management breach (or any combination of these):

1. a warning about future breaches
 2. a monetary fine
 3. a restriction on the use of the venue where the breach occurred
 4. cancelling (or abandoning, if started) a game
 5. deduction of league points or the award of the game
- b. The sanction of warning about future breaches may only be applied for a first offence in a season of a particular breach.

- c. The sanction of deducting league points or awarding a game may only be applied in cases where there is evidence that the integrity of the game was compromised (i.e. a team did something to cheat).
 - d. The referee shall cancel the game (or abandon the game, if started) in cases where a league sanction so specifies, and a mandatory breach is not rectified within the time limit (if specified).
- **Approved Ruling 13-6-2**
 - I. A league specifies that the sanction for the field of play being shorter than 90 yards is to cancel the game. The time limit for the rectification of breaches is 1 hour after kickoff time. On inspecting the field prior to the game, the referee notes that it is only 80 yards long. **RULING:** The referee shall cancel the game 1 hour after the appointed kickoff time, or earlier if it is obvious that the breach will not be rectified.

SECTION 7. Amendments to NCAA Rules for British games

Status of the BAFA Disciplinary Code

- ARTICLE 1. a. No player who is not on his team's roster form may participate.
- b. A head coach may request a coach's conference with the referee if he believes an opposition player is not on the roster (Rule 3-3-4-e). If the player is on the roster, the coach's team shall be charged a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. **(A.R. 13-7-1:I-IV)**

PENALTY – Disqualification [S47].

- c. The BAFA Disciplinary Code specifies that persons who are ejected from a game are suspended for at least one game (**Exception:** players ejected for being “not on roster”). This includes persons disqualified for fighting (Rule 9-5-1) or illegal cleats (Rule 9-2-2-d). The penalties stipulated by the BAFA Disciplinary Code override those specified in NCAA Rules.
- **Approved Ruling 13-7-1**
 - I. After the ball is dead, a Team B player requests a coach's conference because his coach believes that A99, who participated in the previous down, is not on his team's roster. **RULING:** The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify him. If A99 is on the form, charge Team B with a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. [Cited by 13-7-1-b]
 - II. A Team A player leaves the field and A99 enters the field to replace him and communicates with a teammate or an official, enters the huddle, or is positioned in an offensive formation. A Team B player requests a coach's conference because his coach believes that A99 is not on his team's roster. **RULING:** The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify him. If A99 is on the form, charge Team B with a timeout, or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used. [Cited by 13-7-1-b]
 - III. During a down, an official observes player A99 who he believes is not on his team's roster form. **RULING:** Referee's timeout when the ball is dead. The referee shall check the roster form. If A99 is not on the form, disqualify him. If A99 is on the form, the game continues. [Cited by 13-7-1-b]
 - IV. After the ball is dead, a Team B player requests a coach's conference because his coach believes that A18 and A99, who participated in the previous down, are not on their team's roster. After checking the roster form, the referee discovers that A18 is on the form but A99 isn't. **RULING:** Disqualify A99. Team B will not be charged for the coach's conference since at least part of their appeal was upheld. (Rule 13-7-1-b) [Cited by 13-7-1-b]

Removing persons from the field

ARTICLE 2. The referee may require game management to remove any person from the field (including team areas and within the limit lines) who he believes poses a threat to the safety of persons subject to the rules or the officials, or whose behaviour is prejudicial to the orderly conduct of the game. The referee may suspend the game (Rule 3-3-3-a) while this takes place.

REPORT – Persons removed from the field.**Tiebreaker procedures**

ARTICLE 3. ∇ Leagues may adopt regulations to forego the tiebreaker system (Rule 3-1-3) if the scores are tied at the end of a regular season game. In that event, the game shall be terminated and the result shall stand as a tie.

Length of Periods and Intermissions

ARTICLE 4. ∇ Leagues may adopt regulations to limit the playing time (Rule 3-2-1) in a game to 48, 40 or 32 minutes, provided the four periods are of equal length.

Timing devices

ARTICLE 5. □ The use of a visual 25-second clock shall be determined by the game management (Rule 3-2-4-b).

Definition of coach

- ARTICLE 6. a. A coach is a person subject to the rules who, while in the team area or coaching box observes the game and/or gives instructions to players and substitutes.
- b. A player/coach is regarded as being a coach when in the team area or coaching box and as a player or substitute otherwise.
- c. Each team shall designate a coach as its head coach, and so identify him on the roster form.