

RULE 1

The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

SECTION 1. General Provisions

The Game

- ARTICLE 1. a. # The game shall be played between two teams of not more than 11 players each, on a rectangular field and with an inflated ball having the shape of a prolate spheroid.
- b. A team legally may play with fewer than 11 players, but a foul for an illegal formation occurs if the following requirements are not met:
1. When the ball is free-kicked, at least four Team A players are on each side of the kicker (Rule 6-1-2-c-3).
 2. At the snap, at least five players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 are on the offensive scrimmage line and no more than four players are in the backfield (Rules 2-21-2, 2-27-4 and 7-1-4-a) (*Exception:* Rule 7-1-4-a-5). (**A.R. 7-1-4:IV-VI**)

Goal Lines

ARTICLE 2. # Goal lines, one for each team, shall be established at opposite ends of the field of play, and each team shall be allowed opportunities to advance the ball across the other team's goal line by running, passing or kicking it.

Winning Team and Final Score

- ARTICLE 3. a. # The teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to rule and, unless the game is forfeited, the team having the larger score at the end of the game shall be the winning team.
- b. # When the referee declares that the game is ended, the score is final.

Game Officials

ARTICLE 4. # The game shall be played under the supervision of the game officials as specified in Rule 11.

Team Captains

ARTICLE 5. # Each team shall designate to the referee not more than four players as its field captain(s). One player at a time shall speak for their team in all dealings with the officials.

Persons Subject to the Rules

- ARTICLE 6. # a. All persons subject to the rules are governed by the decisions of the officials.
- b. Those persons subject to the rules are: everyone in the team area, players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, athletics trainers, cheerleaders, band members, mascots, public-address announcers, audio/video/lighting system operators, and other persons affiliated with the teams.

- c. The names of everyone in the team area shall appear on a roster form which shall be given to the referee before kickoff.

Teams Subject to the Rules

- ARTICLE 7. a. # Teams that are members of BAFA or affiliated competitions shall conduct all contests in Great Britain under the official football-playing rules of the Association (**Exception:** games played under the auspices of an international organisation).
- b. # BAFA-affiliated officiating organisations shall use the current Manual of Football Officiating published under the jurisdiction of IAFOA.
 - c. # Teams not complying with football-playing rules that do not have a designated penalty are subject to competition and/or BAFA sanctions.

SECTION 2. The Field

Dimensions and Markings

ARTICLE 1. The field shall be a rectangular area with dimensions, lines, zones, goals and pylons as indicated in Appendix D.

- a. Where it is not possible to fully mark the field as indicated:
 1. # The marking of the following lines is mandatory: sidelines, end lines, goal lines, yard lines at 5-yard intervals, hash marks.
 2. § Where the size of the stadium does not permit a full-sized field to be marked:
 - (a) The end zones must be a minimum of **[minendzonedepth undefined]** and a maximum of **[maxendzonedepth undefined]** yards in depth and equal in size.
 - (b) It is strongly recommended that the end zones be marked to the depth of 10 yards specified by rule, and that if necessary to accommodate this, the distance between the goal lines should be reduced to 90 yards or less.
 - (c) The distance between the goal lines must be a whole multiple of 10 yards.
 - (d) If the marked end zones are found to be less than **[minendzonedepth undefined]** yards deep, the referee shall order the 5-yard line be used as the goal line and the length of the field of play reduced accordingly.
 3. # Minimum dimensions:
 - (a) The field of play shall be marked to a length of not less than 80 yards. From 2024, the minimum length will increase to 90 yards, depending on competition, starting with National League Premier Division (see sanction statement below for details).

Exceptions:

 - (1) ∇ A team may apply to the competition authority or the BAFA Rules Committee for an exemption if its stadium does not have room for a 90-yard field but is otherwise of good standard.
 - (2) The referee may allow a game to proceed if the reason for the breach is either (a) that a team has had to move venue at short notice or (b) due to an error in field marking that cannot be rectified before the scheduled kickoff time.
 - (b) The field of play shall be marked to a width of 160 feet.
 4. § Where the size of the stadium does not permit a full-sized field to be marked, game management may use an *IFAF yard* as the unit of measurement.

5. # An IFAF yard is normally 36 inches (91.44cm) long, but may be shortened to no less than 34.12 inches (86.67cm) only if necessary to fit a 100-yard field of play plus two 10-yard end zones within the available playing surface.
6. # If the length of the field is reduced by an IFAF yard factor, all other field dimensions and markings stated in these rules shall be reduced commensurately (*Exception:* The length of the short yard-line extensions and the width of lines). The length of the yardage chain (Rule 1-2-7) shall also be reduced to correspond to the markings on the field.
 - b. § All field-dimension lines shown should be white and 4 inches in width. (*Exceptions:* Sidelines and end lines may exceed 4 inches in width, goal lines may be 4 or 8 inches in width, and Rule 1-2-1-h).
 - c. § Twenty-four-inch short yard-line extensions, four inches inside the sidelines and at the hash marks, are mandatory and all yard lines shall be four inches from the sidelines (Rule 2-12-6).
 - d. § A solid white area between the sideline and the coaching line is recommended.
 - e. # White field markings or contrasting decorative markings (e.g. team names) are permissible in the end zones but shall not be closer than four feet to any line.
 - f. Contrasting colouring in the end zones may abut any line.
 - g. Only these contrasting decorative markings are allowed: competition logo, and team name and logo. These are permissible within the sidelines and between the goal lines, under these conditions (See Appendix D):
 1. The entirety of all yard lines, goal lines and sidelines must be clearly visible. No portion of any such line may be obscured by decorative markings.
 2. No such markings may touch or enclose the hash marks, [short yard-line extensions](#) or numbers.
 3. A single decorative marking, centred on the midfield line, and a maximum of four smaller flanking decorative markings are allowed.
 - h. Goal lines may be of one contrasting colour from the white lines.
 - i. Advertising is permissible on the field, providing it meets the requirements of Rules 1-2-1-e, 1-2-1-f and 1-2-1-g.
 - j. White field yard-line numbers not larger than 6 feet in height and 4 feet in width, with the tops of the numbers nine yards from the sidelines, are recommended.
 - k. White directional arrows next to the field numbers (except at midfield) indicating the direction toward the nearest goal line are recommended. The arrow is a triangle with an 18-inch base and two sides that are 36 inches each.
 - l. # The two hash marks are 60 feet from the sidelines. Hash marks and short yard-line extensions should measure 24 inches in length.
 - m. # Nine-yard marks 12 inches in length, every 10 yards, shall be located nine yards from the sidelines. They are not required if the field is numbered according to Rule 1-2-1-j.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Field markings do not meet minimum standards.**
- **In 2024 (NL Premier only), Field length less than 90 yards or more than 100 yards.**
- **(other divisions), Field length less than 80 yards or more than 100 yards.**
- **In 2025 (all NL divisions), Field length less than 90 yards or more than 100 yards.**

- (other divisions), Field length less than 80 yards or more than 100 yards.
- In 2026 (all adult football, including BUCS league), Field length less than 90 yards or more than 100 yards.
- Field width less than 144 feet or more than 176 feet.
- End zone depth less than 7 yards or more than 13 yards.
- End zones not of equal size.
- Either sideline incomplete.
- Any goal line or end line incomplete.
- Any yard line across the field every 5 yards incomplete.
- Short yard-line extensions at the hash marks incomplete.
- Short yard-line extensions at the sideline incomplete.

REPORT & SANCTION – Bafa may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- Field markings below full standards.
 - Field of play not a multiple of 10 yards in length.
 - Field of play not 160 feet in width.
 - White field markings closer than 4 feet to an end zone line.
 - Absence of nine-yard marks if the field is not numbered according to Rule 1-2-1-j.
- n. # In an indoor stadium, the roof shall be no less than 90 feet above the field.
- o. # If played in a stadium with a retractable roof, game management shall decide 90 minutes before kickoff whether to play the game with the roof open or closed. The roof must be closed if (from 90 minutes before the game until the end of the game) precipitation or lightning is within the vicinity of the stadium, the temperature drops below 40°F (4°C), or wind gusts are greater than 40 miles per hour (64 km/h). Once the roof is closed, it is not allowed to be reopened during the game.

Marking Boundary Areas

ARTICLE 2. # Measurements shall be from the inside edges of the boundary markings. The entire width of each goal line is in the end zone.

Limit Lines

- ARTICLE 3. a. § Limit lines should be marked with 12-inch lines and at 24-inch intervals 18 feet outside the sidelines and the end lines, except in stadiums where the total field surface does not permit. In these stadiums, the limit lines shall be as far back as possible and not be less than six feet from the sidelines and end lines. Limit lines should be 4 inches in width and may be yellow. ^x
- b. # No person outside the team area shall be inside the limit lines. Game management personnel have the responsibility and the authority to enforce this rule.
- c. § Limit lines shall also be marked six feet from the team area around the side and back of the team area, if the stadium permits.

REPORT & SANCTION – Bafa may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- Limit lines below full standards.
- Game management fail to enforce rule regarding persons outside the team area.
- Limit lines closer than six feet to any boundary line.

Team Area and Coaching Box

ARTICLE 4. a. # On each side of the field, a team area behind a solid line 12 feet outside the sideline and between the 20-yard lines shall be marked for the exclusive use of substitutes, athletics trainers and other persons affiliated with the team. The front of the coaching box shall be marked with a solid line six feet outside the sideline between the

20-yard lines. The area between the coaching line and the 12-foot line between the 20-yard lines should contain white diagonal lines or be marked distinctly for use of coaches (Rule 9-2-5). A 4-inch-by-4-inch mark is recommended at each five-yard line extended between the goal lines as an extension of the coaching line for line-to-gain and down indicator six-foot reference points.

- b. # The team area shall be limited to persons named on the team roster including squad members in full uniform and a maximum of 25 other individuals directly involved in the game. All persons in the team area are subject to the rules and are governed by decisions of the officials (Rule 1-1-6). No other credential is valid for the team area. Medical personnel are exempted from the 25-credential limit and should have a separate, distinct pass.
- c. # Coaches are permitted in the coaching box (see Appendix D), which is the area bounded by the 12-foot line and coaching line between the 20-yard lines.
- d. # The team areas shall be marked between the 20-yard lines irrespective of the length of the field.
- e. In stadiums where the playing enclosure does not permit the team areas to be marked on both sides of the field, both teams may share a common sideline. In this case the team areas shall be marked on either side of midfield between the five-yard line and the line five yards from midfield.
- f. # No media personnel, including journalists, radio and television personnel, or their equipment, shall be in the team area or coaching box, and no media personnel shall communicate in any way with persons in the team area or coaching box. In stadiums where the team area extends to the spectator seating area, a pass-through area should be made available for media to move from one end of the field to the other on both sides of the field.
- g. # Game management personnel shall remove all persons not authorised by rule.
- h. Practice kicking nets are not permitted outside the team area (**Exception:** In stadiums where playing enclosures are limited in size, nets, holders and kickers are permitted outside the team area and outside the limit line) (Rule 9-2-1-b-1).

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Team area and coaching box infractions.**
- **Absence of coaching line, team area markings, or team area not marked to 20-yard lines.**
- **Media personnel in team area or coaching box.**
- **Persons in team area not wearing proper credentials.**
- **Game management failure to remove unauthorised persons from team area.**
- **Practice kicking nets outside the team area (except where permitted).**

Goals

ARTICLE 5. a. § Each goal shall consist of two uprights extending at least 30 feet above the ground with a connecting horizontal crossbar, the top of which is 10 feet above the ground. The uprights and crossbar should be white or yellow in colour. The inside of the uprights and crossbar should be in the same vertical plane as the inside edge of the end line. Each goal is out of bounds (see Appendix D). (**A.R. 1-2-5:I**)

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Goal posts inbounds.**
1. # Regardless of the position of the goal posts, the size of the end zone or the distance between the goal lines, the snap on a try play shall be made from any point on or behind Team B's 3-yard line (Rule 8-3-2-c).

- b. § Above the crossbar, the uprights should be white or yellow and 18 feet, six inches apart inside to inside.
- c. # The designated uprights and crossbar shall be free of decorative material (*Exception:* □ 4-inch-by-42-inch orange or red wind directional streamers at the top of the uprights are permitted).
- d. # The height of the crossbar shall be measured from the top of each end of the crossbar to the ground directly below.
- e. # Goal posts shall be padded with resilient material from the ground to a height of at least six feet. (*Exception:* This is not a requirement if the goal post is more than 12 feet outside the end line, or there is a non-hazardous barrier between the end line and the goal post that would prevent players from running into the goal post.) Advertising is permitted on the goals. One manufacturer's logo or trademark or an advertisement is permitted on each goal post pad. Team and competition logos are allowed. All padding is out of bounds.
- f. # The following procedure will be adopted when one or both goals are missing or have been taken down and the original goals are not available for a try or field goal attempt:
 1. If a portable goal is available, it shall be erected or held in place at the request of Team A.
 2. If a portable goal is not available but one goal is in place:
 - (a) On all scrimmage downs, Team B shall defend the end of the field where the goal is situated.
 - (b) On all free kick downs, Team A shall defend the end of the field where the goal is situated.
 - (c) After a change of possession, the teams will change ends if necessary so that Team B is defending the end where the goal is situated.
 - (d) There will be no change of ends at the end of the first or third periods (one minute timeout only). Captains will not have the option to select which goal line to defend at the beginning of a half.
 3. ∅ Alternatively, if one goal is (or becomes) missing or unusable, the game may proceed (or resume) without using the other goal, if both head coaches agree. In these circumstances no (further) field goals shall be scored. Once stated, the coaches' decisions as to whether to proceed without goals shall be irrevocable.
 4. ∅ If no goals are available, the game may be played if both head coaches agree. In these circumstances no field goals shall be scored. If one or both head coaches do not wish to play, then the game shall be abandoned. Once stated, the coaches' decisions as to whether to start/continue shall be irrevocable.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Padding on goal posts absent or less than six feet in height.**

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Goals below full standards.**
- **Uprights less than 20 feet in height.**
- **Crossbar not 10 feet above ground.**
- **Goal not 18 feet six inches wide.**
- **Goal not in plane of end line.**
- **Decorative material on the posts or crossbar (other than streamers).**
- **One or both goals missing or taken down.**

REPORT –

- **Coaches agree to play without goals.**

Approved Ruling 1-2-5

- I. Upon inspection of the field it is noted that goals with offset uprights are being used. The plane of the goal is one yard within the end zone and the post is one yard outside it. **RULING:** Legal. The goal post is not inbounds. [Cited by 1-2-5-a]

Pylons

ARTICLE 6. § Soft flexible four-sided pylons 4 inches by 4 inches with an overall height of 18 inches, which may include a two-inch space between the bottom of the pylon and the ground, are recommended. They should be red or orange in colour. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each pylon. Team logos, competition logos and the name/commercial logo of the title sponsor of the game are also allowed. Any such marking may not extend more than 3 inches on any side. They are placed at the inside corners of the eight intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and end lines. The pylons marking the intersections of the end lines and hash marks extended shall be placed three feet off the end lines.

- a. A displaced pylon is one that is no longer in its proper position. Unless it is obvious that at least some part of the pylon is touching the ground in the 4-inch by 4-inch square that is its proper position, the pylon is no longer a pylon for the purposes of the rules (e.g. Rule 8-2-1-a). A displaced pylon may be restored to its proper position at any time.
- b. Touching a displaced pylon that is partially or completely out of bounds makes the ball or player out of bounds (Rule 4-2).
- c. A displaced pylon that is completely inbounds is no longer a pylon and is to be considered as part of the playing surface.
- d. A displaced goal line pylon that is partially in its proper position is still to be regarded as a goal line pylon for the purposes of the rules. Only parts of a displaced pylon that are behind the vertical plane of the goal line are behind the goal line.
- e. If a goal line pylon cannot be stood upright, it should be positioned so that it lies on the goal line extended out of bounds with its base covering the sideline.
- f. If an end line pylon cannot be stood upright, it should be positioned so that it lies on the sideline extended out of bounds with its base covering the end line.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Illegal pylons that had to be removed.**

Line-to-Gain and Down Indicators

ARTICLE 7. # The official line-to-gain (yardage chain) and down indicators shall be operated approximately six feet outside the sideline, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. These must be operated on the side of the field opposite the press box.

- a. # The yardage chain shall join two rods not less than five feet high, the rods' inside edges being exactly 10 yards apart when the chain is fully extended. The chain shall be made from material that does not stretch or break in normal use.
- b. # The down indicator shall be mounted on a rod not less than five feet high operating approximately six feet outside the sideline opposite the press box.
- c. An unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain indicator and an unofficial down indicator six feet outside the other sideline are recommended.
- d. Unofficial red or orange non-slip line-to-gain ground markers positioned off the sidelines on both sides of the field are recommended. Markers are rectangular, weighted material 10 inches by 32 inches. A triangle with an altitude of five inches is attached to the rectangle at the end toward the sideline.

- e. # All line-to-gain and down-indicator rods shall have flat ends.
- f. Advertising is permitted on the down and line-to-gain indicators. One manufacturer's logo or trademark is permitted on each indicator. Team and competition logos are allowed.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Line-to-gain or down indicator below full standards.**
- **Rods not of minimum height or not with flat ends.**
- **Repeated breakages of the line-to-gain or down indicators.**
- **Failure to provide line-to-gain or down indicators.**

Markers or Obstructions

- ARTICLE 8. a. # All markers and obstructions within the playing enclosure shall be placed or constructed in such a manner as to avoid any possible hazard to players. This includes anything dangerous to anyone at the limit lines.
- b. # After the officials' pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, the referee shall order removed any hazardous obstructions or markers located inside the limit lines.
 - c. # The referee shall report to game management personnel any markers or obstructions constituting a hazard within the playing enclosure but outside the limit lines. Final determination of corrective action shall be the responsibility of game management personnel.
 - d. # After the officials have completed their pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, it is the responsibility of game management personnel to ensure that the playing enclosure remains safe throughout the game.
 - e. # Yardage line markers must be placed at least 12 feet outside the sidelines and should be collapsible and constructed in such a manner as to avoid any possible hazard to players. Yardage markers on the goal lines must be placed at least 18 feet outside the sideline. Markers which do not conform to this standard shall be removed. Advertising on yardage line markers is permitted.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Markers that are not constructed and/or placed to avoid hazard and had to be removed.**

Field Surface

- ARTICLE 9. a. The field surface must be grass or an approved artificial surface.
- 1. A recommended approved artificial surface has the following characteristics:
 - (a) Long pile (minimum 50mm; recommended 65mm) 3G (rubber crumb or equivalent) synthetic turf.
 - (b) A shockpad layer.
 - (c) Although certification is not a requirement, fields that have an up-to-date World Rugby-accredited test certificate should meet this standard.
 - 2. An acceptable approved artificial surface is one that does not meet the "recommended" standard above but has the following characteristics:
 - (a) Short pile (35-50mm) 3G synthetic turf.
 - (b) Although certification is not a requirement, fields that have an up-to-date FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf Quality Standard should meet this standard.
 - (c) At some point in the future, BAFA reserves the right to no longer approve such artificial surfaces. Thereafter only long pile surfaces may be used for games. Short pile surfaces may continue to be used for training.

NOTE: Fields may not meet World Rugby or FIFA certification standards for reasons other than the field surface. BAFA's standard is based on the surface only.

3. A sand-dressed, sand-filled or water-based artificial surface ("2G") is prohibited. Any other form of artificial surface that does not meet the characteristics of 3G is also prohibited. Use of such a surface is permitted for limited training where player contact (other than feet) with the surface is not regular, but not for games or contact-intensive training.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Prohibited field surface.**

- b. # No material or device shall be used to improve or degrade the playing surface or other conditions and give one player or team an advantage (*Exception:* Rules 2-16-4-b and 2-16-4-c).

PENALTY – Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S19: APS].

- c. # The referee may require any improvement in the field necessary for proper and safe game administration.

REPORT –

- **Field surface improvement required.**
- **Any field improvement effected by the referee.**

- d. # The referee shall not allow the game to commence if there is any trip hazard inbounds or within six feet of the boundary lines. A trip hazard is defined to be any change of height of one inch or more in the space of one inch or less, with the exception of holes less than two inches in diameter.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Trip hazard(s).**

- e. § In stadia where discus circles or other objects present a different playing surface, it is strongly recommended that the field of play be shortened to avoid different surfaces in the field of play or end zones.
- f. # The referee should make every effort to play the game at the place and time specified, and to make a report to the appropriate authority as soon as possible afterwards. However, if the markings and facilities available on a field are, in the judgement of the referee, so inadequate as to call into question the validity of the game or the safety of players, spectators or officials, then the game shall not proceed unless and until an improvement has been effected.

STOP, REPORT & SANCTION – Under no circumstances may the game commence, nor proceed if suspended. BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Markings or facilities inadequate for game to proceed.**

SECTION 3. The Ball

Specifications

ARTICLE 1. The ball shall meet the following specifications:

- a. # New or nearly new. (A nearly new ball is a ball that has not been altered and retains the properties and qualities of a new ball.)
- b. # Cover consisting of four panels of pebble-grained leather without corrugations other than seams.
- c. # One set of eight equally spaced lacings.

- d. # Natural tan colour.
- e. # Two 1-inch white stripes that are 3 to 3¼ inches from the end of the ball and located only on the two panels adjacent to the laces.
- f. # Conforms to maximum and minimum dimensions and shape indicated in the accompanying diagram.

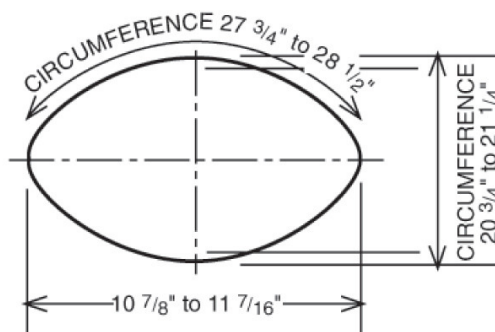


Diagram showing the longitudinal cross section of the standard ball. Maximum and minimum dimensions are used. This diagram is printed in order to secure uniformity in manufacture.

- g. # Inflated to the pressure of 12½ to 13½ pounds per square inch (psi).
- h. # Weight of 14 to 15 ounces.
- i. # The ball may not be altered. This includes the use of any ball-drying or ball-warming substance. Mechanical ball-drying and ball-warming devices are not permitted near the sidelines or in the team area.

Administration and Enforcement

- ARTICLE 2. a. The game officials shall test and be sole judge of not fewer than three and not more than six balls offered for play before and during the game. The game officials may approve additional balls if warranted by conditions.
- b. § Game management should provide a pressure pump and measuring device.
 - c. # Unless provided by the competition authority, the home team shall provide a minimum of three legal balls and should notify the opponent of the ball to be used. The opponent may provide one or more legal balls in addition to those supplied by the home team if they wish to do so.
 - d. # During the entire game, both teams shall use only balls that meet the required specifications and have been measured and tested according to rule.
 - e. # All balls to be used must be presented to the referee for testing at least 60 minutes before the start of the game. Once the teams have presented the game balls to the referee, they remain under the general supervision of the officials throughout the game.
 1. # The referee's first priority is to have three legal balls. If the competition authority or the home team does not provide at least three legal balls, the referee shall inform the away team and offer them the opportunity to provide legal balls. If fewer than three legal balls are provided, the game will proceed with only the legal ball(s) being used. If no legal balls are provided, the referee shall select up to three balls which in their judgement are the best available.
 2. # When more than three legal balls are presented, the referee shall select the balls in best condition from those presented by both teams.

3. ∇ Where competition regulations mandate the use of balls of a particular manufacture, and more than three legal balls are presented to the referee, the referee shall only select balls of another manufacture if there are fewer than three legal balls of the mandated manufacture.
- f. When the ball becomes dead outside the nine-yard marks/top of numbers, is unfit for play, is subject to measurement in a side zone or is inaccessible, a replacement ball shall be obtained from a ball person. **(A.R. 1-3-2:I-II)**
- g. The referee, [centre judge](#) or umpire shall determine the legality of each ball before it is put in play.
- h. The following procedures shall be used when measuring a ball:
 1. All measurements shall be made after the ball is legally inflated.
 2. The long circumference shall be measured around the ends of the ball but not over the laces.
 3. The long diameter shall be measured with callipers from end to end but not in the nose indentation.
 4. The short circumference shall be measured around the ball, over the valve, over the lace, but not over the cross lace.
- i. # In wet conditions (or if the referee deems that conditions warrant it), game management must provide towels for the ball persons to use to keep the ball dry for both teams. If game management fails to provide sufficient towels, the teams may provide additional ones.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Balls below full standards.**
- **Home team provides fewer than three legal balls.**
- **No towels are provided when conditions warrant it.**
- **Balls do not have white stripes.**

Approved Ruling 1-3-2

- I. On fourth down, kicker A1 enters the field with an approved game ball and asks the referee to substitute it for the ball used during the previous down. **RULING:** Substitution of the ball is not permitted. [Cited by 1-3-2-f]
- II. The referee selected from those offered before the game two of the home team's balls and one of the away team's. After a change of possession, the away team asks for its ball to be used in place of one of the other two. **RULING:** The request is denied. Once the referee has selected the game balls to be used, neither team may request that a particular ball be used in a particular situation. [Cited by 1-3-2-f]

Marking Balls

ARTICLE 3. Marking a ball indicating a preference for any player or any situation is [unsportsmanlike conduct](#).

NOTE: If the person(s) subject to the rules who marked the ball cannot be immediately identified, charge the foul to the player(s) most likely to take advantage (e.g. the intended forward passer or kicker).

PENALTY – Live-ball foul. Fifteen yards from the previous spot [S27: UC-UNS].

SECTION 4. Players and Playing Equipment

Recommended Numbering

ARTICLE 1. It is strongly recommended that offensive players be numbered according to the following diagram that shows one of many offensive formations:



Players' Numbering

- ARTICLE 2. a. All players shall be numbered 0 through 99. Any number preceded by the digit zero such as "099", "07" or "00" is illegal.
- b. No more than one squad member may be assigned or wear the same jersey number (Rule 9-2-2-f).
- c. Markings in the vicinity of the numbers are not permitted.

PENALTY – [a&c] Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot [S23: IPN].

- d. When a player enters the game after changing their jersey number, the player must report to the referee. The officiating crew informs the opposing head coach and the referee announces the change. A player who enters the game after changing their number and does not report commits a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. **(A.R. 1-4-2:I)**

**PENALTY – [d] Live-ball foul. 15 yards from the previous spot [S27: UC-UNS].
Flagrant offenders shall be disqualified [S47: DSQ].**

Approved Ruling 1-4-2

- i. The Team A player who started the game wearing jersey number 77 enters the game wearing number 88. **RULING:** The player must report to the referee who, without stopping the game or play clock, [announces the change \(using their microphone if available\)](#) and the relevant flank official informs the opposing head coach. If A88 fails to report it is a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. [Cited by 1-4-2-d]

Mandatory equipment

ARTICLE 3. All players must wear the following mandatory equipment:

- Helmet.
- Hip pads.
- Jersey.
- Knee pads.
- Mouthpiece.
- Pants.
- Shoulder pads.
- Socks.
- Thigh guards.

Specifications: Mandatory Equipment

ARTICLE 4. a. *Helmets.*

1. The helmet must be fitted with a facemask and a secured four- or six-point chin strap, all points of which must be secured whenever the ball is in play.
 2. Helmets for all players of a team should be of the same colour and design.
 3. Helmets must carry a warning label regarding the risk of injury and a manufacturer's or reconitioner's certification indicating satisfaction of National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) test standards. Reconditioned helmets shall show recertification to indicate satisfaction with the NOCSAE test standard.
 4. So called "youth" helmets are designed for very young players. It is strongly recommended that players should be wearing "adult" helmets from the age of 12-14 upwards.
- b. *Hip pads.* Hip pads must include a tailbone protector.
- c. *Jersey.* See Rule 1-4-5.
- d. *Knee pads.* Knee pads must be covered by pants. Furthermore, the pants and knee pads must cover the knees. No pads or protective equipment may be worn outside the pants. (See Appendix E.)
- e. *Mouthpiece.* The mouthpiece must be an intra-oral device of any readily visible colour. It must not be white or transparent. It must be made with FDA-approved base materials (FDCS) and cover all upper teeth. It is recommended that the mouthpiece be properly fitted.
- f. *Pants.* Players of a team should wear pants of the same colour and design.
- g. *Shoulder pads.* There are no specifications for shoulder pads. (See Appendix E.)
- h. *Socks.* Players of a team must wear socks or leg coverings that should be identical in colour and design. (**Exception:** Unaltered knee braces, tape or a bandage to protect or prevent an injury, and barefoot kickers) (**A.R. 1-4-4:I**)
- i. *Thigh guards.* There are no specifications for thigh guards. (See Appendix E.)

Approved Ruling 1-4-4

- l. A player or players of a team wear tights that cover their legs. **RULING:** Legal. For those players that wear tights, they must be of the same design and colour. [Cited by 1-4-4-h]

Jersey Design, Colour and Numerals

ARTICLE 5. a. Design

1. The jersey must have sleeves that completely cover the shoulder pads. It must not be altered or designed to tear. The jersey should be full-length and tucked into the pants or made even with the waistline. No other undergarment (e.g., T-shirt) shall extend below the waistline at the torso. The jersey must cover all pads worn at or above the waist. A second jersey meeting all requirements of Rule 1-4-5 worn concurrently is allowed. Vests and/or altered jerseys with zippers, Velcro, clasps or other fasteners are not allowed.
2. Other than the player's numbers, the jersey may only contain:
 - Player's name;
 - Team name;
 - Sleeve stripes;
 - Logo for team, competition mascot, game memorial, or the military;
 - Authorised advertising material;

- The letter "C" to identify a team captain;
 - The team's national flag.
3. Any item in paragraph 2 must not exceed 16 square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram), including any additional material (e.g. patch).
 4. A border around the collar and cuffs not more than 1 inch wide is permissible, as is a maximum 4-inch stripe along the side seam (insert from the underarm to pants top).
 5. Jerseys may not be taped or tied in any manner.
- b. Colour.
1. # ∇ Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colours. In the event of a clash, the home team shall have first choice of colour (including white). The Competition Authority may determine that the away team shall have first choice of colour. Players on the same team shall wear jerseys of the same colour and design.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Teams not wearing contrasting colour jerseys.**
 - **Players of a team not wearing jerseys of the same colour and design.**
2. If a coloured jersey contains white, it may appear only as any of the items listed in paragraph a-2 above.
- c. Numerals.
1. The jersey must have clearly visible, permanent Arabic numerals measuring at least 8 and 10 inches in height front and back, respectively. **In addition, it is recommended that the jersey has a number on the outside of each shoulder measuring at least 3 inches in height.** The number must be of a colour that itself is clearly in distinct contrast with the colour of the jersey, irrespective of any border around the number. The number must be centred. No logo may appear within 1 inch of the numerals.
 2. Teams wearing jerseys/numerals that do not conform to this rule will be asked to change into legal jerseys before the game and before the start of the second half. On the kickoff at the start of each half, if a team wears a jersey in violation of the conditions specified in paragraph 1, it is a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. ×

PENALTY – Administer as a dead-ball foul. 15 yards at the succeeding spot following the kickoff. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or on the succeeding kickoff, at the option of the offended team. [S27: UC-UNS] In addition, officials shall charge a team timeout at the start of each quarter the illegal jerseys are worn, or a foul for delay of the game if all timeouts have been used. (A.R. 1-4-5:I)

3. All players of a team should have the same colour and style numbers front and back. The individual bars must be approximately 1½ inches wide. Numbers on any part of the uniform shall correspond with the mandatory front and back jersey numbers.

Approved Ruling 1-4-5

- i. The home team is wearing red jerseys with orange numerals. In the judgment of the officials, the numerals and the body of the jersey do not contrast enough to make the numbers readily visible. The referee asks the home team head coach to change to a legal jersey. The head coach tells the referee that their team will not change into different jerseys. **RULING:**× After the ball is declared ready for play for the opening kickoff, the referee charges the home team with a timeout for illegal jerseys. In addition, there will be a 15-yard penalty at the succeeding spot following the kickoff starting each half. If the kickoff is returned for a touchdown, the penalty is assessed either on the try or at the succeeding kickoff. For each quarter that they continue to wear the jerseys, the team is charged with a timeout after the ball is declared ready for play and before the ball is put in play for the first play of that quarter. If a team has no timeouts remaining, a delay of game penalty will be enforced. [Cited by 1-4-5 Penalty]

Optional equipment

ARTICLE 6. The following items are legal:

- a. *Towels and hand warmers.*
 1. Solid colour towels no smaller than 4 inches by 12 inches and no larger than 6 inches by 12 inches with no words, symbols, letters, or numbers. Towels may bear the team logo. They may also contain a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark not to exceed 2-1/4 square inches in area. Towels that are not a solid colour are not permitted.
 2. Hand warmers worn during inclement weather.
- b. *Gloves.*
 1. A glove is a fitted covering for a hand having separate sections for each finger and thumb, without any additional material that connects any of the fingers and/or thumb. There is no restriction on the colour of gloves.
 2. Gloves should have a securely attached label or stamp ("NF/NCAA Specifications") indicating voluntary compliance with appropriate test specifications on file with either the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) or the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE), unless made of unaltered plain cloth.
- c. *Eye shields.* Eye shields must be clear, not tinted, and made from moulded or rigid material. Eyeglasses and goggles also must be clear and not tinted. No medical exceptions are allowed. Eyewear is not clear if it obscures a player's eyes at any time from any angle or in any light condition. "Mirrored" eyewear is expressly prohibited. **(A.R. 1-4-8:II)**
- d. *Insignia.*
 1. Persons or events may be memorialised by an insignia with an area not greater than 16 square inches on the uniform or helmet.
 2. Team decals and advertising are allowed on helmets.
- e. *Eye shade.* Any shading under a player's eyes must be solid black with no words, numbers, logos or other symbols.
- f. *Game information.* Any player may have written game information on the wrist, arm or belt.

Illegal equipment

ARTICLE 7. Illegal equipment includes the following (see Appendix E for additional details):

- a. Equipment worn by a player that could endanger other players.
- b. Tape or any bandage other than that used to protect **or prevent** an injury, subject to the approval of the umpire.
- c. Hard, abrasive or unyielding equipment that is not completely covered and padded, subject to the approval of the umpire.
- d. Cleats that extend more than 1/2 inch from the base of the shoe (See Appendix E for full specifications).
- e. Any equipment that could confuse or deceive an opponent.
- f. Any equipment that could provide an unfair advantage to any player.
- g. Adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a player's person, clothing or attachment (**Exception:** Eye shade (Rule 1-4-6-e)).
- h. Uniform attachments other than towels (Rule 1-4-6-a).

- i. Rib pads, shoulder pad attachments and back protectors that are not totally covered. (A.R. 1-4-7:II) (A.R. 1-4-8:III)
- j. Visible bandannas worn on the field outside the team area. (A.R. 1-4-7:I)
- k. Jerseys that do not conform with Rule 1-4-5.
- l. Non-standard overbuilt facemask. (A.R. 1-4-7:IV) (See Appendix E for examples.)
- m. Equipment that has been modified in a way that reduces the protection of the player wearing it or any other participant.

Approved Ruling 1-4-7

- I. A33 is wearing a bandanna under their helmet, with part of the bandanna protruding from underneath the back of the helmet. **RULING:** Illegal equipment. Bandannas may be worn under the helmet as long as no part of the bandanna is visible when the helmet is in place. The visible bandanna is considered a uniform attachment (Rule 1-4-7-h). A33 must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until the bandanna is removed or completely hidden under the helmet. Team A may request a team timeout, if one is available, to prevent A33 from missing a down, but the bandanna must be hidden or removed. [Cited by 1-4-7-j]
- II. At the end of a down, B55's shoulder pad has become exposed and is not covered by the jersey. **RULING:** Illegal equipment. Because the pad became exposed through play, B55 is not required to leave the game. The pad must be covered by the jersey before the ball is next put into play. [Cited by 1-4-7-i, 1-4-8-c]
- III. Both teams come onto the field before the game wearing coloured jerseys. The visiting team has not obtained written agreement from the home team to wear non-white jerseys, or if such agreement has been obtained the competition authority has not certified that the jerseys are of contrasting colours. **RULING:** Provided the jersey colours do not clash, legal. If they do clash, the home team has first choice of colour unless the Competition Authority has determined otherwise. Report as a game management issue. Neither team is penalised any yardage.
- IV. As Team A is about to break its huddle, the referee notices that A35 is wearing an overbuilt facemask. **RULING:** A35 must leave the game for one down to get a legal facemask. Team A may use an available charged timeout in order that A35 not miss a down, but they may not play with the illegal facemask. [Cited by 1-4-7-l]
- V. Each member of the offensive line is wearing a towel, all of which are white, 4" by 12", with a small team logo. The snapper's towel also has a large skull-and-cross-bones symbol. **RULING:** It is legal for any player to wear a towel. The towels are all legal except the snapper's. They must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until the towel is removed or replaced with one that is legal. Team A may keep them in the game by using a charged timeout, but they may not wear the illegal towel. (Rules 1-4-6-a and 1-4-8)

Mandatory and Illegal Equipment Enforcement

- ARTICLE 8. a. No player wearing illegal equipment or failing to wear mandatory equipment shall be permitted to play. (**Exception:** Rules 1-4-5-b and 1-4-5-c).
- b. If an official discovers illegal equipment, or if a player is not wearing mandatory equipment, the player must leave the game for at least one down and is not allowed to return until the equipment is made legal. The player may be allowed to return without missing a down if the team takes a charged team timeout, but in any event the player may not play with illegal equipment or without mandatory equipment. (A.R. 1-4-8:I-II and IV)
 - c. If equipment becomes illegal through play, the player is not required to leave the game for one down, but the player may not participate until the equipment is made legal. (A.R. 1-4-7:II) (A.R. 1-4-8:III)

- d. If an official notifies a player to leave the field, but the player does not respond by doing so after two notifications, a timeout shall be charged to the team. Each of the first three infractions in a half carries a charged team timeout, if timeouts are available. Any infraction after a team has exhausted its timeouts is a foul for delay of game and carries a five-yard penalty.
1. The timeouts are granted. There is no offset for the first three violations when an opponent has fouled. When timeouts are exhausted, the next violation is a dead-ball delay penalty at the succeeding spot.
 2. A timeout is called, the offending team is indicated by the referee and the captain and head coaches are notified through the officials nearest the sidelines.
 3. Equipment timeouts are not limited by the prohibition on consecutive team timeouts (Rule 3-3-4) but the additional one minute is not granted.

Approved Ruling 1-4-8

- I. After the ball is ready for play, an official identifies a player(s) who is obviously not wearing a mouthpiece. **RULING:** The player(s) must leave the game for at least one down and may not return until properly equipped with a mouthpiece. The player(s) may remain in the game by spending an available team timeout, but they may not play until properly equipped. [Cited by 1-4-8-b]
- II. Late in the first half, Team B has used its three timeouts. At the end of a play the line judge notices that B44, a player who participated in the previous play, is equipped with an eye shield that is either tinted or not clear. **RULING:** Equipment violation. B44 must leave the game for at least one down and may not return if they are wearing an illegal eye shield. [Cited by 1-4-6-c, 1-4-8-b]
- III. When the ball is dead after a scrimmage down, the umpire notices that linebacker B55 has an exposed back pad at waist level, which apparently became exposed through play during the previous down. **RULING:** B55 is not required to leave the game, but they must cover the exposed pad with their jersey before the next down. [Cited by 1-4-7-i, 1-4-8-c]
- IV. An official discovers a player wearing illegal equipment or not wearing mandatory equipment (other than a helmet coming completely off through play - Rule 3-3-9). **RULING:** The official notifies the player that they must leave the game. If the player responds by starting to leave the field, the official is not to stop either the game clock or the play clock. If possible, the referee will use their microphone to make a brief announcement identifying the player and their team and the reason why they must leave the field. This announcement should be made from the referee's position to officiate the next play, and must not delay the start of the next play. However, if the player does not respond after two notifications or stops before leaving the field, the official shall blow their whistle and signal to stop the clock and the offending team will be charged with a timeout (or a delay penalty if all timeouts are exhausted). [Cited by 1-4-8-b]

Coaches' Certification

ARTICLE 9. # The head coach or their designated representative shall certify in writing to the umpire before the game that all players:

- a. # Have been informed what equipment is mandatory by rule and what constitutes illegal equipment.
- b. # Have been provided with the equipment mandated by rule.
- c. # Have been instructed to wear and how to wear mandatory equipment during the game.
- d. # Have been instructed to notify the coaching staff when equipment becomes illegal through play during the game.
- e. # Are not in the Concussion Protocol prior to Stage 6.

Prohibited Signal Devices

ARTICLE 10. Players may not be equipped with any electronic, mechanical or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with any source or recording sound (*Exceptions:*

1. A medically prescribed hearing aid of the sound-amplifier type for hearing-impaired players.
2. A device for transmission or reception of data specifically and only for the purposes of health and safety.)

PENALTY – Administer as a dead-ball foul, 15 yards at the succeeding spot. Player is disqualified. [S7, S27, S47: UC-UNS/DSQ].

Prohibited Field Equipment

ARTICLE 11. Jurisdiction regarding the presence and location of communication equipment (cameras, sound devices, etc.) within the playing enclosure resides with game management personnel.

- a. # Motion pictures, any type of film, facsimile machines, videotapes, photographs, writing-transmission machines and computers may be used within the playing enclosure by coaches or for coaching purposes any time during the game or between periods.
 1. # Game management is responsible for assuring identical television capability and identical video and Internet connectivity in the team area and in the coaches' booths of both teams.
 2. # Teams are responsible for their own computers or other coaching equipment.
 3. # A monitor is permitted on the sideline to assist team or game management medical personnel in the diagnosis and treatment of participants.
- b. # Only voice or text communication between the press box and team area is permitted. Coaches' booth space and location must be approximately equivalent for both teams and should be located in the press box area. Where press-box space is not adequate, only voice or text communication may originate from any area in the stands between the 20-yard lines extended to the top of the stadium. No other communication for coaching purposes is permitted anywhere else, including the use of any communication equipment (e.g. mobile phones or radios) for voice, text, image or any other type of message from inside or outside the playing enclosure by or to any person subject to the rules (remote coaching). (**A.R. 1-4-11:I**)
- c. # Media communication or recording equipment, including cameras, sound devices, computers and microphones, is prohibited on or above the field, or in or above the team area (Rule 2-31-1).

Exceptions:

1. Camera equipment attached to a goal support behind the uprights and crossbar.
2. Camera(s) embedded in any pylon.
3. A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to the **uniform or equipment** of any official with prior approval of the official and **either the competition authority or the participating teams**.

NOTE: Cameras worn by officials solely for the purposes of officiating development may be worn by any official without requiring the permission of **the competition authority or the participating teams**.

4. A camera, with no audio component, may be attached to cables that extend over the team area and field of play, including the end zones.

5. A team videographer may be in the team area as one of that team's 25 credentialed individuals. This video may not be used during any live broadcast or digital stream of the game.
- d. # Drone (unmanned aerial vehicle) use is prohibited for any purpose, including videoing the game, during the period of the officials' jurisdiction (Rule 11-1-1) **or otherwise when squad members are present within the playing enclosure.**
 1. No drone may be flown within the area bounded by the stadium, dome, stands, fences or other structures. Where there is no stadium, dome or stands, no drone may be flown within 165 yards (150 metres) of any area occupied by participants or spectators.
 2. If a drone violates this space or otherwise poses a danger to participants or spectators, the referee shall order the game stopped until such time as the drone is removed from the space.
- e. # Microphones attached to coaches during the game for media transmission or recording are prohibited.
- f. # No one in the team area or coaching box may use any artificial sound amplification to communicate with players on the field.
- g. Any attempt to record, either through audio or video means, any signals given by an opposing player, coach or other team personnel is prohibited.

REPORT & SANCTION – BAFA may apply sanctions for the following breaches:

- **Prohibited field equipment used.**
- **Prohibited media equipment used.**
- **Artificial sound amplification used.**
- **Recording opponent's signals.**
- **Drone inside the playing enclosure.**

Approved Ruling 1-4-11

- l. The Head Coach of the home team is unable to attend the game in person and wants to monitor the TV broadcast and (a) call in plays via cell phone to the offensive coordinator and (b) use a virtual application (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) to communicate with the team in the locker room. **RULING:** Rule 1-4-11-b is specific and allows only voice communication between the press box and the team area, therefore in (a) the coach could not call into the press box or the sideline for anything related to coaching purposes. Although Rule 1-4-11-a allows the use of technology by coaches, this only applies to coaches present within the playing enclosure (Rule 2-27-16-a). Consequently in (b) any virtual session with the team would not be allowed. This prohibition would begin at 60 minutes before the scheduled kickoff when the officiating crew assumes jurisdiction of the game and would include the time between periods until the end of the game when the Referee declares the score final. [Cited by 1-4-11-b]

Coaches' Phones

ARTICLE 12. # Coaches' phones and headsets are not subject to playing rules penalties before or during the game.

- a. ∅ A competition may develop a policy to provide guidance in handling situations dealing with failure of coaches' headsets.

Referee communication

ARTICLE 13. a. § A microphone is strongly recommended for the referee to be used for all game announcements. It is strongly recommended that it be a lapel-type microphone. The microphone must be controlled by the referee. It may not be open at other times.

- b. A wireless communication system open only to the officiating crew, video judge and the officiating observer is permitted.
- c. No person subject to the rules is permitted to eavesdrop wireless communication between officials before, during or after the game.

PENALTY – For fouls before or during the game, administer as a dead-ball foul, 15 yards at the succeeding spot. Person is disqualified. Fouls after the game shall be reported as misconduct.