

# IFAF rule changes 2016

Changes agreed for adoption in 2016. This list includes all NCAA changes for 2015 (unless repealed by subsequent changes).

## 1 Rule changes

#	Rule	Change	Notes
1.	1-2-3	Increase distance for limit lines to be 18 feet outside the sidelines and end lines (where possible).	Safety. To keep game management personnel, media and (sometimes) spectators further back from the field of play. This is particularly an issue where games are not played in stadiums and where there is no barrier between spectators and the field of play.
2.	1-2-5-e	Add: All padding is out of bounds.	Some games are played in fields designed for rugby matches, or even some mobile goals have an H shape. In this cases the uprights are located over the end line and the pads which protect players from injuries project over this line. This clarifies that if a player or loose ball touches these pads, he/it is out of bounds.
3.	1-2-5-f	Replace with: 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 plays, Team B shall defend the end of the field where the goal is situated. (b) On all free kick plays, Team A shall defend the end of the field where the goal is situated.	Provides standardisation of approach if for whatever reason there are not two goals. This has been the BAFA rule for many years and has worked successfully.

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		<p>(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.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
4.	1-2-8-e	<p>New rule 1-2-8-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. Markers which do not conform to this standard shall be removed."</p> <p>Also allow advertising on them.</p> <p>In this and other parts of 1-2, make it clear that advertising must not obscure the main purpose of the object carrying the advert.</p>	<p>New rule to specify position of yardage markers. Modifications to the rule to permit advertising on them as long as the adverts don't obscure the numbers.</p>

#	Rule	Change	Notes
5.	1-3-1	Ball-warming devices not allowed	Makes clear that warming is the same as drying when it comes to using substances or devices to alter the condition of the ball.
6.	1-3-2	Make explicit that the away team (as well as the home team) may provide balls for use during the game. The referee will choose the best of those provided to use.	This only applies if the balls are not provided by the competition authority. Both teams can provide balls and the best of all those provided will be used. It remains the case that neither team can request a particular ball in a particular situation.
7.	1-4-7	Illegal Equipment: Overbuilt Facemask Add new paragraph: "I. Non-standard overbuilt facemask."	Safety. The added weight of the masks can impact the integrity of the helmet and tends to pull a player's head down, which can provide them with a false sense of security during tackling. The rulebook contains diagrams showing examples of legal and illegal facemasks.
8.	1-4-8	Illegal Equipment: Player Must Leave the Game (Rule 1-4-8) Replace the current paragraphs <i>b</i> and <i>c</i> by the following: "b. If an official discovers illegal 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 he may not play with illegal equipment. c. If equipment becomes illegal through play, the player is not required to leave the game for one down, but he may not participate until the equipment is made legal."	Encourage consistent enforcement. No longer is a timeout charged for illegal equipment or failure to wear mandatory equipment. Instead, normally the player must simply leave the field for at least one down and make the equipment legal.
9.	1-4-11	Permit cameras embedded in pylons	Provide another (safe) view of the field for media purposes.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
10.	1-4-11-c Exception 2	Add: (Note: Cameras worn by officials solely for the purposes of officiating development may be worn by any official without requiring the permission of the participating teams.)	Wearables are becoming increasingly commonplace and accessible and can provide a useful tool in the development of officiating due to the perspective they provide. Teams do not need to seek the permission of the officials to film for the purposes of team development (scouting, training etc.), so it is not rational that the officials should need to seek permission of the teams if filming for the same purpose.
11.	1-4-11-g	No drones (unmanned aerial vehicle) may be used inside the playing enclosure. If a drone violates this space, the Referee shall order the game stopped until such time as the drone is removed from the space.	Drones are becoming more common, and associations in the USA are already regulating their use at football games. This is primarily a safety issue because of the risk of control being lost and the drone crashing onto participants or spectators. There is also an issue about one team using a drone to film another team from a too advantageous position.
12.	1-4-13	Replace "Microphones on other officials are prohibited" and the Exception by: Officials' radio communication systems are not subject to the rules before or during the game.	This will free up officiating crews to use wireless communication devices. It is not our role to specify those (particularly as they may be subject to national laws pertaining to use of radio frequencies).
13.	2-10-2	New definition: A personal foul is a foul involving illegal physical contact that endangers the safety of another player.	Not explicitly defined before.
14.	2-27-6-b	Add the text: "is contacted by an opponent or teammate" after "launches" and before "etc."	Make clear that a player airborne as a result of something a teammate or opponent did is covered by the definition.
15.	2-27-14	Define a blind-side block is one where a player obviously does not see the opposing blocker approaching him.	Blind-side is not defined in the rules. In the past we have interpreted it as being outside the 10-2 clock sector as specified in Rule 9-1-6, but we now believe this is too restrictive. Interpretation in NCAA appears to be closer to our new definition.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
16.	2-31-5	Add: Where there is no stadium, dome or stands, the playing enclosure is any area within sight and/or sound of the field. (Rules 9-2-6-b and 9-2-7)	The purpose of this is to clarify that where a game is played not in a conventional stadium, persons disqualified or removed from the playing enclosure must be far enough away from the field of play that they are out of sight and sound of it.
17.	3-3-2-d-1	Add "if Team B will next snap the ball"	Put a turnover in the end zone in the same clock category as 3-3-2-d-3 which covers other changes of possession.
18.	3-3-2-g	Add: If the running clock rule applies, the clock will always be started on the ready for play rather than the snap. (Exception: The clock starts by normal rule on the free kick or snap following the play in which the relevant score margin is reached.)	Introduced last year, the running clock rule was silent on when the clock should start. The Editor's interpretation was that 3-3-2-f applied and that all possible reasons why the clock stopped should be taken into account. This is a simpler solution.
19.	A.R. 4-1-2:IV	Define what is meant by "otherwise signals the ball dead" as being one of the following signals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stop the clock (S3)</li> <li>• touchdown/field goal (S5)</li> <li>• safety (S6)</li> <li>• dead ball (S7)</li> <li>• incomplete pass (S10)</li> </ul> An interrupted signal doesn't count.	Clarify precise meaning of this much debated rule. Any other signal does not make the ball dead.
20.	4-1-3	Additional reason for ball becoming dead: r. When all players in the vicinity of the ball stop playing and/or believe it to be dead.	This is the way officials are taught to officiate it. It covers the situation where a player is in possession of the ball, but he and others nearby stop playing.
21.	7-1-5-a-2	Change "causing an offensive lineman to react" to "threatening an offensive lineman and causing him to react"	Clarifies case where a lineman is not threatened by Team B's move. See <a href="https://youtu.be/ep80eAdwzVM">https://youtu.be/ep80eAdwzVM</a> - this is a false start, not offside.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
22.	8-4-2-b-1	Change to: When the ball is declared dead <del>beyond the neutral zone</del> and is untouched by Team B beyond the neutral zone, it belongs to Team B. Except in an extra period, Team B will snap the ball at <u>either the previous spot, the 20-yard line or the dead ball spot (whichever is most advantageous to Team B)</u> <del>unless the previous spot was between its 20-yard line and the goal line. In that case, Team B will next snap the ball at its 20-yard line.</del>	Simplification., We believe Team B should get the ball at the B-20 in the following case: 8-4-2:VII Team A snaps the ball at the B-15 to attempt a field goal. The kick is blocked, crosses the neutral zone and lands at the B-12. Before any player touches it beyond the neutral zone, the ball rebounds behind the neutral zone and goes out of bounds at the B-17. This change is slightly different from the NCAA change made in 2015.
23.	8-5-1-a exception (a)	Change to: intercepts a pass or fumble; or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or catches or recovers <u>an opponent's</u> kick; and	Why would we want to give Team A the ball if they caught their own kick near their own goal line?
24.	9-2-1-a-1	Unsportsmanlike Conduct for Pushing/Pulling an Opponent off the Pile (Rule 9-2-1) Add new sub-paragraph (k) to Rule 9-2-1-a-1: “(k) After the ball is dead, using forcible contact to push or pull an opponent off the pile.”	Reduce pushing and shoving around piles.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
25.	9-2-5	<p>Game Administration Interference (Rule 9-2-5)</p> <p>Modify penalty statement, as follows:  “PENALTY—Administer as a dead-ball foul.</p> <p>First infraction: Warning for sideline interference. No yardage penalty. [S15]</p> <p>Second and third infractions: Delay of game for sideline interference; five yards from the succeeding spot. [S21 and S29]</p> <p>Fourth and subsequent infractions: Team unsportsmanlike conduct for sideline interference; 15 yards from the succeeding spot. Automatic first down for fouls by Team B if not in conflict with other rules [S27 and S29]”</p>	<p>NCAA officials were not enforcing the old rule.</p> <p>This reintroduces the concept of a "sideline warning" for a first offence. However, it will always be a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty if a person subject to the rules physically obstructs an official.</p>
26.	11-2-2	<p>Confirm that the Manual of Football Officiating is the only manual recognised for international competition.</p> <p>The use of mechanics systems that span 3-man to 8-man crews is essential. The use of manuals that only specify a subset of the mechanics is prohibited.</p> <p>National Federations and officiating bodies are encouraged to use standard mechanics in games played under their jurisdiction to facilitate their officials moving between domestic and international games (Exception: USA, Canada and Japan).</p>	<p>Standardise officiating mechanics, especially across different size crews.</p>

#	Rule	Change	Notes
27.	12	<p>Rule 12 is retained but an experimental variation may be used.</p> <p>Replace the whole of Rule 12 with a new rule that makes a "video judge" able to intervene in cases where video evidence shows that a ruling on the field is incorrect, or a major foul has been missed.</p> <p>See separate document for more details.</p>	<p>Radio communication technology now makes it possible for the replay official to be able to communicate with all the officials on the field. In this case, it is better for the game for the official watching the video to play a fuller part in the decision making process.</p> <p>What is proposed is very similar to the system used in Rugby Union.</p> <p>Contact the Chair of the IFAF Rules Committee if your federation or competition wants to be part of the experiment.</p>
28.	12-3-4	<p>Instant Replay: Blocking by Team A during on-side kick (Rule 12-3-4)</p> <p>Add new paragraph e:</p> <p>"e. Blocking by Team A players before they are eligible to touch the ball on an on-side kick."</p>	<p>Adds one further situation that can be reviewed by replay.</p>

A proposed change to Rule 9-1-6-a-1 has been shelved pending further discussions about its scope. The whole issue of blocking below the waist will be revisited for 2017.

## 2 NCAA changes not adopted by IFAF

IFAF has NOT adopted the following changes made by NCAA in 2015.

#	Rule	Change	Notes
1.	3-1-1	<p>Pre-Game Warm-ups (Rule 3-1-1)</p> <p>Add new paragraph a; re-number subsequent paragraphs.</p> <p>"a. Prior to regular season games, teams may have access to the field for pregame warm-ups until at least 22 minutes before the opening kickoff. This may be altered in advance through written mutual agreement of the teams. Game management personnel are responsible for administering this rule."</p>	<p>Addresses an NCAA problem.</p> <p>Rejected as not relevant.</p> <p>If needed, it should be part of competition regulations.</p>

#	Rule	Change	Notes
2.	3-2-4	Play Clock: Reset When Ball Is Not Ready For Play The first sentence of paragraph <i>b-3</i> becomes: “b-3. In the event that the 40-second play clock is running and reads 25 before the ball is ready to be snapped, the referee shall declare a timeout and signal that the play clock be set at 25 seconds.” (The remainder of the paragraph is not changed.)	Give Team A more time when the officials are delayed in spotting the ball. Rejected. Recommendation is to leave it at 20 seconds. This isn't generally a problem in IFAF football.
3.	3-2-4 / 3-3-9	Play Clock: Helmet Comes Off Defensive Player (Rules 3-2-4 and 3-3-9) a. In Rule 3-2-4-c-13, delete: “Exception: If there is an option for a 10-second subtraction in either half, the play clock is set at 25 seconds for any player.” b. In Rule 3-3-9-b-2, delete second sentence: “The play clock will be set at 25 seconds.”	Already the IFAF rule
4.	11-2-1	Number of Officials: Allow up to eight (Rule 11-2-1) Rewrite Article 1 to read: “ARTICLE 1. The game shall be played under the supervision of five, six, seven or eight officials.”	Already the IFAF rule

### 3 Editorial changes

#### 3.1 NCAA reorganisation

1. Relocate 9-3-5 to 9-1-11-d and e
2. Relocate 1-4-2-c to 9-2-2-d
3. Reorganise 9-3-4, 9-3-5 and 9-3-6

#### 3.2 Consolidation

4. Consolidate 3-1-3-g and 8-3-4 into a single item in Rule 10 covering special enforcement of post-possession fouls.