

RULE 12

Video judge

SECTION 1. Philosophy and rationale

Philosophy

ARTICLE 1. Video technology has become ever more available and accessible. IFAF believes that it should be used where possible to assist the on-field officials in getting the call right.

Rationale

ARTICLE 2. The rationale for this includes:

- a. Modern radio technology makes two-way communication between the on-field officials and video judge much easier. We wish to take advantage of that.
- b. Modern technology makes the provision of video much easier. Replay does not have to be limited to games where there is full-scale television coverage.
- c. If there is a stadium screen, the on-field officials should be able to take advantage of any view they can see on it, provided that choice of view is not biased.
- d. We do not want to delay the game unnecessarily, but there is increasing pressure from fans and media for officials to get the call right.
- e. We must make sure that replay is equally available to both teams — it cannot be under the sole control of the home team, for instance.

SECTION 2. Scope of the video judge

Requesting a review

ARTICLE 1. a. At the suggestion of any official (including the video judge), the referee may request a review of any play within scope.

- b. A head coach may request a review by taking a team timeout before the ball is next legally put in play.
 1. After a review has been completed:
 - (a) If any on-field ruling is changed, the team is not charged with a timeout.
 - (b) If the on-field ruling is not changed, the timeout is charged and that team's privilege to request a review is revoked for the remainder of the game.
 2. If the play review being requested is not reviewable (see Rule 12-2-2), the timeout is charged but the team retains the privilege to request a review.
 3. A head coach may not request a review if their **team's timeouts are exhausted or not available** for that half or in that extra period.
 4. A request for a review shall be ignored when the privilege has been revoked or if the **team's timeouts are exhausted or not available**.
 5. A team may not challenge a ruling in which the game was stopped and a decision has already been made by the video judge. However, until the ball is ready for play, a team may challenge an aspect of the same play if that component of the play was not considered by the video judge as part of the initial review.

6. If a team challenges a specific ruling, but a different ruling is changed, the team is not charged with a timeout and does not lose its privilege to challenge.

Approved Ruling 12-2-1

- I. A team requests a review of a particular aspect of the previous play. That aspect of the play is "out of shot" and cannot be seen on replay. (a) No other aspect of the previous play is changed. (b) Another aspect of the previous play is changed. **RULING:** (a) The team is charged with a timeout and loses the privilege to request a review. (b) The team is not charged with a timeout and retains the privilege to request a review. Rule 12-2-1-b has been designed to avoid a situation where a team could gain an advantage by repeatedly requesting reviews of aspects of plays that are not in view.

Reviewable plays

ARTICLE 2. a. A review can only be used for a play in which there is doubt about:

1. a score
 2. the position of the ball in relation to the goal line
 3. a change of team possession
 4. a foul on the list of explicitly reviewable fouls (Rule 12-2-3) (a foul may be created or cancelled)
 5. a disqualification
 6. the status of the ball (e.g. live/dead, touched/untouched), including when and/or where the ball or a player is out of bounds or in an end zone, which player has possession of the ball, whether a pass is forward or backward, whether the ball was passed or fumbled or whether a forward pass is complete/incomplete
 7. whether the player who caught or recovered a fumble was the fumbler
 8. whether a fair catch signal was made or a player of the receiving team advanced after a fair catch signal (a foul may be created or cancelled)
 9. the location of a player with regard to substitutions, illegal passes (including intentional grounding), illegal kicks and handing (a foul may be created or cancelled)
 10. the location of the ball with respect to a first down
 11. the down number within a series of downs or before the next series
 12. clock status
 13. any obvious errors that may have a significant impact on the outcome of the game
- b. A review can equally be used to determine whether a reviewable action occurred or not.
- c. While undertaking a review of a particular aspect of a play, other reviewable aspects may come under consideration. A review can consider any reviewable aspect of the play for which the game was stopped.

Approved Ruling 12-2-2

- I. While reviewing a play to see whether the pass was complete or incomplete, the video judge spots a personal foul by A88. **RULING:** Foul by A88. Team B may accept or decline the penalty once the ruling of complete/incomplete has been finalised.
- II. During a review, the video judge sees clear evidence that the ball carrier was held and their forward progress stopped before the ball was fumbled. **RULING:** The play will be changed with the ball dead at the spot where the ball carrier's progress was stopped. *Unlike other codes of American football, a forward progress ruling (or absence of) is reviewable.*

Explicitly reviewable fouls

ARTICLE 3. The following plays are explicitly reviewable and the video judge may create a foul when there is no call by the on-field officials or cancel a foul called by an on-field official:

- a. A foul that normally carries a 15-yard penalty, including pass interference.

- b. Any foul on a play that ends with less than two minutes of the game remaining or during an extra period.
- c. Player throwing a forward pass or making a forward handoff when the player's entire body and the ball is or has been beyond the neutral zone or after a change of team possession.
- d. Player beyond the neutral zone when kicking the ball.
- e. Blocking by a Team A player before they are eligible to touch the ball on an onside kick.
- f. The number of players on the field for either team during a live ball.
- g. Illegal touching of a forward pass by an originally eligible receiver who has gone out of bounds or touching of a forward pass by an originally ineligible player.
- h. A Team A player going out of bounds during a kick play and returning inbounds during the down, and whether such a player was blocked out of bounds.
- i. Player who is out of bounds touching a free kick that had not been touched inbounds.
- j. Forward pass that becomes illegal as a second forward pass after an on-field ruling of a backward pass is changed.

Approved Ruling 12-2-3

- i. During the last two minutes of the game or during an extra period, the video judge reviews a play and sees clear evidence of a false start prior to the snap. (a) A Team A player advanced the ball for 3 yards. (b) A Team A player fumbled the ball and it was recovered by Team B. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), after the review the play will be changed. A 5-yard penalty will be enforced and Team A will have possession of the ball.

Injured players

ARTICLE 4. The video judge may declare an injury timeout if they observe an injured participant that the on-field officials have not (Rule 3-3-5).

SECTION 3. Procedures

Equipment and personnel

- ARTICLE 1. a. The video judge may use whatever video equipment is reasonably available. The sources of video to be used shall be determined by the video judge before the game. **This may include body-worn cameras.**
- b. When a replay is shown on a stadium screen, the on-field officials may observe it during a review and use clear evidence from it to change a decision. This may include situations when there is no video judge, but the referee has the ability to request a replay to be shown.
 - c. Review will not be used if there is no video judge AND the decision as to which plays to replay on the stadium screen is in the control of only one team.

- d. **If there is no video judge, but there is the capability to use video equipment near the field of play, the referee shall assume the duties of the video judge provided the following conditions apply:**
 - 1. **The equipment to be used in the review is located outside the limit lines on the sideline or end line and must be completely outside the team area. This is a separate secure location away from spectators and sideline personnel. Ideally, it will be in a tent or other shelter to protect it from rain and also direct sunlight on the display equipment.**
 - 2. **The sources of video to be used are determined by the referee before the game, and the referee agrees that the quality of the video obtainable from each source is sufficient for replay to be used effectively.**

3. The referee agrees that the size and resolution of the display equipment to be used at the sideline is sufficient for replay to be used effectively.

Initiating review

- ARTICLE 2. a. A review can be initiated by stopping the game at any time before the ball is next legally put in play. This includes when there is a positive intention by any official to initiate a review, even if the whistle or signal to denote it comes after the ball is snapped or free kicked.
- b. A review can be initiated whenever an official believes that:
1. There is reasonable evidence to believe an error was made in the initial on-field ruling; and
 2. The play is reviewable; and
 3. The outcome of a review would have a direct, competitive impact on the game. Review shall not be used when there would be no competitive impact on the game, including when the running clock rule is in force (Rule 3-3-2).
- c. An official shall not initiate a review in a situation when it would give one team an advantage with respect to time (on either the game clock or play clock).
- d. There is no limit on the number of reviews initiated by the officials nor is there a time limit for a review. However, officials should have regard to the duration of the game and not instigate reviews that have little impact on the game.
- e. Disqualifications may be reviewed at any time since the impact normally includes the player's ability to play in the next game.

Criteria for reversing an on-field ruling

- ARTICLE 3. a. If there is clear, indisputable evidence that a ruling on the field was incorrect or that something within the scope of the review procedure occurred and was missed by the on-field officials, the video judge will advise the on-field officials to change their ruling(s).
- b. If there is other evidence (e.g. not indisputable), the video judge shall inform the on-field officials of the evidence available and give them the opportunity to change their ruling(s) when that evidence is combined with evidence from their own observations. The video judge may not override the judgment of any of the on-field officials, but may advise them. The final determination of fact(s) shall remain with the on-field officials.
- c. An official (usually the referee) may act for any other on-field official who is unable to communicate with the video judge.
- d. When, in the judgment of the video judge, a foul should have been called, the referee may override that judgment if they believe the action as described to them would not have been ruled as a foul if it had been observed by an on-field official. The video judge is subject to the same officiating interpretations and philosophies as the on-field officials.

Information provision

- ARTICLE 4. a. The relevant official should repeat information provided to them by the video judge to ensure that both are satisfied that the on-field official has heard the information correctly.
- b. Normally, an on-field official (or the referee on their behalf) will ask the video judge to answer a specific question of fact.

- c. If a ruling is changed, the video judge shall provide the referee with all pertinent information as needed (next down, distance, yard line, position of the ball, clock status/adjustment) in order to resume play under the correct game conditions.
 1. If the video judge does not know the precise information, an estimate can be used.
 2. If the game clock was running and was stopped solely for a review, it should be adjusted such that no more than 40 seconds can elapse since the end of the previous play.
 3. With less than one minute in either half, if the correct ruling would not have stopped the game clock, then the clock will be reset to the time the ball is declared dead by the video judge. The referee will subtract 10 seconds from the game clock and the game clock will start on the referee's signal. Either team may use a team timeout to avoid the runoff.
 4. If time expires in a half, and the clock would start on the Referee's signal after review, there must be at least 3 seconds remaining when the ball should have been declared dead to restore time to the clock. With 2 seconds or 1 second remaining on the clock, the half is over unless Team A uses a remaining timeout. (This does not impact situations when the clock is stopped and will remain stopped until the snap such as an incomplete pass or a ball carrier out of bounds.)
 5. If the game clock expires at the end of any quarter, either during a down in which it should be stopped by rule through play when the ball becomes dead or after the down upon a request for an available team timeout, the video judge may restore time. In the fourth quarter, this only applies if the score differential is eight points or less (after a touchdown, all potential results of the try down must be considered).
- d. After a review is completed, the referee shall announce that:
 1. the ruling on the field **is confirmed**, if the video evidence confirms the on-field ruling;
 2. the ruling on the field **stands**, if the video evidence is inconclusive;
 3. the ruling on the field **is changed**, why and what the impact of the ruling is, if the video evidence reveals an error occurred.