



**INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION**
OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

FOOTBALL RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS

2024 EDITION

Original material © IFAF 2011-2024

Foreword

The rules are revised each year by IFAF to improve the sport's level of safety and quality of play, and to clarify the meaning and intent of rules where needed. The principles that govern all rule changes are that they must:

- be safe for the participants;
- be applicable at all levels of the sport;
- be coachable;
- be administrable by the officials;
- maintain a balance between offense and defense;
- be interesting to spectators;
- not have a prohibitive economic impact; and
- retain some affinity with the rules adopted by NCAA in the USA.

IFAF statutes require all member federations to play by IFAF rules, except in the following regards:

1. national federations may adapt Rule 1 to meet local needs and circumstances, provided no adaption reduces the safety of the players or other participants;
2. competitions may adjust the rules according to (a) the age group of the participants and (b) the gender of the participants;
3. competition authorities have the right to amend certain specific rules (listed on page 12);
4. national federations may restrict the above so that the same regulations apply to all competitions under their jurisdiction.

These rules apply to all IFAF organised competitions and take effect from 1st March 2024. National federations may adopt them earlier for their domestic competitions.

Prof Jim Briggs, Editor
on behalf of the IFAF Rules Committee
Andy Fuller, Managing Director
Pierre Trochet, President

Those who find it necessary to write to the editor for interpretations of rules or play situations will receive prompt replies if they number their questions and email them to jim.briggs@americanfootball.sport.

The editor would like to thank the following people who assisted in the production of this edition of the rulebook:

Sergio Avila (Mexico), Jeff Batzler (Sweden), Nic Bevan (Great Britain), Tom Blakeson (Great Britain), Amir Brooks (Great Britain), Alan Christopher (Great Britain), Daniel Coles (Great Britain), Erik De Boeck (Belgium), Steve Egan (Great Britain), Will Fazackerley (Great Britain), James Ford-Bannister (Great Britain), Ignacio Galasso (Argentina), Flavio Garlaschi (Italy), David Gutteridge (Great Britain), Daniel Harries Davies (Great Britain), Perttu Hautala (Finland), Thomas Hofbauer (Austria), Jonathan Ireland (Great Britain), Radek Janhuba (Finland), Mark Looi (Australia), Andrea Lopez Rubio (Spain), Andrew Lovell (Great Britain), Ben Lovell (Great Britain), Alistair May (Great Britain), Gerry Mellough (Great Britain), Paul Mercer (Australia), Richard Moger (Great Britain), Dave Moore (Great Britain), Emma Payne (Great Britain), Juan Perez-Canto (France), Elisey Rodriguez, Alexandre Roger (France), Hubert Romanczyk (Poland), Michal Rosival (Czechia), Owen Samuels (Great Britain), Mark Schofield (Great Britain), Ian Sneddon (Great Britain), Paul Sutton (Great Britain), Marcin Szczepanski (Poland), Pete Thom (Great Britain), Frank Thomson (Great Britain), Simon Waterfield (Great Britain), Ozan Emre Yazici (Turkey)

Table of Contents

Rules changes.....	4
Points of emphasis	6
The Football Code.....	9
Rules and Interpretations	12
Rule 1 — The Game, Field, Players and Equipment.....	14
Rule 2 — Definitions	30
Rule 3 — Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions	50
Rule 4 — Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds.....	73
Rule 5 — Series of Downs, Line to Gain	79
Rule 6 — Kicks.....	83
Rule 7 — Snapping and Passing the Ball	99
Rule 8 — Scoring.....	116
Rule 9 — Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules.....	126
Rule 10 — Penalty Enforcement	149
Rule 11 — The Officials: Jurisdiction and Duties	158
Rule 12 — Video judge.....	159
Summary of penalties	164
Officials' Signals.....	173
Appendix A — Guidelines for Game Officials for Serious On-Field Player Injuries.....	176
Appendix B — Guidelines for Game Officials and Game Management To Use Regarding Lightning.....	177
Appendix C — Concussions.....	179
Appendix D — Field Diagrams	181
Appendix E — Equipment: Additional Details	188
Index of Rules and Interpretations	192