



IFAF Rules Committee Memo 2016/1

Officiating mechanics

IFAF has adopted, on the recommendation of the Rules Committee, a change to Rule 11-2-2 regarding officiating mechanics. The new rule reads:

Officiating responsibilities and mechanics are specified in the current edition of the *Manual of Football Officiating*, published by IAFOA. Officials are responsible for knowing and applying the material in the Manual.

NOTE: 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 in international competition. 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).

The purpose of the rule change is to standardise officiating mechanics, especially across different size crews. The IAFOA manual is the only one that covers crew sizes from 3 to 8.

The Rules Committee felt that it was best for officials working international games to do the same things that they do regularly in their domestic games (as far as possible). Since domestic games are frequently officiated by 4 or 5-man crews, or in some countries using larger crews is limited to special occasions, it is important that the responsibilities and tasks associated with the officiating positions change as little as possible. The one exception to this principle is obviously that on larger crews, the responsibilities of the crew can be spread out over more people and each individual official can therefore have less to do.

It is a recipe for disaster for officials who are working in their national competitions for most weeks of the year to have to switch to a somewhat arbitrarily different set of mechanics for the one or two weeks of the year when they work international competition.

We hope that in due course all national federations and/or officiating organisations will choose to standardise their mechanics and so facilitate the effectiveness of their officials in international competitions. We recognise that this will be difficult for organisations in USA, Canada and Japan to adopt.

The IAFOA manual is the one previously known as the "BAFRA" manual. An IAFOA Mechanics Committee will be established, based on the existing international advisory committee that has determined recent versions. A revised version will be available shortly.

What IFAF is doing here is simply standardising the way that games are officiated. No other major international sport has different positioning requirements for its

officials. American football outside the USA (and Canada and Japan for historic reasons) should be no different.

Dr Jim Briggs
Chair, IFAF Rules Committee
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