



**INTERNATIONAL  
FEDERATION**  
OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

# **IFAF rule changes 2022**

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## **Why are IFAF rules different from NCAA rules?**

- IFAF as a world governing body needs to be independent of "private" organisations
  - linked to our striving for IOC recognition
- NCAA rules are becoming increasingly specialised to Division 1 college football:
  - respond to issues highlighted at that level that are not necessarily our biggest issues
  - increasingly dependent on instant replay

## **We have needs that NCAA doesn't have**

- Different formats:
  - Small-sided formats
  - Flag football
  - Wheelchair football (soon)
- Different players:
  - Women's football
  - Junior football
- Practical problems:
  - Stadiums that are too short to fit a full-sized field
  - Fields that are not perfectly marked out
  - No stadium game or play clocks
  - Players that are inexperienced
  - Inadequate number of officials
- Translating rules into languages other than English

## The IFAF rules process

- Two parallel structures (tackle and flag)
  - A rules contact in every national federation
    - to act as the focal point for communication about rules
    - to act as the local expert
    - to raise issues for interpretation
    - to propose rules changes
- IFAF Rules Committee
  - oversees process
  - helps meet equality and diversity goals
  - recommend rulebook to IFAF Executive Board for ratification
- Contacts:
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  - [wolfgang.geyer@americanfootball.sport](mailto:wolfgang.geyer@americanfootball.sport) (flag)



## **State of the rules 2022**

- 10 NCAA changes
  - 7 from 2020 and 3 from 2021
- 7 IFAF-specific changes
  - but 3 were NCAA-inspired

## **Substitutions (Rule 3-5-3)**

- Team B having >11 players on the field
- Old rule:
  - wait until just before the snap, then flag it (dead-ball foul)
    - unless you miss it 😊 (and it becomes a live-ball foul)
- New rule:
  - flag after snap (always live-ball foul)
- Simplify application
- Exception (IFAF rule 3-5-3-c covers NCAA AR 3-5-3:VII):
  - play clock runs out and Team B has >11 players on field
  - penalise B for SUB rather than A for DOG

## Extra periods (Rule 3-1-3)

- Aim is to shorten long games (safety of tired players)
- Change 1
  - Old rule: From 3<sup>rd</sup> extra period, teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point try
  - New rule:
    - From 2<sup>nd</sup> extra period, teams scoring a touchdown must attempt a two-point try
- Change 2
  - Old rule: Keep playing extra periods from B-25
  - New rule:
    - Still do that for up to 2 extra periods
    - From 3<sup>rd</sup> extra period, have one two-point try play (B-3)

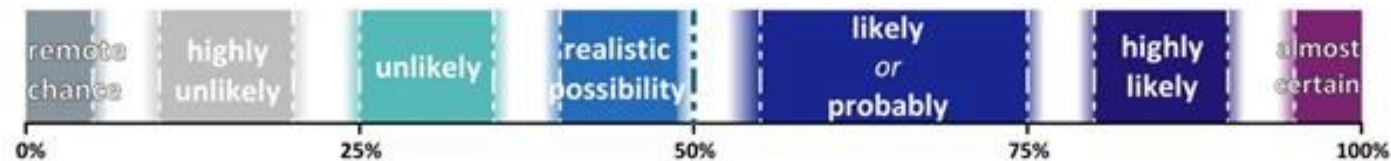
## **Extending periods (3-2-3)**

- In addition to the existing list of reasons, add:
  - carry-over fouls after score:
    - foul on field goal treated same as foul on touchdown
  - illegal touching violation
- Offended team has the option of whether to extend the period if the penalty involves loss of down or illegal touching violation



## Targeting (9-1-3 and 9-1-4)

- Delete words: "When in question, it is a foul"
  - Also disregard MOFO M6.1.30
- This is a player safety foul – why change it?
  - NCAA now insists that all targeting fouls are confirmed by replay
  - call on field can never "stand"
  - this is the nearest we can do, though not exactly the same
- What do we do when there is doubt?
  - MOFO 6.1 principles ("reasonably sure")
  - scientific advice to UK government





## **Penalty enforcement**

- Penalty enforcement after TD/FG can carry over to succeeding spot in extra periods (Rule 10-2-5)
- Apply the penalty enforcement carry-over to ALL personal fouls, not just flagrant ones (10-2-7-a)
  - ensures opportunity to enforce all personal fouls

## Player numbering and equipment

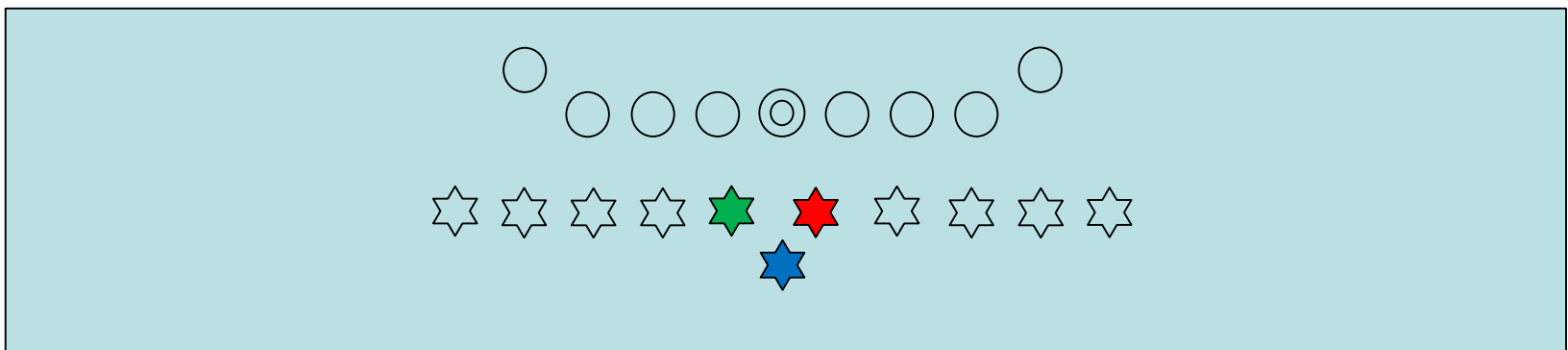
- 0 is now a legal player number (1-4-2-a)
  - ensure systems recognise it
- No 2 players may wear the same jersey number (9-2-2-f)
- Concurrently worn jersey allowed (1-4-5-a-1)
  - anything below waistline (e.g. T-shirt) should be tucked in
- Numbers must be centred on the back and front of the jersey (1-4-5-c-1)
  - no logos within 1 inch of the numerals (aids visibility)
- Jersey colour foul (1-4-5-b), each half:
  - existing rule: 15-yard penalty following opening kickoff
  - now: also charge team timeout at start of each quarter
- Philosophy for application of these rules

## Feigning injuries

- NCAA (2021) added (3-3-5-b):
  - *Feigning an injury for any reason is unethical.*
  - *An injured player must be given full protection under the rules, but feigning an injury is dishonest, unsportsmanlike and contrary to the spirit of the rules.*
  - *For questionable game action, a team or an official has the option to report the matter to the relevant disciplinary authority, who may choose to take action against the player(s) and coach(es) involved.*
  - *Attention is directed to the statement in "The Football Code" (Coaching Ethics).*
- IFAF also made feigning an injury an explicit unsportsmanlike act (9-2-2)

## Protecting the snapper (6-3-14)

- Long snappers are still vulnerable to injury
- New rule:
  - if Team A in scrimmage kick formation
    - so, punts and field goal attempts
  - any Team B player <1 yard from line of scrimmage must be aligned outside frame of body of snapper





## **Field markings (1-2-4-a)**

- Team Area and Coaching Box now extended to 20-yard lines
  - (COVID rules may extend it further)

## Instant replay/video judge (12-3-4-c-4)

- New rule:
  - "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 has a time out remaining.
  - (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.)"
- Prevents Team A from gaining an unfair advantage by calling a review at end of half
  - Team A can still call a review and will be OK if the ruling is changed (or have a timeout and time > 0)



# **EDITORIAL CHANGES**



## **Selected editorial changes 1**

- "Lighting system operators" now subject to the rules (1-1-6-b)
- Displaced pylon: only parts behind goal line are behind goal line (1-2-6-d)
- Disqualify eavesdroppers on officials' radios (1-4-13-c)
- Tee on free kick: ball must be touching tee (2-16-4-b)
- Restriction on Team A player out of bounds only applies during kick (6-1-11 and 6-3-12)
- Restrictions on crossing neutral zone for forward hander now same as for forward passer (7-1-6-a)
- Leaping: include "apparent" kicks (9-1-11)

## Selected editorial changes 2

- Change (9-4-1 and 9-4-4 Penalty)
  - "No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick *is beyond* the neutral zone" becomes
  - "No loss of down if the foul occurs when a legal scrimmage kick has crossed the neutral zone".
- Additional reviewable plays (12-2-2)
  - whether ball passed or fumbled
  - whether fumble recovered by fumbler
  - whether fair catch signal made or ball advanced



Printed copies (from Lulu) available via  
<http://www.myiafoa.org/rules/printedrulebook.html>

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**THANK YOU**