



**INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION**
OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

IFAF rule changes 2023

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IAFOA website

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 - <http://www.myiafoa.org/>
- Original documents in PDF and HTML formats
- Translations

- Joining IAFOA is free
- Access to the discussion forum
 - though most discussion is on the Instant Replay Facebook group
- You must pick a username that includes your full real name

State of the rules 2023

- 6 NCAA changes from 2022
- 6 IFAF-specific changes
 - 1 of which is an "old" NCAA change we didn't adopt earlier



Blocking below the waist 1 (Rule 9-1-6)

- Safety of player's knees
- NCAA has changed this every couple of years forever
- This year is a MAJOR change
 - but considerable simplification, especially for officials

Blocking below the waist 2 (Rule 9-1-6)

- Team A
 - Linemen completely inside the tackle box may legally BBW inside the tackle box on their initial line charge
 - Tackle box considered to stretch 1 yard beyond line of scrimmage
 - previously we allowed 3 yards (free blocking zone)
 - After initial charge, they may BBW only if the force is directed from the front ("10 to 2")
 - Stationary backs within tackle box may BBW only if the force is directed from the front
 - Once the ball has left the tackle box, nobody can BBW
 - No player outside the tackle box may BBW

Blocking below the waist 3 (Rule 9-1-6)

- Simplifies things from an officiating standpoint:
 - Don't have to worry about initial line charge
 - Thereafter, only need look for BBW in TB that is not 10 to 2
 - Those who can BBW is defined at the snap
 - lineman and backs stationary inside TB
 - no need to keep track of players
 - if they leave the TB and re-enter, they can BBW
 - motion man or anyone lined up wide can't BBW
 - Any BBW outside tackle box is a foul, so no worries about:
 - whether it was >5 yards downfield
 - whether block was towards position of ball at snap
 - Any BBW after the ball has left TB is a foul
 - even if the ball re-enters the TB



Blocking below the waist 4 (Rule 9-1-6)

- Team B
 - Only stationary Team B players lined up immediately opposite offensive linemen (inside tackle box) may BBW
 - All other Team B BBWs are a foul (except against ball carriers or simulated ball carrier)
- Simplifies things from an officiating standpoint:
 - Don't have to worry about initial line charge
 - Any BBW after that or elsewhere on field is a foul

Penalty enforcement changes

- Illegal block after fair catch signal (Rule 6-5-4)
 - now 10 yard penalty (was 15)
 - still 15 if the contact is a personal foul
- Illegal touching of a forward pass (Rule 7-3-11)
 - add "loss of down" to 5-yard penalty
- Unsportsmanlike conduct on pass play (Rules 7-3-12 and 9-2-1)
 - UC fouls can now be tagged on to play (like personal fouls)
- Defensive holding (Rule 9-3-4)
 - add "automatic first down" in all cases
 - previously only applied if pass crossed neutral zone

Substitutions (Rule 3-5-3-c)

- Last year we made >11 players on Team B a live-ball foul
- With an exception:
 - if play clock runs out and Team B has >11 players on field
 - penalise B for SUB rather than A for DOG
- This year, added to that:
 - "(or at :05 or less and Team A calls a timeout)"
 - penalise B because Team A was probably confused
 - don't charge the timeout (unless Team A wants it anyway)

Minimum time for a play (Rule 3-2-5)

- Two scenarios at the end of a period (and clock on the ready):
 - a. If the game clock is stopped and will start on the referee's signal with three or more seconds remaining in the quarter, the offense may reasonably expect to throw the ball directly to the ground (Rule 7-3-2-e) and have enough time for another play.
 - b. With two seconds or one second on the game clock there is enough time for only one play."
- Notes:
 - can only apply when the game clock starts on the ready for play
 - still requires Team A to spike the ball effectively
- We can now introduce this NCAA 2013 rule change because we can time games more accurately



25-second clock after touchdown (Rule 3-2-4-c-8)

- In 2019, we changed to a 40-second clock after a touchdown
- This was reasonable for Team A
 - it was driving for a score and would not be surprised
- Judged to be a bit unfair on Team B
 - it would be slightly surprised to score (on a return)
- Now, a 25-second play clock applies after a Team B score

Fake slide (Rule 4-1-3-r)

- "Ball is dead when a ball carrier obviously begins a feet-first slide"
 - this has been the rule since 2018
- Now add:
 - "begins, simulates or fakes"
- Means that ball carrier can not now unfairly take advantage of a rule intended to protect them from a hit

Player equipment (Rule 1-4-6)

- **Gloves (Rule 1-4-6-b):**
 - Deleted "and that completely covers each finger and thumb"
 - Permits fingerless gloves
- **Eye shields (Rule 1-4-6-c):**
 - "Eyewear is not clear if it obscures a player's eyes at any time from any angle or in any light condition.
 - 'Mirrored' eyewear is expressly prohibited."

Goals (Rule 1-2-5)

- Goal post padding has been mandatory for some time
- Occasionally, the goal posts are so far outside the field that they are not a safety hazard
- Rule change does not require padding if goal post is:
 - more than 12 feet beyond the end line
 - outside a non-hazardous barrier that would stop players running into the post

Yardage markers (Rule 1-2-8-e)

- (Strictly this is an editorial change)
- The yardage markers on the goal lines must be 18 feet outside the sideline (or removed)
 - Officials' safety

Points of emphasis 1

- Sideline control
 - Coaches who enter the field of play or leave the team area to debate officiating decisions have committed unsportsmanlike conduct
 - Coaches can temporarily step to the sideline to call plays after all action has ceased
 - Coaches are expected to set an example to their players and fans
- Disconcerting signals
 - Officials should pay special attention to sounds and actions that could create a disruption to the offense's starting signal or cause the offense to false start
 - defense may move but not quick, abrupt movements
 - cannot use words or signals that interfere with offensive signals
 - that includes clapping

Points of emphasis 2

- Sportsmanship
 - Head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team
 - avoid confrontations before, during and after the game
- Football code:
 - A coach must not permit anyone on their team or sideline to address uncomplimentary remarks to any official during the progress of a game, or to indulge in conduct which might incite players or spectators against the officials.



EDITORIAL CHANGES

Penalty code changes

- Instead of TGT, use
 - TGC for Rule 9-1-3 targeting (crown of helmet)
 - TGD for Rule 9-1-4 targeting (defenceless player)
 - TGB if both
 - Enable us to track targeting more effectively
- New codes to distinguish types of OPI, DPI and OFH
 - e.g. OFH-GR, OFH-HR, OFH-TD
- Use UC-DBS for dead-ball shoving

Selected editorial changes 1

- Chains must be made from material that does not stretch or break in normal use (1-2-7-a)
- Area for insignia/logos on jerseys can now be up to 16 square inches (1-4-6-d)
- Coaches communication (1-4-11-b)
 - If booths provided, should be approximately same for each team
 - Coaches cannot communicate from outside playing enclosure
- Emphasised that drones can't be used to film the game (1-4-11-g)
 - Where there is no stadium, dome or stands, 150m (165yds) from participants/spectators is the safety distance for drones
 - Based on UK CAA guidance

Selected editorial changes 2

- Adds "offensive player in a passing posture" to definition of a defenceless player (2-27-14-a)
- Don't extend a period for a foul during a running clock session (3-2-3 or 3-3-2)
- Clarification of wording on whether 25- or 40-second clock applies after an injury or a player losing their helmet (3-2-4-c, 3-3-5-e and 3-3-9-b)
- Don't play unnecessary tries in extra periods (as well as in the fourth quarter) (8-3-2-a)
- New signal for blind-side block S28
- Revised definition of crown of helmet: 6-inch radius from top (9-1-3)
- Having possession of the ball outside the tackle box ends kicker's RTK protection (9-1-16-a-4)

Selected editorial changes 3 (video review)

- A team can't re-review something that has already been reviewed by the video judge
 - but they could ask to review another aspect of the same play
 - last opportunity for re-review is the ready for play
- Position of ball in relation to the goal line is reviewable
 - adds touchbacks to touchdowns and safeties
- Video judge can rule forward progress
 - not so in NCAA and NFL
- Kicking team players out of bounds can be reviewed
- Video judge should restore time in the fourth quarter if the result is still in doubt



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THANK YOU