



**INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION**
OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

FOOTBALL RULES AND INTERPRETATIONS

2026 EDITION

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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 11);
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 2026. National federations may adopt them earlier for their domestic competitions.

Prof Jim Briggs, Editor
on behalf of the IFAF Rules Committee
Javier L'Episcopo
on behalf of the IFAF Board

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 send them to **jim.briggs@americanfootball.sport** by email.

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