



**INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION**
OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

IFAF rule changes 2026

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Useful links for IFAF rules and mechanics

- <http://www.myiafoa.org/>
 - All IFAF rules and IAFOA mechanics go on there first
- <https://iafoa.freeforums.net/>
 - To join you must choose an account name of the format "Firstname Lastname" – all other registrations are rejected
 - Important changes are announced there
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1493279194263112>
 - INSTANT REPLAY
 - Most announcements are replicated there
 - Group also contains MANY non-IFAF officials
 - Group is subject to Facebook's policies and whims



State of the rules 2026

- 10 NCAA changes from 2025
 - some others not adopted (all in Rule 1)
- 0 IFAF-specific changes



Injury timeouts (3-3-6-a-1)

- "If a player presents as injured after the ball is spotted by officials, that team will be charged a team timeout or a delay penalty if all timeouts have been used"
- Emphasise:
 - either team
 - any time during the game - not just last 2 minutes
- Mechanics:
 - If an injured player is observed before the ball is spotted, even if the injury timeout is only granted *after* the ball is spotted, no timeout should be charged to their team.
 - Crew communication is important to establish when a player was first observed as injured.
 - If in doubt, the injury was observed before the ball was spotted.



Extra period timing changes (3-1-3-h)

- "Each team will be allowed one timeout beginning with the third extra period until the game is ended"
- Not one each period, as before
- Also,
 - "Radio and television timeouts are permitted only after the first and second extra periods."
 - "In the absence of a media timeout, after the second ~~and fourth~~ extra period, there will be a two-minute mandatory break period."



Substitution foul clock adjustment (3-5-3-b)

- If:
 - after the two-minute warning in either half
 - Team B has 12 or more players participate in a down
- Then:
 - penalise Team B AND option to reset game clock to time of snap
 - clock then starts on snap
- Doesn't apply if the 12th player was merely exiting the field
- This counters misuse of substitution as a time-wasting tactic



Disconcerting signals (7-1-5-a-5)

- "No person subject to the rules shall use words or signals that disconcert opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. No person subject to the rules may call defensive signals that simulate the sound or cadence of, or otherwise interfere with, offensive starting signals. The terms "move" and "stem" are reserved for defensive cadence and may not be used by the offense. The offense may use a "clap" as a starting signal and this signal may not be used by the defense."
- Allocation of noises!:
 - ONLY 2 words reserved for defense; offense can say anything else
 - Clap reserved for offense - a foul if used by defense
- RA4.7 / MOFO 3.4.7 cover application of this



Defensive restrictions (7-1-5-a-4)

- Clarifying wording on defensive movement before the snap
- "No player within one yard of the line of scrimmage (stationary or not) may make quick and abrupt or exaggerated actions that simulate action at the snap, and are not part of normal defensive player movement in an obvious attempt to make the offense foul (false start)."
- Also covered by RA4.7 / MOFO 3.4.7



Scrimmage kick formation changes (2-16-10-a, 6-3-14-a and 9-1-14)

- 2-16-10-a:
 - "A scrimmage kick formation is a formation with no player other than the potential kicker (or holder) aligned within the frame of the body of the snapper and no player aligned in the clear path from the snapper to the potential kicker (or holder), and with either (1) at least one potential kicker seven or more yards behind the neutral zone; ..."
 - Not SKF if anyone between snapper and kicker/holder
 - Previously it was SKF unless player able to receive hand-to-hand snap
- 6-3-14-a and 9-1-14:
 - In SKF, if the snapper is on the end of the line, they lose protection as the snapper:
 - 6-3-14-a - not a foul for a Team B player to be aligned over them
 - 9-1-14 - not a foul to initiate contact within one second of snap



Other rule changes

- 2-8-3-b (fair catch):
 - A "T" signal is now defined as an invalid fair catch signal
- 9-1-9-a (roughing the passer):
 - Provisions 1, 2 & 4 now *also* apply BEFORE the pass is thrown
 1. Targeting fouls
 2. Forcible contact to the head or neck area that does not meet the requirements of Rule 9-1-4
 4. Forcibly driving the forward passer to the ground and landing on them with action that punishes the player
 - "includes contact to an offensive player who is in a passing posture"
- 10-2-2-b (fouls behind the neutral zone)
 - UC joins OH, IUH, PF on list of fouls penalised from previous spot



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EDITORIAL CHANGES



Selected editorial changes

- Safety zones defined as anywhere within 18 feet of the playing surface (1-2-3)
 - no spectators or media
 - no objects on ground
 - no people with limited mobility
- Inadvertent whistle rules (4-1-2)
 - clarify that "continuing action" ends if ball: touches anything that shouldn't be on field; becomes illegal; ends up with an official
 - any foul during continuing action is treated as a live-ball foul
- Simulating "brandishing a weapon" is a specific unsportsmanlike act (9-2-1-a-1-c) (not just "firing")



Officials' responsibilities (11-2-2)

- "From 2028, only officials who regularly use the latest approved mechanics will be considered for international tournaments. "Latest mechanics" will be the newest edition of the Manual of Football Officiating, or the previous edition for up to 12 months after its replacement."
- Exceptions: USA, Canada, Mexico and Japan."
- Rules Application now replicated in both the MOFO and the rulebook



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THANK YOU