

BAFA rule changes 2020

This list contains all BAFA rule changes adopted for 2020, including those made by IFAF. It also lists some of the most significant editorial changes.

With "importance to teams" (ITT) and "importance to officials" (ITO) indicated. 5 is high; 1 is low.



1 Rule changes

#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change	ITT	ITO
1.	1-2-6	<p>Add:</p> <p>"a. A displaced pylon is one that is no longer in its proper position. Unless it is obvious that at least some part of the pylon is touching the ground in the 4-inch by 4-inch square that is its proper position, the pylon is no longer a pylon for the purposes of the rules (e.g. Rule 8-2-1-a). A displaced pylon may be restored to its proper position at any time.</p> <p>b. Touching a displaced pylon that is partially or completely out of bounds makes the ball or player out of bounds (Rule 4-2).</p> <p>c. A displaced pylon that is completely inbounds is no longer a pylon and is to be considered as part of the playing surface.</p> <p>d. A displaced goal line pylon that is partially in its proper position is still to be regarded as a goal line pylon for the purposes of the rules.</p> <p>e. If a goal line pylon cannot be stood upright, it should be positioned so that it lies on the goal line extended out of bounds with its base covering the sideline.</p> <p>f. If an end line pylon cannot be stood upright, it should be positioned so that it lies on the sideline extended out of bounds with its base covering the end line. "</p>	Address issues of interpretation should a pylon be displaced from its proper position.	1	3
2.	2-3-7	<p>Define "blind-side block".</p> <p>"A blind-side block is an open field block against an opponent that is initiated from outside the opponent's field of vision, or otherwise in such a manner that the opponent cannot reasonably defend himself against the block."</p>	Definition for use in Rule 9-1-18 (below).	5	5
3.	2-34-1-a	Change definition of tackle box so that (like the free blocking zone) it centres on the middle lineman.	Simplification. it is an unnecessary complication to have the two zones defined differently, especially when 99% of the time the snapper is the middle lineman and the two zones do coincide.	1	2
4.	3-1-3-e	<p>Possession series adjusted starting with fifth extra period.</p> <p>Instead of the existing series from the B-25, the extra period will simply be a try down from the B-3.</p>	<p>Attempt to resolve an exceedingly long game more quickly.</p> <p>By this stage, the players may be very tired and it is in their safety interests to get a result in the game more quickly.</p>	2	2

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#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change	ITT	ITO
5.	3-1-3-i	Mandatory break period established in 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."	Health and safety of players by giving them a rest if the game is extended.	2	2
6.	3-3-2-g-1	Delete the exception: "The clock starts by normal rule on the free kick or snap following the play in which the relevant score margin is reached."	This is an unneeded exception. It is simpler in all scenarios for the clock to start on the ready for play on the free kick.	2	4
7.	6-1-10	Illegal wedge formation redefined as two or more players. Also no foul for an illegal wedge if there is no return.	Player safety by making it slightly easier for a kicking team player to avoid a block.	4	4
8.	6-5-1	Free kicks fair caught behind the touchback spot will be put in play at the touchback spot. Consequent change to 6-5-3-a gives the same status to an invalid signal.	This implements last year's NCAA change. Encourages fair catches on free kicks rather than attempting a runback, thus making this phase of the game slightly safer.	3	3
9.	9-1-18	Blind-side block foul and penalty established. "No player shall deliver a blind-side block by attacking an opponent with forcible contact." The ball carrier or a receiver attempting a catch are exceptions to this rule.	Safety. Reduce the incidence of forcible contact that a player does not see coming. Note that this does not prohibit <i>all</i> blind-side blocks – only those with "forcible contact".	5	5
10	Appendix E.5	Amend to "Therapeutic or preventive knee braces <u>should</u> be worn under the pants and entirely covered from direct external exposure."	Previously this said "must", but this rule is frequently ignored even at the highest (NCAA) level. This will remove the need for officials to enforce it.	3	2

2 Editorial changes

This list includes only significant editorial changes. All deletions, corrected errors, clarifications due to interpretation and items rewritten for readability are marked in the rulebook.

#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change
1.	1-2-1-a-2 *	The field of play shall be marked to a length of not less than <u>80</u> yards.	Makes 80-yard fields legal.
2.	AR 1-4-9:IV	New AR: "An official discovers a player wearing illegal equipment or not wearing mandatory equipment. RULING: The official notifies the player that he must leave the game. The official is not to stop either the game clock or the play clock. If possible, the referee will use his microphone to make a brief announcement identifying the player and his team and the reason why he must leave the field. This announcement should be made from the referee's position to officiate the next play, and must not delay the start of the next play.	Emphasise that equipment issues need to be dealt with without stopping either clock. Also provides a route to keeping spectators informed of why a player has been made to leave the field, but only if possible to do so.
3.	1-4-11	Monitor allowed on sideline for medical staff only. We have broadened the NCAA rule to cover team <u>and game management</u> medical personnel and also to apply to all <u>participants</u> .	Marginally adds to safety of participants. Not likely to be available often in IFAF football, but we would not wish to prohibit it if available.

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#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change
4.	2-4-1-a, 2-4-3-a-1	Player possession clarified: must be using hands or arms. Catch, interception, recovery clarified: must be using hands or arms	Clarification that to possess a ball, control must be with the player's hand or arms, i.e. one cannot "control" the ball with ones feet.
5.	2-19-2-b	Forward pass further defined. Not a forward pass if the player clearly starts to bring the ball back to his body.	Make it a fumble if the player clearly stops attempting to throw a pass.
6.	3-3-7-a	"A charged full team timeout requested by any player or head coach shall be one minute plus the five-second referee notification and the 25-second play clock interval."	NCAA realised a mistake they made in 2018 in removing the 5-second notification period. For IFAF, this is just a rewording.
7.	4-1-3-b Exceptions	When there is an inadvertent whistle and in the immediate continuing action the ball goes out of bounds (or a forward pass incomplete, or a kick into Team B's end zone) then the inadvertent whistle can be ignored.	Fill gap in rule. We should treat the ball becoming "dead" in the immediate continuing action the same way we treat an immediate recovery – i.e. ignore the IW. In particular, Team A should not get to repeat the down. This is prompted by NCAA changes to Rule 12-3-3.
8.	4-2-4-d	Forward progress of a striding runner codified as being that of any other airborne player.	Clarification
9.	7-2-4:IV	New AR: "On fourth down at the B-7, A20 fumbles the ball at the B-5 and the bouncing ball is batted towards B's end line at the B-3 by B40. The ball is recovered in the end zone by A23. RULING: Team A should not benefit from a fourth-down forward fumble, so when A23 recovers it, it is returned to the spot of the fumble. B's ball at the B-5. The bat is legal so can be ignored."	Clarifies whether this is a turnover on downs or a safety.
10	7-3-10	Exception added to ineligible receiver downfield rule. No foul if the passer is legally throwing the ball away and the ball lands near or beyond the sideline.	Effectively to ignore this. Puts into rule what officials have been doing for some time.
11	9-1-6-b-1	Team B blocking below the waist clarified. Emphasise that to be legal, a Team B block must be directed from the front.	Clarification
12	9-1-11-b	Change to "It is a foul if a defensive player moves forward and tries to block a kick <u>or apparent kick</u> "	Makes it unnecessary for the ball to be kicked in order for leaping to be a foul.
13	10-1-1-a	"A penalty is completed when it is accepted, declined, <u>offset</u> or cancelled according to rule, or when the choice is obvious to the referee."	Make explicit that offsetting means that a penalty is completed.
14	12-2-2-a-11	Clarification on limitations of reviewable plays. Replace "egregious errors" with "obvious errors that may have a significant impact on the outcome of the game".	Clarification. This better defines what an egregious error is.

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#	Rule	Change	Rationale for change
15	13-4-1 *	<p>New AR:</p> <p>"Competition regulations state that the away team must provide at least one officials' assistant. At the scheduled kickoff time, no assistant has been provided by the away team. RULING: The game cannot start without a minimum of 5 officials' assistants and it will be up to Game Management to find the away team's contributor. Normally, if the kickoff is delayed for game management reasons, we would penalise the home team 10 yards for delay of game. However, because the delay is due to the away team not providing their personnel, this is regarded as one of the "circumstances beyond the control of the home management" that mean the penalty is waived (Rule 3-4-1-b)."</p>	<p>If the away team has to provide an officials' assistant (chain crew or ball boy), the home team won't be penalised for any delay caused by the away team.</p>

* BAFA only

In addition, approved rulings revised in CFO Bulletins 1 and 2 (2019) have been incorporated into the rules.