



GRIDIRON AUSTRALIA

2020 Playing Rules

Adoption of IFAF Playing Rules 2020

As a member of IFAF, Gridiron Australia makes use of the IFAF Playing Rules. The IFAF Playing Rules are based on NCAA Rules, with changes suitable for the level of competition outside of the NCAA.

The IFAF Playing Rules are further adjusted for use in games in Australia. A separate document, covering additional adjustments for '9 on 9' games, exists and should be read in conjunction with this document. Where there is conflict between the two the adjustments in this document take precedence. All Gridiron Australia members use these rules as a starting point.

Gridiron Australia will also develop a rule set for '7 on 7' games which will be published in due course.

Adjustments marked * are applicable to local (state) league games only and do not apply to 'national' level games or competitions unless specified in the rules for those games or competitions.

Adjustments by individual competitions

Adjustments to game rules are discouraged but for particular circumstances they are allowed.

Adjustments that reduce the safety of the game or change it significantly (other than as a result of the reduction in the number of players) will not be approved.

The procedure to obtain approval is as follows:

1. Requests must come from the executive of a state league.
2. Send an email to the AGOA Rules and Mechanics coordinator (rules@ago.org.au) and explain what you have in mind. They will discuss with you the workability of your proposal and ensure that the language is clear and your proposal will be enforceable. They may alternatively advise you not to make the change and explain why.
3. Send a request to the Gridiron Australia Secretary (secretary@ga.org.au) who will submit your proposal to the board and notify you of the outcome.

COVID-19 considerations

It is primarily a league/game management responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with local regulations, social distancing rules and advice and for officials to be aware of what this advice means practically for the safe conduct of the game. The referee shall take an official's timeout to make game management/teams aware of any breaches of the restrictions and, if necessary, suspend the game in accordance with rule 3-3-3.

Rule 1 The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

- 1) The official score for a game is whatever the final score is [Rule 1-1-3-a].
 - * For the purpose of tie-breakers in league tables, the maximum game points differential shall be 35 points. The actual score of the game is to be recorded as the official score. For example;
 - *Example 1: Team A beats Team B 44-0 This is the official (recorded) score and is reflected in the 'Points for' and 'Points against' columns in the league tables. The points differential for tie-break purposes will be 35.*
 - *Example 2: Team A beats Team B 56-20 This is the official (recorded) score and is reflected in the 'Points for' and 'Points against' columns in the league tables. The points differential for tie-break purposes will also be 35.*
 - *Example 3: Team A beats Team B 54-20 This is the official (recorded) score and is reflected in the 'Points for' and 'Points against' columns in the league tables. The points differential for tie-break purposes will be 34.*
- 2) When playing on a rugby field with goal posts 100 metres apart (109.36 yards). The field should be marked as 90 yards. Each end zone should be 9.68 yards. The goal posts must be at the back of the end zone. The 'IFAF yard' [Rule 1-2-1-a] should not be used.
- 3) The IFAF rules regarding stadium roofs [Rule 1-2-1-n and 1-2-1-o] shall be disregarded. If a ball hits anything above the field, the inadvertent whistle provisions of rule 4-1-3-k will apply, the ball becomes dead and an official shall sound their whistle.
- 4) The specification of rugby goal posts is 1 inch narrower and 2 inches lower than Gridiron goal posts [Rule 1-2-5-a]. This is acceptable and no adjustment is required.
- 5) The IFAF rule regarding missing goal posts [Rule 1-2-5-f] shall be disregarded. If goal posts are not available at both ends of the field, the game will be played with no field goals scored at either end.

Rule 3 Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

- 6) The intermission between halves shall be 15 minutes [Rule 3-2-1-b].
- 7) The IFAF rules around starting time before darkness [Rule 3-2-1-c, d and e] shall be disregarded. Any game may be shortened as follows:
 - Before the game starts:** Subject to point 8 below, playing time and the intermission between halves may be shortened *by the referee* if he is of the opinion that darkness or other conditions may interfere with the game. The four periods must be of equal length if the game is shortened before its start [Rule 3-2-2].
 - Any time during the game:** The playing time of any remaining period or periods and the intermission between halves may be shortened *by mutual agreement of the opposing head coaches and the referee* [Rule 3-2-2-a].
- 8) * Where kickoff is delayed is delayed by 2 or more minutes because of the Host Club or one of the competing teams, the playing time of each quarter shall be reduced by 1 minute per quarter for each 3 minutes or part thereof the game is delayed beyond 2 minutes of the scheduled kickoff time. After a delay of more than 14 minutes the game shall be declared a forfeit.

Rule 7 Snapping and Passing the ball

9) * Team A must have at least five offensive linemen numbered 50-79 to start a game but is permitted to replace one or more of those during the game with a player wearing an eligible number (1-49 and 80-99) where an interior lineman is either:

- injured, required to leave the field under the 'helmet off' rule or for illegal equipment or,
- removed by the Head Coach for disciplinary reasons (i.e. they have just incurred either a personal or unsportsmanlike conduct foul) or,
- disqualified

and the team has no other interior linemen numbered 50-79. An interior lineman is a lineman who is not on the end of their line of scrimmage.

Officials are required to monitor that teams do not take advantage of this variation as a means of 'resting' linemen.

Rule 9 Conduct of Players and Others Subject to the Rules

10) * Where a player is disqualified for fighting or a flagrant personal foul, they will be suspended for the next scheduled game their team plays.

11) * Where a player is disqualified for targeting and the disqualification is not reversed at some point before the next scheduled game in which their team plays, the player will be suspended for that next scheduled game.

12) * State Leagues may conduct their own tribunal and impose further sanction or specify their own level of sanction without requiring Gridiron Australia approval.

Rule 12 Video Review of Targeting Calls

Gridiron Australia games do not typically make use of instant replay or video judge rules. Competitions that have suitable video facilities and at least 6 cameras may elect to use the IFAF Video judge rule. Otherwise and by default, Rule 12 is replaced with the following procedures to allow video review of targeting calls.

SECTION 1. Procedures

ARTICLE 1. Where a player is disqualified for targeting, the Referee will inform the Head Coach that the disqualification will be reversed and the player allowed to return if indisputable video evidence is available to show that the call was incorrect. The 15-yard penalty will be enforced and the game will continue.

- a. It is the responsibility of the disqualified players team to source and provide the video evidence. Any agreements between teams to share video are outside the scope of this rule and will not be adjudicated by game officials.
- b. Only one review will be conducted during the game per targeting call. It is the responsibility of the team to ensure the best quality angles and video are available before requesting a review. If the video quality is not sufficient to clearly show that the disqualification was incorrect, then the review will be denied and no further review during the game will be permitted.
- c. If the request to review is made before the video has been found or is ready, the request will be denied and no further review of the call in question will be permitted during the game.
- d. Any decision made by the Referee or the Officiating Supervisor is final.
- e. When a return is allowed the Referee will inform the opposing head coach and announce the return.

SECTION 2. Officiating Supervisor Video Review

ARTICLE 1. Where an Officiating Supervisor has been appointed by the relevant assigning body, they may conduct a review while the game continues. If they determine that the disqualification was incorrect, they will inform the Referee the next time the game clock is stopped, after which the player will be allowed to return.

ARTICLE 2. A team may send a coach out of a team area for the purpose of locating the Officiating Supervisor and requesting the review.

SECTION 3. Coaches Conference Video Review

ARTICLE 1. Where video is available on a mobile device next to the field, and an Officiating Supervisor has not been appointed, a review may be conducted by the Referee and calling official(s) during a coaches conference. If they determine that the disqualification was incorrect, the player will be allowed to return.

SECTION 4. Half-time Video Review

ARTICLE 1. Where video facilities are not next to the field, or when a review is requested during the first 5 minutes of the half time intermission, the review will be conducted by the Referee and calling official(s). As soon as possible during the intermission between halves, the Referee will be provided a

video of the play(s) in question for his review. If the disqualification was incorrect, the player will be allowed to return for the second half.

ARTICLE 2. No request for review is permitted after more than five minutes of the half-time intermission. This is to avoid delaying the start of the second half.

SECTION 5. Post-game Video Review

ARTICLE 1. A request for review may be made up to 30 minutes after the game has ended. Where video is provided to either the appointed Officiating Supervisor or Referee a review will be conducted by the appointed Officiating Supervisor, Referee and calling official(s). If they determine that the disqualification was incorrect the Referee will inform the Head Coach that the disqualification has been reversed.

SECTION 6. Reporting procedures

ARTICLE 1. A Disqualification report must be completed by the calling official(s) whenever a disqualification occurs, even if it is subsequently reversed.

In the case of a reversal, the reason(s) for the reversal must be included in the report.