



BAFA Rules Committee

BAFA Rules Changes 2008

Jim Briggs, Chair BAFA & BAFRA Rules Committees

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The following table lists all the rules changes adopted for 2008 (including NCAA changes introduced in 2007). The changes take effect from 1st March 2008 (except for the remainder of the BUAFL season).

Rule number	Rule difference	Notes
1-2-4-b	Individuals in the team area who are not in full uniform must display credentials	This is to address two safety-related problems: unauthorised people being in the team area, and inappropriate people entering the field to deal with player injuries. The solution has been specifically designed to be easily implementable by teams (some coloured card and safety pins will do it), or teams or leagues could produce nicely laminated ID cards to hang on lanyards or wear as a badge. The cards must be credit card size or bigger, and must be different colours for coaches (light blue), medics/first aiders (dark green) and others (yellow).
3-1-1	The coin toss begins when the field captains leave the nine-yard marks and ends when the captains return to the nine-yard marks.	This is a fairly minor change that extends the period of the coin toss. This keeps the teams away from the field for a few moments more until the captains have returned to their side zone, limiting the opportunity for taunting.
3-2-2-h	After TV timeouts the ready-for-play signal will, with the teams on the field, be 15 seconds. (Exception: Free kicks.)	This change only applies to those games live on TV.

Rule number	Rule difference	Notes
3-2-2-i	If an inadvertent whistle occurs on a play and the down is replayed under the provisions of 4-1-2-b, the time and status of the game clock shall be reset to their position before the play in which the inadvertent whistle occurs.	When a down is replayed as the result of an inadvertent whistle everything, including the clock, is reset to the moment of the snap. If the clock was stopped before the play, the clock starts on the snap. If it was running, then it starts on the ready. It provides more equity to the situation. The correct time will be established by the best means available.
3-2-5	When the ball is free-kicked, the game clock shall be started when the ball is legally touched in the field of play or crosses the goal line after being touched legally by Team B in its end zone and subsequently stopped when the ball is dead by rule.	These changes have the effect of reverting clock rules back to the ones in force two years ago. NCAA recognised that last year's changes had too drastic an effect on some games.
3-2-5-d	The clock stops at the end of a legal kick down and starts on the snap. (Exception: When the next play is a free kick or a try.)	
3-2-5-e	When Team B is awarded a first down, the clock will be stopped and will start on the snap.	
3-3-7-b	For live televised games only, a charged team timeout shall be 30 seconds plus the 25-second play clock interval.	This is another change designed to reduce the length of televised games. All timeouts during televised games will be the optional shorter version introduced in 2001. The 90-second timeout remains the standard for non-televised games.
6-1-1	Unless relocated by a penalty, the kicking team's restraining line on a kickoff shall be its 30- yard line, and for a free kick after a safety, its 20-yard line.	In a further effort to reduce the number of touchbacks, NCAA has moved the spot for kickoffs back from the 35 to the 30-yard line, matching the NFL. BAFA has decided to adopt the change replacing our previous rule that the kickoff should be 15 yards from midfield (to accommodate different length fields). The net effect in Britain is no change on 90-yard fields, the most common field length.

Rule number	Rule difference	Notes
6-2-1	Penalty. Live-ball foul. Five yards from the previous spot; or five yards from the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B; or the receiving team may put the ball in play 35 yards beyond Team A's restraining line at the inbounds spot [S19].	<p>Following on from the change above, the enforcement for kicks out of bounds untouched by Team B has been extended to 35 yards from the previous restraining line.</p> <p>In British football, this change means that after the penalty Team B will always have the same distance to drive for a touchdown (regardless of the length of the field). The old British rule meant that on a shorter field, Team B had a shorter drive, which could be regarded as unfair.</p> <p>A further change is that Team B can choose to take the ball 5 yards from the dead ball spot (see below), which means that Team A never get away with a kick out of bounds untouched without some sort of penalty. If Team B elects to take the 35-yard penalty, then they cannot accept another penalty as well.</p>
6-1-2	The referee will declare the ball ready for play when the umpire hands the ball to the kicker.	Although BAFA has adopted this rule change, officiating mechanics won't change because the way we already do things is optimum from a timing perspective.
6-3-12, 9-1-2, 9-3-3, 10-2-2-e exception 7	Enforcement may be at the previous spot or the spot where the subsequent dead ball belongs to Team B (field goal plays exempted).	<p>These changes add to the number of situations on kick plays when penalties can be enforced from the dead ball spot, rather than only from the previous spot. Interpretations from NCAA indicate that this change is intended to apply to all Team A fouls except for kick catch interference.</p> <p>Note, though, that the change does not apply to field goal attempts.</p>
9-3-5-b	<p>No defensive player, in an attempt to block, bat or catch a kick, may...:</p> <p>3. Be picked up by a teammate, be elevated, propelled, or pushed.</p>	This adds to the list of restrictions on defensive players on kick plays.

Rule number	Rule difference	Notes
12-3-3	Miscellaneous reviewable plays include: a kick that is advanced by the kicking team after a muff or fumble by the receiving team; correcting the number of a down. (Note: The correction may be made at any time within that series of downs or before the ball is legally put in play after that series); any person who is not a player interfering with live-ball action occurring in the field of play (Rules 9-1-4 and 9-2-3-c).	Additions to the list of reviewable plays.
13-3-1-c	Officials' assistants must be at least 14 years old	These two changes together address the issue of under-18s working as chain crew or ball boys. Under no circumstances can under-14s be used, and the game will be held up until older people can be found. Where 14-17 year olds are used, game management is responsible (in child protection terms) for supervising them – this is not the responsibility of the officials.
13-3-1-c-1	Officials' assistants under 18 must be supervised	
13-4-7-a-3	Maximum delay to kick off is 60 minutes unless agreed	These two changes make what was an unenforceable BAFL regulation into a rule. The 60 minutes is a minimum for the delay – if the two coaches and the referee agree, a stipulated longer delay is permissible. However, the provision remains that if the reason for the delay is clearly never going to be fixed, the game can be cancelled/abandoned immediately.
13-4-8-d	Maximum suspension is 60 minutes unless agreed	
13-7-4-a	Shorten game if darkness threatens	To promote consistency, there are now fixed reductions in the length of the game if its start is delayed, and darkness threatens. Darkness could be either the loss of daylight, or a deadline for turning off artificial lighting.
13-7-5-a	Two-minute warning even if there is a stadium clock	There has been confusion at the last two Brit Bowl weekends as to whether or not to have a two-minute warning (because of the use of stadium clocks). This change stipulates that a two-minute warning will always be held.

Acknowledgements: BAFA thanks Stephen Bowness of the NZGOA for his notes on the NCAA rule changes.

The full text of the rules can be found at <http://www.bafra.org/rulesctee/rulebook/2008/index.htm>

Questions about the changes should be addressed to rules@bafra.org