



# AMERICAN FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA



# 2024 PLAYING RULES

8 v 8



## Foreword

### Adoption of BAFA Playing Rules 2024

Due to their well-established link to IFAF, American Football Australia (AFA) has adopted the BAFA (British American Football Association) playing rules for small-sided games.

All AFA members use these rules as a starting point.

American Football Australia provides full credit to BAFA and the BAFA rules committee for the rules as included in this document from page 4 onwards.

### Adjustments by individual competitions

Adjustments to game rules are discouraged but may be allowed in certain circumstances.

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

To obtain approval for local rule adjustments, state competitions must:

1. Submit a request from the executive of a state league.
2. Send an email to the AGOA Rules and Mechanics coordinator ([rules@ago.org.au](mailto:rules@ago.org.au)) and explain the rule adjustment being requested. AGOA will discuss with you the workability of your proposal and ensure that the language is clear, and that your proposal will be enforceable. AGOA may alternatively advise that the requested rule change is not supportable and why.
3. After consultation with AGOA, submit your proposal to the AFA board ([board@americanfootball.org.au](mailto:board@americanfootball.org.au)) who will review the request and notify you of the outcome.

Approved adjustments are for one year's competition only. A new application is required each year for these adjustments to continue in force.

Adjustments to game rules that are not approved by American Football Australia shall not be officiated by AGOA officials and AGOA officiating groups.



# AFA 2024 PLAYING RULES

## 8 v 8

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### Summary of Major Differences to the IFAF Playing Rules

In essence the BAFA 8-on-8 football rules are based on the existing IFAF 11-on-11 rule set with the following major differences:

- Team A must have at least three 'ineligibles' (players numbered 50-79).
- Smaller field
  - Length: 80 yards
  - Width: 40 yards
- End zones: 10 yards (can be varied from 8 to 12 yards to fit into the playing enclosure).
- No goal posts.
- Free kick after a try will be 10 yards from midfield unless relocated by penalty.
- Free kick after a safety will be from the 20-yard line unless relocated by penalty.
- Playing time is 4 x 12-minute periods. Halftime is 15 minutes unless altered before the game by mutual agreement.
- Blocking below the waist – lineman or back must be within 3 yards of the middle lineman.



## 8-on-8 football rules

2023

### Foreword

The rules are revised each year to improve the sport's level of safety and quality of play, and to clarify the meaning and intent of rules where necessary. 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
- not be unduly divergent from the rules adopted by IFAF and NCAA in the USA.

These rules apply to all contests involving BAFA affiliated teams and take effect from 1st March 2023 (Exception: Competitions that began before 1st March 2023 will continue to use 2022 rules until the end of their competition).

For brevity, male pronouns are used extensively in this book, but the rules are equally applicable to female and male participants.

BAFA has established a Rules Committee to discuss and decide future changes to this book. The Committee is also our liaison to IFAF on rules matters. You may make suggestions for changes at any time, but to be eligible for consideration for the following year they must be received by 31st August.

Dr Jim Briggs, BAFRA (Editor) on behalf of the BAFA Rules Committee

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 email them to [rules@britishamericanfootball.org](mailto:rules@britishamericanfootball.org)

### General Principle

ARTICLE 1. 8-on-8 football shall be played under the rules of 11-a-side contact football with the following changes. Where a rule is in conflict with 11-a-side rules or clearly does not apply, the 8-on-8 rule takes precedence.

### The Game

ARTICLE 2. a. The game shall be played between two teams of no more than 8 players each. The minimum number of players in a squad and the number of those permitted to be in uniform shall be determined by the competition authority.

b. A team may legally play with fewer than 8 players, but a foul for an illegal formation occurs if the following requirements are not met:

1. At the snap, at least three players wearing jerseys numbered 50 through 79 are on the offensive scrimmage line and no more than three players are in the

- backfield;
2. When the ball is free-kicked, at least three Team A players are on each side of the kicker.

## **Supervision**

ARTICLE 3. The game shall be played under the supervision of 4 or more officials, 3 in exceptional circumstances.

## **The field**

ARTICLE 4. a. The field of play (area between the goal lines) shall be a rectangular area of length 80 yards and width 40 yards marked with side lines, goal lines.

b. The end zones shall be 10 yards from goal line to end line. This may be varied to a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 yards if necessary to fit into the playing enclosure.

c. Main lines will be marked every 5 yards across the field of play (not in the end zones).

d. Hash marks will be marked every yard in the field of play (not in the end zones) at both side lines and in the middle of the field 40 feet from each sideline. These lines should be 24 inches in length, and the hash marks at the side lines should be 4 inches away from the side line itself.

e. An additional line will be marked in the centre of the field at each 3 yard line to mark where extra point attempts will be snapped from.

## **Goals**

ARTICLE 5. There shall be no goal posts, all extra point attempts will be 2-point scrimmage plays and no field goals can be attempted or scored.

## **The ball**

ARTICLE 6. The ball shall be that mandated by the competition committee and shall be appropriate for the age group of the competing teams. Provision can be made to allow teams to use their own footballs when they are in possession, provided that they are legal.

## **Kicks**

ARTICLE 7. The spot for a free kick will be 10 yards from midfield unless re-located by penalty. A kick after a safety is scored on a normal scrimmage down (not a try) will be from the 20 yard line unless re-located by penalty.

## **Playing time**

ARTICLE 8. a. The maximum total playing time in a game shall be 48 minutes, divided into four periods of 12 minutes each, with one-minute intermissions between the first and second periods (first half) and between the third and fourth periods (second half) (Exception: A one-minute intermission between the first and second and the third and fourth periods may be extended for radio and television timeouts).

b. The intermission between halves shall be 15 minutes, unless altered before the game by mutual agreement of the administrations of both teams. Immediately after the second period ends, the referee should begin the intermission by signalling to start the game clock.

## **Scoring**

ARTICLE 9. The point value of scoring plays shall be:

Touchdown	6 Points
Safety (points awarded to opponents)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown (from 3 yard line)	2 Points
Successful Try Touchdown (scored by Team B)	2 Points

## **Blocking below the waist**

ARTICLE 10. Blocking below the waist is legal on the same basis as in 11-a-side rules except that to legally block below the waist, a lineman or back must be within 3 yards of the middle lineman.