AMERICAN FOOTBALL IRELAND

BY-LAWS 2026

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A. Membership (Clubs)

A.1. All entrants to any of the American Football Ireland (AFI) competitions must be capable of meeting the requirements regarding equipment, player numbers, finances, facilities, administration and other criteria as are currently in force that would reasonably assume to be necessary to be able to participate in any competition.

A.2. Club membership falls into three categories. A year is defined as the period between AGMs. If a club field's more than one team, the team playing at the highest level will be used to determine the club's membership category.

A.3. Full Membership – Applicants must be, at the date of the AGM, either:

(i) Full members who completed in one of AFI's American Football leagues (adult, collegiate or youth) in the most recent full season.
OR

(ii) Full Members who completed in one of AFI's Flag Football leagues (adult, collegiate or youth) in the most recent full season.

A.4. Associate Membership – Applicants must be clubs who, at the date of the AGM, are entered into and deemed capable of fielding a team in an AFI league. Associate Membership may be provisionally granted to a club by the AFI Board at any time, but is subject to approval at the next meeting of the full membership. Associate Members have no voting rights at an AGM/SGM.

A.5. Formative Members – Applicants must be groups or educational institutions who are in the process of putting together a club to compete in the AFI and/or recently formed clubs who are not yet capable of fielding a team in any competition. Formative Membership may be provisionally granted by the AFI Board at any time, but is subject to approval at the next meeting of the full membership. Formative Members have no voting rights at an AGM/SGM.

A.6. Membership in all categories is renewable annually at the AGM. All applicants for Membership in any category should apply in writing to the Commissioner at least 1 month in advance of the AGM on the prescribed application form (which may also be used as an audit form). A majority vote of the Full Membership is required to be granted membership in any category. Votes must be taken for each applicant and a representative of each applicant must be present at the AGM. Existing Full Member clubs may remain as full members for 1 full year after the year in which they last competed regardless of whether or not they will be fielding a team.

A.7. The AFI is permitted to undertake annual audits of all clubs to determine whether or not they can comply with the Membership By-Laws and/or are capable of fielding teams in competitions which they are planning to enter. The AFI will decide what information should be requested from each club. A report on these audits may be presented to the Membership. Audit meetings to discuss the Audit materials submitted and any issues arising can be scheduled for all clubs.

A.8. All clubs must be (i) constituted members clubs, (ii) representative teams of third level educational institutions or (iii) registered companies.

A.9. Full details of each club's management & structure, its contact details and documentation on their legal identity as per **A.8** must be submitted to the AFI along with a club's membership application. Any changes in status or ownership which take place midyear must be approved by the AFI in advance or membership will be deemed automatically terminated. A completed AFI Audit form must be submitted in advance of the AGM along with the club's application for membership (AFI may use a common form for audit/applications at its discretion).

A.10. Changes to the By-Laws must be made per Article 27 of the AFI Constitution.

A.11. Existing clubs who, for the previous season, did not satisfy one or more of the following criteria will have to attend an Audit Meeting and satisfy the same entry requirements as a new applicant to play in the level of league applied for the following season:

(i) Sufficient players to complete their fixtures.
(i) Home venue below minimum requirements for more than one game.
(ii) Was at fault for not fully completing any fixture.
(iii) Did not win any league fixtures.
(ii) Failed to provide team officials for 2 or more assignments.

A.12. Clubs shall assist and provide to the AFI any information which is required by the AFI to assist it with applications to State or other bodies for funding and/or grant aid.

A.13. Requirements to participate in leagues

The following mandatory requirements and guidelines will apply to all applicants to play competitive football. Clubs subjected to audit will be required to provide evidence, in advance of entry deadlines, to show that they can satisfy the requirements. The AFI may permit entry to clubs that do not satisfy the "guidelines" only in exceptional circumstances which must be documented and must still conform to the aims of the "guidelines". There is no discretion for mandatory requirements.

American Football Club (Multidisciplinary)

Mandatory for all clubs:
(i) Finances – can fund a full season.
(ii) Facilities – have a home venue that conforms to minimum game requirements.
(iii) Equipment – sufficient equipment, including uniforms, to kit up players.
(iv) Governance – Ratified Club Constitution and committee consisting of, at minimum, a chairman, a secretary & a treasurer
(v) Administration – can satisfy Section 1 of these By-Laws
(vi) Coaching -
a. for AFI Premier Division teams - have 2 certified coaches, one to remain on side-line at all times.
b. for AFI Division 1/2 teams - have a certified coach to remain on side-line at all times.
c. for AFI Flag Premier Division teams - have 2 certified coaches, one to remain on side-line at all times.
d. for AFI Flag Division One teams - have 1 certified coach present at every fixture (coach-player).
Guidelines:
(i) for AFI Premier Division teams - 30 players on the roster including 15 players who have been registered players for 1 season in which they played a minimum of 5 regular season fixtures in the AFI Premier Division or AFI Division 1.
(ii) for AFI Division 1/2 - 25 players on the roster.
(iii) for AFI Flag Premier Division teams - 20 players on the roster.
(iv) for AFI Flag Division One teams - 20 players on the roster.

Flag Football Only Club
Mandatory for all clubs:
(i) Finances – can fund a full season.
(ii) Equipment – sufficient equipment, including uniforms, to kit up players.
(iii) Governance – Ratified Club Constitution and committee consisting of, at minimum, a chairman, a secretary
& a treasurer
(iv) Administration – can satisfy Section 1 of these By-Laws
(v) Coaching
a. for AFI Flag Premier Division teams - have 2 certified coaches, one to remain on side-line at all times.
b. for AFI Flag Division One teams - have 1 certified coach present at every fixture (coach-player).
Guidelines:
(i) for AFI Flag Premier Division teams - 20 players on the roster.
(ii) for AFI Flag Division One teams - 20 players on the roster.
Requirements to participate in leagues & audits"

Club Name
All club names must be a composite of two parts
- a geographical, educational institution or registered company
- a nickname – with the geographical, educational institute or registered company name preceding the nickname, e.g. Dublin Rebels, Cork Admirals.

The following rules will apply:

(a) Geographical/Educational/Company:

Educational Institutions and registered companies shall include the institution/company's name or recognised derivative in their club name. All other clubs must use one of the following and can only use geographical names of areas in which they operate.

A.14. Dissolution

Any club which ceases activities or loses its membership of the AFI is required to go through a formal dissolution process. This dissolution process should be done under the Law. The dissolution process will include but is not limited to, the payment of any liabilities, the collection of any dues, and the distribution of any remaining club assets (both material and financial). The dissolution process should be concluded at a meeting called specifically for the purpose which can be attended by all the club's members and representatives of the AFI. In the event of dissolution, all individuals who were members during the year (meaning AFI AGM to AFI AGM) in which the club dissolves, who has transferred to another AFI member club or allowed their membership to lapse, will be subject to an equal share of any liabilities or restrictions arising from the dissolution process or failure to complete the dissolution process. For the avoidance of doubt, members during the dissolution year include any individuals whose membership ceased; or was due to cease, or if they had not joined another club in the meantime; on March 1st of that year.

A.15. All clubs/teams and individuals members of AFI are subject to any rules and regulations that apply under the AFI's membership of various national and international organisations.

A.16. All clubs/teams and individual members of AFI are subject to any rules, regulations and policies that are implement by the AFI Management Board.

A.17. All games involving AFI teams that are not part of the official AFI league or competitions schedule must be sanctioned by the AFI. Teams should submit the appropriate sanction form as per the AFI By-Laws.

A.18. League Formats

The AFI will put in place league programmes at various levels for both male and female teams and youth players subject to demand.

B. Membership (individuals) & Registration

B.1. The registration fee is €55 for players on teams playing in AFI Premier Division, AFI Division 1 and AFI Division 2.

B.2. The registration fee is €35 for players on teams competing in AFI Flag Premier Division and AFI Flag Division One.

B.3. It is €5 for all other members (with exception of Alumni and Irish Wolfhounds Overseas Players which is €0).

B.4. A team membership fee of €1000 will be applicable to all teams participating in 11-a-side tackle football in the 2026 season, this fee will be subject to review following the completion of the 2026 season.

B.5. Refund of membership will only be issued in exceptional circumstances to be determined by the Commissioner and may be on a pro-rata basis.

B.6. All players must be registered with AFI. Team Managers are responsible for ensuring that they do not use players who are not registered. From the 2019 season, registration will be via the Azolve Go Membership online system. Members should be individually registered via this system and provide all the details requested as part of the process. All registered members receive an email receipt as proof of registration.

B.7. The categories of membership currently in use are:

(i) AFI Premier Division.
(ii) AFI Division 1&2
(iii) Flag Football
(iv) Coaching
(v) Officiating
(vi) Associate
(vii) Youth Athlete
(viii) Volunteer
(ix) Youth Volunteer
(x) Alumni
(xi) Trial
(xii) Overseas Irish Wolfhounds Athlete

B.8. Persons who occupy multiple roles or who are competing in more than one category of football (Adult American Football, Youth American Football or Flag Football) must register individually for each category to be allowed to participate in competitions run for that category.

B.9. All coaches must be fully paid up registered coaches as per the directions of the Director of Coaching appointed by AFI to oversee coaches. Coaches must register annually via the JustGO membership system, pay the €5 rate of registration and upload proof of their qualification to the system.

B.10. The AFI also has a non-playing membership of individuals who are not attached to any particular club.

(i). Players must be registered a minimum of 2 weeks (14 clear days e.g. register on or before 1st to play a game on 16th) in advance of playing their first league game in any given year.

(ii) Players are not permitted to play in the Play-offs or Championship games unless they have played in a minimum of two regular-season games that season, with the same team and in the same code of sport.

(iii). Players who have played competitive football anywhere worldwide (including Ireland) during the current calendar year and subsequently register with an AFI team are not permitted to play in their team's first competitive fixture post registration with their new AFI team.

(iv) Any overseas members that are participating with any of the Irish Wolfhounds teams must register on Azolve and purchase the appropriate membership

B.11. Members must register annually and registration is open all year. Existing players are permitted to register with their existing club or any other club (if not on debtors list) in advance of their membership expiry. New members are also permitted to register for the upcoming season.

B.12. A member cannot register with a new club unless all monies owed, including the club's own membership Officitand/or charges AND all team owned equipment has been returned to the member's previous team (or recipient of assets in the event of dissolution). Team Managers should inform the AFI of any such members and provide any relevant supporting evidence so that they can be placed on the Debtors List. Details of members to be placed on the Debtors List must be submitted along with the team's annual audit/application form for the following season. A debtor can be any member of the association.

B.13. IFAF International Transfer rules apply to AFI. Overseas players are not considered eligible to play in Ireland until they have completed the relevant IFAF International Transfer procedures in effect at the time of transfer. No player is permitted to be registered with any AFI member club while being simultaneously registered with another club, college or professional team in any IFAF member country. All registration/employment links with a player's previous club(s) must be severed before registering in the AFI. Documented proof of the severance of links may be requested at the AFI's discretion.

B.14. The AFI reserves the right to publish and circulate team rosters and player photos.

B.15. Registered players cannot switch teams without the consent of the club holding their registration. The AFI reserves the right to waive this rule in cases where, due to family or work reasons, a player relocates to a different part of the country or where a club dissolves mid-season. If a player switches teams after the commencement of the regular season, the player is not permitted to play in their new team's first competitive fixture post-transfer.

B.16. A digital headshot photo of each registered player should be submitted at registration and must be made available to the Commissioner upon request.

B.17. All senior kitted players must be over 18 years of age.

B.18. All flag football players must be over 16 years of age

B.19. The AFI may issue player ID cards if deemed necessary.

B.20. In the event of a club dissolving or losing its membership of AFI, those members during the year of dissolution or during its most recent year of AFI membership, are to be placed on the AFI Dissolution List.

This will happen when AFI has positive confirmation that the club has dissolved per the Law and relevant By-Laws.

AFI may remove individual players from the AFI Dissolution List in exceptional circumstances or where the club has entered into a binding agreement with the AFI concerning the dissolution process. If the agreement is cancelled or is not adhered to by the club, the named players will automatically return to the AFI Dissolution List and their membership of any subsequent club(s) is cancelled.

B.21. No person can be a member of 2 clubs playing in the same category of football simultaneously.

B.22. All members should note that the AFI may use the Azolve Go-Membership system to send circulars to various categories of members.

C. Other & Scrimmages/Training Sessions

C.1. Team Provided Officials (TPO)

C.1.a. Kitted Football:

Each team playing is required to have 6 trained officials who have completed the Officiating Level 1 training course.

All Team Provided Officials must be over 18 years of age.

Each team is required to cover a minimum of 3 officiating assignments (can be either 11s or DV-8s) during a season.

All TPOs (and full-time officials) must pass an annual writen or online certification exam administered by the Director of Officiating. A passing score of 70% correct or beter is required to successfully complete the certification requirement. All TPOs and Full-Time officials will be required to participate in a continuous professional development (CPD) program through the course of the season.

New teams are not required to supply TPO's in their first active season. The Director of Officiating, at his/her discretion, may introduce separate training/certification courses for different officiating positions. If training is position-specific, the TPOs to be provided by a team or teams for any particular fixture must include TPOs trained in the positions sought by the Director of Officiating for that fixture e.g. Referee, Side-line Official, and Umpire.

All TPOs must have a minimum of one year (1 season) of experience as a player or coach prior to being assigned as an official for league play.

C.1.b. All AFI Premier Division clubs are required to provide a person for training as a referee (crew chief). This person is to undergo training and may be required to officiate in at least 5 fixtures at AFI Premier Division, AFI Division 1 & 2 levels in any given season. That this requirement is in addition to the TPO requirement.

C.1.c. Flag Football:

Each team playing is required to have 3 trained officials who have completed the Officiating Level 1 training course and passed a written or online certification exam administered by the Flag Football Officiating Committee. The Flag Football Officiating Committee, at its discretion, may introduce separate training/certification courses for different officiating positions. Each team must bring 3 trained officials to every AFI sponsored competition or game unless otherwise directed by the Flag Football Officiating Committee

C.2. Team Photo

Each team can be requested to submit a team photo (digital) for use on the website & in league publicity material. Team photo should be “serious” style with players upright in line in full uniform i.e. no lying around on the ground, waving flags, joking about etc.

C.3. Kitted Teams are encouraged to film each game. Cameras should record the game from an appropriate height on the side-line using a side-line to side-line field of vision. Videotapes can be submitted to the AFI. If a team indicates on its team roster that it is making a visual recording of the game, a copy of the visual recording must be submitted to (i) the Director of Officiating within 3 weeks of the date of the game and (ii) made available to the AFI on request. The AFI may use these recordings for promotional purposes.

C.4. All clubs/games/events (including those run by non-members) must comply with any Irish Sports Council or legally required Code of Ethics and child protection requirements in force at all times. Residents of Northern Ireland must be vetted by the PSNI as per By-Law C5. Residents in all other parts of the island of Ireland or elsewhere must be vetted under the Federation of Irish Sport Garda vetting scheme as per By-Law C6

(i) People must be vetted specifically for American football. Garda vetting for another reason is not acceptable for American Football. For example, all teachers undergo Garda vetting for their employment – this vetting is only valid for their work as a teacher and cannot be used for any other activity, including American Football.
(ii) Everyone who has been vetted must be re-vetted every 5 years.
(iii) The following persons involved in American Football must be vetted:
(iv) Any persons with access to minors and any other person who is required under Law to be vetted.
(v) AFI participating in Federation of Irish Sports Scheme and all persons to be vetted must undergo Garda vetting using this scheme.
(i) People in NI are required to be vetted through AccessNI.
(ii) The AFI Vetting Officer is Nuala Collins.
(vi) Contact: vetting@americanfootball.ie.
(iii) All new persons to be vetted must complete the FIS Garda form and submit it with their registration form. Payments for vetting must be made through Azolve.

C.5. Rules for Northern Ireland residents:

(i) All AFI members residing in Northern Ireland that have direct and prolonged contact with children (i.e. under 18s) must be Access NI vetted. This primarily applies to coaches that coach flag and/or youth teams. Note: Officials do not need to be AccessNI vetted.
(ii) Those that need to be AccessNI vetted must apply for an enhanced disclosure – all other disclosures will be considered insufficient.
(iii) A copy of the AccessNI Disclosure Certificate must be forwarded to the AFI Vetting Officer when issued. This can be scanned and emailed to the AFI Vetting Officer at vetting@americanfootball.ie or posted (email vetting@americanfootball.ie for details).
(iv) Note: The original disclosure certificate must not be sent – only a copy of the disclosure certificate is required.
(v) Further information can be found on the AccessNI website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni-criminal-record-checks.
(i) Any questions or queries on AFI vetting requirements should be sent to the AFI Vetting Officer at vetting@americanfootball.ie

C.6. All overseas residents and those not covered by the vetting provisions of C4 and C5 shall be required to make a statutory declaration to the satisfaction of the AFI Vetting Officer.

C.7. Non-League Games/Scrimmage

The following conditions apply to all fixtures and scrimmages involving AFI teams which are not part of the competitive AFI schedule:

(i) AFI game safety requirements to apply to all fixtures/scrimmages (see C9 below also).
(ii) One neutral official to be present for all scrimmages (see C9 below also).
(iii) AFI must be informed of all fixtures/scrimmages and give sanction.

A scrimmage is defined as any football activity where groups of players from one team line-up against groups of players from another team. Joint training sessions, including kitted sessions, where players from two or more teams do not line-up against one another as separate teams are not regarded as scrimmages.

C.8. Where a scrimmage is fully scripted/formatted, with the prior agreement of the Director of Coaching, it can be regarded as a joint training session thus 8(a) and 8(b) need not apply. All other applicable rules and guidelines concerning safe conduct and participation in training sessions shall apply.

C.9. The rights to all competitive AFI fixtures shall jointly belong to the AFI and the two participating teams. For the avoidance of any doubt, the joint ownership extends to circumstances where a team or the AFI proposes to allow a third party to take responsibility for the staging of a game or where broadcasting income and/or gate receipts are being received for any game. None of the parties (i.e. the AFI or participating teams) is permitted to contract out any rights to any competitive fixture or derives any broadcasting or gate income without the expressed written permission of the other parties.

C.10. In circumstances where the running of a regular-season fixture is contracted out to a third party, the designated home team will take full responsibility for ensuring that their contractor adheres to the minimum requirements for staging a game. It shall not be a defence from a home team to say that issues were unforeseen or that matters were out of their control if minimum requirements are not adhered to. If a sanction fee and/or paid services are required and are not paid by the aforementioned third party, the aforementioned designated home team will be liable for the fee/services payment.

C.11. Anti-Doping

C.11.a. The following organisations are entitled to conduct anti-doping testing of AFI members:

(i) AFI.
(ii) Sport Ireland.
(iii) WADA accredited international organisations whom the AFI is affiliated to.

C.11.b. All testing must be conducted in compliance with the Irish Anti-Doping Rules, as maintained by Sport Ireland.

C.11.c. All adult competitive fixtures and all adult International fixtures, whether run by the AFI or other organisations or involving AFI and/or other teams, will be subject to in-competition testing (as defined by Sport Ireland).

C.11.d. Home teams will be responsible for cooperating with and assisting with the provision of requested facilities for in-competition testing.

C.11.e. The AFI can appoint several Anti-Doping Officers who have a right to be present during the conducting of any testing (subject to the Irish Anti-Doping Rules).

C.11.f. All queries go to antidoping@americnafootball.ie

C.12. Concussion Protocol.

C.12.a. Subject to the adjustments listed in 13(b) below, all AFI members must implement and abide by the AFI Concussion Protocol. Where the word ‘concussion’ is used in this section of the By-Laws, it is defined as meaning an actual or suspected concussion.

C.12.b. The following will apply:

(i) Any player who receives two concussions during a playing season (defined as starting two weeks before the first regular-season fixture in the playing category/league and concluding two weeks after the later of the final fixture in the category) is not permitted to play or engage in any contact training for the remainder of that season. Additionally, if such a player wishes to play in a different category of kitted football taking place during a different time of the year, they may not do so for a minimum of 6 months after the second concussion has occurred.

(ii) All concussions suffered by a player, whether occurring in American football (practice or games), another sport or any other activity, must be reported accompanied by the Side-line Evaluation form to the AFI Commissioner using the email address: commissioner@americanfootball.ie

(i) All home teams must supply a minimum of 10 Side-line Evaluation forms contained within the designated book to the ambulance personnel before the commencement of a game. Failure to provide these forms will result in a delay of game penalty in the first and each subsequent instance. On a second or subsequent instance, a deduction of 1pt will apply to league standings. (A point deduction may carry into the following season).

(ii) The side-line evaluation form will be utilised to determine if a concussion is suspected. All parts of the form must be completed. If after completing the form no concussion is suspected the player may return to play. If a concussion is suspected the player must be immediately removed from play and the AFI Concussion Protocol and Graduated Return to Play process followed. Once a player has entered the protocol, they may not be removed from it under any circumstances until the protocol is complete and medical clearance has been given.

(iii) It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure the AFI Concussion policy and Side-line Evaluation form is completed. In the first instance, this form should be completed and signed by the ambulance personnel present at the fixture. If the ambulance personnel fails/refuses to complete and sign the form it should be completed by the Head Coach. Medical advice from ambulance personnel supersedes this policy and no player should return to play against medical advice.

C.12.c. Procedure during games (kitted football):

(i) The hosting team provided the PHECC (ambulance) personnel with the concussion evaluation booklet, ensuring at least ten forms are blank and ready to use.

(ii) Head referee will confirm with PHECC personnel that the booklet has been received.

(iii) After an evaluation has been completed the PHECC registered personnel will remove the bottom copy (pink) for their records.

(iv) After the game, the head referee will retrieve any completed evaluation forms from the PHECC personnel (top/white copy).

(v) The hosting team will retrieve the concussion evaluation book from the PHECC personnel.

(i) The head referee will forward all completed forms to the Director of Officiating and Commissioner digitally within 48hrs. In the case of a confirmed/suspected concussion notification must be given before the days end. Hard copies of the form should be forwarded to the Director of Officiating.

(vi) If PHECC personnel refuse to complete the form, an AFI certified coach shall take on the role of the PHECC personnel and complete the relevant steps above.

C.12.d. Procedure during games (flag football):

(i) Each team must bring a concussion evaluation booklet, ensuring at least ten forms are blank and ready to use.

(ii) Head referee will confirm with each Head Coach/Team Manager that the booklet is on each team's sideline.

(iii) After an evaluation has been completed the Head Coach will remove the bottom copy (pink) to hand to the venue manager for their records.

(iv) After the game, the head referee will retrieve any completed evaluation forms from the head coach (top/white copy).

(v) The head referee will forward all completed forms to the Director of Officiating and Commissioner digitally within 48hrs. In the case of a confirmed/suspected concussion notification must be given before the days end. Hard copies of the form should be forwarded to the Director of Officiating.

C.12.e. Procedure during practice sessions/scrimmages:

(i) Head Coach/Hosting Coach will ensure that concussion evaluation booklet is readily available at the practice session/scrimmage with at least ten blank forms available and ready to use.

(ii) After an evaluation has been completed the Coach will remove the bottom copy (pink) and provide it to the person being evaluated.

(iii) The Head Coach/Hosting Coach will forward all completed forms to the Director of Officiating and Commissioner digitally within 48hrs. In the case of a confirmed/suspected concussion notification must be given before the days end. Hard copies of the form should be forwarded to the Director of Officiating.

C.12.f. Teams are obliged to ensure that they always have evaluations forms available and if a replacement is required the Commissioner should be informed with at much notice as possible.

SECTION 2 - PLAYING RULES (KITTED FOOTBALL)

A. Travel & Lateness

A.1. Away team should e-mail or ring both home team and officials before noon two days before kick-off (usually Friday) to confirm everything is ok and if necessary, get directions from the home team.

A.2. Away team should ring home team at 10:00 on the morning of the game to confirm that they are en route and inform of any anticipated problems. Both home and away team managers should have mobile phones to ensure that they can contact each other en route.

A.3. Away team should plan to arrive at least 90 minutes before kick-off.

A.4. If the away team has not arrived 90 minutes before kick-off, the home team manager will contact them to find out the reason for the delay and inform match officials. If delayed, the away team should check-in by phone every half hour until they arrive.

A.5. If the away team has not taken the field by the time of the coin toss, the home team is deemed to have won the coin toss. A delay of game penalty may be assessed by the officials against any team not ready to play at kick-off time (see By-Law G3 for penalty enforcement of pre-game penalties).

A.6. If the away team arrives late, kick-off will take place no more than 30 minutes after arrival up to a maximum of 1 hour after the scheduled kick-off time. In the event of a kick-off being delayed by more than 30 minutes, the matter will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for investigation. A delay of game penalty (15yds) will be assessed as per By-Law G3.

A.7. If kick-off does not take place by 1 hour after the appointed time, the home team wins by forfeit.

A.8. In the event of 7 above, the two teams by mutual agreement may play a scrimmage/shortened game which will conclude no later than 3 hours after the original kick-off time and will not count towards league standings.

A.9. In the event of no game/scrimmage taking place due to late arrival, the game will be forfeit by the late team.

A.10. The above procedure may equally be applied to any late home team.

B. Uniforms & Equipment

B.1. Mandatory protective equipment as provided for in the IFAF Rulebook is compulsory for all players.

B.2. Each player on a team must wear the same coloured jersey. Teams should try to kit out all their players in the same coloured helmets and pants. All players in the AFI Premier Division shall endeavour to wear the same coloured helmets, jerseys and pants.

B.3. Opposing teams must wear uniforms with contrasting colours so that players, officials and spectators can easily distinguish between the teams at all times including in poor conditions such as rain, dust and mud. Each AFI Premier Division team must maintain a set of home and away jerseys. Home and away jerseys must be contrasting in colour.

B.4. Each jersey should be numbered as per the IFAF rulebook, with the exception that no two players from the same team may wear the same number. In emergency circumstances which necessitate a change in number midgame, the AFI will allow a maximum of 1 player per team to wear no number or an inside out jersey and such players will be regarded as ineligible.

B.5. Sponsorship and player names are permitted on uniforms.

B.6. Shoulder pads and soft pads on legs/hips should be fully covered by the uniform. All padding should conform to the IFAF rules. Jerseys should be tucked into pants.

B.7. Political, obscene, offensive, sexual and racially abusive symbols and slogans are not permitted on

uniforms.

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B.8. The Director of Officiating or a delegated member of the officiating department will assign jersey colours in advance of each fixture. Home teams shall indicate to the Director of Officiating and/or the appropriate member of the officiating department which jersey colour they prefer to wear in each fixture. Failure to comply will result in the appropriate on-field penalty or penalties being applied.

B.9. Studs/Cleats of player's boots must be no longer than 21mm and must not have any burring or sharp edges.

C. Team Area

C.1. Only registered players, coaches and side-line staff are permitted in the Team Area.

C.2. The onus is on the coaching staff to ensure that unauthorised people do not enter the Team Area. If any unauthorised people refuse to leave the Team Area at the request of the coaches, team management or officials, the game will be suspended, and home team management will make the necessary arrangements for their removal.

C.3. Any authorised person who is in the Team Area is regarded as being a participant in the game and being under the direction of the designated non-playing coach as indicated on the team roster submitted to the officials.

C.4. All persons in the Team Area, whether authorised or not and whether individual members or not, are subject to both AFI and IFAF rules regarding sportsmanship and conduct.

C.5. No player, coach or authorised person in the Team Area is permitted to verbally or physically abuse any person present at the game or make obscene gestures.

C.6. No person in the Team Area should encroach on the field at any time.

C.7. Procedure for side-line problems and encroachment on field is as per IFAF rules.

C.8. All spectators must remain behind the spectator barriers as specified in section Q of these By-Laws.

D. Behaviour at Venue

D.1. All members of the AFI are required to behave in a courteous and sporting manner while at any match venue at any time on the date of any fixture. On receipt of a complaint, the Commissioner has the right to refer the behaviour of any member to the Disciplinary Committee.

D.2. The Officials have the right to enforce penalties against any member or team from the moment they arrive at a venue. Penalties may include unsportsmanlike behaviour and personal fouls and should be enforced as pregame penalties.

D.3. Pregame Penalties

Any penalties assessed before kick-off will be enforced on the opening play from scrimmage.

D.4. Any player who strikes, attempts to strike a member of the opposing team or an official after the final whistle shall receive a minimum 2 match suspension and the matter shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

D.5. No player or coach is permitted to enter the dressing room of an opponent or official without permission.

D.6. No player, coach or other member may approach an official while in a dressing room environment (including immediate environs) unless at least one other official is present.

D.7. No player, coach, official or member is permitted to damage the property of any other member at a match venue.

D.8. No player, coach, official or member is permitted to use a visual/audio recording device in any private area such as a dressing room or bathroom. Visual/audio recordings can only be made in a team's private area with the expressed permission of the teams Head Coach. Visual/audio recordings can be made in an Officials private area with the expressed permission of the Head Referee. On receipt of a complaint, the Commissioner has the right to refer the behaviour of any member to the Disciplinary Committee.

D.9. In the event that any person who is NOT a member of the association strikes, attempts to strike or encroaches onto the field or past the respect barriers in a manner that is reasonably likely to put any person in fear shall be immediately and automatically banned from attending all association events for one calendar year. This person shall not be eligible for membership during their ban.

E. Overtime

E.1. Overtime is only played in play-off or championship games. There is no overtime in regular season games.

E.2. IFAF overtime playing rules will apply when overtime is played.

E.3. Only those players listed as playing on the roster sheet submitted before kick-off are permitted to play in overtime.

F. Cancellations, Rescheduling & Forfeit

F.1. Teams should endeavour to play their fixtures at the times, dates and venues listed on the AFI fixtures schedule.

F.2. If a game has to be cancelled due to no fault of either of the participating teams, the Commissioner, after having consulted with the, Director of Officiating will decide whether or not the game will be rescheduled and, if applicable, the rescheduled time/date.

F.3. Save where other mechanisms are provided in these By Laws, the Commissioner, after having consulted with the Director of Officiating and the respective team managements, have the right to reschedule any game due to unforeseen or emergency circumstances. This may include a change in venue and kick-off time on game day following consultation with the participating teams and officials. Unless an alternative is mutually agreed by all parties, non-fault unplayed games will be automatically rescheduled for the next available Saturday that both teams are free provided that it is at least 26 days after the original date of the fixture. In the final weeks of the season, unless an alternative is mutually agreed by all parties, where there is insufficient time to implement the foregoing, games will be automatically rescheduled for the Saturday or Sunday (at the AFI's discretion) after the final weekend of regular season fixtures.

F.4. If a cancelled game cannot be rescheduled, victory (30-0) will be awarded to the team who was not at fault and the team at fault will be deducted one point in the league standings. If both teams were at fault, the game will be regarded as a forfeit game (30- 30) for both teams with both teams being deducted one point. If neither team is at fault, the game will be regarded as a 15-15 tie.

F.5. If the cancellation of a game is the fault of an organisation / individual / group / company supplying services / equipment / facilities to a particular team, then the team is regarded as being at fault. Equally, By-Law I2 will apply to such organisation / individual / group / companies in circumstances where genuine no fault or unforeseen circumstances arise which lead to the cancellation of a game due to their failure to supply services/equipment/facilities to a particular team.

F.6. A home team may move a fixture to an alternate venue within 25 kilometres of their designated home venue if they have communicated this, along with a valid reason (to be determined by the Commissioner in the event of a dispute) to (i) the visiting team, (ii) the officials and (iii) the AFI Board at least 48 hours prior to kick-off.

F.7. Any team who wishes to have the date, time or venue of a fixture changed, must make a submission to the Commissioner for their consideration at least 4 weeks prior to the fixture. The Commissioner, having consulted with the opposing team and the officials will decide whether or not to reschedule the fixture. The AFI will not entertain requests for changes without supporting evidence.

F.8. Fixture changes will only be granted, at the AFI's discretion, if it is absolutely necessary OR if the fixture change will be of benefit to the league or teams concerned.

F.9. If a request to change is rejected, the game will either be played as per the fixture schedule or will be regarded as a forfeit game against one or other of the teams involved (depending on fault).

F.10. Any game that is not played or not completed due to the fault of one or both of the teams or due to failure of one or both of the teams to comply with the relevant By-Laws will be regarded as forfeit. If both teams are at fault, the game will be deemed a 30-30 forfeit with both teams being deducted one point and it will not be replayed. If one team is at fault, the team that is not at fault may opt to receive a 30-0 victory OR have the game replayed at their venue (regardless of whether they are the home or away team for the fixture). In the event of the game being replayed, the team not at fault can claim the cost of hosting the rescheduling the game from the team at fault. The costs that the non-fault team can claim are limited to the cost of them hiring their normal home ground and putting in place the minimum By-Law requirements to host a competitive game. Any game that is not played or completed due to no fault of either team will be regarded as a 15-15 tie.

F.11. All games cancelled due to the fault of one or more of the participating teams will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for their consideration. The AFI reserves the right to take appropriate action against any team who, without good reason, forfeits any game. Appropriate action may include exclusion from the play-offs and/or the docking of points that count toward the league standings.

F.12. A team must have 11 (or 8 in the case of DV8s fixtures) fit players available to start a game. If the number of players available to a team falls below 11 (or 8 in the case of DV8s fixtures) and I13 to I15 do not apply, the game will be regarded as a Category 4 stoppage as per Section J of these By-Laws.

F.13. Where a game has started, but the number of fit players available to one or both teams falls below 11, the game will not be regarded as a forfeit if all the following circumstances apply to the team with fewer than 11 fit players:

(i) The game is in the 4th quarter, but not yet at the two-minute warning.

(ii) The team started the game with 15 or more available players as shown on the roster supplied before the game.

In such cases, the team that is able to continue will be deemed to have won the game and have choice of the following score (i) the score at the time of the stoppage with 15 points added to their score or (ii) their opponent's score plus 1 point.

F.14. If the game is stopped, as per I13 above, after the referee has given the two minute warning, the team which is able to continue will be deemed to have won the game and have choice of the following score (i) the score at the time of the stoppage or (ii) their opponents score plus 1 point.

F.15. If both teams have fewer than 11 players (or 8 in the case of DV8s fixtures) available after the same play, the score at the time of stoppage will apply.

G. Mid-Game Stoppages & Abandoned Games

G.1. Every effort should be made by all players, coaches, managers & officials to ensure that once a fixture proceeds, it gets completed. Even if there is a high chance that a game may have to stop (e.g. due to adverse weather reports), the game should start as scheduled and proceed until such time as it is no longer possible or reasonable to keep playing. Game stoppages fall into a number of categories and are handled accordingly.

G.2. If a game is temporarily suspended, play will resume at the point at which it was suspended. The game can be suspended for until up to 3 hours after the original kick-off time. If a game is suspended, it must be completed or halted by 5 hours after the original kick-off time.

G.3. There are four categories as follows (1) games suspended due to no fault of either team and completed in accordance with G.2; (2) games suspended due to no fault of either team and not completed in accordance with G.2; (3) games suspended due to the fault of one or both teams and completed in accordance with G.2; (4) games suspended due to the fault of one or both teams and not completed in accordance with G.2.

G.4. Categories 1 & 2 – includes dangerous weather conditions, on advice of emergency or security services & medical emergencies.

Categories 3 & 4 – includes minimum game requirements not being met, lack of security, spectator problems, inadequate medical cover, lack of fit players or any problem that could have been avoided had the team management taken proper precautions.

G.5. Category 1 stoppages – game is completed, and score stands.

G.6. Category 2 stoppages – if abandoned in the third quarter or later, the score stands. If abandoned before kick-off of the third quarter, the teams have the option (both must agree) of allowing the score. If one or other team does not wish the score to stand, the Director of Officiating will reschedule the remainder of the game for an appropriate time and venue and the game will resume at the point at which it was suspended (only those players listed as playing on the roster sheet submitted before kick-off are permitted to play). If the game cannot be rescheduled, the score at the time of abandonment will stand.

G.7. Category 3 stoppages – The team at fault is assessed a 15-yard penalty and required to take timeouts until such time as the reason for the stoppage has been rectified. Once all allowed timeouts have been used, the team will be assessed a 15-yard penalty for every additional full 10 minutes of delay. If a stoppage is for more than 30 minutes, the team not at fault has the option of having the game called and being declared a Category 4 stoppage. If both teams are at fault, both can be assessed penalties and the officials have the option of declaring a Category 4 stoppage after 30 minutes of delay.

G.8. Category 4 stoppages – If the game cannot be completed, the team not at fault will be awarded victory by the greatest of (i) the score at the time of the stoppage with 15 points added to their score or (ii) their opponents score plus 1 point. The team at fault will be deducted 1 league point. In the event of both teams being at fault, the game will be regarded as a 30-30 forfeit with 1 league point deducted from each team.

G.9. The Commissioner may refer any stoppage or abandonment incident to the Disciplinary Committee.

G.10. Any team which is at fault for a Category 4 stoppage must complete the failure to complete form (attached as Appendix 3) and hand it to the Crew Chief within 30 minutes of the game being stopped.

G.11. In the event that a team decides to stop playing midway through a game due to lack of fit players or due to a coaching decision, the side-line coach of the forfeiting team should inform the nearest official that they wish to call a forfeit timeout thus stopping the game. The side-line coach will then inform the Referee who will indicate to all present that the game has been stopped due to a decision of the forfeiting team. This is regarded as a Category 4 stoppage. For avoidance of any doubt, the Head Coach of a forfeiting team is not permitted to discuss the matter with their opponents in advance of the Referee indicating to all present that the game has been stopped.

H. First Aid Requirements

H.1. An ambulance crew with first aid equipment must be present at all fixtures. The home team is responsible for arranging the ambulance crew and all associated costs.

H.2. If an ambulance crew is not present at kick-off time, the home team is regarded as being late for the fixture.

H.3. If the ambulance is required to convey an injured person to hospital, the game can continue in the absence of the ambulance if a member of the ambulance remains at the venue until such time as the ambulance returns. Otherwise, the game will be suspended until the ambulance returns (Category 2 stoppage as per section J of these By-Laws).

H.4. Each team must submit proof of having booked their ambulances for the season to the Commissioner in advance of the start of the season. This proof must also be available on site on game day. Failure to do so will result in an automatic forfeit by the home team in the event that no ambulance is present for any fixture.

I. Coaching

I.1. Coaching terms defined.

(i) Registered Coach. Person who has paid for AFI membership and registered as a coach within the AFI registration portal for the current competitive season.

(ii) Certified Coach. Level 0 qualified coach who has passed the annual AFI recertification test for the current competitive season OR has graduated from the Level 0 course in the past 12 months AND registered as a coach on the AFI registration portal.

(iii) De-certified Coach. Level 0 qualified coach who has not passed the AFI annual recertification test for the current competitive season.

(iv) Level 0 qualified. Person who has graduated from the AFI Introduction to Coaching course or a foreign equivalent course AND has maintained their level 0 qualification.

(v) Coach Developer. Person who has graduated from the Sport Ireland Coach Developer course or foreign equivalent.

I.2. Certification process.

(i) Graduated from the AFI Level 0 course or foreign equivalent and maintained a Level 0 qualification.

(ii) Pass the annual AFI recertification test.

(iii) testing period is the month of December

(iv) The Director of Coaching is responsible for administering the certification process.

I.3. Loss of Level 0 qualification *(effective starting in January 2025)*

I.3.a. Failure to pass the AFI annual recertification test for three consecutive years will result in loss of Level 0 qualification.

I.3.b. Qualification is only restored by attending and graduating from the AFI Level 0 course or foreign equivalent.

I.3.c. The Director of Coaching is responsible for administering the qualification and disqualification process.

I.4. The Introduction to Coaching Course (Level 0)

(i) The Intro course is the foundational coaching course for all codes of American football offered by AFI.

(ii) Course accreditation is through Sport Ireland's National Coaching Development Programme.

(iii) The course uses a blended learning model (online and in-person).

(iv) Students must attend all classes and pass in-person assessments to graduate and receive their Sport Ireland certificates.

I.5. Course equivalency

(i) Coaches who have taken a foreign equivalent coaching course may be awarded a corresponding AFI qualification level without having to attend and graduate from an AFI course.

(ii) Equivalent course content materials and proof of graduation must be provided to the Director of Coaching for evaluation.

(iii) Examples of course content are, but not limited to: course syllabus, course rubrics and study guides, etc.

(iv) Examples of proof of graduation are, but not limited to: course certificates and instructor email acknowledgements of graduation, etc.

(v) Documents submitted in a language other than English or Irish must be translated prior to submission.

(vi) The Director of Coaching administers the course equivalency process and is the decision authority for awarding an AFI qualification level.

I.6. All teams (senior kitted, youth kitted) must have at least one certified coach present for all training sessions. See paragraph I.1. (sections d. and f.) for definitions of registered and certified coach.

a. All coaches involved in youth teams must be an AFI certified coach, vetted through AFI, and possess a current Safeguarding Level 1 qualification.

I.7. All teams must have a non-playing certified coach (not necessarily the Head Coach) present on the sideline for all games. This coach is specifically designated as the sideline coach on the AFI roster form. See paragraph I.1. (sections d. and f.) for definitions of a certified coach.

I.8. Before each game, the designated sideline coach must sign and submit to the referee (white hat) the AFI roster form certifying that:

(i) all participating players are competent to play in the game.
(ii) suspended players will not participate until their suspension is completed.
(iii) all players and coaches are compliant with current AFI registration requirements as outlined in the AFI by-laws.
(iv) all previously concussed players have successfully cleared the AFI concussion protocol.
(v) all players are listed and are indeed present and participating in the game.
(vi) that video recordings of the game will be uploaded to the Qwikcut LEAGUE POOL within 48 hours.
(vii) That the sideline coach will report any concussed players to the AFI commissioner within 24 hours of the conclusion of the game.

I.9. Game Video Sharing / Distribution

a. AFI endeavours to provide all senior kitted clubs, national teams, and the department of officiating with a Qwikcut video analysis software account. The purpose is to provide the NGB with an efficient means of sharing game video to conduct analysis, improve player / officiating performance, facilitate national team recruiting, facilitate appeals, facilitate disciplinary proceedings, and facilitate capture of highlights for AFI social media content creation.
b. Recorded game video of regular and playoff games for senior kitted football (all divisions) will be shared using the AFI provided Qwikcut application.
    i. Home teams are responsible for recording games and uploading to Qwikcut's LEAGUE POOL.
    ii. Away teams may also record the game. If a recording is made by any team it must be uploaded to Qwikcut's LEAGUE POOL.
c. Recorded video of youth games can also be shared using Qwikcut, but is not yet mandatory.
d. Upload Standards
    i. Recordings of raw unclipped video must be uploaded within 48 hours of the game's completion.
    ii. Recordings will be added to the LEAGUE POOL. The upload folder is designated by the first year shown. Example: the 2025 season will use the 2025-2026 LEAGUE POOL folder.
    iii. Recordings should be "clipped" and uploaded within 7 days. 'Clipped' game video separates each play into a single file/recording.
    iv. Video will be recorded from an elevated position using terrain, poles, camera stands, etc.
    v. Video should be recorded from a wide or sideline angle as a priority. Endzone video is encouraged but not mandatory.
e. Non-participation in video sharing
    i. Clubs that fail to participate or consistently fail to meet upload standards will be denied access to the LEAGUE POOL.
        1. Denial of access will continue until standards are met.
    ii. The Director of Coaching will monitor adherence to LEAGUE POOL standards and participation. The Director will provide the AFI Commissioner recommendations for denial of access / reestablishment of access.

J. Refusal to Play On

J.1. Refusal to continue a game shall be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence and shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

J.2. Individual refusing to continue to Play

This is covered by Rule 9-2-1-a:

ARTICLE 1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct or any act that interferes with the orderly game administration on the part of players, substitutes, coaches, authorised attendants or any other persons subject to the rules, before the game, during the game or between periods

a Specifically prohibited acts and conduct include

1. No player, substitute, coach or other person subject to the rules shall use abusive, threatening or obscene language or gestures, or engage in such acts that provoke ill will or are demeaning to an opponent, the game officials or to the image of the game.

PENALTY: Dead-ball foul. 15 yards from the succeeding spot. If a player or an identified squad member in uniform commits two unsportsmanlike fouls in the same game, he shall be disqualified.

Approved Ruling: If a player commits two unsportsmanlike fouls under this rule, it will be deemed the responsibility of that player's Team to ensure that the disqualified player is removed from the field (see Rule 2-31-1 for definition of field). If the Team do not carry out this responsibility, they shall be deemed to violate "Team refusing to play" guidelines.

J.3. Team refusing to continue to Play

This is covered by Rule 9-2-3-a

ARTICLE 3. The following are unfair acts

Specifically prohibited acts and conduct include

PENALTY: The referee may take any action he considers equitable, including assessing a penalty, or suspending or forfeiting the game.

Approved Ruling: In games under these guidelines, the procedure will be

a. Team refusing to play will be charged with a Team Timeout. If that Team have no timeouts remaining in that half, the Team will be penalised 5 yards from the succeeding spot for delay of game.
b. If the Team are still refusing to play after a, the Team will be penalised 5 yards from the succeeding spot for delay of game.
c. If the Team are still refusing to play after a & b, the Team will be penalised 15 yards from the succeeding spot for unsportsmanlike conduct.
d. If the Team are still refusing to play after a & b & c, the referee will suspend the game.

The report shall include the following information:
1. the reason for suspension, 2. the score, 3. the team in possession, 4. the down & distance & 5. the time remaining in the quarter.

J.4. It is AFI policy that if a team refuses to play, the opposition get awarded the game as a 30-0 forfeit or whatever the score is when the game stopped (whichever is more favourable to the other team). In the event of both teams refusing to play, the score shall be provisionally awarded as 0-0. Any team that refuses to play shall have 1 point deducted from their total in the league standings.

J.5. All refusals to play incidents shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee who may take further action which may or may not include the deduction of additional points and/or suspensions.

K. Spectator Problems

K.1. By-Law I will apply to incidents caused by spectators which cause the cancellation or postponement of games, subject to N.2 & N.3 below.

K.2. It is the responsibility of home team management to ensure that spectators do not encroach on the field. Spectator areas should be clearly defined, and the home team must take adequate steps to ensure there are no disruptions to the game. Adequate steps may include, where appropriate, fencing, roped off areas, cones, restricting access to venue and signs.

K.3. Each team shall be responsible for the behaviour of their own supporters. In the event that any person who is NOT DIRECTLY participating IN AN ASSociation event:

K.4. strikes, attempts to strike a player, team member, official or spectator.

- INTIMINDATES OR HARASSES A PLAYER, A TEAM MEMBER, OFFICIAL OR SPECTATORi
- ENCROACHES ONTO THE FIELD OR PAST THE RESPECT BARRIERS IN A MANNER THAT IS REASONABLY LIKELY TO PUT ANY PERSON IN FEAR

SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY AND AUTOMATICALLY BANNED FROM ATTENDING ALL ASSOCIATION EVENTS FOR ONE YEAR

K.4 The use of drones is not permitted within the respect barriers. No drone should fly past the respect barriers or above the field of play, players, coaches, or officials boxes/zones. If this occurs the game will be stopped until such a time that the drone is moved to a safe position.

L. Game Day Forms & Checks

L.1. Each team shall submit a completed Roster Form to the Officials 30 minutes before kick- off. Roster Forms will be kept on file by the AFI and used as the official record of who played in the game. If the form is submitted late, the Officials should assess a pregame delay of game penalty.

L.2. Each Head Coach shall complete an Officials Rating Form (if one is provided) (circulated to team managers in email format at the discretion of the Director of Officiating) and submit it to the Officiating Development Manager within 7 days of each fixture.

L.3. Each Referee shall be responsible for submitting a Game Report to the Director of Officiating within 48hrs of each fixture unless specifically requested earlier due to an incident/appeal. Game Reports shall be made available to the Commissioner and the team managers of the participating teams upon request.

L.4. In the event of a Category 4 stoppage, the responsible team must complete the relevant form specified elsewhere in these by-laws

L.5. Pregame Identity & Equipment Checks:

(i) The officiating crew may carry out equipment checks at any time pre-game or during a game as required.

(ii) Identity Check Procedure

a. 10 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time, each team must line-up all players on their game day roster in kit, in numerical order with faces and numbers clearly visible.

b. Each opposing team must take photo(s)/visual recording of their opponents line- up players in which each player's number and face is visible.

c. Photo(s), upon request, must be emailed or sent by smart phone to the Commissioner.

d. The above-mentioned photos will be used as proof that a particular player played in the respective fixture.

SECTION 3 - 11-A-SIDE PLAYING & COMPETITION RULES

A. Facilities at Home Venue

Home venue should include the following:

A.1. Separate dressing rooms for each team, where application catering separately for varying genders. Either one large dressing room OR two smaller dressing rooms per team. Venue should be able to accommodate c.50 players per team for AFI Premier Division teams, and c.40 players per team for other teams.

A.2. Dressing room for officials capable of holding up to 6 people, where applicable catering separately for both genders.

A.3. Shower facilities for both teams and officials (preferably with separate direct access).

A.4. Toilet facilities.

A.5. Drinking water available (mains tap or bottled).

A.6. Dressing rooms doors should have locks.

A.7. Adequate parking facilities for visiting team bus, officials, and ambulance.

A.8. Pitch access for ambulance.

A.9. Unobstructed direct access to pitch from dressing rooms. Dressing rooms should be on the same premises as the pitch.

B. Pitch Markings/Playing Surfaces

B.1. All teams should aim to play on pitch with the dimensions required in the IFAF rules.
Where it is not possible to have the field length as required:

B.1.a. The distance between goal lines must be a minimum of 90 yards and a maximum of 110 yards.

B.1.b. The end zones must be a minimum of 7 yds. and a maximum of 15 yds. in depth and equal in size

B.2. Pitch should be marked in clearly visible straight white lines in one of the following ways. AFI Premier Division Teams:

B.2.a. Full IFAF markings or

B.2.b. Side lines, goal lines, end lines plus every 5-yard line plus hash marks.

Other Teams:

B.2.c. Full IFAF markings or

B.2.d. Side lines, goal lines, end lines plus every 5-yard line plus centre hash marks.

B.3. The markings should include a restraining line parallel to and 2 yards off the side-line. The chains will be placed on this restraining line. They should also include coaches box and side-line areas and appropriate safety lines as per IFAF rules.

B.4. Goal posts should be provided for all fixtures.

B.4.a. Located on the end lines OR within a distance of 5yds behind the end line.

B.4.b. Goal posts should be a bright colour such as yellow or white, should be clearly visible from the field of play.

B.4.c. Goal posts should include a crossbar and uprights. The following types of goal posts are permitted:

(i) Regulation American football posts.
(ii) Rugby posts.
(iii) GAA posts.
(iv) Soccer posts with temporary uprights attached.
(v) Any similar posts to the above agreed with the AFI Director of Officiating.

B.5. All team managers should consult with the Director of Officiating to agree how the field is to be marked

in advance of the first game of the season to be played at that venue.

B.6. Team/league/sponsors logos/names are permitted to be painted on the field provided they do not interfere with the pitch markings. It is advisable that all persons in the team area should wear identifiable team apparel e.g. polo shirt, sweatshirt, jacket, t-shirt etc.

B.7. Team areas should be clearly marked using paint.

B.8.

B.8.a. Spectators must be kept behind barriers at least 10 yards off the side-lines/end lines If a particular side-line/end line does not have a barrier, spectators are not permitted to stand at that side/end of the field. Permitted barriers include the following:

(i) Permanently installed perimeter fencing around a pitch.

(i) 'Respect Barriers' of a type/model approved for use by the Football Association, Football Association of Ireland, Rugby Football Union or Irish Rugby Football Union (soccer and rugby associations).

(ii) Any other safety barrier/fencing solution suitable for sporting use that does not present a health and safety risk. (AFI should be consulted if any doubt)

B.8.b. Photographers, film crews, event/game staff etc. are permitted to be inside the spectator barriers if they are wearing high visibility vests/jackets or stewards apparel or event apparel or AFI apparel (in the case of persons performing AFI duties).

B.9. Playing surface should be grass or an IFAF approved artificial surface which permits the use of grass footwear. The surface should be even, and the grass kept short. The playing surface should not be littered with dangerous objects such as glass, rubbish, cans, or stones. The playing surface should not have any holes or dips that would increase the risk of injury to players.

B.10. The Officials will inspect the pitch c.90 minutes before kick-off along with the team manager. If there are any deficiencies in the pitch markings or playing surface, the home team will have until 30 minutes before kick-off to rectify them.

B.11. If deemed unsuitable c.90 minutes before kick-off, the Officials will conduct a second inspection 30 minutes before kick-off.

B.12. If the pitch is unsuitable at 30 minutes before kick-off, the home team will be allowed to continue working on the pitch. If the pitch is still unsuitable at the time of the coin toss, late arrival procedures (by-law A) will apply (home team deemed late until such time as the pitch is ready).

B.13. If the home team fail to rectify any problems with the pitch resulting in the cancellation of the fixture, the matter will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. The game will be awarded 30-0 forfeit in favour of the away team.

C. Game Day Requirements

C.1. To be provided by the home team:

(i) 3 registered members wearing high-visibility vests chain crew to be present 30 minutes prior to kick-off.

(ii) It is strongly urged that 2 people to act as ball boys should be supplied by the home team.

C.2. If the game day requirements are not fulfilled, the home team is regarded as being late for the fixture and By-Law A.10 is applied.

D. Officials, Balls, Tees, Chains & Pylons

D.1. The AFI shall supply a minimum of 4 officials for each league fixture and at least 5 officials for each championship game (or suitable alternatives determined by the Director of Officiating). A game will be suspended if the number of officials present falls below 3. The number of officials includes team officials as detailed in the By Laws. The onus is on AFI (not a particular team that has provided a minimum 72hrs notice that they cannot provide the number of officials as directed) to arrange an alternative. If an alternative can be found the team providing the notice will be supplied with a warning on the first occasion. If an alternative cannot be found which causes the game to be cancelled / postponed or relies on the participating teams to provide their own officials, the team providing the

notice will be automatically deducted 1pt. In the event that a team has been issued a warning on the first occasion an automatic deduction of 1 point will apply on the second instance. The first warning is valid for one year from the date of notification of the warning. A team that has received a warning and a subsequent point's deduction will again be eligible for a warning in the first instance should the failure to provide occur again.

D.2. All balls must comply with the current IFAF rules. Three balls for each fixture will be supplied by the AFI and maintained by the Officials. These will be the default balls for any fixture in the event that one or both teams opt not to use their own balls or if there are insufficient team supplied balls at any time during a particular fixture. These will be Wilson GST.

Teams are permitted to use their own balls in fixtures under the following conditions:

(iii) The balls used comply with IFAF rules.
(iv) They are submitted for inspection by the Officials as per IFAF rules.
(i) A minimum of 3 balls must be supplied and pass the inspection.
(ii) All supplied balls must be the same make/model/specification.
(v) Each team supplying balls must provide at least one ball boy who will act under the direction of the officiating crew. Note that the game will not be delayed if the ball boy does not present a particular team's balls on time – the officials have the option of continuing with the ball that was last in play in order to avoid delays.

For the avoidance of doubt, teams are not permitted to opt to use a mixture of team supplied and league supplied balls – all 3 balls in use for a particular team must be the same. Teams are also not allowed to use particular balls on particular types of plays/scenarios e.g. kicking.

D.3. Teams must supply their own kick-off tee that it is in accordance with the IFAF rules.

D.4. Officials' fees will be paid by the League Association using funds collected from player registration fees. [For friendly games and fixtures outside of official competition, an officials' fee of €350 per game or £300 stg in Northern Ireland will apply. This fee must be paid to the crew chief in cash at least 30 minutes before kick-off. Failure to do so will result in a pre-game delay of game penalty.]

D.5. Officials must be certified by the director of officiating having completed the relevant officials training course and pass an exam (as per section 1 c.1) set by the director of officiating. Appropriately certified officials from other ifaf member countries or the ncaa are permitted to officiate in ireland on a temporary basis with the agreement of both the director of officiating and their home countries recognised officiating organisation. Officials must be registered on azolve with an active membership.

D.6. Each home team is responsible for ensuring that a minimum of 8 pylons and a functioning set of chains and down marker are available for use by the officiating crew.

D.7. Game fees will be paid to full-time officials monthly, in arrears. Payment of these fees, plus any mileage expenses, meal allowance and any other allowable expenses as agreed by both the director of officiating and the chief finance officer will be made via bank transfer to the nominated bank account of the official, upon completion of an expense form which is available from the finance department, upon request.

Game fees due to team provided officials (TPOs) will be paid to their respective club for re-distribution, monthly, in arrears. Payment of these fees, plus any mileage expenses, meal allowance and any other allowable expenses as agreed by both the director of officiating and the chief finance officer will be made via bank transfer to the nominated bank account of the club upon completion of an expense form which is available from the finance department, upon request.

[Mileage (payable at a rate of 35c/30p per mile) will be capped at the total distance between the home ground of the officiating club and the location of the game in question. Mileage may only be claimed for one return car journey per officiating assignment. Meal allowances will be capped at a maximum €10 per person, payable only to officials whose travel and officiating duties last equal to or more than 12 hours on a given matchday]

D.8. Each team must have sufficient trained officials to be able to provide 6 certified officials to fulfill their team's quota of fixtures for the year. Assignments to fixtures will be made by the director of officiating. The quota of fixtures for each afi premier division and afi division1/2 team is equal to the number of home games they are scheduled to play plus one. Each afi premier division and afi division 1/2 team who does not qualify for the play-offs is also liable to provide officials to one play-off fixture.

D.9. If on the day of a scheduled game and due to unforeseen circumstances, no Team Provided Officials arrive at the venue, it will be mandatory for each participating team to provide at least one qualified and registered official to ensure the game proceeds. If no qualified or registered Team Provided Official from the participating team(s) is present at the venue then a registered coach that has been qualified for a minimum of two years can act as a Team Provided Official. This coach cannot be used as a Team Provided Official if it would result in there being no dedicated eligible coach on the side-line of the participating team(s). If the game cannot proceed in this manner it will be rescheduled by the Commissioner.

D.10. All officials must declare on the official game report if they are wearing an audio-visual recording device (e.g. go-pro). Only full-time officials are permitted to wear an audio- visual recording device.

Audio visual recording device must:
Be worn on the official cap with the specific hat mount; Only be in use within the respect barriers; Not record audio whilst (a) a player is being treated by medical personnel and/or (b) any personal details regarding and AFI member is being discussed.

Game day footage must be uploaded within 48hrs of the game ending to a location specified by the Director of Officiating. More information is provided on this in the 'officiating footage policy'.

AFI is not responsible for any damages to the device.
The footage is the property of AFI and cannot be used for any other purpose other than those set down by AFI.

D.11. No person is permitted to enter the participating official's dressing room during briefings without the expressed authorisation of the Director of Officiating. This authorisation must be sought 3 days in advance of the fixture.

D.12. Officials Jurisdiction at a venue shall commence upon the arrival of the Head Referee/White cap and ends 30 minutes after the final whistle is blown.

D.13. Head referees/White Caps must ensure that game day forms are fully completed and include details of TPO expenses. In the event that a TPO has not provided their mileage it will consider the distance from their home club to the venue. Game day reports must be submitted to the Director of Officiating within 48 hours unless requested earlier due to an incident/appeal.

D.14. Head referees/White caps should ensure that the association supplied back board attachments are present at the venue and inform the medical personnel that they are available for use.

E. Rules & Fixtures

E.1. The Rules used in all fixtures shall be those in the current "International Federation of American Football Rules and Interpretations" as modified by the AFI By-Laws. The Current Rules shall be defined as the rules dated the year prior to the current season's year (i.e.2020 IFAF Rules apply in the 2021 season).

E.2. Once a Team has accepted its schedule, it must be adhered to.

E.3. The game cannot start without the 11 players on each team. If a team cannot field 11 healthy players, they shall forfeit the game.

E.4. AFI Rules Modifications
The rules modifications, in addition any specified elsewhere in these By-Laws, that are used in the AFI are as follows:

(i) There is no overtime in regular season games – they can end in a tie.

(ii) Rule 3-3-5-a-2 is replaced with the following:

"Player may not return unless deemed fit to play by the designated Side-line Coach as per the team's roster form. Any advice, recommendations or courses of action proposed by the emergency medical crew in attendance must be complied with and will override any decision made by the coaching staff regarding the player's fitness to play."

(iii) League game balls are used (and supplied) for each fixture.

(iv) 12-minute quarters.

(v) At the end of a scoring play or a play during which possession changes:

I. Rule 9-2, Article 1(a) (1) (d) does not apply until the beginning of the next play,

II. Rule 9-2, Article 1(a) (2) (a), (b) and (c) do not apply until the beginning of the next play, and

III. A player, substitute, coach, or other person subject to the rules is deemed to have committed a dead-ball unsportsmanlike conduct foul under Rule 9-2, Article 1(a) (1) if they engage in any of the following:

a. any violent gesture, or an act that is sexually suggestive or offensive,

b. prolonged or excessive celebrations or demonstrations by an individual player or multiple players, or

using any object as a prop, or possessing any foreign or extraneous object(s) that are not part of the uniform on the field or the sideline during the game, other than the football.

E.5. Schedule Changes

In the event that scheduled games are cancelled due to any team(s) withdrawing after the publication of the league schedule or during the course of the season, the AFI is permitted to adjust the schedule to provide all teams with a minimum of 8 regular season games. Such adjustments can take into account practical considerations.

E.6. Non-Kicking Games

In such games, the following additional IFAF rules modifications apply:

i. Rule 3

First and Third Periods

3-1-1d. The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:

1. To designate which team shall first snap the ball from their own 20-yard line.
2. To designate which goal line his team shall defend.
3. To defer his selection to the second half.

ii Rule 6

Kicks

6-1 There will be no kicking games as determined by the League. This cannot be changed on game day by the participating Teams.

6-2 The Team in possession of the ball can elect to "punt" the ball on any down.

6-2-1 The officials will assume that the Team in possession are attempting to gain first down yardage unless otherwise elected.

6-2-2 When a "punt" is elected, the officials will walk off 40 yards from the succeeding spot.

6-2-3 If the succeeding spot is less than 40 yards from the opponents goal-line, this will result is a touchback.

iii Rule 8

Next Play After Try Down

ARTICLE 6. After a try, the ball shall be put in play by a legal snap. The team defending during the six-point touchdown shall snap the ball at their 20-yard line.

Next Play After Safety

8-5-2. After a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the opponents of the
defending team at their own 20-yard line and that team shall put the ball in play on or between the hash marks by a legal snap.

F. Points System & Standings

F.1. The following points system will apply:

Win = 2 points, Loss = 0 point, Tie = 1 points, Forfeit Loss = -1 point

F.2. In the event of a forfeit, stoppage, abandonment or if the game is not played, the appropriate points and score, as per the by-laws, will apply.

F.3. Divisions & Qualification for Play-Offs

The AFI will place each team in appropriate Leagues as per the outcome of the previous season's results and the off-season audit/application process. Teams must play the schedule of games communicated to them by the AFI in advance of the season.

2026 Leagues (in no particular order subject to audits/government restrictions).

SECTION 4 - AFI Premier Division:

A.1.A Belfast Trojans, University College Dublin, Cork Admirals, Dublin Rebels, Louth Mavericks, Belfast Knights, UL Vikings, Caigavon Cowboys

Semi-Finals: 1st placed team will play at home to 4th placed team. 2nd placed team will play at home to 3rd placed team.

The winners of the Semi-Finals will meet in the Shamrock Bowl (venue to be decided by AFI)

Shield Tournament: 6th placed team will play at home to 7th placed team, the winner of this matchup will then go on to play the 5th placed team in a Shield Final (Venue to be decided by AFI)

A.1.B **AFI Division 1:**

South Dublin Panthers Cill Dara Crusaders, West Dublin Rhinos, NorthWest Vipers, Wexford Eagles, Causeway Giants, County Antrim Stags, Westmeath Minotaurs

Schedule Strength:

- Teams 1 and 2 will not play teams 9 and 10; Team 1 will play team 2 twice, Team 9 will play team 10 twice.
- Team 3 will not play team 8
- Team 4 will not play team 6
- Team 5 will not play team 7

Post Season:

Top 4 teams enter Division 1 play-offs

1st placed team will play at home to 4th placed team. 2nd placed team will play at home to 3rd placed team. The winners of these matchups (Semi-Finals) will meet in the AFI Division 1 Bowl (venue to be decided by AFI).

Next 4 teams (Placed 5th to 8th) will enter a Plate Competition – 5th plays 8th and 6ths plays 7th; Winners of these matchups will meet in the AFI Division 1 Plate game (venue to be decided by AFI).

A.1.C **AFI Division 2: Removed for the 2025 season.**

A.1. Tie Breakers

(i) Least number of forfeits given.
(ii) Head to Head least number of forfeits given.
(i) Least number of points deducted for any other reasons.
(iii) Points difference in head to head games.
(iv) Points difference in all games. (forfeits count as 30-0 or 30-30).
(ii) Least number of disciplinary points.
(v) Seeding based on position in previous season's standings (cross divisional as follows: AFI Premier Division, AFI Division 1, AFI Division 2). For clarification, seeding will be based on the teams' regular season record from the previous season(s).
(iii) Drawn out of hat.

Where a league has more than one regional division, tiebreakers are applied within the division first so as to determine the placing within the division. Where inter-divisional tiebreakers are required, they only apply between the teams who finished in the same position in the order of merit in each division.

* In the event that any team fails to complete 2 or more regular season fixtures, all its games will be regarded as 30-0 forfeits for the purposes of calculating the points allowed in these specific tiebreak categories.

A.2. Promotion/Relegation

A.2.a. At the conclusion of the season, the last placed team in the AFI Premier Division will be automatically relegated to AFI Division 1 for the following season unless a higher ranked team is at fault for not completing two or more scheduled games.

A.2.b. The AFI has the discretion to relegate any team in the AFI Premier Division which is at fault for not completing its full schedule of games. Any team(s) that is at fault for not playing 2 or more scheduled games will be automatically relegated even if they are ranked higher than last place. All promoted/relegation is subject to the respective teams passing their annual audit and having fulfilled all their requirements in the most recently completed season.

A.2.c. Subject to paragraph (d), relegated AFI Premier Division team(s) will be replaced by the highest ranked team(s) in AFI Division 1, provided such team(s) can satisfy any requirements/guidelines required of teams playing in the AFI Premier Division.

A.2.d. If, following promotion or relegation, there is an unsuitable number of teams in the AFI Premier Division or AFI Division 1, the AFI may promote or relegate additional teams on the basis of their league rankings or any other factors that the AFI deems relevant.

A.2.e. The AFI has the right to promote/relegate between divisions subject to satisfying requirements/guidelines and/or order of merit.

A.2.f. Where a club is fielding two competitive teams in the AFI league structure, these teams cannot be placed in the same Division. 2nd teams can be promoted/relegated, though they cannot be promoted to a level equal or above that in which their 1st teams play.

A.3. Player Eligibility Rules for 2nd Teams:

A.3.a. Where a club is fielding two teams of players in different divisions it must maintain two separate squads of players. One week prior to the team's first game in either division, the team must submit to the Commissioner a list of all registered players and which team i.e. 1st or 2nd, they are allocated to. Any players registered after that date must be allocated to one or other of the teams upon registration.

A.3.b. Players can move from the 2nd team to the 1st team without penalty, However, they will be regarded as first team players from the date that they appear on the game day roster form of the first team.

A.3.c. Up to five (5) 1st team players can move down to the 2nd team in advance of any 2nd team game. However, these players are not permitted to return to the first team until they have missed at least one 1st team game (regular season or play-offs) post the date they play for the 2nd team. The date that they are first listed on the game day roster for the 2nd team is regarded as the date that they move down.

SECTION 5 - DV-8 PLAYING & COMPETITION RULES

Please note that the rules in Sections 1-3 will apply with the following exceptions:

A. Playing Rule Variations

A.1. Offensive Formation

A legal offensive formation must have exactly 5 players on the line of scrimmage i.e. cannot have more or less than 5 players.

A.2. Blocking

No blocking below the waist by any player - except on the ball carrier.

A.3. Kicking Game

There are no Special Teams in DV-8's.
A team can opt to "punt" on any offensive down - the officials will mark off 30 yards.
A "punt" inside an opponent's 30 will be deemed a touchback and the ball spotted on the opponent's 20-yard line. After any score, including a safety, or at the start of each half, the team due to receive the ball will start their drive on the 20yard line.

A.4. Scoring

A touchdown is worth 6 points.
An extra point conversion from the 2-yard line is worth 1 point. An extra point conversion from the 10-yard line is worth 2 points.

A.5. Mercy Rule

If a team takes a 45-point lead into the end of any quarter A coach's conference MUST be held. The losing coach will be given the option to:
Declare the game a result - whereby the score will be fixed at that point & continue the game with no further scores affecting the result.
OR
Continue with the game - where all scores will count towards the final score.

NOTE: This rule does not affect the any coaches or officials right to end a game due to safety concerns.

A.6. Game Timing

Time of Game 4 x 10-minute quarters. Current AFI timekeeping rules apply. Each Team has two timeouts per half.
OR
If both teams agree and with the Director of Officiating notified in Advance a rolling clock may be used for all games with 2 X 20-minute quarters.

A.7. By-Law I13 does not apply to DV8s fixtures.

B. Pitches & Game Day Requirements

B.1. Pitch Size & Markings

(i) 80 yards between goal lines + 10-yard end zones
(ii) 40 yards between side-lines
(iii) Hash marks are 15 yards from side-lines
(iv) Top of Numbers should be 7 yards from side-lines if marked (can just put a line parallel to side-line at same position)
(v) Mark at 3-yard line for standard PAT attempt

Pitches must be marked with a min of side-lines - goal lines - back of end zones and either every 10-yard line and all hash marks

C. Rookie Rule

Not used

D. Schedule

Not used

E. Points

E.1. Points will be awarded as per By-Law U1 (same as 11s games) with the exception that for Blitzes where the points will be 1st place = 4pts, 2nd place = 3pts, 3rd place = 2pts, 4th place – 1pt.

F. Youth Football

Please note that the rules in Sections 1 through 3 will apply with the following exceptions.

F.1. Safeguarding Children

F.1.a. AFI Requirements.

(i) Publish and maintain a Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, and a Safeguarding Guidance booklet
(ii) Provide an AFI Vetting Officer
(iii) Provide an AFI National Children's Officer
(iv) Conduct verification checks on all AFI and club personnel supervising children or vulnerable people participating in AFI games, events, and activities.
(v) Maintain records of vetting, safeguarding, and coaching qualifications of AFI members supervising children.

F.1.b. Club Requirements

(i) Appoint a vetted and safeguarding level 3 trained Designated Liaison Officer (DLP).
(ii) Appoint a vetted and safeguarding level 2 trained Club Children Officer (CCO).
(iii) All coaches must be vetted and have completed safeguarding level 1 and Introduction to Coaching Level 0 training. (Referred to as the BIG THREE)
(iv) Prior to the start of youth training, clubs must submit a by name list of duty positions (coaches, CCO, DLP) and verification of training listed in the above paragraphs. Scanned copies of safeguarding training certificates will be emailed to the Director of Youth Football.
(v) Clubs will make available the AFI safeguarding statement, risk assessment, and the name & contact information for their club DLP and CCO. It is encouraged that these are published onto the club website, where possible.
(vi) Clubs will provide officials with one team roster for each youth blitz. The roster will list all coaches and players and will be the source document for eligibility verification and on the spot inspections.

F.2. Officials, TPOs, chain crews

(i) A minimum of 1 AFI official will officiate each youth game. The goal is 2 AFI officials.
(ii) All clubs participating in a youth blitz must provide a minimum of one TPO and one chain crew person.

G. Club Player number requirements.

(vi) Three weeks prior to the start of games, youth teams must have a minimum of 12 youth players registered with AFI or they will not be authorised to field a youth team.
(i) Multiple clubs may combine to form a viable youth team of at least 12 players.
(ii) Clubs may choose not to compete in competition but continue with youth training. All club safeguarding and reporting requirements are still applicable.

H. Player Eligibility

Players must be between the ages of 15-17 to compete in AFI sanctioned youth competition. Players may be 18 if they were 17 for at least one day in the season's year. Example 1 - The season is 2020. Player A turns 18 on January 2nd, 2020. Player A is ELIGIBLE to play in the 2020 youth season. Example 2 - The season is 2020. Player B turns 18 on December 31st, 2019. Player B is INELIGIBLE to play in the 2020 youth season.

H.1.a. 18-year olds who competed or trained with a senior team are still ELIGIBLE for youth competition provided their age is compliant with the age guidelines noted in the above paragraph.

All youth players must be registered with AFI to train and compete. Players must be registered at least 14 days prior to participating in a youth game. (same as the senior requirement)

Clubs will provide just one team roster for each youth blitz. The roster will list all coaches and players and will be the source document for eligibility verification on the spot inspections.

I. IFAF Football Rule Modifications.

I.1. Field Dimensions: Standard dimensions and markings apply with the field length modified to 80 yards between the goal lines. The width of the field is 40 yards. The player/team box is between the 20 yard lines. There is no requirement for goal posts. In order to fit a youth pitch into available space, the end zone may be reduced to 5 yards.

I.2. Game Format: The player competition format is 8 players versus 8 players (8v8). Failure to field 8 players at the beginning of a game will result in a forfeit. If injury causes a team to go below 8 players after the start of a game; the game shall continue competitively with 7 players. If a team goes below 7 players, the game will be forfeited but may continue as a scrimmage in a format agreed by the two opposing coaches.

I.3. Authorised Jersey Numbers by Position: There is NO requirement for specific numbers at specific positions. i.e. Offensive lineman DO NOT need to wear numbers 50-79. No two players on the same team may wear the same number.

I.4. Coin Toss: The coin toss winner options are offense, defense, defer, or choice of endzone.

I.5. Game Clock Management. The game will consist of two 20-minute halves (no quarters) using a running clock. The clock will only stop for a score (the PAT is not timed), penalty enforcement, walking off the punt, charged timeout, and player injury. The last two minutes of each half will have a normal managed clock. Each team has two 30 second timeouts per half. The half time is 5 minutes.

I.5.a. If teams play outside of a blitz gameday and play only one game on a day, opposing coaches may agree to lengthen the game play to four 12-minute quarters using a standard IFAF game clock.

I.6. Offensive Formations: A legal offensive formation must have at least 5 players on the line of scrimmage.

I.7. Blocking: There is no blocking below the waist.

I.8. Special Teams: There is no special team play in youth football. Teams will start offensively at their own 20-yard line at the start of the game, start of game after halftime, and after scores. In the case of a safety the team that scored the two-point safety will start at their 30-yard line.

I.8.a. Punts: Teams may opt to punt on any down. Punts will be walked off 25 yards. Punts at or under the opponents 25-yard line will be considered a touchback and spotted at the 20-yard line. Example situation: Punts at the 26 yard line will be marked at the 1 yard line.

I.9. Scoring: Touchdowns are 6 points. There are no kicked PATs or field goals. Safeties are 2 points. 1 point PATs are spotted at the 2 yard line and 2 point PATs are spotted at the 5 yard line. The recording of the actual score of the game will follow senior by-laws concerning game stoppage and forfeits.

J. Points:

For table standings, 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, zero points for a loss, and minus one point for a pre-kick off forfeit. Forfeits pre-kick off will be scored as a 30-0 loss. Forfeits during the game due to injury or safety concerns will be awarded zero points.

K. Playoffs:

Youth playoffs will utilise the semi-final and final format. The first seed will play the fourth seed. The second seed will play the third seed. Semi-final winners will proceed to the final. During the playoff/championship blitz the intent is for all teams to play 2 games regardless of seeding.

SECTION 6 - FLAG FOOTBALL – PLAYING AND COMPETITION RULES

A. Travel & Lateness

A.1. All teams should plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before kick-off.

A.2. If a team has not arrived 30 minutes before kick-off, the hosting manager will contact them to find out the reason for the delay and inform match officials. If delayed, the team should check-in by phone every 15 minutes until arrival.

A.3. If a team has not taken the field by the time of the coin toss, the awaiting team is deemed to have won the coin toss. A delay of game penalty may be assessed by the officials against any team not ready to play at kick-off time (see By-Law G3 for penalty enforcement of pre-game penalties).

A.4. If a team arrives late, kick-off will take place no more than 15 minutes after arrival, up to a maximum of 30 minutes after the scheduled kick-off time. In the event of a kick-off being delayed by more than 15 minutes, a delay of game penalty (15yds) will be assessed as per By-Law S5-D4.

A.5. A.5. If kick-off does not take place by 30 minutes after the appointed time, the awaiting team wins, and the game will be forfeit by the late team.

A.6. The above procedure may equally be applied to any team being late.

B. Uniforms & Equipment

B.1. Mandatory equipment as provided for in the IFAF Flag Football Rulebook (revised 2019 edition) is compulsory for all players as per IFAF Rule 1-3-1.

B.2. Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colours. If the teams are using similar jerseys, the home team has the option which team has to change jerseys.

B.2.a. Players of a team shall wear jerseys of the same colour, cut and style. The jerseys must be full-length and tucked into the pants with contrasting Arabic numerals at least 6 inches (15 cm) in height on the back. All players of a team must have different whole numbers from 1 to 99. Jerseys must not be taped or tied in any manner.

B.2.b. AFI Flag Premier Division teams should endeavour to own two set of jerseys of contrasting colours.

B.2.c. Players of a team shall wear shorts or pants of the same colour, cut and style without pockets, press studs or clips. Players cannot tape or secure their shorts or pants to meet this regulation.

B.2.d. Players of a team shall wear tightly fixed flag belts with sockets and 2 pop-flags. Every effort must be made to keep one flag on each hip of the player. These flags must measure 2 inches (5 cm) x 15 inches (38 cm) must not be altered in any way. The sockets must not be glued or altered in any way and placed facing outwards and downwards. The flags must be clearly visible, hang down freely and must not be covered in any way by the player's uniform. The flags of each team must be of the same single colour and must be contrasting with all colours on the pants. Players, who deliberately manipulate their flags shall be disqualified.

B.2.e. If an intra-oral mouthpiece is worn it must be of a visible, non-white colour and with no part extending more than 0,5 inch (1,25 cm). The use of a mouthpiece is mandatory.

B.3. Sponsorship and player names are permitted on uniforms.

B.4. Illegal Equipment

B.4.a. Shoes with cleats longer than 0,5 inch (1,25 cm), sharp pointed as spikes or made of any metallic material.

B.4.b. Political, obscene, offensive, sexual, and racially abusive symbols and slogans are not permitted on uniforms

B.4.c. Any kind of shoulder pads, helmets or head wear (caps, hoods, bandannas, headbands or similar).

B.4.d. Any kind of protectors which endanger other players (e.g. sharp edged knee braces).

B.4.e. Glasses not medically prescribed or not made out of non-breaking material.

B.4.f. Jewellery must be removed or covered up completely.

B.4.g. Uniform attachments like towels or hand warmers.

B.4.h. Adhesive material, paint, grease or any other slippery substance applied to equipment or on a players person, clothing or attachment that affects the ball or an opponent.

B.4.i. Any electronic, mechanical or other signal devices for the purpose of communicating with a coach.

B.5 In mixed-gender or women's flag football leagues, games and events, teams can elect to use a youth-sized ball.

As a guideline, it is recommended that the youth-size ball is used in the instance that a female is playing QB.
Teams electing to use the youth-sized ball are advised to provide their own balls and must inform officials during the pre-game inspections of the intention to use them and submit them for inspection, if requested by officials.
Where a youth-size ball isn't available, an official-size ball may be used

C. Team Area

C.1. The team area is outside the safety area (3 yards away from the sideline) and between the no-running zones along the sideline with a depth of 5 yards (4,58 m). The use of electronic devices (headsets, video recorders, smart phones etc.) in the team area is legal

C.2. Only registered players, coaches and side-line staff are permitted in the Team Area.

C.3. The onus is on the coaching staff to ensure that unauthorised people do not enter the Team Area. If any unauthorised people refuse to leave the Team Area at the request of the coaches, team management or officials, the game will be suspended, and home team management will make the necessary arrangements for their removal.

C.4. Any authorised person who is in the Team Area is regarded as being a participant in the game and being under the direction of the designated non-playing coach as indicated on the team roster submitted to the officials.

C.5. All persons in the Team Area, whether authorised or not and whether individual members or not, are subject to both AFI and IFAF rules regarding sportsmanship and conduct.

C.6. No player, coach or authorised person in the Team Area is permitted to verbally or physically abuse any person present at the game or make obscene gestures.

C.7. No person in the Team Area should encroach on the field at any time.

C.8. A disqualified player or coach has to leave the team area and remain out of view of the field.

C.9. All spectators must remain behind the spectator barriers as specified in section Q of these By-Laws.

D. Behaviour at Venue

D.1. All members of the AFI are required to behave in a courteous and sporting manner while at any match venue at any time on the date of any fixture. AFI will not tolerate any verbal and/or physical abuse from anyone to players and/or referees on and/or off the field. Anyone caught doing so will be given one warning. If this becomes a regular occurrence, we will be asking Team Managers to remove the person(s) involved from the team roster for the rest of the season. This also applies to players and coaches standing on the side-line during a game.

D.2. If any official judges that a player or a coach is potentially dangerous to anyone on the field or intentionally commits fouls, that person will be disqualified for the rest the game (as per rules R1.1.1 & R1.1.2 form the IFAF Flag Football Rulebook) and will asked to step away from the pitch for the remainder of the game. A complaint will be filed against the same individual to the Director of Flag Football which will be reviewed for disciplinary action by the AFI Flag Football Disciplinary Committee.

D.3. The Officials have the right to enforce penalties against any member or team from the moment they arrive at a venue. Penalties may include unsportsmanlike behaviour and personal fouls and should be enforced as pregame penalties.

D.4. Pregame Penalties

Any penalties assessed before kick-off will be enforced on the opening play from scrimmage.

D.5. Any player who strikes, attempts to strike a member of the opposing team or an official after the final whistle shall receive a minimum 2 match suspension and the matter shall be referred to the AFI Flag Football Disciplinary Committee.

D.6. No player or coach is permitted to enter the dressing room of an opponent or official without permission.

D.7. No player, coach, official or member is permitted to damage the property of any other member at a match venue.

D.8. No player, coach, official or member is permitted to use a visual/audio recording device in any private area such as a dressing room or bathroom. Visual/audio recordings can only be made in a team's private area with the expressed permission of the teams Head Coach. Visual/audio recordings can be made in an Officials private area with the expressed permission of the Head Referee. On receipt of a complaint, the Commissioner has the right to refer the behaviour of any member to the AFI Flag Football Disciplinary Committee.

D.9. In the event that any person who is NOT a member of the association strikes, attempts to strike or encroaches onto the field or past the respect barriers in a manner that is reasonably likely to put any person in fear shall be immediately and automatically banned from attending all association events for one calendar year. This person shall not be eligible for membership during their ban.

E. Overtime

E.1. Overtime is only played in play-off or championship games. There is no overtime in regular season games.

E.2. IFAF Flag Football overtime playing rules will apply when overtime is played.

E.2.a. After a 2 minute intermission, the Referee shall toss a coin at midfield as at the beginning of the game.

E.2.b. The winner of the coin toss will choose to start each following period as offense or as defense. If the winner chooses to start with offense, the other team will elect which end of the field they will defend. If the winner chooses to start with defense then will elect which end of the field they will defend.

E.2.c. No charged team timeouts will be granted.

E.2.d. The first extra period shall consist of 2 series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap at the middle line for one series of downs (no first down at middle). Should the defense score during the first series, other than on the try, then the extra period is over.

E.2.e. Each team retains the ball during its series until it scores (including try downs for 1 or 2 points) or exhausts its series of downs. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead. The series is then ended even if there is a second change of possession during that down.

E.2.f. If after the first period (with 2 series including tries) the score is still tied, the second and following periods consist of series with each team playing a 1-point-try from the 5-yard line. The overtime ends when the score after a period is no longer a tie or the defense scores during the first series of a period.

E.2.g. The team scoring the greater number of points during overtime shall be declared the winner

E.3. Only those players listed as playing on the roster sheet submitted before kick-off are permitted to play in overtime.

F. Cancellations, Rescheduling & Forfeit

F.1. Teams should endeavour to play their fixtures at the times, dates and venues listed on the AFI fixtures schedule.

F.2. If a game has to be cancelled due to no fault of either of the participating teams, the Director of Flag Football, after having consulted with the Director of Officiating will decide whether or not the game will be rescheduled and, if applicable, the rescheduled time/date.

F.3. Save where other mechanisms are provided in these By Laws, the Director of Flag Football, after having consulted with the Director of Officiating and the respective team managements, have the right to reschedule any game due to unforeseen or emergency circumstances. This may include a change in venue and kick-off time on game day following consultation with the participating teams and officials. Unless an alternative is mutually agreed by all parties, non-fault unplayed games will be automatically rescheduled for the next available Saturday that both teams are free provided that it is at least 14 days after the original date of the fixture. In the final weeks of the season, unless an alternative is mutually agreed by all parties, where there is insufficient time to implement the foregoing, games will be automatically rescheduled for the Saturday or Sunday (at the AFI's discretion) after the final weekend of regular season fixtures.

F.4. If a cancelled AFI Flag Premier Division game cannot be rescheduled, victory (30-0) will be awarded to

the team who was not at fault and the team at fault will be deducted 3 points in the league standings, disqualification from a playoff berth and an immediate relegation to the AFI Flag Division One with conditional requirements to participate in any AFI Flag Football events the following year/season

F.4.a. If both teams were at fault, the game will be regarded as a forfeit game (30- 30) for both teams with both teams being deducted 3 points and immediate relegation as per F.4. If neither team is at fault, the game will be regarded as a 15-15 tie.

F.5. If a cancelled AFI Flag Division One game cannot be rescheduled, victory (30-0) will be awarded to the team who was not at fault and the team at fault will be deducted 3 points in the league standings. If the same team forfeits a second time during the same regular season, the same will disqualify from a playoff berth, will be given a one year suspension from any AFI events with conditional requirements to participate in future AFI Flag Division One seasons when eligible to do so.

F.5.a. If both teams were at fault, the game will be regarded as a forfeit game (30- 30) for both teams with both teams being deducted 3 points as per F.5. If neither team is at fault, the game will be regarded as a 15-15 tie.

F.5.b. If either team forfeit a second time during the same regular season, F.5 penalties will then apply.

F.6. If the cancellation of a game is the fault of an organisation/individual / group / company supplying services / equipment / facilities to a particular team, then the team is regarded as being at fault. Equally, By-Law F2 will apply to such organisation / individual / group / companies in circumstances where genuine no fault or unforeseen circumstances arise which lead to the cancellation of a game due to their failure to supply services / equipment / facilities to a particular team.

F.7. Any team who wishes to have the date, time or venue of a fixture changed, must make a submission to the Director of Flag Football for their consideration at least 4 weeks prior to the fixture. The Director, having consulted with the opposing team and the officials will decide whether or not to reschedule the fixture. The AFI Flag Football Committee will not entertain requests for changes without supporting evidence.

F.8. Fixture changes will only be granted, at the AFI Director of Flag Football's discretion, if it is absolutely necessary OR if the fixture change will be of benefit to the league or teams concerned.

F.9. If a request to change is rejected, the game will either be played as per the fixture schedule or will be regarded as a forfeit game against one or other of the teams involved (depending on fault).

F.10. Any game that is not played or not completed due to the fault of one or both of the teams or due to failure of one or both of the teams to comply with the relevant By-Laws will be regarded as forfeit.

F.11. A team must have 5 fit players available to start a game. If the number of players available to a team falls below 5 and F.12 to F.14 do not apply, the game will be regarded as a Category 4 stoppage as per Section J of these By-Laws.

F.12. Where a game has started, but the number of fit players available to one or both teams falls below 5, the game will not be regarded as a forfeit if all the following circumstances apply to the team with fewer than 5 fit players:

(i) The game is in the 2nd half, but not yet at the two-minute warning.
(ii) The team started the game with 8 or more available players as shown on the roster supplied before the game.

In such cases, the team that is able to continue will be deemed to have won the game and have choice of the following score (i) the score at the time of the stoppage with 15 points added to their score or (ii) their opponent's score plus 1 point.

F.13. If the game is stopped, as per F12 above, after the referee has given the two minute warning, the team which is able to continue will be deemed to have won the game and have choice of the following score (i) the score at the time of the stoppage or (ii) their opponents score plus 1 point.

F.14. If both teams have fewer than 5 players available after the same play, the score at the time of stoppage will apply.

G. Mid-Game Stoppages & Abandoned Games

G.1. Every effort should be made by all players, coaches, managers & officials to ensure that once a fixture proceeds, it gets completed. Even if there is a high chance that a game may have to stop (e.g. due to

adverse weather reports), the game should start as scheduled and proceed until such time as it is no longer possible or reasonable to keep playing. Game stoppages fall into a number of categories and are handled accordingly.

G.2. If a game is temporarily suspended, play will resume at the point at which it was suspended. The game can be suspended for until up to 1 hour after the original kick-off time. If a game is suspended, it must be completed or halted by 2 hours after the original kick-off time.

G.3. There are four categories as follows (1) games suspended due to no fault of either team and completed in accordance with G.2; (2) games suspended due to no fault of either team and not completed in accordance with G.2; (3) games suspended due to the fault of one or both teams and completed in accordance with G.2; (4) games suspended due to the fault of one or both teams and not completed in accordance with G.2.

G.4. Categories 1 & 2 – includes dangerous weather conditions, on advice of emergency or security services & medical emergencies.
Categories 3 & 4 – includes minimum game requirements not being met, lack of security, spectator problems, lack of fit players or any problem that could have been avoided had the team management taken proper precautions.

G.5. Category 1 stoppages – game is completed, and score stands.

G.6. Category 2 stoppages – if abandoned in the second half, the score stands. If abandoned before kick-off of the second half, the teams have the option (both must agree) of allowing the score. If one or other team does not wish the score to stand, the Director of Flag Football will reschedule the remainder of the game for an appropriate time and venue and the game will resume at the point at which it was suspended (only those players listed as playing on the roster sheet submitted before kick-off are permitted to play). If the game cannot be rescheduled, the score at the time of abandonment will stand.

G.7. Category 3 stoppages – The team at fault is assessed a 15-yard penalty and required to take timeouts until such time as the reason for the stoppage has been rectified. Once all allowed timeouts have been used, the team will be assessed a 15-yard penalty for every additional full 5 minutes of delay. If a stoppage is for more than 15 minutes, the team not at fault has the option of having the game called and being declared a Category 4 stoppage. If both teams are at fault, both can be assessed penalties and the officials have the option of declaring a Category 4 stoppage after 15 minutes of delay.

G.8. Category 4 stoppages – If the game cannot be completed, the team not at fault will be awarded victory by the greatest of (i) the score at the time of the stoppage with 15 points added to their score or (ii) their opponents score plus 1 point. The team at fault will be deducted 1 league point. In the event of both teams being at fault, the game will be regarded as a 30-30 forfeit with 1 league point deducted from each team.

G.9. The Director of Flag Football may refer any stoppage or abandonment incident to the Disciplinary Committee.

G.10. Any team which is at fault for a Category 4 stoppage must complete the failure to complete form (attached as Appendix 3) and hand it to the Crew Chief within 30 minutes of the game being stopped.

G.11. In the event that a team decides to stop playing midway through a game due to lack of fit players or due to a coaching decision, the side-line coach of the forfeiting team should inform the nearest official that they wish to call a forfeit timeout thus stopping the game. The side-line coach will then inform the Referee who will indicate to all present that the game has been stopped due to a decision of the forfeiting team. This is regarded as a Category 4 stoppage. For avoidance of any doubt, the Head Coach of a forfeiting team is not permitted to discuss the matter with their opponents in advance of the Referee indicating to all present that the game has been stopped.

H. Coaching

H.1. Coaching terms defined.

(i) Registered Coach. Person who has paid for AFI membership and registered as a coach within the AFI registration portal for the current competitive season.
(ii) Certified Coach. Level 0 qualified coach who has passed the annual AFI recertification test for the current competitive season OR has graduated from the Level 0 course in the past 12 months AND registered as a coach on the AFI registration portal.
(iii) De-certified Coach. Level 0 qualified coach who has not passed the AFI annual recertification test for the current competitive season.
(iv) Level 0 qualified. Person who has graduated from the AFI Introduction to Coaching course or a foreign equivalent course AND has maintained their level 0 qualification.
(v) Coach Developer. Person who has graduated from the Sport Ireland Coach Developer course or foreign equivalent.

H.2. Certification Process
(i) Graduated from the AFI Level 0 course or foreign equivalent and maintained a Level 0 qualification.
(ii) Pass the annual AFI recertification test.
a testing period is the month of December
(iii) The Director of Coaching is responsible for administering the certification process.

H.3. Loss of Level 0 qualification (effective starting in January 2025)
(i) Failure to pass the AFI annual recertification test for three consecutive years will result in loss of Level 0 qualification.
(ii) Qualification is only restored by attending and graduating from the AFI Level 0 course or foreign equivalent.
(iii) The Director of Coaching is responsible for administering the qualification and disqualification process.

H.4. The Introduction to Coaching Course (Level 0)
(i) The Intro course is the foundational coaching course for all codes of American football offered by AFI.
(ii) Course accreditation is through Sport Ireland's National Coaching Development Programme.
(iii) The course uses a blended learning model (online and in-person).
(iv) Students must attend all classes and pass in-person assessments to graduate and receive their Sport Ireland certificates.

H.5. Course equivalency
(i) Coaches who have taken a foreign equivalent coaching course may be awarded a corresponding AFI qualification level without having to attend and graduate from an AFI course.
a Equivalent course content materials and proof of graduation must be provided to the Director of Coaching for evaluation.
b Examples of course content are, but not limited to: course syllabus, course rubrics and study guides, etc.
c Examples of proof of graduation are, but not limited to: course certificates and instructor email acknowledgements of graduation, etc.
d Documents submitted in a language other than English or Irish must be translated prior to submission.
e The Director of Coaching administers the course equivalency process and is the decision authority for awarding an AFI qualification level.

All flag teams must have at least one registered coach present for all training sessions. See paragraph H.1. for definitions of registered and certified coach.
(ii) All coaches involved in youth teams and/or with teams who have youth players must be an AFI certified coach, vetted through AFI, and possess a current Safeguarding Level 1 qualification. (See Section 1 Administration, Sub sections C4 and C5 for vetting requirements)

All teams must have a non-playing certified coach (not necessarily the Head Coach) present on the sideline for all games. This coach is specifically designated as the sideline coach on their submitted game roster. See paragraph I.1. (sections d. and f.) for definitions of a certified coach.

At least one day before game day, each Head Coach, or designated alternative in the absence of the Head Coach, must submit a roster form to the Director of Flag Football (or the Director's designated appointee) certifying that:

(iii) all participating players are competent to play in the game.
(iv) suspended players will not participate until their suspension is completed.
(v) all players and coaches are compliant with current AFI registration requirements as outlined in the AFI by-laws.
(vi) all previously concussed players have successfully cleared the AFI concussion protocol.
(vii) all players are listed and are indeed present and participating in the game.
(viii) the sideline coach will report any concussed players to the AFI commissioner within 24 hours of the conclusion of the game.

Game Video Sharing / Distribution

(ix) Recorded video of flag games can be shared in the league pool using Qwikcut, but is not yet mandatory.

I. Refusal to Play On

I.1. Refusal to continue a game shall be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence and shall be referred to the AFI Flag Football Disciplinary Committee.

I.2. Individual refusing to continue to play will regarding as unsportsmanlike conduct which results (as per IFAF 9-2-1) a 10 yards penalty, enforced from the dead ball spot, administer as dead ball foul.

I.3. If a player or an identified squad member in uniform commits two unsportsmanlike fouls in the same game, he shall be disqualified, and the individual shall has to leave the team area and remain out of view of the field (see IFAF rule 10-1-1 for definition of field). If the Team do not carry out this responsibility, they shall be deemed to violate "Team refusing to play" guidelines.

I.4. Team refusing to continue to Play
This is covered by IFAF Rule 10-1-2

I.5. If a team refuses to play or repeatedly commits fouls that can be penalized only by halving the distance or commits an obviously unfair act not specifically covered by the rules, the Referee may take any action considered equitable,
including assessing a penalty, disqualify a player or coach, awarding a score, or suspending or forfeiting the game.

Approved Ruling: In games under these guidelines, the procedure will be:

I.5.a. Team refusing to play will be charged with a Team Timeout. If that Team have no timeouts remaining in that half, the Team will be penalised 5 yards from the succeeding spot for delay of game.
I.5.b. If the Team are still refusing to play after a, the Team will be penalised 5 yards from the succeeding spot for delay of game.
I.5.c. If the Team are still refusing to play after a & b, the Team will be penalised 15 yards from the succeeding spot for unsportsmanlike conduct.
I.5.d. If the Team are still refusing to play after a & b & c, the referee will suspend the game.

The report shall include the following information:
1. the reason for suspension, 2. the score, 3. the team in possession, 4. the down & distance & 5. the time remaining in the half.

I.6. It is AFI policy that if a team refuses to play, the opposition get awarded the game as a 30-0 forfeit or whatever the score is when the game stopped (whichever is more favourable to the other team). In the event of both teams refusing to play, the score shall be provisionally awarded as 0-0 and F.4 and F.5 should apply accordingly.

I.7. All refusals to play incidents shall be referred to the AFI Flag Football Disciplinary Committee who may take further action.

J. Spectator Problems

J.1. By-Law F will apply to incidents caused by spectators which cause the cancellation or postponement of games, subject to N.2 & N.3 below.

J.2. It is the responsibility of hosting team management to ensure that spectators do not encroach on the field. Spectator areas should be clearly defined, and the hosting team must take adequate steps to ensure there are no disruptions to the game. Adequate steps may include, where appropriate, fencing, roped off areas, cones, restricting access to venue and signs.

J.3. Each team shall be responsible for the behaviour of their own supporters. In the event that any person who is NOT a member of the association strikes, attempts to strike or encroaches onto the field or past the respect barriers in a manner that is reasonably likely to put any person in fear shall be immediately and automatically banned from attending all association events for one calendar year. This person shall not be eligible for membership during their ban.

J.4. The use of drones is not permitted within the respect barriers. No drone should fly past the respect barriers or above the field of play, players, coaches, or officials boxes/zones. If this occurs the game will be stopped until such a time that the drone is moved to a safe position.

K. Game Day Forms & Checks

K.1. Each team shall submit a completed Roster Form to the Director of Flag Football at least one day game day. Roster Forms will be kept on file by the AFI and used as the official record of who played in the game. If the form is submitted late, the Director of Flag Football should assess a pregame delay of game penalty.

K.2. Each Referee shall be responsible for submitting a Game Report to the Director of Officiating within 48hrs of each fixture unless specifically requested earlier due to an incident/appeal. Game Reports shall be made available to the Commissioner and the team managers of the participating teams upon request.

K.3. In the event of a Category 4 stoppage, the responsible team must submit a report to the Director of Flag Football within 48 hours after the game took place.

K.4. Pregame Identity & Equipment Checks:

(i) The officiating crew may carry out equipment checks at any time pre-game or during a game as required.

(ii) Identity Check Procedure

a. 10 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time, each team must line-up all players on their game day roster in kit, in numerical order with numbers clearly visible.

b. Each opposing team must take photo(s)/visual recording of their opponents line-up players in which each player's number and face is visible.

c. Photo(s), upon request, must be emailed or sent by smart phone to the Director of Flag Football.

d. The above-mentioned photos will be used as proof that a particular player played in the respective fixture.

L. Facilities at Home Venue

Home venue should at least include the following:

L.1. Toilet facilities.

L.2. Adequate parking facilities for visiting team bus, officials, and ambulance.

L.3. Pitch access for ambulance.

M. Pitch Markings/Playing Surfaces

M.1. All teams should to aim to play on a pitch with the dimensions required in the IFAF Flag Football rulebook

M.2. Pitch do not require to be marked but matching colour cones should be used to clearly mark each relevant yardage point.

M.3. It is advisable that all persons in the team area should wear identifiable team apparel e.g. polo shirt, sweatshirt, jacket, t-shirt etc.

M.4. Spectators must be kept behind “barriers” at least 10 yards off the side-lines/end lines If a particular side-line/end line does not have a barrier, spectators are not permitted to stand at that side/end of the field.

M.5. Photographers, film crews, event/game staff etc. are permitted to be inside the spectator barriers if they are wearing high visibility vests/jackets or stewards apparel or event apparel or AFI apparel (in the case of persons performing AFI duties).

M.6. Playing surface should be grass or an IFAF Flag Football approved artificial surface which permits the use of grass footwear. The surface should be even, and the grass kept short. The playing surface should not be littered with dangerous objects such as glass, rubbish, cans, or stones. The playing surface should not have any holes or dips that would increase the risk of injury to players.

M.7. The hosting team management and officials will inspect the pitch c.30 minutes before kick-off. If there are any deficiencies in the pitch markings or playing surface, the hosting team will have until 30 minutes before kick-off to rectify them.

N. Points System & Standings

N.1. The following points system will apply:

Win = 3 points, Loss = 0 point, Tie = 1 points, Forfeit Loss = -3 points

N.2. In the event of a forfeit, stoppage, abandonment or if the game is not played, the appropriate points and score, as per the by-laws, will apply.

N.3. Divisions & Qualification for Play-Offs

The AFI Flag Football Committee will place each team in appropriate Leagues as per the outcome of the previous season’s results and the off-season application process. Teams must play the schedule of games communicated to them by the AFI Flag Football Director in advance of the season.

2025 Leagues:

N.3.a **Emerald Bowl Conference**

North Division

South Division

1st & 2nd places from each Division (North & South) get a bye into the Divisional Quarter Finals.

3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in both divisions go to Divisional Wild Cards.

Third plays sixth, fourth plays fifth in their respective divisions

1st Place Bye through to Divisional Q Finals = Winner 1

2nd Place Bye through to Divisional Q Finals = Winner 2

Qualify for Divisional Wild Card

3rd Place vs 6th Place = Winner 3

4th Place vs 5th Place = Winner 4

Therefore, 2 teams in each Division progress from Divisional Wild Card to Divisional Quarter Finals.

Divisional Quarter finals see the Winners 1,2,3 and 4 teams in each Division play .

Winner 1 vs Winner 4 = Winner A

Winner 2 vs Winner 3 = Winner B

Winners A and B in each Division go to Divisional Semi Final

Winner A vs Winner B = Winner Z

Divisional Final is Winner Z in each Division. (venue to be decided by AFI)

N.3.b Glas Bowl Conference

North Division

South Division

1st & 2nd places from each Division (North & South) get a bye into the Divisional Quarter Finals.

3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in both divisions go to Divisional Wild Cards.

*(7th 8th and 9th place in Glas Bowl Conference South do not qualify for playoffs)

Third plays sixth, fourth plays fifth in their respective divisions

1st Place Bye through to Divisional Q Finals = Winner 1

2nd Place Bye through to Divisional Q Finals = Winner 2

Qualify for Divisional Wild Card

3rd Place vs 6th Place = Winner 3

4th Place vs 5th Place = Winner 4

Therefore, 2 teams in each Division progress from Divisional Wild Card to Divisional Quarter Finals.

Divisional Quarter finals see the Winners 1,2,3 and 4 teams in each Division play.

Winner 1 vs Winner 4 = Winner A

Winner 2 vs Winner 3 = Winner B

Winners A and B in each Division go to Divisional Semi Final

Winner A vs Winner B = Winner Z

Divisional Final is Winner Z in each Division. (venue to be decided by AFI)

N.3.a. AFI Flag Premier Division Play-Off:

Wildcard Round:

1st and 2nd placed teams gain a bye-game.

3rd placed team will play at home to 6th placed team. 4th placed team will play at home to 5th placed team.

Semi-Finals:

The lowest placed winning team will play away to 1st placed team.

The highest placed winning team will play away to 2nd placed team.

Final:

The winners of the Semi-Finals will meet in the AFI Emerald Bowl (venue to be decided by AFI).

N.3.b. AFI Flag Division One Play-off:

Wild Card Round:

1st and 2nd placed teams gain a bye-game

3rd placed team will play at home to 6th placed team. 4th placed team will play at home to 5th placed team.

Semi-finals:

The lowest placed winning team will play away to 1st placed team

The highest placed winning team will play away to the 2nd placed team

Final:

The winners of the Semi-Finals will meet in the AFI Glas Bowl (venue to be decided by AFI).

N.4. Tie Breakers

(i) Head to head regular season
(i) Highest Total PF
(ii) Lowest Total PA
(iii) Strength of Schedule
(ii) Points difference in head to head games.
(iv) Drawn out of hat.

Where a league has more than one regional division, tiebreakers are applied within the division first so as to determine the placing within the division. Where inter-divisional tiebreakers are required, they only apply between the teams who finished in the same position in the order of merit in each division.

* In the event that any team fails to complete 2 or more regular season fixtures, all its games will be regarded as 30-0 forfeits for the purposes of calculating the points allowed in these specific tiebreak categories.

N.5. Promotion/Relegation

N.5.a. At the conclusion of the season, the last 2 placed teams in the AFI Flag Premier Division will be automatically relegated to AFI Flag Division One for the following season unless a higher ranked team is at fault for not completing two or more scheduled games.

N.5.b. The AFI has the discretion to relegate any team in the AFI Flag Premier Division which is at fault for not completing its full schedule of games (as per F.4). Any team(s) that is at fault for not playing 1 or more scheduled games will be automatically relegated even if they are ranked higher than last place. All promoted/relegation is subject to review by the AFI Flag Football Committee.

N.5.c. Subject to paragraph (d), relegated AFI Flag Premier Division team(s) will be replaced by the highest ranked team(s) in AFI Flag Division One, provided such team(s) can satisfy any requirements/guidelines required of teams playing in the AFI Flag Premier Division.

N.5.d. If, following promotion or relegation, there is an unsuitable number of teams (less than 10) in the AFI Premier Division, the AFI Flag Football Committee may promote or relegate additional teams on the basis of their league rankings or any other factors that the AFI Flag Football Committee deems relevant.

N.5.e. The AFI Flag Football Committee has the right to promote/relegate between divisions subject to satisfying requirements/guidelines and/or order of merit.

N.5.f. Where a club is fielding two competitive teams in the AFI Flag Football league structure, these teams cannot be placed in the same Division. 2nd teams can be promoted/relegated, though they cannot be promoted to a level equal or above that in which their 1st teams play.

N.6. Player Eligibility Rules for 2nd Teams:

N.6.a. Clubs can field a maximum of two teams, one in each Flag Football league divisions

N.6.b. The team competing the AFI Flag Premier Division will be labelled as 1st team, the other team will be 2nd team

N.6.c. Where a club is fielding two teams of players in different divisions it must maintain two separate rosters of players. One week prior to the teams' first games in either division, the teams must submit to the Director of Flag Football a list of all registered players and which team i.e. 1st or 2nd, they are allocated to. Any players registered after that date must be allocated to one or other of the teams upon registration.

N.6.d. Players can transfer from the 2nd team to the 1st team with a maximum of 3 players per season without penalty as long as a minimum of 12 players remain on the 2nd team's roster after the transfer

N.6.e. Players in 1st team cannot transfer down to a 2nd team with one exception:
(i) In case a club 2nd team cannot field a full roster at any game, a maximum of 2 1st team players will be allowed to be transferred to play 2nd team games and will not be able to return to their original 1st team for the remainder of the season.
(ii) The moves have to take place not later than two days prior to the last two games of the regular season of the team the player(s) is moved too

O. Rules & Fixtures

O.1. The Rules used in all fixtures shall be those in the current “IFAF Flag Football Rulebook" as modified by the AFI Flag Football Committee. The most current version can be found at www.americanfootball.sport

O.2. Once a Team has accepted its schedule, it must be adhered to.

O.3. The game cannot start without the 5 players on each team. If a team cannot field 5 healthy players, they shall forfeit the game (refer to S6-F11 and S6-F12)

O.4. Schedule Changes

In the event that scheduled games are cancelled due to any team(s) withdrawing after the publication of the league schedule or during the course of the season, the AFI Flag Football Committee is permitted to adjust the schedule to provide all teams with a minimum of 8 regular season games. Such adjustments can take into account practical considerations.

O.5. Ejections

In the event that a player is ejected during a match, the following shall apply:

The ejected player will banned for 2 halves of a game (The current half they are ejected from counts as 1 half of a game), they must leave the playing area and my not be visible but may return once ban is complete (Tournament style competition sees multiple games played on the same day). This ban should also carry over if a player is ejected in 2nd half of final game on a gameday.

All subsequent ejections within a 12 month period will stack.

1st ejection is a 2 halves ban

2nd ejection is a 4 halves ban

3rd ejection is a ban from 2 full gamedays & warning

4th ejection will see a player banned for 12 months subject to AFI disciplinary committee.

SECTION 7 - ASSOCIATION MATTERS

A. Miscellaneous

A.1. Leagues should be clearly identifiable from one another in terms of player age group, derivative of American football and recruitment base.

A.2. In general, the AFI will not permit more than one league to operate in each of the following categories for either kitted or flag American football - adult, collegiate, under 19, under 15 and peewee.

A.3. Management Board Members and Directors/Officers of AFI can claim mileage for attending meetings and official events at the rate of 35c per mile by completing an expense form. Expense Form can be requested from the Chief Finance Officer or Commissioner.

A.4. Financial transactions must be authorised by a minimum of two members from the AFI Management team (Board Members/Directors/Officers).

B. International Matters

B.1. All individuals and organisations involved in American Football in Ireland shall comply with any relevant rules and regulations laid down by the International Federation of American Football (IFAF) and any other relevant international organisations provided such rules are not in conflict with the AFI's own rules and policies, which have precedence, or Irish Law.

B.2. All American Football teams, clubs, organisations and events in Ireland are subject to the AFI Constitution and By-Laws.

B.3. All American Football games played in Ireland which do not involve a team affiliated to or fielded by a member organisation require sanction from the AFI.

B.4. The AFI and its members and any teams affiliated to member organisations reserve the right to refuse membership or admission to any individuals/participants in organisations, events or games deemed to have breached '2-International Matters' of these By-Laws.

B.5. The AFI and its members and any teams affiliated to member organisations reserve the right to expel any individuals/participants in organisations, events or games deemed to have breached '2-International Matters' of these By-Laws.

C. National Team

C.1. The AFI board shall appoint both the Head Coaches and General Manager of all National Teams (Senior, Youth, Flag).

C.2. The National Programme shall be accountable to the AFI Board.

D. Rights & Property

D.1. No individual or organisation shall claim ownership, membership or to represent the AFI and/or the sport of American Football in Ireland or claim to have any control over rights or properties associated with the AFI and/or the sport in Ireland without the express permission of the AFI.

D.2. No individual or organisation shall claim ownership, membership or to represent any member of the AFI or team/organisation or individual affiliated to any member of the AFI or claim to have any control over rights or properties associated with any team/club/organisation or individual affiliated to any member of the AFI without the express permission of the member, team/club/organisation or individual.

E. Sanctioning of Games/Events

E.1. Any game, practice, or scrimmage (as defined by By-Law C.8) played in Ireland [called 'event' in this

section of the By-Laws], which does not fall into one of the following categories requires Sanction:

(i) Run directly by the AFI.
(ii) Between two AFI members and run solely by those member(s) with no admission fee or commercial income for any party.
(i) AFI regular season fixtures where the game is run at a clubs normal home ground and is run solely by the home team.

AFI Sanction rules take precedence over those of all other organisations including IFAF and other multi-national organisations. Where there is a conflict, the AFI rules must be applied. The AFI Management board reserve the right to waive/forgo any/all of the elements required for the sanctioning of games/events as it sees fit.

E.2. Application for sanction must be submitted on the AFI form entitled "Application for Sanction to run an event/game in Ireland (2015 version)". The deadline for submitting the completed form and any requested supporting documentation is: (i) 3 months in advance for all events where all the teams are members of the AFI and/or GFL International affiliated Federations or (ii) 6 months in advance in all other cases. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the AFI in advance of submitting their application form so as to ensure that they fully understand all requirements and have all the required supporting information. Incomplete applications will be returned and cannot be resubmitted if the deadline has expired.

The AFI Board is entitled to seek additional information, not specified on the aforementioned form, that it deems necessary to decide to sanction or to determine what conditions should be attached to any sanction.

E.3. All games/scrimmages/kitted practices in Ireland must adhere to all minimum safety and welfare rules which currently apply to AFI members and fixtures. Additional rules (as listed in 5.5 below) will apply to all events involving 3rd parties or where commercial income is derived, including events involving the following:

(i) Touring side, where the tour is operated by commercial agent.
(ii) Domestic events operated by a non-AFI member.
(i) Events/games where there is ticketing, or admission charged.
(iii) Any event where there is remuneration between the various parties involved.

E.4. Minimum requirements for all events requiring sanction include the following:

(i) All the normal safety and welfare rules applying to AFI games/scrimmages/practices as specified in the AFI By-Laws.
(ii) Submission of the completed sanction form including the requested details of all parties involved including corporate information and the Coaching qualifications of the coaches travelling with each participating team.
(i) Compliance with Code of Ethics including appropriate declarations where persons are not vetted. Note that all management level persons involved in running events involving minors must be vetted or submit declarations.
(iii) Compliance with ISC Anti-Doping rules.
(iv) Execution of and adherence to a Sanction Contract with the AFI.
(v) Medical insurance for all participants who are non-EU citizens.

E.5. Additional rules for third party/commercial income generating events:

(i) All parties involved in the event [for avoidance of doubt, to include any agents involved in arranging fixtures] must carry Public Liability and Employee/Volunteer Liability insurance with equivalent cover to the AFI's current insurance policies and which is applicable to the event concerned. For avoidance of doubt, where commercial events are run by a commercial third party in conjunction with an AFI member, the AFI regular insurance does not extend to the running such events (cover is only for the AFI member's participation as a team). Note also that individual members of the AFI are not insured for participation/working/volunteering in third party run events.
(i) Where such events are hosted by AFI member clubs, the full cost of staging the football game must be borne by the commercial third party or parties.
(ii) Where a game is part of a tour arranged by a commercial third party, adherence to the requirements of 5.6 below.
(ii) Payment of the appropriate sanction fee as detailed in 5.7 below. 50% of the sanction fee to be paid with the application and the balance to be paid within 30 days of the execution of the sanction contract with the AFI OR as otherwise specified in the executed sanction contract.

E.6. Additional rules for Sports Tours:

These rules apply to all tours arranged, put together or sold by commercial parties where a football event is included in the visiting team's itinerary.

All parties arranging tours should provide bonding to the AFI (in a similar manner to that required by the

Commission for Aviation Regulation for Irish operators), to the following level:

(i) 10% of annual turnover OR 100% of the total income for the particular tour (i.e. what was paid by the visiting team(s) and their members) – whichever is higher. Most recent audited accounts will be used as a guide.

(i) 100% of the cost of the football activities (if not paid for in advance).

For the avoidance of doubt, parties who 'resell' or 'repackage' or add their own services to tourism products obtained via travel agents are required to be bonded in their own right.

The bond must be in one of the following forms:

(i) A guarantee secured with an insurance company (Insurance Bond).

(ii) A guarantee secured with a bank (Bank Bond).

(iii) A sum of money deposited.

Note that the Bond must apply to the named applicant and must include provision for the visiting team and/or AFI and/or AFI member and/or anyone who loses money due to the applicant's actions (or inaction) to draw down on the bond in appropriate circumstances. Where applicants opt to deposit a sum of money, it will be held in safe keeping by the AFI solicitor in their 'client account', which is regulated by Law Society rules.

E.7. The following sanction fees shall apply:

(i) Games between AFI members and certain overseas teams (see below), where there are no commercial parties involved and the game is not part of a tour put together by a travel agent or other third party: €100.

(i) Overseas teams must be members of their countries recognised International Federation of American Football (IFAF), the NCAA, NFHS or AFA.

(ii) Third party/commercial income generating events (base = 2023 prices):

The fees will include legal (to a certain limit), administrative, basic compliance and risk costs to the AFI. Fees will be graduated based on (i) the number of seats in the proposed venue and/or (ii) the ticketed or paying attendance (whichever is higher).

A. < 2,000 = €2,000*
B. 2,000 to 9,999 = €4,000*
C. 10,000 to 19,999 = €6,000**
D. 20,000 to 29,999 = €8,000**
E. 30,000 or more = €10,000**

* If legal costs are in excess of 50%, the applicant pays the balance (vouched).
** If legal costs are in excess of 33%, the applicant pays the balance (vouched).

Fees will be indexed linked annually using an appropriate Irish Government pricing index.

Applicants must also take responsibility for all other extraordinary compliance costs incurred by the AFI relating to their event.

E.8. Equipment solicitation rules:

(i) Equipment or other types of 'in kind' benefit will not be accepted in lieu of the sanction fees or the cost of staging a football game.

(i) The solicitation of football equipment from prospective visiting teams by agents or third parties is not permitted.

(ii) No AFI member is permitted to solicit football equipment from a visiting team in exchange for participating in or assisting at any event.

E.9. Where events involving commercial third parties require services or equipment to be provided by the AFI or its members, the following minimum rates (to be paid directly to the party supplying the service/equipment) shall apply:

Cost of officials – €30 admin fee plus Crew Chief €60, others €60 each [all except admin is paid directly to the officials who work the game]. Plus T&S at normal Revenue rates.

Cost of other helpers (ballboys, chains, stewards etc.) - €30 each to be paid to each individual. Plus T&S at normal Revenue rates.
Field equipment rental - €100 Stencil rental - €300
Goal Post rental - €1,000
(all excl. transport costs, which are to be arranged/paid by applicant).

The minimum cost of any other services shall be (i) the cost to the AFI/members, including

risk/depreciation, (ii) T&S at normal Revenue rates and (iii) in the case of personnel, rates not lower than €10 per hour.

There is no requirement on the AFI or its members to supply any services to an event – any supply is subject to availability and the absolute discretion of the AFI and its member organisations.

Officiating fees for member to member events or non-third party/commercial income events are charged at the normal AFI league fixture rate plus the actual T&S costs for the officials working the event (as opposed to the averaged cost used for league fixtures).

E.10. All event organisers must comply with a Post Event Review conducted by the AFI. Refusal to comply will make an event organiser ineligible for future sanction. All the organisations / individuals who were deemed to be in breach of rules or who have submitted non-compliant applications relating to any events over the past 5 years and who are contacted by the AFI before 1st July 2023 in relation to those past events/applications, will be required to respond to the AFI on any issues raised within two months of receiving such communications. Any failure to cooperate/respond will make those organisations/persons ineligible for sanction in the future

E.11. The AFI is entitled to take into account the past record of (i) applicants or (ii) persons/organisations with a significant role in any proposed event; in complying with AFI rules and/or the truthfulness of any statements or communications issued by such parties relating to any previous events; in any decision on whether to grant sanction or not. The AFI is also entitled to consider past record in similar events in other countries.

E.12. Principals Rule

Past compliance shall be considered in terms of the individuals involved in addition to the legal companies. As such, company directors and proprietors/owners will be regarded as in breach of sanction rules where their organisations have been in breach. The AFI can also consider the past record of any persons with a significant role in a past event when deciding whether or not to sanction a current event.

E.13. For events of 10,000 or more persons (category C above), the AFI is entitled to seek additional measures which promote or develop the sport in Ireland. These measures shall be in line with what is normal for similar large sporting events staged in Ireland and shall take into account any Government or Irish Sports Council policies (only where formally published and only where applying generally to all sporting events) in this area.

Development contributions can be in terms of (i) publicity and promotional measures,
(ii) contributions to development projects or (iii) any acceptable alternative approved by the AFI Board.

E.14. All participants in AFI Sanctioned events are subject to the AFI's Disciplinary rules.

E.15. All appeals of sanction decisions and/or conditions or any other disputes concerning the sanctioning process shall be referred to Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland for binding Arbitration. All disputes concerning events sanctioned by the AFI, including where those disputes which do not involve the AFI or AFI members, shall be referred to Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland for binding Arbitration.

E.16. Any participant in any unsanctioned event for which sanction is required under these By-Laws will automatically be excluded from the AFI and from involvement in any future events. Such exclusions can only be overturned by a vote no less than 75% of the AFI Board and such votes are entirely at the AFI Board's discretion. Such votes cannot be held until at least 5 years after the aforementioned unsanctioned event and cannot be held until the AFI and/or its members are fully compensated for all loses incurred relating to the event (including failure to receive a sanction fee) and appropriate punitive damages are paid. Where such a vote is successful, the individuals or organisations concerned must execute a contract with the AFI which specifically precludes their participation in any future unsanctioned events.

F. Equality Statement

F.1. The AFI aims to promote the sport of American football for all the people who live on the island of Ireland and will be mindful of the need to carry out our functions in a manner which promotes the equality of opportunity between:

(i) Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation.
(ii) Between men and women generally.
(i) Between persons with a disability and persons without.
(ii) Between persons with dependents and persons without.

G – **Gameday Statistics**

G.1 Both teams competing in the game will provide gameday statistics for their own teams. The clubs gameday manager shall be the designated club member required to submit their teams gameday stats.

G.2 Teams are asked to submit their gameday statistics as soon as possible following their game.
Teams will submit their gameday statistics no later than 8pm on the Monday following their game.

G.3 Gameday Statistics required for this season are: All Touchdown Scorers (QBs, RBs & WRs, Kicking Scores (FG & XPs), Interceptions and Big Moment Plays.

SECTION 8 - APPENDIX 1 AFI DISCIPLINARY & DISPUTE MECHANISMS

A. AFI Disciplinary Committee

A.1. The Disciplinary Committee or Appeals Tribunal for any particular allegation will be composed of 3 representatives appointed by the Commissioner. The Board will appoint one member of these representatives to Chair the Committee or Tribunal.

A.2. The Disciplinary Committee is entitled to impose whatever penalties it determines appropriate if it is determined that any individual or club has been guilty of breaking rules, by-laws or Constitution or Code of Conduct. Penalties may include, but are not limited to, suspension, expulsion, financial penalties and allocated tasks. The 3 representatives mentioned to in 1 above will determine the penalties having been advised of any rule or legal matters by the Commissioner and/or relevant Directors as appropriate.

A.3. The AFI Management Board shall be permitted to put in place a single panel of persons from which it will appoint members of a Disciplinary Committee or Appeals Tribunal as required. Membership of any such panel is not limited to members of AFI clubs or the Association.

A.4. Disciplinary hearings and Appeals Tribunals can be conducted by conference call or video conference call at the discretion of the AFI.

A.5. Any costs associated with a Disciplinary hearing or appeal will be borne by the losing party.

B. On Field Playing Incidents

B.1. Any coach, player or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game, or one flagrant foul shall be disqualified/ejected. With the exception of a player who has been ejected for targeting who may remain in their team area, a player disqualified/ejected from the game must leave the playing enclosure under team supervision within a reasonable amount of time after their disqualification. They must remain out of view of the field of play under team supervision for the remainder of the game.

B.2. IFAF Rule 9-6-1 is amended as follows; when a player/coach is disqualified from a game, an automatic half-game suspension will be applied for the next eligible half. The team may appeal the ruling on the field through the means outlined in section K. Ejection Appeals.

B.3. With the exception of a player who has been ejected for targeting who may remain in their team area, a player serving a first-half suspension due to their disqualification in the second half of the team's previous game may participate in pre-game warm-up activities and upon completion of the warm up must remain out of the view of the field of play until the completion of the first half.

B.4. A coach disqualified from the game must leave the playing enclosure within a reasonable amount of time after the disqualification and must remain out of view of the field of play for the remainder of the game. The coach may no longer participate in the game or have any further interaction with any eligible player(s) or participating coach.

B.5. All ejections must be included in the referee's report. Ejections may be appealed in certain circumstances as outlined in 20 below.

B.6. No additional automatic sanctions will be applied for an ejection save for the following circumstances:

(i) Member has exceeded Disciplinary Point threshold as per Section 13 below.

(ii) Incident has been referred to the Disciplinary Committee by the Commissioner

B.7. Incidents of misconduct by a player or club, including alleged breaches of the By-Laws, Constitution and/or the Code of Conduct may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee on the recommendation of the Director of Officiating to the Commissioner.

B.8. The Disciplinary Committee may impose additional penalties in cases of serious misconduct.

B.9. AFI Video Citation & Disciplinary Points:

B.9.a. IFAF rule 9-6 is amended to incorporate the video citation procedures outlined in the document entitled "AFI Video Citation and Disciplinary Points".

B.9.b. The Disciplinary Points procedure outlined in the document entitled "AFI Video Citation and Disciplinary Points" is to apply to all AFI run competitive games.

B.10. IFAF Rule 9-6 amendment:

B.10.a. Player Ejection

ARTICLE 1. When a player is disqualified from the game due to a flagrant personal foul, that team's conference shall automatically initiate a video review for possible additional sanctions before the next scheduled game.

B.10.b. Initiating Contact/Targeting an Opponent

ARTICLE 2. When there is a foul called for initiating contact/targeting an opponent (Rule 9-1-3) that does not result in a player disqualification, there shall automatically be a video review by the conference for possible additional sanctions before the next scheduled game.

B.10.c. Foul Not Called

ARTICLE 3. If subsequent review of a game by a conference reveals plays involving flagrant personal fouls that game officials did not call, the conference may impose sanctions prior to the next scheduled game.

B.11. IFAF Rule 12 Video Judge Rule will come into effect if a Video Judge Referee is present at the fixture.

C. Off Field Incidents including breaches of Game Day Requirements

C.1. Alleged off-field incidents of misconduct and alleged breaches of the By-Laws and/or the Constitution of the AFI and/or the Code of Conduct can be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

D. Summary Procedures

D.1. These By-Laws do not prevent the Commissioner from dealing with breaches of the By- Laws and / or the Code of Conduct and/or minor conduct issues in a summary manner as an alternative to a formal Disciplinary Committee hearing. In such cases, all parties involved must agree to the matter being dealt with in a summary manner and agreement on any penalty imposed must be reached within 2 weeks of the inception of summary procedures.

E. Appeals Tribunal

E.1. An Appeals Tribunal, appointed by the Commissioner will deal with any appeals arising from the Disciplinary Committee. Appeals must be lodged with the Commissioner within 14 days of the notification of the decision of punishment by the Disciplinary Committee. No member of the Disciplinary Committee making the original decision shall be a member of the Appeals Tribunal

F. Appeals of AFI Decision on non-disciplinary matters

F.1. Any formal decision of the AFI in relation to any non-disciplinary matter can be appealed. Such appeals must be lodged with the Commissioner within 14 days of the decision. The Commissioner shall then convene an Appeal Commission to consider the appeal. The Appeal Commission shall be comprised of 3 persons as per the AFI Constitution. The Appeal Commission shall meet within 14 days of receipt of the appeal.

Extract from AFI Constitution concerning Appeals:

"In the event of an appeal in a matter, other than a disciplinary matter, any club, group, organisation, educational institution, association, official, player, coach, company or any member/employee of any club, group, organisation, educational institution, association, official, player, coach, company wishing to appeal shall do so in writing to the Commissioner of the Association. The Commissioner who must receive the appeal within fourteen (14) days of the date of the notice of the original decision shall then convene an Appeal Commission.

The Appeal Commission shall consist of three (3) officers of the Association who may be accompanied by advisors where necessary, but it shall not include any person who has had a prior involvement in the matter being appealed. In the event of there not being three (3) officers eligible or available to form the Appeal Commission, the Chair of the Management Board shall have the power to select an appropriate person or persons to complete the Appeal Commission. The Appeal Commission shall meet within fourteen (14) days of the date of the receipt of the notice of the appeal.

The letter of appeal shall state the reason or reasons for the appeal. The appellant(s) shall have the right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a person or persons of their choice but the names and details of

such person or persons must be included in the letter of appeal. In the event of the appeal being unsuccessful the appellant(s) shall pay the cost of the appeal unless the Appeal Commission decides otherwise. The decision of the Appeal Commission shall be final, and the relevant parties shall be notified of the decision in writing by the Commissioner within seven (7) days of the hearing."

G. Social Media Policy

G.1. Social media should be used in a responsible manner. AFI members are not permitted to libel, defame or bully members, member teams and member organisations or bring the game into disrepute when using social media. Members are also not permitted to libel, defame, or bully non-members or non-AFI organisations in circumstances where they can be perceived as acting on behalf of the AFI, member organisations, member clubs or individual members.

H. Arbitration Appeals to Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland

H.1. All decisions issued by the Association, including those of Appeal Tribunals and Appeal Commissions, may be appealed exclusively by referral to Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland, within 14 days from receipt of such decision, for binding arbitration in accordance with the Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland Arbitration Rules. The arbitral award issued by JSI may be appealed exclusively by referral to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland, within 21 days from receipt of such arbitral award, for final and binding arbitration in accordance with the CAS Code of Sports- related Arbitration

I. Mediation

I.1. All other disputes arising out of or in connection with this Constitution shall be referred to Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland for resolution by mediation in accordance with the Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland Mediation Rules. If the dispute remains unresolved at the conclusion of the mediation process, the dispute shall be referred to Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland for final and binding arbitration in accordance with the Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland Arbitration Rules

J. Application to third parties

J.1. For avoidance of doubt, in accordance with the AFI Constitution, all third parties involved in any sanctioned events in Ireland are subject to these Disciplinary and Dispute procedures.

K. Ejection Appeals

K.1. Ejections may only be appealed in circumstances where one or both teams have videoed the game and have indicated such on their roster form. Only the official video organised by one or other of the teams can be used i.e. no unofficial videos or spectator camera phones. If an official elects to wear a visual recording device during the game, this can be used to support an appeal as secondary footage. The appeal must include the primary video organised by one or other of the teams as outlined above. The use of visual recording devices by officials is covered in the AFI Data Protection Policy – Officiating Footage document.

The appeal must be submitted on the AFI Citation Form within 2 days of the fixture. If the team submitting the appeal has videoed the game, their video footage must accompany the AFI Citation Form.

The video footage of the incident must be of good quality and include the incident/penalty which is being appealed. If the incident was videoed by the appellants' opponent, the opponent must submit the footage of the incident, as mentioned above, within 48 hours of being requested to do so by the Director of Officiating or their nominee. The Director of Officiating or their nominee can request additional video/audio evidence where they feel it will assist the appeals process. All footage must be viewed by the Director of Officiating or their nominee on a screen at least 14" wide.

K.2. The review of the ejection will be conducted by the Director of Officiating or a nominee of the Director of Officiating. The decision of the Director or his nominee will be final and cannot be appealed further. The video footage available to the Director or his nominee must conclusively show that the ejection

was in error for the referee's original decision to be overturned.

In instances of mistaken identity, if the footage submitted for an appeal conclusively shows that an ejection or any other foul was warranted, the Director of Officiating or his nominee may attribute this ejection or foul to the correct player. In such instances, the correct player will serve any consequential suspension and/or other disciplinary penalties that the incident warrants.

If a player is disqualified in the first half the team may appeal during the intermission between halves. The Head Referee will be provided a video of the play in question for his review in the officials' private secure location. The Head Referee will review the video to determine whether the disqualification is reversed. The decision of the Head Referee is final.

L. Scheduled of Set Penalties

Notwithstanding all the aforementioned, the AFI may bring in a Schedule of Set Penalties to automatically apply in circumstances where the AFI By-Laws and/or Constitution have been breached. Where such a schedule exists, the automatic penalty will be applied when the breach has come to the AFI's attention. Any appeals of automatic penalties must be notified to the Commissioner within two weeks of the application of the penalty. In such cases, only the fact that a breach did or did not occur can be appealed. If an appeal is unsuccessful, the automatic penalty remains in situ and the unsuccessful appellant must pay the full cost of the appeal. Such appeals will be heard by the Appeals Tribunal. The list of Set Penalties currently in force is attached at Appendix 4.

M. Video Citation & Disciplinary Points

M.1. Video Citation

M.1.a. Reviews will only take place in the case of (i) flagrant personal fouls recorded by the officials on game day and (ii) where one of the participating teams requests a review of a specific incident for the purpose of determining whether or not a personal foul deemed to merit additional sanction (whether foul is called or not called) occurred; and only if a visual recording of the game has been made by one of the participating teams.

M.1.b. All teams will indicate on the Team Roster Form whether or not they are planning on making a visual recording of the game (video, DVD, etc.).

M.1.c. In the case of a (i) above, the review will be initiated on receipt of the referee's official report. In the case of a. (ii) above, the review will be initiated when the team completes and submits the form entitled "AFI Citation Form" within 5 days of the incident (by email or hard copy). This form must be accompanied by video footage of the incident. The video footage of the incident must be of good quality and include the incident/penalty which is being appealed. The Director of Officiating or his/her nominee can request additional video/audio evidence where they feel it will assist the citation process. All footage must be viewed by the Director of Officiating or his/her nominee on a screen at least 14" wide.

M.1.d. When a request to review has been received, the AFI may request submission of any visual recording of the game made by either of the participating teams.

M.1.e. Following receipt of a request to review and any relevant video footage, THE DIRECTOR OF OFFICIATING AND THeir nominees shall decline frivolous citations. If upheld, THE AFI WILL forward a copy of the citation form and any relevant footage to the team of the individual(s) being cited and the individual(s). The team has to indicate within 1 week of this date whether or not the cited individual(s) wishes to accept that they committed a flagrant foul or contest the citation.

M.1.f. If the individual(s) accept(s), they will be awarded the appropriate disciplinary points as per B below.

M.1.g. If the individual(s) contest the citation, the matter will be referred to the AFI Disciplinary Committee. The cited individual can request that Committee review any other relevant evidence He can submit an explanation of the incident, from his point of view, to the citation panel. The Committee will inform the individual(s) and the team of their verdict, including a brief description of why they arrived at their verdict, plus indicate the total number of points that the individual(s) is currently on cumulatively. The team who

submitted the citation form is permitted to attend any Disciplinary Committee meeting on the matter and make a submission to the Disciplinary Committee as to their reasons for referring the matter to the Committee and the impact, if any, on their club/members. This submission is to be read out at the commencement of the meeting.

M.1.h. If the incident is referred to the AFI Disciplinary Committee, the Committee is entitled to seek technical advice from relevant AFI Directors to assist it in determining the severity of the foul. If the Committee is of the opinion that a personal foul deemed to merit additional punishment occurred, the individual will be awarded the appropriate disciplinary points as per B below.

M.1.i. The AFI Disciplinary Committee may refuse to consider frivolous citation requests.

M.2. Disciplinary Points.

M.2.a. Disciplinary Points will be awarded to participants in all competitive games as follows:

(i) 15-yard penalty recorded by the officials (with the exception of those listed in (a) to (e) below, which will be awarded 0 points) – 1 point.
   a. Defensive Pass Interference.
   b. Illegally batting loose ball.
   c. Illegally batting a backward pass.
   d. Batting ball in possession by player in possession.
   e. Illegally kicking ball.

   [See “Summary of Penalties” in IFAF rule book for rule references for (a) to (e)].

(ii) Citation accepted by individual under A6 above – 2 points.

(iii) Personal foul deemed to merit additional sanction determined by A8 above – 3 points.

(iv) An ejection by the officials, or a foul deemed an ejection after citation – 3 points (plus the automatic 1 game suspension).

(N.B. If a personal foul is recorded by the officials, then cited and ‘upgraded’, the additional points replace the 1 point for the recorded personal foul; they are not added to the 1 point.)

(N.B. 1-point personal fouls cannot be added to the record via citation, if a cited foul is not deemed flagrant, then it does not result in any disciplinary points at all)

M.2.b. Disciplinary Thresholds:

(i) 8 points.

(ii) 12 points and every 4 points thereafter.

M.2.c. A player earns a 1 game suspension for every threshold passed. If a player is ejected on game day, or by the AFI Disciplinary Committee following a citation, he will serve an automatic 1 game suspension in addition to any earned through passing a points threshold.

M.2.d. Suspensions will be administered in the normal manner.

M.2.e. Video evidence may be used to establish the identity of any individual committing a personal foul if the identity (e.g. player number) is not recorded in a referee’s report.

M.3. Disciplinary Log Management

M.3.a. The Director of Officiating will keep the ongoing record of the disciplinary points for each individual who has accrued points. This will be updated with each referee’s game report received. The records will include a list of each point(s) attributed along with the player name, team and date and foul type, as well as a tally of points currently active for each individual.

M.3.b. The enforcement data of a citied foul will be when the verdict was delivered.

M.3.c. Any of the details that are omitted from the game-day record of personal fouls may be filled in at a later date, if there is evidence to support it.

M.3.d. A log will also be kept of citations, including the details of the citation form, whether the individual(s) accepted the citation, or if it went to the Disciplinary Committee, the number of points and brief description of the verdict. The clip of the incident(s) will also be kept on record. This will include records

of citations that were rejected by the Committee, solely for the purpose of comparison with similar types of foul.

M.3.e. The Disciplinary Committee will be able to request details and videos of previous incidents of a similar type, to help them make their verdict.

M.4. Guidelines for Citation Judgements

M.4.a. Injury as a result of the incident is not necessarily proof that it was 'flagrant' or merits additional punishment.

M.4.b. It must be clear, beyond reasonable doubt, that the incident was a foul and that it was flagrant and/or serious enough to merit additional punishment.

M.4.c. If the quality or angle of the visual evidence is insufficient to be clear of reasonable doubt, then the citation must be rejected.

M.4.d. Previous rejected citations against an individual have no influence on other citation decisions against that individual.

M.4.e. The decision must be unanimous.

M.4.f. The football rulebook (IFAF with local adjustments) is the ultimate reference in these judgements. If the incident is not a foul according to the rulebook, then the citation must be rejected.

M.4.g. 'Flagrant' is defined in the rulebook as 'A flagrant personal foul is illegal physical contact so extreme or deliberate that it places an opponent in danger of catastrophic injury' (IFAF 2-10-3).

M.4.h. Whilst the rulebook defines many things in black and white, there is a certain amount of judgment required in the interpretation of some rules, it is this judgment that is the reason the Disciplinary Committee sits on these cases. The judgment of 'flagrant' or serious enough to merit additional punishment will be a central part of the decision.

M.4.i. Emphasis should also be placed on the Protection of Defenceless Players, which is also a Point of Emphasis in the IFAF rulebook which captures these actions in two rules: Targeting and Making Forcible Contact With the Crown of the Helmet (Rule 9-1-3) and Targeting and Making Forcible Contact to Head or Neck Area of a Defenseless Player (Rule 9-1-4). Rule 2-27-14 defines and lists characteristics of a defenseless player.

AFI Citation Form

1. Team submitting Form:_____

2. Name & contact details of team representative submitting form:

3. Fixture (teams/date):_____

4. Details of Individual Being cited/or whose ejection is being appealed (team/number/name if known):

_____

5. Was the incident penalised by the match officials? Y/N

6. Description of incident (when, where on field, persons involved, type of foul etc.):

Please note that a copy of this form will be forwarded to the individual(s) cited.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

Date Received: _____

Appendix 2 - Candidate for Election

Election Type (e.g. AFI Board): _____ Date: _____

Name:
List Board Position(s) candidate is standing for:

Team Affiliation (if any):

Previous teams:

No. of Years as AFI member:

Official (Y/N)	Coach (Y/N)	Player (Y/N):

Committee Experience		
Organisation/Club	*Positions*	*Dates*

Additional information to be circulated to Team Managers

Appendix 3 - AFI Failure to Complete Form

I _____(***name & role***)

of the _____(***name of Team***) informed the officials of my teams decision not to complete the fixture between my club & _____(***opponent***) AT _____(***venue***) ON __/_____/2025. This resulted in the game not being played to completion.

_____(SIGNATURE) _____(DATE)

REASON:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please List Players, who, as a result of injury received during the game received medical treatment, are unable to complete the game. You may be asked to provide documentation of medical treatment involved.

NUMBER	NAME	POSITION
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

NOTE: This form must be completed and returned to the Crew Chief of the Officiating crew within 30mins of ending of the GAME.

It is the responsibility of the team to ensure the Official has the Form within the given time limit. Failure to provide a completed form will result in serious penalties for the team who failed to fulfil the fixture.

NOTE: Information you have provided here will form the basis of any investigation by the AFI into this uncompleted fixture. Information not provided on this form may not be taken into consideration during that investigation.

Appendix 4 - Schedule of Set Penalties

1. Failing to provide the number of team player officials (TPO's) as directed by AFI **without** a minimum of 72hrs notice that the assignment cannot be fulfilled – automatic deduction of 2 points.

2. Failing to provide the number of TPOs as directed by AFI **with** a minimum of 72hrs notice that the assignment cannot be fulfilled, however the fixture can proceed with a sufficient number of officials – Warning issued on first occasion and automatic deduction of 2 points on second occasion.

3. Failing to provide the number of TPOs as directed by AFI **with** a minimum of 72hrs notice that the assignment cannot be fulfilled, however the fixture still cannot proceed with a sufficient number of officials - automatic deduction of 2 points.

4. Failing to provide the number of officials as directed by AFI **with** a minimum of 72hrs notice that the assignment cannot be fulfilled, however the fixture can only proceed using the participating teams TPO's - automatic deduction of 2 points plus a €50/£45 fine for each missing TPO.

5. Teams that fail to meet team provided official training requirements with be relegated automatically at the end of the season.

6. Field markings/respect barriers substandard, but not so unsafe that the game doesn't proceed – if occurs twice in one season, team is deducted 1 point.

7. Playing an unregistered person – game forfeit to opposition plus deduction of an additional point i.e. 2 points in total. Any persons who signed the Roster Form are suspended for 3 months. The player in question is suspended for 12 months.

8. Unregistered person participating in contact practice sessions (contact is defined as intentional contact with another person or relevant practice equipment e.g. tackling bag). Deduction of 1 point in relevant conference.

9. Playing an ineligible player – game forfeit to opposition. Player suspended for 2 months.

10. Turning up late for a fixture – if occurs twice in one season, team is deducted 1 point.

11. Coach not certified – game forfeit plus a deduction of an additional 3 points i.e. 4 points in total.

12. Incomplete Audit – no competitive football for 12 months.

13. Not turning up for Audit meeting – automatic relegation to lower division or possibly no competitive football for the coming season.

14. Not turning up for AGM/SGM/EGM - €500 fine (per meeting) to be paid in full within 3 months of the meeting being held. Non-payment will result in a deduction of 2 points. Exceptions may apply in the event of an emergency and will be decided by the Commissioner.

15. Failure to submit game paperwork including proper Roster Form – game forfeit.

16. Turning up with clashing uniforms – deduction of 1 point if game actually proceeds.

17. Not providing volunteers for AFI events - €200 fine per requested volunteer (all teams are required to provide a minimum of 2 volunteers per season). Exceptions may apply in the event of an emergency and will be decided by the Commissioner.

18. Teams failing to pay the required registration in the 2026 season (€1000) by the date advised by the AFI finance representative, will be referred to a disciplinary panel where an appropriate punishment will be determined.

19. Failure to implement Concussion Protocol – suspended from coaching for 6 months and must recertify.

20. Playing an overage player in any code of football, where a maximum age limit applies – Head Coach is suspended from all footballing activity for 12 months.

Appendix 5 - Team Roster Form 2026

AMERICAN FOOTBALL IRELAND

TEAM ROSTER FORM 2026

Team	
Opponent	
Date	
Level (AFI Premier Division /AFI Division1/ AFI Division 2/Youth/DV8)	
Venue:	
Head Coach	
Team Manager	
Side-line Coach*	
Assistant Coach	
Assistant Coach	
Assistant Coach	
Assistant Coach	

	Yes	No
Are you making a visual recording of this game?*		

I hereby confirm that all players:

a. has been registered correctly with the AFI and has sufficient training to play kitted football.

b. if the team's official Head Coach is not present the designated alternative Head Coach should be

No.	First Name	Surname	Position	Playing

listed as Head Coach and sign the form below.

c. has been informed what equipment is mandatory by rule and what constitutes illegal equipment and in the proper use of the equipment.

d. has been provided with the equipment mandated by rule.

e. has been instructed to wear and how to wear mandatory equipment during the game.

f. has been instructed to notify the coaching staff when equipment becomes illegal through play during the game.

g. is not currently serving a suspension.

h. that the information provided on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

i. all coaches in attendance are appropriately qualified as per AFI By-Laws.

**** Side-line coach is the person designated to (i) ensure that, in advance of any further participation in the game & subject to medical recommendations as per By-Law T4, any player for who leaves the field injured or who causes an injury timeout, is fit to resume, (ii) call timeouts, (iii) control team area & (iv) liaise with officials if required. Must be non-playing coach.***

I also hereby confirm that I am familiar with the concussion protocol as outlined in C13 of the AFI By-Laws and am applying it in all instances.

Head Coaches Signature:

Team Managers Signature

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