



United States Australian Football League
A 501(C)3 Not-For-Profit Organization
1223 W Main Street #269, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin 53590
Tel. +1 872-22-USAFL (+1 872-228-7235)
www.usafl.com | operations@usafl.com

2015 Laws of the USAFL

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This document is how the USAFL modifies the 2015 Laws of Australian Football (as published by the AFL) for all games sanctioned by the USAFL in 2015. Any questions on the rules or interpretations to the rules are to be submitted to the USAFL Umpires Association Rules Committee.

USAFL Laws Variations to AFL Laws

Clause 5.2 Variation of Number

Player numbers for any USAFL sanctioned game will be as follows. In the case two teams from different divisions play against each other then the ruling that applies to the lower ranked team will apply to both teams for that game.

Division I: 18 players-a-side with 6 interchange players (24 players max.). Games not being played at the USAFL Nationals may be played with fewer players if the Captains of each team agree to field a different number, which must be worked out before the games start time and umpires must be notified.

Division II: 18 players-a-side with 6 interchange players (24 players max.). Games not being played at the USAFL Nationals may be played with fewer players if the Captains of each team agree to field a different number, which must be worked out before the games start time and umpires must be notified.

Divisions III: 16 players-a-side, unless the Captains of each team agree to field a different number of players, which must be worked out before the games start time and umpires must be notified. (No maximum number of players for Division III).

Division IV: 14 players-a-side, unless the Captains of each team agree to field a different number of players, which must be worked out before the games start time and umpires must be notified. (No maximum number of players in the Reserves Division).

Women's Division: 12 players-a-side, unless the Captains of each team agree to field a different number of players, which must be worked out before the games start time and umpires must be notified. (No maximum number of players in the Reserves Division).

Clause 10.5 Stopping and Recommencing Time

USAFL Clubs do not have the capacity to add time on for stoppages; therefore games will continue to be played without "time on". Should a serious injury (e.g., a stretcher or ambulance is required to enter the field) occur during any USAFL sanctioned game the controlling umpire must signal to the timekeeper to stop the clock. The Controlling Umpire will signal the timekeeper to re-start the clock and signal "time on" to the players once the Controlling Umpire considers it safe to do so.





Clause 12.1.5 Goal Umpire to Judge Goal or Behind

Due to the lack of qualified goal umpires and the wide variety of ability of “fill in” goal umpires, the USAFL chooses to adopt paragraph (b) which allows the Controlling Field Umpire the right to overrule a decision made by a non-accredited Goal Umpire.

Clause 13.3 Kicking Into Play After Goal Umpire Signal

The USAFL will not adopt the immediate kick in rule once a behind has been signaled (one raised index finger) by the Goal Umpire; the kicker must wait for the flags to be waved. Clause 15.7 Free Kicks – Deliberate Rushed Behind

The USAFL will not adopt the ruling to award a free kick to the attacking team when a defending opponent deliberately knocks the ball over the goal line.

Clause 17 Play On and the Advantage Rule

Due to the difficulty of education of players and umpires regarding how to apply the advantage rule, the USAFL will continue its policy that the field umpire has sole discretion to award advantage (this is different from the AFL where the player’s choice to play on to advantage is part of the application of the law. See support video from the AFL for clarity).

Clause 18.3 50 Meter Penalty – Local Conditions

This law allows a change to 25 Meters for the distance assessed for this penalty. The USAFL has adopted this for all USAFL intrastate games. Certain games at nationals (usually Division1) will use a 50 meter assessment. In addition, with the growth of Metro footy in many clubs, the USAFL recommends the penalty be reduced to 15 meters when matches are played on soccer fields (or with 10 or fewer players per side).

Clause 20 Order Off Law

Yellow Card - a player receiving a Yellow Card is sent off for 15 minutes of game time and can be replaced on the field.

Red Card - a player receiving a Red Card is sent off for the remainder of that game and cannot return to the field of play. The player may be replaced on the field, but only after 15 minutes of game time. In addition, the player will also be subjected to an automatic USAFL tribunal appearance.



AFL Rules - Laws of The Game 2014 Video

The AFL has put together a 23-minute video to illustrate the application of the 2014 Laws of Australian Rules Football. This should be *required* viewing for all USAFL Board Members, Representative team personnel and players, club presidents, and umpires and should be *encouraged* viewing for all USAFL registered players. Below are some comments to the video that relate specifically to assist with USAFL umpires and with USAFL interpretations.
(<http://www.afl.com.au/afl-hq/laws-of-the-game>)

Video	Rule	Notes
1	Forceful Contact Below the Knees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 Players must use a “duty of care”🚩 Sliding into a contest making <i>forceful</i> contact below the knees, as well as any reckless conduct (in which contact was <i>likely</i> to cause injury had contact occurred) is to be penalized🚩 Exceptions: attempt to smother; attempting to mark; pushed, bumped, or tackled to the ground; already on the ground and reaching out for the ball
2	Drawing Head Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 A player is in possession and drives his head into an opponent shall be deemed to have had prior opportunity and will be required to dispose of the ball if legally tackled🚩 Ducking: when a player ducks into the tackle, causing contact, the umpire will call play on🚩 The tackling player still has a duty to try to avoid high contact
3	Protected Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 The strict interpretation of “hands in the air” is removed🚩 A player <i>not</i> in the marking contest <i>must</i> be penalized if <i>delaying</i> the player who marked the ball. This is umpire discretion🚩 Note: A player leaving the protected area is not to be penalized, <i>unless</i> interfering with the play.
4	Marking Contest Free Kicks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 The word “unduly” has been included to rule 15.4.5(d) and applies to an action or actions that are deemed unreasonable and excessive in a marking contest that prevents a player from contesting the ball🚩 Examples are a illegal push, bump, block, or hold of an opponent🚩 Players are allowed to maintain their ground legally (i.e. no hands in the back)



Video	Rule	Notes
5	Other Free Kicks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 No Changes in the following interpretations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 50M penalties🚩 Holding The Ball🚩 Ruck Contests🚩 Advantage🚩 Deliberate Rushed Behinds🚩 Protection of the Ball Player🚩 Holding at Stoppages🚩 Deliberate Out of Bounds🚩 Zero Tolerance to Abuse🚩 Marking Contests (other free kicks)
6	50m Penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 50M penalties will be paid for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 Cribbing the mark (interfering)🚩 Delay the play🚩 Uses abusive language or behavior towards an umpire🚩 Other conduct for which a free kick would be awarded
7	Holding The Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 Prior Opportunity<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 Player in possession of the ball has had prior opportunity to dispose legally🚩 Is tackled legally🚩 Must immediately handball or kick the ball (legally)🚩 Diving on the Ball<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 When a player drags the ball to or under his body🚩 Is legally tackled🚩 Must successfully knock the ball clear🚩 No Prior Opportunity – Genuine Attempt<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 A player gains possession of the ball, but has had no prior opportunity to dispose🚩 Shall be given reasonable opportunity to attempt a correct disposal of the football🚩 The attempt does not have to be successful, but must be a genuine attempt in the discretion of the umpire🚩 Illegal Disposal<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 A player who has possession and drops, places, or throws the ball to the ground without making a genuine attempt to handball or kick, will be penalized
8	Rucks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🚩 The ruckmen will be separated by 1 meter prior to the ball leaving the umpires hands🚩 The umpire will instruct the ruckmen to separate by 1 meter if this is not the case. Failure to follow umpire instruction may result in a 50m penalty🚩 Third man in is allowed, other than center bounce, as long as no other rules are broken (no push, bump, block or hold is allowed)



Video	Rule	Notes
9	Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The advantage play in the USAFL will be the sole discretion of the field umpire.• Umpire may reverse advantage when it is obvious that player does not know rule or does not take advantage.• In international games, it is assumed the home team rules will be applied. Visiting team should inquire/be informed of any such variations to the rules prior to the start of the match
10	Deliberate Rushed Behinds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The USAFL has not adopted this rule; a behind is awarded even when it might be considered intentional under AFL rules.• In international games, it is assumed the home team rules will be applied. Visiting team should inquire/be informed of any such variations to the rules prior to the start of the match
11	Protection of the Ball Player	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free kicks will be awarded against any player who lies on an opponent's back, sits on his head or shoulders, or makes high contact in any form
12	Holding at Stoppages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holding an opponent during a stoppage will be penalized•
13	Deliberate Out of Bounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players will be penalized for intentionally: knock the ball out of bounds, kick or handball the ball out of bounds, or force the ball out of play (including walking over the boundary line)• Ruck contest – the ruckman will be penalized for intentionally knocking the ball out of bounds, even when the ball does not go out on the full.
14	Zero Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No tolerance for players who verbally or demonstratively abuse umpires. Note: the intention of the player is the key - making personal the objection to the call (as opposed to simply getting on with the game)
15	Marking Contests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Player must make the ball their sole objective:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Front on push, no attempt to mark the ball• Bump/Tunnel/Shunt – never allowed• Blocking – the player makes no realistic attempt on the ball• Chopping the arm/s – never allowed• Hold – never allowed• Hands in the Back – USAFL umpires should look for two distinct movements (arm extension to push an opponent and marking the ball for example, would be two movements). This is a slightly less strict interpretation as opposed to the AFL interpretation• (for clarity as this is slightly different from hands in the back) Unrealistic attempt – player must make contact with the ball for the attempt to be considered realistic. This especially applies to 'in the back' and 'high contact'