



IN-COMPETITION CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY RULES



RULES





IFAF EURO FLAG CHAMPIONS

SEPTEMBER 27TH 2025



Introduction and Scope

1.1 The In-Competition Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules (“the In Competition Code”) applies in all IFAF competitions, inclusive of all tackle and flag formats (including wheelchair).

1.2 In addition to all IFAF Integrity Rules to which all Athletes are bound, all Covered Persons agree to be bound by this In-Competition Code and the discipline that may be imposed following a breach of the In-Competition Code or any other IFAF Integrity Rule, by virtue of their participation, or assistance in another's participation, in an IFAF competition. By that participation or assistance, Covered Persons are deemed to:

- voluntarily submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the IFAF In Competition Disciplinary Officer and the Appeals Officer to assess, hear and determine matters arising under this In-Competition Code; and
- agree not to bring any proceedings in any other court or forum that are inconsistent with that voluntary submission to jurisdiction.

1.3 Covered Persons may also be subject to the rules of their National Member Federation governing discipline and conduct. This In-Competition Code is not intended to limit the responsibilities of any Covered Person under such other rules, and nothing in such other rules removes, supersedes or amends the jurisdiction of the IFAF In-Competition Disciplinary Officer or Appeals Officer to determine matters properly arising under this In-Competition Code.

1.4 Any discipline imposed in-competition cannot be appealed other than as expressly provided under this In-Competition Code or other applicable IFAF regulations or rules.

1.5 The In-Competition Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules are applicable inclusively for the period of time starting 48 hours before the scheduled start of the first game of the relevant IFAF or IFAF-approved Championship and ending 2 hours after the end of the last game of the same IFAF or IFAF-approved Championship. IFAF Integrity Rules shall apply to any other integrity matter falling outside of this In-Competition period.

Covered Persons

2.1 Although it is expected that this In Competition Code of Conduct will mostly be applied in relation to the conduct of Teams, Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel, Coaches, Team Managers and Officials, the term “Covered Persons” as defined and used in this In-Competition Code and all IFAF Integrity Rules shall refer to Teams and also includes but is not limited to:

2.1.1 All participants in IFAF activities including but not limited to athletes, coaches, trainers, therapists, physicians, and Technical Officials.

2.1.2 All individuals who compete, coach, officiate, work at, or otherwise participate in a supporting role, including parents and legal guardians of an athlete, in an event, training camp or activity organised, sanctioned or approved by IFAF.

2.2.3 All individuals who hold an IFAF or IFAF-recognised officiating or coaching certification or Technical Official certification.

2.1.4 All individuals who receive accreditation at any IFAF tournament, event or activity, or who act as an IFAF contractor or volunteer in relation to such tournaments, events and activities.

2.1.5 All persons who have, whether by enjoying any form of licence, accreditation or other status from IFAF, or otherwise, consented (expressly or impliedly) to be bound by this In Competition Code and other IFAF Integrity Rules.

2.2 Any person who ceases to be a Covered Person for any reason shall, for all purposes under this In-Competition Code and other IFAF Integrity Rules, be deemed to be and to remain a Covered Person in respect of any allegation into conduct which occurred whilst that person was a Covered Person.

2.3 Any person who became a Covered Person shall be deemed to be and to remain a Covered Person for a continuous period of 12 months after the date, on each occasion, upon which that person became a Covered Person.

2.4 Any person who is not otherwise a Covered Person, but who engages in conduct which would amount to a breach of this In Competition Code, may be treated as a Covered Person and be disciplined by way of a suspension and/or a venue exclusion order.

In-Competition Code of Conduct

3.1 The IFAF Code of Conduct is a set of non-exhaustive guidelines that govern the behaviour and conduct of athletes, Teams and other Covered Persons within the sport of American football and flag football, including wheelchair formats. It is designed to ensure that all participants compete in an environment that is fun, safe, and healthy, and are treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.

3.2 The IFAF Code of Conduct is part of a broader effort to maintain the integrity of the sport of American football and to ensure that all Teams and Covered Persons respect the rules of the game and treat others with the respect and dignity they deserve.

3.3 The IFAF Code of Conduct expects the following principles to be respected by all Teams and Covered Persons In-Competition:

- i. Integrity: Covered Persons must follow all IFAF Integrity Rules.
- ii. Professionalism: Covered Persons must adhere to the spirit and letter of basic professional and ethical conduct on and off the field.
- iii. Respect: Covered Persons must respect the rights and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the sport and all IFAF codes, rules and regulations, including but not limited to, safety rules, equipment rules, technical rules, anti-doping rules, human rights rules and all Integrity Rules.
- iv. Fairness: Covered Persons must participate in fair and transparent competitions and act accordingly.
- v. Safety: Covered Persons must ensure the mental and physical safety and well-being of all individuals involved in the sport.
- vi. Non-Discrimination: Covered Persons must not discriminate against any person on grounds of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status, consistent with the Fundamental Principles of Olympism.
- vii. Fair Play: Covered Persons must respect and follow all the rules of the American Football game (tackle or flag) in all IFAF and IFAF-Approved Competitions.

Notices of Breach and Referrals

4.1 Any one of the following persons may report an alleged breach of this In Competition Code on behalf of a Team or a Covered Person, by lodging Notice of breach or requesting a Referral to the In Competition Disciplinary Officer in accordance with Article 4.2 below:

- i. a Technical Official who officiated in the competition during which the alleged breach was committed;
- ii. the Team Manager or Head of Delegation of any Member Federation participating in the competition during which the alleged breach was committed;
- iii. the IFAF In-Competition Disciplinary Officer, acting on their own initiative; or
- iv. the IFAF Secretary General, the IFAF Sport Manager, or their delegate.

4.2 Notice of breach or a Referral to the IFAF In Competition Disciplinary Officer will only be admissible under this In-Competition Code on one or more of the following grounds:

- i. the person penalised was allegedly not the one who committed the breach (mistaken identity); or
- ii. no breach was allegedly committed (there must be evidence on the balance of probabilities that the breach did not take place), or, in the case of a disqualification, that the match officials misapplied a rule; or
- iii. while a breach was technically committed, the penalty was disproportionately severe.

4.3 Referrals to the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer must be lodged no later than:

- i. 24 hours after the decision in relation to the competition in question;
- ii. 1 hour after the end of the game, in competitions where a team may play more than one game in a day; or
- iii. 72 hours after the end of the game, for other competitions.

4.4 Once the Notice of Breach or Referral has been deemed admissible by the In Competition Disciplinary Officer, only the Team or Covered Person who reported or requested the referral (per the exhaustive list at Article 4.1 above) and the Covered Person/Team against whom the Report of breach or Referral has been made shall be considered Parties to the matter, unless the In Competition Disciplinary Officer, at its sole discretion, believes that for the carrying out of justice, other Affected Teams or Covered Persons should exceptionally be given the opportunity to participate in the process.

4.5 The Notice of breach or Referral lodged with the IFAF In-Competition Disciplinary Officer relating to any breach, or to any appeal of an in-competition on-field sanction or decision, as set out at Article 4.2 above must be together with supporting evidence. This should normally be video evidence but may be accompanied by statements from witnesses where appropriate and relevant and any other evidence which may be pertinent to assist the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer's decision-making process.

4.6 Where it is impracticable for an In Competition Disciplinary Officer to conduct a review before the next game, the suspension will stand but the Referral will be noted in the Integrity Unit's records.

4.7 Notices of breach or Referrals to the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer should be sent to this email address: incompreferral@americanfootball.sport

IFAF In Competition Disciplinary Officer Review and Offer of Consequences

5.1 For World Championships and the Olympic Games, the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer shall be the IFAF Integrity Officer or the IFAF Disciplinary Officer. For all other IFAF competitions, the IFAF Integrity Unit will appoint an In-Competition Disciplinary Officer. The relevant In Competition Disciplinary Officer, and the contact information at which to reach them, shall be clearly identified and communicated to all Teams prior to the start of all competitions.

5.2 Upon receipt of the Notice of breach or of Referral, the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer will conduct a preliminary assessment of the matter and shall endeavour to respond to the Parties and resolve it within 24 hours. As noted above, the In Competition Disciplinary Officer shall at that time also identify an Affected Team or Covered Person who should be given the opportunity to participate in the resolution of the dispute.

5.3 The In-Competition Disciplinary Officer may, where required, enlist the assistance of an independent and impartial investigator or expert to assess the alleged breach or Referral. Should an investigation be required, it shall be completed as soon as possible.

5.4 If the reported Notice of breach or Referral is better dealt with under other IFAF Rules and Regulations, the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer shall so inform the relevant Parties.

5.5 Upon completion of the preliminary review and/or investigation, the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer shall offer Consequences to the parties involved in the Referral as a full and final resolution of the matter either verbally or by email.

5.6 These Consequences must be accepted within 48 working hours of being communicated verbally or by email and shall implicitly be deemed accepted if no response is provided within 48 hours of the time the email the Offer of Consequences is sent by the In Competition Disciplinary Officer to all the parties involved in the Referral.

5.7 A Covered Person or Team who admits a breach and/or accepts the Consequences offered under this Article, expressly or tacitly, waives their right to appeal against the imposition of the proposed sanction.

5.8 When the Team, Covered Persons and /or all Parties involved in the Referral accept the Consequences, or the right to an appeal is waived, or the 48-hour deadline to appeal has lapsed, a brief resolution letter will then be sent by the In Competition Disciplinary Officer to all relevant parties where Consequences are confirmed. That communication will serve as a final and binding decision.

Appeal to Appeals Officer

6.1 Should the In Competition Disciplinary Officer's proposed Consequences to a Notice of Breach or Referral expressly not be accepted by the Team or Covered Person or other Team or Covered Person involved in the Referral will file an Appeal with the Integrity Unit which will be remitted to the Appeals Officer, who shall be responsible for expeditiously dealing with all breaches arising during the competition that are not resolved on the field of play and/or have been referred to the In Competition Disciplinary Officer, who offered Consequences that were not accepted.

6.2 The Appeal to the Appeals Officer must be filed no later than 48 hours of the time the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer's email Proposing Consequences is sent to the Covered Person.

6.3 Appeals to the Appeals Officer will only be admissible and upheld on one or more of the following grounds:

- the person penalised was not the one who committed the breach (mistaken identity); or
- while a breach was technically committed, the proposed penalty is disproportionately severe.

6.4 The Appeals Officer will only impose an alternative sanction to that proposed by the In Competition Disciplinary Officer if it believes the breach committed meets or exceeds a threshold of severity that should typically result in the Covered Person being disqualified from the game or having their accreditation withdrawn.

6.5 Increased sanctions or suspensions from those proposed by the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer will only be imposed on one or more of the following grounds if the party requesting the same has established to the Appeal Officer's comfortable satisfaction that it is justified and:

- The Appeals Officer finds the action is so flagrant or so serious as to warrant a higher sanction than a standard suspension; or
- The Appeals Officer finds the action was part of a series of actions that is likely to continue.

6.6 The decision of the Appeals Officer is final and binding.

6.7 Referrals should be sent to this email address: Incompappeal@americanfootball.sport

6.8 The Appeals Officer will be appointed by the Integrity Unit prior to the Competition.

Burden and Standard of Proof and Evidence

7.1 The burden of proof shall be on the individual or Member Federation who reported the Notice of breach or Referral or who filed the Appeal.

7.2 The standard of proof to be applied by the IFAF in-Competition Disciplinary Officer or the Appeals Officer in assessing the Notice of breach, Referral or Appeal shall be whether they are satisfied, bearing in mind the seriousness of the allegation, that the alleged breach has been committed. This standard is applied on a sliding scale: from, at a minimum, the balance of probabilities for the least serious breaches which may result in a standard suspension (as defined below in Articles 8.3 and 8.4), up to a higher and more exacting standard of comfortable for breaches which may result in an enhanced suspension or a venue exclusion order (as defined below in Article 8.5).

7.3 The In-Competition Disciplinary Officer or Appeals Officer shall not be bound by strict judicial rules governing the admissibility of evidence. Facts relating to an alleged breach may be established by any reliable means, including video evidence, witness statements and admissions.

Disciplinary Rules arising out of Code of Conduct Breaches

8.1 During a game, the following discipline and/or consequences may arise as a result of any breach of the Code of Conduct above, or any in-competition protest or dispute raised further to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct. These are non-exhaustive examples of expeditious in-competition discipline:

- a Covered Person may be disqualified from a game;
- a Covered Person may be removed from the playing enclosure;
- a Covered Person's actions or inactions may be referred for review, e.g. because they were not penalised during the game for a flagrant foul;
- anyone may be referred to the In Competition Disciplinary Officer after being removed from the playing enclosure, because of the severity of their action(s) or because they were not penalised during the game for a flagrant foul;
- a Covered Person may have their accreditation withdrawn for severe breaches of this In Competition Code or breaches of other IFAF Integrity Rules; and
- a Covered Person may be referred to the Integrity Unit and charged with additional sanctions, e.g. because of the severity of their action(s).

8.2 In addition to the Consequences that may be offered to a Covered Person during a game, a confirmed breach of the Code of Conduct in-competition will usually result in a suspension.

8.3 A standard suspension shall apply to any Covered Person who is disqualified, removed, or found to have fouled after review.

8.4 The standard suspension is:

- suspension from the next game (international fixture), if this is a first offence within a 12-month period;
- suspension from the next two games (international fixture), if this is a second offence within a 12-month period; or
- suspension from all games for the next 12 months (international fixture), if this is a third or subsequent offence within a 12-month period.

8.5 An enhanced suspension or additional discipline may be imposed on any Covered Person referred for additional sanctions, reviewed following an incident, or under Flag rules, or in exceptional circumstances not anticipated by this In-Competition Code. An enhanced suspension shall be any length longer than the corresponding standard suspension, up to a maximum of a 5-year period.

8.6 There are generally three types of suspension:

- **Playing suspension:** when a Team or an athlete is suspended from playing in a game. While suspended, they may stand in their team area during the game, so long as that they are not in uniform (except that they may wear a jersey in their team's colours) and that they are wearing any necessary credentials.
- **Game day suspension:** when a Covered Person, including coaches, athlete support personnel, team managers and officials, is suspended from any participation in a game. While suspended, they may not enter the playing enclosure, communicate in any way with anyone who is in the playing enclosure, or otherwise draw the attention of anyone in the playing enclosure, from two hours (one hour in competitions where a team may play more than one game in a day) before kick-off until two hours (one hour) after the game has finished.
- **Venue exclusion order:** a Covered Person is excluded entirely from the venue for the duration specified in the order. A Covered Person subject to a venue exclusion order must leave, and may not thereafter enter, any part of the stadium or venue precinct, including but not limited to the field of play, playing enclosure, changing rooms, medical rooms, technical areas, hospitality suites and boxes, media areas, and any other area to which access is controlled by accreditation. A venue exclusion order is the appropriate sanction where the severity of the conduct is such that the safety, integrity or good order of the competition cannot be assured by a playing suspension or game day suspension alone, and may be imposed in addition to, or instead of, any suspension under this In-Competition Code.

8.7 Bespoke suspensions may be suggested by the In Competition Disciplinary Officer on a case-by-case basis.

8.8 The suspension will be automatically enforced unless a successful referral is made to the IFAF In-Competition Disciplinary Officer or a successful appeal is made to the Appeals Officer.

8.9 If a suspension is not served within a competition (e.g. because the Athlete was disqualified from their team's last game of the competition), it will carry forward to the next international competition played by that team. If a suspension carries forward from an earlier competition, it will be served in the team's first game of that competition.

General Procedural Principles applicable to this In Competition Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules

9.1 Confidentiality: until such time as a public announcement is made, all parties and participants in proceedings under this In Competition Code shall treat those proceedings as strictly confidential. This does not prevent IFAF or a Member Federation from publicly confirming that a matter has been referred, the breach alleged, and the identity of the Covered Person charged.

9.2 Cumulative and concurrent sanctions: where a Covered Person is found to have committed two or more breaches of this In-Competition Code that do not relate to the same incident or set of circumstances, any sanctions imposed shall run cumulatively. Where a Covered Person is found to have committed two or more breaches arising from the same incident or set of circumstances, any sanctions imposed shall run concurrently.

- No plea bargaining: nothing in this In Competition Code permits plea bargaining in relation to any alleged breach.
- Lesser breach: where the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer or Appeals Officer does not find a Covered Person to have committed the breach as charged, it remains open to them, at their discretion, to find the Covered Person to have committed a lesser included breach, and to impose an appropriate sanction accordingly.
- No adjustment of results: neither the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer nor the Appeals Officer has jurisdiction to adjust, reverse or amend the result of any game.

Recognition of Decisions

10.1 Any decision made pursuant to this In-Competition Code shall be recognised and respected by IFAF and its Member Federations automatically upon receipt of notice of the same, without the need for any further formality. IFAF and its Member Federations shall take all steps legally available to them to enforce and give effect to such decisions.

10.2 It shall be a condition of membership of IFAF that all Member Federations comply with this In Competition Code and all IFAF Integrity Rules.

Definitions

As used in this In-Competition Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules, these terms below have the following meaning:

- **Teams:** the full roster of players representing a particular Member Federation at an IFAF or IFAF-Approved Competition. Although each individual member of a Team is a Covered Person for the purposes of all IFAF Integrity Rules, Teams may be identified as Parties to matters and/or disciplined as a whole under this In Competition Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules.
- **Affected Teams or Covered Persons:** as identified by the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer at its whole discretion once a Notice of breach or a Referral has been received. Affected Teams or Covered Persons may exceptionally be given the opportunity to participate and make submissions in matters where the outcome could have a direct impact on them In-Competition.
- **Consequences.** the disciplinary outcome(s) offered by the IFAF In-Competition Disciplinary Officer or imposed by the Appeals Officer to resolve confirmed breach of this In-Competition Code.
- **In-Competition Disciplinary Officer.** The qualified impartial person appointed by the Integrity Unit to review Notices, offer Consequences and otherwise perform the functions assigned to the In- Competition Disciplinary Officer under this In-Competition Code. At World Championships and the Olympic Games, the In-Competition Disciplinary Officer shall be the IFAF Integrity Officer.
- **Appeals Officer:** the qualified impartial person appointed by the Integrity Unit on a competition-by-competition basis to handle Appeals lodged by Teams or Covered Persons in accordance with the process as set out in this In-Competition Code.

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