

Substantive Changes from the 11th Edition Rules

USA Ultimate has revised the Official Rules of Ultimate for 2020-2021. The rules were approved by the Board of Directors on 8/27/2019 for use starting 1/1/2020. The reasons for these changes include the following:

- Increasing player safety [safety]
- Reducing stoppages [stoppages]
- Clarifying previous rule inconsistencies, ambiguities, or omissions [clarity]
- Aligning with WFDF [wfdf]
- Consolidating rules resources (e.g. Misconduct System) in one place [resource]

The changes listed below do not represent the entirety of the changes. To see the complete set of changes, you can view the full Official Rules of Ultimate 2020-2021

(<https://www.usultimate.org/assets/1/page/OfficialRulesOfUltimate2020-2021.pdf>) or the track changes version

(<https://www.usultimate.org/assets/1/page/OfficialRulesOfUltimate2020-2021-redlines.pdf>). Each substantive change listed below is tagged, in parentheses, with its location in the rules and with the reason for the proposed change (listed above in square brackets). The changes are described under the section of the rules in which they appear. In addition, the changes are numbered sequentially to make it easy to refer to a specific change.

Note: The numbering system between the 11th edition and the 2020-2021 rules has changed slightly by replacing Roman numerals with Arabic numbers for the main sections.

Preface, Introduction, and Spirit of the Game

1. Moved language from the preface and introduction regarding Spirit of the Game to a new Spirit of the Game section. This new section is more explicit in defining the expectations of players and gives more detailed examples of both good and poor spirit. (2) [safety, wfdf]

Definitions

2. Added the ability for players to seek the perspective of sideline players and officially-designated video footage to assist in making the appropriate call. (3.A) [clarity, wfdf]
3. Added the following definitions: captain, coach, event support staff, non-player, observer, sideline player, spirit captain, spectator, team member, and team support staff. (3.Q) [clarity, wfdf]

Playing Field

4. Renamed the playing field proper to central zone. Shortened end zone depth to 20 yards from 25 yards. (4.B, 4.E, Appendix A) [clarity, wfdf]

Length of Game

5. Removed the following: requirement to win by 2, overtime, and point caps. There are now three time caps: soft cap, hard cap, and halftime cap. (6) [clarity, wfdf]

Timeouts

6. If the disc is live or in play, the penalty for calling a timeout when there are none available is that the stall count is resumed with the number last uttered before the timeout call plus three. It is no longer an automatic turnover. (7.B.5) [wfdf]
7. Added that an injury timeout should be called for a bleeding player. The bleeding player's wound must be effectively covered within 70 seconds, or they must be substituted. (7.C.7) [safety]
8. The disc may now be returned to the thrower if a dangerous condition is discovered after the disc is in the air or while the thrower is in the act of throwing. (7.D.1.a) [safety]
9. Added the procedure for a spirit timeout. (7.E) [resource]

Starting and Restarting Play

10. Removed repulls for offsides for all cases except for when an offsides call is contested. Offsides by the pulling team allows the receiving team to take the result of the pull or the disc at the brick (1st offsides) or at midfield (2nd and subsequent offsides); no defensive check is required. Offsides by the receiving team requires a defensive check. Added a procedure for calling and contesting offsides in non-observed games. (9.B.4.d) [stoppages]
11. Added a time limit of 25 seconds to signal the gender ratio in mixed gendered play. (9.C.1) [wfdf]
12. Decreased the time between points from 90 seconds to 85 seconds. (9.C.2-4) [wfdf, stoppages]

Scoring

13. Added a goal call. (12.D) [wfdf]

The Marker

14. Added the calls of "straddle" and "wrapping" to provide added guidance to the marker for a disc space marking violation. These calls are a subset of disc space. (15.B.3.b-c) [wfdf]
15. Clarified how to contest a marking violation. (15.B.9) [clarity]

Violations and Fouls

16. Reorganized the continuation rule to make it easier to understand and apply. Added a clause that allows the involved players on both teams to agree that the infraction did not affect the

outcome of the play, allowing the result of the play to stand regardless what the rule says should specifically happen. (17.C) [clarity]

17. Clearly defined how to retract an incorrectly made call and the appropriate stall count with which to resume. (17.D) [clarity]
18. Added instructions on how to resolve multiple infractions occurring on the same play or before play stops. The outcomes should be resolved in reverse sequence (latest infraction first, earliest infraction last). (17.H) [clarity]
19. Moved the Dangerous Play rule to the front of the Fouls section. Contact is no longer a requirement to call Dangerous Play. Clarified how to resolve Dangerous Play calls in different situations. (17.I.1) [safety, wfdf]
20. Added the contact call. (17.I.4.a.6) [clarity, stoppages]
21. Broadened the definition of strip to include all fouls that cause possession of the disc to be lost. (17.I.4.d) [wdf, clarity]
22. When the disc has not been thrown, a travel call does not stop play. (17.K.3.b) [wdf, stoppages]

Observers

23. Added the ability for players to overrule an observer's active ruling and some yardage penalties assigned in the Misconduct System, provided it is to their team's detriment. Previously, this was only specified in the Observer Manual. (19.D) [resource]

Misconduct System

24. Added a summary of the Misconduct System as described in the Observer Manual to a rules appendix. (Appendix B) [resource]

Hand Signals

25. Added a summary of hand signals as described in the Observer Manual. Added new hand signals for bobble, not contested, and spirit timeout. We are changing the gender ratio hand signals for mixed play and the pick signal. (Appendix C) [resource]

Youth Rules Adaptations

26. Moved the adaptations to the rules for youth ultimate competitions to a rules appendix. (Appendix D) [resource]

Beach Ultimate Rules Adaptations

27. Moved the adaptations to the rules for beach ultimate competitions to a rules appendix. (Appendix E) [resource]