ITAFL CONSTITUTION (2020-21)

INTRODUCTION

The ITAFL (ITalian Action pc Football League) is an American Football computer simulation league founded on December 1st 2006. The League was born around a core of Italian friends sharing a passion for American Football and has constantly grown from then to become a truly international one, featuring owners from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and now from Pacific Ocean as well.

Its members use the latest version of DK Sports Action PC! Football computer game to play the games. All members must own a legal copy of the game.

The league has as its sole aim the enjoyment of the members and has been founded on correctness and commitment principles that all members have to respect.

Games are played with "head to head" approach using the internet game option. Only in special cases, to be evaluated by the Commissioner, different solutions could be accepted.

ITAFL is a draft / keeper league, i.e. the managers / coaches own a franchise and its player roster in a continuous fashion, season after season. Coaches draft a certain number of new players before beginning of each season.

ITAFL is managed by present Constitution, which can be modified on request by league members. The Commissioner will publish the change request which will be approved if at least 2/3 of voters will agree on it.

All ITAFL members have to respect the Constitution and its rules and avoid any type of personal attack to the other members. Violators will be warned and should the improper conduct continue punished and as a last resort removed from the League.

LEAGUE OFFICERS

Commissioner [Paolo Forneris]: The Commissioner will remain in charge until he resignes or a motion raised by one of the league members is approved by at least 2/3 of the voters. In the latter case league members will elect a new Commissioner by means of a public voting.

The Commissioner has to compile and distribute the schedule, set the deadlines, send the updated weekly files, simulate games not played head-to-head, organize and manage the draft, update and publish the economical condition of each team prior and during the draft, update the Constitution and its Rules and the game Settings following approval of change requests, organize polls, check player and formations vs. legal roster rules, send warnings and penalizations to the members, decide on possible arguments among league members, apply veto power on unfair trades.

Weekly files shall not be modified for any reason by league members, who have to send to the Commissioner every change request.

Deputy Commissioner [Alessandro Novello]: assumes authority and responsibilities delegated from the Commissioner. Shall serve as acting Commissioner as needed in any matter directly involving the Commissioner's team, or at the request of either the Commissioner or by 3 or more members (which 3 may include the Deputy Commissioner himself) in matters which raise at least the appearance of a potential conflict of interest or loss of impartiality by the Commissioner.

Technical Board (T.B.) [Paolo Forneris & Roberto Tosco & Daniele Miozzi]: composed by at least two league members plus the Commissioner. Its task is to study and propose new rules or variations to the existing ones. The T.B. will propose and evaluate changes to the game settings. In any cases the T.B. decides whether changes will be applied immediately or after an approval vote by league members. T.B. members will remain in charge until they resign or a motion raised by one of the league members is approved by at least 2/3 of the other voters. In the latter case league members will elect new T.B. member(s) by means of a public voting.

Internet Site Administrator [Andrea Bergantin]: creates, maintains and updates site pages and publish League news, stats, player and team rankings in the appropriate categories,etc...

Google Group address: itafl@googlegroups.com

LEAGUE MEMBERS
Full-time Members: each team has an owner/coach who will do his best to play all games H2H

Associate Members: a separate list will be kept for potential new owners or guys who can't commit themselves to be full-time members. Associates will be allowed to sub for coaches who can't occasionally play their games. The Commissioner will contact them as soon as he knows a sub is needed.

New Coaches: can be introduced upon recommendation of a League member after approval by the Commissioner and the Technical Board.

RULE CHANGES
Rules and Settings shall not be changed during the season. However the Commissioner, with the Technical Board approval, may change them in absolutely extraordinary cases, clearly justifying his decision.
Rules and Settings changes can be requested during offseason by every league member and shall be approved if 2/3 of the other members agree.

LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE
The League is presently composed by 22 teams divided into 2 Conferences: European and American.
The European Conference is composed by 2 Divisions.
The American Conference is composed by 3 Divisions.
The Regular Season runs for 16 "Weeks" with two games (one at home and one away) against the teams of the same Division and some games against teams of the other Division(s) and Conference.
Homefield Advantage is on for all games except the ITAFL Bowl.
Regular season will run from January to June (10/11 calendar days for each ITAFL Week), and playoffs will be played till middle of July (one calendar week for each of the 4 playoff Weeks).
As soon as the file for the upcoming week is received, Home team coach shall contact his opponent by phone, SMS, e-mail, etc. within 2 calendar days in order to define day and time of their game.
Home team coach shall also provide information about agreed date to the Commissioner; if this date has to be changed for whatever reason, the information shall be forwarded to them too.

The coach who hosted the game (normally the home team coach, but in case of technical problems the host could be the away team coach) is responsible for sending as soon as possible to the Group the XBX file and optionally the txt/html file(s) detailing Box Score and Play-by-Play
Every XBX file must carry also the Play-by-Play
If a coach can't play his game during the Week period, he has to make that known as soon as possible to the Commissioner who will find a substitute.
If the game can't be played, the Commissioner will simulate it using the "Computer vs. Computer" option and could issue a warning to the defaulting coach(es).

SUB REWARD
A coach who subs for other teams during the season will receive a reward.
For subbing 2 games a coach will receive an 8th round choice in the next free agent draft; for subbing for 4 games he will receive a 6th round choice, for subbing for 6 games he will receive a 5th round choice and for subbing for 8 games a he will receive a 4th round choice

PLAYOFFS FORMAT
Playoff games will be played:

- for the European Conference by the first classified team in each Division plus the best 3 remaining teams. Seeding will be the following:
  1. Division winner with best record
  2. Division winner with worst record
  3. 2nd classified with best record
  4. best record among remaining teams
  5. 2nd best record among remaining teams

  Wild Card Game: 4 vs. 5 (4 at Home)
  Divisional Playoffs: 1 vs. Wild Card Game winner (1 at Home); 2 vs. 3 (2 at Home)
  Conference Championships: Divisional playoff winners (best seed at Home)

- for the American Conference by the first classified team in each Division plus the best 3 remaining teams. Seeding will be the following:
  1. Division winner with best record
  2. Division winner with 2nd best record
  3. Division winner with worst record
  4. 2nd classified with best record
  5. best record among remaining teams
  6. 2nd best record among remaining teams

  Wild Card Games: 3 vs. 6 (3 at Home); 4 vs. 5 (4 at Home)
  Divisional Playoffs: 1 vs. worst seeded Wild Card Game winner (1 at Home); 2 vs. best seeded Wild Card Game winner (2 at Home)
  Conference Championships: Divisional playoff winners (best seed at Home)

ITAFL Bowl: Championship winners (neutral venue, the same that hosted the NFL Superbowl in any given year)

See also Playoff Tie Breaking Procedures later on.

TEAMS, CITIES, STADIUMS AND NICKNAMES

Teams are composed by players chosen during the draft or obtained through trades. Each franchise chooses a hometown and a Stadium among those available in the current Action PC Edition database. Each coach will assign to his team a nickname using common sense; the Commissioner shall use veto power to deny vulgar names or anyway considered improper for a Football team.

LEAGUE SETTINGS

Kickoff Line: 35 yds
Goalpost location: Endline
Field Goal Miss Line: Kick Spot
Ball Spot After End Zone Kickoff: 25 yds
Ball Spot After End Zone Punt or Defensive Recoveries: 20 yds
Audibles: 3/half
Replay Challenges: 2
Rules Year: 2017
Season Length: 16 (Playoff Bracket will be used to manage the post-season)
Minutes/Quarter: 15 Minutes
Homefield Advantage: 2 for all Stadiums, 3 during playoff games
Two-point conversions: on
Ten Minute Ticker: off
High School Rules: off
Play Overtime: on
Allow QB Ball Spikes: on
Allow QB Kneels: on
Display Offense Pre-Play Analysis: off
Include League Records in All-time Record Book: off
Penalties: 20% Fewer
Multi-Game Injuries: Realistic Frequency
Limit Games Missed to Real Life Total: yes
Pre-Set Injuries: off
Postgame Injuries: on
Partial Game Injuries: 20% Fewer
Temporary Game Fatigue: 20% Fewer
Pro Overtime (season): Modified Sudden Death
Pro Overtime (playoffs): Modified Sudden Death
League Type: Draft League
Alternate Reality: off
Internet Play Clock: on (offense and defense), 45 seconds
Game Era: Standard Off/Def Blend
Use Salary Cap: on, $118M
Season Usage Penalties: on, Mild = 105%, Moderate = 110%, Major=115%; Season Usage penalties will still carry-over into Playoffs; non-Wild Card team players will be rested during Week #17 (bye week)
Special Teams Usage Penalties: on
Season Usage Exemptions: None
Game Usage Penalties: on, Mild = 15%, Moderate = 25%, Major = 35%
Game Usage Exemptions: None
Allow all QB's 20 attempts before game usage penalties apply: on
Allow all RB's 5 attempts before game usage penalties apply: off
Allow all Receivers 3 catches before game usage penalties apply: off

GAME PREFERENCES

Coaches may freely decide their own Game Preferences settings with the following exceptions:

- Play by Play speed should be quite fast to avoid unnecessary delays in the game flow;
- Weather Conditions even if extreme must be accepted as randomly determined by the computer without any changes;
- Play Clock has to be checked and set to 45 seconds for Offense and Defense if necessary;
- Video Speed should be realistic and in any cases fast enough to avoid unnecessary delays in the game flow.

ROSTERS

After the draft each team will have a 53-men roster with the following minimum limits at each position:

- 3 quarterbacks
- 2 running backs
- 1 fullback (3/2 blocking value or better to qualify as a FB)
- 2 tight ends
- 4 wide receivers
- 2 centers
- 3 offensive guards
- 3 offensive tackles
- 3 defensive ends
- 2/3 defensive tackles (2 for 3-4 basic defense, 3 for 4-3)
- 2/3 inside linebackers (2 for 4-3 basic defense, 3 for 3-4)
- 3 outside linebackers
- 4 cornerbacks
- 3 safeties
- 1 kicker
- 1 punter
- 1 punt returner
- 3 kickoff returners
- 1 long snapper
- 1 holder

Each player can cover only 1 position even if he can play multiple roles (exceptions: returners, holder, long snapper).

IR LIST

Before the start of the new season, the Commissioner will send a list of players who were on one team's roster the season before and are not in the League data for the upcoming season. Every owner can decide to keep a maximum of two players from that list; the players chosen will be put on team's IR List. A coach can put on IR list only players who are on this list and were on his team roster the year before. Then, the following year, every coach can decide to activate that player, keep him for another year on IR list or cut him. The player can stay on IR list a maximum of two years. Every player who is not on IR list and play again next year will be available in the veteran player's draft.

Players on IR list will not count against the 53 men roster and against the salary cap.

LTIL LIST

Each team can put 2 player on a "Long Term Injury List" (LTIL) before season starts. The first player will not count towards salary cap and towards the 53 man roster; the second player will have a $350 salary and will be a part of the 53 man roster. To qualify as a LTIL candidate, a player

- must been include on an ITAFL data on that year

and

- must haven't played more than 3 games.

Players can remain in the LTIL for 1 year only, then they have to be active for next season or eventually cut.
The IR list and the LTIL are two different list.

SALARY CAPS

Salary cap is fixed at <u>118 M$</u>. At least <u>36</u> players must have a salary greater than minimum (350K$)
Salary for starters cannot exceed <u>87 M$</u>.
To assess Starters salary cap the most expensive combination of players will be considered (i.e. the highest total salary) among following lineups:

Offense:
- OC + 2 OG + 2 OT + QB
- Skill players:
    1. RB + FB + 2 WR + TE
    2. RB + 2 WR + 2 TE
    3. RB + FB + WR + 2 TE
    4. RB + FB + 3 WR
    5. RB + TE + 3 WR
    6. RB + RB + 2 WR + TE
    7. RB + RB + WR + 2 TE
    8. RB + RB + 3 WR
    - FB = RB or HB with at least 3/2 blocking value
    - TEs can be substituted by HBs
Defense:
    1. 4-3 defense: 2 DE + 2 DT + ILB + 2 OLB + 2 CB + 2 S
    2. 3-4 defense: 2 DE + 1 DT + 2 ILB + 2 OLB + 2 CB + 2 S

Only the Technical Board can change one or both salary caps

FREE AGENTS DURING THE SEASON

Free agents won't be available during season with the following exceptions:
- if a franchise has only 1 active QB before playing a game, his coach has to make the situation known to the Commissioner before publication of the updated league files and get a free agent QB whose salary would not exceed the one of his 3rd QB.
- the same concept is applicable to a team which loses its only K or P. Free agent salary would not exceed the one of the injured player.
As soon as the injured player becomes available again, the coach will have to immediately cut the Free Agent. If the injury is a season-ending one, the coach will keep the Free Agent till the end of the season and then discard him before next draft.

INJURY STATUS

Commissioner will adjust Injury status for players injured for more games than their DUR rating.
Example: a QB was available in the NFL on all games but 2 and so has DUR=9 but played only in few games (say 5). After 3 appearances in first 3 games in the ITAFL, that QB gets injured for 11 games. This injury will be automatically reduced to 2 games (the ones where player was not available), so to really have DUR=9 as expected. Unavailability of the player during the game in which he gets injured will be considered as a normal in-game injury.
Coaches are encouraged to promptly point out these situations to the Commissioner when these events occur.

CHANGING PLAYERS' STATUS TO N/A

Coaches may ask the Commissioner to force N/A status for key players they want to protect from injuries in the late stages of the regular season.

This has to be done before the release of a new set of League files and only when at least one of the following conditions is met:

- team has already clinched a playoff spot
- season is entering Week 14/15/16

Once flagged as N/A, players can't be used during that Week.

Status of players has to be confirmed week-by-week; without specific instructions their status will be reverted to "available".

COA FILES

Coaches are required to provide a COA file before season start. They can send updated COA files during the season and the playoffs that will be loaded before subsequent League fileset release.

However these COA files can't change players' status (N/A vs. available).

DRAFTS AND TRADES

Trade period will be open in September.

Trades will be allowed till end of December (before season start). Then trades will not be allowed anymore till next year's Trade period.

Trades can involve players and draft picks for the current year's draft only, even during the draft itself (picks during current draft day can't be traded anymore, only future picks are tradeable).

The Commissioner may use his veto power to void manifestly unbalanced trades. In case the Commissioner is involved in the trade, the Deputy Commissioner may void the trade.

Rookie Draft will take place in September, FA Draft will start soon after. Time slots will be used (1 pick per day). Coaches shall post their picks on Google Spreadsheet. A Draft Tracker will be maintained and daily League files will be issued.

Draft order will be the following:

- Determination of Draft order is based on the record and playoff finish by each team in that year.
- For the teams that did not make the playoffs, order is determined by overall season record, with the worst record picking first.
- For the teams that made the playoffs, the rest of the picks are ordered by playoff record, with the teams that lose getting lower picks based on which round they were ousted and the Super Bowl winner getting the last pick.
- For the playoff teams that got eliminated in the same round, their order is determined by regular season record.
- Overall ties are then broken by strength of schedule, which is a calculation of the combined record of all of a team's opponents in that year, with divisional opponents counting twice.
- The next tie breaker would be record against conference opponents and then divisional opponents.
- Coin flip will occur if tie still exists
- The order will be the same in every round, with the team that picked first which will have the first pick through all the draft.
- If there is an expansion team, that team will pick first, and if there are two expansion teams, they will flip a coin with one team getting the first pick in the draft and the other in the expansion draft of current players.

ROOKIE DRAFT

A 1-round Rookie Draft will be held immediately before the FA Draft.

Draft order will be the one defined above. Draft picks will not be tradeable.

Eligible players are those drafted in April NFL Draft.

The players drafted will become active during the following season and their salary <u>will be 2/3 of original DK salary for their first season with a minimum of 350K$</u>.

Starting from their second season they will be fully paid as all the other players.

Drafted Rookies can be traded only when they become active.

CUTS AND FA DRAFT

At the cuts deadline prior to the FA Draft, owners will have to cut their roster down to a minimum of 18 players while there is not a maximum. No more cuts will be allowed before the start of the draft where it will allowed to drop up to three players.

Once a player is cut he won't be treadable by his former team

Starters' and total salary caps must not be exceeded from this event till end of the season.

The FA Draft will consist of enough rounds to complete 53-men rosters for all the teams.

There will be 1 round per day for first 32 rounds, then multiple rounds per day to wrap up the draft.

A pick/trade shall be made void if salary caps would be exceeded (both the starters' and the total cap) or minimum number of players with salary >350K$ could not be reached anymore due to that pick/trade.

Every rounds will have the same draft order (no serpentine draft).

Up to 3 players can be dropped during the FA draft. A player dropped will be available in the FA pool the next round. Drop(s) must be announced together with a pick. Extra rounds will be added to allow the teams to fill up their rosters to 53 players.

In the same fashion, in case of unbalanced "players vs picks" trades, extra picks will be added or later picks will be eliminated.

<u>Picks which could prevent a team from having a legal roster will be voided and anyway Rosters must be legal at the end of the draft as there will be no "pick & drop" rounds after completion of draft.</u>

TIE BREAKING PROCEDURES - PLAYOFFS

TO BREAK A TIE WITHIN A DIVISION

If, at the end of the regular season, two or more clubs in the same division finish with identical won-lost-tied percentages, the following steps will be taken until a champion is determined.

Two Clubs

1. Head-to-head (best won-lost-tied percentage in games between the clubs).
2. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the division.
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games.
4. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
5. Strength of victory.
6. Strength of schedule.
7. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed.
8. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed.
9. Best net points in common games.
10. Best net points in all games.
11. Best net touchdowns in all games.
12. Coin toss

Three or More Clubs

(Note: If two clubs remain tied after third or other clubs are eliminated during any step, tie breaker reverts to step 1 of the two-club format).

1. Head-to-head (best won-lost-tied percentage in games among the clubs).
2. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the division.
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games.
4. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
5. Strength of victory.
6. Strength of schedule.
7. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed.
8. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed.
9. Best net points in common games.
10. Best net points in all games.
11. Best net touchdowns in all games.
12. Coin toss

TO BREAK A TIE FOR THE WILD-CARD TEAM

If it is necessary to break ties to determine the two Wild-Card clubs from each conference, the following steps will be taken.

1. If the tied clubs are from the same division, apply division tie breaker.
2. If the tied clubs are from different divisions, apply the following steps.

Two Clubs

1. Head-to-head, if applicable.
2. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games, minimum of four.
4. Strength of victory.
5. Strength of schedule.
6. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed.
7. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed.
8. Best net points in conference games.
9. Best net points in all games.
10. Best net touchdowns in all games.
11. Coin toss.

Three or More Clubs

(Note: If two clubs remain tied after third or other clubs are eliminated, tie breaker reverts to step 1 of applicable two-club format.)

1. Apply division tie breaker to eliminate all but the highest ranked club in each division prior to proceeding to step 2. The original seeding within a division upon application of the division tie breaker remains the same for all subsequent applications of the procedure that are necessary to identify the two Wild-Card participants.
2. Head-to-head sweep. (Applicable only if one club has defeated each of the others or if one club has lost to each of the others.)
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
4. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games, minimum of four.
5. Strength of victory.
6. Strength of schedule.
7. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed.
8. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed.
9. Best net points in conference games.
10. Best net points in all games.
11. Best net touchdowns in all games.
12. Coin toss

When the first Wild-Card team has been identified, the procedure is repeated to name the second Wild-Card, i.e., eliminate all but the highest-ranked club in each division prior to proceeding to step 2. In situations where three or more teams from the same division are involved in the procedure, the original seeding of the teams remains the same for subsequent applications of the tie breaker if the top-ranked team in that division qualifies for a Wild-Card berth.

DETERMINING HOME-FIELD PRIORITY
1. To determine home-field priority among division titlists, apply Wild-Card tie breakers.
2. To determine home-field priority for Wild-Card qualifiers, apply division tie breakers (if teams are from the same division) or Wild-Card tie breakers (if teams are from different divisions).

TIE BREAKING PROCEDURES – DRAFTS

Rules for determining draft order

The selection order is based on each team's win-loss record in the previous season and whether the team reached the playoffs. Teams that did not reach the playoffs the previous season are ranked in reverse order of their records (thus the team with the fewest wins is awarded the first selection). Ties between teams with identical records are determined by the following tiebreakers (in order):

1. Strength of schedule, which is the combined win-loss record for all 16 of the team's opponents in the previous season (ties count as a half win and half loss). The team with the lower strength of schedule (i.e. their opponents compiled fewer wins) is granted the earlier pick in round one.
2. If the teams are in the same division, the other playoff tiebreakers will be applied in the specified order.
3. If the teams are in the same conference, the other playoff tiebreakers will be applied in the specified order.
4. Coin flip(s).

Teams that reached the playoffs the previous season are then slotted in the order in which they were eliminated as indicated in the table below. Within each tier, the slotting is determined as above (i.e. worst record picks first and the same tiebreakers apply).

Status	Draft picks
Non-playoff teams	1–11
Eliminated in Wild Card round	12–14
Eliminated in Divisional round	15–18
Conference runners-up	19–20
Super Bowl runner-up	21
Super Bowl champion	22

Once the order for the first round is determined as described above, the selection order remains the same for subsequent rounds with the exception of teams with identical records within their tier. These tied teams "cycle" picks in each subsequent round.

An exception to this ordering strategy occurs when new "expansion teams" are added to the league. Any expansion team is automatically granted the first selection; if there are two or more expansion teams added, a coin toss (for two expansion teams) or a drawing of lots (for three expansion teams or more) determines which team is awarded the first selection in the regular draft. The winner of the coin toss (or of the drawing of lots in the event there are three or more expansion teams) is awarded the first selection in the expansion draft.

COMPLAINTS, SANCTIONS AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Every League member may send to the Commissioner a written complaint if he thinks an opponent deliberately damaged him. However all coaches should try to speak each other and solve emerging problems with a gentleman agreement before writing an official complaint.

The Commissioner shall examine the facts, contact the counterpart(s) if needed asking to account for the charge and then decide whether to accept the complaint or to reject it..

If the complaint is related to a specific game the Commissioner could simply issue a warning to the guilty coach (without further consequences), ask for a game repetition or assign the win to the damaged coach. Accessory sanctions could be an official warning to the defaulting coach, a loss of draft picks or in case of severe or repeated faults even his removal from the League.

Possible causes of sanctions could be: negligence in organizing a match, unresponsiveness to received messages, delayed dispatch of game result files, lack of respect for the opponent, personal attacks to other coaches, unsportsmanlike conduct during a game or during other League activities.

In particular running up the score and moaning about misfortune or otherwise bothering the winning coach with complaint messages are considered poor sportsman conducts and should be absolutely avoided. Of course a single case would not be considered as offensive, but a similar repeated conduct reported by different opponent coaches shall be sanctioned. Remember that the aim of ITAFL is to be an enjoying hobby and not a cause for frustration and anger.

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENTS

For all situations not explicitly covered by the above rules, a gentlemen's agreement is strongly encouraged to solve the problems. As a last resort the Commissioner will decide if the parts can't find this kind of agreement. And now the most important rule: HAVE FUN!