

Flag Football

Play/Rules default to NIRSA Flag Football rules in regards to any situation not listed below:

I. AREA OF PLAY

A. THE FIELD

1. The field shall be 100 yards long by 40 yards wide. The length of the field shall be divided into four 20-yard zones and two 10-yard end zones.
2. The 3-yard and 10-yard scoring lines shall be marked with a line.
3. The 14-yard First Possession line shall be marked with an X.

II. PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTIONS

A. The Players

1. Men's & Women's Games
 - a. Each team will play with no more than seven (7) players on the field at once.
 - b. The minimum number of players required to start and continue a game is five (5).
2. Co-Rec Games
 - a. Each team will play with no more than eight (8) players on the field at once, with an equal (4) men and (4) women ready to play.
 - b. The minimum number of players required to start is six (6), with an equal three (3) Men and three (3) Women ready to play.
 - c. Teams with seven (7) players will have an open option to fill the odd player position, as long as there are at least three (3) Men and three (3) Women (i.e. 3 & 3 + 1).
3. The maximum number of players any team roster may have is 15.
 - a. A team with the minimum amount of players or more must play or the forfeit procedure will go into effect.
 - b. During the course of the game, if a team drops below the minimum players that team will receive the loss according to team misconduct scoring rules.
 - c. If an injury results in a team dropping below the minimum number of players, play will stop and a standard loss will be recorded.
 - d. These rules will be applied regardless of game score at the time of incident.

- B. There will be no limit to the number of substitutions a team can make, providing each substitute remains in the game for at least one play and the substitution does not delay the game.

PENALTY: Illegal Participation, 10 yards

III. EQUIPMENT

A. Player Equipment

1. Any player intentionally violating these equipment rules will receive an unsportsmanlike penalty towards the player. Unintentional violation of these equipment requirements will result in one team warning, followed by a team unsportsmanlike penalty.
2. Players may not participate with equipment that the Intramural Staff deems to be dangerous to other participants. Hard cast, metal or plastic braces, hats and jewelry of any type are examples of illegal equipment. ALL visible body piercing must be removed.
 - a. Bracelets may be taped twice around the wrist. Players must provide their own tape.
3. Players must wear athletic type shorts/pants. These shorts/pants must not have pockets, pouches, loops, belts, zips, zippers, clips, buckles, buttons, or snaps. Torn shorts/pants may not be worn during play.
4. Jerseys/Shirts
 - a. In order to play teams must wear shirts of identical color and shade/tone.
 - b. In the event two teams arrive wearing the same color and are unable to switch to a different color, jerseys will be made available.
 - c. There are no shirts/jerseys available for check out.
- d. Player Numbers
 1. All shirts/jerseys must have legible numbers on at least one side (back or front of shirt) that is a contrasting color to the shirt color and must be legible from a distance of 6 feet.

2. Numbers must be permanent on the shirt in a non-fading medium such as marker or paint. A marker will not be provided. Taped on numbers are not allowed.
 3. Teammates will not share the same shirt/jersey number.
 4. If a player is #0 then that number must appear on the jersey. There can only be one version of #0 per team (i.e. #0, #00, #000, etc.)
 5. Triple digit numbers, or anything greater, are not allowed.
5. Shoes
- a. Each player must wear athletic shoes. They must be made of soft, pliable material that covers the entire foot.
 - b. Any exposed metal or other dangerous material will not be allowed.
 - c. Tennis shoes and molded plastic cleats are acceptable.
6. Players may wear gloves consisting of soft, pliable and nonabrasive material.
7. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap (without ball/knot at top), headbands, or hair bands. Hats with bills are prohibited.
- B. Game Ball
1. A game ball will be made available by Intramural Staff.
 2. Teams may choose to use their own ball of regulation size once approved by intramural staff.
 3. The Offense will accept full responsibility for the ball.
 - a. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after each play from scrimmage, as well as providing the ball for each new offensive series.
 - b. The game/play clock will not stop to retrieve any ball thrown/batted/knocked out of play.
 - c. Officials are not required to retrieve any football.
 4. Regulation Ball
 - a. Men's Game: a full size, NFHS or NCAA regulation ball
 - b. Women's or Co-Rec Game: no smaller than a Youth size ball; a larger ball may be used

IV. TIMING

- A. Delay Time - Once at the scheduled game time:
1. If a team does not have any players present at game time, the game will be declared a forfeit without the Delay Time procedure.
 2. If a team does not have five (5) players signed in at game time, that team will be given 10-minutes to have five players sign in before the game is declared a forfeit.
 3. If neither team has five players signed in, both teams shall have 10-minutes to have five players sign in before the game is declared a forfeit or double forfeit.
 4. Time used to wait for the minimum number of players will be off the game clock and delaying teams will receive a Sportsmanship Deduction for delaying the start of the game. The first team ready to play will receive two (2) points for every minute (rounded up) that the game is delayed (up to the end of the Delay Time period). Teams may use their allotted timeouts to save the delay time penalty, but this will not prolong the amount of time until a forfeit is declared.
 - a. One team ready to play: Team A has enough players at game time and Team B's fifth player signs in with 13:18 remaining in the first half. Team A will start the game with a 14-0 lead.
 - b. Neither team ready to play: Team A's fifth player signs in with 16:00 on the clock, and Team B's fifth signs in with 12:15 left on the clock. Team A will start the game 8-0 with 12:08 remaining in the first half.
 5. The clock will not stop to have players sign in, and game play must begin before the 10-minute period has been completed. Once all teams are ready, the ball will be put into play in accordance with the Start of Game rules.
 6. A forfeit will be recorded as a win for the team ready to play and any points accumulated will be the final score.
 7. Any game forfeit for team misconduct will be scored as 20 points, or the current point total over 20 (whichever is more), for the winning team and zero points for the losing team.
- B. Game Timing:
1. The game will consist of two- 20 minute halves.
 2. The First Half will have a continuously running clock.

3. The last two-minutes of only the Second Half will continue under a regularly stopped-clock for all dead-ball situations.
 - a. Dead ball, stopped clock situations include:
 1. Out of bounds
 2. Incomplete pass
 3. Change of possession
 4. Touchdown; the Point After Try will be un-timed.
 - b. During live ball situations, the clock may be stopped long enough for the administration of a first down, a penalty, or for ball placement (i.e. moving the chains). The Game & Play Clock will begin when the ball is ready for play.
4. There will be three (3) minutes between halves.
5. There will be three (3) 60-second time-outs per game.
6. There will be a play clock of 25-seconds.
7. Overtime:
 - a. Regular season games will not have an overtime period; tied games will remain a tie.
 - b. Overtime for tournament games will not be timed, but will consist of a series of plays.

V. SCORING

A. Point Values

1. Touchdown - 6 points
2. Touchdown, Co-Rec with woman involved - 9 points
 - a. Involvement includes: Throwing the pass, receiving the pass, or running the ball into the end zone.
3. Point After Try (P.A.T.)
 - a. 3-yard line – 1 point
 - b. 10-yard line – 2 points
 - c. 20-yard line – 3 points
4. Safety - 2 points

B. Mercy Rule: If any team gains a point differential matching the outlined criteria, the game will be ended once the losing team loses possession:

1. 35-points or more at any time in the Second Half or at the end of the First Half
2. 19-points or more at any time during the last 2-minutes of the Second Half
 - a. Co-Rec Mercy Rule will be 25 points in the last two minutes of the second half.

VI. START AND RESTART OF PLAY

A. Start of Game

1. A coin toss or Rock-Paper-Scissors will occur during the Captain's Meeting before the game and before the first Overtime period. The team designated as the Visiting Team will make the call during the coin toss.
2. The winning captain shall have a choice of three options:
 - a. To choose to start with the ball
 - b. To choose which half of the field to start on
 - c. To defer their choice to the start of the second half
3. The captain not having the first choice shall choose from the remaining option(s). To "Defer" will not be a valid option for this captain.

B. After a Point After Try and safeties, unless moved by penalty, the opponents of the scoring team shall receive the ball at the First Possession Line.

C. Overtime

1. The first overtime phase will begin with a coin toss, as was done to start the game. The winning captain shall choose either Offense or Defense first. There is no second option.
2. Possession will alternate for each overtime period based on the initial selection.
3. The goal chosen by the officials will be the goal used for all overtime periods.
4. Each team will start First and Goal from the 10-yard line, with an equal number of possessions.
5. For Overtime Periods 1 & 2, each team will have 4 downs to score.
6. Starting with Overtime Period 3, and continuing until a winner is chosen, overtimes will be played using a Sudden Death procedure based on the number of plays required to score. EXAMPLE: Team A starts on offense is able to score on their 3rd down, Team B then must

- score on their 1st or 2nd down to win. If Team B scores on their 3rd down, the game will continue in a tie and the Sudden Death procedure will be repeated.
7. If a penalty is assessed against the Defense that results in an automatic first down for the Offense, the play count will reset.
 8. The Defense may intercept/recover an airborne fumble and return it for a touchdown. If not returned for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the appropriate starting yard line to begin the next series.
 9. Each team will receive one time-out per overtime period. Time-outs will not carry over from regulation play, or to succeeding Overtime Periods.

VII. BALL IN & OUT OF PLAY

- A. Dead Ball: The ball is dead when:
 1. The ball freely falls to the ground.
 2. An opponent legally flags the ball carrier.
 3. Any part of the ball carrier touches the ground, other than the ball carrier's hands and feet (the ball is considered an extension of the hand).
 4. The ball goes out of bounds.
 5. A touchdown, P.A.T., or safety occurs.
 6. On a fumble
 7. The snap from center touches the ground before being caught by a player.
 8. Any pass falls incomplete.
 9. The referee rules the ball "not in play".
- B. First Downs
 1. A first down shall be awarded when a team crosses the next appropriate zone line to gain.
 2. A team has four downs to attain a first down.
 3. If the offensive team's possession is in a zone behind the original zone, either by penalty or loss of yardage, a first down will be established by crossing the original zone line to gain.
- C. Punts:
 1. The Offense may declare a punt on any down. Once this decision is announced, the decision may not be changed unless a time-out or a penalty is called. There are no fake punts. PENALTY: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.
 2. Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee will ask the offense, and reciprocate the decision to the defense, if they will:
 - a. Punt
 - b. Attempt play for a first down
 3. Line of scrimmage rules regarding the snap, encroachment, false start, formation, motion, and shift apply to a punt formation.
 4. The ball must be snapped to the punter.
 5. Players may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked. PENALTY: Illegal procedure, 5-yards from the previous spot.
 6. After receiving the snap, the punter must kick the ball immediately in a continuous motion across the line of scrimmage. PENALTY: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.
 7. If a punt is bobbled, the ball is live as long as it remains in the air and may be advanced by either team once caught. If the ball is uncaught, possession will belong to the offense at the spot the ball lands.
 8. If the punt falls to the ground without being touched, the play will remain live. Only the receiving team will have the opportunity to advance the ball. The kicking team will only have the opportunity to down the ball and end the play.
 9. While a kick is in flight, no kicking team member may touch the ball or obstruct a receiver's attempt to catch the kick in flight. PENALTY: Kick Catch Interference, 5 yards.
 10. If the receiver shows no intention to catch a punt, a kicking team member may attempt to catch or deflect a kicked ball. Any kicked ball may be deflected parallel to or away from the kicking team's scoring end zone. Deflection toward the kicking team's scoring end zone will result in the ball being placed where it was originally touched.
- D. Touchback: unless moved by penalty the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 14-yard line. A touchback occurs when:
 1. A punted ball is kicked into the end zone or touches the goal line.

2. A defender who intercepts a forward pass in the field of play and downs the ball in the end zone (momentum rule may apply)
3. A forward fumble, by the offense, that lands in the end zone. Possession will be given to the defense.

VIII. GENERAL GAME INFORMATION:

A. Offensive Line of Scrimmage:

1. The offensive line of scrimmage (LOS) will be marked with an orange spot and will represent the result of the previous play or penalty.
2. The offense must be set a full second before the ball is snapped. The only movement allowed after being set before the snap is a legal player in motion. PENALTY: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards (movement must be a simulation of play)
3. The quarterback must be two or more yards behind the center, and receive an airborne snap. PENALTY: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.
4. One player may be in motion, parallel to and behind the LOS, at the time of the snap. PENALTY: Illegal Motion, 5 yards.
5. The snapper is the only player required on the LOS. There are no other restrictions to this rule.
6. If an offense wishes to shift multiple players, all players must be set a full second before the ball is snapped. PENALTY: Illegal Shift, 5 yards.
7. If an Offensive player lines up in the neutral zone, on the snap the play will be called dead and the offense will be penalized. PENALTY: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards
8. The center may snap the ball between his/her legs or off to the side. The center may adjust the ball once prior to the snap but must remain behind the offensive line of scrimmage. The snap must leave the snapper's hands with a quick and continuous motion. PENALTY: Illegal Snap, 5 yards.

B. Defensive Line of Scrimmage:

1. The defensive line of scrimmage (LOS) shall be one-yard from the offensive LOS and marked with a yellow spot, thereby establishing a neutral zone. The defensive LOS may extend into the end zone.
2. All defensive players must start behind the defensive LOS at all times. Defensive players may not enter the neutral zone at any time before the snap. PENALTY: Encroachment, 5 yards.

C. De-Flagging an Opponent

1. An offensive player is considered "down" when a Defensive player pulls the ball carrier's flag belt. The spot of the end of the play is the location of the ball at the time of the de-flagging.
2. Anytime a player carrying the ball has inadvertently lost his flags, the player may continue to advance the ball until touched anywhere below the shoulders with one hand, or until the official blows his whistle.
3. Flag pulling of a player without the ball is prohibited and constitutes un-sportsmanlike conduct, and may result in player ejection from the game.
4. An opponent shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt. PENALTY: Defensive Holding, 10 yards.
5. Physically tackling any participant will result in a player ejection. PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards, Player Ejection.

D. Running With The Ball

1. Any player with possession after a legal snap may advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. CoRec Rule: A Male runner may not advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage Illegal Advancement, 5 yards.
2. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
3. Spinning/jumping/diving is allowed provided contact, or potential contact, does not occur. PENALTY: Personal Foul, 10 yards.
 - a. If contact does occur, the diving player is responsible for the penalty.
4. Runners shall not prevent or deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. PENALTY: Flag guarding, 10 yards. Examples are:
 - a. Placing or swinging the hand/arm over the flag belt
 - b. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
 - c. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which covers the flag belt

- d. Obstructing the flag belt with any part of the player's equipment (i.e. shirt or ball)
- 5. Runners shall not contact an opponent with an extended hand/arm, or otherwise purposefully contact an opponent. A runner must avoid contact with all defenders.
- 6. The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate.
PENALTY: Help the Runner, 5 yards.

E. Passing

- 1. All players are eligible to catch a pass.
- 2. All forward passes must be attempted on or behind the offensive line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass is allowed per down.
 - a. It is a forward pass from beyond the line of scrimmage if any part of the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is released. The penalty for a forward pass thrown from beyond the line is enforced from the spot where the ball is released.
- 3. An offensive player, who runs out of bounds before a forward pass is thrown and without influence from a defender, loses eligibility to catch any forward pass.
- 4. In the event of a simultaneous catch, the offense retains possession the ball.
- 5. A pass is complete if the receiver has control of the ball and at least one foot is in bounds. If the receiver is in the air and pushed out of bounds by a defender, it shall be ruled a completed pass and illegal contact on the defense.
- 6. If a passer has started his forward arm motion it is considered a legal pass even if his/her flag is removed during the motion. If the ball is not released, the offensive player will be considered down.
- 7. Defensive players shall not contact, nor force another player to contact, the passer at any time. Inadvertent contact is defined at the official's discretion. PENALTY: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, Automatic First Down.
- 8. The defensive team may advance all interceptions.
- 9. If the quarterback, before the initial pass, crosses the offensive line of scrimmage, he/she may return to the backfield to throw the initial pass as long as his/her entire body is behind the line of scrimmage.

10. Co-Rec Passing: Open & Closed Plays

- a. An Open Play will allow any player to be allowed to complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
- b. A Closed Play will require positive yards to be gained while including a female player in the movement of the ball (i.e. female passer, female runner, female receiver). The spot where the ball becomes dead by Rule must be beyond the offensive scrimmage line.
- c. There shall not be two consecutive plays, wherein a male player completes a legal forward pass to another male player. This rule will apply to the Point After Try. PENALTY: Illegal Forward Pass, 10 yards, Loss of Down
- d. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next play will be designated Open or Closed.
- e. A pass caught jointly by a male and female is considered a female catch.

F. Blocking/Rushing

- 1. All blocking, either at the line of scrimmage or down field, must be a screen block or "non-contact block". The initial position of a blocker determines the point of reference for any penalty.
- 2. A screen block shall take place without contact. Use of a player's hands/arms/legs to assist in blocking, thereby initiating contact with a rushing player, will result in a penalty. PENALTY: Illegal Contact 10 yards (Exception: A blocker may use his hands or arms to break a fall or to retain balance)
- 3. Defensive players must go around an offensive player's screen block without initiating contact. PENALTY: Illegal Contact 10 yards (Exception: A rushing player may use his hands or arms to break a fall or to retain balance)
- 4. Downfield blocking is **Legal** if no contact is initiated by the offensive player. A blocker does not need to be set if no contact is made.

IX. SUMMARY OF PENALTIES: (LOD: Loss Of Down, AFD: Automatic First Down)

A. LOSS OF 5 YARDS:

- 1. Delay of game

2. Putting the ball in play before declared ready
 3. Illegal snap
 4. Illegal offensive formation
 5. Illegal motion
 6. False start
 7. Encroachment by the defense
 8. Illegal forward pass (LOD)
 9. Illegal kick
 10. Illegal shift
 11. Illegal kick formation
 12. Helping the runner
 13. Illegal advancement
- B. LOSS OF 10 YARDS:
1. Striking, kicking, kneeing, elbowing, etc.
 2. Illegal Participation.
 3. Hurdling.
 4. Tripping.
 5. Running into opponent.
 6. Clipping.
 7. Holding by the defense.
 8. Offensive illegal contact
 9. Flag guarding.
 10. Illegal removal of flag.
 11. Obstructing ball carrier.
 12. Offensive pass interference
 13. Defensive pass interference
 14. Roughing the passer (AFD)
 15. Illegally secured belt on touchdown (includes LOD)
 16. Kick catch interference.
 17. Stripping or batting the ball from the player in control.
 18. 10 yards- Un-sportsmanlike behavior/language
 - a. Any player receiving two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties will be disqualified from the game.
 - b. Teams receiving a total of three (3) unsportsmanlike penalties during one game will forfeit the game.