



CAMPUS RECREATION

INTRAMURAL SPORTS

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Updated: 06/16

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The field is 80 yards long by 40 yards wide plus 10 yard long end zones. The playing area is divided into four, 20-yard zones indicated by line of gain markings drawn across the width of the playing field.
- 1.2 Team areas are located 3 yards behind the sideline and between the 20 yard lines.
- 1.3 Key to abbreviations: POI = Point of Infraction; LOS = Line of Scrimmage; PAT = Point After Touchdown.
- 1.4 Rosters are now managed online and freeze at the end of the regular season.
- 1.5 A player must play in at least **one** of his/her team's regular season games to be eligible for tournament play. He/she can only play for one team for the entire season.
- 1.6 Both teams field 7 players (play is 7 vs. 7). A team must field at least five players to begin a game. A team automatically forfeits when they can only field four or less players.
- 1.7 A first down is earned when the offensive team moves the ball across the appropriate line of gain in four downs or less.
- 1.8 A coin toss precedes each game.
 - 1.8a The visiting team (listed on the left side of the schedule) calls the coin flip.
 - 1.8b The winner of the toss has the choice of playing offense, or playing defense first to begin the game.
 - 1.8c Deferring the toss is not an option.
- 1.9 The ball is placed at the 14 yard line to begin each half and after all PAT attempts for the new offensive team.

2. OFFENSE

- 2.1 The offense must put the ball in play within 25 seconds of the ready for play whistle. **Penalty – Delay of Game: play is dead, 5 yards from LOS, repeat down.**
- 2.2 **The offense only needs 1 player on their line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped** (a player in motion is not considered on the line of scrimmage).
Penalty – Illegal Formation: play continues, 5 yards from LOS, repeat down.
- 2.3 Snaps may be taken either between the center's legs or to the side of the player. A snap that hits the ground is dead at the spot.
- 2.4 Unlimited number of laterals, pitches, and hand-offs permitted anywhere on the field. **Penalty – Illegal Forward Pass: play continues, 5 yards from the POI, loss of down (next down).**
- 2.5 All offensive players are eligible receivers.
- 2.6 A player must land with the **FIRST** foot in bounds and control of the football for a legal catch. A player who straddles or touches a sideline or end line is out of bounds. A player who is

kneeling (on one or both knees), sitting or lying on the field of play may legally catch a pass as long as no body part is out of bounds.

- 2.7 An offensive player who steps out of bounds may not touch or catch a pass. **Penalty – Illegal Participation: play continues, 10 yards from the LOS, repeat down.**
- 2.8 Offensive Pass Interference. **Penalty – Offensive Pass Interference: play continues, 10 yards from LOS, loss of down.**
- 2.9 A ball carrier may not stiff arm, slap at, or push away any defender; shield his/her flag belt in any manner. **Penalty – Flag Guarding: play continues, 10 yards from the POI.**
- 2.10 A ball carrier that touches the ground with any body part other than a hand or foot is immediately down at that spot.
- 2.11 A ball carrier must attempt to avoid contact with a stationary defender. Illegal Contact occurs when a ball carrier intentionally runs into a stationary defender. Accidental brushing or minimal, unavoidable contact is not considered a penalty. **Penalty – Illegal Contact: play continues, 10 yard loss from the POI.**
- 2.12 A ball carrier may not hurdle a player anywhere on the field. A ball carrier who initiates contact with a defender who has established position prior to the hurdle/jump is penalized for illegal contact. **Penalty – Illegal Contact: play continues, 10 yard loss from the POI.**
- 2.13 A fumble or dropped ball landing in the playing area is immediately dead at that spot. The ball belongs to the team that last had possession unless: the ball lands on or behind that team's goal line (safety is charged); the ball lands on or behind opponent's goal line (touchback-opponent's ball on its 14 yard line), or if the ball is fumbled on a 4th down play before the line of gain (change of possession).
- 2.14 Blocking for the Quarterback
- 2.14a The blocker(s) may provide a moving screen for the **passer** behind the LOS.
 - 2.14b Although slight incidental contact may occur, it is the rusher's responsibility to avoid contact with the blocker.
 - 2.14c The blocker may not initiate contact in any form with the rusher; if **he/she** does **he/she** will be called for a penalty. **Penalty – Illegal Contact: play continues, 10 yard loss from the POI.**
- 2.15 After a touchdown, the player who scored must report to an official and let the official detach their flag belt. If a player is found to have his flag belt on illegally, the score will be nullified. **Penalty – Illegally Secured Flag Belt: 10 yards from LOS, loss of down and ejection.**
- 2.16 One offensive player may be in motion, parallel to or behind his/her set point. All other offensive players must be stationary in their positions. **Penalty – Illegal Motion: 5 yards from LOS, repeat down.**
- 2.17 Diving will be allowed into open space and to deflag a player. Players may not dive into other players **Penalty – Illegal Contact: 10 yards from POI, repeat down.**

3. PUNTING

- 3.1 The offense must verbally inform the referees their intention to punt or attempt to go for the first down. If a team fails to declare their intention in the first ten seconds, they will lose their opportunity to punt the football. Unless there is a defensive penalty, a time out is the only way that the initial declaration can be changed.
- 3.2 Once the punt is announced, the offense lines up in a legal formation and waits for the referee's signal to begin play. No part of the punter's body may cross the line of scrimmage when punting. The entire punting team must stay behind the LOS until the ball is kicked. **Penalty – Illegal Procedure: play continues, 5 yards from LOS, repeat down.**
- 3.3 The punter has 5 seconds to kick the ball once it is snapped from the center. **Penalty – Delay of Game: play is dead, 5 yards from LOS, repeat down.**

4. DEFENSE

- 4.1 The defensive restraining line is 1 yard in front of the ball. The defense may not lean over or cross the **Neutral zone** line until the ball is snapped. **Penalty – Encroachment: dead ball, 5 yards from LOS, repeat down or result of play.**
- 4.2 A defensive player must go around a blocker. The defender may not push, pull, slide across, or initiate contact with the screen blocker. **Penalty – Illegal Contact: 10 yards from the POI, next down or result of play.**
- 4.3 A defender may not rough the passer. Roughing the passer is defined as any contact with any part of the passer. **Penalty – Roughing the Passer: 10 yards and automatic first down.**
- 4.4 Pass Interference. **Penalty – Defensive Pass Interference: 10 yards from the LOS, automatic 1st down or result of play.**
- 4.5 A defender who intercepts in the end zone may either down or advance the ball. All interceptions made in bounds may be advanced.
- 4.6 A backwards pass, lateral, bobble, or pitch caught in flight in bounds by any player may be advanced. On any fumble, in which the ball hits the ground, play is dead.
- 4.6a If ball is fumbled backward, LOS will be at the point where the ball made contact with ground or crossed the sideline.
- 4.6b If the ball is fumbled forward, LOS will be at the spot where the offensive player's feet were at time of fumble.
- 4.7 A defender may leave his feet to grab a flag. Due to the recreational nature of this league and the awareness of injuries that occur when players leave their feet, diving, or jumping is not recommended.
- 4.8 A **"deflag"** is made when a defender detaches a ball carrier's flag belt. The location of the ball at that time of the "tackle" determines where the ball is to be marked for the next play. When a flag belt is detached (but not clearly pulled) by a defender and does not fall to the ground for several yards down field, the ball is marked at the spot of the initial pull.
- 4.9 A defender may not detach the flag belt of any offensive player who clearly does not have the ball. **Penalty – Pass Interference**
- 4.10 A defender must one-hand touch a ball carrier between the shoulders and the knees to make a **deflag** if the flag belt, of the ball carrier, has come off unintentionally during the course of play.
- 4.11 A defender may not hold or grab any part of a ball carrier's body or uniform. A defender may not push a ball carrier or detain him by any physical contact when "tackling". A defender may not strip the ball from an offensive player in control of the ball. **Penalties – Holding: 10 yards tacked on from end of run, Illegal Contact: 10 yards tacked on to end of run**

5. MISCELLANEOUS

- 5.1 Unlimited substitutions are permitted anytime that the ball is not in play.
- 5.2 Every player on the field must wear a properly secured flag belt at the start of each play. **Penalty – Illegal Participation: play continues, 10 yard penalty from the LOS or result of play.**
- 5.3 Spiking the ball or excessive dancing and end zone celebrations are not allowed. **Penalty – Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10 yard penalty**
- 5.4 Inadvertent Whistle (Quick Whistle). When a referee blows the whistle before a play actually ends, the team in possession of the ball at the time of the whistle may either:
- (a) return to the previous line of scrimmage to replay the down (same down) or
- (b) take the yardage gained up to when the whistle was blown (next down).
- 5.5 No player under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs may participate in any intramural event. In addition, alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, and/or tobacco products are not allowed at the sports complex by anyone at any time (players, coaches, fans, or bystanders).
- 5.6 No individual (on or off the field) may use loud, excessive, abusive or profane language towards any player or official. **Penalty – Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. Second infraction: Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10 yards, ejection of player(s), and minimum 1 game suspension.**

- 5.7 No individual may threaten to throw a punch at or inflict harm towards any individual. No individual may taunt verbally or physically threaten or touch any official or referee. **Penalty– Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10 yards, ejection and potential life time ban.**
- 5.8 Coaches are not allowed on the field at any time except prior to the game and during half time. **Penalties – First infraction, warning; Second infraction - Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10 yards, ejection.**
- 5.9 Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties cover a variety of infractions. These infractions include any action that tends to make a travesty of the game, and any regular or repeated penalty that is judged by the referee to be intentional, flagrant, or avoidable. The actual assessed yardage and result of this penalty is 10 yards. Any repeat offenders will be reported to the Coordinator of Intramural Sports by the head referee in charge. Serious cases may result in an individual being dismissed from participating in intramurals indefinitely. A player ejected from a game must leave the playing area and intramural field. If the player does not leave, the game will be declared a forfeit and a win will be given to the opposing team.
- 5.10 No protest of a referee's judgment call is permitted. Only the captain of the team may approach referee on rule interpretations.
- 5.11 Incidental and unavoidable contact may occur during plays. Officials use discretion in assessing a penalty. All officials' decisions are final.
- 5.12 Point of spot for offensive yardage is decided by where the ball was at the time of the flag belt being pulled. If the player in possession of the ball is down by ground contact, the placement shall be decided by the location of the ball at the time the contact with the ground occurred. (Example: A player goes airborne to catch a pass on the goal line and he lands with his body and ball in the end zone and his feet at the 1 yard line. This play, provided that the player's flag was not pulled, would be ruled a touchdown).
- 5.13 Inclement weather. On game nights, where inclement weather may threaten game play, please visit the IMLeagues page for any announcements about cancellations.
- 5.14 The intramural official in charge reserves the right to rule on any situation not specifically covered in these rules.

6. TIMING

- 6.1 No overtime games will be played during regular season. The result of the game will end in a tie for both teams.
- 6.2 During the playoffs overtime will be held if the score is tied at the end of regulation. A coin toss will be held to determine possession of the football. The home team calls the overtime coin flip. The winner of the toss has the choice of offense, defense, or direction. Each team will play towards the same goal, and have four downs to score from the 10 yard line. Captains alternate choices for additional overtime periods.
- 6.3 Each team has 2 time-outs per half. Time-outs will be no more than one minute in length. **Penalty - Delay of Game: 5 yards.**
- 6.4 Scheduled game time is forfeit time. Players must be ready to begin play at game time. A forfeit will be charged against a team refusing to start or continue play at the referee's discretion. All players must bring their UT ID card to all games they participate in. **No ID. No play!**
- 6.5 Playing time is two 18 minute halves with the clock stopping with 2 minutes left in the second half. described in 6.6. The intermission between halves shall be 3 minutes. In the first 18 minutes of the first half and 16 minutes in the second half the clock will run continuously and stop only for a time-out or an injury.
- 6.6 During the final 2 minutes of each half, the clock will stop for the following:
- 6.6a incomplete pass -- clock starts on the snap
 - 6.6b out-of-bounds -- clock starts on the snap
 - 6.6c score (touchdown or safety) -- clock starts on the new offensives 1st snap
 - 6.6d team time-out -- clock starts on the snap
 - 6.6e first down in bounds -- clock starts on the referee's ready to play whistle
 - 6.6f punt -- clock starts on the snap

- 6.6g referee's timeout
- 6.6h change of possession -- clock starts on the new offensives 1st snap
- 6.6i injury
- 6.7 Mercy Rule: If a team goes ahead by 19 points or more at or under the last two minutes of the second half.

7. SCORING

- 7.1 Six points are awarded for a touchdown.
- 7.2 Two points are awarded for a safety.
- 7.3 Point After Touchdown
 - 7.3a One play to score 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 20 yard line shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown on the previous play.
 - 7.3b The referee must speak to the team's captain asking him/her if his/her team would like to try for 1, 2 or 3 points. Once the captain whose team scored makes the choice of going for 1, 2 or 3 points, he/she may change the decision only by taking a time-out.
 - 7.3c A team's choice cannot be changed if a penalty occurs. Enforcement of yardage from penalties does not change the value of the try for point. The point(s) shall be awarded accordingly if the try for points results in a score.
 - 7.3d A turnover on a PAT may not be returned. The play becomes dead and the try is unsuccessful.

8. EQUIPMENT

- 8.1 The standard flag belt is the "Triple Threat" model. Team players may not wear shorts in the same color or with streaks of the color as their flag belt. The flag belt cannot be altered or improperly worn other than how it is intended. Any alterations or improper wearing of the flag belt is considered deliberate. **Penalty – Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10 yards.**
- 8.2 The flag belt must be worn about the waist. The flags must hang loosely below the waist on each side and down the back of the player.
- 8.3 All jerseys/shirts must be tucked inside the shorts/pants so as not to cover any part of the flag belt. A defensive player that grabs the lower part of a ball carrier's shirt/jersey that is not worn as stated above while attempting to "tackle" that ball carrier will not be called for holding.
- 8.4 Shorts/pants may not have rear pockets or loops.
- 8.5 Soccer-type cleats (recommended) and/or soft-soled sneaker type shoes may be worn. Shoes with metal cleats are strictly prohibited.
- 8.6 Tape and/or any type of bandages worn on a hand and/or finger, unless worn to protect injury, are prohibited. Any type of hard cast that covers any part of a player's arm, wrist, or hand is prohibited.
- 8.7 Soft surface elbow or knee pads are permitted. Ace bandages, "wet suit" rubber wraps, and similar materials are permitted. Any type of orthopedic knee brace and/or knee support is permitted if the plastic covers the protective device with some type of cloth or soft material. Any brace having metal will not be allowed on the playing field. Protective eye wear such as "sports-rec" glasses and/or any mouthpiece are permitted.
- 8.8 Towels may be used but must be placed on the ground next to the orange cone before the snap
- 8.9 Teams may provide their own game ball, provided that the size of the football is approved by the referee. Team captains should ensure that they have a person on the sideline dedicated in holding the team's personal game ball in order to expedite game play.

9. CoRec Football

- 9.1 **The Game.** The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men. Six players, 3 men

and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, or 4 women and 2 men, are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with less than 6 players as long as the team has a chance to win. NOTE: If in doubt, continue the game. *Penalty:* Illegal participation, 10 yards

- 9.2 The ball.** The regular, intermediate, youth, or junior size football shall be used.
- 9.3 Minimum line players.** Team A must have at least 1 player on their line of scrimmage at the snap. *Penalty:* Illegal formation 5 yards
- 9.4 Male Runner.** An A male runner cannot advance the ball through A's scrimmage line. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male runner once the ball has been touched beyond the A or K scrimmage line; during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession. *Penalty:* Illegal advancement, 5 yards from the previous spot
- 9.5 Male to Male Completion.** During the offensive team's possession, there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the try. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the A scrimmage line (1st ball spotter-orange). There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male. A legal forward pass caught jointly by male and female teammates is considered a female reception. *Penalty:* Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot where the 2nd consecutive male to male completed legal forward pass is released, and a loss of down. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."
- 9.6 Illegal Forward Pass.** If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the A scrimmage line (1st ball spotter-orange) on either an "open" or "closed" play, and any A male runner advances beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass. *Penalty:* Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down.
- 9.7 Mercy Rule.** If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2 minute warning for the 2nd half, the game shall be over, or a team scores inside the last 2 minutes of the second half to create a 25 point differential the game shall be over.
- 9.8 Touchdown Value.** If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any A player, prior to a change of possession, the point value is 9.