

# FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## 2009

### I. Governing Rules:

Play will be governed by the NIRSA 2009-2010 National Touch and Flag Football rules. The following are modifications and highlights of these rules. Final interpretations are made by the Intramural Sports Staff.

### II. Equipment:

- A. No protective equipment may be worn; i.e. helmets, shoulder or hip pads. The game official must approve all protective materials (tape, pads, etc.) Casts are illegal equipment. Mouth and teeth mouthpiece are strongly recommended.
- B. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes with metal tip cleats are not allowed. Shoes must be one piece molded plastic/rubber or regular tennis shoes.
- C. Jewelry of any type is considered illegal equipment.
- D. Shirts must be worn with the tails tucked inside pants. No cut off shirts will be allowed. Shirts may not be altered in any manner that produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey.
- E. Shorts are not allowed to have pockets. (Regular or Cargo)
- F. The ball provided by the Intramural Sports Program shall be used unless a team wants to use their own ball with the approval of the referee. All teams are responsible for bringing their ball on the field and taking it off the field. In the event that a team is not ready to play due to not having their ball, the official will not delay blowing his/her ready for play whistle. If the team has not provided their ball at the end of the 25-second period, a delay of game penalty shall be administered.
- G. Coed and Women's teams may use either the regular size ball or the junior size ball.

### III. Playing Field:

- A. The field shall be 100 yards long and 40 yards wide with four 20-yard first down sections, and two 10-yard end zones.
- B. The following dash marks shall be measured from each goal line and placed in the center of the field:
  - 3 yards from goal line = 1 point conversion attempts
  - 10 yards from goal line = 2-point conversion attempt
  - 20 yards from goal line = 3-point conversion attempt
  - 14 yard lines = to start each half and after a score
- C. A player's box shall run parallel to the sidelines between the 20-yard lines. Players must remain in the box if not on the field. Both teams may remain in the same box.

### IV. Timing:

- A. A game shall consist of two 18-minute halves with running clock. Half time shall be no more than 5 minutes in duration.
- B. There is a 5 minute grace period at the start of the actual game time. (Not when the game before you has finished.)
- C. If a team forfeits two games, they are dropped from further competition.
- D. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is **19** or more points ahead anytime after the referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game will be over.
- E. Each team is allowed three 60-second time outs per game. Time outs may be shortened if both teams are ready.

F. The clock will stop during the last 2 minutes of the second half only for the following situations.

1. Incomplete pass - starts on the snap
2. Out-of-bounds - starts on the snap
3. Team time-out - starts on the snap
4. First down - dependent on the previous play
5. Penalty and administration - dependent on the previous play.  
(Exception: Delay of game - starts on the snap)
6. Referee's time-out - starts at his/her discretion
7. Touch back - starts on the snap
8. Change of possession - dependent on the previous play
9. Team attempting to waste time illegally - starts on snap.
10. After a score.

G. Once the ball is marked ready for play; a team has 25 seconds within which to snap the ball.

H. A game will be declared a forfeit by the referee if a team is in violation of the following rules:

1. Team must have five players ready to begin the game at the scheduled time.
2. If a team commits 3 unsportsmanlike fouls in one game.
3. If a team employs tactics obviously intended to delay the game. One warning will be given.
4. If an order for the removal of a player or spectator is not obeyed within three minutes after the warning.
5. If after play has been suspended (by the referee), one side fails to resume playing within 25 seconds after ordered by an official.
6. If a team or its spectators, in the opinion of the referee or the Intramural Supervisor, continues to display unsportsmanlike behavior after being warned by an official.

## V. Players

A. Seven players per team are allowed on the field at a time. (*Coed: 8 players*) Teams are required to know all intramural eligibility rules.

B. A team may begin a game with five players (*Coed: 6 players*).

1. If this team falls behind by 24 points, the game shall be ruled complete at that time.
2. If this team legally gains enough players to make the player limit, no point restriction shall apply.

C. The offense must have at least four players within one yard of the scrimmage line. (*Coed: 5 players*)

D. All plays must originate with a snap from the center. A minimum of 2 yards must be between the center and the person receiving snap. A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.

E. Only one offensive player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. This motion must begin more than one second before the ball is snapped, and must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. There must be four players on the line of scrimmage not counting the person in motion.

F. An offensive huddle is not required prior to play. However, if a huddle is formed, all players must attend.

G. Defensive buffer restrictions: No defensive player may be closer than 1 yard to the line of scrimmage. Defensive players may not break the buffer zone prior to the snap of the ball.

H. All substitute players and spectators must remain between the 20-yard lines.

## VI. First Downs:

A. A first down is awarded to a team whenever they advance the ball across the next 20-yard marker. Four downs will be allowed to obtain the first down.

B. A first down may be obtained by running, passing, penalty, or change of possession.

C. Only one first down per series of possession can be obtained at each 20-yard marker.

## VII. Carrying the Ball:

- A. A ball carrier may not guard his/her flag other than "spinning" or jumping to avoid being deflagged.
- B. The ball carrier may not hurdle a player to avoid being deflagged. Hurdling interprets as an attempt by a runner to jump over a player; the opposing should stand on their feet.
- C. If a player inadvertently loses their flags or the opposition pulls it before possession of the ball, the play will continue and ball player must be downed by a one-hand touch, between the shoulder and knees, including the hand and arm.
- D. A player will be ruled "down" when:
  - 1. a defender removes the flagbelt for a runner. The defender should hold the flagbelt high above the head after removal
  - 2. Any part of the body other than the hand or foot touches the ground
  - 3. under the provision of section C
- E. A player is not "down" if the ball touches the ground while he/she is in possession (The ball then becomes an extension of the hand)
- F. The defender may not play the man, nor may they hold or tackle the runner.
- G. The ball carrier may not be pushed out of bounds, but must be cornered and made to run out of bounds on their own accord.
- H. A fumbled or muffed ball is dead when it strikes the ground.
- I. When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which a penalty accrue the foul is declined, when:
  - 1. The ball is in player possession - the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
  - 2. The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass - the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
  - 3. During a legal forward pass of a free or protected scrimmage kick - the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

Note: **If a foul occurs during any of the above downs, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.**

## VIII. Blocking and Rushing:

- A. Blocking will be by **screening only**, that is, a blocker must hinder a defender's movement through positioning rather than body contact.
- B. No part of the body except the feet shall be in contact with the ground and the feet must remain on the ground for the duration of the block.
- C. During a block, the body must remain upright with elbows and hands touching the body at the side or behind the back.
- D. Moving blocks are legal, so long as the blockers do not initiate contact with any opposing player.
- E. While incidental contact may occur; blocking/rushing penalties will be called against the player who initiates contact.
- F. The defense may not use hands, arms, or legs as a wedge to gain an advantage over a blocker.

## IX. Passing:

- A. A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage.
- B. All incomplete backward passes shall be marked down at the point of ground contact.
- C. Only 1 forward pass may be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage on a given play. A pass is determined to occur at any time the ball is intentionally put into the air, regardless of direction or manner.

- D. A forward pass is illegal if:
  1. The passer's foot is beyond the plane of Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange) when the ball leaves his/her hand.
  2. Thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
  3. Intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
  4. A passer catches his/her untouched forward pass.
  5. There is more than one forward pass per down.
- E. All players except the passer are eligible to receive a pass.
- F. A player must have complete possession of the ball and land with their first foot in bounds, to be a legal reception.
- G. A pass intercepted in the end zone may be advanced.
- H. If the passer is de-flagged prior to releasing the ball, the ball is dead and the down is ended.
- I. An offensive player, who goes out of bounds on his/her own cannot come back into the field and participate in the play.  
Penalty: Illegal Participation: - 10 yards.

**X. Kicking:**

- A. Kickoffs will not be used at any time in the game. Each half will begin with the offense at the 14 yard line.
- B. Immediately after the P.A.T., the ball will be put in play on the 14 yard line.
- C. On fourth down, the offense must announce when the ball is marked whether they will kick. Once the decision is made, it is reversible by using a timeout. If a kick is to be made, the following procedures must be followed.
  1. The kicker must receive the snap at least two yards behind the center.
  2. The kick must be made immediately upon receiving the snap.
  3. All other offensive and defensive line players may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- D. Only the receiving team may advance a punt
- E. A ball that goes into the end zone from the impetus of the kick may be returned.

**XI. Scoring:**

- A. Point values will be as follows
  1. Touchdown: 6 points
  2. Safety: 2 points
  3. P.A.T. from the 3-yard line: 1 point
  4. P.A.T. from the 10-yard line: 2 points
  5. P.A.T. from the 20-yard line: 3 points
- B. Touchdown Verification: The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the player is not easily de-flagged, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified and an unsportsmanlike penalty will be enforced from the previous spot.

**XII. Tie Breaker (Overtime):**

Should a game end with a tie score, the following system shall be used:

- A. Coin toss with the following options:
  1. Offense or defense.
  2. Goal - Both teams will use the same goal on offense.
- B. Each team is allowed a maximum of 4 downs in which to score from 10-yard line. A series is ended by:
  1. Scoring a touchdown, P.A.T. is attempted.
  2. Interception - If returned for touchdown, P.A.T. is attempted, if needed. If no touchdown, they begin their 4 down series if available.
  3. If the score remains tied, the tiebreaker procedure is used again, team captains will alternate choices.

### **XIII. Penalties:**

- A. The offended team may have its choice of the penalty or the result of the play.
- B. When both teams commit an infraction during the same live ball period, regardless of the severity, the down is automatically replayed, provided there is no change of possession. If an ejection is warranted, this may occur even though no yardage is assessed.
- C. When the live ball and dead ball penalty occurs, each is handled on its own merit, regardless whether the penalties are on the same or opposing teams.

### **XIV. Fighting and Ejections:**

- A. Any teams fighting will cause a double forfeit and removal from the league.
- B. Any player ejected from a game will not be allowed to participate in his/her team's next game.
- C. We reserve the right to suspend a player for any amount of games due to the severity of the ejection.

## **COED MODIFICATIONS**

### **Players:**

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women each. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men. 6 players (3 men/3 women or 2 men/4 women) are required to avoid a forfeit.

### **The Ball:**

The regular, intermediate, junior or youth size footballs shall be used for corec games.

### **Free Kick & Protected Scrimmage Kick Receivers:**

All players from the receiving team are eligible to catch and/or advance a kick. A kicker/punter cannot kick the ball to himself/herself or any other player on his/her team (penalty: Illegal Kicking, 10 yards).

### **Minimum Line Players:**

The offensive team must have at least 5 players on the scrimmage line at the snap of the ball. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

### **Male Runner:**

An offensive male runner may not advance the ball across the scrimmage line. There are no restrictions for female runners.  
Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from previous spot.

### **Male-to-Male Completion:**

- A. During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver.
- B. If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead must be beyond the offensive teams scrimmage line. Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down. The foul, whether accepted or declined shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is "open" or "closed".
- C. If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the offensive scrimmage line and runs 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.
- D. Females must complete or receive the ball in front of the line of scrimmage in order to open the play up.

### **Mercy Rule:**

If a team is **25** or more points ahead anytime after the referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game will be over.

### **Touchdown Values:**

If a female participates in a scoring play by either passing, receiving or running the touchdown shall be **9 points**.

## SUMMARY OF PENALTIES:

### CODE:

(P.S.) = Previous Spot

(Spot) = Spot of Foul

#### A. *Dead Ball Fouls* - Loss of 5 yards

1. Delay of game (P.S.)
2. Encroachment (P.S.)  
(2nd consecutive encroachment - loss of 10 yards)
3. False Start (P.S.)
4. Illegal Snap (P.S.)
5. Illegal substitutions (P.S.)

#### B. *Live Ball Fouls* - Loss of 5 yards

1. Aiding runner by teammates
2. Failure to wear required equipment (P.S.)
3. Illegal forward pass (Loss of down if by team A) (SPOT)
4. Illegal handing the ball forward (Loss of down if by team A)
5. Illegal motion (P.S.)
6. Illegal procedure (P.S.)
7. Illegal shift (P.S.)
8. Less than required # of players on the scrimmage line at the snap (P.S.)
9. Male advancing ball through the neutral zone (Co-Rec) (Spot)
10. Player receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line (P.S.)
11. Two consecutive male-to-male forward pass completions (Loss of down)(Co-Rec)(Spot)

#### C. *Live Ball Fouls* - Loss of 10 yards

1. Eligibility lost by going out of bounds and participating in the play.
2. Flag Guarding
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct (Succeeding spot)
4. Illegal bat, illegal kick, illegal participation.
5. Illegal contact
6. Illegal secured flag belt on touchdown (Loss of down& score; player disqualification) (P.S.)
7. Pass interference - defense (Automatic 1st down) (P.S.)
8. Pass interference - offense (Loss of down) (P.S.)
9. Personal Foul
10. Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st Down) (P.S.)

**NOTE:** If any of the above infractions are deemed flagrant, the player will be disqualified.