

## **FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

**2008-2009**

### **Rule changes are highlighted**

**I. Flag Football** is a game designed to utilize skill, deception and speed, rather than contact and bulk. Play the game according to the rules of the sport and the concepts of sportsmanship.

### **II. Governing Rules:**

- A. Play will be governed by the NIRSA 2009 National Touch and Flag Football rules. The following are modifications and highlights of these rules. A copy of this book may be reviewed in the Intramurals Office.
- B. Final interpretations are made by the Intramural Sports Staff.

### **III. Equipment:**

- A. No protective equipment may be worn; i.e. helmets, shoulder or hip pads. All protective materials (tape, pads, etc.) must be approved by the Game Official.
- B. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes with metal or screw-in 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. Medical Alert bracelets are allowed and must be taped underneath a player's clothing.
- D. Shirts must be worn at all times. Shirts may not be altered in any manner that produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey. Shirts must be tucked in at all times or be positioned 4" above the waist. All players must be wearing the same colored shirt.
- E. Pants or shorts must be of different color than the flags.
- F. No belt loops or drawstrings are allowed on shorts or pants. It is recommended that no pockets be on pants or shorts. Teams that have an individual with pockets will not have the benefit of a holding penalty on the shorts.
- G. Only RSW supplied flags may be used.
- H. The ball provided by the Recreational Sports Office 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 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 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. Co-Rec teams may use either the regular size ball or the junior size ball; Women teams may use any size ball.
- I. It is strongly recommended that all players to protect the mouth and teeth wear a mouthpiece.
- J. Players may wear pliable and non-rigid sunglasses.
- K. Players may carry a playbook inside their clothing as long as it is not made of an unyielding material and is not visible. If it is carried on the field, a player must keep it rather than throw it on the ground.

### **IV. Playing Field:**

- A. The field shall be 100 yards long and 40 yards wide.
- B. There shall be four 20-yard first down sections, and two 10-yard end zones.
- C. A 1-yard dash mark shall be placed in the center of the field, 3 yards, from each goal line for 1-point conversion attempts and 10 yards, from each goal line for 2-point conversion attempts.
- D. The goal lines shall be marked with cones.
- E. The end line and line-to-gain shall be marked with cones.
- F. A player's box shall run parallel to the sidelines between the 20-yard lines. Player's must remain in the box if they are not on the field. Both teams may remain in the same box.
- G. A hash mark will be put on the 14-yard line. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> half will start here unless there is a penalty that forces the half to start further back. After a score this is also where the opposing team will take over possession of the ball.

### **V. 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.

## VII. Timing:

- A. A game shall consist of two 20-minute halves with running time.
- B. Stop timing will be used only during the last 2 minutes of each half, at which time the clock will stop according to Federation Football Timing. Teams will be notified at the two minute warning or if a play is taking place at the next stoppage of play. We will implement the two minute warning the same way they do in the NFL.
- C. Each team is allowed two 60-second time outs per half. Time outs may be shortened if both teams are ready. Time Outs **do not** carry over.
- D. During the last 2 minutes of each half the clock will stop for a:
  - Incomplete pass - starts on the snap
  - Out-of-bounds - starts on the snap
  - Team time-out - starts on the snap
  - First down – on spot of ball and marker
  - 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 – on spot and down setting
  - 8. Change of possession – yes
  - 9. Team attempting to conserve time illegally - starts on snap.
  - 10. A score for the kickoff

\*\*\* Note we will play college timing rules in the last two minutes, therefore, when the ball has been spotted and the down marker is spotted the Referee will wind the clock. In addition after a kickoff once the ball is spotted the clock will run.

- H. Once the ball is marked ready for play; a team has 25 seconds within which to snap the ball.
- I. Half time shall be no more than 5 minutes in duration.
- J. A game will be declared by the referee in favor of the team not in violation of the following cases:
  - Team fails to have five players ready to begin the game at the scheduled time. There will be a ten-minute grace period. However, one-point will be awarded to the opposing team for every minute the team is late.
  - The third un-sportsmanlike conduct foul by a team will result in forfeiture of the game.
  - If a team employs tactics obviously intended to delay the game. One warning will be given.
  - If order for the removal of a player or spectator is not obeyed within one minute after the warning.
  - If after play has been suspended (by the referee), one side fails to resume playing within 25 seconds after ordered by an official.
  - If a team or its spectators, in the opinion of the referee or the Intramural Supervisor, continues to display un-sportsmanlike behavior after being warned by an official.

A team which wins by forfeit receives a score of 30 - 0 or the current score of the game, whichever results in the greatest point differential.

## VIII. Players

- A. Only seven players per team are allowed on the field at a time. (Corec: 8 players)
- B. A team may begin a game with five or six players.
  - If this team falls behind by 24 points, the game shall be ruled complete at that time.
  - If this team can legally gain enough players to make the player limit, no point restriction shall apply.
  - The offense must have at least four players within one yard of the scrimmage line. (Corec: 5 players)
  - 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.
- C. 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. The player must run vertical. (Illegal Motion will be call if a player is running horizontally.)
- D. 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.
- E. All players not in the game, and spectators, must remain between the 20-yard lines. If room between fields does not allow this, spectators must assume a position at the end of the field.

## IX. 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 de-flagged. Hurdling interprets as an attempt by a runner to jump over a player; the opposing player should still be on their feet.
- C. If a player inadvertently loses their flags or it is pulled by the opposition 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:
  - a. A defender removes the flag belt of a runner. The defender should hold the flag belt high above the head after removal.
  - b. any part of the body other than the hand or foot touches the ground
  - c. see "C"
- E. The defender may not play the man, nor may they hold or tackle the runner.
- F. 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.
- G. A fumbled or muffed ball is dead when it strikes the ground.
- H. When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, when:
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - During a legal forward pass of a free or protected scrimmage kick - the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.
  - *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.*

## X. Blocking and Rushing:

- A. 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.
- B. Blocking will be by SCREENING ONLY, that is, a blocker must hinder a defender's movement through positioning rather than body contact.
- 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.

## XI. 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:
  - It is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage. (Players foot not the ball).
  - It is intentionally grounded. (Throwing the ball into the ground (Downing) to stop the clock *is legal*.)
  - It is thrown after a change of possession.
  - 4. It is thrown to oneself.
- E. All players except the passer are eligible to receive a pass. The passer may recover the ball if it is tipped.
- 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. The penalty is Illegal Participation: 10 yards.

## **XII. Kicking:**

- A.)** On fourth down, the offense must announce when the ball is marked whether or not they will kick. Once the decision is made, it is reversible only by using a timeout or a defensive penalty before the ball is kicked. If a kick is to be made, the following procedures must be followed.
- The kicker must receive the snap at least two yards behind the center.
  - The kick must be made immediately upon receiving the snap.
  - The kicker must kick the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
  - All other offensive and defensive line players must remain motionless until the ball is kicked.
- B.** Only the receiving team may advance a punt. A kicker/punter cannot kick the ball to himself/herself or any other player on his/her team (penalty: Illegal Kicking, 10 yards).
- C.** Spot passes are not legal.
- D.** A ball that goes into the end zone from the impetus of the kick may be returned.
- E.** Once a returning team player touches the ball it is dead. The player in open space has 2 seconds to recover the ball after muffing it. It is the official's discretion to blow the play dead once he/she does that decision is final.

## **XIII. Scoring:**

- A.** Point values will be as follows
- Touchdown: 6 points
  - Safety: 2 points
  - P.A.T. from the 3-yard line: 1 point
  - P.A.T. from the 10-yard line: 2 points
- B.** Co- Rec only
- Touchdown by a male : 6 points
  - Touchdown by a female (throw/ run/ caught) 9 points
  - P.A.T. from the 3-yard line: 1 point
  - P.A.T. from the 10-yard line: 2 points
- C.** 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 un-sportsmanlike penalty will be enforced from the previous spot.

## **XIV. Tie Breaker (Overtime):**

Should a game end with a tie score, the following system shall be used: (College Format)

### **A.** Coin toss with the following options:

- Offense or defense.
- 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:

- Scoring a touchdown, P.A.T. is attempted.
- Interception - If returned for touchdown, P.A.T. is attempted, only during the regular season for tie breakers. If no touchdown, they begin their 4 down series if available.
- If the score remains tied, the tiebreaker procedure is used again; the team that went on defense first goes on Offense first in this series and vice versa until a winner is declared.
- On the third overtime series both teams are required to go for two following a touchdown.

## **XV. 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.

**D.** If there are multiple fouls and there is a change of possession, and the recovering teams foul happened after the change of possession then they keep the ball have their penalty enforced and automatically decline their opponents penalty.

#### **XVI. Mercy Rule:**

If a team is 19 (25 for Co- Rec) or more points ahead when the referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game will be over. The same rule applies if a team scores inside 2 minutes with this differential.

#### **XVII. 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 **2** games.
- C. We reserve the right to suspend a player for any amount of games due to the severity of the ejection.

#### **XVII. Playoffs:**

- A. All teams without a forfeit are eligible for playoffs. Teams with one forfeit may qualify for playoffs by paying a \$10 non-refundable fee prior to the brackets being drawn. Teams with two or more forfeits are not eligible for the playoffs.
- B. Playoff brackets are seeded according to the team rankings. Team rankings are decided by votes from supervisors, officials and team captains. The top 4 teams in each bracket are automatically set into the brackets and cannot play each other until the semi-final round.
- C. For major team sports, a captains' meeting will be held after all possible games have been played during the regular season. All teams eligible for the playoffs are **required** to have a representative present. Teams will place themselves into a bracket according to their final regular season rankings.
- D. The Coordinator of Intramurals will have the final decision regarding placement and seeding.

### **SUMMARY OF CO-REC RULES**

#### **The Game:**

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 or 4 men/2 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 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 their 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:**

- During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver.
- 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 team's 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".

#### **Mercy Rule:**

If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game shall end at that point.

#### **Touchdown Values:**

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

## **SUMMARY OF PENALTIES:**

### **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 formation (P.S.)
8. Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down) (Spot)
9. Less than required # of players on the scrimmage line at the snap (P.S.)
10. Male advancing ball through the neutral zone (Co-Rec) (Spot)
11. Player receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line (P.S.)
12. Two consecutive male-to-male forward pass completions (Loss of down)(Co-Rec)(Spot)

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

1. Eligibility lost by going out of bounds and participating in the play
2. Flag Guarding (Spot)
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.) (Any pass interference deemed intentional to avoid a big yardage play shall result in the Referee ejecting the offending player)
8. Pass interference - offense (Loss of down) (P.S.)
9. Personal Foul
10. Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st Down) (Succeeding spot.)

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

**CODE: (P.S.) = Previous Spot; (Spot) = Spot of Foul**