

# MEN & CO-ED FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## **ELIGIBILITY**

All eligibility rules apply. Consult your Intramural Manager's material.

## **TEAM MANAGERS**

Will be responsible for sharing the participation risk, injury and insurance information with team members.

## **UNIFORMS**

First team listed in the pairings must wear white shirts. Other team dark shirts.

## **BALL**

The Intramural football is the official game ball.

## **STARTING GAME**

1. **Rock, Paper, Scissors.** Three minutes before the start of the game the Referee shall designate which captain shall call the fall of the coin, then toss a coin in the presence of the opposing captains. All officials shall be present at the coin toss. The captain winning the toss shall have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:

A. To choose whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.

B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.

2. **Putting the ball in play.**

A. Kickoff.

B. After a safety the team scored on will place kick or punt from their goal line. Receiving team lines up behind the 20 yd line.

## **PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. **Number**

A. Seven (7) players shall constitute a team, and no team shall be allowed to play a game with less than five players. Each team must have 5 players to start a game. Forfeit time is game time.

B. A minimum of four players shall be on the line of scrimmage for the offensive team at the snap of the ball (within one yard of the line the ball is on). Failure to do so is a 5 yd. penalty. No limit on number of defensive players on the line.

## 2. Substitutions

A. There shall be no limit to the number of substitutions a team may make, providing such substitutes remain in the game for at least one play and providing the substitutions cause no delay of the game. Officials will allow an adequate time for exchanging flags on substitutions.

## EQUIPMENT

### 1. Protective Equipment and Clothing

A. No player shall wear screw in spiked or cleated shoes of any kind. (molded rubber shoes are acceptable). No boots or sandals permitted. Shoes must be worn.

B. No player shall wear padded suit, headgear, shoulder pads, or any other special protective body device.

C. Long sleeved jerseys or shirts, sweat shirts and T-shirts may be worn, however, they must be tucked inside the pants.

### 2. Wearing of Flags

A. All players, both offensive and defensive, must wear flags while on the playing field.

B. The flags will be fastened to the belt in such a manner as not to be twisted under or fastened to the inside of the belt.

C. The flags are to hang down vertically along the side seam of the trousers.

D. Loose shirts or jackets hanging below the waist must be tucked into pants so as not to interfere with pulling flags.

### 3. Penalty

Players found playing in the game with any of the above irregularities shall be assessed a 5 yd. penalty and must make the equipment corrections.

## BALL

1. The ball provided by the Intramural Office will be used for all contests.

## THE GAME

### 1. Length

A. The game shall consist of two 20 min halves containing a 5 min halftime. Running clock at all times. The last 2 minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> half the clock will only stop in dead ball situations. The official will keep track of the time and will inform teams when there is 2 minutes left in each half.

B. All live ball plays will count, (even if there is a penalty assessed). Exception is last play of each half, if defensive foul occurs.

C. Extra point tries will not count as a play, but a punt does count as a play.

D. Defensive fouls at the end of either half will cause an additional play to be run, if penalty is assessed.

E. Officials and captains will meet before the game starts and at the end of the first half for choice of ball and goals. Loser of the first flip will have their choice for second half.

F. 25 second huddles between plays will be strictly enforced and a violation of time limit will cause a delay of game penalty.

G. Each team shall be allowed three (3) time outs per game - limited to one (1) minute each.

H. **Mercy Rule:** if a team has a lead of 50 pts. or more the game will end.

### **THE FIELD AND PLAY**

1. **Dimensions:** Field size - 80 yds x 40 yds. The area between goal lines will be divided by three lines making four equal zones. These three lines will be known as "first down lines". Two (2) 10 yd. end zones.

2. **Downs:** When the ball is downed, the team in possession shall be given four (4) downs to advance the ball from that point to the next first down line or goal line (each first down line may only be gained once in a series of downs).

3. **Tiebreaker:** In case of a tie game, at the end of regulation play, a tiebreaker will be used.

A. The referee will conduct a coin flip with the team captains prior to each overtime series. The winner of the coin flip has the choice of first possession or choosing which end to play at, the loser takes the remaining option.

B. The ball is placed at the ten (20) yard line and a team has four (4) downs in which to score. If successful, try for extra point is played (1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 20 yard line). After a score or loss of possession the other team receives their four down possession.

C. The four down series, for each team, continues until a winner is determined.

D. An interception/other loose ball recovered by the defensive team, in the overtime series, is a dead ball and ends the four down series or try for point for the offensive team.

E. Each team receives one (1) additional time-out per overtime series. Timeouts from regulation play do carry over to overtime series.

F. All other rules apply.

### **SCORING AND SCORING PLAYS**

1. **Scoring:** Touchdown - 6 points; point after touchdown from 3 yd line - 1 point; safety – 2 points; point after touchdown from 10 yd. line – 2 points; point after touchdown from 20 yd line - 3 points.

2. The play for "point-after-touchdown" shall be made by a scrimmage play from the opponent's three, ten, or twenty yard line.

## **FORWARD PASS RULE**

All players are legal receivers. Only **one** forward pass is allowed per down no matter if completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. The pass must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opponents the ball is awarded to the offense. An offensive player must have one foot in bounds when catching forward pass.

## **FUMBLES**

1. Any ball that is fumbled or muffed and touches the ground, shall be dead immediately and shall belong to the team last in possession at the spot where the ball touched ground on the fumble or muff.
2. On kicks, any ball touched, muffed, or fumbled, which touches the ground, shall belong to the receiver at the spot of touch, muff, or fumble.
3. A bad pass from the center which touches the ground before being touched by a player shall be dead and shall remain in possession of the offensive team at the spot it touched the ground, except on the fourth down, when it shall go over to the opponents at the spot it touched the ground. **Exception:** Read section on declared scrimmage kicks.

## **TOUCHING**

1. A "touch" occurs when an opponent removes one or more flags from the ball-carrier, and the ball shall be declared dead at the spot of the pulled flag.
2. Opponent should try to drop the flags as near as possible to the spot where they were removed from the ball carrier.
3. The attempt to remove the flag by a defender must be judged to be a legal attempt to stop the man with the ball. Efforts to stop a ball carrier without attempting to pull the flag is illegal. **(Penalty 10 yds.** - removal from game if flagrant.)
4. If a flag inadvertently falls off the person can be downed by 1 hand touch between shoulders & knees or by pulling the other flags.

## **BLOCKING**

### **1. On the line or in the open**

A. Blocking - teammates of a runner or passer may set a screen block for him/her, anywhere on the field. Movement is allowed in the direction and path of the opponent. Teammates may not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another to protect a teammate with the ball.

B. Offensive Screen Blocking - this shall take place without contact. The blocker(s) shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her sides, behind the back, or bent at the elbows and in contact with the chest. Movement is allowed in the same direction and path of an opponent's movement. Any use of the arms, elbows or legs during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. (10 yd. penalty for illegal blocks).

C. Defensive Player Responsibilities - these players must go around the offensive players screen block. The arms and hands may be used if there is no holding or aggressive

pushing. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the officials (excessive use of hands/arms will be penalized 10 yds).

2. **Restraining Lines:** There shall be a one (1) yard restraining line for the defensive team away from the scrimmage line.

3. **Defensive Restrictions:** Defensive players must attempt to avoid blockers. Incidental contact with the hands will be allowed but should the defender gain an advantage by use of the hands will be penalized. (Penalty: 10 yds)

4. **Blocking on Declared Kicks (Punts) and After a Safety:** The receiving team may release and set-up in a blocking formation. A stationary screen block should be used. Movement allowed in the same direction and path of an opponent's movement. It is the kicking team's responsibility to avoid the setblockers, running blockers over will result in a 10 yd penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **DECLARED SCRIMMAGE KICK**

### **1. A scrimmage-kick**

A. A scrimmage-kick shall be "declared" by the referee before ball has been centered. The referee in turn shall notify the defensive captain. When a scrimmage-kick has been declared, the ball must be kicked from behind the line of scrimmage, following a snap from the center. The team has five (5) seconds to kick the ball. Failure to do so will result in the loss of a down and if it was fourth down, it will mean loss of ball. A snap on declared kick may touch ground or be fumbled or muffed, providing it is within the 5 second period.

B. On a "declared" scrimmage-kick, no player of either team may cross the line of scrimmage or restraining line until after the ball has been kicked.

C. There shall be no restriction as to the position of the kicking players, as long as they are back of their own lines of scrimmage.

D. There are absolutely **no** quick kicks.

E. There are absolutely **no** on-side kicks. Once the ball hits the ground, in fair territory, it is dead and belongs to the receiving team.

F. Blocking for declared kicks (punt), and after a safety is covered under RULE XI,

## **TIME LIMIT**

There shall be a time of twenty-five (25) seconds between plays, from the time the ball is declared ready for play by the referee until the ball is snapped on the succeeding play (delay of game - 5 yd penalty).

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. **"Touch" or "Touching"** -In order to stop an offensive play, the defensive player must pull the flag of the opponent ball carrier.

2. **Offensive Screen Blocking** - this shall take place without contact. The blocker(s) shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her sides, behind the back, or bent at the elbows and in contact with the chest. A flag-football screen block is similar to a basketball screen.

3. **The ball is dead** when or if:

- A. it goes out of bounds - carried or loose.
- B. the ball carrier is legally "touched" by an opponent, if the flag is pulled. If a runner accidentally loses a flag, a one hand touch between the shoulders and knees will "down" the man (refer to Rule X, Section 1, Article 4)
- C. touchdown, or safety occurs.
- D. after a touchback where punt reception or interception caught in the end zone (ball put in play at the 20 yd line).
- E. fumbled or muffed ball touches the ground.
- F. snap from center touches the ground before touching a player except on declared scrimmage kick.
- G. forward or backward pass becomes incomplete.
- H. referee rules ball "not in play".

4. **Offside:** A player, excepting the offensive center, is offside when any part of the body is over the line of scrimmage or restraining line at the time the ball is snapped.

5. **Declared kick** (punt): A declared kick is a punt from scrimmage and there shall be no attempt to block the punt, and after such declaration they must kick.

6. **Spot of Fumble:** The spot of fumble is the place where the ball first touches the ground.

7. **Fair catch:** No fair catch allowed.

8. The center shall not pick ball up before the snap. If the center does so and sets it back down, it shall be a 5 yd. penalty.

9. No center sneaks are allowed.

10. Ball must be snapped between the legs.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES**

1. **Penalty Enforcement Philosophy:** Whenever the ball is live one or two types of plays are in progress. It is either a running play or a loose ball play. The type of play has no significance unless a foul occurs. When a foul occurs, in order to determine the basic spot of enforcement the official must know (1) which team committed the foul and where it occurred in relation to where the play started; (2) whether the foul was during a running play; or (3) whether it was during a loose ball play.

**A loose ball play** is action during:

- 1. a free kick,
- 2. a scrimmage kick,
- 3. a legal forward pass,
- 4. a backward pass or a fumble by A from on or behind the scrimmage line,

5. a loose ball play also includes the run which precedes a legal pass, kick, or fumble.

**NOTE:** When a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot. However, if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic enforcement spot, it is from the spot of the foul.

**A running play** is any action not included in Item (a).

1. Behind the line, a running play includes a run which is not followed by a loose ball.

2. Beyond the line, a running play includes any run and any loose ball which starts beyond the line following the run.

3. A run ends when a runner loses possession, and that spot becomes the basic spot of enforcement.

**NOTE:** When a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is where the related run ends, which is where the ball becomes dead or where the player loses possession. However, if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic enforcement spot, it is from the spot of the foul.

## 2. Procedure After A Foul

A. **Captain's Choice.** When a foul occur during a live ball, the Referee shall, at the end of the down, notify the offended captain of his/her options. If the penalty is declined or there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked.

B. **Dead Ball Foul.** When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free kick or snap, the ball does not become alive. The Referee shall notify the offended captain of his/her option.

C. **Live Ball/Dead Ball Foul.** When a live ball foul is followed by a dead ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

3. **Special Enforcement: Half the Distance.** A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the enforcement spot to the goal line.

## 4. Summary of Penalties

### A. Loss of 5 yards:

(a) illegal timeout

(b) delay of game

(c) infraction of free kick formation

(d) offensive player illegally in motion prior to/at the snap (only one offensive player may be in motion and must not be forward)

(e) illegal shift

(f) illegal equipment

- (g) **less than four** offensive players on the line of scrimmage at the snap
- (h) snap infraction by center
- (i) illegally handing ball forward

**B. Loss of 10 yards:**

- (a) team not ready to start second half
- (b) infraction of rules during intermission (assessed from 20 yd. line)
- (c) persons illegally on field
- (d) illegal forward pass (and loss of down)
- (e) intentional grounding (and loss of down)
- (f) offensive pass interference (and loss of down)
- (g) protecting/guarding flag
- (h) illegal moving block
- (i) interference with opportunity to catch kick
- (j) unsportsmanlike conduct (physical/verbal): striking, kicking, kneeing, elbowing, tripping, tackling, unnecessary roughness, and hurdling (ejection if flagrant)
- (k) illegal use of hands/arms by offense or defense
- (l) running into opponent obviously out of play
- (m) shoving opponent out of bounds instead of pulling the flag

**C. Defensive Pass Interference:**

- (a) on defensive pass interference the offense has a choice of taking ball at the spot of the foul or 10 yard penalty and automatic first down from line of scrimmage. If the interference occurs in the end zone the offended team gets a choice of the ball at the 1 yd line or 10 yd penalty and automatic first down from the line of scrimmage.

4. **Ejection.** If a player is ejected within the final five (5) plays of the game or during an overtime period they will be suspended from playing in the next game.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. **Tackling:** It is a foul to tackle, trip, kick, push, shove, or elbow the ball carrier or a blocker while trying to pull the flag. It is a foul for a defensive player to "stiff arm" tackle the ball carrier. The runners forward progress cannot be impeded in any way such as shoving an opponent out of bounds instead of pulling the flag. (For any of the above violations, the penalty is 10 yds.)

2. **Ball carrier and running with the ball.** It is a penalty for the ball carrier to "stiff arm", charge into, knee, kick or try to knock over a player at anytime. Ball carrier cannot push the hand away to avoid having the flag pulled. The ball players must try to avoid contact with all defensive players at all times. (Violation of any of the above is a 10 yd penalty.)

3. **Rough Play and Ejections/Suspensions.** Whenever, in the judgment of any official or field supervisor, a player or players may be involved in any deliberate or flagrant violation of the rules, they will be ejected and their team penalized 10 yards. This involves intentional rough play, battering of opponents, foul, dirty, or abusive language or violent protest by either word or action against any official or other players. In the judgment of any official or intramural sports supervisor any type of unsportsmanlike conduct by any player or team will be a 10 yd penalty and if the official feels it necessary, he can eject players or forfeit the game. If a player is ejected within the final five (5) plays of the game or during an overtime period they will be suspended from playing in the next game.

4. **Fouls to prevent play** (delay of game): If the defensive team commits a foul so near its own goal line that they can be penalized only by halving the distance to the goal line, the object being (in the opinion of the referee) to prolong the game, it shall be regarded as a refusal to allow play to proceed. In that event, the referee shall warn the offending team once, and then if the offense is repeated, it will result in the offense receiving a "free down".

5. **Teams are responsible for keeping players and fans back** at least 3 yards from the sidelines. (Failure to do so can result in a 10 yard penalty.)

6. **Sleeper plays:** All players must return to the huddle after each play and break the huddle at the same time. The sleeper play is not legal. Offensive team must huddle on 4th down.

7. Ball carriers may not jump over or hurdle players. This will be deemed an "unsportsmanlike penalty" at the official's discretion (penalty 10 yards from spot of foul).

8. **Catch reception close to out of bounds:** Only one foot must touch in bounds in order for pass reception to be considered legal.

9. **Safeties:** On all safeties, the ball shall be put in play by a place kick or punt from the goal line.

10. **Defense foul on score:** If there is a foul by the defense during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try, the penalty may be measured from the succeeding spot.

11. **Ball blown dead:** In flag football, it is not uncommon for a ball to be mistakenly blown dead. In these cases, the ball is dead where blown dead with one exception. If during a forward pass, the official mistakenly blows the ball dead as the quarterback releases the ball, the down will be played over.

12. **Playoffs:** Each league will advance two teams to Division Playoffs. In case of ties in league play the following priorities are used to determine who will advance to the playoffs.

A. Team with a forfeit loss receives lowest ranking.

B. Winner when the two teams met head to head.

C. Difference of points scored for and against in the games between the teams involved. The team having the greatest point difference receives the highest ranking.

13. **Protests:** If a team feels that an official misinterpreted the rules, they must lodge a protest with the official. The official must (1) stop the contest and (2) bring the rule in question to the attention of the Intramural Sports Supervisor. The Intramural Sports Supervisor will make a ruling and the contest is continued. If the team questioning the rule believes the Intramural Sports Supervisor is incorrect, they

must lodge a written protest to the Intramural Coordinator prior to 3:00 p.m. the day following the original protest.

**NOTE:** Play must be stopped immediately. If the protesting team allows subsequent action; they forfeit the right of protest.

14. **Postponements in case of weather:** if the weather is questionable, the decision for a postponement due to inclement weather will be announced after 2:00 p.m. on the information line.

15. No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be allowed at any intramural events. Those failing to comply with this rule will be asked to leave and their team will forfeit.

**16. Schedules:**

- A. Schedules will be handed out at the captains meeting.
- B. Extras will be located in the Wellness Center.
- C. Schedules and results will be posted on a bulletin board in the Wellness Center.

**17. Forfeits**

- A. Teams are allowed 10 minutes after game to have enough people for an official game.
- B. If a team does not show or it does not have a full team after 10 minutes they will be forced to forfeit. 2 forfeits during the regular season eliminate a team from tournament contention.
- C. Absolutely no refund is given back.

## CO-ED Rules

1. During co-ed play, each team must have 4 men and 3 women on the field during play at all times.
2. During co-ed play, a male player may not advance the ball forward on the kickoff return. They may carry the ball backward or parallel or reverse lateral to another player. The ball may be advanced forward by a female runner only.
3. During co-ed play, a male player may not advance the ball forward on the punt return. They may carry the ball backward or parallel or reverse lateral to another player. The ball may be advanced forward by a female runner only.
4. During co-ed play a male passer may only attempt a pass to a male receiver every other down. There are no restrictions concerning a male passer to a female receiver or a female passer to any receiver.
5. A male runner may not advance the ball through a team's scrimmage line and only run on every other down. There are no restrictions concerning runs by a female runner.
6. In co-ed play men must line up against men and women against women on the line of scrimmage. After the snap, there are no restrictions on men defending women or women defending men.
7. Both men and women can run an interception.