

INTRAMURAL SPORTS 4-ON-4 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

The Official NIRSA Flag Football Rules will govern play with intramural modifications.

Each player must present their [valid UMass UCard](#) to participate in each and every intramural contest.

For the full list of intramural policies and procedures, please read the [Intramural Participants Guide](#)

Team captains are responsible for the conduct and eligibility of their teammates, spectators and adherence to the rules governing play.

I. TEAMS ON THE FIELD

- A. A team shall consist of four (4) players with a maximum of three (3) substitute players for men's/women's and four (4) substitute players for co-rec.
 - 1. 7 players may sign-in to play each evening for Women's/Men's and 8 players for Co-Rec.
 - 2. 12 players per team maximum may be on each roster.
 - 1. A co-rec team shall consist of two (2) women and two (2) men.
- B. A game cannot begin without a least three (3) players. If a team fails to maintain three (3) players on the field, the game shall be declared forfeited.
 - 1. A co-rec game cannot begin without at least three (3) players – two (2) men and one (1) woman or two (2) women and one (1) man. If a co-rec team fails to maintain three (3) players on the field, the game shall be declared forfeited.

II. FIELD OF PLAY

- A. The field is forty (40) yards long and twenty-five (25) yards wide with ten (10) yard end zones. The first down is at midfield.

III. EQUIPMENT

- A. The officials shall not permit any player to wear equipment that, in their judgment, is dangerous to other players. Players must remove all jewelry, including rings, bracelets, necklaces, watches and earrings. Taping of earrings and other jewelry is not permitted under any circumstances. A medical emergency bracelet may be worn but it must be completely covered and taped to the body.
- B. Athletic footwear must be worn. Rubber-cleated footwear is permitted. Replaceable rubber cleats may not exceed ½ inch in length. No metal tipped or cleated footwear is permitted.
- C. Pants and/or shorts with belt loops, pockets or zippers are not permitted. **Players may not turn pants/shorts inside out or tape pockets in an attempt to comply with the rules.**

IV. TIMING

- A. The game shall consist of two, 20-minute halves with a 2-minute half time. Games are running time for the entire first half and the first 19 minutes of the 2nd half. Only team time-outs and official time-outs can stop the clock. Approximately one minute before the end of the second half the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the time left on the clock. The clock will restart on the snap.
- B. The clock will stop during the final minute of the 2nd half for:
 - 1. Incomplete pass - clock restarts on the snap
 - 2. Out of bounds - clock restarts on the snap
 - 3. Penalties - clock restarts depending on previous play
 - 4. Score - clock restarts on opponent's next snap from scrimmage
 - 5. Timeouts - clock restarts on the snap
 - 6. Touchback - clock restarts on the snap
 - 7. First downs - clock restarts depending on previous play
 - 8. Change of possession - clock restarts on the snap
- D. Teams have one (1) timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carryover.

E. Once the official whistles the ball ready for play, the offense will have 25 seconds to snap the ball.

V. SCORING

- A. A touchdown is worth 6 points. A PAT try from 3 yards is worth 1 point, while one from 10 yards is worth 2 points.
1. **In co-rec games**, a touchdown thrown, caught or run into the end zone on a “Co-Rec Play” is worth 9 points.
 2. A “Co-Rec Play” is a pass play that involves more than one gender throwing and receiving the ball.
- B. If the defensive team intercepts or recovers an airborne fumble **during a PAT**, the play is immediately dead and may not be returned.

VI. RULES OF PLAY

- A. The winner of a pre-game coin toss will have the options: offense, defense, direction, or defer the choice to the 2nd half.
- B. The game will start from scrimmage on a team's own 5-yard line.
- C. Teams will have **three downs** to advance to the mid-field stripe for a first down or to the end zone for the touchdown.

D. **In co-rec games only:**

CO-REC PASSING - All offensive players are eligible receivers. Receivers are restricted by the following circumstances:

1. A passer may not catch their own pass unless touched first by another player.
2. During an offensive team's possession, there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions involving a passer and receiver of the same gender. This rule applies to the try.
If a passer completes a legal forward pass to a receiver of the same gender, the next legal forward pass completion must be a *co-rec play*.
3. A *Co-Rec Play* is a pass play that involves different genders passing and throwing a legal forward pass that is caught beyond the line of scrimmage. The spot where the play becomes dead must be also beyond the line of scrimmage.
4. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the play is open or closed.

Penalty – Illegal forward pass, 3 yards from the point of the pass, loss of down.

CO-REC RUNNING - An offensive runner cannot advance the ball through the offensive team's scrimmage line.

There are no restrictions: During a run by a runner, once the ball has been thrown beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line; at this point the ball could be pitched back behind the line of scrimmage and ran across.

Penalty – Illegal procedure, 3 yards, repeat the down.

- E. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs.
- F. The ball is put into play at the five-yard line after a score.
- G. A team scoring a safety will receive two points and the ball on its own 5-yard line.
- H. There are no punts. If the offense fails to convert on third down, the ball will be placed on the defense's own 5-yard line with a change of possession.
- I. In order to legally rush behind the line of scrimmage before it has been initially crossed, each rusher must be behind the seven-yard cone, during the play or at the snap; this includes all PATs.
Penalty – Illegal rush, 3 yards, repeat the down.
1. If the person who initially receives the snap hands off or passes the ball in any direction, the seven yard zone no longer applies during that play.
- J. The ball must be snapped from the spot designated by the ball marker. The official may adjust the ball marker due to poor field conditions.
- K. The offensive team is permitted one (1) running play per possession. However, the offensive team may have one additional rush for a maximum of two (2) if they accept a defensive penalty. Running plays are not permitted during a try. A play is deemed running or passing by the way the line of scrimmage is **initially** broken.
Penalty – Illegal procedure, 3 yards, loss of the down.
- L. When an offensive team is at or inside the opponent's 5-yard line (not including PATs), the defensive team may rush from behind a one-yard neutral zone with an unlimited number of defensive players.
- M. The offensive team can throw multiple passes behind the line of scrimmage per down. If the ball is caught behind the line of scrimmage and the player runs, the play counts as a running play. However, a forward pass completed beyond the line of scrimmage may be pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage and still be advanced. However, only **one (1)** forward pass can break the line of scrimmage.
- N. The offensive team must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage at the snap.

- O. If a team is leading by 75 points or more at halftime or at any point in the second half, or by 33 points or more in the final two minutes of the game, the mercy rule will be applied and the game will end.
 - 1. **In co-rec games**, if a team is leading by 45 or more points in the final two minutes of the game, the mercy rule will be applied and the game will end.
- P. **Overtime**
 - 1. Overtime periods will **not** be played during pool/league play. Tied games are permissible in pool/league play.
 - 2. During playoffs, the winner of the toss will choose to play offense or defense. Each team will be given three (3) downs from the same 10-yard line to score a touchdown. Each team will have one (1) timeout per overtime period.
 - 3. Overtime periods will be repeated until the tie is broken. Captains will alternate choice of offense or defense for subsequent overtime periods.

V. SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. In order to promote a fun and safe playing environment, participants and spectators are expected to be civil towards one another and staff.
- B. Any conduct judged by an intramural staff member to be detrimental to the participants, program, or any particular intramural activity may result in removal from a contest and/or further sanctions.
- C. A detailed outline of the Intramural Sports Sportsmanship Policy can be found [here](#)

Summary of Fouls and Penalties

A. Loss of 3 Yards:

Required equipment worn illegally
 Delay of game
 Illegal snap
 False start
 Encroachment (illegal rush)
 Illegal procedure
 Illegal forward pass (3 yards from the point of the pass and the loss of down)
 Intentional grounding (3 yards from the point of the pass and loss of down)
 Helping the runner (runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate)
 Illegal Run (3 yards from the previous spot plus a loss of down)

B. Loss of 5 Yards:

Delaying the start of either half
 Two or more consecutive encroachments during the same interval between downs (the initial encroachment will be a 3-yard penalty)
 Illegal participation
 Offensive pass interference
 Defensive pass interference
 Illegally secured flag belt on touchdown (touchdown nullified and loss of down)
 Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during the dead ball
 Attempting to steal the ball from the carrier
 Hurdling
 Unnecessary contact of any sort
 Roughing the passer (automatic first down)
 Defensive illegal use of the hands
 Guarding the flag belt and stiff-arming
 Illegal batting
 Illegal flag belt removal
 Unsportsmanlike conduct
 Personal foul
 Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct (disqualification)
 Flagrant personal foul (disqualification)
 Intentional tampering with the flag belt (disqualification)
 Illegal equipment