

TOP TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL

1. **NO POCKETS.** No shorts with pockets. No zipper pockets regardless of their location on the shorts/pants. No shirt pockets are allowed either. If pockets form a “bunny ear” when turned inside out, that is also not allowed.
2. No jewelry may be worn on the field. If it’s a new piercing, or one that’s difficult to remove, it must be covered. If it’s a religious Jewelry item or special event wristband, it must still also be covered. It is the player’s responsibility to come prepared with a means to cover these items.
3. Flag belts will be provided to each team on site. **Shirts must be tucked in and flag belts must be worn on the outside of all clothing with the clip in front! DO NOT TIE YOUR FLAGBELTS!**
4. Respective lines to gain (1st down) for each team in order are the 20, 40, and 20. The point of the ball determines if it crosses the line.
5. If a team is not present and ready to play by **the scheduled game time** (checked in, flags and jerseys on, minimum number of players on the field), the opposing team shall be given the ball, choice of goal, and the choice for the second half.
6. The referee will conduct a coin toss. The winner will select to defer his/her option until the second half, to start on offense or defense, or to defend a specific goal. Each half of the game will begin with the ball placed on the 14-yard line of the offense. There are no kickoffs to begin the game.
7. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Backward passes are unlimited. A **pass** is any exchange of the ball that involves airtime. This can be a forward or backward, overhand pass, underhand pitch, or any other toss or flip of the ball.
8. The ball becomes dead when the flag belt is removed legally (If the belt falls off, one hand touch between shoulders and knees).
9. On fourth down, the Referee will ask the offensive captain if he/she wants to punt. There are no fake punts.
10. **Flag Football is NOT a CONTACT sport.**

INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL PLAYING RULES

General Information

- 1) **The team captain and all players are responsible for all information contained in the Playing Rules, the Intramural Eligibility, Policies, and Guidelines webpage, and the Flag Football Event webpage.**
- 2) **Participants must have a valid photo ID with them at all times.**
- 3) Intramural Sports Flag Football is governed by National Intramural/Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) playing rules and any modifications outlined in this document.
- 4) Prior to the scheduled game time, players should be signed in with a valid photo ID, warmed up, and ready to play.
- 5) Each team shall designate to the referee a team captain(s) for the contest. The captain is required to sign the scorecard at the end of each game verifying the final score and that all participating players have been checked in.

Players

- 1) **Players are required to bring a valid photo ID to all Intramural Sports Flag Football games.**
- 2) All men's and women's divisions play 7-on-7 flag football. The minimum required to play is 5, and each team may have a maximum of 20 players.
 - a) If injuries reduce a team to 4 players or less, the game may continue at the referees' discretion.
 - b) A team reduced to 4 players or less via player ejections will automatically forfeit.
- 3) See attached coed modifications for coed player policies.

Equipment and Uniforms

- 1) Teams are required to wear similar colored jerseys or T-shirts based on their designation of home or visitor on the division's schedule page. Home teams will wear white shirts or jerseys (these shirts may have writing or designs on them). Visitor teams must wear matching dark color shirts or jerseys (these shirts may have writing or designs on them). A team that has matching shirts or jerseys will be permitted to wear them regardless of their home or visitor designation, however, if they are the home team and the visitor team is wearing the same color, the home team will be required to wear jerseys. **No team may wear neon yellow jerseys or shirts.** Jerseys may not be tied in a manner that creates any type of knot. Jerseys will not be provided at the field. Failure to comply with the team color guidelines will result in a decrease in sportsmanship rating.
- 2) Teams must supply their own game ball. Teams may bring their own ball or checkout balls from the Gateway Building. Men shall use a regular size ball while women's and coed teams may use either a regular or intermediate size ball.
- 3) Flag belts will be provided to each team on site. **Shirts must be tucked in and flag belts must be worn on the outside of all clothing with the clip in front! DO NOT TIE YOUR FLAGBELTS!**
- 4) Only athletic type soccer/football, running, court, or turf shoes with or without molded plastic or rubber cleats are allowed. All cleats must be less than ½ inch; metal/sharp plastic cleats are not allowed. All players must wear athletic shoes. No sandals, boots, bare feet, or five-finger shoes are allowed.
- 5) All team members must wear athletic apparel appropriate for football. Any apparel items with exposed metal or plastic (jeans, khakis, cargo shorts/pants, etc. with rivets, zippers, buttons) will not be permitted. Shirts may have short or long sleeves, but may not have hoods, zippers, or any other dangerous adornments. **Shorts may not have belt loops or pockets.**
- 6) Baseball style hats, bandannas, and sunglasses are not permitted. No other types of headwear with knots or dangerous material are allowed.
 - a) **Religious Headwear** – In the event a participant may not expose his/her uncovered head, the Intramural Sports Assistant Director may approve a covering or wrap which is not abrasive, hard, or dangerous to any other player and which is attached in such a way it is highly unlikely to come off during play. Hard items including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes, and bobby pins are prohibited. **Participants must receive approval for headwear from the Intramural Sports Assistant Director prior to participating.**
- 7) **NO** casts/splints will be allowed under any circumstances. Players who wear a knee brace with exposed metal, hard plastic, or metal hinges are required to cover it with padding or foam at least ¼ inch thick.
- 8) Players may wear kneepads, gloves, covered knee braces, headbands, and knit caps.
- 9) Players **may NOT** wear any exposed jewelry of any type.
 - a) **Medical Alert and Medical Treatment Religious Medals** – Medical-alert and religious medals are not considered jewelry. Religious medals must be taped and worn under the uniform. Medical-alert medals must be taped and may be visible. The wearing of a religious medal must be approved by the Intramural Sports Assistant Director **prior** to participating in any contest. (A cross would not be considered a religious medal for the purposes of this rule).
 - b) **Special Event Wristbands** – If participating in a special event that requires a participant to wear a wristband (ex. OU or ACL wristbands), it is the PLAYER'S responsibility to provide an acceptable method

to cover the wristband. Acceptable methods are limited ONLY to the following: sweat bands or athletic tape, which will NOT be provided by RecSports.

10) All equipment is subject to the approval of the Intramural Staff on duty.

The Playing Field

- 1) Respective lines to gain (1st down) for each team in order are the 20, 40, and 20.
- 2) The point of the ball determines if it crosses the line.
- 3) Hash marks will divide the width of the field into thirds, 15 yards each.
 - a) When the spot of the ball is between the hash mark and sideline, the ball will be put in play on the hash mark creating a wide and short side.
 - b) When the spot of the ball is between the hash marks, the ball will be put in play at that exact spot.
- 4) The side and end lines are out of bounds. Players, coaches, and fans must stay between the 20-yard lines at all times.
- 5) Two ball spotters (small plastic cones) will be used during play. The **ORANGE** cone marks the offensive scrimmage line, and the **YELLOW** cone marks the defensive line. The ball spotters will always be one yard apart.

No-Show

- 1) If a team is not present and ready to play by **the scheduled game time** (checked in, flags and jerseys on, minimum number of players on the field), the opposing team shall be given the ball, choice of goal, and the choice for the second half.
- 2) If a team is not present and ready to play by **3 minutes** after the scheduled game time, the ball is moved to the 39-yard line of the offense. 1st down, line to gain is the 40.
- 3) If a team is not present and ready to play by **6 minutes** after the scheduled game time, the ball is moved to the opponent's 20, and the offense is given credit for a Red Zone.
- 4) If a team is not present and ready to play by **9 minutes** after the scheduled game time, the offense is credited with (1) one touchdown and a 3-point extra point (9pts).
- 5) If a team is not present and ready to play by **10 minutes** after the scheduled game time, **the game is declared a no-show win, 9-0, to the team ready to play.**
- 6) Should the game begin after the 9-point penalty has been assessed, the team arriving late shall be given the ball at their 14-yard line as if they had been scored upon.
- 7) **Note:** If neither team is ready to play by the scheduled game time and it is less than 10 minutes past the scheduled start time, the teams will be permitted to play. The game shall begin with a coin toss and continue for the remaining time in the first half.
- 8) **If a team has one no-show, they are not eligible for the playoffs. The team is also completely removed from the league unless they communicate to the programs office in Gregory Gym that they intend to play their remaining games! Send an email to utrs.intramural@austin.utexas.edu**

Starting the Game

- 1) The referee will conduct a coin toss. The winner will select to defer his/her option until the second half, to start on offense or defense, or to defend a specific goal.
- 2) Each half of the game will begin with the ball placed on the 14-yard line of the offense.

Timing

- 1) Games shall consist of a 20-minute running clock first half, 5-minute halftime, 15-minute running clock second half, followed by a 10-play series (outlined later in this document).
- 2) A game shall be considered "official" if after the 10-minute mark of the 2nd half the game is stopped for inclement weather.
- 3) Game time is the scheduled league time, unless the previous game goes over the allotted time.

Time-outs

- 1) Each team is allowed one 30-second time-out per half and one 30-second time out during the 10-play series.
- 2) **Time-outs do not carry over from 1st half to 2nd half or to the 10-play series.**
- 3) No time-outs shall be called during the final 2 minutes of the 1st half. Any time-out called before the 2-minute warning will end once the warning is sounded.
- 4) A time-out may be called at any time during the second half.

Ten-Play Series

- 1) A horn will sound signifying the end of the 15 minute second half and the beginning of the 10-play series.
- 2) At this point, the game shall continue with no interruption other than notification by the Referee that 10 plays remain. The team in possession at the horn shall retain possession of the ball and continue under normal rules.
- 3) Extra points and downs on which a non-loss of down penalty is accepted are not counted towards the 10-play total.
Punts DO count as a play in the ten-play series.
 - a) **Exception: A game cannot end with a punt on the tenth play of the 10-play series. If a team punts on the 10th play, the receiving team will be allowed to run one play from scrimmage. Then, barring a penalty or an inadvertent whistle, the game shall be over.**
- 4) In the event the Referee misses the 15-minute tone, the 10-play series will begin as soon as the error is discovered. However, if 10 minutes has elapsed and the error is not noticed, the game shall be considered over, even though the 10 plays were not counted.

Mercy Rule

- 1) A mercy rule goes in to effect at any time after the 15-minute mark in the 2nd half.
 - a) Men's or Women's leagues – 19 points.
 - b) Coed leagues – 25 points
- 2) If at any time after the tone, including in the 10-play series, the point spread is established, the mercy rule will be in effect and the game shall end.

Scoring

- 1) All touchdowns are worth 6 points.
 - a) To be ruled a touchdown, the ball must be on or over the goal line.
 - b) The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player.
- 2) A try-for-point follows the touchdown. The ball may be played from the 3, 10, or 20-yard line. If the try is successful the points are awarded as follows: 3 yard try, 1 point; 10 yard try, 2 points; 20 yard try, 3 points.
- 3) An intercepted pass or fumble during the try results in a dead ball and may not be returned for points.
- 4) When a safety is scored (2 points) the ball belongs to the **scoring team** at their 14-yard line.
- 5) After any score, the ball shall be placed in play at the opposing team's 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

Red Zones

- 1) **Red Zones will be tracked and used to break ties during league play.**
- 2) A Red Zone shall be scored whenever a ball is declared dead and legally in possession of a team on or beyond the opponent's 20-yard line.
- 3) Only one Red Zone may be scored per possession by a team.
- 4) A live ball penalty bringing the ball back outside the 20-yard line does not count as a Red Zone, as the ball was not legally dead inside the 20-yard line.
- 5) If time expires on 4th down for the offensive team when they are behind their own 20-yard line, the defensive team gains possession and shall be awarded a Red Zone even though time has expired.

NOTE: During the playoffs, Red Zones will not be counted to break ties. All tied games will play overtime.

Overtime Procedure - PLAYOFFS ONLY

- 1) There will be only one coin toss. Field captains will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played.
- 2) The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction.
- 3) Both teams will go the same direction in overtime.
- 4) Each team gets **one time-out**.
- 5) Each team will be given a series of four (4) downs from the same 10-yard line.
- 6) If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win the game.
- 7) If the defense intercepts the ball, the ball is dead and the possession has ended.
- 8) Try for points will still be attempted in the normal manner by any team who scores a touchdown.

HOW TO PLAY FLAG FOOTBALL

Starting the Play

- 1) The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the Referee has blown the whistle to put the ball in play.

The Snap

- 1) The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a **quick and continuous** motion of the hands.
 - a) They do not have to pass the ball between the legs.
 - b) Both of their feet must be behind the line.
- 2) Following the ready whistle, no defensive players may break the plane of the restraining line until the snap.
- 3) No offensive player shall make a false start or any action that simulates the start of play.
- 4) The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the scrimmage line.

Line of Scrimmage Sets

- 1) All players are subject to motion, position, and illegal procedure rules.
- 2) The offense must have at least **1** player not in motion on their line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 3) The offense must bring all players within 15 yards of the ball after the ready for play whistle and prior to the snap.
- 4) One player may be in motion, but not forward motion, at the snap.
- 5) Following a huddle or shift, each offensive player must come to a full stop for one second before the snap.

Substitutions

- 1) Players may substitute at any time between downs provided they are ready to play.

Zone-Line-to-Gain and New Series

- 1) The offensive team has 4 consecutive downs to advance the ball across the next zone line-to-gain.
- 2) A new series is awarded:
 - a) To the offense if the line-to-gain is reached or a penalty which carries an automatic first down is accepted
 - b) To the defense if the offense fails to reach the line-to-gain after four consecutive downs
 - c) To either team if a change of possession or a punt occurs during the down

Hand-offs

- 1) Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
- 2) There are no sneak hand-offs.
- 3) If the ball is tossed or there is airtime between the ball and the catch, then passing rules will apply.
- 4) There are no restrictions on handing the ball during punt returns or following changes in possession.

Passing the Ball

- 1) All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Backward passes are unlimited.
- 2) A **pass** is any exchange of the ball that involves airtime. This can be a forward or backward, overhand pass, underhand pitch, or any other toss or flip of the ball.
- 3) Only one forward pass may be thrown per scrimmage down, but NOT on kicks, punts, or interceptions.
- 4) A pass is considered illegal when:
 - a) Either of the passer's feet are beyond the line when the ball leaves the hand.
 - b) The ball is intentionally grounded.
 - c) The passer catches their own untouched pass.
 - d) There is more than one forward pass during a scrimmage down.
 - e) A forward pass is thrown after a change in team possession.
- 5) A player may pass the ball backward at any time. NOTE: Backward passes that hit the ground in play are dead at the spot. Backward passes that go out of bounds belong to the offense unless the ball goes out of bounds behind a goal line, and then the play will result in a touchback or safety.
- 6) The pass begins when the ball is released from the passer's hand. The ball is dead if the passer is de-flagged before the release.
- 7) The initial direction of a pass determines whether a pass is forward or backward.
- 8) One foot must touch the ground in-bounds for a catch to be legal.
- 9) If a forward or backward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players, the ball becomes dead. It is considered a completed pass and belongs to the offensive team.
- 10) Interceptions in a team's own endzone may be advanced out or downed for a touchback.

Momentum rule

- 1) When a defensive player intercepts a forward pass, or catches a legal punt between his/her 5-yard line and the goal line, and his/her momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball becomes dead, the ball is placed at the spot where possession was gained (i.e. the 3-yard line).

Ending the Play

The ball becomes dead when:

- 1) The whistle blows (On inadvertent whistles, the team may replay the down or take the ball at the spot where whistle was blown. If a forward pass is airborne when the whistle is blown, the pass is considered incomplete).
- 2) It goes out of bounds.
- 3) Any part of the runner's body other than a hand or foot touches the ground. Ball in possession is considered part of the hand.
- 4) Any score occurs.
- 5) Any punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it, or a muff hits the ground.
- 6) A forward or backward pass, fumble, or snap hits the ground (Dead at the spot on backward pass, fumble, and snap).
- 7) The flag belt is removed legally (If the belt falls off, one hand touch between shoulders and knees).
- 8) If a player or ball from an adjoining field interferes with the result of a play, the official shall stop play and offer the team in possession the option of replaying the down or taking the ball at the spot of interruption.

Punting the Ball

- 1) On fourth down, the Referee will ask the offensive captain if he/she wants to punt.
- 2) There are no fake punts.
- 3) If the offense wants to change their decision to punt or not, they must call a time-out.
- 4) After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in one continuous motion.
- 5) All line of scrimmage set requirements and procedure rules apply to punts as on any other play.
- 6) The following scenarios denote K as the Kicking team and R as the Receiving team:
 - a) Neither K nor R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked.
 - b) The kicker may not kick the ball to him or herself or any other member of the kicking team. Defensive players may jump and attempt to block the kick.
 - c) If a punt touches a player on either team and then hits the ground, it is dead and belongs to R.
 - d) If a punt hits an R player and is then caught in the air by R, it can be advanced.
 - e) If a punt hits an R player and is caught in the air by K, it belongs to K at that spot. Exception: punts blocked by R and caught in the air by K behind their scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange) may be advanced by K.
- 7) Before being touched, if a punt goes out of bounds or comes to rest inbounds, it belongs to R at that spot.
- 8) There are no fair catches. K players may not interfere with R's ability to catch the ball. If K touches the ball first, then R can take the ball at that spot or the result of the play.
- 9) If a punt breaks the plane of R's goal line, it will automatically be ruled a touchback, and the ball will be placed on the 14-yardline.

PENALTY ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION

Note: Flag Football is NOT a CONTACT sport. However, incidental contact will occur and could be severe.

Captains

- 1) The captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable.
- 2) Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

Personal Fouls

Players may not commit any of the following personal fouls:

- 1) Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- 2) Trip, clip or hurdle any player.
- 3) Contact an opponent who is on the ground, or after the ball is declared dead.
- 4) Throw the runner to the ground.
- 5) Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player or lower the shoulder.
- 6) Commit any unnecessary roughness.
- 7) Tackle a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
- 8) Roughing the Passer (automatic first down) - applies only to the player throwing a legal forward pass behind the offensive line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer in any fashion, whether or not he/she touches the pass, it is roughing the passer. Contacting the ball while in the passer's hand is roughing the passer.
- 9) Aid the runner; grab, push or pull a teammate with the ball.
- 10) Stiff-arm an opponent.
- 11) Guard flags by blocking them with the hands, ball or otherwise denying the defense the chance to pull the flag.
- 12) Use hands or body to block or hold an opponent.
- 13) Pulling the flag from an opponent who does not have the ball.
- 14) Tying the flag belt in a knot or any other tampering with the flag belt. This will also result in the player being ejected from the game.

Legal and Illegal Offensive Screen Blocking

- 1) Offensive players may protect the runner or passer by screening.
- 2) The offensive screen block shall take place without contact, and the screener may maintain a position (moving or stationary) between the defensive player and the runner.
- 3) The screen blocker shall have his/her arms at their sides or behind their back. Any use of arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use a hand or arm to break a fall or retain balance. Players must remain on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking. No part of the screener's body, except their feet, may be in contact with the ground.
- 4) Defensive players must avoid the offensive player's screen block and may not use their arms or hands as a wedge to contact the offensive blocker.
- 5) Illegal contact between the blocker/rusher will be called against the player determined to have initiated contact (similar to "block/charge" in basketball).
- 6) Offensive screen blocking beyond the line of scrimmage when a forward pass crosses the line is illegal.

Pass Interference

- 1) Pass interference is defined as bumping, pushing, or unnecessary contact with an opponent OR restricting a player from access to a pass while on offense or defense.
- 2) Players may not wave their hands in the face of an opponent.
- 3) Players may not go through opponents to get to a ball in flight.
- 4) Whether or not the pass is catchable has no effect on a pass interference call.
- 5) Defensive Pass Interference carries a 10-yard penalty in addition to an automatic 1st down for the offense.
- 6) Offensive Pass Interference carries a 10-yard penalty in addition to a loss of down.

TYPES OF FOULS

1) **Dead Ball Fouls**

- a) Occur during a dead ball either between downs or before the snap

2) **Live Ball Fouls**

- a) Occur during a live ball simultaneous with the snap and before the ball becomes dead by rule

TYPES OF PLAYS

1) **Loose Ball** plays are:

- a) Action during a punt
- b) Action during a legal forward pass
- c) Action during the run or runs that precede(s) such legal pass or punt

2) **Running Plays** are defined as any play not falling under the loose ball variety.

PENALTY ENFORCEMENT TERMS

1) **Previous Spot** – Where the ball was last snapped

2) **End of the Run** – Where the player loses possession of the ball via fumble or the ball becomes dead in player possession (flag pulled)

3) **Succeeding Spot** – Where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred

4) **Spot of the Foul** – Where the foul occurred

BASIC PENALTY ENFORCEMENT SPOTS

Running Plays	Spot of Enforcement
Foul by defense	End of run
Foul by offense behind end of run	Spot of foul
Foul by offense beyond of end of run	End of run

Loose Ball Plays	Spot of Enforcement
Fouls by defense	Previous spot
Roughing passer/completion*	End of run
Foul by offense behind line of scrimmage	Spot of foul
Foul by offense beyond line of scrimmage	Previous spot

***Roughing the passer with no completion is enforced from the previous spot**

- 1) Non-contact penalties result in a 5-yard penalty
- 2) Contact penalties result in a 10-yard penalty
- 3) Exception: All unsporting conduct are 10-yard penalties

INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL COED RULES

All previously listed rules apply to coed games in addition to those listed below.

Number of Players

The number of players is 8 on 8. The minimum to play is 6, and the roster maximum is 20.

Legal Coed Player Combinations

Full Team		7 Person Team		6 Person Team	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
4	4	4	3	4	2
3	5	3	4	3	3
2	6	2	5	2	4
1	7				

Touchdown

- If a female scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any player on the offense, then the point value is 9. All other touchdowns are 6 points.

Substitutions

- Substitutions must be male for male or female for female only, unless it will bring the ratio of male and female players to 4 and 4.

Starting the Play

- The offense must have at least 1 player, not in motion, on their line of scrimmage at the snap. The snapper is considered on the line of scrimmage.

Runners

- 1) A runner cannot advance the ball through the scrimmage line until a legal forward pass has been completed.
- 2) Once the line of scrimmage has been legally crossed, all advancement restrictions are eliminated (i.e., a player may catch a legal forward pass, behind the line, and advance beyond the line and then pitch to a player who is still behind the line and they may advance with no restriction.)
- 3) After a change of team possession, any player may advance the ball without restriction, as in an interception or punt return.

Forward Pass Completions

- 1) During the offensive team's possession, there may not be two (2) consecutive legal forward pass completions on downs from a same gender passer to a same gender receiver.
- 2) The term **CLOSED** means a male player may not complete a legal forward pass to a male if the previous play was a male to male completion. Also, a female player may not complete a legal forward pass to a female if the previous play was a female to female completion.
- 3) The term **OPEN** means any player can complete a pass to any other player.
- 4) If a passer completes a legal forward pass to a person of the same gender, the next legal forward pass completion must involve the opposite gender as a passer or receiver **for positive yards**. If the player receiving the pass is de-flagged before gaining positive yards, the next play remains closed.
- 5) In order for a closed play to become open, the direction of the pass **MUST** be forward.
- 6) Accepted penalties have no affect on open and closed plays. It is possible to lose net yardage on a closed play – then for the next play to be open – if all of the requirements to open a play are met. Positive yards gained are GROSS yards gained, not NET yards gained after the penalty has been enforced.