

Intramural Flag Football 7v7 Rules and Regulations

These Intramural Flag Football rules are based on the rules elaborated by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), with modifications deemed necessary by conditions of intramural competition. Any rules not covered by this supplement shall be governed by NIRSA rules.

All rules listed here are in conjunction with the Intramural Sports Participant Handbook. The Intramural Sports Participant Handbook outlines additional rules and policies not found in this rules supplement.

1. Players and Substitutes

- 1.1** Each team is required to wear a shirt with the same shade of the same color. Each team must bring an alternate white shirt to each game.
- 1.2** All players must wear athletic shoes. The shoes must have a rubber sole, and screw-in cleats will be allowed as long as the screw is part of the cleat. Metal spikes or cleats with metal tips are not allowed. First offense is issued a warning, second offense will lead to an automatic ejection.
- 1.3** Equipment which may be dangerous to another player (such as hats and bandannas) is not allowed. The supervisor/official will determine if an article is dangerous and will ask the player to remove the article.
- 1.4** Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least ½ inch of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.
- 1.5** Jewelry, rubber bands, chains, rings, or earrings may not be worn. Medical alert bracelets or religious jewelry must be taped to the body. *Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct.*
- 1.6** A regulation team consists of seven (7) players. A team must have a minimum of five (5) players to begin a game. *Exception: Fewer than five players is allowed if an individual cannot continue due to an injury, as long as the officials deem the team to have a legitimate chance to win the game.*

2. The Field and Equipment

- 2.1** The field dimensions are 80 yards by 40 yards with 10-yard end zones. The playing field is divided into four 20-yard zones. Both 14 yd. lines shall be marked with an "X" on the hash mark.
- 2.2** Each team box is a designated area for players. Each box is marked between the 20-yard to 20-yard line and one yard from the sideline. Players must stay within this team box. The spectator area is designated five yards from the sideline and extends from 20-yard line to 20-yard line.
- 2.3** Men shall use the regular size football while women shall use the men's, intermediate, youth, or junior size. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion. During the game each team must use a legal ball of its choice when in possession.
- 2.4** Shirts must remain tucked into pants at all times.
- 2.5** Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), holes, or exposed drawstrings.
- 2.6** Flag belts must have all three flags visible, situated properly on the waist.
- 2.7** Players may carry a playbook inside of their clothing as long as it is not made of unyielding material.

3. Time Factors

3.1 The game will consist of two twenty (20) minute halves. The clock will run continuously except in the last minute of the first half and last two minutes of the second half. During continuous play, the clock will only stop on time-outs and injuries. Halftime will be no longer than 5 minutes.

3.2 A half must be extended by an untimed down, except for unsportsmanlike or non-player or fouls which specify a loss of down, if during the last timed down, one of the following occurred:

A. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted.

B. There was a double foul.

C. If a touchdown was scored, the Try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the second half and the point(s) would not affect the outcome of the game.

3.3 In the first half, a verbal 2 minute warning will be issued to both teams. During last 2 minutes of the second half the clock will stop for a(n):

A. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass-starts on the snap.

B. Out-of-bounds-starts on the snap.

C. Safety-starts on the snap.

D. Team time-out-starts on the snap.

E. First down-depends on previous play.

F. Touchdown-starts on next offensive snap (Point Tries are untimed)

G. Penalty and administration-dependent on the previous play (except delay of game-starts on snap)

H. Referee's time out-starts at his/her discretion.

I. Touchback-starts on the snap.

J. Team attempting to conserve time illegally-starts on whistle.

K. Team attempting to consume time illegally-starts on snap.

3.4 Each team will receive two (2) time-outs of sixty (60) seconds per game.

3.5 The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or inaction by either team, which tends to prevent this, is a *delay of game*. This includes:

A. Failure to snap within 25 seconds after the ball is whistled ready for play.

B. Putting the ball in play before it is whistled ready for play.

3.6 The Referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his/her opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume time.

4. Beginning the Game

4.1 The captain winning the toss shall have the choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half. The options are:

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

B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.

4.2 Play at the beginning of each half will start at the offense's 14 yard line.

5. Substitutions

5.1 No substitute shall enter during a down. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from the team area. A replaced player must leave the field at the sideline nearest his/her team area prior to the ball being snapped. *Penalty: Illegal Substitution.*

5.2 No substitute shall become a player and then withdraw, and no player shall withdraw and then re-enter as a substitute unless a penalty is accepted or there is a charged time-out. *Penalty: Illegal Substitution.*

6. Dead Ball Situations

6.1 A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead when:

- A. When it goes out-of-bounds,
- B. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground.
- C. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful Try is made.
- D. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
- E. When the ball strikes the ground after being first touched by the kicking team
- F. When a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players. A ball snapped, which hits the ground before or after getting to the intended player is dead at the spot where it hit the ground.
- G. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached by another player from the belt
- H. When a runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm when the flag belt inadvertently becomes detached.
- I. When a punt has touched the receiving team and then touches the ground

7. Series of Downs, Number of Downs, and Team Possession

7.1 The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. Teams have four (4) downs to legally advance the ball to the next zone line-to-gain.

7.2 A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the defense moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the defense involves an automatic first down; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, punt, touchback, pass interception, or turnover on downs.

7.3 After a penalty which leaves the ball in possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with the next line-to-gain.

7.4 Foul Before Change of Possession: The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves a loss of down, or leaves the ball on or beyond the line-to-gain. If the penalty involves a loss of down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

8. Punting

8.1 Prior to making the ball ready for play on the fourth down, the Referee must ask the offensive team captain if they want to punt. The team captain may request to punt on any down. After such announcement, the ball must be punted, unless a charged time-out is called or a penalty occurs prior to or during that down which allows the kicking team to repeat the down.

8.2 Neither the Kicking team nor Receiving team may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball has been punted. All scrimmage line rules regarding the snap, encroachment, false start, minimum line players, motion and shift apply.

8.3 After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion. Otherwise, leading to a delay of game penalty.

8.4 Once the ball is punted, any receiving team player may block the kick. If the blocked punt touches the ground, the play is dead at that spot. If the punt is blocked by any receiving team player and then caught by any kicking team player behind the line of scrimmage, they may advance the ball. The receiving team may advance the punt anywhere in the field. A kicking team player cannot punt the ball to himself/herself or any other kicking team player. The kicking team may only punt once per series.

9. The Scrimmage

9.1 All plays must be started by a legal snap from a point on or between hash marks.

9.2 The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a down.

10. Prior to the snap

10.1 *Encroachment*: Following the ready for play whistle, and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor make contact with opponents or in any other way interfere with them (verbally or otherwise). This includes standing in or shifting through the neutral zone.

10.2 No offense player shall make a *false start* or simulate the start of a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled.

10.3 The snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of play until the snap. (*Illegal Snap*) When over the ball, the snapper shall have his/her feet behind the scrimmage line. The snapper shall pass the ball backwards from its position on the ground with a continuous motion.

11. Position and Action During the Snap

11.1 Legal Position: Anytime on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each offensive player must be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap (i.e., they must come inside the hash marks).

11.2 An offensive possession may continue if all hold true:

A. The offensive team must have at least four players on or within one yard of their scrimmage line. (*Penalty: Illegal Formation*)

B. One offensive player may be in motion, but not toward the opponent's goal line at the snap. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head, or arms. (*Penalty: Illegal Motion*)

C. The player receiving the snap must be at least two yards from the offensive line of scrimmage. (*Penalty: Illegal Formation*)

D. All offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain still for one second prior to the snap. (*Penalty: Illegal Motion*)

12. Backward Pass and Fumble

12.1 A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble anytime.

A. The quarterback may do a backwards pass to another player which makes that player eligible to throw a forward pass

12.2 A backward pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted and advanced by any player inbounds.

12.3 A backward pass or fumble, which touches the ground between the goal lines, is dead at the spot where it touches the ground or crosses the sideline.

12.4 A defensive player who intentionally attempts or successfully strips the runner will result in *Stripping*

13. Legal and Illegal Forward Pass

13.1 All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a down and before a change of possession a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the offensive line of scrimmage when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one forward pass is allowed per down. A play involving a run across the line of scrimmage and then back behind the line of scrimmage where a forward pass is thrown is a legal play.

13.2 A forward pass is illegal if:

A. If the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is released. *Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass*

B. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage. *Penalty: Intentional Grounding*

C. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass. *Penalty: Illegal Procedure*

D. If there is more than one forward pass per down. *Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass*

14. Completed or Intercepted Passes

14.1 If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by member of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.

15. Forward Pass Interference

15.1 During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the offensive line of scrimmage, contact or action that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage is *pass interference*. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball.

16. Scoring

16.1 All touchdowns are scored as six (6) points.

16.2 Point After Try (PAT): Following a touchdown, the offensive team will attempt the PAT. An opportunity to score one point from the three yard line, two points from the ten yard line, or three points from the twenty yard line by running or passing shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown. Note: If a touchdown is scored on the last timed down of the second half, the Try is not attempted, unless it will affect the outcome of the game.

16.2.1 Once the scoring captain makes the choice, the decision may only be changed when either team takes a charged time-out. A penalty does not allow for a change in point value, nor does awarded or lost yardage affect the point value. If the defense intercepts a pass or loose ball/fumble that has not hit the ground, on a Try and returns the ball for a touchdown, they receive three points.

16.2.2 If an offsetting penalty occurs, the Try will be replayed. If the offensive team is penalized on a successful try, the down will be repeated if the penalty is accepted. If the offensive team incurs a loss of down penalty, the Try will not be repeated.

16.2.3 If the Try is unsuccessful and a penalty on the defense is called, the Try will be repeated at the succeeding spot after enforcement.

16.2.5 After the Try, the new offensive team shall snap the ball from its own 14-yard line unless moved by a penalty.

16.3 Safety = 2 points: A safety occurs when:

A. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line and the ball becomes dead

B. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line and the ball becomes dead behind their goal line

C. A player on offense commits any penalty for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from within his/her end zone, or any situation which leaves the offense in possession of the ball in their own end zone.

D. After a safety, the scoring team shall snap the ball at their own 14-yard line, unless moved by a penalty.

16.4 Mercy Rule

16.4.1 If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the two-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over.

16.4.2 The game will end at halftime or any point thereafter if one team reaches a lead of 50+ points.

17. Touchbacks

17.1 A touchback occurs when:

A. The receiving team downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line

B. The kicking team downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line

C. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass)

D. After a touchback, the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 14-yard line, unless moved by a penalty.

18. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

18.1 Noncontact Player Acts: No player shall commit acts including:

A. Using words similar to the offensive audible or quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense

B. Intentionally kicking the ball, other than a punt

C. Participating while wearing illegal player equipment

D. Fighting or attempting to fight (results in disqualification)

18.2 Dead Ball Fouls: When the ball is dead, no player shall:

A. Intentionally kick the ball

B. Spike the ball

18.3 There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official

B. Disrespectfully addressing an official

- C. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures
- D. Intentionally making contact with a game official during the game
- E. Fighting
- F. Leaving the team area and entering the playing field during a fight

18.4 The second unsportsmanlike conduct foul by the same player results in disqualification. If a spectator receives the penalty, it will be assessed to the captain.

19. Personal Fouls

19.1 No player shall:

- A. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a player in possession by punching, striking, or stealing.
- B. Contact an opponent who is on the ground
- C. Throw a runner to the ground
- D. Hurdle any other player
- E. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is dead
- F. Make contact of any nature which is deemed unnecessary
- G. Deliberately dive or run into a defensive player
- H. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.

19.2 *Roughing the Passer*: Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. NOTE: The passer remains the passer while the ball is in flight or until they move to participate in the play.

20. Screen Blocking

20.1 Screen blocking can only take place during the kick-off and at the line of scrimmage. There is no screen blocking at any point after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Players downfield after the ball is caught may stand still or run behind the runner without interfering with defense. *Penalty: Illegal Blocking*

20.2 The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind the back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block will lead to *Illegal Blocking*. A blocker must be on his/her feet before, during, and after the screen.

20.2 A player who screens shall not:

- A. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
- B. Take a position close to a moving opponent such that the opponent cannot avoid contact.
- C. After assuming the legal screening position, move unless the blocker moves in the same direction as the opponent.

21. The Runner

21.1 *Flag Guarding*: Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to:

- A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt
- B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
- C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt

21.2 The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt. *Penalty: Illegal Contact, Holding, or USC*

21.3 A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in their path. If a runner in progress has established a straight path, he/she may not be crowded out of that path, but if a defensive player legally established position, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction. *Penalty: Illegal Contact*

RUSHING: the defense may rush the quarterback after the official's 3 second count has expired, has handed the ball off to another player, and/or has completed a backwards pass to another quarterback. *Penalty: Enchroachment*

22. Overtime

22.1 There will be only one coin flip during the overtime. ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE. The end zone used is at the discretion of the Intramural Staff and game officials.

22.2 Unless moved by penalty, each team will start first down and goal from the 10-yard line. The team will have four downs to score, unless awarded first down automatically, or a penalty allows for repeating the down. If the offense fumbles the ball, or the defense intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the series is over. Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime period.

23. CoRec Modifications

23.1 A regulation team consists of seven (7) players. A team must have a minimum of five (5) players to begin a game. Teams must follow the difference of one rule: one gender may not outnumber the other by more than one. Example: 3 males and 4 females or 4 males and 3 females.

23.2 A regular, intermediate, youth, or junior size ball may be used.

23.3 An offensive male runner cannot advance the ball across the line of scrimmage.

23.4 Male to Male Completion - During the offensive team's possession there may not be two consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the Point After Touchdown Try. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass must involve a female passer or female receiver for positive yardage. Any penalty, whether accepted or declined shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."

23.5 If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the line of scrimmage, and any male runner runs across that line, it is an *Illegal Advancement*.

23.6 A touchdown involving a female receiver/runner crossing the goal line or throwing a legal forward pass is worth 9 points.

23.7 Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by 25 points or more at the two minute warning, the game is complete.

24. Penalty Summary

Loss of 5 Yards	Page	Rule	Article
1. Delay of Game	2	3	5
2. Illegal Substitution	2	5	1,2
3. Illegal Procedure	5	13	2C
4. Encroachment	4/7	10/21	1

5. False Start	4	10	2
6. Illegal Snap	4	10	3
7. Illegal Formation	4	11	2A, 2C
8. Illegal Motion	4	11	2B, 2D
9. Illegal Advancement (Co-Rec)	8	22	5
10. Illegal Forward Pass	5	13	2A, 2D
11. Intentional Grounding	5	13	2B
12. Illegal Male Reception (Co-Rec)	8	22	4

Loss of 10 Yards or More

1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct	6	18, 21.2	
2. Offensive Pass Interference	5	15	1
3. Defensive Pass Interference (AFD)	5	15	1
4. Stripping	4	12	4
5. Roughing the Passer (AFD)	7	19	2
6. Flag Guarding	7	21	1
7. Holding	7	21	2
8. Illegal Contact	7	21	2
9. Illegal Blocking	7	20	1,2

25. Cancellations, Delays, and Defaults

25.1 For various reasons such as facility issues, inadequate light, or inclement weather, injuries intramural sports games may be canceled, delayed, or end in a default.

25.2 If time and space allows, canceled games will be rescheduled.

25.3 Games canceled during play will be rescheduled if the game has not yet reached an “official” game.

25.4 Games cancelled after the game is declared “official” will end with the score remaining final and no reschedule will be made.

25.4.1 The standards leading to the declaration of an “official” game are outlined in the rules of each sport.

25.5 A default is a game that is not played as a result of one of the teams not being able to field the minimum number of participants required to start the game. The game is recorded as a loss but is not considered a forfeit.

25.6 A default will NOT result in lower sportsmanship.

25.6.1 Teams that default will receive a sportsmanship score of five.