



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Intramural Flag Football shall be governed by the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Flag and Touch Football rules, with the following exceptions.

Participants must present a physical copy of their UGA ID card, a picture of their UGA ID card (front and back), or their Digital Student Profile from Athena or the UGA IM APP before every game... NO EXCEPTIONS!

A. THE FIELD

- a. Forty (40) yards wide and eighty (80) yards long, one hundred yards including the end zones.
- b. Two ball spotters will be used.
 - i. The orange ball spotter will mark the forwardmost point of the football.
 - ii. The yellow ball spotter will mark the defensive scrimmage line.
 - iii. The ball spotters will always be one yard apart.

B. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- a. Jerseys must be long enough so they remain tucked in the pants during the entire down or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline.
- b. **Each player must wear shorts/pants, which do not have belt loops, pockets, belts, or exposed drawstrings.** The pants must be a different color than the flags.
- c. Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored shirts without pockets (**home = light and away = dark as noted on schedules, NO GRAY SHIRTS**).
- d. **No jewelry, hats, bandanas, casts, or other equipment that may be dangerous to another participant will be permitted!**
 - i. Exception: knit or stocking caps are acceptable (even with soft ball on top)
 - ii. Refer to the Intramural Sports Participant Guide page 13.
- e. Penalty for improper dress: the player cannot play.

C. THE GAME AND PLAYERS

- a. Flag football is a non-contact sport with contact.
- b. Men's and Women's games shall be played between two teams of seven players each. Four players are required to avoid a default.
 - i. Co-Rec Games will be played between two teams of eight players each. Five players are required to avoid a default (See Co-Rec).
- c. **A designated captain will be the only player to confer with the referees.** The team will identify this player before the game.
 - a. The captain who wins the toss will have the first choice of options for the first half or defer their option to the second half. The options for each half shall be as follows:
 - i. To choose whether their team will start on offense or defense, or
 - ii. To choose the goal their team will defend.
 - i. Overtime coin toss - the winner has choice of ball, defense, or goal to defend.

- ii. Any additional overtime periods during the tournament, choice is made alternately by teams. Example: Red won the first overtime option, and a second overtime period is necessary, blue has their choice, etc.

D. GAME TIME

Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into four quarters of ten (10) minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be no more than five (5) minutes. When overtime is needed, there will be a three (3) minute intermission. Each team will have three (3) timeouts of one (1) minute in length **per game**.

- a. The clock will start when the ball is legally snapped. It will run continuously in the 1st and 3rd quarters. During the 2nd and 4th quarters, the clock will run continuously for the first nine (9) minutes unless it is stopped for a:
 - i. Team time-out -- starts on the snap.
 - ii. Referee's time-out -- starts based upon the referee's discretion.
- b. Approximately one (1) minute before the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters, the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that quarter. The clock will start again on the snap. The back judge will announce the remaining time to both teams after each play in the last (1) minute.
- c. During the final (1) minute of the 2nd and 4th quarter, the clock will stop for a(n):
 - i. Incomplete pass -- starts on the snap.
 - ii. Out-of-bounds -- starts on the snap.
 - iii. Score (touchdown or safety) -- starts on the snap at the 14-yard line.
 - iv. Team time-out -- starts on the snap.
 - v. First down -- dependent on the previous play inbounds/out of bounds.
 - i. Penalty and administration-- dependent on the previous play.
(Exception: delay of game -- starts on the snap).
 - vi. Referee's time-out -- starts at his/her discretion or previous play.
 - vii. Touchback -- starts on the snap.
 - viii. Change of possession -- starts on the snap.
 - ix. Team attempting to conserve time illegally -- starts on the snap.

E. STARTING THE GAME

- a. All games' opening series will start at the 14-yard line.
- b. After every touchdown, the opponent's next series of downs will start on the 14-yard line unless moved by penalty.
- c. After a safety, the team that scored will next put the ball in play at their own 30-yard line unless moved by penalty.

F. SERIES OF DOWNS

- a. The team on offense is responsible for getting the ball at the end of every down. The center will bring the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line.
- b. Zone-line-to-gain: getting the ball to or into the next zone results in a first down.
 - i. Exception -- first down because of penalty that results in automatic first down. It could be the first and near twenty or first and less than one depending on where the next zone-line-to-gain is.
 - ii. Loss on the play or due to a penalty, a team may need more than twenty yards for a first down.

G. THE SNAP

- a. Must be one continuous motion
- b. To a back at least two yards behind the scrimmage line of scrimmage plays and punts. There cannot be a hand-to-hand center-back exchange on the snap. This would be an illegal snap.
- c. Illegal snap is a dead ball foul.

H. DEFLAGGING/TAGGING

- a. Runners must not guard the flags with ball, hands, or shoulders.
- b. Flags must not be attached to the runner in a way that one pull cannot deflag the runner. (Flag tampering results in a 10-yard penalty and disqualification.)
 - i. If a runner loses their flag belt, a one-hand tag by the opposing team between the knees and the shoulders will end the run. Touching the head or below the knee will not stop the play.
- c. Runner scoring a touchdown must raise hands so nearest official can deflag the scorer.
 - i. *If two pulls do not remove the flag, the touchdown does not count. Penalty: Ten yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.*
- d. Intentional deflagging of an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player results in a 10-yard penalty.
 - i. *Basic spot for penalty is used.*
- e. Deflagger may leave feet to deflag runner.

I. RUNNER CANNOT

- a. Stiff arm
- b. Run over potential deflaggers
- c. Flag guard in any way

J. DEFENSIVE PLAYER CANNOT

- a. Intentionally deflag a player without the ball (personal foul).
- b. Hold, push or knock the runner down while attempting to deflag.

K. SCREEN BLOCKING

- a. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without contacting them with any part of the screen blocker's body.
- b. Blockers cannot use arms or elbows. Hands must be at their side or behind their back.
- c. Blockers must get in the moving rusher's direction of movement quickly enough for a change of direction to be made prior to possible contact.
- d. Screen blocks must be made short of contact in the defensive player's visual field and one step away in the defensive player's blind area (directly behind the player being blocked).

L. FORWARD PASS

- a. Only one forward pass can be made per down.
- b. Ball can be passed or handed backward to any player at any time anywhere on the field.
- c. Forward **handing** can be made at any point during the game and as many times as you want.
- d. All players are eligible pass receivers.
- e. Illegal forward pass:
 - i. Two forward passes during a down.
 - ii. Intentionally throwing ball away; however, ball can be spiked into ground to stop the clock.

- iii. Intentionally throwing the ball away to save a loss. This includes a backward pass out-of-bounds. QB can spike the ball into the ground to stop the clock.
 - iv. If the passer is beyond the offensive scrimmage line.
 - v. Pass after a possession change.
 - vi. If the passer catches his own untouched pass.
- f. If a player throws a backward pass to conserve time or fumbles to keep from being deflagged/tagged, it is an illegal pass. (Penalty is five yards and is a loss of down; and the clock will be started on the ready for play whistle.)

M. BALL TOUCHES GROUND

- a. The Ball is dead when it touches the ground at any time, except on a punt prior to it being touched by any player.

N. PUNTS

- a. Must be announced by the referee after asking the team captain on fourth down how they want to play the down: kick or play.
- b. There are no quick kicks - illegal kick.
- c. Punting formation: Kicking Team must have at least one player on the scrimmage line.
- d. Kicker must kick immediately upon receiving the snap. If not, it is illegal procedure (5 yards).
- e. Neither kickers nor receivers can cross their scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.
- f. Punts can be fielded off the ground and then returned.
- g. Scrimmage kicks that are not announced are illegal kicks (10-yard penalty).
 - i. If a time-out is taken by either team, the "K" team can change the decision concerning a kick or an announced scrimmage play. Also, the decision can be changed if the down is repeated because of a penalty.
 - ii. A "K" player may not kick the ball to himself or any other "K" player. Illegal Kicking - 10 yards.

O. BASIC PENALTY SPOTS

- a. Previous spot is used to administer:
 - i. Loose ball fouls.
 - ii. Fouls (including encroachment) that are committed at or about the time of the snap.
- b. Succeeding spot:
 - a. Where the ball will next be spotted.
- c. Spot of foul - distance is marked from foul spot.
 - a. Illegal pass.
 - b. Fouls by offense behind the end of the run and beyond the previous spot.

P. PENALTIES THAT RESULT IN A LOSS OF DOWN

- a. Illegal forward pass in all cases except after change of possession – illegal pass
- b. Illegally secured flag belt
- c. Illegal backward pass
- d. Intentional grounding

Q. FOULS THAT CREATE AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN

- a. Roughing the passer
- b. An illegally secured flag belt

R. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- a. Ejection from the game because of flagrant foul(s)/unsportsmanlike conduct (physical or verbal) will result in disqualification from at least the next scheduled game.
 - a. Individuals who receive two unsportsmanlike penalties or one major unsportsmanlike penalty will be ejected from the game and suspended from the next game.
 - b. When ejected from the game, the offending player(s) will be expected to leave the playing area within 60 seconds. This means "out of sight and sound."
 - c. The offending team will enforce the sound and sight rules.
- i. Failure of the team to maintain control of their players and fans will result in the forfeit of the game.
- d. Teams receiving 2 ejections in the season, or the playoffs combined will be removed from the league.

S. LOCAL RULES

- a. Spiking and aggressively throwing the flag belt after removal will constitute an unsportsmanlike foul.
 - i. Spinning, spiking, or throwing the ball, and other gestures to taunt opponents or to draw attention to oneself will be an unsportsmanlike foul.
- b. Players are not allowed to wear jewelry.
 - i. Players who have medical or religious jewelry that cannot be removed can come to the games with the medical or religious bracelet or necklace taped down.

T. OTHER

- a. Rules decisions are final after the ball is next legally snapped.
- b. Inadvertent whistle
 - i. Replay down if ball is loose on pass or kick
 - ii. Replay down or take play results option to team whose player is in possession at time of whistle
- c. Roughing the Passer
 - i. If a defensive player trying to block a pass contacts the passer's arm, it will constitute roughing the passer. This is the case regardless if the ball is touched or missed by the defender. Defensive players should go for the flag belt ONLY.

U. TIE GAMES

- a. During the regular season, a tie after one (1) over-time period will be recorded as a tie. In tournament play, over-time periods will continue until a winner is decided.

V. OVERTIME

- a. Each team is given a **series of downs** from the ten (10) yard line.
- b. Visiting team will call the toss. Toss is made for:
- c. Defense or offense first or:
- d. End of field overtime will be played.
- e. Choice on other overtime periods is made on an alternate basis. If red won choice on toss, blue has second overtime choice, etc.
- f. If a team scores on first down, then their series of downs is over.

- g. **If the defense intercepts or gains possession of the ball, then the play is dead, and the series is over.** The overtime period is over if the defense has already played its series in overtime; otherwise, the defense gets their series of downs.
- h. Extra points will be played if the contest has not been decided.
 - i. One overtime, if necessary, will be used in regular season play. After one overtime a tie game is recorded. During the post season tournament overtime play will continue until a winner is decided.
 - ii. Example: Red is on offense first and throws an interception and does not score. Blue then scores a touchdown so no extra points are needed to decide the game and blue is declared the winner.

W. CO-RECREATIONAL RULES

- a. The game shall be played between two teams of eight players. No more than four players of any gender can be on the field at a time when playing with eight or seven people. **Five** players are required to avoid a default. No more than three players of any gender can be on the field at a time when playing with six or five people. When playing with four people, no more than two of any gender can be on the field at one time, only allowed in case of an injury.
- b. The offensive team must have a minimum of one player on the scrimmage line at the snap for a punt or a regular scrimmage play. Infraction: Illegal Procedure, five yards from previous spot.
- c. An offensive team male player may not advance the ball through the scrimmage line. There are no restrictions once the ball has been touched by a player beyond the scrimmage line, during a run by female, if there is a change of possession, or a legal forward pass. Infraction: Illegal Advancement, five yards from previous spot.
- d. In the Co-Rec game, plays will either be "Open" or "Closed"
 - i. The term "open" means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player. The term "closed" means a player who is a man may NOT complete a legal forward pass to any other player who is a man.
 - ii. The 1st down of each half or overtime possession shall be "open". The 1st down of a new series following a team change of possession shall be "open".
 - iii. The offensive team may not complete two consecutive male-to-male passes. This includes extra point attempts. Infraction: Illegal reception, five yards from previous spot, loss of down. (The next down is "closed")
 - iv. If a passer who is a man completes a legal forward pass to a receiver who is a man during an "open" play, the next play is "closed".
 - v. To "open" the play, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a passer who is a woman or a receiver who is a woman and positive yards must be gained (There is no penalty for negative yards gained, but the play will remain "closed").
- e. **All touchdowns are worth 6 points regardless of the gender of the thrower or receiver.**