

# Flag Football

**NIRSA Flag Football rules will be in effect for anything not covered in these rules. Winthrop University Recreational Services reserves the right to rule on any instances not covered in these rules.**

## TIME

- The game shall consist of two 20-minute halves, with a 3-minute intermission.
- Time runs continuously except for the last 2 minutes of each half when it will stop during dead ball situations and timeouts. The clock shall run during extra points.
- The ball must be snapped within 25 seconds of the ball being marked ready for play.
- No half shall end until the ball is dead and all penalties are resolved.
- Time-outs
  - a. Each team has 2 time-outs per half. (No Carry Over)
  - b. Time-outs will not exceed one minute.
  - c. Each team has one time-out in overtime.
  - d. Coaches and spectators are not permitted on the field during time-outs.

## FORFEIT POLICY

- Teams have 5 minutes passed the scheduled time to have a team ready for play. For every minute that goes by, the opposing team will be awarded 2 points. During this time, the game clock will be running.

## MERCY RULES

- In all leagues, if at any time during the second half a team is up by 40 points or more, the game shall be declared over
- During men's and women's league games, if a team is ahead by 19 or more points at the 2-minute warning, the game shall be over.
- During co-rec league games, if a team is 23 or more points ahead at the 2-minute warning, the game shall be over.

## PLAYERS

### WOMEN'S AND MEN'S TEAMS

- The maximum number of players on the field at one time is 7.
- A team must have 5 players to start a game. If during a game a team drops below 5, the game may be forfeited according to official's judgment. A team with an opportunity to win a game may not be denied that opportunity.

### CO-REC TEAMS

- The game will be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women.
- Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men.
- Six players, 3 men and 3 women are required to avoid a forfeit.

## EQUIPMENT

- The Intramural Sports program will provide each team with flag belts
- The flag belt is of one-piece construction, and will fall completely off when pulled. The belt must be clipped. *It is illegal to tie or tamper with the belt.*
- The Intramural Sports program will provide game balls, but teams may use their own footballs. The only restriction for leagues is that Men will be required to use a regulation size football.
- The following equipment shall be considered Illegal:
  - a. Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, or stiff material, including billed hats.

- b. Jewelry
- c. Pads or braces worn above the waist.
- d. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in or detachable cleats.  
Exception: Screw – in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat.
- e. Shirts or jerseys, which do not remain, tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt, which does not remain tucked in. No pockets allowed.
- f. Pants or shorts with any BELT (s), Belt Loop (s), pocket (s) or exposed drawstrings.
- g. Hard leg and knee braces which are not covered.
- h. Towels attached at the player's waist.

## **SCORING**

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Safety = 2 Points
- Try for point after:
  - a. 1 point from the 3 yard line
  - b. 2 points from the 10 yard line
  - c. 3 points from the 20 yard line.
  - d. 3 points for any try returned by the defense.

## **COREC**

- If a female player scores a touchdown or throws a legal forward pass for a touchdown, the point value is 9.
- Try for point after: same as above

## **DOWN AND LINE TO GAIN**

- In a series of 4 downs, it is necessary that the ball be advanced into the next zone line ahead of the zone where the ball was when the new series of downs began. The line to gain is always the boundary of a zone and crossing this line constitutes a first down.

## **OFFENSIVE PLAY**

- All players are eligible to receive a forward pass.
- There must be at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap for the offensive team only. For co-rec games, there must be 5 players on the line of scrimmage.
- All players must begin play with a flag belt.
- When a player unintentionally loses a flag belt, he or she is considered down when touched with one hand between the shoulder and knee by a defender.
- The ball carrier must make an attempt to avoid the defensive player.
- 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.
- One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. If such player starts from their backfield, that player may not be in motion toward the opponent's goal line when the ball is snapped. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms.
- Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down. Failure to retrieve the ball will result in a Delay of Game penalty
- The offensive line of scrimmage will be marked by an orange ball spotter.
- Co-Rec: Males are not allowed to advance the ball through the line of scrimmage

## **BLOCKING**

- 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 his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
- Use of hands by the Defense. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official.

## **PUNTING**

- The offensive team must declare punts – **NO QUICK KICKS.**
- After a team has announced they will punt, they must punt.  
Exception:
  - a. If either team calls a time-out
  - b. A penalty occurs anytime during this down which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down.
- No player from either side may cross the line of scrimmage until the kick.
- The kicker must kick the ball immediately.
- The punter cannot kick the ball to himself/herself or to any other member of their team.
- No player from the kicking team may touch the kicked ball until it has been touched by a receiving team player.
- A kicking team player may gain possession but not advance a muffed punt that has not touched the ground.
- No player from the kicking team may interfere with a receiving team player attempting to catch the kick.

## **DEAD BALL**

- The ball becomes dead:
  - a. Anytime the ball carrier touches the ground with any part of the body except the hands or feet.
  - b. Anytime the ball touches the ground.

## **TIE BREAKER**

- **COIN TOSS** – A coin will be flipped by the referee to determine the options. The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice from the remaining options.  
All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.
- **TIE BREAKER** – Each team will be given 4 downs from the same 10-yard line. If the first team scores, they will choose a point after option, and then the second team will be given 4 plays to match the opponents score. Teams will alternate offense and defense for each additional overtime period. Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime period. Overtime will continue until a winner is determined.

## **FOULS AND PENALTIES**

### *FIVE YARD PENALTIES:*

- a. Illegal Equipment
- b. Delay of Game **DEAD BALL**
- c. Substitution Infractions
- d. Unfair Tactics
- e. Infractions of Protected Scrimmage Kick Formation
- f. Encroachment Dead Ball

- g. False Start Dead Ball
- h. Illegal Snap Dead Ball
- i. Offensive Player Not Within 15 yds. of Ball
- j. Illegal Formation
- k. Illegal Motion
- l. Player Out-of-Bounds When Ball is Snapped
- m. Player Receiving Snap Within 2 yards of the Scrimmage Line
- n. Illegal Shift
- o. Illegally Handing the Ball Forward (Loss of Down)
- p. Advancement Through the Neutral Zone by a Male Runner (Co-Rec. Only)
- q. Intentionally Throwing Backward Pass or Fumbling Out of Bounds (Loss of Down)
- r. Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down)
- s. Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)
- t. Illegal Forward Pass-2 Consecutive Male to Male Forward Pass Completions (Loss of Down) (Co-Rec. Only)
- u. Illegal Forward Pass-Male Catches Pass and Runs Beyond Scrimmage Line (Loss of Down) (Co-Rec. Only)
- v. Helping the Runner

#### *TEN-YARD PENALITIES*

- a. Quick Kick
- b. Kick Catch Interference
- c. Offensive Pass Interference (Loss of Down)
- d. Defensive Pass Interference (Automatic First Down)
- e. Illegally Secured Flag Belt (Loss of Down if by Offense) (Automatic First Down if by Defense)
- f. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- g. Stripping or Striking the Ball in an Attempt to Steal the Ball.
- h. Tripping
- i. Hurdling
- j. Illegal Contact
- k. Tackling (Disqualification)
- l. Roughing the Passer (Automatic First Down)
- m. Defensive Use of Hands
- n. Illegal Screen Block
- o. Flag Guarding
- p. Illegal Participation.

**Note:** Certain penalties may also carry disqualification, depending on the severity.

#### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

- A player, coach, or spectator using abusive or insulting language, disrupting, or arguing a call is display of unsportsmanlike conduct. Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties against one player constitute an automatic ejection. Three unsportsmanlike penalties against a team will forfeit the contest. Unsportsmanlike violations by a spectator will be charged to the team captain. If the unsportsmanlike conduct is flagrant in nature then the offender will be disqualified.

**All rules are subject to change by the Program Director for Intramural and Club Sports.**