

FLAG FOOTBALL Rules & Regulations

The University of Akron Student Recreation & Wellness Services Intramural Sports

Participation in any and all activities within this facility and/or sponsored by The University of Akron is voluntary. All participants understand and agree that use of this facility and/or participation in an activity sponsored by the university is at their own risk and that the university is not responsible for any incidents, injuries or loss of property that may occur.

All team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, spectators and/or other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of Officials assigned to the game as well as the Site Supervisor.

Current National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association rules shall apply, with the following clarifications and modifications in effect:

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- All students, faculty or staff can participate provided they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Intramural Sports Participants Handbook. All participants must present a valid, physical copy, University of Akron ZipCard. **NO ID, NO PLAY!**
- All games will be played at either InfoCision Stadium or Lee Jackson Field.
- Following four (4) weeks of regular season play teams will advance to a single elimination playoff bracket, provided they meet sportsmanship requirements.
- Each team will consist of seven (7) players; a minimum of four (4) is required to start to avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with fewer than 4 players as long as the team has a chance to win.
- A player may only play on one (1) team in any given league (i.e.: one single-gender team, and one co-rec team).
- Each team shall designate to the Officials a player as the court captain. This person is the only player who may communicate with the Officials.

EQUIPMENT:

- Teams must provide a football of their own choosing to be used when in possession of the ball. Men must use a regular size football, while women and co-rec teams may choose to use a regular, intermediate, junior or youth size football.
- Flagbelts will be provided by Intramural Sports on-site, and **must be free of knots, may not be looped, tied or wrapped, and must be clipped in the front.** The secured flags should hang with one on each hip, and one in the back.
- Teams shall wear jerseys that are of like color with numbers on the back. Team jerseys must contrast with the jerseys of the opposing team. If teams are wearing the same color jersey, the **Visiting Team** on the game sheet will wear the provided scrimmage jerseys. Jerseys may not be tied in a manner that creates any type of knot. A team member shall not remove the jersey and/or pants/shirt within the visual confines of the playing area during the game.
- **Shorts or pants with pockets or belt loops may NOT be worn.** Pockets that are secured with a lining on the inside, may be worn inside out, provided the pockets lay flat and do not hang loose (create bunny ears).
- Molded cleats (**non-metal tipped**) or other athletic footwear may be worn; no sandals, boots or other shoes are allowed. Shoes must be worn at all times.
- **Shirts must remain tucked in at all times.** Shirts that cannot be tucked in must be a minimum of 4" above the flagbelt. Shirts with cutoff sleeves must have an arm opening less than 4" below the armpit.
- Players may wear a headband made of soft pliable material. No other headwear will be allowed.

- **All jewelry must be removed, and can NOT be taped over.**
 - Only Medical Alert bracelets and/or necklaces will be permitted, and must be taped to the body, leaving vital information visible.

GAME FORMAT:

- **The Scorekeeper's record is final.**
- A coin toss, called by the Visiting Captain, at the beginning of the match will determine the choice of first ball possession, choice of direction, or defer their choice to the 2nd half.
 - The opponent shall have these options for the second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 14-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross the next first-down line until they score a touchdown or fail to cross a first-down line.

TIMING:

- All games shall consist of two (2) - 20 minute halves.
- Half-time shall be three (3) minutes in length.
- The entire first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half will be a running clock. The last two (2) minutes of the second half will follow NIRSA timing rules (similar to NCAA & NFHS Football).
- After a stopped clock, time will begin at the snap of the ball, unless in the final minutes of the game as dictated by the previous play.
- Once the ball is marked ready for play, a team has 25 seconds within which to snap the ball.
- Each team will receive two (2) charged time-outs per half. Only **players on the field or coaches on the sidelines** may request a time-out from an official only when the ball is dead.
 - Once a team captain makes a choice of going for a one (1), two (2), or three (3)-point conversion after scoring a touchdown, he/she may change the decision only if a charged time out is granted to either team.

OVERTIME:

- Only applies during bracket play, **NOT in the regular season.**
- Should a game end with a tie score, the following system shall be used:
 - Coin toss to the home team with the following options.
 1. Offense or defense
 2. Goal – both teams will use the same goal on offense.
 - Each team is allowed four (4) plays in which to score by passing from the 10-yard. If they score, the extra point will be attempted as in normal regulation. An interception will end the series.
 - Play will continue until one team has scored more points after both teams had the same number of series.
 - This type of play will continue until a winner is declared.

PLAYERS:

- Players arriving late must check-in with the Scorekeeper, prior to entering the game.
- All plays must originate with a snap from center. This snap must be received at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. The snap may be made between the legs or to the side of the snapper.
- The offensive team must have at least one (1) player on their scrimmage line at the snap. The snapper must count as one of the players.
- Only one (1) offensive player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. This motion must begin more than one second before the ball is snapped, and must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.

- After the ball is ready-for-play, each player of the offensive team must momentarily be within 10 yards of the ball prior to the snap before moving closer to the sideline.
- No defensive player may be closer than one (1) yard to the line of scrimmage during all scrimmage downs, as indicated by the neutral zone markers. Players may not break the neutral zone until the ball is snapped.
- Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended. The snapper may have the ball spotted or bring it to the huddle to dry and clean it.

RUNNING THE BALL:

- A runner shall not flag guard by using his/her hands, arms, or the ball to cause contact between the runner and an opponent that denies the opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. "Spinning" or jumping to avoid being deflagged is legal. Actions such as slapping with the hand or stiff arming are examples of flag guarding.
- Diving is legal by offensive or defensive players; however, the diving player is still responsible for any contact which they initiate. An offensive player diving towards the defense is another example of flag guarding. Offensive players diving while players attempt to run in from the sides and pull flags that are not guarded is legal.
- A ball carrier may not hurdle a player to avoid deflagging. Hurdling is interpreted as an attempt by a runner to jump over a player still on their feet with the feet or knees of the runner foremost.
- If a player inadvertently loses their flags or it is pulled by the opposition before gaining possession of the ball, the **play will continue and the player must be downed by a one hand touch**, between the shoulder and knees, including the hand and arm.
- A player will be ruled "down" when any part of the body other than the hand or foot touches the ground, or he/she has been de-flagged.
- The defender may not play the person, nor may they hold or tackle the runner while deflagging the ball carrier.
- A fumbled or muffed ball is dead when it strikes the ground.
- When an inadvertent whistle occurs:
 1. The offensive team will have the option of taking the play with the ball spotted at its location when the whistle blew or replay the down.
 2. If the ball is loose following a backward pass or fumble, the team will have the option of taking the ball at the spot where possession was lost or replay the down.
 3. During a legal forward pass or a legal kick, if an inadvertent whistle occurs, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip a ball in player possession. The object of the game is to deflag a ball carrier, not steal the ball.

BLOCKING & RUSHING:

- No part of the body except the feet shall be in contact with the ground and the feet must remain on the ground for the duration of the block.
- Blocking will be by **SCREENING** only. That is, a blocker must hinder a defender's movement through positioning rather than body contact.
- During a block, the body must remain upright with elbows and hands touching the body at the side or behind the back.
- While incidental contact may occur, blocking/rushing penalties will be called against the player who initiates contact.
- The defense may not use hands, arms, or legs as a wedge to gain an advantage over a blocker.

PASSING:

- A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage.
- All incomplete backward passes shall be marked down at the point of ground contact.

- Only one forward pass may be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage on a given play.
- A forward pass is illegal if:
 1. It is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage.
 2. It is intentional grounding.
 3. It is thrown after a change of possession.
 4. The passer catches his/her untouched forward/backward pass.
 5. It is the second forward pass during a play.
- All players except the passer are eligible to receive a pass.
- A player must have complete possession of the ball and land with the first part of their body inbounds, normally one foot, to be a legal reception.
- A pass intercepted in the end zone may be advanced.
- If the passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball, the ball is dead at that spot and the down has ended.
- If an offensive player goes out-of-bounds on his/her own volition and returns inbounds to contribute to the play, it is an illegal participation foul.
- **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. 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.
- If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead at the spot of the catch and possession belongs to the team that snapped the ball.

PUNTING:

- All punts must be announced prior to the snap of the ball. **There are no fake or quick punts allowed.**
- A minimum of one (1) player must be on the offensive line of scrimmage and no movement beyond the offensive line of the scrimmage is allowed until after the ball has been punted.
- There are no fair catches during the punt.
- Once the ball is touched and hits the ground (muffed), the ball is dead at the spot where it hits the ground.
- If the punt goes out of bounds, the ball is taken at the spot where the ball goes out of bounds.
- If the ball hits the ground on the snap, it will be dead and the receiving team will gain control at the spot where it hit the ground.
- There are no restrictions to the number of players the defensive team must have on their line of scrimmage. Defensive players MAY attempt to block the punt by jumping straight up in the air. They may NOT penetrate the line of scrimmage.

SAFETY:

- A safety will be awarded if:
 - A player carries the ball across the goal line they are defending and the ball becomes dead while in their team's possession
 - A team commits a penalty in the end zone where the spot of enforcement is designated as the spot of the foul
- A team recording a safety will receive two (2) points and will obtain possession of the ball on their own 14-yard line.

SCORING:

- To be ruled a touchdown, the ball must break the plain of the goal line.
- Point values will be as follows:
 1. Touchdown: 6 points
 2. Safety: 2 points
 3. PAT from 3 yard line: 1 point

- 4. PAT from **10** yard line: 2 points
- 5. PAT from **20** yard line: 3 points
- **No interceptions on a PAT may be returned**; an interception during a PAT will be blown dead at time of interception.
- **Touchdown Verification** – The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed, the player is disqualified and it is a penalty.
- **Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by the following points at or inside the corresponding times, the game shall be over:
 - 50 points at or inside the second half.
 - 35 points at or inside the final five (5) minutes.
 - 19 points at or inside the final two (2) minutes.

PENALTIES:

- The offended team may have its choice of the penalty, or the result of the play.
- When both teams commit an infraction during the same live ball period, regardless of the severity, the down is automatically replayed, provided there is no change of possession. If an ejection is warranted, this may occur even though no yardage is assessed.
- When a live ball and dead ball penalty occurs, each is handled on its own merit, regardless of whether the penalties are on the same or opposing teams.
- Live ball fouls committed by either team after the original defense gains possession during a try or an overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot (where the ball will next be snapped).

Five yard Penalties

- Improper equipment
- Illegal substitution
- Illegal formation, motion, shift, snap, procedure, encroachment, and false start
- Delay of game
- Illegal position (offensive player not within 10 yards of the ball)

Ten yard Penalties

- Illegal participation
- Hurdling
- Flag guarding
- Illegal removal of flag
- Illegal contact (illegal use of hands, arms, legs or body)
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Unnecessary roughness
- Tackling the runner (automatic disqualification)
- Fighting (an attempt by a player or non-player to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football) includes acts such as attempting to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s), or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact (automatic DQ)
- Intentionally contacting a game official physically (automatic DQ)
- Defensive/Offensive pass interference (if intentional or flagrant, may be penalized an additional 5 yards)
- Roughing the passer, plus automatic first down
- Steal or attempt to steal ball from ball carrier
- Consecutive encroachments in the same interval between downs

- Illegally secured flag belt (if by the offense will also result in player DQ and loss of down; if by the defense will also result in player DQ and automatic first down)

Loss of down Penalties

- Illegal forward pass (5 yards)
- Illegally secured flag belt on a touchdown by the offense (also DQ, 10 yards)
- Illegal backward pass (5 yards)
- Illegal male reception (5 yards)

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:

- All unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are penalized as a dead ball foul. A player receiving an unsportsmanlike conduct foul must sub out for the subsequent down. If a penalty occurs on the subsequent down which results in repeating the down the player may re-enter the game. If a dead ball penalty occurs between downs the player may still not re-enter until after the subsequent down.
- If a fight occurs on the playing field, all team substitutes are to remain in their team box. If a substitute enters the field to observe, separate participants, become involved in the fight, or for any other reason, he/she will be disqualified and a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be enforced from the succeeding spot. Each individual substitute who enters illegally will be disqualified and penalized. Entering substitutes, who are on the field for substitution purposes before the fight, will not be penalized for being there if they do not participate in the fight.
- The second unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the same player or non-player results in disqualification.
- Ejected players must meet with the Manager of Intramural Sports before he/she is allowed to participate in any intramural contest moving forward.

CO-REC MODIFICATIONS:

- Co-Rec Teams consist of eight (8) players, four (4) men and four (4) women. A team may play with uneven numbers of men and women so long as the number of either gender does not exceed one (1) except if the team has only six (6) members. They may play with four (4) women and two (2) men, or (2) women and (4) men. A minimum of five (5) players are needed to begin, (3) men and (2) women or (2) men and (3) women. The game may be continued with fewer than 5 players as long as the team has a chance to win.
- No male player may advance the ball by running across the line of scrimmage.
- **If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is nine (9). If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by ANY offensive player, the point value is nine (9).** All other touchdowns will score six (6) points.
- **Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by the following points at or inside the corresponding times, the game shall be over:
 - 50 points at or inside the second half.
 - 25 points at or inside the final two (2) minutes.
- **Open/Closed Plays-** After any change of possession, a team will begin their offensive series with an "open" play. In "open" plays, any gender passer may complete a pass to any gender receiver. During a "closed" play, either the passer or receiver (or both) **MUST** be a female if the pass is completed.
 - During the offensive team's possession there may not be two (2) consecutive forward pass **completions** from a male passer to a male receiver.
 - If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver, the next play will be **closed**.
 - During a **closed** play, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. If a female is involved as the passer and/or receiver during a completed **legal** forward pass for **positive** yardage, the next play will be **open**.

- Any play where a forward completed pass is not involved will **not** open the next play. The spot where the ball becomes dead must be beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line.
- This rule also applies to the try-for-point.
- Penalty: Illegal Male Reception, 5 yards from the previous spot, and a loss of down. **Any penalty, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the play from scrimmage is "open" or "closed".**
- If a female throws a forward pass to a male receiver behind the offensive team's scrimmage line and he runs beyond the scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.

AWARDS:

- The winning team in each division will receive Intramural Sports Champion T-shirts.

Updated 7/30/18