

California State University, Northridge
SRC INTRAMURAL SPORTS



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1. **The Field:** The field will be 100 yards long and 40 yards wide. The field will consist of 4 zones, each 20 yards in length in addition to 2 end zones, each 10 yards in length. Sidelines and end lines are out-of-bounds.
2. **Equipment:**
 - a. Men shall use a regular size football and women may use a junior size football. Players are allowed to use their own football if agreed upon by both captains.
 - b. **NO JEWELRY WILL BE PERMITTED** in intramural flag football. Jewelry includes, but is not limited to, earrings wedding rings or bands, other rings, necklaces, bracelets, rubber bands, and metal barrettes.
 - i. *[EXCEPTION: head coverings worn for religious purposes.]*
 - c. All shirts/jerseys must be tucked into pants/shorts at all times.
 - d. **Players must wear pants/shorts without any belts, belt loops, exposed drawstrings or pockets. Players cannot place tape over their pockets.**
 - e. Each player must wear shoes. Players may wear cleats provided that the rubber cleats are short and molded into the sole of the shoe. **METAL CLEATS ARE NOT PERMITTED.**
 - f. Each player must wear a flag belt provided by the intramural program, free of knots, at the waistline with 3 flags permanently attached, on flag on each side and one in the center of the back.
3. **Start of Each Game:** Games will start at the specified time. A 10-minute forfeit time will be allowed before a game is called due to forfeit. The game will begin with a coin toss or other random method. The winner of the toss has first choice of options in the first half, and the loser of the coin toss will have the first choice of options in the second half. The two options are either:
 - a. To have first possession of the ball or to defer.
 - b. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.
4. **Game Time:**
 - a. Playing time will be four (4) quarters of 10 minutes each with a 5-minute half time. In case of an overtime period, there will be a 3-minute interval between regulation and overtime.
 - b. The clock runs continuously except for the last 2 minutes of each half (second and fourth quarters). A two-minute warning will be given by the officials. The clock will begin when the offense legally snaps the ball. The back judge will keep the game time.
 - c. The clock stops during the last 2 minutes for an
 - i. Incomplete pass
 - ii. Out of bounds

- iii. Score
- iv. Team time-out
- v. First down
- vi. Fair catch
- vii. Penalty and administration
- viii. Referee's time-out
- ix. Touchback
- x. Change of possession
- xi. Inadvertent whistle

5. **Tie Breaking Procedure** (occurs only during tournament play)

In case of a tie, each team will be awarded 4 downs in which to score a touchdown, and if successful, one play to score on an extra point try (*Try*). Procedure is as follows:

- a. A coin toss will determine possession, in the same manner used to start the game. Only one coin toss will occur during overtime play. The winner of the toss may choose to play offense, defense, or defend a goal. All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal after one is selected. After the initial toss is won, the remaining overtime periods will begin with the opposite team making a selection of offense or defense.
 - b. The team taking possession begins with the ball on the 10 yard line and attempts to score at the nearest goal.
 - c. In the event of an interception, the play is dead and the team that intercepted the ball gets the ball on the 10 yard line.
 - d. There is no requirement that a team must go for 2 points after a certain number of periods. The procedure is repeated until one team has scored more points than their opponent at the end of the overtime period.
6. **Time-Outs:** Each team is entitled to 2 time-outs per half, which do not carry over to the next half. No time-outs are given for the overtime period. Each time-out shall not exceed 60 seconds. A team requesting excessive time-outs will be charged a delay of game penalty (5 yards). The referee will warn both teams 5 seconds before a charged time-out expires. The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after a time-out concludes.
7. **Delays:** All players must be on the field at the scheduled game time with their flags in the proper position. A delay of game penalty is given to a team that:
- a. Consumes more than 25 seconds to put the ball in play.
 - b. Deliberately advances the ball after it has been declared dead.
 - c. Deliberately puts the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
- Penalty:** *Delay of game – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage*
8. **Substitution:** Substitution infractions include:
- a. Entering the game during a live ball.
 - b. Entering/leaving the game during a live ball.
 - c. Entering and leaving during the same dead ball – the player must play at least 1 down.
 - d. Entering a game without being ready to play.
9. **Starting the Game:** There will be no kickoff. The game begins with a scrimmage play at the 14 yard line of the team that has been awarded the ball.
10. **Dead Ball**

- a. A live ball becomes dead when:
 - i. A runner's flag belt is removed legally by a defensive player.
 - ii. It goes out-of-bounds nor when it touches the goal line of the runner's opponent.
 - iii. Any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground.
 - iv. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try-for point is made.
 - v. A fumble or pass touches the ground.
 - vi. A passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball.
 - vii. An untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it.
 - viii. An official blows his/her whistle (even if inadvertently)
 - ix. A protected scrimmage kick breaks the plane of the receiving team's goal line.
 - x. The defense secures possession of the ball during a try or overtime.

11. Downs & Team Possession

- a. A team has 4 consecutive downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next.
- b. During the first possessions of each half or after a team has scored, the ball is placed on the team's 14 yard line. In order to gain a first down, the team only has to move the ball 6 yards to the next zone. If this occurs, the next zone line (20 yards) must be reached for a first down.
- c. A new series of downs is awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone. If a player carries the ball so that it only temporarily dents the line-to-gain before going out-of-bounds, it would be a first down.
- d. When a scrimmage follows the penalty for a live ball foul committed during a free kick, the down and distance established by the penalty shall be the first down with the next zone line-to-gain.
- e. 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 zone line-to-gain.
- f. If a penalty is declined, the number of the next down will be what it would have been if that foul had not occurred.
- g. After a penalty between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as established before the foul unless the foul leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain.

12. Protected Scrimmage Kick

- a. The team captain must inform the referee when he/she wants a protected scrimmage kick. Once requested, the ball must be kicked.
- b. The offense must have 4 players within one yard of their scrimmage line and they may not cross the line of scrimmage **until the kick is made.**
Penalty: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards from the previous spot
- c. Kicker must be at least 5 yards behind scrimmage when receiving the snap.
- d. If a player of the kicking team catches a protected scrimmage kick beyond the kicker's scrimmage line, provided the kicked ball had been touched by a receiver of the non-kicking team who was clearly beyond the kicker's scrimmage line at the time of touching, the ball is dead and belongs to the kicking team.
- e. There are no onside kicks or fake punts.

- f. If a protected scrimmage kick goes out-of-bounds, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team at the spot where it left play.
- g. When any protected scrimmage kick breaks the plane of the receiving team's goal line, the ball is dead and is a touchback. The ball will be placed on the 14-yard line to begin the next series.
- h. If the ball is kicked out-of-bounds outside the area of the end zones or touches the ground between the goal lines without being touched by a receiving team player, the ball is dead and a touchback at the 14-yard line will occur.

13. Fair Catch

- a. Once a player gives a fair catch signal, a member of the kicking team shall not touch the ball or the receiver nor obstruct the receiver's path to the ball. The kicking team must give the receiver a 3-yard cushion.
Penalty: Fair Catch Interference – 10 yards
- b. The ball becomes dead and may not be advanced once a receiver gives a fair catch signal and catches the ball. If the ball hits the ground first, it remains live.

14. The Scrimmage: Scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point on the inbound line. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down. Players may use a two-, three-, or four-point stance.

15. Prior to the Snap

- a. Once the ball is set on the line of scrimmage:
 - i. The snapper may neither move nor change the position of the ball.
 - ii. Defensive players may not jump into the neutral zone nor touch the ball or an offensive player.
 - iii. No offensive player shall make a false start.

Penalty: Offsides – 5 yards from the previous spot

16. Position and Action During the Snap: The offensive team must have at least 4 players on the scrimmage line. One offensive player may be in motion horizontal to the line of scrimmage. The player receiving the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Before the snap, all offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hands.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards

17. Handing the Ball: Any player may hand the ball forward or backyard at any time.

18. Backward Pass and Fumble

- a. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at any time except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being deflagged.
- b. A backward pass or fumble may be caught in flight in bounds by any player and advanced.

19. Legal and Illegal Forward Pass

- a. Only one forward pass per down. All players are eligible to catch a pass.
- b. A forward pass is illegal if:
 - i. The passer is beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. Intentionally thrown to the ground to stop the clock.
 - iii. Out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage towards an intended receiver.

Penalty: It will be considered an illegal pass if there is no receiver within the immediate area of the pass.

Illegal pass – 5 yards from the end of the run or previous spot and loss of down

- c. If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead and the possession of the catch will be awarded to the offensive player.
- d. A forward pass is complete when and only if the receiver has at least one foot (knee and/or elbow as can count towards the completion of the attempted catch) in bounds.
- e. If a member of the defense intercepts a forward pass, the interception will be legal as long as the Player A catches the ball inbounds or Player A tips/taps the ball to a teammate (Player B) that is inbounds prior to Player A going out of bounds.

20. Pass Interference

- a. During a forward pass there shall be no interference with any player of either team who is eligible to catch the pass except incidental contacts that may occur when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide effort to catch or bat the ball.
 - i. No contact is allowed by both the offense and defense from the time the ball is snapped. The defense ***is not allowed to jam the receiver*** at the line of scrimmage.
- b. If an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to catching a pass, it is considered pass interference.

Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yards from the previous spot of the snap and replay the down.

Defensive Pass Interference – 10 yards from the previous spot and replay the down.

21. Scoring

- a. A touchdown is worth 6 points. After a touchdown is scored, a team has a choice of points possible from the try-for-point. A try-for-point from the 3-yard line is worth 1 point. A try-for-point from the 10 yard line is worth 2 points. A try-for-point from the 20 yard line is worth 3 points. If a try is intercepted and returned for a score it is worth 3 points.
- b. A safety is worth 2 points. A team that scores a safety gets the ball on their own 14 yard-line. Exceptions: A try-for-point that is intercepted by a defender who then leaves and returns to his/her end zone and is deflagged for a safety is worth 1 point.
- c. On a score, a team may protest that the player's flags are illegally tied or attached. In this case, the player will stand with hands raised and the official will pull off the flag belt in order to enforce or penalize the touchdown call.
- d. If there is a foul by the defensive team (including unsportsmanlike or non-player) during a down which results in a touchdown, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot (Try) or after the Try at the 14-yard line.
- e. If after a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play signal for the Try, either team commits any foul for which the basic spot of penalty enforcement is the

succeeding spot (Try), the offended team may have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot (Try) or after the Try, at the 10-yard line.

22. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the referee announced the 2 minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more, the game shall end at that point.

23. **Touchback**

- a. A touchback occurs when:
 - i. A kick touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line, or is caught by a receiver in the end zone and downed rather than run out.
 - ii. A pass is intercepted in the end zone by a defensive player and is downed rather than run out of the end zone.
- b. The ball is put in play on the 10 yard line following a touchback.

24. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the rules. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. Abusive or insulting language
- b. Any acts of unfair play
- c. Verbally or physically interfering with another team's signals or movements
- d. Intentionally kicking another player
- e. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage
- f. Intentionally swinging an arm
- g. Intentionally kicking, spiking, or throwing the ball into the air or ground.
- h. Failure to return the ball to the huddle.
- i. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
- j. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- k. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
- l. Using profanity, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures

Penalty: *Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yards*

Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Ejection and possible suspension

25. **Personal Foul:** A personal foul is:

- a. Stealing, attempting to steal, or batting the ball from a player in possession.
- b. Tripping, clipping, or tackling a runner.
- c. Contact made to a runner who is on the ground.
- d. Hurdling a player.
- e. Contacting a player before or after the ball is declared dead.
- f. Deliberately driving or running into a defensive player.

Penalty: *Personal Foul – 10 yards*

26. **Roughing the Passer:** Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear that the ball is thrown.

Penalty: *Roughing the Passer – 10 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down*

27. **Blocking**

- a. Blocking must be done without the use of hands or extended arms and without contact. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.

- b. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after blocking.
- c. Teammates may not use interlocking interference to block for a runner.
- d. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen. They must refrain from using their hands or arms extended to move the offense.

Penalty: *Personal Foul – 10 yards*

28. Runner

- a. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponents to pull or remove the flag belt.
- b. The runner is prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm.
- c. The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled, or pushed by a teammate.
- d. The ball will be spotted at the point where the ball was located when the runner goes out of bounds.

29. Flag Belt Removal

- a. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged.
- b. Play continues if a player loses his/her flag belt either accidentally or inadvertently.
- c. The ball is declared dead when a runner has a flag belt removed legally by an opponent. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached from the belt, the belt is torn into more than one piece, or the flag is torn off the belt.
- d. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.
- e. Intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.
- f. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying or double wrapping is illegal.