

CAMPUS RECREATION
INTRAMURAL SPORTS
2023-2024 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

FLAG FOOTBALL IS A CONTACT SPORT AND INJURIES ARE A POSSIBILITY. THE INTRAMURAL SPORTS PROGRAM ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR INJURIES; HOWEVER, BASIC FIRST AID WILL BE AVAILABLE.

THE GAMES WILL BE PLAYED ACCORDING TO THE NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL RULES WITH THE FOLLOWING CLARIFICATIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

MEN AND WOMEN

STARTING THE GAME

1. **START TIME:** Teams are to be at the field and signed in before the official game time. If any team is not at the field and ready to play at the scheduled game time, the game will be declared a forfeit. It is recommended that teams arrive at the game site fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
2. **SCORING:** An Intramural Game Manager will keep the official score.
3. **TEAMS:** In all official games in the Men's and Women's Divisions, teams shall be composed of no more than seven (7) players or no less than five (5) players. New Rule: The snapper is the only player who is required to be on the line of scrimmage. However, the offense is still restricted to one player in motion parallel to the line of scrimmage.
4. **GAME BALLS:** When on offense, teams must provide their own ball that complies with NIRSA Flag and Touch Football Rules. If a team does not have a ball, one can be checked out from the Intramural Supervisor
5. **COIN TOSS:** A coin toss between team captains will begin each game. The winner of the toss may choose to be on offense, a goal to defend, or defer their option to the second half. The opponent then has the choice from the remaining options.
6. **UNIFORMS:** Teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys. If a team does not have their own jerseys, they may be checked out from Intramural Supervisor. Shirts/jerseys **MUST** remain tucked in at all times. Shorts with pockets may not be worn. Hoods on sweatshirts **MUST** be tucked in. There may be no visible knots in any shirt or jersey. Any cut-off jerseys or shimmer jerseys may **NOT** cover any portion of the flag belt - there must be a four-inch gap between the flag belt and the bottom of the jersey, if this type is worn. Face shields are permitted. Soft and yielding padded compression shorts and shirts are legal apparel.

PLAYING THE GAME

7. **GAME TIME:** The game will be played in two halves of twenty (20) minutes each. The clock is running time except for the last two (2) minutes of the second half. During this time the clock will start and stop according to the NIRSA Flag and Touch Football Rules Book

8. COIN TOSS: If used the Referee shall instruct the visiting captain to give a “heads” or “tails” choice before the coin toss. The referees will then toss and catch the coin. The method of determining possession is up the officials
9. HALF TIME: Three (3) minutes will be allowed between halves. However, teams may agree to take less time.
10. TIME-OUTS: Each team will be granted two (2) time-outs per half. Time-outs will be one (1) minute in length, and do not carry over from the first half to the second half. Teams must be ready to play immediately following a time-out. The clock starts on the snap following all time-outs.

11. ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT

- A. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material (including billed hats) or items containing exposed knots are illegal
- B. All players must wear shoes. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in or detachable cleats are illegal. EXCEPTION: Plastic screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat. Any players wearing an illegal type shoe will be removed from the game until they return with a legal type shoe.
- C. ALL jewelry is illegal and must be removed.
- D. Pads or braces may not be worn above the waist.
- E. Pants or shorts with any belt loops, or exposed drawstrings are illegal. Sweatshirts with pockets continue to be illegal. Flags must not be tucked into pockets of pants.
- F. Towels may not be attached at any player’s waist. A towel may be left next to the orange ball spotter or behind the deepest back to wipe off the ball in-between plays.

12. *MERCY RULE*: If a team is at least nineteen (19) points ahead when the Referee announces the two (2) minute warning for the second half, the game will be over. Any score within the last two (2) minutes of the second half that creates a differential of at least nineteen (19) points will end the game.

13. POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN: After a touchdown, the scoring team may choose from the following options for the conversion:

- 1 point from the 3-yard line
- 2 points from the 10-yard line
- 3 points from the 20-yard line

Immediately after scoring a touchdown the Referee will ask the team captain for his/her choice for the conversion. Once this decision is made, it can only be changed by taking a charged time-out. A team’s decision cannot be changed should a penalty occur on the conversion attempt. NOTE: Any change of possession on a conversion results in a dead ball.

14. SUBSTITUTES: Substitutes may enter during any dead ball period. If a substitute enters the field, another player must leave and the substitute must play at least one (1) down.

15. INJURIES: An injured player whose injury caused play to be delayed must leave the game for at least one (1) down. A player that suffers an apparent loss of consciousness may not return to play that day without written authorization from a physician.
16. BEGINNING A SERIES: There will be NO kickoffs.
 - A. A team will put the ball in play with a scrimmage down from the first zone (14-yard line) to start each half. This team will be determined by a coin toss.
 - B. The ball will be put in play by the team scored upon by a scrimmage down from their 14-yard line following a touchdown (and try-for-point).
 - C. The ball will be put in play by the scoring team from their 14-yard line following a safety.
17. FORWARD PASSING: One (1) forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage may be thrown per down by the offense.
18. PUNTS: The Referee will ask the offensive team captain if he/she will punt or go for a fourth down. If a team elects to punt, they must still have four (4) players on the line to snap the ball. There are no fake punts. A team may only change their decision to punt or not punt if a penalty is called or a time-out is taken. DEFENSE NEEDS ZERO (0) PLAYERS ON THE LINE. The kick will be declared dead when it hits the ground even if muffed or breaks the plane of R's goal line.
19. FLAG BELT REMOVAL: The ball becomes dead when a ball carrier's flag belt is removed. The ball will be spotted at the location of the most forward point of the ball when the flag belt clip was removed. All players must be wearing a flag belt at the time of the snap. It is illegal to intentionally remove a player's flag belt if he/she is not in possession of the ball. If a flag belt falls off of a ball carrier, he/she is considered down when a member of the opposing team tags him/her with one hand between the shoulders and knees. If a nonplayer deflags or interferes with a runner. Penalty:
Personal Foul, 10 yards. The referee will award a touchdown and disqualify the player.
20. TIE GAME: During the regular season, all games ending in a tie score will be recorded as a tie in the records. During the playoffs, the NIRSA Flag Football overtime procedures will be used. When B secures possession during a Try or overtime the ball is declared dead.

SPORTSMANSHIP

21. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: Any unsportsmanlike conduct including, but not limited to, arguments with officials by any player, coach, manager, or spectator, flagrant fouling, fighting, etc. will result in expulsion of that individual and/or team from further participation in that scheduled game. Officials/supervisors have the authority to impose penalties for teams behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner.
22. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FOUL LIMIT: If two (2) players from the same team are ejected from a game, that game will be ended and that team will receive a loss and a zero (0) sportsmanship rating, regardless of the score and the time remaining. In addition, if a team receives three (3) unsportsmanlike conduct fouls the game will be ended as stated above.

23. **BENCH CONDUCT:** All substitutes, coaches, and spectators must adhere to Intramural Sports and UNC Field rules and are subject to the authority of the Intramural Sports Supervisor and all sportsmanship-related rules and policies.
24. **DRUG, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY:** Teams and fans are not permitted to bring alcohol and/or drugs or come under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Teams and fans are also not permitted to use any tobacco products on the UNC Fields. Violators may be removed from the facilities with possible forfeiture of the game, at the discretion of the Supervisor.
25. **INTRAMURAL POLICIES:** Team captains are responsible for making sure that all members of their teams are aware of all Intramural Sports policies and rules. Captains are responsible for their teams' sportsmanship and may be held accountable for the actions of individuals on their team.
26. **RATING:** Sportsmanship Ratings are on a ranking from 0-3. The intramural supervisor will distribute sportsmanship for each team at the end of every game and will be noted on the score sheet. General description of each rating and the behavior that is expected of all participants, spectators, and bench personnel (including the coach): Teams must maintain a 2 sportsmanship rating to make the playoffs.
- 3- Above Average: High level of respect consistently shown to opponents, staff, officials. Conducts themselves in a calm respectful manner.
 - 2- Average: No incidents of poor conduct or one minor unsporting incident (ie: talking back to an official more than once during the game)
 - 1- Below Average: frequent swearing, disrespect towards opponents, supervisors, and officials. Consistent arguing with the officials' calls or a player is ejected.
 - 0- Unacceptable: multiple players are ejected, abusive language towards officials or staff, any behavior resulting in the contest needing to be stopped

CO-RECREATION

27. **THE GAME:** The game shall be played between teams of eight (8) players, four (4) men and four (4) women. Teams may play with as few as six (6) players per team. If a team is playing with less than eight (8) players, the male/female ration may be 4:3, 3:4, 3:3, 4:2, or 2:4, six players are required to start a game. The game may be continued with less than 6 players as long as the team has a chance to win. New Rule: The snapper is the only player who is required to be on the line of scrimmage. However, the offense is still restricted to one player in motion parallel to the line of scrimmage.
28. **MERCY RULE:** If a team is at least twenty-five (25) points ahead when the Referee announces the two (2) minute warning in the second half, the game shall be over. Any score within the last two (2) minutes of the second half that creates a differential of at least twenty-five (25) points shall end the game.
29. **MALE RUNNERS:** A male ball carrier may not advance the ball through the line of scrimmage, as runner or pass receiver, until the scrimmage line is broken by a legal forward pass or a female advancing the ball through the line of scrimmage.

30. SCORING: If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is nine (9). This can be done in either of the following ways:
- Female runs the ball across the goal line.
 - Female throws a legal forward pass that results in a touchdown (by any offensive player).
31. OPEN & CLOSED PLAYS: Prior to each play, the Referee will announce whether the next play is considered open or closed.
- During an offensive possession, there may not be two consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the try after a touchdown.
 - If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next play is closed.
 - To open a closed play, a female must be involved either as the passer and/or receiver of a legal forward pass that results in positive yards. If positive yardage is not gained, the next play remains closed.
 - Closed plays mean that a male player may not throw a legal forward pass completion to another male player. Penalty: illegal forward pass, five (5) yards and loss of down
 - Open plays mean that any player may pass or receive a legal forward pass.
 - It is permissible to OPEN a play by throwing a FORWARD pass to a FEMALE teammate (from a male or female passer) BEHIND the line of scrimmage as long as she gains POSITIVE yards past the line of scrimmage.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES CLARIFICATIONS

32. 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. Slapping the ball while the quarterback is attempting to pass is considered roughing the passer, as the ball is considered an extension of the arm (while still in possession). Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond Team A's scrimmage line but illegal contact can still be called.
- Penalty: Ten (10) yards and automatic first down. This penalty will be tacked on to the end of the run on a completed pass, if accepted.**
33. FLAG GUARDING – Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opponent an opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:
- A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - D. Any other act, besides spinning and various other types of hip movement, to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Penalty: Ten (10) yards.**
34. PASS INTERFERENCE – During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A's scrimmage line, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond Team A's scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when two (2) or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous

and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. Interference occurs when the player places 1 or both hands in front of the opponent's face or waves his/her hand(s) or arm(s) near the opponent's face. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Offensive pass interference may be called at any time after the ball is snapped. Defensive pass interference can only be called during the time of a pass attempt. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on offensive or defensive forward pass interference.

- Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, no longer a loss of down.
- Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, the automatic first down has been eliminated.

35. LEGAL CATCH / SIMULTANEOUS CATCH – A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds or being contacted by an opponent in such a way that he/she is prevented from returning to the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.

- One foot is required to be inbound s(while in player possession). Additionally, a catch by a kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion.
- B. A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds. The ball will be blown dead at that spot and possession will be awarded to the offense.

36. FUMBLES - A fumble is a loss of player possession of the ball other than by handing, passing or punting the ball. A fumbled ball that hits the ground is dead at that spot.

37. FACE GUARDING – Any act by a player to inhibit an opponent's (usually a potential receiver) ability to see the ball and/or other players is considered face guarding. Interference occurs when the player places 1 or both hands in front of the opponent's face or waves his/her hand(s) or arm(s) near the opponent's face. Face guarding is illegal. **Penalty: Pass Interference**

38. 15 YARDS AFTER READY FOR PLAY – At any time after the ready for play whistle and prior to the snap, all offensive players must be within fifteen (15) yards from the ball (orange ball spotter). This is to prevent offensive players from “sneaking” onto the field and staying near the sideline just before the ball is snapped, which would leave that particular player uncovered with a clear path to the end zone. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, five (5) yards (previous spot).**

39. ENCROACHMENT – The first offender rule is in effect when it comes to encroachment. This means that the moment a player from either team enters the neutral zone (after the ready for play whistle) he/she shall be called for the penalty. This is a dead ball foul, so play should be whistled dead immediately after the encroachment occurs. **Penalty: Five (5) yards.**

40. SCREEN BLOCKING – This is legal as long as the following guidelines are followed:

- The blocker's arms must be kept at his/her side, in front of his/her waist, or behind his/her back.

- B. The blocker may not initiate contact with a defender. A penalty occurs when contact is initiated and there is an advantage gained. **Penalty: Illegal contact, ten (10) yards (spot of foul or end of run).**

41. SNAP REGULATIONS – To start every play there must be a snap.

A. The snap must take place directly next to, but not on top of or in front of, the offensive scrimmage cone.

B. A snap must be one smooth, quick, and continuous motion, either between the snapper's legs or from the side. The ball must leave the snapper's hand(s) during this motion. After the snapper takes his initial position over the ball, he/she may move or rotate the ball. After the snapper comes to a set position, he/she may not move the ball again until it is snapped. **Penalty: Dead Ball, Illegal Snap, five (5) yards.**

C. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal. **Penalty: Live Ball, Illegal Snap, five (5) yards.**

D. A small towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.