Intramural Flag Football Rules

Any rule not specifically covered will be governed in accordance with the 2015 & 2016 NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book & Officials’ Manual 17th Edition. Modifications have been made to suit Ohio State Recreational Sports programs.

All text highlights in grey represents rule changes for the 2015 season.

Rule 1: Eligibility
A participant may be an Ohio State student taking a minimum of four credit hours. The Department of Recreational Sports defines a student as any individual who is currently enrolled at The Ohio State University and is registered with the University Registrar. Students taking four or more credit hours automatically pay the Recreational Sports student fee and therefore, do not need to purchase a membership.

The following people are eligible to participate after purchasing the appropriate Recreational Sports membership through the RPAC Welcome Center for the semester in which they intend to participate.

A participant may be:
- an Ohio State student taking less than four credit hours
- the spouse of a student or a faculty or staff member
- a faculty or staff member of The Ohio State University. The Department of Recreational Sports defines faculty and staff as all current faculty and staff, and visiting professors at The Ohio State University who are paid through the university payroll department.
- an affiliate of the department (alumni, member of the President’s Club, other recognized affiliate groups)
- a member-sponsored adult

To participate in any intramural activity, all participants must show a valid Ohio State University issued photograph identification card. Acceptable identification cards are limited to BuckIDs, Ohio State Medical Center identification cards, and Recreational Sports membership cards. An Ohio State identification card must include the following information and be clearly visible to be considered valid: the individual’s name, photograph and identification number. Identification cards that do not have one or more of these requirements will not be accepted and the individual will not be allowed to play.

Misuse of an identification card (borrowing, lending, counterfeiting, altering, etc) is a violation of The Ohio State University Student Code of Conduct. The identification card will be confiscated and the individual attempting to use the card will be ineligible to participate. If the card belongs to another student, that student must meet with a professional staff member in order to regain possession of their identification card.

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Professional Athlete Rule
Any individual who has been paid to participate in football, under contract with a professional team, included on a professional team roster, practiced with a professional team, and/or compensated for trying out for a team is NOT eligible to participate in intramural flag football.

Intercollegiate Athlete Rule
Intercollegiate football athletes are not eligible to participate in an intramural flag football game, activity, or event until a period of one year has passed following completion of all activities with the team. After the period has passed, former intercollegiate football athletes must participate in the highest level of play in each league (Premier, Co-Rec A, Men’s A, Women’s A). Intercollegiate football athletes are defined as individuals who are practicing with or competing with a team recognized as a varsity sport. Included in this rule are red-shirt athletes and practicing proposition 48 athletes.

Sport Club Rule
No more than two members of the club football team may participate in intramural flag football per team. Sport club members must participate in the highest level of play in each league (Premier, Co-Rec A, Men’s A, Women’s A). A sport club member is defined as an individual who has practiced or played in a contest for a registered sport club during the academic year.

Rule 2: Levels of Play

Co-Rec (COA, COB)
Play once per week. You may play with a maximum of four females or four males at one time. Teams with positive point total and 3.0 sportsmanship rating will make the playoffs. COA tends to be more competitive than COB. You may only play on ONE Co-Rec team per sport.

Graduate / Faculty (GF)
Play once per week. Teams consist mainly of graduate or faculty students. Teams with positive point total and 3.0 sportsmanship rating will make the playoffs. You may only play on ONE Grad/Fac or ONE Fraternity team.

Men’s (MA, MB)
Play once per week. Teams with positive point total and 3.0 sportsmanship rating will make the playoffs. MA tends to be more competitive than MB. You may only play on ONE Men’s team per sport.

Women’s (WOA, WOB)
Play once per week. Teams with positive point total and 3.0 sportsmanship rating will make the playoffs. WOA tends to be more competitive than WOB. You may only play on ONE Women’s team per sport.

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Fraternity (FR)
Play once per week. Teams consist solely of fraternity members registered with that organization. Teams with a positive point total and 3.0 sportsmanship rating will make the playoffs. You may only play on ONE Fraternity or ONE Grad/Fac team.

All Scholars (ASL)
Play once per week. This league is designed for participants enrolled in a scholarly program recognized by the university only. This league will use Co-Rec rule modifications. You may only play on ONE All Scholars team.

Rule 3: Equipment

- Jewelry is not allowed. Medical or religious medallions must be removed, taped or sewn under the uniform.
- Shorts and/or hoodies with pockets, belt loops or unoriginal openings are prohibited.
- A head sweatband is permitted; however, hats with unyielding material, bandanas and "do-rags" are not permitted.
- Rubber, cloth or elastic bands may be used to control hair. Hard items such as beads, barrettes and bobby pins are not permitted.
- A guard, cast or brace made of hard and unyielding leather, plaster, pliable plastic, metal or any other hard substance, even though covered with foam padding, is not permitted on the finger, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow.
- Knee and ankle braces that are unaltered from the manufacturer’s original design/production shall be permitted and do not require additional padding.
- Knee and ankle braces that are altered from the manufacturer’s original design/production shall be permitted as long as they are soft and yielding or all exposed metal and other hard parts are padded with at least ½-inch foam rubber (or ¼ inch closed cell, slow recovery foam rubber).

Rule 4: Team Captain Responsibilities

- Ensure their team members follow all eligibility requirements. Team captains are also advised to seek clarification on special eligibility requirements, if necessary.
- Communicate game time, location and ID policy to teammates.
- Ensure that all teammates sign a Release of Claims form located on the back of the scorecard before participating in their first game.
- Ensure teammates have a valid Ohio State University ID at game time to check in.
- Represent the team and communicate with the officials. The captain is the only player permitted to discuss the game with officials.
- Ensure good team sportsmanship among teammates.
- Turn in team conflict sheets reflecting any scheduling problems for the members of your team.

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• Cooperate with the intramural supervisors at the game site concerning any protests, incidents or accidents that may occur, as well as with the intramural sports staff the day following such occurrences.

Rule 5: Players

• Each team may have a maximum of seven players on the field at one time. A team may begin a game with a minimum of five players. If injuries or ejections cause a team to drop below five players and the referees decide that team still has an opportunity to win the game, the game shall continue.
  - All players must check in using a valid Ohio State University issued ID.
  - A maximum of 16 players is allowed on the roster.
• Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball is snapped.
  - All substitutes must enter the field from their sideline and all replaced players must leave the field on their sideline.
  - During the same dead ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw, and no player shall withdraw and then re-enter as a substitute unless a penalty is accepted, a dead ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out or a period ends.

Rule 6: Forfeits/Defaults

Forfeit Policy:

• Late teams will receive a sportsmanship rating no higher than a “B”.
• When a team is not ready to begin play at scheduled game time, the opposing team shall be awarded choice of both halves.
• When a team is five minutes late, the opposing team shall be awarded the ball of the first half at its 34-yard line as well as choice of the second half.
• When a team is 10 minutes late, the opposing team shall be awarded a 9-0 (12-0 Co-Rec) victory. The late team shall receive an “F” for sportsmanship.

There are three situations that will result in a forfeit:

• Not enough players – Team does not have the required number of players to participate by 10 minutes after scheduled game time.
• Eligibility – One or more of the players participating is ineligible and therefore, may not participate. Ineligibility may be due to the player being a roster violator, being previously ejected, ruled ineligible for sportsmanship-related issues, etc.
• Sportsmanship – Game is ended by staff for sportsmanship-related issues.

Any team knowing in advance that they will be unable to play a regularly scheduled contest is provided the opportunity to default the contest. This will result in the team receiving a loss and

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“A” sportsmanship rating for the contest. To receive a default, the captain must call the Competitive Sports office by 4 p.m. on the day of the contest with their request. For teams playing on Sunday, the deadline is Friday at 4 p.m. The opposing team will then be contacted by the intramural office to let them know they do not need to arrive for their scheduled contest.

A team is allowed one default per sport per season. Any request after the first default will be counted as a forfeit.

If a team has been granted a default and the contest is then canceled due to weather or scheduling issues, the default will be removed and the contest will be played normally if it is rescheduled.

**Rule 7: Protests**

*Rules Protest*
Questions pertaining to interpretation of rules on the part of game officials must be addressed by the intramural supervisor at the time the interpretation occurs and prior to the next live ball. The procedure shall be:

1. If a team feels the official has made a misinterpretation of a rule, the captain shall calmly and immediately request a “time out” and inform the official that he or she wishes to have a ruling on the interpretation by the intramural supervisor in charge.
2. No protest, which involves the judgment of the official(s), shall be upheld. The judgment of the official(s) is final. This also includes intramural staff when necessary.
3. If corrections are necessary, the intramural supervisor shall rule immediately and the team shall not be charged with a time out; however, if the official’s interpretation was correct, the team will be charged with a time out.
4. If the participant still does not agree with the decision at the game site, a protest form should be obtained from the intramural supervisor on site and completed. The contest will continue from this point “under protest.”

*Eligibility Protest*
Protests involving player eligibility must be called to the immediate attention of the intramural supervisor prior to the completion of the contest while the protested individual is present. Eligibility protests may not be made by participants after the completion of the contest. A protest form should be obtained from the intramural supervisor and completed. The contest will continue from this point “under protest.”

**Rule 8: Play**

*Start of Game*
The game shall begin with a captain’s meeting and coin toss. The team winning the coin toss may choose to defer their option to the second half or choose from the following two options:

1. Select to play offense or defense first
2. Select which end they would like to defend

The team losing the coin toss shall exercise the remaining option.

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Timing

- The game shall consist of four 10-minute quarters
- The clock shall stop in the last minute of the second and fourth quarters; otherwise, the clock will run continuously barring timeouts.
- Each team is permitted one timeout per half and one additional timeout during the entire tiebreaker (during playoffs ONLY). Timeouts do NOT carry over.
- Tiebreakers are to only be used in the playoffs. During the regular season, all ties will remain as such.
  - Coin Toss
    - There will only be one coin toss in overtime. If additional overtime periods are played, the captains will alternate choices. The choices are: offense, defense or direction. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.
  - Each team will receive one timeout for the entire overtime. Timeouts not used during regulation will not be carried over.
  - Unless moved by penalty, each team will start first and goal from the Team B 10-yard line.
  - Each team has four downs (unless there is an automatic first down) to score.
  - Try options: one point – three yard-line; two points – 10 yard-line; three points – 20-yard line.
  - If the score is still tied after one period, play will proceed to a second period or as many as needed to determine a winner.
  - If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble, the ball will be declared dead immediately and the series will be over.
  - If play is suspended for any reason, and the contest has reached half-time, the contest shall be considered final. If the game has not reached half-time and is eligible to be rescheduled (i.e. did not end in forfeit) the game shall restart at point of suspension.

Scoring

- A touchdown is scored when the ball breaks the vertical plane of the opponent’s goal line. A touchdown is worth six points.
- After a team scores a touchdown, they will have the option of trying a one, two or three point conversion. A try is good when the ball breaks the vertical plane of the opponent’s goal line. Each try will be from the following distances and the captain MUST declare their choice to the referee:
  - Try for one will be from the three-yard line
  - Try for two will be from the 10-yard line
  - Try for three will be from the 20-yard line
  - If a live ball is recovered by the defense during a try, the ball will be declared dead immediately and the try will be over.
- A safety is scored when the ball becomes dead in a team’s own end zone while they are in possession of the ball or have caused the ball to become dead in their end zone. A
safety is also scored when the team in possession of the ball incurs a penalty that leaves the ball on or behind its own goal line. A safety is worth two points.

Mercy Rule
If a team is 19 (25 for CoRec) or more points ahead with two minutes or less remaining, the game shall be over.

Ball In Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds
- Ball in play:
  - The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds of the referee sounding the ready for play whistle.
  - Penalty: Delay of game, five yards.
- A ball is declared dead when:
  - a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
  - a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground
  - a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player
  - a runner is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, once the flag belt is no longer attached.
  - a snap hits the ground.
  - a muff of a kickoff or protected scrimmage kick strikes the ground
  - the passer is deflagged before releasing the ball
  - a fumble or backward pass hits the ground. The team in control of the ball prior to the fumble or backward pass will maintain possession, unless it was fourth down and the offense did not reach the goal line to gain.
  - the defense secures possession during a try or overtime
  - the punt breaks the plane of the receiving team’s goal line
- Out-of-Bounds
  - A ball in player possession is out-of-bounds when either the ball or any part of the runner touches the ground or anything else, except a player or game official, which is on or outside a boundary line. If the runner inbounds, bumps into or is touched by a player or an official on the sidelines out-of-bounds, the ball is still in play.

Zone Line-to-Gain, Number of Downs
- Zone Line-to-Gain
  - Each zone is 20 yards in length.
  - The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone (next field marker) in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.
  - In such case, the original zone line-to-gain shall be maintained.
  - The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines shall be the determining factor.
- Number of Downs
  - The offense shall have four downs to reach the zone line-to-gain.

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**Kicking the Ball**
- Punt
  - The kick must be executed behind the scrimmage line within a reasonable time.
  - Neither team may cross the scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.
  - There are no quick kicks. All punts must be announced to the referee.
  - The receiving team may NOT advance balls kicked into the end zone, it shall be a touchback and place at the receiving team’s 14-yard line.
  - If the punt is blocked by any member of the receiving team behind the kicking team’s scrimmage line and then caught by any member of the kicking team behind their scrimmage line; the kicking team may run and/or throw a pass.
  - No member of the receiving team shall raise/wave his/her arm above his/her head during a punt in attempt to confuse the kicking team.
    - Penalty: unfair Act, 10 yards from the end of the kick or run using the all but one principle

**Snapping, Handing and Passing the Ball**
- The Scrimmage
  - Snapping - the snap does not have to be between the snapper's legs. The player receiving the snap must be at least two-yards behind the scrimmage line. A legal snap must be one continuous, fluid motion.
    - Penalty: illegal snap, five-yards from the previous spot
  - The snapper is the only offensive player required to be on their scrimmage line (1st ball spotter – orange) at the snap.
    - Penalty: illegal formation, five-yards from the previous spot
  - No player of the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start is any movement simulating the start of a play.
    - Penalty: false start, five yards from the previous spot
  - Encroachment - After the snapper has touched the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the plane of his/her scrimmage line, except the snapper’s right to be over the ball.
    - Penalty: encroachment, five-yards from the previous spot
  - Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after the scrimmage down. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line (1st ball spotter-orange).
  - A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather conditions.
  - All offensive players must be motionless for one second preceding the snap. After all players are set, a player moving parallel to or away from the scrimmage line is legal.
    - Penalty: illegal motion, five yards from the previous spot
  - An offensive player that moves/shifts (other than going legally in motion) must stop for one full second before the snap.
    - Penalty: illegal shift, five yards from the previous spot.
• Handing the Ball
  - Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

• Forward Pass
  - All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Only one legal forward pass per down is allowed.

• A forward pass is illegal:
  - if the passer’s foot is beyond Team A’s scrimmage line (first ball spotter orange) when the ball leaves his/her hand
  - if thrown after team possession has changed during the down
  - if intentionally grounded to save loss of yardage
  - if a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass
  - if it is the second forward pass in that down
  - (Co-Rec) A female throws to a male receiver behind the line of scrimmage and a male is the first to advance the ball through the line of scrimmage.
    - Penalty: illegal forward pass, five yards, spot of the pass, loss of down, if prior to possession change.

• Interference
  - After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the offensive scrimmage line when the legal forward pass crosses the offensive scrimmage line (orange ball spotter).
    - Penalty: offensive pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot.
  - After a legal forward pass is released by the passer and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A’s scrimmage line while the ball is in flight which crosses the Team A scrimmage line.
    - Penalty: defensive pass interference, 10 yards from the previous spot.
  - If opposing players catch a pass simultaneously, the ball becomes dead, is considered a completed pass and belongs to the offensive team.

Enforcement of Penalties
• Basic Spot
  - Loose ball plays the basic spot of enforcement is the previous spot
    - Punt, exclude post scrimmage kick fouls
    - Legal forward pass
    - Backward pass, including the snap, or fumble made by A-1 from on or behind his/her scrimmage line
      - The run or runs which precedes such legal pass, punt or fumble
  - Punts (before possession is gained) basic enforcement spot is previous spot (where ball was kicked from).
  - On all running plays the basic enforcement spot is from the end of the run.
  - All fouls are marked off from the basic enforcement spot except an offensive foul behind the basic enforcement spot that becomes a spot foul.
  - Live ball fouls committed by either team after B gains possession during a try or in OT shall be enforced at the succeeding spot.
  - All dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

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- Fouls during a scoring play committed by the opponent of the scoring team and there was no change of possession, the scoring team may enforce the penalty on the try or on the 14-yard line after the try.
- Fouls during a scoring play committed by the opponent of the scoring team with a change of possession and the foul occurred after the change of possession, the scoring team may enforce the penalty on the try or on the 14-yard line after the try.

- **Loss of Five Yards**
  - Delay of game (dead ball foul)
  - False start (dead ball foul)
  - Encroachment (dead ball foul)
  - Illegal snap (dead ball foul)
  - Offensive player leaving the field on the wrong side (dead ball foul)
  - Illegal procedure
  - Illegal formation
  - Illegal motion
  - Illegal shift
  - Player receiving snap within two yards of scrimmage line
  - Illegal forward pass (loss of down, if by Team A)
  - Intentional grounding (loss of down)
  - Illegal substitution
  - Aiding runner by teammates
  - Male advancing ball through the neutral zone (Co-Rec)
  - Two consecutive male-to-male forward pass completions (loss of down)
  - Male catches pass and runs beyond scrimmage line (loss of down, Co-Rec)
  - Required equipment worn illegally
  - Player out-of-bounds when ball is snapped
  - Intentionally throwing a backward pass or fumble out-of-bounds (loss of down)

- **Loss of 10 Yards**
  - Illegal contact
  - Eligibility lost by going out of bounds and participating in the play
  - Offensive pass interference
  - Defensive pass interference
  - Stiff arm
  - Flag guarding
  - Illegal flag belt removal
  - Personal foul
  - Roughing the passer (automatic first down)
  - Illegally secured flag belt on touchdown (Team A - loss of down, Team B – automatic first down and player DQ)
  - Illegal participation
  - Illegal kicking (treated as a fumble)
  - Illegal stripping
- Unsportsmanlike conduct (players, coaches, substitutes or others)
- Illegal player equipment
- Quick kick
- Spiking, kicking or throwing ball during dead ball
- Batting a loose ball
- Receipt of an unsportsmanlike penalty
- Two or more encroachment fouls during the Interval between downs
- Hurdle any player
- Kick catch interference
- Unfair act
- A nonplayer deflags or interferes with a runner (disqualification and touchdown awarded)

• NOTE: if any of the above infractions are deemed flagrant, the player will be disqualified.

**Rule 9: Sportsmanship**
The team captain is responsible for the actions of his or her team and their spectators.
Additionally, the captain will ensure that his or her team is familiar with the rules of play and intramural policies and procedures contained in this handbook. Sportsmanship is a vital component for success in every intramural contest. Participants and spectators are expected to display good sportsmanship toward opponents and the intramural sports staff at all times.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct**
Participants and spectators shall not commit acts of unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, arguments with staff, flagrant fouling, fighting, etc. before, during or after a contest. No player or team shall:

• Use foul or derogatory language, threaten or verbally abuse any other participant or intramural employee before, during or after the

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• Participate in a game for which he or she is ineligible.
• Argue or talk back to the intramural staff. Only the captain should address an official, and only if done so in a courteous manner.
• Intentionally strike, push, trip or flagrantly foul another participant, spectator or Recreational Sports employee.
• Mistreat the facility, equipment or supplies of The Ohio State University and/or the Department of Recreational Sports.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalties**
Any participant displaying unsportsmanlike conduct will be issued either a conduct warning or ejection by the game officials or Competitive Sports Supervisors.

**Flag Football**

• Verbal warning resulting in incident report – Conduct Warning
• Ejection of participant with/out warning – Ejection
• Two ejections or three verbal warnings– Forfeit

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Disciplinary Action
Any player receiving two conduct warnings in one game or ejected from a game is required to meet with a professional staff member. The player will be suspended indefinitely from ALL recreational sports facilities and programs until the meeting occurs and for a minimum of seven days from the time of the meeting.

Rule 10: Co-Rec Modifications
- A team shall play with a maximum of four females and four males at a time. A minimum of six players (at least 2 per gender) is required to begin a game.
- During the snap, the offensive team must have at least one player on their scrimmage line within one yard of the scrimmage line.
  - Penalty: illegal formation, five-yards from the previous spot
- If a female throws, catches, or runs the ball across the goal line for a touchdown, the touchdown shall be worth nine points.
- If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed". Exception: Illegal forward pass.
  - Open - males are eligible to catch a pass.
  - Closed - male-to-male forward pass completions are illegal. This rule applies to the try.
- If a down is erroneously declared open/closed, Team A may choose the result or replay the down.
- A male may not be the first run the ball through the line of scrimmage.
- If a team is 25 or more points ahead with two minutes or less to play, the game shall be over.

Rule 11: Playoffs
In addition to a positive playoff point total, teams must also maintain a “3.0” or “B” sportsmanship average during the regular season to be eligible for the playoffs. Team’s averages will be formulated in the same way a student’s GPA is calculated. Each sportsmanship letter grade is assigned a numerical value:
- “A” – Four (4) points
- “B” – Three (3) points
- “C” – Two (2) points
- “D” – One (1) point
- “F” – Zero (0) point

The grades for each regular season contest will be added together and divided by the total number of contests held. This will equal the team’s sportsmanship average.

For any questions or clarifications, please contact the Competitive Sports Office at (614) 292-2732.