

American University Intramurals

4 vs. 4 Flag Football Rules

4 vs. 4 Intramural Flag Football will be conducted under the rules of the NIRSA – National Intramural/Recreational Sports Association – with the following modifications.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. All participants must have their current valid AU ID with them in order to participate. No player will be allowed to play without his or her own valid AU ID. Players must have also completed the waiver form on-line.
2. The players must check-in with the supervisor on duty, which will check their AU ID and verify completion of the waiver form.
3. A player may play for ONE team. Any intercollegiate football player that participated in the 2006 football season at any collegiate institution is ineligible to participate in intramural football.
4. Teams may add players under the following circumstances:
 - a. The player must not have played for another team in their respective division.
 - b. The player must have a completed waiver on-file for that sport.
 - c. The player must show his/her valid AU ID to the supervisor to check-in prior to the game.
5. Teams may have a maximum of 6 players on their team.
6. See the attached diagram for field layout and dimensions.

Protests: Protests are not allowed on judgment calls. Team managers are allowed to protest a misapplication of the rule **before the snap of the next play** to staff on duty. The supervisor and officials will make a decision before the next play. The team manager may protest the game at that point if they believe that the decision is still incorrect. Protest procedures are laid out in the Policy and Procedure manual. Protests regarding plays will not be heard at any other time. Eligibility protests may be made at any time to staff members on duty. The staff will then alert the opposing team of the eligibility issue. Any further eligibility protests must be made in the Intramural Office.

Captains: Each team shall designate to the Referee the team captain or captains. The captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team. The team captain is responsible for all information contained in the 4 vs. 4 Intramural Flag Football Manager's packet.

The playing field: Respective lines-to-gain (1st down) for each team is the 20. The point of the ball determines if it crosses the line. The side and end-lines are out-of-bounds. One foot must land in bounds for a legal catch. Player, coaches, and fans shall stay between the 3-yard lines at all times. Two ball spotters (small plastic cones) will be used during play. The ORANGE cone marks the offensive scrimmage line, the YELLOW cone the defensive line. The ball spotters will always be one yard apart.

Game balls: All games shall use the regular size ball. Each team is responsible for providing their game ball. Teams may bring their own ball or checkout a ball from the supervisor.

Flags: Flags will be provided to each team on site. **Shirts MUST be tucked in and flag belts must be worn on the outside of all clothing with the clip in the front.**

Equipment: All equipment is subject to the approval of the intramural staff on duty.

1. Players must play with shoes. No sandals, boots, or **CLEATS** will be allowed.
2. Players may NOT wear pads or braces above the waist, casts/splints at any time, baseball caps, or bandanas with knots.
3. All pants must not have pockets, belts, or belt loops.

4. Players may not have any type of exposed jewelry. All jewelry must be removed before participating in Intramural contests.
5. Players MAY wear kneepads, gloves, covered knee braces, headbands, knit caps, and plastic sunglasses.

CAPTAIN'S MEETING, GAME TIME, AND SCORING INFORMATION

Coin Toss: The referee shall toss a coin and offer the winning Captain these options:

1. To defer his/her option until the second half.
2. To start on offense or defense.
3. To defend a specific goal.

Starting the game: Each half will begin with the ball placed on the 10 yard line. There will be no kickoffs.

1. First half = the clock will run continuously for 12 minutes. Stopping only for team timeouts and official's timeouts.
2. Half time = 3 minutes.
3. Second half = the clock will run continuously for the first 11 minutes of the half. With approximately 1 minute remaining in the game, the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in the game. The clock will then start on the snap. The Back Judge will announce the time and status of the clock after every play. The remaining 1 minute of the game will use a stopped clock. The clock will stop for a:
 - a. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass – starts on the snap.
 - b. Out-of-Bounds – starts on the snap.
 - c. Safety – starts on the snap.
 - d. Team timeout – starts on the snap.
 - e. First down – dependent on the previous play.
 - f. Touchdown – starts on the snap (after the try).
 - g. Penalty and administration – dependent on the previous play. (EXCEPTION: Delay of game – starts on the snap).
 - h. Referee's timeout – starts at his/her discretion.
 - i. Touchback – starts on the snap.
 - j. Team A is awarded a new series – dependent on the previous play.
 - k. Team B is awarded a new series – starts on the snap.
 - l. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal kick – starts on the snap.
 - m. Inadvertent whistle – starts on the ready.

No Show procedure: Any team not ready to play at game time (checked in, flags on, minimum number of players on the field) shall be forfeit the match. **GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.**

Mercy Rule: At the time of the 6-minute mark in the second half or any time, if a team is up by more than 45 points the mercy rule will be in effect and the game shall end.

Touchdowns: After any score the ball shall be placed in play at the opposing team's 10-yard line, unless moved by penalty. All touchdowns are 6 points.

Try-for-point: Ball in play from the 3-yard line = 1 point, from the 10-yard line = 2 points, from the 20-yard line = 3 points.

1. An intercepted pass or fumble during the try that is returned for a touchdown = 3 points.
2. If Team A commits a foul, or Team B commits a foul following a change of possession, the try is over.

Safety: When a safety is scored (2 points) the ball belongs to the scoring team at their own 10-yard line.

Timeouts: Each team is allowed 1 one-minute timeouts per game including overtime

Substitutions: Players may substitute at any time between downs provided they are ready to play, and have checked in with the supervisor.

HOW TO PLAY FLAG FOOTBALL

Starting the play: The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the Referee has blown the whistle to put the ball in play.

The Snap: The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hands. They do not have to pass the ball between the legs. Both of their feet must be behind the offensive scrimmage line.

1. Following the ready whistle, no defensive player may break the plane of the restraining line until the snap.
2. No offensive player shall make a false start or any action that simulates the start of play.
3. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the scrimmage line.

Line of scrimmage sets: All players are subject to motion, position, and illegal procedure rules.

1. The offense must have at least 1 player not in motion on their scrimmage line at the snap. The defense does not have a minimum requirement.
2. One player may be in motion, but not forward at the time of the snap.
3. Following a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a full stop for one second prior to the snap.

Hand-offs: Any player may hand the ball backward or forward at any time beyond the line of scrimmage.

1. There are no sneak handoffs.
2. If the ball is tossed or there is time between the ball and the catch, then passing rules will apply.
3. There are no restrictions on handing the ball during punt returns or following changes in possession.

Passing the ball: All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Backward passes are unlimited.

1. There must be one legal forward pass each down. The receiver must catch the ball beyond team A's scrimmage line.
2. Team A has **7 seconds** to release the ball on a forward pass. If not, it is a loss of down and the ball is next snapped at the previous spot. The Referee will sound his/her whistle at 7 seconds if the passer has possession of the football.
3. A **pass** is any exchange of the ball that involves airtime. This can be forward or backward, overhand pass, or underhand pitch, or any other toss or flip of the ball.
4. Only one forward pass may be thrown per scrimmage down, but NOT on kicks, punts, or interceptions.
5. These passes are **illegal** – when either of the passer's feet is beyond the line when the ball leaves the hand, the ball is intentionally grounded, and the passer catches their own untouched pass, when there is more than one forward pass during a scrimmage down, if a forward pass is thrown after a change in team possession.
6. A player may pass the ball backwards at any time. NOTE: Backward passes that hit the ground in play are dead at that spot. Backward passes that go out of bounds belong to the offense unless the ball goes out of bounds behind a goal line, and then the play will result in a touchback or safety.
7. The pass begins when the ball is released from the passer's hand. The ball is dead if the passer is deflagged before the initial release. When in doubt the ball was released before the flag was pulled.
8. The initial direction of a pass determines whether a pass is forward or backward.
9. If opposing players catch a forward or backward pass simultaneously, the ball becomes dead, is considered a complete pass, and belongs to the offensive team at that spot.
10. Interceptions in a team's own end zone may be advanced out or downed for a touchback.
11. Momentum rule: When a defensive player intercepts a forward pass, backward pass, fumble, or catches a legal kick between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line, and his/her momentum carries

him/her into the end zone and becomes dead, the ball is placed at the spot where possession is gained.

Ending the play: The ball becomes dead when:

1. The whistle blows. (On inadvertent whistles, the team may replay the down or take the ball at that spot.)
2. It goes out-of-bounds.
3. Any part of the runner's body other than a hand or foot touches the ground. Ball in possession is considered part of the hand.
4. After any score.
5. A forward or backward pass or snap hits the ground. (Dead at spot on backward pass and snap.)
6. The flag belt is removed legally. (If the belt falls off, one hand touch between shoulders and knees.)

OVERTIME PROCEDURE: In case of a tie game at the end of regulation the following procedure will be used.

1. The Referee will conduct a coin toss like the beginning of the game. The team not calling the toss to start the game will call the toss in overtime.
2. The winner of the toss will be given the following options: Offense, Defense, or direction. The loser of the toss will choose the remaining option. ALL OVERTIME PERIODS WILL BE PLAYED IN THE SAME DIRECTION.
3. Each team will attempt to score by passing from the 3-yard line for 1 point or from the 10-yard line for 2 points. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble, the attempt is over.

FOULS AND PENALTIES

Flag football is NOT a CONTACT sport. However, incidental contact will occur.

Personal Fouls: Players may not commit any of the following personal fouls:

1. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
2. Trip, clip, or hurdle any player.
3. Contact an opponent who is on the ground, or after the ball is dead.
4. Throw the runner to the ground.
5. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player or lower the shoulder.
6. Commit any unnecessary roughness.
7. Tackle a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
8. Rough the passer (automatic first down) – applies only to the player throwing a legal forward pass behind the offensive line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer in any fashion, whether or not he/she touches the pass, it is roughing the passer.
9. Aid the runner, grab, push, or pull a teammate with the ball.
10. Stiff-arm an opponent.
11. Guard flags by blocking them with the hands, ball or otherwise denying the defense the chance to pull.
12. Use hands or body to block an opponent.
13. Pulling the flag from an opponent who does not have the ball.
14. Tying the flag belt in a knot or any other tampering with the flag belt (Also results in player ejection.).

Legal and Illegal Offensive Screen Blocking: Offensive players may protect the runner by screening.

1. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact and screener may maintain a position (moving or stationary) between the defensive player and the runner.
2. The screen blocker shall have his/her arms at their sides or behind their back. Any use of arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use a hand or arm to break a fall or retain balance. Players must remain on their feet before,

- during, and after screen blocking. Any part of the screener's body, except their feet, may not be in contact with the ground.
3. Defensive players must avoid the offensive player's screen block, and may not use their arms or hands as a wedge to contact the offensive blocker.
 4. Illegal contact between the blocker/rusher will be called against the player determined to have initiated the contact (similar to "block/charge" in basketball).

Pass Interference

1. Pass interference is defined as bumping, pushing, or unnecessary contact with an opponent OR restricting a player from access to a pass while on offense or defense. Players may not wave their hands in the face of an opponent.
2. Offensive screen blocking beyond the line of scrimmage when a forward pass crosses the line is illegal.
3. Players may not go through opponents to get a ball in flight.

Penalty enforcement

1. There are 3 and 5-yard penalties.
2. Enforcement will be from one of 4 spots – the line of scrimmage (previous spot), the spot of the foul, the end of the run, or the spot where the ball will next be snapped or kicked (succeeding spot).
3. The following penalties will be 3-yard penalties: Delay of game, encroachment (Offside), false start, illegal snap, unfair tactics, illegal motion or shift, player receiving the snap within 2 yards of line of scrimmage, illegal forward pass, intentional grounding, advancement by a runner, illegal substitution, illegal equipment, aiding the runner, not enough players on the line, player out of bounds at snap.
4. The following penalties will be 5-yard penalties: illegal worn flag belt, pass interference, roughing the passer, steal, strike, or strip ball, unsportsmanlike conduct, quick or illegal kicks, spike, kick throw a dead ball, illegal screen block, flag guarding, illegal removal of a flag belt, holding or obstruction of a runner, clipping, tackling, tripping, stiff arm, illegal contact, illegal participation, hurdling any player.