



Campus Recreation: Intramural Flag Football Rules

Any rule or interpretation not covered in these rules will be governed by the NIRSA Flag Football Rules. Some minor modifications have been implemented for the intramural program to encourage sportsmanship, provide for the safety of the participants and to adhere to time restrictions.

RULE 1: Facility, Playing Areas, and Equipment

- I. Facility - Wish Field, located on Belden Street (one half-block east of Sheffield Avenue).
- II. Playing Area
 - a. Each field will be rectangular in shape.
 - b. Approximately 100 yards in length and 40 yards wide.
 - c. There will be two 10-yard end zones and four 20-yard zones.
 - d. Extra point lines will be marked at the 3, 10, and 20-yard lines.
- III. Equipment
 - a. Ball: a game ball will be provided by Campus Recreation if teams can't agree on a game ball.
 - b. Jersey: must be long enough that they remain tucked in the pants/shorts or short enough that there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the waistline.
 - c. Pants/Shorts: each player must wear pants/shorts without belt loops/pockets. Shorts may not be turned inside-out
 - d. Flag belts: will be provided by Campus Recreation.
 - e. Shoes: each player must wear shoes, no metal cleats are allowed.
 - f. Headwear: all hats and bandannas are illegal. The only legal headwear is a knit-style stocking cap or sweatband.
 - g. Mouth guards: it is strongly recommended that a mouthpiece be worn.
 - h. Jewelry: all jewelry is illegal (including rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, etc.).
 - i. Padding: no padding. Also braces or casts made of hard, unyielding substances.

NOTE: Officials of each game will determine legality of all equipment. A player wearing illegal equipment will not be permitted to play.

RULE 2: Responsibilities of Captains, Players, Teams, & Spectators

- I. All team members are required to know the rules of the game and to abide by them.
- II. The team manager and/or playing captain is responsible for the discipline and proper conduct of team members and spectators. Any difficulties with a person's conduct will be handled through the manager.
- III. The playing captain is the only player who may address the officials, but only on matters of rule interpretations. Judgment calls that are protested may result in penalty for the offending team.
- IV. Sportsmanship Ratings
 - a. Teams are rated on sportsmanship nightly based on their behaviors before, during and after each contest. Possible ratings include: "Outstanding, Acceptable, Unacceptable, or Season Ending".
 - b. Teams receiving an "unacceptable sportsmanship rating" will need to meet with the Assistant Director of Intramurals before the team is eligible to participate in any

further games. A second unacceptable rating will result in a team being removed permanently from further play.

- c. Teams receiving "Season Ending ratings will be subject to immediate removal from the league and possible further sanctions with the Dean of Students office.

V. Spectators

- a. May observe intramural activities and must comply with the policies that have been set by the Campus Recreation staff.
- b. The team manager is ultimately responsible for the conduct of their spectators.
- c. Indoor sports, i.e., basketball, floor hockey, soccer, and volleyball, have limited spectator seating; therefore admittance of spectators may be limited. Outdoor sports, i.e., flag football, soccer, and softball; there is no limit to the number of spectators a team may have present. Spectators are to encourage and support their teams, not to berate or attempt to intimidate the officials or opponents.
- d. Any volatile or unruly acts by a spectator will be handled by Campus Recreation staff and if necessary referred to the Dean of Students. Campus Recreation wants spectators to know that they are part of the game. Their participation is important to the outcome of the game. Have fun and encourage own team, rather than discourage opponent or the officials. Remember the team a spectator is cheering for may be adversely affected if behaviors are inappropriate.

RULE 3: Team Composition and Eligibility

I. Player eligibility: All DePaul University students, faculty and staff with proper I.D. are eligible provided:

- a. The player is not already participating with another team in the same division (open, women or co-rec).
- b. The player has not competed as a varsity athlete (or been red-shirted) in a parallel sport(s) in the previous one year (calendar year). If playing with an ex-varsity college athlete, the team must be in the competitive division.
- c. No more than two current club members of a parallel sport may be listed on any roster (additionally, if playing with a current club member or former varsity athlete, a team may have no more than two club members/ex-varsity athletes).
- d. All players are required to provide their DePaul I.D. to officials prior to game time to be eligible to play. No exceptions.

II. IM Leagues

- a. Will be used for all scheduling which means that each player must register with IM Leagues.
- b. Their first and last name MUST match the name on their student, faculty, or staff ID card in order to be eligible to participate.
- c. Captains MUST accept each player to their playing roster. After they are on the IM Leagues score sheet AND have signed the waiver they will be eligible to play.
- d. Teams are permitted to add eligible members throughout the season until the playoffs (league play) or until the semi-finals of a tournament.
 - i. Additions must be made in accordance with the policy on adding players.
- e. A player must have played in at least one previous game to be eligible for the playoffs (league play) or semi-finals (tournament play).

III. Required Players

- a. The game will be played between two teams of seven players each.

- i. *Co-Rec Modification: 8 players, 4 male and 4 female*
 - b. Five players are required at game time to avoid a forfeit
 - i. *Co-Rec Modification: 6 players are needed, 3 male/3 female, 4 male/2 female, or 2 male/4 female.*

IV. Shorthanded teams

- a. A team cannot play with less than the required number of players. If for any reason they fall below the required number, and there are no available substitutes, the shorthanded team will lose by forfeit.
- b. A team that loses two players due to ejection/disqualification in the same contest will be forced to forfeit that contest.

V. Substitutions

- a. Players may substitute freely between downs.
- b. *Co-rec Modification: Substitutions must be male for male and female for female.*

RULE 4: Timing

I. Beginning the Game

- a. Each game will begin with a coin toss
 - i. The captain winning the toss shall have the choice of options for the first half or shall defer their option to the second half.
 - ii. The option for each half shall be:
 - 1. To choose whether their team will be offense or defense
 - 2. To choose the goal their team will defend
 - 3. To defer to the second half.
- b. Forfeit Time
 - i. Teams must be signed in with the required number of players (and ready to play) at game time to avoid a forfeit (see forfeit policy in [policy and procedures](#)).

II. Playing time

- a. Each game will consist of two 16 minute halves s (running time)
- b. Halftime shall be 3 minutes.
- c. When overtime is used, there will be a 2-minute intermission.

III. The Game Clock

- a. The game clock will run continuously until and of the following:
 - i. The last two minutes of each half the clock will stop for all change of possessions, incomplete passes, penalties, ball out of bounds, inadvertent whistles, first downs and during extra points.
 - ii. A time-out is requested and granted
 - iii. For an official's time-out
- b. The back judge will be the official timekeeper on the field.
 - i. They will announce the time remaining periodically throughout each half and will announce when there is two minutes left in each half. (2-minute warning – each half).
 - ii. Under two minutes the time should be announced after every play.
- c. Delay of game
 - i. The ball shall be put in play within 25 seconds after it is declared ready for play by the Referee (whistle and arm).
 - ii. No player shall put the ball into play until it is declared ready for play.

IV. Time-outs

- a. Each team is entitled to 3 charged time-outs per game.
- b. These time-outs are not to exceed thirty seconds in length.
- c. Teams will be allowed one time-out during any overtime period.
- d. Time-outs not used in the first half will be available during the second half.

V. Forfeited score

- a. The score of a forfeited game shall be 17-0.
- b. If the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score stands.

VI. Mercy rule

- a. If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the during the 2 minute warning in the second half the game shall end.
 - i. *Co-Rec Modification: The Mercy Rule will be 25 points.*
- b. If either team is ahead by 40 or more points anytime in the second half, the game will end.

VII. Captain-Referee Conference

- a. When a team requests a charged time-out for a rule interpretation or scoring conflict, the referee will confer with the team captain or manager.
- b. If the referee determines the rule was misapplied or the score was incorrect, the time-out will be recorded as an official's time-out rather than a team time-out.
- c. If the ruling or score is found to be correct, the time-out will remain as a charged team time-out.

VIII. Overtime Procedure - ONLY DURING PLAYOFFS

- a. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line
- b. Each team will start 1st and goal from the 10-yard line (unless moved by a penalty).
- c. The object will be to score a touchdown.
- d. A coin toss will be used to determine who is awarded the ball first; the team winning the coin toss will decide on either playing offense or defense first.
- e. Each team will be provided an opportunity to score during an overtime period.
- f. If the score is still tied after one period; a second period (or as many as needed) will be used to determine a winner.
- g. If the first team awarded the ball scores, the opponent will have a chance answer (to win or tie the game).
- h. Try-for-points will be attempted and scored as provided by rule.
- i. Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime period.

IX. Injured player

- a. Any player that is injured (or apparently injured) when the ball is alive or dead and play is stopped for them, will be required to sit out at least until the next substitution opportunity (after the ball becomes live again).
- b. Any player that is found to be bleeding must immediately be removed from the game and must receive attention to stop the bleeding.

RULE 5: Ball in Play, Dead Ball, out-of-bounds

I. To start each game, the second half, and after touchdowns the ball will be placed on the 14-yard line of the team on offense for first down and zone line to gain (unless yards are lost due to penalty).

II. Live Ball

- a. The ball becomes live when it is snapped.

III. Dead Ball

- a. When it goes out-of-bounds or when it crosses the goal line (vertical plane).
- b. When any part of the runner OTHER THAN a hand or foot touches the ground.
- c. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful extra point attempt is made.
- d. When, during an extra point attempt, the offensive team is unsuccessful
- e. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- f. When a player of the kicking team catches a protected scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone (also results in penalty on kicking team)
- g. When a backward pass or fumble by a player touches the ground.
 - i. A ball snapped from scrimmage, which hits the ground before or after getting to the intended receiver, is dead at the spot where it hits the ground.
 - ii. *NOTE: If in doubt, the snap close to the ground remains alive.*
- h. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached from the belt.
- i. When a passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball.
 - i. *NOTE: If in doubt as to the release or not, the ball is released.*
- j. When an official sounds their whistle inadvertently during a down or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined.

IV. Out-of-bounds

- a. A player is out-of-bounds when any part of their body touches anything, other than another player or a game official which is on or outside the sideline or end line.
- b. A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official which is out-of-bounds.

V. In bounds

- a. A player who is catching a forward pass needs one foot, their first foot, inbound for it to be declared a legal catch.

RULE 6: Series of Downs, Number of Downs

- I. A team, in possession of the ball, shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line to gain an additional 4 downs.
- II. Any down may be repeated or lost if provided by the rules.
- III. The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.

RULE 7: Protected Scrimmage Kick

- I. Protected Scrimmage Kick (PSK)
 - a. Prior to making the ball ready for play on 4th down, the Referee will ask the Team A captain if they want a protected scrimmage kick. The Referee must communicate this decision to the Team B captain and the other officials.
 - b. The Team A captain may request a protected scrimmage kick on any down.
 - c. After such announcement, the ball must be kicked. Except if one of the following occurs:
 - i. Team A time-out is called
 - ii. A foul occurs which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the Referee must ask the Team A captain whether or not they want a protected

scrimmage kick and communicate this decision to the Team B captain and the other officials.

- d. A legal protected scrimmage kick is a punt made in accordance with the rules. Quick kicks are illegal.
- e. The ball must be kicked immediately and in a continuous motion.

II. PSK Formation

- a. The offensive team must have and maintain at least 4 players within 1 yard of their scrimmage line and remain motionless until the kick is made.
- b. *Co-Rec Modification: Must have 5 players on the line.*

III. First Touching

- a. If any member of the kicking team touches the PSK before or after it crosses the kicking team's scrimmage line and before it is touched by any receiving player, it is referred to as "first touching".
- b. The receiving team may take the ball at the spot of first touching or may choose to have the ball put in play as determined by the action which follows.

IV. Receiving the Punt

- a. A PSK that touches the ground may still be picked up and advanced at any time by the receiving team.
- b. If a kick comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.
- c. If a PSK is muffed, the following rules apply.
 - i. If either team muffs the ball causing the ball to hit the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team.
 - ii. If the receiving team muffs the PSK and the ball is then caught in the air by the receiving team it can be advanced, if caught by a player from the kicking team the ball is dead and belongs to the kicking team at that spot.
- d. If the PSK goes behind the receiving team's goal line, it is dead immediately and is a touchback.

V. Blocking the Punt

- a. Once the ball is punted, any receiving player may block the kick as long as they are behind their scrimmage line.
- b. If the blocked punt hits the ground, it is dead at that spot.
- c. If any member of the kicking team catches the blocked punt before crossing their scrimmage line, they may advance the ball.
- d. If a receiving player catches the blocked punt it may be advanced.

RULE 8: Snapping, Handing, and Passing the Football

I. The Snap

- a. Penalties
 - i. Encroachment- after the snapper has made their final adjustment of the ball, no player may break their respective planes of their scrimmage line marked by the ball spotters.
 - ii. False Start- includes simulating a charge or start of play, whether or not the ball is snapped.
- b. The snap must be made in one continuous motion either with a side snap or between the center's legs.

- c. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the scrimmage line.
- d. At the time of the snap, the offensive team must have at least 4 players within one yard of the line of scrimmage.
 - i. *Co-Rec Modification: Offensive teams must have 5 players.*
- e. Motion
 - i. One offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap, but not in motion towards the opponent's goal line.
 - ii. If a player starts in motion from their scrimmage line, that player must be at least 1-yard behind the line when the ball is snapped.
 - iii. If such player starts in motion from their backfield, that player may not be in motion toward the opponent's goal line when the ball is snapped.
 - iv. A player in motion is not considered to be on the scrimmage line, therefore cannot contribute to minimum number of players needed on the line.

II. Handing the ball

- a. Any player may hand the ball backward or forward anywhere on the field.

III. Passing the Ball

- a. Backwards pass
 - i. Any player may throw a backwards pass anywhere on the field
 - ii. A backwards pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel or towards the passer's endline.
 - iii. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground is dead at that spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.
- b. Legal forward pass
 - i. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.
 - ii. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.
 - iii. The passer's feet must be behind the scrimmage line when the ball is released.
 - iv. *Co-Rec Rule Modification*
 - 1. *There may not be 2 consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver.*
 - 2. *After a male completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or female receiver for positive yards – play is closed when female must be involved as passer or receiver.*
 - 3. *This rule applies to the Try.*
 - 4. *The only way to open a play is to have a female passer or receiver gain positive yardage on a legal forward pass.*

IV. Co-Rec Rule Only- males are not allowed to advance the ball through the line of scrimmage on a running or passing play.

- a. *Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage however, a lateral may occur from female to male.*

V. Completed or Intercepted Passes- it is counted as a completion as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch, usually one-foot, touches inbound.

VI. Simultaneous catch

- a. If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball.

- b. *Co-Rec Rule Only – A simultaneous catch by a male and a female on the same team is counted as a female reception.*

RULE 9: Scoring Plays

I. Touchdown

- a. Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
- b. *Co-Rec Modification: If a female player is the passer or the player who scores a touchdown the point value is 9.*

II. Player responsibility after a touchdown

- a. The player scoring the touchdown must raise their arms so the nearest official can deflag the player.
- b. If the player is not deflagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed and the player is EJECTED!

III. Extra point tries

- a. An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3-yard line, 2 points from the 10-yard line, or 3 points from the 20-yard line shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown.
- b. The referee must speak to the field captain only, asking them whether the try for points shall be from the 3, 10, or 20-yard line.
- c. Once a team captain makes the choice, they may change the decision only by taking a time out.
- d. Any interception during an extra point try will result in the play being called dead.

IV. Safety

- a. A safety is worth 2 points.
- b. Examples of safeties:
 - i. A player on offense has the ball and is downed while in their own end zone.
 - ii. A fumble, lateral or backward pass by the offense which first hits the ground in its own end zone.
 - iii. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in their own end zone constitutes as a safety.
- c. The game will restart with possession by the previous defense at their own 14.

Rule 10: Offensive and Defensive Regulations

I. Screen Blocking

- a. Blockers must keep their hands grasped behind their backs or at their sides.
- b. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact is illegal.
- c. A blocker must remain on their feet before, during and after the block.
- d. An offensive player may not move into a defensive player initiating contact.

II. Defensive rushing

- a. Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive player's screen block.
- b. Defensive players may not use their hands to hold or push an offensive player.
- c. Once a rusher gets alongside or past a blocker, the blocker is responsible for any contact.

III. Spinning

- a. A player may spin to make a move to avoid being downed.

IV. Diving

- a. Players may dive, but if diving creates contact with an opponent, the player (who is diving) will be penalized for unnecessary roughness.

V. Flag Belts

- a. Flag Guarding
 - i. A ball carrier may not defend or guard their flags in any manner. (i.e., stiff arm, drop the shoulder, push the defender's hand away, etc.)
- b. All players are required to wear a flag belt.
- c. If a player participates without a flag belt, a penalty will be issued.
 - i. If the player is noticed following the snap, the opponent has the option of accepting the result of the play or taking the penalty, which will result in a 5-yard loss from the line of scrimmage, repeating the down.
- d. A player who removes the flag belt from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag belt above their head to assist the official with properly spotting the ball.
- e. A player in possession of the football, whose flag belt accidentally falls off, is downed by a one-handed touch between the shoulders and the knees.

VI. No player shall steal, or bat the ball from a player in possession.

VII. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag. The defensive player is restricted to reaching for the flags.

VIII. Pass Interference

- a. Contact or face guarding beyond the neutral zone by a defensive player whose intent to impede an eligible offensive receiver is obvious and which prevents the opponent the opportunity of receiving a forward pass.
- b. Defensive pass interference occurs after the ball has been released for a pass and until the ball has been touched.
- c. Offensive pass interference occurs after the ball is snapped and until the pass has been touched.

IX. Deflagging prior to possession

- a. If an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a forward pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be the same as pass interference.
- b. Any other time a defensive player deliberately pulls an opponent's flag belt before that player has possession, the penalty will be unsportsmanlike conduct.

RULE 11: Inadvertent Whistle

I. A live ball becomes dead at the sound of the whistle and:

- a. If a live ball is loose behind the line of scrimmage, or a legal forward pass, snap, or punt is in flight, the down will be replayed.
- b. If a live ball is loose following a backward pass (lateral) or fumble beyond the offensive team's line of scrimmage, or behind the offensive team's line of scrimmage following a change of team possession, the ball will be awarded to the team last in possession at the spot where possession was lost and the down will be counted.
- c. If a live ball is in a player's possession, team may choose to accept the play at that point or replay the down.

RULE 12: Player Ejection

- I. The field monitor/supervisor/official has the right to disqualify any individual at any time for any unsportsmanlike conduct. Malicious play will not be tolerated.
- II. Extremely offensive conduct (obscene or insulting word gestures) towards Intramural staff, spectators or other players results in ejection of a team member(s) from the game in which the offense occurred.
- III. Ejected individuals must leave the playing area and possibly the gym. If they are asked to leave the gym they will be given one minute to gather their belongings and depart. Further delay will result in team forfeiture.
- IV. Reinstatement Procedure
 - a. All players ejected from an intramural contest, for any reason, must set an appointment to meet with the Assistant Director before they or their team is eligible to participate again.
 - b. Ejected players will serve an automatic one-game suspension with the severity of the conflict dictating further suspensions.
 - c. This suspension will not begin until the meeting has taken place.
 - d. A player who is ejected from two contests during a season will not be eligible for playoff competition.
- V. The Assistant Director reserves the right to impose further penalties against the player(s) or team at his own discretion.

RULE 13: Special Rules

Any new rule may be implemented during the season by the Assistant Director who will inform team managers by email or memo of additions, clarifications, or changes.