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

ALL RULE CHANGES ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GRAY.

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

OPEN, IFC FRATERNITY, AND WOMEN'S TEAMS

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. **IDENTIFICATION:** All participants must bring a current valid Photo I.D. to the playing area in order to be checked in and ruled eligible to participate prior to the beginning of each game. Late arriving players must sign in with an Intramural Supervisor before entering the game.
3. **PLAY PASS:** All participants must have purchased a valid Intramural Sports Play Pass in order to be eligible to participate.
4. **SCORING:** All Officials will keep the official score.
5. **TEAMS:** In all official games in the Open, IFC Fraternity, and Women's Divisions, teams shall be composed of no more than seven (7) players or no less than four (4) players on the field. Teams may only have a maximum of thirteen (13) players on their full roster (With the exception of the 2025-2026 Women's division)
6. **CLUB TEAM MEMBERS:** No more than two (2) members of the active club flag football team's roster are eligible for participation in the game per team. No more than two (2) members of the club flag football team may be listed on the same team's roster.
7. **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 Sports Supervisor.
8. **UNIFORMS/PLAYER EQUIPMENT:** Shirts/jerseys **MUST** remain tucked in at all times. Sweatshirts 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 shimmy 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. **NO POCKETS ALLOWED ON ANY SHORTS OR PANTS.** Players that arrive at the game site wearing shorts or pants with pockets will not be permitted to play. Teams that are designated as 'Home' on the IMLeagues schedule will be required to wear white or a matching light team color. Teams that are designated as 'Away' on the IMLeagues schedule will be required to wear black or matching dark team color. Teams who do not comply with the color policies are subject to a reduced sportsmanship rating.

9. **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.
10. **JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES:** No jewelry or accessories may be worn. Earrings may NOT be covered with band aids or tape. A player suspected of covering an earring with tape will NOT be permitted to participate. *Clarification: Medical alert bracelets are not considered jewelry; they must be taped down with the medical information visible.*

PLAYING THE GAME

11. **GAME TIME:** The game will be played in four quarters of ten (10) 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.
12. **HALF TIME:** Three (3) minutes will be allowed between halves. However, teams may agree to take less time.
13. **LAST TWO MINUTES:** With less than 2 minutes remaining in the game, the offended team of any foul will have the option to start the game clock on the snap when it would have normally started on the ready for play whistle.
14. **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.
15. **ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT:**
 - A. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material (including billed hats) or items containing exposed knots is 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/accessories are illegal and must be removed.
 - D. Pads or braces with exposed metal or other hard, unyielding material are not allowed.
 - E. Pants or shorts with any belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings are illegal. Short pockets may NOT be taped or turned inside-out for play.

- 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.
- G. Hand warmers worn around a player's waist.

16. **MERCY RULE:** If a team is at least thirty-seven (37) points ahead at any time during the second half, or nineteen (19) points ahead when the Referee announces the two (2) minute warning for the second half, the game will be over.
- a. Any score within the second half that creates a differential of at least thirty-seven (37) points, or any score within last two (2) minutes of the second half that creates a differential of at least nineteen (19) points, will end the game.
17. **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 if there is charged team time-out. A team's decision cannot be changed should a penalty occur on the conversion attempt.

NOTE: Any conversion that is intercepted, the try is over and the ball is dead at the spot of the catch.

18. **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 down.
19. **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.
20. **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 touch down (and try-for-point).
 - c. The ball will be put in play by the scoring team from their 14-yard line following a safety.
21. **FORWARD PASSING:** One (1) forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage may be thrown per down by the offense.
22. **BACKWARD PASSING:** There is unlimited backward passing (laterals) allowed in flag football. The initial movement of the ball in relation to the player making the pass will determine whether a pass is forward or backward. A horizontal pass is considered to be thrown backward. **THERE ARE NO FUMBLES IN FLAG FOOTBALL.** If a backward pass strikes the ground, the play is dead and the offense retains possession at the spot the ball struck the ground.

23. **PUNTS:** The Referee will ask the offensive team captain if he/she will punt or go for a fourth down. There are no fake punts. Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked. Once snapped, the ball must be punted immediately in one continuous motion. A team may only change their decision to punt or not punt if a penalty is called or a time-out is taken.
24. **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 broken. 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.
25. **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 following overtime procedures will be used:
- There will be no game clock (untimed), teams have 0 timeouts. The 25-second play clock is still in effect.
 - There will be 1 coin toss. The winner can choose; offense, defense or side. The other team will be presented with the remaining options.
 - Possession will alternate after every round (Ex: 1st round: Team A plays then Team B; 2nd round: Team B plays then Team A, etc.)
 - All OT periods will take place on one side of the field.
 - In the 1st and 2nd period, teams can choose the point value of their try.
 - In the 3rd period, teams can only go for a try of 2 or more points during their possession.
 - In the 4th period, teams can only go for a try of 3 points.
 - In the 5th over time period and beyond, teams will start from the 10-yard line (2 points line) and get 1 chance each to score (no extra points).

SPORTSMANSHIP

26. **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.
27. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FOUL LIMIT:** Two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on the same player will result in an ejection. If two (2) players from the same team are ejected from a game (for sportsmanship related issues), that game will be ended and that team will receive a loss and a 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.
28. **BENCH CONDUCT:** All substitutes, coaches, and spectators must adhere to Intramural Sports and Burdick Field rules, and are subject to the authority of the Intramural Sports Supervisor and all sportsmanship-related rules and policies.

29. **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 Burdick Field. Violators may be removed from the facilities with possible forfeiture of the game, at the discretion of the Supervisor.
30. **INTRAMURAL SPORTS 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.

CO-ED TEAMS

All of the above general rules apply with the following exceptions, and clarifications:

31. **THE GAME:** The game shall be played between teams of eight (8) players, four (4) males and four (4) females. Teams may play with as few as five (5) players per team. If a team is playing with less than eight (8) players, the male/female ratio may be 4:3, 3:4, 3:3, 3:2, or 2:3.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES CLARIFICATIONS

1. **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. 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.
2. **FLAG GUARDING** – Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, shoulders, or the ball to deny the opponent an opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Runners are encouraged to hold the ball high and in front of them when defenders are attempting to pull their flags (defenders may never "strip" the ball from your grasp). 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.
 - E. Contact is required for flag guarding to be called.*Penalty: Ten (10) yards.*

3. **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. 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. Contact is required for pass interference to be called. Face guarding without contact is not a foul. 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.

Offensive Pass Interference – *Penalty: Ten (10) yards (previous spot).*

Defensive Pass Interference – *Penalty: Ten (10) yards (previous spot).*

4. **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.
 - A. One foot is required to be inbounds (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.
5. **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.
6. **LEGAL POSITION** – Any time on or after the ball is marked ready for play, all offensive players must momentarily be at least five (5) yards inbounds before the snap. 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 endzone. Exception: The offensive player is covered by a defensive player. *Penalty: Illegal Formation, five (5) yards (previous spot).*
7. **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. The defense cannot “get back” onside after they have entered the neutral zone. This is a dead ball foul, so play should be whistled dead immediately after the encroachment occurs. *Penalty: Five (5) yards.*
8. **SCREEN BLOCKING** – This is legal as long as the following guidelines are followed:
 - A. 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, previous spot, or end of run).*
9. **SNAP REGULATIONS** – To start every play there must be a snap.
 - A. The snap must take place directly next to, but not 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.*
- B. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive

scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal. The distance is determined by the point at which the ball is first touched following the snap.

Penalty: Live Ball, Illegal Formation, five (5) yards.