

Flag Football Rules

Texas State Intramural Sports uses the **NIRSA Flag and Touch Football Rules Book** for all rulings unless stated differently in the rules below.

Rule 1: Eligibility

1. All participants are subject to the Eligibility guidelines, which are listed in the current Intramural Sports Participant Handbook.
2. Participation is limited to currently enrolled TXST fee paying students.
3. All players must check-in with the Supervisor at site prior to game time with a photo ID (Government issued ID, TX State ID, etc).

Rule 2: The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

1. Games shall be played between two teams of 7 players each. Teams must start and end with a minimum of 5 players. There is a maximum of 20 players per team.
2. A game will consist of two 20 minute halves of continuous running time, except for timeouts. There will be a 3 minute halftime.
3. Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys/shirts. The home team has the choice of color if there is any conflict. Jerseys must be long enough so they remain tucked in during the entire down or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline.
4. In an effort to maintain the safest environment possible please abide by the following:
 - a. All rings, necklaces, studs, watches, bracelets etc. must be removed prior to playing.
 - b. All braces with metal/hard plastic must be wrapped or removed
 - c. Individuals wearing casts are not allowed to play.
 - d. All body piercings must be removed or covered prior to playing.
 - e. Players are prohibited from wearing hats (stocking caps or bandannas are acceptable).
5. The Supervisor reserves the right to prohibit any apparel that is deemed unsafe or not within the spirit of the game.
6. Each team shall designate to the official a captain. The captain shall address the official on matters of interpretation or to obtain essential information.
7. Game balls will be provided, but warm up balls must be supplied by participants. The Supervisor does have any equipment available for check out with a Catcard.

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8. Each player must wear a one piece flag belt without knots around the waistline with **three flags permanently attached**. There should be one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flags must be of a contrasting color to the color of their shorts.
9. Each player must wear pants or shorts without belt loops, with no pockets, exposed drawstrings, or exposed snaps of any type.
10. All players must wear athletic type shoes. Among the items which do not meet these requirements are gymnastic slippers, loafers, tennis shoes cut so protection is reduced, ski and logger boots, and other apparel not intended for football use. Cleats are limited to studs or projections which do not exceed ½ inch in length the screw must be a part of the cleat) and are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber type synthetic material which does not chip or develop a cutting edge.
11. Tackle football type equipment is prohibited.
12. The field of play is 40 yards x 100 yards. There are four 20 yard zones and two 10 yard end zones that mark the field of play. Teams in possession of the ball are given four downs in which to advance the ball into the next 20 yard advancing zone. Failing to cross into the next advancing zone results in loss of possession.
13. A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the Supervisor or official, is dangerous or confusing.

Rule 3: Periods, Time Factors and Substitutions

1. Each team is allowed 3 one minute timeouts per game.
2. The ball shall be placed at the 14 yard line to begin each half and following a try or touchback, unless moved by a penalty. After a safety the ball will be placed at the 30 yd line.
3. A coin toss will determine choice. The team winning the toss shall choose one of the following options
 - a. Starting the half with the ball or
 - b. Which end zone to defend.
4. At the start of the second half the team losing the coin toss shall choose between the same options. Teams winning the toss in the first half cannot defer their choice until the second half.
5. A team may substitute any number, but no more than 7 players may be on the field at any given time.
6. No substitute shall enter the game while a down is in progress.

Rule 4: Dead Ball and Out of Bounds

1. The ball is dead whenever:
 - a. A live ball touches the ground (other than a kicked ball).
 - b. The ball is muffed on a punt return (the kick returner drops the ball after touching it).
 - c. Any part of the ball carriers body, except hand or foot, touches the ground.
 - d. The official's whistle is sounded.
 - e. The ball carrier steps on or over a boundary line.
 - f. A ball carrier's flag is pulled.
2. Whenever the football is fumbled, batted or muffed, the ball is spotted where the ball first touched the ground. Exception: If the ball is fumbled forward, the ball will be spotted where possession last occurred.
3. An offensive player who goes out of bounds under his/hers own impetus during a down may not participate in the remainder of the down.

Rule 5: Punting the Ball

1. Punts will be protected scrimmage kicks and must be declared to the official prior to the snap.
2. Neither team may move past the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
3. Blocking a punt is allowed as long as the defender remains on their side of the line of scrimmage throughout the entire play.

Rule 6: Scrimmage

1. The scrimmage line is determined by the position of the ball.
2. No player shall be offside prior to, or at the snap of the ball.
3. Defensive players shall not enter the established neutral zone before the snap. As soon as they enter the neutral zone the ball becomes dead. This is encroachment. Penalty: 5 yards, replay the down.
4. Defensive players must remain 1 yard off the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
5. The player receiving the snap must be a minimum of 2 yards behind the scrimmage line.
6. All offensive players must momentarily line up at least 5 yards from the sideline after the ready for play whistle.
7. Only one player may be in motion during the snap and must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.
8. No player shall take a 3 or 4 point stance.
9. The neutral zone between the offense and the defense is 1 yard.

Rule 7: Passing the Ball

1. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down. The initial direction of a pass determines whether the pass is forward or backward.
2. Any player may make a backward pass to any other player at any time.
3. An incomplete backward pass or fumble is a dead ball at the spot where it strikes the ground. The team last in possession retains possession at that spot.
4. A forward pass caught simultaneously by opposing players is dead and belongs to the offensive team at that spot. If either player lands out of bounds, the pass is incomplete.
5. A receiver must have 1 foot inbound for a pass to be ruled complete. (If that foot lands out of bounds simultaneously with, or before, the inbound foot lands, the pass is incomplete).
6. Illegal forward passes include forward passes released beyond the scrimmage line.
7. Both offensive and defensive receivers shall have the same opportunity to catch a thrown pass without physical contact. Therefore, neither team may use physical contact to break up a pass regardless if contact comes before or after the ball becomes a pass that can be caught.
8. Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing in whether pass interference has occurred.
9. Defensive players may not contact offensive receivers. This is a no contact sport.

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Rule 8: Offensive Team Regulations

1. Offensive screen blocking shall take place with minimal or no contact. The screen blocker must have their hands, elbows, and arms close to or behind their bodies. Screen blocking is defined as taking a normal upright stance and/or moving to maintain a position between the opponent and the ball carrier without making contact. A player making a screen block shall not take a position so close to a moving opponent that the opponent cannot avoid contact. Use of any part of the body to initiate contact is illegal. Unintentional contact causing the offensive team to receive an advantage is also illegal. Screen blockers must be on their feet while attempting to screen block.
2. The ball carrier must avoid contact with defensive players attempting to pull his/hers flags. He/she may not intentionally run into defensive players or lower head and/or shoulder to gain an advantage.
3. The ball carrier may not flag guard or stiff arm.
4. Teammates may not physically assist (push, pull, etc.) the ball carrier to gain an advantage.
5. If a ball carrier inadvertently loses his/her flag, a one hand tag between the shoulders and the knees constitutes capture.
6. A ball carrier may leave his/her feet in order to gain a certain yardage, but may not go through, over or initiate contact with an opposing player.
7. After an inadvertent or early whistle is sounded, the team in possession of the ball will have the choice of either accepting the play or replaying the down.

Rule 9: Defensive Team Regulations

1. Defensive rushing shall take place with minimal or no contact. The defensive players are expected to go around an offensive screen blocker by using an evasive maneuver. Hands and arms cannot be used to hold or push an opponent to gain an advantage.
2. Regardless of field location, the neutral zone is always 1 yard.
3. Players may leap into the air in an attempt to deflect a thrown ball provided that there is no physical contact (in midair or upon landing) with an opponent.
4. Players may not contact a thrower's arm when attempting to block a pass and must allow the thrower a full follow through motion.
5. Players may not obstruct the ball carrier while attempting to de-flag him/her.
6. De-flagging the ball carrier is the only legal way to stop his/her progress. Pushing the ball carrier out of bounds is an illegal act. Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct.
7. Stripping or attempting to strip the ball from the ball carrier is illegal.

Rule 10: Scoring

1. A touchdown is worth 6 points. It is scored when the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the player is not de-flagged with one pull, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed, and the player is disqualified.
2. The Try - (Point after touchdown): 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 by running or passing the ball only. The offensive team

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must declare their option immediately following their touchdown.

- a. An intercepted PAT becomes dead immediately.
3. A safety is worth 2 points for the defense and brings the ball to the 14 yard line with a first down.
4. A touchback brings the ball to the 14 yard line with a first down.
5. A fumble, backward pass or snap that goes out of bounds behind the goal line or would be spotted behind the goal line is a safety.
6. A foul by the offensive team behind their own goal line is a safety.
7. If a pass is intercepted and their momentum carries the ball carrier into their own end zone a touchback results.
8. The mercy rule will be put in effect if either team is up by 19 points with less than 2 minutes left in the game, or 40 points any time in the second half.
9. The clock will stop in the final minute of both halves. After that, the clock will start and stop on the referee's command

Rule 11: Overtime

1. A coin toss/ rock paper scissors will determine the first offensive possession in the overtime.
2. Both teams shall have four attempts to score from the 10 yard line
3. The same end of the field will be used for both teams' attempts.
4. The four downs will be treated as a regular offensive series. If a team gains one yard on its first down then it shall be second and goal to go.
5. Intercepted passes in overtime become dead immediately.

Rule 12: Conduct of Players, Coaches, and Others

1. All substitutes and fans must remain in between the 20 yard markers at all times.
2. Any act will be considered unsportsmanlike if in the opinion of the official it promotes ill will or detracts from the game. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Unnecessary roughness
 - b. Use of abusive or insulting language
 - c. Indicating objections to an official's call
 - d. Touching or striking an official (immediate player ejection and life suspension)
 - e. Intentionally pulling the flag of a player not in possession of the ball.
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct: Any participant receiving 2 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties during a game shall be removed (ejected) from the game immediately and must leave the playing facilities. Ejected players must meet with the Department Judicial Board before they will be allowed to resume play. Any player receiving 3 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for the season will be disqualified for the remainder of the season. 3 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on one team shall end (forfeit) the game immediately. Any team receiving 4 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for the season will be disqualified for the remainder of the season.

CoRec Modifications

Rule 1: The Game, Field, Players and Equipment

1. The games shall be played between two teams of 8 players each, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men. Teams appearing with a minimum of 6 players must be 3 men and 3 women in order to avoid a forfeit. At no time may a team compete with more than 4 men or women and fewer than 3 men or women.
2. A regular or intermediate size football may be used. No ball smaller than intermediate size may be used. If an intermediate ball is used it must say intermediate on the ball.

Rule 2: Open/Closed Plays

1. During the offensive team's possession, there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to a try. 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. There are no restrictions concerning a male passer completing a legal forward pass to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male. Penalty: illegal male reception from the previous spot.
 - a. Any penalty, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is open or closed.
2. A male runner can never advance the ball through the offensive team's line of scrimmage. There are no restrictions when the ball has passed beyond the line of scrimmage, a run is by a female, or there is a change of possession, or after a legal forward pass. Penalty: illegal male advancement.
3. There are 3 criteria that are necessary to open a play.
 - a. Must be a legal forward pass
 - b. A female must be the passer or the receiver
 - c. Positive yardage must be gained

Rule 3: Scoring

1. If a male scores a touchdown it is worth 6 points. A female's touchdown is worth 9 points. If a female throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored it is worth 9 points.
2. The mercy rule will be put in effect if either team is up by 23 points with less than 2 minutes left in the game, then the game is over.