

-Texas A&M University-
Department of Recreational Sports
INTRAMURAL SPORTS

4 ON 4 FLAG FOOTBALL

Regulations published in the Texas A&M Rec Sports Handbook will be the governing policies for all intramural sports. Team captains are responsible for possessing a thorough understanding of these regulations and their implications. The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association Flag and Touch Football Rules will be in effect with the following interpretations and exceptions. Points of emphasis and all recent rule changes will be in bold type.

1. PARTICIPATION

- a. Proper identification must be presented to check in. Proper identification is a government-issued photo ID.
- b. Roster: Each player's name must appear on the roster before he/she enters a game.
- c. Any player disqualified from a contest will be removed from that game and can still play in next contest.
- d. Any player ejected from a game is automatically suspended from all intramural activities pending a meeting with the appropriate intramural staff member.
- e. Intramural staff retain the authority to require an ejected player to leave the facility. Any player instructed to leave must do so immediately.
- f. **Protest Procedure:** Judgment calls may not be protested. If a team wants to protest a rule interpretation, the protest must be made immediately at the time of the questionable incident. Notify the official. The clock will stop while a protest is being filed.
- g. **Eligibility:** The eligibility of all players is the responsibility of team captains and the individual players. Refer to the intramural handbook for details.
- h. **Blood Rule:** Players who sustain an injury causing an open wound will be required to leave the game. A player may not re-enter the contest until the flow of bodily fluids is stopped and the wound covered.
- i. **Jewelry:** Participants are not permitted to wear any jewelry.
- j. **Medical Alert Bracelets** – Permitted, must be taped flush with the skin and may be visible.
- k. **Casts/splints:** Not allowed under any circumstances. Knee braces with exposed metal, hard plastic, or metal hinges must be covered with padding or foam at least ¼ inch thick.
- l. **Religious Headwear** – In the event a participant may not expose his/her uncovered head, the intramural supervisor may approve a covering or wrap which is not abrasive, hard or dangerous to any other player and which is attached in such a way that it is highly unlikely to come off during play. This stipulation applies only to religious headwear to cover the head and does not apply to any necklaces/rings/ earrings/ bracelets or any other form of jewelry.
- m. Elastic headbands and hair control devices without metal, hard plastic, or bandanas without knots are permitted. Hard items, including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes and bobby pins are prohibited. Other head decorations or headwear are not allowed.
- n. **Equipment:** If the team does not have the same or similar color, **ALL** team members **MUST** wear jerseys provided by the Department of Recreational Sports. A shirt (must have the sleeves attached) must be worn under the jerseys provided by the Department of Recreational Sports, or the player will not be allowed to play. If a team has its own jerseys with numbers, the numbers must be whole numbers, no more than 2 digits, and the jerseys must be of the **SAME/SIMILAR** color.
- o. If eyeglasses are worn, they must be unbreakable. Each player is responsible for the safety of own glasses.

- p. Any slippery substance of a foreign nature on equipment, clothing, or an exposed part of the body is illegal.
- q. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap (no caps with bills) and/or soft, pliable, non-abrasive gloves. Bandanas with a knot are not permitted.
- r. Footwear: Indoors – all players must wear athletic shoes with non-marking court soles. Hard soled shoes of any kind will not be permitted. Outdoors – all players must wear athletic shoes. Metal cleats, spikes, or toe cleats will not be permitted. Five finger shoes are not considered athletic shoes.
- s. Pants – Participants are encouraged to wear athletic style shorts or pants.
- t. All equipment decisions made by the intramural staff or Rec Sports medic on duty shall be final.

2. **THE GAME**

- a. To start and continue a game, a team must have at least three (3) players.
- b. **Field of Play:** The field will be 40 yards in length from goal line to goal line, and 30 yards in width. The team areas will be from the 3-yard line to the other 3-yard line.
- c. **Flag Football Equipment: Penalty: Delay of Game—3 yards**
 - i. **NO SHORTS WITH POCKETS/BELT LOOPS MAY BE WORN**
 - ii. **Game Ball** – Each team must provide their own ball. Game balls can be checked out at the Penberthy building. Men’s games will use the regular size football while **Women’s and Coed games will use the regular, intermediate, or youth size.** The team on offense has its choice of what ball it would like to play with. The referee is the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion.
 - iii. **Shoes:** Each player must wear shoes. Regulation rubber soled cleats, plastic cleats, detachable rubber cleats that screw into the shoe, and tennis shoes are the only permissible footwear. Sandals, street shoes, hiking boots, combat boots, or metal spikes are not allowed. No steel cleats, metal tips or shoes with detachable steel cleats that screw onto the shoes may be worn.
 - iv. **Pads:** Players may wear soft, pliable pads or braces on the leg, knee, and/or ankle. Braces made of any hard material must be covered with at least one-half inch padding for safety reasons.
- d. **Forfeits:** A team will forfeit a game when it does not have the minimum amount of players ready to play by 10 minutes after the scheduled game time. The following penalties will be enforced during the 10 minute grace period:
 - i. **3 minutes:** Team ready for play will be awarded a 6pt. touchdown.
 - ii. **6 minutes:** Team will be awarded a second 6pt. touchdown making the score 12-0.
 - iii. **9 minutes:** Team will be awarded a third 6pt. touchdown making the score 18-0.
 - iv. **10 minutes:** Team will be awarded 1 extra point and the game will be declared a forfeit with a final score of 19-0.

3. **THE COIN TOSS**

- a. The captain winning the toss will have his/her choice of one of the options for the first half or will defer his/her option to the second half. The options for each half are:
 - i. To choose whether his/her team will be on offense or defense first.
 - ii. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.
- b. The captain not having the first choice of options for a half will exercise the remaining option.

4. GAME TIMING

- a. Playing Time and Intermissions - A game will consist of two halves lasting twelve (12) minutes. Each half will consist of eleven (11) minutes of running clock and a **1-minute warning**. There is no halftime.
- b. 1-Minute Warning - The last one (1) minute of both halves will run similar to College Football. The clock will stop for the following:
 - i. Incomplete Passes
 - ii. Runner Out of Bounds
 - iii. Penalties
 - iv. Turnovers
 - v. Any Scoring Plays
 - vi. Time Out
 - vii. First Downs
 - viii. Injury
- c. Delay of the Game - The ball must be put in play promptly and legally, and any action or infraction by either team which tends to prevent this is delay of the game. This includes:
 - i. Consuming more than twenty-five (25) seconds to put the ball in play after it is marked ready for play.
 - ii. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
 - iii. A captain-referee conference after the permissible charged timeout has been used, during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change results.
 - iv. The referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his/her opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by tactics in his/her judgment to be unfair.
 - v. The wearing of illegal equipment. (Example: jewelry)
- d. The penalty for any delay of game infraction is 3-yards from the previous spot of the ball.
- e. Timeouts
 - i. Each team is entitled to one charged timeout per game. A charged timeout requested by any player will not exceed one minute. Each team WILL NOT receive an additional timeout in overtime.
 - ii. Captain-Official Conference - When a team requests a charged timeout for a rule interpretation, the referee will confer with the team captain. If the referee changes his/her ruling, it is an official's timeout. If the ruling is not changed, it is a charged timeout. If the team has used its timeout, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.
- f. Substitutions
 - i. Eligible Substitutes - No substitute may enter during a down. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players if the game is not delayed.
 - ii. Illegal Substitutions - During a dead ball, no substitute may enter the game and leave before the next play or leave the game and reenter before the next play unless a dead ball foul occurs, there is a charged timeout, or the period ends.
Penalty: Illegal substitution - 3 yards.
 - iii. Substitutions in Uniform - Each substitute must be in uniform, ready for play, with flags in position. **Penalty: Delay of game - 3 yards.**
 - iv. Using substitutes with an obvious attempt to confuse or deceive the opposing team is subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Overtime - During the regular season, if the score is tied at the end of regulation play, the score will remain a tie. During playoffs, a tie will result in overtime. All overtime periods shall be played toward the same goal line.

- i. Each team will be awarded ONE attempt to score by passing from the 3 yard line for 1 point or from the 10 yard line for 2 points. This will continue until a winner has been determined. If a defender intercepts the pass/fumble, the attempt is over.

5. **SCORING**

- b. Touchdown = 6 points
 - i. Touchdown Verification - The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the official determines that the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed and the player is ejected. **Penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.**
- c. Try For Point = 1 or 2 points
 - i. An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3-yard line or 2 points from the 10-yard line will be given to the team scoring a touchdown.
 - ii. Once the team representative makes the choice, he/she may change the decision only by taking a charged timeout. A team's choice cannot be changed if a penalty should occur. Enforcement of yardage penalties does not change the value of the try for point.
 - iii. The point(s) will be awarded if the try for point results in what would have been a touchdown.
- d. Safety = 2 Points
- e. **Mercy Rule— If a team is up by 19 or more points with 1 minute remaining in the second half, the game shall be ended and made final.**

6. **DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS**

- a. **Flag Belt Removal:** When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier, the down will end and the ball is declared dead.
 - i. If a defensive player is attempting to remove the flag belt from a ball carrier, he/she may contact the body and shoulders of an opponent with their hands, but not their face or any part of their neck or head. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.
Penalty: Illegal Contact - 5 yards
 - ii. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes a "tackle." If in the judgment of an official the contact is unnecessarily rough, it will result in a penalty. **Penalty: Illegal Contact – 5 yards**
- b. **Offensive Scrimmage Line:** The yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the forward point of the ball. An offensive player is on his/her scrimmage line when his/her head breaks the plane of an imaginary line drawn through the waistline of the snapper and parallel to the scrimmage line. (*Orange Disc*)
- c. **Defensive Rushing Line:** The yard line and its vertical plane, which passes *one yard* from the forward point of the ball. (*Yellow Disc*)
- d. **Forward & Backward Pass:** A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's goal line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward or parallel to the passer's goal line. [A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the

ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble. It will be dead at the spot where it strikes the ground.]

7. **SERIES OF DOWNS, LINE TO GAIN**

- a. Series - A series of three consecutive scrimmage downs will be awarded to the team that puts the ball in play to start a half or after a change of possession.
- b. Yardage on Downs - The field is divided into 20-yard zones. A team has three downs to move the ball from one zone to the next. A first down results when the ball is declared dead, any part of which is on or above the next zone line, and a live ball penalty does not bring the ball behind the first down zone. There will be no option to punt the ball on third down.
- c. **Penalty Accepted - If a penalty is accepted, the down will remain the same unless otherwise specified by the rules regarding change of team possession, penalty enforcement and/or the ball is left beyond the zone line to gain.**
- d. Penalty Declined - If a penalty is declined, the number of the next down will follow as if that foul had not occurred.

8. **SNAPPING THE BALL**

- a. The snapper must pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s). The snapper does not need to pass the ball back between his/her legs.
- b. **The snapper is the only offensive player required on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.**
- c. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms. All other offensive players must remain stationary at the time of the snap. **Penalty: Illegal shift - 3 yards.**
- d. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are not allowed on any down. **Penalty: Illegal snap-3 yards.**

9. **FUMBLES**

- a. When a player fumbles the ball, or if a snap hits the ground before being received, the ball is dead immediately at the spot where the ball hits the ground. If the ball touches the ground forward of the player who last possessed it, the ball will be spotted where the player was at the time of the fumble, unless the fumble is into the end zone.
- b. A fumbled ball that goes out of bounds without hitting the ground remains in possession of the fumbling team at the spot fumbled or where the ball went out of bounds, whichever is closer to the goal it is defending.
- c. A fumble which becomes dead in the end zone is:
 - i. Declared a safety if it becomes dead in the end zone the fumbling team is defending.
**Exception: If a team gains possession of the ball in the end zone and fumbles the ball without advancing the ball out of the end zone, it is a touchback and the fumbling team retains possession.
 - ii. Declared a touchback if it becomes dead in the end zone they are advancing toward (i.e., the ball will belong to the opponents at the five yard line.)

10. PASSING THE BALL

- a. **Pass clock**—From the time the ball is snapped, a team will have five (5) seconds to throw a forward pass. After five (5) seconds the play will be blown dead and a loss of down will result.
- b. **Eligibility** - All players except the passer are eligible to touch or catch a forward pass before an opponent has touched it. A forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the offensive line of scrimmage when the pass is made. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.
- c. **Simultaneous Catch** - If members of opposing teams catch a legal forward pass simultaneously, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that put the ball in play.
- d. **Completed Pass** - A forward pass is completed when caught inbounds by a member of the passing team. It is counted as a completion as long as the first part of the receiver to make contact with the ground after the catch touches inbounds.
- e. **Pass Interference** - Pass interference is contact by a player that prevents an opponent the opportunity of receiving a catchable forward pass. It is also pass interference if a receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball, or a player playing the opposing player instead of the pass.
Penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot; replay the down

****Exception:** If the contact is the result of two opponents making simultaneous, legitimate attempts to reach, catch or bat a pass, there is no foul. A player may not go through another player when making an attempt to catch the ball.

11. BLOCKING

- a. **Offensive Screen Blocking** - The offensive screen block must take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms within the frame of his/her body. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. **Penalty: Illegal contact - 5 yards.**
- b. **Screen Blocking Fundamentals** - A player who screen blocks may NOT:
 - i. Take a position closer than a normal step from the opponent when he/she is behind a stationary opponent.
 - ii. Make contact with the opponent when he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 - iii. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be one to two normal steps or strides from the opponent.
 - iv. Move to obstruct an opponent after assuming his/her legal screening position, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path of his/her opponent.

Penalty: Illegal contact - 5 yards.

- c. **Defensive Rush** – There is no defensive rush in 4 v 4 Flag Football. The quarterback must pass the ball before the 5-second count.

12. **PENALTIES**

Ejection may be associated with any penalty for an act which is unduly rough or flagrant. Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on the same player at any time during the game will result in automatic ejection.

a. 3 Yard Penalties

- i. Delay of Game
- ii. Encroachment
- iii. Interference with Opponent or Ball before Snap
- iv. False Start or Illegal Snap
- v. Illegal Motion, Shift, or Position at Snap
- vi. Illegal Forward Pass (**Loss of Down**)
- vii. Illegal Substitution
- viii. Receiving Snap within 2 yards of Line of Scrimmage
- ix. Illegal Procedure

b. 5 Yard Penalties

- i. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - See Special Enforcement of Penalties
- ii. Illegal Contact
 1. Illegal Blocking
 2. Charging - The ball carrier may not run through a defensive player, but must evade the tackler. The runner shall be allowed unlimited 360 degree turns.
 3. Tackling - The tackler must not hold the ball carrier and must “play the flag” rather than the opponent
 4. Stripping the Ball
 5. Stiff Arming
- iii. Illegally Secured Belt - Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts (**Loss of Down**)
- iv. Illegal Belt Removal - No opponent may exert any extra force than is necessary to remove the ball carrier’s flags
- v. Flag Guarding - Holding or swinging the arm near the flag to ward off attempts to remove the flag is illegal
- vi. Offensive Pass Interference
- vii. Defensive Pass Interference
- viii. Holding
- ix. Hurdling

c. Special Enforcement of Penalties

- i. On all unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, the offending player may be removed from the game for three plays at the discretion of the officials. Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on the same player at any time during the game will result in automatic ejection.
- ii. Half the Distance - No penalty may exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team’s goal line.
- iii. Safety/Goal Line - If the offensive team commits any foul on or behind its goal line for which the penalty is accepted, it is a safety. The ball will be given to the safety awarded

team on their 10yd line. For a defensive team foul on or behind the offended team's goal, measurement is from the goal line.

- iv. Foul on Score - If there is a player foul by the offensive team, other than unsportsmanlike, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or try-for-point, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a live ball foul committed by the defensive team during a down, which results in a successful touchdown, or try-for point, the offensive team will have the option to accept the penalty and assess the foul from the succeeding spot.
- v. Dead Ball Fouls - All dead ball fouls will be enforced from the spot where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred.

13. **FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS**

- a. **Pass clock**—From the time the ball is snapped, a team will have five seconds to throw a forward pass. After five seconds the play will be blown dead and a loss of down will result.
- b. **Offensive Rushing**
 - i. No offensive player may advance the ball beyond the offensive scrimmage line unless it has already been broken by a forward pass
Penalty: Illegal procedure - 3 yards. The only exception to this rule is: A runner may advance the ball through the offensive line of scrimmage after the ball has previously been advanced past the line by a legal forward pass.
 - ii. A forward pass that is caught behind the line of scrimmage is ILLEGAL
Penalty: Illegal forward pass - 3 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down.
- c. **Punting** ---- There is NO PUNTING in 4v4 Flag Football.
- d. **Backward Passes**—Any team may throw an unlimited number of backward passes.
- e. **Putting the Ball in Play**—The ball shall be placed at the Team A 10 yard line to begin each half of a game and following a Try, touchback or safety, unless moved by penalty.

14. **COED MODIFICATIONS**

- a. **Number of Players** – Coed teams shall have 4 players on the field, 2 males and 2 females. A team must have at least 3 players ready to play in order to start and continue a game. The eligible combinations of males and females on the field are: 2M/1F, 1M/2F, 2M/2F
- b. **Game Ball** - Coed games will use the regular, intermediate, junior, or youth size football.
- c. **Scoring** - All touchdowns scored by females and touchdowns following a legal forward pass completion with a female passer count 9 points.
- d. **Mercy Rule** - **If a team is up by 25 or more points with 1 minute remaining in the second half, the game shall be ended and made final.**
- e. **Illegal Forward Pass**
 - i. The term “closed,” means a male player may not throw a forward pass completion to any other male player. The term “open” means any player can complete a forward pass to any other player.
 - ii. During the offensive team's possession there may not be two consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule also applies for all try (point after touchdown) attempts. If the previous scoring play was male to male, the try will be closed.

- iii.** If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or female receiver for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line (marked by the orange disc).
- iv.** If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the scrimmage line who then runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.
- v.** The penalty for an illegal forward pass is three yards from the spot where the pass is released, and a loss of down. One example of an illegal forward pass is the second consecutive male-to-male completed forward pass.
- vi.** Any foul, whether accepted or declined, will have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."