

**Texas A&M University
Department of Recreational Sports
Intramural Sports**

**Intramural Flag Football Rules
Fall 2004**

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.

Rule I. The Field

The field will be 100 yards x 40 yards with four 20-yard playing zones. The 3-yard and 10 yard lines will be marked for extra point attempts. Teams and spectators must stay in the team area between the twenty-yard lines.

Rule II. The Players

- A. **Proper identification must be presented to an official upon request.** Proper identification for students is a current student ID. Faculty, staff, and spouses must present a current Rec membership card or Intramural Pass and photo ID. (Lost ID's: Refer to lost ID policy in the Recreational Sports calendar).
- B. **Roster** - Each player's name must appear on the roster before he/she enters a game. Players may be added during a timeout or at halftime. A player must present his/her ID to an official and be entered on the roster before being allowed to play. **Penalty: Illegal Substitution - 5 yards.**
- C. **Team** - Each team consists of 7 players. In CoRec a team is composed of 8 players, 4 males and 4 females. A team must have 4 players present to start and continue a men's or women's game. In CoRec play, a team must have a minimum of 5 players to start and continue a game. The five players must consist of at least 2 members of each gender.
- D. A team will be penalized one point for each minute, after the scheduled game time, it is late. Even if the game starts late, the game will be played in its entirety. Ten minutes after the scheduled game time, the game will be declared a forfeit.

Rule III. Equipment

- A. **Game Ball** - The department will supply a game ball. A team captain, with the referee's approval, may choose to use a different ball when his/her team is on offense. Men's games will use the regular size football while **Women's and CoRec games may use the regular, intermediate, or youth size.** The referee is the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion.
- B. **Shoes** - Each player must wear shoes. They must be made of a soft pliable upper material (canvas, leather, or synthetic), which covers the foot attached to a molded bottom, which may or may not have rubber cleats. **No exposed metal may appear on the shoe.**

- C. **Pads** - The use of headgear of any nature, shoulder pads, body pads, or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. The only pads allowed are soft, pliable knee or elbow pads worn in the appropriate location.
- D. **Tape** - Tape or bandages on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow are prohibited except to protect an injury. The intramural supervisor or EMT must approve any tape or bandages before a player is eligible to participate. **Under no circumstances will a player wearing a cast or splint be allowed to play.**
- E. **Blood Rule** - **Players who sustain injury causing an open wound will be required to leave the game. A player may not reenter the contest until the flow of bodily fluids is stopped and the wound covered. Also, any saturated clothing must be removed before reentering the contest.**
- F. **Foreign Substance** - Any slippery or sticky substance of a foreign nature on equipment, clothing, or an exposed part of the body is illegal.
- G. **Jewelry** - Watches, bracelets, rings, neck chains, or any other item deemed dangerous by the officials may not be worn during the game unless they are taped and flush with the body so as not to be a hazard to other players. Players must supply their own tape. *Medics will not furnish tape.*
- H. **Jerseys** - **All players' jerseys must be either:**
 1. **Long enough so they remain tucked in; or**
 2. **Short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. Jerseys that repeatedly become untucked during the game may be disallowed at the discretion of the referee.**
- I. **Pants/Shorts** - **Each player must wear athletic style pants or shorts (no shorts with POCKETS or BELT LOOPS may be worn).**
- J. **Headwear and Gloves** - Players may wear a knit or stocking cap, **bandanas (without knots)**, and/or soft, pliable, non-abrasive gloves. The cap must have no bill. No hair clips made of hard material may be worn.

Rule IV. Definition of Playing Terms

- A. **Removal of Flag Belt ("Tackle")** - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier, the down will end and the ball is declared dead.

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 (Tackling) - 10 yards.**
- *** **If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes a "tackle." If in the judgement of an official the contact is unnecessarily rough, it will result in a 10-yard penalty for Illegal Contact.**
- 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.
- C. **Defensive Scrimmage Line** - The yard line and its vertical plane which passes one yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line.

- 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.]

Rule V. **The Coin Toss**

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:

- A. To choose whether his/her team will be on offense or defense first.
B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.

The captain not having the first choice of options for a half will exercise the remaining option.

Rule VI. **Game Time**

- A. **Playing Time and Intermissions** - A game will consist of two halves with a 5 minute intermission. Each half will consist of 18 minutes of running clock and 6 additional untimed plays. In case of approaching rain or schedule delays, half-time may be shortened by the referee.
- B. **6 Plays Warning** - Once the "6 plays warning" has been issued the remainder of the half will consist of 6 plays from scrimmage, not including the following:
1. Extra points and kicks after safeties.
 2. Accepted defensive penalties.
 3. Accepted offensive penalties which bring the ball back behind the previous line of scrimmage.
 4. An inadvertent whistle where the down is replayed.
- C. **Clarifications of 6 Plays**
1. If an offensive penalty brings the ball back to or forward of the previous line of scrimmage, a loss of play, but not loss of down occurs.
 2. Any penalty that carries a loss of down will count as one of the plays.
 3. An accepted penalty that does not cause a loss of down will not count as one of the plays, except as outlined in C1 above.
 4. A defensive penalty that results in an automatic first down is not considered a loss of down and does not count as one of the plays.
- D. **Delay of the Game** - The ball must be put in play promptly and legally, and any action or infraction by either team that tends to prevent this is delay of the game. This includes:
1. Consuming more than 25 seconds to put the ball in play after it is marked ready for play.
 2. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
 3. A captain-referee conference after all permissible charged timeouts have been used, during which the referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change results.
 4. 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.

The penalty for any delay of game infraction is 5 yards from the previous spot of the ball.

E. **Timeouts**

1. **Each team is entitled to two charged timeouts per game.** A charged timeout requested by any player will not exceed one minute. Timeouts **cannot** be carried into any overtime period.
2. **Captain-Official Conference** - When a team requests a charged timeout for a rule interruption, 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 two time-outs, a delay of game penalty will be assessed. Judgment calls **cannot** be overruled. **No call in recreational "D" can be protested.**

F. **Substitutions**

1. **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.
2. **Legal 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 - 5 yards.
3. **Substitutions in Uniform** - Each substitute must be in uniform, ready for play, with flags in position. **Penalty: Delay of game - 5 yards.**
4. Using substitutes with an obvious attempt to confuse or deceive the opposing team is subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Rule VII. Series of Downs, Line to Gain

- A. **Series** - A series of four consecutive scrimmage downs will be awarded to the team that puts the ball in play following a free kick, touchback, fair catch, or change of possession.
- B. **Yardage on Downs** - The field is divided into 20-yard zones. A team has four 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.
- 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, 6 plays remaining 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.

Rule VIII. Kicks

- A. When a punt is to be made, the kicking team must announce to the referee before the ball is ready for play that it wishes to kick. After such announcement, the ball must be kicked. Exception: If a) either team calls timeout, or b) a penalty occurs any time during this down which results in the kicking team being in a position of fourth down again, the kicking team must re-declare its option. No direct snap is allowed.
- B. **Punt Line-Ups** - The kicking team must maintain at least 3 players on its line of scrimmage until the kick is made. Neither team may cross its scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. A linesperson may not raise his/her arm(s) to distract the kicker or block the kick. **Penalty: Illegal procedure - 5 yards.**
- C. **Punting the Ball** - **After the snap, the punter must kick the ball within 5 seconds.** **Penalty: Illegal procedure - 5 yards.** If a punter drops the ball, it is considered a fumble and the ball is declared dead.

- D. **Failure to Cross the Kicking Team's Scrimmage Line** - A protected scrimmage kick which fails to cross the kicking team's scrimmage line is dead where it hits the ground or is touched.
- E. When a punt that has crossed the kicking team's scrimmage line touches a player from either team and then hits the ground the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team. If it hits a player of the receiving team and is then caught by a teammate in the air, it can be advanced by the receiving team. If after hitting a player of the receiving team, the ball is caught by the kicking team, the ball is dead and belongs to the kicking team.
- F. **Punt Out-of-Bounds** - If a punt goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or 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.
- G. **Free Kick Line-Ups** - For any free kick following a safety, the kicking team will kick the ball from their own 20-yard line. The receiving team's free kick line shall be the 40-yard line. It is encroachment for any players to be beyond the free kick line after the ball is ready for play and until it is kicked. A free kick, which goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines untouched, is a penalty. **The receiving team has three options: a) rekick with a 5-yard penalty; b) take possession where the ball went out of bounds; c) take possession 25 yards from where the ball was kicked, normally the receiving team's 35 yard line.**
- H. **Kick Catch Interference** - While any kick is in flight beyond the kicking team's scrimmage line, no player on the kicking team may touch the ball or any receiver nor obstruct any receiver's path to the ball. **Penalty: Kick catch interference - 10 yards from the previous spot.**

Rule IX. 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. All offensive players must momentarily be **within 15 yards** of the ball when the ball is snapped. **Penalty: Illegal procedure - 5 yards.**
- C. The offense must have at least 3 **players** on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. **CoRec rules require 4 players. Penalty: Illegal procedure - 5 yards.**
- D. One offensive player may be in motion, **Penalty: Illegal Shift**, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Motion** Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms. The offensive team must still have 3 **stationary players** on the offensive line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. **Penalty: Illegal procedure - 5 yards.**
- E. 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 - 5 yards.**

Rule X. 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 that team is defending.
- C. *A fumble that becomes dead in the end zone is:*
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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 fifteen-yard line.)

Rule XI. Passing the Ball

- A. **Eligibility** - All players except the passer are eligible to touch or catch a forward pass before it has been touched by an opponent. **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.**
- B. **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.
- C. **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.
- D. **Sacks - When a passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball, he/she is considered sacked and the ball is dead.**
- 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. **Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down (if committed by offense) or automatic first down (if committed by defense.)**

****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.**

Rule XII. Scoring

- A. **Touchdown = 6 or 9 points**

In CoRec play all touchdowns scored by females and touchdowns following a legal forward pass completion with a female passer count 9 points. All other touchdowns are 6 points.

Touchdown Verification - The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed and the player is disqualified. **Penalty: Personal Foul (Illegally Secured Flag Belt), 10 yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.**
- B. **Try For Point = 1 or 2 points**
 - 1. 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.

2. 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 change if a penalty should occur. Enforcement of yardage penalties does not change the value of the try for point.
3. The point(s) will be awarded if the try for point results in what would have been a touchdown.

C. Defensive Score on Try For Point = 2 Points

On a try for point, if the defensive team legally gains possession and returns the ball across the offensive team's goal line, the defense will be awarded two points. Fouls that occur after the defense gains possession will be enforced to the succeeding spot. If there are offsetting fouls after defensive possession, the try is not replayed.

D. Safety = 2 Points

- E. "17 Point Rule"** - If either team is ahead by 17 or more points at the 6 play warning of the second half, the game is over. In CoRec, there will be a "23 Point Rule."

F. Overtime - If scores are tied at the end of the second half the game will be recorded as a tie (game over) during regular season. During the playoffs an overtime period will be played. A coin flip will determine the options. All overtime periods shall be played toward the same goal line.

1. An overtime period consists of one possession by each team.
2. Unless moved by penalty, each team will start first and goal from the 10-yard line. Each team will have a series of downs to score a touchdown.
3. If the score is still tied after one overtime period, the game will be declared a tie in league play. In the playoffs, as many periods as necessary will be played to determine a winner.
4. Try for points will be attempted and scored during overtime.
5. Each team is entitled to one timeout per overtime period. These timeouts are not cumulative.

- G. Forfeited Game** - The score of any game forfeited in accordance with the rules will be 10-0 against the forfeiting team.

Rule XIII. 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 (Illegal Block) - 10 yards.**
- B. Screen Blocking Fundamentals** - A player who screen blocks may NOT:
1. Take a position closer than a normal step from the opponent when he/she is behind a stationary opponent.
 2. Make contact with the opponent when he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.

If a player violates any of these provisions and contact rules, he/she has committed a personal foul. **Penalty: Illegal Contact (Illegal block) - 10 yards.**

- C. ***Defensive Rush*** - A defensive player must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent.
Penalty: Illegal Contact (Charging) - 10 yards.

Rule XIV. Penalties

Disqualification may be associated with any penalty for an act that is unduly rough or flagrant. Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on the same player at any time during the game will result in automatic ejection. Disqualification also results in an automatic suspension from further intramural play until reinstated through the Recreational Sports Department.

A. 5 Yard Penalties

1. Delay of Game
2. Encroachment
3. Interference with Opponent or Ball before Snap
4. False Start or Illegal Snap
5. Illegal Motion, Shift, or Position at Snap
6. Illegally Handling the Ball Forward (**Loss of Down**)
7. Illegal Forward Pass (**Loss of Down**)
8. Illegal Substitution
9. Receiving Snap within 2 yards of Line of Scrimmage
10. Infraction of Punting Regulations

B. 10 Yard Penalties

1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct - **See Special Enforcement of Penalties**
2. Unnecessary Contact
3. 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**)
4. Illegal Belt Removal - No opponent may exert any extra force than is necessary to remove the ball carrier's flags
5. 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.
6. Tackling - The tackler must not hold the ball carrier and must "play the flag" rather than the opponent
7. Guarding the Flag - Holding or swinging the arm near the flag to ward off attempts to remove the flag is illegal
8. Stiff Arming
9. Offensive Pass Interference (**Loss of Down**)
10. Defensive Pass Interference (**Automatic First Down**)
11. Holding or Illegal Block
12. Roughing the Passer (**Automatic First Down**)
13. Quick Kick
14. Kick Catch Interference
15. Stripping the Ball
16. Hurdling

C. CoRec- Penalties - 5 Yards

1. Male advances the Ball through the Line of Scrimmage
2. Illegal Male-to-Male Pass. (**Illegal Forward Pass**)
3. Illegal Female to Male (received behind the Line of Scrimmage and **advances it through the line**) Pass. (**Illegal Forward Pass**)

D. Special Enforcement of Penalties

1. 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.
2. Half the Distance - No penalty may exceed half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.
3. 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. For a defensive team foul on or behind the offended team's goal, measurement is from the goal line.
4. 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 must decline the penalty for the scoring play to stand.
5. Dead Ball Fouls - All dead ball fouls will be enforced from the spot where the ball would next be snapped or free kicked if a foul had not occurred.

Intramural Co-Rec Flag Football Rules

Fall 2004

Co-Recreational (CoRec) flag football games will be conducted under the rules of the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association Flag and Touch Football Rules and the 1999 TAMU Flag Football rules with the following interpretations and exceptions:

1. **Number of Players-** The CoRec games shall be played between two teams of eight players, four men and four women. A team must have at least 5 players present to start and continue a game. The five players must contain at least two members of the opposite sex.
2. **Minimum line players:** Offense must have 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
2. **Game Ball-**CoRec games will use the regular, intermediate, junior, or youth size football.
3. **Scoring-** All touchdowns scored by females and touchdowns following a legal forward pass completion with a female passer count 9 points.
4. **Illegal Forward Pass**
 - A. 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.
 - B. 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.**
 - C. 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). There is no foul for a female receiver being deflagged behind the offensive scrimmage line. The next forward pass completion remains “closed.”
 - D. **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.**
 - E. The penalty for an illegal forward pass is five 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.

Any foul, whether accepted or declined, will have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is “open” or “closed.”
5. **Running the Ball-** An offensive male runner (this includes a pass receiver) cannot penetrate through the offensive line of scrimmage with the ball. **Penalty: Illegal procedure - 5 yards. There are two exceptions to this rule:**
 - a. **A male runner may advance the ball through the offensive line of scrimmage after the ball has been previously advanced legally beyond the line.**
 - b. **After a change of possession, males may advance the ball through the offensive scrimmage line.**