

4x4 Flag Football Rules

(Updated December 11, 2008)

2007 & 2008 NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules book will govern play.

Intramural Policies, Procedures, Eligibility Requirements, etc. and specific rule modifications will take precedent.

Points of Emphasis for 2008

1. **Foul on a score-** If there is a foul by the offensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down which results in a successful touchdown or Try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a down which results in a successful touchdown or Try, the penalty will be enforced from the succeeding spot.

I. GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

A. The Playing Field:

1. The field shall measure 30 yards wide and 40 yards long plus 10-yard end zones.
2. The playing fields will be divided into two (2) zones by one (1) line.

B. Equipment:

1. The Recreational Sports Department shall provide a ball and jerseys for the teams; however, each team may bring their own ball and wear their own jersey's as long as they have numbers on their jerseys (TAPE NUMBERS will not be accepted). Men's leagues will use a regulation size ball, while women's and coed leagues may use an intermediate size ball. The referee shall approve the game ball(s).
2. **The offensive team is responsible for securing the ball after each play. The offensive team should secure the ball and take it back to their team huddle after every play.**
3. Two ball spotters will be used to mark the neutral zone. An orange color mark will serve as the offensive scrimmage line. A yellow color mark will serve as the defensive scrimmage line. The marks will be one (1) yard apart.
4. **ROSTER LIMIT: The maximum a team may hold on their roster will be six (6) players (All divisions).**
5. Players must wear athletic type shoes that cover the foot completely. Sandals, boots, and open toe shoes are NOT allowed. **Sports cleats are limited to studs with projections, which do not exceed ½ inch in length and are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material, which does not chip or develop a cutting edge.** The officials and supervisors on duty have the authority to disallow any shoe, which they feel would endanger the person wearing the shoe or his/her opponents. No protest regarding shoes will be accepted by the Intramural Staff.
6. **Pants/Shorts: Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s) or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.**
7. Flags:
 - a. Each player must have a set of flags on at all times. Flags will be supplied by the Intramural department. Failure to wear a flag belt may be called a live ball or dead ball penalty. Failure to wear proper equipment.
 - b. **Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal.** Infractions will result in player disqualification.
8. Shirts:
 - a. **Shirts must be either long enough so they remain tucked in the pants during the entire down or**
 - b. **Short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline** (the Referee will use a closed fist to measure the distance between the waistline and the bottom of the jersey.).
8. Players are strongly encouraged to wear long pants and long sleeves to prevent cuts, scrapes, etc. Any person with exposed cuts or scrapes must substitute out of the game until all bleeding is stopped and covered (Please see BLOOD RULE).
9. No stickum or similar substance will be allowed. Infractions will result in player disqualification.
10. Football pads, casts, or metal braces are not allowed (knee/elbow pads are legal).
11. Players may wear the Navy Watch - Style knit or stocking cap. The cap must not have a bill.
12. **Jewelry shall not be worn.** Religious and medical alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

13. It is strongly recommended that all players wear mouth guards.

C. The Game:

1. Men, Women, Coed: Four (4) players will constitute a team. In Coed, a maximum number of 2 men and 2 women are allowed on the field at any time (must need 1 member of the opposite sex to avoid a forfeit).
2. A minimum number of three (3) players must be **ready to play** at game time or the team will forfeit. **The game official's watch is the "official" game time. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.** A team must finish the game with the minimum starting number. Any time a team falls below the minimum number that game is forfeited.
3. The captain winning the toss shall have first choice of options for either the first or second half. The loser shall have the first choice of options for the half the winner of the toss did not select. The options for each half shall be:
 - a. To choose whether his/her team will begin on offense or defense.
 - b. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of option for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.
 - c. **If a team allows their opponents 10 minutes to avoid a forfeit, they shall automatically receive the first choice of options.**
4. **The game will consist of two halves; each made up of a 12 minute running clock. The game clock will stop for all time-outs and in the last **one (1) minute of the both halves**. In the last minute of play for the half or the game, there will be **three (3) plays**.**
5. Each team is allowed one (1) time-out per half, use or lose. Time-outs will be limited to 30 seconds in duration. Teams will not be charged a time-out for an injured player (all injured players must leave the game for a minimum of one play).
6. Unnecessary delay of the game is prohibited. If the ball is not put into play within 25 seconds after being spotted by the referee, it will be considered delay of the game.
7. **The ball will be placed on the offensive team's 10 yard line at the beginning of each half, as well as following touchdowns, touchbacks, and safeties (unless moved by penalty).**
8. A team in possession of the ball has three (3) downs to score or advance into the next zone.
 - a. If a penalty occurs during a play the zone to gain will be established after the enforcement of the penalty.
 - b. If a penalty moves the ball beyond the zone to gain or a penalty calls for a first down the next line will be the zone to gain.
 - c. Declined penalties will have no effect on the zone to gain and the number of the next down will be whatever it would have been had the foul not occurred.
9. When the ball becomes dead, the spot of the ball is directly under the position of the ball (foremost point of the ball).
10. Kicking - There is NO KICKING in the game.
11. Snapping:
 - a. The offensive team must have at least **one (1) player on their scrimmage line** (within a 1-yard zone from a line parallel with the ball) at the snap. Players in motion do not count as being on the line of scrimmage (Penalty - Illegal Procedure).
 - b. The player who receives the center snap must be a least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. No direct snaps are allowed (Penalty - Illegal Procedure).
 - c. "Sleeper" plays are not allowed. After the ball is ready for play, each offensive player must momentarily be within **10 yards** of the ball before the snap (Penalty - Illegal Procedure).
 - d. Players may use 2, 3 or 4 point stance.
12. Passing, Handing the Ball:
 - a. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at any time.
 - b. Forward passes may be made from any place behind the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass is allowed per down (Penalty - Illegal Forward Pass).
 - c. Lateral or backward passes may be made anywhere on the field and there is no limit to the number that may be attempted in each scrimmage down.
 - d. Every member of a team is eligible to receive a pass. The passer becomes eligible to catch his/her own pass after a defensive player touches the ball (Penalty - Illegal Forward Pass).
 - e. Intercepted passes may be returned from the opponent's end zone.
 - f. The quarterback may catch the snap from center and IMMEDIATELY throw the ball to the ground to stop the clock, but may not do so to avoid loss of yardage (Penalty - Intentional Grounding).
 - g. Ball Carrier(s): Advancement of the ball is restricted by the following circumstances
 1. **Scrimmage play via the run-advancement from behind the line of scrimmage to beyond the line of scrimmage is not allowed (Penalty - Illegal Advancement).**
 2. **There are no advancement restrictions once possession of the ball has been obtained beyond the line of scrimmage.**
13. Screen Blocking:
 - a. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the arms, elbows, torso, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive

player's screen block is illegal, this applies to the offensive as well as defensive players. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking (Penalty - Personal Foul).

- b. A player who screens shall not:
 - 1. Take a position closer than a normal step behind a stationary opponent.
 - 2. Make contact with a stationary opponent when he/she assumes a position at the side or in front with him/her.
 - 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 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
 - 4. Move to maintain his/her established legal screening position unless he/she moves in the same direction and path as his/her opponent.

If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, he/she has committed a personal foul (Penalty - Personal Foul).

- 5. **Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense**-Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. *The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official* (Penalty - Personal Foul).

14. Running:

- a. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponents to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:
 - 1. Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - 2. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - 3. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging (Penalty - Flag Guarding).
- b. The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a "stiff arm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag.
- c. The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate.
- d. Spinning while running is considered part of running and is allowed provided the runner maintains contact with the ground and does not initiate contact with an opponent.
- f. Hurdling in an attempt to gain yardage by a ball carrier is illegal and will constitute a personal foul.
- g. **Obstruction of Runner**- The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag (Penalty - Holding).
- h. Charging. A runner shall not charge into an opponent in his/her path or attempt to run between two opponents, unless the space is such as to provide a reasonable chance for him/her to go through without contact (Penalty - Personal Foul).

15. Dead Ball:

- a. A fumble, muffed ball, center snap and lateral or backward pass which strikes the ground is dead at the spot. The ball shall go to the team that fumbled it at that spot, unless the play occurred on third down. NOTE: Any fumble that does not hit the ground may be advanced by the player catching it.
- b. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground, the ball is dead.
- c. A runner is down:
 - 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.
 - When a runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, once the flag belt is no longer attached.

16. Scoring:

- a. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified (Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct. If by Team A, loss of down. If by Team B, automatic first down).
- b. The point value of scoring plays shall be:
 - 1. a. Touchdown 6 points
 - b. In co-rec; touchdown scored by a woman, by pass, catch, or run 9 points
 - 2. Safety 2 points
 - 3. Extra Point/Try: 1 point
 - Originally from 3-yard line 1 point
 - Originally from 10-yard line 2 points
 - Originally from 20-yard line 3 points
- c. Extra Points:
 - 1. After a touchdown is scored, the offensive team may try for either a one (1) point, two (2) point or three (3) extra point attempt.

2. Defensive players who intercept a pass or fumble (without the ball falling to the ground) during the try and return it for a touchdown shall score three (3) points.
 3. Once the captain has made the decision for one (1), two (2) or three (3) point attempt, a team may not change its mind without using a time-out. If the distance of the attempt is changed by penalty, the attempt will be for the point value of where the penalty is enforced.
 - d. Tie Games:
 1. Regular season - if the game is tied, no overtime will be played, the game will be recorded as a tie.
 2. Tournament play - A coin will be flipped by the Referee to determine the options as in the start of the game. Unless moved by penalty, each team will have the opportunity to score by using three (3) plays from the ten (10) yard line. If the defensive team intercepts the pass or fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will placed for the Team B series. **No time-outs will be allowed during overtime.**
 - e. Mercy Rule:

If a team secures a **15 or more point lead (21 or more points in Co-Rec.)** at any time during the **last one (1) minute of the game**, the game shall be over. However, at any time after the completion of the first half of any men's, women's, and Co-Rec. game, once a team has a lead of 40 or more points, the game shall be declared over.
17. Force, Safeties, and Touchbacks:
- a. The team responsible for the ball being behind the goal line is the team whose player:
 1. Carries the ball across that goal line.
 2. Applies an initial force which carries the ball across that line (pass, snap, fumble).
 3. Incurs a penalty which leaves the ball behind the line.
 - b. Safety:
 1. It is a safety when a runner carries the ball from the field of play across his/her own goal line and then it becomes dead behind the goal line in his/her team's possession (Exception: Momentum Rule).
 2. It is a safety when a player passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play across his/her goal line and the ball subsequently becomes dead behind the goal line in his/her team's possession.
 3. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her own end zone.
 4. The ball then belongs to the opposing team at their own ten (10) yard line.
 - c. Momentum Rule:

When a Team B player intercepts a forward pass between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball becomes dead in his/her teams possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where possession was gained.
 - d. Touchback:
 1. It is a touchback when the ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except for incomplete forward pass), when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player behind the player's own goal line, or when the ball becomes dead not in possession behind a team's own goal line, and the opposing team is responsible for putting it there.
 2. All touchbacks will be spotted on the team's ten (10) yard line unless moved by penalty.
18. Player Restrictions:
- No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited here under or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No player shall:
- a. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
 - b. Trip an opponent.
 - c. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
 - d. Throw the runner to the ground.
 - e. Hurdle any other player.
 - f. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
 - g. Make any contact with an opponent who is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fist, locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand, as well as the legs, knees, and/or feet.
 - h. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
 - i. Clip an opponent.
 - j. Position himself/herself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
 - k. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hand(s) or arm(s) and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football. This will result in player disqualification (Penalty: Illegal Contact, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified).

II. PLAYER/TEAM CONDUCT - Use of Cards

* **Incidents of player/team conduct will be reviewed within the Sportsmanship Rating System.**

1. Any incident involving more than one (1) player from each team could result in the game being stopped and declared a double forfeit, i.e. bench clearing or team fights.
2. Yellow (caution) card:
 - a. A player shall receive a yellow (caution) card if:
 - 1) He/she is persistently called for the same penalty (flag guarding, holding, etc.).
 - 2) He/she shows by word or action, dissent from any decision by an official.
 - 3) He/she is guilty of Unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - 4) He/she is guilty of any incidental vulgar or profane language.
 - 5) He/she is penalized for unnecessary roughness.

Managers are subject to a yellow card for team/spectator misconduct.
3. Red (ejection) card:
 - a. A player shall receive a red (ejection) card if:
 - 1) In the opinion of the referee he/she is guilty of violent conduct.
 - 2) He/she is abusive in language or gesture.
 - 3) He/she receives a second yellow card for any offense.

NOTE: A player may receive a red (ejection) card without first receiving a yellow card. A player may be ejected without being shown a red card. Therefore, the player must immediately leave the field of play and meet with the supervisor on duty.

BLOOD RULE: Any player who is bleeding must be substituted for until the bleeding stops. An intramural staff member or game official has the authority to remove the player. If by removing the player who is bleeding, the team falls below the minimum number necessary to play, the following will apply: The game clock will stop and a maximum of five (5) minutes will be allowed for the player to stop the bleeding. Either an intramural staff member or game official must approve the player to re-enter. If the bleeding is not stopped within the allotted five (5) minutes, the team will forfeit the game.

III. CO-REC FLAG FOOTBALL RULE MODIFICATIONS

- A. BALL CARRIER(S): Advancement of the ball is restricted by the following circumstances:
 1. Scrimmage play via the run – **no player** may advance the ball from behind the line of scrimmage to beyond the line of scrimmage.
- B. PASSING GAME: The passer may be either male or female. The receivers are restricted by the following:
 1. **Male Passer** - during the offensive team's possession there may not be two (2) consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver. This rule applies to the Try also.
 2. **Female Passer** - can complete her forward pass to a player of either sex who is beyond the line of scrimmage.