



# Hardin-Simmons University University Recreation Department

## Flag Football Rules

In adapting the official rules for use in flag football, the object has been to keep as close to the original rules as possible and at the same time eliminate the dangers of body contact. Flag football games will be conducted under the rules of the NIRSA with the following exceptions:

### THE FIELD, THE PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

1. The field shall be a rectangle 100 yards by 40 yards, including two 10-yard end zones. The width of the field shall be lined at 20-yard intervals from goal line to goal line. The 3 and 10 yards try for point lines shall be 1 yard wide.
2. Seven players constitute a men's or women's team. A team may play with five (i.e., team must start if five players are present). **If fewer than five players are present, the game will be declared a forfeit.** If at anytime a team falls below the minimum number of players, the game will be declared a forfeit.
3. A player's name must appear on the scorecard before he/she may enter the game. A team may add players to the scorecard at anytime during the game.
4. Shoes must be soft-soled soccer/football type cleats or cross-country, tennis or Astroturf shoes. **Cleats must be made of nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material which does not chip or develop a cutting edge.**
5. The use of headgear, jewelry, shoulder pads, body pads or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap and use soft, pliable gloves if they desire. **No baseball style caps or bandannas may be worn at anytime.**



6. Tape or bandage on the hand, wrist, forearm, or any other part of the body is prohibited except to protect an injury. Under no circumstances will a player wearing a cast or splint be allowed to play. Braces with exposed metal parts must be covered.
7. Each team must wear the same type of jersey or shirt. If not, jerseys will be provided but may not always be clean. **The jersey must be tucked in at all times or be at least 4 inches above the flag belt.**
8. Belt loops, **pockets, exposed drawstrings, or untucked hoods** on sweat tops are illegal.
9. **The flag belt must be free of all knots.**
10. **Any decision on the legality of any equipment on or being used by a player will be made by the manager on duty and his/ her decision will be final.**
11. **Teams are limited to number of former varsity player(s) (listed below) they can register. A former varsity player is defined as a student who has been listed on a "school's varsity roster (squad list) for any 2-year or 4-year college/university team for more than one academic year:**  
**Flag Football – 2 athletes**

### **THE TOSS AND OPTIONS**

Three minutes prior to the start of the game, the referee shall toss a coin and the visiting team captain shall call the toss. The winner of the toss shall have offense, defense, direction, or defer their option until the second half. The team losing the toss shall have the choice of options at the start of the 2nd half, unless the team winning the toss deferred their option until the second half.

### **PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, AND RESTRICTIONS BEFORE THE SNAP**

1. Playing time shall be of 40 minutes duration, divided into two halves of 20 minutes each. Half-time shall be 5 minutes long. In case of overtime, there



will be a one-minute intermission between the end of the game and the overtime (**Overtime will only be used in the playoffs**). Time shall run continually throughout the entire game until the final 2 minutes of the both halves. During this period, the clock will stop under all normal dead ball situations. **The Supervisor shall have discretion to reduce the length of half-time if conditions deem it necessary.**

**NOTE: Overtime will only be played in the playoffs. In case of a game ending in a tie,** the two captains will determine the options by a coin flip. The options are the same as the start of the game. The home captain will call the toss. Teams will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played. Both teams will go in the same direction. Each team will be given a series of downs from the same 10-yard line. If the first team scores a touchdown, the second team still receives a series of downs to win the game. Extra points will be attempted and scored as previously stated. **If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble during the try and returns it for a touchdown, they score three points.** If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If it is not returned for a score, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line. Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime.

2. **MERCY RULE:** If a team is 20 or more points ahead when the referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. The same rule applies if a team scores inside 2 minutes with this differential.
3. Each team will be permitted 2 time-outs per half; these time-outs shall be 1 minute in length. First half time-outs do not carryover to the second half.
4. The referee may start or stop the game clock whenever, in his/ her judgement, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by using illegal or unfair tactics.
5. No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of a play.
6. Following the ready-for-play, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball.



7. After the ready for play whistle, it is illegal to consume more than twenty five seconds before putting the ball in play.
8. Players can enter and leave the game as many times as they want to, but substitutions must be made during a dead ball.
9. All offensive players must have momentarily been within 15 yards of the ball after the ready-for-play.

### **KICKING THE BALL**

1. **Punt / Pass Line-ups** - The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. Neither team may cross the scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. **The defensive team may block the punt, but must remain behind their restraining line to do so. No fake punts are allowed.**
2. **Kick Offs** - No Kick Offs will occur. The ball will be placed at the 3 yard line to begin the game.
3. **Opportunity to Catch Kick** - A player of the receiving team who is within the boundary lines and who is so located that he could have caught a free kick or a scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone while such a kick is in flight must be given an unmolested opportunity to catch the kick. The protection terminates when the kick is touched by any player of the receiving team or the ground.

### **SNAPPING, PASSING, AND DEFLAGGING**

1. The player who receives the ball from snapper must be at least 2 yards behind his/her scrimmage line. **The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s).**
2. The offensive team must have a minimum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. The offensive team must come to a complete stop for one second before ball is snapped. **After this, only one**



**person may be in motion at a time. This person may not be in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap.**

3. If on the snap, scrimmage kick or any other circumstance the ball is fumbled, it is **immediately dead** upon hitting the ground. No advancement can be made by either team. A fumble going out of bounds without hitting the ground remains in possession of the fumbling team at the spot where fumbled or wherever the ball went out of bounds. **INTERPRETATION:** A team may not **intentionally** fumble the ball forward to gain yardage.
4. All players are eligible to touch a forward pass. The passer may catch his/her own forward pass after it has touched another player. **Only one legal forward pass may be thrown per down from behind Team A scrimmage line.** The offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended. Officials are not responsible for retrieving the ball.
5. A forward pass is a live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line. A backward pass is a live ball thrown parallel or towards the passer's goal line. A backward pass hitting the ground is ruled the same as a fumble.
6. A catch is established when a player possesses the ball with one foot in bounds.
7. If a forward pass or backward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead and belongs to the offensive team
8. It is illegal to attempt to steal a ball in any player's possession. Once a player has obtained possession of the ball, his/her opponent must play for the flag not the ball.
9. Defensive players must not ruff the passer at anytime during or after the play. **Rushers may try to deflect the ball, but they may not contact the passer even if the ball is deflected.** If the defender contacts the passer, it is considered roughing the passer. Penalty: 10 yards from end of related run, automatic first down.



10. After the ball is snapped and until it has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Penalty: 10 yards, loss of down.
11. After the pass is thrown, and until it has been touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Penalty: 10 yards, automatic first down.
12. If a player is purposely de-flagged before the legal forward pass is touched, it is pass interference.
13. **Removal of the flag belt - When the flag clip is broken**, the player is considered down. **If the flag inadvertently falls to the ground, a one hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture.** The runner is also down if any part of his body touches the ground other than his feet or hands.
14. No players shall place the ball, hand, arm, or shoulder over the flag or flag belt to place the opponent at a disadvantage when attempting to de-flag a runner.
15. The offense will receive a series of 4 downs to advance the ball to the next zone line to gain for a first down.

### **SCREENING, RUSHING, AND CONTACT**

1. Contact that places either team at a disadvantage is illegal.
2. An offensive player may screen a defensive player by maintaining a position in their path. The offensive player in maintaining position may not move in such a manner as to initiate contact with the defensive player. Nor may the defensive player contact the offensive player with an extended arm, shoulder, hip, or knee. The concept of screening and rushing is similar to blocking and charging in basketball in most but not all cases.
3. Down field screens are allowed.



## SCORING

- |    |                 |   |
|----|-----------------|---|
| a. | Touchdown       | 6 points<br>9 points (co-ed Female Score)   |
| b. | Safety          | 2 points  |
| c. | Trys for points | 1 point from 3 yds.<br>2 points from 10 yds.<br>3 points from 20 yds.<br><b>3 points when the defense returns the try for a touchdown</b> |

Touchdowns will be verified by the official de-flagging the player. If the flag does not come off and the official determines the flag belt has been illegally secured, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified and it is a personal foul. Penalty - 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

1. There can only be protest over a player's eligibility or a rules interpretation. An official's judgement call can not be protested. Protest concerning eligibility must be made before, during, or immediately after the game. Protest concerning a rule interpretation must be made immediately following the play in question. **The Supervisors decision is final. Only players of the offended team will be allowed to protest.**
2. If a team forfeits twice, they will be dropped from the league.
3. All teams advance to the playoffs. (pending sportsmanship rating)
4. Teams must appear with the minimum number of players at the scheduled location at game time to avoid a forfeit.
5. Accumulation of four unsportsmanlike penalties by the same team will constitute a forfeiture of the game.



6. **There will be No Cursing.** If an incident of cursing is heard by a game official or supervisor, **NO** warning will be issued. If it occurs a second time the offending team will be penalized 10 yards. A 3<sup>rd</sup> time will result in a stoppage of play and the offending teams forfeiture of the game.
  
7. **If at any point a player is disqualified from play, that player will be asked to leave the premises immediately and will be deemed ineligible to play until he or she schedules and meets with The Coordinator of University Recreation and is cleared to play again.**

### **SUMMARY OF CORECREATIONAL FOOTBALL RULES**

1. **The Game** – The game shall be played between 2 teams of eight players, four men and four women. Teams with seven players shall be four men and three women or three men and four women. Six players, three men and three women, are required to avoid a forfeit.
2. **The Ball** – The regular, intermediate, youth, or junior size football shall be used.
3. **Minimum Line Players** – The offensive team must have at least five players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
4. **Male Runner** – A Team A male runner cannot advance the ball through Team A's scrimmage line. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male once the ball is beyond the Team A scrimmage line; during a run by a female; and after a change of possession.
5. **Male to Male Completion** – 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 the 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 runner for positive yardage. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the Team A scrimmage line. There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, for female to female, or



female to male. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."

6. **Illegal Forward Pass** – If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the Team A scrimmage line and runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.
7. **Mercy Rule** – If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game shall end at that point.
8. **Touchdown Value** – If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and the touchdown is scored by any Team A player, the point value is 9.

## **SUMMARY OF PENALTIES**

### **LOSS OF 5 YARDS**

1. Failure to wear required equipment
2. Illegal delay of game
3. Unfair tactics
4. Substitution rules infractions
5. Putting the ball in play before declared ready by ref
6. Exceeding 25 second count
7. Infraction of free kick formation
8. Encroachment of free kick line
9. Free kick out of bounds
10. Infraction of protected scrimmage kick-kickers or players
11. Illegal snap
12. Interlocked legs on scrimmage line
13. Interference with opponents ball
14. Defensive encroachment
15. False start
16. Failure to pause a full second following huddle or shift
17. Infraction of scrimmage formation



18. Offensive player illegally in motion
19. Receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line
20. Offensive player not within 15 yards of the ball
- \* 21. Illegally handing ball forward
- \* 22. Intentionally throwing backward pass, fumble out of bounds
23. Helping the runner
- \* 24. Illegal forward pass

### LOSS OF 10 YARDS

1. Quick kick
  2. Fair catch interference
  3. Two or more consecutive encroachments
  4. Eligibility lost going out of bounds
  5. Unsportsmanlike conduct-includes coaches, players, or fans
  6. Steal, bat, or attempt to steal ball from runner
  7. Contact with opponent on ground
  8. Throwing runner to ground
  9. Diving for opponents flag and contact is made
  10. Hurdling
  11. Unnecessary contact of any nature
  12. Use body of teammate to loft oneself
  - \*\*\* 13. Tackle
  - \*\* 14. Roughing passer
  15. Illegal offensive screen blocking
  - \*\* 16. Interference defensive
  - \* 17. Interference offensive
  18. Illegal use of hands
  19. Guarding flag belt
  20. Stiff arm
  21. Obstruction of runner (Holding)
  22. Batting a free ball
  23. Illegal participation
  24. Illegal kicking
  - \*\*\* 25. Illegally secured flag belt by the offense
  - \*\*\* 26. Illegally secured flag belt by the defense
- \* Loss of Down



- \*\* Automatic first down
- \*\*\* Player disqualification

