

Flag Football Rules

Governing Rules

1. The 2018/2019 NIRSA Flag Football rules will apply in all areas except where special University of Washington Intramural Sports rules apply.

Eligibility

1. Current UW students, faculty and staff, and +1s
2. Every player should be on the roster by 8:00am the day of your game, or 8:00am Friday if your team plays on Saturdays and/or Sundays
3. Players must bring a valid UW ID or gov. issued photo ID to EVERY game
4. NO ID = NO PLAY, NO EXCEPTIONS!
5. Current UW Varsity football players are not eligible
6. Professional athletes, current or former, may not participate in their respective or alike sport, activity or event. A professional athlete is defined as a person who has been paid to participate in a sport, under contract with a professional team, included on a professional team roster, practiced with a professional team and/or compensated for trying out for a team.

Equipment

1. No JEWELRY is permitted!
2. Teams must be wearing the appropriate color uniforms that are indicated on the league schedule. Home team will wear white and the away team will wear black/dark.
3. Mouth guards for each player are recommended for protection.
4. Team jerseys must be long enough so they remain tucked in during an entire down or short enough that there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline.
5. Each player must wear pants/shorts that do NOT have any pockets, belt loops or exposed metal, including zippers. Pants/Shorts must be a different color than the flags. **PLAYERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PLAY IF THEIR PANTS/SHORTS DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE RULES. NO TAPING OF POCKETS OR ZIPPERED POCKETS.**
6. The Intramurals Program provides flags that each player must wear at all times. Flags must be worn on each hip and one behind. Flags are to be clipped on, not tied.
7. Athletic, closed toe shoes must also be worn. Metal cleats will not be allowed. No boots or sandals.
8. No hats are allowed. Players are permitted to wear head bands, or stocking caps provided they do not contain any hard, unyielding, or dangling material (i.e. pom poms or sting).
9. No braces, supports or casts that may cause other players harm will be permitted. Knee braces are acceptable as long as there is no exposed metal.
10. Game balls will be provided.

Pre-Game

1. All participants will need to bring a Husky ID or gov. issued photo ID card to the game site.
2. Participants need to check in with the Intramurals Staff before each game to verify themselves on the team roster.
3. Team Captain will take part in a pre-game conference with the officials.

The Game

1. 2 teams of 7 players in single gender leagues and open.
2. Minimum to start a game is 5. Maximum number of players on a team roster is 14.
3. Game is divided into two 20 minute halves with a 3 minute halftime.
4. Clock will stop within the last 2 minutes of each half for:
 - a. Incomplete pass
 - b. Out-of-bounds
 - c. Touchdown

- d. Time-out
- e. First down
- f. Fair catch
- g. Penalty and administration
- h. Touchback or safety
- i. Change of possession
 - i. Once stopped, the clock will start when the ball is spotted for a scrimmage play and the referees have blown their whistles signaling play to begin or when the ball is legally snapped following a change of possession or time-out.
5. Game is played on a 60 yard x 40 yard field. Each end zone is 10 yards deep. Field is divided into four 15 yard zones (zone line to gain).

Start the Game

1. Coin Toss: A coin will be flipped (or pick odd/even) by the Referee to determine the options as in the start of the game. If an additional overtime period is played, field captains will alternate choices. The winner of the toss shall be given the options of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss/pick shall make a choice of remaining options. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.

Overtime (only playoff games)

1. During league play the tie score will not be broken. Tie scores in playoff games will be broken.
2. Overtime will begin with a “coin toss” by the referee and the team managers. The winner will have choice of:
 - a. Offense or defense
 - b. Direction during the overtime
3. Each team will receive one possession from the 10-yard line. If the score is still tied, the overtime procedure will repeat in an alternating possession manner until a winner is declared.
4. Both teams will go the same direction in the overtime.
5. If the defense intercepts a pass a dead ball will be declared.
6. Teams will alternate who is on offense first each overtime period.
7. There will be no time-outs in overtime.

Delays

1. The ball shall be put in play within 25 seconds after it is declared ready for play, unless during that interval play is suspended by an official.
2. The official 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 obviously unfair.

Substitutions

1. No substitute shall enter during a down. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided that the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball becomes alive. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from his/her team area.
2. During the same dead ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw, and no player shall withdraw and then re-enter as a substitute unless a dead ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out, or a period ends.

Injured Player

1. An injured or apparently injured player who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least one down unless the half-time or overtime intermission occurs. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player and may not return until the bleeding has stopped and/or the uniform is changed.

Inadvertent Whistle

1. If an official blows an inadvertent whistle, the play is dead and the down will be repeated from the original spot of the ball.

Series of Downs

1. A team, in possession of the ball, shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone.

Zone Line-to-Gain:

1. The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. The forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.

Awarding a New Series

1. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or either team has obtained possession of the ball as a result of a penalty, kick, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.

Start of each half

1. Unless moved by penalty the ball shall be snapped from the offensive teams own 10 yard line.
2. A ball ready for kickoff must be placed only on the ground. Players may not use tees or a holder's foot for kickoffs.
3. Formation: At least four players of the receiving team must be on the mid-field line after the ball is ready for play and until the ball is kicked.
4. Recovery of a free kick: There are no onside kicks.
5. First touching: If any player on the kicking team touches the ball before it crosses the receiving team's free kick line the ball is dead where it hit the ground following the touching. It is the receiving team's ball at the spot of first touching or where the ball is declared dead, whichever spot is most advantageous.

Protected Scrimmage Kick (Punt)

1. Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the official must ask the offensive team captain if he/she wants to punt. The decision is announced to the opponent and, if requested, the kick must be made. The offensive team may request a punt on any down; however, quick kicks are illegal. (10 Yards)
2. Formation:
 - a. Both teams must have and maintain at least four players on their scrimmage line and remain motionless until the kick is made. A line player may not raise his/her arms to distract the kicker or block the kick. (5 Yards)
3. Kicking the ball:
 - a. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.
4. Beyond the scrimmage line:
 - a. When a kicked ball which has crossed the scrimmage, line touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team. If the ball is touched by a receiver and then is caught in the air, the receiving team can advance the ball. If caught by the kicking team, the ball is dead and belongs to the kicking team.

Kick/Punt Out-of-Bound

5. Between the goal lines: If a kicked ball goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines, untouched inbounds by the receiving team, ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.
6. Behind the goal line: When a kicked ball touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiver's goal line, it can be downed for a touchback or the receiver may run the ball out of the end zone.

Kicked ball coming to rest

1. If an inbounds punt comes to rest anywhere on the field and no player of either team attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at the dead ball spot. If the dead ball spot is in the end zone a touchback is ruled and play will resume on the 10-yard line.

Kick Catch Interference

1. While any kick is in flight, the kicking team shall not touch the ball or receiver nor obstruct the receiver's path to the ball. This prohibition does not apply if the act is after the receiving team has touched the kick, or if there are no receiving team players in position to catch ball.

Signal

1. Players shall ignore any signals given by the kickers or receivers. The ball remains alive and there is no foul.

The Scrimmage

1. Ball Responsibility:
 - a. Offensive team members are responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down. Failure to do so shall result in a "delay of game penalty". (5 Yards)
2. Stances:
 - a. Players may use a two point stance.
3. The start:
 - a. All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap.
4. Encroachment:
 - a. After the ball is ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, or contact an opponent. This includes entering the neutral zone—from the forward point of the football one yard to the defensive scrimmage line and extended to each sideline. After the snapper has placed his/her hand(s) on the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball. (5 yards)
5. False Start:
 - a. No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled. (5 Yards)
6. The Snap:
 - a. The snapper is allowed a two point stance. Can be snapped from the side or between the legs from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hands. The ball shall leave the hands in this motion. (5 Yards)

Position and Motion During the Snap

1. Legal Position:
 - a. Anytime at or after the ball is ready for play, each offensive player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap.
2. Minimum Line Players:
 - a. The offensive team must have at least four players on their scrimmage line at the snap. (5 Yards)
3. Motion:
 - a. One offensive player may be in motion, but not toward the opponent's goal line. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head, or arms. (5 yards)
4. No Direct Snap:
 - a. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal. (5 Yards)

Handing the Ball Off

1. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.
2. During a free kick, a player may not hand the ball forward. (5 Yards)
3. During a scrimmage down, a player may hand the ball forward behind the line of scrimmage only:
 - a. To any line player who has clearly faced his/her goal line and is at least one yard behind the line when he/she receives the ball.
 - b. To a teammate who, at the snap, was behind his/her line or on an end of his/her line and was not the snapper.

Backward Pass and Fumble

1. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose possession by a fumble at any time except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or avoid being deflagged.
2. A backward pass or fumble, which touches the ground, is dead at the spot where it touches the ground.

Forward Pass

1. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a scrimmage down, any number of forward passes may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the offensive team's scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand.
2. A pass is illegal if intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage, if the passer catches his/her untouched pass, or if any of the above rules are violated. (5 Yards loss of Down)

Pass Caught/Intercepted

1. A forward pass is counted as completed/intercepted as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch (one foot) touches in bounds.

Mercy Rule

1. If a team is 19 points ahead when the official announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game clock will run for the last two minutes. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more points, the game will go back to stop clock.

Player Responsibility

1. 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 shall be ejected, and an unsportsmanlike penalty shall be charged to his/her team. (10 yards)

Try-for-Point

1. An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3-yard line or 2 points from the 10-yard line or 3 points from the 15-yard line by running or passing only, shall be granted the team scoring a touchdown.
2. The team captain shall declare whether the team will attempt a 1, 2, or 3-point attempt.
3. The choice may only be changed by taking a charged time-out.
4. If the defense intercepts a pass or a fumble during a try-for-point the ball is dead.

Safety

1. A safety is worth 2 points. It is a safety when:
2. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line and it becomes dead there in his/her possession.
3. A player forces a loose ball to or across his/her goal line and the ball becomes dead there in his/her team's possession.
4. A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted, and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone.
 - a. After a safety, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 10-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

Touchback

1. It is a touchback when:
2. Any kick touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line unless the receiver chooses a spot of first touching by the kicking team.
3. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line or when the ball becomes dead on, above or behind the team's own goal line.
4. After a touch back, the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 10-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

Dead Ball Player Fouls

1. When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, he/she shall not:
 - a. Intentionally kick the ball.
 - b. Spike the ball into the ground.
 - c. Throw the ball high into the air.
 - d. Fail to return the ball to the official.

Personal Fouls

1. 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 which is deemed unnecessary of any nature.
 - h. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
 - i. Clip an opponent.
 - j. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football. (DQ)
2. Roughing the Passer:
 - a. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of play after the pass. Roughing the passer restrictions end if the forward pass is thrown from beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line.

Blocking

1. Offensive screen blocking:
 - a. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker must have his/her hands and arms behind his/her back. 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. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
2. Screen blocking fundamentals:
 - a. A player who screens shall not:
 - i. When he/she is behind a stationary opponent, take a position closer than a normal step from him/her.
 - ii. When he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent, make contact with him/her.
 - 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 1 or 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
 - iv. After assuming his/her legal screening position move to maintain it, 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.
3. Blocking and interlocked interference:

- a. Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.
4. Use of hands or arms by the defense:
 - a. 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. A blocker may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

The Runner

1. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes: (10 yards)
 - a. Swinging the hand/arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - b. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - c. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
2. Stiff arm:
 - a. 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. (10) Yards
3. Helping the runner:
 - a. The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate. (15) Yards
4. Obstruction of runner:
 - a. The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt.

Flag Belt Removal

1. There are basic rules, which are established for flag football because of legal or illegal removal of the flag belt.
2. Players must have possession of the ball before they can be legally deflagged.
3. When a runner loses his/her flag belt accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling) play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees.
4. In circumstances where the flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.
5. Defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.
6. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal. (DQ)

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. Noncontact player acts: No player shall commit noncontact acts including but not limited to:
 - a. Any acts of unfair play.
 - b. Using disconcerting words or acts prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offensive signals.
 - c. Intentionally kicking the ball, other than during a legal punt.
 - d. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of an official.
 - e. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player. (DQ)
 - f. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at an opposing player. (DQ)
 - g. Using words similar to the offensive audible and quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offensive team's signals or movements.
 - h. No whistles, noisemakers, or blow horns may be used by players or spectators during the game.

Prohibited Acts

1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches or others subject to rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
 - b. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
 - c. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
 - d. Holding an unauthorized conference or being on the field illegally.
 - e. Using profanity, taunting, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures.

- f. Intentionally contacting an official. (DQ)
- g. Fighting an opponent. (DQ)
- h. Leaving the team area and entering the playing area during a fight. (DQ)

Sport Conduct Rating

1. The Intramurals program promotes sportsmanship at all contests and activities. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes actions which are unbecoming to an ethical, fair, and honorable individual. It consists of acts of deceit, disrespect or vulgarity and includes taunting.
2. Teams will be assigned a Sports Conduct Rating on a scale from (4 – 0) after each game. Sport Conduct Ratings will be determined by the Intramurals Staff and are non-negotiable.
3. Team captains are responsible for their players, sidelines, and spectators. All will contribute to a team's Sport Conduct Rating.

Ejections

1. Any player ejected from a game will be immediately suspended from participating in all Intramurals. The ejected player must then make an appointment with the Intramurals Manager to determine the length of suspension and any other sanctions.
2. The following actions can result in ejections from Intramural Sports: 1. Improper language. 2. Unsporting conduct. 3. Throwing or kicking the ball outside of the field, at any object or person

Co-Rec Rule Modifications

The Game

1. 2 teams of 6 players, equal gender ration of 3 men and 3 women.
2. Minimum number of players is 4. Maximum number of players on a roster is 14.
3. Teams with 5 players shall be 3 men and 2 women, or 3 women and 2 men.

Male Runner

1. A male runner cannot advance the ball beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line.
2. There are no restrictions:
 - a. During a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line.
 - b. During a run by a female runner.
 - c. After a change of possession.

Male-to-Male Pass Completion

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 the try-for-point after a touchdown. If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver,(Closed) the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. (Open) The female receiver may catch the forward pass behind the line of scrimmage and advance it beyond the line of scrimmage. The spot where the ball becomes dead must be beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line for the next down to be considered open. There are no restrictions concerning a male passer completing forward passes to a female receiver, or female-to- female, or female-to-male completions. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completed is open to male-to-male or not. (5 yards and loss of down)

Mercy Rule

1. If a team is 19 points ahead when the official announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game clock will run for the last two minutes. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more points, the game will go back to stop clock.