

Flag Football Rules

Cost: \$50 per team

FORMAT

This is a 7-player league for single gender and open league teams and an 8-player league for Mix-Gender teams. Teams will be placed in round robin pool play for the regular season. Teams acquiring a .500 record or better will be placed into a single elimination playoff tournament. All games will be played on the Jessup Field Complex located at the intersection of Jessup Road and Triphammer Road. **These fields are only available for scheduled Intramural Sports activities.** All participants should park in A-Lot.

ELIGIBILITY

Players are eligible to join one Single Gender team (Fraternity, Women's) and one multiple gender league (Mix-Gender or Open) team regardless of level of play Participants are subject to the Intramural Sports eligibility rules as stated in the Intramural Handbook (Section VI.: Eligibility). **Teams will be allowed to add new players to their roster throughout the season, including playoffs.** All roster additions will be handled through IMLeagues.com or at the game site. **If a participant registers at the game site, they will need to create a profile by 10am the next morning.** Failure by write-in participants to create an IMLeagues account profile by the deadline will result in a \$5 fine per account created for the team to the team captain.

VALID CORNELL ID CARDS: Before anyone can participate, **each player must present their Cornell picture ID when they check in at all events. NO ID = NO Play.**

TEAM JERSEYS: Each team must wear similar color jerseys. Visible numbers (0-99) must be displayed on the back of the jersey. No taped-on or pinned-on numbers are permitted. Pinnies will be provided for teams that need them.

RAIN OUTS: If weather or field conditions are questionable, please check the Intramural webpage or IMLeagues webpage for updates. Games will be rescheduled at a later date, if possible. **No teams will be called.**

FORFEIT FEE

If a team fails to have the required number of participants at the scheduled match time, the opposing team who is present will have the following options:

1. Take the win by forfeit at that time. No contest will be played.
2. Choose to wait until the opponent arrives. However, the official game clock will start running as scheduled. The game will commence once the opponents arrive with whatever game time remaining on the clock and the score at 9-0, in favor of the waiting team. If the opposing team is not ready to play 10 minutes after the scheduled game time, the Intramural Staff will declare a forfeit win for the waiting team.

Any team that forfeits one game will be charged a \$40 forfeit fee.

All fees will automatically appear on the captain's bursar account. If a team calls prior to 4:00 PM the day of their scheduled contest, the forfeit fee will not be applied; however, they will still receive a default. Teams that forfeit only once are still eligible for playoff consideration. A team that forfeits the equivalent of two games will be dropped from the league without the possibility of re-entry. **Teams that win by forfeit will NOT receive a grade toward their sportspersonship rating.**

GENERAL RULES

- Proper attire must be worn. No jeans or dress pants allowed.
- It is forbidden to wear any object that may cause an injury or give an artificial advantage to the player, including but not limited to: head gear, hard-billed hats, jewelry (including tied rope necklaces, earrings, nose rings, etc.), casts, or braces. **Taping of exposed jewelry will not be permitted.** This is for your safety as well as others.
- Religious wear or medical identifications must be removed from chains and taped or sewn under the uniform. They also require prior approval from the Director of Intramurals.
- Individuals are required to obtain prior approval from the Director of Intramurals for the use of orthopedic devices essential to protect an injury.
- Players bleeding or having blood on clothing will be prohibited from participation until appropriate measures have been administered.
- Any player who refuses to follow these rules cannot play and may be removed from the playing area.

The 2021-2022 NIRSA Touch & Flag Football Rulebook will prevail on rules not discussed within this packet.

TEAM:

Seven players, or 8 players in the Mix-Gender division, per team are allowed on the field at a time. A minimum of FOUR players is necessary to begin and continue play. Teams can finish with less due to an injury or other reasons.

OFFICIALS:

The officials have absolute control of the game. Their decisions will be final and are not to be disputed by any members of either team. **The officials and Intramural Supervisors will rule on all situations not specifically covered in this rule packet.**

A. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTION:

- Unlimited substitutions are permitted as long as they are done during a dead ball, in between plays, and there is no delay of game.
- No substitute shall enter during a down.
- All players must be checked in prior to playing on the field.

B. EQUIPMENT:

- Sneakers or cleats may be worn to play, with the following exceptions: No metal or screw in cleats (of any kind) or five-finger shoes will be permitted. **The legality of footwear is at the discretion of the Intramural Supervisor on duty.**
- All players will wear the official flag belt with the flags attached in the proper locations. Shirts or jerseys must be tucked under the flag belts as well as into the shorts/pants and in no way cover or protect the flags.
- Flags must be of contrasting colors with vests/jerseys and shorts/pants.
- Ball spotters: Two soft and pliable spotters (orange and gold disks/cones) will be used to mark the offensive and defensive scrimmage line. The ball spotters will always be one yard apart.
- **Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), exposed drawstrings, or holes. Tear-away pants are illegal.**

C. TIME:

- Games will be two 20-minute halves.
- Games may be shortened if weather or other conditions interfere.
- **The clock will continuously run throughout the game except for the last two minutes of the second half and time-outs.**
- A team is allotted two time-outs per half (30 seconds each). **Time-outs do not carry over.**
- If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the official announces the 2-minute warning for the second half or any point thereafter, the game shall be over.

D. SCORING: (TOUCHDOWN = 6 points; SAFETY = 2 points; TRY = 1, 2 or 3 points)

- When attempting a try for extra points, the offensive team must decide if they want to try for 1 point from the 3-yard line, 2 points from the 10-yard line, or 3 points from the 20-yard line. The ball becomes dead and the try ends when the defense secures possession.
- 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: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

- After a try, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the scoring team at their 14-yard line, unless moved by a penalty.
- After a safety, the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their 30yard line, unless moved by penalty.
- **TIE GAME: During regular season pool play there will be no overtime.** In the case of a game ending in a tie score during the playoffs, the two field captains shall be brought together and a coin will be flipped to determine the option. The winner of the toss shall be given the option of offense, defense, or direction. Both teams will go in the same direction. Each team will be given four (4) downs from the same 10-yard line. The object will be to score a touchdown. If the first team scores a touchdown, the second team will still have four (4) downs to try to score.
 - Extra points will also be attempted as normal. **Each team is entitled to one time-out only, during the entire overtime period.**

If the defensive team intercepts the ball, the ball is dead and the series is over. The ball will be theirs and placed on the 10-yard line, where they may attempt to win. If the game remains tied after this procedure, it will be repeated until the tie is broken.

E. START OF THE GAME:

- Start of each half will begin by placing the ball on the 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty.
- The captain winning the coin toss shall have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer their option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:
 - Offense,
 - Defense,
 - Which goal to defend.
- The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining options.

F. SCRIMMAGE:

- On offense, you must have at least the snapper on the line of scrimmage at the snap. All players must be inbounds. All players are eligible to receive passes. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards**
- To gain a first down, the ball must be advanced to or beyond the next zone line to gain, regardless of where the series originated, within 4 downs. Exception: In case a penalty moves the ball back into another 20-yard zone, the line to gain for a first down is from the original spot marked.
- The center (snapper) may not run with the ball, but is eligible for a pass. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps within 2 yards of the offensive scrimmage line are illegal. **Penalty: Illegal Formation, 5 yards**
- A receiver may receive a ball or a defensive player may intercept a pass even if his or her flag has accidentally dropped off, and either may advance the ball. (See Rule K - Removing the flag belt)
- Motion: One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the snap. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, hand, head, or arms. **Penalty: Illegal Motion, 5 yards**
- The ball carrier must run to avoid defenders. The ball carrier may not stiff-arm an opponent, nor create contact to "run over" a defender or elude a flag pull. The runner may attempt to maneuver between or around defenders when trapped along the sidelines.
- It is legal for a defensive player to dive when removing a flag belt.
- Both lines may assume a two, three, or four-point stance. The offensive linemen must be set for one full second before the snap.
- If the ball carrier or passer falls to the ground (any part of their body besides the hands/feet touching), he or she is down at that spot, and may not resume play.
- After the official marks the ball ready for play, the offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball. **Penalty: Delay of Game, 5 yards**
- Any time on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each offensive player must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards**

G. BLOCKING:

- The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have their hands and arms at their side or behind their back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use their hand or arm to break a fall or to retain their balance. A player must be on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking.

- Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for them by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.
- 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 on illegal blocking plays: Personal Foul: Illegal Contact, 10 yards

- Interlocked Blocking
 - Teammates of a runner may legally screen block, but they shall not use interlocked blocking, such as grasping a teammate or encircling an opponent in any manner
 - **Penalty: Interlocked Blocking, 10 yards**

H. FORWARD PASS:

- The ball may be passed forward only once per down and must originate from behind the scrimmage line.
- It may be passed backward or laterally as many times as desired on any one play until the ball becomes dead.
- Forward passes are not permitted on punts or interceptions of forward passes.
- **ROUGHING THE PASSER:** Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he is considered out of play after the pass. Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond the scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange).
Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards from previous spot, or from the end of the run (if the pass is completed), automatic first down.
- One foot must be in-bounds when a catch is made and before the other foot touches out-of-bounds for a legal catch.
- A receiver who voluntarily steps out of bounds before or during his or her pass route loses eligibility for that play. If a receiver is pushed out of bounds, s/he must come back in before making a play at the first available opportunity. In addition, a penalty may be assessed or the pass completed, or both.

I. FUMBLES:

- If a player fumbles/laterals the ball backwards, it is dead and will be marked at the point it touches the ground.
- If a player fumbles the ball forward, it is dead and will be marked at the point of release of the fumble.
- Touching the ball, whether controlled or not, with the ball hitting the ground, is considered a fumble.
 - Example: A dropped hike or a lateral.
- A ball fumbled into the air may be intercepted and advanced by any player.

J. PUNT:

- Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the official must ask the offensive team captain if they want to punt. The official must communicate this decision to the defensive captain and the other officials. After such announcement, the ball must be kicked. Once the offense has declared to punt the captain must call a time-out to change their option.
- Neither the kicking nor receiving team may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards penalty enforced depending on situation**
- After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards penalty enforced depending on situation**

K. REMOVING THE FLAG BELT:

- When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the ball is declared dead and the down shall end. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above their head. **If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture.**
- In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. **NOTE:** If contact on the body and shoulders is deemed excessive and/or disadvantageous by the officials, it may be flagged for illegal contact (**10-yard penalty**).
- A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.
 - **Penalty: Illegal Contact, 10 yards from the end of the run**

L. FLAG GUARDING:

- Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to cause contact between the runner and the opponent that denies the opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes, but is not limited to:
 - Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging. **NOTE:** If your “natural running motion”, in regards to arm-swing, impedes flag-belt removal, it is considered a flag-guard.
 - Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - There must be contact for a flag guard to occur. If no contact occurs during a flag pull attempt, there can be no flag guarding.
- **Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards**

NOTE: The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a “stiff arm” extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag. **Penalty: Personal Foul, Illegal Contact 10 yards**

M. MIX-GENDER MODIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

- Eight players per team are allowed on the field at a time. A minimum of FIVE players is necessary to begin and continue play.
- Neither gender may outnumber the opposite gender by more than one player on the field.
- Team A male runner cannot advance the ball through Team A’s scrimmage line. There are no restrictions for:
 - During a run by a female runner.
 - After a change of team possession.
 - After a legal forward pass, even if caught behind the line of scrimmage.
 - **Penalty: Illegal Male Advancement, 5 yards from the previous spot**
- **OPEN vs. CLOSED PLAYS:** The term “closed” means a male player may NOT throw a legal forward pass completion to any other male player. The team “open” means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
 - 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 receiver for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the Team A (offense scrimmage line). There is NO foul for a female receiver being tagged or deflagged behind the Team A scrimmage line; however, the next down remains “closed”.
 - There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male.
 - **If a male receiver catches a pass from a male passer on a closed play, it is a foul of ILLEGAL MALE RECEPTION. Whether the penalty is accepted or declined, the next down shall remain closed. Penalty: Illegal Male Reception, 5 yards from the previous spot, loss of down. The next down is closed.**
 - **Any other foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is open or closed.**

PENALTIES:

Pass Interference:

- By offense - 10 yards from the original line of scrimmage.
- By defense - 10 yards from the original line of scrimmage.
- Pass interference can include pushing or shoving the player out of bounds while in route and intentionally removing the flag belt before the catch while the ball is in flight.

Five Yard Penalties:

- Delay of Game, Disconcerting Act, Encroachment, False Start, Illegal Formation, Intentional Grounding, Illegal Forward Pass, Intentional Forward Fumble, Failure to Wear Proper Equipment. All of these penalties will be marked from the original line of scrimmage except:
 - Intentional Grounding- Point of infraction and loss of down.
 - Illegal Forward Pass- Point of infraction and loss of down.

Ten Yard Penalties (contact and unsporting acts):

- Illegal use of hands, forearms, or elbows, offensive or defensive holding, intentional batting/kicking flag guarding, leaving the feet (foot) on a block, roughing the passer, stiff-arming, wedge blocking and/or clipping. All of these penalties are marked from the basic spot of enforcement, according to the all-but-one principle.

Gross unsporting conduct, intentional or flagrant foul:

- **The person(s) charged with gross unsporting conduct, intentional or flagrant foul may be removed from the game and Intramural suspensions will be enacted. Any player receiving two unsporting conduct penalties will be ejected immediately, and will be subject to Intramural disciplinary procedures.**

RISK MANAGEMENT

Cornell Recreational Services assumes no responsibility for injuries received during intramurals, special events, and other recreational activities. Participants are reminded that their participation is completely voluntary. The nature of sport activities and the large number of participants in the Cornell University Intramural program make the occurrences of some injuries inevitable. It is strongly recommended that all participants have a physical examination prior to participating. Any injuries or accidents occurring during recreational activities should be reported immediately to on-duty personnel. Participants with a health issue and individuals who are on medication are urged to confidentially inform the Director of Intramural Sports of their specific situation.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

Individuals, teams, and spectators who arrive intoxicated, suspected of consumption, or possessing alcohol, tobacco, or other illegal substances will not be permitted to play and will be asked to leave the playing area. The game may be forfeited and the offending individuals immediately suspended. Cornell Recreational Services will not tolerate such behavior and will act in a manner that is prudent, with the safety of all participants the priority. Such individuals will be dealt with harshly, given a minimum of a 365-day suspension and will be subject to University disciplinary procedures.

SPORTSPERSONSHIP & PARTICIPANT CONDUCT

Great sportspersonship is a cornerstone of a quality intramural experience. We value the good sportspersonship of our participants.

Personal & Team Sportspersonship Rating

Beginning in the 2021-2022 Intramural Sports season, sportspersonship ratings will no longer be utilized to determine player and team eligibility for play and playoff status. Instead, the determining factor will be accumulation for unsporting acts and penalties for individuals and teams during the sports' season. Any acquisition of an unsportspersonlike conduct foul during a contest will be added to an individual's and team's unsportspersonlike total for the activity's season.

We will be using a "2, 3, 4, 5" method of determining eligibility. The following will be in effect for the activity's season:

- The accumulation of TWO (2) unsportspersonlike conduct fouls in a game will result in the ejection of the individual from the game, and procedures outlined in the "Ejections" section.
- The accumulation of THREE (3) total unsportspersonlike conducts fouls during an activity's season will result in the dismissal of the individual from the activity for the remainder of its season.
- The accumulation of FOUR (4) unsportspersonlike conduct fouls accumulated by a team during a game will result in the team forfeiting the contest.
- The accumulation of FIVE (5) total unsportspersonlike conduct fouls by the team's individual participants during an activity's season will result in the dismissal of the team from the activity for the remainder of the season.

Accumulations of unsportsmanlike conducts do not reset during playoffs. If an individual or team meets the prior criteria during playoffs, they may be subject to dismissal during playoffs.

Additional actions may be taken depending upon the infractions outlined in Section IX., Disciplinary Procedures.

The Intramural Supervisors reserve the right to reevaluate and amend any grade based on team/player's sportsmanship.

Please read the Intramural Handbook. It is a written description of the regulations that govern the Intramural Sports Program. No matter what sport you play, these regulations govern your participation in our programs. It is imperative to the continuity of the program that all participants are aware of and abide by the regulations set forth by Cornell Recreational Services.

All rules not specifically covered in this document will be enforced as NIRSA Touch & Flag Football Rules. All rules are subject to change by the Intramural Sports professional staff.

If you have any questions regarding the Intramural Flag Football rules, please contact Scott Flickinger (Director of Intramural Sports) at (607) 255-8063 or e-mail: sf487@cornell.edu
Schedules and results will be available on the IMLeagues webpage: imleagues.com/cornell

