

## INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Intramural flag football games will be conducted under the rules of the NIRSA - National Intramural/Recreational Sports Association 16<sup>th</sup> Edition (2012-2013) Flag and Touch Football Rulebook and Official's Manual with the following modifications:

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- a) All Intramural Flag Football games are played at the Outdoor Center North Turf Fields located at 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Stadium Drive in Champaign.
- b) All participants must have their University of Illinois Student Identification Card (I- card) with them at all times – NO EXCEPTIONS
- c) All men's and women's divisions play 7 on 7 flag football. The minimum required to play is 5. All Co-Rec divisions play 8 on 8. See attached co-rec modifications for co-rec player policies.
- d) Team rosters are limited to a maximum of 20 players.
- e) Each team shall designate to the Referee the team captain or captains for the contest. The captain is required to sign the scorecard at the end of each game. The team captain is responsible for all information contained in the Intramural Football Rules and Intramural Handbook.
- f) Teams should be warmed up and ready to play as soon as the previous game ends on their field.

### No Show Procedure for 10 minute wait period

- a) If a team not present and ready to play by **the scheduled game time** (flags and jerseys on, minimum number of players on the field) the opposing team shall be given the ball and choice of goal awarded to the opposing team.
- b) If a team not present and ready to play by **(10)** ten minutes after the scheduled game time **the game is declared a no show, 1-0, to the team ready to play.**

### Equipment and Uniforms

- a) All players are required to bring a valid UIUC (I-card) to all Intramural Flag Football games.
- b) The intramural jersey policy is in effect for intramural flag football. The policy reads:

#### Jersey Policy

Participants are required to wear their own team shirts during all Intramural contests. For Flag Football, Soccer, Broomball, and Basketball games teams must have a set of home jerseys and a set of away jerseys. **All home jerseys MUST BE WHITE. Away jerseys must be any color other than white and each member of your team must be wearing the SAME SHADE OF A SPECIFIC COLOR.** This is necessary to ensure that our staff can easily identify team members based on jersey color. Please refer to IMOnline to see if you are listed as the home team or the away team. Failure to abide by the jersey policy may result in a forfeit, or technical foul/unsportsmanlike conduct penalty being assessed against your team at the beginning of the contest. Intramural Facility Managers on duty will have the final say whether a team has acceptable jerseys to begin a contest. Jerseys will not be available for checkout at Intramural games.

- c) Game balls will be provided. Men shall use a regular size ball while women's and co-rec teams may use either the regular or intermediate size ball. It is permissible for a team to use their own ball when they are on offense given that the ball is regulation size.

- d) Flag belts will be provided to each team on site. **Shirts must be tucked in and flag belts must be worn on the outside of all clothing with the clip in front, one flag on each hip and one flag on the back.**
- e) Only athletic type soccer/football, running, court, or turf shoes with or without molded plastic or rubber cleats are allowed. All cleats must be less than ½ inch, metal/sharp plastic cleats are not allowed. All players must wear athletic shoes. No sandals, boots, or bare feet.
- f) Players must wear athletic apparel with **no exposed metal, no belt loops, and no pockets.**
- g) Baseball style hats, bandannas, and sunglasses are not permitted. No other headwear with knots or dangerous materials is allowed.
- h) Players may not wear casts/splints under any circumstances at any time and all pads/braces must be above the waist. Players who wear a knee brace with exposed metal or metal hinges are required to cover it.
- i) Players may wear kneepads, gloves, covered knee braces, headbands, and knit caps.
- j) Players may not wear any exposed jewelry of any type besides medical alert bracelets (please have these taped down)
- k) All equipment is subject to the approval of the intramural staff on duty.

### **The Playing Field**

- a) Respective lines to gain (1st down) for each team in order are the 20, 40, 20, Goaline.
- b) The point of the ball determines if it crosses the line.
- c) Hash marks will divide the width of the field into thirds, 15 yards each.
  - i) When the spot of the ball is between the hash mark and sideline, the ball will be put in play on the hash mark creating a wide and short side.
  - ii) When the spot of the ball is between the hash marks, the ball will be put in play where the previous play ended.
- d) The side and end lines are out of bounds. Players, coaches, and fans shall stay between the 20-yard lines at all times. Two ball spotters (small plastic cones) will be used during play. The ORANGE cone marks the offensive scrimmage line, the YELLOW cone the defensive line. The ball spotters will always be one yard apart.

### **Starting the game**

- a) The referee will conduct a coin toss (Odd or Even finger guess). The winner will select to defer his/her option until the second half, to start on offense or defense, or to defend a specific goal.
- b) Each half of the game will begin with the ball placed on the 14-yard line.

### **Timing**

- a) Games shall consist of four 10 minute running clock quarters and 5 minute halftime. However the final two minutes of the first half (second quarter) and second half (fourth quarter) shall utilize a stop clock where:
  - i. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass-starts on the snap.
  - ii. Out-of-bounds-starts on the snap.
  - iii. Safety-starts on the snap.
  - iv. Team time-out-starts on the snap.
  - v. First down-depends on play achieving first down.
  - vi. Touchdown-starts on snap (after the try).
  - vii. Penalty-dependent on the previous play. (Exception: Delay of game starts on the snap).
  - viii. Referee's timeout-starts at referee's discretion.
  - ix. Touchback-starts on snap.
  - x. Change of possession-depends on previous play.
  - xi. Team B is awarded a new series that starts on the snap.
  - xii. Inadvertent whistle-starts on the ready.

- xiii. Team attempting to conserve time illegally-starts on the ready
- xiv. Team attempting to consume time illegally-starts on the snap

- b) The officials will be in charge of keeping time.
- c) A game shall be considered "official" and the result final if after the conclusion of the first half-time the game is stopped for inclement weather.
- d) Game time is the scheduled league time, unless the previous game goes over the allotted time.
- e) At the end of the game, captains are required to check and verify all information by signing the scorecard.

### **Scoring**

- a) All touchdowns are worth 6 points.
  - i) To be ruled a touchdown; the ball must be on or over the goal line.
  - ii) The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player.
- b) A try-for-point follows the touchdown. The ball may be played from the 3 yard line, 10 yard line, or 20 yard line. If the try is successful the points are awarded as follows: 3 yard try, 1 point; 10 yard try, 2 points; 20 yard try, 3 points.
  - i) An intercepted pass or lateral during the try automatically ends the try, the ball becomes dead and it cannot be returned for points by the defense.
- c) When a safety is scored (2 points) the ball belongs to the scoring team at their 14-yard line.
- d) After any score, the ball shall be placed in play at the opposing team's 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty.

### **Substitutions**

- a) Players may substitute at any time between downs provided they are ready to play.

### **Time-outs**

- a) Each team is allowed one 30-second time-out per half and there are no time-outs in overtime periods.
- b) **Time-outs DO NOT carryover from 1st half to 2nd half or from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half to Overtime.**

### **Mercy Rule**

- a) A mercy rule goes in to effect at any time after the 8-minute mark in the fourth quarter. The rule goes in to effect if the scoring spread is:
  - i) Men's or women's leagues - 19 points
  - ii) Coed leagues - 25 points
- b) If at any time after the 8-minute mark, the point spread is established, the mercy rule will be in effect and the game shall end.
- c) At any time during the second half if the point spread is 50 points or greater the mercy rule will be in effect and the game shall end. This rule applies to all divisions.

### **Overtime Procedure**

- a) There will be only one coin toss (odd or even). Field captains will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played.
- b) The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction.
- c) Both teams will go the same direction in overtime.
- d) Each team will be given a series of downs (4 downs) from the same 20-yard line.

- e) If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to tie or win the game.
- f) Following an intercepted pass or lateral, the ball automatically becomes dead and the offensive team's possession is over.
- g) Try for points will still be attempted in a normal manner by any team who scores a touchdown.
- h) If two cycles of overtime play have been completed (both teams have played offense and defense twice), it is required that teams try for 2 or 3 points instead of 1 point.

## **HOW TO PLAY FLAG FOOTBALL**

### **Starting the Play**

- a) The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the Referee has blown the whistle to put the ball in play.

### **The Snap**

- a) The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with quick and continuous motion of the hands.
  - i) They do not have to pass the ball between the legs.
  - ii) Both of their feet must be behind the line of scrimmage.
- b) Following the ready whistle, no defensive players may break the plane of the defensive scrimmage line until the snap.
- c) No offensive player shall make a false start or any action that simulates the start of play.
- d) The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the scrimmage line.

### **Line of Scrimmage Sets**

- a) All players are subject to motion, position, and illegal procedure rules.
- b) The offense must have at least 4 players not in motion on their scrimmage line at the snap. 5 players for Co-Rec
- c) The offense must bring all players within 15 yards of the ball at some point after the ready for play whistle and prior to the snap.
- d) One player may be in motion, but not forward motion, at the snap.
- e) Following a huddle or shift, each offensive player must come to a full stop for one second before the snap.

### **Zone-Line-to-Gain and New Series**

- a) The offensive team has 4 consecutive downs to advance the ball across the next zone line-to-gain.
- b) A new series is awarded:
  - i) To the offense if the line-to-gain is reached or a penalty which carries an automatic first down is accepted,
  - ii) To the defense if the offense fails to reach the line-to-gain after four consecutive downs,
  - iii) To either team if a change of possession or a kick occurs during the down.

### **Hand-offs**

- a) Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
- b) There are no sneak hand-offs i.e. putting a ball underneath a shirt
- c) If the ball is tossed or there is airtime between the ball and the catch, then passing rules will apply.
- d) There are no restrictions on handing the ball during punt returns or following changes in possession.

### **Passing the Ball**

- a) All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Backward passes are unlimited.
- b) A **pass** is any exchange of the ball that involves airtime. This can be a forward or backward, overhand pass, underhand pitch, or any other toss or flip of the ball.
- c) Only one forward pass may be thrown per scrimmage down, but NOT on kicks, punts, or interceptions.
- d) One foot must touch the ground in-bounds for a catch to be legal.
- e) These passes are illegal:
  - i) When either of the passer's feet are beyond the offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the hand.
  - ii) The ball is intentionally grounded.
  - iii) The passer catches his/her own untouched pass.
  - iv) When there is more than one forward pass during a scrimmage down.
  - v) If a forward pass is thrown after a change in team possession.
- f) A player may pass the ball backward at any time. NOTE: Backward passes that hit the ground in play are dead at the spot. Backward passes that go out of bounds belong to the offense unless the ball goes out of bounds behind a goal line, and then the play will result in a touchback or safety.
- g) The pass begins when the ball is released from the passer's hand. The ball is dead if the passer is de-flagged before the release.
- h) The initial direction of a pass determines whether a pass is forward or backward.
- i) If a forward, or backward, pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players the ball becomes dead. It is considered a completed pass and belongs to the offensive team.
- j) Interceptions in a team's own end zone may be advanced out or downed for a touchback – momentum rule will be in effect

### **Ending the Play**

The ball becomes a dead when:

- a) The whistle blows (On inadvertent whistles, the team may replay the down or take the ball at the spot where whistle was blown. If a forward pass is airborne when the whistle is blown, the pass is considered incomplete).
- b) It goes out of bounds.
- c) Any part of the runner's body other than a hand or foot touches the ground. Ball in possession is considered part of the hand.
- d) After any score.
- e) Any kick or punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it, or a muff hits the ground.
- f) A forward or backward pass, fumble, or snap hits the ground (Dead at spot on backward pass, fumble, and snap).
- g) The flag belt is removed legally (If the belt falls off, one hand touch between shoulders and knees).
- h) If a player or ball from an adjoining field interferes with the result of a play the official shall stop play and offer the team in possession the option of replaying the down or taking the ball at the spot of interruption.

### **Punting the Ball**

- a) On fourth down, the Referee will ask the offensive captain if he/she wants to punt.
- b) There are no fake punts.
- c) If the offense wants to change their decision to punt or not, they must call a time-out.
- d) Neither K nor R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick immediately and in a continuous motion. The

kicker may not kick the ball to him or herself or any other member of the kicking team. Defensive players may jump in an attempt to block the kick provided they do not cross the defensive scrimmage line before the ball is kicked.

- e) If a punt touches a player on either team and then hits the ground it is dead and belongs to R. If a punt hits an R player, and is then caught in the air by R it can be advanced. If a punt hits an R player, and is caught in the air by K it belongs to K at that spot. Exception: Punts blocked by R and caught in the air by K behind their line of scrimmage (first ball spotter-orange) may be advanced by K.
- f) If a punted ball goes out of bounds anytime before being touched, or comes to rest between the goal lines it shall belong to R at that spot.
- g) There are no fair catches. The punting team may not interfere with the receiving team's ability to catch the ball. If the punting team touches the ball first, the receiving team can take the ball at that spot or the result of the play.

## **FOULS AND PENALTIES**

**Note: Flag Football is NOT a CONTACT sport. However, incidental contact will occur.**

### **Captains**

- a) The captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable.
- b) Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

### **Personal Fouls**

- a) Players may not commit any of the following personal fouls.
- b) Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- c) Trip, clip or hurdle any player.
- d) Contact an opponent who is on the ground, or after the ball is declared dead.
- e) Throw the runner to the ground.
- f) Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player or lower the shoulder.
- g) Commit any unnecessary roughness.
- h) Tackle a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
- i) Hold or slow a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
- j) Roughing the Passer (automatic first down) - applies only to the player throwing a legal forward pass behind the offensive line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer in any fashion, whether or not he/she touches the pass, it is roughing the passer. Contacting the ball while in the passer's hand is roughing the passer.
- k) Aid the runner; grab, push or pull a teammate with the ball.
- l) Stiff-arm an opponent.
- m) Guard flags by blocking them with the hands, ball or otherwise denying the defense the chance to pull.
- n) Use hands or body to block an opponent.
- o) Pulling the flag from an opponent who does not have the ball.
- p) Tying the flag belt in a knot or any other tampering with the flag belt (Also results in player ejection).

### **Legal and Illegal Offensive Screen Blocking**

- a) Offensive players may protect the runner by screening.
- b) The offensive screen block shall take place without contact and the screener may maintain a position (moving or stationary) between the defensive player and the runner.

- c) The screen blocker shall have his/her arms at their sides or behind their back. Any use of arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use a hand or arm to break a fall or retain balance. Players must remain on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking. No part of the screener's body, except their feet, may be in contact with the ground.
- d) Defensive players must avoid the offensive player's screen block, and may not use their arms or hands as a wedge to contact the offensive blocker.
- e) Illegal contact between the blocker/rusher will be called against the player determined to have initiated contact (similar to "block/charge" in basketball).
- f) Offensive screen blocking beyond the line of scrimmage when a forward pass crosses the line is illegal.

### **Pass Interference**

- a) Pass interference is defined as bumping, pushing, or unnecessary contact with an opponent OR restricting a player from access to a pass while on offense or defense. Players may not wave their hands in the face of an opponent.
- b) Players may not go through opponents to get to a ball in flight.

### **Momentum, Safety, and Touchback**

**Safety = 2 Points.** It is a safety when:

- a) A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession;
- b) A player forces a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line by his/her kick, pass, fumble, snap, muff, or bat, and the ball subsequently becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. This includes when the ball is declared dead on or behind their goal line. However, it does not apply to a legal forward pass which becomes incomplete.
- c) A player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from his/her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him/her in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.
- d) When a safety is scored the ball belongs to the defending team at its own 14 yard line unless moved by a penalty.
- e) **EXCEPTION/MOMENTUM RULE:** When a Team B player intercepts a forward pass or catches a scrimmage kick or free kick 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 is declared dead in his/her team's possession or it goes out-of-bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where the pass was intercepted or the kick was caught. This is known as the momentum rule.

## **Co-Rec MODIFICATIONS**

All previously listed rules apply to co-rec games in addition to rules listed below.

### **Number of Players**

The number of players is 8 on 8. The minimum number of players to start a game is 6 and teams must have at least 2 men and 2 women to start. Each team is allowed a maximum of 4 men and 4 women on the field at one time. Please see table below for legal Co-Rec lineups.

Legal Co-Rec Lineups	
Men	Women
4	4
4	3
3	4
4	2
3	3
2	4

### Touchdown

If a female scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass, and a touchdown is scored by any Team A player and there has been no change of possession, the point value is 9. All other touchdowns are 6 points.

### Substitutions

Substitutions must be man for man or woman for woman only.

### Starting the Play

The offense must have at least 5 players, not in motion, on their scrimmage line at the snap.

### Male Runners

- a) A male runner cannot advance the ball through the scrimmage line.
- b) There are no restrictions concerning runs by a female.
- c) Once the line of scrimmage has been legally crossed, all advancement restrictions are eliminated (i.e., a female runner may advance beyond the line and then pitch to a male who is still behind the line and he may advance with no restriction.)
- d) After a change of team possession any male runner may advance the ball without restriction, as in an interception or punt return.

### Male-to-Male Forward Pass Completions

- a) During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions on downs from a male passer to a male receiver.
- b) The term **CLOSED** means a male player may not complete a legal forward pass to a male.
- c) The term **OPEN** means any player can complete a pass to any other player.
- d) If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or receiver **and gain positive yards**. If the female is deflagged before gaining positive yards, the next play remains closed.
- e) If a male receiver catches a pass from a female passer behind the line of scrimmage and then advances beyond the line of scrimmage the penalty will be an Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down.
- f) In order for a closed play to become open, the direction of the pass involving a female **MUST** be forward.
- g) Accepted penalties have no affect on open and closed plays. It is possible to lose net yardage on a closed play – then for the next play to be open – if all of the requirements to open a play are met. Positive yards gained are GROSS yards, not NET yards gained after the penalty has been enforced.

