

# TEXAS STATE<sup>®</sup>

## INTRAMURAL SPORTS

### **FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

Intramural football games will be conducted under the rules of the NIRSA - National Intramural/Recreational Sports Association - with the following modifications:

#### **THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT**

##### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **The Players** - The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. 5 players are required to avoid a forfeit. A team must start if 5 players are present. If for any reason a team drops below the minimum number of players (5), it may continue to play if the Referee feels they still have a chance to win. **CO REC ONLY:** The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 males and 4 females. **Teams may not have more than 4 of either gender on the field at a time.**
- **Scorecards** - Signed scorecards constitutes a roster of eligible players.
- **Team Captains** - Each team shall designate to the Referee the team captain. The captain's first choice of any penalty option is irreversible. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team. The team captain is responsible for information contained in the Intramural Flag Football Rules, and the Intramural policy and procedures.
- **Persons Subject to the Rules** - Team representatives including: players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, fans/spectators and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

##### **II. THE FIELD**

- **Markings** - The field shall be a rectangular area 100 yards x 45 yards. Lines to gain for each team are the 20, 40, and 20. Hash marks will be visible at the 3 & 10-yard lines at both ends of the field. An "X" will be placed at the 14-yard lines on each side of the field. The ball will be snapped at the 14-yard line to start each half.
- **Inbounds/Out of Bounds** - The lines bounding the sidelines and the end zones are out of bounds in their entirety, and the lines bind the inbounds area. The entire width of each goal line shall be a part of the end zone.
- **Team Areas** - Players, coaches, and fans shall stay between the 20-yard lines at all times in the team areas. **Repeated warnings about this rule will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.**
- **Ball Spotters** - Two ball spotters will be used during play. One, which shall be orange in color, will mark the offensive scrimmage line. The second, which shall be gold in color, will mark the defensive scrimmage line. **The spotters will be 1 yard apart for all contests.**

##### **III. EQUIPMENT**

- **The ball** - The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and shall meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure and ball marking. Men shall use the regular size football while women and co-rec will use a women's ball. **ALL GAME BALLS WILL BE ISSUED FROM THE INTRAMURAL SPORTS DEPARTMENT.**

- **Flag belt** - Each player must wear a one piece belt that is free of any knots clipped at the waist line with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one at the center of the back. Flags shall be contrasting color to team jerseys and also their opponent's flags. Flags 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!! Also, Players may not wear shorts with pockets or belt loops!**
- **Team Jerseys** - Teams shall wear shirts with or without numbers that are of the same color. Team jerseys must contrast with the jerseys of the opposing team. Jerseys will be provided on site. Jerseys may not be tied in any way to create a knot.
- **Shoes** - Players must wear shoes, either soft soled soccer/football type cleats, tennis, or Astroturf shoes. No sandals, boots, or metal/sharp plastic cleats will be allowed.
- **Supports, Braces, Gloves, and Pads** - **NO** casts/splints will be allowed under any circumstances. No pads or braces will be allowed above the waist. Players who wear a knee brace with exposed metal or metal hinges are required to cover the exposed metal. Players may wear gloves which consist of a soft, pliable non-abrasive material. Any player wearing illegal or dangerous equipment shall not be permitted to play. **Jewelry is illegal equipment** and may not be worn. **All equipment shall be subject to the approval of the Intramural Staff and their decisions shall be final.**
- **Headwear** - Players may wear one-piece elastic headbands made of soft pliable material. They may also wear knit stocking caps in cold weather. Rubber of elastic cloth bands may be used to control hair. No other headwear will be allowed. **NO baseball caps, bandannas, or helmets.**

## **PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

- **Game Time - Game time is Forfeit time.** Any team not ready to play at game time is subject to forfeit. The forfeit fee is (\$ 20.00). The captain must pay this fee 48 business hours before their next game, in order for the team to continue the season.
- **Coin Toss** - The Referee shall toss a coin and offer the winning Captain these options:
  - To defer his/her option until the second half.
  - Offense or defense.
  - To defend a specific goal.
  - At the start of the 2nd half, the loser of the first half coin toss shall have his/her option to go on offense or defense, or which goal to defend, unless the first half winner deferred his/her decision.
- **Starting the Game** – Games will start with the offense having the ball to begin the first half at their own 14-yard line with a first down line to gain to their own 20-yard line. **THERE WILL BE NO KICK-OFFS.** Second half will begin in a similar manner.
- **Time Factor** - A game will consist of two 20 minutes halves, and a half time of 5 minutes. Continuous clock. The last 2 minutes of the second half only the clock will stop and start similar to a regulation football game (i.e.: incomplete pass, out of bounds, etc.).
- **Mercy Rule** - If at any time during the last two minutes of the game a team is losing by 19 points (Co Rec- 25 points) the game will be called.
- **Overtime Procedure** - In case of a tie, the officials will bring all players and coaches to the center of the field to explain the overtime procedure. There will be only one coin toss. Field captains will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played. The winner of the toss shall be give options of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Both teams will go the same direction in overtime. **Each team will be given a series of downs (4 downs) for the same 10-yard line.** The object will be to score a touchdown. The goal line shall **always** be the zone line-to-gain in overtime. If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win the game. Try for points will still be attempted in a normal manner by any team who scores a touchdown. If the defense intercepts the ball returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line to begin their series of 4 downs.
- **Time-outs** - Each team is allowed two 1-minute time-outs per half. **Time-outs do not carry over from one half to another.** Each team will be given one time-out per overtime period. If a team protests a rule interpretation and the ruling is not changed, they will be charged with a time-out, if they have no time-outs left a delay of game penalty will be assessed. If the call is changed, no time-out will be charged.

- **Substitutions** - Players may substitute at any time between downs. Each substitute shall be in uniform, ready for play, flag belt in position at the time of the substitution. **Penalty: Delay of game, 5 yards.**

## **BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT OF BOUNDS**

- **Ball in Play** - The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the Referee has blown the whistle to put the ball in play. **Penalty: Delay of Game, 5 yards, Dead Ball Foul.**
- **Dead Ball** - A live ball becomes dead as provided in the rules, or when on official sounds the whistle, or otherwise declares the ball dead. The ball is declared dead when:
  1. It goes out of bounds
  2. Any part of the runner's person other than a hand or foot touches the ground. Ball in possession is considered part of the hand
  3. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try-for-point is made.
  4. Any punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it
  5. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
  6. A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground, or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
  7. A ball snapped from scrimmage, or other backward pass, that hits the ground
  8. A forward pass is legally completed, or a loose ball is caught by a player on, above or behind the opponent's goal line.
  9. 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.**
  10. A runner is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and the knee, including the hands and arm when the flag inadvertently falls off before being legally deflagged.
  11. A passer is deflagged or legally touched before releasing the ball
  12. A muff of a protected scrimmage kick strikes the ground
  13. The official sounds the whistle inadvertently during a down.
    - a. **Result: Team in possession at time of whistle may choose to take the play from the spot or the ball at the whistle or replay the down. Note: Any penalties that occur during this down will be accepted or declined.**
- **Out of Bounds** - A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches the ground or anything else, except a player or game official, which is on or outside a boundary line. If the runner inbound is touched by a player or an official on the sidelines out of bounds, the ball is still in play. A loose ball is out of bounds when it touches the ground, a player, or anything else which is on or outside a boundary line. A player who is catching a forward pass is considered out of bounds when any part of his/her person contacts that area declared out of bounds. One foot inbound is needed for legal reception.

## **SERIES OF DOWN, NUMBER OF DOWNS**

- **Number of Downs** - The team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line-to-gain. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone.
- **Line to Gain** - The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless the 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 most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor if a line-to-gain has been achieved.

## **KICKING THE BALL**

- **Free Kick (Kick-Off)**
  - **NOTE: There will be NO kick-offs at any point.**
- **Protected Scrimmage Kick (Punt)**
  - **Decision to punt** - Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee will ask the offensive captain if he/she wants a protected scrimmage kick (punt). The Referee will then communicate this decision to the

defensive team captain. The offense may request a punt on any down. After such announcement, the ball must be kicked. Exception: If a team time-out is called, or b) a penalty occurs anytime during this down which results in the right of the kicking team to repeat the down. The Referee must then again ask the offensive captain whether he/she wants a punt.

- **Formation** - 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 kicking team must have all players (except the punter) within 1 yard of their scrimmage line and remain motionless until the kick is made. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards. Previous spot.**
- **Recovery** - 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 a 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. If R catches a punt and then fumbles, and K catches the fumble in the air before it hits the ground it can be advanced by K. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**
- **Out of Bounds and ball at rest** - 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. If the ball goes out of bounds behind the goal line, it may be taken as a touchback and put in play at R's 14-yard line or R may advance it out of the end zone.
- **Co-Rec: Males and Females are able to return punts.**

## **INTERFERENCE, FIRST TOUCHING, AND FAIR CATCH**

- **Interference** - No member of K may interfere with the ability of R to catch a protected scrimmage kick. This includes anytime K touches the ball or any R player while the ball is in flight. **Penalty: Kick Catch Interference. R may take the ball at the spot of the foul, or accept 10 yard penalty from the previous spot and re-kick.**
- **First Touching (ball not in flight)** - If any member of K touches the kicked ball first, either before or after it crosses the line of scrimmage, it is referred to as first touching and R may take the ball at that spot or at the spot determined by the action that follows first touching. R loses the right to take the spot of first touching if during the return a foul is committed by R, or any penalty is accepted by R.
- **Fair Catch - NO FAIR CATCH.** There are no signals, fair catch or otherwise, during kicks.

## **SNAPPING, HANDING, AND PASSING THE BALL**

### **A. THE SCRIMMAGE AND SNAP**

- **The snap** - The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with quick and continuous motion of the hands. **They do not have to pass the ball between the legs.**
  1. Following the ready for play signal, no defensive player may break the plane of the restraining line at any time until the ball snapped.
  2. **Penalty: Encroachment, 5 yards.**
  3. No offensive player shall make a false start or any action that simulates the start of the play. This penalty may be enforced regardless if the ball is snapped. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**
  4. The snapper must have both feet behind the scrimmage line. They may also not simulate the start of the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**
  4. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the scrimmage line at the time of the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**
- **Legal Positions** - All players are subject to motion, position, and illegal procedure rules.
  1. Anytime at or after the ball is ready for play, each Team A player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap. **Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.**
  2. During the snap, the offense must have at least 1 player on their scrimmage line.
  3. Three, and four point stances are illegal.
  4. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the snap and must not be the player established on the line of scrimmage.
  5. Following a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary for one full second before the snap.

- **After the Play** - Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after the scrimmage down. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line.

## **B. HANDING THE BALL**

- **Handing – Note: Co Rec restrictions noted in #4.**
  1. Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.
  2. During a free kick down, a player may not hand the ball forward to a teammate.
  3. During a scrimmage down an offensive player may hand the ball forward behind the scrimmage line only to any line player who has clearly faced his/her goal line by moving both feet in a half-turn and is at least 1 yard behind the scrimmage line when he/she receives the ball **or** to a teammate who, at the snap, was behind his/her line of scrimmage or an end of his/her scrimmage line and was not the snapper. **Simple terms = no sneak hand-off.**  
**Penalty: Illegal Handing, 5 yards and loss of down.**
  4. **(Co Rec Only) A male runner cannot advance the ball through the scrimmage line.**  
**Note:** There are no restrictions concerning runs by females. Once the line has been legally penetrated, 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.) After a change of team possession any male runner may advance the ball without restriction, as in an interception or kick return.

## **C. PASSING AND RECEIVING**

- **Legal and Illegal Forward Passing** - All players are eligible to touch or catch a forward pass.
  1. Only **ONE** forward pass may be thrown per down. A forward pass is illegal:
    - a) If either of the passer's feet are beyond the offensive line of scrimmage when the ball leaves his/her hand;
    - b) If thrown after team possession has changed during the down;
    - c) if intentionally grounded to save loss of yardage;
    - d) if a passer catches his/her untouched forward pass;
    - e) if there is more than one forward pass per down.
  2. **(Co Rec only)** 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.
    - a) The term **CLOSED** means a male player may not complete a legal forward pass to a male.
    - b) The term **OPEN** means any player can complete a pass to any other player.
    - c) 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 **for positive yards**. If the female is deflagged before gaining positive yards, the next play remains closed. **Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from spot of the pass, loss of down.**
- **Backward Pass and Fumble**
  1. A runner may pass the ball backward anytime.
  2. A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight inbounds by any player and advanced.
  3. A backward pass or fumble which goes out of bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out of bounds spot.
  4. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touched the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.
  5. A backward pass or FUMBLE by the offense that first hits the ground in
    - a) the team's own end zone is a **safety**, or **b)** in the opponent's end zone is a **touchback**.
- **Pass Interference - Intramural Football is NOT a CONTACT sport, however, incidental contact will occur.**
  1. There shall be no offensive screening/blocking beyond the scrimmage line when a legal forward pass crosses the offensive scrimmage line.

**Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from previous spot, Loss of Down.**

2. There shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the scrimmage line while a ball is in flight, which crosses the offensive scrimmage line.

**Penalty: Automatic First Down, 10 yards from the previous spot.**

3. In #1 and #2 above, 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.

4. Players may **NOT "go through opponents"** to get to a ball that is in flight.

- **General Information**

1. A pass is any exchange of the ball that involves air time. This can be a forward or backward, overhand, underhand pitch, or any other toss or flip of the ball.

**CO REC NOTE: In order for a completed pass that involves a female for positive yardage to open the next play, the pass itself must be forward.**

2. The pass begins when the ball is released from the passer's hand. The ball is dead if the passer is deflagged or legally touched before the release.

3. The initial direction of a pass determines whether a pass is forward or backward.

4. If a forward or backward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players, the ball becomes dead, is considered a completed pass, and belongs to the offensive team.

#### **D. SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK**

- **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, the point value is 9 (**Co Rec Only**). All other touchdowns are 6 points.

**Try-for-point:** Ball in play from the 3 yard line = 1 point.  
Ball in play from the 10 yard line = 2 points.  
Ball in play from the 20 yard line = 3 points.

**Note:** An intercepted pass or fumble during the try that is returned for a touchdown = 1,2 or 3 points.  
(Depends on try)

**Note:** The try is over when: Team A commits a loss of down foul during the try, or Team B commits a foul following a change in possession during the try.

- **Safety:** When a safety is scored (2 points) the ball belongs to the **scoring team** at their own 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty. It will be put into play with a first down line to gain is their own 20.

- **General Information - After any score, the ball shall be placed in play at the opposing team's 14-yard line, unless moved by penalty.**

1. To be ruled a touchdown, the ball must be on or over the goal line.

2. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown will be disallowed. The player is disqualified from the game and it is a foul. **Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down.**

3. Once the captain makes the choice for one or two points after a touchdown, he/she may change the decision only after an offensive or defensive charged time-out.

4. A team, which intercepts a pass in its own end zone, may advance the ball out of the end zone. It is a touchback if the interceptor is deflagged before leaving his/her end zone.

#### **E. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS**

##### **PERSONAL FOULS**

1. There shall be no personal fouls committed by players, substitutes, or coaches. Personal fouls may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Using fist, foot, knee, or leg to contact an opponent;
- b. Tacking the ball carrier;
- c. Steal, attempt to steal or strip, or bat the ball from a player in possession;
- d. Illegal contact;
- e. Hurdling an upright player, tripping, clipping, etc.;
- f. Unnecessary roughness;
- g. Touching a player or ball carrier with undue force;

- h. 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.

**Penalty: For 1-8 above: Personal Foul, 10 yards, flagrant offenders will be disqualified.**

**2. The runner may not:**

1. Be aided by a teammate (grabbed, pushed, or pulled).
2. Stiff-arm an opponent;
3. Guard their flags by blocking with arms, hands, or the ball, and thereby denying on opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt.

**Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the foul.**

**F. BLOCKING AND SCREENING**

1. Blocking, as in regulation football, is prohibited. A player may not use his/her hands or body to block or ward off an opponent. **Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.**
2. Offensive players may protect the runner by screening. 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. 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 a screen blocking. No part of the screener's body, except their feet may be in contact with the ground.  
**Penalty: Illegal contact, 10 yards.**
3. Defensive players must avoid the offensive player's screen block. **Penalty: Personal Foul 10 yards.**
4. The runner may not stiff arm or lower a shoulder into an opponent. **Penalty: Personal Foul 10 yards.**
5. Illegal contact between the blocker/rusher will be called against the player determined to have initiated contact (similar to "block/charge" in basketball). **Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.**

**G. FLAG REMOVAL**

1. Deflagging (removal of the flag by a player) is allowed only under special circumstances similar to tackling in football in that players must have possession of the ball before they can be deflagged.
2. When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grappling or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and the knees.
3. In circumstances where the flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the result of the play. **Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.**
4. Pulling or removing a flag belt from on offensive player without the ball is a foul. **Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.**
5. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is a foul. **Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards from previous spot, loss of down, player disqualification.**

**SUMMARY OF NIRSA FLAG/TOUCH FOOTBALL PENALTIES**

**I. PENALTIES AND YARDAGE**

**A. Loss of 5 yards**

1. Encroachment (**dead ball**)
2. False Start (**dead ball**)
3. Illegal Snap(**dead ball**)
4. Delay of Game (**dead ball**)
5. Infraction of Kick Formation (**dead ball**)
6. Encroachment of Free Kick Lines (**dead ball**)
7. Illegal Motion
8. Illegal Shift
9. Illegal procedure, free kicks, punts, scrimmage, number of players on line, etc.
10. Intentional Grounding
11. Illegal Substitution
12. Free Kick Out of Bounds
13. Required equipment worn illegally

14. Player receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line
15. Helping the runner
16. Illegally handing ball forward (**Loss of down for offense**)
17. Illegal forward pass (**Loss of down for offense**)
18. Advancement by male runner (**Co-Rec only, Loss of down for offense**)
19. Illegal forward pass on closed play (**Co-Rec only, Loss of down for offense**)

**B. Loss of 10 yards**

1. Kick Catch interference
2. Two or more consecutive encroachments during the same down interval.
3. Forward pass interference (**Defense=Automatic first down at spot, Offense=Loss of Down**).
4. Illegally secured flag belt on touchdown (**Loss of down and disqualification**).
5. Steal, strike or attempt to strip the ball
6. Trip, hurdle, tackle, clip, stiff arm, or any unnecessary contact of any nature.
7. Illegal offensive screen blocking
8. Flag guarding by offense, illegal removal by defense
9. Obstruction of runner
10. Illegal participation
11. Defensive illegal use of hands.