

Intramural Flag Football Rules Fall 2017

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Participation Warning

There are inherent risks of mental and physical injury while participating in the Intramural Sports Program. Our goal is to reduce or eliminate as many risks as reasonably possible to provide a safe and fun program. This does not mean that injuries will not happen. We ask for your full cooperation in following instructions regarding proper conduct, proper use of equipment and facilities, and adherence to the rules of each sport as established by the Intramural Sports Program. Participants are responsible for the cost of any injury; therefore, you are encouraged and recommended to have adequate health insurance.

Rules of Play

National Intramural & Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Flag Football Rules will govern play with the following exceptions:

Team Regulations

1. Seven players will constitute as a team for Flag Football. Five players are required at the start of the game to avoid a forfeit.
2. Team captains are responsible for monitoring participants who join their team. If players are not on the team roster before 4pm of your scheduled game day, those players will need to get permission from the Competitive Sports Supervisor on duty. The cut off for adding players to rosters is one day after the season ends.

Equipment and Jerseys/Clothing

1. A game ball will be provided; however, teams are to furnish their own practice balls and will
2. NOT be allowed to use the game ball during warm-ups, half-time, or after the game.
3. Players are strongly recommended that a mouth piece be worn.

4. All players must wear appropriate athletic shoes. If cleats are worn, they must be made of rubber.
5. **No metal cleats will be allowed.**
6. The Intramural Office will provide jerseys for team identification; however, **t-shirts with full sleeves must be worn under the provided Campus Recreation jerseys.** All jerseys and shirts that are long enough must be tucked into the player's pants/shorts so there is no interference with the pulling of the player's flags. Shirts and jerseys may also hang down to 4 inches above the waist.
7. Jeans of any sort will not be allowed.
8. Shorts, sweats, or shirts with pockets or belt loops are not allowed. If a player shows up with pockets, they will still be permitted to play. However, this player will not have a flag and will only require a one hand touch anywhere other than the head to be down.
9. Each player must wear the distributed flags. Flags cannot be pinned, fastened, or tied on.
10. *Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards*
11. If clothing or equipment is considered dangerous, the Intramural Staff can declare it illegal.

Playing Time

1. Games will be divided into two twenty (20)-minute halves with a continuous clock. There will be a three-minute half-time break. The clock starts on the snap and will only stop for time-outs or injuries.
 - a. During the last two minutes of the second half, the clock stops and starts again at the snap for the following reasons: team timeout; 2-minute warning; incomplete pass; play ends out of bounds; score; change of possession
 - b. During the last two minutes of the second half, the clock stops and starts again on the ready for play (RFP) whistle for the following reasons: first down; official's timeout; injury timeout; flags (fouls and penalties).
 - c. If more than one reason exists to stop the clock, starting the clock on the snap will supersede the clock starting on the RFP whistle. For example, if in one play a team runs for a first down, and then run out of bounds; the clock will start on the snap because running out of bounds supersedes the first down.
1. The offense has 25 seconds to put the ball into play after the referee has blown his/her whistle (ready for play).
2. Each team will be allotted two 30 second time-outs per game which may be signaled by any player on the field of play **ONE** designated person on the sideline that is determined in the captains meeting. Timeouts do not carry over. One timeout per the entire overtime period.
3. When games are behind schedule due to injury or other extenuating circumstances, Intramural Staff have the right to shorten half-time.
4. Teams are expected to be ready to play at the scheduled time. If teams are not ready at the scheduled time the clock will start even while waiting for team members to arrive. Teams with less than five players will be given a *five-minute leeway*. A forfeit will then be given to teams with less than five players. See the Intramural Sports Manual for further clarification on forfeits, which is available at intramurals.usu.edu.

Student Staff

Officials, Game Managers and Competitive Sports Supervisors will be provided for each game. The Supervisors have jurisdiction over each contest with the authority to eject players, coaches, and/or spectators from the playing area or building for abusing the rules and/or any unsportsmanlike behavior.

Game Rules

1. Touchdowns are six points; a safety is two points. The team that has scored is allowed to try for one, two, or three extra points. The one point line is three yards away, the two-point line is ten yards away, and the three-point line is 20 yards from the goal line.
2. With two minutes left in the game and if one team is ahead by 19 or more points, the game is declared over, and the team with the lead is declared the winner.
3. When the score is tied at the end of the second half in the regular season, the game is over and will be recorded as a tie, the official will call the field captains to the center of the field for the coin toss. The team winning the toss will have their choice of offense or defense.
4. In tournament play the overtime policy is as follows:
 - a. The official will call the field captains to the center of the field for the coin toss. The team winning the toss will have their choice of possession, or side. The same end zone will be used for the entire overtime period.
 - b. Each team will have a series of four downs; the ball being placed on the 10-yard line, unless moved by penalty. A try for one, two, or three points will be given after the touchdown.
 - c. The team that scores MORE will be declared the winner. If both teams score and the game is still tied, the team using the least amount of downs to score will be declared the winner.
 - d. In tournament play, if neither team scores, the four-down series is repeated until a winner is declared. If both teams score, then the team that uses the least amount of downs to score will be declared the winner. If both teams use the same amount of downs to score, the four-down series is repeated.
5. To begin the game, the referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing managers, after first designating which captain shall call the toss. The captain winning the 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:
 - a. To choose whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.
 - b. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The manager, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option (a or b). The choice of offense or defense is given.
 - c. **Note:** Team A is considered the team that won the coin toss. If Team A decides to be offense then play begins by placing the ball on the fifteen-yard line and
 - d. Team B assumes the defensive position for the first half and will have the same choices as team A had for the second half. If Team A does not choose offense or defense then they choose which goal to defend.

6. **Flags** - In order to down a ball carrier, flags must be withdrawn from the waist by any other player on either team.
7. The “tackler” must stop at the point of the tackle and extend his arm with the withdrawn flag upward. The ball carrier is declared down at this point. It is illegal for the ball carrier to deliberately touch his own flags or to defend them in any manner, i.e., guarding, diving, or jumping. (**Penalty: 10 yards from the spot of the penalty and replay the down.**)
 - a. It shall be illegal for a player to deliberately withdraw an opponent’s flag unless that player is in possession of the ball. The official shall consider this action as unsportsmanlike conduct (10-yd penalty). If a flag is inadvertently lost, the player is still eligible and play reverts to one hand touch rule, between the shoulders and knees.
8. **Fumbles** - A fumbled ball is dead at the point the ball touches the ground if fumbled backward, or at the spot where the fumble occurred if fumbled forward. The ball belongs to the team which controlled it last, before the ball touched the ground. A loose ball which has not hit the ground may be caught and advanced by either team.
9. **Kicking** - All kicks must be announced, and the ball must be snapped. Neither team can cross their scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. The officials will notify both teams when a team has announced that they intend to kick the ball.
 - a. There are no kick-offs.
 - b. After a touchdown, the ball will be put into play from the 14-yard line.
 - c. The halves are to start from the 14-yard line.
10. A team in possession of the ball shall have four consecutive downs to gain a first down.
11. **Legal position** - anytime at the snap or after the ball is ready for play, each offensive player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball. (*Penalty: Illegal Procedure, five yards from the line of scrimmage.*)
12. **Motion** - one offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion towards the opponent’s goal line. Other offensive players must be stationary without movement of their feet, body, head, or arms. (*Penalty: Illegal shift or motion, five yards from the line of scrimmage*)
13. The ball can be snapped between the legs or on the side of the snapper and the person receiving may not be closer than two yards to the snapper. (*Penalty: Illegal snap, five yards from line of scrimmage*)
14. **Defensive Encroachment** - entering the neutral zone prior to the snap is a dead ball foul. The whistle shall be blown immediately. (*Penalty: encroachment- five yards from line of scrimmage and two or more between snaps results in a 10-yard penalty*)
15. **False Start** - movement on the offensive line is a dead ball foul. The whistle shall be blown immediately. (*Penalty: false start- five yards from line of scrimmage*)
16. **Screen Blocking**: (*Penalty: illegal contact, 10 yards from the spot of foul*)
 - a. The offensive screen block shall take place without **contact**.
 - b. The screen blocker shall have their hands and arms at their side or behind their back.
 - c. Use of arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive screen block is illegal.
 - d. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance.
 - e. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
17. **Screen Blocking Fundamentals**: (*Penalty: Illegal Contact, 10 yards from the spot of foul*)

- a. A player who screens shall not:
- b. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
- c. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.
- d. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
- e. 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.

18. Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense: *(Penalty: Illegal contact, 10 yards from the end of the run, or previous spot)*

- a. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block.
- b. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent.
- c. A rusher may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

19. Handling the Ball

- a. Any player may hand or throw the ball backward at any time.
- b. Ball carrier cannot use a "stiff arm". *(Penalty: Illegal contact, 10 yards from spot of foul)*
- c. If opposing players simultaneously catch a pass or a fumble in flight, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.
- d. No runner with the ball may *Jump* (to avoid having a flag pulled), and *Guard* (blocking an opposing player from pulling a flag) all are illegal. *(Penalty: flag guarding- 10 yards from the spot of foul)*
- e. The player scoring a touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the player is not de-flagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified. *(Penalty: unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards from the previous spot.)*

20. Passing the Ball:

- a. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- b. One foot must land in bounds to complete a pass.
- c. A passer is declared down if their flag is withdrawn by a defensive player before the ball leaves their hand
- d. The passer remains the passer until the pass is complete/incomplete or the passer moves in a way that appears like they are participating in the rest of the play. Any illegal or excessive contact will be penalized as roughing the pass. *(Penalty: 10 yds. from the previous spot or end of the run and automatic 1st down)*
 - i. Illegal forward pass: only one legal forward pass is allowed each down. A second forward pass, or a forward pass beyond A's line of scrimmage is illegal *(Penalty: five yards from spot of penalty and loss of down).*

21. Runner:

- a. The ball carrier is down at the spot where the tackler pulls their flags. Unnecessary roughness by the tackler or by the runner is a personal foul. *(Penalty: illegal contact- 10 yards from the spot of the foul)*

- i. 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: *(Penalty: 10 yards from spot of penalty)*
 - ii. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - iii. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
 - b. An offensive player in front of the ball carrier must stop his run when a defender is in his proximity. ***Offensive blockers may not extend their arms forward or to the side to create contact.*** *(Penalty: Illegal contact 10 yards from spot of penalty)*
 - c. If a defensive player intentionally knocks down an opponent, when the runner was in the clear, and in the opinion of the referee, would have scored if he/she had not been knocked down, a touchdown shall be allowed and an illegal contact penalty will be enforced on the try or next possession.
 - d. If a defensive player reaches across the body of the ball carrier to pull the flag and contact is made, the responsibility of the contact lies with the judgment of the official.
 - e. If the defensive player forces the offensive player out of bounds, a penalty will be assessed. *(Penalty: illegal contact- 10 yards from spot of penalty, unless, in the official's opinion the tackle was flagrant. If a flagrant tackle occurs, the offender will be ejected from the game.)*
22. Unsportsmanlike conduct (UC), including any unnecessary roughness or cursing at the student staff or opponents, may cause that player to be eliminated from the game at the Officials or Supervisors discretion and their team shall be ***penalized 10 yards from the line of scrimmage - NO WARNING NEEDED. Three UCs on the same team will result in a forfeit.***

Co-Rec Rules

The rules stated above will govern play with the following exceptions:

1. Teams are made up of four women and four men. Teams may start a game with six players.
2. Teams cannot play with more than five men at a time.
3. No restrictions regarding who may advance a punt.
4. Open and Closed
 - a. When a play is open, a male passer may throw the ball to anyone on the field.
 - i. After a male-male completion, the next play is considered "closed"
 - ii. Two male-male completions in a row is considered illegal forward pass.
 - b. During a "closed" play a female must be involved as a passer, runner, or receiver.
 - i. To open a play there needs to be all of the following in a play: female involved; legal forward pass; and positive yards gained.
 - ii. The following plays will remain closed until these criteria has been met
 - c. Males may not run the ball past the line of scrimmage, but they may receive a legal forward pass behind the line of scrimmage and run past the line of scrimmage.
 - d. Mercy Rule: 25 points

5. Touchdowns scored by female players will be worth nine points, this includes any legal forward pass by a female to a male which results in a touchdown.
 - a. Extra points will be one point from the three-yard line, two points from the 10-yard line, and three points from the 20-yard line.
 - b. With two minutes left in the game and one team is ahead by 25 or more points, the game is declared over, and the team with the lead is declared the winner.

Injured Player(s) Policy

If someone on your team becomes injured, please contact the Intramural Program staff at intramurals@usu.edu 24 hours before your next scheduled game to inquire about replacing the injured player on your team. Doctor or Athletic Trainers note may be required. Intramural Sports Program staff has the authority to determine if an injured player will be allowed a substitute. There are limitations when it comes to who can substitute during tournament play. If someone becomes injured during the tournament, an eligible participant may play in their place. Once the injured individual becomes approved to play again, that substitute is then removed from the team roster.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility to participate in the Intramural Sports Program at Utah State University is restricted to certain members of the campus community. Review the following requirements carefully to ensure you and your teammates are, and remain, eligible. For questions concerning eligibility, please call our office at 435-797-8388 or email intramurals.usu.edu.

- Students: If you are enrolled at Utah State University with at least one (1) credit, paying the Campus Recreation fee, or are doing research and possess a current student activity card or proof of enrollment.
- Faculty and Staff: If you are currently employed by any department of Utah State University you can pay the Campus Recreation fee for \$35.61 at the Registrar's Office.
- Spouses of Students/Faculty/Staff: You can purchase a spouse pass at the Registrar's Office that will give you access to participate for \$40.
- Intercollegiate/Club Sport Athletes: You can only have two or three Intercollegiate or Club Sport athletes (depending on the sport) on an Intramural team that at one point were on the team roster during that current school year. See tables below for Intercollegiate and Club Sport Athletes on eligibility for Intramural Sports.

Intercollegiate/Club Sports Athletes

USU Sport	Club Sport	Intramural Sport	# of Participants you can have on IM Team
Football	N/A	Flag Football	2

Adding Players

Team captains are responsible for monitoring participants who join their team. If players are not on the team roster before 4pm of your scheduled game day, those players will need to get permission from the Competitive Sports Supervisor on duty. The cut off for adding players to rosters is one day after the season ends.

Sportsmanship Rating System

The sportsmanship rating system is intended to be an objective scale by which teams' attitudes and behaviors can be assessed. Behavior before, during, and after a contest is included in each rating. Each team captain is responsible for educating **ALL players and spectators** affiliated with his/her team about the system. **Teams must maintain a 3.0 ("B") average in order to qualify for tournament play. Teams must also maintain a 3.0 ("B") average during tournament play.** The Intramural Staff will determine the score for the teams after each intramural contest. The Intramural Staff reserves the right to review and/or change any sportsmanship rating given. Captains inquiring about their team's sportsmanship rating should do so the business day following the contest by contacting the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports or Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports by emailing intramurals@usu.edu

The sportsmanship rating system is based on the following criteria, **but not limited to:**

4.0 = Excellent Conduct and Sportsmanship (A)

- Team members cooperate with and demonstrate good sportsmanship toward members of opposing teams, spectators, and ALL campus recreation staff.
- Team manager exhibits control over his/her team and spectators, converses reasonably and rationally with officials about rule interpretations, and cooperates by providing any information requested by any intramural staff member.

3.0 = Good Conduct and Sportsmanship (B)

- Team members verbally complain about some of the decisions made by the officials and/or show minor dissensions, which may or may not merit an unsportsmanshiplike conduct penalty.
- Teams receiving one unsportsmanshiplike conduct penalty will receive no higher than a "B" rating.
- A team defaults the contest

2.0 = Average Conduct and Sportsmanship (C)

- Team shows verbal dissent toward officials and/or the opposing team, which may or may not result in an unsportsmanshiplike conduct penalty.
- Team captain exhibits minor control over team/spectators, but is in control of himself/herself.
- Teams receiving more than one unsportsmanshiplike conduct penalties will receive no higher than a "2.0" rating.
- Team is unable to produce a team at game time resulting in a forfeit.

1.0 = Below Average Conduct and Sportsmanship (D)

- Team continually dissents the officials and/or opposing team from the court/sidelines.

- Team manager exhibits little or no control over team/spectators or himself/herself.
- Teams that have a player ejected will receive no higher than a "D" rating.

0.0 = Poor Conduct and Sportsmanship (F)

- Team is completely uncooperative; manager has no control over team/spectators/self.
- Teams play with ineligible participants or withhold any information requested.
- Damage or destruction of any Campus Recreation facility/equipment.
- Multiple player ejections or causing a contest to be forfeited by any reason than not having enough players will receive an "F" rating.
- Any threatening behavior (verbal/nonverbal) towards any player, spectator, or campus recreation employee.

Teams receiving a "0.0" rating during tournament will not be allowed to advance.

Teams receiving a "1.0" rating during tournament must have their team captain meet with the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports before their next scheduled contest.

Teams that do not maintain a 3.0 Average during Tournament play will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports before their next scheduled contest.

For full details and our entire Intramural Sports Program Manual, please visit https://www.usu.edu/campusrec/intramural_sports/homepage_intramural

Everything is at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports and Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports. If you have any questions, contact them at intramurals@usu.edu