

**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY™**  
**Recreation/Intramural Department**  
**Flag Football Rules**

\*\*Unless otherwise modified, the current NIRSA Flag Football Rules will be in effect.\*\*

**ELIGIBILITY**

1. All eligibility rules listed in the handbook apply.
2. **ALL participants must show their current EMU EagleOne Card or Rec/IM membership card (staff/faculty) to one of the supervisors on duty BEFORE entering into the game. Guest and Forgotten ID passes are not allowed as proof of eligibility.**
3. Participants are eligible to play on one men's team or one women's team & one co-rec team.

**TEAM**

1. Seven players constitute a men's or women's team. A team may play with 5 (i.e., team must start if 5 players are present). If fewer than 5 players are present at game time, the game will be declared a forfeit. If a team drops below 5 players at anytime during the game for reasons other than injury, the game shall be recorded as a forfeit.

**FORFEIT TIME**

1. Game time is forfeit time.
  - a. A failure by any team to have the allotted number of players at the appropriate game time will result in the team receiving an automatic forfeit for the game.
  - b. Two forfeits automatically remove your team from participating in the play-offs, and may result in automatic removal from the league.

**PRE-GAME COIN TOSS**

1. Prior to the start of the game, the referee shall toss a coin, and the visiting team captain shall call the toss.
  - a. The captain winning the toss shall have the choice of offense, defense or defer to the second half.
  - b. If the winning captain chooses to defer, then the other captain shall choose offense or defense.

**THE GAME**

1. The official game ball will be furnished by the Intramural Department. **This is the ball that will be used during the game unless both teams agree to use their own game ball.**
2. The game will consist of two halves of 20 minutes. The clock will run continuously during the first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half, except when a timeout is called, or at the referee's discretion. During the last two minutes of the game, the clock will stop for the following reasons:
  - a. An incomplete pass; a player going out-of-bounds; penalties; change of possession; any score; and first downs.
  - b. After a first down, the clock will start on placement of the ball.
3. Half-time will be 5 minutes. The referee shall have discretion to reduce the length of the half-time if conditions deem it necessary.
4. Teams will start from the 10-yard line at the beginning of each half and after any score by the opposition.
5. The field shall be rectangle 100 yards by 35 yards, including two 10 yard end zones. The width of the fields shall be lined at 20 yard intervals from goal line to goal line.
6. The neutral zone will be one-yard wide and marked with a marker on the ground. Both teams must line up behind their line of scrimmage. Any player jumping into the neutral zone is an automatic dead ball, offsides or false start.

**TIME-OUTS**

1. Each team will be permitted one (1) time-out per half.
  - a. These time-outs shall be 1 minute in length.
  - b. Time-outs do not carry over to the second half.
2. Teams are permitted one (1) time-out per overtime period. (only in the play-offs)

### **UNIFORMS/EQUIPMENT**

1. Each player on the field must wear a one piece flagbelt (provided by Intramural Sports) at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flagbelt must be free of any knots.
2. All participants must wear athletic shoes. Absolutely no work boots, sandals, etc. Absolutely no metal spikes are allowed.
3. The use of headgear, jewelry, shoulder pads, body pads or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap and use soft, pliable gloves if they desire. No baseball style caps or bandannas may be worn at anytime.
4. Tape or bandage on the hand, wrist, forearm, or any other part of the body is prohibited except to protect an injury. Under no circumstances will a player wearing a cast or splint be allowed to play. Braces with exposed metal parts must be covered.
5. All players must wear jerseys (shirts) long enough so that they remain tucked in during each down, or cut at least 4" above the flag belt. Each team must wear the same color jersey or shirt. The jersey must be tucked in to allow for grabbing the flag. Penalty - 5 yards.
6. Belt loops, pockets, exposed drawstrings, or untucked hoods on sweatshirts are illegal. Players wearing such illegal equipment will not be allowed to participate until illegal equipment is removed.
7. Any decision on the legality of any equipment on or being used by a player will be made by the supervisor on duty, and his/her decision will be final.

### **SCORE/CLOCK**

1. The score will be kept by an Intramural staff member.
2. The referee may start or stop the game clock whenever, in his/her judgment, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by using illegal or unfair tactics.
3. Scoring values are as follows:
  - a. Touchdown: 6 points
  - b. Safety: 2 points
  - c. Extra Points: 1 point from 3 yards; 2 points from 10 yards.; 3 points from 20 yards
4. If the game ends in a tie during the regular season, overtime will NOT be played and the game will be recorded as a tie.
5. OVERTIME WILL ONLY BE PLAYED IN THE PLAY-OFFS, in the following format:
  - a. The two captains will determine the options by a coin flip. The visitor captain will call the toss. The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense or defer. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining option. Teams will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played.
  - b. ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.
  - c. Each team will be given a series of 4 downs to score. Extra points will be attempted and scored as previously stated.
    - i. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game.
    - ii. The game will continue to be played until a winner is determined.

### **SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. A player may re-enter the game as often as they wish.
2. Teams may only substitute players when the play is dead.

### **MERCY RULE**

1. If a team is 17 or more points ahead when the referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half, or anytime thereafter, the game shall be over.

### **KICKING THE BALL**

1. **Kick Catch Interference:** While any protected scrimmage kick is in flight beyond K's scrimmage line, K shall not touch the ball or R, nor obstruct R's path to the ball. This prohibition does not apply if the act is after the kick has been touched by R. K may catch, touch, muff or bat a protected scrimmage kick in flight beyond K's scrimmage line if no R player is in position to catch the ball.
2. Players shall ignore any signals (fair catch) given by the kickers or receivers. The ball remains live. There is no foul.
3. Prior to a protected scrimmage kick the offensive team must make the referee aware of its intentions. After such announcement, the ball MUST be kicked, unless one of the following exceptions occurs:
  - a. Either team calls a time-out, or
  - b. A foul occurs anytime prior to or during this down after the K team captain's decision which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the referee must ask the K captain whether or not he/she wants a protected scrimmage kick and communicate this decision to the R captain.
4. Neither K or R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.
  - a. All scrimmage line rules regarding the snap, stance, false start, minimum line players, motion and shift apply to protected scrimmage kicks too.
5. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.
  - a. If a kicker drops the ball, it is considered a fumble, and the ball becomes dead at the spot.
6. During a punt, the return team MUST have five players on the line of scrimmage.
7. If the R team muffs or drops the punt, the ball becomes dead at the spot.

### **SNAPPING THE BALL**

1. The player who receives the snap from the center must be at least 2 yards behind his/her scrimmage line.
2. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s).
3. The offensive team must have a minimum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
  - a. A player in motion is not counted as one of the 4 on the scrimmage line.

### **PASSING THE BALL**

1. All players are eligible to touch a forward pass after it is thrown. The passer may catch his/her own forward pass provided it has been touched by another player first.
2. If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneous by members of opposing teams, the ball is immediately dead upon returning to the ground and belongs to the offense.
3. A forward pass is a live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line. A backward pass is a live ball thrown parallel or backwards. The initial direction of the pass will determine whether or not the ball is backwards or forwards.
4. Only one foot must touch inbounds in order for a pass reception to be considered legal.

### **FUMBLES**

1. If on the snap, scrimmage kick, or any other circumstances the ball is fumbled, it is immediately dead, at the spot, upon hitting the ground. No advancement can be made by either team. A fumble going out of bounds without hitting the ground remains in possession of the fumbling team at the spot where the ball was fumbled or wherever the ball went out of bounds.

### **SCREENING, RUSHING, AND CONTACT**

1. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact with him/her.
2. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her 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 his/her hands or arms to break a fall or to retain his/her balance.
3. 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. A rusher may use his/her hands or arms to break a fall or retain his/her balance. The application of this Rule depends entirely on the judgement of the official.
4. These actions are judged similarly to the block/charge call in basketball.

## OTHER RULES

1. It is illegal to attempt to steal the ball while in player possession. Once a player has obtained possession of the ball, his/her opponent must play the flag, not the ball. If a player tries to take the ball away from the person in possession of the ball, it is considered unnecessary roughness/illegal contact.
2. Defensive players must not contact the passer at anytime during or after the play. They may only go for the flag. Rushers may try to deflect the ball, but they may not contact the passer even if the ball is deflected. If the defender contacts the passer, it is considered roughing the passer.
3. Team Players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended. Officials are not responsible for retrieving the ball. The offensive team may take the ball to the huddle after each play.

## PROTESTS

1. All rule interpretation protests must be made by the team captain at the time the dispute occurs and before play continues. The protest must be made verbally to the head official before the ball is snapped to start the next play. If the head official is not notified before the ball is snapped, the protest will not be considered.
2. A team wishing to protest will be charged with a timeout.
  - a. If the protest is ruled invalid, the team will lose its timeout.
  - b. If the protest is valid, the timeout will be charged to the officials.
  - c. If a team has no timeouts remaining and wishes to protest they may do so, however, they will be charged with a 10 yard unsportsmanlike penalty if the protest is invalid.
3. Protests based on the judgment of officials will not be considered under any circumstances.
4. If the team is still dissatisfied with the ruling, the captain must notify the Intramural Supervisor on duty. The Intramural Supervisor may rule on any protest. If the protesting team is still not satisfied, then the officials will notify both teams that the game is being played under protest and will so state on the scorecard. The game will continue on as called.
5. Unless the above procedures have been followed, the protest will not be considered. In the event that the protest is upheld, the contest will be replayed from the point of interruption at a date and time to be determined by the Intramural Director.

## CO-REC MODIFICATIONS

1. The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men; six players, 3 men and 3 women. A team must have at least six players to start and continue a game.
2. The regular, intermediate, junior or youth size football shall be used.
3. The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
4. **Male runner:** A male runner cannot advance the ball beyond the scrimmage line when on offense. There are no restrictions concerning female runners; a run by a male once the ball is beyond the offensive scrimmage line; and after a change of possession.
5. During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver within a zone.
  - a. 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 female receiver for positive yards unless a first down was obtained.
6. The term **CLOSED** means a male player may NOT throw a legal forward pass completion to any other male player. The term **OPEN** means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
7. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is **OPEN** or **CLOSED**, unless a first down was obtained.
8. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is 23 or more points ahead when the referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half or anytime thereafter, the game shall be over.
9. **Touchdown Value:** 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 offensive player, the point value is 9. All other touchdowns will be 6 points. The values and distances of extra points do NOT change.