

**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Recreation/Intramural Sports**  
**Flag Football Rules**

Note: Play is governed by current NIRSA Flag Football Rules with the following modifications.

**RULE 1. THE FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT**

- A. 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.
- B. THE PLAYERS
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 anytime during the game for reasons other than injury the game shall be recorded as a forfeit.
  2. A player's name must appear on the scorecard before he/she may enter the game.
- C. 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. **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.**
  3. 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.
  4. 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.
  5. **Belt loops, pockets, exposed drawstrings, or untucked hoods on sweat tops are illegal. Players wearing such illegal equipment will not be allowed to participate until illegal equipment is removed.**
  6. **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.**

7. All participants must wear athletic shoes. Absolutely no work boots, sandals, etc. **Absolutely no metal spikes are allowed.**

## **RULE 2. TIMING**

### A. PLAYING TIME AND INTERMISSIONS

1. 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 the clock will stop for an incomplete pass, when a player goes out of bounds, on penalties, on a change of possession, on any score, and on first downs. After a first down, the clock will start on placement of the ball.
2. Half-time will be 5 minutes. The referee shall have discretion to reduce the length of the half-time if conditions deem it necessary.
3. **In case of a game ending in a tie during the playoffs**, 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. **ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.** Each team will be given a series of 4 downs to score. Extra points will be attempted and scored as previously stated. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If it is not returned for a score, the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line. Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime. The game will continue to be played until a winner is determined.
2. **Mercy Rule:** 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.
3. Each team will be permitted one(1) time-out per half. These time-outs shall be 1 minute in length and first half time-outs do not carry over to the second half of the game.
4. 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.

## **RULE 3. PRE-GAME AND KICKING**

### A. The Toss and Options

**Procedure** Prior to the start of the game, the referee shall toss a coin, and the visiting team captain shall call the toss. The captain winning the toss shall have the choice of offense, defense or defer to the second half. If the winning captain chooses to

defer, then the other captain shall choose offense or defense.

## B. 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. Exception: If a) a Team A or B time-out is called, or b) a foul occurs anytime prior to or during this down after Team A captain's decision which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the referee must ask the Team A captain whether or not he/she wants a protected scrimmage kick and communicate this decision to the Team B captain.
4. Neither K or R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. Note: All scrimmage line rules regarding the snap, stance, false start, minimum line players, motion and shift apply to protected scrimmage kicks.
5. **Kicking the Ball:** After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. 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. No players are allowed to move until the ball is kicked.
7. If the R team muffs or drops the punt, the ball becomes dead at the spot.

## **RULE 4. STARTING THE GAME AND CHANGE OF POSSESSION AFTER SCORE**

1. Teams will start from the 10-yard line at the beginning of each half and after any score by the opposition.

## **RULE 5. SNAPPING AND PASSING THE BALL**

### A. SNAPPING THE BALL

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

4. 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 offside or false start.

## B. 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. 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.
5. 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.
6. Only one foot must touch inbounds in order for a pass reception to be considered legal.

## **RULE 6. SCREENING, RUSHING, AND CONTACT**

### A. SCREENING AND RUSHING

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. The application of this Rule depends entirely on the judgement of the official. A rusher may use his/her hands or arms to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

4. These actions are judged similarly to the block/charge call in basketball.
5. 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.

### **RULE 7. SCORING**

#### A. Point Value

Touchdown	6 points
Safety	2 points
Extra Points	1 point from 3 yards 2 points from 10 yards 3 points from 20 yards

### **RULE 8. PROTESTS AND FORFEITS**

- A. **A team wishing to protest, rules interpretations, will be charged with a timeout. If the protest is ruled invalid the team will lose its timeout. If the protest is valid the timeout will be charged to the officials. 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.**
- B. **Player Eligibility:** Protests concerning player eligibility must be made to the Intramural Sports supervisor before the contest in question. The protest will be ruled on by the Coordinator of Intramural Sports the following day.
- C. **Judgement Calls:** Questions about an official's or umpire's judgement are not valid grounds for a protest.
- D. All teams will advance to the playoffs unless eliminated due to unsportsmanlike behavior or forfeits.

## SUMMARY OF CO-REC FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

1. **The game:** 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 Ball:** The regular, intermediate, junior or youth size football shall be used.
3. **Minimum line players:** The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
4. **Male runner:** A team A male runner cannot advance the ball beyond team A's scrimmage line. There are no restrictions concerning: runs by a female runner; during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the Team A scrimmage line; and after a change of possession.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. **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.
11. **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 Team A player, the point value is 9. All other touchdowns will be 6 points.