

## Department of Recreational Sports | Intramural Sports 2022-23

### 7v7 Flag Football Information Sheet

#### Rules of the Game

1. Number of Players
  - a. Games are played between teams of 7.
  - b. For CoRec games, only half of the players actively participating for a team may identify as the same gender. For example:
    - i. 8 players → gender max 4
    - ii. 7 players → gender max 4
    - iii. 6 players → gender max 3
    - iv. 5 players → gender max 3
    - v. 4 players → gender max 2
  - c. **Only two Sport Club or Registered Student Organization team members may be on a team roster in their sport or allied sport.**
  - d. **At least 4 players** are needed to start all games.
  - e. If a team does not have the required minimum number of players checked in at the scheduled game time, a 10-minute grace period is given.
    - i. If a team (or teams) doesn't have the required number of players by the end of the 10-minute grace period, the game is recorded as a forfeit.
    - ii. If one team is present at the start of the grace period (scheduled game time), that team has the option to start up by the mercy rule (19 points) when their opponent arrives during the grace period. However, the present team may also elect to decline the penalty and start the game with a score of 0-0.
2. Periods/Time
  - a. The game consists of two 20-minute halves with a running clock. The clock will stop for the 2 minute warning in each half and will restart on the snap.
    - i. During the last 30 seconds of the first half and the final 2 minutes of the second half, the clock will stop on scores, penalties, out of bounds, first downs, change in possession, touchbacks, inadvertent whistles, and incomplete passes.
    - ii. Overtime periods will not be used during the regular season (Playoffs Only).
  - b. Each team is entitled to one 30-second timeout per half.
3. Flag Belts
  - a. Must be worn with 1 flag on each hip and 1 flag in the back. The clip must be secured to the other end of the belt. Flag belts must be wrapped over the top of a player's shirt or jersey.
  - b. **Flag belts may not be tied!** *Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct*
  - c. Flag belts will not be used for players participating with shorts/pants that have pockets instead, player(s) participating with pockets will be subject to a one-hand touch rule between the knees and shoulder. Player(s) playing with pockets and without a flag belt must notify the officials and opposing team prior to the game. All players without pockets may continue to use flag belts.
    - i. Players that are wearing a flag belt that falls off by itself during the play are subject to the same one-hand touch rules as a player participating without a flag belt.
    - ii. Players attempting to circumvent this rule will be assessed an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty.
4. The Ball
  - a. Teams may use their own ball as long as it meets all requirements:
    - i. Men's games - regulation size ball only
    - ii. Women's games - regulation, intermediate, youth, or junior size ball
    - iii. CoRec games - regulation, intermediate, youth, or junior size ball
  - b. During play, the offensive team is responsible for the football. The offensive players are responsible for taking the ball back to the team huddle. The officials **will not** retrieve balls.
5. Substitutions
  - a. Players may substitute freely between downs. Substitutes must be in uniform and read for play prior to the substitution.
6. Live Ball/Dead Ball

- a. The offense must legally snap the ball within 25 seconds after the referee has sounded the ready for play whistle. *Penalty: Delay of Game.*
  - i. If a team attempts to conserve time illegally, the clock may be started on the ready for play signal.
  - ii. If a team attempts to consume time illegally, the clock may be started on the snap. This includes delay of game and encroachment fouls by the defense.
- b. The ball becomes dead when:
  - i. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
  - ii. A backwards pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground.
  - iii. A runner's flag belt is removed legally by an opponent. A flag is removed when the clip is detached from the belt, or if the flag/belt rips when pulled.
  - iv. A runner is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, if the flag belt falls off during play.
  - v. A snap hits the ground.
  - vi. A muffed punt strikes the ground.
  - vii. If a ball in-flight hits an official at any time and the ball falls to the ground (if the pass was forward, it is an incomplete pass, otherwise the play is dead at the spot).
  - viii. Any part of a player's body - other than the hands or feet - hits the ground.
- c. Out of Bounds
  - i. If the ball or any part of a player touches the boundary line, the ball is dead.
  - ii. If an inbounds runner touches or is touched by an out-of-bounds player or official, the ball remains live.

#### 7. Fumbles

- a. There are no fumbles in flag football.
- b. A fumble or backwards pass is dead at the spot it hits the ground.
- c. The ball belongs to the team last in possession - touching a fumble is not considered legal possession.

#### 8. Series and Number of Downs

- a. The team in possession of the ball has four downs to advance to the next zone line-to-gain. After a change of possession, the succeeding play will be a first down for the team with possession.
- b. The zone line-to-gain will be the line (or field marker) in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such cases, the original line in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain (referred to as "double stakes").
- c. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, is the determining factor.

#### 9. Kicking the Ball

- a. There are no kickoffs. Each new series starts at the 14-yard line.
- b. A team must declare they will punt before the ready-for-play whistle on that down. **No fakes!**
- c. Neither team can enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.
- d. The player punting the ball must do so immediately upon possession and in one, continuous motion.
- e. A punt becomes dead if:
  - i. It touches any player and then hits the ground (muffed).
  - ii. It is recovered by a player on the kicking team.
  - iii. Goes out of bounds.
  - iv. Goes beyond the goal line.
  - v. Comes to rest with no player attempting to secure it.
- f. 1<sup>st</sup> touching occurs when a player on the kicking team touches the ball before the receiving team.
- g. The kicking team cannot interfere with the receiving team's ability to catch a punt that is still in flight. *Penalty: Kick Catch Interference*
- h. There are no fair catches in flag football. All signals should be ignored.

#### 10. Scrimmage Play

- a. Snapping
  - i. The snap need not pass through the snapper's legs but must be done in one continuous motion. *Penalty: Illegal Snap.*
  - ii. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the scrimmage line. *Penalty: Illegal Formation.*

- iii. **The snapper is the only defensive player required to be on the offensive scrimmage line.**
- iv. The snapper may carry the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line. A towel may be used to help keep the ball dry and placed under the ball, but may not be attached to the player.
- v. No player on the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start is any movement simulating the start of play. *Penalty: False Start.*
- vi. At the time of the snap, it is encroachment for any player to break the plane of their scrimmage line, except the snapper's right to be over the ball. *Penalty: Encroachment.*
- vii. Prior to the snap, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary for at least one full second. If two or more players shift, all must become set for one second before the snap. *Penalty: Illegal Shift.*
- viii. Only one offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion towards the opponent's goal line. *Penalty: Illegal Motion.*

#### 11. Handling the Ball

- a. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

#### 12. Passing and Receiving

- a. All players are eligible to touch or catch a forward pass. Only one forward pass may be thrown per down.
- b. A forward pass is illegal if:
  - i. The passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves their hand.
  - ii. The ball is thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
  - iii. The ball is intentionally grounded to save loss of yardage.
  - iv. A passer catches their untouched forward or backward pass.
  - v. There is more than one forward pass per down.
  - vi. *Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass*
- c. After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage if the legal forward pass crosses the line of scrimmage. *Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference.*
- d. After a legal forward pass is released by the passer and until it has been touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the line of scrimmage while the pass that crosses the line of scrimmage is in flight. *Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference.*
- e. If opposing inbounds players simultaneously catch a pass, the ball becomes dead at the spot and belongs to the passing team.
- f. A player must have one foot inbounds for a legal reception.

#### 13. Scoring Plays

- a. A touchdown in all leagues is worth 6 points.
- b. In all leagues, a safety is 2 points.
- c. A try is granted to a team following a touchdown. The team will have the opportunity to score:
  - i. 1 point from the 3-yard line
  - ii. 2 points from the 10-yard line
  - iii. 3 points from the 20-yard line

#### 14. Onside Conversion

- a. Only in the last 2:00 of a game, a team that scores a touchdown and attempts a try will then have the option to attempt an "onside conversion".
- b. The onside conversion option may be attempted from the offense's own 14-yard line with the zone line-to-gain being the 40-yard line.
  - i. The offense has one down to attempt the onside conversion, unless extended by penalty.
  - ii. The conversion would be an untimed down.
  - iii. Note: The onside conversion is treated as "4th down". If the conversion is unsuccessful, the defensive team would gain possession of the ball at the spot that it became dead. If the conversion is successful, play would continue from that point.

#### 15. Mercy Rule

- a. If a team is up by 19 or more points with two minutes to play, the game is over.
- b. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the game and the score creates a 19 or more point differential the game is over.

\*\*\*All other rule will follow the NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book\*\*\*