

TOWSON UNIVERSITY
INTRAMURAL SPORTS
2009-2010 4-ON-4 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

4-ON-4 FLAG FOOTBALL IS A CONTACT SPORT, AND INJURIES ARE A POSSIBILITY. THE INTRAMURAL SPORTS PROGRAM ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR INJURIES; HOWEVER, BASIC FIRST AID WILL BE AVAILABLE.

ALL RULE CHANGES ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GRAY.

THE GAME WILL BE PLAYED ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL INTRAMURAL RECREATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION (NIRSA) FLAG AND TOUCH FOOTBALL RULES WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS:

MEN AND WOMEN

STARTING THE GAME

1. **START TIME:** Teams are to be at the field and signed in before the official game time. If any team is not at the field and ready to play at the scheduled game time, the game will be declared a forfeit. It is recommended that teams arrive at the game site fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
2. **IDENTIFICATION:** All participants must bring their current valid Towson University identification card to the field area in order to be checked in and ruled eligible to participate prior to the beginning of each game. Late arriving players must sign in with the scorekeeper before entering the game.
3. **SCORING:** An Intramural Program Assistant will keep the official score at the scorer's table.
4. **FIELD DIMENSIONS:** The field will be two 20-yard zones with two 10-yard end zones.
5. **TEAMS:** Four (4) players constitute a team. A team may not start or play with fewer than three (3) players.
6. **GAME EQUIPMENT:** Teams must provide their own ball when on offense. Balls may be checked out from the Intramural Program Assistant.
7. **UNIFORMS:** Teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys. If a team does not have their own jerseys, they may be checked out from the Intramural Program Assistant. Shirts/jerseys **MUST** remain tucked in at all times. Sweatshirts with pockets may not be worn. Hoods on sweatshirts must be tucked in. There may be no visible knots in any shirt or jersey. Any cut-off jerseys or shimmell jerseys may **NOT** cover any portion of the flag belt; there must be a four inch gap between the flag belt and the bottom of the jersey, if this type is worn. Pants/shorts may **NOT** have pockets and/or belt loops.
8. **COIN TOSS:** A coin toss between team captains will begin each game. The winner of the toss may choose to be on offense, to defend a specific goal, or defer their option to the second half. The opponent then has the choice from the remaining options.

PLAYING THE GAME

9. **GAME TIME:** The game will consist of two (2) halves of twelve (12) minutes. During the first half and first eleven (11) minutes of the second half, the clock only stops for team and official time-outs. The clock will stop during the last minute of the game according to NIRSA Flag Football Rules.

10. **OVERTIME:** During the regular season, all games ending in a tie will be recorded as a tie in the records. During the playoffs, NIRSA Flag Football overtime rules will be used.
11. **TIME-OUTS:** Each team will be granted one (1) time-out per half. Time-outs will be one (1) minute in length, and do not carry over from the first half to the second.
12. **BEGINNING A SERIES:** There are no kickoffs. The ball will be put in play from the 10-yard line to begin a half or following a score.
13. **SERIES OF DOWNS:** A team will have three (3) downs to advance the ball to the zone line to gain. There is no punting, so teams must always attempt the zone line on third down.
14. **MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS:** The offense must have at least one (1) player on their scrimmage line.
15. **FORWARD PASSING:** Only one (1) forward pass may be thrown per down by the offense. A forward pass is defined as the passer's feet being behind the offense's line of scrimmage at the time of release.
16. **LEGAL FORWARD PASS:** There must be a legal forward pass each down. The receiver must catch the ball beyond Team A's scrimmage line. The passer has seven (7) seconds to release the ball. If not, it is a loss of down and the ball is snapped from the previous spot. **NOTE:** The seven (7) seconds shall be counted by the Referee.
17. **RUNNER:** A Team A runner may not advance the ball through Team A's scrimmage line (orange ball spotter). There are no restrictions once a pass has been caught beyond Team A's scrimmage line or following a change of possession.
18. **FLAG BELT REMOVAL:** The ball becomes dead when a ball carrier's flag belt is removed. The ball will be spotted at the location of the most forward point of the ball when the flag belt clip was removed. All players must be wearing a flag belt at the time of the snap. It is illegal to intentionally remove a player's flag belt if he/she is not in possession of the ball. If a flag belt falls off of a ball carrier, he/she is considered down when a member of the opposing team tags him/her with one hand between the shoulders and knees.
19. **POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN:** After a touchdown, the scoring team may choose from the following options for a conversion:
 - 1 point from the 3-yard line
 - 2 points from the 10-yard line
 - 3 points from the 20-yard line
 - A pass that is intercepted and returned for a score by the defense is worth three (3) pointsImmediately after scoring a touchdown the Referee will ask the team captain for his/her choice for the conversion. Once this decision is made, it can only be changed by taking a charged time-out. A team's decision cannot be changed should a penalty occur on the conversion attempt. **NOTE:** Any conversion that is intercepted and returned for a score is worth 3 points.
20. **DEFENSIVE RESTRICTIONS:** There are no defensive restrictions (i.e., a rusher may cross the scrimmage line as soon as the ball is snapped by the offense).
21. **MERCY RULE:** If a team is twenty-eight (28) or more points ahead when the Referee announces the one-minute warning for the second half, the game will be over. Any score within the last minute of the second half that creates a differential of twenty-eight (28) points or more shall end the game.
22. **PENALTY ENFORCEMENT:** All 10-yard penalties are 5-yards and all 5-yard penalties are 3-yards.

SPORTSMANSHIP

23. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:** Any unsportsmanlike conduct including, but not limited to, arguments with officials by any player, coach, manager, or spectator, flagrant fouling, fighting, etc. will result in expulsion

of that individual and/or team from further participation in that game. Officials/supervisors have the authority to impose penalties for teams behaving in an unsportsmanlike manner.

24. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FOUL LIMIT: If two (2) players from the same team are ejected from a game, that game will be ended and that team will receive a loss and a 0 sportsmanship rating, regardless of the score and the time remaining.
25. BENCH CONDUCT: All substitutes, coaches, and spectators must adhere to Intramural Sports and Burdick Field rules, and are subject to the authority of the Intramural Sports Supervisor and all sportsmanship-related rules and policies.
26. DRUG, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY: Teams and fans are not permitted to bring alcohol and/or drugs, or come under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Teams and fans are also not permitted to use any tobacco products on Burdick Field. Violators may be removed from the facilities with possible forfeiture of the game, at the discretion of the Supervisor.
27. INTRAMURAL POLICIES: Team captains are responsible for making sure that all members of their teams are aware of all Intramural Sports policies and rules. Captains are responsible for their teams' sportsmanship, and may be held accountable for the actions of individuals on their team.

CO-RECREATION

All of the above rules apply with the following exceptions:

28. TEAMS: Teams will be composed of two (2) men and two (2) women. A team may not play with fewer than three (3) players. If a team is playing with less than four (4) players, the male/female ratio may be 2:1 or 1:2.
29. SCORING: If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is nine (9). This can be done in either of the following ways:
 - Female runs the ball across the goal line.
 - Female throws a legal forward pass that results in a touchdown (scored by any offensive player).
30. MERCY RULE: If a team is thirty-seven (37) or more points ahead when the Referee announces the one minute warning for the second half, the game will be over. Any score within the last minute of the second half that creates a differential of at least thirty-seven (37) points shall end the game.
31. OPEN & CLOSED PLAYS: Prior to each play, the Referee will announce if that play is open or closed.
 - During an offensive possession, there may not be two consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to a try after a touchdown.
 - If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next play is closed.
 - To open a closed play, a female must be involved as the passer and/or receiver of a legal forward pass that results in positive yards. If positive yardage is not gained, the next play remains closed.
 - Closed plays mean that a male player may not complete a pass to another male player. *Penalty: illegal forward pass, three (3) yards and loss of down.*
 - Open plays mean that any player may pass or receive a legal forward pass.

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES CLARIFICATIONS

1. ROUGHING THE PASSER – Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. Slapping the ball while the quarterback is attempting to pass is considered roughing the passer, as the ball is considered an extension of the arm (while still in possession). Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond Team A's scrimmage line, but illegal contact can still be called.

Penalty: Five (5) yards and automatic first down. This penalty will be tacked on to the end of the run on a completed pass, if accepted.

2. **FLAG GUARDING** – Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opponent an opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:
 - A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
 - D. Any other act, besides spinning and various other types of hip movement, to prevent an opponent from deflagging.

Penalty: Five (5) yards.

3. **PASS INTERFERENCE** – During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A’s scrimmage line, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond Team A’s scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when two (2) or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond Team A’s scrimmage line. Offensive pass interference may be called at any time after the ball is snapped. Defensive pass interference can only be called during the time of a pass attempt.

Offensive Pass Interference – *Penalty: Five (5) yards (previous spot) and loss of down.*

Defensive Pass Interference – *Penalty: Five (5) yards (previous spot) and automatic first down.*

4. **LEGAL CATCH / SIMULTANEOUS CATCH** – A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight, and contacting the ground inbounds or being contacted by an opponent in such a way that he/she is prevented from returning to the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.
 - A. One (1) foot is required to be inbounds (while in player possession). Additionally, a catch by a kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion.
 - B. A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds. The ball will be blown dead at that spot and possession will be awarded to the offense.

5. **FUMBLES** - A fumble is a loss of player possession of the ball other than by handing, passing or punting the ball. A fumbled ball that hits the ground is dead at that spot.

6. **FACE GUARDING** – Any act by a player to inhibit an opponent’s (usually a potential receiver) ability to see the ball and/or other players is considered face guarding. Face guarding is illegal. **Penalty: Pass Interference**

7. **15 YARDS AFTER READY FOR PLAY** – At any time after the ready for play whistle and prior to the snap, all offensive players must be within fifteen (15) yards from the ball (orange ball spotter). This is to prevent offensive players from “sneaking” onto the field and staying near the sideline just before the ball is snapped, which would leave that particular player uncovered with a clear path to the end zone.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, three (3) yards (previous spot).

8. **OFFSIDES / ENCROACHMENT** – The first offender rule is in effect when it comes to encroachment. This means that the moment a player from either team enters the neutral zone (after the ready for play whistle) he/she shall be called for the penalty. This is a dead ball foul, so play should be whistled dead immediately after the encroachment occurs.

Penalty: Three (3) yards.

9. **SCREEN BLOCKING** – This is legal as long as the following guidelines are followed:

- A. The blocker’s arms must be kept at his/her side, in front of his/her waist, or behind his/her back.
- B. The blocker may not initiate contact with a defender. A penalty occurs when contact is initiated and there is an advantage gained.

Penalty: Illegal contact, five (5) yards (spot of foul or end of run).

10. SNAP REGULATIONS – To start every play there must be a snap.
- A. A snap must be one smooth, quick, and continuous motion, either between the snapper's legs or from the side. The ball must leave the snapper's hand(s) during this motion. After the snapper takes his initial position over the ball, he/she may move or rotate the ball. After the snapper comes to a set position, he/she may not move the ball again until it is snapped. *Penalty: Dead Ball, Illegal Snap, three (3) yards.*
 - B. The player who receives the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal.
Penalty: Live Ball, Illegal Snap, three (3) yards (previous spot).