

Flag Football Rules

Part 1: Playing Procedures

I. Team Size

- A team will consist of 7 players on the field. There shall be no limit to the number of eligible players on a roster. Teams must have at least 6 players present to begin play.

II. Eligibility

- Only players listed on the official roster are eligible to participate on a football team. All players must meet the eligibility requirements of the UC San Diego Intramural Sports Office. Additions and subtractions to official team roster must be made prior to that team's third league game. No changes to rosters will be accepted after that time.
- If one or both teams do not have 7 players present and ready at 5 minutes after game time, a non-roster player may participate upon approval from the opposing team captain, and may only play one game for any particular team. **The referee must be notified concerning the participation of a non-roster player.**
- AN INDIVIDUAL MAY PLAY ON ONLY ONE TEAM PER TYPE (Men's, Coed)

III. Equipment

- Soft rubber soccer style molded cleats or shoes with cleats not more than 1/2 inch long will be allowed only. No metal spikes or cleats longer than 1/2 inch will be allowed.
- Officials will provide all necessary equipment for the game with the exception of a regulation size football. Teams must bring their own ball.
- NO protective hand gloves or pads on any part of the arms will be allowed.
- NO shorts with pockets will be allowed.

IV. Field Dimensions

- The field will be divided into 20-yard quarters. The two end zones will be 10 yards deep.
- The area enclosed by the side and end lines shall be considered "inbounds" and the areas surrounding and including the side and end lines shall be declared "out-of-bounds."

V. Starting Time

- Starting times for all games will be given on league schedules published by the IM office. Games postponed due to inclement weather will be rescheduled by mutual agreement of team captains involved, with the consent of the IM Director.
- A 15-minute forfeit time will be in effect for any team or teams that are not present and ready to play according to Sec-1. Captains should report early to games so they will have time to fill out their game roster on the scoresheet.

VI. Game Time

- There shall be two 20-minute halves with running time, except the last minute of the second half which will be regulation stop time, with a 5-minute rest period between halves.

VII. Time Outs

- 3 one-minute time-outs shall be allotted for each team per game. Only team members on the field may call a time out. Timeouts will not carry over to any overtime period

VIII. Scoring

- A touchdown will be worth 6 points.
- A safety will be worth 2 points.
- A conversion from 3 yards out will be worth 1 point.
- A conversion from 10 yards out will be worth 2 points.
- A return of a extra point by the defense team across the offensive team's goal line is 2 points.

IX. Coin Toss

- The winner of the coin toss at the beginning of the game shall choose whether to start on offense or defense, which goal to defend, or defer his decision to the second half.

X. Substitutions

- There will be unlimited substitutions during any dead ball situation. Substitutes must remain in the game for at least one play.
- Entering offensive substitutes must pass within 10 yards of the ball.

XI. Ball Placement

- At the start of a half, and after a touchdown or safety, the ball shall be placed at the offensive team's own 30-yard line.
- After a touchback, the ball shall be placed on their own 20-yard line.

XII. Line-of-Scrimmage and Backfield Player Positioning

- At least one player (the center) must position himself/herself on the designated line-of-scrimmage. At least one player (the quarterback) must position himself/herself in the backfield.
- All other players may align themselves either on the line-of-scrimmage or in the backfield.
- All offensive players (with exception of a back-in-motion) must be set one second prior to the snap from the center.

XIII. Man-in-Motion

- At the time the ball is snapped from center, only one member of the offense may be in motion and he/she must run parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.

XIV. Eligible Pass Receivers

- All offensive players shall be eligible to receive a forward pass.

XV. First Downs

- Four downs are granted to make a first down.
- A first down shall be awarded for advancing the ball to or across a section (or quarter) line. If the section line has been previously crossed during the same series of possession, a first down will not be awarded.

XVI. Downfield Blocking

- Downfield blocking is permitted on all running plays from scrimmage and on passing plays after a pass is completed - No downfield blocking is allowed while the ball is in the air.

XVII. Putting the Ball in Play

- To put the ball in play, (except on punt plays), the center must pass the ball through his legs in a single continuous motion.

- Prior to putting the ball in play, the center may adjust the ball by rotation only. After such an adjustment, further movement before the snap will be considered illegal procedure.

XVIII. Runs From Scrimmage

- All runs from scrimmage must be preceded by a lateral pass or hand-off before the runner has crossed the line-of-scrimmage.

XIX. Forward Pass

- All forward passes must be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Any amount of forward passes behind the line of scrimmage will be legal.

XX. Downed Ball Carrier

- A ball carrier is considered down when any defensive player detaches one of the two flags worn by the ball carrier. Officials will rule on all cases where loss of flag is unintentional and where play is to be continued. Defensive players should continue until whistle is blown.
- If a flag is detached during incidental contact, a ball carrier may be downed if a defending player touches the ball carrier anywhere below the shoulders with two hands.
- A defending player who removes a potential ball carrier's flag is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- A forward passer who has started his forward throwing motion shall not be considered down if his flag is pulled.

XXI. Legal Catch

- A pass receiver must have at least one foot in-bounds after gaining possession of the ball in order for a catch to be legal (providing that his other foot is not touching either on or over the out-of-bounds line).
- If a receiver catches a ball while suspended in air over fair territory, and is pushed out-of-bounds by a defensive player before hitting the ground, the pass will be complete and it will be an unnecessary roughness penalty from that spot for pushing the player out of bounds.
- A pass deflected from one offensive player to another will be considered a legal catch.

XXII. Dead Ball

- A live ball becomes dead:
 - when a score is made
 - the ball goes out-of-bounds
 - an errant snap-from-center or lateral touches the ground
 - a punt is dropped
 - whenever an official sounds his whistle, even though inadvertently-the offensive team will be given the option of taking the ball at the spot of the whistle or having the play go over
 - Incomplete pass.

XXIII. Loose Ball

- All loose balls are dead upon touching the ground. In the case of an errant or fumbled lateral, the ball will be spotted either at the point of contact with the ground or at the point that the ball was last controlled, whichever creates the greatest disadvantage for the team in possession.

XXIV. Punts

- A team wishing to punt can announce its intentions to the officials and the opposing team before the ball is declared ready for play.

- Following the announcement, the ball must be punted and neither team may cross the line-of-scrimmage until the punt has been executed.
- On free punts the ball will be put in play by the punter.
- Four defensive players must be on the line-of-scrimmage.
- Quick kicks are allowed.
- A blocked punt or a partially blocked punt is not a free ball and cannot be advanced by the kicking team under any circumstances.

XXV. Punt Returns

- A punt may not be returned if the ball is not fielded cleanly by the punt returner. Any punt that is fielded and then dropped (or - simply touched by the receiving team prior to the ball hitting the ground) is considered a dead ball and may not be advanced.
- If an untouched punt strikes the ground it remains live until The Kicking Team downs the ball or The Receiving Team recovers and advances it.
- Once a punt is touched, it is dead when it next strikes the ground and belongs to the Receiving Team.
- If not previously touched, a ball laying on the ground may be picked up and advanced by the receiving team.

Part 2 : Penalties

I. Illegal Procedure-4 yards from Line of Scrimmage, Down Over

- Illegal Snap-from Center (except on punts)
 - Picking the ball up from the ground by the center.
 - Further movement of the ball by the center after initial adjustment.
 - Failure by the center to pass the ball through his legs.
 - Advancement of the ball by the center if the ball has not completely left his hands and given to the quarterback.
- Illegal Execution of Punts
 - Forward movement by either team before the punt has been executed.
 - Advancement of a blocked punt by the punting team.
 - Failure to line four defensive players on the line-of-scrimmage.
- Illegal Motion
 - Failure of all offensive players (with the exception of a legal man-in-motion) to become set for at least one second immediately preceding the snap-from-center.
 - Movement towards the line-of-scrimmage by a man-in-motion.
 - Having two or more offensive players in motion at the time of the snap.
- Illegal Delay of Game
 - Failure by the offensive team to put the ball in play within 30 seconds after the official has placed the ball for play.
 - Delay of game violations committed by a team that is leading or tied in the last 3 minutes of a contest shall automatically stop the clock.
- Illegal Ball Carrier
 - There will be no direct runs from scrimmage - An offensive player who advances the ball beyond the line-of-scrimmage without first receiving a forward pass, lateral pass, or hand-off from another offensive back will be considered an illegal ball carrier.
- Illegal Substitution
 - Failure of all entering substitutes to pass within 10 yards of the ball.
 - Having more than the legal number of players on the playing field while the ball is in play.
- Off-sides

- Failure by any player to remain behind the line-of-scrimmage before the ball is snapped.
 - If a defensive player is drawn off-sides by the illegal motion of an offensive player the ball shall be immediately blown dead (offensive penalty).

II. Personal Fouls – 12 yards

- Illegal Block
 - A blocker may not leave his feet to make contact with another player. His hands and arms may not be further from his body than the vertical plane of his elbows. Contact must be made with the forearms and not with fists or elbows. No contact may be initiated lower than the WAIST. Any contact made to the head or neck whether unintentional or not, is strictly prohibited.
 - Violations of downfield blocking (Sec-16) also will be enforced under this section.
Penalty enforcement: 12 yards from the spot of the foul, down over.
- Clipping
 - Contact on a block must be made within the blocked person's field of vision. Contact to the backside of a player and delivered behind his field of vision shall be considered a clip.
 - If a player to be blocked turns his backside to a blocker within 5 yards of each other so that contact is made from behind, no violation will be called.
Penalty enforcement: 12 yards from the spot of the foul, down over.
- Illegal Use of Hands –OFFENSE
 - All offensive players are prohibited from using their hands for grabbing or holding a defensive player (blockers may make contact with an open hand).
Penalty enforcement: 12 yards from line of scrimmage, down over.
- Illegal Use of Hands –DEFENSE
 - Defensive players may use hands and arms to push, pull, or move offensive players (other than the ball carrier) out of the way in an effort to get at the ball carrier. However, defensive players not attempting to reach the ball-carrier may not use hands or arms to tackle or hold an offensive player. (This includes holding an offensive player's flag belt.)
Penalty enforcement: 12 yards from the spot of the foul, down over
- Unnecessary Roughness –OFFENSE & DEFENSE
 - Any player who commits any action which, in the opinion of an official, may cause serious injury to another player, whether unintentional or not, is guilty of unnecessary roughness.
 - On offense, all ball carriers must make an effort to evade potential flag pullers. Ball carriers may not run over, straight-arm, or ward off defensive flag pullers
 - On defense, all players must play the ball or the ball carrier's flags. Defensive players may not tackle, hold, block, or shove a ball carrier either on-the-playing field or out-of-bounds.
Penalty enforcement: OFFENSE 12 yards from the spot of the foul, down Over
DEFENSE 12 yards from the spot of the foul, automatic first down
- Roughing the Passer
 - A defensive player who has not touched, deflected, or blocked a thrown ball, must avoid contact with the passer. Any contact by a defensive player with a passer shall constitute roughing the passer.
 - A penalty shall not be incurred by the defense, if an offensive blocker knocks a defensive player into the passer.
Penalty enforcement: 12 yards from the line-of-scrimmage , down over.
- Double Roughness Penalty
 - Any player who has committed two unnecessary roughness fouls or roughing the passer violations, whether intentional or otherwise, shall be removed from the contest.

III. Major Pass-Run Procedure Penalties

- Flag Guarding- 8 yards from spot of foul – Loss of Down
 - A ball carrier may not use his hands in a manner that prevents a potential flag puller from pulling a flag. All ball carriers must run with arms and hands above waist-high while in the immediate area of pursuing defensive players.
 - Failure of a ball carrier or potential ball carrier to fully expose his flags for the defense.
 - Clothing must not be worn over flags-All shirts must be tucked in.
 - Twirling, twisting and spinning maneuvers, that do not violate existing rules, shall be legal.
 - NO jumping: The ball carrier must leave at least 1 foot on the ground.
- Illegal Forward Pass - 4 yards from Spot of Foul – Loss of Down
 - A passer may not cross the line-of-scrimmage and attempt a forward pass.
- Illegal Forward Lateral - 4 yards from Spot of Violation – Loss of Down
 - A forward lateral beyond the line-of-scrimmage shall be illegal.
- Intentional Grounding - 4 yards from Line of Scrimmage – Loss of Down
 - Intentionally grounding the ball by the passer to avoid a loss shall also be illegal.
- Pass Interference
 - No player, whether unintentionally or otherwise, shall make contact with or physically prohibit another player from attempting to catch a passed ball (which includes waving hands in a receiver's face).
 - Incidental contact occurring when neither player has an obvious advantage of receiving the pass shall not be considered a violation.
Penalty enforcement: DEFENSE -12 yards from Line-of Scrimmage and Automatic first (or 1 yard line if committed in the end zone).
OFFENSE -8 yards from line-of-scrimmage and loss of down.
- Defensive "Chucks" – 4 yards from Line of Scrimmage – Down Over
 - Defenders may "chuck" a receiver but only within 3 yards of the line of scrimmage. Defenders who block or "chuck" a receiver more than 3 yards beyond the line of scrimmage will be penalized.
 - You may NEVER "chuck" a receiver in the area of the head.
 - You may "chuck" the offensive center but not until he has had a chance to assume an upright position. This is to prevent "canning the center" and a chance of injury.

IV. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Actions that are potentially dangerous to the participants of the game and/or conduct that is detrimental to the purpose of intramural sports will not be tolerated. No players may physically intimidate or verbally abuse student players or officials. Violations of this nature will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and at the discretion of the official, may result in a 12-yard penalty, removal from the contest or both.
- Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties assessed an individual will automatically remove him from the contest.
- Fighting--any acts of aggressive physical violence will not be tolerated. This includes throwing a punch, kicking an individual or any other aggressive acts. Any player guilty of such an action immediately before, during, or after an intramural contest shall be expelled from further participation in intramural sports for the duration of one year.

Part 3 : Overtime Rules & Procedures

I. Overtime Period

- When playoff games ends in a tie score, each team shall receive one series of four downs from their opponents 20 yd line to score.
- The referee shall hold a coin toss with the two field captains-the captain winning the toss shall have the option of having the ball first or second, or choosing which end of the field shall be used for the overtime.
- The loser of this coin toss shall have the option of choosing from the options during all subsequent even numbered overtime periods
- Penalties - Penalties shall be interpreted according to the regular rules of the game.

II. Series Play – Team A shall refer to the offensive team, Team B to the defense

- Each play shall begin by scrimmage, and shall be limited to running and passing plays.
- The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead, however Team A shall not receive a new 1st down if it again possesses the ball after a change of team possession
- If Team B intercepts a pass or lateral and scores a touchdown, the extra period shall be over and Team B wins

III. Scoring

- The team scoring the greater number of points during the extra period shall be declared the winner

IV. Additional Overtimes

- In case the first overtime period does not produce a winner, each team shall receive a series of 2 downs from their opponents 10 yard line to score.
- All other overtime rules shall remain the same
- If the second overtime period does not produce a winner, each team shall again receive a series of 2 downs from their opponents 10 yard line.
- All try after touchdown attempts in this and subsequent periods will have to be for 2 points
- Overtime periods of this nature shall remain in effect until a winner is declared.