

2012 4 ON 4 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES –

The following is an abridged version of the 2011-2012 NIRSA Flag Football Rules

TEAM COMPOSITION

1. Four (4) players are on the field at a time.
2. Three (3) players are required to start the game.
3. Players can compete for only ONE single sex team, regardless of league classification (e.g. - participants can NOT play for a men's comp and men's rec team).
4. Once a participant has played for a team, he/she may NOT transfer to another team.
5. Each team shall designate to the game officials a team captain to make all decisions.

EQUIPMENT

1. FOOTBALL: Teams may furnish their own game ball or used FSC IM game balls. The game officials shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at their discretion.
2. FLAG BELTS: Each player must wear a one piece quick release belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. Flag belts will be provided to each team before the game.
3. JERSEYS/SHIRTS: Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys. Jerseys must be either long enough so they remain tucked in the pants/shorts during the entire down or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline (the game official will use a fist to measure the distance between the waistline and the bottom of the jersey). Pinnies will be available for teams without matching jerseys.
4. PANTS/SHORTS: Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings. Pants or shorts may not be turned inside out or taped in order to avoid the pocket violation.
5. SHOES: Each player must wear shoes. Tennis/running shoes and rubber molded cleats are permitted. Spikes, screw-in cleats, cleats with metal or ceramic exposed, and apparel not intended for football use (i.e. – gymnastic slippers, ski and logger boots, dress shoes) will not be permitted.
6. PADS/BRACES: No pads or braces may be worn above the waist. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material must be covered on both sides and all edges with appropriate slow-recovery padding.
7. HEADWEAR: Players may not wear baseball style caps or other rigid headwear. Knit and stocking caps are permitted. Players may wear a headband no wider than two inches and made of non-abrasive cloth, elastic, fiber, soft leather, or rubber. Bandanas with knots are prohibited. Rubber or cloth elastic bands may be used to control hair.
8. JEWELRY: No jewelry, including livestrong bracelets, may be worn. Jewelry must be removed before the participant will be allowed to participate. Medical alert bracelets are permitted but they must be taped down. TAPING OF ALL OTHER JEWELRY IS NOT PERMITTED.
9. SUNGLASSES: Players may not wear sunglasses that are metal or rigid.
10. PLAYBOOKS: Teams may carry a playbook inside their clothing as long as it is not made of an unyielding material and is not visible. If carried on the field, a player must keep it rather than throw it on the ground in the field of play.
11. TOWELS: No towel may hang from a player's waist or otherwise interfere with the possible removal of the flag belt. However, towels may be used and kept on the ground in-between the ball spotters before the snap.

THE GAME

1. LENGTH OF GAME: The game shall consist of two (2) halves of ten (10) minutes.
2. COIN TOSS: A toss of a coin or odds/evens will determine which team shall have the first choice. In the postseason, the higher seeded team will have first choice. The winning team of the toss shall have the following options:

- A. To defer their option until the second half;
- B. To receive the ball first or play defense (selecting defense does not guarantee a team the ball to start the second half);
- C. To defend a specific goal (this does not guarantee a team the ball to start the second half)

After the winner of the coin toss has chosen, the losing team will have choice of the remaining options.

3. TIMING REGULATIONS: The clock will run continuously, unless a time-out is called, until the last minute of the second half. During the final minute of the second half, the clock will stop for a:

- A. Incomplete Legal/Illegal Forward Pass – clock restarts on the snap
- B. Out Of Bounds Play – clock restarts on the snap
- C. Safety – clock restarts on the snap
- D. Team Timeout – clock restarts on the snap
- E. First Down – clock restarts on the ready for play whistle
- F. Touchdown – clock restarts on the snap (after the extra point try)
- G. Penalty – clock restarts depending on the result of the previous play
- H. Official Timeout – clock restarts at the discretion of the officiating crew
- I. Touchback – clock restarts on the snap
- J. Change Of Possession – clock restarts on the snap
- K. Inadvertent Whistle – clock starts on the ready for play whistle

4. ONE MINUTE WARNING: Approximately one minute before the end of each half the referee shall stop the clock and inform both teams of the time remaining in that period. The clock will start on the snap.

5. HALFTIME: There will be a two (2) minute halftime.

6. OVERTIME: Regular season games can end in a tie. Overtime will only be played during the postseason. Overtime procedures will be as followed:

- A. To start overtime, a coin toss will be conducted with the winner selecting offense, defense, or direction. If additional overtime periods are played, the

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order of possession will alternate each new period. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.

- B. Each team will attempt to score by passing from either the 3 yard line for 1 point, from the 10 yard line for 2 points, or from the 20 yard line for 3 points.

- C. The defense may intercept the ball and return it for 3 points. In this case, they will win the game. If the team does not score, the overtime will proceed as necessary. The offensive team's series is over when the defense intercepts a pass.

7. TIME-OUTS: Each team will receive one (1) timeout, each 30 seconds in length.

8. MERCY RULE: The game shall be over if a team is behind in the second half by:
40 points or more with five (5) minutes or less remaining
30 points or more with three (3) minutes or less remaining
20 points or more with one (1) minute or less remaining

9. GRACE PERIOD: Teams will be granted a five (5) minute grace period from the original game start time if at least one player has checked in at game time. If the minimum number of players required to start are present before the grace period has

concluded, the game will begin and the opposing team will be awarded seven (7) points and first choice. The game clock for the first half will be set at 5 minutes. **If no players are checked in at game time, there is no grace period and the game will be declared a forfeit.**

10. **OPTIONAL GRACE PERIOD:** After the original grace period has expired, the opposing captain has the option of taking the win or waiting an additional five minutes. In the event the captain decides to wait, the decision is irreversible. If the minimum number of players required to start are present before the optional grace period has expired, the game will begin and the opposing team will be awarded an additional seven (7) points. The game will begin in the second half. The late team will receive the first possession down 14-0.

11. **DEFAULTS:** A default is an un-played game that is recorded as a loss and no forfeit fee is charged. In order to receive a default, teams must have one less than the minimum number of participants required to play present at game time or the team must notify the Intramural Office of their inability to field the required number of participants for the game no later than 2:00PM on the day of the contest (once the default has been requested, it cannot be overturned).

12. **FORFEITS:** If a team fails to appear for a scheduled game or match on time (or following the grace periods) or default, a forfeit will be declared. If a team forfeits a contest, the captain's student account will be charged a \$20 forfeit fee, the team will be ineligible for postseason competition, and the team may be dropped from the

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league if there is a wait list team to replace them. A team with two forfeits will be automatically dropped from the league.

13. **PROTESTS:** If a team wants to submit a protest, the team captain must stop play immediately and notify the games officials and supervisor. The supervisor will document the appeal and forward it to the Intramural Graduate Assistants and/or Coordinator. Teams cannot appeal an official's judgment.

PLAYING RULES

1. **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, touchback, or safety (unless moved by penalty).

2. **SERIES OF DOWNS:** The team in possession of the ball shall have three (3) downs to advance the ball to the next zone line-to-gain.

3. **ZONE LINE-TO-GAIN:** The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain.

4. **FIRST DOWNS:** A team registers a first down when it crosses or touches the zone line-to-gain. Once the first down has been established, the team may not make another first down by crossing the same line during that series of downs.

5. **PLAY CLOCK:** The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after the referee signals "ready for play" and blows his or her whistle.

6. **BALL RESPONSIBILITY:** The offensive team must retrieve the ball after each play from scrimmage.

7. **MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS:** The offensive team must have at least one (1) player on the line of scrimmage at the snap (this may be the center).

8. **ADVANCING THE BALL:** Only a legal forward pass behind the offensive line of scrimmage may advance the ball (Penalty: Illegal Advancement).

9. **DEFENSIVE RUSH:** After 3 seconds have expired, which will be counted out loud by the referee, the defensive team may rush the passer. During this 3 second period, no defensive player may cross the offensive line of scrimmage (Penalty: Encroachment –

Live Ball).

10. TOUCHDOWNS: A touchdown shall count for six (6) points.

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11. POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN: After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a PAT. Once the decision is announced, it can only be changed by taking a charged timeout. The options for the try are:

- A. One (1) point from the 3-yard line
- B. Two (2) points from the 10-yard line
- C. Three (3) points from the 20-yard line

12. INTERCEPTED PAT: A try that is intercepted by the defense and returned for a score is three (3) points, regardless of how many points the offense's try was for.

13. SAFETY: Two (2) points shall be awarded for a safety. A safety is scored when a team is de-flagged, downed, or commits a penalty in their own end zone. Exception: a safety is not scored on a change of possession when the ball carrier does not carry the ball out of the end zone or on a change of possession when a player's momentum carries him/her into the end zone.

14. GENERAL PENALTIES:

3 Yard Penalties

- A. Delay Of Game
- B. Encroachment
- C. False Start
- D. Illegal Procedure
- E. Illegal Motion
- F. Illegal Shift
- G. Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down)
- H. Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)

5 Yard Penalties

- A. Flag Guarding
- B. Illegal Contact
- C. Holding
- D. Tripping
- E. Offensive Pass Int
- F. Defensive Pass Interference (Automatic First Down)
- G. Roughing The Passer (Automatic First Down)