

# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

NIRSA rules will govern play except for the following changes made by Ferris State Intramural Sports. General policies and all official sport rules can be found on the Intramural Sports page on the UREC Website.

## Table of Contents

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>Rule 1: Facility and Equipment</b> .....                     | <b>Page #1</b> |
| <b>Rule 2: Eligibility &amp; Game</b> .....                     | <b>Page #1</b> |
| <b>Rule 3: Flag Football Specifics</b> .....                    | <b>Page #3</b> |
| <b>Rule 4: Co-Rec Modifications</b> .....                       | <b>Page #6</b> |
| <b>Rule 5: Captain Responsibilities and Sportsmanship</b> ..... | <b>Page #7</b> |

## Rule 1: Facility and Equipment

### **Article 1. Facility**

- a) Ferris State Intramural Sports has a zero tolerance policy for alcohol, tobacco, or any other drug at intramural events. Furthermore, Intramural Sports staff reserves the right to remove participants or fans suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The removal process may involve the assistance of authorities such as Ferris State DPS or a member of the Big Rapids Police Department.
- b) **Pets:** Due to health and safety concerns, pets are not allowed at the Intramural Sports Facilities. This includes both formal intramural competitions/events and informal recreational activities.

### **Article 2. Equipment**

- a) The Intramural Department will provide game balls. These do not have to be used by the teams. However, men will use a regular size football while Women and Co-Rec have the option to use the youth sized football.
- b) The Intramural Department will provide flag belts. Belts must be clipped at the waist line with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one at the center of the back. Flags shall be contrasting color to team jerseys and also their opponent's flags. Belts cannot be tied and must be worn on outside all clothing.
- c) Shirts must be tucked in at ALL TIMES! Shirts must be long enough to tuck in or must be 6 inches above the waist. Shirts must not have an armpit opening longer than 4 inches.
- d) The Intramural Department will provide pennies for each team. Teams can wear their own jerseys if numbers are present and they contrast with the color of opposing team's pennies/jerseys. Pennies/jerseys may not be tied in any way to create a knot.
- e) NO METAL CLEATS.
- f) No polyurethane spikes or shoes similar to metal sole and heel plates will be allowed. No boots or sandals.
- g) NO casts/splints will be allowed under circumstances. Players who wear a knee brace with exposed metal are required to cover the exposed metal.
- h) Jewelry is illegal equipment and may not be worn. All equipment shall be subject to approval of the Intramural Staff and their decisions shall be final.
- i) Headwear: Players may wear one-piece elastic headbands made of soft pliable material. They may also wear knit stocking caps for colder weather. Rubber or elastic cloth bands may be used to control hair. No other headwear will be allowed. NO BASEBALL CAPS, BANDANAS, OR DO-RAGS. Any headwear with a knot/ball attached, is prohibited.

## Rule 2: Eligibility & Game

### **Article 1. Eligibility**

- a) Ferris State students, staff, and faculty are allowed to participate in IM Sports.
- b) NO ID, NO PLAY, NO EXCEPTIONS! All players must present their own personal FSU ID card before every game in order to participate.
- c) If you are caught using someone else's ID, that person will be ejected from the game.
- d) Former football Varsity athletes can participate in Intramural Flag Football if they are not currently on the Varsity roster.

### **Article 2. Game**

- a) The game is played between two teams of 7 players. A minimum of 5 players are needed to play and avoid a forfeit.



# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- b) Co-rec team need 8 players. 4 males and 4 females. A minimum of 6 players are needed to play and avoid a forfeit. Acceptable ratios include:
  - a. 4 males, 4 females.
  - b. 4 males, 3 females.
  - c. 4 females, 3 males.
  - d. 4 males, 2 females.
  - e. 4 females, 2 males.
  - f. 3 males, 3 females.
- c) Games consist of two 20 minute quarters, and a 3 minute halftime. The game uses a continuous clock (except during timeouts and injuries). LAST 2 MINUTES OF THE SECOND HALF: the clock will stop on incomplete forward passes, “fumble of ball”, player taking the ball out of bounds, safety, team timeout, touchdowns, penalty and administration, touchbacks, turnovers, (i.e. interceptions), and after a punt (in a new series). The clock will resume at the snap of the ball for the situations listed above. Exceptions where the clock will resume on the head referee’s whistle include: first downs and inadvertent whistles.
- d) Mercy rule:
  - a. If a team is ahead by 40 or more points within 5 minutes left in the 4th quarter.
  - b. 19 points or more within 2 minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.
- e) Ball Spotters- Two ball spotters used: Orange=offensive, Yellow=defensive. The spotters will be 1 yard apart during all contests.
- f) Winner of the coin flip chooses one of the following:
  - a. To defer his/her option until the second half.
  - b. Offense or defense.
  - c. To defend a specific end zone.
- g) Offense will begin with the ball at their own 14- yard line with a first down line to gain to their own 20 yard-line. THERE WILL BE NO KICK-OFFS. Second half will begin in a similar manner.
- h) The team in possession has 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next line-to-gain. Once reached, a new set of downs is awarded.
- i) The line-to-gain in any series is the zone in advance of the ball, unless the distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. The most forward point of the ball determines how much distance has been gained.
- j) Ball in play- The offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball once the referee has blown the whistle.
- k) Two timeouts per half (THEY DO NOT CARRY OVER).
- l) Substitutions- Players may substitute at any time in-between downs.
- m) Officials for Flag football include 1 head referee, 1 line judge, 1 back judge, and 1 scorekeeper.
- n) Teams shall stay between the 20-yard lines at all times while on the sideline. Repeated warnings about this rule will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

## Article 3. Regular Season

- a) Regular Season will consist of 4 games.
- b) All players must be listed on the team roster before the third game of the regular season.
- c) Rosters will be frozen at the end of the THIRD WEEK of the regular season. This means that all players MUST be signed up on IMLeagues on the roster of that team AND paid for prior to the beginning of the third week (game #3) of the season. No additions will be allowed unless approved by the Assistant Director of Intramurals and Club Sports.
- d) Intramural Sports recommends that you have at least two extra players than the required amount on your roster in case you need subs throughout the regular season and playoffs.

## Article 4. Overtime

- a) During the regular season, there will be no overtime.
- b) During playoffs, when the game is tied at the end of regulation, a coin flip will determine which team starts on offense, or defense. The team that loses the coin flip will accept the option not selected by the winner of the coin flip.
- c) The goal line shall always be the zone line-to-gain in overtime.
- d) The offensive team will have 4 downs from the 14-yardline (x mark) to score.
- e) If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the 14-yard line to begin their series of 4 downs.
- f) If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win the game. Try for points will still be attempted in a normal manner by any team who scores a touchdown.



# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## Article 5. Playoffs

- a) Every team makes the playoffs as long as they have the proper sportsmanship average (2.75). The fans sportsmanship can also have an effect on your team's sportsmanship rating.
- b) Once in playoffs, a team must maintain a 3.0 sportsmanship rating to advance.
- c) During the playoffs, overtime periods will be played until a winner is declared. Each team will receive 1 timeout overtime period during the playoffs.

## Rule 3: Flag Football Specifics

### Article 1. Dead Ball

- a) A dead ball will be ruled when any of the following occurs:
  - a. Ball travels out of bounds.
  - b. Any part of the runner's body other than a hand or foot touches the ground. (Ball in possession is considered part of the hand)
  - c. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try-for-point is made.
  - d. A punt comes to a rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it.
  - e. An incomplete pass or a simultaneous catch by opposing players.
  - f. A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is simultaneously caught. A ball that is snapped, or any other backward pass that hits the ground.
  - g. A forward pass is legally completed, or a loose ball is caught by a player on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line.
  - h. Player is de-flagged.
  - i. Runner legally touched with one hand between shoulders and knees, including the hands and arm when the flag is advertently falls of.
  - j. A passer is de-flagged or legally touched before releasing the ball.
  - k. When a punted ball comes into contact with a receiving player and strikes the ground.
  - l. Inadvertent whistle:
    - i. Results- Team in possession at time of the whistle may choose to take the results of the play from the spot of the ball at the whistle or replay the down. NOTE: Any penalties that occur during this down will be accepted or declined.

### Article 2. Kicking the Ball

- a) There are no kick-offs at ANY POINT.
- b) Referees will ask the offensive team if they would like to punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down. After the decision has been made, the ball must be kicked.

Exception: If a) Team time out is called, or b) a penalty occurs anytime during this down which results in the right of the kicking team to repeat the down. The Referee must then again ask the offensive captain whether he/she wants to punt.
- c) All players must stand still behind their respective scrimmage lines until ball is kicked. Punts may bounce several times and still be playable.
- d) A punt may be picked up and returned off a bounce or several bounces and or rolling on the ground.
- e) A punt that rolls on the ground and comes to a complete stop will be blown dead by the officials. If a punt touches a player on either team and then hits the ground it is dead and belongs to the returning team (R). If a punt hits an (R), and is then caught in the air by (R) it can be advanced. If a punt hits (R), and is caught in the air by kicking player (K), it belongs to the K at the spot. If an (R) catches a punt and then laterals or loses control of the ball, and K catches the ball in the air before it hits the ground it can be advanced by K.
- f) If a punted ball goes out of bounds any time before being touched, or comes to rest between the goal lines it shall belong to R at the spot.
- g) If the ball goes out of bounds behind the goal line, it may be taken as a touchback and put in play at R's 14-yardline or R may advance it out of the end zone.
- h) No member of K may interfere with the ability of R to catch a protected scrimmage kick. This includes anytime K touches the ball or any R player while the ball is in flight.
- i) If any member of K touches the kicked ball first, either before or after it crosses the line of scrimmage, it is referred to as first touching and R may take the ball at that spot or at the spot determined by the action that follows first touching. R loses the right to take the spot of first touching if during the return a foul is committed by R, or any penalty is accepted by R.



# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- j) Receiving team may attempt to “block” the punt from their scrimmage line, but the receiving team may not cross the line of scrimmage in this attempt to “block” the punt. Player attempting to “block” must remain on their side of the scrimmage line and attempt to jump and deflect the punt or alter the punting motion in any way.
- k) If the ball contacts a player and then hits the ground, it is declared dead at the spot. NO FAIR CATCH. There are no signals, fair catch or otherwise, during kicks.

## Article 3. Snapping the Ball

- a) Snapped shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with quick and continuous motion of hands. They do not have to pass the ball between the legs.
- b) No defensive player may break the place of restraining line at any time until the ball is snapped.
- c) No offensive player shall make a false start or any action to stimulate the start of play. Penalty may be enforced regardless of whether the ball is snapped.
- d) Snapper must have both feet behind the line of scrimmage.
- e) Player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage line at the time of the snap.
- f) All players are subject to motion, position, and illegal procedure rules.
- g) Each offensive team player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap.
- h) During the snap, the offense only needs one player on the line of scrimmage. That player is the center/snapper. All other players can be in any formation imaginable but will still be subject to motion, shifting, and illegal procedure rules.
- i) Only one offensive player may be in motion, but not toward the opponent’s goal at the time the ball is snapped.
- j) If multiple players are in motion, they must come to a complete stop before the ball is snapped. One player can then go back in motion while the ball is snapped.
- k) Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after downs, not the referees or the defense.
- l) Any player may hand the ball backward or forward at anytime and anywhere on the field.

## Article 4. 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:
  - a. Either of the passer’s feet are beyond the offensive line of scrimmage when the ball leaves his/her hand.
  - b. Thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
  - c. A passer catches his/her untouched forward pass.
  - d. There is more than one forward pass per down.
- c) The pass begins when the ball is released from the passer’s hand. The ball is dead if the passer is de-flagged or legally touched before the ball is released.
- d) The initial direction of a pass determines whether a pass is forward or backward.
- e) A receiver only needs one foot in bounds for a catch to be legal.
- f) If a forward or backward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players, the ball becomes dead, and is considered a completed pass which belongs to the offensive team.
- g) A runner may pass the ball backward anytime and there are no restrictions on the amount of backward passes.
- h) A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight in bounds by any player and be advanced toward their end zone.
- i) A backward pass or fumble which goes out of bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out of bounds spot.
- j) A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal line is dead at the spot where it touched the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.
- k) A backward pass or “FUMBLE” by the offense that first hits the ground in a) the team’s own end zone is a safety, or b) in the opponent’s end zone is a touchback.

## Article 5. Pass Interference

- a) There shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the scrimmage line while a ball is in flight, which crossed the offensive scrimmage line.
- b) Rule 4, article 5, Section A defines pass interference as: bumping, pushing, or unnecessary contact with an opponent OR restricting a player from access to a pass while on offense or defense.
- c) Players may NOT make contact with receiver to get to a ball that is in flight.

## Article 6. Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

- a) Touchdowns are 6 points. To be ruled a touchdown, the ball must be on or over the goal line.



# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- b) The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown will be disallowed. The player is disqualified from the game and it is a foul.
- c) Try-for-point:
  - a. Ball in play from 3 yard line = 1 point
  - b. Ball in play from 10 yard line = 2 points
  - c. Ball in play from 20 yard line = 3 points
  - d. An intercepted pass during the try that is returned for a touchdown = 3 points.
  - e. The try is over when: Team A commits a loss of down foul during the try, or Team B commits a foul following a chance in possession during the try.
- d) Safety: When a safety is scored, 2 points are awarded, and the ball belongs to the scoring team at their own 14- yard line, unless moved by penalty. It will be put into play with a first down, and the line to gain will be their own 20 yard line.

## Article 7. Personal Fouls

- a) Using fist, foot, knee, or leg to contact opponent.
- b) Tackling the ball carrier.
- c) Attempt to steal, strip, or bat the ball from a player in possession of the ball.
- d) Hurdling an upright player, tripping, clipping, etc.
- e) Unnecessary roughness.
- f) Touching a player or ball carried with excessive force.
- g) Roughing the passer (automatic first down) – applies only to the player throwing a legal forward pass behind the offensive line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer in any fashion, whether or not he/she touches the pass, it is roughing the passer.  
**Penalty:** Personal Foul, 10 yards, flagrant offenders will be ejected.

## Article 8. Blocking and Screening

\*\*\* The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have their hands and arms at their side or behind their back when screen blocking. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or other body part to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen blocking is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, or after screen blocking. Behind the line of scrimmage, screeners may move laterally. Past the line of scrimmage, a block must be a stationary basketball pick. \*\*\*

- a) Blocking is prohibited. A player must not use their hands or body to block or ward off an opponent.  
**Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards**
- b) Defensive players must avoid the offensive player's screen block.  
**Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards**
- c) The runner may not stiff arm or lower a shoulder into an opponent.  
**Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards**
- d) Illegal contact between the blocker/rusher will be called against the player determined to have initiated contact (similar to "block/charge" in basketball).
- e) **Blocking in Flag Football is like setting a pick in basketball.**

## Article 9. Flag Removal

- a) De-flagging (removal of the flag by a player) is allowed only under special circumstances similar to tackling in football in that players must have possession of the ball before they can be de-flagged.
- b) When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by a grappling or pulling), play continues and a one hand touch between shoulders and knees must be carried out.
- c) The runner may not:
  - a. Be aided by a teammate (grabbed, pushed, or pulled).
  - b. Stiff-arm an opponent.
  - c. Guard their flags by blocking with arms, hand, or the ball, and thereby denying an opponent the opportunity to pull or remove their flags.  
**Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards from spot of the foul.**
- d) In circumstances where the flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of penalty or the result of the play.  
**Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.**



# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- e) Pulling or removing a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is a foul.  
**Penalty; Personal Foul, 10 yards.**
- f) Tampering with flag belts in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign objects, or other such acts is a foul.  
**Penalty:** Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards from previous spot, and loss of down (Having 2 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties warranted will result in immediate ejection).

## Rule 4: Co-Rec Modifications

### Article 1. Male Advancement

- a) A male runner cannot advance the ball through the line of scrimmage by running, unless the ball is passed FORWARD to him prior to running through the line of scrimmage, i.e. pitched, passed, or tossed forward.
  - a. Note: There are no restrictions concerning runs by females. Once the line has been legally penetrated, all advancement restrictions are eliminated (i.e., a female runner may advance beyond the line and then pitch to a male who is still behind the line and he may advance with no restrictions). After a change of team possession any male runner may advance the ball without restriction, as in an interception or kick return.
- b) During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions on downs from a male passer to a male receiver.
  - a. The term **CLOSED** means a male player may not complete a legal forward pass to a male.
  - b. The term **OPEN** means any player can complete a pass to any other player.
  - c. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or receiver for positive yards. If the female is de-flagged before gaining positive yards, the next play remains closed.  
Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from spot of the pass, loss of down.
- c) **In order for a completed pass that involved a female for a positive yardage to open the next play, the pass itself must be forward.**
- d) **Touchdown:** 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 member, the point value is 9.

## Rule 5: Captain Responsibilities and Sportsmanship

### Article 1. Captain Responsibilities

- a) The captain must maintain control of his/her team's sportsmanship. Your team will be graded each game and must maintain a 2.75 average to make the playoffs. Every team makes the playoffs as long as they have the proper sportsmanship average. The captain is also in charge of the fans that come to support his/her team. The fans' sportsmanship can also have an effect on your team's sportsmanship rating.
- b) **GAMETIME IS FORFEIT TIME.** If your team does not show up ON TIME for your scheduled game, your team will receive a forfeit and a 3 sportsmanship rating. If at least one member of the team shows up before the scheduled start time, a 5 minute grace period will be awarded.
- c) **If your team forfeits, a \$25.00 fee will be issued to the Captain, and will need to be paid by 3 pm prior to the next game. Failure to do so will result in a second forfeit.**
- d) If your team forfeits a second time, by any means, the Captain will be issued another \$25.00 fee and their current team will be removed for the rest of the season.
- e) **If the Captain is unable to make it into the SRC to pay the forfeit fee in time, he/she is allowed to contact the Intramural Office to authorize the fee to be charged to their Student Account. We will try our best to contact the captain the next morning after to remind them about the fee. However, this is ultimately the Captain's responsibility!**
- a) Defaults are an alternative to forfeiting game. If your team will not be able to make it to a scheduled game, you may contact the Intramural office by **3pm on the day of the game (3pm on Friday for Sunday games)** and let us know you will default the game. Your team will receive a loss, but you will not have to pay a forfeit fee.

### Article 2. Appeal Play/Protest

- a) Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an official.
- b) The appeal must be made before the next legal snap of play. The following may be appealed/protested:
  - a. Misinterpretation of a playing rule.



# IM FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

- b. Failure of an official to apply the correct rule to a given violation.
- c. Failure of an official to impose correct penalty for a given violation  
**Anyone on the team may protest a call.**

