



Flag Football Rules

Activity Format: Three regular season games followed by a single elimination playoff tournament.

Policy Information: For additional information please review the Intramural Sports Handbook online at: www.butler.edu/intramurals

Equipment

Shoes: Each player must wear athletic shoes. They must be made of soft, pliable upper material (molded plastic, canvas, leather, or synthetic), which covers the foot attached to a composition bottom. Shoes with rubber cleats are acceptable; however, NO METAL may be exposed on cleats.

Jerseys: For all flag football games, it is required that teams wear uniformly colored shirts in order to help distinguish one team from another. During the game, shirts must be tucked in at all times and/or the entire flag belt must be visible by players and officials. See the Intramural Handbook for any further clarification.

Balls: Men will use a regulation football. Women and Co-Rec may use a regulation, intermediate, or youth ball. Each team may provide a ball or the teams may agree upon one ball to play the game with. Balls may be checked out from the intramural sports staff at the field.

Illegal Equipment: Pants or shorts must be free of exposed drawstrings or belt loops. Stocking hats may be worn, but any hat with a hard bill will not be allowed. Any equipment that is in the official's judgment would be injurious to participants is illegal to wear. Jewelry of any kind may not be worn unless previously approved by the Intramural Office (medical/religious reasons). Wrists must be free of all bracelets, hair ties, Livestrong bands, etc.

Game Regulations

Players: Male/Female team = Seven (7) players

- Minimum = Four (4) players

Co-Rec team = Eight (8) players

- Minimum = Five (5) players

Game Length: A game shall consist of two 20-minute halves with a running clock. There will be a 3-minute half-time intermission. Regular playing time will be kept on an automatic timing device. There will be a "two-minute warning" in the second half. In the first half, the clock will not stop at the "two-minute warning" and run through the remainder of the half. In the second half, the clock will stop on all dead ball situations for the final two minutes.

Overtime: If the score is tied at the end of regulation play during the regular league season, the game WILL BE DECLARED A TIE. Overtime procedures will be used in the playoffs ONLY. A new coin toss will determine offense, defense or direction. (all overtime periods are played toward the same goal line) Each team will get 4 downs starting from the 10 yd line, if tied after the round another will be played until there is a winner. Penalty's will be administered the same throughout. When the defense secures possession, the ball is dead and the series is over.

Official Game: In the event of inclement weather during the regular season, if a game has reached halftime, it is over and the score is official. If the game has not yet reached halftime, it is considered a canceled game and will not be counted toward playoff qualification.

Officials: The Intramural Staff will assign officials for each scheduled game. All games conducted by the Department of Recreational Sports must be played under the supervision of the Intramural Supervisor employed by the Department. No game may be played without its being scheduled through the Intramural Office. An Intramural Official will keep the scorecard.

Playing Area: All games will be played at the Intramural Sports Fields unless specified. A diagram of the playing field is located at the end of this document for your reference.

Mercy Rule: A modified "Mercy Rule" will be in effect. If a team is 19 or more points ahead in men's or women's, 25 for Co-Rec, when the referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half or any time after, the game shall have a running clock.

Coaches: Teams may have only one non-roster member (Coach) present on the bench.

Sport Specific Rules

Illegal equipment: *Any equipment that in the official's judgment could be injurious is illegal to wear.*

- Pants, shorts and shirts must not have exposed drawstrings and/or belt loops including jeans and khakis.
- All jewelry must be removed before playing. (This includes earrings, necklaces, sunglasses, watches, and rings)
- Stocking hats may be worn but any hat with a hard bill will not be allowed.
- Helmets, casts, shoulder pads, and boots are all examples of illegal equipment.

Flags: The intramural sports staff will furnish flag belts for all contests. All flag belts worn by a team should be the same color. Competing teams should wear different colored flags.

Scoring (NEW FOR 2025!):

Touchdown - 6 points

Safety - 2 points or 1 point on a Try

PAT (run or pass) –

1. 3 points from the 25
2. 2 points from the 10
3. 1 point from the 5
4. If the defense secures possession of the ball during a PAT, the ball becomes dead and the PAT ends.

Substitution: Teams may substitute with knowledge and consent of the referee on any dead ball.

Start of Game: The game shall start with a coin toss, or odd or even game. The referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing team captains. One (1) captain of the visiting team will be designated to call the fall of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following:

1. Take option in the first half
2. Take option in the second half.
 - The options available to teams each half are:
 - a. To choose whether his/her team will start on (a) offense or (b) defense.
 - b. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.
 - c. The opposite team shall then choose between the remaining options.

*The team not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining options.

Starting Play (NEW FOR 2025!): To start each half, following a touchdown, or touchback, the ball will be placed on the **5-yard line** of the team in possession. There will be no kickoffs.

Time Outs: Each team will be allowed two thirty-second time-outs per game. The referee may declare a time-out for any injury

or rule interpretation between officials. Each team is granted one thirty-second timeout per overtime period in the playoffs.

NO CONTACT at any time!

Lines to gain (NEW FOR 2025!): The field is divided into two halves. A team shall have four (4) consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next zone. The only LTG is the 25 YD line. This may be affected by the penalty.

Scrimmage Line: The scrimmage line for the offensive team is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the forward point of the ball which is placed at the orange ball spotter. The scrimmage line for the defensive team is the vertical plane which passes one yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line (the yellow marker).

Minimum Line Players: The snapper is the only offensive player REQUIRED to be on their scrimmage line at the snap.

Ball Responsibility: The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after the down.

Flag Belts: Every eligible participant on the field of play must have a legally secured flag belt at the time of the snap.

Motion: One offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal.

Shift: The action of one or more offensive players who after taking a set position, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

Snapping the Ball: Each time the ball is snapped, it must be a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s). The ball must leave the hand(s) in this motion.

Long Snap: The player who receives the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. **No Direct Snaps!**

Ball in Play (NEW FOR 2025!): On each play after the referee sounds the ready for play whistle, the team on offense has 30 seconds to put the ball in play.

Diving: A player, who is attempting to remove the flag belt, may leave his/her feet. Any contact will be considered the fault of the person diving. Diving by the offensive player may only occur into an open space (no contact).

Handing and Passing the Ball

Handing the Ball: Any player may hand the ball backwards at any time at any location on the field.

Backward Pass: A runner may pass the ball backward given that its initial direction is parallel with or towards the defenders end line.

Fumble: Unintentional loss of possession. The loose ball remains live until it hits the ground and then becomes dead. While the ball is live and in the air, it may be recovered and advanced by any legal player. A fumble will not stop the clock at any time.

Dead Ball: A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless it is lost on downs.

Eligible Receivers: All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. An offensive player forfeits his/her eligibility once he/she goes out-of-bounds.

Legal Forward Pass: During a scrimmage down one (1) forward pass may be thrown providing the passer's feet are behind the offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand, and the initial direction of the ball is towards the offenses end line.

Illegal Forward Pass: A forward pass is illegal if:

1. The passer's foot is beyond the scrimmage line when the ball leaves his/her hand.
2. Thrown after team possession has changed during a down.
3. Intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage. (EXCEPTION=A Spike to stop clock)
4. A passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass.
5. There is more than one forward pass per down.

Legal Catch or Interception: A pass is considered a catch as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground, after the catch, is inbounds. (i.e. One foot must touch inbounds to be considered a catch)

Simultaneous Catch by Opposing Players: If a pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball at the spot of the catch.

Incomplete Pass: When a forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds, it becomes dead.

Blocking

Blocking: All players will be limited to screen blocking. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him with any part of the screen blocker's body.

Offensive Screen Blocking: The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance.

Screen Blocking Fundamentals: A player who screens shall not:

1. Take position closer than a normal step from the opponent when he/she is behind a stationary opponent.
2. Make contact with the opponent when he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
3. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or direction. The speed of the player to be screened determines where the screener may take his/her position. This position will vary and must be at least one (1) normal step or stride from the opponent.
4. After assuming his/her legal screening position move, to maintain the position the player must move in the same direction and path of his/her opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, he/she has committed a personal foul.

Blocking and Interlocked Interference: Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.

Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense: Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used to contact the opponent. A player may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance.

Blitzing

Blitzing: Blitzing is allowed 1 play every 4 downs. If an additional blitz happens within those 4 downs, the penalty is a live ball penalty, 5 yards penalty, replay down. If the penalty is declined, they can take the result of the play.

Pass Clock: On plays that the defense does not blitz, there will be a 5 second verbalized pass clock for the offense to throw the ball. This will be verbalized by the referee and physically shown via signal (same signal as a count in basketball). "1,2,3,4,5!" Once they get to 5, the count is over. If the ball has not been released by the end of the pass clock, then the play will be blown dead and a 5 yard illegal procedure penalty will be enforced from the previous spot.

Flag Belt Removal

Basics: Every player must have a securely fastened flag belt at the snap. When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner the down shall end and the ball is declared dead at the spot of the

ball when the belt is removed. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official.

Inadvertent Removal (NEW FOR 2025!): If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one hand tag on any part of the player constitutes down.

Defensive Contact: In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may inadvertently contact the body and shoulders of an opponent with their hands, but not their face or any part of their neck or head. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

Runner

Flag Guarding: Runners shall not guard the flag belt by using any part of their body or the ball to deny the opponent an opportunity to remove the flag belt. Examples include but are not limited to:

1. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.
2. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt.
3. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt.

Stiff-Arm: The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended arm or hand.

Obstructing the Runner: The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or at any time during play.

Charging: A runner shall not charge into an opponent in his/her path. The runner must avoid contact by changing direction.

Knee Touching Ground: The ball becomes dead if any part of the ball carrier, other than the hands or feet, touches the ground.

Kicking

Protected Scrimmage Kick: The only kick permitted shall be a punt. For each scrimmage kick, the offensive team must announce that they are going to punt. No one shall rush the kicker and no player from either team shall cross the scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. **NO FAKES ARE ALLOWED.** If a team chooses to punt and then changes their mind, they must use a timeout. If they have already used their timeouts then they will not be allowed to change their decision.

Punting (New for 2025!): **Punting and kicking is not allowed due to the shortened field.** Teams will be required to go for it on 4th down.

Ball hitting the Ground: When receiving a kick a team may choose to let the ball hit the ground before they pick it up and

run; however if the receiving team touches the ball and the ball then touches the ground, the play becomes dead and the ball is spotted where it hit the ground.

Behind the Goal Line: The receiving team may receive the protected scrimmage kick behind the goal line and either down the ball for a touchback or run the ball out of the end zone. If the ball goes out of the end zone, it is ruled as a touchback.

Fair Catch: There are NO fair catches. Any reception off a kick is live unless it is dropped by the receiver.

Penalty Enforcement

Captain's Choice: When a foul occurs, the Referee shall notify both captains. The Referee shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding their options on the penalty. Once a penalty has been accepted or declined, that choice may not be changed. For penalties under two minutes in the second half, the offended captain has the option to start the clock on the ready for play whistle or on the snap.

Establishing the Zone Line-to-gain: The zone line-to-gain shall be established after all penalties are administered and prior to the ready for play signal.

Half the Distance: A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending teams goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

Penalties on Scoring Plays/PATs: If there is a penalty on the non-scoring team during a play that results in a touchdown or a successful PAT, the foul may be enforced either on the PAT or after the PAT, at the succeeding spot.

Loss of down Fouls: Fouls by the offense that result in a loss of down include;

1. Illegal forward pass
2. Insecure flag belt

Automatic First Down Fouls: Fouls by the defense that result in an automatic first down include:

1. Roughing the passer
2. Insecure flag belt

Illegally secured flag belt is grounds for immediate ejection.

Co-Rec Modifications

The number of players will be 8 (4 males and 4 females). Teams must have a minimum of 5 players to start with at least 1 player of each gender. (ie 4 males and 1 female or 4 females and 1 male is the minimum requirement)

A male runner may not advance the ball past the scrimmage line. A runner is considered to be a runner upon possession of the

ball. There are no restrictions once the ball is beyond the scrimmage line, during a run by a female or after a change of possession.

1. **Penalty:** Illegal Male Advancement, 5 yards from the previous spot.

There are two types of plays in Co-Rec Flag Football:

1. **Closed Play**- means that a male player may NOT throw a legal forward completed pass
 - a. To any other male player.
2. **Open Play** - means any player may complete a legal forward pass to any other player. During the offensive team's possession there may not be two (2) consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the PAT.
3. A play becomes closed after a legal and successful male thrower completes a pass to a male receiver. To open a play, the closed play must meet all of the following criteria:
 - a. Female involvement (Passer or Receiver)
 - b. Legal Forward Pass
 - c. Resulting in net positive yards
4. There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male.
5. **Penalty:** Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed legal forward pass is released, and a loss of down.

Penalty, Yardage, Marked from where?

CODE: (PS = Previous Sport) (Spot = Spot of Foul)

5 YARD PENALTIES

Dead Ball Fouls

1. Delay of game (PS)
2. Encroachment (PS)
 - a. (2nd consecutive encroachment – loss of 10 yards)
3. False start (PS)
4. Illegal snap (PS)

Live Ball Fouls – Loss of 5 Yards

1. Aiding runner by teammate
2. Failure to wear required Equipment (PS)
3. Illegal forward pass (+ loss of down, if by team A) (Spot)
4. Illegal motion (PS)
5. Illegal procedure (PS)
6. Illegal formation (PS)
7. Illegal shift (PS)
8. Illegal male advancement (PS-CoRec)
9. Illegal male reception (+loss of down) (PS-CoRec)

Possession and Change of Possession (NEW FOR 2025!):

1. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. Crossing the midfield is the only opportunity for an offense to gain a first down within a single possession.
2. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
3. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
4. If the defense intercepts the ball, a defensive player can attempt to return it until down or out of bounds.
5. All possessions changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.

10. Intentional grounding (+ loss of down) (Spot)

11. Illegal substitution (PS)

10 YARD PENALTIES

Live Ball Fouls – Loss of 10 Yards

1. Eligibility lost by going out of bounds and participating in the play by offensive players
2. Kick-catching interference (PS)
3. Flag guarding, illegal flag belt removal, stiff arm
4. Illegal bat, illegal kick, illegal participation
5. Illegal contact
6. Illegal secured flag belt on touchdown (+ loss of down and score; player disqualification) (PS)
7. Pass interference – defense (+ automatic first down) (PS)
8. Pass interference – offense (+ loss of down) (PS)
9. Personal foul
10. Roughing the passer (+ automatic first down) (PS)
11. Unsportsmanlike conduct (Succeeding Spot)
12. Illegal equipment (PS)

Field Dimensions (NEW FOR 2025!):

FLAG FOOTBALL

