

7v7 Flag Football - Rules

Revised Summer 2019

The Game, Field, Players, and Equipment

1. **No ID...No Play...!** - Each player must present a valid Mason G Card before each contest to be eligible to participate.
 - a. **Regular Season Exception**– During the regular season a valid photo id (Drivers license, passport, etc) and that player must be able to login into their patriot web account. If the player is not able to provide both, then they cannot participate.
 - b. **Playoffs** – There is NO Substitute for a Mason G Card to sign into a playoff game.
2. **Game time is forfeit time.**
3. The game shall be played between two teams of seven (**7**) players each. Five (**5**) players are required to start the game to avoid a forfeit.
4. All players must have checked in with the supervisor and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate.
5. Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, spectators and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.
6. The Intramural Staff have the authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. These decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

I. Governing Rules

- 1.1 National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association (Nirsa) Flag and Touch Football rules shall govern all play, with any exceptions listed below. Final interpretations and modifications shall be determined by the Coordinator of Competitive Sports, directly overseeing the sport.

II. General Provisions and Equipment

2.1 Team Requirements

- a) A team consists of seven (7) players. A team must have five (5) players on the field at all times. Exception: four players are allowed if an individual cannot continue due to an injury.
- b) When a team has forfeited, the opposing team must have at least five players checked in with the supervisor to receive a win
- c) Substitutions may occur during periods between downs or prior to the ball being snapped
- d) Spectators are permitted in a team's bench area. Teams may have a "coach" but they will not be recognized by the game officials. However, any spectator/coach in the team's bench area can affect the team's sportsmanship.

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2.2 Equipment

- a) Teams must wear jerseys/shirts with the same shade of color, Jerseys/shirts may not have pockets, holes, or a button placket.
 - i. Teams may wear the intramural department provided pennies
 - ii. Jackets/Hoodies may be worn provided there are no exposed pockets and the hooded portion is tucked into the back of the player's shirt.
- b) Jerseys must be either:
 - i. Long enough so they remain tucked in the pants/shorts the entire down, or
 - ii. Short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline
- c) Pants/Shorts- Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), holes, or exposed drawstrings. Pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags. Pants or shorts may not be turned inside out, and pockets may not be taped.
- d) Flag Belt – Players on the field must be wearing a flag belt to be a legal participant. The belt must be worn so that the flags fall two at the side and one in the back. Belts cannot be tied or tucked.
- e) All players must wear athletic shoes made of canvas, leather, or synthetic material which cover the entire foot. No metal cleats will be permitted
- f) The official shall not permit any player to wear equipment that, in his or her judgment, is dangerous to other players. Jewelry, including rings, bracelets, necklaces, watches and earrings, is illegal. Also, hats are not permitted. Medical emergency bracelets/necklaces may be worn but must be taped to the person. **Penalty: Illegal Equipment**
- g) Casts (plaster, metal or other hard substances in their final form) or any other item judged to be dangerous by the supervisor, official or athletic trainer may not be worn during the game. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.
- h) Teams may provide their own football, provided it meet the following - the official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and meets the recommendations of size and shape for regulation football. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure and markings. Men shall use the regular size while women shall use the men's, intermediate, youth, or junior size. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at their discretion. During the game each team must use a legal ball of its choice when in possession.

2.3 Optional Equipment

- a) Headwear – Players may wear a knit stocking cap or a headband/bandana provided that the excess does not hang past the shoulders once it has been tied.
- b) Sunglasses – Players may wear pliable and non-rigid sunglasses
- c) Towels – towels may be worn from the waist, however, towels will count as an additional flag
- d) Play Book – Players may carry a playbook on their arms or inside their clothing as long as it is not made of unyielding material
- e) Hand warmers are ILLEGAL equipment

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III. The Game, Overtime, Time-outs

3.1 Game Structure

- a. There will be two 20-minute halves of continuous running time. Clock stops for time outs or official time outs (e.g. for injuries). The clock will stop during the final two (2) minutes of both halves. Teams will be alerted to the clock stopping with a two (2) minute warning. The clock will restart according to the following
 - i. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass-starts on the snap.
 - ii. Out-of-bounds-starts on the snap.
 - iii. Safety-starts on the snap.
 - iv. Team time-out-starts on the snap.
 - v. First down-depends
 - i. Out of bounds – on the snap
 - ii. In bounds – on the whistle
 - vi. Touchdown-starts on next offensive snap (Extra Point Tries are untimed)
 - vii. Penalty and administration-dependent on the previous play (except delay of game starts on snap)
 - i. with under two (2) minutes remaining in the second half, the offended team of any foul will have the option to start the game clock on the snap
 - viii. Referee's time out-starts at their discretion.
 - ix. Touchback-starts on the snap.
 - x. Team attempting to conserve time illegally-starts on whistle.
 - xi. Team attempting to consume time illegally-starts on snap.
- b. Prior to all games there will be a captains meeting and coin toss. The options for the team winning the coin toss will be:
 - i. Offense/Defense
 - ii. Side
 - iii. Defer (If the winning team defers, the other team is advised to pick offense)
- c. There will be a three-minute intermission between halves
- d. Once the ball is marked ready for play, a team has twenty-five (25) seconds within which to snap the ball

3.2 Overtime

- a. There will be one coin toss prior to the overtime period. The choices will be Offense/Defense or the goal line teams will play toward.
 - i. All Overtime periods are played toward the same goal line
- b. Unless moved by penalty, each team will start first down and goal from the 10-yard line. The team will have four downs to score, unless awarded first down automatically, or a penalty allows for repeating the down.
- c. Any turnovers will result in the play being blown dead immediately, and the ball awarded to the opposing team at the 10 yard line.
- d. Extra point attempts
 - i. 1st overtime teams may go for 1, 2, or 3

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- ii. 2nd overtime teams must go for 2, or 3
- iii. 3rd overtime teams must go for 3
- e. There will be no timeouts during the overtime period

3.3 Timeouts

- a. Each team will have three (3) timeouts per game, lasting no more than one (1) minute
- b. Timeouts may only be requested by a player on the field during a dead ball period.
- c. Dead Ball Timeout – timeouts may be requested by either team when the ball is not in play
- d. Overtime – there will be no timeouts in the regular season during the overtime period
 - i. Playoffs – One thirty (30) second timeout per team. Timeouts from regulation will not carry over into overtime

3.4 Scoring

- a. Touchdown = Six (6) points
- b. Safety = Two (2) points
- c. Extra Points – Once a decision has been announced, teams may only change if there is a charged timeout. PATs that are intercepted are immediately blown dead.
 - i. Three (3) yard line = One (1) point
 - ii. Ten (10) yard line = Two (2) points
 - iii. Twenty (20) yard line = Three (3) points

3.5 Starting Play

- a. Only seven players per team are allowed on the field at a time. A minimum of four players are necessary to begin a game
- b. The offense must only have 1 player on the line of scrimmage. (i.e. – snapper)
- c. All plays must originate with a snap from center. This snap must be received at least 2 yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. The snap does not need to be made between the legs of the snapper.
- d. Only one offensive player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. This motion must begin more than one second before the ball is snapped, and must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. A player may go in motion from the line but IS NOT considered to be on the line.
- e. After the ball is ready-for-play, each player of the offensive team must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball prior to the snap before moving closer to the sideline.
- f. No defensive player may be closer than 1-yard to the line of scrimmage during all scrimmage downs. Defensive players may not break the neutral zone until the ball is snapped.
- g. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended.
- h. All players not in the game, and spectators, must remain between the 20-yard line markers and two yards off the sideline.
- i. The snapper may not receive the snap.

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3.6 Carrying the Ball

- a. A ball carrier may not deliberately guard their flags. "Spinning" or jumping to avoid being deflagged is legal. Actions such as slapping with the hand or stiff-arming are examples of flag guarding.
- b. A ball carrier may not hurdle a player to avoid deflagging. Hurdling is interpreted as an attempt by a runner to jump over a player still on their feet with the feet or knees of the runner foremost.
- c. If a player inadvertently loses their flags or it is pulled by the opposition before gaining possession of the ball, the play will continue and the player must be downed by a one hand touch, between the shoulder and knees, including the hand and arm.
- d. A player will be ruled "down" when any part of the body other than the hand or foot touches the ground, or under the provision of Section C (see above).
- e. The defender may not play the person, nor may they hold or tackle the runner while deflagging the ball carrier.
- f. A fumbled or muffed ball is dead when it strikes the ground.
- g. When an inadvertent whistle occurs, the offensive team will have the option of taking the play with the ball spotted at its location when the whistle blew or replay the down. If the ball is loose following a backward pass or fumble, the team will have the option of taking the ball at the spot where possession was lost or replay the down. During a legal forward pass or any kick, if an inadvertent whistle occurs, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.
- h. It is illegal to attempt to steal a ball in player possession. The object of the game is to deflag a ball carrier, not steal the ball.
- i. In pulling a flag and/or touching a ball carrier, a defender's feet MAY leave the ground. Diving is legal by defensive or offensive players however, the diving player is still responsible for any contact which they initiate.
- j. Any player may hand the ball backward or forward at any time.

3.7 Blocking & Rushing

- a. No part of the body except the feet shall be in contact with the ground and the feet must remain on the ground for the duration of the block.
- b. Blocking will be by SCREENING ONLY. That is, a blocker must hinder a defender's movement through positioning rather than body contact.
- c. During a block, the body must remain upright with elbows and hands touching the body at the side or behind the back.
- d. While incidental contact may occur, blocking/rushing penalties will be called against the player who initiates contact.
- e. The defense may not use hands, arms, or legs as a wedge to gain an advantage over a blocker.

3.8 Passing

- a. A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage (both feet behind LOS).
- b. All incomplete backward passes shall be marked down at the point of ground contact.

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- c. Only one forward pass may be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage on a given play.
- d. A forward pass is illegal if:
 - i. It is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - ii. It is intentional grounding.
 - iii. It is thrown after a change of possession.
 - iv. The passer catches his/her untouched forward/backward pass.
 - v. It is the second forward pass during a play.
- e. All players except the passer are eligible to receive a pass.
- f. A player must have complete possession of the ball and land with the first part of their body inbounds, normally one foot, to be a legal reception.
- g. A pass intercepted in the end zone may be advanced.
- h. If the passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball, the ball is dead at that spot and the down has ended.
- i. If an offensive player goes out-of-bounds on their own accord and returns inbounds, it is an illegal participation foul.
- j. Roughing the Passer -- Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid contact with a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as they are considered out of the play after the pass.

3.9 Kicking

- a. There will be no kickoffs or free kicks. Possessions beginning a new half will begin on the 14 yard line.
- b. Following any touchdown, the ball shall be placed on the 14 yard line, possession being given to the opponent of the scoring team. Following a safety, the ball shall be placed on the 14 yard line with possession belonging to the team who just scored the safety.
- c. On fourth down, the offense must announce prior to the ball being marked ready-for-play whether or not they will punt. Once the decision is made, it cannot be changed except through the use of a charged time-out by either team, the period ends, a foul occurs, or an inadvertent whistle is blown that cause the down to be replayed. If a kick is to be made, the following procedures must be followed:
 - i. The offense (no requirements for the defense) must have a minimum of 4 players on their line of scrimmage at the snap.
 - ii. The kicker must receive the snap two yards behind the center as for any other scrimmage play.
 - iii. The kick must be made immediately upon receiving the snap.
 - iv. Players of the kicking or receiving team may not advance beyond their respective scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked. The receiving team may attempt to block the kick after it crosses their scrimmage line.
 - v. Once the ball is punted, any R player may block the kick. If a player on the kicking team catches the kick behind the receiving team's line of scrimmage they may advance.

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- d. The kicking team may catch, touch, muff or bat a punt in flight beyond their line of scrimmage if no receiving team player is in position to catch the ball.
- e. When a punt breaks the plane of the receiver's goal line it is a touchback.

3.10 Penalties

- a. The offended team may have its choice of the penalty or the result of the play. (NOTE: If there is a foul by the defense during a down that results in a successful touchdown, the scoring team may choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot or 14 yard line.)
- b. If there is a foul by the defensive team (including unsportsmanlike or non-player) during a down which results in a touchdown, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot (try), or after the Try, at the 14 yard line.
- c. If after a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play signal for the Try, either team commits any foul for which the basic spot is the succeeding spot (try), the offended team may have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot (try), or after the try, at the 14 yard line.
- d. When both teams commit an infraction during the same live ball period, regardless of the severity, the down is automatically replayed, provided there is no change of possession. If an ejection is warranted, this may occur even though no yardage is assessed.
- e. When a live ball and dead ball penalty occurs, each is handled on its own merit, regardless of whether the penalties are on the same or opposing teams.
- f. All unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are penalized as a dead ball foul. A player receiving an unsportsmanlike conduct foul must sub out for the subsequent down. If a penalty occurs on the subsequent down which results in repeating the down the player may reenter the game. If a dead ball penalty occurs between downs the player may still not re-enter until after the subsequent down.
- g. If a fight occurs on the playing field, those players will be disqualified, and the game may be forfeited by the Competitive Sports Staff.
- h. The second unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the same player or non-player results in disqualification. The third unsportsmanlike foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game.
- i. Live ball fouls committed by either team after Team B (the team on defense at the start of the down) gains possession during a try or overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot (where the ball will next be snapped or free kicked).
- j. Establishing Zone Line-to-Gain- Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement which occur prior to the ready for play signal shall be administered before setting the zone line-to-gain down box for a new series.
- k. Establishing a Zone Line-to-Gain- Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement which occur after the ready for play signal shall be administered AFTER setting the zone line-to-gain box for a new series.

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- l. Loose Ball Play. Exception: The penalty for roughing the passer on a completed forward pass will be enforced from the end of the last run when the run ends beyond the neutral zone and no change of possession has occurred (“tack on”).
- m. Safety/Goal Line. For a defensive foul, if the enforcement spot which is now the basic spot, is on or behind the offended team’s goal line any measurement is from the succeeding spot.
- n. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a down, which results in a successful touchdown or try, the penalty will be enforced from the succeeding spot.
- o. A period will not be extended for a foul which specifies loss of down, if accepted. Also, any score by the team which fouled is cancelled.
- p. A flagrant foul is so severe and extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.

IV. Bench and Substitutions

4.1 All players/coaches on the sideline must stay within the bench area

4.2 Substitutes must report to the scorer’s table prior to entering the game. All subs must be beckoned onto the playing surface by an official.

V. Injured Player

5.1 An injured player must be removed until the next opportunity to substitute if a coach, teammate(s) or a Site Manager is beckoned for the purpose of providing assistance. Time must actually come off the clock prior to any legal re-entry, or if a team is granted a time out the player may return at the conclusion of the time out period.

5.2 Any player who is bleeding, oozing bodily fluids, has an open wound or has an excessive amount of blood on their uniform shall be considered an injured player. Such player may not return to the game until the situation is corrected.

VI. Co-ed Differences

6.1 Co-Rec Teams consist of four (4) males and four (4) females. A team may play with uneven numbers of men and women so long as the number of either gender does not exceed four (4). A minimum of five (5) players are needed to begin and continue play.

6.2 Open/Closed Plays- After any change of possession, a team will begin their offensive series with an “open” play. In “open” plays, any gender passer may complete a pass to any gender receiver. During a “closed” play, either the passer or receiver (or both) MUST be a female if the pass is completed.

6.3 During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver, the next play will be closed. During a closed play, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. If a female is involved as the passer and/or receiver during a completed legal forward pass for positive yardage, the next play will be open.

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A running play or any other play where a forward completed pass is not involved will not open the next play. The spot where the ball becomes dead must be beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line. This rule also applies to the try-for-point. Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed forward pass is released, and a loss of down. Any penalty, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the play from scrimmage is "open" or "closed".

4. Male runners are prohibited from advancing the ball across the offensive line of scrimmage prior to the ball being beyond the offensive team's scrimmage line unless a legal forward pass precedes this run (this rule does not apply after a change of possession). Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.

6. A regular, intermediate, junior or youth size football may be used. The offensive team is responsible for getting the desired ball in play.

9. If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is nine. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and the end result of the play is a touchdown for that team, the point value is nine. All other touchdowns will be worth six points.

10. If at, or following, the two (2) minute warning in the 2nd half one team is ahead by 25 or more points, they will be declared the winner and the contest will end.

