



Men's Flag Football Rules

Season League

Games are played at the Alpine Turf Field

Number of Players: 7 vs. 7

MAXIMUM OF 10 PLAYERS ON A ROSTER

1. GOVERNING RULES

- a. Situations not specifically covered or implied by these rules shall be governed by the 2020-2021 NIRSA Flag Football Rules Handbook except where a special University of Colorado Colorado Springs Intramural Sports rule applies.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- a. All Participants must be either students registered at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs or Faculty/Staff/Affiliate with a Recreational Sports Membership.

3. PREGAME

- a. All participants will need to bring their ID card to sign in for their game.
- b. Team managers must fill out jersey numbers of players participating in that night's game. If a player is not currently printed on the score sheet, the player must see a supervisor to gain approval before playing. Players will need their ID to be added.
- c. Team captains will take part in meeting with the officials prior to game time.
- d.

4. GENERAL

- a. All participants **must** bring their current UCCS ID to each game. Participants without proper identification will **not** be allowed to play. No other forms of identification (driver's license, class schedule, etc.) will be accepted. **Every player must sign in at least one time in order to be eligible for the playoffs.**
- b. **Intramural regulations and policies concerning eligibility are in effect.**
- c. **All** injuries must be reported to the supervisor on duty. IM supervisors are trained in first aid and CPR.
- d. Regulations published in the Intramural Sports Captain's Manual will be the governing policies for all intramural sports. Team captains are responsible for possessing a thorough understanding of these regulations and their implications. They alone may appeal to the official, and then only on interpretations of the rules. Judgment calls may not be protested.

SPECIFIC GAME RULES AND SITUATIONS

1. NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

- a. The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. Five players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may continue with less than 5 players as long as the team has a chance to win.

2. EQUIPMENT:

a. The Ball

- i. The Referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion. During the game each team must use a legal ball of its choice when in possession.

b. Jersey

- i. Players of opposing teams wear contrasting colored shirts/jerseys. If two teams have the same color shirt/jersey and the officials deem the contrast to not be great enough, the visiting team must change shirt colors.

3. ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT:

- a. A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment which, in the opinion of the Referee, is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment or substances which shall always be declared illegal include:

- i. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots.
- ii. Jewelry
- iii. Pads, casts, or braces worn above the waist
- iv. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats. EXCEPTION: Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat and metal tipped cleats provided the entire cleat is not made of metal material.
- v. Shirts or Jerseys which do not remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirts, or shirt which does not remain tucked in. Tear away jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner which produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear away jersey. Jerseys which have an arm opening more than 4 inches below the armpit.
- vi. Pants or shoes with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstrings.
- vii. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped, and any other hard substance unless covered with at least 1/2" of closed cell, slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.
- viii. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body.
- ix. Equipment which includes computers or any electronic or mechanical devices for communication.
- x. Exposed metal on clothes or person.
- xi. Towels attached at the player's waist
- xii. Flags that can be detached from the flag belt.

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards

4. THE GAME:

a. The Start

- i. All plays must be started by a legal snap placed on the ground on a spot on or between the inbound line (hash marks). The ball may be moved with approval by the Referee due to poor field conditions. The opening drive of each team shall take place on the 14 yard line, unless moved by penalty.

b. Ball Responsibility

- i. Team A players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the Team A scrimmage line. A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.
 - c. **Legal Catch**
 - i. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball which is in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds or being contacted by an opponent in such a way that they are prevented from returning to the grounds inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.
 - ii. If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch.
 - iii. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
 - d. **Loss of a Down**
 - i. "Loss of a down" means "loss of the right to repeat the down."
 - e. **Neutral Zone**
 - i. The neutral zone is from the forward point of the football one yard to the Team B scrimmage line and extended to each sideline. It is established when the ball is marked ready for play.
 - f. **Passing**
 - i. Passing the ball is throwing it. In a pass, the ball travels in flight. A pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward.
 - ii. **Forward and Backward Pass**
 - 1. A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or towards the passer's end line. A backward pass or fumble that hits the ground is ruled dead at that spot.
 - g. **Flag Belt Removal**
 - i. When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the ball is declared dead and the down shall end. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture. A player may leave their feet to remove the flag belt.
 - h. **Contact**
 - i. In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, an opponent may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck, or any part of the head of the runner with their hands. An opponent may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.
- 5. PRIOR TO THE SNAP:**
- a. **Encroachment**
 - i. Following the ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor contact opponents or interfere with them in any other way. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals or shifting throughout the zone. After the snapper has placed their hands on the ball it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball. Two or more consecutive encroachment fouls committed by the defensive team will be 10 yards for subsequent encroachment fouls.
 - b. **False Start**

- i. No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled.

6. POSITION DURING THE SNAP:

a. Minimum Line Players

- i. The offensive team must have at least 1 players on their scrimmage at the snap. The remaining players must be either on their scrimmage line or behind their backfield line. All players must be inbounds. A player in motion is not counted as one of the 4 or 5 on the scrimmage line.

b. Direct Snap

- i. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal. The snapper may not snap the ball to him/herself.

7. START OF THE GAME:

a. Possession Decision

- i. Five minutes before the start of the game the Referee shall call captains to find a fair and simple solution to decide possession. (ex. rock paper scissors, coin flip, etc). All officials shall be present for the decision.
- ii. The winning captain shall have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer their option to the second half. The options for each shall be:
 1. To choose whether their team will start on offense or defense.
 2. To choose the goal their team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.

b. Change of Halves

- i. The teams shall change goals at halftime.

c. Forfeit Time

- i. Five minutes after game time is forfeit time.

d. Start Each Half

- i. Unless moved by penalty or field dimensions have been shortened, the ball shall be snapped on the 14 yard line to start the first and second halves, as well as every new possession after a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt.

e. Weather

- i. If for any reason the game must be called before completion, it will be called official if one half of play has been completed.

8. GAME TIME:

a. Playing Time and Intermissions

- i. Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into 2 halves of 20 minutes each. The intermission between the first and second half shall be 3 minutes. When overtime is used, there will be 3 minute intermission.

b. Extension of Periods

- i. A period must be extended by an untimed down, if during the last time down, one of the following occurs:
 1. There was a foul, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player or fouls which specify loss of down, by either team and the penalty is accepted. For a loss of down fouls, any score by the team which fouled is cancelled.
 2. There was a double foul.

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3. There was an inadvertent whistle.
 4. If a touchdown was scored, the extra point(s) is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period and the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.
- c. First 38 minutes of the Game**
- i. The clock will start on the snap. It will run continuously for the first 38 minutes of the game unless it is stopped for a:
 1. Team Time-out - Starts on the snap
 2. Referee's Time-out - Starts on the ready for play
 3. End of the first half - Starts on the snap
- d. Two Minute Warning**
- i. Approximately 2 minutes before the end of the game the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that half. The clock starts on the snap. The Back Judge will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final 2 minutes of the game.
- e. Last 2 minutes**
- i. During the final 2 minutes of the game the clock will stop for:
 1. Incomplete legal or incomplete illegal forward pass - starts on the snap
 2. Out-of-bounds - starts on the snap
 3. Safety - starts on the snap
 4. Team time out - starts on the snap
 5. First Down - dependent on the previous play
 6. Touchdown - starts on the snap
 7. Penalty and administration - dependent on previous play
 8. Referee's time out - starts at his/her discretion
 9. Touchback - starts on the snap
 10. Team A is awarded a new series - dependent on previous play
 11. Team B is awarded a new series - dependent on previous play
 12. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal punt - starts on the snap
 13. Team attempting to conserve time illegally - starts on the ready
 14. Team attempting to conserve time illegally - starts on the snap
 15. Inadvertent Whistle - starts on the ready.
- f. Overtime**
- i. Overtime shall only be used during playoffs. If the game is tied at the end of regulation in the regular season, the tie shall be final.
 - ii. In playoffs:
 1. The officials shall call captains and explain overtime rules. A coin toss shall be conducted, and the winner gets to choose to play offense or defense first, and the loser gets to pick which endzone all overtimes periods shall be played at.
 2. All overtime possessions begin at the 10 yard line, going in. Teams have 4 downs to score a touchdown.
 3. If the defense gains possession of any live ball, the play is over, and their team will begin their possession on the 10 yard line, going in.
 4. If the offense scores, they shall attempt an extra point from the same values as during regulation time: 1, 2 or 3 extra points.
 5. After the try, or, if the offense does not score a touchdown, the defense will take possession from the yard line, going in towards the SAME goal that the previous offense was scoring towards.

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6. Periods will continue until one team has scored more points than the other.
 - a. Example: On team A's first possession, they score a TD, and 2 extra points. Team B scores a TD and is unsuccessful in their extra point attempt. RULING: Game is over, Team A wins.

9. TIME-OUTS:

a. Charged Time-Outs

- i. Each team is entitled to 3 charged time-outs per game..

b. Injured Player

- i. An injured or apparently injured player who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least 1 down unless the period or overtime intermission occurs.

c. Unconscious or Apparently Unconscious Player

- i. A time-out occurs when an unconscious player is determined by the game officials. The player may not return to the game without written authorization from a physician.

10. DELAYS:

a. Delay of Game

- i. The ball must be put into play promptly and legally and any action or inaction by either team which tends to prevent this is delay of game. This includes:
 1. Failure to snap within 25 seconds after the ball is declared ready for play.
 2. Putting the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
 3. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
 4. Coach-Referee conference after all permissible charged time-outs for the team have been used.

11. BALL IN PLAY – DEAD BALL:

a. Ball Declared Dead

- i. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead:
 1. When it goes out-of-bounds.
 2. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground.
 3. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
 4. When a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players. A ball snapped, which hits the ground before or after getting to the attended receiver, is dead at the spot where it hits the ground.
 5. When a runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, when an inadvertent flag fall occurs.

12. INBOUNDS SPOT:

a. Anywhere Between Lines

- i. Before the ready for play signal, Team A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the inbounds lines (hash marks):
 1. Start of each half.
 2. For an extra point(s).
 3. Following a touchback, safety, try, and awarded catch after a punt.
 4. For the start of each series using an overtime procedure.

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13. SERIES – HOW STARTED, HOW BROKEN, RENEWED:**a. Series of Downs**

- i. A team shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone. Any down may be repeated or lost if provided by the rules.

b. Zone Line-to-Gain

- i. 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.

c. Awarding a New Series

- i. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against opponents involves an automatic first downs; or after enforcement of a penalty against a team, the ball is in advance of the zone line-to-gain; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, punt, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.

14. PUNTING:**a. Punt Rules and Exceptions**

- i. Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee must ask the kicking team captain if they want to punt. The Referee must announce this decision to all players and all officials. The offensive team captain may declare a punt on any down. After such announcement, the ball must be punted. [Exception: If (a) either team time-out is called, (b) the period ends, (c) a foul occurs any time prior to or during this down after the kicking team captain's decision which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the Referee must ask the kicking team captain whether or not they want to punt and communicate this decision to the defensive team captain.] Quick kicks are illegal. **NO FAKES ARE ALLOWED.**

b. Formation and Snap

- i. Neither team may advance beyond their respective scrimmage lines until the ball is punted. NOTE: All scrimmage line rules regarding the snap, encroachment, false start, formation, motion, and shift rules apply to the punt.

c. Punting the Ball

- i. After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion. Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards

d. After Being Punted

- i. Once the ball is punted, the receiving team may advance the punt anywhere in the field of play or end zone. A kicking team player cannot punt the ball to themselves or any other teammate. Teams may punt the ball once only per down.

e. Crosses Kicking Teams Scrimmage Line

- i. When a punt, which has crossed the scrimmage line, touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team.
- ii. If it hits a receiving team player and then is caught in the air, it can be advanced by the receiving team.
- iii. If caught by the kicking team, the ball is dead, belongs to the kicking team, and a new series begins for them.
- iv. If the ball is untouched and hits the ground, it may be picked up and returned by the receiving team.

f. Punt Out-of-Bounds Between the Goal Lines or at Rest

- i. If a punt goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.
- g. **Punt Behind the Goal Line**
 - i. When any punt touches anything while the punted ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line, it can be downed and is a touchback. NOTE: R may run the punt out of the end zone.

15. DEAD BALL AND LEGAL PASSING

a. Dead Ball

- i. 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 offensive team.

b. Legal Forward Pass

- i. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the plane of offensive team's scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down. NOTE: If in doubt, the passer is behind the Team A scrimmage line.

c. Illegal Forward Pass

- i. A forward pass is illegal:
 - 1. If the passer's arm is beyond the plane of their scrimmage line when the ball is released.
 - 2. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
 - 3. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
 - 4. If a passer catches their own untouched forward pass.
 - 5. If there is more than one forward pass per down.

d. Simultaneous Catch by Opposing Players

- i. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams inbounds, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.

16. MERCY RULE:

a. Two Minute Warning

- i. If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half, the game is over.

b. After 2 Minute Warning

- i. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that creates a point differential 19 or more points, the game is over.

17. TOUCHDOWN:

a. Touchdown Value

- i. All touchdowns are worth 6 points.

b. Player Responsibility

- i. The player scoring the touchdown must raise their arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed and the offending team is penalized.

18. EXTRA POINT(S):

a. 1,2,or 3 Points

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- i. An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 20 yard line by running or passing only shall be granted the team scoring a touchdown.
- b. **Next Play**
 - i. After the extra point(s), the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the scoring team at their own 14 yard line, unless moved by penalty.
 - ii. If the defending team on the extra point(s) obtains possession and scores without penalty, the defense shall be awarded 3 points.

19. SAFETY AND TOUCHBACK:

a. Safety = 2 points

- i. It is a safety when:
 - 1. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across their own goal line, and it becomes dead there in their team's possession.
 - 2. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across their end zone and the ball subsequently becomes dead there in their team's possession. This includes when the ball is declared dead on or behind their goal line. However, it does not apply to a legal forward pass which becomes incomplete.

b. Touchback

- i. It is a touchback when:
 - 1. Receiving team downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind their goal line.
 - 2. Kicking team downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line, or if no one attempts to secure the ball.
 - 3. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line, when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above, or behind the player's own goal line, or when the ball becomes dead not in possession on, above, or behind the team's own goal line, and the attacking team is responsible.

20. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:

a. Dead Ball Fouls

- i. When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, they shall not:
 - 1. Intentionally kick the ball.
 - 2. Spike the ball into the ground.
 - 3. Throw the ball high into the air.

b. Prohibited Acts

- i. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players or non-players. Examples, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
 - 2. Disrespectfully addressing the official.
 - 3. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
 - 4. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.
 - 5. Using profanity and taunting.
 - 6. Intentionally contacting a game official.
 - 7. Leaving the team box and entering the field during a fight.

c. Second Unsportsmanlike Foul

- i. The second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or non-player results in disqualification.

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d. **Third Unsportsmanlike Foul**

- i. The third unsportsmanlike foul by the same team results in their forfeiture of the game.

21. PERSONAL FOULS:

a. **Restrictions**

- i. No player or non-player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No player or non-player shall:
 1. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a runner by punching, striking, or stealing it.
 2. Throw the runner to the ground.
 3. Hurdle any other players.
 4. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
 5. Make contact of any nature with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary including using fists, locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand.
 6. Drive or run into an opponent.
 7. Position themselves on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
 8. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football.
 9. Fight an opponent .

b. **Screen Blocking**

- i. 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. Any use of the hands, elbows, legs, arms, legs or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use their hand or arm to break a fall or to retain their balance. A player must be on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking.

c. **Screen Blocking Fundamentals**

- i. A player who screen shall not:
 1. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
 2. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 3. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that their opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take their stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
 4. After assuming their legal screening position move to maintain it, unless he /she move in the same direction and path as their opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, they have committed a personal foul.

d. **Guarding the Flag Belt**

- i. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Examples of flag guarding 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 which places the arm over the flag belt

e. **Stiff Arm**

- i. The runner shall be prohibited from contacting the opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a "stiff arm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag

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f. **Charge**

- i. A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in their path nor attempt to run between two opponents or between an opponent and a sideline, unless the space is such as to provide a reasonable change for him/her to go through without contact. If a runner in their progress has established a straight line path, they may not be crowded out of the path, but if an opponent is able to legally establish a defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction.