

4v4 Flag Football Rules

Revised April 2023



Department of
CAMPUS RECREATION
Division of Student Affairs



Contents

1. <u>Players and Equipment</u>	3
2. <u>Game Factors and Timing</u>	3
3. <u>Scoring</u>	4
4. <u>Series of Downs and Zone Line-to-Gain</u>	4
5. <u>Dead Ball, Fumbles, and Out-of-Bounds</u>	5
6. <u>Snapping and Passing</u>	5
7. <u>Blocking, Rushing, and Running</u>	6
8. <u>Conduct</u>	6
9. <u>Penalty Enforcement</u>	7



1. Players and Equipment

- 1.1. Each Men's, Women's, and Co-Rec team will consist of four players. A minimum of three players must be present at game time to begin.
- 1.2. Teams are advised to bring their own football; however, some footballs will be available for checkout. Men's teams will use a regulation-sized football, while Women's and Co-Rec teams will have the option to use junior-sized footballs. Flag belts will be provided for teams.
- 1.3. Teams are required to wear matching colored shirts that include individual numbers on the back. Teams will wear their respective color selected during registration. During the game participants must keep their shirts tucked in at all times. **Participants must wear shorts or pants without pockets or belt loops. Pockets may not be turned inside out or taped down.** Cleats with metal exposure are prohibited.
- 1.4. No pads or braces may be worn above the waist. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material must be covered on both sides and all edges must be lined with appropriate slow-recovery padding.
- 1.5. Players may not wear baseball-style caps or other rigid headwear. Knit and stocking caps are permitted. Players may wear a headband no wider than two inches and made of non-abrasive cloth, elastic, fiber, soft leather or rubber. Bandanas and other headgear with knots are prohibited. Rubber or cloth elastic bands may be used to control hair.
- 1.6. No jewelry or any other item deemed dangerous by Sport Programs staff may be worn. Any player wearing exposed permanent jewelry (e.g., body piercings) will not be permitted to play.

2. Game Factors and Timing

- 2.1. Each game will consist of two 15-minute halves with a running clock. The clock will stop during the last minute of the second half.
- 2.2. The playing field will be 40 yards in length from goal line to goal line and 30 yards in width.
- 2.3. The winner of a coin toss will have the option to start on offense or defense, defend a specific end zone, or defer these options until the second half. The remaining options will be given to the opposing captain. Unless moved by penalty, play starts at the beginning of each half with the ball placed on the offensive/receiving team's 7-yard line.
- 2.4. Each team will be permitted one timeout per half. Unused timeouts will not carry over between halves. No timeout will exceed one minute in length.
- 2.5. Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by 19 or more points when the official announces the one-minute warning in the fourth quarter or at any time after the one-minute warning, the game will end.
- 2.6. Overtime: If the score remains tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be played. An overtime period consists of a series of three downs by each team from the 10-yard line,



the object of which is to score a touchdown. If the score remains tied after one overtime period, play will proceed to a second period or as many as needed to determine a winner. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line. Possession at the beginning of the overtime period will be determined by a coin toss. If the team scores during the first series, the opponent will have a chance to attempt a touchdown. If the defensive team secures possession during a series, the ball is dead, and the series is over.

- 2.7. A half may be extended by an untimed down when there was during the last timed down a:
- foul by either team, and the penalty was accepted;
 - double foul;
 - inadvertent whistle;
 - touchdown scored; or
 - foul that results in a safety.

3. Scoring

- 3.1. All touchdowns are worth six points. It is a touchdown when a runner advances from the field of play so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the opponent's goal line. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player while the ball is on or behind the opponent's goal line.
- 3.2. A touchdown scoring team will be awarded the chance to attempt a try for one point from the three-yard line, two points from the 10-yard line, or three points from the 20-yard line. Once the offensive captain has declared his or her choice, he or she may change the decision only when a charged timeout for either team is taken. A team's choice cannot be changed if a penalty should occur. If the defending team comes into possession of the ball during a try, the play ends immediately.
- 3.3. A safety results in two points for the defensive team as well as possession from their own 14- yard line. A safety occurs when:
- a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his or her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in their team's possession;
 - a player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across their goal line 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 that becomes incomplete; or
 - a player on offense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in their end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from their end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation that leaves them in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.

4. Series of Downs and Zone Line-to-Gain

- 4.1. A team in possession of the ball will have three consecutive downs to advance the ball to midfield, and another three consecutive downs to score a touchdown, unless affected by a penalty. Each spot will be determined by the most forward point of the ball.



5. Dead Ball, Fumbles, and Out-of-Bounds

- 5.1. The ball will be declared dead when:
 - a. a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players;
 - b. a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground;
 - c. a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player;
 - d. a runner is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, once the flag belt is no longer attached;
 - e. a snap hits the ground; or
 - f. the passer does not release a forward pass within five seconds after the snap.
- 5.2. A fumble or backward pass is dead at the point it hits the ground. The ball goes to the team that last had possession. A fumble by the offense into the opposing team's end zone will result in a touchback.
- 5.3. A ball in player possession is out-of-bounds when either the ball or any part of the runner touches the ground or anything, except a player or game official, which is on or outside a boundary line. If the runner in bounds bumps into or is touched by a player or an official on the sidelines out-of-bounds, the ball is still in play.

6. Snapping and Passing

- 6.1. The ball must be snapped backward from the ground. The ball need not be snapped between the center's legs, but the center cannot have his or her feet over the scrimmage line. In a legal snap, the movement must be a quick and continuous backwards motion of the hand or hands.
- 6.2. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the ball at the time of the snap.
- 6.3. Each offensive player must momentarily be at least five yards inbounds before the snap.
- 6.4. One player may be in motion so long as the player is not moving towards the scrimmage line. The player must be behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 6.5. All offensive players must be motionless for one second preceding the snap, except for one player in motion moving parallel to or away from the scrimmage line.
- 6.6. 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 on or behind the offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.
- 6.7. The passer **must** release the ball within five seconds of the snap; if the ball is not released within five seconds, officials will rule the play dead and the play will end where the passer is standing.
- 6.8. A forward pass is counted as a completion or interception as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground after the catch is in bounds.



- 6.9. A forward pass is illegal if:
- the passer's foot is beyond their scrimmage line when the ball leaves their hand;
 - thrown after team possession has changed during the down;
 - intentionally grounded to save a loss of yardage;
 - a passer catches their untouched forward pass; or
 - it is the second forward pass during a down.
- 6.10. A player may pass the ball backwards or fumble anytime except intentionally thrown out of bounds to conserve time. A backward pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted by any other player inbounds and advanced. A player may not throw an untouched backward pass to themselves.

7. Blocking, Rushing, and Running

- 7.1. The defense may not cross the neutral zone at any point in an attempt to de-flag the passer.
- 7.2. Pulling or removing the flag belt from an offensive player as the ball is snapped or before a pass reception is illegal.
- 7.3. An offensive team runner may not advance the ball through the line of scrimmage. There are no restrictions after a change of possession or once a legal forward pass has been touched beyond the scrimmage line.
- 7.4. A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to cause contact between the runner and an opponent that denies the opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt.
- 7.5. Defensive players may not steal or strip the ball from an offensive player once they have control of the ball.
- 7.6. The flag belt is to be fastened around the waist by use of the end clip. Any tampering to secure the flags to make them more difficult to pull is illegal and will result in ejection from the game.

8. Conduct

- 8.1. No player or non-player will commit acts of unsportsmanlike conduct. Examples include but are not limited to:
- refusal to comply or abide by the request or decision of an official;
 - using words similar to quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offensive team's signals or movements;
 - intentionally kicking at the ball other than during a punt;
 - participating while wearing illegal player equipment;
 - excessive celebrations and taunting behavior;
 - disrespectfully addressing an official;
 - using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures;
 - intentionally contacting a game official (DQ); or



- i. bench players, coaches, or spectators leaving the team area and entering the playing field (DQ).
- 8.2. Individual players accruing two different unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be disqualified from play. Any team with three unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will forfeit the game.

9. Penalty Enforcement

9.1. Three Yard Penalties:

- a. Use of Illegal Equipment
- b. Delay of game
- c. False Start
- d. Encroachment
- e. Illegal Procedure
- f. Illegal Forward Pass (three yards from the point of the pass, loss of down)
- g. Helping the runner: the runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled, or pushed by a teammate

9.2. Five Yard Penalties:

- a. Two or more consecutive encroachments during the same interval between downs
- b. Illegal participation
- c. Offensive pass interference
- d. Defensive pass interference
- e. Unsportsmanlike conduct
- f. Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during a dead ball
- g. Attempting to steal the ball from the carrier
- h. Hurdling
- i. Unnecessary conduct of any sort
- j. Flag guarding
- k. Illegal contact
- l. Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct (Ejection)
- m. Intentional tampering with the flag belt (Ejection)

