



CLEMSON[®] **INTRAMURAL
SPORTS**

Flag Football Rules

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Department of

CAMPUS RECREATION

Division of Student Affairs



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1. Players and Equipment

- 1.1. Each Men's and Women's team will consist of seven players. A minimum of six players must be present at game time to begin. Co-Rec teams will consist of eight players. A minimum of three players of each gender must be present at game time to begin. One gender may never outnumber another by more than one person at any given time.
- 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. 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.
- 1.4. All players must begin each down wearing a flag belt. If the flag belt falls off of a player inadvertently during the down, that player may be downed via one-hand touch.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. No jewelry, wrist-watches, or any other item deemed dangerous by the 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 four 10-minute periods with a running clock. The clock will stop during the last two minutes of the fourth quarter. The clock will start on the snap of the ball during the first and third periods. Between the first and second and between the third and fourth periods, the teams will change goals.
- 2.2. Inside the final two minutes of the fourth quarter, the clock will stop on the following situations:



- a. Dead ball at or inside two minutes remaining (e.g., if a play ends with the clock reading 1:57 remaining, the “two minute warning” will occur at 1:57);
 - b. First downs;
 - c. The runner stepping out-of-bounds;
 - d. Incomplete passes; or
 - e. Penalties.
- 2.3. Inside the final two minutes of the fourth quarter, after a clock stoppage, the clock will restart:
- a. Next snap (first play after two-minute warning, play ending out-of-bounds, incomplete passes, penalties accepted on dead-ball plays, and scoring plays); or
 - b. Referee’s ready-for-play whistle (first down in-bounds, penalties in-bounds).
- 2.4. 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 14- yard line.
- 2.5. Each team will be permitted two timeouts per half. Unused timeouts will not carry over between halves. No timeout will exceed one minute in length.
- 2.6. Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by 19 or more points when the official announces the two-minute warning in the fourth quarter or at any time after the two-minute warning, the game will end.
- 2.7. 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 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.
- 2.8. A quarter may be extended by an untimed down when there was during the last timed down a:
- a. foul by either team, and the penalty was accepted;
 - b. double foul;
 - c. inadvertent whistle;
 - d. touchdown scored; or
 - e. foul that results in a safety.
- 2.9. If a touchdown is scored on the last play of the game, or on the last play prior to the mercy rule taking effect, and the outcome of the game will not be affected by any try values, the try will not be attempted and the game will end.



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. After a touchdown, the 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. 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 his or her team's possession;
 - b. 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
 - c. 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 four consecutive downs to advance the ball to the next zone line-to-gain, unless affected by a penalty. There will be four different zone lines: each 20-yard line, the 40-yard line, and the opponent's goal line.
- 4.2. Each spot will be determined by the most forward point of the ball at the end of the play.

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 is de-flagged before releasing the ball.
- 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. One player may be in motion so long the player is not moving towards the scrimmage line. The player must be behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 6.4. All offensive players must be motionless for one second preceding the snap, except for a player in motion moving parallel to or away from the scrimmage line.
- 6.5. 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.
- 6.6. 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.
- 6.7. A forward pass is illegal if:
- a. the passer's foot is beyond his or her scrimmage line when the ball leaves his or her hand;
 - b. thrown after team possession has changed during the down;
 - c. intentionally grounded to save a loss of yardage;
 - d. a passer catches his or her untouched forward pass; or
 - e. it is the second forward pass during a down.
- 6.8. 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. Once the ball is snapped, the defense may cross the line of scrimmage in attempt to de-flag the passer.
- 7.2. Screen blocking is permitted and will take place without contact. Any use of the hands, arms, legs, elbows or body to initiate contact by an offensive player is illegal. A player must be on their feet before, during and after screen blocking.
- 7.3. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent.
- 7.4. Pulling or removing the flag belt from an offensive player as the ball is snapped or before a pass reception is illegal.
- 7.5. A runner shall not flag guard by using his/her 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.
- 7.6. Defensive players may not steal or strip the ball from an offensive player once he or she has control. The ball in possession is an extension of the hand and contact with the ball will be treated as such.
- 7.7. Players are not permitted to tackle opposing players or force them to the ground in any way. Any attempts made to physically harm another player will result in disqualification.
- 7.8. A player may not push or shove another player out of bounds.
- 7.9. Players are not permitted to hurdle an opponent.

8. Kicking

- 8.1. Prior to putting the ball in play on fourth down, the offensive team must declare whether it chooses to go for a first down or punt. If the offensive team chooses to kick, the ball must be kicked:
 - a. The snap must be received by the kicker then kicked in an immediate and continuous motion. There are no fake punts.
 - b. No player may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked
 - c. If the kicked ball goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest in bounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot
- 8.2. The defensive team may attempt to block a punt as long as team members do not cross the plane of the defensive restraining line. A blocked punt that is caught behind the line of scrimmage on the receiver's side may be advanced by the offense.



- 8.3. When a punt, which has crossed the line of scrimmage, touches a player from either team, and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team. If it hits a player on the receiving team and then is caught in the air, it can be advanced by the receiving team. If it is caught by the kicking team after the ball contacts a receiving team player, the ball is dead and belongs to the kicking team at that spot, and a new series begins for the kicking team.

9. Conduct

- 9.1. 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;
 - intentionally contacting a game official (DQ); or
 - bench players or coaches leaving the team area and entering the playing field (DQ).
- 9.2. Individual players accruing two different unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be disqualified from play. Any team with three unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will forfeit the game.
- 9.3. Intramural Sports activities will not be venues for verbal or physical abuse of staff, players, or spectators. All participants are expected to uphold the Clemson University Student Code of Conduct, respecting the rights of members of the campus community. Any violation of the code of conduct will be referred to the Office of Community and Ethical Standards for review.
- 9.4. Additionally, any behavior that violates Intramural Sports policy or sportsmanship guidelines will not be permitted. Intramural Sports staff will make decisions on whether to warn, penalize, or remove players/teams/spectators based on their behavior. Players and spectators are expected to display positive sportsmanship before, during, and after their games while on-site.

