

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY INTRAMURAL RECREATIONAL SPORTS

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Truman State University Intramural Flag Football will follow National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association Flag and Touch Football Rules. The following is a listing of the more common rules applying to Intramural play along with Intramural Recreational Sports Modifications. The complete NIRSA rulebook is available for viewing in the Intramural Recreational Sports Office.

SECTION 1: GENERAL RULES & REGULATIONS

TEAM REQUIREMENTS

1. A team shall consist of six (6) players. A team can play with a minimum of five (5) players. The game can continue with less than 5 players if the official determines they have a chance to win.
2. All players must have checked in with the scorekeeper and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate.
3. Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time-outs.
4. The designated player area is one yard off the sideline and between the 18 yard lines. Spectators must remain behind the designated markers.
5. All games shall be played on the date and hour scheduled. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

1. All players must wear close-toed shoes.
2. Rubber cleated shoes will be allowed. No screw-in cleats, open toe, open heel or hard soled shoes will be allowed.
3. Each player must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets(s) or exposed drawstrings. A player may not turn his/her shorts inside-out or tape his/her pockets in order to play.
4. All jewelry must be removed before participating.
 - Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards
5. Exposed towels may not be worn; a towel may be kept behind the play.
6. Equipment such as helmets, billed hats, bandanna's, pads or braces worn above the waist, leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, or casts is strictly prohibited. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least 2 inches of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed.
7. Each player must wear a one piece belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached. Flags must have a spring loaded clip. Teams must use flags provided by IM.
8. Teams must wear similarly colored shirts with numbers or mesh vests provided by IM. Shirts must be tucked in the players pants or cut off a minimum of 4 inches above the top of the flag belt.

9. Teams may use a legal ball of their choice when in possession.
10. The offensive team is responsible for the ball on/after all plays. A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.
11. Two ball spotters will be used to mark the scrimmage lines. Oranges will designate the offensive scrimmage line and yellow the defensive scrimmage line. There will always be a 1 yard neutral zone on plays.

GAME RULES

1. Length of the field shall be 70 yards by 30 yards with 8 yard end zones, yard markings every 18 yards.
2. The ball will be placed on the 12 yard line after PAT, safety, or touchback.
3. A team shall have four consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line-to-gain pending penalty enforcement.
4. 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.
5. A new series of downs will be awarded when a team's end result moves the ball into the next zone.

SECTION 2: PRE-SNAP SET-UP, FORMATIONS, AND PENALTIES

START OF GAME & TIMING

1. Toss of the Coin - Before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting during which Team A will call the toss of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of:
 - Choosing offense or defense.
 - Choosing which goal to defend.
 - Choosing to defer selection to the second half.The captain not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option(s).
2. The team on offense at the beginning of each half will begin at the 12 yard line with the 18 yard line to gain.
3. Games will consist of two 18 minute halves with a 3 minute half-time. The clock will stop only for team and officials' timeouts during the first half. Timing will be continuous for the first 16 minutes of the second half. Federation timing will be used for the last two (2) minutes of the second half. At either 2 minutes or the nearest dead ball whistle thereafter, the official shall stop the clock and notify teams of the time remaining. The clock will restart on the snap.
4. If a team is leading by 19 points or more in the final two minutes of the game, the mercy rule will be put into effect and the game will be over.
5. During the final two minutes of the 2nd half the clock will stop for:
 - Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass - starts on the snap.
 - Out of bounds - starts on the snap.
 - Safety - starts on the snap.
 - Team time-out - starts on the snap.
 - Officials time out - starts at officials discretion.
 - First downs - dependent on the previous play.
 - Touchdowns - starts on the snap (after the try).
 - Penalties - dependent on the previous play (exception: delay of game c starts on the snap).

- Touchback - starts on the snap.
- Inadvertent whistle - starts on the ready.
- Change of possession - starts on the snap.

6. Three (3) time-outs per game are allowed per team. They can be used at any time. All timeouts will be 30 seconds.

7. The ball must be put into play no more than 25 seconds after the official has placed the line marker and given the ready for play signal. The play clock will be kept by the official.

PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY

The ball will be put in play using the following procedure:

- Start of the first or second half at the 12 yard line.
- After a touchdown -- 12 yard line.
- After a safety or touchback -- 12 yard line.
- Overtime -- 18 yard line.

POSITION & ACTION DURING THE SNAP

1. The center, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs. The player receiving the snap must be 2 yards off the ball for a scrimmage play and for a punt. The center may not snap a ball to his/herself.

- Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5 yards.

2. All offensive players must be momentarily within 15 yards of the ball. It must be clear who the seven offensive players are on each play. The intent of this rule is to eliminate all sleeper or hideout plays.

- Penalty: Illegal participation, 10 yards.

3. The offensive team must have 3 players on their line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. Remaining may be on line of scrimmage or in the back field.

- Penalty: Illegal formation, 5 yards

MOTION/SHIFT

Only one offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. This motion must not be toward the opponents goal line(forward).

- Penalty: Illegal motion, 5 yards

If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.

- Penalty: Illegal shift, 5 yards

SNAPPING, HANDING, & PASSING THE BALL

1a. ENCROACHMENT: After the ready-for-play whistle has been blown, no defensive player may enter into the neutral zone for any reason (e.g. signal plays, shift into defensive position, etc.), touch the ball, or contact opponents/ interfere with them in any way.

1b. Once the snapper has placed their hands on the ball, it is encroachment for *any player* to enter into the neutral zone.

- Penalty: Dead Ball, Encroachment, 5 yards from succeeding spot. If this occurs 2 or more times by the defense during the interval between downs, the penalty will be 10 yards thereafter.

2. FALSE START: No offensive player shall make a false start. This includes simulating a charge or start of play. The ball does *not* have to be snapped for this to occur.

- Penalty: Dead Ball, False Start, 5 yards from succeeding spot.

SECTION 3: PLAY ACTION AND DEAD BALL/ LOOSE BALL SITUATIONS

DEAD BALL

A live ball becomes dead:

- When it goes out-of-bounds.
- A legal de-flagging occurs by the defense.
- The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet (ball is part of hand).
- A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made.
- When the ball strikes the ground following first touching by the kicking team.
- When a player of the kicking team catches a punt which is beyond the neutral zone; when an untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it.
- A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
- When a backward pass is fumbled or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- When a muff of a punt strikes the ground.
- When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down.
- When a snapped ball hits the ground, it is dead at the spot of contact.

Out-of-bounds:

1. A player, whether in possession of the ball or not, is declared out-of-bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official, who is on or outside the sideline or end line.
2. A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, who is out-of-bounds.

DOWN & POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

1. PENALTY RESULTING IN FIRST DOWN: Any penalty which leaves the ball in possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with next zone line-to-gain.

2. FOUL BEFORE CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION: Following a distance penalty between goal lines which occurs during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to Team A. The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves a loss of a down. Or leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain. If the penalty involves a loss of down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

3. FOUL AFTER CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION: Following a distance penalty for a foul committed after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with zone line-to-gain.

4. PENALTY DECLINED: If a penalty is declined the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

BACKWARD PASS, HANDOFFS & FUMBLES

1. A runner may pass the ball backwards or lose player possession by a fumble anytime.
2. Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground.
3. The ball is put into play by the offensive team at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
4. A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight by any player and advanced.
5. A backwards pass or fumble into the offensive team's own end-zone will result in a safety. If the ball is fumbled into the opponent's end-zone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 12 yard line).
6. Any player may hand the ball forward or backwards at any time.

SCREEN BLOCKING

1. Blocking, as in regulation tackle football, is prohibited. A screen block shall take place without initiating contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during a screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.

- Penalty - Personal foul, 10 yards.

2. Charge, a runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his/her path nor attempt to run between two opponents unless the space is such to provide reasonable chance for him/her to go through without contact.

- Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards

FLAG BELT REMOVAL

1. When the flag belt is taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A ball carrier is considered deflagged when the clip of the flag belt becomes detached, not where the belt falls to the ground. The succeeding spot will be determined by the position of the ball at the time the player was deflagged.

2. If a flag belt inadvertently falls off, a one hand tag constitutes a capture.

3. A player may leave his/her feet to remove a flag.

4. In an attempt to remove the flag belt from the ball carrier, ***defensive players may have contact with an opponent's body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head.*** A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.

5. A defensive player may not remove an offensive player's flag when the offensive player does not have the ball. Similarly, the defensive player may not remove the quarterback's flag after the ball has been thrown.

- Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yards.

6. A defensive player may not remove an offensive receiver's belt while the ball is in the air prior to the receiver touching the ball.

- Penalty: Defensive pass interference, 10 yards and automatic first down.

7. A player may not fasten his flags to his uniform or belt other than prescribed in the rules.

- Penalty: Illegally secured flag belt, 10 yards and an automatic disqualification. The official will check the flags of each person who scores a touchdown or PAT. If a player removes their flag belt prior to one of the officials checking the flag belt, the score will be disallowed.

8. All players on the field must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a five yard penalty, if noticed prior to the ball being snapped. If noticed after the ball has been snapped, then the player without a flag belt must be touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees.

- Penalty: Failure to wear required equipment, 5 yards

9. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
- Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging. *Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards.*
- An offensive player may not stiff arm to ward off an opponent. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.*

LEGAL CATCH

For a legal catch the pass receiver:

- Must come down with at least one foot in bounds while maintaining control of the ball.
- A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
- A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.
- A simultaneous catch by players on opposing teams shall result in an immediate dead ball with the offense maintaining possession at the spot of the simultaneous catch.

PUNTS

1. Punts must be announced before the ball is ready for play. The kicking team must have 4 players on their line of scrimmage. Punts must be snapped from the center. The punter must be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage upon receiving the snap and must punt the ball immediately. Players from the kicking team may not cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is kicked.

- Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.

2. Defensive players may not enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.

- Penalty: Encroachment, 5 yards.

3. Defensive players may jump to block the kick.

4. The ball may be run back if it touches the ground before hitting a player.

5. A fumbled punt is dead where it touches the ground.

6. Quick kicks and fake punts are illegal.

- Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards.

7. No player shall intentionally kick a ball other than as a punt.

SECTION 4: SCORING PLAYS & CONDUCT

SCORING PLAYS & TOUCHBACK

1. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player behind the opponent's goal line and when runner advances so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the goal line. The body does not have to cross the line. Touchdowns are worth 6 points.

2. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms to be de-flagged by the official.

3. There shall be an opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 18 yard line by running or passing. If the defense should intercept a pass, they may return it for a 3 point score.

4. Fouls during a try before Team B possession:

If a double foul occurs during a down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by Team A during a successful Try, the down will be repeated, if accepted. However, if a Team A penalty carries a loss of down, the Try has ended and will not be repeated.

5. Safety: 2 points. Occurs when:

- A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line. The exception to this is the Momentum Rule: A defensive player running for the ball, his/her original momentum carries them into the end zone, and the ball is declared dead. The defensive team gets the ball at the spot where possession was gained.
- An offensive player commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her own end zone.
- A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line and the ball becomes dead there in his/her possession. Does not include when a forward pass becomes incomplete.

6. Touchback: Occurs when:

- K or R downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind R's goal line or no one attempts to secure the ball.
- The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except for an incomplete pass); or when the call becomes dead in possession of a player on, above, or behind, the player's own goal line.

PLAYER CONDUCT

No player shall commit the following acts:

- Intentional kick the ball.
- Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.
- Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player.

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified.

- Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game.
- Fighting an opponent

Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. If flagrant the offender shall be disqualified.

- Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possessions.
- Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
- Throw the runner to the ground.
- Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
- Tackle the runner.

Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified.

Unsportsmanlike Foul Set-up:

- Personal unsportsmanlike fouls
 - After the 2nd unsportsmanlike foul, the player shall be ejected from the game.
 - After the 3rd unsportsmanlike foul, the player shall be disqualified from the league/ tournament.

- Team unsportsmanlike fouls:
 - After the 4th unsportsmanlike foul on a team, the team shall forfeit the game.
 - After the 5th unsportsmanlike foul on a team, the team shall be disqualified from the league/tournament.

There are no unfair tactics

SECTION 5: VARIATIONS TO NORMAL SITUATIONS

CO-REC RULE VARIATIONS

1. Each team will consist of 6 players, 3 men and 3 women. Teams must always have an equal or greater number of women players. The minimum number of players necessary to start a game is 5. A game may continue with less than 5 players if the officials determine that the team has a chance to win.

- Penalty: Illegal participation, 10 yards

2. A regular, intermediate or youth size ball may be used.

3. The offensive team must have at least 3 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.

- Penalty: Illegal participation, 5 yards

4. A male runner cannot advance the ball through the line of scrimmage. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the line of scrimmage; during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession.

- Penalty: Illegal participation, 5 yards from the previous spot

5. During the offensive teams possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the extra point (try). If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the scrimmage line. There are no restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male.

- 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. Note: Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is open or closed.

6. If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the scrimmage line and he runs beyond the scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.

- Penalty: Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down

7. If a team is ahead by 25 points or more at the 2 minute warning of the second half or any time thereafter, the game will be over.

TIE GAME PROCEDURE (Playoffs only)

Tie score at the end of regulation - the field captains shall be brought together and a coin toss will be conducted. During the playoffs, the overtime format will be repeated until a winner is declared. The winner of the toss shall be given the option of either offense or defense. Each team will be given 4 downs from the same 18 yard line to score a touchdown. If the first team scores, then the second team will still have 4 downs to attempt to win or tie the a touchdown, the game will be

over, if not the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line to begin the series of four downs. If the defensive team intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown the game will be over with the defensive team being the winner. Conversion attempts will be held as in regulation play. Each team is entitled to one time out per overtime period.

SECTION 6: SUMMARY OF FOULS & PENALTIES

Loss of 5 Yards:

- Required equipment worn illegally.
- Delay of game.
- Illegal snap.
- False start.
- Encroachment.
- Illegal procedures.
- Illegal forward pass (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
- Intentional grounding (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
- Helping the runner: the runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate.
- Unfair tactics.
- Offensive player not within 15 yards of ball.
- Illegal Shift.

2. Loss of Ten Yards

- Delaying the start of either half.
- Two or more consecutive encroachments during same interval between downs. The initial encroachment is a 5 yard penalty.
- Illegal participation.
- Offensive pass interference. (Loss of down).
- Defensive pass interference. (Automatic 1st down).
- Illegally secured belt on touchdown. (Revoke touchdown and loss of down).
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Spiking the ball or not returning the ball to the official during the dead ball.
- Attempt to steal the ball from the carrier.
- Hurdling.
- Unnecessary contact of any sort.
- Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st down).
- Defensive use of hands.
- Guarding the flag belt (and stiff arming).
- Illegal batting.
- Illegal flag belt removal.
- Personal foul.
- Flagrant Unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification).
- Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification).
- Intentionally tampering with flag belt. (Disqualification).

Automatic First Down Penalties	Loss-of- Down Penalties
1. Defensive Pass Interference	1. Offensive Pass Interference
2. Defensive Illegally Secured Flag Belt	2. Offensive Illegally Secured Flag Belt
3. Roughing the Passer	3. Illegal Forward or Backward Pass
4. Tackling/Tripping	