

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

REVISED 9/11/09

General

- Flag Football will feature men's, women's (7 on 7) and Co-Rec (8 on 8) divisions. Co-Rec teams must be comprised of 4 men and 4 women.
- Flag Football will be offered in a round robin format. All qualified teams will be placed into a single elimination playoff bracket at the conclusion of the regular season.
- All Flag Football games will be played on the IM Recreational Fields behind the Mackal Fieldhouse and beyond the Varsity Baseball Field.
- Intramural Guidelines as set forth in the Intramural Handbook govern all participation.
- All participants must be currently enrolled as a student, faculty, or staff member of the University of Rhode Island and have paid the recreation fee in order to participate in the Intramural Program.
- All participants must present a current, valid URI ID Card upon checking in with the IM Staff. Participants who do not have their URI ID Card with them WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE. No other form of identification will be accepted. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- Individuals may only play for one same gender team and one coed team per sport. The first team for which a participant plays is the team to which she/he is committed for the duration of that program.
- A player may not participate unless she/he is recorded on the score sheet. Players may be added to a roster at any time during the regular season provided all other eligibility criteria are met (see Intramural Handbook).
- **Game time is forfeit time. There is no grace period.** All players must be signed in and ready to play at the exact scheduled game time.

Forfeits

Forfeited contests needlessly waste time and resources and detract from the overall satisfaction levels for all parties involved in the Intramural Sports Program. By registering for any Intramural Sports event, participants are making a commitment to attend all regularly scheduled contests. It is with this commitment in mind that the following policy regarding forfeits has been designed.

At the time of registration, each team is required to pay the registration fee plus a forfeit deposit of \$25. If the team does not forfeit any games during the course of the season, the forfeit deposit will be returned to the **team captain and only the team captain** at the conclusion of the season. Team captains may pick up forfeit deposits for a period of two weeks from the end of the playoffs for each sport. If the team captain does not pick up the forfeit deposit within the two week period, the forfeit deposit will not be returned.

A forfeit is defined as any team or individual that fails to appear for any scheduled contest. Similarly, a forfeit will result when a team does not have at least the minimum number of players needed to play the activity **signed in and ready to play** at the appointed playing area by the time of the game. **Game time is forfeit time. There is no grace period.** It is recommended that teams arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the start of each game in order to allow time to sign in and warm up. All forfeited games will be recorded as a loss and the initial forfeit deposit will not be returned. Subsequently, a new forfeit deposit of \$25 must be paid in the Intramural Sports Office located in Keaney Gym **48 hours prior to the next scheduled game**. This deposit is refundable provided that the team does not forfeit any other games. If a team does not put down another forfeit deposit within this time frame, they will be permanently removed from the schedule for remainder of that particular sport season. This policy will be strictly enforced. If there are any questions in regard to the forfeit policy, the Intramural Sports Office can be reached by calling 401.874.5972.

Defaults

If a team knows in advance that it will not be able to make a scheduled contest, the captain should contact the Intramural Sports Office (874.5972). A default will be granted to each team or individual that has notified the Intramural Department according to the following deadlines:

- Games scheduled Monday-Friday→ notification must be received by 12pm on the day of the scheduled game
- Games scheduled Saturday/Sunday→ notification must be received by 3pm on the Friday before the scheduled game

Captains may contact the Intramural Sports Office by phone (874.5972) or by email at imsports@etal.uri.edu. This notification must come from the team captain only. All defaulted contests will be counted as a loss. However, the team will not be charged with a forfeit, will not owe a forfeit fee and will otherwise remain eligible for league playoffs and will remain in double elimination tournaments provided the defaulted contest does not result in the second loss.

Dropped from Play

Teams are allowed to forfeit or default one game per season and still remain eligible for league playoffs. Teams with any combination of more than one forfeit and/or default will not be eligible for league playoffs. Teams that forfeit or default tournament games in a double elimination tournament will remain eligible unless the forfeited/defaulted contest results in the second loss. Teams that forfeit

a game in a double elimination tournament will be eliminated unless an additional forfeit deposit is paid as outlined above. Forfeited and defaulted contests will not be rescheduled and are counted as losses.

Playing Field

- ✓ Field measurements - 100 x 40 yards; 80 yards between goal lines and 10 yard end zones.
- ✓ The field consists of three first down lines (lines to gain) -- 20 yards apart.

Equipment

- ✓ All participants must wear athletic shoes and athletic clothing. Sandals or flip-flops are not appropriate footwear.
- ✓ **SHOES WITH METAL SPIKES ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED.** Screw-in cleats are allowed provided that no sharp edges are exposed on the screw-ins. If there are any questions concerning interpretations, contact the student supervisor.
- ✓ Knit caps may be worn. Headgear with bills or knots, jewelry (tape is not permitted to cover any exposed jewelry) including Lance Armstrong or similar jewelry, shoulder pads, body pads (above the waist) or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is not allowed. Players may use an ace wrap of no more than two inches thick in any given area. It can be anchored at each end by tape not to exceed two turns.

Players, Rosters, and Subs

- ✓ Same gender teams: **Seven (7) players, at least 4 on line of scrimmage** for offense. Any player is eligible to catch a pass. Must have a minimum of at least 5 players to start a game.
- ✓ Co-Rec: 8 players maximum and 6 players minimum to start a game (see Co-Rec rules)
- ✓ The defense has no rules on the number of players that are required on the line of scrimmage.
- ✓ Individuals may be added to the roster in the IM Sports Office located in Keaney or at the game site at any time.
- ✓ Unlimited substitutions are allowed when ball is dead. Substitution must be completed before the ball is in play. Teams may not break the huddle with more than 7 players (8 for Co-ed games).
- ✓ Team captains are the only individuals permitted to confer with officials regarding rulings or questions. If another player attempts to dispute, then a warning may be issued. Subsequently, an ejection could be issued.
- ✓ Each team, at the conclusion of each game, will receive a sportsmanship rating by that game's officials. Any team receiving a '1' or '2' rating will be suspended from further play until that team's captain has met with the Coordinator of Intramural Sports. If you have any questions, refer to the Intramural Handbook for further clarification.
- ✓ All players, non-players, and spectators affiliated with a team are subject to the Rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.
- ✓ The Referee has the authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the Rules. The Referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.
- ✓ The game officials shall assume authority for all contests, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present. The official's jurisdiction extends through the Referee's declaration of the end of the contest and includes all teams post game conduct as well. Verbal abuse at the end of the games will simply not be tolerated by the URI Intramural Sports Program.

Pre-Game Conference: Three minutes before the start of each game the Referee shall meet with the team captains to conduct the coin toss. The designated home team shall call the toss. The captain winning the toss shall have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:

- ✓ To choose whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.
- ✓ To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option. Note: If the winning captain elects to defend a goal with his/her choice in the first half, the opposing team may also elect to receive the ball at the start of the second half.

Game Time: 4 ten-minute quarters with a running clock.

During the final two (2) minutes of each half the clock will stop for:

- Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass
- Out of bounds
- Score (touchdown or safety)
- Time-out (official or team)
- First down (clock will restart when the ball is marked ready for play by the officials)
- Penalty & administration
- Change of possession
- Inadvertent whistle
- Clock will not run during extra point attempts in the final 2 minutes of each half.

The clock will restart on the snap for any other stoppage of play during the final 2 minutes of each half.

Playing Rules

1. The ball will be placed at the 14 yard line for the first play of a new possession at the start of each half and after any scoring plays.
2. If a ball is muffed (**doesn't touch the ground**) - during a punt or similar loose ball situation, the ball becomes a live ball and may be gained by either team.
3. Spinning and jumping are allowed during live ball situations. Players are not allowed to hurdle defensive players to prevent the defender from pulling their flags.
4. Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground. The play will be blown dead and the next play will begin at the point where the ball touched the ground. **Exception:** Ball flies forward. The ball will then be placed at the point it left the ball carrier's hands.
5. Inadvertent whistle: If an official inadvertently blows his/her whistle during a live ball play, the play shall be declared dead at that point and the following action will be taken:
 - Offensive player did not possess the ball beyond the line of scrimmage – replay the down from the previous line of scrimmage.
 - Offensive player with possession beyond the line of scrimmage – offense chooses whether to replay the down from the previous line of scrimmage or they can put the ball in play where it was declared dead.
 - **NOTE:** any accepted penalty nullifies inadvertent whistle option.
6. Offense has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after the official sets it down and declares it ready for play. *Penalty:* Delay of Game – 5 yards.
7. A team will receive four (4) consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line to gain.
8. Only one **forward** pass is allowed per play (down). All players are eligible receivers. A forward pass completed behind the line of scrimmage is still considered the one forward pass for that play.
9. Direct snaps to the quarterback are not permitted. Snaps to players in motion are allowed. Snaps may be through the legs or a side-pitch. However, the ball must remain on the ground and motionless until the actual snap. Pitching or snapping to a player on the line of scrimmage is not permitted. **The snap must be received at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage (i.e. the SHOTGUN formation).**
10. Scoring:
 - Touchdown 6 points
 - Safety 2 points
 - PAT (3 yards) 1 point
 - PAT (10 yards) 2 points
 - **PAT (20 yards) 3 points**
 - Intercept PAT -- If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble during the PAT and returns it for a score it will be worth 3 points, regardless of the original attempt amount. This rule will also be in effect during overtime periods.
11. Rule Protest: Must be done at time of incident. **Judgment calls may not be protested**, only rules and interpretations.
12. Ball Responsibility: **Offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down.** The offense is responsible for the football, not the officials. *Penalty:* 5 yards, delay of game. Teams may use the balls provided by the intramural sports program or may use another if agreed upon by both teams.
13. Penalty During Try for Point:
 - Penalty on defense:
 - If the attempt was unsuccessful, add the penalty enforcement and replay the down.
 - If the attempt was successful, the play stands.
 - Penalty on offense:
 - If the attempt was unsuccessful, then the play is over and the attempt will not be repeated.
 - If the attempt was successful, then take the converted score away add the penalty enforcement and replay the down.
14. **MERCY RULE** – If a team is ahead by **28 points** or more points when there are **5 minutes** left, the game is over. If a team is ahead by **19 points** or more points when the **2 minute warning** is announced, the game is over. If a team scores during the last 5 minutes of the second half and that creates a point of differential of 28 points or more, the game is over. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more points, the game is over.
15. Excessive celebration will be cause for a 10 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. This is an official's judgment call and may not be protested.
16. Any player may move in motion, provided there are 4 offensive players (5 offensive players for Co-Rec) on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. **Only one person may move in motion at once.**

Overtime- Only in Playoffs (regular season games end in ties)

- ✓ All games ending in a tie will be settled with overtime.
- ✓ **One** coin toss will occur for all overtime periods.
- ✓ The visiting team captain will call the toss and the winner has the option of offense or defense.

- ✓ All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.
- ✓ Unless moved by penalty, each team will start 1st and goal from the **10 yard line**.
- ✓ Consists of each team receiving a set of 4 downs. First downs cannot be earned in OT. **Exception: Penalties.**
- ✓ If the score is still tied after one period, the teams will go to a second overtime period, or as many as needed to determine a winner.
 - No new coin toss will occur. The captains will alternate choices.
 - If the score remains tied for a potential third overtime, the officials will move the ball back an additional 10 yards to the **20 yard line** to begin the third and subsequent overtime periods. Both teams then must also attempt a 2 point or 3 point conversion after a touchdown.
- ✓ If the first team awarded the ball scores, the opponent will have a chance to win or tie the game.
- ✓ If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line to begin their series of 4 downs (exception: Games in the 3rd OT period will start from the 20 yard line).
- ✓ Each team is entitled to one time-out for all of the overtimes combined.

Time outs: 2 per team each half - 1 per team for all of the overtime period, all are one minute in length.

NO CARRY OVER!

Officials Time-outs:

- Injury - charged to official - player must leave field and be replaced.
- Injury with bleeding, must leave field and may not return until inspected by a student supervisor, bleeding is stopped and wound is covered. Blood soaked clothing must be removed.

Punts

- ✓ The kicking team must announce their intention to kick and then must kick (unless time-out or penalty, then re-declare). **FAKE PUNTS ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Quick kicks are not permitted at any time.
- ✓ The punter must receive the ball like any other snap (at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage).
- ✓ The punter must immediately kick the ball after receiving the snap. If punter fails to do this, time stops and the ball is dead at the line of scrimmage. A 5 yard penalty for illegal procedure will be enforced with a replay of the down. Game time will resume when ball is punted.
- ✓ The kicking team must have a minimum of four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. The receiving team has no rules on the number of players on the line of scrimmage.
- ✓ Neither team may advance past the line of scrimmage until the ball has been punted. The receiving team may shuffle their players as they wish at any time.
- ✓ The kicking team may down the ball after it is kicked to maximize field position, but must first allow the receiving team the opportunity to make the catch.
- ✓ Fumbled punts are dead when the ball hits the ground (if in end zone, touchback comes out to the 14 yard line).
- ✓ **A punt can be advanced after it hits the ground.**
- ✓ If the punt extends beyond the back of the end zone, the ball is dead and will be placed on the **14 yard line**. Punts received in the end zone may be advanced.
- ✓ Fair Catch: During any punt, the kicking team members must allow receivers an attempt to make a play on the ball. The kicking team shall not obstruct their path to the ball. This applies even if a fair catch is not signaled and opponents have not yet touched the ball.
 - *Penalty:* 10 yards from previous spot and replay of the down OR choose an awarded fair catch after enforcement of a 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.
- ✓ Momentum Rule - A player who is attempting to catch a punted ball, whose momentum carries them into the end zone, may advance the ball forward or down the ball while in the end zone for a touchback.

Flag Rules

1. Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys and flags.
2. No article of clothing may cover any portion of the player's flag. One warning to each team.
3. Each player on the field must wear the flag belt provided by the intramural program. Belt must be properly attached at waistline - one flag center back and one flag over each hip.
4. **Shirts must be tucked in at all times.**
5. Legal tag: If a player has inadvertently lost their flag belt, then a one (1) hand tag between the shoulder and knees constitutes a "tackle".
6. Removing flag belt: When the belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. The belt should be held over the head to assist officials with the call. If belt is missing from the runner and not inadvertently lost, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage and a penalty for illegal equipment will be assessed.

7. Contact: In an attempt to remove the belt from a ball carrier, defensive players may make inadvertent contact with the body of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.
8. All players must have their flags in legal position (flags at either side and one flag down the back side) at the start of each play. Penalty: Illegal equipment.
9. Subs in uniform: Each sub shall be in uniform and ready to play upon entering the game. Penalty: Delay of game.
10. Intentionally pulling or removing a belt from any player that does not have possession of the ball is illegal.
11. Flag guarding: Ball carriers shall not guard their flags in a manner that would prevent an opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. A ball carrier may not use straight arm tactics, swing arm to deflect, or use other means to keep an opponent from pulling a flag. This style of running constitutes flag guarding.
12. A ball carrier may not lower his/her head or run in a bent over fashion, which hinders an opponent from pulling a flag. This style of running constitutes flag guarding with intent to injure.
13. Obstruction of ball carrier: The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct forward progress of a ball carrier when in the act of removing the belt or making a legal tag. Penalty: 10 yards.

Blocking

The offensive screen block shall take place without 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 an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

A player who screens shall not:

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

Penalty: Person Foul, 10 yards.

Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. Penalty: Person Foul, 10 yards.

Opponents must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to displace the opponent. The application of this Rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A defender may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance. Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Coed Rules

1. Team of 8 players: A team may begin a game with as few as 6 players, as long as there are never more than 4 males on the field at any time. A team must have 3 females present to start a game. Teams must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage on offense.
2. Passing:
 - The QB can be a male or a female.
 - There are no restrictions regarding female passers or receivers.
 - A male QB may not complete 2 consecutive passes to a male receiver; this includes the try for point following a touchdown.
3. A male ball carrier cannot advance the ball through the scrimmage line. **EXCEPTION:** If the ball crosses the line of scrimmage on a pass or female advancement this restriction is eliminated. i.e.: the ball is pitched back behind the LOS, a male may advance the ball past the LOS.; (hook & ladder play is legal) Females have no such restrictions on advancing the ball through the LOS. Female must gain positive yards on run for it to count.
4. Male to male completions: During the offensive team's possession, there may not be two (2) consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule also applies to the Try after a touchdown. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass must involve either a female passer, a legitimate attempt to a female receiver, or a positive rushing gain by a female. There are no other 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.

Any penalty, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion in “open” or “closed.”

5. The term “closed” means a male player may **NOT** throw a legal forward pass completion to any other male player. The term “open” means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
6. If a crew of officials erroneously indicates the “open/closed” status of a down, then the down must be repeated.
7. **There are no restrictions on returning punts for males or females.**
8. A regular size football may be used. Both teams must agree on the size of the football which will be used during the game.

Penalties

1. Enforcement philosophies
 - Penalties behind the line of scrimmage:
 - By the offense – enforce from the spot of the foul
 - By the defense – enforce from the line of scrimmage
 - Penalties beyond the line of scrimmage
 - After a player already has possession of the ball
 - By the offense – enforce from spot of the foul.
 - By the defense – enforce from the end of the run.
 - Before a player has possession of the ball
 - By the offense – enforce from the line of scrimmage
 - By the defense – enforce from the line of scrimmage.

5 YARD PENALTIES

- Delay of game
- Substitution infraction
- Encroachment (*dead ball*)
- Advancement by male player through LOS (coed only)
- False start (*dead ball*)
- Illegal snap (*dead ball*)
- Illegal formation - 4 players not on line – offense (5 for coed)
- Player not within 15 yards of the ball
- Illegal shift/motion
- Player receiving snap within 2 yards [illegal procedure]
- Illegal forward hand off
- Intentional fumble [illegal pass]
- Illegal forward pass (**LOSS OF DOWN**)
- Intentional grounding to avoid a sack (**LOSS OF DOWN**)
- Illegal pass - consecutive completed pass male to male (**LOSS OF DOWN**)
- Aiding runner

10 YARD PENALTIES

- Illegal equipment
- Running play after declaring punt
- Fair catch interference
- Two or more consecutive encroachments (2nd is 10 yards)
- Offensive pass interference - (**LOSS OF DOWN**)(**from Line of scrimmage**)
- Defensive pass interference – (automatic 1st down)(Spot foul)
- Illegally secured belt on touchdown (**LOSS OF DOWN**, no score)
- Unsportsmanlike conduct (i.e. – taunting or excessive celebration)
- Spiking, kicking, throwing ball during a dead ball
- Attempt to steal or hit the football from the hands of an opponent
- Contact with opponent on ground
- Throwing runner to the ground
- Hurdling player
- Tripping, tackling, clipping, unnecessary contact
- Roughing the passer – (automatic 1st down)
- Illegal blocking
- Obstruction or holding of the runner
- Flag guarding, illegal flag belt removal
- Illegal participation

Disqualification associated with certain 10 yard penalties (loss of down or automatic 1st down)

- Intentionally kicking or attempting to strike an opposing player or official.
- Unsportsmanlike player / coach / bench conduct - verbal or physical abuse of an official, player, coach, or bench.
- Tackling or throwing a player to the ground.
- Intentional tampering with the flag belt (offense or defense)

Miscellaneous

Any Rules not covered are subjected to the 2009-2010 NIRSA Flag Football Rules Book and Officials Manual. Copies of this rules book are available for perusal in the IM Sports Office located in Keaney Gym.