

**SCSU Intramural/Recreational Sports Office (IRS)**  
**Flag Football Rules**

Play is governed by current NIRSA Flag Football Rules with the following modifications.

1. **Coin Toss:** Before the start of the game the referee will toss a coin in the presence of opposing captains, after first designating which captain shall call the fall of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:  
Offense.  
Defense.  
To designate which goal his/her team will defend.  
To defer the choice of the above options to begin the second half.
2. **Number of Players:** The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each (Coed-8). A minimum of 5 players (Coed-6) are required to prevent a forfeit.
3. **Equipment:** Each player on the field must wear a one piece flag belt (provided by ISO) at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flag belt must be free of any knots. If cleats are worn, they must have a one-piece molded bottom. Illegal equipment includes: the use of headgear, forearm, hand, or elbow pads, shoes with metal cleats, shoulder pads, jewelry, or any unyielding or dangerous equipment. Knee braces with exposed hard surfaces are also illegal. Any slippery or sticky substance of a foreign nature on equipment or exposed parts of the body is illegal. Taping of jewelry is also illegal.  
**PLAYERS MAY NOT WEAR SHIRTS, SHORTS OR PANTS THAT HAVE POCKETS. ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR JERSEYS or SHIRTS LONG ENOUGH SO THAT THEY REMAIN TUCKED IN DURING EACH DOWN, OR CUT AT LEAST 4" ABOVE THE FLAG BELT.**
4. **Timing Game:** The game consists of two 20-minute halves. The clock will run continuously during the first half and the first 19 minutes of the second half, except when a timeout is called or at the referee's discretion. During the last minute of the game the clock will stop for an incomplete pass, when a player goes out of bounds, on penalties, on a change of possession, touchdowns, and on first downs.  
TIME OUTS--Each team is entitled to **two** timeout per half. Timeouts **are not** carried over from the first to the second half. The clock will stop during time outs. Timeouts are 30 seconds in length.
5. **Yards and Downs:** When a first down is gained in a zone, the team in possession of the ball is allowed four (4) downs to move the ball from that point into the next zone.
6. **Forward Pass:** Any member of the passing team is an eligible receiver. All forward passes must originate behind the line of scrimmage. The position of the passer's feet will determine legality. Teams are allowed only one forward pass per down.

7. **Dead Ball:** A live ball becomes dead when an official sounds the whistle or declares it dead. The ball will become dead when:
- \* the ball goes out of bounds or when it touches the goal line of the ball carrier's opponents.
  - \* any part of the ball carrier's person other than the hand or foot touches the ground. NOTE: the ball carrier may contact the ball to the ground and the ball will remain live as long as no other body parts other than the foot or hand are in contact with the ground. The ball is considered to be part of the hand a touchdown, touchback, safety, or try for point is made.
  - \* a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
  - \* a backward pass or fumble by a player touches the ground. This includes snaps. NOTE: Backward passes and fumbles may be caught in flight inbounds by any player and advanced.
  - \* a ball carrier has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player.
  - \* a ball carrier is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees (including on the hand or arm) once the flag belt is no longer attached.
  - \* a muff of a punt strikes the ground.
  - \* a punt is touched by the kicking team. The receiving team retains possession. NOTE: A punt that falls to the ground untouched will remain alive.
  - \* the official inadvertently blows his/her whistle.
8. **Blocking:** Offensive screen blocking is legal as long as there is no contact. The screen blocker shall position her/his hands and arms behind their back, to their sides, or wrapped across their chest. Screen blocking down field is legal, however, the blocker must be on her/his feet before, during and after screen blocking. This is judged like a block/charge in basketball. ***PENALTY: Personal Foul, 10 yards.***
9. **Defensive restrictions:** Defensive players may not use their hands on blockers. They must attempt to avoid them. Incidental contact with the hands will be allowed, but should the defender gain an advantage by use of the hands, a penalty will be assessed. ***PENALTY: Personal Foul, 10 yards.***
- Tackling:** It is a foul for a defensive player to tackle, trip, push, shove, or elbow the ball carrier or blocker. The runner's forward progress may not be impeded in any way. ***PENALTY: Personal foul, 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified.***
11. **Ball carrier restrictions:** It is a penalty for the ball carrier to stiff arm, charge into, knee, or try to knock over a defensive player at any time. This is judged like a block/charge foul in basketball. Spinning and diving is legal. However, the ball carrier must be in control of his/her body at all times. ***PENALTY: Personal Foul, 10 yards, and the player will be ejected if flagrant.***

- 12. Punt:** The referee shall notify the defensive team prior to a punt. Players from either team may not pass the scrimmage line until after the ball has been kicked. **PENALTY:** Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.  
Quick kicks are illegal. **PENALTY: *Illegal kick, 10 yards.***  
After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. **PENALTY: *Delay of Game, 5 yards.***  
If a snapped ball hits the ground after a touch by the kicker or any other offensive player the ball is dead.  
No fake punts. The ball may not be advanced by the kicking team.
- 13. Fouls to prevent play:** If the defensive team commits a foul so near its goal line that they can be penalized only by halving the distance to the goal line, the object being (in the opinion of the officials) to consume time, it shall be regarded as a refusal to allow play to proceed. In that event, the referee shall warn the offending team once, and then if the offense is repeated, it is in the officials power to award a touchdown.  
**Ball in play:** A team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after the referee has signaled ready for play. **PENALTY: *Delay of game 5 yards. Dead ball foul.***
- 14. Scoring -** Touchdown: 6 pts; Try-for-Point: 1 pt from the 3 yd line, 2 pts from the 10, 3 pts from the 20; Safety: 2 pts. On a Try-for-Point a defensive player may return an interception for a touchdown, scoring 2 points.
- 16. Mercy Rule:** If a team is trailing by 25 points or more at the two-minute warning, the game is over. The same rule applies if a team increases their lead to 25 or more points during the last two minutes. If a team is trailing by 40 or more points at any time in the second half, the game will be terminated immediately.
- 17. Overtime:** THERE WILL BE NO OVERTIME DURING THE REGULAR SEASON. During the playoffs there will be overtime. All overtime periods are played towards the same goal line. A coin toss will determine which team has the options, as in the beginning of the game. Each team will start 1st and goal from the 10 yd line. An overtime period consists of one series of downs for each team. This process will be repeated until a winner is determined. The object will be to score a touchdown. Try-for-points will be attempted.  
**Penalties:** Penalties shall be assessed according to the regular rules of the game.  
**Interceptions:** Intercepted passes may be returned in an overtime period. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the 10 yd line to begin their series of 4 downs. Each team is entitled to one timeout per overtime period.  
**Ready for Play:** After the ball is ready for play, each Team A player must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap. **PENALTY: *Illegal Procedure 5 yards (S19).***
- 19. Out of Bounds:** Only one foot must touch inbounds in order for a pass reception to be considered legal.

20. **In the case of an inadvertent whistle**, the offensive team shall have the option of replaying the down from the previous spot, or accepting the ball at the spot where it was blown dead. On all loose balls such as a pass in flight, the down must be replayed from the previous spot. After a change of possession, the team in possession at the time the ball is blown dead shall have the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.
21. **Momentum and touchback:** In the case of a player intercepting the ball or catching a kickoff or punt and momentum carries him/her into his/her own end zone, the team shall be awarded the ball at the spot where the ball was caught or the player may choose to return a kick or an intercepted pass from his/her own end zone.
22. **CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP:** Unsportsmanlike conduct examples include: Taunting; Abusive or insulting language; Any acts of unfair play; Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a legal kick; Spiking the ball into the ground; Throwing the ball high into the air; Intentionally kicking at any opposing player (DQ); Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player (DQ); Intentionally contacting a game official during the game by persons subject to the rules (DQ). The second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or nonpayer results in disqualification.
23. **Snap:** The snapper does not have to pass the ball back between his/her legs. The player receiving the snap, however, must be at least two yards behind the scrimmage line.
24. As of the 2002-2003 season, kickoffs have been eliminated. Each half starts with the ball being placed at the 15-yard line.  
Any player may hand the ball backward or forward at any time.

Always Remember  
Good Sportsmanship  
At all times!