



**Austin Peay State University
Intramural Sports**

Flag Football Rules

Eligibility Guidelines

1. You must present a valid APSU ID card to the Intramural Supervisor on duty in order to play...No exceptions!
2. An individual may only participate on one team in each league (Men's or Women's). Participation on two teams in the same sport is only permitted if one of the teams is Co-Rec. Players who play on more than one team in each league are subject to losing their eligibility for that sport. The opposing team does not have to protest if caught by a supervisor or official.
3. Players using false identification will be suspended for a period of time determined by the Coordinator and Graduate Assistant of Intramural Sports.

Note: Captains are responsible for ensuring that their team roster is in compliance with the eligibility guidelines of the APSU Intramural Sports Participation Manual.

The Game

1. **The Field:** The field shall be 100 yards long and 40 yards wide: 80 yards of playing field with two 10-yard end zones.
2. **Team:** Teams will consist of a maximum of 16 players. 7 players on the field at a time in single gender (Men's or Women's) play, 8 in Co-Rec play. A team may begin with as few as 5 players in single gender play and 6 in Co-Rec (see pg.
3. **The Game:** The game shall be played with two 20 –minute halves and a three minute half time. The clock will run continuously until the final 2 minutes of the game (clock will not run during injuries).
4. **Timeouts:** Teams will have 3 timeouts per game. Teams will receive one timeout for all overtime periods. Any unused timeouts in regulation will not carry over to overtime.

5. **Substitutions:** Substitutions may occur during any “dead ball” situation. Multiple players can be substituted as long as each team has no more than 7 players on the field at 1 time.
6. **Equipment:** Hats, bandanas, metal cleats or spikes, shorts with pockets, or jewelry **MAY NOT** be worn while playing. Any player found wearing any of the above during the game will be removed from the game and not allowed to re-enter until the equipment has been replaced.

Note: For more detailed equipment guidelines, please refer to the APSU Intramural Sports Participation Manual.

7. **Mercy Rules:** Games will be called when a team is ahead by 42 points at any point in the 2nd half (including halftime), 28 points with 10 minutes or less remaining in the 2nd half, and 19 points with 2 minutes or less in the 2nd half.

Note: Teams may not stall games to keep from getting the mercy rule. Any games that are not played competitively by both teams will be ended immediately. Games being prolonged to avoid mercy rule will be called immediately. For more details about the Competition Policy, please refer to the APSU Intramural Sports Participation Manual.

Coin Toss

A coin toss called by the visiting team will determine which team will gain possession of the ball in the first half. The captain who wins the coin toss will choose one of the following options:

- First possession of the ball.
- Defend their goal of choice.
- Defer their option to the 2nd half.

Kickoffs

There will be no kickoffs. The team with first possession of the ball in each half will start at their own 14 yard line. This procedure will also be used after a possession resulting in a touchdown.

Timing

Timing will be continuous for the entire first half and for the first 18 minutes of the second half. Only a team time-out and official's time-out can stop the clock.

The clock will stop during the final two minutes of the second half for:

- Incomplete pass (clock restarts on the snap)
- Out of bounds (clock restarts on the snap)
- Penalty (clock restarts depending on the result of the previous play)
- Touchdown (clock restarts on opponent's next snap from scrimmage)
- Timeout (clock restarts on the snap)
- Fair catch (clock restarts on the snap)
- Touchback (clock restarts on the snap)
- Inadvertent whistle (clock restarts on the ready for play whistle)
- First down (clock restarts based on the result of the previous play)

Approximately 2 minutes before the end of each half, the field judge shall inform both team captains of the playing time remaining in each half. The clock will stop in the 2nd half for the 2-minute warning and will restart on the next snap.

Play Clock

The ball must be put into play no more than 25 seconds after the official has marked it ready for play.

Situations Requiring a Timeout

- If the team decides to change the point total of their PAT (point after touchdown), a time-out must be used and the new point total stated to the officials.
- If the team decides to change a 4th down decision (play or punt) a time-out must be used and the change of decision stated to the officials.

Overtime

Should a game be tied at the end of regulation the following procedure will be used to determine a winner:

- A coin toss will be conducted to start the overtime period, which will be called by the visiting team. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. Both teams will play offense on the same side of the field.
- Each team will have a series of four downs to score from their opponent's 20-yard line. Teams which begin their overtime period outside of the 15-yard line due to penalty must score in four downs and will not receive any first downs for crossing zone-line-to-gains in the process. Teams may receive another set of downs by penalty only (automatic first down).

- When a team scores, they will attempt a PAT (one, two, or three points in value).
- The team on who starts on defense will have its chance to play offense.
- If the game goes to a second overtime, the team which lost the toss at the beginning of the first overtime has the choice to start on offense or defense for the second overtime. The choice will then alternate for each succeeding overtime period.
- After the second overtime period, teams must go for a minimum of 2 points on their extra point try.
- Overtime will continue until a winner is declared.

2011 NIRSA Rule Change: If at any time the defense intercepts a pass during overtime, the ball will be declared dead immediately and the offensive series will end.

Scoring

Touchdowns shall count as six (6) points in Men's and Women's games. In co-rec games, touchdowns will be worth nine (9) points if a female is involved in the scoring (pass, run or catch). The player who scores the touchdown must let the nearest official check their flags to make sure they are legally secured.

After each touchdown there will be a PAT attempt. Values for PATs vary based on the distance needed to convert.

- From the 3 yard line = 1 point
- From the 10 yard line = 2 points
- From the 20 yard line = 3 points

2011 NIRSA Rule Change: If the defense intercepts a pass during a PAT, the ball will be declared dead immediately and PAT will be unsuccessful.

A safety will count as two (2) points and will result in the defense gaining possession of the ball starting on their own 14 yard line.

Equipment and Attire

- **Jewelry:** Jewelry is not allowed to be worn by any participant during any intramural event. Jewelry consists of any rings, watches, necklaces, earrings, bracelets and any other such similar jewelry that can be seen. Exceptions will be made for medical IDs and religious accessories, but these items must be secured.

- **Clothing:** Shorts, sweatpants, or shirts may not have pockets are not allowed to be worn while participating in Intramural Sports. Cut-off shirts and jerseys must not hang more than four (4) inches from the underarm area (no “muscle shirts”).
- **Uniforms:** All participants must have a number on their jersey, with all players on a team having different numbers. Only one player may play without a number and be “number 0” (there will be no exceptions to this rule). Teams may choose to wear their own jerseys or Intramural Sports issued jerseys. To check out jerseys each player must provide the Intramural Supervisor on duty their APSU Gov’s ID.. Teams are not required to wear the jerseys if they have their own team jerseys. Jerseys must be of the same color and have a legible number on them. Numbers may not be taped on the back of the jersey.

Note: Intramural Sports reserves the right to disallow team names and logos that are considered obscene or offensive.

- **Headwear:** Headwear is not allowed to be worn by any participant during an intramural event, except for one-piece head/sweat bands that do not have to be tied or do not have any form of knot(s). . Skull/stocking caps and bandanas may be worn as long as they are not tied in a knot.
- **Footwear:** Non-marking athletic shoes are required. Pliable rubber cleats may be worn on the Intramural Field. No metal spikes, metal tips or protrusions from screw-ons will be permitted. The Intramural Sports staff will declare the player ineligible to participate until s/he changes shoes so that the equipment requirements are met.
- **Medical Accessories:** Any metal on a knee brace must be covered with a soft padding to prevent injury to fellow participants. Casts and/or other braces must be covered with a soft padding as well. All medical accessories must be approved by the Intramural Sports staff before the player will be cleared to play.

Note: In all of the above equipment policies the Intramural Sports staff has the authority to disallow any individual from participating if they feel their equipment would endanger themselves or his/her opponents.

Flag Belts:

At the beginning of each play, each player must have their flag belt legally secured (no knots) when the ball is snapped. If the official notices this prior to the snap it will be a live ball foul (5 yards from the previous spot). Tampering with the flag belt (such as tying in knots) will be considered **unsportsmanlike conduct** (10 yard penalty, loss of down, and player disqualification).

Screen Blocking

Screen blocking is the only type of blocking that will be permitted. A legal screen block must meet the following guidelines:

- Player must have hands at side, across chest or behind back.
- May not use hands, arms, legs or body to initiate contact.
- Must be on feet before, during, and after the block.
- Must allow the defender room to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.

Retrieving the Ball

The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball at the conclusion of each play.

Line of Scrimmage

Four (4) offensive players (five in Co-Rec) must be on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Offensive players must be lined up behind/on the orange ball spotter, while defensive players must be lined up behind/on the yellow ball spotter. Failure to do so will result in an **illegal formation** penalty (**live ball foul, 5 yard penalty from the previous spot**).

First Downs

A team gains a first down when it attains the zone-line-to- gain as designated by the Referee at the start of each play. These zone lines are indicated by markers on the playing field at the two goal lines, two twenty yard lines, and midfield at the forty yard line. A team may only gain a first down by crossing each line once during each possession.

Punting

On fourth down, the referee will ask the offense if they would like to “punt” or play. If the team decides to change a 4th down decision (play or punt) a time-out must be called by the offense and the change of decision stated to the officials.

During a punt, these guidelines must be followed:

- Kicker must catch and kick the ball in one continuous motion (**Illegal Procedure, 5 yard penalty from the previous spot**).
- Neither team may advance beyond the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked (**Illegal Formation, 5 yard penalty from the previous spot**)
- Kickers may not punt barefoot (**Failure to Wear Proper Equipment, 5 yard penalty from the previous spot**).

Punt Returns

If a punt is muffed (failed attempt to catch the ball by a returner) the following results occur:

- Caught in the air by the kicking team: Ball is dead at the spot.
- Caught in the air by the returning team: Ball may be advanced.
- Hits the ground: Ball is dead at the spot of the muffed punt.

Interceptions

If a player intercepts the ball in the end zone is deflagged before returning the ball out of the end zone, the play will result in a touchback (new possession starting at the 14 yard line for the new offense).

If he returns the ball out of the end zone and then is deflagged in the end zone, the play will result in a safety (two points for the new defense and a new possession starting at the 14 yard line making them the new offense).

Fumbles

The ball will be declared a fumble and dead immediately as soon as it touches the ground, except when it's a punt that hasn't been touched by the returning team. If the ball is fumbled forward, the ball will be spotted at the spot of the fumble.

Handing the Ball

Players may hand the ball off forward or backward at any point during a play. This includes beyond the line of scrimmage.

The Passing Game

The following provisions are required for a legal forward pass:

- The passer's foot is on or behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is released.
- The pass occurs before a change of possession.
- It is the first and only forward pass during the down.

A player may run across the line of scrimmage and then behind the line of scrimmage and still throw a forward pass. A player may also cross the line of scrimmage and throw a backward pass across the line of scrimmage to a teammate who may then throw a forward pass so long as it meets the provisions listed above.

All players are eligible receivers on a given play. In order for a catch to be legal, a player must have one foot/knee in bounds while gaining possession of the ball. A player may land out of bounds with possession if there was contact that prevented them from meeting this provision.

Inadvertent Whistles

When an official has an inadvertent whistle the following results will occur:

- During a loose ball play other than a backward pass, the down will be replayed.
- During a backward pass and all running plays, the offense will have the option of accepting the play as it stood when the whistle blows or to replay the down.

General Penalties

Delay of Game: The ball must be put in play legally within 25 seconds of the Referee declaring the ball ready for play. Any action by either team that prevents this will constitute as **delay of game (dead ball foul, 5 yard penalty from the previous spot)**.

Encroachment (False Start): Prior to the snap, it is illegal for a defensive player (**encroachment**) or offensive player (**false start**) to break the plane of their line of scrimmage (**dead ball foul, 5 yard penalty from the previous spot**). Offensive players must be lined up behind/on the orange ball spotter, while defensive players must be lined up behind/on the yellow ball spotter.

Illegal Procedure/Snap: There must be four offensive players on the line of scrimmage (five for Co-Rec) at the time of the snap. The player receiving the snap must be two yards behind the line of scrimmage (**5 yard penalty from the previous spot**).

Illegal Motion and Shift: Only one offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. The player may not be in motion towards the line of scrimmage. After the huddle, all offensive players must stop and be stationary for one second before any of them go in motion (**5 yard penalty from the previous spot**).

Flag Guarding: The ball carrier may not protect his/her flags with their arms or hands to prevent the defender from deflagging them (**10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul**). Examples of flag guarding include stiff arming and running while holding the ball at hip level.

Illegally Deflagging an Opponent: An offensive player may not be deflagged without being in possession of the ball (**10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul**). If an eligible receiver is deflagged, there may be **pass interference**.

Illegal Contact by the Ball Carrier: The ball carrier must run in a manner as to avoid the defender (**Personal foul, 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul**). They may spin or jump in order to do so, but must remain in control of their body at all times. A player may not hurdle (jump with feet or knees) over a player or between players.

Holding: A defensive player may not hold a player in an attempt to deflag the ball carrier. An offensive player may not hold an opponent to prevent the ball carrier from being deflagged (**Defense: 10 yard penalty from the end of the run, Offense: 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul**).

Tripping: 10 yard penalty from the end of the run.

Illegal Forward Pass & Intentional Grounding: Any pass in violation of the legal pass guidelines (pg. 7) will be considered an illegal forward pass. If a pass is intentionally thrown to the ground or out of bounds to save loss of yardage it will be considered (**both penalties are 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down**).

Illegal Contact by the Defense: A defender may not contact the ball carrier in the process of pulling the flag (**10 yards from the end of the run**).

Pass Interference: Contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage. The following are the penalties associated with **pass interference**:

- Offensive Pass Interference: 10 yards from the spot and a loss of down.
- Defensive Pass Interference (completed pass): 10 yards from the end of the run and an automatic first down.
- Defensive Pass Interference (incomplete pass): 10 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down.

Roughing the Passer: Contact with the quarterback during or after the ball is released. The following are the penalties associated with **roughing the passer:**

- Completed pass: 10 yards from the end of the run and an automatic first down.
- Incomplete pass: 10 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down.

Co-Rec Modifications

The game is played between two teams of eight (8) players each. Teams must play with six (6) players at all times. Five (5) players must be on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped (**Illegal Formation, five yards from the previous spot**). Co-Rec games may be played with any of the following player ratios in relation to gender:

- 4:4
- 4:3
- 3:3
- 4:2

Male players may not advance the ball across the line of scrimmage. This will result in an **illegal advancement penalty (five yard penalty from the previous spot)**.

In co-rec games, touchdowns will be worth nine (9) points if a female is involved (pass, run or catch). All other touchdowns will be worth six (6) points.

Open vs. Closed

Each possession will begin with an “open” play. This means that a male may complete a legal forward pass to another male. If the pass is completed, the next play will be “closed.” Closed plays means the next legal forward pass must include a female be completed for positive yardage in order to “open” play back up. Two consecutive legal forward passes from a male to male are illegal (**Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the previous spot, loss of down**). Penalties (accepted or declined) shall have no effect on the status of whether the next legal forward pass is “open” or “closed.”

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