



# UW-WHITewater INTRAMURAL SPORTS FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Last update: August, 2021

FLAG FOOTBALL IS A CONTACT SPORT AND INJURIES ARE A POSSIBILITY. THE INTRAMURAL SPORTS PROGRAM ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR INJURIES; HOWEVER, BASIC FIRST AID WILL BE AVAILABLE.

## TEAM CAPTAIN'S MEETING

This is a sport that requires a preseason captain's meeting. Be attentive to your email regarding either an in-person meeting date or a link for a webex meeting.

## ENTRY FEE

The entry fee of \$50/team must be paid at time of registration.

## LEAGUE SCHEDULES

Schedules for league play will be posted on IMLeagues and the UWW Rec Sports app.

## QUESTIONS

Please feel free to contact the Office of Recreation Sports and Facilities or the Intramural Coordinator, Matt Schneider, with any questions or concerns at 262.472.1145 or email [imsports@uww.edu](mailto:imsports@uww.edu)

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

Please use the Captain's Handbook as a resource throughout the year. If you are team captain, please inform your players of all of the guidelines in the handbook BEFORE your first contest.

## **MEN AND WOMEN**

### STARTING THE GAME

1. **START TIME:** Teams are to be at the field and signed in before the official game time. If any team is not at the field and ready to play at the scheduled game time, the game will be declared a forfeit. It is recommended that teams arrive at the game site fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
2. **IDENTIFICATION:** All participants must bring their current valid UW - Whitewater identification card to the field area in order to be checked in and ruled eligible to participate prior to the beginning of each game. Late arriving players must sign in with a supervisor before entering the game.
3. **SCORING:** A scorekeeper will keep the score the entire game. Touchdowns are worth 6 points and will result in a PAT; see Rule 18
4. **TEAMS:** In all official games in the Men's and Women's Divisions, teams shall be composed of no more than seven (7) or no less than five (5) players.
5. **GAME BALLS:** When on offense, teams must provide their own ball that complies with NIRSA Flag and Touch Football Rules. If a team does not have a ball, one can be checked out from the Equipment Room.

6. UNIFORMS: Teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys. If a team does not have their own jerseys, they may be checked out from the Equipment Room with a current UW-W ID. Shirts/jerseys MUST remain tucked in at all times. Sweatshirts with pockets may not be worn. Hoods on sweatshirts must be tucked in. There may be no visible knots in any shirt or jersey. Any cut-off jerseys or shimmell jerseys may NOT cover any portion of the flag belt - there must be a four (4) inch gap between the flag belt and the bottom of the jersey, if this type is worn. Shorts/pants with pockets are prohibited.
7. FIELD RULES: Only officials, players (including substitutes) and one coach per team wearing proper shoes are permitted on the field. TOBACCO USE at the Intramural Fields is PROHIBITED. Failure to comply with all Intramural Policies and Procedures for flag football and the Intramural Field Rules by spectators will result in immediate expulsion of the spectators and possible forfeiture of the game.
8. SHOE INSPECTION: Players must wear shoes at all times. Shoes must be inspected and approved by the official in order for the player's name to be on the score sheet. A late arriving player must have his/her shoes checked prior to adding their name to the score sheet by the official.
9. COIN TOSS: A coin toss between team captains will begin each game. The winner of the toss may choose to be on offense, a goal to defend, or defer their option to the second half. The opponent then has the choice from the remaining options.
10. CAPTAIN: Only the captain may speak with the officials and only if done so in a polite manner. The captain will speak for the team in all dealings with the officials.

#### PLAYING THE GAME

11. GAME TIME: The game will be played in two (2) halves of twenty (20) minutes each. A maximum of 60 minutes from the scheduled starting time is allotted. This means that the last period could be shortened to fit in the 60 minutes allotted. The clock is running except for the last minute (1) of each half. A 1 minute warning will be announced once that time remaining is met.
12. HALF TIME: Three (3) minutes will be allowed between halves. However, teams may agree to take less time.
13. TIME-OUTS: Each team will be granted two (2) time outs per half (which may not be carried over). Time-outs will be one (1) minute in length. The clock will stop during time outs. Teams must be ready to play immediately following a time out.
14. ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT:
  - A. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material (including billed hats) or items containing exposed knots are illegal. Casts are also illegal.
  - B. All players must wear shoes. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in or detachable cleats are illegal. EXCEPTION: Plastic screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat. Any players wearing an illegal type shoe will be removed from the game until they return with a legal type shoe.
  - C. ANY jewelry is illegal and must be removed. Tape can be bought in Room 100 to cover jewelry and wristbands.
  - D. Pads or braces may not be worn above the waist.
  - E. Pants or shorts with any belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings are illegal. Short pockets may NOT be taped or turned inside-out for play.
  - F. Towels may not be attached at any player's waist. A towel may be left next to the orange ball spotter or behind the deepest back to wipe off the ball in-between plays.

15. **EQUIPMENT:** Shoulder pads, and any unyielding or dangerous equipment are prohibited. It is mandatory for team players to wear the flag belts (provided by Intramural Sports). Failure to comply will result in disqualification and/or forfeiture of the game. Forearm, elbow, and hand pads are illegal unless approved by the SUPERVISOR in charge of the fields for the protection of an injury.
16. **PROTESTS:** If your team wishes to protest a misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule, a time-out must be called by the team captain BEFORE the ball is next legally snapped. If upon the review of the Intramural Staff on-site the ruling is reversed, the team that called the timeout will be charged as an official's time-out. If the ruling is not changed, it is a charged team time-out. If that team has used its available time-out, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.
17. **MERCY RULE:** If a team is 19 or more points ahead when there are two minutes remaining in the second half, the game shall be over. Any score within the last two minutes of the second half that creates a differential of 19 points or more shall end the game. If a team is 36 or more points ahead at the 5:00 mark the game shall be over.
18. **POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN:** After a touchdown, the scoring team may choose from the following options for the conversion:
- 1 point from the 3 yard line
  - 2 points from the 10 yard line
  - 3 points from the 20 yard line
- Immediately after scoring a touchdown the Referee will ask the team captain for his/her choice for the conversion. Once this decision is made, it can only be changed by taking a charged time-out. A team's decision cannot be changed should a penalty occur on the conversion attempt.
- NOTE: Any conversion that is intercepted and returned for a score is worth 3 points.
19. **SUBSTITUTES:** Substitutes may enter during any dead ball period. If a substitute enters the field, another player must leave and the substitute must play at least one (1) down.
20. **INJURIES:** An injured player whose injury caused play to be halted must leave the game for at least one down. A player that suffers an apparent loss of consciousness may not return to play that day without written authorization from a physician.
21. **BEGINNING A SERIES:** There will be NO kickoffs.
- A) A team will put the ball in play with a scrimmage down from the first zone (14-yard line) to start each half. This team will be determined by a coin toss.
  - B) The ball will be put in play by the team scored upon by a scrimmage down from their 14-yard line following a touch down (and try-for-point).
  - C) The ball will be put in play by the scoring team from their 14-yard line following a safety.
22. **FORWARD PASSING:** Only one forward pass may be thrown per down by the offense. A forward pass is defined as the passer's feet being behind the offense's line of scrimmage at the time of release.
23. **PUNTS:** The Referee will ask the offensive team captain if he/she will punt or go for a fourth down. A team may only change their decision to punt or not punt if a penalty is called or a time out is taken.

24. **FLAG BELT REMOVAL:** The ball becomes dead when a ball carrier's flag belt is removed. The ball will be spotted at the location of the most forward point of the ball when the flag belt clip was removed. All players must be wearing a flag belt at the time of the snap. It is illegal to intentionally remove a player's flag belt if he/she is not in possession of the ball. If a flag belt falls off of a ball carrier, he/she is considered down when a member of the opposing team tags him/her with one (1) hand between the shoulders and knees.
25. **TIE GAME:** During the regular season, all games ending in a tie score will be recorded as a tie in the records. During the playoffs, the NIRSA Flag Football overtime procedures will be used.
- **OVERTIME RULES:** Start with a coin toss. The visiting team shall call the toss. The winner of the coin toss shall select offense, defense or direction. All Overtime periods are played toward the same goal.
    - Each team will start 1<sup>st</sup> and goal from their opponent's 10-yard line. The object will be to score a touchdown. An overtime period consists of 4 downs by each team. If the score is still tied after 1 period, play will proceed to a 2<sup>nd</sup> period or as many are needed to determine a winner. If the first team awarded the ball scores, the opponent will have a chance to win the game. Unless moved by a penalty, they will start 1<sup>st</sup> and goal from the same 10-yard line.
    - Teams have the option of a 1, 2 or 3-point try as indicated in Rule 18.

#### SPORTSMANSHIP

26. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:** Players and nonplayers shall not commit acts of unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, arguments with officials by any coach, manager, or spectator (the captain is the only player permitted to talk with the officials), flagrant fouling, fighting, etc.
27. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT PENALTY LIMIT:** If a team receives three (3) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties in a game, the game will be ended and that team will receive a loss and a "0" sportsmanship rating, regardless of the score and the time remaining.
28. **DISQUALIFIED PLAYER:** Any player or nonplayer disqualified from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct must leave the field IMMEDIATELY, and will be declared ineligible for play in any intramural sports activity until he/she has met with the Intramural Coordinator. Failure to leave may result in disqualification of the captain, or forfeiture of the game. Any second occurrence of unsportsmanlike conduct by a team may result in that team being eliminated for the remainder of the season.
29. **CAPTAINS:** You are responsible for the actions of your team. Be sure that your team is familiar with and follows the regulations of the intramural sports program. It is your responsibility to know both these regulations and the Flag Football rules. Failure to do so may result in undesirable consequences for your team. Copies of the rules are available in the Intramural Sports office and on the Intramural webpage at <http://www.uww.edu/staffair/recsport/intramurals>

## CO-RECREATION

All of the above general rules apply with the following exceptions, and clarifications:

30. **THE GAME:** The game shall be played between teams of eight (8) players, four (4) men and four (4) women. Teams may play with as few as six (6) players per team. If a team is playing with less than eight players, the male/female ratio may be: 4:3, 3:4, or 3:3.
31. **MERCY RULE:** If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. Any score within the last two minutes of the second half that creates a differential of 25 points or more shall end the game. If a team is 45 or more points ahead at the 5:00 mark, the game shall be over.
32. **MALE RUNNERS:** A male ball carrier may not advance the ball through the line of scrimmage, as a runner or as a pass receiver, until the scrimmage line is broken by a legal forward pass or a female advancing the ball through the line of scrimmage.
33. **SCORING:** If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9 points. This can be done in any of the following ways:
- Female scores running touchdown.
  - Female throws a legal forward pass (that is scored by any offensive player) that results in a touchdown.
34. **OPEN & CLOSED PLAYS** – Prior to each play, the Referee will announce whether the next play is considered “open” or “closed”.
- ◆ During an offensive possession, there may not be two consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the try after a touchdown.
  - ◆ If male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass must involve either a female passer or female receiver, **for positive yards**. If positive yardage is not gained, the next play remains “closed.”
  - ◆ “Closed” plays means that a male player may NOT throw a legal forward pass completion to any other male player.
  - ◆ “Open” plays means that any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
  - ◆ Penalties do not affect the opening or closing of plays
  - ◆ To open a play, a legal forward pass must be completed by a female passer, or the initial receiver is a female, for positive yards.

*Other than the above exceptions, the game will be played according to the NIRSA Flag Football Rules.*

## FLAG FOOTBALL RULES CLARIFICATIONS

1. **ROUGHING THE PASSER** – Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. Slapping the ball while the quarterback is attempting to pass is considered roughing the passer, as the ball is considered an extension of the arm (while still in possession). Roughing the passer restrictions do not apply if the forward pass is thrown from beyond Team A's scrimmage line but illegal contact can still be called. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down. This penalty will be tacked on to the end of the run on a completed pass, if accepted.
2. **FLAG GUARDING** – Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opponent an opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:
  - A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
  - B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
  - C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
  - D. Any other act, besides spinning and various other types of hip movement, to prevent an opponent from deflagging.Penalty: 10 yards (spot of foul).
3. **PASS INTERFERENCE** – During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A's scrimmage line, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond Team A's scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Offensive pass interference may be called at any time after the ball is snapped. Defensive pass interference, however, can only be called during the time of a pass attempt.
  - Offensive Pass Interference** – Penalty: 10 yards (previous spot) and loss of down.
  - Defensive Pass Interference** – Penalty: 10 yards (previous spot) and automatic first down.
4. **LEGAL CATCH / SIMULTANEOUS CATCH** – A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds or being contacted by an opponent in such a way that he/she is prevented from returning to the ground inbounds while maintaining possession of the ball.
  - A. One foot is required to be inbounds (while in player possession). Additionally, a catch by a kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion.
  - B. A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds. The ball will be blown dead at that spot and possession will be awarded to the offense.
5. **FUMBLES** - A fumble is a loss of player possession of the ball other than by handing, passing or punting the ball. A fumbled ball that hits the ground is dead at that spot. Offense retains the ball.
6. **PUNTING THE BALL**
  - A. The offensive team captain is responsible for notifying the Referee when they wish to punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down. The Referee will then announce this decision to both teams. All punts will be a protected scrimmage kick (no rushing by the offense or defense). A team may request to punt on any down.
  - B. All fake punts are **ILLEGAL**. Penalty: Illegal Kick, 10 yards (spot of foul).

7. 15 YARDS AFTER READY FOR PLAY – At any time after the ready for play whistle and prior to the snap, all offensive players must be within 15 yards from the ball (orange ball spotter). This is to prevent offensive players from “sneaking” onto the field and staying near the sideline just before the ball is snapped, which would in many cases, leave that particular player uncovered with a clear path to the endzone.  
Penalty: Illegal Formation, 5 yards (previous spot).
8. OFFSIDES / ENCROACHMENT – The first offender rule is in effect when it comes to encroachment. This means that the moment a player from either team enters the neutral zone (after the ready for play whistle) he/she shall be called for the penalty. This is a dead ball foul, so play should be whistled dead immediately after the encroachment occurs.  
Penalty: 5 yards.
9. SCREEN BLOCKING – This is legal as long as the following guidelines are followed:
  - A. The blocker’s arms must be kept at his/her side, in front of his/her waist, or behind his/her back.
  - B. The blocker may not initiate contact with a defender.A penalty occurs when contact is initiated and there is an advantage gained.  
Penalty: Illegal contact, 10 yards (spot of foul).
10. SNAP REGULATIONS – To start every play there must be a snap.
  - A. A snap must be one smooth, quick, and continuous motion, either between the snapper’s legs or from the side. The ball must leave the snapper’s hand(s) during this motion. After the snapper takes his initial position over the ball, he/she may move or rotate the ball. After the snapper comes to a set position, he/she may not move the ball again until it is snapped. Penalty: Dead Ball, Illegal Snap, 5 yards. The player who receives the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal. Penalty: Live Ball, Illegal Snap, 5 yards.