IM Flag Football Rules and Information

All Rules not covered below shall be found in the 2013-2014 NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules

I. GENERAL RULES

1. The supervisor on duty reserves the right to remove any player from competition who has violated any Emory University Intramural Policy or Rule and/or endangered any player or IM staff member. Ejected players must leave the facility immediately. Any player or team that exhibits a pattern of troublesome behavior will be removed from intramural sports. Supervisors also have the authority to end a game.

2. Three (3) Unsportsmanlike Penalties will result in a team disqualification regardless of the score. Two (2) Personal Unsportsmanlike Penalties will result in the player leaving the game. Only a team's designated Captain is allowed to confer with the officials. There is a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for any unsportsmanlike behavior directed towards players, officials, and staff.

3. Participants are not allowed to play in a manner that is potentially dangerous or reckless. Safety for all our participants is our number one priority. Any action(s) that is deemed dangerous and/or reckless by the game's official or the Intramural Sport Supervisor will result in either an unsportsmanlike penalty or an ejection depending on the severity of the action. Intramural managers and players should consider this rule their warning not to play in a dangerous or reckless manner.

II. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Participation is limited to currently-enrolled, fee-paying students, Emory University faculty/staff members, spouses, and Alumni.

2. All players must have an Emory University ID or Government Issued photo ID (i.e. Driver’s License) at each game to sign-in. ID Cards will be checked EVERY GAME.

3. All players MUST be listed on the printed scoresheets and cannot be written in at gametime.

4. Varsity & Club Athletes: Varsity players are not eligible to participate in similar intramural sports. Each team can have up to two club players in a similar sport. Teams who violate this policy will receive a forfeit loss for each game the violation has taken place and will be ineligible for the playoffs.

III. TEAM COMPOSITION & SUBSTITUTIONS

1. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME. You must have the required number of players at game time in order to avoid a forfeit.

2. Players can compete on only one men’s or one women’s team, regardless of division. Participation in the men’s or women’s league and co-rec league is permitted.

3. Seven (7) players constitute a team in all Men’s and Women’s Leagues. Eight (8) players per team in the Co-Rec League.

4. In all Men’s and Women’s Leagues, teams must have at least five (5) players to start a game. Six (6) players are required to start a game in the Co-Rec League.
5. Substitutions may take place during any dead ball situation. Substitutes must remain in their designated area when on the sideline.

IV. EQUIPMENT & PLAYING AREA

1. All players must wear gym shoes or molded rubber cleats. No street shoes, bare feet, sandals, metal or posted cleats will be allowed.

2. **No player may wear jewelry** including, but not limited to watches, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and various body rings. Jewelry worn for medical and/or religious reasons must be taped down.

3. **No pockets:** Each player must wear pants or shorts without any pockets, belts, belt loops, or exposed drawstrings. Pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.

4. Teams must all wear the same colored jersey/shirt. We will only check out a set of numbered mesh pennies when both teams are wearing the same color jerseys.

5. Baseball caps, hats, bandanas, and any other headwear that has a brim or knot are not permitted. Knit stocking caps and mesh head bands are allowed. Non-abrasive sun glasses are also permitted.

6. No player may wear a towel. If a towel is to be used, the towel must be placed on the ground at the line of scrimmage marker during the play.

7. Footballs and flag belts will be provided.

8. The playing field shall be 80 x 40 yards.

9. Pets are not permitted at Kaminsky Park.

V. MATCH TIME, LENGTH, & SCORING

1. **Game Length:** The game consists of two 20-minute halves with a 3-minute intermission. There will be a running clock for the entire first half, and the first eighteen (18) minutes of the second half. During this time, the clock will only stop on team and official time-outs. The last two (2) minutes of the second half will follow NIRSA timing rules (similar to NCAA Football). During the final two (2) minutes of the second half the clock will stop for a(n):

   1. Incomplete pass – starts on the snap
   2. Out-of-bounds – starts on the snap
   3. Score (touchdown or safety) – starts on the snap
   4. Team time-out – starts on the snap
   5. First down – If not out-of-bounds, starts on official’s signal to start play
   6. Penalty and administration – If not out-of-bounds or incomplete pass, starts on official’s signal to start play (Exception: delay of game – starts on the snap)
   7. Referee’s time-out – starts at his/her discretion
   8. Touchback – starts on the snap
   9. Change of possession – starts on the snap
   10. Team attempting to conserve time illegally – starts on the snap

The clock will not run on any one, two, or three point conversion attempts in the last two minutes. The clock will continue to run on all fumbles, unless a change of possession occurs. The offense shall be allowed to attempt conversions with no time left on the game clock if they scored a touchdown on the last play of either half. The offense has the right to extend a half by one play if a defensive penalty occurred on the last play of the half. The
clock will be stopped and not restarted until the next snap if a team is deemed to be illegally wasting time. In the case of overtime, there will be a 3-minute intermission prior to starting overtime.

2. Regular season games ending in a tie shall remain a tie after each team completes one (1) offensive possession in overtime.

3. In the event of inclement weather, a game is considered complete once the first half is completed.

4. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is winning by any of the following margins the mercy rule will come into effect and the game will end:

   - 40 points at any point in the second half
   - 25 points with 5 minutes remaining
   - 19 points with 2 minutes remaining

Exception: If the team in jeopardy of losing via mercy rule has possession at the time that one of the mercy rules go into effect, they will be permitted to continue their possession in order to bring the deficit under the mercy rule.

5. **Timeouts:** Teams shall be granted three (3) one-minute timeouts per contest. Officials will notify teams of timeouts remaining for the game once a team has called a timeout. The clock shall continue to run if a team attempts to call a fourth timeout in a game. Playoff overtime rules can be found in a later section.

6. Once the signal has been given to start a play, the offense shall have 25 seconds in which to snap the ball. Failure to do so will result in a **delay of game** penalty. A delay of game penalty by the same team on consecutive plays in the same possession will result in a 10-yard penalty and a loss of down.

7. **Scoring:** Touchdowns are worth six (6) points. When a team scores a touchdown, they have the option of attempting a one, two, or three point conversion. A one-point attempt shall be taken from the three-yard line. A two-point attempt shall be taken from the ten-yard line. A three-point conversion shall be taken from the twenty-yard line. Once the ball has been signaled ready for play on a conversion attempt, it cannot be changed to another point value unless the offense is charged with a timeout. If a penalty occurs on a conversion attempt and must be replayed, the point value cannot be changed. The team captain's decision shall be the official decision. All conversion attempts (1, 2 or 3 points) can be returned by the defense into the other end zone for two points. A defensive penalty on a successful conversion attempt shall be enforced at the start of the next possession. A defensive penalty on an unsuccessful conversion attempt shall result in a retry with penalty yardage marked. An offensive live ball penalty will result in the try being no good. An offensive pre-snap penalty (delay of game/false start) will result in a retry with penalty yardage marked.

VI. RULES OF PLAY

1. **Rock-Paper-Scissors:** The captains shall meet the officials before each game. The team winning rock-paper-scissors has the following options: (1) elect to take the ball to start the first half, (2) Elect to play defense to start the first half. (3) Elect to defend a particular goal in the first half. (4) Defer choice to the second half. The other team shall then take the remaining option. To begin the second half, whichever team has the right to first choice will choose to take the ball, play defense or defend a particular goal. The other team shall then take the remaining option. Special notes: 1) Teams are not required to switch the directions to start the second half; 2) If the team winning the coin toss chooses to play defense to start the first half instead of choosing to defer, that team will lose its right to first choice in the second half.

2. **Jerseys:** Teams must wear the exact same or similarly colored shirts/jerseys. If all players do not have exact or similarly colored shirts, the team must wear pennies provided by the intramural department. All shirts/jerseys must be tucked in completely at all times. Shirts that are cut off 4” above the waist are allowed.
3. The ball shall be placed on the 14-yard mark to begin a half, touchback, after a safety, and after every touchdown, unless a dead ball penalty is enforced.

4. The offense has the responsibility of bringing the ball back to the line of scrimmage following each play.

5. **False Starts/Offsides:** There shall be two lines of scrimmage, one for the offense and one for the defense. A disc or other object shall mark these lines, with one yard in between each object. No player may go beyond their respective line of scrimmage with any body part once the official has signaled that the lines are in good standing. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a false start or encroaching penalty. Teams may cross the lines of scrimmage without penalty before the official has signaled “lines set”.

6. **The Snap:** The center is not required to snap the ball between his/her legs. However, the snap must be made in one continuous motion, starting with the ball on the ground. The individuals receiving the snap must be at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage. Failure will result in an illegal snap penalty. No direct or “under center” snaps.

7. **Line of Scrimmage:** The offense is required to have at least four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. If the ball is snapped before at least four players are deemed to be on the line, an illegal procedure penalty will be assessed. Should a team have at least four players on the line of scrimmage, they can send one or more players in motion, so long as the following rules are adhered to: (1) The team must maintain at least four players on the line at all times after the line is signaled good. (2) The team may not have two or more players in motion at the time the ball is snapped. (3) All players in motion must be at least 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. (4) If two or more players go in motion before the snap, this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second before the snap. Players in motion are eligible to receive a direct snap.

8. No offensive player may be going in forward motion at the time of the snap. An offensive player illegally in motion penalty will occur.

9. Each player must begin each play wearing one flag belt. The flag belt must be clipped in the front and must have one flag each dangling from the left side, right side, and back. Any player not wearing a flag belt at the time the ball is snapped shall be flagged for illegal player equipment. Any player who continues to wear the flag belt incorrectly after being warned shall be flagged for an illegal player equipment penalty. Any player caught with a flag belt that is tied in any fashion shall be ejected and an illegally secured flag belt penalty will be enforced. The player may be replaced on the field. Substitutes shall not be granted any extra time to receive flag belts from teammates coming off the field.

10. **First Downs:** Teams will be given four downs in which to gain enough yardages to score a touchdown or give them a new series of downs. First downs occur at the 20 and 40 yard lines.

11. Once the ball is snapped, all players are allowed to go anywhere in-bounds. Every member of the team in men and women's contests is eligible to catch a forward pass.

12. **Forward Pass:** No more than one forward pass may be thrown on one play, regardless of the position of catches. Failure will result in an illegal forward pass penalty (also brings a loss of down). The location of the passer's front foot at the time a forward pass is released will determine whether an illegal forward pass occurred (also brings a loss of down).

13. **Roughing the Passer:** The passer may not be touched in any manner while attempting a pass or on the follow-through motion. Failure will result in a roughing the passer penalty.

14. **Blocking:** The only style of blocking allowed is screen blocking. Screen blocking is defined as legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body. Hands must be placed behind the back, across the chest, or directly in front of the body. Hands must maintain contact with the
body. Elbows may not be outstretched. Hips, legs, and other body parts may not be used to obstruct the opponent. The blocker must remain in an upright position. Failure will result in an illegal offensive screen blocking penalty.

15. **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.

16. **Out-of-Bounds**: Players only need to come down with one foot in bounds to legally catch a pass.

17. No player may go out of bounds under their own control; come back in, and be the first player to touch the forward pass. Failure will result in an illegal procedure penalty.

18. **Fumbles**: All fumbles are dead once they hit the ground. The point at which it touches the ground shall be the line of scrimmage for the next play. If a team fumbles a ball in or out of its own end zone, a safely shall result. If a team fumbles a ball in or out of its opponent's end zone, a touch back will result.

19. A player may not intentionally throw a backward pass or fumble the ball out of bounds to conserve time or to avoid being downed. This will be penalized as an intentional backward pass/fumble out of bounds.

20. **Ball Carrier Restrictions**: A ball carrier may not hurdle or leap into or over a player in a way that initiates contact. The ball carrier may not lower his/her head in an attempt to run over an opponent. **Stiff arming is NOT allowed**; an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called and if warranted an ejection will result.

   Ball carriers are only permitted to dive into open space in an attempt to avoid contact.

21. **Flag Guarding**: The ball carrier may not use any part of his/her body or the ball itself to obstruct the flag from the grasps of a defender. Failure will result in a flag guarding penalty.

22. No defender may strip the ball carrier of the ball or touch the ball in any manner while the ball carrier has full possession. Failure will result in a strip or attempt to strip the ball penalty.

23. **Tackling an opponent** will result in an ejection. This is considered an unsportsmanlike ejection.

24. **Deflagging**: Deflagging of an opponent is only legal when the opponent has possession of the ball at the time of the deflagging attempt. Failure will result an illegal flag belt removal penalty. Holding of any body part or article of clothing may not occur in the deflagging process. Failure will result in an obstructing or holding the runner penalty. Player's unintentionally grabbing an opponent's shirt/shorts in an attempt to pull the flag will not be penalized. If a ball carrier's flag belt has inadvertently fallen to the ground during the play, he shall be considered deflagged when an opponent touches the carrier with one hand between the shoulders and knees.

25. **Punting**: On fourth down, the referee will ask the offensive team captain to select if they wish to (1) punt or (2) “go for it”. Once a decision is reached, the referee will announce the decision to the defense. If the offense declares to punt, then wants to change their decision, they may do so after a charged timeout or an accepted penalty in which the down is to be replayed.

   A. All punts must be announced to the referee. There are no quick kicks.
   B. The kicking team must have 4 players (5 in co-rec) on the line of scrimmage during a punt.
   C. The kicker must catch and kick the ball immediately in one continuous motion.
   D. Neither team may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.
   E. Kickers may not punt barefoot.
   F. Punts that have not been touched by a player are NOT dead while bouncing on the ground. When a punt touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, it is dead at that spot and belongs to the receiving team. If a punt is muffed by the receiving team and caught in the air by the kicking team, it is dead at that spot and the
kicking team retains possession, first and line-to-gain. If caught in the air by the receiving team, they may advance the ball.

G. When a punt breaks the plane of the receiving team's goal line, it is a touchback. Punts may not be returned out of the endzone.

H. There are no fair catches. Fair catch signals shall be disregarded. The player receiving the punt must be provided adequate space and opportunity to catch the punt unobstructed by the kicking team.

26. Inadvertent Whistle: Should an inadvertent whistle be blown, the team with possession of the ball at the time the whistle shall have the following options: (1) replay the down (2) place the ball at the spot where it was blown dead and proceed with the next down (all penalties flagged on the play would still apply).

VII. PENALTIES

1. Any live ball penalty committed on a ball carrier will be enforced from the spot of the foul. Offense has option of taking penalty or result of play.

2. Live ball penalties committed by the offense shall be enforced from the spot of the foul. Exception: Offensive pass interference and if a penalty occurred further downfield than the point where the play was whistled dead, the penalty shall be enforced from the end of the run.

3. Any defensive live ball unsportsmanlike conduct penalty shall be tacked on to the end of the play.

4. When both teams commit at least one live ball penalty on a play, the ball will be brought back to the previous line of scrimmage and the down replayed. Dead ball unsportsmanlike penalties that occur after the play will be assessed from the end of the run.

VIII. PLAYOFF RULES

1. Each team needs at least a 2.0 sportsmanship rating in each playoff game to advance to the next round, or win the championship.

2. Overtime rules are as follows (Similar to NCAA football rules):

   There is no game clock, but the play clock is still in effect.

   Rock-Paper-Scissors shall take place at the beginning of the overtime period. The team that wins has the following options: (1)Start the first overtime on offense, (2) Start the first overtime on defense, or (3) Play the entire overtime on a particular half of the field. The team that loses the coin toss will take the remaining option.

   An overtime period is defined as a period in which each team gets a least one series of downs in which to score. Exception: If the team getting the ball first is intercepted and the defense returns the ball for a touchdown, or if any team is charged with a safety, the game is over.

   If the game is still tied after the first overtime period, the teams will switch offensive and defensive roles in the second overtime period. (Ex: Team A starts the first overtime period on offense; Team B will start the second overtime period on offense) This rotation will continue until a winner is determined.

   Each team will receive one timeout per overtime period. Timeouts will not carry over from regulation to overtime or from overtime period to overtime period.

   The team taking the ball first will get the ball at the 10-yard line. They will have four downs to score a touchdown. No first downs will be granted.
After the first team finishes their possession, the second team will take over at the same 10-yard line and attempt to score the same amount of points or more points than the opposition.

After a touchdown, the offense will have the option of attempting a one, two, or three point conversion. They shall retain this right throughout all overtime periods.

This process will continue until a winner is determined.

**IX. CO-REC RULES**

1. **Roster**: Teams field 8 players (4 men and 4 women). Need at least 6 players to avoid forfeit and can also play with 7. The following combinations of men and women are required to avoid forfeit if playing with 6 or 7 players:

   - 7 players: 4 men and 3 women, 4 women and 3 men
   - 6 players: 3 men and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, 4 women and 2 men

2. **Mercy Rule**: 40 points at any point in the second half; 30 points with 5 minutes remaining; 25 points with 2 minutes remaining.

3. **Punt**: There are no restrictions on males when returning punts.

4. **Offense**: A male cannot run the ball past the line of scrimmage. A male receiver who receives the ball behind the line of scrimmage must pitch the ball to a female, take a knee, or run out of bounds in order to avoid an illegal male advancement penalty. There cannot be consecutive male-to-male receiver completions. After one male-to-male completion, next pass completion must be to a female. “Open” plays = male-to-male; “closed” plays must be male to female. Female passer may throw to anyone. Team must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage.

5. **Scoring**: Same as Men’s and Women’s Leagues, except 9 points for a female touchdown, 6 points for a male touchdown.

6. **Penalties**:
   - Illegal advancement – 5 yards
   - Illegal forward pass – 5 yards and loss of down
     1) Consecutive male to male pass completions
     2) Female to male completion behind LOS where the male runner advances beyond the offensive scrimmage line
       *This rule applies to the extra point try.*