

7-on-7 Flag Football Rules

All participants must have & show their valid KENT STATE UNIVERSITY ID before the start of every game. Anyone without an ID will not be allowed to participate. No exceptions.

All games will be officiated based on the *National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) Rules*; which will be in effect unless otherwise noted in this supplement.

PLAYERS

- Seven players constitute a team (Men's and Women's), and eight players constitute a Co-Recreational team. On offense, four players must be on the line of scrimmage (five players in co-rec).
- A team may not start or continue a game with less than five (5) players for men's and women's and six (6) players for co-recreational.
- The person receiving the snap must be two yards behind the line of scrimmage. Snaps must be between the legs or from the side of the snapper. All snaps must be of a quick, continuous motion. No Direct Snaps.
- No player, substitute, coach or others subject to the rules shall use disconcerting words or phrases, or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purpose of confusing the opponent.
- Players and spectators must remain on the sidelines and may not cross the 20 yard line marker toward the end zones. Players and spectators must be at least 2 yards off the sidelines. Teams must be on opposite sidelines.

EQUIPMENT

- Teams may check out jerseys and flag belts **from intramural staff at the Student Recreation Fields.** A Flash Card ID must be used to check out equipment. Teams may wear their own jerseys with numbers (numbers may not be taped on) provided they are of the same color.
- Each player must wear the flag belts provided. Belts have three flags that are to be positioned one to each hip and one in the back. Flag belts shall not be tied at anytime. PENALTY: automatic disqualification, 10 yard penalty, loss of down (or) automatic first down.
- Shirts must be tucked in so that the flag can be easily seen and grabbed. Pinnies that hang over the flag belt must be tucked in at the discretion of the referee. If a sweatshirt is worn, it must be tucked in a manner in which it will not cover the flag belts. **Shorts or pants must not have pockets or belt loops. Shorts or pants must be a different color than the flag belt being worn.** Billed-hats or any headgear containing knots are not allowed. Stocking hats and headbands no wider than 2" are allowed to be worn during flag football.
- No metal cleats, or screw on type cleats will be allowed.
- Players may not participate in sandals, boots, dress shoes, or barefoot. Players wearing illegal shoes become subject to disqualification.
- Absolutely no jewelry will be allowed.
- No casts of any material will be allowed. Braces, which are made of hard or unyielding material, will not be allowed. Pads may be worn below the waist only.
- The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber and must meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. Officials will make the final ruling regarding the appropriate size of the football to meet Department of Recreational Services standards. Teams can bring their own ball, but are responsible to bring it out on their offensive series. Women's and Co-Rec leagues may use a regular, intermediate, youth or junior size football.
- Games will be played on a field 80 yards long (with ten yard end zones) by 40 yards wide.

LENGTH OF THE GAME

- A team has 5 minutes past the designated start time to have a team checked in and ready to play. If the team is ready within the 5 minutes, the team that was on time will receive 7 points and they automatically win the toss. The game clock will begin when the grace period begins and will run continuously. After the 5 minute grace period a forfeit will be declared.
- The game will start with a captain's meeting and a coin toss before all regular season and playoff games.
- The winner of the toss will have the following options:
 - start on offense or defense
 - select which goal to defend
 - **NOTE: Whatever decision is made, the start of the second half will be exactly opposite of the start of the first half. For example, if Team A elects to play defense for the first half defending the East end zone, Team A will automatically get the possession to start the second half defending the West end zone.**
- The game will consist of two -- twenty (20) minute halves, with a two (2) minute half-time.

- A team will have two time-outs per half---60 seconds in length. Time outs may not be carried over.
- During the first 18 minutes of each half, the clock will run continuously and will only be stopped on team's time-out or referee's time-out.
- During the last two minutes of the each half, the clock will stop only during appropriate dead ball situations (first downs, touchdowns, penalties, safeties, touchbacks, time outs, injuries, punts, out of bounds, and incomplete pass). Also, during the final two minutes teams may intentionally down the ball to stop the clock.
- Once the ball is marked ready for play, a team has 25 seconds within which to snap the ball.
- If two teams should have a tie score at the end of regulation time, an overtime period may be played.
- Prior to the overtime period starting, a captain's meeting will be held, a coin toss will determine possession of the ball, and each team will get four plays from the 10 yard line to score.
- In the regular season if the game remains tied after one overtime period, the game will end in a tie. During the post season tournament the process will continue until a winner is determined.
- Teams may go for a one (1), two (2) or three (3) point conversion after a score.
- Each team will get one additional time out per overtime session. Time outs may not be carried over to the overtime period or each subsequent period

BLOCKING

- Offensive screen blocking shall take place without contact (similar to the fundamentals of a screen block in basketball).
- The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind the back.
- Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
- A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
- There shall be NO charging into offensive blockers, the defense must make an effort to get around the offensive blocker.
- If the defense does charge into or bull rush into offensive blocker, a 10 yard penalty will be assessed against the defense and could lead to a player being ejected.

HURDLING

- No hurdling is allowed.
- Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent. (A player may not attempt to leap over another player, while leading with his knees or feet, this is considered hurdling).

PUNTING

- On fourth down (or any other down), a team must announce its intentions to punt to the officials before the ball is declared ready to play. No Quick Kicks are permitted.
- After such an announcement, the punting team can only change the decision after either team has requested a time-out or any penalty allowing the offensive team to repeat the down.
- The offensive team must also have a minimum of four players on the line of scrimmage during a punt.
- No one may move across the scrimmage line until the ball is actually kicked.
- The center must snap the ball to the punter who must be at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- A punter must punt the ball within 5 seconds of receiving the ball from the snapper.
- A punted ball that hits the ground may be advanced, but it must be fielded cleanly.
- The ball will be declared dead if the punting team downs the ball or if the receiver doesn't field the ball cleanly (fumbles or muffs the punt).
- When a punt breaks the plane of the receiving team's goal line it is a touchback.

FUMBLES

- Any fumble or forward pass that is intercepted or caught in the air may be advanced.
- A fumbled or muffed ball is dead when it strikes the ground; the ball will be spotted at the appropriate spot.
- Balls may be fumbled backwards for a safety or a loss but not forward for a touchdown or gain. It will remain at the point of the fumble.
 - **EXCEPTION:** An offensive player who fumbles the ball forward into the end-zone before the ball crosses the plane of the goal line will result in a turnover and the defensive team will have possession at their 14 yard line.

FIRST DOWNS

- Each team will have a series of four (4) downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next zone.
- Failure to advance the ball to the next zone line to gain results in a turnover on downs.
- The zone line to gain in any series shall be the line in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or loss of yardage.

- The placement of the ball will be determined by the spot of the ball when the person is de-flagged.
- Any part of the ball touching the line is considered over the line.

PASSING/RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- Only one legal forward pass is allowed per live ball play.
- A legal forward pass is one that is made from behind the line of scrimmage (indicated by the orange ball spotter).
- Reverse passes may be thrown at any time, and anywhere on the field.
- Any player may hand the ball backward or forward at any time.
- Receivers must have one foot in bounds while "in possession" of the ball to constitute a completed catch.
- A receiver who steps out of bounds and returns back to the playing field is ineligible.

SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points (9 points in co-rec leagues if the touchdown is scored by a female passer or runner)
- Safety: 2 points
- Point after try from 3 yards: 1 point
- Point after try from 10 yards: 2 points
- Point after try from 20 yards: 3 points
- *PATs that are intercepted cannot be returned and the ball is dead immediately.

NOTE: a team is given one choice (one, two or three points) for a point after try. The declared point value will remain the same even if a penalty moves the ball closer or farther from the goal. A team may not change the value of the try in the event of a penalty by the defense.

SECURING THE FLAG

- The defensive player may not tackle, block, trip or hold the ball carrier while attempting to de-flag the ball carrier, such acts will result in a ten yard penalty. If flagrant, unsportsmanlike, unnecessary roughness occurs, ejection may also result. In pulling a flag and/or touching a ball carrier layer's feet may leave the ground, and diving is legal, however the diving player is still responsible for any contact they initiate. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be de-flagged. Intentionally pulling the flag of an offensive player without that offensive player having possession of the ball is illegal (10 yards penalty).
- The flag belt must be "clearly taken" from the ball carrier. If a defensive player tries for the belt and they don't pull the flag off, but it falls off for any other reason, the play continues.
- If an offensive player loses his/her flag prior to being de-flagged, that player may be downed by one hand touch between the shoulders and knees.
- Always play until you hear the whistle.
- After a score is made, the player should go to the closest official for a flag-belt removal. If the flag doesn't come off with a reasonable attempt, the score does not count (additional 10 yard penalty from the previous spot and loss of down) and player is ejected.
- If a player is found wearing a belt that is illegally secured, he/she will be ejected from the game.

FLAG GUARDING

- Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag belt.
- The ball carrier may not hurdle another player to avoid being de-flagged.
- A runner or receiver is also down if any part of his/her body touches the ground other than the hands or feet.
- Rushers chasing the passer must play the flag and not the ball. If they attempt to block a pass, they may not make contact with the passer in any manner, even if the ball is touched or blocked.

RETURNS FROM END ZONE

- Passes, interceptions, and punts may be returned from end zones, but not from behind the end line.
- An interception in the end zone can be advanced or downed for a touchback (ball placed on the 14 yard line) if downed or de-flagged in the end zone.
- A player that moves the ball out of the end zone and scrambles back into the end zone and is de-flagged will result in a safety.

MOMENTUM RULE

- IT IS NOT A SAFETY, when a Team B (defensive/receiving) player intercepts a forward pass, fumble, backward pass, or catches a punt between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his/her team's possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where possession was gained.

INADVERTENT WHISTLE

- A live ball becomes dead when an official sounds the whistle, even if inadvertently.
- If an inadvertent whistle happens during a live play, the following will happen:
 - The ball is in player possession-the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where it was declared dead when the whistle blew or replay the down.
 - The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass-the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
 - During a legal forward pass or a free or protected scrimmage kick-the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

MOTION

- Only one offensive player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. This motion must begin more than one second before the ball is snapped, and must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.
- A player in motion is not considered to be on the line of scrimmage.

FALSE START

- All offensive players (except the player in motion) must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head, or arms for at least one full second before the snap.

SPIKING THE BALL

- Deliberately throwing the ball down after any play is a five yard penalty. A spike will be allowed on Touchdowns as long as it is not unsportsmanlike in any way.
- If judged to be unsportsmanlike toward the other team or official(s) it may be a 10 yard penalty.
- Taunting at any time will be a 10 yard penalty.

PENALTY MEASUREMENT

- A penalty measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.
- Any offensive penalty behind the basic spot (previous spot or succeeding spot), shall be enforced from the spot of the foul if accepted by the defense.
- If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, which is now the basic spot, it is a safety.

STEALING THE BALL

- No opponent may attempt to strip (steal) the ball from the ball carrier.
- The ball is dead and belongs to the ball carrier. There will also be a 10 yard penalty, enforced against the defense. This is not to be confused with a fumble that can be caught in the air and advanced.

NEUTRAL ZONE

- There will be a one yard separation between the offensive line of scrimmage (point of the ball) and the defensive line of scrimmage.
- This will be designated by a spot with two markers for both the offensive (orange) and defensive (yellow) lines of scrimmage.

ENCROACHMENT

- No offensive or defensive player may penetrate the neutral zone area by any part of their body once the Line Judge has set the lines.
- The first time is a 5 yard penalty and two consecutive encroachment penalties during the same series of downs by the defense will result in the second penalty being assessed 10 yards.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are 10 yards and loss of down if on the offense, and 10 yards and automatic first down if on the defense.
- Extreme cases of unsportsmanlike conduct can lead to a player ejection.
- Swearing at the official, throwing the ball at the official, grabbing the official, tying flags, fighting, tackling, intentional tripping, unnecessary roughness, or any other acts deemed unsportsmanlike by the official will lead to automatic ejection.
- Two unsportsmanlike penalties per player or non-player will lead to an automatic ejection and possible forfeiture of the game.
- Four (4) unsportsmanlike penalties on a team in one game will result in forfeiture of the game.

MERCY RULE

- The game will be called under the mercy rule if the point differential is 19 points (25 points Co-Rec) with two minutes or less remaining in the second half.

BLOOD RULE

- If and when an official observes a player is bleeding, or has an open wound, or has an excessive amount of blood on his/her uniform (clothing), the player must leave the game.
- In an instance when a substitute is not available, the official may allow time for the player to receive medical attention, but the time may not be excessive in the judgment of the official.
- If a substitute is available, the player must leave and may not re-enter until after the clock has run and a substitution opportunity occurs.

CO-REC RULES

- **The Game** shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players (4 men and 4 women). A team may play with uneven numbers of men and women as long as the number of either gender does not exceed four (4). A minimum of six (6) players are needed to begin and continue play.
 - Teams with 7 players shall be: 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men
 - Teams with 6 players shall be: 3 men and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, 2 men and 4 women
- **The Ball** may be a regular, intermediate, youth or junior size football.
- The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the time of the snap.
- **Male Runner**, A Team A male runner may not receive the ball (from either a male or female passer) behind Team A's scrimmage line and advance the ball through the scrimmage line. There are no restrictions:
 - during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the Team A scrimmage line;
 - during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession.
- **Open/Closed Plays** – After the change of possession, a team will begin their offensive series with an “open” play. In “open” plays, any gender passer may complete a pass to any gender receiver. During a “closed” play, either the passer or receiver (or both) MUST be a female if the pass is completed.
- **Male-to-Male Completion**, during the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule also applies to the point after try.
 - If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next play will be CLOSED. During a CLOSED play, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards.
 - The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the Team A scrimmage line (i.e., positive yards) to OPEN the play.
 - If a female is involved as the passer and/or receiver during a completed legal forward pass for positive yardage, the next play will be OPEN.
 - A running play or any other play where a completed legal forward pass is not involved will NOT open the next play.
 - Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next play from scrimmage is “open” or “closed”.
- **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. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half, and that creates a point differential of 25 or more the game shall end at that point.
- **TOUCHDOWN VALUE:** If any female player scores a touchdown (either by passing/receiving or running), the point value is 9.

EJECTION

- In the case of an ejection, the player not only must leave the premises but also needs to meet with the Assistant Director or Coordinator of Intramural Sports before she/he may participate in the next activity.
- Upon ejection the player is ineligible from all intramural activities until he/she has met with the Assistant Director or Coordinator of Intramural Sports to determine the length of the suspension, and any other course of action. Any person ejected from an intramural contest is subject to a probation period, at minimum, for the remainder of the sports season.

THE INTRAMURAL STAFF HAS THE RIGHT TO STOP A GAME IF THEY DEEM IT NECESSARY!!!