Ashland University
Department of Recreational Services
Intramural Flag Football Rules
Updated: 07/03/13

Playing Area and Conditions
- All games will be played on the intramural fields.
- All rules not covered in this manual are in compliance with NIRSA guidelines.
- Weather information – check imleagues.com under announcements for cancellations
- Any personal items (ID’s, keys, equipment, etc.) left at any intramural site and found by any intramural employee will be taken to the “lost and found” at customer service in the Recreation Center.
- Jewelry is not allowed.
- Seven players constitute a team. On offense, four players must be on the line of scrimmage.
- A team may not start or continue a game with less than five players

Equipment
- Teams may check out jerseys and flag belts at the intramural fields. An AU ID must be used to check out equipment.
- Teams may wear their own jerseys (with numbers) provided they are the same color.
- Each player must wear the flag belts provided
- Shirts must be tucked in so that the flag can be easily seen and grabbed. If a sweatshirt is worn, it must be tucked in a manner in which it will not cover the flag belts.
- **No belt loops or pockets on any form of pants will be allowed.**
- **No hats or any headgear containing knots are allowed. No hooded shirts or hooded sweatshirts are allowed.** Stocking hats and headbands are allowed to be worn during flag football as long as they have no knots.
- Metal cleats are illegal. Players may not participate in sandals, boots, dress shoes, or barefoot. Players wearing illegal shoes become susceptible to disqualification.
- Casts or metal braces must be covered by a soft material.

Illegal Participation (10-yard penalty)
- More than seven players on the field after the snap
- An injured player is not replaced for one down
- A disqualified player reenters the game.
  - (all three are a 10-yard penalty)
**The Snap**
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. Players must be set for one second prior to the snap. The quarterback must be at least 3 to 8 yards behind the snapper.

**Field**
Approximately 80-yard fields with 10-yard end zones will be used. Outdoor fields will be 40-yards wide.

**Length of Game**
The game will start with a captain’s meeting and a coin flip.

- The winner of the flip will have the option of receiving the ball in the first half or defer to the second half.
- The losing teams will then have the option of which goal to defend to start the game.
- To start the game and to start the second half, there will be a kickoff. After all touchdowns the ball will be spotted on the 20-yard line.
- 2-20 minute halves with a 5-minute half time.
- Continuous clock (except for timeouts)
- During the last two minutes of the game, the clock will stop when the ball is dead:
  - first downs
  - touchdowns
  - penalties
  - safeties
  - touchbacks
  - time-outs
  - injuries
  - punts
  - out of bounds
  - incomplete pass

During the last two minutes of the game the clock will be stopped for the extra points and will not run during the try.

**Overtime**
There will be no overtime in the regular season. During the playoffs, a coin flip will determine possession of the ball. Each team will get four plays from the 10-yard line to score. Teams may go for one or two point conversions after a score. If the defensive team intercepts the ball and runs it back for a touchdown they will win the game within the overtime period. If a game remains tied after one overtime period the process will continue until we have a winner.

Each team will get one additional time out per overtime session.

**Blocking**
Offensive screen blocking shall take place without contact. It is similar to a screen 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. 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 the offensive blocker it will be a 10-yard penalty and could lead to ejections. **Hands must always stay behind your back at all times for both genders.**

**Punting**

When punting the ball, a punting team must announce its intentions to the officials before the ball is declared ready to play. After such an announcement, the punting team can only change the decision by taking a time out or by accepting a delay of game penalty. The defense must maintain a minimum of four and a maximum of six people on the line of scrimmage until the kick is made. The offensive team must also have a minimum of four and a maximum of six players on the line of scrimmage during a punt. No one may move 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. There shall be no quick kicks.

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 muff the punt)

**Kickoffs**

A free kick begins each half of a game and resumes play following a safety. The ball shall be put in play by a place kick from the kicking team’s 20-yard line. A ball ready for kickoff must be placed on a legal tee or placed on the ground or holder’s shoe must be in contact with the ground.

If the kickoff hits the ground before touching any players it can still be picked up by the receiving team and advanced, but not by the kicking team. (Once touched by the kicking team the ball is dead at that spot. If the ball is touched by the receiving team and dropped it is dead at the spot of the drop. If the kickoff is kicked out of bounds it will be placed on the receiving team’s 40-yard line. *If the ball is not touched by either team and both teams let it go it will be dead at that spot and can not be returned.*

If the ball lands in the end zone it can be brought out or if downed then it is brought out to the 20-yard line.

It is encroachment for any player other than the kicker to be beyond the free kick line after the ball is ready for play and until it is kicked.

**THERE ARE NO ON-SIDE KICKS!!!**

**Fumbles**

Airborne fumbles (a.k.a. backward passes and laterals) may be advanced by either team. Once an airborne fumble has contacted the ground, the ball is dead at that spot.

**Safeties**

If a ball is fumbled in or out of the end zone or a player is deflagged within their own end zone it is a safety and the team that fumbled or got deflagged will have to do a free kick from the 20 yard line.

Accepted offensive penalties occurring in the end zone will result in a safety.
Delay of Game
The ball must be put in play with a backward snap between the legs or from the side within 25 seconds of when the referee blows the whistle after they spot the ball. No direct hand-off snaps are allowed. The ball must be snapped with a quick continuous motion. (5 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage)

First Downs
Each team will have a series of four (4) downs to advance the ball from one end zone to another. Failure to do so in four downs results in loss of the ball to the opponent. The 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 location of the ball when the person is deflagged. 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 forward pass is allowed behind the line of scrimmage. Lateral passes may be thrown at any time. Receivers must have one foot in bounds while in possession of the ball. A receiver who steps out of bounds and returns back to the playing field is ineligible.

Scoring
| Touchdown | 6 points |
| Safety    | 2 points |
| Point after TD | 1 point (from 3 yards) |
| Option    | 2 points (from 10 yards) |

Note: A team is given one choice (one or two points). The declared point value will remain the same even if penalties move the ball closer or farther from the goal. An interception or fumble on a try for an extra point can be returned by the defense for a two-point conversion.

Securing the Flag
The defensive player must not tackle, block, trip or hold the ball carrier while attempting to deflag the ball carrier. If a player trips, holds, or uses any other illegal acts in leaving of their feet, a penalty of ten yards will be called. If flagrant, unsportsmanlike, unnecessary roughness occurs, ejection may also result. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged and intentionally pulling the flag without the offensive player having the ball is illegal. (10-yard penalty)

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. It will become a one hand touch between the neck and waist on the offensive player without the flag.** Also, the person that takes the flag is responsible for returning the flag to the offensive player. Always play until you hear the whistle.

If a player is found wearing a belt that is tied, it will be an automatic ejection from the game. The player will also be ineligible for the next contest. After a score is made, the
referee must pull off the player’s flag. If the flag doesn’t come off the score does not count and the player is ejected. (Additional 10-yard penalty)

**Flag Guarding**
Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. The ball carrier may not hurdle or attempt to jump over another player. The player with the ball may not intentionally dive. The penalty would be a ten-yard penalty and loss of down. A runner must attempt to stay upright.

**Diving or Hurdling**
There is no diving or hurdling allowed for the offensive player in certain situations in a game. Illegal examples of this would be an offensive player trying to score and he/she dives into the end zone or for a first down. It is illegal to hurdle a player to avoid a tackle. Offensive players can’t jump away from a defender to stop them from grabbing their flag.

**Legal Jumping**
They are allowed to jump while running as long as it doesn’t gain them an illegal advantage (up to the discretion of the referee). Other times that an offensive player can dive or jump is when the player is trying to catch a ball. Defensive players can dive for flags and for the ball.

**Player Down**
A runner or receiver is also down if any part of him/her touches the ground other than a hand or foot.

Rushers chasing the passer must play the flag and not the ball. If they attempt to block a pass, they may not contact the passer in any manner, even if the ball is touched or blocked. This will result in a ten-yard penalty and an Automatic First Down.

**Returns from End Zone**
Passes, interceptions, and kicks may be returned from end zones, but not from behind the out of bounds lines. An interception in the end zone can be advanced or become a touchback (ball placed on the 20-yard line) if downed or deflagged in the end zone.

**Inadvertent Whistle**
A live ball becomes dead when an official sounds the whistle, even if inadvertently. If an inadvertent whistle happens the following will happen:

- The ball is in player possession; the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
- The ball is looses from a fumble, backwards 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**
When the ball is snapped, only one offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the line of scrimmage. A player in motion on the line of scrimmage must not be one of the four scrimmage line players.
**False Start**
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. Penalty is five yards.

**Spiking the Ball**
Deliberately throwing the ball down after any play is a 5-yard penalty. If judged to be unsportsmanlike toward the other team or official it may be a 10-yard penalty. Any taunting at any time will be a 10-yard penalty.

**Penalty Measurement**
A penalty measurement that would take the ball into the end zone will be placed on the 1-yard line. Thus no penalties will take half the distance.

**Stealing the Ball**
An opponent may not snatch (steal) the ball from the ball carrier. The ball is dead and offensive keeps the football. There will also be a 10-yard penalty (from the spot of the penalty). This is not to be confused with a fumble that can be caught in the air and advanced.

**Neutral Zone**
There will be a 3-yard separation between the offensive line of scrimmage (point of the ball) and the defensive line of scrimmage. The only time this will change is if the offensive team is on the 1 or 2 yard line. Then the neutral zone will go down to 2-yards. A spot will designate this with two markers for both the offensive and defensive lines of scrimmage.

**Encroachment**
(Offside) Offensive or defensive teams may not penetrate scrimmage neutral zone areas once the snapper has his/her hands on the ball. The first time is a 5-yard penalty and two consecutive encroachment penalties will make the second one a 10-yard penalty. (equal to 15-yards) It is not at the point of the foul.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct**
- 10 yards plus loss of down on offense
- 10 yards plus automatic first down on defense
- Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties on one player results in an ejection
  Swearing at the official, throwing the ball at the official, grabbing the official, tying flags, fighting, tackling, intentional tripping, or any other form of unnecessary roughness deemed by the official will result in an ejection.

**Mercy Rule**
- 5-minutes with 20 points or more

**Fighting**
Anyone fighting will be automatically suspended for the year.

**Note:** If someone has blood on his or her body or clothing they must have it cleaned before entering the game.

**CO-REC\n**\n**FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**

1. **The Game:** The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women. Teams with 7 players shall be 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men. 6 players, 3 men and 3 women, are required to avoid a forfeit.  
   **Penalty:** *Illegal Participation*, 10 yards

2. **Minimum line players:** The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their line of scrimmage at the snap. **Penalty:** *Illegal Procedure*, 5 yards

3. **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 applies to a try. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass must be to a female receiver or thrown by a female passer. Male passer to a male receiver is not aloud to throw two consecutive backward passes either.  
   **Penalty** for two consecutive passes from Male to Male is 5 yards from the spot of the release and a loss of down.

4. **Mercy Rule** 25 points in the last 2 minutes of the game.

5. **Touchdown Value**  
   Females scores – 9 points  
   Female throws a legal forward or backward pass and any player scores – 9 points

6. All other AU Intramural Flag Football rules apply to Co-Rec Football