



# NU Intramural Sports

## Flag Football Rules

### GENERAL RULES:

1. **All players must present their valid Northeastern University Photo ID to play.** No exceptions! Current, valid NU photo identification must be present in order to participate. Participation will be denied to anyone without their current, valid NU photo identification card.
2. **Jewelry is not allowed to be worn by any participant during an Intramural event.** Any and all dangerous equipment must be removed prior to participation. Jewelry cannot be taped or covered with a band-aid.
3. **GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME!** The minimum number of players must have their Husky Cards turned in, be present on the field and in uniform for a team not to forfeit. The team manager must be responsible for collecting his team's IDs and registering their uniform numbers with the IM staff.
4. **3 Unsportsmanlike Penalties** will result in a team disqualification regardless of the score. 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.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to: Taunting; Abusive or insulting language; Attempting to influence officials decisions; Any acts of unfair play; Intentionally kicking at the ball; Spiking the ball into the ground; Throwing the ball high into the air; Intentionally kicking at any opposing player (DQ); Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player (DQ); Intentionally contacting a game official during the game by persons subject to the rules (DQ).

5. The supervisor on duty reserves the right to remove any player from competition who has violated any NU Intramural Policy or Rule and/or endangered any player or IM staff member. Ejected players must leave the facility. 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.

### THE GAME AND FIELD:

1. All games will be played in Cabot gymnasium. Players must wear athletic clothing and tennis shoes or rubber soled one-piece athletic shoes. Turf shoes and cleats are not allowed.
2. Players must wear the following athletic equipment: Each team must wear matching colored jerseys, which must be tucked in at the waist or cut 4 inches above the waist. Each player on the field must wear a one-piece flag belt at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flag belt must be free of any knots/loops.
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. Bandanas that are without knots, knit stocking caps, elastic headbands, and brimless hats are permitted.
5. **Coin Toss:** Before the start of the game the referee will toss a coin in the presence of opposing captains, after first designating which captain shall call the fall of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:
  - To start on offense or defense
  - To designate which goal his/her team will defend
  - To defer their decision until the second half

The captain losing the coin toss will choose from the remaining options. It is possible for teams to defend the same goal for both halves.

6. **Scoring:** Touchdown: 6 pts; Try-for-points: 1 pt from the 3 yd line, 2 pts from the 10 yd line, or 3 points from the 20 yd line ; Safety: 2 pts. If the ball is intercepted on a try, the play will be signaled dead and the try is over. The defense cannot return an interception on a try.
7. **Game Length:** The game consists of two 20-minute halves. The clock will run continuously during the first half and the first 19 minutes of the second half, except when a timeout is called or at the referee's discretion. During the last minute of the game the clock will stop for an incomplete pass, when a player goes out of bounds, on penalties, on a change or possession, touchdowns, and on first downs. The supervisor has the authority to shorten any game due to time restraints or any other reason. Each team will receive two time outs per half. Timeouts will be 30 seconds in length. The clock will stop for timeouts.
8. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by 19 points or more at the one-minute warning of the second half, the game will end by Mercy Rule. The same rule applies if a team increases their lead to 19 or more points during the last minute of the game. If a team is trailing by 30 or more points at any time in the second half, the game will end immediately.
9. **Overtime:** There is no overtime for tied games during the regular season. During the playoffs there will be overtime. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line. A coin toss will determine which team has the options, as in the beginning of the game. Each team will start 1st and goal from the defense's 20 yd line. An overtime period consists of one series of downs for each team. This process will be repeated until a winner is determined. Try-for-points will be attempted. Interceptions during overtime are not returnable.
10. **Penalties:** Applied according to the regular rules of the 4v4 game as defined by NIRSA.
11. **Yards and Downs:** When a first down is gained in a zone, the team in possession of the ball is allowed 3 downs to move the ball from that point into the next zone. First downs may be gained at midfield.
12. **Forward Pass:** Any member of the passing team is an eligible receiver. All forward passes must originate behind the line of scrimmage. The position of the passer's feet will determine legality. Teams are allowed only one forward pass per down. Any player may hand the ball backward or forward at any time.
13. **Dead ball:** A live ball becomes dead when an official sounds the whistle or declares it dead. The ball will become dead when:
  - The ball goes out of bounds or when it touches the goal line of the ball carrier's opponents
  - Any part of the ball carrier's person other than the hand or foot touches the ground. The ball is considered to be part of the hand.
  - A touchdown, touchback, safety, or try for point is made
  - A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
  - A backward pass or fumble by a player touches the ground. This includes snaps. Backward passes and fumbles may be caught in flight in bounds by any player and advanced
  - A ball carrier has a flag belt removed by a defensive player
  - A ball carrier is legally touched with one hand between the shoulders and knees (including on the hand or arm) once the flag belt is no longer attached
  - The official blows his/her whistle
14. **Punt:** There is no punting in intramural flag football.
15. **Ball in Play:** A team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after the referee has signaled 'ready for play'.  
**PENALTY:** Delay of game is a 3 yard penalty. Dead ball foul.
16. **Out of Bounds:** Only the first foot must touch in bounds in order for a pass reception to be considered legal.
17. **Inadvertent whistle:** In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offensive team shall have the option of replaying the down from the previous spot, or accepting the ball at the spot where it was blown dead. On all loose balls such as a pass in flight, the down must be replayed from the previous spot. After a change of possession, the team in possession at the time the ball is blown dead shall have the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.

18. **Snap:** The snapper does not have to pass the ball back between his/her legs. The player receiving the snap, however, must be two yards behind the scrimmage line. The snap must be made off the ground.

#### **PLAYER RULES:**

1. A team will consist of 5 players each. A minimum 4 players is required to avoid a forfeit. Only one offensive player must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap (the snapper).
2. Substitutes must remain in the designated area during play.

#### **FOULS:**

1. **Blocking:** Offensive screen blocking is legal as long as there is no contact. The screen blocker shall position her/his hands and arms behind her/his back, to her/his sides, or wrapped across her/his chest. Screen blocking down field is legal, however, the blocker must be on her/his feet before, during and after screen blocking. This is judged like a block/charge in basketball. **PENALTY:** Illegal Contact, 5 yard penalty.
2. **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. **PENALTY:** Illegal Contact, 5 yard penalty.
3. **Tackling:** It is a foul for a defensive player to tackle, trip, push, shove, or elbow the ball carrier or blocker. The runner's forward progress may not be impeded in any way. The defensive player may not attempt to strip the ball from the runner. **PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 5 yard penalty, and if flagrant, the offender shall be disqualified.
4. Diving for a flag is illegal. **PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 3 yard penalty.
5. **Ball carrier restrictions:** It is a penalty for the ball carrier to stiff arm, charge into, knee, or try to knock over a defensive player at any time. This is judged like a block/charge foul in basketball. Spinning is legal. Diving for extra yardage is illegal. The ball carrier must be in control of his/her body at all times. **PENALTY:** Personal Foul, 5 yard penalty, and the player will be ejected if flagrant.

#### **General Participant Play**

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.