

# Flag Football Rules

Revised 12/22/11

## GENERAL RULES & REGULATIONS

### GENERAL INFO

1. All participants must meet the eligibility requirements listed in the Intramural Sports Policies and Procedures handbook. **Each player must be an FIU student or current FIU Recreation Member.** All expired memberships must be updated before the individual may play in any game. Participants must have their Panther ID at every game. Any games in which an ineligible player signs in will be considered a forfeit.
2. All intramural participants must personally sign the **Waiver Release** and are responsible for their own medical expenses.
3. **Teams are responsible for keeping their players and spectators under control.** Misconduct of players, coaches, managers or spectators can result in penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain within the area designated by the IM Sports staff.
4. Alcoholic beverages, smoking, and pets are prohibited from all intramural contests.
5. IM Sports Officials/Supervisors will have absolute authority during the contest and can make decisions on any matter or question not specifically covered in the rules.
6. The **2011 & 2012 NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules** will govern play, with the modifications listed in sections below.

## SECTION 1: THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

### THE GAME

1. All games shall be played on the date and hour scheduled. **If, at the scheduled game time, a team does not have 5 players, a 10-minute grace period will be granted in an attempt to ensure that the game is played. The 10-minute grace period will be deducted from the actual game time. During this grace period, the team with the minimum number of players present will be awarded 1 point for every minute or portion of a minute after the scheduled start time up to the tenth minute. If, at the end of the grace period, the team still does not have the minimum number of players the game will be declared a forfeit.**
2. The game shall be played between two teams of **seven (7)** players. A team can play with a minimum of 5 players. The game can continue with less than 5 players if the official determines they have a chance to win.
3. All players must have checked in with the scorekeeper and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate.
4. Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time-outs.

### THE FIELD

1. The field shall be 80 yards long, divided into four 20 yard zones, by 32 yards wide with two 10 yard end zones. There shall be lines at each 3 and 10 yard line to designate the line of scrimmage for PAT attempts. Both 14 yard lines shall be marked with an "X", to designate the line of scrimmage to begin the game or following a score, unless moved by penalty.
2. The team box shall be 2 yards off the sideline between the 20 yard lines. All team personnel not on the field, including spectators, must remain in the team box at all times.

### CONCUSSION

1. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional.

## GAME EQUIPMENT

1. Teams may use a legal ball of their choice when in possession. In men's games, only the regular sized ball may be used. In women's or Co-Rec games, regular, intermediate, or youth footballs may be used. Game balls will be provided by the Intramural Sports Department in the case that teams do not have a game ball of their own.
2. Two ball spotters will be used to mark the scrimmage lines. **Orange will designate the offensive scrimmage line and yellow the defensive scrimmage line.** There will always be a 1 yard neutral zone between the spotters.

## PLAYER EQUIPMENT

1. Players of the same team must wear the same or similarly colored jerseys with different numbers. Jerseys must either be long enough to remained tucked in, or short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. If teams do not have jerseys, Intramural Sports will provide pinnies.
2. Each player must wear pants or shorts.
3. Each player must wear a one piece belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag at each side and one flag at the center of the back. Teams must use flag belts provided by Intramural Sports.
4. All players must wear close-toed sneakers or cleats. Cleats must be rubber or a rubber-type synthetic material.
  - The penalty for failing to wear required equipment can be a live or a dead ball foul, with a loss of five yards.
5. Players may wear ace type bandages no more than two turns thick, provided they are not anchored with metal clips.
6. Players may wear soft, pliable gloves.
7. Players may wear soft headbands, and knit or stocking caps, provided that the cap does not have a bill or a knit ball on top.
8. Players may wear soft, pliable knee pads. Players may wear leg or knee braces only if the brace is covered with at least ½" of closed cell, slow recovery rubber, or a material of similar thickness and physical properties.
9. It is strongly recommended that players wear mouth guards.
10. Players may carry a playbook inside their clothing, as long as it is not made of an unyielding material and is not visible. If a playbook is taken on the field, it must be kept by a player. Players may also wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays.
11. Players may wear pliable, non-rigid sunglasses.
12. All jewelry must be removed before participating.
13. Players may not wear headwear containing any hard, unyielding material, or items containing exposed knots.
14. Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against a facial injury.

15. Players may not wear pads or braces above the waist, and may not wear casts anywhere on the body.
16. Players may not wear shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats.
17. Players may not wear shirts or jerseys which do not remain tucked in, or jerseys which have an arm opening more than 4" below the armpit.
18. Players may not wear shorts or pants with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets(s) or exposed drawstrings. A player may not turn his/her shorts inside-out or tape his/her pockets in order to play.
19. Players may not wear towels attached at the waist. A towel may be brought on the field, regardless of weather conditions, but it must be kept by the offensive (orange) ball spotter during play.
  - The penalty for wearing illegal equipment is Unsportsmanlike Conduct, with a loss of 10 yards.

## **SECTION 2: PERIODS, TIMING, SUBSTITUTIONS**

### **COIN TOSS**

1. Toss of the Coin - Before the start of the game, the referee will conduct a captain's meeting **during which Team A will call the toss of the coin**. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of:
  - Choosing offense or defense.
  - Choosing which goal to defend.
  - Choosing to defer selection to the second half.
  - The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option(s).

### **CHANGE OF PERIODS**

1. The team on offense at the beginning of each half will begin at the 14 yard line with the 20 yard line to gain, unless the ball is moved by penalty.

### **GAME TIME**

1. Games will consist of two 20-minute halves with a 3 minute halftime.
2. The clock will run continuously during the 1<sup>st</sup> half, unless stopped by a:
  - a. Team time-out – starts on the snap
  - b. Officials time-out – starts on ready for play
3. The clock will run continuously for the first 18 minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half unless stopped by a team or officials' timeout. At the first dead ball at or inside 2 minutes before the end of the half, the Referee shall stop the clock and administer the Two Minute Warning. The clock will restart on the next snap.
4. During the last 2 minutes of the second half the clock will stop for:
  - a. Incomplete forward pass – starts on the snap.
  - b. Out-of-bounds – starts on snap.
  - c. Scoring play – starts on snap(after the try).
  - d. Touchback – starts on snap

- e. Team time-out – starts on snap.
  - f. First down – dependent upon previous play
  - g. Penalty administration – dependent on previous play (except for Delay of Game – starts on snap).
  - h. Officials' timeout – starts at Referee's discretion.
  - i. Change of possession - starts on the snap
  - j. Either team is awarded a new series following a punt – starts on the snap
  - k. Team attempting to conserve time illegally – starts on the ready
  - l. Team attempting to consume time illegally – starts on the snap
  - m. Inadvertent whistle – starts on the ready
5. A half must be extended by an untimed down if during the last timed down there was a foul that is accepted, other than unsportsmanlike fouls, nonplayer fouls, or fouls which specify a loss of down. A half must also be extended if during the last timed down there was a double foul, an inadvertent whistle, to attempt a PAT or **for a penalty enforcement which results in a safety.**

#### **TIME OUTS**

1. Each team is entitled to three 60-second timeouts per half.
2. If the clock is stopped for an injured player, then that player must be replaced for 1 down.

#### **DELAYS**

1. The ball must be put into play no more than 25 seconds after the ready for play signal has been given.
2. A team may not put the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.
  - The penalty in either case is a Dead Ball Foul, Delay of Game, with a loss of 5 yards.

#### **SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players on the field, provided that all replaced players are off the field before the ball is snapped. However, during the same dead ball interval, no player may leave the game and reenter as a substitute.
  - The penalty is Illegal Substitution with a loss of 5 yards.

### **SECTION 3: BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT OF BOUNDS**

#### **DEAD BALL BECOMES LIVE**

1. A dead ball becomes live when it is legally snapped.

#### **BALL DECLARED DEAD**

1. A live ball becomes dead:
  - a. When it goes out-of-bounds.

- b. When a runner has a flag belt legally removed. A flag belt is considered to be removed when the clip is detached from the belt, if the belt is torn into more than one piece, or if a flag becomes loose on the belt or is torn off the belt.
- c. If the runner's flag belt inadvertently falls off, the runner is down when the defender legally tags the runner with one hand between the knees and shoulders.
- d. The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet (ball is part of hand).
- e. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made.
- f. When the ball strikes the ground following first touching by the kicking team.
- g. When a player of the kicking team catches a punt which is beyond the neutral zone; when an untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it.
- h. A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
- i. When a backward pass or fumble strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players, or when a snapped ball hits the ground.
- j. When a muff of a punt strikes the ground.
- k. When an official sounds his/her whistle inadvertently during a down.

### **OUT OF BOUNDS**

- 1. A player, whether in possession of the ball or not, is declared out-of-bounds when any part of the person is touching anything, other than another player or game official, who is on or outside the sideline or end line.
- 2. A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, who is out-of-bounds.

### **SECTION 4: SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWN, AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY**

#### **PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY**

- 1. The ball will be put in play using the following procedure:
  - a. Start of the first or second half at the 14 yard line.
  - b. After a touchdown -- 14 yard line.
  - c. After a safety or touchback -- 14 yard line.
  - d. Overtime -- 10 yard line.
  - e. After a change of possession – end of the run
  - f. After a failed 4<sup>th</sup> down attempt – previous spot

#### **SERIES – HOW STARTED, HOW BROKEN, RENEWED**

#### **SERIES OF DOWNS**

- 1. A team shall have 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone. Any down may be repeated or lost by penalty.

#### **ZONE LINE TO GAIN**

- 1. The zone line to gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless moved by penalty. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line to gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead, shall be the determining factor.

## **AWARDING A NEW SERIES**

1. A new series shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty, or when an accepted penalty against the opponent results in a first down.

## **DOWN & POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY**

### **PENALTY RESULTING IN FIRST DOWN**

1. Any penalty which leaves the ball in possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with next zone line-to-gain.

### **FOUL BEFORE CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION**

1. Following a distance penalty between goal lines which occurs during a down and before any change of team possession during that down, the ball belongs to Team A. The down shall be repeated unless the penalty also involves a loss of a down, or leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain. If the penalty involves a loss of down, the down shall count as one of the four in that series.

### **FOUL AFTER CHANGE OF TEAM POSSESSION**

1. Following a distance penalty for a foul committed after team possession has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred. The down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with zone line-to-gain.

### **PENALTY DECLINED**

1. If a penalty is declined the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

## **SECTION 5: KICKING THE BALL**

### **PUNTS**

1. Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee must ask the offensive team if they want to punt. Once the declaration to punt is made, the Referee will announce the decision to both teams. Once the decision is made and the ball is marked ready for play, the ball must be punted, unless a penalty occurs or a time-out is called.
2. The kicking team must have 4 players on their line of scrimmage at the time the ball is snapped and the punter must receive the snap at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Players from either team may not cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is kicked.
  - Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.
3. Defensive players may jump to block the kick.
4. The ball may be run back if it touches the ground before hitting a player.
5. Punts that break the plane of the receiving team's goal line are dead and the receiving team will take possession at their 14.
6. A fumbled or muffed punt is dead where it touches the ground.
7. Quick kicks and fake punts are illegal.

- Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards.
8. If the punt is blocked by any receiving player behind the kicking team's scrimmage line and then caught by a kicking team player behind the kicking team's scrimmage line, the kicking team may run and/or throw a pass.

### **KICK CATCH INTERFERENCE**

1. While any punt is in flight, the kicking team may not interfere with a receiver's right to catch a punt, unless the punt has already been touched by the receiving team. The kicking team may catch or touch a punt if there is no member of the receiving team in position to catch the ball.
  - Penalty: Kick Catch Interference. The receiving team may choose to accept a 10 yard penalty from the previous spot and replay the down, or they may accept an awarded catch at the spot of the foul.

### **SIGNALS**

1. There are no fair catches. All signals given by a receiver should be ignored.

## **SECTION 6: SNAPPING, HANDING, AND PASSING THE BALL**

### **THE START**

1. All plays must be started by a legal snap.

### **BALL RESPONSIBILITY**

1. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after each down.

### **STANCES**

1. Players may use a 2, 3, or 4 point stance.

### **ENCROACHMENT**

1. After the ready-for-play whistle has been blown, no defensive player may enter into the neutral zone for any reason (e.g. signal plays, shift into defensive position, etc.), touch the ball, or contact opponents/ interfere with them in any way.
  - Penalty: Dead Ball, Encroachment, 5 yards from succeeding spot. If this occurs 2 or more times by the defense during the interval between downs, the penalty will be 10 yards thereafter.

### **FALSE START**

1. No offensive player shall make a false start. This includes simulating a charge or start of play. The ball does *not* have to be snapped for this to occur.
  - Penalty: Dead Ball, False Start, 5 yards from succeeding spot.

### **SNAP**

1. The snapper, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion, not necessarily between the center's legs. The player receiving the snap must be 2 yards off the ball for a scrimmage play and for a punt. The center may not snap a ball to him/herself.
  - Penalty: Dead Ball, Illegal Snap, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

### **MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS**

1. The offensive team must have 4 players on their line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. The remaining offensive players may be on line of scrimmage or in the back field.
  - Penalty: Illegal Formation, 5 yards

### **MOTION**

1. Only one offensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. This motion must not be toward the opponent's goal line(forward).
  - Penalty: Illegal motion, 5 yards

### **SHIFT**

1. If two or more players go in motion before the snap, then this is considered a shift and all players must come set for one full second prior to the snap.
  - Penalty: Illegal shift, 5 yards

### **DIRECT SNAP**

1. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage. The receiver of the snap may not be directly under center.
  - Penalty: Illegal Formation, 5 yards

### **HANDOFFS, BACKWARD PASS, & FUMBLES**

1. A runner may pass the ball backwards or lose player possession by a fumble anytime.
2. Fumbles are dead when the ball touches the ground. The ball is put into play by the fumbling team at the point where the ball first touched the ground.
3. A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight by any player and advanced.
4. If a backward pass or a fumble in flight is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.
5. A backwards pass or fumble that goes out of bounds between the goal lines belongs to the offensive team at the out of bounds spot. A backwards pass or fumble by the offense into its own end-zone will result in a safety. If the ball is fumbled into the opponent's end-zone the result is a touchback (opponent's ball on their 14 yard line).
6. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

### **LEGAL OR ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS**

1. All players are eligible to touch or receive a pass. A forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is released. Only one forward pass may be thrown per down.
2. A forward pass is illegal if:
  - a. The passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is released.
  - b. Thrown after team possession has changed.
  - c. Intentionally thrown to the ground or out of bounds to save a loss of yardage.
  - d. A passer catches his/her own untouched forward pass
  - e. There is more than one forward pass per down.
  - f. When an illegal forward pass touches the ground or goes out of bounds, the ball belongs to the offensive team at the spot the ball touches the ground or goes out of bounds. If a

player catches an illegal forward pass, the ball continues to be in play until declared dead.

- Penalty: Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down.

### **COMPLETED OR INTERCEPTED PASSES**

1. A forward pass is caught or intercepted when:
  - The player comes down with at least one foot in bounds while maintaining control of the ball through contact with the ground.
  - The player makes the catch when kneeling or prone inbounds.
2. A simultaneous catch by players on opposing teams shall result in an immediate dead ball with the offense maintaining possession at the spot of the simultaneous catch.
3. When a forward pass touches the ground or anything out of bounds, it becomes dead and is ruled an incomplete pass.

### **FORWARD PASS INTERFERENCE**

1. During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the line of scrimmage, **whether the pass is catchable or uncatchable**, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver/defender is pass interference, unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible players make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach the ball. Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to play the ball is pass interference, even though contact may not be made. It is also pass interference if an eligible player is deflagged/tagged prior to touching a forward pass.
2. After the ball is snapped, and until the pass has been touched by any player, there shall be no offensive pass interference.
  - Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down
3. After the pass is thrown, and until the pass has been touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference.
  - Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, automatic first down.

### **SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK**

#### **MERCY RULE**

1. If a team is ahead by 19 or more points at or inside the 2 minute warning of the second half, the game is over.

#### **TOUCHDOWN**

1. It is a touchdown when a loose ball is caught by a player behind the opponent's goal line or when a runner advances so that the ball penetrates the vertical plane of the goal line. Touchdowns are worth 6 points.
2. The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms to be deflagged by the official. If the official is not able to remove the flag belt and determines that the belt was illegally secured, the touchdown is disallowed, the offending team is penalized, and the player is disqualified.

- Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot. If committed by the offense, loss of down. If committed by the defense, automatic first down.

### **TRY = 1, 2, OR 3 POINTS**

1. Following a touchdown, the scoring team shall be given an opportunity to score 1 point from the 3 yard line, 2 points from the 10 yard line, or 3 points from the 20 yard line by running or passing. The Referee will ask the scoring captain whether the try shall be from the 3, 10, or 20. Once the declaration has been made, the Referee will announce the decision. Once the ball is marked ready for play, the offense may not change its mind unless a time-out is called. **If the defense should intercept a pass, the ball will be declared dead and the extra point attempt over.**
2. Fouls during a try before team B possession:
  - If a double foul occurs during a down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by Team A during a successful Try, the down will be repeated, if accepted. However, if a Team A penalty carries a loss of down, the Try has ended and will not be repeated.

### **SAFETY = 2 POINTS**

It is a safety when:

- A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line and it becomes dead there in his/her team's possession.
- The exception to this is the Momentum Rule: When a defensive player intercepts a ball or when a player receives a punt inside his/her own 5 yard line and his/her original momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball is declared dead, the ball belongs to the defensive/receiving team at the spot where possession was gained.
- An offensive player commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her own end zone.
- A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her goal line and the ball becomes dead there in his/her possession.

### **TOUCHBACK**

It is a touchback when:

- K or R downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind R's goal line or no one attempts to secure the ball.
- The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except for an incomplete pass); or when the ball becomes dead after a player gains possession on, above, or behind, the player's own goal line after a change of possession.
- Punts that break the plane of the receiving team's goal line are dead and result in a touchback.

## **SECTION 8: CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS**

### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

1. No player or nonplayer shall commit the following acts:
  - Refusing to comply or abide by the decision of an official of disrespectfully addressing an official.
  - Using words similar to offensive audibles or quarterback cadences prior to the snap
  - Intentionally kicking at the ball.
  - Spiking the ball
  - Participating while wearing illegal player equipment.

- Using profanity, taunting, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures.
- Leaving the team area and entering the field to participate during a fight.
  - Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards. Any player who participates in a fight shall be disqualified.

### **UNFAIR ACTS**

1. No player or nonplayer shall use words or phrases or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit or fair play for the purpose of confusing the opponent.

### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL ACCUMULATION**

1. Personal Unsportsmanlike Fouls:
  - If a player commits his/her 2<sup>nd</sup> unsportsmanlike foul in a game, the player shall be ejected from the game.
  - If a player commits his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> unsportsmanlike foul in a season, the player shall be disqualified from the league/ tournament.
2. Team Unsportsmanlike Fouls
  - If a team commits 4 unsportsmanlike foul in a game, the team shall forfeit the game.
  - If a team commits 5 unsportsmanlike fouls in a league/tournament, the team shall be disqualified from the league/tournament.

### **PERSONAL FOULS**

#### **RESTRICTIONS**

1. No player or nonplayer shall:
  - Punch, strike, strip, steal or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possessions.
  - Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
  - Make contact of any nature with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary.
  - Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
  - Throw the runner to the ground.
  - Deliberately drive or run into an opponent.
  - Tackle the runner
  - Fight an opponent
    - Penalty: 10 yards, and if flagrant, the offender will be disqualified.

### **ROUGHING THE PASSER**

1. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer or making contact with the passer's throwing arm after it is clear that the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back after releasing a legal forward pass. Roughing the passer restrictions only apply to legal forward passes.
  - Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards to the end of the play, Automatic First Down.

### **SCREEN BLOCKING**

1. Blocking, as in regulation tackle football, is prohibited. Screen blocking is permitted, provided that the blocker does not use hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. The principle of screen blocking is the same as the block/charge principle in basketball. Screen blockers may not be interlocked with another teammate.

- Penalty - Personal foul, 10 yards.
2. Opponents must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to displace the opponent.
    - Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards

### **FLAG BELT REMOVAL**

1. When the flag belt is taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A ball carrier is considered deflagged when the clip of the flag belt becomes detached, not where the belt falls to the ground. The succeeding spot will be determined by the position of the ball at the time the player was deflagged.
2. Players must have possession of the ball before they can be legally deflagged by an opponent.
3. When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose before in possession of the ball, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one hand tag of the runner between the knees and shoulders.
4. An opponent intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should be allowed to continue with the option of the penalty or the result of the play.
  - Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards
5. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage, including tying, is illegal.
  - Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards from the previous spot and Player Disqualification. If by the offense, loss of down. If by the defense, automatic first down.
6. If a nonplayer deflags or interferes with the runner
  - Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards. The Referee will award a touchdown and disqualify the nonplayer.
6. A player may leave his/her feet to remove a flag.
7. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag. These actions include, but are not limited to:
  - 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 which places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from deflagging.
    - Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards.
  - d. An offensive player may not stiff arm to ward off an opponent.
    - Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.
8. A runner shall not charge into an opponent. If the defensive player is in position to pull the flag, it is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact.
  - Penalty: Personal foul, 10 yards.
9. An opponent shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag.
  - Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

### **ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION**

1. It is Illegal Participation:
  - To have more than the maximum allowed number of players participating at the snap.
  - If an injured player, for which the officials stop the clock, is not replaced for one down, unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs.
  - If an offensive or kicking team player goes out of bounds and returns inbounds during the down to participate, unless that player is blocked out of bounds. If a player is blocked out of bounds, he/she must return inbounds immediately.
    - Penalty: Illegal Participation, 10 yards

## **SECTION 9: ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES**

### **PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL**

1. A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. Types of fouls are:
  - a. Dead Ball – A foul which occurs in the time between downs.
  - b. Live Ball – A foul which occurs during a down.
  - c. Simultaneous with the Snap - An act which becomes a foul when the ball is snapped.
3. When a foul is committed, the offended captain shall have the choice of accepting the penalty or taking the result of the play.
4. If a live ball foul is followed by a dead ball foul, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.
5. Establishing the Zone Line to Gain
  - a. On a live ball, mark off the penalty yardage first then establish the zone line to gain
  - b. Penalties which occur with succeeding spot enforcement which are prior to the ready for play signal shall be administered before establishing the zone line to gain.
  - c. Penalties for fouls with succeeding spot enforcement which occur after the ready for play signal shall be administered after setting the zone line to gain.

### **TYPES OF PLAYS AND BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS**

1. When the ball is live, 1 of 2 types of plays are in progress, either a loose ball or a running play. The type of play determines the basic spot of enforcement for penalties. A loose ball penalty occurs when neither team is in possession of the ball. All action preceding a loose ball is considered part of a loose ball play. A running play occurs when a team is in possession of the ball.
2. Any live ball foul is penalized according to the All-But-One Enforcement Principle. The basic spot for loose ball plays is the previous spot. The basic spot for running plays is the end of the run. The exception for this is the All-But-One Principle, which means that the basic spot of enforcement for a live ball foul by the offense is the spot at which the foul occurred.

### **SPECIAL ENFORCEMENTS**

1. A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.
2. If the offensive team commits a penalty in its own end zone and the penalty is accepted, a safety shall be awarded.

3. If there is a foul by the offensive team on a touchdown, acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a touchdown, the scoring team may keep the touchdown and choose to have the foul enforced either on the try or on the opponent's next possession.
4. If there is a foul by the offense during a try, acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a foul by the defense on an unsuccessful try, the offense may accept the penalty and replay the try. If there is a foul by the defense on a successful try, the penalty will be enforced on the opponent's next possession.
5. If either team commits a foul after a change of possession during a try or overtime, the penalty shall be enforced at the succeeding spot.
6. It is a double foul if both teams commit fouls on the same play. The penalties offset and the down is replayed.
  - EXCEPTION: If each team commits a foul on a down where a change of possession occurs, the team last gaining possession may keep the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession. This is referred to as the Clean-Hands Principle.
7. When two or more live ball fouls are committed during the same down by the same team, only one penalty may be accepted by the offending team, unless one or more of the fouls is Unsportsmanlike. All Unsportsmanlike fouls may be accepted.
8. Fouls by the offense which include loss of down are Illegal Backward Pass, Illegal Forward Pass, Offensive Pass Interference, and Illegally Secured Flag Belt.
9. Fouls by the defense which give the offense an automatic first down are Defensive Pass Interference, Roughing the Passer, and Illegally Secured Flag Belt.

## **SECTION 10: VARIATIONS TO NORMAL SITUATIONS**

### **CO-REC RULE VARIATIONS**

1. Each team will consist of 8 players. The minimum number of players necessary to start a game is 6. The acceptable combinations for Co-Rec are 4 men/4 women, 4 men/3 women, 4 women/3men, 4 men/2 women, 4 women/2men, & 3 women/3 men. A game may continue with less than 6 players if the officials determine that the team has a chance to win.
  - Penalty: Illegal participation, 10 yards
2. A regular, intermediate or youth size ball may be used.
3. The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
  - Penalty: Illegal formation, 5 yards
4. A male runner cannot advance the ball through the line of scrimmage. There are no restrictions during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the line of scrimmage, during a run by a female runner, or after a change of possession.
  - Penalty: Illegal advancement, 5 yards from the previous spot
5. 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 extra point (try). If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal 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 scrimmage line. There are no restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male.
  - Penalty: Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed legal forward pass is released, and a loss of down. Note: Any foul,

whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is open or closed.

6. If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the scrimmage line and he runs beyond the scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.
  - Penalty: Illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down
7. If a team is ahead by 25 points or more at the 2 minute warning of the second half or any time thereafter, the game will be over.
8. If a female scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored, the point value is 9.

#### **TIE GAME PROCEDURE (Playoffs Only)**

1. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, overtime will be played.
  - The officials will conduct a coin toss. The winning captain shall have the option of offense, defense, or choosing the side of the field where the overtime will be played. The losing captain will have the remaining choice.
  - Each team will be given 4 downs from 10 yard line to score.
  - Conversion attempts will be held as in regulation play.
  - If the defensive team intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown the game will be over.
  - If the score is tied at the end of the first overtime, a second overtime will be played. The captain that did not win the coin toss will have the option. This process will be repeated until a winner is determined, with the choice of options alternating each round.
  - All overtime periods will be played at the same end of the field.
  - Each team is entitled to one time out for the entire overtime.

#### **SECTION 11: SUMMARY OF FOULS & PENALTIES**

1. Loss of 5 Yards:
  - Required equipment worn illegally.
  - Delay of game.
  - Illegal substitution.
  - Illegal formation.
  - Illegal snap.
  - False start.
  - Encroachment.
  - Illegal procedure.
  - Illegal motion.
  - Illegal forward pass (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
  - Intentional grounding (5 yards from point of pass and loss of down).
  - Helping the runner.
  - Illegal backward pass out of bounds to conserve time.
  - Illegal advancement (Co-Rec).
  - Illegal Shift.
2. Loss of Ten Yards
  - Illegal player equipment.
  - Quick kick or illegal kick.

- Kick catch interference.
- Two or more consecutive encroachments during same interval between downs. The initial encroachment is a 5 yard penalty.
- Illegal participation.
- Offensive pass interference. (Loss of down).
- Defensive pass interference. (Automatic 1st down).
- Illegally secured belt on touchdown. (Revoke touchdown and loss of down).
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Spiking the ball
- Attempt to steal the ball from the carrier.
- Hurdling.
- Unnecessary contact of any sort.
- Roughing the passer (Automatic 1st down).
- Defensive use of hands.
- Guarding the flag belt (and stiff arming).
- Illegal batting.
- Illegal flag belt removal.
- Personal foul.
- Flagrant Unsportsmanlike conduct. (Disqualification).
- Flagrant personal fouls. (Disqualification).
- Intentionally tampering with flag belt. (Disqualification).

<b>Automatic First Down Penalties</b>	<b>Loss-of- Down Penalties</b>
1. Defensive Pass Interference	1. Offensive Pass Interference
2. Defensive Illegally Secured Flag Belt	2. Offensive Illegally Secured Flag Belt
3. Roughing the Passer	3. Illegal Forward or Backward Pass

#### **4-On-4 Football Rules Summary**

1. The game shall be played between 2 teams of 4 players each. Three players are required to avoid a forfeit.
2. The field measures 40 yards in length, goal line to goal line, and 30 yards in width.
3. The ball shall be placed at the 10 yard line to begin each half and following a try, touchback, or safety, unless moved by penalty.
4. Playing time shall be two 10-minute halves.
  - The clock will start on the snap to begin each half. It will run continuously during the first half and for the first 9 minutes of the second half, unless stopped by a team or an official timeout.
  - Approximately 1 minute before the end of the second half, the referee shall stop the clock and inform the captains of the remaining time.
  - The clock will stop in the final 1 minute according to NFHS tackle football timing rules.
5. Regular season games can end in ties. If a playoff game ends in a regulation tie, then each team will attempt to score by passing from the 3 yard line for 1 point or from the 10 yard line for 2 points or from the 20 yard line for 3 points. The process will be repeated until the tie is broken. If the defense causes a turnover, the try is over.
6. Each team is entitled to one charged timeout per game including overtimes.
7. A team shall have 3 consecutive downs to advance the ball to the next zone.
8. The offensive team must have at least 1 player on their scrimmage line at the snap.
9. A runner cannot advance a ball past the offensive scrimmage line.
10. There must be a legal forward pass each down. The receiver must catch the ball beyond the offensive scrimmage line. The offense has 7 seconds to release the ball. If not, it is a loss of down and the ball is next snapped at the previous spot. The referee will sound the whistle at 7 seconds if the passer has possession of the football.

11. The mercy rule does not apply.
12. There are no punts.
13. All 10 yard penalties are enforced 5 yards and all 5 yard penalties are enforced 3 yards.