



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S LEAGUES GENERAL RULES

RULE 0. SFASU RULES AND EXCEPTIONS SECTION 1. STARTING THE GAME

Article 1. Eligibility

Every player must meet the eligibility requirements set forth in the Intramural Sports Policies and Procedures manual. Any individual that participated with varsity football is eligible to participate as long as they do not appear on a varsity roster during the current academic year. Any participants who are or have played for professional or semi-professional teams in football or flag football are not eligible to participate, no matter how long they have been removed.

Article 2. Player Equipment

- **NO POCKETS ARE ALLOWED TO BE WORN BY ANY PARTICIPANT DURING PLAY.** Pockets may not be taped or zipped up. Intramural Sports Staff (site managers and officials) has the right to refuse you the right to play in any contest if pockets are seen or if the participant refuses to allow staff to check for pockets. If pockets are seen during a game, the official's may penalize your team for illegal equipment and the player can be ejected.
- **Jerseys** with an opening more than 4" below the armpit may not be worn during play. Cut off shirts or shirts that have been manipulated must be able to remain tucked in or short enough to not interfere with the flag belt. Shirts that have been ripped and tied together creating a large hole on the sides are **ILLEGAL**.

Article 3. Field Rules

- **Teams:** Only officials, players, and one coach are permitted on the fields. All spectators are to remain in the stands and no closer than the bleachers.
- Teams are allowed one (1) non-playing coach in the designated team area.
- Use of electronic devices for coaching purposes is prohibited.
 - No use of cell phones to discuss game play with spectators across the field.
- **TOBACCO use is prohibited on the IMS Field Complex. Failure to comply with all intramural Rules and Regulations for the IMS Field Complex by any players or spectators will result in immediate expulsion of the individual(s) and possible forfeiture of the contest.**
- **No ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES will be allowed inside the IMS Field Complex. Teams and fans are not allowed to bring glass or metal containers onto the fields. Violators will be removed and SFASU Police will be notified about such violations.**

Article 4. Blood Rule

If and when an official observes that a player is bleeding, has an open wound, or has excess blood on his/her uniform, the player will be directed to leave the game. The injured player is not to return until the bleeding has stopped, the open wound is covered, and excessively bloody clothing has been removed. The player must be removed from play and a substitute must enter the game. The clock will run as normal once the player is removed.

RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. The Game – Men and Women

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. Five players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit.

SECTION 2. THE FIELD

Article 3. Field Markings

Hash Marks shall be 6' long and 4" wide, and intersect the 20 and 40 yard lines. Additional hash marks, 3' long and 4" wide, shall touch the goal line and extend into the field of play. They shall run parallel with each sideline and be located 15 yards "in" from each sideline.

- The ball will be spotted between the hashes to reflect the dead ball spot. If the ball becomes dead in a "side zone," it will be placed on the hash mark. The ball will never be marked outside the hash marks.
- We will have strong and weak sides of the fields using hash marks.

SECTION 3. GAME EQUIPMENT

Article 1. The Ball

There are no requirements regarding ball pressure and markings. Men shall use a regular size football only. Women and Co-Rec teams may choose between a regular, intermediate, youth or junior size ball.

Article 2. Team Balls

Each team may use a ball of their own choosing. There is no official game ball. Men may not use junior footballs.

SECTION 4. PLAYER EQUIPMENT – REQUIRED

Article 1. Jersey

The visiting team is responsible for the avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is any doubt, the Referee may request the home team to change. Jerseys must be either:

- A. Long enough to be tucked in the pants/shorts during the entire down (an official can remove a player wearing a shirt that will not remain tucked in repeatedly) or
- B. Short enough so there is a minimum of 4" from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline.
- C. Jerseys with an opening more than 4" below the armpit may not be worn during play.
- D. Pinnies will be available from the scorekeeper. Pinnies should be worn just like shirts and they should not cover the flag belt. If they are too long, they must be tucked into the shorts.
- E. Shirts must be worn underneath pinnies provided by IMS Staff.
- F. Players must have jersey numbers either on personal shirts or on pinnies.

Article 2. Pants/Shorts

Each player must wear pants or shorts without any pocket(s), belt(s), belt loop(s), or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be different color than the flags. *PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yds – Live ball or dead ball.*

Article 3. Flag Belt

Each player must wear a one-piece quick release belt, without any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and in the center of their back. The flags must be of a contrasting color to their opponent's flags. The referee must KNOW that a player was not wearing a flag belt during the down in order to penalize that team.

PENALTY: Failure to wear legal equipment – 5 yds – live ball or dead ball.

Article 4. Shoes

Cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed ½ inch in length and are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material, which does not chip or develop a cutting edge. METAL SPIKES ARE ILLEGAL (see NIRSA rules for exceptions). If no cleats are available, the players must wear athletic type shoes.

PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yds – Live ball or dead ball.

- Cleats are made now with metal bottoms surrounded by plastic – LEGAL for IMS Flag Football

SECTION 5. PLAYER EQUIPMENT – OPTIONAL

Article 2. Gloves

Players may wear gloves consisting of a soft, pliable and nonabrasive material.

Article 3. Head wear

- A. Players may wear a knit stocking cap. The cap will have no bill. It can have a knit ball on top.
- B. Players may wear a headband no wider than 2" thick. The headband must be worn around the head only.
- C. Players may wear a soft rubber hat.
- D. Any head wear containing hard or unyielding material (including knots) may NOT be worn.

Article 4. Pads

Players may wear soft, pliable pads on the leg, knee, and/or ankle. Soft and yielding padded compression shorts and shirts are legal apparel.

Article 6. Play Books

Players may carry a play book inside their clothing as long as it is not made of an unyielding material. The play book may not be exposed during a play (i.e. you cannot tuck your playbook halfway into your shorts.) Play books may not be thrown onto the field and left during plays. A time-out or a 5yd penalty (Delay of Game) will be called for leaving your playbook on the field.

Article 7. Sunglasses

Players may wear pliable or non-rigid sunglasses.

Article 8. Face Shield

Players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against a facial injury.

SECTION 6. PLAYER EQUIPMENT – ILLEGAL

Article 1. Illegal Equipment

A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. This applies to any equipment, which in the opinion of the Referee is dangerous or confusing. Types of equipment or substances, which shall always be declared illegal include:

A. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats or items containing knots.

EXCEPTION: Face Shield

B. Jewelry of any kind (exception for medical alert bracelets).

C. Pads or braces worn above the waist.

D. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats with exposed metal. **EXCEPTION** – Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat. Flat metal tips wrapped in plastic are legal. Baseball spikes are illegal.

E. Shirts or jerseys, which do not remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt, which does not remain tucked in. Tear-away pants, jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner which produces a knot-like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey. **SWEATSHIRTS WITH POCKETS ARE NOT ALLOWED. Jerseys** with an opening more than 4” below the armpit may not be worn during play.

F. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstring(s). They may not be turned inside out.

G. Leg braces made of hard unyielding material unless covered by at least ½ inch of closed cell, slow recovery rubber or other material of similar thickness and physical properties.

H. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body.

I. Exposed metal on clothes or persons. This includes “O” or “D” rings used to secure flag belts.

K. Towels attached at the players waist.

RULE 2. DEFINITIONS OF PLAYING TERMS

SECTION 3. CATCH, INTERCEPTION, SIMULTANEOUS CATCH, TOUCHING

Article 1. Catch.

A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball, which is in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds.

A. If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.

B. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or an interception.

C. A loss of the ball simultaneously while returning to the ground is not a catch or interception. A player **MUST** demonstrate possession of the ball upon striking the ground.

Article 3. Simultaneous Catch or Recovery.

A simultaneous catch or recovery is a catch or recovery in which there is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players who are inbounds. The ball is awarded to the team last in possession of the ball.

SECTION 6. FIGHTING

Article 1.

Fighting is the attempt by a player or non-player to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempt to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), leg(s), or foot (feet) whether or not there is contact.

SECTION 7. FOUL

Article 1. Foul

A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed. NOTE: If in doubt, it is not a foul.

Article 2. Flagrant Foul.

A flagrant foul is so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.

SECTION 14. LOSS OF A DOWN

Article 1.

“Loss of a down” means “loss of the right to repeat the down.” Periods can end on accepted penalties that include “loss of down.”

SECTION 18. PASSES

Article 2. Forward and Backward Pass.

A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent’s end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer’s end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass or fumble that hits the ground is ruled dead at that spot.

SECTION 20. REMOVING THE FLAG BELT

Article 1. Flag Belt Removal.

When the flag belt is clearly removed from the runner in possession of the ball, the ball is declared dead and the down shall end. **An opponent who removes the flag from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the runner was downed.** This does not mean that the runner was down in that spot, but will only ASSIST the official in getting an accurate spot. *The flag is removed when the clip is broken.*

- A. **Throwing the flags** – If a player pulls an opponent’s flags and then throws them away, the official can penalize that player for unsportsmanlike conduct. The flags should be pulled and held in the air or dropped immediately.
- B. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture.

Article 2. Contact.

In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner or other offensive players down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

SECTION 21. SCREEN BLOCKING

Article 1.

Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact.

SECTION 23. SHIFTING

Article 1.

A shift is the action of one or more offensive players who, after a huddle or after taking a set position, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap.

SECTION 24. TAGGING

Article 1.

Tagging is placing one hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees of an opponent with the ball. The tagger may leave his/her feet to make the tag. Pushing, striking, slapping, and holding are not permitted. If the player trips the runner in his/her attempt to make a diving tag, it is a foul.

RULE 3. PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTIONS

SECTION 1. THE START OF EACH HALF

Article 1. Coin Toss.

Three minutes before the start of the game the Referee shall designate which captain shall call the fall of the coin, then toss a coin in the presence of the opposing captains. All officials shall be present at the coin toss.

The captain winning the toss shall have a choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half. The options for each half shall be:

- A. To choose whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.
- B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain, not having the first choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.
- C. Defer to the 2nd half.

Article 3. Forfeit Time.

GRACE PERIOD: SFA IMS shall invoke a 10-minute grace period that will begin at the regular scheduled game time. The game clock will start as long as both teams have at least one (1) player present at the scheduled game time. At game time, the team with a legal number of players present will get choice of ball both 1st and 2nd half. One point will be awarded to the team with the legal number of players for each minute waiting during the grace period. If at 10 minutes, the opposing fails to have enough players to start a win will be awarded with the score being 9-0.

Article 4. Start Each Half.

Unless moved by penalty, the ball shall be snapped on the 14 yard line to start each half.

SECTION 2. GAME TIME

Article 1. Playing Time and Intermissions.

Playing time shall be forty-four (44) minutes. Each half will consist of 21 minutes of running clock and one (1) minute where the clock will stop. The intermission between halves shall be 5 minutes.

Article 5. First 21 Minutes.

The clock will start on the snap. It will run continuously for the first 21 minutes unless it is stopped for a:

- A. Team time-out – starts on the snap.
- B. Referee's time-out starts on the ready for play.
- C. Injury – starts at the officials discretion.

Article 6. One Minute Warning.

Approximately one minute before the end of the 1st and 2nd half, the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in that half. The clock starts on the snap. The Back Judge will announce to the captains the remaining time and status of the clock after every play during the final minute.

Article 7. Last 1 Minute.

During the final 1 minute of the 1st and 2nd halves the clock will stop for:

- A. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass – starts on the snap.
- B. Out-of-bounds – starts on the snap.
- C. Safety – starts on the snap.
- D. Team time-out – starts on the snap.
- E. Referee's time-out – starts at his/her discretion.
- F. First down – dependent on the previous play.
- G. Touchdown – starts on the snap (after the Try).
- H. Penalty and administration – dependent on the previous play. (EXCEPTION: Delay of game – starts on the snap).
- I. Touchback – starts on the snap.
- J. Team A is awarded a new series – dependent on the previous play.
- K. Team B is awarded a new series – starts on the snap.
- L. Either team is awarded a new series following a legal punt – starts on the snap.
- M. Team attempting to conserve time illegally – starts on the ready.
- N. Team attempting to consume time illegally – starts on the snap.
- O. Inadvertent whistle – starts on the ready.

Article 8. Extension of Period.

A period will be extended by one untimed down if there is an accepted penalty and the clock expires. The only exception is on penalties that include a loss of down. If on the untimed down, there is an accepted penalty, the procedure will repeat.

SECTION 4: TIME-OUTS

Article 3. Charged Time-Outs.

Each team is entitled to **two (2)** charged time-outs during each half. Time-outs do not carry over into following halves or overtime periods.

Article 4. Length of Time-Outs.

A charged time-out requested by any player or designated head coach, which is legally granted, shall be 30 seconds and can be shortened if both teams are ready.

Article 7. Authorized conferences.

One coach may enter the field at his/her team's huddle between the inbounds lines (hash marks) to confer with no more than 7 players (co-rec – 8 players).

Article 8. Injured Player.

An injured or apparently injured player, who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least 1 down unless the halftime or overtime period intermission occurs. A player who is bleeding or has an open wound or has an excessive amount of blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player and must leave the game until all the blood is cleaned or the clothing is removed and replaced.

SECTION 5: DELAYS

Article 1. Delay of Game.

The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or inaction by either team, which tends to prevent this is delay of game. This includes:

- A. Failure to snap within 25 seconds after the ball is declared ready for play.
- B. Putting the ball into play before it is declared ready for play.
- C. Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.
- D. Coach – Referee Conference after all permissible charged time-outs for the coach's team have been used, and during which the Referee is requested to reconsider the application of a rule and no change results.
Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Delay of Game. 5 yards from the succeeding spot.

SECTION 6. CONSERVING OR CONSUMING TIME

Article 1. Illegally Conserving or Consuming Time.

The referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever, in his/her opinion, either team is trying to conserve or consume time by tactics obviously unfair.

RULE 4. BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF-BOUNDS

SECTION 1. BALL INPLAY – DEAD BALL

Article 1. Dead Ball Becomes Live.

A dead ball, after having been declared ready for play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped legally.

Article 2. Ball Declared Dead.

A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead:

- A. When it goes out-of-bounds.
- B. When any part of the runner other than a hand(s) or foot (feet) touches the ground.
- C. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- D. When a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players. A ball snapped, which hits the ground before or after getting to the intended receiver, is dead at the spot where it hits the ground. NOTE: If in doubt, a snap close to the ground is live.
- E. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by an opponent. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached from the belt. NOTE: If in doubt, the flag belt has been pulled.
- F. When a runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, by an opponent once the flag belt is no longer attached.

- G. The passer is deflagged/tagged prior to releasing the ball. NOTE: If in doubt as to the release or not, the ball is released.
- H. When a muff of a punt strikes the ground.
- I. When an officials sounds an inadvertent whistle.
 - a. The ball is in player possession – the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where it was declared dead or replay the down.
 - b. 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.
 - c. During a legal forward pass or a punt – the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down is replayed.

If a foul occurs during any of the above downs, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When a foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle. NOTE: there is no time added for an inadvertent whistle.

Article 3. Inbounds spot.

Before the ready for play signal, Team A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the inbounds lines (hash marks): start of each half; for the try; following a touchback, safety, try, and awarded catch after a punt; and for the start of each series using an overtime procedure.

RULE 5. SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWNS AND TEAM POSSESSION AFTER PENALTY

SECTION 1: A SERIES – HOW STARTED, HOW BROKEN, RENEWED

Article 3. Zone Line-to-Gain.

The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. 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 between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.

SECTION 2: DOWN AND POSSESSION AFTER A PENALTY

Article 2. Foul Before Change of Team Possession.

Following a distance penalty between the 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 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.

Article 3. Foul After a Change of Team Possession.

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.

Article 5. Rule Decisions Final.

NO RULE DECISION MAY BE CHANGED AFTER THE BALL IS NEXT LEGALLY SNAPPED.

RULE 6. KICKING THE BALL

SECTION 1. PUNT

Article 2. Punt

Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee must ask the Team A captain if he/she wants to punt. The Referee must announce this decision to all Team A and Team B players and the other officials. The Team A captain may request to punt on any down. After such announcement, the ball must be punted. [EXCEPTION: If (a) a Team A or B time-out is called, or (b) the period ends, (c) or a foul occurs any time prior to or during this down again, the Referee must ask the Team A captain whether or not he/she wants to punt and communicate this decision to the Team B captain].

Article 3. Formation and Snap.

Neither K nor R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is punted. *Penalty: Live Ball Penalty, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.* NOTE: All scrimmage line rules regarding the snap, encroachment, false start, minimum line players, motion, and shift apply to the punt.

Article 5. After Being Punted.

Once the ball is punted, any R player may block the kick by jumping vertically and not advancing beyond the receiving team's scrimmage line. If the blocked punt hits the ground, it is dead at that spot and belongs to R. If the punt is blocked by any R player and then caught by any K player behind the Team A scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange), they may advance. R may advance the punt anywhere in the field of play or end zone. A K player cannot punt the ball to himself/herself or any other K player. Team K may punt the ball once only per down. *Penalty: Illegal Kicking, 10 yards.*

Article 7. Eligible for Return.

When a punt, which has crossed K's scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange), touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to R. If it hits an R player and then is caught in the air, R can advance it. If caught by K, the ball is dead and belongs to K, and a new series begins for K. K cannot advance a muffed punt. **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A FAIR CATCH IN FLAG FOOTBALL.**

Article 8. Punt Out-of-Bounds Between the Goal Lines or at Rest.

If a punt goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines or comes to rest inbounds untouched and no player attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team at that spot.

Article 9. Punt Behind the Goal Line

When a punt breaks the plane of R's goal line, it is a touchback unless R chooses the spot of 1st touching by K.

RULE 7. SNAPPING, HANDING AND PASSING THE BALL

SECTION 1. THE SCRIMMAGE

Article 2. Ball Responsibility.

Team A players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down. The snapper will bring it from the huddle to the Team A scrimmage line (first ball spotter – orange). A towel may be placed on the ground under the ball. The towel must be carried to the next snap location by Team A and may not be left behind during a hurry up offense.

- A towel may be placed under the ball, regardless of weather or field conditions.

SECTION 2. PRIOR TO THE SNAP

Article 1. Encroachment

Following the ready for play and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the neutral zone to give defensive signals, or shifting through the zone. After the snapper has placed his/her hand on the ball, it is encroachment for any players to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's head to be over the ball. *Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Encroachment, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.* During the interval between downs when the defensive team commits two or more consecutive encroachments fouls, the penalty will be 10 yards for the subsequent encroachment fouls.

Article 2. False Start.

No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled. *Penalty: Dead Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.*

Article 3. Snap.

The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand. The snap can go between the legs of the center or the center can kneel or crouch and pass the ball from the side. All snaps must begin from the ground and the center may not be kneeling in the neutral zone.

SECTION 3. POSITION AND ACTION DURING THE SNAP

Article 1. Legal Position.

Anytime on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each A player must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap. *Penalty: Illegal Formation, 5 yards.*

Article 2. Minimum Line Players.

The offensive team must have at least four (4) players set on their scrimmage line (first ball spotter – orange) at the snap. The remaining players must be either on their scrimmage line (first ball spotter – orange) or behind their backfield line. All

players must be inbounds. A player in motion is not counted as one of the four (4) on the scrimmage line. *Penalty: Live Ball Penalty, Illegal Formation, 5 yards.*

Article 3. Motion.

One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion towards the opponent's end line, during the snap. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head or arms. *Penalty: Live ball Foul, Illegal Motion, 5 yards.*

Article 4. No Direct Snap.

The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line (first ball spotter – orange). Direct snaps are illegal. *Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.*

Article 5. Shift.

In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, or arms for at least one full second before the snap. *Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Shift, 5 yards.*

SECTION 4. HANDING THE BALL

Article 1. Anytime.

Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at anytime.

SECTION 5. BACKWARD PASS AND FUMBLE

Article 2. Caught or intercepted.

A player may not throw an untouched backward pass to him/herself. *Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down if by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down.*

Article 3. Simultaneous Catch.

If a backward pass or fumble in flight is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams inbounds, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the team last in possession of the ball.

Article 4. Out-of-Bounds.

A backward pass or fumble which goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of-bounds spot. If out-of-bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.

Article 5. Ball Dead When It Hits the Ground.

A backward pass or fumble which touched the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the last team in possession unless lost on downs.

NOTE: When a ball is fumble forward from the spot of the fumble, the ball will be declared dead from the spot of the fumble, not from where the ball touches the ground.

SECTION 6. LEGAL AND ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS

Article 1. Legal Forward Pass.

All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass except the thrower (unless touched by an opponent previous to the reception). During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter – orange) when the ball leaves the passer's hand. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.

PLAY: A-1 throw a short forward pass and A-1 catches that pass: ILLEGAL. *Live Ball Foul, illegal forward pass, 5 yards from the spot of the throw and loss of down.*

Article 2. Illegal Forward Pass.

A forward pass is illegal:

- A. If the passer's foot is beyond Team A's scrimmage line (first ball spotter – orange) when the ball leaves his/her hand.
- B. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
- C. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
- D. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass.
- E. If there is more than one forward pass per down.

SECTION 7. FORWARD PASS INTERFERENCE

Article 1. Interference

During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A's scrimmage line contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond Team A's scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. ***Hindering an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept or bat a ball is pass interference, even though no contact was made.*** The player must place 1 or both hands in front of the opponent's face or wave his/her hand(s) or arm(s) near the opponent's face. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged/tagged prior to touching the pass thrown beyond Team A's scrimmage line,

Article 2. Offensive Pass Interference.

After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line. *Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot.*

Article 3. Defensive Pass Interference.

After the pass is thrown, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line while the ball is in flight. It is illegal to hinder an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, deflect, or intercept a ball, even though no contact was made. *Penalty: Live Ball Foul, Defensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot.*

Article 4. Not interference

Action by Team B which is not a foul and which is obviously away from the direction of the pass is not defensive pass interference. It can be penalized as contact or a live ball unsportsmanlike conduct.

Article 5. Catchable/Uncatchable

Whether a pass is catchable or uncatchable has no bearing on offensive and defensive forward pass interference.

RULE 8. SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK

SECTION 2. MERCY RULE

Article 1. One Minute Warning.

If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 1-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over.

Article 2. After 1 Minute Warning.

If a team scores during the last minute of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more points, the game shall end at that point.

Article 3. Flags pulled after a score by the Official

The player scoring a touchdown must raise his/her arms so that the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged after one or two tries and the official observes tampering of the flag belt as to give that player an advantage over the opponent, that player will be disqualified and the score will be negated and the ball will be moved by penalty from the previous spot. *Penalty: Unsportsmanlike Conduct, 10 yards from the previous spot. If by Team A, loss of down. If by team B, automatic first down.*

SECTION 4. TRY = 1, 2, OR 3 POINTS

Article 2. 1, 2 or 3 Points.

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 only shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown.

Article 3. Try Begins and Ends.

The Try begins when the ball is marked ready for play. The Try ends when B secures possession, the Try is successful, or the ball becomes dead by Rule.

Article 4. Next Play.

After a Try, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the scoring team at their own "14" yard line, unless moved by penalty.

SECTION 6. MOMENTUM, SAFETY, AND TOUCHBACK

Article 1. Safety = 2 Points.

It is a safety when:

- A. 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;
EXCEPTION: when a defensive player intercepts a forward 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 the defensive team at the spot where possession was gained. This is known as the momentum rule.
- B. 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 subsequently becomes dead there in his/her team's possession. This includes when the ball is declared dead on or behind their goal line. However, it does not apply to a legal forward pass, which becomes incomplete.
- C. A player on defense commits any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from a spot in his/her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from his/her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him/her in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.
- D. After a safety the ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own "14" yard line, unless moved by penalty.

Article 2. Touchback.

It is a touchback when:

- A. R downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind the R's goal line.
- B. K downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind R's goal line, or if no one attempts to secure the ball.
- C. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass), when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above, or behind the team's own goal line, and the attacking team is responsible.
- D. After a touchback the ball shall be snapped at the nearest "14" yard line, unless moved by penalty.
- E. On a punt, the ball will be declared a touchback as soon as it breaks the plane of R's goal line.

RULE 9. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

SECTION 1. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Article 1. Noncontact Player Acts.

No player or non-player shall commit noncontact acts during a period or intermission.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Refusal to comply or abide by the decision of an official.
- B. Using words similar to offensive audibles and quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with Team A's signals or movements.
- C. No player or nonplayer shall use *verbiage* or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purposes of confusing the opponent.
- D. Intentionally kicking at the ball, other than during a punt.
- E. Leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage unless replaced or with permission of the Referee.
- F. Intentionally kicking at any opposing player.
- G. Intentionally swinging an arm, hand or fist at any opposing player.
- H. Participate while wearing illegal player equipment.

Article 2. Dead Ball Player Fouls.

When the ball becomes dead in possession of a player, he/she shall not:

- A. Intentionally kick the ball
- B. Spike the ball into the ground
- C. Throw the ball high into the air.

Article 3. Prohibited Acts.

There will be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the Rules.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.

- B. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- C. Indicating objections to an official's decision.
- D. Holding an unauthorized conference, or being on the field illegally.
- E. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
- F. Intentionally contacting a game official physically during the game by persons subject to the Rules.
- G. Fighting an opponent.
- H. Leaving the team area and entering the playing field during a fight.

Article 4. Second Unsportsmanlike Foul.

The second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or non-player results in disqualification.

Article 5. Player Ejection

If a player is ejected from a game due to unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she will not be allowed to remain on the bench. **Out of site, out of sound.** The field area includes the IMS Field Complex. The player must be out of sight and sound. If the player refuses to leave IMS Field Complex after being told to by the IMS Staff, the team may be penalized for another unsportsmanlike penalty or forced to forfeit the game. – **All players ejected for unsportsmanlike reasons are to meet with the Assistant Director – Intramural Sports within one (1) week and are suspended from all Intramural Sports activities until that meeting takes place.**

Article 6. Team Unsportsmanlike Conduct

If a team commits four (4) unsportsmanlike conducts penalties in a single game, that game will be forfeited to the opponent and the team must meet with the Assistant Director– Intramural Sports prior to their next contest. The captain will be held responsible for team actions.

SECTION 3. PERSONAL FOULS

Article 1. Player Restrictions.

No player or non-player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul. No player shall:

- A. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a player in possession by punching, striking or stealing.
- B. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
- C. Throw the runner to the ground.
- D. Hurdle any other player.
- E. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
- F. Make contact of any nature with an opponent, which is deemed unnecessary including using fists, locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand.
- G. Deliberately drive or run into a player.
- H. Position himself/herself on the shoulders or body of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- I. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling with the hand(s) or arm(s) and taking the opponent toward the ground as in tackle football.

Article 2. Roughing the Passer.

Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. NOTE: The ball is considered part of the passer's arm when considering contact on the passer.

Penalty: Roughing the Passer, 10 yards, and automatic first down.

- Contacting a passer's arm, upper body, head, neck, shoulders is considered roughing the passer. Rushers are encouraged to go for the flag belts every opportunity to avoid contacting the passer.

Article 3. Screen Blocking.

The offensive screen block shall take place without contact, the screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arms to break a fall or retain body balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.*

- Screen blockers must remain inside the framework of their body at all times.
- Blocking downfield is legal, but all screen blocking rules apply.

Article 4. Screen Blocking Fundamentals.

A player shall not:

- A. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
- B. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
- C. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that his/her opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
- D. After assuming his/her legal screening position move to maintain it, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path as his/her opponent. If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, he/she has committed a personal foul.

Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.

Article 6. Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense.

Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of the Rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A blocker may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.*

SECTION 4. RUNNER**Article 1. Removing the Flag Belt.**

There are rules, which are established for flag football because of legal or illegal removal of the flag belt.

- A. Players must have possession of the ball before they can be deflagged legally by an opponent.
- B. When a runner loses his/her flag belt accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees.
- C. In circumstances where a belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of a penalty after the play. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.*
- D. An opponent intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.*
- E. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards, player ejection, loss of down or automatic first down.*

Article 2. Guarding the Flag Belt.

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. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to:

- A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.
- B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt.
- C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt. *Penalty: Flag Guarding, 10 yards from the spot of the foul.*

Article 3. Stiff Arm.

The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a "stiff arm" extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag/tag. *Penalty: Personal Foul, 10 yards.*

RULE 10. ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES**SECTION 1. PROCEDURE AFTER A FOUL****Article 3. Dead Ball Foul.**

When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or before a snap, the officials shall not permit the ball to become live. The penalty for any foul between downs, any non-player foul, or any unsportsmanlike foul, is enforced from the succeeding spot. If a dead ball foul occurs after time expires for any period, the penalty shall be measured from the succeeding spot. The succeeding spot is where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred.

SECTION 2. TYPES OF PLAY AND BASIC ENFORCEMENT SPOTS**Article 1. Live Ball Fouls.**

Any live ball foul is penalized according to the All-But-One Enforcement Principle except:

- A. A foul, which occurs simultaneous to the snap, is penalized from the previous spot.
- B. A non-player foul, unsportsmanlike foul, or dead ball foul is penalized from the succeeding spot.

Article 2. All-But-One Enforcement Principle.

Enforcement philosophy is based on the fact that a team is given the advantage of the distance, which is gained without assistance of a foul. It is assumed that the only foul that would give this aid is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot.

Therefore, all fouls but this one, that is a foul by the offense behind the basic spot, are penalized from the basic spot.

This one foul is penalized from the spot of the foul. NOTE: Exception: Roughing the Passer.

Article 4. Loose Ball Play.

A loose ball play is action during:

- A. A punt.
- B. A legal forward pass.
- C. A backward pass, including the snap, or fumble made by A from on or behind his/her scrimmage line (first ball spotter –orange).
- D. The run or runs, which precedes a legal pass, punt, or fumble.

If a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot, the spot of the snap.

Article 5. Running Play.

A running play is any action, which is not a loose ball play.

- A. Behind the line it includes:
 1. A run, which is not followed by a loose ball behind the line.
 2. A run, which is followed by an illegal pass from behind the line.
- B. Beyond the line it includes any run. A run ends when a runner loses possession, but the related running play continues until the ball becomes dead or some player again gains possession.

If a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is the spot where the related run ends.

SECTION 3. SPECIAL ENFORCEMENTS**Article 1. Half the Distance.**

A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is great than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

Article 6. Foul on a Score.

If there is a foul by the offensive team, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during a down which results in successful touchdown or Try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a down which results in a touchdown or Try, the scoring team may choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot (try) or the 14 yard line after the completion of the try.

Article 10. Double Foul.

It is a double foul if both team commit fouls, other than unsportsmanlike or non-player, during the same live ball period which:

- A. There is no change of team possession.
- B. There is a change of team possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouls prior to the final change of possession.
- C. There is a change of possession and the team in final possession accepts the penalty for its opponent's foul.

In (A), (B) and (C) the penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

EXCEPTION: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponents foul(s), other than unsportsmanlike or non-player. This exception is commonly referred to as the principle of "clean hands." NOTE: This Rule does not apply to double fouls during a Try or overtime period.

Article 11. Multiple Live Ball Fouls.

When two or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike or non-player conduct occurs. In such cases, the penalty/penalties for the unsportsmanlike or non-player conduct fouls are administered from the succeeding spot as a dead ball foul.

Article 12. Multiple Dead Ball Fouls.

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls. Penalize all unsportsmanlike and non-player fouls

separately. If the same number of dead ball fouls are committed by both teams, and the order of occurrence cannot be determined, they will offset.

Article 13. Loss of Down Fouls.

Fouls by Team A which include loss of down are:

- A. Illegal Backward Pass.
- B. Illegal Forward Pass.
- C. Illegally Secured Flag Belt

Article 14. Automatic First Down Fouls.

Fouls by Team B that give Team A an automatic first down are:

- A. Roughing the Passer who has thrown the ball from behind the Team A scrimmage line(first ball spotter – orange).
- B. Illegally Secured Flag Belt.

Article 15. Foul to end a half that carries a loss of down.

A team committing a foul that carries a loss of down with it shall lose the right to replay that down.