

# Spring 2010 Men's & Women's 4 Player Flag Football Rules

## BGSU Intramurals

\*NOTE: All wording in *bold italics* designates differences between 4 player flag football and 7 player flag football

### 1. Players, Substitutes, Roster Size and IDs

- A. There will be four weeks of regular season play and one week of playoffs.
- B. A men's or women's team must have a minimum of **3** players to start the game. Team maximum is **4** players on the field of play. A total roster limit is **8**. If at any time one team has less than 3 players, including result of injury, that team shall forfeit the game.
- C. Roster Changes: At anytime during the regular season of play roster changes can be made either online or at the contest site. **Teams utilizing players who are discovered by the IM staff as falsely representing themselves as someone else (aka: wrong ID) will be immediately suspended from play and awarded a "Season Ending" Sportsmanship Rating.** New players must sign an "Agreement to Participate" form prior to playing. If a player is found to be on two rosters the later of the two teams they played for will be assessed a loss and will jeopardize their consideration for playoffs. Captains who play must be listed on the player roster.
- D. Members of the 2009-10 varsity football team are ineligible to participate. Current year coaches and coaches and players from the previous academic year are eligible to play, but a maximum of *one* total are allowed per roster. A maximum of *one* 2009-10 club rugby players are allowed per roster.
- F. To recreate in the SRC or PFH without additional cost, faculty or staff members must purchase a Rec Sports membership and undergraduate and graduate students must have at least 10 credit hours. Otherwise, a BGSU affiliate must pay the daily guest fee of \$5.
- G. To participate in intramurals, there is no credit hour requirement, however students and faculty/staff must present a BGSU ID (with picture and P00#) to an Intramural employee in order to participate.
- H. Substitutions may be made any time the ball is not in play (clock will not stop). Repeated attempts to delay the game will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

### 2. Playing Area and Conditions

- A. *All games will be played in the Field House turf room.*
- B. *The field measures 40 yards in length, goal line to goal line, and approximately 30 yards in width.*
- C. The team captain will see that all players and team spectators will remain within the designated team area (2 yards behind sideline and between the 3-yard lines). Violation = possible unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- D. During intramurals, chewing or smoking tobacco products is prohibited at all indoor and outdoor sites on campus. Coaches or rostered players found chewing or smoking tobacco may be warned, penalized by sport-specific rules, and/or removed from play. Uncooperative spectators may also penalize a team.
- E. Any personal items (ID's, keys, equipment, etc.) left at any intramural site and found by an intramural employee will be taken to that facility's "lost and found", or to the front desk of Perry Field House, to be placed in their "lost and found".

### 3. Equipment and Uniform

- A. *It is strongly suggested that exposed skin areas be covered to reduce turf burns!*
- B. Only BGSU Intramural flag belts and captain's IDs may be worn by each team. \*Each player's flag belt must be worn with a flag on each side and one in the center of the back. Flag belts should contrast with color of pants/shorts.
- C. *Participants are recommended to wear flat-soled, non-cleated athletic shoes. Turf shoes are acceptable.*
- D. Soft, pliable, non-abrasive gloves may be worn.
- E. The only headgear that is acceptable will be *headbands and soft-knotted bandanas*.
- F. A team's players must have the same color t-shirts or jerseys, and they must remain tucked in at all times or shirts can be cut off. The flag belt must be visible. Otherwise, colored pinnies may be available.
- G. Each offensive unit will choose which ball they wish to use, including their own, their opponent's or the IM ball (balls must be regulation size).

**4. Safety and Prevention**

- A. A player who has any visible amount of blood on their uniform shall be considered an injured player and must leave the game immediately for appropriate treatment and/or changing of clothes.
- B. Each player must wear pants/shorts without any belt(s), belt loops, or exposed drawstrings. In addition, we strongly recommend pants/shorts without pockets. No hooded sweatshirts.
- C. No dangerous or inappropriate equipment may be worn. No hard casts allowed. All metal on joint braces must be safely covered to officials' satisfaction.
- D. Mouth guards are strongly recommended, and players wearing glasses should have shatter proof lenses and straps.
- E. Absolutely no jewelry shall be worn. A warning will be issued to a team for an infraction of this policy. If a 2<sup>nd</sup> infraction arises in a given contest by the team in question will be assessed a 5yd. Dead Ball penalty .  
\*\* Exception - medical ID tags which must be taped to the body. Check with the IM Office prior to your team's game day.

**5. Participant Conduct and Fair Play – “SPORTSMANSHIP”**

- A. All players, captains, and spectators will be held to a reasonable standard of conduct and fair play. Violators of this standard will be subject to sport-specific penalties, and/or possible removal from the facility and future intramural sports.

**6. Time Regulations and Length of Game**

- A. Game-time:
  - 1. Two **12**-minute halves; 5 minutes between halves. **One** time-out of 1 minute duration per half per team. In each half, the clock will only be stopped for team or official's time outs during the first **11** minutes.
  - 2. The clock stops during the final **one minute of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half** for the **1**-minute warning and for:
    - a. Incomplete pass - clock starts on snap. (On a backward pass that is dropped, clock continues to run)
    - b. Out-of-bounds - clock starts on snap
    - c. First down - dependent on the play. Ex. If a player gets first down and his/her flag is pulled off in bounds, the clock is stopped until the ready for play whistle - then the clock starts again. If player ran out of bounds, clock starts at snap.
    - d. Penalty and administration - the clock stops on the penalty and is re-started dependent on the previous play, like part "c" above.
    - e. Touchdowns - No time runs during extra point attempts. Clock starts on snap when opponents take possession.
    - f. Change of possession - clock starts on the snap
    - g. Team time-out - clock starts on snap
    - h. Injury - clock starts on snap
    - i. Referee's time-out - clock starts on his/her discretion
    - j. Inadvertent whistle - starts on ready for play whistle
  - 3. If under 1 minute in game, QB may receive snap and throw ball into ground immediately in order to stop clock.
  - 4. Mercy Rule: If a team is **19** or more points ahead at the 1 minute warning of the second half or any time within the final 1 minute, the game shall be over.
  - 5. A team has 25 seconds to snap the ball after the referee marks it ready for play.

**7. Forfeits and Starting Games**

- A. Game time is forfeit time. All players should be checked in and ready to play at the scheduled time. There is no grace period. Once team minimum is met, late arrivals can still play once they check in.
- B. Participants failing to check in with the scorekeeper before play will be penalized, and may penalize the whole team. Once a person is found to have played prior to checking in, they will be asked to present a valid ID. If the player can present a valid ID, he/she will be removed from the game. If that player is unable to present a valid ID, the game will be declared a forfeit.
- C. If a team forfeits once for any reason, they jeopardize their eligibility for playoffs. Forfeiting a second night drops that team from play for the rest of the season.
- D. A toss of a coin will determine possession or direction (no deferring) at start of the game or in the tie game situations. Possession and direction are switched for the second half.

**8. Playing Rules and Scoring - This is a non-contact game!**

- \* Official NIRSA rules will prevail in all cases not otherwise covered, as long as they fall within the spirit of Intramurals!

A. Plays from scrimmage:

1. The ball shall be placed at your own **10** yard line to begin each half of a game and following a Try, touchback or safety, unless moved by penalty. Note: ***There are no kicks of any kind.***
2. After gaining possession of the ball, a team has **three** downs in which to reach the next zone line to gain a first down. If this does not happen, the ball will be turned over to the opposing team at the same spot.
3. The offensive team must be behind the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
4. The defensive team must line up behind the one yard restraining line, which will be designated with a cone by the official before each play.
5. The offensive team must have at least **one** player on the line of scrimmage, regardless of number of players on the field.
6. All receivers on offense must be at least 3 yards from either sideline prior to the snap.
7. The quarterback must receive the snap at least 2 yards behind the center. No direct snaps.
8. At the snap, one offensive player may be in motion, but not toward the opponent's goal. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without moving the feet, body, or arms.
9. Rushing - There is no limit on the number of defenders who can rush once the ball is snapped, and they do not have to line up at the line of scrimmage.
10. Offensive team's blockers can only screen block. Players may not interlock legs during an offensive set. Arms must be behind their backs while they obstruct an opponent, without initiating contact.
11. Defensive rushers must go around the offensive player's screen block without using their hands as a wedge.
12. Screen blocking is also allowed for a ball carrier beyond the line of scrimmage.
13. After each play, the team on offense is responsible for returning the ball to the line of scrimmage. The referee will mark the ball set for play after a reasonable period of time for retrieval of the ball. Intentional delays will result in delay of game penalties.
14. ***An offensive runner cannot advance the ball through the line of scrimmage, even if they catch a pass behind the line (3 yard penalty).*** There are no restrictions after an interception or once a legal forward pass has been caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
15. ***There must be a legal forward pass each down. The receiver must catch the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The passer has 7 seconds to release the ball. If not, the referee will blow the whistle, the play is over and the ball will be returned to the previous spot for the next down.***

B. Legal catches, possession, de-flagging a ball carrier:

1. All players are eligible for a pass.
2. If a player has possession and control of the ball, and if one foot first lands in bounds, it is a catch or interception, even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds. Just like high school rule.
3. Any time the knee touches the ground and the ball is in the player's possession, the play is dead. However, a catch by a kneeling or prone in-bounds player is a completion or interception.
4. No player may go out-of-bounds and return during the current down unless blocked out-of-bounds by an opponent.
5. De-flagging: A player is downed and his/her forward progress ceases when he/she is de-flagged (belt clip has come undone) as a result of the defense, while the ball is in his/her possession. The official will determine where the de-flagging occurred, not where the belt actually fell off.
6. To legally down a player, it is necessary to pull flag belt from the ball carrier.
7. If belt falls off inadvertently, the ball carrier will be downed by one hand touch between the shoulder and knee (includes ball carrier's arms and hands).
8. Flag Guarding: Ball carrier cannot guard/cover their flag by using their hands, arms, the ball, or their jersey in such a manner as to prevent an attempted de-flagging from being successful.
9. A fumbled ball becomes dead when it touches the ground. If the ball is fumbled forward, the ball is placed at the spot where the fumble occurred (when possession was lost). If the ball is fumbled backward, it is placed where it hit the ground. If the offense fumbles the ball in their own end zone, a safety is awarded to the defense. If the offense fumbles the ball into the opponent's end zone, the ball is awarded to the defense and placed on the **10**-yard line. (touchback)

C. Officials decisions:

1. An official will blow the whistle to signify the end of a play. When an inadvertent whistle is blown by mistake, the play is dead at that point, and the following steps are taken:
  - a. Offensive player did not possess ball beyond line of scrimmage = replay from previous line of scrimmage.
  - b. Offensive player with possession beyond line of scrimmage = offense chooses whether to replay from previous line of scrimmage or they can put the ball in play where it was declared dead.
  - c. Note: any accepted penalty nullifies inadvertent whistle option.



5. Illegal defensive contact when rushing results in 5-yard penalty.
  6. Defensive pass interference - 5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
  7. If defender makes contact with passer's arm, a 5-yard penalty will result and an automatic first down. If the defender contacts the passer's arm, whether or not he/she touches the pass (ball) it is roughing the passer. Go for the flag only. If the pass was completed, the 5 yards will be added to the end of the play.
  8. A defensive player shall not hold, push, grasp, obstruct forward progress, or deliberately step in front of ball carrier with no intention to grab the belt. 5-yard penalty from end of the run.
- C. Loss or gain of 3 yards and repeat the down from line of scrimmage (note exceptions):
1. Delay of game (dead ball foul) -- 25 seconds from ball being placed
    - includes "team area" violations
  2. Illegal equipment/substance or illegally worn equipment.
  3. Not enough players on line of scrimmage (M&W need *I* players min.)
  4. Offensive player closer than **three** yards to the sideline at snap
  5. Illegal substitution
  6. False start (dead ball foul)
  7. Illegal motion, procedure, shift
  8. Illegal snap (i.e. ball is picked up/moved while set, prior to actual snap--dead ball foul)
  9. Player receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line
  10. Illegal forward pass (loss of down, penalize from spot of foul).
  11. Intentional grounding (loss of down) Note: There is no "out-of-pocket" rule like in NFL.
  12. Encroachment (dead ball foul)
  13. Helping the runner (offensive players physically pushing/pulling runner)
- D. Loss or gain of 5 yards and repeat the down (note exceptions):
1. Unsportsmanlike or unnecessary conduct: jewelry violations following warning (always enforced as dead ball foul); taunting/profanity; excessive force; excessive delay of game;
    - a second penalty by the same player will result in disqualification
    - a third unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the same team will result in a forfeit
  2. Illegal offensive contact: ball carrier running into defender; stiff arms; initiating contact when blocking; interlocking arms/legs; clipping; tripping; offensive pass interference (loss of down)
  3. Quick kicks, fake punts (**remember, there are no kicks**)
  4. Flag guarding (Note: this is NOT a loss-of-down penalty)
  5. Illegally secured flag belt (loss of down and possible player disqualification)
  6. Illegal participation: player who went out-of-bounds (without being blocked out by opponent), returns to the field and participates in a play. Also, too many players on the field after the ball is snapped.
  7. Illegal defensive contact: obstructing/tackling ball carrier; pass interference (automatic first down); roughing the passer (automatic first down); defensive use of hands; tripping; strike, or attempt to steal ball from ball carrier
  8. Illegal flag belt removal (removing belt from offensive player too soon)
  9. Two or more consecutive encroachments (defensive offsides) during the same down
  10. The offended team has the option of either taking the penalty or declining the penalty. For non-dead ball fouls, the official should throw a flag and delay the whistle until the play is completed. *Note: all distance penalties may be declined.*
- E. Captains are expected to ensure proper behavior by their players and spectators should an altercation develop. Details, including penalties, are spelled out in the IM Handbook and Captain's Responsibilities handout.

## 10. Tie Games and Overtimes (only during playoffs)

- A. Tie game:
1. *In the regular season, a tie game at the end of regulation will remain a tie.*
  2. *During playoffs, a tie breaker system will be used and a coin toss will be held to determine possession and which endzone to use.*
  3. *Tie Breaker: Each team will attempt to score by passing from the 3 yard line for 1 point, from the 10 yard line for 2 points, or from the 20 yard line for 3 points. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble, the attempt is over and the whistle will be blown (overtime only).*
  4. *If the score is still tied, additional overtime periods will be played until there is a winner. No team will begin an overtime period on offense two consecutive periods (rotate). If the score is still tied after 2 overtime periods, each team must attempt a 2 or 3 point conversion beginning in the third overtime period.*

## 11. Playoffs

- A. The number of teams who qualify, plus the number, length, and playing rules for playoff games may be altered as time, weather, facility, and equipment conditions require. A variety of options will be considered before altering the preferred playoff format.
- B. Teams must be able to play any day M-T, after 5 p.m. during playoffs. Make sure you have enough players on your roster so you do not have to forfeit during playoffs.
- C. A captain should call the IM Office to check on their team's status as to playoffs. The IM Office does not personally notify teams regarding playoff schedules. Please see the IM Handbook for specifics as to the procedures for determining how teams advance to playoffs.
- D. The captain is responsible for notifying his/her team of the playoff schedule. Playoff schedules will be available online beginning the Friday before playoffs by 4 p.m.
- E. Teams who don't want to be included in playoff consideration must contact the IM Office in person prior to their last regular season game.
- F. Teams need to familiarize themselves with the Team Sportsmanship Rating System located in the IM Handbook as this will affect their eligibility for playoffs at the end of league play.

**12. Officials and Manager Duties**

- A. The Intramural referee at each field will be responsible for scoring the game and checking IDs and rosters (this may also be done by a supervisor). Teams should verify the score at the end of each score, at the half, and after the game. Captains must sign the score sheet to verify the game winner.
- B. Managers/Officials have the power to enforce all IM rules as they apply to players, coaches and spectators.

**13. Miscellaneous**

- A. All participation in the Intramural program is voluntary. The University is not responsible for injuries while participating in Intramural sports. Each participant is advised to carry personal health and accident insurance. For reporting purposes, participants injured during play must have an appropriate report form completed and turned in to the Intramural Office within 48 hours of the injury.
- B. T-shirts will be awarded to those participants on each championship team in each division who played in at least one game and did not commit multiple violations. The t-shirts should be picked up individually in the office beginning two days after final playoffs and within 15 academic weeks.

**Perry Field House Turf Room**

