UVM Intramural Sports • 4-on-4 Flag Football Tournament

The rules governing this intramural sport activity are derived from rules used by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) and rules unique to the UVM Intramural Sports Program. This rules sheet is not meant to be all-inclusive; rather it is a summary of the more common rules, policies, and procedures used by the Intramural Sports Program. All important policy information can be found in the Intramural Sports Handbook. Current NIRSA Flag and Touch Football rules will be in effect with the exceptions of those listed below. All team managers and players are responsible for reading this document and understanding the rules, policies, and procedures prior to participating in this activity.

General/Eligibility

See the Intramural Sports Handbook for complete listing of eligibility.

Club Player Eligibility:
- Members of the UVM Club Football Team are eligible to participate in the intramural flag football tournament; however, there may not be more than two (2) club players on a roster.
- **Penalty:** Any team that is in violation of the club player participation guidelines will automatically forfeit every game in which the ineligible player(s) participated. During playoffs, use of an ineligible player will result from the team being removed from further competition.

UVM Identification: All players MUST present a UVM Cat Card to the IMS Supervisor prior to participating in the tournament. Players who do not have their Cat Card will be subject to the terms of the Campus Recreation ID Policy.

Team Rosters: The official team roster consists only of those individuals who are eligible and who have signed the official roster/waiver. Individuals must be listed on the official roster by the end of regular season play in order to be eligible to participate in playoffs. Confirming that all players are listed on the official roster is the responsibility of the Team Manager.

Players may only play on one team.

General Rules

Current NIRSA Flag and Touch Football rules will be in effect with the exceptions of those listed below.

Players and Substitutions

**Players:** Four (4) players constitute a team with a roster limit of eight (8) players. A team may start with no less than three (3) players. In the event a team is playing with the minimum number of players (three (3)), and a player becomes injured or has to leave (other than an ejection) the game will continue until it is deemed a farce as determined by the officials and supervisor.

**Unlimited substitutions:** Substitutes can enter on any dead ball situation. The substitutions must be completed before the ball is put in play. Exiting players must go directly to their sideline.

**Player Misconduct:** If any player or team exhibits conduct that is deemed unacceptable by the Intramural Sports Staff, one warning will be given to the team manager. A second instance of unsportsmanlike behavior by any team member will result in the team being disqualified from the tournament.

**Communication with Staff:** Team managers are the only individuals permitted to speak with officials regarding substitutions, calls, or questions. If another player attempts to dispute, a warning may be issued. Subsequently, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty may be called followed by a possible ejection.

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Game Management

Managers’ Meeting: Before the game, team managers will meet with game officials at least five (5) minutes before game time to check player eligibility with the roster/score sheet, sign-out flag belts, and determine the options of kicking, receiving, or defending a particular goal with the HOME team calling the toss (team listed first on schedule; if overtime, then opposite team from first half).

Game Time is Forfeit Time! All intramural events are tightly scheduled based on facility availability to allow for maximum participation, so keeping the games on schedule is very important. Please have your team at the field checked-in and ready to play at least ten (10) minutes before your scheduled game time. Game time if forfeit time! If one team is late/is not present, the team’s manager that is present and has the minimum number of participants required ready to play will be given two options (once a decision is made it cannot be changed):

- Take the forfeit immediately
- Give the team five (5) minutes to show
  - If the team shows, the game must be played with only the remaining amount of time left. If the team still does not show, it will be a forfeit.

Reserve Clause: the IM Staff reserves the right to make time adjustments to accommodate scheduling conflicts

Duration of game: Two twelve (12) minute halves with a running clock. During the final two (2) minutes of the second half, the clock will stop for:

- Incomplete pass- starts on the snap.
- Out of bounds- starts on the snap.
- Score- touchdown; starts on the snap.
- Safety- starts when the ball is snapped from the ensuing position.
- Team time-out- starts on the snap.
- Officials' time-out- starts on the ready.
- Touchback- starts on the snap.
- 1st Down- starts on the snap.
- Time-outs: Two (2) per game (1 per half). Unused time outs do not carry over into any overtime period.

Overtime: During tournament play the following apply:

- A new coin toss will occur.
- The away team manager will call the toss and the winner has the option of offense, defense, or direction.
- All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal line.
- Each team will start 1st and goal from the opposing team’s 10 yard line (unless moved by penalty). Each team will receive a set of three (3) downs.
- The object will be to score a touchdown (followed by a P.A.T.).
- A point after touchdown (P.A.T) attempt can be made by passing from the 3-yard line for one (1) point or from the 10-yard line for two (2) points.
- An overtime period consists of each team receiving a set of three (3) downs.
- If the first team that is awarded the ball scores, the opponent will still have a chance to win, re-tie, or lose the game.
- If the defense intercepts the ball then the play is blown dead, the ball will be placed on their ten (10) yard line to begin their series of three (3) downs or a new overtime period will start, or the game is over, whatever the score/game situation constitutes.
  **This procedure will continue until a winner is declared.

Mercy Rule: Upon the 2-minute warning of the second half, if a team is out scoring their opponents by twenty-three (23) or more points, the game shall end. If a team scores DURING the last two (2) minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of twenty-three (23) or more, the game shall end at that point.

Equipment:

Jerseys: Will be provided by the IMS program

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**Shorts/Pants:** Each player must wear pants or shorts with **NO belts, belt loops, or pockets**, and must be a different color than the flags.

**Flag Belts:** All players are required to wear flag belts the entire game. Belts must be one piece without any knots. Belts must have three flags and are to be secured around the waistline, with one flag positioned on each player’s side and one directly in the center of the back. The belt may not be wrapped around itself.

**Shirts:** No article of clothing may cover any portion of the player’s flag (ALL SHIRTS MUST BE TUCKED IN AT ALL TIMES). **UNSECURED HALF SHIRTS ARE NOT PERMITTED. Penalty: 3 yards**

**Shoes:** Turf shoes, cleats, and soft, pliable, rubber bottom shoes are permitted. METAL CLEATS, SANDALS, & OPEN-TOED SHOES ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED. Shoes must be worn. If there are any questions concerning footwear, contact the onsite supervisor/official.

**Game Ball:** The game ball shall be issued by the officials. Teams are encouraged to bring their own football(s) to practice (warm up) with. A regular size football will be used.

**Jewelry:** All jewelry must be removed. This includes, but is not limited to, necklaces, earrings, newly pierced earrings, facial piercings, rings, bracelets, and watches. Individuals will not be allowed to tape over any jewelry item. **If you cannot remove the item then you CANNOT play.**

**Playing Rules**

**The Playing Field:** The field measures forty (40) yards in length, goal line to goal line, and thirty (30) yards in width.

**Penalty Enforcement:** All 10-yard penalties are five yards and all 5-yard penalties are three (3) yards.

**Kicking:** There shall be no kicking. The ball shall be placed at Team A’s 10-yard line to begin each half of a game and following a try, touchback or safety, unless moved by penalty.

**Passing:** There must be a legal forward pass each down. The person receiving the ball must be beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass is allowed per play (down). All players are eligible receivers. The offense must make a forward pass attempt within seven (7) seconds. On the 7th second the play is blown dead and the down is over; the ball will be spotted where the ball is once the whistle is blown. There is no rush rule; the defense may rush at any time.

**Runner:** A Team A runner cannot advance the ball through Team A’s scrimmage line. There are no restrictions after a change of possession or once a legal forward pass has been caught beyond Team A’s scrimmage line. **Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5-yards from the previous spot.**

**Series of Downs:** A team shall have three (3) consecutive downs to advance to the next zone. A new series of downs is awarded when a team moves the ball legally into the next zone or the opponent obtains possession of the ball by penalty, pass interception, or failure to advance to the next zone.

**Minimum Line Players:** The offensive team must have at least one (1) player on their scrimmage line at the snap.

**Snapping the Ball:** Direct snaps are not permitted. Snaps may be through the legs or to the side; however, the ball must remain on the ground and motionless until the actual snap. The snap must be received at least two (2) yards behind the line of scrimmage.

**Play Clock:** Offense has twenty-five (25) seconds to put the ball in play after the official declares it ready. **Penalty: 3 yards**

**Fumbles:** The ball is dead as soon as the ball touches the ground. Teams cannot recover a fumble.
Legal Catch: A player must have at least one (1) foot in bounds for a catch to be legal. The line is considered out.

Simultaneous Catch: If a legal forward pass is caught by members of the opposing teams, the ball shall become dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball prior to the play.

Ball Responsibility: It is the responsibility of the OFFENSE to get the ball.

No Punting: If teams do not obtain a first down after three (3) downs, a change of possession will occur. The opposing team will get the ball at the 10-yard line unless a penalty is assessed on the offensive team prior to change of possession.

Roughing the Passer: Only called if contact is to the face or deemed intentional. Officials will protect the quarterback more often than not.

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points.

Safety: 2 points.

PAT: From 3 yards = 1 point; from 10 yards = 2 points. *Once declared, teams may only re-declare after a time-out (by either team). It cannot be re-declared after a penalty.

Intercepting an Extra Point: If the defense intercepts any extra point attempt the play will be blown dead. You may not return an interception of an extra point.

Penalty During an Extra Point Attempt

If on defense:
- If the attempt was unsuccessful, then replay the down and add the penalty enforcement.
- If the attempt was successful, then the play stands and penalty can be enforced after change of possession.

If on the offense:
- If the attempt was unsuccessful and the penalty declined, the play is over and the attempt will not be repeated.
- If the attempt was unsuccessful and the penalty is accepted, take the converted score away, mark off the penalty and the attempt will be repeated.

Flag Rules

Removing Flag Belt: The belt should be held over the head to assist officials with the ball placement; however, if the flag belt is delayed in falling off as a direct result of an attempt by a defensive player, the play will be whistled dead where the flag belt first starts to fall.

Legal Tag: If a player has inadvertently lost the flag belt, then one (1) hand tag between the shoulder and knees constitutes a capture. **NOTE: The play is NEVER over until a whistle has sounded.** No player shall intentionally pull or remove a belt from any player that does not have possession of the ball. **Penalty: 5 yards, and if flagrant, possible ejection.**

Contact: In an attempt to remove the belt from a ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body and shoulder of an opponent with their hands, but not their opponents face or any part of the neck or head. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag. **All tackles will be penalized by a 5-yard penalty and possible ejection.**

Removing the Flag: Players may dive to catch a pass, defend a pass, to remove an opponent’s flag, and to gain yardage; however, no player may intentionally dive into another player or over a player to gain yardage. No player may hurdle or attempt to hurdle over another player.
Guarding the Flag: Ball carriers shall not guard their flags in a manner that would prevent an opponent the opportunity to pull or remove the flag belt. A ball carrier may not use straight arm tactics, swing arm to deflect, or use other means to keep an opponent from pulling a flag. **Penalty: 5 yards from the spot of the foul.**

A ball carrier may not lower the head or run in a bent over fashion which hinders an opponent from pulling a flag. This style of running constitutes Flag Guarding with the intent to injure another player. **Penalty: 5 yards.**

If the ball carrier touches a knee to the ground, the play will be whistled dead and spotted there. If the ball carrier slips and falls, but regains balance with the ball or hand only in contact with the ground, play shall continue.

**Obstruction of the Ball Carrier:** A defensive player shall not hold, grasp, push or obstruct forward progress of a ball carrier when in the act of removing the belt or making a legal tag. **Penalty: 5 yards.**

**Blocking**

- Screen blocking only. Hands and arms must be behind the back, allowing one normal step between players.
- Individuals are not permitted to use feet, knees, elbows, dip shoulders, trip, or kick legs to initiate contact.
- Contact with an opponent on the ground is prohibited.
- Helping a ball carried through pushing or contact is prohibited.
- Defensive players must go around a block – no holding, tackling, aggressive pushing or other use of arms and hands - no holding or obstructing the ball carrier to remove the flag.

**Summary of Penalties**

**3 Yard Penalties:**
- Equipment worn illegally (from the line—replay down)
- Delay of game (from the line—replay down)
- Substitution infraction (from the line—replay down)
- False start (from the line—replay down)
- Illegal snap (from the line—replay down)
- Player out-of-bounds when ball is in play (from the line—replay down)
- Illegal shift/motion (from the line—replay down)
- Illegal forward hand off (from the spot or line, whichever is greater – loss of down)
- Intentional fumble [illegal pass] (from the spot or line, whichever is greater – loss of down)
- Illegal forward pass (from the spot or line, whichever is greater – loss of down)
- Intentional grounding (from the line—loss of down)

**5 Yard Penalties:**
- Aiding runner [illegal participation] (from the spot or line, whichever is greater - replay down)
- Delay start of either half (from the 15yd line)
- Forward pass interference—offensive (from the line—loss of down)
- Forward pass interference—defensive (from the line—automatic 1st down)
- Illegally secured belt on touchdown (from line and loss of down and no score if on TD)
- Spiking, kicking, throwing ball by offense (if after TD from 15yd line, all other from end of play)
- Attempt to steal or hit the football from the hand of an opponent (from the spot—replay down)
- Tripping; non-intentional (from the spot or line, whichever is greater—replay down)
- Contact with opponent on ground [unsportsmanlike]
- Hurdling player [non-contact foul] (from the spot—replay down)
- Clipping (from the spot—replay down)
- Illegal use of hand or arms – holding/blocking (from the spot—replay down)
- Flag guarding (from spot—replay down)
- Illegal participation (from the line –replay down)
- Intentionally kicking or attempting to strike an opposing player or official [unsportsmanlike]
- Unsportsmanlike player/coach/bench conduct – verbal (taunting) or physical abuse of an official (from the line or end of play, whichever is greater—possible ejection)
- Tackling or throwing a player to the ground [unsportsmanlike]
- Tripping; intentional [unsportsmanlike]
- Roughing the passer; intentional (from the line—automatic 1st down)
- Half the distance penalty is enforced half the distance to the goal when:
- 5 yard penalty—on or inside of the 10 yard line