

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

Recreational Sports

Flag Football Rules

Flag football games will be conducted under the rules of the NIRSA. This document covers the major rules with some exceptions:

*Note- The Rec-Sports Assistant Director may make changes to any rules he deems necessary.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Participation is limited to full-time enrolled NMSU students on main campus, Aggie Fit members, faculty members, and full-time staff. NMSU branch students, NMSU alumni, and members of the community are **NOT ELIGIBLE** without the purchase of an Aggie Fit pass. All areas of eligibility are covered in the Rec-Sports Intramural Policies and Procedures.
2. In order to participate in an Intramural contest each player must present their validated NMSU ID.
3. Participants must be able to access the Rec-Sports facilities. A valid NMSU ID is required to enter the facility.

THE FIELD, THE PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

1. The field shall be a rectangle 100 yards by 40 yards, including two 10-yard endzones. The width of the field shall be lined at 20-yard intervals from goal line to goal line. The 3 and 10 yard try for point lines shall be 1 yard wide.
2. Seven players constitute a men's or women's team. A team may play with five (i.e., team must start if five players are present). If fewer than five players are present, the game will be declared a forfeit. If at anytime a team falls below the minimum number of players, the game will be declared a forfeit.
3. A player's name must appear on the scorecard before he/she may enter the game. A team may add players to the scorecard at anytime during the game.

4. Shoes must be soft-soled soccer/football type cleats or cross-country, tennis or Astroturf shoes. Cleats must be made of nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material, which does not chip or develop a cutting edge.
5. The use of headgear, jewelry, shoulder pads, body pads or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap and use soft, pliable gloves if they desire. No baseball style caps or bandannas may be worn at anytime.
6. Tape or bandage on the hand, wrist, forearm, or any other part of the body is prohibited except to protect an injury. Under no circumstances will a player wearing a cast or splint be allowed to play. Braces with exposed metal parts must be covered.
7. Each team must wear the same type of jersey or shirt. If not, jerseys will be provided but may not always be clean. The jersey must be tucked in at all times or be at least 4 inches above the flag belt.
8. Belt loops, pockets, exposed drawstrings, or untucked hoods on sweat tops are illegal.
9. The flag belt must be free of all knots.
10. Any decision on the legality of any equipment on or being used by a player will be made by the manager on duty and his/ her decision will be final.

THE TOSS AND OPTIONS

Three minutes prior to the start of the game, the referee shall toss a coin and the visiting team captain shall call the toss. The winner of the toss shall have offense, defense, direction, or defer their option until the second half. The team losing the toss shall have the choice of options at the start of the 2nd half, unless the team winning the toss deferred their option until the second half.

PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, AND RESTRICTIONS BEFORE THE SNAP

1. Playing time shall be of 40 minutes duration, divided into two halves of 20 minutes each. Half-time shall be 5 minutes long. In case of overtime, there will be a one-minute intermission between the end of the game and the overtime. Time shall run continually throughout the entire game until the final 2 minutes of the both halves. During this period, the clock will stop under all normal dead ball situations. The referee shall have discretion to reduce the length of half-time if conditions deem it necessary.

NOTE: Overtime will only be played in the playoffs. In case of a game ending in a tie, the two captains will determine the options by a coin flip. The options are the same as the start of the game. The home captain will call the toss. Teams will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played. Both teams will go in the same direction. Each team will be given a series of downs from the same 10-yard line. If the first team scores a touchdown, the second team still receives a series of downs to win the game. Extra points will be attempted and scored as previously stated. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble during the try and returns it for a touchdown, they score three points. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If it is not returned for a score, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line. Each team is entitled to only one time-out during the entire overtime.

2. MERCY RULE: If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. The same rule applies if a team scores inside 2 minutes with this differential.
3. Each team will be permitted 2 time-outs per half; these time-outs shall be 1 minute in length. First half time-outs do not carryover to the second half.
4. The referee may start or stop the game clock whenever, in his/ her judgment, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by using illegal or unfair tactics.
5. No offensive player shall make a false start. A false start includes simulating a charge or start of a play.
6. Following the ready-for-play, it is encroachment for any player to break the scrimmage line plane, except for the snapper's right to be over the ball.
7. After the ready for play whistle, it is illegal to consume more than 25 seconds before putting the ball in play.
8. Players can enter and leave the game, as many times as they want to, but substitutions must be made during a dead ball.
9. All offensive players must have momentarily been within 15 yards of the ball after the ready-for-play.

KICKING THE BALL

1. Punt Line-ups - The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. Neither team may cross the

scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. The defensive team may block the punt. No fake punts are allowed.

2. Kicking the Ball - The kicker must be at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. If the punter delays the kick, the referee will enforce the "attempting to consume time" rule. Penalty: 5 yard penalty for illegal procedure, reset the game clock to the previous playing time and start the clock on the snap.
3. Opportunity to Catch Kick - A player of the receiving team who is within the boundary lines and who is so located that he could have caught a free kick or a scrimmage kick which is beyond the neutral zone while such a kick is in flight must be given an unmolested opportunity to catch the kick. The protection terminates when the kick is touched by any player of the receiving team or the ground. If K catches a muff, the ball is dead and belongs to K.
4. During a punt, if R fouls beyond their neutral zone before the end of the kick, the foul will be enforced where the kick was caught. If the kick ends in the end zone, it will be enforced from the 14 yard-line.

SNAPPING, PASSING, AND DEFLAGGING

1. A team shall snap the ball from their 14 yard-line to begin each half and following a try for point, safety, or touchback.
2. The player who receives the ball from snapper must be at least 2 yards behind his/her scrimmage line. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s). It is illegal for the snapper to snap the ball to himself/herself.
3. The offensive team must have a minimum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. The offensive team must come to a complete stop for one second before ball is snapped. After this, only one person may be in motion at a time. This person may not be in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the time of the snap.
4. If the ball is fumbled, it is immediately dead upon hitting the ground. No advancement can be made by either team. A fumble going out of bounds without hitting the ground remains in possession of the fumbling team at the spot where fumbled or wherever the ball went out of bounds.
INTERPRETATION: A team may not intentionally fumble the ball forward to gain yardage.

5. All players are eligible to touch a forward pass. The passer may catch his/her own forward pass after it has touched another player. Only one legal forward pass may be thrown per down from behind Team A scrimmage line. The offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended. Officials are not responsible for retrieving the ball.
6. A forward pass is a live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line. A backward pass is a live ball thrown parallel or towards the passer's goal line. A backward pass hitting the ground is ruled the same as a fumble.
7. A catch is established when a player possesses the ball with one foot in bounds.
8. If a forward pass or backward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead and belongs to the offensive team.
9. It is illegal to attempt to steal a ball in any player's possession. Once a player has obtained possession of the ball, his/her opponent must play for the flag not the ball.
10. Defensive players must not contact the passer anytime during or after the play. Rushers may try to deflect the ball, but they may not contact the passer even if the ball is deflected. Penalty: 10 yards from end of related run if run ends beyond the line of scrimmage and there is no change of possession (if not, previous spot), automatic first down.
11. 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: 10 yards, loss of down.
12. After the pass is thrown, and until it has been touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A's scrimmage line. Penalty: 10 yards, automatic first down.
13. If a player is purposely deflagged before the legal forward pass is touched, it is pass interference.
14. Removal of the flag belt - When the flag clip is broken, the player is considered down. If the flag inadvertently falls to the ground, a one-hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes capture. The runner is also down if any part of his body touches the ground other than his feet or hands.

15. No players shall place the ball, hand, arm, or shoulder over the flag or flag belt to place the opponent at a disadvantage when attempting to deflag a runner.
16. The offense will receive a series of 4 downs to advance the ball to the next zone line to gain for a first down.
17. Any player may hand the ball forward at any time.
18. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a down which results in a successful touchdown or Try, the penalty will be enforced from the location where the ball will next be snapped.
19. The half may end if a loss of down foul is committed during the last play of the half.
- 20. There shall be two inbounds lines (hash marks), which will run parallel with each sideline and be located 15-yards "in" from each sideline. All plays must be started by a legal snap from a spot on or between the inbounds lines. Team A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the inbounds lines to start each half, for a try, following a touchback, safety, try, awarded catch after a punt, and for the start of each series using an overtime procedure. Other than these times, the ball will be spotted when the ball is declared dead between the inbounds lines or brought to the nearest inbounds line if declared dead in the side zone (the area between the inbounds line and the sideline).**
- 21. If there is a foul by the defensive team during a down that results in a successful touchdown, the scoring team may choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot or the 14-yard line.**

SCREENING, RUSHING, AND CONTACT

1. Contact that places either team at a disadvantage is illegal.
2. An offensive player may screen a defensive player by maintaining a position in their path. The offensive player in maintaining position may not move in such a manner as to initiate contact with the defensive player. Nor may the defensive player contact the offensive player with an extended arm, shoulder, hip, or knee. The concept of screening and rushing is similar to blocking and charging in basketball in most but not all cases.
3. Down field screens are allowed.

SCORING

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| a. | Touchdown | 6 points |
| b. | Safety | 2 or 1 point(s) |
| c. | Trys for points | 1 point from 3 yds.
2 points from 10 yds.
3 points from 20 yds.
3 points when the
defense returns
the try for a touchdown |

Touchdowns will be verified by the official deflagging the player. If the flag does not come off and the official determines the flag belt has been illegally secured, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified, and it is a personal foul. Penalty - 10 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

1. There can only be protest over a player's eligibility or a rules interpretation. An official's judgment call cannot be protested. Protest concerning eligibility must be made before, during, or immediately following the game. Protest concerning a rule interpretation must be made immediately following the play in question. The manager decision is final. Only players of the offended team will be allowed to protest.
2. If a team forfeits a game, they will have 48 business hours to pay a \$30.00 forfeit fee if they wish to remain in the league. If not, a team on the waiting list will replace them. If a team forfeits twice, they will be dropped from the league.
3. A team will have a 10-minute grace period from the scheduled game time to arrive with the minimum number of players to avoid a forfeit. At the scheduled game time, the supervisor will start the game clock. For every minute the team is not ready begin play, the offended team will receive one (1) point. When the team arrives with the minimum number of players and is ready to being play, the score will reflect the point(s) awarded due to the lateness of the team, and the clock will not be reset. If the team has not arrived within 10 minutes, they will forfeit the game. The game will be recorded as a forfeit with a score of 10-0.
4. All teams advance to the playoffs.

5. Accumulation of three unsportsmanlike penalties by the same team will constitute a forfeiture of the game.

SUMMARY OF CORECREATIONAL FOOTBALL RULES

1. The Game – The game shall be played between 2 teams of eight players, four men and four women. Teams with seven players shall be four men and three women or three men and four women. Six players, three men and three women or four women and two men or four men and two women, are required to avoid a forfeit.
2. The Ball – The regular, intermediate, youth, or junior size football shall be used.
3. Minimum Line Players – The offensive team must have at least five players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
4. Male Runner – A Team A male runner cannot advance the ball through Team A's scrimmage line. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male once the ball is beyond the Team A scrimmage line; during a run by a female; and after a change of possession.
5. Male-to-Male Completion – 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 applies to the 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 runner for positive yardage. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the Team A scrimmage line. There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, for female-to-female, or female to male. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed." If the crew of officials erroneously indicates the open/closed status of a down, the play is nullified and the down will be repeated.
6. Illegal Forward Pass – If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the Team A scrimmage line and any Team A male runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.
7. Mercy Rule – If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half that creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game shall end at that point.

8. Touchdown Value – If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9.
9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown results for Team A before a change of team possession, the point value is 9.

SUMMARY OF 4 on 4 FOOTBALL RULES

1. The game shall be played between two teams of four players each. Three players are required to avoid a forfeit.
2. The field measures 60 yards in length and 30 yards in width, including two 10-yard end zones. The field will have one 20-yard zone line marking the middle of the field. The 3 and 10 yard try for point lines shall be 1 yard wide.
3. The captain winning the toss shall select offense, defense, direction, or defer their choice to the second half.
4. Playing time shall be two 12 minute halves.
5. The clock will start on the snap to begin each half. It will run continuously for the first 11 minutes unless stopped by a team or referee time-out.
6. Approximately 1 minute before the end of each half, the referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining in the half. The clock will then start on the snap. During the last minute of each half, a start/stop clock shall be used.
7. Each team will attempt to score a Try for Point by passing from the 3 yard line for one point, 10 yard line for two points, or 20 yard line for three points. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble in flight, it may be returned for 3 points.
8. Each team is entitled to one charged time-out per game, including overtime.
9. A team shall have 3 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone by scrimmage. 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.
10. To begin each half, following a Try, safety, or touchback, teams will begin play at their 5 yard line, unless moved by penalty. If a team is not awarded a new series, their series will begin on their 5 yard line. If an opponent intercepts the ball, their series will begin where the ball is

declared dead. An offensive player cannot advance the ball through their scrimmage line if the ball was snapped within 5 yards of the zone line to gain (no run zone). Any other time, a player can advance the ball through their scrimmage line if followed by a legal exchange (handoff or pass) or following a change of possession.

11. All players that rush the passer must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Players not rushing the passer may defend at the line of scrimmage. The referee will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
12. Once the ball has been handed off, the 7 yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders are eligible to rush.
13. MERCY RULE: 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. The same rule applies if a team scores inside 1 minute with this differential.

NOTE: Overtime will only be played in the playoffs. In case of a game ending in a tie, the two captains will determine the options by a coin flip. The options are the same as the start of the game. The home captain will call the toss. Teams will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played. Both teams will go in the same direction. Each team will be given a series of downs from the same 10-yard line. If the first team scores a touchdown, the second team still receives a series of downs to win the game. Extra points will be attempted and scored as previously stated. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble during the try and returns it for a touchdown, they score three points. If the defense intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown, they will win the game. If it is not returned for a score, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line. **Each team is entitled to only one time-out during the entire overtime.**

SUMMARY OF PENALTIES

LOSS OF 5 YARDS

1. Failure to wear required equipment
2. Illegal delay of game
3. Unfair tactics
4. Substitution rules infractions
5. Putting the ball in play before declared ready by ref
6. Exceeding 25 second count
7. Infraction of protected scrimmage kick-kickers or players

8. Illegal snap
9. Interlocked legs on scrimmage line
10. Interference with opponent's ball
11. Defensive encroachment
12. False start
13. Failure to pause a full second following huddle or shift
14. Infraction of scrimmage formation
15. Offensive player illegally in motion
16. Receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line
17. Offensive player not within 15 yards of the ball
- * 18. Intentionally throwing backward pass, fumble out of bounds
19. Helping the runner
- * 20. Illegal forward pass

LOSS OF 10 YARDS

1. Quick kick
 2. Two or more consecutive encroachments
 3. Eligibility lost going out of bounds
 4. Unsportsmanlike conduct-includes coaches, players, or fans
 5. Steal, bat, or attempt to steal ball from runner
 6. Contact with opponent on ground
 7. Throwing runner to ground
 8. Diving for opponent's flag and contact is made
 9. Hurdling
 10. Unnecessary contact of any nature
 11. Use body of teammate to loft oneself
 - *** 12. Tackle
 - ** 13. Roughing passer
 14. Illegal offensive screen blocking
 - ** 15. Pass Interference defensive
 - * 16. Pass Interference offensive
 17. Illegal use of hands
 18. Guarding flag belt
 19. Stiff arm
 20. Holding
 21. Batting a free ball
 22. Illegal participation
 23. Illegal kicking
 - *** 24. Illegally secured flag belt by the offense
 - *** 25. Illegally secured flag belt by the defense
- * Loss of Down
** Automatic first down

*** Player disqualification