



Flag Football Rules

(Men's, Women's)

Note: Rule changes for 2010-11 will be shaded grey.

Rules and procedures not covered in this manual shall be enforced using NIRSA flag football rules.

RULE 1. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Section 1. Eligibility

1. All participants must be current full-time students or Kiewit Fitness Center members.
2. All participants must bring and show their current Creighton picture ID card to participate.
3. Participants may only play on **ONE** single-sex team (M or W) and **ONE** co-rec (C) team.
4. Refer to the Intramural Sports Manual for further eligibility guidelines.

Section 2. Assumption of Risk

1. All participants must agree to the following:
 - a. *I acknowledge that participation in the activity may involve the risk of bodily injury, property damage, or any other danger. I freely assume all risk of loss, property damage, or personal injury, including death, that may be sustained by me as a result of participating in the activity, whether caused by the negligence of Creighton University, its agents and employees, or otherwise. I hereby release, waive, and discharge Creighton University, its Board of Directors, and its agents and employees from all liability to me, my personal representatives assigns, heirs, and next of kin, for all loss or damage and any claims or demands thereof, including attorney's fees, on account of injury to myself or my property. I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Creighton University and any of its directors, employees, and agents from any and all claims and cost arising directly or indirectly as a result of my participation in the activity.*

Section 3. Captain's Meeting

1. A team representative must attend the preseason captain's meeting. It does not need to be the captain. Unrepresented teams will not be included in the playoffs **and/or are subject to a fine.**

RULE 2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

Section 1. Teams

1. Teams shall consist of seven (7) players. There is no limit as to the number of eligible substitutes.
2. Teams must have at least five (5) eligible players present to start a game and avoid a forfeit.
 - a. Teams may continue a game in progress with less than 5 players (but no fewer than 3).
 - b. The Intramural Supervisor shall rule on all forfeit situations.
3. Players may only be added to the team roster during the regular season. Following the conclusion of the regular season, new players may only be added to teams with the permission of the Intramural Director.

Section 2. Participants

1. All participants are subject to the rules of the game and Intramural Sports guidelines. Participants include, but are not limited to: players, non-players, substitutes, coaches, spectators, fans, and trainers.



Section 3. Supervision

1. The game shall be played under the supervision of the Intramural Sports Supervisor(s) and 2-4 officials. The Supervisor has the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered by the rules.

Section 4. Equipment

1. Men's teams shall play with an official sized ball. Women's and Co-Rec teams may play with a regular, intermediate, or youth sized ball.
2. Players may not wear jewelry of any kind. (Exception: Medical alert bracelets)
3. Players may not wear any equipment deemed to be dangerous or made of unyielding material.
4. Uniform requirements:
 - a. Teams must wear jerseys or t-shirts of one primary color. Black may not be the primary color.
 - b. Jerseys and shirts must remain tucked in at all times, unless short enough to have at least 4 inches from the bottom of the shirt to the top of the shorts/pants.
 - c. Shorts/Pants may not have any pockets, belts, belt loops or exposed drawstrings.
 - d. Metal or hard-plastic cleats are not allowed. Shoes must be athletic. No boots, sandals, etc.
 - e. Hoods on jackets and sweatshirts must remain tucked in at all times.
 - f. Hats with brims are not allowed. Bandanas may be worn, provided it is not tied in a knot.
5. The flag belt must be worn with the clip in the front. The belt may not be tied, looped, or tampered with in any way that gives an unfair advantage. (**Penalty: Illegally secured flag belt, 10 yards, loss of down / automatic first down, player is ejected**)

RULE 3. PREGAME, TIMING AND SCORING

Section 1. Captain's Meeting

1. Prior to the start of the game, there shall be a pre-game captain's meeting. The referee will conduct a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss shall make one of three choices:
 - a. Defer their choice to the beginning of the second half.
 - b. Choose to go on offense or defense first.
 - c. Choose which end of the field to defend.
2. If the option is deferred, the opposing captain shall choose first. If the option is not deferred, the opposing captain shall make the remaining choice.
3. The result of the initial coin flip shall determine who gets first choice at the start of the second half.

Section 2. Timing

1. Game time is forfeit time.
2. The game shall consist of two (2) twenty-minute (20) halves. A game becomes "official" at halftime.
3. First Half:
 - a. During the 1st half, the clock will run continuously except during time-outs.
4. Second Half:
 - a. During the 2nd half, the clock will run continuously during the first eighteen (18) minutes.
 - b. Two minute warning:
 - i. At or around two minutes left, the clock will be stopped, and there will be a 2-minute warning announced by the timing official. The clock will then start on the snap.
 - c. Post- two minute warning:
 - i. The clock shall stop according to high school rules. This includes, but is not limited to: Incomplete passes, out-of-bounds, first downs, penalties, scores, change of possession.
 - ii. The clock shall start on either the snap or whistle dependent upon the previous play.

5. Each team is allowed **two timeouts per game**. Timeouts shall last 30 seconds.
6. Overtime:
 - a. There is no overtime during the regular season. The game shall be recorded as a tie.
 - b. Playoffs / Tournament Events:
 - i. A coin flip shall determine who possesses the ball first, and which side of the field to play. Both teams shall play all overtime periods towards the same goal.
 - ii. Unless moved by penalty, each team will be given 4 downs to score from the 10-yard line. The goal line is always the line to gain.
 - iii. Penalty enforcements remain the same.
 - iv. Each team is given one timeout for all of overtime. They do not carry over from the 2nd half.
 - v. Teams always have the choice for the point value of the try.
 - vi. If a pass is intercepted and returned for a touchdown, the game ends.
 - vii. As many overtime periods as necessary shall be played until a winner is declared.

Section 3. Scoring and Touchbacks

1. Touchdowns are worth six (6) points. Refer to the Co-Rec summary for those point values.
2. Try
 - a. Teams choose the point value of the try. They must inform the referee of their decision, which is final. Teams may only change the point value of the try if either team calls timeout prior to the try. This decision cannot be changed as a result of a penalty.
 - b. Point values: One (1) point from the 3-yard line. Two (2) points from the 10-yard line. Three (3) points from the 20-yard line.
 - c. **If the defense intercepts the ball, the play is dead.**
3. Safeties are worth two (2) points.
 - a. A player forces the ball from the field of play across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there. This includes runs, fumbles, snaps, muffs, punts and bats of the ball. (Exception: incomplete passes)
 - b. Momentum Exception: If a defensive player intercepts the ball, or a player receives the punt, between the 5-yard line and his/her goal line, and the original momentum carries him/her into the end zone, and the ball becomes dead, the ball belongs to team at the spot possession was gained.
 - c. An offensive player commits a foul where the penalty is accepted and enforced from the end zone.
4. Touchback
 - a. During a punt, the untouched ball crosses in or behind the receiving team's goal line.
 - b. The ball is out of bounds, or becomes dead in possession of the player behind his/her goal line, and the attacking team is responsible for the force.

Section 4. Mercy Rule

1. The game ends if a team is winning by 19 points (25 in Co-Rec) or more at, or following the two-minute warning.
2. **The game ends if a team is winning by 40 points (45 in Co-Rec) or more at any point during the second half.**
3. Prior to the enforcement of the mercy rule, there must be a down free of any live-ball fouls.

RULE 4. BALL IN PLAY

Section 1. Start of Series

1. Unless moved by penalty, the ball shall be snapped from the 14-yard line to start each half, or to start a new series following a try for point, safety, or touchback. There are no kickoffs.

2. The offensive team shall have four (4) downs to legally advance the ball into the next zone. The zone line-to-gain shall be the immediate zone in advance of the ball, unless changed due to loss of distance by penalty or by failure to gain (ex. QB sack).

Section 2. Neutral Zone

1. The neutral zone is a one (1) yard area that separates the offensive and defensive lines of scrimmage. The offensive line of scrimmage is an extended plane that is marked using an orange ball spotter. The defensive line of scrimmage is an extended plane that is marked using a yellow spotter.
2. **Encroachment:** Following the ready for play signal, no player may encroach into the neutral zone. The player is not allowed to jump back on sides. (**Penalty: Encroachment, dead-ball, 5 yards**)
 - a. During the same dead-ball interval, two or more consecutive encroachment penalties by the defense result in 10-yard penalties.

Section 3. Prior to the Snap

1. **False Start:** No offensive player shall simulate the start of the snap. (**Penalty: False Start, dead-ball, 5 yards**)
2. Offensive formations
 - a. The snapper must snap the ball either next to, or on top of, the orange ball spotter. The ball may be moved with approval from the referee due to poor field conditions.
 - b. The snapper is the only player required to be on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. There is no minimum number of offensive players required on the line of scrimmage at the snap.
 - c. The player receiving the snap shall be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal (**Penalty: Illegal Formation, live-ball, 5 yards**).
3. Snap
 - a. The snap must be made in one quick and continuous motion. The ball must be snapped from off the ground, orange ball spotter, or towel. (**Penalty: Illegal snap, dead-ball, 5 yards**)
 - b. The snapper may not snap the ball to him/herself. (**Penalty: Illegal snap, live-ball, 5 yards**)
4. **Shift:** Prior to the snap, all offensive players must come to a complete stop for at least one full second. (**Penalty: Illegal shift, live-ball, 5 yards**)
5. **Motion:** Only one offensive player may be in motion during the snap. This motion may not be towards the line of scrimmage. (**Penalty: Illegal motion, live-ball, 5 yards**)
6. **Delay:** The snapper may not snap the ball prior to the referee's ready for play signal. Once signaled, the snap must occur within 25 seconds. (**Penalty: Delay of game, dead-ball, 5 yards**)

Section 4. Blocking

1. Offensive screen blocking
 - a. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands at their side or behind the back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. The screener may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain balance.
 - b. The offensive screen blocker may not take a position so close to a moving opponent that the opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.
 - c. After assuming a legal screening position, the offensive screen blocker may not move to maintain it, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path of the opponent.
2. Defensive rushing

- a. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arm and hands may not be used as a wedge to displace the opponent. A defender may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain balance.
3. The application of this Rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. The player deemed primarily responsible for the illegal contact shall be penalized. (**Penalty: Illegal contact, live-ball, 10 yards**)

Section 5. Passing the Ball

1. All players are eligible receivers.
2. Legal Forward Pass
 - a. The initial direction of the ball determines if the pass is forward or backward.
 - b. Prior to a change of possession, any offensive player may throw a forward pass, provided the passer's feet are behind the offensive line of scrimmage when the ball is thrown. Only one forward pass may be thrown per down. (**Penalty: Illegal forward pass, live-ball, 5 yards, loss of down**).
3. Catching the Ball
 - a. A player needs to catch the ball with only one foot inbounds to possess the ball.
 - b. A ball caught simultaneously by the offense and defense shall be awarded to the offense and the play shall be immediately ruled dead at the spot of the simultaneous catch.
4. **Roughing the Passer:** Defensive players must make a definitive effort to avoid charging into or contacting a passer after it is clear that the ball has been thrown forward legally. Contacting the passer's arm or hand following a legal forward pass shall be considered roughing. (**Penalty: Roughing the passer, live-ball, 10 yards, automatic first down**).
5. **Interference:** During a legal forward pass, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver beyond the neutral zone is pass interference, unless the contact 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 a play on the ball, even if there is no contact, is also interference.
 - a. Offensive pass interference may occur from the start of the snap until the ball is touched by any offensive player. (**Penalty: Offensive pass interference, live-ball, 10 yards, loss of down**).
 - b. Defensive pass interference may occur from after the pass is thrown until the ball is touched by any player. (**Penalty: Defensive pass interference, live-ball, 10 yards, automatic first down**).

Section 6. Running the Ball

1. The runner is the player in possession of a live ball or simulating possession of a live ball. Once a player catches or intercepts a pass, he/she becomes a runner.
2. Backwards pass
 - a. A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by fumble anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time. A player may not throw an untouched pass, forward or backward, to him/herself. (**Penalty: Illegal pass, live-ball, 5 yards, loss of down**)
 - b. A backwards pass or fumble in flight may be caught or intercepted and advanced.
 - c. A backwards pass or fumble which is thrown out-of-bounds, or touches the ground, is DEAD where it hits and belongs to the team last in possession of the ball, unless it is a touchback or safety.
3. Removing 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 either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees by an opponent.**

- c. An opponent intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. (**Penalty: Illegal flag belt removal, live-ball, 10 yards**)
- d. An opponent shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag. (**Penalty: Holding, live-ball, 10 yards**)
- e. An opponent shall not strip or attempt to strip the ball from a runner by punching, striking, or stealing it. (**Penalty: Illegal contact, live-ball, 10 yards**)
4. **Flag Guarding:** Runners may 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 include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt. (**Penalty: Flag guarding, live-ball, 10 yards**)
 - b. Stiff arms are illegal. (**Penalty: Illegal contact, live-ball, 10 yards**).
5. A runner may not charge into nor contact an opponent in his/her path. If the opponent has legally established defensive position in that path, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction. (**Penalty: Illegal contact, live-ball, 10 yards**)

Section 7. Kicking the Ball

1. Quick kicks are illegal. (**Penalty: Illegal kicking, live-ball, 10 yards**)
2. Punting the ball
 - a. On fourth down, the referee will ask the captain if his team chooses to punt or attempt to gain the first down. The decision must be made in a timely manner. The referee can stop the game clock, if he/she thinks the offense is using delaying tactics. The decision must be communicated to the defense and to the other officials. A punt may be declared on any down.
 - b. If the offense chooses to punt, they must punt the ball. Fake punts are illegal. The offense may reverse their decision if either team calls a timeout, if a foul occurs, or if the period ends.
 - c. Neither the kicking nor receiving team may cross their scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked. (**Penalty: Illegal procedure, live-ball, 5 yards**) Note: All scrimmage line rules apply to the punt.
 - d. After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion.
3. Fielding the punt
 - a. An untouched punt that hits the ground remains live and may be advanced by the receiving team.
 - b. When a punt crosses K's scrimmage line touches a player from either team, and then hits the ground, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team.
 - c. If the punt in flight hits the receiving team, and is caught by the kicking team, it belongs to the kicking team. However, the ball is dead at that spot as K cannot advance a muff by R.
 - d. An untouched punt that crosses the receiver's goal line is a touchback and may not be run out.
4. Interference
 - a. While the punt is in flight, the kicking team shall not touch the ball or the receiving team, nor obstruct R's path to the ball, unless the punt has been touched by R. The kicking team may catch, touch, muff, or bat the ball if no receiving player is in position to catch the ball. (**Penalty: Kick catch interference, live-ball, 10 yards; or R may accept an awarded fair catch at the spot of the foul.**)
5. No Fair Catch: Players shall ignore all signals given by the kickers or receivers. There is no foul.

RULE 5. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

Section 1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. Non-contact acts. Include but are not limited to:
 - a. Participate while wearing illegal player equipment.

- b. Entering or leaving the field illegally to gain an advantage.
 - c. Using words or signals in an attempt to interfere with the offense's signals or movements.
 - d. Any acts of unfair play used in an attempt to confuse the opponent.
2. Dead-ball fouls. Include but are not limited to:
 - a. Intentionally kicking the ball.
 - b. Spiking the ball.
 - c. Throwing the ball high into the air.
 3. Prohibited acts. Include but are not limited to:
 - a. Using profanity, taunting, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures.
 - b. Refusal to comply or abide by the request or decision of an official or supervisor.
 - c. Attempting to influence a decision by an official or supervisor.
 - d. Disrespectfully addressing an official or supervisor.
 - e. Indicating objections to a decision made by an official or supervisor.
 - f. Intentionally contacting an official or supervisor. (Flagrant)
 - g. Fighting (Flagrant)
 - i. Any attempt to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to the game, whether or not there is contact (ex. Spitting, throwing a punch). Leaving the team bench and entering the field during a fight is also considered a flagrant unsportsmanlike act.
 4. **Penalty: Unsportsmanlike conduct, dead-ball, 10 yards; if flagrant, player is ejected**
 5. Two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls against the same participant in the same game shall result in ejection.
 6. Three unsportsmanlike conduct fouls against the same team in the same game shall result in forfeit.
 7. Any act of fighting shall result in the game being ended immediately, with the offending team(s) forfeiting.

Section 2. Personal Fouls

1. No player shall make contact of any nature with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary. (**Penalty: Illegal contact, live-ball, 10 yards**)
2. No player may tackle another player by grasping or encircling the opponent and taking him/her toward the ground as in tackle football. (**Penalty: Flagrant illegal contact, live-ball, 10 yards, player is ejected**)

RULE 6. ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

Section 1. Types of Fouls

1. Dead-ball: When a dead-ball foul occurs, the officials shall not permit the ball to become live. The penalty for any foul between downs, or unsportsmanlike foul, is enforced from the succeeding spot (The spot where the ball would next be snapped if no foul had occurred.)
2. Live-ball: Any live ball foul is enforced according to the All-But-One Principle except:
 - a. A foul which occurs simultaneously with the snap is penalized from the previous spot.
3. Live-ball fouls followed by dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

Section 2. All-But-One Principle

1. All fouls are enforced from the basic spot, except for a foul by the offense that occurs behind the basic spot. This foul is enforced from the spot of the foul. (Ex. Flag guarding, offensive illegal contact behind the line)

Section 3. Types of Plays

1. Loose ball play: Any action during a punt, a legal forward pass, a backwards pass made from behind the offensive scrimmage line, or the run or runs which precedes a legal pass, punt or fumble.
 - a. The basic enforcement spot is the previous spot, the spot of the snap.



2. Running play: Any action that is not a loose ball play.
 - a. The basic enforcement spot is the end of the related run.

Section 4. Special Enforcements

1. Half the distance:
 - a. 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 greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.
2. Foul during a touchdown:
 - a. If there is a foul by the scoring team (other than unsportsmanlike) during a down which results in a successful touchdown, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score.
 - b. If there is a foul by the defensive team (including unsportsmanlike) during a down which results in a touchdown, the scoring team may accept the result of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced on the Try or the after the Try, the 14-yard line.
3. Foul prior to a Try:
 - a. If, after a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play signal for the Try, either team commits any foul for which the basic spot of penalty enforcement is the succeeding spot (Try), the offended team may have the penalty enforced on the Try or after the Try, the 14-yard line.
4. Foul during a Try:
 - a. If there is a foul by the offense (other than unsportsmanlike) during a down which results in a successful Try, the acceptance of the penalty nullifies the score. If, during a successful Try, the offense commits a loss of down foul, there is no score and no replay.
 - b. If there is a foul by the defense during a successful Try, the penalty will be enforced from the 14-yard line.
5. Double Foul:
 - a. It is a double foul when both teams commit live-ball fouls (other than unsportsmanlike) during the same down and there is no change of possession; or there is a change of possession, and the team in possession at the end of the down fouled prior to the final change of possession.
 - b. In all instances of a double foul, all of the penalties offset and the down is replayed.
 - c. Clean Hands Exception:
 - i. If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul is not prior to the final change of possession and it declines the penalty for its opponent’s foul(s).
6. Multiple Live Ball Fouls:
 - a. When two or more live ball fouls (other than unsportsmanlike) are committed during the same down by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen by the offended team.

SUMMARY OF PENALTIES

5-yard Penalties		10-yard Penalties	
False Start (Dead)	Illegal Formation	Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Dead)	Flag Guarding
Illegal Snap (Dead)	Illegal Substitution	Personal Foul – Late Hit (Dead)	Holding
Encroachment (Dead)	Illegal Pass (LOD)	Pass Interference (LOD or Auto 1 st)	Illegal Contact
Illegal Substitution (Dead)	Intentional Grounding (LOD)	Roughing the Passer (Auto 1 st)	Illegal Participation
Delay of Game (Dead)	Failure to wear equipment	Tackle = Flagrant (Ejection)	Illegal Batting
Illegal Motion	Illegal male advancement	Illegal Secured Belt (LOD + ejection)	Illegal Kicking
Illegal Shift	Illegal procedure	Illegal Secured Belt (Auto 1 st + ejection)	Unfair Acts

Flag Football Rules

(Co-Rec)

Note: Co-Rec rules are the same as men's and women's rules, with the following modifications:

RULE 2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

Section 1. Teams

1. Teams shall consist of six (6) players. There is no limit as to the number of eligible substitutes.
2. Teams must have at least four (4) eligible players present to start a game and avoid a forfeit. **Teams must have at least two (2) men and two (2) women to avoid a forfeit.**
3. Teams may play with the following combinations: (2M/2W, 3M/2W, 2M/3W, 3M/3W)

Section 4. Equipment

1. Co-Rec teams may play with a regular, intermediate, or youth sized ball.

RULE 3. PREGAME, TIMING AND SCORING

Section 2. Scoring / Mercy Rule

1. If a female scores a touchdown, it is worth nine (9) points. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any offensive player, prior to a change of possession, it is worth 9 points.
2. All other touchdowns are worth six (6) points.
3. The mercy rule is 45+ points after halftime or 25+ points at the two-minute warning.

RULE 4. BALL IN PLAY

Section 5. Passing the Ball

1. All new series shall start with an open play.
2. Open play: Any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
3. Closed play: A male player may **NOT** complete a legal forward pass to any other male player.
4. Pass Rule: If a male completes a legal forward pass to a male, the next down is considered closed. Thus, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or female receiver for positive yards. This Rule applies to the Try. (**Penalty: Illegal forward pass, live-ball, 5 yards, loss of down**)
 - a. There is no foul for a female receiver being deflagged behind the scrimmage line. The next play would remain closed.
 - b. If a female runs for positive yards on a closed play, the next play shall remain closed.
 - c. A legal forward pass caught jointly by male and female teammates is considered a female catch.
 - d. All illegal forward pass fouls are classified as fouls during a running play. Thus, illegal forward passes do not change the open/closed status of a down.
 - e. All fouls, accepted or declined, have no effect on the open/closed status of the next play.

Section 6. Running the Ball

1. An offensive male runner cannot advance the ball through his scrimmage line (orange ball spotter). There are no restrictions: (A) once the ball has already been touched by any player beyond the offensive scrimmage line, (B) once there has been a change of possession, or (C) during a run by a female. (**Penalty: Illegal male advancement, live-ball, 5 yards**)
 - a. A female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the line of scrimmage, who then runs beyond the line of scrimmage (**Penalty: Illegal forward pass**)