

INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES
San Francisco State University
Campus Recreation Department
Intramural Sports
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The team captain is expected to read and familiarize themselves with the SF State Intramural Sports Handbook and is responsible to inform their team of all rules listed here and within the handbook.

The SF State Campus Recreation Department/Intramural Sports Program reserves the right to implement and/or revise any rules without prior notice to protect the integrity of the leagues, ensure fairness of competition, and for the safety of participants.

GAME AND PLAYER EQUIPMENT
1. The IM Program will furnish the game ball, but not for warm ups
2. Only tennis shoes or rubber cleats (quarter inch) are allowed. No metal cleats or spikes will be permitted on the field.
3. A player may not wear anything which could be dangerous to another player (e.g. jewelry, rings, watches, etc.) Only stud earrings are permitted. Knee braces are permissible provided all metal is covered by protective padding.
4. Hard casts of any kind are not allowed.
5. The IM program will provide jerseys and flag belts. However, it is recommended your team get your own jerseys. Jerseys must be numbered. Jerseys must be tucked in or worn 4 inches above the waist.
6. Flag belts must be 1 piece without any knots and be worn around the waist with 3 belts attached. Flag belts must be worn, so that two flags fall to each side and 1 flag falls to the back of the body.
7. Tampering with the flag belt such as tying it is a personal foul and may result in the player being disqualified from the game.
8. Players may not wear red or yellow shorts.

TEAM COMPOSITION
1. Teams may carry a maximum of 15 players on their roster.
2. You have up to the fourth week of league games to finalize your official team roster.
3. Each Flag Football participant may only compete in one team in the league.
4. Club players must play in Division A Leagues. No more than two club members can play on any intramural team.

THE GAME
1. The game shall be played by two teams of seven players on the field.
2. Each team must have a minimum of six players to officially start the game.
3. All Co-Ed teams will have a minimum of 3 women and 4 men or 4 women and 3 men at all times.
4. A five minute grace period will be given to late arriving teams. After 5 minutes the team will be given a forfeit and 0 sportsmanship points for that game.
5. SF State ID cards are REQUIRED at the beginning of every game prior to a participant playing on the field. You must have your SF State ID card to play. NO EXCEPTIONS!
6. There will be two, 15-minute running clock halves. During the last 2 minutes of regulation, the clock will stop under normal college football rules if the score is within 14 points.
7. You have 25 seconds to initiate a play or to snap the ball or else it is a delay of game penalty of 5 yards.
8. Each team will be allowed one 1-minute timeout per half.
9. Games will be played across an 80 yard field including two 10 yard end zones. The area of the field inside the goal lines shall be divided into four 15 yards zones. Teams will be given 4 downs to reach the next 15 yard zone. Once the next zone is reached, team will start back at first down.
10. Both the offensive scrimmage line and defensive scrimmage lines are marked with a yellow ball spotter placed 1 yard away. The area between the two lines is the neutral zone.
11. The ball is snapped on the designated yellow circle to start the 1st and 2nd half.
12. During regular season, a tie game will be recorded as a tie game. Only in playoffs will there be overtime.

RUNNING THE BALL, DEAD BALL, OUT OF BOUNDS
1. Players advance the ball by running until they are deflagged or fumble the ball.
2. Runners will typically run with the ball extended in front of them to advance the ball.
3. An opponent may not strip the ball from a runner when it is in a players possession.
4. A player is out of bounds when any part of him/her touches anything, other than another player or a game official who is on or outside the sideline or end line. The player touching the line is out of bounds. The line is out!
5. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground the ball is dead. (Knee, shoulder, elbow= deadball)
6. When a fumble or snap touches the ground the ball is dead and the ball is placed at the spot the ball hit the ground.
7. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player the ball is dead.
8. When a runner has a flag belt partially removed and then the flag drops to the ground, the play shall be dead and the ball will be taken at the spot where the ball was when the flag is removed.
9. If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground, a one hand tag between the shoulders and the knees constitutes a deadball. Pushing, striking, slapping, and holding are not permitted.
10. A runner may spin to avoid being deflagged or dive to advance the ball. Ball carrier must take 3 steps between spins.
11. A runner may not guard his/her flag belt during play (10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul). Flag guarding includes:
   a. placing the arm or hand over the flag belt
   b. placing the ball over the flag belt
   c. lowering the shoulders to position the arm over the flag belt

PUNTING
1. On 4th down the referee will ask the Captain if he/she wants to punt. The referee will announce the decision to both teams. When a punt is to be made, the kicking team must announce to the referee of its intention. Teams are not allowed to fake a kick.
2. Neither the kicking team nor the receiving team may advance beyond their scrimmage lines until the ball is punted.
3. Both teams must have at least 4 players within 1 yard of their scrimmage line and remain motionless until the kick is made (arms must be to the player’s side).
4. The kicker must be at least 5 yards or more behind the scrimmage line. After the snap, the Kicker in one continuous motion must kick the ball. Penalty: Delay of game. 5 yard penalty, repeat 4
5. When a punt crosses the scrimmage line, then touches a player from either team and hits the ground it is dead at the spot and belongs to the receiving team.
6. A punt may be run out of the end zone by the receivers.
7. If a punt touches the ground that is behind the goal line a player may catch the ball and advance or down the ball; whistle is blown and play is stopped immediately (touchback). A touchback will be awarded to the receiving team. It’s a change of possession and the ball is placed on the designated starting spot. Clock shall continue to run unless it’s the last 2 minutes of the game.
8. There are no on-side kicks.
9. Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any kick is in flight and is beyond the kicker's free kick line.
10. If any receiver gives a valid signal for a fair catch and catches the kick beyond the kicker's line and between the goal lines, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead. The player must signal intention by extending one arm above his/her head and waving laterally from side to side more than once

THE SNAP
1. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the snap. The defensive line of scrimmage is 1 yard off the ball. The yard between the offensive line of scrimmage and defensive line of scrimmage is considered the neutral zone. Neither team can enter the neutral zone until the ball has been snapped.
2. Players in motion are not considered on the line of scrimmage.
3. After the snapper has placed his/her hands on the ball, it is encroachment for any defensive player to enter the neutral zone. Offensive players create a false start if they move down field prior to the ball being snapped, or if they fake the start of the play with a quick or sudden movement. PENALTY: 5 yards from previous spot.
4. Players may line up at the scrimmage line in a 2 point, 3 point, or 4 point stance.
5. Any player receiving the snap must be two to five yards behind the teams offensive line while receiving the snap. Direct snaps from under center are illegal.
6. Ball may be snapped backwards between the snappers legs or to the outside of the snappers legs to one side.
7. Snapper may not move the ball or fake the start of the snap prior to the snap being made. PENALTY: 5 yards from previous spot.
8. If the snap hits the ground the ball is dead at that spot.
9. After the ball is ready for play, all offensive players must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap.
PASSING AND HANDLING THE BALL
1. Both backward and forward passes are legal.
2. All players of either team are eligible to touch or catch a pass.
3. A player must have at least a foot in bounds with possession of the ball when catching a pass.
4. A catch is legal if a receiver is kneeling and inbounds.
5. If a player goes out-of-bounds, then returns inbounds and makes a catch it is illegal participation.
6. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.
7. A forward pass is illegal:
   a. If the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage.
   b. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
   c. If there is more than one forward pass per down.
8. Backward passes are legal both behind and in front of the line of scrimmage. If the backward pass is done behind the line of scrimmage, one forward pass is still legal.
9. If players from opposing teams share possession of a caught ball, the possession goes to the offensive team and the ball cannot be advanced.
10. Any contact that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage is pass interference unless it occurs when 2 or more opposing players make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass.
11. It is pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball. If the pass is completed, the receiver may still advance the ball under the inadvertent flag rule. Once the player is down the offense may choose to accept the 10 yard penalty from the previous line of scrimmage or decline the penalty.
   a. Offensive pass interference- PENALTY: 10 yards from previous spot, loss of down.
   b. Defensive pass interference- PENALTY: 10 yards from previous spot, automatic first down.
12. If a receiver is deflagged in the process of making a catch (juggling the ball) it will be considered pass interference. If the receiver completes the reception, the completion will stand and the ball will be spotted where the reception was made. The offense will then choose to accept a 10 yard penalty from the previous line of scrimmage or decline the penalty. If it is incomplete, there will be a 10 yard penalty from the previous line of scrimmage and repeat down.

SCORING
1. All touchdowns are 6 points.
2. On a touchdown play, the player must signify a touchdown by raising both his/her hands in the air so the nearest referee can deflag the player to ensure the player equipment is legal.
3. After a touchdown the scoring team may choose to go for the following extra points: From the 5 yard line is worth 1 point, from the 10-yard line is worth 2 points, and from the 20-yard line is worth 3 points.
4. The Referee must speak to the field captain, asking him/her whether the try shall be from the 5, 10 or 20-yard line. Once the scoring team makes the choice, he/she may change the decision only by taking a charged team time out.
5. If a defensive player intercepts the pass or recovers the ball from a fumble prior to hitting the ground on a try and returns it for a touchdown, they receive 2 points.
6. The Intercepting Momentum Rule applies when a defensive player intercepts the ball inside his/her own 5 yard line and carries it into their own end zone. The ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot of the interception.

SAFETIES AND TOUCHBACKS
1. A safety is worth 2 points. When a safety is scored, the ball belongs to the defending team. The defense shall put the ball in play at the 15 yard line.
2. A safety occurs when an offensive player is deflagged in his/her end zone, commits a foul in his/her own end zone, goes out of bounds in the end zone, or the snap hits the ground in the end zone.
3. It is a safety when 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.
4. A pass intercepted and downed by a player in their own end zone is a touchback and the offense shall put the ball back into play at the 15 yard line.

SCREEN BLOCKING
1. Offensive Screen
   a. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact.
   b. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back.
   c. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen is illegal. PENALTY: Personal foul, 10 yards from spot of penalty.
2. Defense
   a. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block.
b. The arms and hands may not be used to contact an opponent except when capturing a flag belt or tagging a runner without a belt.
c. Attempting to steal, punch or strip the ball from a player is illegal.
d. Holding, pushing, or tackling a runner is illegal.
e. Grabbing on to the shirt is illegal: 10 yard penalty.
f. Any contact made will be considered unnecessary roughness and the team shall be assessed 10 yards.

c. **Guarding of the flag belts with any part of the body to avoid being deflagged is illegal. 10 yards**

**QUARTERBACK**

1. *Defensive players may not push, pull, hold, tackle, trip, or hit a quarterback while or after he/she is attempting to make a play. (Roughing the passer, 10 yard penalty from the previous spot, automatic first down.)*

2. *Quarterback may not push, flag guard, or stiff arm a defensive player while he/she is trying to go for the flag. (10 yard penalty at the spot of the foul (repeat down).)*

**FALSE STARTS AND OFFSIDES**

1. All players on the offensive line must remain motionless for one second before the snap. Any player(s) moving before the snap will be deemed illegal. Penalty false start 5 yard penalty, repeat down.

2. Only one player may be in motion moving towards the sideline before the snap. A player in motion moving towards the line of scrimmage will be given a 5 yard penalty for illegal motion.

3. The center/ hiker may roll the ball side to side on the ground before the snap. If the ball is picked up and placed back on the ground it will be deemed dead, 5 yard penalty, loss of down.

4. The center must hike the ball in one continuous motion to the quarterback or kicker.

5. Any defensive player crossing the neutral zone before the snap will be deemed illegal and the play will be stopped immediately. Penalty: 5 yard penalty, repeat down. Any contact made by a player during the offsides will be deemed illegal and a 10 yard penalty will be assessed (repeat down). If the contact was unsportsmanlike that player will be ejected from the game and the 10 yard penalty will be assessed.

6. A defensive player may not step back to his/her side of the playing field before the snap. Play shall be whistled dead immediately and penalties will be enforced.

**SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. No substitute shall enter during a down. All substitutions may enter the game when the play is whistled dead and before the next snap.

**CO-ED RULES**

1. All the preceding rules apply, with the following exceptions.

2. A male runner cannot advance the ball past the team’s scrimmage line. PENALTY: 5 yards from previous spot.

3. If a female player passes or scores for a touchdown, the point value is 6.

4. An open play is a play in which a person of either gender can be involved. A closed play is a play in which a female must be involved. A female must be involved in an attempt for positive yards in at least one of every three plays. An open play will always follow a closed play. The referee will announce before each play whether it is open or closed. PENALTY: illegal forward pass, 5 yards from spot where the third consecutive male-to-male completed legal pass is released, and a loss of down.

**SUMMARY OF FOULS AND PENALTIES**

*Loss of 5 yards*

Required Equipment Worn Illegally; Delay of Game; Free Kick Out-of-Bounds; Encroachment; False Start; Illegal Snap; Offensive Player Illegally in Motion; Helping the Runner, Too many players on the field, coming onto the field without a flag

*Loss of 5 Yards and Loss of Down*

Illegal Forward Pass; Intentional Grounding

*Loss of 10 Yards*
**SPORTSMANSHIP RATING & PLAYOFFS**

1. All teams are given a sportsmanship rating at the end of every game (0-4.0).
2. If a team forfeits, they will be given a 0 rating in sportsmanship. If a team captain knows his/her team will be forfeiting a game ahead of time, the team should notify the intramural sports office. Teams that notify the intramural sports office via email by 12:00 noon on the day of their game will be given a 2.0 sportsmanship rating for their forfeited game. [An email must be sent by 12:00 noon to ims@mail.sfsu.edu]
3. The overall sportsmanship average (SPA) will determine whether or not a team is eligible for playoffs. A team with a total sportsmanship average (SPA) at the end of the season below a 2.7 will not be eligible to participate in playoffs.
4. All teams with a sportsmanship average (SPA) above 2.7 are eligible for playoffs, which will be held in a tournament format. Regular season records will determine tournament seeds.

**ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

There is ZERO TOLERANCE towards all violent and/or threatening behavior in all SF State Intramural Leagues. Players and/or spectators involved in any behavior which could potentially cause harm or injury to another player, ie: body checking, throwing punches, tripping, excessive taunting, verbal or physical abuse, and other malicious acts will be severely dealt with. In addition, talking to a game official is strictly prohibited and trash talking, arguing, or harassing a Campus Recreation employee will not be tolerated. Individuals choosing to engage in such behavior will be banned from future participation within the SF State Intramural Program forever, and a report will be filed with the University Police Department, possibly resulting in assault charges being filed against the individual.