



Northwestern Michigan College Recreation and Intramural Sports

Official Flag Football Rules and Regulations

Rule 1: Players, Field, and Equipment

Section 1: Team

Article 1 Teams will compete with no more than seven players on a side. Additional players may be substituted without restriction during times when play is not in progress.

Article 2 At least five players from each team must be present at the scheduled game time to begin a game. A grace period of no more than ten minutes will be given teams who are short players before officials will declare a forfeit.

Note: In cases of severe weather, such as lightening, the Intramural Supervisor will determine whether or not the game will be played. Cancellations will be made at game time only. Scheduled teams should report to the field prepared to play.

Article 3 Forfeited games will not be rescheduled.

Section 2: Field Dimensions and Markings

Article 1 The field is sixty yards long and thirty-two yards wide with seven yard end zones.

Article 2 The field will be divided in to three twenty-yard zones. A team will be given four downs to cross each consecutive line and earn a new set of downs. Note that the distance to go for a first down may vary depending on where the line of scrimmage is located.

Section 3: Equipment

Article 1 All players must purchase and wear their own mouth guards.

Article 2 Only regular athletic shoes or shoes with rubber cleats or ripples as an integral part of the shoe's construction will be permitted for play. This does not include any type of detachable cleats made from any fiber, metal or plastic.

Article 3 No hard soled street shoes may be worn

Article 4 No shoulder pads or helmets may be worn.

Article 5 It is requested that each team wear color coordinated jerseys.

Rule 2: Game Set-up and Procedures

Section 1: Pregame

Article 1 Intramural flag football is open to registered students at Northwestern Michigan College who are enrolled in at least one course during the current semester. All players must present a valid student I.D. before being allowed to compete.

Section 1: Pregame (continued)

Note: Protests regarding eligibility may be entered at any time and appropriate investigations and/or actions will be taken. However, sportsmanship dictates that eligibility questions are raised immediately and not reserved as a crutch to bring about expulsion of a superior team following a loss.

Article 2 Players will be checked for mouth guards. Those found to be missing mouth guards will not be allowed to compete.

Article 3 Each team member must be equipped with a flag belt of the same color. Shirts must be tucked beneath the flag belt so that the entire flag is visible and unimpeded from a defensive player attempting to make a legal tag.

Article 4 Each game will begin with a coin toss. The officials will designate a captain to call the toss either heads or tails. The winner of the toss will be given the first choice of options for either the first or the second half. In turn, the loser of the toss will have the first choice of options for whichever half was not chosen by the winner. Teams may choose to play either offense (receive) or defense or choose which goal to defend. Note that teams will automatically switch ends following halftime.

Section 2: Timing

Article 1 A game will consist of two twenty-minute halves.

Article 2 There will be a five-minute halftime period. Officials may shorten or omit the halftime period entirely in cases where not doing so may threaten timely completion of the game.

Article 3 Each team is allotted two one-minute time-outs per half.

Article 4 In the event of an injury, the clock will be stopped.

Article 5 The clock will run continually until the last two minutes of the game.

Article 6 During the final two minutes of the game, the clock will be stopped following:

- An incomplete pass
- A ball carrier stepping out of bounds
- A touchdown
- A penalty
- A change of possession
- A first down while officials spot the ball

Article 7 In the event that the difference in score is greater than twenty-one points entering the last two minutes of the game, the clock will run continuously until the game's completion.

Section 3: Scoring

Article 1 A touchdown is valued six points.

Article 2 Following a touchdown, the scoring team must choose to attempt a point-after-touchdown conversion valued either one or two points.

- Two points will be awarded for a successful attempt from the eight yard line.
- One point will be awarded to a successful attempt from the three yard line.
- The defense cannot score on a point-after-touchdown play.

Point-after-touchdown conversions may be scored by either running or passing.

Section 3: Scoring (continued)

Article 3 There are no kicking field goals or extra points.

Article 4 Two points will be awarded for a safety. A safety will not be scored on the first set of downs to begin a half or following an opponent's touchdown. The play will instead result in a loss of down and the ball will be spotted on the one yard line for the next play.

Note: In the event a fourth-down play ends within a team's own end zone during this first set of downs, it will be considered a turnover-on-downs and the defensive team will take over possession at the opponent's one yard line.

Rule 3: Game Play

Section 1: Start of Play

Article 1 No kickoffs will be used.

Article 2 The ball will be put in to play at a team's own eight yard line to begin each half and following all point-after-touchdown attempts.

Article 3 The officials will allow the team taking possession after an opponent's score adequate time to get their offense on the field and huddled before starting the play clock to run their first play.

Section 2: Scrimmage Plays

Article 1 No player may assume a three-point or four-point stance. They must remain in an upright, two-point stance.

Article 2 The offensive team must position three players on the line of scrimmage including a center lined up over the ball and a guard lined up to each side of the center. The remaining four offensive players may position themselves anywhere on their side of the line of scrimmage.

Article 3 A forward pass may be made from any point behind the line of scrimmage.

Article 4 All players are eligible to receive a pass except for the two guards.

Article 5 At least three defensive linemen must line up one yard off the line of scrimmage and no farther than one yard off the outside shoulder of the offensive guard.

Article 6 In the event a passer's arm is moving forward in an attempt to complete a forward pass when his flag is pulled, the play will be considered alive and allowed to continue.

Article 7 While a pass is in the air, all players have an equal right to the ball. However, a player may not go over or through another player in pursuit of the ball.

Section 3: Blocking

Article 1 The only legal block must be executed from an upright position with both feet on the ground.

Article 2 Only the arms and shoulders may be used in performing a block.

Article 3 All blocks must be made above the waist and below the shoulders.

Article 4 Purposely knocking a player to the ground will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and result in a fifteen yard penalty and possible ejection from the game if, in the opinion of the officials, such action is warranted.

Section 4: Ending a Play

Article 1 A legal tag is made when a defensive player detaches a flag from the belt of the ball carrier.

Section 4: Ending a Play (continued)

- Article 2** A player may not dive to make a tag. However, a player who is already on the ground may make a legal tag.
- Article 3** Tags made prior to a receiver gaining possession of the ball will be ignored and play will continue.
- Article 4** In the event that a flag accidentally falls off a player's belt before or during possession of the ball, a defensive player may execute a tag with a one-hand touch made between the shoulders and the knees in the flag's absence.
- Article 5** A flag-guarding infraction will be called in the event that a ball carrier uses his/her hand or arm to prevent a defensive player from making a legal tag. A flag-guarding infraction may also be called in situation where, in the opinion of the official, a ball carrier has spun for the purpose of avoiding his/her flag being pulled. A player flag-guarding will be ruled down at the spot of the infraction.
- Article 6** The ball is dead if either knee of the ball carrier touches the ground at any time.
- Article 7** A defensive player must make every attempt to stop a ball carrier by pulling his/her flag. Stopping a ball carrier by any other means (i.e. tackling, bumping, stripping the ball) will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and result in a fifteen yard penalty.

Section 5: Fumbles

- Article 1** Fumbles are immediately dead at the spot which they contact the ground.
- Article 2** Following a fumble, the ball will be spotted at the place where the fumbled ball contacted the ground with the fumbling team retaining possession provided that the fumbling team has downs remaining. Fumbles occurring before the conversion of a fourth down play will result in a change in possession.
- Article 3** The offensive team may not advance the ball by means of a fumble.

Section 6: Punting

- Article 1** Teams may only punt on fourth down.
- Article 2** Prior to running a fourth down play, the offensive team must declare whether or not they are punting. Fake punts will not be allowed.
- Article 3** The defense may not cross the line of scrimmage to block a punt.
- Article 4** Following a punt, the ball will be put in to play from the spot at which the punted ball's progress towards the goal line was stopped. Punts may not be returned or advanced.

Rule 4: Penalties and Enforcement

- Article 1** Major violations will result in a penalty of fifteen yards and include the following:
- Offensive or defensive pass interference
 - Clipping or Pushing
 - Tripping
 - Roughing the passer
 - Illegal use of the hands
 - Illegal blocking
 - Unnecessary roughness
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct

Article 2 Minor violations will result in a penalty of five yards and include the following:

- Offside
- Defensive encroachment
- Delay of game
- Too many players on the field
- Illegal motion
- Illegal forward pass (loss of down)
- Intentional grounding (loss of down)
- Incidental bumping or grasping

Article 3 Offensive and defensive holding will result in a penalty of ten yards.

Article 4 Disqualification of a player or players may be result from any unsportsmanlike act or from repeated or flagrant commission of a violation at the discretion of the officials.

Article 5 Penalties will be enforced from the line of scrimmage except in situations where the violation occurred following a change of possession. In such cases, the penalty will be enforced from the point of the violation or from the point at which the play has ended, whichever is of greater severity.

Rule 5: Playoffs

Section 1: Additional Playoff Procedures

Article 1 The fifth week of the season will be reserved for a single elimination tournament with seeding based upon regular season records.

Article 2 Unlike during the regular season, playoff games will use an overtime period to determine a winner in the event that the score is tied at the end of regulation play.

Article 3 The overtime formatted is as follows (used only in playoff games):

- A coin flip will be used to determine possession of the ball, just as it was at the beginning of the game.
- Each team will have four downs to score from twenty yard line of the opposing team. Point-after-touchdowns will be the same
- After each team has completed its series, the team with the most points wins.
- If the score remains tied, the process is repeated with teams alternating possessions.
- The ball is live and in play. In other words, if the ball is turned over the defensive team takes over on offense at the opponent's twenty yard line or where the turnover play ended, whichever is to their advantage.
- An interception returned for a touchdown ends the game.

Code of Conduct

- Understand, appreciate and abide by the rules of the game.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials and staff.
- Respect your opponents and congratulate them in a courteous manner following each match, whether in victory or defeat.
- Be responsible for your actions and maintain self-control.
- Do not taunt or bait opponents. Refrain from using foul or abusive language.