



Xavier IM Flag Football Rulebook

Any rule not specifically covered in the below document will be governed in accordance with the most updated version of the NIRSA National Flag Football Rule Book.

1. Team Requirements

- 1.1.** A team shall consist of seven (7) players on the field at one time, however 5 (5) players must be fielded in order to start a game
- 1.2.** The Ball and therefor the center are the only two things on the field that need to be “on the line” at the time of the snap
- 1.3.** All Players must have checked in with the scorekeeper with their All-Card and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate
- 1.4.** Teams may substitute during dead ball periods
- 1.5.** There will be an automatic 5-minute grace period which will begin at the scheduled game time.
 - 1.5.1.** If both teams are unable to field the minimum number of players at the scheduled start time, no additional points will be awarded and both teams will have 5 minutes to field a team large enough to play or take the forfeit.
 - 1.5.2.** If one team meets the minimum roster requirements to start at game time the team that is ready to play will be awarded 7 points and the other team will have 5 minutes to field enough players to avoid a forfeit
 - 1.5.3.** Teams **MUST** meet the minimum requirement in order to receive a win from a game
 - 1.5.3.1.** The only acceptance to this rule is if anyone from one team shows up while their opponents are a complete no-show.

1.6. For CoRec, Teams will be allowed to field 8 players in total. There may be no more than 4 players of the same gender on the field at a time and there must be a minimum of 2 players of differing genders on the field. If teams fail to meet roster requirements for CoRec, the same grace period rules are in affect.

2. Equipment and Facilities

2.1. All players MUST wear athletic, closed toed shoes.

2.2. Rubber cleated shoes will be allowed. No metal screw-in cleats, open toe, open heel, or hard soled shoes may be worn while playing.

2.3. A player may not be barefoot

2.4. Each player must wear athletic pants or shorts without belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstrings. In order to play with a flag belt, players MUST wear shorts that were manufactured without pockets or belt loops

2.4.1. If a player cannot find an immediate solution to pockets, they may participate WITHOUT flag belts and will be one hand touch, provided they are still in athletic clothing that does not pose any additional risk to participants

2.5. All jewelry/hats/etc must be removed prior to entering the game

2.6. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances, or casts are strictly prohibited.

2.6.1. Knee braces made of hard unyielding substances that are covered with at least 2 inches of slow recovery rubber or material on either side will be allowed.

2.7. Players must wear flag belts provided by the IM staff. Belts may not be tied, knotted, fastened or in any other way secured to a player outside of the standard clip that comes with the flag belt.

2.8. Teams must wear similar colored shirts. Teams may provide their own uniforms or they may elect to use the jerseys that will be provided by the IM program. All jerseys must have permanent, visible, non altered numbers on the back. Players may not alter or create numbers using tape. Players on the same team may not have the same number

2.9. An official ball will be supplied by the IM program, however personal football may be approved by both teams and the officials during the captains meeting

3. Start of the game and timing

3.1. A coin flip (rps, evens/odds, etc) will take place during the captains meeting no later than 5 minutes before the scheduled start time.

3.1.1. The Winning captain may:

- a) Defer to the second half
- b) Elect to start on offense
- c) Elect to start on defense
- d) Elect the side of the field they would like to defend

3.1.2. The losing captain may choose from any remaining option

3.2. Games will consist of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves with a three (3) minute half time. Timing will be a running clock except for the last two minutes of the second half. At approximately two minutes before the end of each half, the referee will stop the clock and loudly announce the two-minute warning. Play will resume on the snap.

3.2.1. Teams will have three, 30 second, timeouts per game

3.3. Games can be counted as official after halftime if the game is cut short by weather, etc.

3.4. Mercy Rule

3.4.1. 40 points at halftime or any point in the second half

3.4.2. 19 points with 2 minutes or less

3.5. The Clock will stop under 2 minutes for the following instances

- a) Incomplete legal or Illegal Forward pass
- b) Out of Bounds
- c) Safety
- d) Time out
- e) First down
- f) Touchdown
- g) Penalty
- h) Touchback

- i) Inadvertent Whistle
- j) Start a of a new series
 - a. Injuries

3.6. A 25 second play clock will be in place beginning when the head official blows the play in to start the count

4. Field and First Downs

4.1. Length of the field shall be 80 yards by 35 yards with 10 yard end zones. Yard markings will be every 20 yards

4.2. A team shall have four (4) consecutive downs to advance to the next zone line to gain.

5. Flag Belt removal

5.1. A runner will be declared dead once their flag belt has been legally removed by an opponent

5.1.1. The official will get the spot where the ball was at the time of the flag pull, not the player

5.2. If a flag belt inadvertently falls off or the player is one hand touch due to the pocket rule, the player may be downed via a one-hand tag between the shoulder and knee

5.2.1. The tag should not be made with excess force and should fit within the confines and rules of the game. Any violation can be penalized appropriately

5.3. A player may leave their feet in order to remove a flag

5.4. A defensive player may make contact with another player during the flag pull, provided the player is playing to the flags and not through the body of the opponent. Wrapping up, standing up, pushing or holding are all examples of Illegal Contact

5.5. If a player intentionally removes their opponents' flags while they are not in possession, or it is not reasonable to assume that they may be in possession, a penalty will be assessed for Illegal Flag Belt Removal

5.5.1. If the intentional flag pull meets the above requirements and is prior to a pass being thrown, the penalty will be for Pass Interference

5.6. No player shall fasten their flag belt to themselves in any other manner other than the intended use of the belt. All belts should be clipped at the waist with the clip that is attached. Any wrapping, tying, or any other form of securing will be deemed illegal

5.6.1. Officials will do a flag check on each scoring player after every Touchdown and PAT. Players should approach the official with both hands in the air, allowing the official to remove their flag belt to ensure it is not fastened or secured in any additional way.

5.7. Flag Belts should be worn at a reasonable level around the waist or pants line and should be orientated such that there is a flag on each hip and one down the center behind the player.

5.8. A runner may not use their hands, arms, the ball or any other part of their body to obstruct or deny an opponent the opportunity to pull their flags. **If Contact is made during a flag pull attempt and the runner is doing any of these things, they may be flagged for illegal contact.**

- a) A runner may not stiff arm an opponent
- b) A runner may not place their hand down in front of their flags to block an opponent's attempt
 - a. A runner can flag guard via their natural running motion if said running motion swings the arms past the hip at flag level. If any contact is made it constitutes a flag guard.
 - i. Runners are encouraged to run with both hands on the ball and the ball held out or up to avoid this.
- c) The runner may not use the ball as an object to block a players attempt to pull the flags
- d) The runner may not use any other part of their body, (shoulders, hips, etc) to gain an advantage and block a defensive players flag pull attempt

6. Dead Ball

6.1. A live ball becomes dead when:

- a) The ball goes out of bounds
- b) A legal de-flagging occurs by the defense

- c) The ball carrier touches the ground with any part of their body other than the hands or feet (the ball is an extension of the hand)
- d) A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try is made
- e) A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players
- f) Whenever the ball hits the ground
- g) When an official sounds their whistle inadvertently during a down.

7. Action Prior to the Snap

- 7.1.** The center may not pick up and move the ball after it has been spotted. Once the center has gotten into position, they may not do anything with themselves or the ball to simulate the start of play
- 7.2.** The center does not need to snap the ball between their legs, but the snap must be one fluid motion from ground to toss. The entirety of the centers body should remain behind the line of Scrimmage
- 7.3.** No other players are required to be “on the line” at the time of the snap
- 7.4.** The QB must be at least 2 yards behind the center
- 7.5.** No defensive player shall do anything that mimics an offense’s cadence to draw the offense offsides. (If the QB is using a clap pre-snap, the defense should not clap before the snap occurs)
- 7.6.** All offensive players must have at some point prior to the snap been within 10 yards of the ball and more than 5 yards in the field of play from the sideline. It must be clear and obvious who the 7 players are on the field for the offense

8. Motion/Shift

- 8.1.** One player is allowed to be in motion at the time of the snap, however this player may not be moving towards the line of scrimmage. If more than one player moves, it is considered a shift and ALL players must come set for at least a brief moment before the snap occurs.

9. Backwards Passes/Fumbles

- 9.1.** A runner may pass or lateral the ball backwards at any time
- 9.2.** Fumbles are dead once the ball touches the ground
- 9.3.** The ball will be put in play at the spot where it first touched the ground

- 9.3.1.** If an official deems a fumble to be intentional and for the gain of the offense, the official may elect to bring the ball back to the spot of last possession and continue the game as if the runner was downed at that spot
- 9.4.** Any lateral or fumble may be intercepted before it hits the ground and returned by the defense
- 9.5.** Fumbling the ball into a team's own endzone will result in a safety. A fumble into the opponents endzone will result in a touchback.

10. Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

- 10.1.** A touchdown is scored when a ball, in possession of a player, breaks the plane of the opponent's goal line. The player's body does not need to be past the goal line
- 10.2.** The scoring player should raise hands and go to the nearest official for a flag check
- 10.3.** Scoring teams will have the option to go for a 1 point, 2 point, or 3 point try. The 1 point try will be taken from the 3 yard line, the 2 point try from the 10 yard line, and the 3 point try from the 20 yard line
 - 10.3.1.** Once a team communicates their decision to the official and the ball is spotted, they cannot change their choice. The only way a team can change the value of the PAT is if either team calls a time out prior to the snap.
 - 10.3.2.** Penalty enforcement during a try does not change the value of the try.
 - 10.3.3.** If a try is intercepted, it is dead on the spot, there will be no returns for PATs
 - 10.3.4.** If either team commits a foul and the PAT is replayed, the value of the try cannot be changed from then onward

11. Screen Blocking

- 11.1.** Contact blocking, as in regulation football is strictly prohibited. Players instead will be allowed to screen block. A player should keep both arms and hands down in front of them, at their sides, or behind their back. The blocker may move to stay in front of a defender provided they do not move into the opponent. (Think like a screen in basketball, you need to beat them to the spot). Players should

remain within the frame of their body while screen blocking. Failure to do so could result in an illegal contact penalty if contact is made

11.1.1. Blocking of any type across the Line of Scrimmage is also prohibited.

Offensive players beyond the line of scrimmage should stand still and “give themselves up” as the play moves downfield past them to avoid being in the way. A defender has the responsibility of avoiding any offensive player who is giving themselves up.

11.2. No player is allowed to charge (bull rush or truck) another player at any time.

Charging through defenders will result in a illegal contact penalty and could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty given the severity of the situation. It is the offense’s responsibility to avoid and go around stationary defenders. Similarly, a defender may not chest or belly up a runner and wrap up in an attempt to putt the players flags.

12. Putting the Ball in Play

12.1. Each possession will start on the offense’s own 14 yard line

12.1.1. Any turnovers resulting in a dead ball spot not at the 14 yard line will begin at the place where the ball was ruled dead after the turnover and any penalties have been enforced

12.1.2. After a safety, the ball will be brought out to the offense’s own 30 yard line where they will begin play.

12.2. During overtime each team will start their possession from the opponents 10 yard line, goal to go.

13. Punts

13.1. Teams must elect to punt or “go for it” every 4th down. The official will ask the teams of their decision prior to announcing and blowing the play clock in.

13.1.1. Similar to the PATs, once a team has made a decision and the ball has been blown in, the decision can only be changed with the use of a timeout

13.2. Punts will be snapped from the line of scrimmage. All other players on the team must remain BEHIND the initial Line of Scrimmage until the ball has been kicked.

13.3. The punter must be 2 yards or more behind the center

13.4. No Defensive players may enter the neutral zone or cross the Line of Scrimmage, but are allowed to jump at the LOS in an effort to deflect or block a punt

13.5. The ball can be returned via catching the punt or picking it up cleanly off the ground.

13.5.1. Once a ball touched any player and returns to the ground, it will be ruled “muffed” and dead where it touched the ground.

13.6. The kicking team is not allowed to do anything to deceive the returning team on punts, including fake punts, quick kicks, etc.

14. Legal Catch

14.1. A player must meet these 3 requirements to complete a catch

14.1.1. The player must have full possession of the ball and survive the full process of the catch

14.1.2. The player must have at least one (1) foot in bounds by the time they secure possession of the ball

14.1.3. The player must maintain full control and possession throughout the entirety of the catch

15. Overtime

15.1. Regular season games will be allowed to end in a tie, these rules will only apply to playoffs.

15.1.1. Team captains will be called back to midfield for an overtime captains meeting and “coin toss”

15.1.2. Captains may choose one of these three options in the overtime coin toss: Side of play, Offense, Defense

15.1.3. Every overtime possession will be played at the same endzone

15.1.4. Each team will have a chance to get the ball in every overtime period regardless of the score.

15.1.5. Every possession starts from the 10 yard line, unless moved by penalties, and teams will have 4 downs to score.

15.1.5.1. TD's and PATS will be administered the same as regulation

15.1.6. After the coin toss, teams will alternate who goes first in the new period (i.e. Team 1 was on defense/offense in period 1, for period 2 they will go offense/defense).

15.1.7. After the conclusion of the second overtime period, if the game is still tied, teams will alternate 2 point conversion attempts until a winner has been decided

15.1.8. All penalties will be administered the same as regulation

15.1.9. Interceptions and turnovers may be returned to the opposite endzone

16. Player Conduct

16.1. All teams will be expected to maintain an acceptable sportsmanship rating to qualify for the playoffs.

16.2. Players will be assessed unsportsmanlike conduct for any actions that violate the expected standard of conduct. These actions include but are not limited to:

- a) Intentionally kicking the ball during a dead ball (delay of game)
- b) Kicking, swinging, striking or attempting to against another player
- c) Disrespect or dissent towards game officials
- d) Profanity, taunting, vulgar language or gestures
- e) Slurs of any kind
- f) Physically contacting a game official
- g) Fighting
- h) Deliberately hitting the ball out of an opposing players hand
- i) Deliberate tripping of an opponent
- j) Excessive force/unnecessary roughness
- k) Charging (severity judged by official)
- l) Any other act not specifically covered that is deemed flagrant or excessive by the IM staff

16.2. Any player whose actions are deemed flagrant by the IM staff will be disqualified and required to leave the facility before play can begin

16.3. If a player receives two or more unsportsmanlike penalties, they will be disqualified from the game. It is up to the discretion of the IM staff whether or not

this participant must leave the facility. If the participant is asked to leave the facility at any point, the game will be paused or forfeited until they do so.

17. CoRec Clarifications

17.1. CoRec teams will be allowed to field teams of 8 players as outlined in Rule 1.6

17.2. CoRec will use an open/closed play system. Every new possession will start as open. Consecutive plays will remain 'open' until there has been a male-to-male completion. The next immediate play following a male-to-male completion will be 'closed'. In order to open a play back up a team must fulfill these 3 requirements:

17.2.1. A female player must be involved in a pass play either as the QB or the receiver

17.2.2. The pass the female is directly involved in must be a legal forward pass

17.2.3. The end result of the play must be a gain of positive yards

17.3. If these three requirements are not met on a 'closed' play, the play will continue to remain 'closed'. Once they are met, the subsequent plays will be 'open' until another male-to-male reception once again closes the next play

17.4. If a team completes a male-to-male reception on a close play, a penalty will be assessed for Illegal Advancement.

17.5. No male player may cross the line of scrimmage with the ball in hand during a CoRec game unless:

17.5.1. He has caught a legal forward pass prior to doing so

17.5.2. There has been a change of possession in the backfield

17.5.3. The ball has been touched by another player already across the LOS

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is vital to the success of each and every program we offer to the university community. In order to encourage proper conduct before, during and after a scheduled contest, the Intramural Sports Department has developed a rating system. The rating procedure is as follows:

Acceptable Rating (3)

The team exhibits respect and cooperation and sporting behavior towards all sport programs staff, teammates, and opponents. The team has no issues or minor disagreements with the judgement of the officials. Captain demonstrates control over spectators, teammates, and him/herself.

Average Rating (2)

The team exhibits some respect and cooperation towards all sports programs staff, teammates, and opponents. The team has several minor disagreements with the judgement of the officials. Captain demonstrates mild or little control over spectators, teammates, and him/herself. Teams receiving one unsportsmanlike penalty fall into this category as well.

Unacceptable Rating (1)

The team does not exhibit respect and cooperation with unsporting behavior towards any sport programs staff, teammates, and opponents. The team displays issues and disagreements with officials. Captain demonstrates no control over spectators, teammates, and him/herself. Teams receiving more than one unsportsmanlike penalty fall into this category as well.

If a team receives two unacceptable ratings in a season, the team will be removed from the league and have to meet with the Sports Programs Office. Teams may face additional suspension and sanctions for one unacceptable rating depending on the situation and severity of the incident.