



Intramural Sports

Flag Football

FOREWORD

Flag Football is an adaptation of traditional football designed for non-contact play.

All National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) rules apply with some modifications as adopted for play in the Santa Clara Intramural Sports program. The Intramural Flag Football leagues are organized for the purpose of offering current Santa Clara University students, faculty and staff the opportunity to participate in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good sportsmanship. Captains are expected to familiarize themselves and their teammates with these rules and the Intramural Sports policies within the Intramural Sports handbook. Any disruptive or unsportsmanlike conduct can be cause for suspending an individual and/or team from the program. The program is based upon cooperation and mutual respect among players, student referees and supervisors.

GENERAL RULES

1. Teams consist of SEVEN (7) players; however, a team may start or continue to play the game with only 5 players. Team rosters may have a maximum of 15 players.
2. Each team must designate one field captain. He/she will make decisions regarding penalty options and should speak for the team on all other game issues.
3. Coaches, substitutes and spectators are not allowed on the field during game and must remain at least 5 yards from sidelines. One coach may enter the field at his/her team's huddle between the inbounds lines (hash marks) to confer with no more than 7 players.

EQUIPMENT

1. All necessary equipment is provided.
2. Ball: men will use high school or college size while women will use the intermediate size. Both captains and Intramural Sports Officials must approve game ball if it is not an Intramural Sports program ball.
3. Only one piece rubber soled shoes with rubber molded cleats are allowed. Screw-in or metal cleats of any type are not permitted.
4. All players must wear the provided three-flag regulation belt.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AND INSURANCE COVERAGE

1. Each player must have a signed "Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk for Use of Athletic Facilities and Programs" on file with the ACCESS office.
2. **Player safety is of foremost concern.** This is enhanced by rule modification, staff training, and facility inspection.
3. **Any and all injuries should be reported immediately to an Intramural Sports Staff member on-site at the event.**
4. All jewelry should be removed prior to play.
5. A player is not allowed to wear any equipment that, in the opinion of the Intramural Sports Staff, is unsafe or confusing (i.e. braces, sweatshirts, etc). Intramural Sports Staff will check for illegal or unsafe equipment before every game.
6. Each participant is responsible for his/her own medical insurance coverage. **Santa Clara University does not provide insurance to individuals for any injury incurred in Intramural Sports participation.** The university also does not provide any services to prepare or maintain a player's readiness to participate. One must bring their own athletic tape to prepare to play.
7. In the case that a participant sustains an injury that causes bleeding:
 - a. The participant must exit the area of play until the bleeding has been stopped and the wound is bandaged.
 - b. If blood stains any part of the participant's clothing, he or she may not return to the game until blood is no longer visible on the clothing.

FIELD & MARKINGS (Field 1 - nearest softball field/Field 2 – nearest baseball field)

1. 60 yards long x 30 yards wide. Goal line-to-goal line, 80 yards.
2. 2 inbounds lines (hash marks), which run parallel with each sideline and are located 12 yards in from each sideline.
3. End zones, 10 yards.
4. 20 yard 1st down lines indicated by cones.
5. The lines bounding the sidelines and the end zones are out of bounds in their entirety.
6. Line of Scrimmage Ball Spotters (2) – One indicates offensive line of scrimmage and the other defensive line or scrimmage 1-yard apart.

STARTING the GAME

1. **GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.**

2. Both Intramural Sports officials and captains should check in at game table 10 minutes prior to game.
3. Make sure proper teams and assigned referees are on the correct field.
4. Each player must show valid ACCESS card prior to every Intramural Sports contest.
5. Officials and captains should meet at midfield 5 minutes prior to starting time, shake hands and review captains' responsibilities. Captains must confirm that only players on their official roster are being used.
6. Intramural Sports Officials will perform coin toss. Team that wins toss has the choice of ball possession or defending goal. Choices reverse for 2nd half.
7. Each half starts with ball placed at the 15 yard line.

PLAYING TIME & TIMEOUTS

1. Intramural Sports Officials will maintain the official game clock.
2. Game consists of two 20-minute halves of running time.
3. Time will stop during last 2 minutes of second half only for incomplete passes, out-of-bounds, score, penalty, time-out, and punts. Clock restarts in these situations on the ensuing snap of the ball.
4. Team has 25 seconds to put ball in play after it has been spotted and declared ready for play by referee.
5. 5-minute half-time intermission.
6. Each team has two 1-minute time-outs per game.
7. Intramural Sports Officials may call time whenever deemed necessary.

SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Players may only enter game when ball is dead. Incoming player may not enter after ball is declared ready for play.
2. Any injured player whose injury causes an excessive time-out shall leave the field and may re-enter the game after the next play.

SCORING

1. Touchdown = 6 points
2. Point after Touchdown:
 - o Successful conversion from 3 yard line = 1 point.
 - o Successful conversion from ten yard line = 2 points.
 - o Successful conversion from twenty yard line = 3 points.
3. Safety = 2 points

(NOTE: a safety or touchback is determined by which team's impetus placed the ball behind the goal line. If offensive team's, then it is a safety. If defensive team's then it is a touchback.)

4. Interception on Point after Touchdown returned for a score by intercepting team = 3 points. (NOTE: This is regardless of whether the offensive team is attempting a 1, 2 or 3 point try).

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

1. Inbounds Spot – Prior to the play, the offensive team may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere on or between the inbounds lines (hash marks).
2. All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap through the center's legs.
3. All backs must be at least 2 yards behind line of scrimmage.
4. No offensive player on the line of scrimmage may take snap from center.
5. The center may adjust the ball only once after assuming position. Additional movement will be penalized.
6. No player of either team shall encroach upon the neutral zone after it has been established. For the team in possession of the ball, members may line up on the football, but not over it. Defensive players must be at least 1 yard behind the ball indicated by yellow disc. Violation of the neutral zone is encroachment - immediate dead ball.
7. No player may make contact or interfere with an opponent or the ball before it is snapped.
8. Offensive player may not take a false start - motion penalty. When ball is snapped, only one offensive player may be in motion.
9. No player of offensive team shall assume a position near sidelines which in a manner resembling a "sleeper play".
10. A team in possession of ball shall have 4 downs to advance to next first down line. A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team crosses that line.
11. All players must be in a normal standing position. No 3-point stance.
12. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving ball after play is blown dead and give it to the nearest referee.

FUMBLES & INTERCEPTIONS

1. A fumble that touches the ground is a dead ball at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession.
2. A dropped snap from center is considered a fumble - dead ball.
3. Fumbles caught in mid-air may be advanced by either team.
4. A fumble that first contacts the ground in the offensive team's end zone is a safety.

5. Interceptions may be returned. An interception downed in the end zone results in the ball being placed on the intercepting team's 15-yard line.
6. Interception on Point after Touchdown returned for a score by intercepting team = 3 points. (**NOTE:** This is regardless of whether the offensive team is attempting a 1, 2 or 3 point try).

SCREEN BLOCKING

1. **BLOCKING AS IN TACKLE FOOTBALL IS PROHIBITED.**
2. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without physically contacting him/her with any part of blocker's body. Screen blockers shall have their hands and arms at their sides or behind their backs. Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during a screen block is illegal.
3. Defensive players may not initiate contact with screen blockers and must avoid them when pursuing ball carrier.
4. Illegal contact between offensive and defensive players will be called against the player determined to have initiated the contact.

BALL CARRIER MANUEVER

1. Ball carrier shall not intentionally, or unintentionally, obstruct the hands of the defensive player in any way as he/she attempts to grab the flag. This includes contact from ball or elbows during running motion, dropping the shoulder, lowering the head, or "stiff arming".
2. Ball is considered dead when ball carrier's knee touches ground.
3. Ball carrier shall not hurdle, dive or attempt to run over defensive player.
4. Tackling the ball carrier is not allowed. **This includes pushing the ball carrier out of bounds.** The only way to legally stop a ball carrier is by pulling off the flag belt.
5. If ball carrier's flag falls off- one hand tag between the shoulders and knees constitutes a capture.
6. Flag belt must be worn around waist and buckled in conventional manner. Sweatshirts or jackets may not obstruct the proper wearing of the flag belt. Tampering with the flag belt is considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
7. Ball carrier must have possession of ball before he/she can be deflagged.

PASSING/PASS RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to catch a pass.
2. Passer must be behind the line of scrimmage for all forward passes.
3. Only one forward pass per play.
4. A lateral or backward pass may be thrown anywhere on the field to any player.
5. Receiver must catch ball with at least one foot in bounds.
6. A pass caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams - the ball belongs to the offensive team.
7. Physical contact is not allowed with any receiver.
8. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid "roughing the passer." Do not attempt to block the pass when in close proximity to the passer, play the flag.

KICK-OFFS/PUNTING

1. There will be no kick-offs. Ball will be put in play at the 15-yard line at start of each half or after touchdown.
2. There will be no punt returns. Ball will be considered dead when touched or caught by member of either team.
3. A punt is allowable on any down; however, captain must inform referee of an ensuing punt and he/she will declare a punt situation (dead ball). There will be no center snap.
4. Punter must stand at least 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Punting team may not go down field until ball has been punted. Punting team shall not interfere with person catching the punt...receiver must be given at least 3 yards.
5. Receiving team members must be at least 3 yards off of the line of scrimmage and may not interfere with the punter in any manner.

BASIC ROUTINES-PENALTIES

1. When a foul occurs, either referee will throw the flag and play continues until the ball carrier is deflagged and play is whistled dead. Exception: Dead ball violations are whistled immediately and the penalty enforced.
2. At the end of the play, the referee shall advise both captains of the nature of the foul. Captain of offended team shall have the choice of accepting or declining the penalty. Referee will spot ball accordingly.
3. When a penalty is accepted, the down will be replayed (some exceptions).
4. Penalties that carry into end zone will be marked half the distance to the goal line.
5. An offensive penalty with a spot of infraction in the offensive team's end zone is a safety.
6. Offsetting penalties - penalties against both teams on the same play-down replayed from line of scrimmage.
7. **Inadvertent whistle** - whistle mistakenly blown, ball is dead. Offensive team captain has option of taking the play or replaying the down.

8. Referees calling foul indicate to captains using the 4 W's.
 - Who - Offense or defense?
 - What - type of foul?
 - When - status of ball?
 - Where - spot where the run ends or spot of the foul.
9. No rule decision may be changed after the ball is legally snapped.

PENALTIES & ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

5-Yard Penalty from Line of Scrimmage - Replay the Down

- Delay of Game
- Illegal Procedure (too many players on the field, illegal center snap, helping the runner, etc.)
- Illegal Motion
- Encroachment on Neutral Zone – Dead Ball

5-Yard Penalty from Line of Scrimmage – Loss of Down

- Illegal Forward Pass
- Intentional Grounding

10-Yard Penalty from Line of Scrimmage – Automatic 1st Down

- Defensive Pass Interference
- Roughing the Passer

10-Yard Penalty from Line of Scrimmage – Loss of Down

- Offensive Pass Interference

10-Yard Penalty from Spot of the Infraction – Replay the Down

- Illegal Offensive Blocking or Contact
- Illegal Use of Hands on Defense (if behind line of scrimmage, from line of scrimmage)
- Guarding the Flag
- Ball Carrier Hurdling, Diving, or Charging into a Defensive Player

10-Yard Penalty from Spot of the Infraction – Automatic 1st Down

- Tackling

15-Yard Penalty (from line of scrimmage if dead ball, otherwise from spot of infraction) – Possible Player Ejection

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Any conduct deemed in bad taste and not conducive to the best interest of the game. Including abusive language, profanity, illegally secured flag belt, etc.
- Flagrant Foul - Any physical contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary or excessive such as using fists, locked hands, elbows or forearm, etc.

TIEBREAKER PROCEDURES

1. Each team will be given four downs from the 10-yard line to score a touchdown. Play is not “sudden death.”
2. Extra points will be attempted.
3. Interceptions outside of the end zone may be returned for a touchdown. Interceptions in end zone, or not returned for a touchdown, result in change of possession.
4. Play continues until there is a winner.

CONDUCT

- The value of Intramural Sports is in playing, not in winning - so you, your team, and your fans are expected to **behave in a sportsmanlike manner at all times, both on and off the field.**
- Profanity, intimidation, abusive language, threats, fighting or other physical contact is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action as defined below.
- Possession or consumption of alcohol or illegal substances is not allowed. Any individual suspected of being “under the influence” will be asked to leave the facility immediately. The Malley Center and Bellomy Field are facilities where no alcoholic beverages are permitted.
- Officials are fellow SCU students and must be treated with respect at all times. **If you have any problems with a call, team captains must bring it up with the officials and/or IM supervisor immediately after the call.**

Disciplinary action includes but is not limited to:

- Immediate player ejection (must leave the facility within two minutes or game is forfeited)
- Ejected player must meet with the Director of Recreation and/or Intramural Sports Coordinator student staff.
- Two ejections within the intramural season (academic year) results in an automatic suspension from the program.
 - For example, if a player is ejected from a flag football game & then a basketball game they may be suspended from all future play in the Intramural Sports program.
- Suspensions are a minimum two games (player may not attend team's games during the suspension).
- Possible referral to Office of Student Life and/or Campus Safety.

Appealing disciplinary action includes:

- A written request for reinstatement and a meeting with Director of Recreation and/or Intramural Sports Coordinators needs to be requested within 5 business days of the decision.