



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
RECREATION & WELLNESS – INTRAMURAL SPORTS

7v7 Flag Football

GENERAL POLICY

- For any questions or concerns regarding any of the following policies and rules please contact our Sports Programs office at (813) 974-4449 or rec-imsports@usf.edu. Or stop by our office, REC 107, Monday – Friday 10am-5pm.
- All participants must check in with a Sports Programs supervisor with either their USF ID card or government-issued photo ID. The USF ID or other form of identification must have a clear name, picture, and legible U# for the USF ID. No other forms of identification may be used to check in.
- All officially enrolled students and Faculty and Staff members with an active Recreation and Wellness membership at the University of South Florida are eligible to play. For further eligibility guidelines please reference the IM Handbook, found on the USF Recreation and Wellness website.
- **Game time is forfeit time.** Teams should be ready to play at the scheduled game time. It is beneficial to have your team arrive 15-20 minutes early to ensure that games start on time and that forfeits be avoided.
- Teams must all wear the same color jersey. Pennies **will not** be provided. All teams will be required to bring one alternate color in case both teams show up wearing the same color. Skins will not be allowed.
- **Jewelry is not allowed.** Any player who enters the game with jewelry will be forced to **leave the game**.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- Sportsmanship ratings will be given based on the behavior of players, coaches, and spectators. They will also be judged on actions before, during, and after contests. Sportsmanship is rated at the conclusion of every game on a 1-6 scale (details of each can be found in the IM Participant Handbook).
- At the conclusion of the regular season of all sports will be a playoff tournament. For a team to be eligible for playoffs they must have averaged a sportsmanship rating of 4 or better during the regular season, have no regular season forfeits, and have won at least one game during the regular season.
 - If a team's sportsmanship rating drops below a 4 in the playoffs, they will be forfeited out of playoffs and their opponent will move on if their sportsmanship rating is at or above a 4.
- Players are held to a standard of good sportsmanship. If a player does not adhere to that standard, they can be removed from a contest by any Sports Programs employee.

SPORT CLUB PARTICIPANTS

- For sports with more than 4 players, only 3 sport club participants may be on the same team in the same sport. For sports with 4 players or less, only 2 sport club participants may be on the same team in the same sport. A sport club participant is defined as a student who has appeared on a home or away match roster within the past 365 days from the day of the intramural game. A team is allowed to have only 2 or 3 total club members, regardless of gender, depending on the size of the sport. This rule only applies for sport club members whose sport is the same or in close relation to the intramural sport being offered (i.e. volleyball club(s) for volleyball intramural or soccer club(s) for 3v3/8v8 soccer)

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- Players may wear gloves which must consist of a soft, pliable and nonabrasive material.
- Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads on the leg, knee and/or ankle. It is also strongly recommended that a mouth piece be worn by all players.
- Players may carry a play book inside their clothing as long as it is not made of an unyielding material and is not visible. If carried on the field, a player must keep it rather than throw it on the ground. Players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays.
- Players may wear pliable and non-rigid sunglasses.

GAME, FIELD, AND EQUIPMENT

- Single gender games will be played with two (2) teams of seven (7) players each. Four (4) players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. In the case of an injury, the game may be continued with less than four (4) players; given the team has the opportunity to win.
- The rectangular field is divided into four (4) zones, each 20 yards in length; and two (2) end zones, each ten (10) yards in length.
- The use of dangerous equipment is prohibited. Shoes must be worn at all times. Cleated shoes must have rubber or polyurethane cleats. Metal cleats are **NOT** allowed. Player will be removed until equipment has been changed. The player must sit out one (1) play.
- Players are **not allowed to wear shorts or pants with pockets or belt loops.**
 - Pockets cannot be taped, flipped inside out, zippered closed, or tied.
- Players **must tuck in their shirts** during play so their flag is exposed at all times.
- Players may not wear hard-billed hats.
- Men use the regular size football, while women will use the intermediate size football. Game balls will **NOT** be provided, so teams must provide their own. The referees will not handle the football; the offensive team is responsible for the ball at all times.
 - Flags will be provided; teams are not permitted to bring their own flags to use during the contest.

INITIAL POSSESSION, LENGTH OF GAME, AND TIME CONSTRAINTS

- The winner of the pre-game toss shall have the first choice of the following options: A) offense or defense or B) which goal to defend.
- A game shall consist of two (2) 20-minute halves, with a 5-minute intermission in between halves. Each half will have a continuous clock, for the first 18 minutes of each half. The only time the clock will stop in the first 18 minutes of each half is for injury and referee's timeout. In the last 2 minutes of each half, the referee will inform both teams that there is 2 minutes remaining in the half or the game that the clock has stopped. The clock will stop on:
 - Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass - starts on the snap.
 - Out-of-bounds - starts on the snap.
 - Safety - starts on the snap.
 - Team time-out - starts on the snap.
 - First down - dependent on the previous play.
 - Touchdown - starts on the snap (after the Try).
 - Penalty and administration - dependent on the previous play.
 - EXCEPTION: Delay of game - starts on the snap.
 - Referee's time-out - starts at their discretion.
 - Touchback - starts on the snap.
 - Team A is awarded a new series - dependent on the previous play.
 - Team B is awarded a new series - starts on the snap.
 - Either team is awarded a new series after a legal punt - starts on the snap.
 - Team attempting to conserve time illegally - starts on the ready.
 - Team attempting to consume time illegally - starts on the snap.
 - Inadvertent whistle - starts on the ready.
- The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after the referee signals "ready for play."
- Each team is allowed two (2) 1-minute timeouts per half. Any timeouts not used during the first half do **NOT** carry over into the second half. The clock will stop on all timeouts.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND TIEBREAKERS

- Free substitutions are allowed after any whistle, provided the substitution does not delay the game. However, no offensive substitute may enter unless they join the huddle and are part of the huddle at the time when it breaks.
- Overtime will **not be played** in regular season game that ends in a tie.
- Tie games will be broken using a “Texas Tiebreaker”:
 - A coin toss will precede the tiebreaker. Team winning the toss has three (3) options: A) offense; B) defense; or C) direction. The opposing team has the remaining choice.
 - Play will begin on the 10-yard line and each team will have four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If Team A scores on its four plays, then Team B will have four (4) plays to score. If the score remains tied after each team finishes their possession then the process is repeated. If Team A started the overtime on offense then in the second overtime Team B will start on offense.
 - When a pass is intercepted, the possession is over. An interception cannot be returned.
 - Penalties are assessed similar to the regular game. A team shall be given a new series of four (4) plays when an automatic first down penalty is accepted. Dead ball penalties after a touchdown are penalized on the extra point attempt. Live ball penalties committed by either team after Team B gains possession during an attempt or overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot. Dead ball penalties following a successful attempt will be penalized from the succeeding spot, Team B’s 10-yard line, if accepted.
 - Tiebreakers will be played on one side of the field throughout the whole overtime.

DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

- Scrimmage Line
 - The scrimmage line for Team A is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. The scrimmage line for Team B is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes through one yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line.
- Removal of Flag Belt
 - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead.
 - The position of the ball when the player is deflagged determines the spot of the next line of scrimmage.
 - A defensive player may not hold, push or knock down the ball carrier in an attempt to remove the flag, nor shall an offensive player hold, block or run through a defensive player trying to remove the flag belt.
 - When a runner loses his/her flag belt, either accidentally or inadvertently, play continues. The deflagging attempt reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner above the waist and below the shoulder.

HANDLING THE BALL (PUNTS, SNAPS, HANDING, CATCHING, AND PASSING)

- **PUNTS:**
 - If a punt is to be made, the team punting must announce it before the down starts. After the announcement, the punt must actually be made; NO FAKE PUNTS. The offensive team making the punt must have four (4) players on the line of scrimmage; but the defensive team does not need anyone on the line of scrimmage. The receiving team may have blockers for the punt, but the blockers may not pass the line of scrimmage at any time; they may only jump in a vertical plane, never passing over the line of scrimmage. The offensive team may not cross the neutral zone until the ball is punted. After the punter receives the snapped ball, he/she must punt it immediately in a continuous motion.
 - The defensive team may not build a pyramid or support each other in any manner in order to block or attempt to block a punt.
- **SNAPS:**
 - The ball may be snapped between the legs or to the side of the snapper, from the ground.
 - The player who receives the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive line of scrimmage. Direct snaps are illegal.
 - If an eligible player is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a forward attempt, it is defensive pass interference.
 - During the interval between downs, two (2) or more consecutive encroachment fouls are committed by the same team. **Penalty: 10 yards for the second encroachment foul.**
- **HANDING:**
 - Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
- **CATCHING:**
 - Forward pass that is caught or intercepted in bounds. If the pass is caught simultaneously by members of the opposing teams inbounds, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and it belongs to the offensive team.

- **PASSING:**
 - All players are eligible for a forward pass. The passer may pass the ball from anywhere BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.
 - The passer shall not intentionally ground the ball in order to avoid a sack. **Penalty: 5 yards from the spot of foul and loss of down.**

SCORING

- Touchdowns will be worth six (6) points.
- A team is given the choice of going for 1, 2, or 3 points after scoring a touchdown. Once the captain makes a decision, it may only be changed if a timeout is called.
- Ways of scoring a successful point after attempt are:
 - By running or passing from the 3-yard line = 1 point;
 - By running or passing from the 10-yard line = 2 points;
 - By running or passing from the 20-yard line = 3 points.
- Touchdown Verification
 - The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If a player is not deflagged with one good pull by the official, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed.
 - The player is disqualified, and it is a foul. **Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot, ejection of the player and loss of down.**
- After every score, the ball will be placed on the new offensive team's 14-yard line.
- After a safety is scored, the team that is awarded two (2) points will automatically gain possession at their own 14-yard line.
- **Single Gendered Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by 40 points or more with five minutes or less remaining in the game, or if a team is ahead by 19 with two minutes or less remaining in the game, the game will be over.
- **Co-Rec Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by 45 points or more with five minutes or less remaining in the game, or if a team is ahead by 25 points with two minutes or less remaining in the game, the game will be over.

SPECIFIC RULES

- It is illegal to steal or attempt to steal (strip) the ball from a player with possession of the ball. The object of the game is to deflag a ball carrier, not to steal the ball. **Penalty: 10 yards from the end result of the run.**
- Roughing the Passer
 - Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after the ball has clearly been thrown. The defensive player may not make contact with the throwing arm of the passer. **Penalty: 10 yards**
- Flag Guarding
 - Ball carriers shall not guard their flags by blocking (with their hands, arms or the ball) the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. **Penalty: 10 yards**
 - The defensive player shall not (intentionally or accidentally) hold, grasp or obstruct forward progress of a ball carrier when attempting to remove a flag belt.
- Flag Belt Removal
 - A defensive player intentionally pulling or removing a flag belt from an offensive player not in possession of the ball is illegal. **Penalty: 10 yards**
- Offensive Screen Blocking
 - The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her sides or behind his/her back. Any use of the arms, elbows, legs or knees to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her feet in order to gain position before, during or after screen blocking. **Penalty: 10 yards**

CO-REC RULES

- Co-rec games will be played with two (2) teams of eight (8) players each (4 males and 4 females). Five (5) players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit (2M/3F; 3M/2F). In the case of an injury, the game may be continued with less than five (5) players; given the team has the opportunity to win.
- Either size football will be used for co-rec games (regular size or intermediate size).
- Open Play
 - Everyone is eligible to receive or throw a pass.
- Closed Play
 - After a male to male completion the play becomes closed. In order to open the play, a female must be involved as either a passer or the receiver of a legal forward pass and the play must end in positive yardage.
 - If a male were to throw to another male on a closed play, penalty would be 5 yards and loss of down, and the play remains closed.
- Illegal Forward Pass
 - (Co-rec only) If a male were to throw to another male on a closed play. If a crew of officials erroneously indicates the "open/closed" status of a down, then the down will be replayed.

- Male Runner
 - A team's male runner cannot advance the ball through their line of scrimmage unless preceded by the ball breaking the line of scrimmage and touching another player or a completed forward pass involving any gender.
Penalty: Illegal Advancement: 5 yards from the previous spot.
- Touchdown Values
 - If a female player scores a touchdown, the offensive team receives nine (9) points. If a female player throws a legal forward pass (to a male or female receiver) for a touchdown, the offensive team also receives nine (9) points.
- Points After Attempt
 - If the play was closed on a touchdown, the extra point play will automatically be open. If the play was open on a touchdown, the extra point play will be closed if it was a male to male play. The extra point will remain open if it was a male to female play. The point values for point after attempts will remain the same as single-sex league rules.
- Mercy Rule
 - **Single Gendered Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by 40 points or more with five minutes or less remaining in the game, or if a team is ahead by 19 with two minutes or less remaining in the game, the game will be over.
 - **Co-Rec Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead by 45 points or more with five minutes or less remaining in the game, or if a team is ahead by 25 points with two minutes or less remaining in the game, the game will be over.