

UNC CHARLOTTE INTRAMURALS

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Flag Football Rules will be used with UNC Charlotte modifications.

RULE ONE: THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS

Section One. General Provisions

A. Eligibility

1. This activity will be conducted according to standard eligibility rules as set forth in the current UNC Charlotte "Participants' Guide to Intramural Sports."
2. Participants must be listed on their respective team rosters prior to participating, sign risk and liability waiver and must show their UNC Charlotte ID Card prior to entering a contest.
3. The participation by an ineligible player will subject the offending team to forfeiture of the contest in which the ineligible player participated, and possibility of the team being removed from the league.
4. There are no restrictions on sport club players for this sport.

B. Players

1. The game shall be played between two teams of seven players each (**CoRec 8**).
2. A team may begin a game with a minimum of five players (**CoRec 6**).
3. Team representatives (players, substitutes, coaches, trainers, and other persons affiliated with the team) are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

C. Inclement Weather

1. The decision to play scheduled games threatened by bad weather or wet playing areas will be made at 3:00 pm on that day if applicable. If bad weather occurs after 3:00pm, please check The Gold Mine Sport Line.
2. Players and officials should call The Gold Mine Sport Line (704) 687-2547 to obtain information regarding the status of the games for that day.
3. If games are canceled due to inclement weather or poor field conditions, then both teams will receive a tie for that game and a 5 sportsmanship rating. Games will not be made up, unless it is in playoffs.

D. Sportsmanship Rating

The Intramural Sports Program expects all participants to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. In order to be eligible for the playoffs, a team must have a sportsmanship rating of at least 3.5 over the regular season. During playoffs, a sportsmanship score of at least (4) each game will guarantee advancement for the winning team. A winning team with sportsmanship of 1-3 will be reviewed by the IM Staff to determine if they advance. Following the game, officials evaluate and issue sportsmanship points to all teams. The breakdown of points is as follows:

POINTS DESCRIPTION

- 5 **NORMAL GAME:** Questioning an official on rule interpretation only.
- 4 **SOME STATIC:** Some questions of judgment or repeated complaints. No infractions issued.
- 3 **DIFFICULTY:** Repeated question of judgment. Unsportsmanlike call in soccer (yellow card), softball, volleyball, flag football or a technical foul in basketball.
- 2 **HARASSMENT:** Multiple unsportsmanlike calls, technical fouls (not on the same participant) or spectator harassment of the officials.
- 1 **EJECTION:** Any ejection, whatever the cause.
- 0 **FORFEIT OR FIGHTING:** Includes threatening an employee. If involved in a fight your team could be removed from the league for the remainder of the season.

Section Two. The Field.

- A. The field is 100 yds. in length and 40 yds. in width. The length of the field shall be divided into four 20 yd. intervals from goal line to goal line with two 10 yd. end zones.
- B. On each side of the field, an area is designated for the teams and coaches. The Home team will decide what side of the field they would like to be on. Coaches must sign-in and be an eligible participant on that teams roster. All team members must remain between the two 20 yd. lines.
- C. Spectators and team attendants shall be located 2 yds. behind either endzone. No spectators may be in-between fields, team captains will be responsible for their spectators.

Section Three. The Equipment

A. Ball - The official ball shall be a leather intercollegiate size ball for men. Women can use a leather intercollegiate, intermediate, youth, or junior size ball. Each team has the option of using their own legal playing ball. Referee shall check game ball prior to the game. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure. The Referee has final say on legality of any ball.

B. Jerseys

1. Players of opposing teams wear contrasting colored jerseys which are numbered on the front and/or rear. If teams do not have their own jerseys, then jerseys will be provided by the UNC Charlotte Intramural Dept.
2. Jerseys can be numbered with any whole number, 0 - 99. No team may have a 0 and a 00.
3. They must also be long enough so they remain tucked in during the entire down or short enough so there is a minimum of 4 inches from the bottom of the jersey to the player's waistline. The referee will use a closed fist to measure the distance between the waistline and the bottom of the jersey.
1. Players of opposing teams wear contrasting colored jerseys.
2. All jerseys must be the same type as the entire team. If the whole team fails to all have similar jerseys they will be required to wear Intramural Pinnies.
3. No team members may share jerseys.
4. The jerseys will be provided by the Intramural department if a team cannot provide their own.
5. Teams may not have the same color or similar shade of jersey. In this case, the visiting team must wear the Intramural Pinnies.

C. Players

1. Athletic shoes must be worn by all players; soccer style cleats may be worn, but **metal cleats shall not be permitted.**
2. Protective pads (i.e. elbow, hand, and forearm pads) will not be permitted.
3. Other types of equipment or substances which will be declared illegal include jewelry, headgear, any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body, and any equipment which includes computers or any electronic or mechanical devices (i.e. Bullhorns) for communications.
2. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material (unless covered on both sides and all edges over-lapped with at least 1/2 inch of protective material) will be declared illegal.
3. **Shorts/Pants must not have any pockets, zippers, or belt loops. Shorts with pockets and/or belt loops are NOT permitted. Pockets may not be turned inside out, taped, zipped, or covered by any other means.**

RULE TWO: PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, SUBSTITUTIONS**Section One. The Start of Each Period**

A. Coin Toss

1. Each half shall start with the ball being placed on the 14 yard line, unless moved by penalty.
2. The Referee shall toss a coin after first designating which captain shall call the fall of the coin.
3. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of options for the first half.
The options for each half shall be:
 - a. *defer,*
 - b. *offense,*
 - c. *defense, or*
 - b. *Which goal to defend.*
4. If b, c, or d are chosen the opposing captain get the options in the second half.

Section Two. Game Time

A. Playing Time and Intermissions

1. *Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into four quarters of 10 minutes each.* The intermission between halves shall be 3 minutes.
2. If the Intramural Supervisor deems any condition unsafe, the game may be called at any point.
3. The clock will start when the ball is legally snapped. It will run continuously for the first half, and only stopping for the last two minutes in the second half as outlined below.

B. Last Two Minutes

1. During the final 2 minutes of the 4th quarter, the clock will stop for:
 - a. Incomplete pass (starts on the snap)
 - b. Out-of bounds (starts on the snap)

- c. Score (starts on the snap, try is untimed)
 - d. Team time-outs (starts on the snap)
 - e. First down (depends on previous play)
 - f. Penalty (depends on the previous play, with the exception of Delay of Game which starts on the snap)
 - g. Referee's Time-Out (starts at his/her discretion)
 - h. Touchback (starts on the snap)
 - i. Change of Possession (depends on the previous play)
 - j. Team attempting to consume time illegally (starts on the snap), or conserve time (i.e. fake injury) illegally (starts on the ready).
 - k. Inadvertent whistle (Starts on the ready)
- C. Timing Errors - The Referee shall have authority to correct obvious timing errors if discovery is made prior to the second live ball following the error.
- D. Tie Game (Playoffs only) - Games may end in a tie during regular season.
- 1. In case a game ends in a tie, the officials must bring both teams to the center of the field and discuss all tie-breaker procedures prior to the coin toss.
 - 2. Following the meeting, the Referee will toss a coin to determine the options as in the start of the game. The winner of the toss shall be given the options of offense/defense or direction. The loser shall make a choice on the remaining options. **All Over-Time procedures are played toward the same goal.**
 - 3. Unless moved by penalty, each team will start 1st and 10 yds. to the goal line. The object will be to score a touchdown. An overtime period consists of one possession by each team. The line-to-gain is always the goal line. If the score is still tied after one period, they go to a second period or as many as needed to determine a winner. If the first team which is awarded the ball scores, the opponent will still have a chance to win the game. Try-for-points will be attempted and scored during the overtime following a touchdown if needed.
 - 4. If the defense intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the ball will be placed 1st and goal from the 10 yd. line.
 - 5. Penalties are administered similar as the first four periods. Dead ball fouls following a touchdown are administered on the try. Live ball fouls committed by either team after the defensive team gains possession during a try shall be enforced from the succeeding spot. Dead ball fouls following a successful try will be penalized from the succeeding spot.
 - 6. Each team is entitled to one time-out per overtime period. Remaining time-outs from regulation do not carry over to overtime.

Section Three. Time Outs

- A. Charged Time-Outs and Length
- 1. Each team is entitled to three charged 1-minute time-outs per game.
 - 2. The Referee shall warn both teams 5 seconds before a charged time-out expires. The team then has 25 seconds to put the ball in play or suffer a Delay of Game penalty.

RULE THREE: BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL

Section One. Ball in Play, Dead Ball.

- A. Dead Ball Becomes Alive
- 1. A dead ball, after having been declared ready for play, becomes a live ball when it is snapped legally.
- B. Ball Declared Dead
- 1. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead when:
 - a. It goes out-of-bounds or when it touches the goal line of the runner's opponents,
 - b. Any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground.
 - c. A touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try-for-point, the defensive team obtains possession of the ball,
 - d. A punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it,
 - e. A forward pass strikes the ground,
 - f. A lateral or fumble by a player touches the ground (a ball snapped from scrimmage which hits the ground is dead at the spot where it hit the ground),
 - g. A forward pass is legally completed or a loose ball is caught on or across the opponent's goal line,
 - h. A runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player,
 - i. A runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including hand and arm, once the flag belt is no longer attached,

- j. A passer is deflagged/tagged prior to releasing the ball,
- l. Following a valid or invalid fair catch signal when the punt is caught or recovered between the goal lines by any receiver beyond the kicker's line of scrimmage, or when
- m. There is an inadvertent whistle.

RULE FOUR: KICKING THE BALL, FAIR CATCH

Section One. Free Kick

A. *There are no free kicks. At the start of each half, the ball will be placed on the 14 yard line. There are no kickoffs.*

Section Two. Punts (formerly protected scrimmage kick)

A. Formation and Legal Kick

1. Punting team must have at least 4 players (**CoRec 5 players**) within 1 yd. Of the scrimmage and remain motionless until the kick is made. **Penalty:** 5 yds
2. A punt can be made on any down but only if the captain of the team has requested it.
3. A quick kick is illegal. **Penalty:** 10 yds.
4. Once the ball is punted, any Receiving player may touch the kick. If the touched punt hits the ground, it is dead at that spot. Once the punt has been touched by any receiving player it becomes live and may be received by any player on the field. If the ball touches a receiving player and then lands on the ground, the ball is dead.
5. The kicker must be 5 yds behind the scrimmage line when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. **Penalty:** 5 yds.

B. Receiving Punts

1. Receiving player is eligible to return punts or allow them to come to rest on the field of play.
2. Players shall ignore any signals given by the kickers or receivers. The ball remains alive. There is no foul.
3. A punt that goes out-of-bounds whether it has been touched or not, or an untouched ball that comes to rest will be marked at those respective spots.
4. All punt returns with respect to the kicking team first touching or recovering the ball, penalties, etc., the receiving team has the option to take the ball at the spot of first touching or where the ball was declared dead
5. Kick-Catch Interference applies if the receiver's path to the ball in flight has been obstructed by the kicking team. **Penalty:** 10 yds.
6. If the kicking team recovers the kick, whether it crosses over the receiving team's restraining line or not, the ball is dead and the receiving team is awarded the ball at that spot. If the kicking team touches the ball first but does not gain control, the receiving team has the option to take the ball at the spot of first touching or where the ball was declared dead. **Exception:** if the receiving team commits a penalty, they no longer have the option of taking the ball where it was first touched.
7. When any kick touches anything (player included) on or behind the goal line, it is a touchback and the ball is brought out to the 15 yd line.

RULE FIVE: SNAPPING, HANDLING, AND PASSING THE BALL

Section One. The Scrimmage and Snap.

A. Responsibilities

1. **The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down.**
2. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the offensive team's line of scrimmage (orange spotter).
3. Players may use a 2,3, or 4 point stance.
4. The offensive team must have at least 4 players (**Co-Rec 5 players**) on their scrimmage line and after the ball is ready for play, each player must momentarily be within 15 yds. before the snap. **Penalty:** 5 yds.
5. All players must be inbounds.

B. Action during the snap

1. One offensive player may be in motion but not toward the opponent's goal. If such player starts from their scrimmage line, that player must be at least 5 yds. behind that line of scrimmage at the snap. **Penalty:** 5 yds.
2. **No Direct Snaps.** The player who receives the snap must be at least 2 yds. behind the offensive line of scrimmage. **Penalty:** 5 yds.
3. **Shift.** In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, or arms for at least one full second before the snap. **Penalty:** 5 yds.

Section Two. Handling the Ball.**A. Handing off the Ball**

1. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
2. **A Forward Handoff.** During a scrimmage down, a player may hand the ball forward at any time. A handoff is legal if both individuals are touching the ball at the same instant.
3. **A Backward Pass.** It is a pass with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. Treated the same as a backward pitch.
4. A backward pass or fumble that touches the ground is dead at the spot.
5. A backward pass or fumble that is intentionally thrown out-of bounds to avoid being deflagged, tagged, or to conserve time is illegal. **Penalty:** 5 yds. and **loss of down.**
6. If a fumble touches the ground behind the goal line, it is a safety or a touchback. (See Rule 6 for clarification between the two).

Section Three. Forward Pass.**A. Legal Forward Pass**

1. It is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line.
2. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.
3. During a scrimmage down and before team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer's feet are behind the offensive line of scrimmage (orange spotter) when the ball leaves the passer's hand.
4. Only one forward pass can be thrown during the down.
5. No forward pass can be thrown following a change of possession during the down.
6. A forward pass possessed by an airborne player can be thrown or batted forward or backward legally.
7. No passer can catch his/her forward or backward pass unless touched by another player.
8. If an illegal forward pass is thrown, the play is to proceed until the play is completed. The penalty is assessed from the spot of the pass. **Penalty:** 5 yds. and **loss of down** if by Team A before possession changes during a scrimmage down.
9. A forward pass is considered complete as long as the first part of the person to make contact with the ground is inbounds.
10. A simultaneous catch by opposing players results in the play becoming dead and belongs to the offensive team at the spot of the simultaneous catch. It is not a simultaneous catch until both players have returned to the ground in the field of play possessing the ball simultaneously.

B. Illegal Forward Pass (CoRec Rule Only)

1. The term "closed" means a male player may **not** throw a legal forward pass completion to any other male player. The term "open" means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player.
2. During the offensive team's possession, there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the try
3. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or female receiver for positive yds. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the offensive scrimmage line (orange spotter). There is **no** foul for a female receiver being deflagged behind the offensive scrimmage line. The next legal forward pass completion remains "closed."
4. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."
5. **Penalty** Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yds. From the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed legal forward pass is released, and a loss of down.

C. Interference

1. During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the scrimmage line, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the scrimmage line is pass interference, unless there is a **bona fide** attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass, and incidental contact occurs.
2. A defensive player who goes through and bumps, etc., or waves his/her hands in the face of an offensive receiver will be assessed with defensive pass interference.
Penalty: 10 yds. From previous spot and **automatic first down.**
3. Defensive pass interference that is considered to be intentional or unsportsmanlike.
Penalty: 10 yds. for Unsportsmanlike Conduct, possible ejection, **AND** 10 yds and first down for interference.
4. An offensive player who goes through bumps, etc. Or waves his/her hands in the face of a defensive player to prevent a play on the ball will be assessed with offensive pass interference.
Penalty: 10 yds. From the previous spot and **loss of down.**

Section Four. Male Runner (CoRec Rule Only).

- A. A male runner cannot advance the ball through the offensive scrimmage line.
Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yds. From the previous spot.
- B. Once the ball is beyond the offensive scrimmage line, there are no restrictions regarding who can run with the football anywhere on the field either before or after possession changes.

RULE SIX: SCORING**Section One. How Scored.**

- A. Touchdown = 6 points or **9 points (Co-Rec Rule, when a female scores.)** A touchdown is awarded when a legal forward pass is completed or a fumble or backward pass is caught on or behind the opponent's goal line or when a player is legally in possession of the ball while any part of it is on, above, or behind his/her opponent's goal line.
- B. Try = 1 point (3yds) or 2 points (10 yds), *or 3 points (20 yds)* - An opportunity to score extra points shall be granted the team scoring a touchdown.
- C. Safety = 2 points; It is a safety when:
1. 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: **Exceptions:** When a player intercepts a forward pass, catches a scrimmage kick or free kick between his/her 5yd. Line and goal line and his/her momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead. This is known as the momentum rule and a touchback will be awarded.
 2. A player on offense who commits a foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from the spot in his/her end zone; or throws an illegal forward pass from his/her end zone and the penalty is declined in a situation which leaves him/her in possession at the spot of the illegal pass and with the ball having been forced into the end zone by the passing team.
 3. Following a safety, the ball is put in play by the scoring team at their own 15 yard line, unless moved by a penalty.
- D. Touchback = 0 points
1. It is a touchback when any kick (scrimmage or free) touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line unless they choose a spot of first touching by the kicking team.
 2. The ball is out-of-bounds: behind a goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass); when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above or behind the player's own goal line; or when the ball becomes dead not in possession on, above, or behind the team's own goal line and the attacking team is responsible.
 3. The team whose goal line is involved shall put the ball in play on the inbounds line on the *15 yd. line*.

RULE SEVEN: BLOCKING, FLAG BELT REMOVAL, GENERAL PRINCIPLES**Section One. Offensive Screen Blocking and Defense**

- A. **Offensive screen block shall take place without contact, with his/her hands or arms at the side or behind him/her.**
- B. **Any use of arms, legs, or elbows to initiate contact during an offensive screen block is illegal.**
- C. When screen blocking a stationary opponent from behind, he/she must take no position closer than a normal step from him or her.
- D. Teammates of a runner/passers may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but may not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. **Penalty:** 10 yds.
- E. **Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block.**
- F. **Defensive players may not use his/her arm or hands as a wedge to contact the opponent.**

Section Two. Flag Belt.

- A. **Flag Belt Removal** - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred. A player who removes the flag belt may leave his/her feet.
- B. **Contact** - In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders of an opponent with their hands, but not their face or any part of their neck or head. **A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.**

Section Three. General Principles

- A. **A runner shall not:**
1. **Flag guard with hands, arms, or the ball,**

2. **Stiff arm, or**
3. **Lower his/her shoulder to prevent an opponent from deflagging.**

B. In General

1. Touchback comes out to 14 yd. line.
2. Team has four downs to score or get to the next zone line.
3. An injured player must come out for one play. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player.
4. The neutral zone between offensive line of scrimmage and defensive line of scrimmage is 1 yd.
5. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is 19 (**Co-Rec 25**) or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half, or if a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 (**Co-Rec 25**) or more, the game shall end at that point.
6. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball becomes live.
7. Rule decisions may not be changed after the ball is legally snapped or punted.

RULE EIGHT: CO-REC MODIFICATIONS SUMMARY

1. **THE GAME.** The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players (4 women, 4 men).
2. Six (3 Men and 3 Women) seven (4 Men and 3 Women or 3 Men and 4 Women for 7 players), or eight (4 Men and 4 Women) players are required to avoid a forfeit.
3. **THE BALL.** The regular, intermediate, youth or junior size ball shall be used.
4. **MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS.** The offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
5. **MALE RUNNER.** A team A male runner cannot advance the ball through Team A's scrimmage line. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male runner once the ball is beyond the Team A scrimmage line; during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession.
Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5 yds from previous spot.
6. **MALE TO MALE COMPLETION.** During the offensive team's possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the try. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the Team A scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange). There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female. **Penalty:** Illegal forward pass, 5 yds from spot of where the illegal pass is released, and loss of down. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed".
7. **ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS.** If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the Team A scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange) and he runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.
Penalty: Illegal forward pass, 5 yds from the spot of the pass and loss of down.
8. **MERCY RULE.** If a team is ahead by 25 points or more when the referee announces the two-minute warning for the second half or a team creates a point differential of 25 points or more, the game shall be over.
9. **TOUCHDOWN VALUE.** If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any Team A player, the point value is 9. Male to male completions or runs are worth 6 points. All extra points, regardless of who scores, are worth 1, 2, and 3 points.
10. **OFFICIALS.** If a crew of officials erroneously indicates the "open/closed" status of a down, then Team A has the option to repeat the down or take the result of the play. This must be done prior to the next snap.