

# 7-on-7 Flag Football Rules

**All participants must have & show their valid KENT STATE UNIVERSITY ID before the start of every game. Anyone without an ID will not be allowed to participate. No exceptions.**

All games will be officiated based on the *National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) Rules*; which will be in effect unless otherwise noted in this supplement.

## PLAYERS

- Seven players constitute a team (Men's and Women's), and eight players constitute a Co-Recreational team. On offense, four players must be on the line of scrimmage (five players in co-rec).
- A team may not start or continue a game with less than five (5) players for men's and women's and six (6) players for co-recreational.
- The person receiving the snap must be two yards behind the line of scrimmage. Snaps must be between the legs or from the side of the snapper. All snaps must be of a quick, continuous motion. No Direct Snaps.
- No player, substitute, coach or others subject to the rules shall use disconcerting words or phrases, or commit any act not in accordance with the spirit of fair play for the purpose of confusing the opponent.
- Players and spectators may not cross the 20 yard line marker toward the end zones. Players and spectators may not be within 2 yards of the sidelines. Teams must be on opposite sidelines.

## EQUIPMENT

- Teams may check out jerseys and flag belts at the Intramural Storage Building at Allerton. A Flash Card ID must be used to check out equipment. Teams may wear their own jerseys (with numbers) provided they are of the same color.
- Each player must wear the flag belts provided. Belts have three flags that are to be positioned one to each hip and one in the back. Flag belts shall not be tied at anytime. PENALTY: automatic disqualification, 10 yard penalty, loss of down (or) automatic first down.
- Shirts must be tucked in so that the flag can be easily seen and grabbed. Pinnies that hang over the flag belt must be tucked in at the discretion of the referee. If a sweatshirt is worn, it must be tucked in a manner in which it will not cover the flag belts. No belt loops or pockets of any form of pants will be allowed. Billed-hats or any headgear containing knots are not allowed. Stocking hats and headbands no wider 2" are allowed to be worn during flag football.
- Metal cleats are illegal.
- Players may not participate in sandals, boots, dress shoes, or barefoot. Players wearing illegal shoes become subject to disqualification.
- Absolutely no jewelry will be allowed.
- No casts of any material will be allowed. Braces, which are made of hard or unyielding material, will not be allowed. Pads may be worn below the waist only.
- The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber and must meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. Officials will make the final ruling regarding the appropriate size of the football to meet Department of Recreational Services standards. Teams can bring their own ball, but are responsible to bring it out on their offensive series. Women can use a youth or junior size football for their leagues.
- Games will be played on a field 80 yards long (with ten yard end zones) by 40 yards wide.

## LENGTH OF THE GAME

- A team has 5 minutes past the designated start time to have a team checked in and ready to play. If the team is ready within the 5 minutes, the team that was on time will receive 7 points and they automatically win the toss. **The game clock will begin when the grace period begins and will run continuously.** After the 5 minute grace period a forfeit will be declared.
- The game will start with a captain's meeting and a coin toss before all regular season and playoff games.
- The winner of the toss will have the following options:

- start on offense, or
- start on defense, or
- defer the option to second half, or
- select which goal to defend
- If the winning team defers, the losing team will have the same options as the coin toss winner except for deferring to the second half.
- The game will consist of two -- twenty (20) minute halves, with a two (2) minute half-time.
- A team will have three time-outs per half--30 seconds in length.
- During the first 18 minutes of each half, the clock will run continuously and will only be stopped on team's time-out or referee's time-out.
- During the last two minutes of the each half, the clock will stop only during appropriate dead ball situations (first downs, touchdowns, penalties, safeties, touchbacks, time outs, injuries, punts, out of bounds, and incomplete pass). Also, during the final two minutes teams may intentionally down the ball to stop the clock.
- If two teams should have a tie score at the end of regulation time, an overtime period may be played.
- Prior to the overtime period starting, a captain's meeting will be held, a coin toss will determine possession of the ball, and each team will get four plays from the 10 yard line to score.
- If the game remains tied after one overtime period, the process will continue until a winner is determined.
- Teams may go for a one, two or three point conversion after a score.
- Each team will get one additional time out per overtime session. Time outs may not be carried over to the overtime period or each subsequent period

## **BLOCKING**

- Offensive screen blocking shall take place without contact. It is similar to the fundamentals of a screen block in basketball.
- The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind the back.
- Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
- A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking.
- There shall be NO charging into offensive blockers, the defense must make an effort to get around the offensive blocker.
- If the defense does charge into or bull rush into offensive blocker, a 10 yard penalty will be assessed against the defense and could lead to a player being ejected.

## **HURDLING**

- No hurdling is allowed. If someone is trying to avoid a tackler and hurdles the player that is illegal.
- Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent. (A player may not attempt to leap over another player, while leading with his knees or feet, this is considered hurdling)

## **PUNTING**

- On fourth down (or any other down), a team must announce its intentions to punt to the officials before the ball is declared ready to play. No Quick Kicks are permitted.
- After such an announcement, the punting team can only change the decision after either team has requested a time-out or any penalty allowing the offensive team to repeat the down.
- The offensive team must also have a minimum of four players on the line of scrimmage during a punt.
- No one may move until the ball is actually kicked except for the kicker.
- The center must snap the ball to the punter who must be at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- A punter must punt the ball within 5 seconds of receiving the ball from the snapper.
- A punted ball that hits the ground may be advanced, but it must be fielded cleanly.
- The ball will be declared dead if the punting team downs the ball or if the receiver doesn't field the ball cleanly (fumbles or muffs the punt).

## **FUMBLES**

- Any fumble or forward pass that is intercepted or caught in the air may be advanced.
- Any time the ball touches the ground during a play from scrimmage, the play becomes dead and the ball is spotted at the appropriate spot.

- Balls may be fumbled backwards for a safety or a loss but not forward for a touchdown or gain. It will remain at the point of the fumble.
  - **EXCEPTION:** An offensive player who fumbles the ball forward into the end-zone before the ball crosses the plane of the goal line will result in a turnover and defensive team will have possession at their 14 yard line.

## DELAY OF GAME

- The ball must be put in play with a backward snap between the legs or from the side within 25 seconds of when the referee blows the whistle ready for play.
- No direct hand-off snaps are allowed.
- The ball must be snapped with a quick continuous motion.

## FIRST DOWNS

- Each team will have a series of four (4) downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next zone.
- Failure to advance the ball to the next zone line to gain results in loss of the ball to the opponent.
- The zone line to gain in any series shall be the line in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or loss of yardage.
- The placement of the ball will be determined by the spot of the ball when the person is de-flagged.
- Any part of the ball touching the line is considered over the line.

## PASSING/RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- Only one legal forward pass is allowed per live ball play.
- A legal forward pass is one that is made from behind the line of scrimmage (indicated by the orange ball spotter).
- Reverse passes may be thrown at any time, and anywhere on the field.
- Receivers must have one foot in bounds while "in possession" of the ball.
- A receiver who steps out of bounds and returns back to the playing field is ineligible.

## SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points (men's leagues, women's leagues, or co-rec if no female is involved in the play)
- Touchdown: 9 points (In co-rec leagues if the touchdown is scored by a female passer or runner)
- Safety: 2 points
- Point after try: 1 point (from 3 yards),
- Point after try: 2 points (from 10 yards),
- Point after try: 3 points (from 20 yards).
- Defensive return during a point after try: 3 points

**NOTE:** a team is given one choice (one, two or three points) for a point after try. The declared point value will remain the same even if a penalty moves the ball closer or farther from the goal. A team may not change the value of the try in the event of a penalty by the defense.

## SECURING THE FLAG

- The defensive player may not tackle, block, trip or hold the ball carrier while attempting to de-flag the ball carrier. If a player trips, holds, or uses any other illegal acts in leaving their feet, a penalty of ten yards will be called. If flagrant, unsportsmanlike, unnecessary roughness occurs, ejection may also result. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be de-flagged. Intentionally pulling the flag of an offensive player without that offensive player having possession of the ball is illegal (10 yards penalty).
- The flag belt must be "clearly taken" from the ball carrier. If a defensive player tries for the belt and they don't pull the flag off, but it falls off for any other reason, the play continues.
- If an offensive player loses his/her flag prior to being de-flagged, that player may be downed by one hand touch between the shoulders and knees. Also, the person that takes the flag is responsible for returning the

flag to the offensive player. Failure to return the flag to an offensive player may result in a delay of game penalty.

- Always play until you hear the whistle.
- After a score is made, the player should go to the closest official for a flag-belt removal. If the flag doesn't come off with a reasonable attempt, the score does not count (additional 10 yard penalty from the previous spot and loss of down) and player is ejected.
- If a player is found wearing a belt that is tied, he/she will be ejected from the game. The player will also be ineligible for the next contest.

## **FLAG GUARDING**

- Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to remove the flag belt.
- The ball carrier may not hurdle another player to avoid being de-flagged.
- A runner or receiver is also down if any part of his/her body touches the ground other than the hands or feet.
- Rushers chasing the passer must play the flag and not the ball. If they attempt to block a pass, they may not make contact with the passer in any manner, even if the ball is touched or blocked.

## **RETURNS FROM END ZONE**

- Passes, interceptions, and punts may be returned from end zones, but not from behind the end line.
- An interception in the end zone can be advanced or downed for a touchback (ball placed on the 14 yard line) if downed or de-flagged in the end zone.
- A player that moves the ball out of the end zone and scrambles back into the end zone and is deflagged will result in a safety.

## **MOMENTUM RULE**

- IT IS NOT A SAFETY, when a Team B (defensive/receiving) player intercepts a forward pass, fumble, backward pass, or catches a punt between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his/her team's possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to Team B at the spot where possession was gained.

## **INADVERTENT WHISTLE**

- A live ball becomes dead when an official sounds the whistle, even if inadvertently.
- If an inadvertent whistle happens during a live play, the following will happen:
  - The ball is in player possession-the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where declared dead or replay the down.
  - The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, illegal kick, or illegal forward pass-the team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
  - During a legal forward pass or a free or protected scrimmage kick-the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

## **MOTION**

- Before the ball is snapped, only one offensive player may be in motion, the motion may not be toward the line of scrimmage.
- A player in motion on the line of scrimmage is not considered to be part of the line of scrimmage.

## **FALSE START**

- All offensive players (except the player in motion) must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head, or arms for at least one full second before the snap.

## **SPIKING THE BALL**

- Deliberately throwing the ball down after any play is a five yard penalty.

- If judged to be unsportsmanlike toward the other team or official it may be a 10 yard penalty.
- Taunting at any time will be a 10 yard penalty.

### **PENALTY MEASUREMENT**

- A penalty measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line.
- Any offensive penalty behind the basic spot (previous spot or succeeding spot), shall be enforced from the spot of the foul if accepted by the defense.
- If the offensive team throws an illegal forward pass from its end zone or commits any other foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, which is now the basic spot, it is a safety.

### **STEALING THE BALL**

- No opponent may attempt to strip (steal) the ball from the ball carrier.
- The ball is dead and belongs to the ball carrier. There will also be a 10 yard penalty, enforced against the defense.
- This is not to be confused with a fumble that can be caught in the air and advanced.

### **NEUTRAL ZONE**

- There will be a one yard separation between the offensive line of scrimmage (point of the ball) and the defensive line of scrimmage.
- This will be designated by a spot with two markers for both the offensive (orange) and defensive (yellow) lines of scrimmage.

### **ENCROACHMENT**

- No offensive or defensive player may penetrate the neutral zone area by any part of their body once the Line Judge has set the lines.
- The first time is a 5 yard penalty and two consecutive encroachment penalties during the same series of downs by the defense will result in the second penalty being assessed 10 yards.

### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

- Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are 10 yards and loss of down if on the offense, and 10 yards and automatic first down if on the defense.
- Extreme cases of unsportsmanlike conduct can lead to a player ejection.
- Swearing at the official, throwing the ball at the official, grabbing the official, tying flags, fighting, tackling, intentional tripping, or any other form of unnecessary roughness deemed by the official will lead to automatic ejection.
- Two unsportsmanlike penalties per player or non-player will lead to an automatic ejection and possible forfeiture of the game.
- Four (4) unsportsmanlike penalties in one game will result in forfeiture of the game.

### **MERCY RULE**

- The game will be called under the mercy rule if the point differential is 19 points (25 points Co-Rec) with two minutes or less remaining in the second half.

### **BLOOD RULE**

- If at any time, a player has blood on their body or clothing he/she must have it stopped, cleaned and the clothing removed from the playing area prior to being allowed to continue to participate.

## CO-REC RULES

- **The Game** shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players (4 men and 4 women)
  - Teams with 7 players shall be: 4 men and 3 women or 4 women and 3 men
  - Teams with 6 players shall be: 3 men and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, 2 men and 4 women
- **The Ball** may be a regular, intermediate, youth or junior size football.
- **Minimum Number of Line Player**, the offensive team must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the time of the snap.
- **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.
- A male may not receive the ball (from either a male or female passer) behind Team A's scrimmage line and advance the ball through the scrimmage line.
- **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 position yards.
  - The spot where the ball becomes dead by rule must be beyond the Team A scrimmage line to OPEN the play.
  - There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver.
  - Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed".
- **MERCY RULE:** If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half, and that creates a point differential of 25 or more the game shall end at that point.
- **TOUCHDOWN VALUE:** If any female player scores a touchdown (either by passing/receiving or running), the point value is 9.

## EJECTION

- In the case of an ejection, the player not only must leave the premises and also needs to meet with the Coordinator of Intramural Sports before she/he may participate in the next activity.

**The Intramural Staff has the right to stop a game if they deem it necessary.**