

NIRSA Southern Atlantic Flag Football Championships
Rules Summary

Note: The following is a summary of the rules used to govern the tournament and is NOT a complete listing. Play is governed by current NIRSA Flag and Touch Football Rules. These rules are intended as a service and are **NOT OFFICIAL**.

RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS, AND EQUIPMENT

A. THE FIELD

1. The field shall be rectangle 100 yards by 40 yards, including two 10 yard end zones. The width of the fields shall be lined at 20 yard intervals from goal line to goal line. The 3 and 10 yard try lines shall be 1 yard wide.

B. THE PLAYERS

1. 7 players constitute a men's/women's team. 5 players are required to start a game and avoid a forfeit.

C. EQUIPMENT

1. Each player must wear a one piece quick release flag belt (provided) at the waistline with three flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back. The flag belt must be free of any knots and **conform to standard length and width.**
2. Shoes must be soft-soled soccer/football type cleats or cross-country, tennis, or turf shoes. **NO HARD PLASTIC, LEATHER, OR METAL IS ALLOWED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CLEATS OR SHOES. WET TURF SOCCER SHOES (SCREW-ON CLEATS) ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Molded one-piece screw-ins with a cleat length of ½" or less are permitted. NOTE: Rubber cleats with a tipped metal material are legal.
3. **The use of headgear, jewelry, shoulder pads, body pads, or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may wear soft and yielding padded compression shorts, shirts, and hats. Players may wear a knit/stocking cap or soft rubber hat and use soft, pliable gloves if they desire. No baseball style caps allowed.**
4. Tape or bandage on the hand, wrist, forearm, or any other part of the body is prohibited except to protect an injury. Under no circumstances will a player wearing a cast or splint be allowed to play. Braces with exposed metal parts must be covered.
5. All players must wear jerseys, (shirts), long enough so that they remain tucked in during each down or cut at least 4" above the flag belt. Each team must wear the same color jersey or shirt. If not, jerseys will be provided. The jersey must be tucked in to allow for pulling the flag.
Penalty - 5 yards.
6. **Belt loops, pockets, exposed drawstrings, or untucked hoods on sweat tops are illegal. Players wearing such illegal equipment will not be allowed to participate until illegal equipment is removed.**
7. Any decision on the legality of any equipment on or being used by a player will be made by the officials on the field, and his/her decision will be final.
8. An injured or apparently injured player who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least 1 down unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs. A player who is bleeding, or has an open wound, or has any amount of blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player.

9. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game. The player may not return to play in the game or tournament without written authorization from a physician.

RULE 2. TIMING

A. PLAYING TIME AND INTERMISSIONS

1. The game will consist of four 12 minute quarters. The clock will run continuously during the first and third quarters except when a timeout is called, or at the Referee's discretion. During the **last two minutes of the second quarter, and the last two minutes of the fourth quarter** the clock will stop for an incomplete pass, when a player goes out of bounds, on penalties, on a change of possession, on any score, and on first downs.
2. Half-time will be 5 minutes.
3. In case of a game ending in a tie, the two captains will determine the options by a coin flip. The home captain will call the toss. The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction. The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Teams will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played. **ALL OVERTIME PERIODS ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.** Each team will be given a series of 4 downs to score. Trys will be attempted and scored as stated in Rule 6. ***Once B secures possession the ball is dead and the series is over and the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line.*** Each team is entitled to one time-out only for the entire overtime. The game will continue to be played until a winner is determined.
4. **Mercy Rule:** If a Men/Women's team is **19 (Co-Rec-25 points)** or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2 minute warning for the second half or anytime thereafter, the game shall be over.
5. Each team is entitled to 3 time-outs per half. These time-outs shall be 1 minute in length. First half time-outs do not carry over to the second half of the game.
6. The Referee may start or stop the game clock whenever, in his/her judgment, either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by using illegal or unfair tactics.

RULE 3. PRE-GAME AND KICKING

A. The Toss and Options

Procedure Three minutes prior to the start of the game, the Referee shall toss a coin, and the visiting team captain shall call the toss. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of options for the first half or shall defer their option to the second half.

The options for each half shall be:

- A. To take ball on the 14 yard line
- B. To choose the goal his/her team will defend. The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option.

B. Kicking the Ball

1. There will be no kickoffs to begin each half. Each half will start with the ball on the 14 yard line.
2. Anytime at or after the ball is ready for play (determined by the Referee blowing the ready for play whistle), each Team K player must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap.

3. Prior to a punt the offensive team must make the Referee aware of its intentions. After such announcement, the ball must be kicked. Exception: If a) a Team A or B time-out is called, or b) a foul occurs any time prior to or during this down after Team A captain's decision which results in the kicking team having the right to repeat the down again, the Referee must ask the Team A captain whether or not he/she wants to punt and communicate this decision to the Team B captain.
4. Neither K nor R may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. Note: All scrimmage line rules regarding the snap, stance, false start, minimum line players, motion and shift apply to a punt.
5. **Kicking the Ball:** After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. If a kicker drops the ball, it is considered a fumble, and the ball becomes dead at the spot.
6. **Touchback:** All punts breaking the plane of R's goal line will be a touchback and the ball placed at R's 14 yard line, unless R chooses the spot of first touching by K.

RULE 4. SNAPPING AND PASSING THE BALL

A. SNAPPING THE BALL

1. The player who receives the snap from the center must be at least 2 yards behind his/her scrimmage line. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s).
2. The offensive team must have a minimum of 1 player on their line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. A player in motion is not counted as on the scrimmage line.
3. **Anytime at or after the ball is ready for play (determined by the Referee blowing the ready for play whistle), each Team A player must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap.**
4. If the ball is fumbled, it is immediately dead, at the spot, upon hitting the ground. No advancement can be made by either team. A fumble going out of bounds without hitting the ground remains in possession of the fumbling team at the spot where the ball was fumbled or wherever the ball went out of bounds.

B. PASSING THE BALL

1. All players are eligible to touch a forward pass after it is thrown. The passer may catch his/her own forward pass provided it has been touched by another player first.
 2. If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneous by members of opposing teams, the ball is immediately dead upon returning to the ground and belongs to the offense.
 3. A forward pass is a live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line. A backward pass is a live ball thrown parallel or backwards. The initial direction of the pass will determine whether or not the ball is backwards or forwards.
 4. It is illegal to attempt to steal the ball while in player possession. Once a player has obtained possession of the ball, his/her opponent must play the flag, not the ball
 5. Defensive players must not contact the passer at anytime during or after the play. They may only go for the flag. Rushers may try to deflect the ball, but they may not contact the passer even if the ball is deflected. If the defender contacts the passer, it is considered roughing the passer.
 6. Only one foot must touch inbounds in order for a pass reception to be considered legal.
- *** Note: Accepted penalties that carry a loss of down will no longer extend the half*****

RULE 5. SCREENING, RUSHING, AND CONTACT

A. SCREENING AND RUSHING

1. Screen blocking is legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact with him/her.
2. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hands or arms to break a fall or to retain his/her balance.
3. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this Rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A rusher may use his/her hands or arms to break a fall or retain his/her balance.
4. These actions are judged similarly to the block/charge call in basketball.
5. Team Players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended. Officials are not responsible for retrieving the ball. The offensive team may take the ball to the huddle after each play.

RULE 6. SCORING

A. Point Value

1. Touchdown 6 points
2. Safety 2 points
3. Try:
 - 1 point from 3 yards
 - 2 points from 10 yards
 - 3 points from 20 yards

NOTE: The player scoring must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player.

NOTE: Once B secures possession of the ball during a Try the Try is over.

NOTE: If a touchdown is scored on the last timed down of the 4th period, the Try must be attempted during Pool Play because it can affect playoff qualifying, unless the Mercy Rule is applied.

RULE 7. PROTESTS AND FORFEITS

- A. **Rule Interpretations:** Protests involving rule interpretations will be considered on the field immediately following the incident in question. The game is suspended and the Championships Tournament Committee will be called to the game site. Play should not continue until the committee renders a final decision. **NOTE:** If a team continues to play without calling the Championships Tournament Committee to the game site, then that team forfeits its right to a protest.
- B. **A team wishing to protest will be charged with a timeout. If the protest is ruled invalid the team will lose its timeout. If the protest is valid the timeout will be charged to the officials. If a team has no timeouts remaining and wishes to protest they may do so, however, they will be charged with a 5 yard delay of game penalty if the protest is invalid.**
- C. **Player Eligibility:** Protests concerning player eligibility must be made to the site supervisor before the game. The protest will be ruled on by the Championships Tournament Committee.

- D. Judgment Calls: Questions about an official's judgment are not valid grounds for a protest. These protests will be heard, however, judgment calls will not be overturned.
- E. **Forfeited Game:** Game time is forfeit time. **The score of a forfeited game shall be: Offended Team-1, Opponent-0. If the offended team is ahead at the time of the forfeit, the score stands.**

CO-REC FOOTBALL RULES SUMMARY

In addition to the above mentioned rules, the following rules will apply to all Co-Rec games:

1. **The Game.** 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. Six players, 3 men and 3 women, 4 men and 2 women, or 4 women and 2 men, are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with less than 6 players as long as the team has a chance to win. NOTE: If in doubt, continue the game. *Penalty:* Illegal Participation, 10 yards (S28).
2. **The Ball.** The regular, intermediate, youth or junior size football shall be used.
3. **Minimum Line Players.** The offensive team must have at least 1 player on their scrimmage line at the snap. *Penalty:* Illegal Formation, 5 yards (S19).
4. **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 has been beyond the Team A or K scrimmage line; during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession. *Penalty:* Illegal Advancement, 5 yards from the previous spot (S19).
5. **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, or female to male. A legal forward pass caught jointly by male and female teammates is considered a female reception. *Penalty:* Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed legal forward pass is released, and a loss of down. (S35 and S9). Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is “open” or “closed.”
6. **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) on either an “open” or “closed” play, and any Team A male runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass. *Penalty:* Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot of the pass and loss of down (S35 and S9).
7. **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.
8. **Mercy Rule.** If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game shall end at that point.
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, prior to a change of possession, the point value is 9.