Ball State University Intramural Flag Football Rules

Eligibility

To participate in Ball State University Intramural Sports, you must:
- Be a currently enrolled student with a valid and current Ball State University ID Card.
- Be a current Ball State University faculty or staff member with a valid ID Card.
- Be a Ball State University Rec Cardholder with a valid current Rec Card.
- No Burris or Indiana Academy Student may participate in the intramural sports program.
- Participation in intramural sports may be limited due to the following constraints:
  - Medical red shirts, as designated by the NCAA, cannot participate within intramural sports at any time.
  - If you are currently participating (includes practicing/playing) with an intercollegiate athletic team, you may NOT participate in the “associated sport” (see the Intramural Sports Policies and Procedures at www.bsu.edu/recreation/intramurals) within intramural sports. Once you cease your affiliation with the intercollegiate athletic team, you may become eligible to play intramural sports in the “associated sport.” Once your eligibility ends and you have been removed from that team’s active roster, you may participate within an associated sport in intramural sports. The Athletic Department Compliance Office to the NCAA reviews all eligibility designations and remains in full contact with this office.
  - ONLY TWO registered sport club team members may participate on an intramural sports team in an “associated sport” relating to their club sport.

Forfeits

- A forfeit will be assessed under three conditions:
  - If zero members of a team do not show up within ten (10) minutes of a scheduled event. Teams should not see this as an opportunity to be late. For every minute late, the team with the minimum amount of players or more will receive two (2) points for a maximum of twenty (20) points.
  - A game that ends in result of a team’s unsportsmanlike behavior (i.e. 3 unsportsmanlike technical in a basketball game) will be scored a forfeit against the team that behaved inappropriately.
  - If a team is found to have an ineligible player on their roster.
- A team that forfeits twice in league play will not be eligible for the playoffs.

Protests

Invariably, disagreements may arise due to knowledge of rules and procedures. A system has been set aside for participants to “protest” two items within an intramural sports activity. Thus, there are only TWO times that you can file a protest:
• An eligibility concern
• A misinterpretation of a published procedure or rule.
  o A protest **CAN NEVER** be filed on the judgment call(s) of an official**

If a team feels that one or both of the following have happened, a team must do the following:
• Call a time out and request a protest.
• A protest is considered valid only at the time that the discrepancy has taken place. For eligibility protests, you can only protest between the start and completion of a game. For a rule misinterpretation, a team must signify their intent to protest at the exact time. If subsequent play has started before the protest is signified, it’s too late to protest.
• If a protest is deemed invalid or the official’s rule interpretation is correct, the protesting team will be charged one (1) time out.
• If a protest is signified in time, the protesting team’s captain must make themselves available to file a protest form with the on-site intramural sports supervisor. The protest must be filed on the PARTICIPATION PROTEST FORM to be considered valid. This procedure will take a few minutes, as there is important information from participants, officials, and staff. The game will stop during this time and will resume when the proper paperwork is complete.
• The intramural sports supervisor will document all necessary information about the protest and game conditions.
• The game will continue when all paperwork is completed.

**Sportsmanship Ratings**

Each team will be awarded a sportsmanship rating following each game. This rating will be on a scale of 1 to 4, one being the worst sportsmanship and 4 being the best. Teams must maintain a 3.0 sportsmanship rating throughout the regular season to be able to play in the playoffs. If a team’s sportsmanship is below a 3.0 they must meet with the Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports to discuss their eligibility for the playoffs.

**Players**

Each team may have a maximum of seven (7) players on the field at one (1) time. A team may begin a game with a minimum of five (5) players.
• All players must check in using a valid Ball State University issued ID.
• 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 is snapped.
• All substitutes must enter the field from their sideline and all replaced players must leave the field on their sideline.

**Captains**

Each team shall designate to the Referee the team captain or captains. The captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team. The team captain is responsible for all information contained in the Intramural Football Rules.

**Equipment**

• Recreation Services will provide balls, flags, and various colored pennies for all players and teams.
• Each player must wear one flag belt at the waistline with three permanent flags, one on each side and one in the center of the back.
Teams are required to wear the same colored shirts that contrast with the opponents. If teams cannot provide their own shirts, they may use the provided pennies. Shirts/jerseys/pennies may not be tied in a manner that creates any type of knot.

All equipment is subject to the approval of the Intramural Staff on duty.

- Players must wear shoes. Soccer / football type cleats, tennis, or Astroturf shoes are legal. All cleats must be less than 1/2 inch. No sandals, boots, or metal/sharp plastic cleats will be allowed.
- Players may NOT wear pads/braces above the waist, casts/splints at any time, baseball caps or bandanas with knots.
- Players MAY wear kneepads, gloves, padded knee braces, headbands, knit caps, and plastic sunglasses.
- Players MUST wear athletic apparel with NO exposed metal, NO belt loops, & NO pockets.
- Players may not wear any exposed jewelry of any type. Medical alert bracelets and necklaces are allowed only when covered and held down.

The Playing Field

- Respective lines to gain (1st down) for each team in order are the 20, 40, and 20 yard lines. The point of the ball determines if it crosses the line. Hash marks will divide the width of the field into thirds, 15 yards each. When the spot of the ball is between the hash mark and sideline, the ball will be put in play on the hash mark creating a wide and short side. When the spot of the ball is between the hash marks, the ball will be put in play at the spot the run ended. The side lines and end lines are out of bounds. Possession and control, as well as one (1) foot in bounds are required for a legal catch. Players, coaches, and fans shall stay in between the 20 yard lines at all times. Two ball spotters (small plastic cones) will be used during play. The ORANGE cone marks the offensive scrimmage line; the YELLOW cone marks the defensive line. The ball spotters will always be one yard apart. After a score, or after the end of the 1st period, the offense will always begin their drive at their own 14 yd line unless penalties change the spot of the ball.

Playing the Game

- **Start of Game**
  - The game shall begin with a captain’s meeting and coin toss. The team winning the coin toss may choose to defer their option to the second half or choose from the following two (2) options:
    1. Select to play offense or defense first.
    2. Select which end they would like to defend.
  - The team losing the coin toss shall exercise the remaining option.

- **Timing**
  - The game shall consist of two (2) 20-minute halves.
  - The clock shall stop in the last two (2) minutes of the first and second halves. Otherwise, the clock will run continuously barring timeouts.
  - Each team is permitted two (2) timeouts per half and one (1) additional timeout during the entire tiebreaker (during playoffs ONLY). Timeouts do NOT carry over.
  - Tie breakers are to only be used in the playoffs. During the regular season, all ties will remain as such.

- **Scoring**
  - A touchdown is scored when the ball breaks the vertical plane of the opponent’s goal line. A touchdown is worth six (6) points.
After a team scores a touchdown, they will have the option of trying a one (1), two (2), or three (3) point conversion. A try is good when the ball breaks the vertical plane of the opponent’s goal line.

Each try will be from the following distances and the captain MUST declare their choice to the referee:

1. Try for one (1) will be from the 3-yard line.
2. Try for two (2) will be from the 10-yard line.
3. Try for three (3) will be from the 20-yard line.
4. If a live ball is recovered by the defense during a try, and they run the ball across the opponent’s goal line, they are awarded three (3) points.

A safety is scored when the ball becomes dead in a team’s own end zone while the team is in possession of the ball or has caused the ball to become dead in its end zone. A safety is also scored when the team in possession of the ball incurs a penalty which is to be enforced from behind the goal line. A safety is worth two (2) points.

**Mercy Rule**

- If a team is ahead by 19 or more points with two (2) minutes or less remaining in the second half, the game shall be over.
- If a team is ahead by 40 or more at any point in the second half (including halftime) then the contest is over.

**Ball In Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds**

- **Ball in Play**
  - The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds of the referee sounding the ready for play whistle.
  - Penalty: Delay of game, five (5) yards.

- **Ball is Declared Dead When:**
  - A forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
  - A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground.
  - A runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player.
  - A runner is legally touched with one (1) hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm, once the flag belt is no longer attached.
  - A snap hits the ground.
  - A muff of a kickoff or protected scrimmage kick strikes the ground.
  - The passer is deflagged before releasing the ball.
  - An official has inadvertently blown their whistle. (Repeat Down)
  - A fumble or backward pass hits the ground. The team in control of the ball prior to the fumble or backward pass will maintain possession, unless it was fourth down and the offense did not reach the goal line to gain.
  - ***If a player uses the ball as a crutch to keep themselves from falling to the ground, the play is LIVE until one of the above occur. The play would be dead if the player lost the ball in the act of using it as a crutch.

- **Out of Bounds**
  - A ball in player possession is out of bounds when either the ball or any part of the runner touches the ground or anything else, except a player or game official, which is on or outside a boundary line. If the runner inbounds, bumps into, or is touched by a player or an official on the sidelines out of bounds, the ball is still in play.

**Zone Line-to-Gain, Number of Downs**

- **Zone Line-to-Gain**
  - Each zone is 20 yards in length.
  - The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone (next field marker) in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain.
• In such case, the original zone line-to-gain shall be maintained.
  ▪ The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.
  
  o Number of Downs
  ▪ The offense shall have four (4) downs to reach the zone line-to-gain.

• Kicking the Ball
  o Punt
    ▪ The kick must be executed behind the scrimmage line within a reasonable time.
    ▪ Neither team may cross the scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.
    ▪ There are no quick kicks. All punts must be announced to the referee.
    ▪ The receiving team may advance balls kicked into the end zone.
    ▪ If a punt goes out of bounds, the official will mark the spot and teams will change possession.

• Snapping, Handing and Passing the Ball
  o The Scrimmage Line
    ▪ Snapping - the snap does not have to be between the snapper's legs. The player receiving the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the scrimmage line.
      • Penalty: Illegal Snap, five (5) yards from the previous spot.
    ▪ During the snap, the men's or women's offensive team must have at least four (4) players on their scrimmage line within one (1) yard of the scrimmage line.
      • Penalty: Illegal Formation, five (5) yards from the previous spot.
    ▪ No player of the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start is any movement simulating the start of a play.
      • Penalty: False Start, five (5) yards from the previous spot.
    ▪ Encroachment - After the snapper has touched the ball, it is encroachment for any defensive player to break the plane of his/her scrimmage line, except the snapper's right to be over the ball.
      • Penalty: Encroachment, five (5) yards from the previous spot.
    ▪ Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after the scrimmage down. The snapper will bring the ball from the huddle to the scrimmage line (first ball spotter-orange). A towel may be used to help keep the ball dry and placed under the ball.
    ▪ All offensive players must be motionless for one (1) second preceding the snap. After all players are set, a player moving parallel to or away from the scrimmage line is legal.
      • Penalty: Illegal motion, five (5) yards from the previous spot.
    ▪ An offensive player that moves or shifts (other than going legally in motion) must stop for one (1) second before the snap.
      • Penalty: Illegal Shift, five (5) yards from the previous spot.
  o Handing the Ball
    ▪ Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
  o Forward Pass
    ▪ All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Only one (1) legal forward pass per down is allowed.
  o A Forward Pass is Illegal
    ▪ If the passer’s foot is beyond Team A’s scrimmage line (first ball spotter orange) when the ball leaves his/her hand.
    ▪ If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
    ▪ If intentionally grounded to save loss of yardage.
    ▪ If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass.
    ▪ If it is the second forward pass in that down.
- Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, five (5) yards, spot of the pass or loss of down, if prior to possession change.
  - Interference
    - After the ball is snapped and until it has been touched, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the offensive scrimmage line when the legal forward pass crosses the offensive scrimmage line (orange ball spotter).
      - Penalty: Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards, previous spot, or loss of down.
    - After a legal forward pass is released by the passer and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond Team A’s scrimmage line while the ball is in flight which crosses Team A’s scrimmage line.
      - Penalty: Defensive Pass Interference, ten (10) yards, previous spot or automatic first down.
  - If opposing players catch a pass simultaneously, the ball becomes dead, is considered a completed pass, and belongs to the offensive team.

- Enforcement of Penalties
  - Basic Spot
    - For loose ball plays the basic spot of enforcement is the Previous Spot.
      - Punt, excluding post scrimmage kick fouls
      - Legal forward pass
      - Backward pass, including the snap or fumble made by A-1 from on or behind his/her scrimmage line
      - The run or runs which precedes such legal pass, punt or fumble
      - Punts (before possession is gained) basic enforcement spot is previous spot (where ball was kicked from).
      - On all running plays the basic enforcement spot is from the end of the run.
      - All fouls are marked off from the basic enforcement spot except an offensive foul behind the basic enforcement spot that becomes a spot foul.
      - Live ball fouls committed by either team after Team B gains possession during a try or in overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot. All dead-ball fouls are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

- Yardage for Penalties
  - Loss of Five (5) Yards
    - Delay of game (dead-ball foul)
    - False start (dead-ball foul)
    - Encroachment (dead-ball foul)
    - Illegal snap (dead-ball foul)
    - Offensive player leaving the field on the wrong side (dead-ball foul)
    - Illegal procedure
    - Illegal formation
    - Illegal motion
    - Illegal shift
    - Player receiving snap within two (2) yards of scrimmage line
    - Illegal forward pass (loss of down, if by Team A)
    - Intentional grounding (loss of down)
    - Illegal substitution
    - Aiding runner by teammates
    - Male advancing ball through the neutral zone
    - Two (2) consecutive male-to-male forward pass completions (loss of down)
    - Male catches pass and runs beyond scrimmage line (loss of down)
    - Required equipment worn illegally
- Offensive player not within 15 yards of the ball once the ready for play whistle is blown, the player may line up outside the 15-yard zone (5 yards from sideline rule)
- Player out-of-bounds when ball is snapped
- Intentionally throwing a backward pass or fumble out-of-bounds (loss of down)
  - Loss of 10 Yards
    - Illegal contact
    - Eligibility lost by going out of bounds and participating in the play
    - Offensive pass interference (loss of down)
    - Defensive pass interference (automatic first down)
    - Stiff arm
    - Flag guarding
    - Illegal flag belt removal
    - Personal foul
    - Roughing the passer (automatic first down)
    - Illegally secured flag belt on touchdown (Team A - loss of down, Team B automatic first down and player disqualified)
    - Illegal participation
    - Illegal kicking (treated as a fumble)
    - Illegal stripping
    - Unsportsmanlike conduct (players, coaches, substitutes, or others)
    - Illegal player equipment
    - Quick kick
    - Spiking, kicking or throwing ball during dead ball
    - Receipt of an unsportsmanlike penalty
    - Two (2) or more encroachment fouls during the interval between downs
    - Hurdle any player
    - Kick-catch interference
    - NOTE: if any of the above infractions are deemed “flagrant,” the player will be disqualified.

### Sportsmanship Policies

This portion of the document is designed to be a summary of the Sportsmanship Policy for Intramural Sports. Please refer to the Intramural Policies and Procedures Manual for a complete version of this policy.

- **No Player, Coach, or Team Follower Shall:**
  - Use foul or derogatory language, threaten, or verbally abuse any other participant or intramural sports employee before, during, or after the game. This includes trash talk.
  - Participate in a game for which he/she is ineligible.
  - Argue or talk back to the game official.
  - Intentionally strike, push, or trip another person. Fighting is prohibited.
  - Mistreat the facility, equipment, or supplies of Ball State University.

- **Warning/Ejection**
  - A warning/ejection system will be used to enforce the sportsmanship policy. Individuals will be issued a warning for unsporting behavior. A second penalty will result in an ejection. Ejections may be issued without warnings in specific situations, including all those that involve fighting.

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Ball State University ~ Office of Recreation Services  
[www.bsu.edu/recreation/intramurals](http://www.bsu.edu/recreation/intramurals) ~ SRWC 201A ~ 765-285-1753
Flag Football

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- Team captains are responsible for the conduct of their players, sidelines and spectators.
- Fighting is defined as a participant intentionally striking, pushing, slapping, punching, elbowing, tackling or committing any other malicious act toward any other person. Fighting is never permitted during intramural sports contests. Participants who fight will be ejected immediately and suspended from all further participation until the outcome of a disciplinary action meeting with the Office of Recreation Services Staff.

**Sportsmanship Ratings**

- Each team will be awarded a sportsmanship rating following each game. This rating will be on a scale of 1 to 4, one being the worst sportsmanship and 4 being the best. Teams must maintain a 3.0 sportsmanship rating throughout the regular season to be able to play in the playoffs. If a team’s sportsmanship is below a 3.0 they must meet with the Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports to discuss their eligibility for the playoffs.

**Co-Ed Modifications**

- A team shall play with a maximum of four (4) females and four (4) males at a time on the field. A minimum of five (5) players is required to begin a game. Female / male ratios must be within one (1), i.e. 2:3, 3:3, 3:4, and 4:4.
- If a female throws, catches or runs the ball across the goal line for a touchdown, the touchdown shall be worth nine (9) points.
- 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. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is "open" or "closed."
  - Open - males are eligible to catch a pass.
  - Closed - male to male forward pass completions are illegal. This rule applies to the try.
  - One (1) foot inbounds is needed for a legal reception.
  - If officials erroneously indicate open/closed play, Team A can either replay or take result of the play.
- **Male Runner**
  - A male runner cannot advance the ball through the scrimmage line.
  - There are no restrictions concerning runs by a female.
  - Once the line of scrimmage has been legally penetrated, all advancement restrictions are eliminated (i.e., a female runner may advance beyond the line and then pitch to a male who is still behind the line and he may advance with no restriction.)
  - After a change of team possession any male runner may advance the ball without restriction, as in an interception or punt return.

**Overtime Procedures**

- There will be only one coin toss. The winning captain will have choice of offense of defense. Unless moved by penalty, each team will start 1st and goal from the opposing team’s 20 yard line. The offensive team will have 4 downs to score a touchdown. One overtime period consists of 4 downs and a point after attempt if necessary for each team. If the score is still tied after one period, play will proceed to a
second period or as many as are needed to declare a winner. If the first team with the ball scores, the second team will then have 4 down in which to tie the score. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return it for a touchdown, the series is over and they will receive the ball on the opponent’s 20 yard line. Each team is entitled to only one time-out during the entire overtime.

**Playoffs**

- Playoff seedings will be determined by total win/loss percentage, head to head results, total points allowed, and total points scored.
- Teams that forfeit once during regular season will not be eligible for playoffs. Also, a team that defaults two (2) or more times will not be eligible for playoffs.
- Winning teams for each division will receive an Intramural Sports “Championship T-shirt”.

These rules are not meant to be all-inclusive. It is the team captain’s responsibility to consult the Office of Recreation services for clarification on any of these rules.