

Intramural Flag Football Official Rules

Spirit of the Game: Carleton University Intramural Flag Football League relies upon a spirit of sportsmanship that places the responsibility for fair play on the player. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect among competitors, adherence to the agreed upon rules or the basic joy of play. Protection of these vital elements serves to eliminate unsportsmanlike conduct from the football field. Actions such as taunting opposing players, dangerous aggression, belligerent intimidation, intentional infractions or other "win-at-all costs" behaviour, are contrary to the spirit of the game and must be avoided by all players.

1. Equipment/Score Sheets:

- i. The on-site staff member will bring the equipment to the field. This includes cones or bean bags to mark the line of scrimmage and rush, flags and one football per field.
- ii. Cleats are allowed but metal spikes are not permitted.
- iii. Please refrain from wearing shorts with pockets as players can seriously hurt their hands when going for the flag.
- iv. Each team must submit their roster on the opening day to the on-site staff member and make any additions throughout the season.
- v. It is the responsibility of both team captains to submit the score of the game to the on-site staff immediately following the game.
- vi. Each convener has a basic first aid kit (ice packs, band aids and tensors) stored in the convener's equipment bag. The convener is the person who blows the whistle to start the game.

2. Game Time/Default:

- i. Please arrive 15 minutes early to warm up and start your games on time. Do not go on the field if another game is being played.
- ii. A default will occur if any team cannot field a squad 10 minutes after the official start time.
- iii. Games are played 7 vs 7 but a team can play with a minimum of 5 people, in the coed division, minimum of 2 females on the field. The opposing team captain may waive the minimum player requirement AND have the results of the match COUNT towards the standings. Agreeing that the results of the match COUNT must be made clear prior to the start of play by the team captains. Agreeing to play does not infer that the match counts unless this is explicitly decided by the opposing team captain.
- iv. The games begin right at 12:05, 1:05 or 2:05.
- v. If teams have the same number of points (winning percentage is to be used instead of points in the event that teams have played an unequal number of games) at the end of the season, the tiebreaker is as follows:

- a. Head to head (if the two teams tied played each other, the winner of the game places higher)
 - b. Points differential
 - c. Points scored
 - d. Points against
 - e. Flip a coin
- vi. **Playoff Eligibility:** Each player must play at least half of the regular season games in order to be able to play in the playoffs, unless it is cleared with the league convener. This prohibits teams from adding "ringers" to their teams for the playoffs.

3. General Rules:

- i. Captains do a rock, paper, scissor game to decide who kicks and who receives.
- ii. The kicking team will kick-off from their own goal line. On all kick-offs, the kicking team must be situated behind the kicker. All players on the receiving team must be on their own side of midfield. All kicks are to be a 'punt' style. If the ball is kicked out of bounds before it touches the ground on either a punt or a kick-off, the offensive gains possession. The offense will then start their drive at either 10 yards back from the half line in the centre or from where the football first goes out of bounds. Please note there is NOT an option to ask for a re-kick. If the ball is kicked and it lands in bounds but bounces out of bounds, it is just played at the point where it crossed the out of bounds line in the centre of the field or at the 1 yard line (if it rolls out of the end zone).
- iii. If the ball is dropped on a kick off, it is considered a fumble and the ball is dead and remains in the receiving team's possession. On a kickoff, if the ball bounces without touching anyone then a receiving player may pick up the ball and run.
- iv. If a player (or players) of the kicking team reaches the ball before any member of the receiving team, then the kicking team's player(s) cannot come within 3 yards of the ball before it is touched by a player from the receiving team.
- v. Lateral passes (both over and underhand) are allowed on the kick off and during offensive plays (provided the lateral is passed backwards). If the lateral pass is forwards, the play is dead where the pass was made.
- vi. Each offensive play starts at the line of scrimmage in the center of the field. The ball MUST be in contact with the beanbag prior to the "snap" - i.e. a play CANNOT be started with the ball in the hands of the quarterback or in the huddle. The centre must snap the ball between legs to the quarterback who is at least 5 yards away.
- vii. An offensive player CAN turn their body from side to side, and 360 spins are permitted.
- viii. Offensive players cannot protect, cover, hide or block their flag. If the person with the ball blocks the defender's hand from grabbing their flag, the play is dead where the block occurred.

- ix. After each play, players should check and make sure their flags are on their hips. The flags must be on top of all clothing. For safety reasons, shirts must be tucked in, especially if a loose, baggy shirt is being worn. Players are asked not to wear shorts with pockets. This is to avoid hands being caught in the pocket. If a flag of an offensive player with the ball inadvertently falls off, the play is stopped at that location with no re-down. An offensive player that is missing a flag is not an eligible receiver/carrier. If the flag of a defensive player falls off, that player may still play defensively, but is not eligible to make interceptions. If an interception is made, and the missing flag is noticed after the fact, the throw is regarded as an incomplete pass and the offensive team retains possession.
- x. Fumbles are dead balls and are taken from the spot of the fumble and remain in the possession of the offense. Defensive players can not grab or hit the ball in order to create a fumble. Defensive players must only grab for the flag.
- xi. An offensive player can dive or jump to catch a ball, but once in possession, he/she cannot leave their feet at any time. This includes all forms of diving and jumping. If the ball carrier breaks this rule, the play is dead at the point where the player stood before the infraction. A juke or side-step is not considered a jump.
- xii. Defensive players may not create an unsafe play by stepping in front of the ball carrier or block a running lane. As well, offensive players should not run with their head down in an attempt to run through the defenders. It is inevitable that incidental contact will happen, but players should not be run over. Please play safe.
- xiii. If the offensive team is flagged in their own end zone, the down is complete and the next play shall be scrimmaged from the one yard line; no points are awarded to the defense.
- xiv. Minor NFL or CFL rules not stated will not apply. For example: it is NOT a foul if a defensive player has his/her back to the ball and inadvertently blocks a pass with their arms or back of their head.
- xv. A defensive player cannot intentionally put their hands in front of the face of the receiver to block their vision. If the defense blocks a pass, but in doing so physically interferes with the intended receiver, (including hands close to the face of the receiver) it should be deemed a catch at the point of interference and a first down. This is if it is uncontested by the defense, only. Slight incidental contact should not be considered interference in most cases. If contested by the defense, it is a re-down at the original line of scrimmage. If the interference occurs in the end zone and is uncontested, the ball goes to the goal line and it becomes a first down.

4. Picks/Crossing Patterns

- i. Teams MUST AVOID running pick plays (intentional or not), which often involve teams on offense running crossing pass patterns.
- ii. No offensive player may move in such a manner to cause a defensive player guarding a receiver to be obstructed by another player. Obstruction may be the result of contact with, or the need to avoid, the offending player. The obstructed defensive player must be within three meters of the receiver in order for it to be a "pick". In the event of a pick: the obstructed player must immediately call "pick" loudly. A pick results in a re-down.

5. Blocking

- i. Offensive players may not block or intentionally obstruct any defensive players. In the event of a block, the ball is dead where the infraction occurred.
- ii. An offensive player is entitled to his/her stationary position and physical contact is to be avoided. On a kick off, running play or after a receiver has caught the ball, the offensive players without the ball must not block for the runner. They must either stand still or get behind the runner for a lateral pass. The runner is allowed to use the stationary players as blocks, as long as they were ahead of them before they caught the ball and do not move during the play. If an offensive player without the ball (that is, within 3 meters of the ball carrier), moves in such a way as to create a pick, then the "pick" rules apply.

6. First point of contact

- i. A receiver is determined to be "in" or "out" based on their first point of contact with the ground. If a player lands first with one foot in bounds and the other foot touches down out of bounds, it IS a fair catch. But, the play ends where they touched the out of bounds line. If a player catches the ball but is straddling or lands straddling the sideline, it is NOT a catch. Only a ONE foot landing is allowed - as long as that foot touches down in bounds first.
- ii. When a player carrying the ball slips or falls and any part of his/her body touches the ground (excluding the hand), the play is dead and the defense does not have to remove a flag for the play to stop.

7. Scoring

- i. Six points are scored when a player catches any legal pass or runs the ball into the defensive end zone prior to having one of their flags stripped. Please note that it is not enough to have the "plain of the end zone" broken by the ball - to score a player must step over the line in the end zone.

- ii. The offensive team has three downs to get to half or to the end zone once the line of scrimmage is past the midfield.
- iii. The offensive team may punt on the 3rd down only and need to notify the defense of their intentions to do so. Otherwise, they must pass or run the ball. No fake punts.
- iv. Rushers must line up 6 yards from the line of scrimmage before rushing. No steamboats are required. Quarterback may run at any time and does not have to wait to be rushed.
- v. Teams receive 6 points for a touchdown. Teams can select to have 1 point convert from the 5 yard line or to attempt a 2 point convert taken from the 10 yard line. No kicking for converts. After each touchdown, teams switch sides and kick off (as there is no halftime in the game).
- vi. The offense has 30 seconds to start the next play. It is not acceptable to run down the clock with an unnecessarily long huddle.

8. Ending the Game

- i. When the whistle blows with 5 minutes left to go, there are 4 plays left in the game (converts and kickoffs do not count in the four plays).
- ii. Games in the regular season can end in a tie. In the playoffs, if a game is tied at the end of regulation time, the game continues until a team has scored a touchdown to break the tie (i.e. play continues with the current line of scrimmage, the current down count and with the current team in possession of the ball).
- iii. Teams can call one (1) minute time-out per game.
- iv. Only NFL or CFL regulation balls may be used for the games. No junior sizes permitted.

9. Discrepancies:

- i. All games are self officiated (no referees), therefore, teams are required to call their OWN violations. They are expected to be honest and keep a high level of sportsmanship and safety at all times. If you feel your opponent is not being accountable, your team captain may politely intervene to discuss rules called or uncalled. We rely on your spirit of sportsmanship and honesty to keep the matches pleasant for all. If there is a dispute and an agreement cannot be reached, don't waste time arguing the play - simply redo the down.

10. Weather Conditions

- i. Games are played rain or shine (but not during lightning and not if the city closes the fields). See cancellation policy below.
- ii. Always show up to the game even if it's raining as the weather can change very quickly. At the start of the game the captains are to make the decision if the games are to be

cancelled. If lightning cancels any game, the rest of the games are cancelled for the night.

- iii. **LIGHTNING POLICY:** If thunder is heard within 30 seconds of seeing lightning, games will be postponed. All participants must leave the playing area and seek shelter in a building or an automobile. Never stand under trees, in an open field or under an umbrella. Games will resume 30 minutes after the thunder and lightning have moved away. If thunder and lightning are still present 30 minutes after, the game will be cancelled and the score counts as it was when the game was stopped. Halfway point of the game must be reached (20 minutes) in order for the game to count towards the league standings.
- iv. **CANCELLATION POLICY:** In the event that games are cancelled due to field closures, the following policy will be applied:
 - First Cancellation: Games are not rescheduled or refunded
 - Second Cancellation: Games will be rescheduled as extra games on the night that they play or on another available date. If neither of these scenarios are viable, a partial team credit will be applied in the following season.
 - Third Cancellation or more: Games will be rescheduled as extra games on the night that they play or on another available date. If neither of these scenarios are viable, a partial team credit will be applied in the following season.

11. Abuse/Alcohol:

- i. Any abuse, whether it be physical, sexual or mental is not acceptable in any manner. If this kind of abuse is reported, the player or team will receive a verbal warning. If a second incident occurs, the player or team will be asked to leave the league or tournament without refund. Teams are responsible for other teammates' actions; as a teammate, please encourage good sportsmanship at all times. Carleton University Athletics reserves the right to eject a player or team without a warning and without a refund. The Carleton Intramural Flag Football is to be enjoyable and fun for everyone, let's keep it that way.
- ii. Alcohol is not permitted at any game or event, offenders will be asked to leave the league without refund. Playing while intoxicated is prohibited.