



FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

I. All captains are responsible for:

- a. All team fees are turned in before registration deadlines
- b. All players must be added to the roster and players must sign a waiver before playing
- c. Only allowing players on the field who are listed on the roster. No roster changes can be made after the third game.

II. Number of players and league type description:

- a. Each team's roster can have between 6-15 players
- b. All teams will consist of 6 players on the field and must be 18 years or older.
- c. Teams may start with 6 players; teams may play only 4 if injury or disqualification of a team member occurs.
- d. The bench area is restricted to only players on the roster and designated coaches listed on the roster.

III. Equipment Rules

- a. Teams are permitted to use their ball but it must be approved by officials. All games will be played with Stars Indoor Sports flags or flags approved by officials.
- b. No baseball caps are permitted during play
- c. No cleats are permitted
- d. Jewelry cannot be worn during gameplay. This includes and is not limited to; watches, earrings, rings, and necklaces.
- e. All players must wear pants or shorts without belt loops, exposed drawstrings, exposed knots, and pockets.
- f. Teams must wear matching shirts.
- g. Gloves are allowed.
- h. Illegal optional equipment: Pads and/or braces that consist of metal, plastic, or any material deemed unsafe are prohibited. Towels may be attached at the player's waist or side but cannot obstruct the flags in any way.

IV. Player Eligibility

- a. All players on a team must be listed on the roster before the first game. Any team may add a player before the beginning of the third game. Roster changes are not allowed after the beginning of the third game.
- b. The team deposit must be paid before the first game. All team fees must be paid in full before the second game for the team and players to be considered eligible.
- c. Any team found to have a player(s) who have falsified or played under an assumed name will have to forfeit the game in which the infraction was noticed and could be subject to removal from the league without a refund of team fees for that session.

- d. Rosters may be challenged during the game. If your team would like to challenge the roster of an opponent, your team captain and/or coach must inform the referee of this either before the start of the game or before the beginning of the second half. Roster checks will not be allowed once the second half begins. The game will be stopped, but not the clock. A Stars Indoor Sports staff member will enter the field and roster-check both teams. Teams will not receive the results of the roster check immediately. The results of the roster check will be communicated to team captains within 48 hours of the game by the Sports Director. Any players present who are not on either team's roster will result in a forfeit loss for that team and potential suspension or removal of that team from the league.

V. Periods, Length of Game, Substitutions & Time-Outs:

- a. Each game will consist of (2) 22-minute halves with a 1-minute halftime period. There will be a running clock throughout the game.
- b. Players may substitute freely between downs. Each substitute must be in uniform, ready to play, and with flags in position during the time of substitution. **Penalty:** illegal substitution, 5 yards.
- c. There must only be 5 people on the field before the snap of the ball. **Penalty:** 1 verbal warning, any occurrence thereafter 5 yards.
- d. All doors to the benches must be latched shut before the start of each play. **Penalty:** 1 verbal warning, any occurrence thereafter, illegal procedure, 5 yards.
- e. Each team will receive (1) 30-second time-out per half; time-outs do not carry over into the second half. Any time out will stop the clock. All time-outs must be clearly communicated to the referee before the time-out is taken. Granting time-outs is at the discretion of the referee.

VI. Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-of-Bounds

- a. Possession begins at the 10-yard line.
- b. The offense has 20 seconds to start the play. The 20-second play clock will begin at the official's discretion by blowing the whistle and announcing "20 seconds", at this time, the offense is permitted to snap the ball. **Penalty:** A dead-ball foul, delay of game, 5 yards.
- c. If a team continues to delay the game after the first delay-of-the-game penalty, the next infraction will result in loss of down, with the third infraction resulting in loss of possession.
- d. Ball is declared dead when:
 - 1. A forward pass is incomplete.
 - 2. A backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground. In case of a fumble, the ball becomes dead at the point where it touches the ground. The ball goes to the team that had the last possession. The spot where the ball touches the ground becomes the new line of scrimmage. The offense cannot advance a fumble; the ball will be placed where the ball was fumbled.
 - 3. A runner has her/his flag belt removed.
 - 4. A snap hits the ground.
 - 5. The passer is de-flagged before releasing the football.
 - 6. **Out of Bounds:** All boards/glass will be considered as defining out-of-bounds. If the

ball carrier touches the boards/glass, the play will be blown dead. Any offensive or defensive player without the ball may step out of bounds and be eligible to come back in bounds as an eligible player. Any player who makes contact with the sideboards is out of bounds. Players must have 1 foot in bounds and possession of the ball for the ball to be considered a catch. *Any defensive player who pushes, tackles, trips, or any unsafe behavior near the boards will receive an unsportsmanlike penalty resulting in an automatic first down for the offense and possible ejection for the responsible player(s). Any offensive player who commits similar actions will result in a loss of possession and possible ejection.*

7. Any forward pass that comes in direct or indirect contact with the ceiling or side netting will remain a live ball until the ball makes contact with the ground or sideboards

8. Any forward pass that comes in direct or indirect contact with sideboards along the perimeter of the field will be considered incomplete/dead ball. Any other occurrence when the flag belt is removed or falls off the ball carrier.

e. The ball will be spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

VII. Series of Downs, Number of Downs:

a. There will be (1) possibility for a first down. The center line is the first down line. b. Each team has (4) downs to try and advance past the first down or the goal line. Teams may elect to pass-punt on 4th down.

VIII. Kicking the Ball (Pass-Punt):

a. A team may elect to punt the ball on 4th down. All pass punts must be announced to the referee. Any offensive player may notify the referee of the pass or punt. There are no fake pass-punts allowed; once a team has decided to pass-punt, they must execute the punt, and they must release the ball downfield within 10 seconds of the snap. ***Once the team has broken the huddle and not declared a punt, it will be assumed the offensive team is going for the first down. The team cannot change the declaration unless a time-out is called. A penalty does not allow the team to change the declaration.***

b. The ball will be down at the spot if the pass-punt goes out-of-bounds, or touches the ground or the side boards.

c. The ball will be ruled a touchback if the pass-punt enters the end zone. d. The pass-punt must be executed behind the line of scrimmage within the 20-second play clock.

e. The defense cannot attempt to de-flag the pass-punter, i.e., no rushing the kicker. **Penalty:** Illegal procedure, 5 yards.

IX. Snapping, Passing, and Handing of Ball:

a. Snapping: The ball must be snapped between the center's legs. The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the center. **Penalty:** *Illegal Procedure, 5 yards.* b.

During the snap, teams are required to have at least 3 players on the line of scrimmage.

Penalty: Illegal Procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.

c. No player on the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start is any movement simulating the start of play.

d. Encroachment: After the center has touched the ball, it is considered encroachment for any player to cross the line of scrimmage and/or make contact with any player on the opposing team. Play will continue unless the defensive player is unobstructed on their way to the quarterback. **Penalty:** Encroachment, a 5-yard penalty from the previous spot.

e. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after the completion of the down. The center is responsible for placing the ball in the center of the field on the offensive line of scrimmage. The offense is responsible for placing the cones, which designate the offensive and defensive LOS. The cones should be placed 1 yard apart for all men's leagues, and 7 yards apart for all coed leagues.

f. All offensive players are to remain motionless for one second before the snap of the ball, except for one (1) player in motion, moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage. The player in motion is not counted as one of the 3 on the scrimmage line. Once the center is set, he/she may not reset or change position. **Penalty:** Illegal Motion, 5 yards from the previous spot.

g. Any offensive player that moves/shifts (other than going legally in motion) must stop for one full second prior to the ball being snapped. **Penalty:** Illegal shift, 5 yards from the previous spot.

h. Illegal Forward Passes:

1. If the passer's foot is beyond the scrimmage line when the ball leaves her/his hand.
2. If thrown after team possession has changed during the down.
3. If a passer catches her/his untouched forward or backward pass.
4. If there is more than one forward pass per down.

Penalty for 1-4: *Illegal Pass, 5 yards from the original LOS, and a loss of down if by the passing team before possession changes during a scrimmage down. If the illegal pass occurs on 4th down by the passing team, the passing team will turn the ball over on downs and be penalized 5 yards.*

i. Roughing the Passer

1. No defensive player can make contact with the quarterback unless the contact is deemed incidental while attempting to de-flag the quarterback. **Penalty:** Roughing the passer, 10 yards from original LOS, automatic first down.

j. Pass Interference and defensive holding

1. After the ball is snapped, and until the ball has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive pass interference beyond the passing team's scrimmage line, this includes face guarding. **Penalty:** Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards from the previous spot, and loss of down.
2. Men's Leagues Only: The defense is permitted to make contact with the offense only within 3 yards of the LOS; the defense is not permitted to make contact with the offense. **Penalty:** Illegal Contact, 5 yards from the previous spot, and replay the down.
3. After the ball is thrown, and until it has been touched, there shall be no defensive pass interference beyond the passing team's scrimmage line while the ball is in flight.
Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot, automatic first down. **Note:** *If the pass interference by either player is intentional or unsportsmanlike, her/his team shall be penalized an additional 10 yards.*

X. Scoring Players and Touchback

a. **End zone is marked by the farthest cone line on each end of the field.**

b. Touchdown:

1. All touchdowns are 6 points.
2. The ball must cross the goal line to be a touchdown before her/his flags are removed.

c. Mercy Rule

1. The game will end if one team is ahead of the other team by 19 points or more with 2 minutes remaining in the game.

d. Extra Points (1, 2, or 3 points)

1. Opportunities for extra points are as follows: 1 point from the 3-yard line; 2 points from the 5-yard line; 3 points from the 10-yard line.
2. If the defensive team intercepts a pass and returns it past their goal line during a try for 1, they score 1 point; 2 points for any 2-point attempts and 3 points for any 3-point attempt returned.

e. Safety

1. A safety is worth 2 points. The team that records the safety will start possession at the 10-yard line.

f. Touchback

1. Any pass-punt that strikes the boards will be a dead ball. If the ball hits the boards behind the goal line, the ball will be placed at the 10-yard line.

XI. Rule Classifications per League:

a. All divisions:

1. The defense is allowed to rush the passer after the offensive snap.

- a. Defensive players cannot cross the defensive line of scrimmage before the snap. This will be considered offside. The play will continue unless the defensive player is unobstructed on their way to the quarterback. **Penalty:** Encroachment, 5 yards.
 - b. The defensive LOS will be marked off 7 yards from the offensive LOS for the Coed league.
 - c. The defensive LOS will be marked off 1 yard from the offensive LOS for all men's leagues.
2. Interception returns allowed in all leagues

Coed Divisions

- a. The only legal block is a screen block (see clarification below). Any other contact will be considered an illegal block. **Penalty:** Illegal block, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down.

Men's Divisions

- a. Blocking is allowed only on the line of scrimmage. This includes 5 yards on both sides of the original snap (the tackle box) and 3 yards downfield from the LOS. All blocking downfield must be a screen block. CONTACT IS NOT PERMITTED past 3 yards of the original LOS.
- b. Offensive players are not permitted to block the defensive player by holding of any kind. This includes, but is not limited to: holding the jersey, hooking the player with their arm, and grabbing the player to stop their progress. **Penalty:** Offensive Holding, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down. (A hold that occurs in the end zone will be a safety).
- c. The following blocks are illegal: Block in the back, crack-back, cut block, double team (more than 1 player blocking another player at the same time). **Penalty:** Illegal

Block, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down. (An illegal block that occurs in the end zone will be a safety.

b. All Leagues: Screen Blocking

1. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have her/his hands and arms at their side or behind their 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 their hand or arm to break a fall or to retain their balance. A player must be on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking occurs. **Penalty:** Illegal Block, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down.

2. A player who screens blocks shall not:

a. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.

b. Make any type of contact when assuming a position at the side of or front of a stationary opponent.

c. Take any position too close to a moving opponent that her/his opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping and/or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened dictates where the screener may take their stationary position. This will vary between opponents and can be anywhere from 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.

d. After assuming their legal screening position, the player must not make any attempt to move in the same direction or path as their opponent. If any violation of these rules results in contact, they have committed a personal foul.

Penalty for 1-4: Illegal Block, 10 yards from the spot of foul, loss of down.

3. Teammates of a runner or passer shall not use any interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. **Penalty:** Illegal Block, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down.

4. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block, and the arms and hands must not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. **Penalty:** Illegal Block, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down.

XII. Sportsmanship & Conduct of Players and Others:

a. Any player who commits two unsportsmanlike penalties in the same game will be disqualified from the game and will be considered for further suspension for at least one game. If a player is disqualified from a second game in the same season; that player is automatically disqualified from league play for the remainder of the season and may be subject to further suspension from Stars Indoor Sports.

b. Any player who intentionally forces another player into the boards will be ejected from the game.

c. Any player who participates in a fight will be automatically ejected from the game and

suspended for the remainder of the session. The player will also be subject to review by Stars Indoor Sports, with the possibility of a permanent ban from all programs.

d. The fourth unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the same team will result in a forfeit of the game, and a review of all team actions to consider whether that team shall be disqualified for that session and/or sessions that follow thereafter.

e. Only the designated team captain will be allowed to talk with officials. Any other player who argues with the officials will be given a verbal warning. If, after the warning the player does not stop, the team will be penalized 10 yards. The player may also be subject to ejection.