

**Flag Football Rules**

**Intramural Sports Policies and Procedures Manual**

* All participants are required to adhere to the Policies of the Colorado Mesa Intramural Program.
* The Participant Handbook can be downloaded at: <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/studentlife/documents/ParticipantCMU.docx>
* **All participants must present a valid Colorado Mesa ID card at every game. Failure to present a valid Colorado Mesa ID will result in not being allowed to participate. NO EXCEPTIONS!**
* Changes to the rules from last season will be highlighted in grey.

All games will be held on Grand Mesa Quad or Delta Quad, or MavPav for Arena.

**Rule 1: Equipment**

1. No jewelry allowed (watches, earrings, facial piercings, necklaces, etc.)

**Exception:** Medical alert tags are not considered jewelry and may be worn, provided all of the chain, necklace, band, etc., is taped to the body with the tag visible.

1. No pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets allowed.
2. All players must wear like colored, numbered jerseys or t-shirts, at official’s discretion. They must be tucked in or short enough that a significant gap is created between the belt line and the jersey line. Shirts must be worn under the intramural jerseys**.**
3. All players on the field must wear a flag belt that has three flags, one on each hip, and one down the back of the player. Flags must not be illegally fastened.
   * 1. **Effect:** If a player is found illegally fastening his/her flag belt, they will be ejected from the game, along with applicable yard penalty.
4. No metal tipped cleats and/or screw-in metal cleats allowed.
5. Sweatbands and soft caps on the head are allowed. No hats with a hard bill, bandanas, or other headgear are allowed.
6. Players are allowed to wear braces, soft casts, and protective coverings provided they are covered with ½ inch high density padding or wrapped with similar material.
7. Footballs will be provided by the intramural department

**Exception:** Teams may decide to use their own football. Teams will be responsible for changing footballs each possession.

1. **Intramural staff reserves the right to rule on any equipment issue.**

**Rule 2: Timing**

* 1. All games shall consist of two, fifteen-minute halves, with a supervisor determined half time period. The game clock is continuous up until the **2 minute** mark in the secondhalf.

Effect: The clock will stop under 2 minutes on normal dead-ball plays.

**Exception**: The clock will stop for: team time outs, referee’s time outs, and extra point attempts if less than 2 minutes is remaining in the second half.

* 1. Teams will have 3, one-minute, timeouts during each game.
  2. Ties will stand during regular season. During playoffs, the following procedure will be followed:
     1. A coin toss will occur to begin the overtime period. Winner of the toss will get the choice to play on offense or defense first. There will be no deferring of choice during overtime. The visiting team will call the toss.
     2. Each team will start 1st and goal from the 10 yard line. The object will be to score a touchdown. Teams are allowed 4 attempts to score. If the score is still tied after one period, play will proceed to a second period or as many as are needed to determine a winner. If the defense intercepts a pass and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception for a touchdown, the series is over, the ball will be placed at the 10 yard line and the original defense will begin their series of 4 downs, if available. Each team is entitled to 1, one-minute timeout during the entire overtime.
  3. Mercy Rule: If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the referee announces the 10 minute mark, or after, for the second half, the game is over. Prior to applying the Mercy Rule, there must be a down free of any accepted live ball fouls.
     1. If a team scores during the last 2 minutes of the second half and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more points, the game will end at that point.

**Rule 3: Players**

1. Each team will consist of seven players. Five players are needed to start the game, and the game may be continued with less than 5 players as long as the team has a chance to win.

**CoRec Modification:**  Teams will consist of 8 players. A minimum of 6 players is necessary to begin and continue play. There must be an equal number of each gender, or in the case of 7 players, a difference of one. The game may be continued with less than 6 players as long as the team has a chance to win.

1. Any number of substitutions may be made during **dead ball** situations:
   * + 1. Between downs, any number of eligible subs may replace players.
     1. A team **must** substitute for a player who is bleeding.
     2. Referees can stop play when there is a dangerous situation or injury.

**Rule 4: Periods**

1. The start of each half shall begin with possession at the 14 yard line. Prior to game time the Referee shall conduct a coin toss in the presence of the field captains, and the visiting team will call the toss.
2. The winner of the toss will decide:
   * 1. To choose whether his/her team will be on offense.
     2. To choose the goal his/her team will defend.
     3. Defer his/her choice to the second half- ( chose side or receive ball)
   1. A team has 25 seconds to put the ball into play. The referee shall warn each team 5 seconds before a delay of game penalty is called.

# **Rule 5: Kicking the Ball**

* 1. A legal protected scrimmage kick is a punt made in accordance with the rules. Quick kicks are illegal. PENALTY: Illegal kick, 10 yards from the preceding spot.
  2. Protected scrimmage kick:

Before making the ball ready for play on the 4th down, the referee will ask the team A if they elect to punt, or try for the first down. The referee will then relay the information to the defensive team. **Team A may punt on any down, but must tell the referee before executing the play.** After the announcement to either punt or try has been made, the play must be executed (Note: to change options, team A will be charged with a time-out unless a penalty occurs giving the team A the right to repeat the down). If the signal for a scrimmage kick is given, yet the calling team “fakes” the punt. PENALTY: Illegal Kick, 10-yard penalty, re-kick, and a charged time-out

* 1. Team A must have and maintain, at least, 4 players, within 1 yard of their scrimmage line and all players must remain motionless until the kick is made. A line player may not raise his/her arms to distract or block the kick. The kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.
  2. If a player on the receiving team bobbles the punt, the ball is live while it is in the air. The ball is dead when it hits the ground.
  3. Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any kick is in flight. If any receiver gives a valid signal for a fair catch and catches the kick, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead at that point. No receiver may advance the ball after a fair catch signal.
  4. After a scrimmage kick, ball becomes dead if kicking team touches the ball first or if the ball rolls into the end zone. The receiving team can pick up a live bouncing ball that has not been touched by the kicking team and return it.

# **Rule 6: Snapping, Passing, and Handling the Ball**

* 1. The center, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of play until it is snapped.
  2. The center shall either pass the ball back between his/her legs from a crouched position, or side snap the ball with a quick and continuous motion.
  3. No offensive player shall make a false start. PENALTY: Dead ball foul, false start, 5 yards from the previous spot.
  4. The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. The remaining players must be either on their scrimmage line or behind their backfield line. All players must be on or behind the line of scrimmage and within the side hash marks. PENALTY: Illegal formation, 5 yards.
  5. All offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, or arms for at least one-full second prior to the snap. Normal football motions may occur before this time. PENALTY: Illegal motion, five yards.
  6. The player who receives the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are illegal. PENALTY: Illegal procedure, 5 yards.
  7. Any player may hand or pass the ball backward at any time except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds.
  8. A backward pass or fumble may be caught in flight inbound by any player and advance.
  9. A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines and in the field of play is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.
  10. A backward pass or fumble that lands on the ground within the end zone behind the line of scrimmage will result in a safety.
  11. A fumble that lands in the end zone in front of the play will result in a touchback and possession will be changed to the non-advancing team.
  12. A backwards pass or fumble can be thrown forward as long as it is still behind the line of scrimmage and the ball has not been thrown forward once already.

# **Article 1: Legal and Illegal Forward Pass**

* 1. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.
  2. A forward pass is illegal:
     1. If the passer’s foot is touching or beyond team A’s scrimmage line when the ball leaves his/her hand (1st ball spotter)
     2. If thrown after the team possession has changed during the down.
     3. If there is more than one forward pass per down.
  3. If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the offensive team. (Referee ’s discretion)
  4. Intentional grounding will be called if the quarterback is trying to avoid being sacked, even in the last two-minutes of play.

# **Article 2: Offensive and Defensive Pass Interference**

* 1. During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses Team A’s scrimmage line, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond Team A’s scrimmage line is pass interference unless it occurs when two (2) or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, catch, or bat a pass. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is de-flagged prior to touching the ball on a pass thrown beyond Team A’s scrimmage line. Offensive pass interference may be called at any time after the ball is snapped. Defensive pass interference can only be called during the time of a pass attempt.
     1. **Offensive Pass Interference** – *Penalty: ten (10) yards (previous spot) and loss of down*
     2. **Defensive Pass Interference** – *Penalty: Ten (10) yards (previous spot) and automatic first down.*
  2. Any act by a player to inhibit an opponent’s (usually a potential receiver) ability to see the ball and/or other players is considered face guarding. Face guarding is illegal. *Penalty: Pass Interference*

# **Rule 7: Scoring plays**

* 1. Touchdown is 6 points. Safeties are 2 points.

**Exception:** CoRec: If a female scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any A player, the point value is 9.

* 1. An opportunity to score 1 point from the 3-yard line, 2 points from the 10-yard line, or 3 from the 20-yard line shall be granted to the team scoring a touchdown. The captain must tell the referee 1, 2, or 3. If you change your mind, your team has to call time-out to change your decision. If you have no time-outs remaining, the initial decision will stand.

If B intercepts the ball, they may return it to their end zone for 3 points.

* 1. After every score, the player who scores must remain in the end zone until a referee checks his/her flags.

After a Try, the ball shall be snapped by the opponent of the scoring team at their own 14 yard line, unless moved by penalty.

# **Rule 8: Blocking**

* 1. 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 arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player’s block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break the fall or to retain his/her balance. A player must be on his/her feet before, during, and after screen blocking. PENALTY: Personal foul, 10 yards.
  2. Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner. PENALTY: Personal foul, 10 yards.
  3. Defensive players must go **around** the offensive player’s screen block. The arm 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 Referee. PENALTY: Personal foul, 10 yards.

# **Rule 9: Runner**

* 1. Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. Flag guarding includes:
     1. Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
     2. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging.
     3. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt to prevent an opponent from de-flagging. PENALTY: Flag guarding, 10 yards.
  2. The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This is also known as stiff-arming. PENALTY: Personal foul, 10 yards.
  3. Flag guarding will be called if there is an attempt at de-flagging an opponent. If there is no attempt, then there is no flag guarding.
  4. Diving or leaping forward to gain yardage is legal provided the dive is not toward **or over** a defensive player. PENALTY: Illegal contact, 10 yards from the point of infraction, the play stands.
  5. **The runner shall avoid contact with a defender who has established position on the field.**

# **Rule 10: Flag Belt Removal**

* 1. Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be de-flagged.
  2. When a runner loses his/her flag belt, (accidentally or inadvertently) play continues. The de-flagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and the knees. If the flag belt was removed intentionally, it will be regarded as a Tampering Infraction.

Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including typing, using foreign materials, or other such acts is illegal. PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike conduct, 10 yards from the previous spot, loss of down, and player disqualification

**Rule 11 CoRec Rules Summary**

**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

**The Ball.** The junior size football shall be used.

**Minimum Line Players.** A must have at least 5 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.

**Male Runner.** An A male runner cannot advance the ball thought A’s scrimmage line. There are no restrictions; during a run by a female runner once the ball has been beyond the A or B 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. If a male passer makes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass must involve either a female passer or a female receiver **for positive yards.**

**Illegal Forward Pass.**  If a female completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the A scrimmage line, on either an “open” or “closed” play, and any A male runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.

**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 the score creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game shall end at that point.

**Touchdown Value**. If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female player throws a legal pass and a touchdown is scored by any player, prior to a change of possession the point value is 9.

**Arena Football Addendum:**

All of the above rules will be enforced with the following exceptions:

* + - 1. Players: 6v6
         1. Minimum of Players:

Men’s & Women’s: 4 to start and finish

CoRec: 2 male and 2 female players to start and finish

* + - * 1. Players on the line on scrimmage at the snap:

Men’s & Women’s: 3

CoRec: 3

* + - 1. Punting: There will be **no punting**. A will have to attempt to reach the zone to gain on fourth down. B will gain possession at the succeeding spot if a turn over on downs occurs.
      2. Mercy Rule:

Men’s, Women’s and CoRec: 25 points after 10 minutes remaining in the second half

**Note: Being ejected from a game will result in a meeting with the Manager of Intramurals to determine your continued participation in the program.**

**All rules not specifically discussed in this document will be enforced as NIRSA Flag Football Rules. All rules are subject to change by the intramural sports staff.**