



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



All games will be governed by the current NIRSA Flag Football Rules with some CENTEX Girls Flag football modifications:

PLAYERS:

- The game should be played between 2 teams of teams consist of 7 players. A minimum of 5 players are required to avoid a forfeit.
- A speaking captain must be selected to make all decisions and shall be the only one who addresses the officials
- Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game, and shall be governed by decisions of officials assigned to the game.

EQUIPMENT:

- No jewelry, hats, bandanas, or hard plastic hair ties. (Knit caps or elastic headbands are permitted)
- Closed toed athletic shoes must be worn.
- No metal cleats are allowed.
- **No pants or shorts with pockets or belt loops. (Must be different color then flags)**
- Shirts may not have pockets or un-tucked hoods.
- Flag belt must be a one piece let at the waistline with three flags attached, one each side and one center of back
- Gloves - Players may wear gloves which must consist of a soft, pliable and nonabrasive material
- Football - The official ball shall be pebble-grained leather or rubber covered and shall meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. Women shall use the intermediate, junior, or youth size. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his/her discretion.

The Game:

- The shall be officiated by 2- 4 officials
- The game will consist of two 20 minute halves with a 3 minute halftime.
- The clock will not stop during either half except for team timeouts, official's timeouts and injuries.
- Each team receives two 30 second charged timeouts for the game.
- Depending on the situation the clock will either restart on the ready to play whistle or on the snap. (i.e. offense team leading the game and receiving a delay of game penalty)
- Games that end in a tie will remain a tie during regular season.



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



- In playoffs, if the game remains a tie, the game will proceed to overtime procedures. Home team will have ball first and visitors determine which of field to play. All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal line. Each team will receive a series of downs to score and try for 1, 2 or 3 points. Each team receives one 1 timeout per the entire overtime. The game will continue with this process until a winner is determined.
- The ball shall be snapped on the 14 yard line following the coin toss, extra point try, or half. Unless moved by penalty.
- A first down can be gained when the offensive team passes the next zone line to gain.
- A team has 25 seconds to snap the ball after the referee has signaled ready for play
- **MERCY RULE**, if a team is ahead by 19 points with less than 5 minutes remaining in the game the score is final and the teams go into scrimmage mode for the remainder of the game.
- Each team receives four (4) downs to pass the zone-line-to-gain or end zone
- The zone line-to-gain in any series shall be the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. The most forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.
- A new series of downs shall be awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone on a play free from penalty; or a penalty against the opponents moves the ball into the next zone; or an accepted penalty against the opponents involves an automatic first down; or either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, free kick, protected scrimmage kick, touchback, pass interception, or failure to gain the zone in advance of the ball.
- If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated.
Exception: If each team fouls during a down in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declines all penalties for its opponent's fouls, other than unsportsmanlike.
- Flag Belt Removal - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.
- When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The de-flagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees.
- In circumstances where a flag belt is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of the penalty or the play.
- A defensive player intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal. The official shall warn the team, any further penalty will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct.
- The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap.
- All offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball.
- In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, and arms for at least one full second before the snap.

- There is no diving while running with the ball. A receiver may dive to catch a ball. A defensive player may dive for to try to remove a flag
- A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at any time except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being de-flagged/tagged.
- A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it touches the ground and belongs to the last team in possession unless lost on downs
- A backward pass or fumble that goes out-of -bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of -bounds spot. If out-of bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.
- If an offensive player fumbles the ball prior to reaching the end zone and the ball lands in the end zone, the offensive team shall retain possession at the spot of the fumble.
- All players are eligible to catch a pass.
- A forward pass is illegal:
 - If the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.
 - If there is more than one forward pass per down.
- The line of scrimmage remains throughout the play. A team may advance the ball across the line of scrimmage by laterals or runs, and then lateral the ball behind the line for a forward pass attempt.
- If a player attempts a catch or intercept while in the air, the player must contact the ground inbounds with the ball in his/her possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent's contact causes him/her to first touch out-of- bounds.
- A. If one foot first lands in-bounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception although a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.
- A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception.
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The Field:

- The field should be a minimum of 40 yards in width, and contain four (4) twenty (20) yard zones with a ten (10) yard end zone on each end.
- A one (1) yard wide line should be marked at each end at the three and ten yard lines in the middle of the field. These lines shall be used for the extra point try when a team scores a touchdown.



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Definitions of Playing Terms:

Catch - A catch is an act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight.

Clipping – Clipping is running or diving into the back, or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg or legs of an opponent, or pushing an opponent in the back.

Encroachment - Encroachment is a term to indicate a defensive player is illegally in the neutral zone. An entering substitute is not considered to be a player for encroachment restrictions until he/she is on his/her team's side of the neutral zone.

Fair Catch – A signal made by receiving person of a punt in which the receiver cannot run after catching the ball and the ball is immediately down when caught.

Foul – A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is assessed.

Fumble - A fumble is a loss of player possession other than by handing passing or kicking the ball.

Goal Line – Each goal line is a vertical plane separating the end zone from the field of play. The plane of goal extends beyond the sideline.

Hurdling - Hurdling is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over a player who is on his/her feet.

Interception - A catch of an opponent's pass or fumble in flight is an interception.

Flag Belt Removal - When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner in possession of the ball, the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

Contact - In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders, but not the face, neck or any part of the head of an opponent with their hands. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt

Flag Guarding - A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. A player may use a spin move, however; must keep their arms away from their flag to avoid flag guarding.

Stiff Arm – A runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm which includes the use of a “stiff arm” to flag guard



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Helping the runner – A player shall not grasp, pull, push or aid any teammate runner.

Live Ball - A pass or fumble, which has not yet touched the ground, is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team.

Neutral Zone - The neutral zone is the area between the offensive and defensive line of scrimmage that has been established by the spot cone markers and extends to each sideline. It is established when the ball is ready for play.

Pass (Forward and backward) - A forward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction toward the opponent's end line. A backward pass is a pass thrown with its initial direction parallel with or toward the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble. It will be dead at the spot where it strikes the ground.

Penalty – A penalty is a loss imposed by rule upon a team that has committed a foul.

Protective Scrimmage Kick – A punt in which prohibits either team from advancing beyond their scrimmage lines until the ball is kicked.

Punting - A punt is kicking the ball by a player who drops it and kicks it before it hits the ground.

Offense Blocking – A player that is on either side of the center on the line of scrimmage and that is no more than 5 yards from the center is eligible to screen block. The offensive blocking shall take place without contact. The 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 block is illegal. The blocker can take a maximum of 1 step to either side to screen block at the line.

Interlock Blocking - 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. Teammates of a runner

Defensive Rush and Use of Hands – Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive blocker. Defensive players must not use any part of his/her arms, hands, elbows, or any part of the body to contact the offensive player.



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Snapping The Ball:

- The player who receives the snap from the center must be at least 2 yards behind his/her scrimmage line.
- The offensive team must have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap. A player in motion is not counted on the line.
- If on a snap the ball is fumbled, it is immediately blown dead at the spot it hit the ground.
- Every offensive player must at least momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball on or after it is marked ready for play. The rule is meant to prevent a substitute deceiving the defense.
- The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended.
- The center can snap the ball between his/her legs or stand to the side of the ball. This has to be done in one continuous motion, with the ball starting on the ground.

Passing The Ball:

- A legal forward pass is a live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line, from behind the line of scrimmage. The initial direction of the ball determines whether or not the ball is backwards or forwards.
- There may only be one legal forward pass per down.
- All players, with the exception of the passer, are eligible to touch a forward pass after it is thrown.
- The passer may catch his/her own forward pass provided another player has touched it first.
- Players only need one foot inbounds and the ball under control to establish possession.
- When members of opposing teams catch a legal forward pass simultaneously, the ball is immediately blown dead and possession belongs to the offense.
- Defensive players shall not contact the passer before or after the ball is released behind the line of scrimmage. Defensive players must try to avoid contact with the passer at all times. The only contact allowed is that caused by going for the flags. The ball cannot be contacted while in the passers hand. If the defender deflects a pass, he/she cannot follow through and contact the passer.

Kicking The Ball and Fair Catch:

- Protected Scrimmage Kick
- Prior to making the ball ready for play on fourth down, the Referee must ask the offense if he/she wants a protected kick (punt). The Referee must communicate this decision to the defensive captain and the other officials.



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



- The offense must have all field players (typically 6) except the punter on the line of scrimmage. The defense must have at least 5 players within 1 yard of their scrimmage line. All players on the line of scrimmages must remain motionless until the kick is made. A line player may not raise his/her arms to distract the kicker or block the kick.
- The kicker must be at least 5 yards behind the scrimmage line when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.
- Any kick caught by the kicking team behind the line of scrimmage cannot be advanced.

FAIR Catch:

- Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any kick is in flight and is beyond the kicker's free kick line.
- If any receiver gives a valid signal for a fair catch and catches the kick beyond the kicker's line and between the goal lines, it is a fair catch and the ball becomes dead.
- After a valid fair catch signal by any member of the receiving team, no receiver may advance the ball. When receiving a protected kick the receiver may call for a fair catch. The player must signal intention by extending one arm above his/her head and waving laterally from side to side more than once.
- An invalid fair catch signal is any signal by a receiver before the kick is caught or recovered that does not meet the requirements of a valid signal or after the kick has touched a receiver or the ground.

Coach-Referee Conference:

Coach-Referee Conference - When a team requests a charged time-out for a misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule, the Referee will confer with the IM supervisor and team captain or coach. The request must be made prior to the time the ball becomes alive following the play to be reviewed unless the period has officially ended. At the end of the half the team has until the first snap of the second half to protest.



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Method of Scoring:

- Touchdown = 6 points
- The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can DE flag the player. If the official determines that the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified and a penalty will result.
- Safety = 2 points (And the ball from your own 20 yard line)

- **Extra points** (Team Captain determines choice; 1st choice is final unless a timeout is taken)
 - 1 point (from the 3 yard line)
 - 2 points (from the 10 yard line)
 - 3 points (from the 20 yard line)

Penalty Enforcement:

Offensive Fouls:

PENALTY	DISTANCE	ENFORCEMENT SPOT / DOWN
Required equipment worn illegally	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Delay of game (Dead ball)	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
False start (Dead ball)	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Encroachment (Dead ball)	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Illegal Snap (Dead ball)	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Illegal Substitution	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Illegal forward pass (Loss of down)	5	Spot of foul / NO
Illegal Formation	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Illegal Shift	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Intentional Grounding (Loss of down)	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Illegal shift	5	Previous Spot
Intentional backward pass or fumble out-of-bounds (Loss of down)	5	Spot of foul/NO
Player receiving snap, not 2 yards behind LOS	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Illegal Procedure	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Offensive Pass Interference (Loss of down)	10	Previous Spot/ NO
Flag Guarding	10	Spot of foul/REPEAT
Stiff Arm	10	Spot of foul/REPEAT
Spiking, kicking, or throwing the ball in the air	10	Spot of foul / NO
Illegal Screen	10	Spot of foul/REPEAT
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10	Previous Spot/ REMAINS THE SAME
Hurdling any player	10	Spot of foul/REPEAT
Illegally Secured Flag on TD (Loss of down)	10	Previous Spot/ NO



NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Defensive Fouls:

PENALTY	DISTANCE	ENFORCEMENT SPOT / DOWN
Offside	5	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Roughing the Passer	10	Previous Spot/ AUTO 1st Down
Obstruct/hold the runner	10	SPOT/ Next Down
Stripping the Ball	10	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Kick Catch Interference	10	SPOT/ Next Down
Illegally Secured Flag on TD	10	Previous Spot/ 1 st Down
Face Guarding	10	Previous Spot/ AUTO 1st Down
Defensive Pass Interference	10	Previous Spot/ AUTO 1st Down
Illegal Use of Hands During Defensive Rush	10	Previous Spot/ REPEAT
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10	Previous Spot/ REMAINS THE SAME