**Intramural Flag Football Rules**

All Intramural participants are responsible for their own medical expenses. Any student unsure of their physical condition should check with their family physician or the Student Health Center before participating.

Eligibility for Intramural Sports

1. Current Colorado Mesa University students, faculty, and staff.

Teams are responsible for keeping their spectators under control. Misconduct of spectators, players, or coaches can result in assessment of a penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain in the area designated by the officials. The official shall have the power to make decisions on any matters or questions not specifically covered in the rules.

***Please create an account on the IMLeagues.com website.***

***You will not be allowed to participate without first creating an account!!!***

**RULE 1: THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT.**

**1.1 General Provisions.**

1.1.A. The Game.

1. The game shall be played between two teams of seven players each.

2. Six players are required to start the game and to avoid a forfeit.

3. All players must have checked in with the supervisor and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to participate.

1.1.B. Persons Subject to the Rules.

1. Team representatives, including players, substitutes, replaced players, coaches, trainers, spectators 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.

1.1.C. Referee’s Authority.

1. The Referee has the authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules.

2. The Referee’s decisions are final in all matter pertaining to the game.

**1.2 The Field.**

1.2.A. Field Layout.

1. The field dimensions will be 60 yards in length with a 10-yard end zone at each end.

2. The field is divided into three 20-yard zones.

1.2.B. Inbounds/Out of Bounds

1. The lines bounding the sidelines and the end zones are out-of-bounds.

**1.3 Game Equipment.**

1.3.A. The Ball.

1. Footballs will be supplied by Colorado Mesa University Intramural Program.

2. Teams are encouraged to provide their own football, if they so choose.

3. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure or markings.

4. During the game, each team must use a legal ball of its choice when in possession.

**1.4 Player Equipment.**

1.4.A. Uniform.

1. Teams are not required to wear matching uniforms, although it is requested.

2. Uniforms must be either:

A. Long enough so they remain tucked in the pants/shorts the entire down, or

B. Short enough so there is a minimum of 4” from the bottom of the jersey to the player’s waistline.

1.4.B. Flag Belt

1. The Referee must be able to see the Flag Belt at all times.

2. The Flag Belt cannot be tied. If the Flag Belt is tied, the team will forfeit the down **AND** be penalized 15 yards from the spot of the ball.

1.4.C. Shoes

1. Shoes must be worn at all times throughout the game.

2. Shoes can be made of canvas, leather, or synthetic material, which cover the entire foot.

3. Metal Cleats are PROHIBITED!!

**1.5 Blocking.**

1. No body-blocking is allowed at any time.

2. Shoulder-blocking is not allowed at any time.

3. Blocking must be made with the blocker in an upright position with arms extended straight. The arms are not allowed to bend at any point of blocking.

4. Leaving your feet to make a block is considered unsafe and will result in immediate ejection.

**RULE 2: PERIODS, TIME FACTORS, AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

**2.1 Start of Each Half.**

2.1.A. Coin Toss.

1. A coin toss will be assessed at the beginning of the game. The captain winning the coin toss shall have the choice of options for the first half or shall defer his/her option to the second half. The options are:

A. To choose whether his/her team will start on offense or defense.

B. To choose the goals his/her team will defend.

The captain not having the first choice of options for a half shall exercise the remaining option.

**2.2 Game Time.**

2.2.A. Playing Time and Intermission.

1. Playing time shall be 30 minutes, divided into two halves of 15 minutes each.

2. The clock will run continuously except for the last 2 minutes of the SECOND half.

A. The clock will also stop at charged time outs, officials’ time out, injury, incomplete pass, or if a player steps out-of-bounds.

2.2.B. Last 2 Minutes.

1. During the last two minutes of the SECOND half, the clock will stop for a:

A. Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass.

B. Out-of-bounds.

C. Safety.

D. Team time-out.

E. Touchdown. (Extra-point times are untimed)

F. Penalty and administration.

G. Referee’s time-out.

H. Touchback.

I. Team attempting to conserve time illegally.

J. Team attempting to consume time illegally.

2.2.C. Tie Game.

1. Overtime.

A. During the regular season, there will be no overtime period and teams will receive a tie if the teams are deadlocked.

B. During playoffs, overtime will continue until a winner is determined.

C. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line.

2. Tie Breaker.

A. Each team will start first down and goal from the 20-yard line.

B. The team will have four downs to score, unless awarded first down automatically, or a penalty allows for repeating the down.

C. 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.

2.2.D. Time Outs.

1. Charged Time-outs.

A. Each team is entitled to one charged time-out during each half.

B. Time-outs can ONLY be called by the captain (or team representative when captain is unavailable). The Team representative MUST be distinguished at the coin-flip to start the game.

2. Length of Time-outs.

A. A charged time-out requested by any player which is legally granted shall be one minute and can be shortened if both teams are ready.

**RULE 3: BALL IN PLAY, DEAD BALL, OUT-OF BOUNDS.**

**3.1 Ball in Play – Dead Ball.**

3.1.A. Ball Declared Dead

1. A live ball becomes dead and an official shall sound the whistle or declare it dead when:

A. When it goes out-of-bounds.

B. When any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground.

C. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful Try is made.

D. When a forward pass strikes the ground (Incomplete Pass).

E. When the ball strikes the ground after being first touched by the kicking team.

F. When a backward pass or fumble by a player strikes the ground. A ball snapped, which hits the ground before or after getting to the intended player is dead at the spot where it hit the ground.

G. When a runner has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player.

H. When a runner is legally tagged with one hand between the shoulders and knees, including the hand and arm when the flag belt inadvertently becomes detached.

I. When a punt has touched the receiving team and then touches the ground.

J. Any time the ball hits the ground.

**RULE 4: SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWNS, AND TEAM POSSESSION.**

**4.1 Series of Downs.**

4.1.A. Zone Line-to-Gain.

1. 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.

4.1.B. Awarding a new series.

1. 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

2. A penalty against the defense moves the ball into the next zone, or

3. An accepted penalty against the defense involves an automatic first down, or

4. Either team has obtained legal possession of a ball as a result of a penalty, punt, touchback, pass interception, or turnover on downs.

4.1.C. Kicking the Ball.

1. Punting.

A. Prior to making the ball ready for play on the fourth down, the Referee must ask the offensive team captain if they want to punt.

B. The team captain may request to punt on any down.

C. After such announcement, the ball must be punted, unless a charged time-out is called or a penalty occurs.

2. Formation and Snap.

A. Neither the Kicking team nor the Receiving team may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball has been punted.

3. Punting the Ball.

A. After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion.

B. *No players on the scrimmage line by the offense or defense may move until the ball is punted.*

**RULE 5: SNAPPING, HANDING, AND PASSING THE BALL.**

**5.1. The Scrimmage**

5.1.A. The Start.

1. All plays must be started by a legal snap from a point on or between the hash marks.

2. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a down.

**5.2. Prior to the Snap.**

5.2.A. Encroachment.

1. Following the ready for play whistle, and until the snap, no player on defense may encroach, touch the ball, nor make contact with opponents or in any other way interfere with them (verbally or otherwise). This includes standing in or shifting through the neutral zone.

5.2.B. False Start.

1. No offensive player shall make a false start or simulate the start of a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment shall be cancelled.

5.2.C. Snap.

1. The snapper, 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 the snap.

2. When over the ball, the snapper shall have his/her feet behind the scrimmage line.

3. A ball must be snapped between the legs. An alteration to this rule includes:

A. The center can stand sideways to snap the ball.

**5.3 Position and Action During the Snap.**

5.3.A. Legal Position.

1. Anytime on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each offensive player must be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap (i.e. they must come inside the hash marks).

5.3.B. Minimum Line Players.

1. The offensive team must have at least four players on or within one yard of their scrimmage line.

A. There must be three players inside the tackle box on offense.

B. There must be two players inside the tackle box on defense.

5.3.C. Motion Players.

1. **No player may go “in motion” prior to a snap! Once the center has touched the ball, nobody on the offensive team may move, or a “false start” penalty will be called.**

5.3.D. No Direct Snap.

1. The player receiving the snap must be at least two yards from the offensive line of scrimmage.

5.3.E. Center’s hand on the Ball.

1. Once the center has put his hand on the ball prior to the snap, all other offensive players must remain stationary. Any movement will result in a false start penalty, including a player in motion.

**5.4 Handing the Ball.**

5.4.A. Handing the Ball.

1. Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

**5.5 Legal and Illegal Forward Pass**

5.5.A. Legal Forward Pass.

1. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.

2. During a down and before a change of possession, a forward pass may be thrown provided the passer’s feet are behind the offensive line of scrimmage when the ball leaves the passer’s hand.

A. Only one forward pass is allowed per down.

3. If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by a member of opposing teams, the ball becomes dead at the spot of the catch and belongs to the offensive team.

5.5.B. Illegal Forward Pass.

1. A forward pass is illegal if:

A. If the passer’s foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is released.

B. If intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage.

C. If a passer catches his/her untouched forward or backward pass.

D. If there is more than one forward pass per down.

5.5.C. Forward Pass Interference.

1. Contact. During a down in which a legal forward pass crosses the offensive line of scrimmage, contact or action that interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond the line of scrimmage is pass interference. It is also pass interference if an eligible receiver is de-flagged prior to touching the ball.

**RULE 6: SCORING PLAYS AND TOUCHBACK.**

**6.1 Mercy Rule.**

1. If a team is winning by 21 points, then the losing team is given one chance to score. If the losing team fails to do so, the game shall be over.

**6.2 Touchdown.**

1. A touchdown is scored when an offensive player crosses the goal line without losing his/her flags.

2. Touchdowns are worth 6 points.

**6.3 Point(s) after Touchdown Tries**

1. One or Two points.

A. An opportunity to score one point from the three yard line, two points from the ten yard line by running or passing shall be granted to the team scoring the touchdown.

B. If a team decides to go for one point, the possession must be a pass. *Any possession inside the 5 yard line (dotted line) must be a pass. The offensive team may not run. If the team chooses to run, the attempt and the down are failed.*

NOTE: If a touchdown is scored on the last timed down of the second half, the Try is not attempted, unless it will affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

2. Decision.

A. Once the scoring captain makes the choice, the decision may only be changed when either team takes a charged time-out. A penalty does not allow for a change in point value, nor does awarded or lost yardage affect the point value.

B. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble on a Try and returns the ball for a touchdown, they receive two points.

3. Penalties During a Try.

A. If a double foul occurs, the Try will be replayed.

B. If the offensive team is penalized on a successful try, the try will not be repeated, and the offensive team will forfeit the points awarded.

4. Subsequent Series.

A. After the Try, the new offensive team shall snap the ball from their 10 yard line unless moved by a penalty.

**6.4 Momentum, Safety, and Touchback.**

6.4.A. Safety = 2 points.

1. A safety occurs when:

A. A runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line and the ball becomes dead.

B. A player punts, passes, fumbles, snaps, muffs, or bats a loose ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line and the ball becomes dead behind their goal line.

C. The snap lands in the end zone.

2. After a safety, the scoring team shall snap the ball at their 10-yard line, unless moved by a penalty.

6.4.B. Touchback.

1. A touchback occurs when:

A. The receiving team downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team’s goal line.

B. The kicking team downs a punt that touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team’s goal line.

C. The ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass)

D. After a touchback, the ball shall be snapped from the nearest 10-yard line.

**RULE 7: CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS.**

7.1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

7.1.A. Noncontact Player Acts.

1. No player shall commit acts including:

A. Using words similar to the offensive’s audible or quarterback cadence prior to the snap in an attempt to interfere with the offense.

B. Intentionally kicking the ball, other than a punt.

C. Participating while wearing illegal player equipment.

D. Fighting or attempting to fight.

7.1.B. Dead Ball Fouls.

1. When the ball is dead, no player shall:

A. Intentionally kick the ball.

B. Spike the ball.

C. Intentionally throw the ball to delay the game.

7.1.C. Prohibited Acts.

1. There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the rules. Examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Attempting to influence a decision by an official.

B. Disrespectfully addressing an official.

C. Using profanity, taunting, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.

D. Intentionally making contact with a game official during the game.

E. Fighting.

F. Leaving the team area and entering the playing field during a fight.

7.2. Personal Fouls.  
 1. No player shall:

A. Strip or attempt to strip the ball from a player in possession by punching, striking, or stealing.

B. Contact an opponent who is on the ground.

C. Throw a runner to the ground.

D. Hurdle any player.

E. Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is dead.

F. Make contact of any nature which is deemed unnecessary.

G. Deliberately dive or run into a defensive player.

H. Tackle the runner by grasping or encircling the hands or arms.

2. Roughing the Passer.

A. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally.

B. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass.

NOTE: The passer remains the passer while the ball is in flight or until they move to participate in play.

7.3. Runner.

7.3.A. Flag Guarding.

1. Runners 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.

2. Examples of flag guarding include, but are not limited to:

A. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.

B. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt.

C. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner which places the arm over the flag belt.

D. Stiff Arm

E. A runner shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in their path. If a runner in progress has established a straight path, he/she may not be crowded out of that path, but if a defensive player legally established position, the runner must avoid contact by changing direction.

**RULE 8: SUMMARY OF NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL PENALTIES.**

8.1 Loss of 5 Yards:

1. Delay of Game (Dead Ball Foul)

2. False Start (Dead Ball Foul)

3. Encroachment (Dead Ball Foul)

4. Illegal Snap (Dead Ball Foul)

5. Illegal Procedure

6. Illegal Motion

7. Illegal Shift

8. Less than required number of players on the scrimmage line at the Snap.

9. Player receiving snap within 2 yards of scrimmage line.

10. Illegally handing the ball forward (Loss of down, if by Team A).

11. Illegal Forward Pass (Loss of Down, if by Team A).

12. Intentional Grounding (Loss of Down)

13. Illegal Substitution

14. Aiding Runner by Teammates

15. Required equipment worn illegally.

16. Offensive player not within 15 yards of the ball.

17. Defense not being a yard off the ball.

18. Defense not having two people inside the tackle box.

8.2. Loss of 15 Yards:

1. Illegal Contact

2. Eligibility lost by going out of play

3. Offensive Pass Interference (Loss of Down)

4. Defensive Pass Interference

5. Personal Foul (body blocking, clipping, shoulder blocking, tripping, tackling, etc).

6. Roughing the Passer (Automatic 1st Down)

7. Fair Catch Interference

8. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

9. Spiking, Kicking, or Throwing the Ball during a dead ball

8.3. Spot Foul:

1. Stiff Arm

2. Flag Guarding

**RULE 9: ELIGIBILITY OF PARTICIPANTS.**

1. All students, staff, and faculty are allowed to participate.

2. All participants are required to create an account on the IMLeagues.com website before being allowed to participate in any Intramural Sports events.

3. All participants must be on their team’s roster sheet prior to the individual’s first game.

4. All participants must be on their team’s roster sheet prior to their last regular season game in order to be eligible to play in the post season.

5. All players must have played in at least one regular season game prior to their last regular season game in order to be eligible to play in the post season.

6. No player can play for more than one team.

A. If your team is eliminated in the playoffs, you may NOT join another team.

7. Teams may NOT have any participants who are currently on a Varsity Athletic Teams Roster.

**Special Note to All Teams:**

Teams that think their opposing team has ineligible players are highly encouraged to file a formal protest and deliver it to the Intramural Office, which is located in the Maverick Pavilion. Your help making the Intramural Program as safe and fair as possible is very much appreciated, and your formal protests assists the Intramural Staff in providing you a fair and safe opportunity.

**RULE 10: POST SEASON ELIGIBILITY.**

1. Colorado Mesa University’s Intramural Program has developed a Sportsmanship Rating Scale. All teams and players must achieve a 3.0 or better to be eligible to participate in the post season. Failure to achieve a 3.0 or better will result in disqualification for the post season. See the attached sheet.
2. To qualify for the Post Season, the team must NOT have had to forfeit a Regular Season Game.

**Sportsmanship Rating System**

Sportsmanship rating will be given to teams after each contest by the Intramural Sports Supervisor and/or officials. These ratings reflect behavior before, during, and after the contest. In order for a team to qualify for the playoffs, the team must maintain a “B” (3.0) average sportsmanship rating. Sportsmanship rating will be based on the following criteria:

**A (4.0) – Excellent Conduct and Sportsmanship:** Players cooperate with the Intramural Staff and other team members. The captain calmly converses with the Intramural Staff about interpretations and calls. The captain also has full control of his/her teammates and spectators.

**B (3.0) – Good Conduct and Sportsmanship:** Team members complain about some decisions made by Intramural Staff and/or show minor dissension which may or may not receive an unsportsmanlike penalty. Teams receiving one unsportsmanlike penalty will receive no higher than a “B” Rating

**C (2.0) – Average Conduct and Sportsmanship:** Teams show verbal dissent towards Intramural Staff and/or the opposing team, which may or may not merit an unsportsmanlike penalty. Captains exhibit minor control over his/her teammates. Teams that receive two unsportsmanlike penalties will receive no higher than a “C” Rating.

**D (1.0) – Below Average Conduct and Sportsmanship:** Teams constantly commenting to the Intramural Staff and/or opposing team from the field and/or sidelines. The team captain exhibits little or no control over teammates or himself/herself. Teams receiving more than two unsportsmanlike penalties or having a player ejected due to sportsmanship will receive no higher than a “D” Rating.

**F (0.0) – Poor Conduct and Sportsmanship:** Team is completely uncooperative. Captain has no control over teammates, and/or himself/herself. Any team causing a game to be forfeited by result of unsportsmanlike behavior, and/or having multiple unsportsmanlike penalties and/or more than one player ejections will receive an “F” Rating.

NOTE: Any team that receives an “F” Rating will automatically be suspended for their next scheduled game and the team captain must meet with the Manager of Intramural Sports prior to participating in any additional Intramural contest.

NOTE: If any one player receives an “F” Rating for serious offenses such as fighting or striking another player will be suspended from ANY and ALL further Intramural contests for the semester. The person will also need to meet with the Manager of Intramural Sports prior to re-instating the participant. This person will also meet with the head of the Disciplinary Action board at Colorado Mesa University

**Sportsmanship Rating during Playoffs**

**A.** Teams are required to have a “B” (3.0) average sportsmanship rating to be eligible for the playoffs.

**B.** In order for teams to continue to play in the playoffs they must receive “A” or “B” sportsmanship rating in every game.

**Intramural Sports Officials Evaluations**

It is evident that the Intramural Sports program at Colorado Mesa University views sportsmanship as a vital component to every Intramural Sports contest. As each team is evaluated in each game based on the NEW Intramural Sports Sportsmanship Rating System, each team will have the opportunity to evaluate each Intramural Sports Official after each game on a 1-5 scale.

(1 = poor, 5 = excellent). These evaluations will serve as a tool that allows us to select officials to work the playoffs and championship games.

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