Saint Joseph’s University Recreation and Intramurals
Flag Football Rules

General Information

Eligibility:
1. Each team captain must submit a completed Intramural Sports Roster with the required fee, to the Rec Office before the published date. All players must sign his/her name on the team roster/waiver.
2. Game time is forfeit time. Teams forfeiting will post a loss for that particular game and may be declared ineligible for the playoffs. Any team which forfeits twice will be banned from further competition in the league.
3. All participants must be a current student or faculty and staff member at Saint Joseph's University.
4. Participants can be on the roster of only one single sex team and only one co-rec team.
5. Teams may add new players to their roster prior to the mid-season point.
6. Players must participate in at least 2 games prior to the playoffs.

** All players are required to present a valid Saint Joseph's University ID prior to every intramural contest. Those who fail to show their ID will not be allowed to participate. **

RULE 1. The Game, Field, Players, and Equipment

Section 1. General Provisions

The Game – Men, Women shall be played between two teams of (6) six players each. Five players are required to avoid a forfeit. Co-Rec shall be played between two teams of six players each (3 men and 3 women). Teams with five players shall have 3 men and 2 women, or 2 men and 3 women.

The Team Captain shall be designated to the referee. The captain’s first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable. Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

Persons subject to the Rules include 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 the officials assigned to the game.

Section 2. The Field

The Field shall be a rectangular area with lines and zones shown in the accompanying diagram. Because of facility limitations, distances of field lengths and widths may be modified.

Section 3. Game Equipment

The Ball shall be pebble grained leather or rubber covered and meet the recommendations of size and shape for a regulation football. There are no requirements regarding ball pressure and markings. Men shall use the regular size while women shall use the intermediate, youth, or junior size. Co-Rec teams shall use the regular size.

Section 4. Player Equipment -Required

Shirts of contrasting colors should be worn. Each team is responsible for 2 different colored shirts. Jerseys must be either:
A) Long enough to remain tucked in during play.
B) Short enough so that 4” is between the jersey and the belt.

Pants or shorts must be worn by each player and without any belt(s), belt-loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstrings.

Flag Belts must be worn, free of any knots, at the waistline with three flags permanently attached. Two flags shall hang at each side with the third in the center of the back.

Multi-Purpose cleats are permitted. No metal spikes, cleats or bare feet are permitted.
Section 5. Player Equipment -Optional

Knee/Elbow Pads made of soft, pliable and non-abrasive materials may be worn. Mouth and Tooth Guards are strongly recommended.

Section 6. Player Equipment – Illegal

Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots.
Shirts and Jerseys which do not remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or shirt which does not remain tucked in.
Pants or Shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstring(s).
Towels attached at the player’s waist.
No Jewelry is permitted.

RULE 2. Definitions of Playing Terms

Section 1. Live, Dead Ball
If the ball touches the ground at ANY time the play is dead and the ball will be spotted where it hit the ground.

A Live Ball is a ball in play. A pass which has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight and therefore can be caught and advanced by either team. If a backward pass falls incomplete, the ball will be spotted where the ball hit the ground.

A Dead Ball is ready for play when the referee:
A) If time is in, sounds the whistle and signals “ready for play”.
B) If time is out, sounds the whistle and signals either “start the clock” or “ball is ready for play”.

Section 2. Catch, Interception, Simultaneous Catch, Pass

A Catch is an act of establishing possession of a live ball in flight. An airborne player must contact the ground inbounds with the ball in their possession prior to touching out-of-bounds, unless an opponent’s contact causes them to first touch out-of-bounds.
A. If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch or interception even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.
B. A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.
C. A loss of ball simultaneously with returning to the ground is not a catch or interception. NOTE: If in doubt, it is a catch.

A Simultaneous Catch is joint possession of a live ball by opposing players inbounds. Awarded to the team originally in possession.

A Pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead. The initial direction determines whether a pass is forward or backward. A backward pass or fumble that hits the ground is ruled dead at that spot.

RULE 3. Periods, Time Factors, Substitutions

Section 1. Coin Toss, Options

The winner of the coin toss shall have choice of options for the first half or defer to the second half. The options for each half shall be:
A. To choose whether his/her team will play offense or defense.
B. To choose to defend a goal.
The captain not having the choice of options for a half, shall exercise the remaining option.

Section 2. Time
**Playing Time** shall be 40 minutes, divided into two halves of 20 minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be 5 minutes.

**The first 38 minutes** of the game, the clock will run continuously unless it is stopped for

- A. Safety; clock starts on next snap.
- B. Team time-out; clock starts on next snap.
- C. Referee’s time-out; clock starts on the “ready for play”.

**The final 2 minutes** of the game, the clock will stop for:

- A. Incomplete pass; clock starts on next snap.
- B. Out-of-bounds; clock starts on next snap.
- C. Safety; clock starts on next snap.
- D. Team time-out; clock starts on next snap.
- E. Touchback; clock starts on next snap.
- F. Touchdown; clock starts on next snap.
- G. Team attempting to consume time illegally; clock starts on next snap.
- H. Team attempting to conserve time illegally; clock starts on the “ready for play”.
- I. Inadvertent whistle; clock starts on the “ready for play”.
- J. Referee’s time-out; clock starts at his/her discretion.
- K. First Down; clock start is dependent upon previous play.
- L. Change of possession; clock start is dependent upon previous play.
- M. Penalty and administration; clock is dependent upon previous play.

**Section 3. Tie Game**

*A Coin Toss* will determine the options as in the beginning of the game. There will be only one coin toss during the overtime. Captains will alternate options if additional overtime periods are played.

**ALL OVERTIMES ARE PLAYED TOWARD THE SAME GOAL LINE.** Unless moved by penalty, each team will start “first and goal” on the 10-yard line, and receive 4 downs to score a touchdown. Try for point(s) will follow. If the score is still tied, extra periods will be played as needed. If the defense intercepts a pass, and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. **Penalties** are administered similar to the regular game.

**Section 4. Time-Outs**

Each team is entitled to 3 charged time-outs during the game. Successive charged time-outs may be granted each team during a dead ball period. A time-out will be charged for a coach/referee conference if there is no change in the application or interpretation of a rule.

**An Injured Player** shall be replaced for at least one down. A player whom is bleeding, or has an open wound, or has an excessive amount of blood on their uniform shall be considered an injured player.

**Section 5. Delays**

**Delay of Game** – The ball must be snapped or free kicked within 25 seconds

**Section 6. Substitutions**

**No substitute shall enter during a down.** An incoming sub must enter the field directly from his/her team area and play at least one down. A replaced player must leave the field at the sideline nearest his/her team area prior to the snap.

**RULE 4.** **SERIES OF DOWNS, NUMBER OF DOWN, AND…**

**Section 1. A Series – How Started, How Broken, Renewed**

**The field itself** shall be divided into 4 different zones (not including end-zones) separated by 3 lines: one line at midfield, and one at each 20 yard lines.

**A series of downs** is 4 consecutive downs to advance to the next zone. Any down may be repeated or lost if provided by the Rules.
The Zone Line-to-Gain shall be the zone in advance of the ball.

The Ball Spotters, both orange in color, one for the offensive scrimmage and one for the defensive scrimmage, will always be one yard apart.

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 an accepted penalty moves the ball into the next zone; or involves an automatic first down.

**RULE 5. KICKING THE BALL**

Section 1. Free Kicks

No Kickoffs!!! Play begins on the offense’s own 14-yard-line, unless changed by penalty.

Protected Scrimmage Kicks (Punts) May take place on any down. Neither team may advance beyond their respective scrimmage line until the ball is kicked. After receiving the snap, the kicker must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. The kicking team must have 3 players on the LOS; the receiving team may have all players back to field the kick. All punts must be kicked.

**RULE 6. SNAPPING, HANDLING, and PASSING**

Section 1. The scrimmage, prior to the snap

The offense is responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down. Failure to do so will result in a delay of game. The snapper will bring it from the huddle to the line of scrimmage.

It is encroachment/false start for any player to break either scrimmage line plane after the center has placed his/her hand(s) on the ball. The Snapper, after assuming position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick continuous motion of the hand(s).

Section 2. Position and Action During the Snap

Legal Positions: Offensive must momentarily be within 15 yards of the ball before the snap. They must have at least 3 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. One player may be in motion, but not towards the opponent’s goal line. In a snap preceded by a shift, all offensive players must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position for at least one full second before the snap.

NO DIRECT SNAP. The snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line.

Section 3. Handling the Ball

Any player may hand the ball backward at any time.

An offensive player may hand the ball forward behind the scrimmage line only.

A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted in flight inbounds by any player and advanced.

Section 4. Legal and Illegal Forward Pass

All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. A forward pass may be thrown provided the passer’s feet are behind the offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer’s hand.

Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.

Co-Rec Rule Only – There may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This applies to the try. If a male passer completes a legal forward pass to a male receiver, the next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards.
RULE 7.  SCORING PLAYS and TOUCHBACK

Section 1. Mercy Rule

If a team is 17 or more points (Co-Rec Rule – 23 points) ahead at the 2 minute warning in the second half, the game is over.

Section 2. Touchdown = 6 or 9 points

All touchdowns are 6 points. For Co-Rec, if a female scores a touchdown = 9 points. If a female player throws a legal forward pass that results in a touchdown by any team “A” player = 9 points.

Section 3. Try = 1 or 2 or 3 Points

1 point from the 3-yard-line, 2 points from the 10-yard-line and 3 points from the 20-yard line. Note: If the defense intercepts a pass during the try and return it for a touchdown = 3 points. Try points are the same for co-rec attempts.

Section 4. Momentum, Safety, and Touchback

Safety = 2 points when a runner carries the ball from the field of play to or across his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead there in his/her team’s possession; EXCEPTION: When original momentum is the force (inside the 5-yard-line). The spot where possession was gained.

It’s a touchback when the ball is out of bounds behind a goal line, when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above or behind the team’s own goal line, and the attacking team is responsible. (Play begins on the 14-yard-line)

RULE 8. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND OTHERS

Section 1. Personal Fouls

No Player Shall:
- Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball.
- Trip, throw, clip, or tackle an opponent.
- Hurdle any other player or initiate contact through diving to advance the football.
- Make any contact with an opponent which is deemed unnecessary of any nature including using fists, locked hands, elbows or any part of the forearm or hand.

Roughing the Passer. Every effort must be made to avoid charging into a passer.

Section 2. Blocking

The Offensive Screen Block shall take place without contact. The screen blocker shall have their arms close to the sides or behind the back. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact is illegal.

Defensive Players must go around the offensive player’s screen block. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent.

Section 3. Runner

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. NO “STIFF ARMS”. The runner must hold the ball at chest level when running to avoid blocking the flag. The ball is the spot rather than the runner. The official shall spot the ball depending on where it was when the runner was legally decided to be down (either by loss of flag or being tagged)

A player in possession of the football may dive to advance the ball however is not allowed to initiate contact with any other player while doing so.

Defensive players shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt.
Section 4. Flag Belt Removal

A. Players must have possession of the ball to legally be deflagged.
B. Once deflagged, the ball will be spotted where the flag is removed.
C. When a runner loses his/her belt, the deflagging reverts to one hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and the knees.
D. Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying, using foreign materials, or any such acts is illegal.

Rule 9. Enforcement of Penalties

When a foul occurs the referee shall, at the end of the down, notify both captains. The distance penalty for any foul may be declined. A captain’s choice of options may not be revoked.

Section 1. Special Enforcements

Safety: Any foul for which the penalty is accepted and measurement is from on or behind its goal line, which is now the basic spot, is a safety.

Offensive Live-Ball Fouls: Penalties committed by the offense while the ball is in play. The defensive team has the choice of accepting the result of the play or accepting the penalty and replaying the down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Yard Penalties:</th>
<th>10 Yard Penalties:</th>
<th>Loss of Down Penalties:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From previous spot, remains the same down; dead ball</td>
<td>From previous spot, remains the same down</td>
<td>Result in the loss of yardage and the loss of a down; from LOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Start</td>
<td>Holding/Obstruction (from LOS)</td>
<td>Illegal Forward Pass (10 yards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay of Game</td>
<td>Illegal contact/Blocking (from LOS)</td>
<td>Intentional Grounding (10 yards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving to advance the spot of the football</td>
<td>Stiff Arm (from LOS)</td>
<td>Forward Pass interference (10 yards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiating Contact through Diving to advance the ball (From LOS)</td>
<td>Illegally Secured flag belt {w/ disqualification} (10 yards; TD will be nullified if play resulted in such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guarding Flag Belt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defensive Live-Ball Fouls: Penalties committed by the defense when the ball is in play. The offensive team has the choice of accepting the result of the play or accepting the penalty and replaying the down.

NOTE: a game may not end on a defensive penalty. If a defensive penalty is called during a play when time expires, the offensive team may be awarded one additional down with no time on the clock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 yard penalties:</th>
<th>10 yard penalties:</th>
<th>Automatic First down Penalties:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From previous spot; dead ball</td>
<td>Ball is moved from previous spot, can result in a first down</td>
<td>Ball will be moved from the previous spot and a new set of downs given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offsides</td>
<td>Holding or Obstructing the Runner or Receiver (from LOS)</td>
<td>Pass Interference (10 yards or if in end zone ball will be placed on three-yard line).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay of game</td>
<td>Illegal Contact/Use of Hands (from LOS)</td>
<td>Roughing the passer (10 yards from LOS or end of run)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disqualification Associated with Certain 10-yard Penalties:

1. Flagrant unsportsmanlike player conduct (Coaches, Players, Subs or Others)
2. Intentionally kicking at or swinging an arm, hand, or fist at anyone.
3. Flagrant spiking, kicking, throwing, or not returning the ball.
4. Intentionally contacting an Official.
5. Flagrant personal fouls.
6. Tackling the runner.

**SUMMARY of Co-Rec RULES**

**The Game:** Two teams of 6 players each (3 men/3 women). If only 5 players, then (3 men/2 women or 2 men/3 women).

**Male Runner:** Cannot advance the ball through their own scrimmage line. No restrictions once the ball is beyond their scrimmage or following a change of possession.

**Male to Male Completion:** During a possession there may not be two consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule applies to the try. The next legal forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or receiver for positive yards.

**Touchdown Value:** If a female scores a touchdown, the point value is 9. If a female throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any team member, the point value is 9.

**City 6 Participation**

SJU Intramural Flag Football League Champions participate in the City 6 Extramural Flag Football Classic. Eligibility rules stipulate that these teams must consist of full-time, undergraduate students. In addition, the following individuals are not eligible to participate: Junior varsity, club, NCAA partial and non-qualifiers, current, and former collegiate football athletes. Teams with individuals on their roster who are ineligible for City 6 participation may compete for SJU league championships, but are not permitted to advance to the City 6 Tournament. Questions regarding this policy will be answered by the Director of Recreation.