

NIRSA FLAG FOOTBALL RULES  
adopted for Hogoheegee.Com Alumni Tournaments

**1. Game, Field, Players, and Equipment**

1.1 Shirts must be long enough to tuck in so that they remain tucked in the pants/shorts during the entire down or short enough so there is a minimum 4" from the bottom of the shirt to the player's waistline. Hogoheegee.Com will provide your shirts, so unless altered, they should be good enough.

1.2 Pants or shorts with **BELT LOOPS or POCKETS are prohibited.**

1.3 Towels may not hang from a player's waist or otherwise interfere with the possible removal of a flag. Towels however may be used and kept on the ground on the ball before the snap.

1.4 All jewelry must be removed including watches, earrings, bracelets, etc. Players may wear soft, pliable basketball or wrestling knee pads on legs, knees and/or ankle.

1.5 The game shall be played between two teams of 7 players each on a rectangular field. Each team must have 5 players on the field in order to begin the game.

1.6 The field is divided into 4 zones of 20 yards each and 2 end zones of 10 yards each.

1.7 Each team shall designate a captain to act as team spokesperson and make decisions. Only the captain may talk to officials. Team representatives including players, spectators, team managers, coaches, and group members subject to the rules.

1.8 The use of dangerous equipment is prohibited. Shoes must be worn; Cleats are okay, **Metal cleats (spikes) are prohibited.**

1.9 A Kicking tee is provided. Teams have the option of punting or using the kicking tee only.

1.10 Men will use the regular size football. Game balls will be provided by Hogoheegee.Com. No personal footballs will be allowed to be used as game balls. **Referees will not handle the football. The offense is responsible for the ball at all times.**

**2. Periods, Time Factors, Substitutions**

2.1 The winner of the pre-game toss shall have the first choice of options:

A. offense/defense

B. which goal to defend

C. to defer their choice of A or B until the second half.

2.2 Playing time and intermissions: A game shall consist of 2 halves with a 5-minute intermission. Each half shall consist of 20 minutes. The clock will run continuously during the first 18 minutes of each half. The clock will run during PAT's unless it falls within the 2 minute window. During the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock will stop such as in pro football:

The clock will stop within the last 2 minutes for the following:

Penalties  
(Touchdown) scoring  
Incomplete passes/out of bounds  
Injured players

3. **Mercy Rule**: If a team is ahead by 20 points at the two-minute warning in the second half, the game is over.

4. **Kickoffs**: The ball will be kicked off to begin each half. All kick-offs will take place on the 20-yard line. After every score the ball will be placed on the new offensive team's 20-yard line with a first and 20 situation.

2.5 Each team is allowed two (2) timeouts per half (1-minute time-outs); time-outs not used in the first half are not carried over into the second half. The clock will stop during time-outs.

2.6 Free substitution is allowed after any whistle provided the substitution does not delay the game. However, no offensive substitute may enter unless he joins the huddle and is part of the huddle at the time when it breaks.

2.7 The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after referee signals "ready for play." Penalty: 5 yards.

2.8 A maximum of 12 players is allowed on the roster.

2.9 Tie Games: Ties will be broken by the "Texas Tie Breaker"

A. Play will begin on the 10-yard line and teams will have 4 plays each.

B. A coin toss will precede "Tie Breaker". The team winning the toss has 3 options: Offense, Defense, or Direction. The opposing team then has the remaining choice.

C. The object is to score a touchdown and subsequent extra point (1 or 2 points). After team A scores, team B then has 4 plays within which to score. If no team has scored after their respective plays the process is repeated.

D. When a pass is intercepted the defense becomes the offense and begins their series of 4 plays. If the interception is returned for a touchdown, the game is over.

E. Penalties are assessed similar to the regular game. A team shall be given a new series of 4 plays when an automatic first down penalty is accepted. Dead ball penalties after a touchdown are penalized on the extra point attempt. Live ball penalties committed by either team after team B gains possession during an attempt or in overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot. Dead ball penalties following a successful attempt will be penalized from the succeeding spot, the team B 10-yard line, if accepted.

### **3. Definition of Playing Terms**

3.1 Removal of flag belt: When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag belt above his head to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred. A player may dive to remove a flag belt as long as no contact is made with the opposing team.

3.2 The position of the ball when a player is deflagged determines the spot of the next line of scrimmage.

3.3 A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock down the ball carrier in an attempt to remove the flag, nor shall an offensive player hold, block, or run through a defensive player trying to remove the flag belt.

3.4 When a runner loses his/her flag belt, either accidentally or inadvertently, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner.

3.5 Scrimmage line: The scrimmage line for team A is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. The scrimmage line for team B is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes one yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. A colored puck will signify each.

### **4. Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-Of-Bounds**

4.1 The ball is declared dead when the ball touches the ground: A) on a fumble B) on a lateral C) on a pass or D) after touching a player on a punt.

4.2 The sideline and end lines are considered out of bounds. (Only one foot needs to touch in bounds in order for a pass to be complete).

4.3 Once an offensive or defensive player steps out of bounds, that player is no longer eligible to touch the ball. Penalty: 5 yards and replay the down.

### **5. Series of Downs, Number of Downs**

5.1 In a series of 4 downs, the ball must be advanced forward into the next zone in order for a new series of downs to be awarded. Yardage lines are considered part of the forward zone.

### **6. Kicking the Ball**

6.1 If a punt is to be made, the team punting must announce it before the down starts. After the announcement, the punt must actually be made, and neither team may move until after the ball has been punted. Defensive and offensive teams must have 4 players on the line of scrimmage until the punt is made. After receiving the ball the punter must put the ball in play within 5 seconds. **Quick kicks (punting outside of punt formation) are illegal.** Penalty: Delay of game.

6.2 The defensive team may not build a pyramid or support each other in any manner in order to block or attempt to block a kick. Penalty: 5 yards from the previous spot.

## **7. Snapping, Handling, and Passing the Ball**

7.1 The ball may be snapped between the legs or to the side of the snapper. The ball must remain on the ground during the snap.

7.2 The player who receives the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps are always illegal (under center).

7.3 It is defensive pass interference if an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a forward pass attempt. (10 yards from spot of foul)

7.4 During the interval between downs, when 2 or more consecutive encroachments are committed by the same team, the penalty will be 10 yards for the second encroachment foul.

7.5 The offensive team must have a minimum of four players on the line of scrimmage.

7.6 All players are eligible for a forward pass. The passer may pass from anywhere behind the LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.

7.7 The passer shall not intentionally ground the ball in order to avoid a sack. Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down

## **8. Scoring Plays and Touchbacks**

8.1 A team is given the choice of going for 1 or 2 points after scoring a touchdown. Once the captain makes the choice, it may only be changed if a time out is called. Ways of scoring a successful point-after-attempt: A) By running or passing from 3 yards = 1 point. B) By running or passing from 10 yards = 2 points.

8.2 Touchdown Verification: The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one good pull, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed. The player is disqualified, and it is a foul. Penalty: 10 yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.

8.3 Play after safety. After a safety is scored, the team that is awarded 2 points will automatically gain possession at their own 20-yard line. (No kick will take place)

## 9. Players' Conduct

9.1 It is illegal to steal or attempt to steal (strip) the ball from a player in possession. The object of the game is to deflag a ball carrier, not to steal the ball. Penalty: 10 yards from the end of the run.

9.2 Roughing the passer. Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear that the ball has thrown and may not make contact with the throwing arm. Penalty: 10 yards and automatic first down, tack on the end of the play (if positive yards have been gained), if not, 10 yards from the original spot and automatic first down.

9.3 Guarding the flag belt. Ball carriers shall not guard their flags by blocking, with arms, hands or ball, the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt Ball Carriers must have 2 hands on the ball at all times. Penalty: 10 yards.

9.4 The defensive player shall not (intentionally or accidentally) hold, grasp, or obstruct forward progress of a ball carrier when in the act of removing the flag belt. Penalty: 10 yards.

9.5 The flag belt removal. Intentionally pulling or removing a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player is illegal. Penalty: 10 yards.

9.6 Offensive screen blocking. 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, legs, or knees to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use his/her feet in order to gain position before, during and after screen blocking. Penalty: 10 yards.

9.7 Screen blocking fundamentals – a player who screens shall not: A. when he/she is behind a stationary opponent, take a position closer than a normal step from him or her; B. when he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent, make contact with him/her; C. take a position so close to a moving opponent that his opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be one to two normal steps or strides from the opponent. D. After assuming his/her legal screening position, move to maintain it, unless he/she moves in the same direction and path of his/her opponent. Penalty: 10 yards.

9.8 Blocking and interlocked interference. 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: 10 yards.

9.9 Use of hands or arms by the defense. Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block. The arms and hands may not be used to grab or push the opponent aside. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A rusher may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance. Penalty: 10 yards.

9.10 There shall be no bumping, checking, or other intentional contact between a defender and an offensive pass receiver. Both offense and defense are limited to screening an opponent.

9.11 If a player attempting a diving flag removal trips the ball carrier there is a penalty of 10 yards from the spot of the foul.

Hogoheegee.Com Add in rules

Defense will be allowed to blitzes all 4 downs (if the Offensive teams decides to go for it on 4<sup>th</sup> down) . Only on a punt will the defense not be allowed to rush.

2 forfeits will eliminate a team from tournament as will 2 losses. Forfeits will not be made up.

A forfeit will be given when a team has less than 5 players or no players show up for a scheduled game or if a team receives a conduct penalty and the team does not pay forward \$20 to complete the game. A team will be allowed a 3 minute grace period after the start time. The game clock will start and after 3 minutes time, if the team without the necessary amount of players does not have enough on the field, they forfeit the game.

All games will be played at the Chilhowie Recreation Park.

All teams need to make sure they fill out the roster on the day of the tournament. If roster changes occur that are different from the original roster submitted, please see Travis Terry prior to playing. The game will start on time.

Captains will be responsible for their players. Any actions pre, during, and post game will be discussed between Hogoheegee.Com and officials about potential disciplinary actions (fines, etc.). Post game conduct can be penalized.

If any player(s) gets ejected from the game, they will have one minute to vacate the playing area (not only leave the field, but leave the area). **The team must pay \$20 to Hogoheegee.Com before the game resumes.** If said player(s) does not vacate the area at the request of the lead official, their team will forfeit the game (no matter what the score or how much time is left in the game). **Said player(s) will have to meet with the Director before they will be allowed to participate in any future Alumni Activity. They will have a minimum of one game suspension, possibly more at the discretion of the Director.**

No unfriendly trash talking to the opposite team! This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (15 yds) and could result in an ejection from the game.

**No unsportsmanlike conduct should be shown to ANY officials, they are your peers and without them we would not have a tournament for you to participate. They will make mistakes, but so will your team, so give them a break! They will be working just as hard to call a good game as you will be at winning it. This conduct will not be tolerated and the student/player/fan will be asked to leave. Any conduct toward an official will result in disciplinary actions being taken by the Director.**

Protests of games will not be allowed except for eligibility protests.

If on the kickoff the ball goes out of bounds before hitting the ground in fair territory or an offensive player, there will be a 10 yard penalty from the spot of where the ball went out.