

**CU • STUDENT REC CENTER INTRAMURALS**  
**FLAG FOOTBALL • RULES**  
Office Line: 303-492-2893 • Email: [imsports@colorado.edu](mailto:imsports@colorado.edu)  
Website: [www.colorado.edu/rec-center/intramurals](http://www.colorado.edu/rec-center/intramurals)

---

**ROSTER SIZE IS LIMITED TO 16 PLAYERS**  
**Teams winning a championship will receive a maximum of 10 t-shirts.**

Games will be governed by the current rules of the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), with the following modifications and points of emphasis:

#### **GENERAL**

- Participants should have adequate health insurance to cover any injury which may occur.
- Alcoholic beverages and drugs are prohibited in the Student Recreation Center, on any recreation center property and at all Intramural Sports sanctioned events. Participation while under the influence of these substances is also prohibited in these areas. Any violation of this policy will be grounds for immediate ejection, forfeiture and possible suspension.
- NO JEWELRY is allowed in any intramural competition.
- **Game time is forfeit time! Players should check in with the Intramural Supervisor at least 15 minutes before their scheduled game time. If you do not have enough players to field a team at game time, your team will receive a Forfeit. NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- **No Buff OneCard = No Play! All intramural participants are required to have either their Buff OneCard or Rec Center membership card with them at EVERY intramural event. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility. NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- The following are situations in which your team WILL NOT be allowed to advance to the post-season tournament:
  - If you forfeit one regular season game.
  - If you accumulate two or more Honest Effort Forfeits (HEF).
  - If your team fails to average a 3.00 or better sportsmanship rating.
- The Intramural Sports Office **DOES NOT** reschedule regular season or post-season tournament games once the schedule has been posted. If your team is unable to make a regular season game, **your team captain must** email the intramural office at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled game time Monday-Friday, and by no later than 5:00pm on the Friday preceding a Sunday game. The intramural office will then be responsible for offering out your game. If your game is picked up by another team, your team will not be credited with a Forfeit. However, if your game is not picked up by another team, your team is still responsible for playing that game. Failure to notify the intramural office by the deadline stated will result in a Forfeit. Failure to show up to a game where no replacement team was found will result in an Honest Effort Forfeit (HEF).
- All games picked up by a team count as a real game and will count towards your record and sportsmanship rating.

#### **FORFEIT POLICY**

- **GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME!** All teams should arrive **15 minutes prior** to the scheduled start of the game to check in and get the necessary equipment for the game. Any team failing to report ready-to-play at the scheduled starting time shall forfeit to their opponent. Any team that forfeits will be removed from the league for the remainder of the season.
- If you are not playing at least 50% of your scheduled games due to other teams forfeiting, please contact the intramural office to see if we can schedule more games for your team.

## ELIGIBILITY

- Every eligible intramural participant must be a full fee paying University of Colorado student or recreation center member.
- Every eligible intramural participant must present their Buff OneCard or Student Recreation Center Membership Card in order to check in before every game. If a player fails to have one of these two proofs of identification, they will not be allowed to participate. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Players may play on no more than one team in the Equal Opportunity division and one in the Co-Rec division per sport per session.
- A player must have played in at least one of the first four regular season games in order to be eligible to play in the post-season tournament.
- **Intercollegiate Athletes:** Current intercollegiate athletes are not eligible to participate in their sport or any related sport. An intercollegiate athlete is any individual participating in intercollegiate contests attending regular practice, whose name appears on the official squad list, or who has won a letter at a recognized senior college. Varsity, red shirts, junior varsity players and freshman are all considered intercollegiate athletes. You are considered an intercollegiate athlete for one entire academic year unless you have been dropped from the squad before the first intercollegiate contest and no longer playing or practicing with the team.
- **Club Players:** A member of a club sport is defined as a student who participated or practiced with the club during the current academic year. Intramural teams are limited to three club players per team in their specific sport or any related sport, and athletes must play on a team in the most competitive league offered.

## TEAMS & SUBSTITUTIONS

- An Equal Opportunity team consists of seven players on the field. A minimum of five players are needed at game time to start the game.
- An Honest Effort Forfeit will be awarded to Equal Opportunity teams that have only three players at game time, teams with any less than this will be given a standard Forfeit.
- A Co-Rec team consists of eight players on the field, with four players of a different gender. A minimum of six players are needed at game time to start the game, with at least two players of a different gender.
- An Honest Effort Forfeit will be awarded to Co-Rec teams that have only three players at game time, teams with any less than this will be given a standard Forfeit.
- A player may substitute in or out after a play is downed and before another one begins.

## UNIFORM/EQUIPMENT

- Players must wear athletic-style clothing. Some examples of inappropriate clothing would be such items as jeans, button-down shirts, sandals, dress shoes, etc. The Intramural Staff has the final discretion on what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate.
- Players must wear athletic footwear (tennis shoes, cross trainers, molded cleats etc.). No Crocs, flip-flops, toe shoes, sandals, boots, dress shoes or shoes of the like are allowed during play. Shoes must be worn! Screw-in and Screw-on cleats will only be accepted if they are determined safe by an IM Sports Supervisor before each game.
- Players may not wear hats, watches, headphones or any sort of jewelry.
- Braces or casts are only allowed if deemed safe by the Intramural Supervisor on site.
- Teams are required to wear shirts of the same color, which is chosen by their captain at the time of registration. If both teams are wearing the same color jersey, scrimmage vests will be given to the away team.
- No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag belt.
- Shirts must be tucked into pants or be short enough that they are 4 inches above a player's flag belt.

- Tear-away pants, pants/shorts with pockets, belt loops, belts or exposed draw-strings are not allowed. Pants/shorts with zipper pockets will only be accepted if they are determined safe by an Intramural Supervisor before each game.
- Standard sweatshirts and coats may be worn as long as they do not contain pockets. Hooded sweatshirts will be allowed if they do not contain pockets, or if they are worn inside out so that no pockets are exposed.
- Equal Opportunity teams must play with regular size footballs. Co-Rec teams may play with regular, intermediate, youth or junior size footballs.
- Flag belts will be provided by Intramural sports.

## **THE GAME**

### **LENGTH OF GAME**

- The game will consist of two 20-minute halves. The first half will have a running clock. The last one minute of the second half will follow NIRSA timing rules. The clock will stop for incomplete passes, penalties, and first downs.
- Games are subject to being limited to 15 minute periods by the Intramural Supervisor on duty. This is a rare event but occasionally is necessary and is up to the discretion of the Intramural Staff.

### **TIMEOUTS**

- Each team is allowed two, 30-second timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over from half to half.

### **CAPTAIN'S MEETING**

- At the beginning of each game there will be a captain's meeting. Officials will go over any questions or rule changes with captains at this time.

### **STARTING THE GAME**

- During the captain's meeting, the referee will toss a coin and offer the winning captain the following options:
  1. To defer his/her option.
  2. To start on offense or defense.
  3. To defend a specific goal.
- Each half shall begin with the ball being placed on the 14 yard line. There are no kick-offs.

### **SCORING**

- Scoring is identical for both the Equal Opportunity and Co-Rec leagues, regardless of the gender of individual(s) involved in scoring.
- A touchdown is worth six points.
- After a team scores, their captain will be given the choice to go for a one, two, or three point conversion.
  - 3 yard line = one point
  - 10 yard line = two points
  - 20 yard line = three points
- If a team wishes to go for a different point value on the conversion after they've declared a decision to the Referee, they're required to use a time-out.
- An intercepted pass during the conversion may be returned by the opposing team for a score of three points, regardless of the conversion's initial point value.
- A team recording a safety will receive two points. The ball shall be snapped by the scoring team at their own 14 yard line, unless moved by penalty.

### **MERCY RULE**

- If a team is ahead by 19 points or more at the two minute mark, 28 points at the three minute mark, or 37 points at the four minute mark, then the game is over.

### **OVERTIME**

- There is no overtime during the regular season.

- During tournament play, if the game score is tied after regulation time, then a coin toss will determine possession and direction. Captains will alternate choices if additional overtimes are necessary. The winner of the coin toss will be given the options of offense, defense, or direction. Both teams will go the same direction in overtime. Each team gets one time out. Each team will be given a series of four downs from the same 14 yard line. If the first team given the ball scores, the second team will still be given the ball and have four downs to attempt to win the game. Try for points after will still be attempted in the same manner.

## **RULE CLARIFICATIONS**

### **THE SNAP**

- The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the Referee has blown his whistle to put the ball into play.
- The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick continuous motion of the hands. The snapper may pass the ball either between their legs or from the side. Both of their feet must be behind the line of scrimmage.

### **LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**

- In Equal Opportunity play, the offensive team must have four players set on the line of scrimmage at the snap. In Co-Rec play, the offensive team must have five players set on the line of scrimmage at the snap. The player in motion does not count as a player on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the center has placed his hands on the ball, no player may enter the neutral zone.
- Until the snap, no defensive player may encroach, touch the ball, stand in, or in any other way interfere with the offensive team.

### **PLAYERS IN MOTION**

- Only one player may be in motion at a time.
- A player in motion may not be in motion towards their opponent's goal line when the ball is snapped. If a player does go in motion towards their opponent's goal line, they must be set for at least one second before the ball is snapped.

### **RUNNING THE BALL**

- Any player, including the quarterback is eligible to run the ball past the line of scrimmage after the ball has been legally snapped.

### **BACKWARD PASSES AND FUMBLES**

- Any ball that is fumbled during a down will be ruled dead immediately at the spot where it touches the ground. Backward passes are unlimited. Backward passes that hit the ground are dead at the spot it hit the ground.

### **FORWARD PASSES AND INTERCEPTIONS**

- The passer's foot must be behind the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves his/her hands.
- Only one forward pass is allowed per down, backward and lateral passes are unlimited,
- A player attempting to catch the ball in the air must contact the ground with at least one foot in bounds with the ball in possession prior to going out of bounds.
- If a forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of opposing teams, the ball is dead at the spot and is awarded to the offensive team that snapped the ball.

### **PASS INTERFERENCE**

- Pass interference is defined as bumping, pushing, or unnecessary contact with an opponent or restricting a player from access to a pass while on offense or defense.
- There does not have to be contact for pass interference to be called, obstructing an opponent's view while making no play on the ball (i.e. not facing the ball) is considered pass interference.
- Pulling the receiver's flag before he/she catches the ball is considered pass interference.

### **PUNTING THE BALL**

- On fourth down the Referee will ask the offensive team if they want a protected scrimmage kick or if they want to go for it. The referee must communicate this decision to the defensive team.

- There are no quick kicks.
- The kicking team must have all of its players on the line of scrimmage except for the punter.
- After receiving the snap the ball must be punted immediately in 1 continuous motion.
- There are no restrictions for the number of players the defensive team must have on the line, but defensive players may not penetrate the line of scrimmage.
- If the punt crosses the scrimmage line and touches a player from either team and then hits the ground, the ball is dead at that spot and belongs to the receiving team. However, a punted ball may touch the ground an unlimited number of times and even come to rest and still be a live ball if it does not contact a player from either team.
- A team may declare to punt on any down. After such announcement the ball must be punted. If a team declares to punt the ball and then wishes not to, a time-out will be charged for this change of decision.

### **FOULS AND PENALTIES**

- Players may not commit any of the following personal fouls:
  1. Punch, strike, strip, steal or **attempt** to steal the ball from a player in possession.
  2. Trip, clip, or hurdle any player.
  3. Contact an opponent who is on the ground, or after the ball is declared dead.
  4. Throw the runner to the ground.
  5. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player or lower the shoulder.
  6. Commit any unnecessary roughness.
  7. Tackle a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
  8. Roughing the passer.
  9. Stiff arming
  10. Pulling the flag of an opponent that does not have the ball or before he /she has the ball.

### **SCREEN BLOCKING**

- Screen blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have their hands and arms at their sides or behind their backs.
- A screen blocker cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact.
- The defense must go around the offensive blocker.
- The offensive blocker cannot lean or use hips to block a defensive player.
- If a player wishes to block for a teammate who is advancing the ball, the blocker may run alongside them until a defensive player comes within approximately 1 stride of the blocker. At that point the blocker must stop running and hold their position without initiating any contact.

### **THE FLAG BELT**

- All shirts must be tucked in and are not permitted to hang over the flag belt.
- Should a player lose their flag belt legally or illegally during a down and then should that player gain possession of a live ball, that player will be down when a legal tag (one hand touched by the defense) is made.
- If a player's belt is illegally secured, a personal foul will be given and the player is disqualified. If this occurs during a touchdown, the team will receive the penalty and the touchdown will not be awarded.

### **GUARDING THE FLAG**

- Runners shall not guard the flag by using any part of the body or ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt.

### **CONDUCT/SPORTSMANSHIP**

- Fighting and unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and are grounds for the entire team and all its members being dropped from the league and/or from Intramural Sports. Any team whose members leave the bench will result in the entire team being suspended for at least the semester.

- Any abusive language, physical gestures and untimely or inappropriate questioning of calls directed at any intramural staff, participant or spectator is grounds for ejection. Team technicals may be given and team captains are therefore responsible for controlling their respective benches.
- Pre and post-game harassing of any intramural staff, participant or spectator, as well as any unsportsmanlike conduct or lack of cooperation, is grounds for program penalty, suspension or expulsion.
- The Intramural Supervisor has the ability to award penalties and/or ejections to any Intramural Participant or Spectator at any point in time.
- Only captains may address the intramural staff on matters of interpretation and discussion.
- Teams are required to clean up after themselves and keep the intramural playing area clean. Failure to do so can impact your sportsmanship rating.
- **Teams must average no less than a 3.0 sportsmanship rating. Failure to do so will result in expulsion from the post-season tournament.**

### **TOURNAMENT SCHEDULES**

- Teams are considered ineligible for the post-season tournament for the following reasons:
  - Accruing one Forfeit.
  - Accruing two Honest Effort Forfeits (HEF).
  - Receiving less than a 3.0 sportsmanship rating average.
- Post-season tournament schedules will be posted the last week of the regular season.

### **CO-REC CLARIFICATIONS**

All Standard Intramural Rules listed above will also be used for Co-Rec Flag Football. Please note that as of Fall 2019, Open and Closed plays have been eliminated from Co-Rec football.

**Forfeit Score: 19-0**

**Needed to Start for EO: 7**

**Needed to Start for CR: 8, with 4 of a different gender**

**Minimum to Start for EO: 5 players**

**Minimum to Start for CR: 6, with 2 of a different gender**

**HEF: 3 players**