

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

Revised August 2025

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.
- **SHORTS WITH POCKETS ARE NOT ALLOWED**
- 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 Flag Football.
- **No Buff OneCard or Government issued ID = No Play!** All intramural participants are required to have either their Buff OneCard or Government issued ID with them at **EVERY** intramural event. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

FORFEITS

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 will forfeit to their opponent, be assessed a fee, and become ineligible for playoffs.

- **Teams who forfeit will have all of their members suspended until the forfeit fee has been paid. The forfeit fee will be \$30.**
- The captain of the team will be emailed a notification of the forfeit fee. Teams can pay the forfeit fee online (Link) or at the guest services desk at the Student Recreation Center.
- Once the fee has been paid teams will bring their receipt to the IM Sports office to be reinstated. Any team that forfeits a second time will be automatically removed from the league for the remainder of the season.
- 10-Minute Grace Period: If one team is present and ready to play, they can choose to grant their opponents a 10-minute grace period.
 - The game clock will start at the original start time.
 - If the required minimum number of players arrives within 10 minutes, the game will be played and recorded as an official game.
 - The waiting team will be given a point for every minute they wait.

- If neither team has the required number of players at the scheduled contest time, both teams will be given 10 minutes to complete their team.
 - No scoring advantage will be given to either team in this case.
- Teams that have a second forfeit will be assessed an additional forfeit fee and dropped from the league.

Defaults

If your team is unable to make a regular season game, your team captain must email the Intramural Office at imsports@colorado.edu by 2:00 pm the day of your scheduled game, and by no later than 2:00 pm on the Friday preceding a Sunday game time. This will result in a default and keep your team from being assessed a forfeit fee.

Teams that default a second game in a season will be treated as a forfeit and be given a forfeit fee.

ELIGIBILITY

The following people are eligible for participation in Intramural Sports:

- Students: All **full fee-paying** students are eligible to participate in the Intramural Sports Program. Graduate students who opt out of paying Recreation Center fees and who are not members of the Recreation Center are not eligible to participate in Intramurals.
- Faculty, Staff, and Alumni Members: All faculty, staff, and alumni members that have a Recreation Center Membership are eligible to participate in the Intramural Sports Program.
- Part-Time Students and Continuing ED: All **full-fee** paying part-time and continuing education students or part-time and continuing education students who are members of the Student Recreation Center are eligible to participate in the Intramural Sports Program. Part-time and continuing education students who opt out of paying Recreation Center fees and are not members of the Recreation Center are not eligible to participate in Intramurals.
- Student/Faculty/Staff Spouses: Spouses of eligible undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and/or staff members who have a valid Recreation Center Membership are eligible to participate in Intramurals.
- The minimum age to participate is 15 years old.
- Miscellaneous: All other persons who have a valid Recreation Center Membership (minimum monthly membership that is active) are eligible to participate in the Intramural Sports Program.
- [Link to Rec Membership page](#)

*****All participants must present their Buff OneCard or any government-issued photo identification at every game to check-in. *****

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.
- A Co-Rec team consists of eight players on the field, with four players of a different gender. A minimum of five players are needed at game time to start the game, with at least two players of a different gender.
- 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 with bills or knots, watches, headphones, or any sort of jewelry.
- Braces or casts are only allowed if deemed safe by the Intramural Supervisor on site. No open metal braces will be allowed.
- Teams are required to wear shirts of the same color. 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.
- **Tear-away pants, pants/shorts with pockets, belt loops, belts or exposed drawstrings are NOT allowed.**
- 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 and the hood has been tucked in.
- 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 two minutes 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 one, 30-second timeout 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 their 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 the individual(s) involved in the 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 will be called dead immediately.

- 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.

ONSIDE CONVERSION

- A team can elect for an onside conversion at any point in the second half after a touchdown unless the team is leading by 19 points or more after the score.
- After a score the official will ask the captain whether they would like to go for a Onside conversion following the try. If the decision is changed a time-out will be charged to the team.
- The conversion will take place on the 20-yard line. If the conversion is successful, the offensive team will retain possession on their 30-yard line. Unless moved by penalty.
- If the conversion is unsuccessful the defending team will receive possession of the ball on their opponent's 30-yard line. Unless moved by penalty.
- Onside conversions are considered dead when the offensive team converts, the defense secures possession, or the ball becomes dead by rule.

MERCY RULE

- If a team is ahead by 19 points or more at the two-minute mark.

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 in the same direction in time. 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 is 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 their 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

- The snapper is the only player required to be on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the center has placed their 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 toward the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. If a player does go in motion toward the line of scrimmage, 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 they 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.
- After receiving the snap the ball must be punted immediately in 1 continuous motion.
- Players not kicking on the kicking team may not move until the ball has been kicked.
- 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 until it has come to rest and does not contact a player from either team in which case it will become dead.
- A team may declare to punt on any down. After such an 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:

- Punch, strike, strip, steal or **attempt** to steal the ball from a player in possession.
- Trip, clip, or hurdle any player.
- Contact an opponent who is on the ground, or after the ball is declared dead.
- Throw the runner to the ground.
- Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player or lower the shoulder.
- Commit any unnecessary roughness.
- Tackle a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
- Roughing the passer.
- Stiff arming
- 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. Contact must be made to call Flag Guarding.

CONDUCT/SPORTING BEHAVIOR

We will be using a "2, 3, 4" method of determining eligibility for all leagues and major tournaments. The following will be in effect for the activity's season:

- The accumulation of **TWO (2)** unsporting conduct fouls in a game will result in the ejection of the individual from the game, and procedures outlined in the "Ejections" section.
- The accumulation of **THREE (3)** total unsporting conduct fouls during an activity's season will result in the dismissal of the individual from the activity for the remainder of its season.

The accumulation of **FOUR (4)** unsporting conduct by a team will result in the forfeiture of the contest.

- The accumulation of **FIVE (5)** total unsporting conduct fouls by the team's participants during an activity's season will result in the dismissal of the team from the activity for the remainder of the season.

**Unsporting totals rollover to playoffs*