The rules for UC Irvine Intramural Flag Football are derived from the NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation rulebook with the following exceptions. The current NIRSA Flag Football Rules Book will apply in all cases not specifically covered below. Copies of the NIRSA rules are available at www.nirsa.org.

I. Eligibility

A. All participants are subject to Campus Recreation Eligibility Rules that are outlined in the Intramural Sports Participant Handbook.
B. All players must present a valid UCI Student ID OR Driver’s license in order to check in for a game.
C. Players may not participate on two or more teams in any division and in the same sport during the Intramural season. However, players may play in one CoRec league and in one Men’s/Women’s league concurrently.
D. A player must have played in a regular season game to be eligible for playoffs. There will be no on-site additions to a team’s roster once playoffs have begun. Please contact the Director of Intramural Sports with any roster questions.

II. The Game

A. The game shall be played between two teams of seven players each.
B. Prior to the game the captains will meet with the officials for the coin toss.
   1. The winner of the coin toss will have the option of offense, defense, designating the side of the field the team wants to defend, or to defer choosing until the second half.
   2. The team starting on offense will start from their 14-yard line.
   3. Teams will switch sides between halves.
   4. After the end of every score, the opposing team will start from their 14-yard line.
C. If tied, all games will have an overtime period.

III. Players, Substitutions and Fans

A. A team must have a minimum of six players to start a game.
B. Games will start on time. A team with less than the minimum number of players to start the game will be given a forfeit loss. **Teams are given a 5-minute grace period to field the minimum number of players required to start a game.** The game will begin once the minimum amount of players has arrived for each team. If a team does not have the minimum amount to start the game at game time, that team will automatically move down to a “2” for sportsmanship rating, and cannot achieve higher than a “3” rating for that game.
C. Each team shall designate to the officials a captain. The captain will be the only player to address the officials on matters of interpretation or to obtain essential information.
D. Substitutions can only be made during a dead ball period.
   1. An incoming/outgoing substitute may only enter/exit the sideline directly from his/her team area prior to the ball being snapped.
   2. All substitutes entering the game must be within 15 yards of the snap location prior to the ball being snapped. Once within this distance, a player may line up any distance away from the ball, but still within the playing field lines.
   3. **PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION – 5 YARDS (from previous spot if Dead Ball; from succeeding spot if Live Ball)**
E. Fans, spectators, or coaches may not enter the field during the game. They will be asked to leave the premises if they fail to comply with the rules and polices stated by Campus Recreation.

IV. Uniforms, Equipment, Game Ball and Field

A. Each member of the team must wear the same color t-shirt which is specified on the Team Schedule page. Any person wearing a different colored shirt will not be allowed to participate.
B. Players may not wear pants or shorts that have belt loops, pockets, or an exposed drawstring.

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C. Shirts must be long enough so they remain tucked in the pants or shorts. It must remain tucked in at all times.
D. NO JEWELRY IS ALLOWED. Any participant wearing jewelry will be asked to remove it prior to that start of the game. If a player refuses to remove said jewelry, he/she will not be allowed to participate.
E. Any metal cleats or tips with exposed metal are illegal. Players wearing illegal footwear may not enter the game.
F. Athletic shoes must be worn at all times.
G. No pads or braces may be worn above the waist unless wrapped in a soft material.
H. Leg and knee braces made of hard unyielding material must be covered on both sides at all times.
I. No baseball caps or other rigid headwear. Bandanas with knots are prohibited.
J. Towels may not be attached at the player’s waist.
K. Players may carry a playbook inside their clothing as long it is not made of an unyielding material. Playbooks may also be worn outside the clothing on a wrist band.

1. PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT – UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – 10 YARDS

L. The first downs are achieved by crossing the “zone line to gain.” Zone lines are 20 yards apart.
M. There will be a 25-second play clock from when the ball is signaled ready for play by the Head Official.

V. Timeouts, Game Length and Overtime Procedure

A. Each team is allowed THREE 60-second timeouts for the entire game.
B. Timeouts not used may not be carried over to overtime. Each team will receive one timeout for the entire overtime period.
C. Each game shall be 40 minutes divided into two 20-minute halves.
D. The game clock will run continuously for the first 19 minutes of the first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half (except on timeouts).
E. Two-Minute Warning – During the final minute of the first half and the final two minutes of second half, the clock will stop after each of the following situations:
   1. Incomplete Pass – starts on the snap.
   3. Penalty and Administration – depends on the previous play. (Exception: following delay of game, clock starts on the ready whistle).
   4. Touchdown – starts on the succeeding snap after the try.
   5. Team Time-out – starts on the snap.
   6. First down – depends on the previous play.
   7. Official’s Time-out – starts at the referee’s discretion.
   8. Touchback – starts on the snap.
F. There will be a 25-second play clock from when the ball is signaled ready for play by the Head Official.
G. All games ending in a tie, during both regular season and playoffs, will follow NIRSA OVERTIME PROCEDURES.
H. All overtime periods will be played into the same end zone, which is selected by the officials at the beginning of overtime.
I. The team on offense will start with the ball at the 10-yard line and will have four downs to score a touchdown.
J. If the defense intercepts a ball and runs it back for a touchdown, the game is over.
K. If the defense recovers the fumble at the 10-yard line and does not touch the ground, the defense will take over at the 10-yard line and have four downs to score.
L. If the game is still tied at the end of the overtime, a second overtime period will take place. The team who started on offense first will start on defense in the second overtime period.
M. Teams are allowed one timeout for the entirety of overtime. Timeouts not used in the regular game will not be carried over.
N. The overtime periods will continue until a winner is declared.
O. The overtime procedure will be used in all divisions with some modifications in the CoRec and Housing leagues.

VI. Scoring, Onside Kicks, and Mercy Rule

A. A touchdown is worth 6 points.
B. Extra points: From the 3-yard line is worth 1 point, from the 10-yard line is worth 2 points, and from the 20-yard line is worth 3 points.
C. A safety is worth 2 points.
D. During an extra point, if a defensive player intercepts the ball, the play will be blown dead immediately and the try will be over.

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E. **Onside Kick** – On all scoring plays in the second half, after attempting the Try (whether successful or unsuccessful) and if still trailing by any amount, the scoring team can elect for an "onside kick." Once the Team A captain elects for an onside kick, he/she may change the decision only when a Team A or Team B charged time-out is taken. If the team elects for the onside kick they will receive one attempt, similar to a conversion, from the 20-yard line.
   a. If the play results in Team A converting the attempt, Team A will receive possession of the ball at their own 14-yard line to begin a series.
   b. If the play does not result in Team A converting the attempt, Team B will receive the ball at their own 34-yard line to begin a series.
   c. All penalties will be enforced as if they occurred during a Try. The clock will operate as if this play is a Try.
   d. No points can be scored during an onside kick attempt.

F. Once a player scores a touchdown, an official shall remove the flag belt to ensure equipment is legal.

G. For Men's, Women's, and Housing leagues, if a team is up by 19 or more points with two minutes left in the second half, the game will end. In CoRec, if a team is up by 25 or more points with two minutes remaining in the second half, the game will end.

**VII. Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out of Bounds**

A. **DEAD BALL:** A live ball becomes dead when an official sounds the whistle or declares it dead:
   1. When the ball goes out-of-bounds or when it touches the ground (exception: Refer to Section 7, Article 8-i).
   2. When any part of the ball carrier's person other than the hand or foot touches the ground.
      
      NOTE: The ball carrier may contact the ball to the ground and the ball will remain live as long as the ball carrier maintains possession of the ball and as long as no other body parts other than the foot or hand are in contact with the ground. The ball is considered to be part of the hand.
   3. When a touchdown, touchback, safety, or try for point is made.
   4. When a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
   5. When a backward pass or fumble by a player touches the ground, this includes a snap.
      
      **EXAMPLE:** On protected scrimmage kicks, the ball will be considered dead if it hits the ground at any time after the snap and before it is kicked.
      
      **NOTE:** Backward passes and fumbles may be caught in flight, in-bounds by any player and advanced.
   6. When a ball carrier has a flag belt removed legally by a defensive player.
   7. When a ball carrier is legally touched with one hand below the shoulders once the flag belt is no longer attached.
   8. A muffed scrimmage kick is dead when it strikes the ground.
      a. When the kicking team touches a scrimmage kick, the receiving team can take possession at the point of first touching by the kicking team.
      
      **NOTE:** A scrimmage kick that falls to the ground untouched will remain alive until the ball comes completely to rest or breaks the plane of R’s goal line.
   9. When an inadvertent whistle occurs.

B. **BALL BLOWN DEAD (Inadvertent whistle):** In flag football, it is not uncommon for a play to be mistakenly blown dead. In these cases, the offensive team shall have the option of replaying the down or accepting the ball at the spot where it was blown dead. On loose balls such as a pass in flight, the down must be replayed. After a change of possession, the team in possession at the time the ball is blown dead shall have the option of accepting the play or replaying the down.

C. **INBOUNDS SPOT:** If the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, the ball shall be placed at that approximate spot. If the ball becomes dead in a side zone, place the ball at the nearest hash mark at the corresponding yard line.

**VIII. Kicking the Ball**

A. There will be no kickoffs at any time.

B. On fourth down, the team on offense will have the option of going for it or punting the ball. Either choice must be announced to the Head Official.

C. When lining up for a punt, **the offense must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage**, much like any offensive play.

D. At no time can any player, offense or defense, enter the neutral zone until the ball has been kicked.

E. The kicker, after possessing the snap, must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. **(PENALTY – Illegal Procedure – 5 yards)**
   1. There are no “fake punts” allowed. Once a punt is declared, the ball must be kicked unless a timeout is taken by either team.

F. If the ball hits the ground at any time after the snap and before it has been kicked, it is ruled dead at that spot.

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G. A ball that is snapped that lands in the end zone or is snapped out of the back of the end zone will be ruled a safety.
H. When a punt breaks the plane of the receiving team’s goal line, it is a touchback.

IX. **Snapping, Handing, and Passing/Catching the Ball**

A. **The offensive team must have at least one player on the line of scrimmage at the snap.** The one player must have at least one foot on the line of scrimmage. **(PENALTY – Illegal Formation – 5 yards)**

B. A catch is the act of establishing player possession of a live ball which is in flight, and first contacting the ground inbounds. Sideline cones are considered out-of-bounds.
   1. If one foot first lands inbounds and the receiver has possession and control of the ball, it is a catch even though a subsequent step or fall takes the receiver out-of-bounds.

C. **FORWARD PASS: Any member of the passing team is an eligible receiver.** All forward passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass per down is permitted.

D. **BALL IN PLAY:** A team gets 25 seconds to put the ball in play after it is signaled ready for play by the referee. **(PENALTY – Delay of Game – 5 yards)**

E. The snapper need not have his/her shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage, or snap the ball between his/her legs in order for the snap to be legal.
F. Ball must be snapped to a player at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage.
G. The snapper may not snap the ball to him/herself.

H. The ball must be snapped in one continuous motion from the ground.
   1. Any violation of Section 9, J-L: **(PENALTY – Illegal Snap – 5 yards)**
I. A team may legally spike the ball to prevent loss of time in the final two (2) minutes of each half.
J. **LEGAL POSITION:** Anytime on or after the ball is marked ready for play, each offensive player must momentarily be at least 5 yards inbounds before the snap. **(PENALTY – Illegal Formation - 5 yards)**

X. **Offense and Defense**

A. **Offensive Screen Blocking**
   1. The offensive screen block shall take place without contact.
   2. The screen blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back.
   3. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player’s screen is illegal. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards)**
   4. It is possible for some incidental, legal contact to occur, but all attempts should be made to avoid contact.

B. **Defense**
   1. **DEFENSIVE RESTRICTION:** Defensive players may not use their hands on blockers. They must attempt to avoid blockers. Incidental contact with the hands will be allowed, but should the defender gain an advantage by use of the hands, he/she will be penalized. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards)**
   2. Attempting to steal, punch or strip the ball from a player is illegal. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards)**
   3. Holding, including grabbing of a runner’s shirt, or pushing a runner is illegal. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards)**
   4. Any player tackling an opponent will be ejected from the game. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards; Ejection)**
   5. The swim maneuver where contact is made with the opposite hand on the lower part of the body is prohibited and shall be deemed illegal. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards)**

C. **Running With the Ball**
   1. Guarding of the flag belts with any part of the body to avoid being de-flagged is illegal. Please note contact must occur and the flag belt not pulled for a penalty to have taken place. **(PENALTY – Flag Guarding – 10 yards from the spot of the infraction)**
      a. This includes “stiff arming,” “dipping elbows/shoulders, pushing hand away, using ball as a blocking device, etc.
   2. A player may not dive, run into an opponent or lower their head and shoulders, causing contact. He/she must be in control of his/her body at all times, and should always attempt to avoid contact with a defensive player. **(PENALTY – Personal Foul – 10 yards)**
   3. Diving and spin moves are allowed, but the player must maintain control and not charge into a defender, or a Personal Foul penalty may be assessed.
XI. Quarterback

A. In Men’s and Women’s leagues, the Quarterback may cross the line of scrimmage on a running play. In CoRec, a female Quarterback may cross the line of scrimmage on a running play, however a male Quarterback cannot.
B. Defensive players may not push, pull, hold, tackle, trip, or hit the Quarterback while he/she is attempting to throw or has released a pass attempt (Penalty – Roughing the Passer – 10 yards from Previous Spot, AFD).

XII. False Start/Encroachment

A. All players on the offensive line must remain motionless for one second before the snap. Any player(s) moving before the snap will be deemed illegal. (Penalty – False Start – 5 yards)
B. Only one player may be in motion moving parallel to the line of scrimmage before the snap. A player in motion moving towards the line of scrimmage, or multiple players in motion at the same time, is illegal. (Penalty – Illegal Motion – 5 yards)
C. Any defensive player crossing the neutral zone prior the snap will be deemed illegal, and the play will be stopped immediately. (Penalty – Encroachment – 5 yards)

XIII. CoRec Rule Modifications:

A. NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Eight players (four men and four women) constitute a team. Teams with seven players shall be four men and three women or four women and three men, and seven player are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game may be continued with six players as long as the team has a chance to win. (Penalty – Illegal Participation – 10 yards.)
B. THE BALL: The regular, intermediate, youth or Junior size football shall be used in CoRec play.
C. MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS: The offensive team must have at least one player on its scrimmage line at the snap. (Penalty – Illegal Procedure – 5 yards.)
D. MALE TO MALE COMPLETION: During the offensive team’s possession there may not be 2 consecutive legal forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule also applies to a 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. (Penalty – Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male-to-male completed forward pass is released, LOD) Any pass caught simultaneously by male and female teammates is considered a female reception.
   1. Any foul, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the next legal forward pass completion is “open” or “closed.” The term “open” means any player may complete a forward pass to any other player. The term “closed” means a male player may NOT throw a forward pass completion to any other male player.
E. MALE RUNNER: An offensive male runner cannot advance the ball through Team A’s scrimmage line with possession of the ball. There are no restrictions: during a run by a male runner once the ball is possessed beyond the Team A scrimmage line; during a run by a female runner; and after a change of possession. (Penalty – Illegal Procedure – 5 yards from Previous Spot)
F. ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS: If a female passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver behind the Team A scrimmage line and he runs beyond this scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass. (Penalty – Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards from the spot of the pass, LOD)
G. MERCY RULE: If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the Referee announces the 2-minute warning for the second half, the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last two minutes and that score creates a point differential of 25 or more points, the game shall end at that point.
H. TOUCHDOWN VALUE: If a female passer, female receiver, or female runner scores a touchdown, the point value is 9 points.

XIV. Playoff Requirements and Seeding

A. In order to determine playoff qualification, the intramural sports staff will use the following guidelines:
   1. Win/loss record will determine final regular season standings. Teams that finish in 1st and 2nd place in their division will participate in the “A” playoffs, and teams that finish in 3rd and 4th place in their division will participate in the “B” playoffs. Sportsmanship criteria must still be met. Please refer to the Intramural Sports Participant Handbook for full tiebreaker procedures.
      a. Any game that is defaulted by a team will count worse than a loss for that defaulting team’s record for seeding purposes.
      b. Any game that is forfeited by a team will count worse than a default for that forfeiting team’s record for seeding purposes.
   2. An average sportsmanship rating of 2.5 or better by the end of the season. This average must be maintained throughout playoffs. If a team has worse than a 2.5 average, they cannot make playoffs.
B. A player must have played in a regular season game to be eligible for playoffs. There will be no on-site additions to a team’s roster once playoffs have begun.

XV. Enforcement of Penalties

5 Yard Penalties:
1. Delay of Game
2. False Start
3. Encroachment (10 yards for 2 or more consecutive encroachments by the same team)
4. Illegal Procedure
5. Illegal Motion
6. Illegal Shift
7. Illegal Snap
8. Illegal Formation
9. Illegal Forward Pass*
10. Illegal Backward Pass*
11. Intentional Grounding*
12. Illegal Substitution
13. Failure to wear required equipment
14. Illegal Advancement
15. Helping the Runner

10 Yard Penalties:
1. Illegal Contact
2. Illegal Participation
3. Offensive Pass Interference
4. Defensive Pass Interference
5. Roughing the Passer^*
6. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
7. Sideline Interference
8. Illegal Equipment
9. Kick Catch Interference
10. Holding
11. Flag Guarding
12. Illegal Batting
13. Illegal Kicking
14. Illegally Secured Flag Belt*

*Loss of Down Fouls:
1. Illegal Forward Pass
2. Illegal Backward Pass
3. Intentional Grounding
4. Illegally Secured Flag Belt (by offense)
5. Illegal Male Reception (CoRec)

^Automatic First Down Fouls:
1. Roughing the Passer
2. Illegally Secured Flag Belt (by defense)