

## Hill Country Indoor Adult Flag Football Playing Rules

### General Information

- 1) The team captain and all players are responsible for all information contained in the Playing Rules, HCI Code of Conduct, and the HCI Flag Football webpage.
- 2) Hill Country Indoor Flag Football is governed by the National Intramural/Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) playing rules and any modifications outlined in this document.
- 3) Prior to the scheduled game time, players should be signed in, warmed up, and ready to play.
- 4) Each team shall designate to the referee a team captain for the contest. The captain is required, at the end of each game, to verify the final score and that all participating players have been checked in.

### Players

- 1) All divisions play 5 on 5 flag football. The minimum required to play is 4 and each team may have a maximum of 15 players.
  - a. If injuries reduce a team to 3 players or less, the game may continue at the players' discretion.
  - b. A team reduced to 3 players or less via player ejections will automatically forfeit.

### Guest Players

- 1) All Guest Players must pay a \$20 drop-in fee to participate in games. Guest Players do not count toward the official team roster.
- 2) Guest Players may NOT play for 2 separate teams during the season.
- 3) New Guest Players may be used up to Game 4. After the 4<sup>th</sup> week of games, no new Guest Players may be used during games.
- 4) PLAYOFFS: Only Guest Players who have played in a regular season game with a team can play in the playoffs, but only with that team. Guest Players may only play on a team who has 5 players or less present at game. (Limit 2)
- 5) Any Guest Player infractions will result in a forfeit for the team committing the infraction.

### Equipment and Uniforms

- 1) Teams are required to wear similar colored jerseys or T-Shirts. Jerseys may not be tied in a manner that creates any type of knot. Jerseys will be provided at the field before your first game.
- 2) Teams must supply their own game ball. Teams may bring their own ball or checkout balls from Guest Services. Men shall use a regular sized ball.
- 3) Flag belts will be provided to each team on site. **Shirts must be tucked in and flag belts must be worn on the outside of all clothing with the clip in front! DO NOT TIE YOUR FLAGBELTS!**
- 4) Only athletic type soccer/football, running, court, or turf shoes with or without molded plastic or rubber cleats are allowed. All cleats must be less than ½ inch; metal/sharp plastic cleats are not allowed. All players must wear athletic shoes. No sandals, boots, bare feet, or five-finger shoes are allowed.

- 5) All team members must wear athletic apparel appropriate for football. Any apparel items with exposed metal or plastic (jeans, khakis, cargo shorts/pants, etc. with rivets, zippers, buttons) will not be permitted. Shirts may have short or long sleeves, but may not have hoods, zippers, or any other dangerous adornments. **Shorts may not have belt loops or pockets.**
- 6) No other types of headwear with dangerous material are allowed.
  - a. **Religious Headwear** – In the event a participant may not expose his/her uncovered head, the Director may approve a covering or wrap which is not abrasive, hard, or dangerous to any other player and which is attached in such a way it is highly unlikely to come off during play. Hard items including, but not limited to, beads, barrettes, and bobby pins are prohibited. **Participants must receive approval for headwear from the Director prior to participating.**
  - b. **Baseball Caps** – Baseball caps are permitted, but all caps must be worn with the bill facing behind the player.
- 7) **NO** casts/splints will be allowed under any circumstances. Players who wear knee brace with exposed metal, hard plastic, or metal hinges are required to cover it with padding or foam at least ¼ in thick.
- 8) Players may NOT wear any exposed jewelry of any type.
  - a. **Medical Alert and Medical Treatment Religious Medals** – Medical-alert and religious medals are not considered jewelry. Religious medals must be taped and worn under the uniform. Medical-alert medals must be taped and may be visible. The wearing of religious medal must be approved by the Director **prior** to participating in any contest. (A cross would not be considered a religious medal for the purposes of this rule.)
  - b. **Special Event Wristbands** – If participating in a special event that requires a participant to wear a wristband (ex. OU or ACL wristbands, it is the PLAYER'S responsibility to provide an acceptable method to cover the wristband. Acceptable methods are limited **ONLY** to the following: sweat bands or athletic tape.

### **The Playing Field**

- 1) Respective lines to gain (1<sup>st</sup> down) for each team is the 20.
- 2) The hips determine if a player crosses the line.
- 3) There will be no hash marks. The ball will be placed in the center of the field after each play.
- 4) The side and the end lines are out of bounds. Non-playing players, coaches, and fans must stay off the playing field at all times.
- 5) Two ball spotters (small plastic cones) will be used during play. The **ORANGE** cone marks the offensive line of scrimmage, and the **YELLOW** cone marks the defensive line. The ball spotters will always be 3 yards apart.

### **No-Show**

- 1) If a team is not present and ready to play at **the scheduled game time** (checked in, flags and jerseys on, minimum number of players on the field), the opposing team shall be given the ball, choice of goal, and the choice for the second half.

- 2) If a team is not present and ready to play by **3 minutes** after the scheduled game time, the ball is moved to the 19-yard line of the offense. 1<sup>st</sup> down, line to gain is the 20.
- 3) If a team is not present and ready to play by **6 minutes** after the scheduled game time, the ball is moved to the opponent's 10.
- 4) If a team is not present and ready to play by **9 minutes** after the scheduled game time, the offense is credited with 1 touchdown and a 3-point extra point (9pts).
- 5) If a team is not present and ready to play by **10 minutes** after the scheduled game time, **the game is declared a no-show win, 9-0, to the team ready to play.**
- 6) Should the game begin after the 9-point penalty has been assessed, the team arriving late shall be given the ball at their goal line as if they had been scored upon.
- 7) **Note:** If neither team is ready to play by the scheduled game time and it is less than 10 minutes past the scheduled start time, the teams will be permitted to play. The game shall begin with a coin toss and continue for the remaining time in the first half.
- 8) If a team has one no-show, they are not eligible for the playoffs. The team is also completely removed from the league unless they communicate to the Director that they intend to play their remaining games. Send an email to [blaine@hillcountryindoor.com](mailto:blaine@hillcountryindoor.com)

### **Starting the Game**

- 1) The referee will conduct a coin toss. The winner will select to defer his/her option until the second half, to start on offense or defense, or to defend a specific goal.
- 2) Each half of the game will begin with the ball placed on the goal line of the offense.

### **Timing**

- 1) Games shall consist of a 20-minute running clock first half, 3-minute halftime, 18-minute running clock second half, followed by a 10-play series (outlined later in this document).

### **Time-outs**

- 1) Each team shall be allowed (2) 30-second time-outs in the 1<sup>st</sup> half, and two (2) 30-second time-outs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. First half time-outs WILL NOT carry over to the second half. Time-outs may be called at any legal point in the game.
- 2) The 10-play series is considered a part of the second half.

### **Ten-Play Series**

- 1) A horn will sound signifying the end of the 18-minute second half and the beginning of the 10-play series.
- 2) At this point, the game shall continue with no interruption other than notification by the Referee that 10 plays remain. The team in possession at the horn shall retain possession of the ball and continue under normal rules.
- 3) Extra points and downs on which a non-loss of down penalty is accepted are not counted towards the 10-play total.

### **Mercy Rule**

- 1) A mercy rule goes into effect at any time after the 18-minute mark in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
  - a. Men's – 25 points
- 2) If at any time after the horn, including the 10-play series, the point spread is established, the mercy rule will be in effect and the game shall end.

### **Scoring**

- 1) All touchdowns are worth 6 points.
  - a. To be ruled a touchdown, the hips must be on or over the goal line.
  - b. The player scoring the touchdown must raise their arms so that the nearest official can de-flag the player.
- 2) Extra points follow the touchdown. The ball may be played from the 7, 10, or 20-yard line. If the try is successful the points are awarded as follows: 7-yard try, 1 point; 10 yard try, 2 points; 20 yard try, 3 points.
- 3) A fumble during the try results in a dead ball and may not be returned for points.
- 4) An interception during the try can be returned for points equal to that of the current try by the offense stated above.
- 5) When a safety is scored (2 points) the ball belongs to the scoring team at their goal line.
- 6) After any score, the ball shall be placed in play at the opposing team's goal line, unless moved by penalty.

### **Overtime**

- 1) There will be only one coin toss. Field captains will alternate choices if additional overtime periods are played.
- 2) The winner of the toss shall be given options of offense, defense, or direction.
- 3) Both teams will go the same direction in overtime.
- 4) Each team gets **one timeout**.
- 5) Each team will be given a series of 4 consecutive downs from the same goal line.
  - a. Each team will receive 4 plays regardless of a score. (ie. If team one scores on the first play of overtime, they will still receive 3 more plays from their goal line)
  - b. After the first team has completed their 4 play series by completing 4 plays or by turnover, the second team will begin their 4 play series in the same manner.
- 6) If the defense intercepts the ball, the ball is dead and the possession has ended.
- 7) Extra points will still be attempted in the normal manner by any team who scores a touchdown. Extra point attempts will not count as a play in the 4 play series.
- 8) Tie Breaker: If the score remains tied at the end of each team's 4 play series, the team that gained more yards during the 4 play series is the winner.
  - a. Example: Neither Team A or Team B scored a touchdown during their 4 play series. Team A ends their 4 play series at the opposing 10 yard line gaining a total of 30 yards. Team B ends their 4 play series at the opposing 9 yard line gaining a total of 31 yards. Team B wins the game.

## HOW TO PLAY FLAG FOOTBALL

### **Starting the Play**

- 1) The offense must snap the ball within 25 seconds after the Referee has blown the whistle to put the ball in play.

### **The Snap**

- 1) The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position of the ground with a **quick and continuous** motion of the hands.
  - a. Snappers do not have to pass the ball between the legs.
  - b. Both of the snapper's feet must be behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Following the ready whistle, no defensive players may break the plane of the restraining line until the snap.
- 3) No offensive player shall make a false start or any action that simulates the start of play.
- 4) The player receiving the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage.

### **Line of Scrimmage Sets**

- 1) All players are subject to motion, position, and illegal procedure rules.
- 2) The offense must have at least 1 player not in motion on their line of scrimmage at the snap.
- 3) One player may be in motion, but not forward motion, at the snap.
- 4) Following a huddle or shift, each offensive player must come to a full stop for one second before the snap.

### **Substitutions**

- 1) Players may substitute at any time between downs provided they are ready to play.

### **Zone-Line-To-Gain and New Series**

- 1) The offensive team has 3 consecutive downs to advance the ball across the next zone line-to-gain.
- 2) A new series is awarded:
  - a. To the offense if the line-to-gain is reached or a penalty which carries an automatic first down is accepted.
  - b. To the defense if the offense fails to reach the line-to-gain after three consecutive downs
  - c. To either team if a change of possession occurs during the down.

### **Hand-offs**

- 1) Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.
- 2) If the ball is tossed or there is airtime between the ball and the catch, then passing rules will apply.

## **Passing the Ball**

- 1) All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Backward passes are unlimited.
- 2) A **pass** is any exchange of the ball that involves airtime. This can be forward or backward, overhand pass, underhand pitch, or any other toss or flip of the ball.
- 3) Only one forward pass may be thrown per scrimmage down.
- 4) A pass is considered illegal when:
  - a. Either of the passer's feet are beyond the line when the ball leaves the hand.
  - b. The ball is intentionally grounded.
  - c. The passer catches their own untouched pass.
  - d. There is more than one forward pass during a scrimmage down.
  - e. A forward pass is thrown after a change in team possession.
- 5) A player may pass the ball backwards at any time. NOTE: Backward passes that hit the ground in play are dead at the spot. Backward passes that go out of bounds belong to the offense unless the ball goes out of bounds behind a goal line, and then the play will result in a touchback/safety.
- 6) The pass begins when the ball is released from the passer's hand. The ball is dead if the passer is de-flagged before the release.
- 7) The initial direction of a pass determines whether a pass is forward or backward.
- 8) 1-foot must touch the ground in-bounds for a catch to be legal.
- 9) If a forward or backward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players, the ball becomes dead. It is considered a completed pass and belongs to the offensive team.
- 10) Interceptions in a team's own endzone may be advanced out or downed for a touchback.

## **Ending the Play**

- 1) The ball becomes dead when:
  - a. The whistle blows (On inadvertent whistles, the team may replay the down or take the ball at the spot where the whistle was blown. If a forward pass is airborne when the whistle is blown, the pass is considered incomplete.)
- 2) It goes out of bounds.
- 3) Any part of the runner's body other than a hand or foot touches the ground. Ball in possession is considered part of the hand.
- 4) Any score occurs.
- 5) A forward or backward pass, fumble, or snap hits the ground (dead at the spot on backward pass, fumble, and snap).
- 6) The flag belt is removed or falls off.

## PENALTY ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION

**Note: Flag Football is NOT a CONTACT sport. However, incidental contact will occur and can be severe.**

### **Captains**

- 1) The captain's first choice of any penalty option shall be irrevocable.
- 2) Decisions involving penalties shall be made before any charged time-out is granted to either team.

### **Personal Fouls**

- 1) Players may not commit any of the following personal fouls:
  - a. Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
  - b. Trip, clip or hurdle any player.
  - c. Contact an opponent who is on the ground, or after the ball is declared dead.
  - d. Throw the runner to the ground.
  - e. Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player or lower the shoulder.
  - f. Commit any unnecessary roughness.
  - g. Tackle a runner by grasping or encircling with the hands or arms.
  - h. Roughing the Passer – applies only to the player throwing a legal forward pass behind the offensive line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer in ANY fashion, whether or not they touch the pass, it is roughing the passer. Contacting the ball while in the passer's hand is roughing the passer.
  - i. Aid the runner; grab, push, or pull a teammate with the ball.
  - j. Stiff-arm an opponent.
  - k. Guard flags by blocking them with the hands, ball or otherwise denying the defense the chance to pull the flag.
  - l. Use hands or body to block or hold an opponent.
  - m. Pulling the flag from an opponent who does not have the ball.
  - n. Tying the flag belt in a knot or any other tampering with the flag belt. This will also result in the player being ejected from the game.

### **Legal and Illegal Offensive Screen Blocking**

- 1) Offensive players may protect the runner or passer by screening.
- 2) The offensive screen block shall take place without contact, and the screener may maintain a position (moving or stationary) between the defensive player and the runner.
- 3) The screen blocker shall have their arms at their sides or behind their back. Any use of the arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A blocker may use a hand or arm to break a fall or retain balance. Players must remain on their feet before, during, and after screen blocking. No part of the screener's body, except their feet, may be in contact with the ground.
- 4) Defensive players must avoid the offensive player's screen block and may not use their arms or hands as a wedge to contact the offensive blocker.

- 5) Illegal contact between the blocker/rusher will be called against the player determined to have initiated the contact (similar to block/charge in basketball).
- 6) Offensive screen blocking beyond the line of scrimmage when a forward pass crosses the line of scrimmage is illegal.

**Pass Interference**

- 1) 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.
- 2) Players may not go through opponents to get to ball in flight.
- 3) Whether or not the pass is catchable has no effect on a pass interference call.
- 4) Defensive pass interference carries a 10-yard penalty in addition to an automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down for the offense.
- 5) Offensive pass interference carries a 10-yard penalty in addition to a loss of down.

**Types of Fouls**

- 1) Dead Ball Fouls
  - a. Occur during a dead ball either between downs or before the snap.
- 2) Live Ball Fouls
  - a. Occur during a live ball simultaneous with the snap and before the ball becomes dead by rule.

**Types of Plays**

- 1) Loose Ball plays are
  - a. Action during a legal forward pass
  - b. Action during the run or runs that precede(s) such legal pass or punt
- 2) Running plays are defined as any play not falling under the loose ball variety.

**Penalty Enforcement Terms**

- 1) Previous Spot – Where the ball was last snapped
- 2) End of the Run – Where the player loses possession of the ball via fumble or the ball becomes dead in player possession (flag pulled)
- 3) Succeeding Spot – Where the ball would next be snapped if a foul had not occurred
- 4) Spot of the Foul – Where the foul occurred

**Basic Penalty Enforcement Spots**

| Running Plays                     | Spot of Enforcement |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Foul by defense                   | End of run          |
| Foul by offense behind end of run | Spot of foul        |
| Foul by offense beyond end of run | End of run          |

| <b>Loose Ball Plays</b>                  | <b>Spot of Enforcement</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Foul by defense                          | Previous Spot              |
| Roughing passer w/ completion*           | End of run                 |
| Foul by offense behind line of scrimmage | Spot of foul               |
| Foul by offense beyond line of scrimmage | Previous spot              |

| <b>Loss of Down Plays</b>   |
|-----------------------------|
| Offensive Pass Interference |
| Intentional Grounding       |
| Illegal Forward Pass        |

**\*Roughing the passer with no completion is enforced from the previous spot**

- 1) Non-contact penalties result in a 5-yard penalty
- 2) Contact penalties result in a 10-yard penalty
- 3) Exception: All unsporting conduct are 10-yard penalties