4 on 4 Flag Football Rules

All rules not mentioned will be governed by the 2013-2014 NIRSA Football Rules Handbook. Coastal Carolina Intramural rules apply. Many of the rules for 4v4 are the same as 7v7 Flag Football. Here are the significant differences:

- The game shall be played between two teams of 4 players each on a rectangular field. Each team must have 3 players on the field in order to begin the game.
- The ball will be placed on the Team A (offense) 10-yard line to begin each half as well as after any Try, touchback or safety.
- In a series of 3 downs, the ball must be advanced forward past the next zone-line to gain in order for a new series of downs to be awarded. Yardage lines are considered part of the forward zone. There is no punting.
- Defensive players may only rush past the line of scrimmage if they begin at least 7 yards off the defensive line of scrimmage.
- The offensive team must have at least one player on their scrimmage line at the snap (the center).
- An offensive player cannot run the ball through the offensive line of scrimmage. There are no restrictions after a change of possession or once a legal forward pass has been caught beyond the offense's line of scrimmage.
- There must be a legal forward pass each down. The receiver must catch the ball beyond the offensive scrimmage line (no screen passes).
- The offense has seven (7) seconds to release the ball on a forward pass. If not, the referee blows the whistle and the ball is dead with a loss of that down. The ball will be placed for the next down at the previous spot.
- The mercy rule does not apply to 4 on 4 Flag Football.
- All fouls are penalized 5yds or 3yds instead of 10yds and 5yds, respectively.

Game, Field, Players, and Equipment

- 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.
- Pants or shorts with BELT LOOPS or POCKETS are prohibited.
- 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 in between the pucks before the snap.
- 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.
- The game shall be played between two teams of 4 players each on a rectangular field. Each team must have 3 players on the field in order to begin the game.
- The field is divided into 2 zones of 20 yards each and 2 end zones of 10 yards each and is 30 yards in width.
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 are subject to the rules.

The use of dangerous equipment is prohibited. Shoes must be worn; metal cleats are prohibited.

Men will use the regular size, NCAA or NFHS football, while women and co-rec may use either a regular or intermediate-size football. Officials will not handle the football, the offense is responsible for the ball at all times.

All forfeits will result in a score of 6-0 unless the team that did not forfeit is winning at the time of the forfeiture. If the winning team did not forfeit, the score shall stand as it is at the time of the forfeit.

The winner of the pre-game toss shall have the first choice of options: offense/defense, which goal to defend, or to defer the same choice until the second half.

Playing time and intermissions

A game shall consist of two halves with a two-minute intermission. Each half shall consist of 12 minutes with the clock stopping once at the one-minute warning of each half. The clock will run continuously for the first 11 minutes, stopping at the one-minute mark and afterwards for the following reasons:
- Penalties (may start on referee's ready-to-play whistle)
- Scores and changes of possession
- Incomplete passes/out of bounds
- First downs (until the ball is set in play by referee's ready to play whistle)
- Official and team time-outs

The ball will be placed on the Offense's 10-yard line to begin each half. After every score the ball will be placed on the new offensive team's 10-yard line with a first down, with the line to gain being the 20-yard line.

Each team is allowed one timeout per game including any overtimes. The clock will stop during time-outs.

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 don when it breaks. Penalty: Illegal substitution (5 yds)

The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play after referee signals "ready for play." Penalty: 3yds, Delay of Game.

A maximum of 9 players are allowed on the roster.

Ties will be broken by the following tie breaker procedure
- Each team will attempt to score by passing from the 3 yard line for 1 pt, from the 10 yard line for 2 pts or from the 20 yard line for 3 pts. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble, the attempt is over.

Definition of Playing Terms
o When the flag belt buckle is clearly "broken" 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 illegal
contact is made with the opposing team.
o The position of the ball when a player is de-flagged determines the spot
of the next line of scrimmage.
o 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,
hurdle, or run through a defensive player trying to remove the flag belt.
o When a runner loses his/her flag belt, either accidentally or inadvertently,
play continues. The de-flagging reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner
between the knees and shoulders.
o 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.

Ball in Play, Dead Ball, Out-Of-Bounds

o The ball is declared dead when the ball touches the ground: A) on a
fumble B) on a backward pass C) on an incomplete forward pass
o 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).
o It is illegal participation if, prior to a change of possession, an offensive
player goes out-of-bounds and returns during the down, unless blocked
out-of-bounds by an opponent. If a player is blocked out-of-bounds by an
opponent and returns during the down, he/she shall return at the first
opportunity. During the down, no player shall intentionally go out-of-
bounds and return. Penalty: 5 yards.

Series of Downs, Number of Downs

o In a series of 3 downs, the ball must be advanced beyond the next zone-
line to gain in order for a new series of downs to be awarded. Yard lines
are considered part of the forward zone.

Kicking the Ball

o There is no kicking in 4 on 4 Flag Football.

Snapping, Handling, and Passing the Ball

o The ball may be snapped between the legs or to the side of the snapper.
o The player who receives the snap must be at least 2 yards behind the
offensive scrimmage line. Direct snaps (QB under center) are always
illegal.
It is defensive pass interference if an eligible receiver is de-flagged prior to touching the ball on a forward pass attempt.

During the interval between downs, when 2 or more consecutive encroachments are committed by the same team, the penalty will be 5 yards for the second encroachment foul.

All players are eligible for a forward pass. The passer may pass from anywhere behind the line of scrimmage.

The passer shall not intentionally ground the ball in order to avoid a sack. Penalty: 3 yards and loss of down.

An offensive player may not advance the ball through its own scrimmage line (orange ball-spotter).

Scoring Plays and Touchbacks

A team is given the choice of going for 1, 2 or 3 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 passing from 3 yards = 1 point. B) By passing from 10 yards = 2 points; By passing from 20 yards = 3 points

The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can de-flag the player. If the clip is not broken 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: 5 yards from the previous spot and a loss of down.

After a safety is scored, the team that is awarded 2 points will automatically gain possession at their own 10-yard line. (No kick will take place)

Players’ Conduct

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: Illegal Contact; 5 yards from the end of the run

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: 5 yards and automatic first down, added on the end of the play (if positive yards have been gained), if not, 5 yards from the previous spot and automatic first down.

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. Penalty: 5 yards from the spot of foul.

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: 5 yards from spot.

Intentionally pulling or removing a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball by a defensive player is illegal. Penalty: 5 yards from spot.

There shall be no bumping, checking, or other intentional contact between a defender and an offensive pass receiver.

The third unsportsmanlike foul by the same team shall result in their forfeiture of the game.