Flag Football Rules
(Revised by Ricky Talman August 2012)

1. The Intramural Coordinator will make the final determination on all rules interpretations. Tiger Recreation reserves the right to add, delete, and revise rules periodically to insure fair play for all involved.

2. All Rules not covered below shall be found in the National Collegiate Flag and Touch Football Rules.

3. All players who are expected to compete throughout the course of the game must have their name on the score sheet. This needs to be turned into the intramurals office 24 hours prior to the competition that this player will compete. Except when the contest falls on Sunday or Monday, then the form must be turned in by 11 am the previous Friday. If this is not done the player will not be able to compete in the contest.

4. No pets are permitted on university property.

5. No alcoholic beverages are permitted. Any participant who is under the influence of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises.

6. The officials' and supervisors' authority and jurisdiction will be in effect in and around the field of play.

7. Any captain, player, or spectator ejected from a game for conduct reasons will be suspended for at least one game and must follow the ejection procedures listed in the TigeRec Official's Manual (see page 4 and page 7).

8. A mouthpiece is suggested, but not required.

9. All players must wear gym shoes or molded rubber cleats. No street shoes, bare feet, sandals, metal or posted cleats will be allowed.

10. No player may wear a towel.

11. No player may wear jewelry including, but not limited to watches, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and various body rings.

12. Each player must begin each play wearing one flag belt. The flag belt must be clipped in the front and must have one flag each dangling from the left side, right side, and back. Any player not wearing a flag belt at the time the ball is snapped shall be flagged for illegal player equipment. Any player who continues to wear the flag belt incorrectly after being warned shall be flagged for an illegal player equipment penalty. Any player caught with a flag belt that is tied in any fashion shall be ejected and an illegally secured flag belt penalty will be enforced. The player may be replaced on the field. Substitutes shall not be granted any extra time to receive flag belts from teammates coming off the field.

13. Free substitutions are allowed after each play.

14. All shirts, jackets, jerseys, and other clothing must be tucked completely in the pants.
15. Teams are required to be signed in before game time. Once game time has arrived, if a team does not have a sufficient number of eligible players the game shall be forfeited. Teams must have five players to start a game. Seven are allowed on the field at one time. Teams may finish a game with less than the required number of players (7).

16. The captains shall meet the officials before each game. A coin toss will occur. The winner of this toss has the following options: (1) elect to take the ball to start the first half. (2) Elect to play defense to start the first half. (3) Elect to defend a particular goal in the first half. (4) Defer choice to the second half. The other team shall then take the remaining option. To begin the second half, whichever team has the right to first choice will choose the take the ball, play defense or defend a particular goal. The other team shall then take the remaining option. Special notes: 1) Teams are not required to switch the directions to start the second half; 2) If the team winning the coin toss chooses to play defense to start the first half in stead of choosing to defer, that team will lose its right to first choice in the second half.

17. Playing time shall be 40 minutes, separated into two halves of 20 minutes. Half-time shall be 3 minutes. There will be a running clock for the entire first half, and the first 18 minutes of the second half. The last 2 minutes of the second half will follow NIRSA timing rules (similar to NCAA Football). Inside the last two minutes, the clock will stop on official and team timeouts, accepted and declined penalties, incompletion, out-of-bounds violations, changes in possession, and scores. The clock will not run on any one or two point conversion attempts in the last two minutes. The clock will continue to run on all fumbles, unless a change of possession occurs. The offense shall be allowed to attempt conversions with no time left on the game clock if they scored a touchdown on the last play of either half. The offense has the right to extend a half by one play if a defensive penalty occurred on the last play of the half. The clock will be stopped and not restarted until the next snap if a team is deemed to be illegally wasting time. In the case of overtime, there will be a 3-minute intermission prior to starting overtime. Should darkness threaten the completion of a game, periods can be shortened by mutual consent of the captains, the Official, and a supervisor.

18. Teams shall be granted three one minute timeouts per contest. Officials will notify teams of timeouts remaining for the game once a team has called a timeout. The clock shall continue to run if a team attempts to call a forth timeout in a game. Playoff overtime rules can be found in a later section.

19. Regular season games ending in a tie shall remain a tie after each team completes two offensive possessions in overtime.

20. The ball shall be placed on the 20-yard line to begin a half, touchback, after a safety, and after every touchdown, unless a dead ball penalty is enforced.

21. Once the signal has been given to start a play, the offense shall have 25 seconds in which to snap the ball. Failure to do so will result in a delay of game penalty. A delay of game penalty by the same team on consecutive plays in the same possession will result in a 10-yard penalty and a loss of down.

22. There shall be two lines of scrimmage, one for the offense and one for the defense. A disc or other object shall mark these lines, with one yard in between each object. No player may go beyond their respective line of scrimmage with any body part once the official has signaled that the lines are in good standing. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a false start or encroaching penalty. Teams may cross the lines of scrimmage without penalty before the official has signaled lines good.
23. The offense is required to have at least four players on the line of scrimmage. If the ball is snapped before at least four players are deemed to be on the line, an **infraction of scrimmage formation** penalty will be assessed. Should a team have more than four players on the line of scrimmage, they can send one or more players in motion, so long as the following rules are adhered to: (1) The team must maintain at least four players on the line at all times after the line is signaled good. (2) The team may not have two or more players in motion at the time the ball is snapped. (3) All players in motion must be at least 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

24. The center is not required to snap the ball between his/her legs. However, the snap must be made in one continuous motion, starting with the ball on the ground.

25. The individuals receiving the snap must be at least two yards behind the line of scrimmage. Failure will result in an **illegal snap penalty**.

26. No offensive player may be going in forward motion at the time of the snap. An **offensive player illegally in motion penalty** will occur.

27. Once the huddle is broken, no players are allowed to enter the field for either team. If the offense chooses not to huddle, then no player may enter the field after the lines are signaled good.

28. Once the ball is snapped, all players are allowed to go anywhere in-bounds.

29. Any snap, lateral, or dropped ball, which touches the ground, is dead at that point. The point at which it touches the ground shall be the line of scrimmage for the next play. If a team fumbles a ball in or out of its own end zone, a safely shall result. If a team fumbles a ball in or out of its opponent's end zone, a touch back will result.

30. Every member of the team in men and women's contests is eligible to catch a forward pass.

31. No more than one forward pass may be thrown on one play, regardless of the position of catches. Failure will result in an **illegal forward pass penalty** (also brings a loss of down).

32. The location of the passer's foot at the time a forward pass is released will determine whether an **illegal forward pass** occurred (also brings a loss of down).

33. A player may not intentionally throw a backward pass or fumble the ball out of bounds to conserve time or to avoid being downed. This will be penalized as an **intentional backward pass/fumble out of bounds**.

34. After the ball has snapped any offensive player who aides the ball carrier in advancing the ball will be called for a **helping the runner penalty**.

35. No player may go out of bounds under their own control; come back in, and be the first player to touch the forward pass. Failure will result in an **offensive player illegally in motion penalty**

36. Any player who verbally assaults the official continues to use inappropriate language after being warned, or exhibits any other behavior deemed inappropriate by the referee will be penalized with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. All unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are subject to ejection from the game.

37. Players only need to come down with one foot in bounds to legally catch a pass.
38. The only style of blocking allowed is screen blocking. Screen blocking is defined as legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body. Hands must be placed behind the back, across the chest, or directly in front of the body. Hands must maintain contact with the body. Elbows may not be outstretched. Hips, legs, and other body parts may not be use to obstruct the opponent. The blocker must remain in an upright position. Failure will result in an illegal offensive screen blocking penalty.

38. At no point may a player use their hands, arms, or any body part to initiate contact that gives them an advantage over an opponent. Failure will result in an unnecessary contact of any nature penalty or similar foul.

39. Tackling an opponent will result in an ejection. This is considered an unsportsmanlike ejection.

40. Deflagging of an opponent is only legal when the opponent has possession of the ball at the time of the deflagging attempt. Failure will result in an illegal flag belt removal penalty. Holding of any body part or article of clothing may not occur in the deflagging process. Failure will result in an obstructing or holding the runner penalty. If a ball carrier's flag belt has inadvertently fallen to the ground during the play, he shall be considered deflagged when an opponent touches the carrier with one hand between the shoulders and knees.

41. A ball carrier may not hurdle or leap into or over a player in a way that initiates contact. Failure will result in a hurdling (hurdle a player) penalty. Ball carriers are only permitted to dive into open space in an attempt to avoid contact. The ball carrier may not use any part of his/her body or the ball itself to obstruct the flag from the grasps of a defender. Failure will result in a flag guarding penalty. The ball carrier may not lower his/her head in an attempt to run over an opponent. Failure will result in an illegal contact penalty.

42. No defender may strip the ball carrier of the ball or touch the ball in any manner while the ball carrier has full possession. Failure will result in a strip or attempt to strip the ball penalty.

43. The passer may not be touched in any manner while attempting a pass or on the follow-through motion. Failure will result in a roughing the passer penalty.

44. Any deliberate contact with an opposing player before or after the ball is dead will result in a contact before/after the ball is dead penalty.

45. Stiff arming is NOT allowed; an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called and if warranted an ejection will result

46. Teams will be given four downs in which to gain enough yardages to score a touchdown or give them a new series of downs.

47. The offense has the responsibility of bringing the ball back to the line of scrimmage following each play.

48. When a team scores a touchdown, they have the option of attempting a one, two, or three point conversion. A one-point attempt shall be taken from the three-yard line. A two-point attempt shall be taken from the ten-yard line. A three-point conversion shall be taken from the twenty-yard line. Once the ball has been signaled ready for play on a conversion attempt, it cannot be changed to another point value unless the offense is charged with a timeout. If a penalty occurs on a conversion attempt and must be replayed, the point value cannot be changed. The team captain's decision shall be the official decision. All conversion attempts (1, 2 or 3 points) can be returned by the defense into the other end zone for two points. A defensive penalty on a successful conversion attempt shall be enforced at the start of the next possession. A defensive penalty on an unsuccessful conversion attempt shall result
in a retry with penalty yardage marked. An offensive live ball penalty will result in the try being no good. An offensive pre-snap penalty (delay of game/false start) will result in a retry with penalty yardage marked.

49. Whether a team elects to punt on any down, the location of the line of scrimmage will determine where the ball will be placed after the punt. If the offense has the ball inside their own 20-yard line, the defense will take possession at midfield. If the offense has the ball at or outside their own 20-yard line, the defense will take possession at its own 20-yard line.

50. There shall be a mercy rule in effect for all regular season contests and specific playoff contests. If a team is leading by 25 or more points with 10 minutes or less remaining, the game will be stopped. If a team is leading by 19 points or more with 2 minutes or less remaining, the game will be stopped. Exception: If the team in jeopardy of losing via mercy rule has possession at the time that one of the mercy rules go into effect, and the possession grants them a chance to come under the deficit needed to continue the contest, that team shall be allowed to complete their possession. If their possession results in bringing the margin of points close enough to avoid the mercy rule, then the game shall proceed until time expires or until the margin is no longer close to avoid a mercy ruling rule, which ever come first.

51. Should an inadvertent whistle be blown, the team with possession of the ball at the time the whistle shall have the following options: (1) replay the down (2) place the ball at the spot where it was blown dead and proceed with the next down (all penalties flagged on the play would still apply)

52. If a player is bleeding, the game must be stopped and the wound must be covered. All clothing covered in blood must be cleaned or removed. The player must sit out at least one full play after he/she leaves the game before being allowed back in. An injured player must sit out at least one full play id the game must be halted to attend to them.

53. Any live ball penalty committed on a ball carrier will be enforced from the spot of the foul. Offense has option of taking penalty or result of play.

54. Live ball penalties committed by the offense shall be enforced from the spot of the foul. Exception: Offensive pass interference and if a penalty occurred further downfield than the point where the play was whistled dead, the penalty shall be enforced from the end of the run.

55. Any defensive live ball unsportsmanlike conduct penalty shall be tacked on to the end of the play.

56. When both teams commit at least one live ball penalty on a play, the ball will be brought back to the previous line of scrimmage and the down replayed. Dead ball unsportsmanlike penalties that occur after the play will be assessed from the end of the run.

57. Teams are required to average a sportsmanship rating of “B” in the regular season in addition to having a sufficient won-loss record in order to qualify for the playoffs. Once in the playoffs teams must finish each game with at least a “B” sportsmanship rating to advance to the next round. Teams must earn a “B” sportsmanship rating in the championship game to win the championship. See the Official’s Manual for more information on sportsmanship ratings.

58. Playoff rules are as followed:

The mercy rule may be waivered in specific playoff contests. Teams will be made aware prior to each contest whether the mercy rule is still in effect.
Each team needs at least a C sportsmanship rating in each playoff game to advance to the next round, or win the championship.

59. Overtime rules are as follows (Similar to NCAA football rules):

There is no game clock, but the play clock is still in effect.

A coin flip shall take place at the beginning of the overtime period. The team that wins the coin flip has the following options: (1) Start the first overtime on offense, (2) Start the first overtime on defense, or (3) Play the entire overtime on a particular half of the field. The team that loses the coin toss will take the remaining option.

An overtime period is defined as a period in which each team gets at least one series of downs in which to score. Exception: If the team getting the ball first is intercepted and the defense returns the ball for a touchdown, or if any team is charged with a safety, the game is over.

If the game is still tied after the first overtime period, the teams will switch offensive and defensive roles in the second overtime period. (Ex: Team A starts the first overtime period on offense; Team B will start the second overtime period on offense) This rotation will continue until a winner is determined.

Each team will receive one timeout per overtime period. Timeouts will not carry over from regulation to overtime or from overtime period to overtime period.

The team taking the ball first will get the ball at the 10-yard line. They will have four downs to score a touchdown. No first downs will be granted.

After the first team finishes their possession, the second team will take over at the same 10-yard line and attempt to score the same amount of points or more points than the opposition.

After a touchdown, the offense will have the option of attempting a one, two, or three point conversion. They shall retain this right throughout all overtime periods.

This process will continue until a winner is determined.