

SUAC Condensed Flag Football NIRSA Rules

(Based on NIRSA Guidelines)

The SUAC follows the **NIRSA** (National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association) rules to ensure a safe and healthy recreational environment. NIRSA is a premier association of leaders in recreation and is used across the board in athletics. Below is a condensed version of the rules for SUAC play. All **Athletic Directors** and **Coaches** are required to read and understand these rules.

A complete set of NIRSA rules is available upon request.

1. Game Format

- **Quarters:** Four (4) quarters, 10 minutes each.
- **Switching Sides:** Teams switch sides after each quarter.
- **Two-Minute Rule:** At the 2-minute mark in the **2nd** and **4th** quarters, the clock stops on:
 - Incomplete passes
 - Out-of-bounds plays
 - Scoring plays
 - Penalty enforcement
 - Timeouts
- **Overtime:** No overtime during the regular season. Overtime is used only for playoffs and championship games.
- **Timeouts:** Each team gets **two (2) timeouts per half**. No carryover between halves.

2. Equipment & Safety

- **Flags:** “Triple threat” belts with three (3) flags. The belt must detach completely when deflagged. *No “pop” belts allowed.*
- **Clothing:** No shorts with pockets, belt loops, or unsafe attachments.
- **Footwear:** Cleats are permitted.
- **Mouth Guards:** Required for all players on the field.
- **Ball Size:**
 - Youth (Ages 12-14) Footballs
 - Junior (Ages 9-11) Footballs

3. Players

- **Team Size:** 7 players on the field per team.
- A team may start with 6 players but may not continue with fewer than 6.
- If a team drops to 5 players or less, the game cannot continue.

4. Field & Scoring

- **Dimensions:** 80 x 40 yards.
- **First Downs:** Line to gain every 20 yards; four (4) downs to reach a new first down.
- **Starting the Half / After Scores:** Ball placed at the 14-yard line (first down, 6 yards to reach the 20-yard line).
- **Extra Points:**
 - 1 point from the 3-yard line
 - 2 points from the 10-yard line

- If a turnover occurs during an extra point, the ball is dead. No points for defense.
- **Defensive Penalty on Scoring Play:** Offense may accept on the extra point attempt or on the ensuing kickoff (enforced half the distance from the 14 to start at the 20).

5. Offense Rules

- **Line of Scrimmage:** Only 1 player (center) required on LOS. Center may snap between legs or side snap.
- **Quarterback Position:** QB must be at least 2 yards behind center; no direct snaps.
- **Eligibility:** All offensive players are eligible to catch, run, or throw.
- **Forward Passes:** Only 1 forward pass behind LOS per play. Unlimited laterals allowed behind LOS.
- **Illegal Forward Pass:** 5-yard penalty from point of infraction + loss of down.
- **Dead Ball Penalties:** False start, illegal shift, snap infraction = 5 yards, repeat down.
- **Blocking:** Only stationary “pick” style allowed (arms in, no movement, no holding). Movement to impede defender is a foul.
- **Flag Guarding:** Only a penalty if contact is made by runner against defender attempting to pull flag.
- **Extending Ball:** Runner may extend ball for a first down or touchdown.
- **Fumbles:** If runner drops the ball and it hits ground = dead ball. If defense catches before it hits ground = turnover.
- **Spiking the Ball:** Illegal to spike to avoid deflagging (except inside final minute to stop clock).
- **Spinning:** Legal for the runner.
- **Offensive Charging:** Illegal contact by runner into defender’s body frame = 10-yard penalty from POI, repeat down.

6. Defense Rules

- **Encroachment:** No entering neutral zone before snap. 5-yard penalty, repeat down.
- **Pass Interference:** No deflagging receiver before catch. 10-yard penalty from LOS.
- **Rush Line:** Defense must rush from 5 yards behind LOS unless line to gain is within 5 yards. Always 1-yard separation from offense.
- **Stripping/Batting:** Defense may not intentionally knock ball loose from runner.

7. Special Teams

- **Punts:** Must be declared. Defense may not rush punter. Ball must be snapped normally.
- **Touchbacks:**
 - Any punt crossing goal line = touchback.
 - Fumble into or out of end zone = touchback (spot based on ball breaking plane, not where it touched ground).

 *These rules are a condensed version of NIRSA guidelines and are meant for quick reference. All officials, coaches, and athletic directors are responsible for knowing and enforcing these rules during SUAC play.*