



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Intramural Sports

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES – FALL 2024

General Rules Adapted for Intramural Play; in other cases, rules of the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association will be in effect.

1. THE GAME: The game shall be played between 2 teams of 7 players each. Four players are necessary to start a game. Games may continue with less than four players if a team has a chance to win. Players must be prepared to show a valid WyoOne identification card. Each team captain is responsible for ensuring that each player on his/her team is legibly signed in on the score sheet, with the proper W number, and is an eligible player. If an ineligible player is on a team, the team may be subject to forfeiture of the contests and all contests in which the ineligible player participated.

PENALTY (playing with more players): *Illegal participation – 10 yards*

2. THE FIELD: The field will be approximately 80 yards long and 40 yards wide. The field will consist of 4 zones, each 20 yards in length. Sidelines and end lines are out-of-bounds.

3. EQUIPMENT

- a.) Men shall use a regular size football and women shall use a junior size football. Players can use their own football, permitted to fit the sizing criteria. The offense is responsible for choosing what ball they want to use, permitted they fit the sizing criteria.
- b.) It is recommended that players wearing glasses use some form of safety glass or a protective mask over the glasses.
- c.) Shorts must be a different color than the flags.
- d.) Each player must wear a one-piece belt, free of knots, at the waistline with 3 flags permanently attached, one flag on each side and one in the center of the back (provided by the IM office). Flags must be hooked on the outside of clothing.

PENALTY: Live ball foul, failure to wear required player equipment – 5 yards from previous spot. *A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play until the equipment problem is corrected.*

e.) Illegal equipment:

- headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots
- jewelry
 - **NO JEWELRY WILL BE PERMITTED** in Intramural Flag Football. Jewelry includes earrings, wedding rings or bands, other rings, necklaces, bracelets, rubber bands, and metal barrettes. The only exception to this rule is a medic alert bracelet or necklace. In that case it must be taped down. If you refuse to remove your jewelry, you will not be allowed to participate. **TAPING OF JEWELRY TO THE BODY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. ALL THE JEWELRY MUST BE REMOVED PRIOR TO THE INTRAMURAL EVENT.**
- metal braces that are not padded or other hard or dangerous protective equipment
- metal cleats
- shirts that do not remain tucked in
- pants or shorts with any belts, belt loops, pockets, or exposed drawstrings
- exposed metal on clothes or person.
- towels attached to the player's waist.
- hand warmers worn around the waist.

PENALTY: Unsportsmanlike conduct – 10 yards (if found during the play)

4. START OF EACH GAME: Games will start at the specified time. If one team does not have enough to start the opposing captain may choose to take a forfeit win or to allow the team a 10-minute period to



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have enough players to start. If the 10-minute period is chosen, then the game clock will begin to run at the time it is chosen. Each captain is responsible for making sure all players are registered on FusionPlay and checked in. The game will begin with a coin toss or some other random method. The winner of the toss has the first choice of options in the first half, and the loser of the coin toss will have the first choice of options in the second half (unless the first team chooses to defer). The two options are to start on offense or defense or defer your option to the second half.

5. GAME TIME

- a.) Playing time will be 2 halves of 20 minutes each with a 5-minute half time. In case of an overtime period, there will be a 3-minute interval between regulation and overtime. Overtime will only occur during playoffs.
- b.) In case of inclement weather, playing time may be shortened. The Intramural Sports Staff reserves the right to delay or suspend the game.
- c.) The clock runs continuously **except for the last 2 minutes of the second half**. A two-minute warning will be given by the officials. The clock will begin at the snap. The back judge will keep the game time.
- d.) The clock stops during the last 2 minutes for a(n):
 - 1.) incomplete pass
 - 2.) out-of-bounds
 - 3.) score (restarts after extra point(s))
 - 4.) team time-out
 - 5.) first down (clock begins at ready)
 - 6.) penalty and administration (clock restart is dependent on the previous play (EXCEPTION: delay of game foul is accepted - clock restarts on the snap)
 - 7.) referee's time-out
 - 8.) touchback
 - 9.) change of possession
 - 10.) team attempting to consume time illegally (clock begins at ready)
 - 11.) first touch on a free kick or when the ball strikes the ground
 - 12.) inadvertent whistle (clock begins at ready)
 - 13.) either team awarded a new series following a legal punt

6. TIE BREAKING PROCEDURE (occurs only during tournament play)

In case of a tie, each team will be awarded 4 downs in which to score a touchdown, and if successful, one play to score an extra point. Procedure is as follows:

- a.) A coin toss will determine possession, in the same manner used to start the game. Only one coin toss will occur during overtime play. The winner of the toss may choose to play offense, defense, or defend a goal. The loser of the toss has the choice of the remaining options. All overtime periods will be played toward the same goal after one is selected. After the initial toss is won, the remaining overtime periods will begin with teams alternating choices.
- b.) The team taking possession begins with the ball on the 10-yard line and attempts to score at the nearest goal.
- c.) In the event of an interception, the play is dead and the team that intercepted the ball gets the ball on the 10-yard line.
- d.) In the first OT, teams can choose whether they want to go for 1 or 2. In the second OT, teams must go for 2. If the score remains tied after two OTs, teams will enter a 2-point conversion shootout in which they will alternate going for 2 until the tie is broken.

7. TIME-OUTS: Each team is entitled to 2 timeouts per half, which do not carry over to the next half. Each team is given one timeout for the entire overtime period. Each time-out shall not exceed 60 seconds. A team requesting excessive time-outs will be charged a delay of game penalty (5 yards from the succeeding spot). The referee will warn both teams 5 seconds before a charged timeout expires. The offensive team has 25 seconds to put the ball in play.

8. INJURED PLAYER: An injured or apparently injured player who is discovered by an official while the ball is dead and the clock is stopped, shall be replaced for at least 1 down unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has any amount of blood on his/her



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uniform or on the player shall be considered an injured player. A player who exhibits signs/symptoms of a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game.

9. DELAYS: All players must be on the field at the scheduled game time with their flags in the proper position. A delay of game penalty is given to a team that:

- a.) Consumes more than 25 seconds to put the ball in play after the signal is given.
- b.) Deliberately advances the ball after it has been declared dead.
- c.) Deliberately puts the ball in play before it is declared ready for play.

PENALTY: *Delay of game – 5 yards from the succeeding spot*

10. SUBSTITUTION: Between downs, a team may replace any number of players, as long as the substitution is legal.

Substitution infractions include:

- a.) Entering the game during a live ball.
- b.) Entering/leaving the game away from his/her team area.
- c.) Entering and leaving during the same dead ball - the player must play at least 1 down.
- d.) Entering a game without being ready to play
- e.) A replaced player not leaving the field immediately.
- f.) Entering player not being on his/her team's side of the neutral zone when the ball is snapped.
- g.) Having too many players on the field.

PENALTY: *Illegal Substitution – 5 yards from the previous spot. If it is a dead ball or non-player foul, 5 yards from the succeeding spot.*

11. STARTING THE GAME: There will be no kickoff. The game begins with a scrimmage play at the 14-yard line of the team awarded the ball.

12. DEAD BALL

a.) A live ball becomes dead when:

- 1.) a runner's flag belt is removed legally by a defensive player
- 2.) it goes out-of-bounds or when it touches the goal line of the runner's opponent
- 3.) any part of the runner other than a hand or foot touches the ground
- 4.) a touchdown, touchback, safety, or successful try-for-point is made
- 5.) A fumble or pass touches the ground
- 6.) A passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball
- 7.) An untouched punt comes to rest on the ground and no player attempts to secure it
- 8.) An official blows his/her whistle (even if inadvertently)
- 9.) A protected scrimmage kick breaks the plane of the receiving team's goal line.
- 10.) The defense secures possession of the ball during a try or overtime.
- 11.) A forward pass is caught simultaneously by opposing players.
- 12.) A snapped ball that hits the ground before getting to the receiver.
- 13.) The ball strikes the ground following a first touch by the kicking team.

b.) A loose ball is out-of-bounds when it touches anything, including a player or game official, which is out-of-bounds.

13. DOWNS & TEAM POSSESSION

a.) A team has 4 consecutive downs to advance the ball from one zone to the next.

b.) During the first possessions of each half or after a team has scored, the ball is placed on the team's 14-yard line. To gain a first down, the team only has to move the ball 6 yards to the next zone. If this occurs, the next zone line (20 more yards) must be reached for a first down.



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- c.) A new series of downs is awarded when a team moves the ball into the next zone. If a player carries the ball so that it only “dents” the line-to-gain before going out-of-bounds, it would be a first down.
 - Zone line to gain: the zone in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain. The forward point of the ball, when declared dead between the goal lines, shall be the determining factor.
- d.) When a scrimmage follows the penalty for a live ball foul committed during a free kick, the down and distance established by the penalty shall be the first down with the next zone line-to-gain.
- e.) After a penalty which leaves the ball in possession of a team beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with the next zone line-to-gain.
- f.) If a penalty is declined, the number of the next down will be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.
- g.) After a penalty between downs, the number of the next down shall be the same as established before the foul unless the foul leaves the ball on or beyond the zone line-to-gain.

14. PUNT

- a.) The team captain must inform the referee when he wants a punt. Once requested, the ball must be kicked UNLESS a time out is called, there is an inadvertent whistle, or a foul occurs during the play. The decision will be announced by the referee to all players.
- b.) Neither team may cross into the neutral zone **until the kick is made**.
PENALTY: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards from the previous spot
- c.) Kicker must be at least 2 yards behind scrimmage when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately in a continuous motion.
PENALTY: Illegal Procedure – 5 yards from the previous spot
- d.) If a player of the kicking team catches a protected scrimmage kick beyond the kicker’s scrimmage line, provided the kicked ball had been touched by a receiver of the non-kicking team who was clearly beyond the kicker’s scrimmage line at the time of touching, the ball is dead and belongs to the kicking team.
- e.) There are no onside kicks or fake punts.
- f.) If a protected scrimmage kick goes out-of-bounds, the ball is dead and belongs to the receiving team at the spot where it left play.
- g.) When any protected scrimmage kick breaks the plane of the receiving team’s goal line, the ball is dead and is a touchback.
- h.) If the ball is kicked out-of-bounds outside the area of the end zones or touches the ground between the goal lines without being touched by a receiving team player, the ball is dead and a touchback at the 14-yard line will occur.
- i.) A muffed punt may not be advanced if caught by the kicking team.
- j.) Quick punts are illegal.

PENALTY: Illegal Kick, Quick Punt – 10 yards

15. FAIR CATCH

- a.) Players shall ignore signals given by K or R. The ball remains live.
- b.) There are no fair catches.

PENALTY: Unfair Acts – 10 yards

16. Kick Catch Interference

While any punt is in flight beyond K’s scrimmage line, K shall not touch the ball or R, nor Obstruct R’s path the ball, unless the punt has been touched by R. K may catch, touch, muff, or bat a punt in flight beyond K’s scrimmage line if no R player is in position to catch the ball.

PENALTY: Kick Catching Interference – 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a first down.



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17. THE SCRIMMAGE: Scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point on the inbound line. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after a scrimmage down. Players may use a two-, three-, or four-point stance.

18. PRIOR TO THE SNAP

a.) Once the snapper touches the ball at the line of scrimmage:

- 1.) The snapper may not move or change the ball's position in a way simulating play.
- 2.) Defensive players may not jump into the neutral zone nor touch the ball or an offensive player.
- 3.) No offensive player shall make a false start (including a charge or start of play).

PENALTY: *Dead Ball Foul – 5 yards from the previous spot*

19. POSITION AND ACTION DURING THE SNAP: The offensive team must have the snapper on the scrimmage line. One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion towards the opponent's goal line. The player receiving the snap must be at least two yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. Before the snap, all offensive players must be within 15 yards of the ball. The snapper shall pass the ball back from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hands.

PENALTY: *Illegal Procedure – 5 yards*

20. HANDING THE BALL: Any player may hand the ball forward or backward at any time.

21. BACKWARD PASS AND FUMBLE

a.) A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at any time except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid being deflagged. **If a legal backward pass goes out of bounds, the ball belongs to the offensive team at the out-of-bounds spot. If it's out of bounds behind a goal line, it is a touchback or safety.**

PENALTY: *Illegal Backwards Pass – 5 yards from the spot of the pass or fumble and loss of down*

b.) A backward pass or fumble may be caught in flight in bounds by any player and advanced.

22. LEGAL AND ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS

a.) Only one forward pass per down. All players are eligible to catch a pass.

b.) A forward pass is illegal if:

- 1.) the passer's foot is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves their hand
- 2.) intentionally thrown to the ground or out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage or conserve time
- 3.) the passer catches their own untouched forward pass.
- 4.) It is thrown after a change of team possession.
- 5.) if there is more than 1 forward pass per down.

PENALTY: *Illegal Forward Pass – 5 yards from the spot of the pass and a loss of down if by A before possession changes during a scrimmage down*

c.) If a legal forward pass is caught simultaneously by members of the opposing team, the ball is dead and belongs to the team that snapped the ball.

A forward pass is complete when and only if the receiver has at least one foot in bounds.

If a member of the opposing team intercepts a forward pass, it is counted as a completion if the person remains inbounds.

23. PASS INTERFERENCE

a.) During a forward pass, there shall be no interference with any player of either team who is eligible to catch the pass except such incidental contacts as may occur when 2 or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide effort to catch or bat the ball.

- 1.) No contact is allowed by either the offense or defense from the time the ball is snapped. The defense is not allowed to jam the receiver at the line of scrimmage.

b.) If an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to catching a pass, it is considered pass interference.

PENALTY: *Offensive Pass Interference – 10 yards from the previous spot of the snap*



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Defensive Pass Interference – 10 yards from the previous spot

c.) Intentional or unsportsmanlike pass interference shall be penalized by an additional 10 yards.

24. SCORING

- a.) A touchdown is worth 6 points. After a touchdown is scored, a team has a choice of points possible from the try-for-point. A try-for-point from the 3-yard line is worth 1 point. A try-for-point from the 10-yard line is worth 2 points. A try-for-point from the 20-yard line is worth 3 points. The try ends when the defense secures possession.
- b.) safety is worth 2 points. A team that scores a safety gets the ball on their own 14-yard line.
Exception: When a defensive player intercepts his/her opponent's forward pass, fumble, or backwards pass, or a receiving player catches a punt between his/her 5 yard line and the goal line and his/her original momentum carries him/her into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his/her team's possession behind the goal line, the ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession was gained.
- c.) On a score, a team may protest that the player's flags are illegally tied or attached. In this case, the player will stand with hands raised and the official will pull off the flag belt in order to enforce or penalize the touchdown call.
- d.) If there is a foul by the defensive team (including unsportsmanlike or non-player) during a down which results in a touchdown, the scoring team may accept the results of the play and then choose to have the foul enforced at the succeeding spot (Try) or after the Try at the 14-yard line.
- e.) If after a touchdown and prior to the initial ready for play signal for the Try, either team commits any foul for which the basic spot of penalty enforcement is the succeeding spot (Try), the offended team may have the penalty enforced from the succeeding spot (Try) or after the Try, at the 14-yard line.

25. MERCY RULE: If a team is 40 or more points ahead at any point in the second half OR 20 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 second half and that score creates a point differential meeting mercy rule criterion, the game shall end at that point.

26. TOUCHBACK

- a.) A touchback occurs when:
 - 1.) A kick touches anything while the ball is on or behind the receiving team's goal line or is caught by a receiver in the end zone and downed rather than run out.
 - 2.) A pass is intercepted in the end zone by a defensive player and is downed rather than run out of the end zone
- b.) The ball is put in play on the 14-yard line following a touchback

27. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: There shall be no unsportsmanlike conduct by players, substitutes, coaches, or others subject to the rules. This includes but is not limited to:

- a.) abusive or insulting language
- b.) any acts of unfair play
- c.) verbally or physically interfering with another team's signals or movements
- d.) intentionally kicking another player
- e.) leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage
- f.) intentionally swinging an arm
- g.) intentionally kicking, spiking, or throwing the ball into the air or ground
- h.) failure to return the ball to the huddle
- i.) attempting to influence a decision by an official
- j.) disrespectfully addressing official
- k.) indicating objections to an official's decision
- l.) using profanity, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures
- m.) refusing to abide by the request or decision of an official



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PENALTY: *Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 10 yards*

Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Ejection and possible suspension from further intramural competition

A second unsportsmanlike foul by the same player or nonplayer results in disqualification.

28. PERSONAL FOULS: A personal foul is:

- a.) stealing, attempting to steal, or batting the ball from a player in possession
- b.) tripping, clipping, or tackling a runner
- c.) contact made to a runner who is on the ground
- d.) hurdling a player
- e.) contacting a player before or after the ball is declared dead
- f.) deliberately driving or running into a defensive player
- g.) fighting an opponent (each player in a fight will be assessed 1 flagrant personal foul)

PENALTY: *Personal Foul – 10 yards*

Flagrant Personal Foul – Ejection and possible suspension from further play

29. ROUGHING THE PASSER: Defensive players must try to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown forward legally. No defensive player shall contact the passer who is standing still or fading back as he/she is considered out of the play after the pass. Roughing the passer restrictions only apply to legal forward passes.

PENALTY: *Roughing the passer—10 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down.*

30. BLOCKING

- a.) Blocking must be done without the use of hands or extended arms and without contact. **All blockers' hands must be kept behind their backs.** Any use of the arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal.
- b.) A player must be on his/her feet before, during and after blocking.
- c.) Teammates may not use interlocking interference to block a runner.
- d.) Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen. They must refrain from using their hands or arms extended to move the offense.

PENALTY: *Personal Foul, Illegal Contact — 10 yards*

31. RUNNER

- a.) Runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponents to pull or remove the flag belt.

PENALTY: *Flag guarding—10 yards from the spot of the foul*

- b.) The runner is prohibited from contacting an opponent with an extended hand or arm.

PENALTY: *Personal Foul – 10 yards from the spot of the foul*

- c.) The runner shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled, or pushed by a teammate.

PENALTY: *Helping the Runner—5 yards from the spot of foul*

- d.) An opponent shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner when in the act of removing the flag belt or making a legal tag.

PENALTY: *Holding—10 yards*

- e.) The ball will be spotted at the point where the ball was located when the runner goes out of bounds.

32. FLAG BELT REMOVAL

- a.) Players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged.
- b.) Play continues if a player loses his/her flag belt either accidentally or inadvertently. The deflagging then reverts to a one-hand tag of the runner between the shoulders and the knees.
- c.) The ball is declared dead when a runner has a flag belt removed legally by an opponent. A flag belt is removed when the clip is detached from the belt, the belt is torn into more than one piece, or the flag is torn off the belt.



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D. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down to remove the flag belt.

e.) If a flag belt is removed illegally, play continues with the option of the penalty or the play.

PENALTY: *Personal Foul—10 yards from the previous spot*

f.) Intentionally pulling a flag belt from an offensive player without the ball is illegal.

PENALTY: *Personal Foul—10 yards from the end of the run*

g.) Tampering with the flag belt in any way to gain an advantage including tying or double wrapping is illegal. After a score, if the official deems that the flag belt was worn illegally, the score is disallowed, the offending team is penalized, and the player is ejected.

PENALTY: *Unsportsmanlike conduct—10 yards from previous spot, loss of down if A, first down if B.*

33. SPORTSMANSHIP: A team is responsible for the action of all individual members and spectators directly related to the team before, during, and after the game. Any individual that is involved in any type of physical altercation or unsportsmanlike conduct may be automatically suspended along with the entire team. The officials will assess sportsmanship ratings after each game.

34. PROTESTS: All contest protests must be made by the protesting team's captain in the presence of the officials, the opposing team's captain, and the supervisor at the time and place of the incident. Protests involving judgment calls will not be received. The supervisor makes the final decision. The protest must be made immediately before the next play. Once the play has resumed following a protest, the protest is complete.

35. ADMINISTRATION

a.) The Intramural Sports Staff reserves the right to stop any game whenever such a stoppage is in the best interest of safety and/or program goals.

b.) The Intramural Sports Staff reserves the right to combine divisions and move teams to another classification for tournament competition.

CO-RECREATION FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

The University of Wyoming Intramural Sports Flag Football rules are in effect in addition to the following co-recreational rules.

1. THE GAME

The game shall be played between 2 teams of 8 players: 4 men and 4 women. If playing with less than 8 players, the gender difference may be no more than one. Five players are required to start a game in order to avoid a forfeit. Games may continue with less than four players if a team has a chance to win. The ball can be either an official or junior size football, the offense gets to pick.

2. MINIMUM LINE PLAYERS

The offensive team must have the snapper on their scrimmage line at the snap.

PENALTY: *Illegal procedure – 5 yards from the previous spot.*

3. MALE RUNNER

An offensive male runner CANNOT advance the ball through his team's scrimmage line under any circumstances. There are no restrictions during a run by a male once the ball is beyond the scrimmage



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line. There are no restrictions during a run by a female, after a legal forward pass, or after a turnover occurs.

PENALTY: *Illegal Advancement – 5 yards from the previous spot.*

4. MALE TO MALE COMPLETION

The term “open” means any player can complete a legal forward pass to any other player. The term “closed” means a male player may NOT complete a legal forward pass to any other male player. An illegal forward pass does not change the open/closed status of a down. During the offensive team’s possession there may not be 2 consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. This rule also applies to a try after completion. 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. The spot where the ball becomes dead must be beyond the offensive scrimmage line. A legal forward pass that is caught simultaneously by male and female teammates is considered a female reception. There are no other restrictions concerning a male passer completing legal forward passes to a female receiver, or female to female, or female to male. *Clarification: After a change of possession, the first offensive play will be open. The first play of the half is also open.*

PENALTY: *Illegal forward pass – 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down. The next down is closed.*

6. PROTECTED SCRIMMAGE KICK RECEIVER

On a protected scrimmage kick, any receiving team player may advance forward with the ball at any time.

7. TOUCHDOWN VALUE

If a female player scores a touchdown or throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any A player prior to a change of possession, the point value is 9. If a male player scores a touchdown, the point value is 6.

8. MERCY RULE: If a team is 45 or more points ahead at any point in the second half OR 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 second half and that score creates a point differential meeting mercy rule criterion, the game shall end at that point.