

AQUINAS COLLEGE INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

TEAMS

Men's and Women's:

Seven (7) players constitute a team. A game may start with five (5) players on a team to avoid a forfeit.

ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

1. All students who are matriculated, registered and paying AQ tuition for classes.
2. Every student will be required to present his/her valid student ID card to the game official prior to the start of the game. A player may obtain a waiver in lieu of their student ID from the Program Desk or at the Outdoor Sports Complex. The student must present a picture ID to IM Staff to receive the waiver (i.e. drivers license). Waivers will be given out only during Program Desk office hours in the Student Activity Center or Outdoor Sports Complex.
3. A team may add a player at game time providing he/she has proper identification. This player's name will be added to the team roster at the IM office after checking eligibilities. To delete a player, the manager must come to the Program Desk, Student Activity Center. A player must participate in one (1) regular season game to be eligible for post-season playoffs.
4. A participant may only play for and one (1) men or women's team.
5. A former varsity letter winner may participate providing **one academic year has been "sat out"**

FORFEIT POLICY

If game time arrives and one team does not have the minimum of players, the captain of the other team prepared to play has two choices: 1) take the win by forfeit, or, 2) give the opposing team 5 additional minutes to show up. If the team shows up during the additional time period, game time will be reduced by the number of minutes late the game begins. If the captain chooses to take the win by forfeit, the decision may not be changed. If the captain decides to play the game, the captain must accept the results of the game. After the additional 5 minutes have expired and the team still does not have the minimum number of players the game will be a forfeit.

RAIN OUT POLICY

Rained out games will be rescheduled whenever possible. A decision to play or not to play will be made one hour before the first game of the evening. After the first game, IM staff will decide the status of the cancellations. The team manager must contact the IM office forty-eight (48) hours or more after the rained out games to obtain rescheduling information. Please call the **IM HOTLINE at 774-7339 or Program Desk 774-3200** for announcement concerning cancellations.

EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM

1. **Shoes:** Players may not wear metal or screw-on cleats, baseball shoes (either of metal or plastic), or street shoes. Rubber cleats are allowed. No player may play without shoes. Exception: A punter may punt the ball without shoes, but is ineligible to participate until both shoes are on. No player will be allowed to play in bare feet or boots.
2. Teams should attempt to wear shirts of similar color.

3. **The ball used in women's rec games will be an intermediate or regulation size football. Men's games will be played with a regulation size football. Teams can decide which ball will be used.**
4. Jewelry is not allowed to be worn when playing (exception: post earrings (must be taped), wedding rings and medical bracelets).
5. The flag belts may not have knots.
6. Shorts/ pants with pockets are not recommended.

GAME RULES

The National Intramural Recreational Sports Association and *N.C.A.A. rules have been used as a base and will be consulted concerning interpretations.

1. **Game Time:** Playing time shall be 40 minutes, divided into two (2) halves of twenty (20) minutes each. The intermission between halves shall be five (5) minutes. When overtime occurs (only during playoffs), there will be a three-minute intermission. The clock will only stop in the last two (2) minutes of the game for time-outs, official time-outs, touchdowns, first downs, injuries, PAT, penalties, incomplete pass, out of bounds, or touchbacks.
2. **Field:** Will be up to IM.
3. **Start of Game:** The team that won the toss will choose either offense or defense. The captain who lost the toss will choose the goal they want to defend. For the second half, team option will be reversed. The offensive team will begin the game on the 14 - yard line, with twenty (20) being the first line to gain.
4. **Scoring:**
 - Touchdown** - six (6) points. Co
 - PAT** (point after touchdown) from three-yard line - one (1) point
 - PAT** from ten-yard line - two (2) points
 - PAT** from the 20 yard line (3) three points
 - If defense intercepts on a PAT they may return the ball for the same point value as the offense attempts.
 - Safety** - two (2) points (a safety shall be scored when the ball becomes dead in the end zone of the team in possession and that team provides the momentum which placed the ball into the end zone.) **The team scored upon shall place the ball in play with a punt from their twenty-yard line.**
5. **Mercy:** For **men's/women's** leagues, if a team is up by 19 points with under two (2) minutes to go the game will be ended. For co-rec leagues the game will be ended when there is a point spread of at least twenty-five (25) points.
6. **Time-outs:** Each team shall be entitled to one sixty (60)-second time-out per half. The time-out ends when the ball is whistled ready for play.
7. **Delay of Game:** A team has twenty-five (25) seconds **from the time the ball is whistled ready for play** to snap the ball.
8. **First Down:** A team shall be allowed four (4) downs to advance the ball across each zone line (twenty {20} yards apart). Each time a team does, it is awarded a first down and is allowed four (4) more downs to cross the next zone line. If a team is pushed backwards, it must still reach the original first down line. Upon a change of team possession, the line to gain shall be that line immediately down field from the spot where the ball becomes dead. **In case of penalties during a play involving change of team possession, the line to gain shall not be established until after the penalties have been assessed.**
9. **Line of Scrimmage:**

- A. The offensive team must always have at least four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. Any offensive player may be on the line of scrimmage, except the quarterback or the punter. The quarterback (player receiving the snap) or the punter must be **at least two (2) yards** behind the line of scrimmage. The punter must be positioned directly behind the snapper. The quarterback must be directly behind the snapper at the time of the snap (he can be in motion).
Penalty: illegal procedure.
- B. There is **no** requirement for defensive players on the line of scrimmage, except during a punt when there must be **four (4)** defensive players on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.
Penalty: illegal procedure.
- C. The offensive line of scrimmage is the yard line and its vertical plane, which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line.
- D. The defensive line of scrimmage is the yard line and its vertical plain, which passes one (1) yard from the point of the ball nearest its own goal line.
10. **Huddle:** Teams do not have to huddle after every play.
11. **Offsides:** Off sides occurs when an offensive or defensive player is **in the neutral zone** (space between the two lines of scrimmage) when the ball is snapped. This violation **does not** involve movement.
12. **Encroachment:** Encroachment occurs when an offensive or defensive player illegally **moves** into the neutral zone prior to the ball being snapped.
13. **False Start:** No player of the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start includes faking charge or a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be canceled. Penalty: illegal procedure.
14. **Shift:** A shift is the action of one (1) or more offensive players who, after taking set positions, move to a new set position before the ensuing snap. If two (2) or more players are involved in the shift, the action must be simultaneous. The player(s) shifting must come to a "set" position for one (1) second before the ball is snapped.
15. **Motion: One player only** may go into motion providing he/she does not move towards the line of scrimmage. Penalty: illegal procedure. A player who sets up off the line of scrimmage and then goes into motion is not required to be five (5) yards from the LOS at the time of the snap. (The player cannot, however, take more than one (1) step toward the LOS prior to the snap.)
16. **Stance:** All players must assume an "upright", two (2) -point stances. Penalty: illegal procedure.
17. **Snap:** Legally snapping the ball is passing it back from its position on the ground with **quick and continuous motion** of the hand(s). After the ball has been adjusted by the center, it is **not** a legal snap if the ball is first moved forward or lifted. The center may not be called for offsides as long as he/she is facing forwards or sideways. Penalty: illegal procedure.
18. **Passing:** A forward pass (**any live ball thrown towards the opponent's goal line**) must be thrown from a point behind the line of scrimmage. On punts and interceptions, no line of scrimmage has been determined; therefore, forward passing is **not** allowed. Backward passes (a live ball thrown toward or parallel to the passer's goal line, also referred to as laterals) may be made at anytime on any play. *The unlimited forward passing behind the line of scrimmage has been eliminated.*
19. **Dead Ball:** A live ball shall become dead and an official shall sound the whistle when:
- A. A ball carrier has a flag removed legally by a defensive player.

- B. A ball carrier is legally touched with one (1) hand between the shoulders and knees, if the flag is no longer attached.
- C. Any part of the ball carrier's body other than hands and feet touch the ground.
- D. A quarterback is downed if his/her flag is legally removed before the ball is released.
- E. A forward or backward pass strikes the ground.
- F. A ball goes out of bounds or a player in possession touches the out of bounds line, the ground or any person or object that is out of bounds.
- G. The ball breaks the vertical plane of the goal line (nearest edge). A touchback, safety or extra point occurs.
- H. Specific fumble or punt rules apply.

20. **Fumble:** A fumbled ball becomes a **dead ball** when it touches the ground. The team fumbling retains possession of the ball at the point where the ball first struck the ground. (Unless it occurs on the fourth down in which case possession is determined by whether a first down has been earned.) **A fumbled ball may only be advanced if it is recovered before the ball strikes the ground. Exception:** *If the ball is fumbled forward (towards opponent's goal line), it is spotted from where the fumble occurred. If the offensive team fumbles into the end zone the ball is considered dead and a touchback occurs for the defensive team.

21. **Punt:**

- A. The offensive team must inform the officials of their intent to punt while they are **in the huddle**. The decision to punt is irreversible. Penalty: illegal procedure.
- B. The punter when receiving the snap must be at least five (5) yards directly behind the snapper and must punt the ball immediately. Penalty: illegal procedure.
- C. No player on either team may move into the neutral zone or off the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. Penalty: illegal procedure.
- D. A punted ball that has bounced on the ground or is muffed may be picked up and advanced by the receiving team, providing the ball has not been downed by the kicking team. (A muff is an unsuccessful attempt to recover a ball; the ball being touched in the process, but possession is not established.)
- E. A punt that enters the receiving team's end zone may be downed or returned at their own risk. (If downed it is a touchback.)

22. **Legal Offensive Blocking:** An offensive player **must not move into a defensive player or initiate contact**. *Blockers must keep their hands grasped behind their backs (female blockers will be allowed to have their arms in front of their bodies, but must have their hands and elbows in contact with their bodies at all times). The offensive player is limited to forcing a rusher to alternate their path by moving laterally. Any use of the arms, elbows or legs to initiate contact is illegal. A blocker must be on his/her feet before, during and after a block. Beyond the line of scrimmage, one moving screen blocker is permitted.

23. **Defensive Rushing:** Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive player's block. Defensive players may **not use** their hands to hold or push. Once a rusher gets alongside or past a blocker, the blocker is responsible for contact that occurs.

24. **Substitutions:** Substitutions may be made without restrictions during any dead ball situation. An offensive player entering the game must report to the huddle.

25. **Inadvertent Whistle:** A live ball becomes dead at the sound of the whistle and:

- A. If a live ball is loose behind the line, or a legal **forward** pass, snap or is in flight, the down will be replayed.
- B. If a live ball is loose following a backward pass (lateral) or fumble the offensive team's line of scrimmage, or behind the offensive team's line of scrimmage following a change of team

possession, the ball will be awarded to the team last in possession at the spot where possession was lost and the down will be counted.

C. If a live ball is in player possession, team may choose to accept the play at that point or replay the down.

26. **Tie Games:** During the regular season, the game will be recorded as a tie. During play-offs, the team captain, winning the coin toss has the option of offense, or defense. All overtime periods are played toward the same goal line. Each team will have a series of 4 downs from the 10-yard line. If the defense intercepts a pass or fumble and returns it for a touchdown, they win the game. If they do not return the interception or fumble for a touchdown, the ball will be placed at the Team B 10 yard line to begin their series of 4 downs, if available. Tries will be attempted and scored as indicated

27. **Conduct of Players - Offensive:**

A. A ball carrier may spin to "make a move" to avoid being downed, but he/she may not continually spin down the field. Penalty: unsportsmanlike conduct.

B. A ball carrier may not defend or guard their flags in any manner. Penalty: unsportsmanlike conduct.

C. The ball carrier must have his/her belt completely exposed and properly fastened around his/her waist. Clothing may not cover the belt. Penalty: loss of five (5) yards.

D. All players are required to wear a flag belt. If a player breaks the huddle not wearing a flag belt, the referee may point out the problem to the player. If the twenty-five (25) second count expires before the player secures a belt and the ball is snapped, the team is penalized for delay of game. If the player refuses to acquire a flag belt, the team is penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct. If the referee does not notice the player without a flag belt until after the ball is snapped, the opponents have the option of accepting the result of the play or penalizing the team five (5) yards from the line of scrimmage.

E. Offensive diving is allowed. If contact is initiated while airborne, the offensive player may be called for unnecessary roughness.

28. **Conduct of Players - Defensive:**

A. No player shall steal the ball from a player in possession. Penalty: unsportsmanlike conduct.

B. A player who removes the flag belt from the ball carrier **should immediately HOLD the flag belt above his/her head** to assist the official in locating the spot where the capture occurred.

C. The feet of a player who removes the flag belt may leave the ground. A player may not dive a ball carrier to remove the flag belt or present a hazardous situation for himself/others by lifting feet from the ground. Penalty: unnecessary roughness.

D. If an eligible receiver is deflagged prior to touching the ball on a forward pass thrown beyond the passing teams scrimmage line, the penalty will be the same as pass interference. All elements of defensive pass interference must be present. Defensive pass interference is contact beyond the neutral zone by a defensive player whose intent to impede an eligible opponent is obvious and could prevent the opponent the opportunity of receiving a catchable forward pass. *Defensive pass interference occurs only after a forward pass is thrown.* Any other time a defensive player deliberately withdraws an opponent's flag before that player has possession, the penalty will be unsportsmanlike conduct.

E. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag. The defensive player is restricted to reaching for the flags. Penalty: unnecessary roughness or for more severe infractions, unsportsmanlike conduct.

29. **Summary of Penalties:**

A. Loss of Five (5) Yards

1. Clothing covering flag
2. Delay of game
3. Offsides
4. Encroachment
5. False start
6. Illegal procedure

B. Loss of Five (5) Yards and Loss of Down

1. Intentional grounding (marked from spot of pass)
2. Illegal forward pass (marked from spot of pass)
3. Illegal backward pass (marked from the spot of pass)

C. Loss of Ten (10) Yards - Major Penalties

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|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Defending the flag | 6. Clipping |
| 2. Illegal locking/contact | 7. Pushing |
| 3. Illegal use of hands | 8. Tripping |
| 4. Unnecessary roughness | 9. Illegal time out |
| 5. Holding | |

D. Roughing the Passer: automatic first down and ten (10) yards (marked from line of scrimmage).

E. Defensive Forward Pass Interference: Ten yards from the previous line of scrimmage and an automatic 1st down.

F. Offensive Forward Pass Interference: Loss of ten (10) yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

G. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:

Against offense: loss of ten (10) yards and a down

Against defense: ten (10) yards and automatic first down

Possible player ejection.

30. Summary of Penalty Enforcement Spot

A. Penalty Enforcement Spot: Unless specified, infractions which occur behind the line of will be penalized from the line of scrimmage and infractions which occur beyond the line of scrimmage will be penalized from the point of infraction. Any dead ball penalty should be assessed from the succeeding spot (the point at which the ball would next be put in play if that foul had not occurred).

B. Half the distance: A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the enforcement spot to the goal line.

C. A penalty, which occurs against the defending team on a successful extra point attempt, shall be administered on the following possession.

D. If both teams commit live ball fouls, each foul is an offsetting foul. The penalties cancel each other and the down is replayed.

E. When two (2) or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, the offended team is given the option of selecting one (1) of the penalties.

F. Loss of down penalty: A loss of down penalty cannot cause a team to lose possession; a loss of down penalty accepted on fourth down does not result in a turnover; that part of the penalty will not be enforced. On a play involving change of possession, the team gaining possession cannot lose a down that they have not yet been awarded; the team would start with first down, not second down.

31. Flag vs. Whistle: The whistle will be blown and the ball will be declared dead on the following violations: encroachment, false starts and delay of game. A thrown flag will indicate

all other violations. Play will continue and the offended team is offered the option of accepting or declining the penalty after the ball becomes dead.

PROTESTS:

To place a game under protest, the manager must notify the official and request that a protest form be completed by the supervisor. If the protest form is not completed prior to the next live ball, the protest will **not be considered**. The team manager must also provide a written statement explaining the protest to the Program Desk by **5 PM of the next business day** in order for the protest to be considered.