I. **Governing Rules** - Play will be governed by the rules from the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA). Following are modifications and highlights of these rules.

II. **Equipment**
A. Protective equipment used in tackle football such as helmets, shoulder pads, or hip pads may not be worn. Mouthpieces are legal. All protective medical materials (tape, pads, etc.) must be approved by the Game Official.
B. Molded cleats (non-metal tipped) or tennis shoes are the only allowable footwear. Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat. Shoes must be worn at all times.
C. Shirts must be worn, with either tails tucked inside pants or short enough to be a minimum of 4 inches above the belt. Jerseys which have been altered in any manner which produces a knot like protrusion or creates a tear-away jersey are illegal.

D. **NO BELT LOOPS OR POCKETS ARE ALLOWED ON PANTS. Pants must be a different color than the flags.**
E. Intramural Sports shall provide a game ball, however each team may use a legal ball of its own choice while in possession. Men shall use the regulation ball while women/co-rec shall use the intermediate, junior, or youth ball.
F. The use of headgear (including hats), jewelry, body pads or any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Headwear containing any exposed knots, such as bandannas, is illegal. Should there be a question regarding the legality of any equipment, the referee will make the final ruling.

III. **The Game**
A. The winner of a coin toss shall select first ball possession, choice of direction, or defer their choice to the 2nd half. The loser of the toss shall have these options for the 2nd half.
B. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 10-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, they will have three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, or cross midfield, their opponent takes possession at the yard line in which the series of downs was ended.

IV. **Timing**
A. A game shall consist of two 16 minute halves.
B. Stop timing will be used during the last minute of the second half, at which time the clock will stop on allwhistles other than de-flagging. Teams shall be notified at the beginning of the one minute period.
C. During the first 31 minutes of the game, the clock will stop only for a team or official time out.
D. The clock will run during a P.A.T. attempt (except in the final minute of the game or a timeout).
E. Each team is allowed one charged time out per game, including overtimes.
F. After a stopped clock, time will begin at the snap of the ball, unless in the final minute of the game as dictated by the previous play.
G. Once the ball is marked ready for play, a team has 25 seconds within which to snap the ball.
H. Once a team captain makes a choice of going for a 1, 2, or 3-point conversion after scoring a touchdown, he/she may change the decision only if a charged time out is granted to either team.

V. **Players**
A. Only four players per team are allowed on the field at a time. A minimum of three players are necessary to begin and continue play. The game MAY be continued with less than 3 players as long as the team has a chance to win the game.
B. All plays must originate with a snap from center. This snap must be received at least 2 yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. The snap may be made between the legs or to the side of the snapper.
C. The offensive team must have at least one player on their scrimmage line at the snap. The snapper may count as the one player.
D. Only one offensive player may be in motion when the ball is snapped. This motion must begin more than one second before the ball is snapped, and must be parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.
E. After the ball is ready-for-play, each player of the offensive team must momentarily be within 10 yards of the ball prior to the snap before moving closer to the sideline.
F. No defensive player may be closer than 1 yard to the line of scrimmage during all scrimmage downs. Players may not break the neutral zone until the ball is snapped.
G. Offensive players are responsible for retrieving the ball after a down has ended. The snapper may have the ball spotted or bring it to the huddle to dry and clean it.
H. The offense must have only 1 player on the line of scrimmage (i.e. – snapper)
VI. **Running the Ball**

A. An offensive team runner may not advance the ball past the offensive scrimmage line. Prior to a change of possession and before the ball has been in player possession beyond the neutral zone, NO PLAYER may run the ball from behind to beyond the neutral zone. The penalty for this infraction is an illegal procedure. 4-on-4 is designed to be a passing game. There are no restrictions after a change of possession or once a legal forward pass has been caught beyond the offensive scrimmage line.

B. A ball carrier may not deliberately guard their flags. “Spinning” or jumping to avoid being deflagged is legal. Actions such as slapping with the hand or stiff arming are examples of flag guarding.

C. A ball carrier may not hurdle a player to avoid deflagging. Hurdling is interpreted as an attempt by a runner to jump over a player still on their feet with the feet or knees of the runner foremost.

D. If a player inadvertently loses their flags or it is pulled by the opposition before gaining possession of the ball, the play will continue and the player must be downed by one hand touch, between the shoulder and knees, including the hand and arm.

E. A player will be ruled “down” when any part of the body other than the hand or foot touches the ground, or under the provision of Section C.

F. The defender may not play the person, nor may they hold or tackle the runner while deflagging the ball carrier.

G. A fumbled or muffed ball is dead when it strikes the ground.

H. When an inadvertent whistle occurs, the offensive team will have the option of taking the play with the ball spotted at its location when the whistle blew or replay the down. If the ball is loose following a backward pass or fumble, the team will have the option of taking the ball at the spot where possession was lost or replay the down. During a legal forward pass or a legal kick, if an inadvertent whistle occurs, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down replayed.

I. It is illegal to attempt to steal a ball in player possession. The object of the game is to deflag a ball carrier, not steal the ball.

J. In pulling a flag and/or touching a ball carrier, a defender’s feet MAY leave the ground. Diving is legal by defensive or offensive players, however, the diving player is still responsible for any contact which they initiate.

VII. **Blocking & Rushing**

A. No part of the body except the feet shall be in contact with the ground and the feet must remain on the ground for the duration of the block.

B. Blocking will be by SCREENING ONLY. That is, a blocker must hinder a defender’s movement through positioning rather than body contact.

C. During a block, the body must remain upright with elbows and hands touching the body at the side or behind the back.

D. While incidental contact may occur, blocking/rushing penalties will be called against the player who initiates contact.

E. The defense may not use hands, arms, or legs as a wedge to gain an advantage over a blocker.

VIII. **Passing**

A. A forward pass may be thrown from any point behind the line of scrimmage.

B. A player has seven (7) seconds from the time of the snap to release the ball. If the ball has not been released at the end of this time period, the play shall be blown dead. If this occurs, it will be a loss of down and the ball will be placed at the previous spot.

C. All incomplete backward passes shall be marked down at the point of ground contact.

D. Only 1 forward pass may be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage on a given play.

E. A forward pass is illegal if:
   1. It is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage.
   2. It is intentional grounding.
   3. It is thrown after a change of possession.
   4. The passer catches his/her untouched forward/backward pass.
   5. It is the second forward pass during a play.

F. All players except the passer are eligible to receive a pass.

G. A player must have complete possession of the ball and land with the first part of their body inbounds, normally one foot, to be a legal reception.

H. A pass intercepted in the end zone may be advanced.

I. If the passer is deflagged prior to releasing the ball, the ball is dead at that spot and the down has ended.

J. If an offensive player goes out-of-bounds on their own volition and returns inbounds, it is an illegal participation foul.
K. Roughing the Passer -- Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer after it is clear the ball has been thrown. 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.

IX. Scoring
A. Point values will be as follows:
1. Touchdown: 6 points
2. Safety: 2 points
3. PAT from 3 yard line: 1 point
4. PAT from 10 yard line: 2 points
5. PAT from 20 yard line: 3 points
6. An offensive turnover on a PAT may not be returned for points. The ball is ruled dead.

B. Touchdown verification - The player scoring the touchdown must raise his/her arms so the nearest official can deflag the player. If the player is not deflagged with one pull, and the official determines the flag belt has been secured illegally, the touchdown is disallowed, the player is disqualified and it is a foul.

C. Mercy Rule - If a team is 19 or more points ahead when the officials announces the 1 minute warning for the 2nd half the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 1 minute of the game and that score creates a point differential of 19 or more the game shall end at that point.

D. If a team is up by 50 points or more at any point during the game the game shall be over.

X. Tie Breaker
Should a game end with a tie score, the following system shall be used:
A. Coin toss with the following options.
1. Offense or defense
2. Goal - Both teams will use the same goal on offense.
B. Each team is allowed one (1) down in which to score by passing from the 3 yard line for 1 point, from the 10 yard line for 2 points, or from the 20 yard line for 3 points.
C. This type of play will continue until there is a winner.

XI. Penalties
A. The offended team may have its choice of the penalty, or the result of the play.
B. When both teams commit an infraction during the same live ball period, regardless of the severity, the down is automatically replayed, provided there is no change of possession. If an ejection is warranted, this may occur even though no yardage is assessed.
C. When a live ball and dead ball penalty occurs, each is handled on its own merit, regardless whether the penalties are on the same or opposing teams.
D. All unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are penalized as a dead ball foul. A player receiving an unsportsmanlike conduct foul must sub out for the subsequent down. If a penalty occurs on the subsequent down which results in repeating the down the player may reenter the game. If a dead ball penalty occurs between downs the player may still not re-enter until after the subsequent down.
E. If a fight occurs on the playing field, all team substitutes are to remain in their team box. If a substitute enters the field to observe, separate participants, become involved in the fight, or whatever, he/she will be disqualified and a 5-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be enforced from the succeeding spot. Each individual substitute who enters illegally will be disqualified and penalized. Entering substitutes, who are on the field for substitution purposes before the fight, will not be penalized for being there if they do not participate in the fight.
F. The second unsportsmanlike conduct penalty by the same player or non-player results is disqualification.
G. Live ball fouls committed by either team after Team B (the team on defense at the start of the down) gains possession during a try or an overtime shall be enforced at the succeeding spot (where the ball will next be snapped).

Three yard Penalties
- Improper equipment
- Illegal substitution
- Illegal formation, motion, shift, snap, or procedure, encroachment, and false start
- Delay of game
- Illegal position (offensive player not within 10 yards of the ball)

Five yard Penalties
- Kick catch interference – spot of the foul penalty
• Illegal participation
• Hurdling
• Protecting the flag
• Illegal removal of flag
• Illegal use of hands, arms, legs or body
• Unsportsmanlike conduct
• Unnecessary roughness
• Tackling the runner (automatic disqualification)
• Fighting (an attempt by a player or non-player to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to football) includes acts such as attempting to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s), or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact (automatic DQ)
• Intentionally contacting a game official physically (automatic disqualification)

- Defensive Pass interference - no longer automatic first down
- Offensive pass interference - no longer a loss of down penalty
- Roughing the passer, plus automatic first down
- Steal or attempt to steal ball from ball carrier
- Consecutive encroachments in the same interval between downs
- Illegally secured flag belt (if by Team A will also result in player disqualification and loss of down, if by Team B will also result in player disqualification and automatic first down)

Loss of down Penalties
• Illegally handing ball forward (3 yards)
• Illegal forward pass (3 yards)
• Illegally secured flag belt on a touchdown by Team A (also disqualification, 5 yards)
• Illegal backward pass (3 yards)

Co-Rec Modifications

1. Co-Rec Teams consist of two (2) males and two (2) females. A team may play with uneven numbers of men and women so long as the number of either gender does not exceed two (2). A minimum of three (3) players are needed to begin and continue play.
2. The regular, intermediate, junior or youth sized football may be used. The offensive team is responsible for getting the desired ball in play.
3. The offensive team must have one (1) player on the line of scrimmage.
4. If a female player scores a touchdown, the point value is nine. If a female player throws a legal forward pass and a touchdown is scored by any Team A player, the point value is nine. All other touchdowns will score six points.
5. Mercy Rule - If a team is 25 or more points ahead when the officials announces the 1 minute warning for the 2nd half the game shall be over. If a team scores during the last 1 minute of the game and that score creates a point differential of 25 or more the game shall end at that point.
6. Open/Closed Plays- After any change of possession, a team will begin their offensive series with an “open” play. In “open” plays, any gender passer may complete a pass to any gender receiver. During a “closed” play, either the passer or receiver (or both) MUST be a female if the pass is completed.
7. During the offensive team’s possession there may not be 2 consecutive forward pass completions from a male passer to a male receiver. If a male passer completes a forward pass to a male receiver, the next play will be closed. During a closed play, the next forward pass completion must involve either a female passer or a female receiver for positive yards. If a female is involved as the passer and/or receiver during a completed legal forward pass for positive yardage, the next play will be open. Any play where a forward completed pass is not involved will not open the next play. The spot where the ball becomes dead must be beyond the offensive team’s scrimmage line. This rule also applies to the try-for-point. Penalty: Illegal Forward Pass, 5 yards from the spot where the second consecutive male to male completed forward pass is released, and a loss of down. Any penalty, whether accepted or declined, shall have no effect on whether the play from scrimmage is “open” or “closed”.
8. If a female throws a forward pass to a male receiver behind the offensive team’s scrimmage line and he runs beyond the scrimmage line, it is an illegal forward pass.