

Yale Intramurals

Touch Football Rules

Applicable for Men's and Coed Football



THE GAME

The game consists of two periods of thirty plays each. A team has five downs in which to score. On the fifth down the offensive team must declare whether they will kick or play. Kickoffs and try for points do not count as official plays. Each team is permitted two 30 second time-outs per half.

The game begins with a free kick. Possession of the ball is determined prior to the free kick by a coin toss. The team winning the coin toss may elect to kick or receive - whichever they decide, they must do the opposite to begin the second half.

The field of play is a rectangular level surface with dimensions of 90 yards in length by 40 yards in width. There is one midfield stripe (free kick receiving line), two stripes at the thirty yard mark (free kick line), and two stripes at the ten yard mark (goal lines).

THE TEAM

There are six players on each team along with unlimited substitutes. Five players may start a game and late arriving players must be entered on the score sheet before joining play. In Coed Touch a maximum of three players of either gender are permitted on the field. Substitutions are permitted at any stoppage of play. An offensive and defensive captain for each team should be identified prior to the start of play and are the only players permitted to discuss with the officials matters pertaining to the match.

ELIGIBILITY

All undergraduate students and persons officially associated with a residential college who meet general eligibility requirements except former varsity football award winners, current varsity, junior varsity or freshmen football team players and graduate students are eligible to participate. Current players are those players who practiced, played or are on the active team rosters after September 25. Any instances involving special exceptions require a review by the Athletic Secretaries Ad Hoc Eligibility Committee.

LATE POLICY

Teams are expected to be at the fields and ready to begin play at the time designated on the schedule. If at the starting time a team has the minimum number of players then the game must begin as soon as possible. If a team has fewer than the minimum at the designated starting time then the start of the game will be delayed until enough players arrive. However, if the late team does not have the minimum number of players up to 15 minutes after the original starting time, then the game is reduced by 15 plays, and seven points are awarded to the opposing team along with possession of the ball at their twenty yard line. If at 30 minutes past the scheduled starting time the team does not have the minimum number of players, then the game is forfeited.

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DEFINITIONS AND RULES

Catch: The act of establishing possession of a live ball in flight. A catch is complete when the receiver has possession of the ball and one foot in bounds.

Contact: An illegal attempt to block or move an opponent involving the use of the hands, arms, shoulders, legs or head.

Defense: The team defending against a score.

Down: A single play by the team in possession of the ball. It starts with a snap from center and ends when the ball becomes dead.

Downed: A player with the ball is downed when he/she is tagged, steps out of bounds or touches a knee to the ground.

Fumble: Inadvertent loss of the ball by the player in possession. The ball is dead immediately upon contact with the ground and remains in the possession of the team which dropped it. If the fumble occurs at the snap, behind the passer or behind the line of scrimmage then the next play starts at the spot where the ball hit the ground. If the fumble occurs beyond the passer then the next play starts at the spot where possession was lost. A fumble in the offensive team's end zone is a safety. A kick or punt that contacts the ground before being possessed by the receiving team is not a fumble and may be advanced by the receivers. A kick or punt that contacts the ground and is recovered by the kicking team must be whistled dead and possession is given to the receiving team at the spot where the ball was first touched by the kickers.

Huddle: Players grouped together usually for receiving instructions for the next play.

Interception: When the defensive player gains possession of a pass. The defensive team may move the ball forward using runs and forward or backward passes and laterals.

Interference: Illegal contact with a receiver or defender prior to the catch of the ball

Kickoff: A free kick or punt which starts the game or follows a score. The kicking team may down the ball to stop play, however, the receiving team gains possession. The receiving team may move the ball forward using runs or backward passes, but, may not pass the ball forward. If a kickoff goes out of bounds before it is touched, the receiving team has the option to accept the ball where it left the playing field or request a rekick from the original line of scrimmage.

Line of Scrimmage: The unmarked yard line that passes through the point of the ball and designates the spot where the play begins. The offensive team must place at least three players on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball.

Motion: Offensive players moving before the snap of the ball. Players can be in motion behind the line of scrimmage so long as three players are set and on the line of scrimmage before the snap of the ball.

Muff: A misplay of a kick-off or punt when the receiver contacts the ball but does not gain full possession. A muff is not a fumble therefore if it hits the ground a receiver may regain possession to advance or the kicking team may down the ball and the receivers start their series at that spot. A muff by the receivers in their end zone may be advanced to the field of play or may be downed with play starting at the twenty. A muff recovered by the kickers in the receiver's end zone is a safety.

Offense: The team in control of the ball with the intent of scoring.

Overtime: If the score is tied after regulation then each team gets an equal number of play series from the mid field line to score. When the team going first scores a touchdown they must also attempt an extra point try, then, the opponents get their play series to attempt to tie the score. First possession is determined by a coin flip. Any fumble, interception or defensive score ends the series.

Pass: A live ball thrown forward or backward, overhand or underhand to another player. An illegal pass is a pass caught by the passer, untouched by any other player and thrown for the purpose of avoiding the tag. Once caught, the ball is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the illegal pass.

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Play: The ball is put in play at the middle of the field at the spot where: the ball was downed by the kicking team; the ball carrier was tagged; an incomplete pass thrown providing it is beyond the line of scrimmage; the ball or ball carrier went out of bounds; the ball carrier touches a knee to the ground; or, an incomplete backward pass hits the ground. Once dead the ball may not be put back in play until the official declares it ready for play and sounds a whistle. It then must be put in play within twenty-five seconds to avoid a delay of game penalty.

Possession: The moment when a player holds or controls the ball.

Punt: A punt may be used on the fifth down and denotes a change of possession. The defense may not rush the punter but may place players on the line of scrimmage who may attempt to block the punt. The receiving team may move the ball forward using runs or backward passes, but, may not pass the ball forward.

Release: The moment when the ball ceases contact with hands during a hand-off or pass. A play is ended and spotted at the point of contact when the thrower is tagged before the ball is released from the hand.

Rushing: Attacking the ball carrier behind the line of scrimmage. The rusher may directly attack the ball carrier after the snap of the ball. However, the rusher must attempt to avoid contact with the screener either by side-stepping or hand checking. Initiating direct contact with the head, legs, forearms or elbows is illegal.

Safety: When an offensive play concludes in the defensive team's end zone. The defensive team is awarded two points. Following a safety, the offensive team (having just yielded points), must put the ball into play from its own twenty yard line by a free kick.

Screening: Intentionally hindering the progress of a defensive player by screening with the body. Screeners may shuffle laterally along, behind and/or beyond the line of scrimmage to impede or alter the path of a rusher/tagger, however, initiating contact with the legs, forearms, elbows or hands is illegal.

Snap: A quick, continuous backward motion from the ground by which the ball is handed or lateraled from the line of scrimmage to a player in the backfield to begin the play.

Stop: The down is stopped when: the ball carrier is tagged; an incomplete pass touches the ground; the ball or ball carrier goes out of bounds; the ball carrier or receiver touches a knee to the ground; a team scores; or, the official's whistle is sounded.

Tag: A touching with one hand anywhere between the shoulders and knees of an opponent carrying the ball. The feet of the tagger may leave the ground to make the touch.

Touchback: When the ball becomes dead in an end zone after a change of possession kick or an interception. The defending team takes over the ball at the twenty yard line.

Touchdown: When a player in possession of the ball penetrates the opponent's goal line. The value of a touchdown is six points.

Try-For-Point: The try is a "bonus" opportunity granted to the team who has just scored a touchdown to add to its total by one point.

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PENALTIES

Loss Of 5 Yards: The referee immediately stops play and assesses a five yard penalty for the following infractions. The down is replayed. *Delay of Game - Offsides - Illegal Set - Encroachment*

Loss Of 10 Yards: The referee notes time of incident and discusses the options with the team captain at the conclusion of the play for the following infractions. If the penalty is accepted then it is assessed from the point of the infraction and the down is replayed. *Contact - Clipping - Rough Tag - Holding*

Loss Of 15 Yards: The referee may determine that the actions of a player or team are inappropriate or overly aggressive and are cause for a personal foul. The penalty is assessed from the previous spot, the spot where the play ended, or the spot where the infraction occurred, whichever is more advantageous to the offended team. When the penalty occurs by the defense in the endzone or within 15 yards of the goal line then the next play starts at the one yard line. When the penalty occurs by the offense in the endzone then the next play starts 15 yards from the previous spot.

Disqualification: When a player is ejected from the game by an official he/she must immediately leave the field, then the team is penalized by addition or loss of down (whichever is more severe) and must play shorthanded for the remainder of the game.

Delay of Game: When a team fails to start a play within the twenty-five seconds limit. *First offense: Warning and a five yard loss. Second offense and thereafter: Loss of down and five yards.*

Encroachment: When a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the snap of the ball. *Penalty: Dead ball foul with five yard loss.*

Illegal Tag:

- Intentional pushing, striking, slapping, and/or holding while tagging are/is illegal and will result in a personal foul penalty. *Penalty: Live ball foul with loss of ten yards.*
- If a defender tags the ball carrier above the shoulders or below the knees and the tag causes the ball carrier to fall to the ground the referee must make the following judgments: if the ball carrier could have gained additional yardage but would not have scored then the ref may replay the down from the spot of the illegal tag; or, if the ball carrier could have scored then the ref may award a touchdown or extra point.

Interference: Illegal contact with a receiver or defender prior to the catch of the ball. *Penalty: Live ball foul. Beyond the line of scrimmage it is a spot foul. Behind the line of scrimmage the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.*

- Offensive interference: without an offensive catch results in a loss of down and return to the original line of scrimmage, and, with an interception results in change of possession.
- Defensive interference: with or without a catch results in the replay of the down from the point of the infraction; however, when interference occurs in the defensive team's end zone the down is replayed from the one yard line.

Offsides: When the offensive team penetrates the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. Only the snapper may line up offside without the possibility of incurring a penalty. *Penalty: Dead ball foul with five yard loss.*

Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Certain behavior deemed inappropriate by the referee may result in a warning to or ejection of a player. Examples of this behavior include: persistent infringement of the rules; unsportsmanlike conduct; foul or abusive language; violent or dangerous actions; and/or serious foul play. When a player is ejected he/she is indefinitely suspended from all intramural sports and may be reinstated only after a hearing with the Intramural Director or an Ad Hoc Disciplinary Committee.