



Youth Flag Football Coaching Manual



Message From OCPRD

We thank you for volunteering your time this season to coach a group of up and coming flag football players! The mission of OCPRD is to, through a coordinated effort, enrich the quality of life of the citizens we serve, by providing safe and accessible recreational facilities and a diversified program of recreational activities for all citizens. We would not be able to do that without flag football coaches like yourself, so thank you for making this program happen!

The philosophy of OCPRD's flag football program is to allow players to participate, develop skills, and learn the game in a fun and safe environment. We have all the confidence in you to help us make that happen for our players!

The OCPRD flag football program has grown to 290+ players, 30+ teams – which brings a necessity of 30+ volunteer coaches! You are such an integral part of giving the youth of this community an opportunity to get out and play flag football, so we cannot thank you enough for that.

The following manual will give you information on the season, specific things you need to do and a great collection of advice on the season to come. Please read through in its entirety, and know we are here for you if you have any questions on players, parents, practices or games throughout the season. Your direct contact will be the Youth Flag Football Program Coordinator, whose name and contact information can be found on our website, via the Youth Flag Football page.

We are looking forward to a great season!

OCPRD Team

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Coach Requirements

All volunteer youth athletic coaches must complete the following:

1. Complete a Volunteer Coaches Application online through Community Pass:

Form Link: [Community Pass](#)

2. All coaches must complete and pass online criminal history background check. Coaches must complete the background check before stepping on the field with their team:

Form Link: [Oconee County P&R Background Screening Form](#)
[Volunteer Eligibility Criteria](#)

3. Complete free online concussion training:

Course Link: [CDC Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports](#)

4. Complete the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) training – NYSCA is offered twice a season. You must renew this certification every 12 months.

○ Renewal Options:

- Attend the NYSCA Training, offered twice each season by OCPRD
 - (August 12 or August 19 at 6:00pm at OVP)
- Attend Pre-Season Coaching Clinic
 - (August 6 at 6:15pm at OVP)

Oconee County Parks and Recreation Coaches Code of Ethics

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics:

I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.

I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.

I promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.

I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.

I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.

I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.

I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

Coach Responsibilities

- Coaches will participate in evaluating players during evaluations.
- Coaches are asked to contact all members of their team within 48 hours of receiving their roster. Emails followed up with phone calls seem to be the most effective way to contact each player. If you have trouble reaching a player, please contact OCPRD at 706-769-3965.
- Coaches will be scheduled to lead up to two practices each week. (one weekday and one Saturday)
- Coaches will receive an equipment bag that contains footballs, flags, cones, first aid, and mouthguards.
- Coaches are responsible for bringing equipment bags to practices and games.
- Coaches must return equipment bags to OCPRD once the season is complete.
- Once all requirements are completed, coaches will receive a coach badge and whistle.
- Coach badge must be worn during practices and games.
- Focus on a few rules and emphasize throughout the season.
- Encourage players to arrive on time for practices and games.
- Coaches and parents are expected to abide by OCPRD rules.
- Be proactive in sharing information with parents.
- Ask parents to let you know ahead of time if a player will not be able to make a practice/game.
- Encourage your players to practice good sportsmanship in victory and in defeat. The league is designed to allow players to have a safe and fun environment in which to play.
- Always look for the positives in a loss. Point out things your team did well. Ask players what areas the team could improve.
- Give players an opportunity to develop skills at various positions.
- As a coach you will have to address various issues and concerns from parents ranging from playing time to game strategies. How you handle these situations can affect the course of the season. During your first team meeting, let parents know a little bit about yourself and best times to reach you. If a parent approaches you with a suggestion or concern, let them share – uninterrupted – and tell them you'll think about their suggestion and figure out a way to best address their concerns. Always respond in a positive, non-confrontational manner, and make sure things don't get out of hand.

Season Timeline

Monday, July 13th	Fall Registration Begins – 8:00 AM (<i>online only</i>)
Thursday, August 6th	Youth Flag Football Registration Deadline
Thursday, August 6th	Coach Meeting at 6:15pm in OVP Community Center
Saturday, August 8th	Evaluations/Draft <i>Mite (ages 7-8) at 9:00am at Oconee Veterans Park</i> <i>Pee Wee (ages 9-10) at 10:15am at Oconee Veterans Park</i> <i>Major (ages 11-12) at 11:30am at Oconee Veterans Park</i>
Wednesday, August 12th	NYSCA Clinic at 6:00pm in OVP Community Center
Wednesday, August 12th	Coaches Contact Parents Deadline
Saturday, August 15th	ALL Youth Flag League Practices Begin (Oconee Veterans Park Multipurpose Fields)
Wednesday, August 12th	NYSCA Clinic at 6:00pm in OVP Community Center
Monday, September 7th	Labor Day – NO Team Activities
Tuesday, September 8th	Games Begin
Friday, September 11th	<i>Make-up Date from September 7</i>
*Friday, September 11th	Picture Day
*Friday, September 18th	Picture Day
*Friday, September 25th	Picture Day
Saturday, September 26th	Saturday Game Day
Monday, October 12th	OC Schools Fall Break – We Will Have Team Activities
Saturday, October 17th	Saturday Game Day
Week of October 19th	Pee Wee Jamboree and Major Tournament

Inclement Weather

Cancellations due to weather on weeknights will generally not be made until 4 pm.

We will make every reasonable effort to contact coaches/team managers with cancellation information as soon as a decision is made and coaches/team managers will contact parents/players.

Please give your parents the Inclement Weather Hotline number: 706-769-3965 (select option 2)

For mobile alerts: Text OCPRD to 84483

CodeRED Alerts: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BF3A63052F22>

My game has already started, but inclement weather pulled us off. What do I do?

- OCPRD Staff will make an announcement when lightning is seen within 10 miles of the park and will assist the public in exiting the fields.
- Every player, coach, and parent will be required to exit the fields and seek shelter.
- Shelter locations may include the concrete areas beside the fields and personal vehicles.
- Patrons cannot be on grass.
- Play will be suspended for 30 minutes after each lightning strike. The 30-minute timer will reset after each new lightning strike.
- The remainder of the game will be cancelled if lightning persists for 30 minutes.
- If a game is called after one half of play, the game will be considered official.
- The rescheduled makeup game will begin at the time and place the current game is forced to end.
- The score will also be carried over to the rescheduled game.

10 Tips for Getting Your Team Focused, Motivated, And Playing Hard!

- By Jeff Haefner

"Coaches who can outline plays on a blackboard are a dime a dozen. The ones who win get inside their players and motivate." -- Vince Lombardi

One of the biggest challenges that coaches of all levels face is the challenge of keeping your players focused, motivated to play, and playing as hard as they can. The following are 10 tried and true tips to keep your team motivated.

1. Set a precedent on the first day of practice. Establishing your expectations from the very beginning is the best way to not only establish your role within the team, but to also let your players know what kind of coach you're going to be. For example: As your first practice starts and players are milling about blow your whistle and call them to the center of the field. If they don't sprint to you, they get to run right then and there. After they've run, blow the whistle again. This time all your players will enthusiastically sprint to you. And more importantly, you'll have their full attention for the rest of the year.

2. Show your players that they matter. Probably the most effective method for getting your players to work hard for you, and for themselves, is to let them know that you care about them. Show interest in their lives outside of flag football. Get to know your players as individuals. Spend time talking to them one on one. It doesn't have to be for hours; a couple minutes will do the trick. The point is to let them know that they're important to you on and off the football field.

3. Model motivation in all of your actions. Have fun, remain positive, and let your players know what is expected of them immediately. Your players will pick up on everything that you say and do and they will respond accordingly. Verbalize your philosophy so your players know what to expect and to what to strive for. It's all about what you emphasize! If you're constantly talking about securing the ball, your players will pick up on that and become better ball carriers.

4. Offer verbal rewards. Rewards grab attention - players and people love compliments. Whether you're running beginner flag football drills or drills that require more skill, give praise for improvement and for working hard. Occasionally, for significant effort, praise players in front of the team. Public praise is often well received and players will work hard to earn such praise. Remember that if negative feedback is required to sandwich it between positive feedback.

5. Offer occasional non-verbal rewards. Players can be motivated to achieve goals by occasionally offering tangible rewards like a sports drink. You may also use permissions. Permissions were rewards granted to players based on outstanding efforts or reaching set goals. The permissions are earned throughout the practice and then totaled up at the end. Each permission resulted in one less lap, suicide, or other conditioning drill. You can also add laps to players for not meeting expectations. For example, you can set up a receiving drill and players that catch 5 or more passes pick up a permission and those that catch less than 4 pick up a lap.

6. Coach the success of the team. When it comes down to it, it is more fun to win together than it is to win alone and flag football is a team sport. Your players are more likely to give greater effort if they know the team is counting on them. By reminding players, through your actions and words that they are a team, they'll be motivated to work together to succeed. Often this can be accomplished by verbally

praising players that are working well together or by offering a non-verbal reward for practices where they work together particularly well. Also, by knowing your players strengths and weaknesses you'll be able to keep an eye out for potential conflicts and enforce a team attitude.

7. Add competition to your drills. A great way to spice things up and keep players working hard is to add competition to your drills. As an example, you could establish teams for a shooting drill and reward the team or individual player that makes the most shots successfully. With a little imagination, you can come up with ways to make almost all your drills competitive.

Just remember that comparisons between teammates can make some players feel badly about themselves and can spur rivalries between teammates. In short, it can squash a player's motivation. If you need to compare teammates, do so only to model a desired behavior or skill. For example, "Watch how Joe follows through with his free throw shot, try that next time you're at the line and see how it feels."

8. Teach visualization. Visualization is a valuable coaching tool and it is the one skill that all athletes can take away from their sport, no matter what level they perform at, and use the skill to attain success the rest of their lives. Teach your players to visualize reaching their goals. Visualization teaches focus. It teaches planning, executing, and succeeding. Incorporate a few minutes of visualization in each practice by asking the team to visualize a play that they're having difficulty perfecting, a shot that they need to work on, or executing the drill of their choice. Teach them to utilize all their senses in the visualization so that they can hear the ball bouncing, see the ball bouncing, and feel their gym shoes squeak on the floor.

9. Don't punish, discipline with the intent to teach. Punishment for poor or inappropriate behavior only serves to fragment the teams focus and hinder their motivation. Instead, discipline with the intent to teach your players how to conduct themselves appropriately. Rather than yell or punish players that aren't living up to their potential, ask them, "Is that the best you can do? Are you trying your hardest?" Often simply by acknowledging to you or to themselves that they're not trying their hardest, players will try harder, particularly if they know that you notice. Additionally, discipline with consistency. For example, if it is unacceptable to be late to practice then all who are late to practice receive the exact same consequences no matter what.

10. Set the right type of goals for your team and for your players. Players and teams need goals so that they know what to focus on and they know what to strive for. But the key is the "type" of goals you choose. Avoid goals for prestigious statistics, like scoring the most points and even winning games. Players already want those things. If you set goals for other critical aspects of the game you will see huge success!

Goals such as low number of fumbles, team passing percentage, team rushing yards (not individual), defensive stats, and possessions per game. Just be careful about the message you send your players when setting goals. When used properly, goals are a powerful motivator. Don't forget to reward players for achieving their goals.

Sample Practice Plan

Introductions (5 minutes) Take a few minutes to get to know your team. A good exercise is to form a circle, and go around the circle having each child introduce themselves and provide some basic information. (For example: school they attend, their favorite NFL team, their favorite NFL player, etc). Let your team know a little about yourself. This is also a good opportunity to let your parents know that there are lots of opportunities for them to help with the team, and that you welcome their participation.

Warm-Ups and Basic Stretches (8 minutes) Have your players go for a brief jog in an orderly fashion, stressing that it's not a race, and they should run at an easy pace. Toe touching their toes, quad stretches (flamingos), butterfly stretch, arm circles, etc. Have your team help identify stretches to do. *Micro and Mite may not need any or as much time to warm-up or stretch.*



Snapping the Ball (8 minutes) Each play begins with a snap, so this is an important skill to master. Begin by demonstrating the proper technique involved in snapping the football with the quarterback under center, shotgun, and from the side.

- Proper technique begins with the center grasping the ball in a similar fashion to which he would grasp the ball to throw a pass. The center's feet should be slightly more than shoulder width apart, and knees should be bent.
- The center executes the snap on the quarterback's signal (set - hike, or whatever cadence you choose).
- The laces of the football should be parallel to the ground when the quarterback receives the ball. Have each player perform a few under-center snaps, with players rotating at quarterback.
- The snap can start under center, shotgun, or snapped from the side. Have the center look at his target between his legs, or to the side, and execute the shotgun snap on the quarterback's signal.
- Have each player perform a few snaps, with players rotating at quarterback.



Passing Warm-Up (8 minutes)

- Have players split into groups of three or four placed around 10 yards apart (adjust the distance for different age groups).
- Have the players begin throwing the football to one another to warm up their arms and demonstrate proper passing and receiving techniques.
- For passing, each player should stand with the shoulder of their non-throwing arm pointed directly at their target. He should use the shoulder kind of like a gun site. The ball should be held high (“on the shelf”, or basically at the letters).
- The Peyton Manning school of quarterbacking simplifies the basics of passing into three motions -- wipe the windshield (the quarterback’s non-throwing arm leaves the ball, and begins to open up the chest to make a throwing motion), elbow your brother (the quarterback’s throwing arm simultaneously moves backward, with the elbow remaining at the same height), and flick the booger (when the quarterback completes his throwing motion, he should flick his wrist and flick his finger at the target to follow through).
- For receiving, make sure that players are catching the ball with their hands, and not trapping it against their body.
- For balls received above the waist, the player’s thumbs and index fingers should touch, forming a diamond. For balls received below the waist, the player’s pinkies should touch.

Break (2 minutes) Have the players grab a quick drink and set up for your next drill. Use multiple breaks if necessary.



Basic Route Running (8 minutes) Set up two lines for receivers to run routes, and two separate lines for quarterbacks to throw passes. You should have just two quarterbacks, and should rotate quarterbacks during the drill. The receivers should run through four separate routes: the seven-yard out, seven-yard curl, go-route, and the slant.

- *Seven Yard Out* Receivers run seven yards up the field, turning out at a 90-degree angle at seven yards. Receivers should use the opposite foot to make their cut -- for example,

if the pattern calls for an out pattern to the left, the receiver should cut off of his right foot, and vice-versa.

- *Seven Yard Curl* Receivers work seven yards up the field and turn quickly. Receivers should place their hands out in front of them to create as much space between themselves and a defensive player. Make sure receivers STOP at seven yards, and do not continue to drift down field.
- *Go Route* Receiver is simply having the receiver run straight up the field. The quarterback should release the ball when the receiver is around seven yards down the field.
- *Slant* Receiver should take two steps up field and then break at a 45-degree angle. Again, receivers should use their off-foot to make their cut.



Defensive Back Technique and Flag Pulling (8 minutes)

Defensive Back Technique:

- Their feet should be staggered with a heel-to-toe relationship, no wider than shoulder width apart. They should be bent at the waist and knees, tail up and shoulders down.
- Arms should be relaxed, hanging from the sides.
- The backpedal players should try and remain low to the ground during their backpedal to enable easy change of direction.
- Shoulders should be over the thighs, with feet slightly shoulder width apart.
- Mechanics should be similar to running forward, but in reverse.
- Players should reach back with each step, pulling their bodies over their feet as when running forward.
- Breaking on the ball, have players line up in the same manner as in the basic route running drills.
- On the snap, have the players backpedal. Call out “break”, and have the defender break forward.
- When the defender breaks forward, throw the ball to the defender.

Flag Pulling:

- Remind players to stay on their feet to reduce the chance of injury and remain involved in the play.
- Run through the ball carrier. This may sound a little odd, and it’s important to emphasize what this ISN’T. This isn’t a collision or tackle. There are 2 reasons to coach

this method. First, teaching your players not to stop and take a swipe a flag as the runner goes by at full speed. Second using your body to slow the runner's momentum.

- Use both hands. As the player approaches the ball carrier he should spread his arms out slightly with hands in front of him. The player should always attempt to grab a flag with each hand, one on each hip.
- Focus on the hip and swipe down. This is simple, but not something many kids come up with on their own, so they need to be coached. Players should start at the top of the flag belt and move his or her hand straight down the length of the flag.

Once your players understand proper flag pulling, the skills must be reinforced continuously with drills. Your entire flag football defense will benefit from your players learning and executing proper flag pulling techniques.

Bringing it All Together -- Route Running with Defensive Back Coverage (8 minutes) This drill brings together all of the skills taught during the practice. Have players line up the same way as they did for the basic route running drill. Instead of just lining up as receivers, players will rotate from receiver to defensive back to center, then back to the end of the receiver line. The quarterback will tell the receiver which route to run. The receiver will then line-up, with a defensive back in coverage. The quarterback will call for the snap from the center, and the receiver will run their route, while the defensive back tries to cover him. The routes should last no more than 3-4 seconds each. After a few practices, teams may choose to have a small scrimmage.

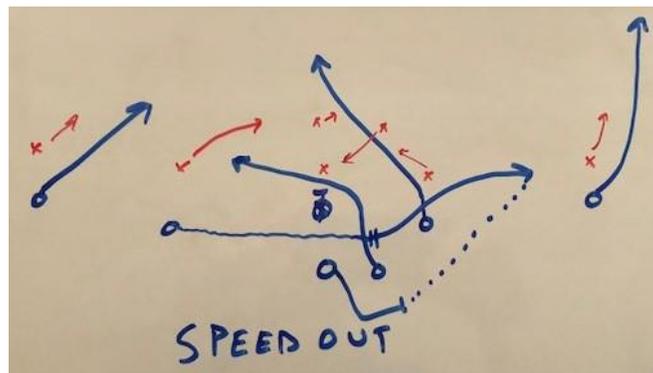
Closing Practice and Homework (5 minutes) Close practice by going over what was taught. Encourage players to do their "homework" by playing catch at home and going over the drills they practiced with a parent, sibling or friend.

Sample Plays for Flag Football

Play # 1: Speed Out/Go/Bubble

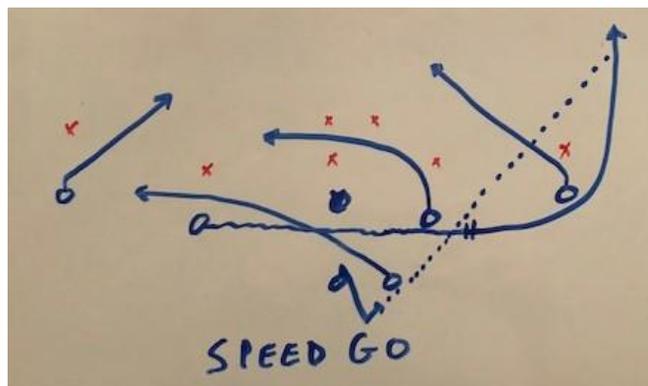
These are three plays built into one. How the defense is adjusting to your motion and how they align will determine which route will be called. If the defense isn't running or they aren't keeping up with the motion player, you will hit the Speed Out or Go route. If they are playing zone coverage or off man to man coverage you will have the motion player run the bubble. The bubble is a great way to get your athletes the ball in space and allow your athlete to get separation from the defenders. Not to mention that the bubble route is somewhat of an easy throw and catch for kids.

Out Route



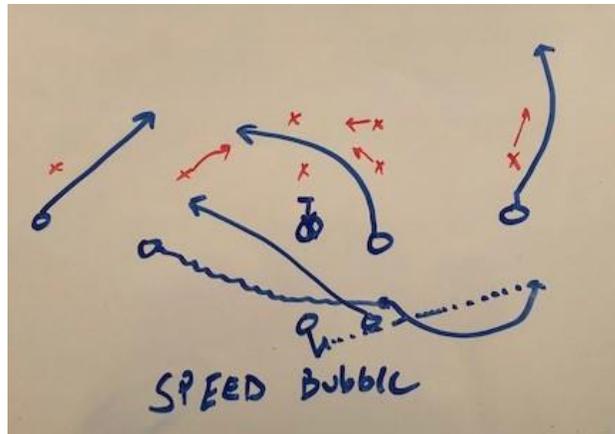
Have the motion player do a shallow out route when the defense is playing man to man coverage. Motion the player across so that he/she can be at full speed when the ball is snapped. Most of the time the defenders will not be able to keep up with the motion player. This is an easy throw and catch. This play will allow your receiver to get separation and it will allow him/her to make plays in space.

Go Route



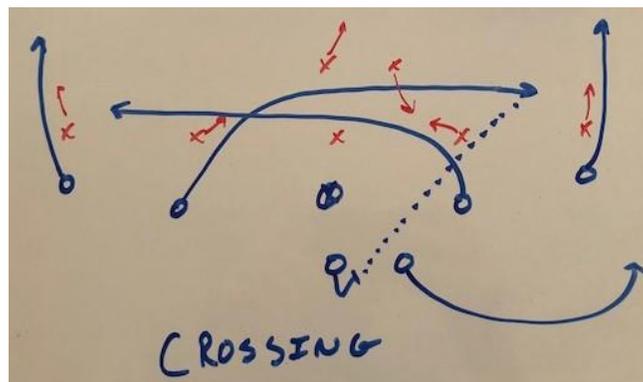
When the defense isn't running with the motion player call this go route. Motion the player across and have him/her turn up-field and run a go route. This is a great play against defenses that do not have a safety. Keep in mind that the receiver doesn't have to be 20 yards down the field before the pass is thrown. As soon as the motion player turns up-field, have the QB throw it. The deeper the throw the more difficult it is for the QB and the receiver to complete the pass.

Bubble Route



This play is great against zone defenses and man to man defenses that are playing soft coverage. The bubble screen is an easy throw that has a high completion rate. The motion player must belly his/her motion back a couple of yards so that he/she creates an easy throw for the QB. This will give your athlete some separation and allow him/her to make plays in space. You may utilize motion to free up and to get your athletes the ball in space.

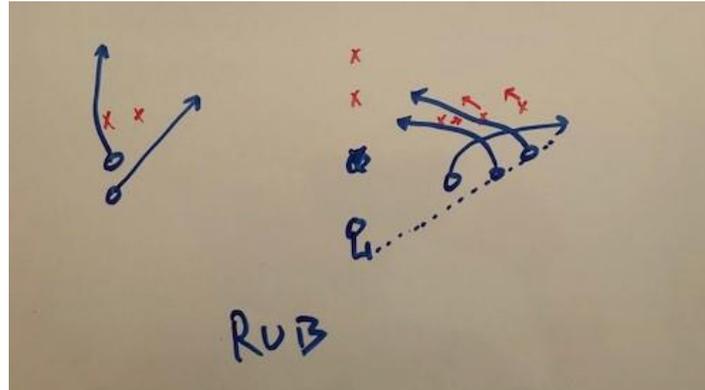
Play # 2 Crossing Routes (Mesh Concept)



The crossing route concept will allow your athletes to use the width of the field. It is a great concept to run with your fastest players. It will allow them to out run the defenders and it will create coverage confusion. Crossing routes are very easy to complete and they work well

against both man to man and zone coverage. The left slot receiver will run 9-10 yard crossing route (deepest crosser), the right slot will run a 6-7 yard cross route. It's important that the crossing route players continuing running outside. Also, make sure they don't collide.

Play # 3 Rub Concept (Outside Rub)



The rub concept is a good passing play in 7 vs 7. It's very effective against man coverage and it is also very good against zone coverage. The rub concept will allow your inside receiver to get a free release to the outside. This is a quick hitting play that is easy to complete and has big play potential. There are also options to the stacked side where the front receiver runs a Go Route and the back receiver runs a Quick Slant.