

Flag Football Coaches Tips & Drills

Tips: Strategy

Develop a Strategy

Decide what style of game you want to play and plan your plays accordingly. There is only so much you can teach the players in the time you have so keeping to a theme can make it easier to understand what you are asking them to do.

Example Strategy

- Play for first downs, not touchdowns
- Accomplish this through use short passes and running plays

Tips: Offense

Throwing the Football

- Hold the ball near the back with your fingers over the laces
- Keep your elbow in tight to your body and the ball up by your ear
- Point your non-throwing shoulder toward your target
- Throw the ball by letting it spin off your fingers as you follow through toward your target

Leading the Receiver

- As a quarterback, you don't want to throw the ball to where the receiver is but rather where he/she is going to be
- Practicing your routes with your receivers will help you figure out how far you can lead them with your throws

Receiving a Pass

- Form a triangle with your hands (between your index fingers and thumbs)
- Keep your eye on the ball at all times
- Try to keep the ball away from your body
- Keep your hands soft so that you can cushion the ball
- Once you have caught the ball, tuck it away so that you don't fumble it.

Play Action

- Using a fake handoff can distract the defensive backs enough to get the receivers open for a pass
- Try a few running plays first to set up the play fake then throw the ball down the field

Short Passing Routes

- Short passes are safe and effective ways of moving the ball
- Short passes can be run towards the sideline (out), towards the middle of the field (in), or just by turning back toward the QB when you have found an whole in the defense (button hook)
- Often a short pass can turn into a big gain with a few quick moves

Long Passing Routes

- Long passes are great ways of moving the ball in a hurry
- Long passes can be run towards the sideline (corner pattern), towards the middle of the field (post pattern), or just by running straight (fly pattern)
- A long pass is most effective when the defense is caught off guard. Using a mixture of running plays and short passes will open up the field for the long bomb.

Tips: Defense

Pulling the Flag

- Watch the ball carrier's hips as opposed to his/her feet or head
- Stay in front of the ball carrier
- Stay low and lunge at the flag
- If you grab anything but the flag, let go immediately so that you don't get a penalty

Playing Zone Defense

- Each defensive back is responsible for an area as opposed to a player
- The advantage of this system is that you can keep an eye on the receiver and the quarterback at the same time
- As receivers come through your area try to anticipate where the quarterback wants to throw it and beat the receiver to the spot

Playing Man to Man Defense

- Leave some space between you and the receiver (this is your cushion)
- As the receiver starts his/her route you can start to back pedal
- When the receiver makes his/her break you can turn and run with them to try to break up the pass

Drills

Warm-Up Drill: "Jingle-Jangle"

This is a good way to begin practice. After a short stretching period, this drill gets players loose and warmed up, while also helping them practice their agility and footwork.

Purpose: Improve balance, footwork, and change of direction.

Drill Outline:

- Place cones at corners of 15-yard square. Line up players at one corner of square. Players then:

1. sprint to first cone
2. side-step to second cone
3. backpedal to third cone
4. sprint back to beginning of line.

Throw a football to each player as he or she finishes the drill. Repeat drill to other side after everyone has had a turn.

Drill: Centre QB Exchange

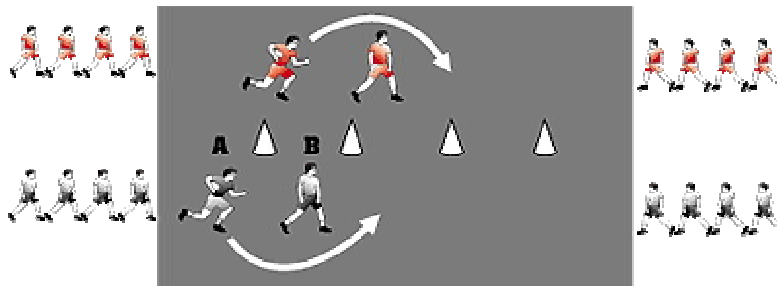
Purpose: To develop proper snapping technique.

Organization: Set out a 20 x 20-yard area. Divide teams into even groups and place in even lines. Place cones in middle of drill four yards apart. One football per team; the entire class can participate.

Drill Outline:

- This is a relay race.
- The quarterback (A) and centre (B) on each team start the race.
- The centre (B) snaps directly to the QB(A). The centre will stand still while the QB runs to the next cone.
- The previous(A) snaps to (B), then (B) snaps to (A) and so on, until course is completed.
- The race is continued until each participant gets a turn.

Key Coaching Points: Centre must place the ball on the ground before snapping.



Drill: Defense

Purpose: To develop defensive skills of backpedaling and pulling the flag.

Organization: Set out a 20 x 20-yard area. Pair up 10-12 participants or as many as space allows.

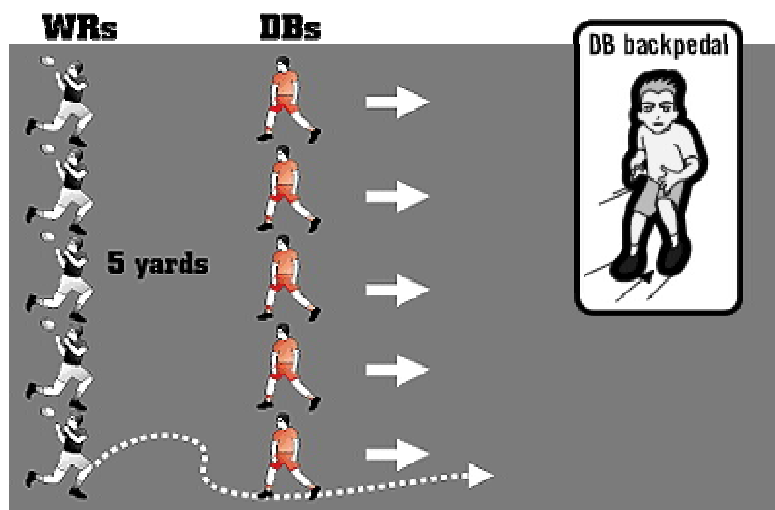
Drill Outline:

- Pair up kids - one group is WRs, the other DBs.
- Each DB will backpedal and "mirror" the WR. All players will start in slow motion on the coach's command.
- Switch, making WRs play as DBs. Progress to half speed.
- Switch positions again. Now go to full speed. On the instructor's whistle, the WRs will try to run past the DBs, who are backpedaling.
- During the drill, the instructor calls out "GO", the DB is now allowed to pull the flag of the WR who is still running for the end zone.
- The "GO" simulates the WR catching the football.

Progression: The coach will pass a football to an open offensive player when "GO" is called.

Key Coaching Points:

- DB stays in front of offensive player.
- DB watches WR's waist and hips.



Drill: Defense

Purpose: To develop running skills and avoid the DB. Also teaches RBs to run to an open area.

Organization: Set out a 20 x 20-yard area. 10 players start at one end zone, each with a football (if available). Two DBs are stationed in the middle of the field.

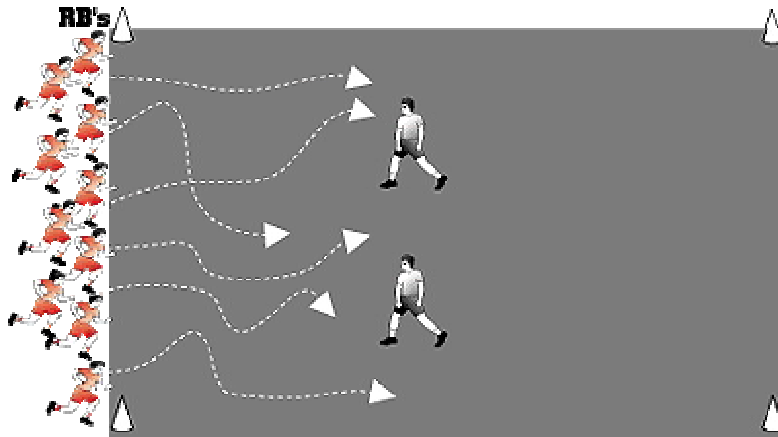
Drill Outline:

- The object is for the RBs to run past the DBs to the opposite end zone without getting their flags pulled.
- If a RB has his/her flag pulled, he/she sits out.
- Stop the drill after RBs reach the opposite end zone. Identify kids with pulled flags and allow players to catch their breath.
- The drill continues then by changing direction until there is one RB remaining.

Progression: Instead a RB sitting out after his/her flag is pulled, have him switch to a DB and assist in pulling other RB's flags.

Key Coaching Points:

- DBs should run to where the RB is going, not to where they are.
- Watch RB's waist, not his/her head or shoulders.



Drill: Running With The Ball

Purpose: To develop running skills and avoid having the flag pulled.

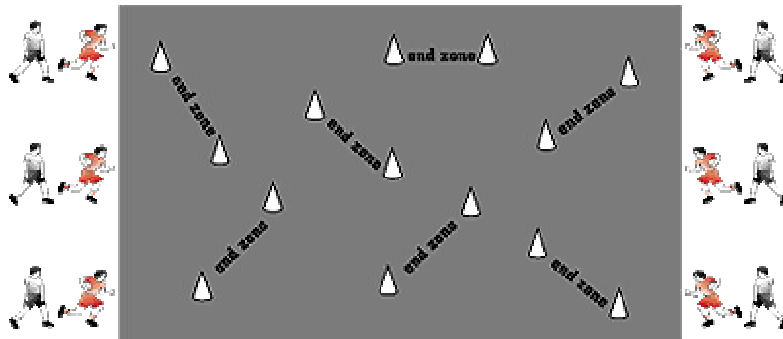
Organization: Set out a 40 x 40-yard area. Place cones 2 yards apart to simulate a mini-end zone. Recommended for six pairs of players, the maximum number of kids is 20. If cones are not available, marks on the ground or floor, t-shirts, or tape can be used. Balls are optional.

Drill Outline:

- Pair players up-one as a RB and one as a DB. The DB is in back of the RB and chasing the RB from behind.
- RB's should carry a football (if available).
- Each RB starts off on the end line at either side of the playing area.
- The DBs start 5 yards behind the RBs.
- On the coach's whistle, the RBs attempt to cross through the mini-end zones without getting their flags pulled by the pursuing DBs.
- The DB must chase the RB.
- Both flags are pulled, RB is out. If one flag pulled, the RB keeps going.
- Any end zone can be crossed and there is no order in which the end zones have to be crossed.
- The drill lasts 45 seconds and then you switch RB's to DB and DB's to RB.

Progression: Shorten time to 30 seconds. Key Coaching Points:

- RBs run plays with their heads up.
- DB watches the movement of RB's hips, not his/her head or shoulders.



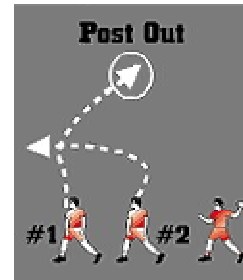
Drill: Pass Pattern Combinations



Streak Out:
#1 WR runs a 5-yard out toward the sideline and WR #2 runs a streak.



Streak Curl:
#1 WR runs a streak and #2 WR runs a 5 yard-curl inside.



Post Out:
WR #1 runs a post and WR #2 runs a 5-yard out.



Corner Smash:
WR #1 runs a corner and WR #2 runs a 5-yard smash.



Curl Post Corner:
WR #1 runs a 5-yard curl and WR #2 runs a post.



Twin Curl:
WR #1 and WR #2 both run 5-yard curls. This play is used in short-yardage situations.

*On all these patterns, #1 is an option if #2 is covered, and vice versa.

Drill: Passing & Receiving

Purpose: To develop running, passing, and receiving skills.

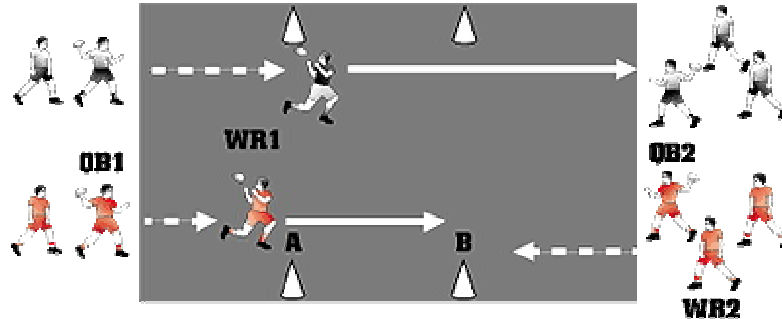
Organization: Set out a 20 x 20-yard area and divide the team into even groups. Set cones 5 yards from each end line and 10 yards apart. Each team requires one football so the entire team can participate.

Drill Outline:

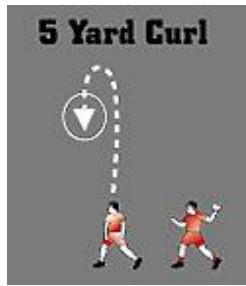
- This is a relay race.
- The object is for QB 1 to pass to WR 1, who has run to cone (A) to catch the ball.
- The second participant in line is WR 2.
- WR 2 runs to cone (B) and repeats the drill.
- The drill is repeated until every participant has a turn.
- If the ball is dropped, the WR picks it up and continues with the drill.

Key Coaching Points:

- WR must stop and completely turn around giving the QB a big target.
- WR must give a solid handoff to the QB when returning to line.
- After each relay race, a WR becomes the new QB.



Drill: Individual Pass Patterns



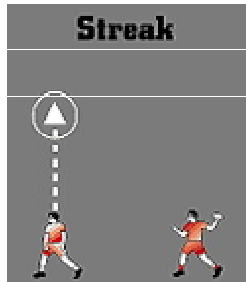
5 Yard Curl:
The WR runs up the field 5 yards, stops, and returns back towards the QB.



5 Yard Out:
The WR runs up the field 5 yards and cuts to the sideline.



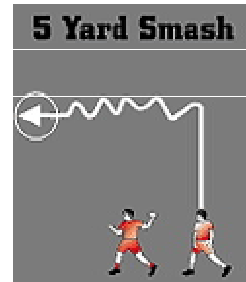
8 Yard Post:
A WR runs up field 8 yards and cuts toward the centre of the field on a 45-degree angle



Streak:
The WR runs straight up the field as fast as possible.



Post Corner:
The WR runs up the field. At 8 yards he cuts toward the centre of the field and after 2 yards runs towards the corner of the end zone.



5 Yard Smash:
The WR runs up the field 5 yards and then turns toward the QB and side shuffles with body facing the QB.