

Warm Up

Stretching

There are a variety of stretching exercises that can be used as a warm up before drills are practiced. Here are a few to help a player warm up...

Hamstring stretch – This can be performed in two different ways. 1) Have players get in a circle shoulder width apart. Players should spread their legs shoulder width and bend down and touch their toes. The player can remain in a touching toe position for 30 seconds. 2) Player can cross his or her right leg over the left leg and bend down and touch their toes. Player should remain down for 30 seconds. After 30 seconds, the player can place their left leg over the right leg and do the same for 30 seconds.

Arm stretches – 1) Players line up at shoulder width. With their arms extended over their heads, players stand on their toes and reach as high as possible. 2) Players raise their arms shoulder height and rotate them in a circular motion. The players can rotate their arms front wards and then backwards.

Running Exercises

20 – 40 – 60 Yard Sprint – All players line up across the field and on the coach's command sprint 20 yards downfield and then back to the starting line. Next have the player's run 40 yards downfield and back and 60 yards downfield and back. For younger player's a coach may want the player's to run 20-30-40 yards instead. Make sure that your player's have enough rest between sprints.

Partner Lateral Relay

This drill is done in pairs and can be done as part of a relay race. Each pair starts facing each other and approximately 1 – 2 yards apart. One player from each pair has a football. At the coach's command, the pairs start to run downfield and lateral the ball back and forth to each other as they move downfield. Players should concentrate on making good laterals, keep their eyes on the ball, and properly catching/receiving the lateral, all while

running downfield.

The Offense

Quarterback – From the Quarterback standpoint, it can be very difficult for a young player to hold the football properly. A QB should hold the ball by placing his hand where the seams of the ball are. Getting the proper grip on the ball is very important for the QB. In a game, the Quarterback will position himself under the center in order to get the ball to start the play. The Quarterback-Center exchange is very important and should be practiced. Without the exchange the play will not start and if the Quarterback does not get the ball he will not be able to continue executing the play. In many leagues, if the quarterback fumbles the exchange, he can attempt to recover the fumble and continue the play. However in some leagues, once a fumble occurs, the play is blown dead by the referee and you have a loss of down

Running Back - For many young players, running the football can be a difficult challenge. Although in youth leagues the football is smaller than a regulation football, it still can be large and difficult to handle in small hands. Players need to be shown the proper way to accept a handoff from the Quarterback, and how to properly grip and run with the ball. When accepting a handoff from the QB, the Running Back needs to create a large target or basket with his arms. A Running Back's stance can vary. They can start in a 2-point stance or a 3-point stance. You will find in most cases, since your players are younger and less experienced, it will be easier if the running backs start in a 2-point stance.

Receiver – Receivers need to get down field quickly so that they can run a pass route. Catching a football can be very difficult. One of the keys to catching a football is for the Receiver to start with a proper target. Their hands should be out giving a target to the QB. Receivers should try to catch the ball with their hands, then bringing the ball into their body. Many young players will try to catch the ball by trapping it with their arms and body. When trying to catch the ball by trapping it, the ball will sometimes bounce off their chest. While trapping the ball can be an acceptable way of catching for new players, you should try to emphasize catching with the hands. Remember, the most important thing in catching is for the Receiver to keep

their eyes on the ball. Receivers should position themselves on the line by utilizing a 2-point stance with one leg back further than the other, with legs slightly bent. This stance will enable your receivers to get down field quickly.

In flag football, especially for younger players, throwing a completed pass can and running the football can be very difficult. Don't get too frustrated if your players have difficulty executing. The following drills should help your players with the offensive part of the game.

QB/Running Back/Receivers Drills

Quarterback – Running Back Handoff Drill – In this drill, have your running backs line up in their proper stance and in their proper position in the backfield (approximately 3 to 5 yards back) The QB should call out hike, move and pivot in the correct direction and hand the ball off to the RB. The RB should have a proper hand position so as to correctly accept the handoff. The QB should make sure that he firmly puts the ball into the RB's target area.

Grab the Grass – This drill can be done as a relay race or the entire squad can participate all at the same time. The player(s) line up at the starting line and on the coach's first whistle, begin to run downfield. When the coach blows the whistle again, the player, in stride, bends down and grabs a clump of grass, and then continues downfield. Depending on the running distance, each player should have to grab grass 3 to 6 times. This drill should be done with and without the ball.

Run Around Cones – This is a simple drill that helps develop ball carrying skills and coordination. Divide your team into 2 – 3 groups. Each group lines up in a straight line. Set up 3 to 4 cones every three yards. On the coach's command, have the first player in each group run around the cones. You can make this drill into a relay race, the first team to have each player go through the cones and sit in a straight line wins the race.

Pass and Catch Drill. – This drill is for receivers but running backs can do it as well. Have the receiver's line up in their proper stance and position. When the QB signals hike, the receiver will sprint 10 yards down the sideline and cut sharply to the middle of the field. The QB should release the ball to the

receiver at the point of his cut. The receiver should have his hands ready to catch the pass.

Defense

Defensive Linemen- The Defensive Linemen take a position on the opposite side of the line scrimmage, in front of the Offense. While it is the offensive line's job to block, the Defensive Line's job is not to get blocked, maintain their position and try to grab the flag from the ball carrier.

Linebackers – The Linebackers line up a few yards behind the defensive line. Linebackers are responsible for stopping the ball carrier and going into pass coverage to prevent the short pass. Linebackers should position themselves in an athletic 2-point stance, with legs slightly more than shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent.

Defensive Backs- The Defensive Backs line up a few yards behind the Linebackers or out on the far sides of the line of scrimmage. It is their responsibility to prevent the completion of a pass and on running plays, rush up and stop the ball carrier by grabbing their flag. The stance of a Defensive Back is a 2-point athletic stance, with legs shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent with one leg back slightly further than the other.

Flag Grabbing

The obvious difference between flag football and regulation football is that in flag football the defense must grab the flag of the player with the ball instead of tackling the player. Believe it or not, it is probably more difficult to grab a flag than it is to tackle a player. Your team must learn the best way to grab an opponent's flag. You may find that most of your players will want to lunge at one of the opponent's flag with one hand. While this can work, a better technique is for the player to attempt to position themselves in front of the opponent giving the defensive player an opportunity to get either flag.

It is a good practice teach your team to “swarm around the ball” on defense. The goal on defense is to grab the flag. You should try to have as many players attempting to grab the flag as possible. The more defenders you have around the ball, the more chances your team will have to grab a flag. Here are some drills to help your team on defense.

Bull in the Ring – Have your team form a circle. Start with one player in the middle of the circle; this player will be the ball carrier. Call out the name of another player; this player will be the defender. The defender's goal is to corner the ball carrier and grab their flag. The goal of the ball carrier is not to be caught within the circle.

Sharks vs. Minnows Drill – For this drill, designate an area on the field for play. All players must stay within this designated area. Start with one or two players designated as the “Shark(s)” The rest of the players are the “Minnows”. The object of the “Shark” is to grab the flag of the “Minnows”. Once a “Minnow” has their flag grabbed, then they become “Sharks,” and attempt to grab the flag from other “Minnows”. At the start of the game the “Minnows” should be on the run trying to avoid the “Shark(s)”. The drill ends when there is one “Minnow” remaining.

Footwork Drill – This drill can be done by the entire team regardless of position. Have the player's line up in 3 to 5 lines across the field. At the start of the drill, the players are to get into their proper defensive stance, with their eyes focused on the coach. The player's are to react to the coach's movement.

1. If the coach moves to the Right; The defense shuffles to the Right.
2. If the coach moves to the Left; The defense shuffles to the Left.
3. If the coach moves Backward (as if to pass); The defense moves forward to rush. Defensive backs backpedal into coverage.
4. If the coach moves Forward; The defense rushes Forward.