



Youth Flag Football Playbook



5-A-Side

Acknowledgements and Credits



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Flag Football is a developmental and competitive sport for people of all ages and abilities.

According to the Football Canada Long Term Athlete Development model, Flag Football is incorporated as a developmental sport for youth as young as seven years old building to the competitive level that starts for youth approximately 13 years old.

Football Canada emphasizes the importance of learning and teaching the basics to youth, including proper warm-up, throwing and catching techniques. It is vital to health and well being as well as the enjoyment of the game for players to feel confident with basic skills before being asked to run plays and cover offensive patterns.

The National Flag program is developed continually to ensure that all populations can benefit from Flag. It is your participation that helps develop the sport at the provincial, national and international level.

Thank you.

Football Canada

Offense Position Descriptions



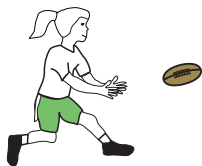
Quarterback (QB)

- The QB calls the offensive plays as leader of the offense.
- The QB always receives the football in what is called a “snap” from the Center (C).
- The QB has the option to hand off the football or pass the football to a teammate on offense.
- The QB cannot run across the “LOS” unless there has been a legal ball exchange with a player and a legal ball exchange back to the QB.



Center (C)

- The Center snaps the football to the QB. A snap is when the Center tosses the football between his or her legs.
- After the snap, the Center can run out for a pass.



Wide Receiver (WR)

- The Wide Receiver may catch a pass or take a handoff from the quarterback to gain yardage.
- There are up to three WR's on offense.



Running Back (RB)

- The Running Back stands to the side or behind the QB.
- He/she will take a hand off or run for a pass play.

Starting the Play



Huddles

Center sets up the huddle after each play.

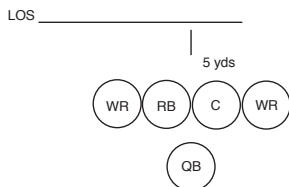
Each play must start within 30 seconds of the ball being placed on the “LOS”.

Quarterback runs the huddle.

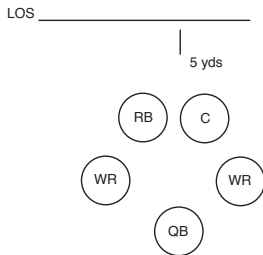
Huddle breaks after each player receives instructions, when the QB says ‘Ready’ (to confirm everyone knows what play to run) then ‘Break.’

If a signal is not heard or understood, an offensive player should call out “check” for a repeat.

Open



Closed



Cadence

A series of words or numbers uttered by the QB in a rhythmical or non-rhythmical manner to start a play.

Set
Go
Hut
Hut

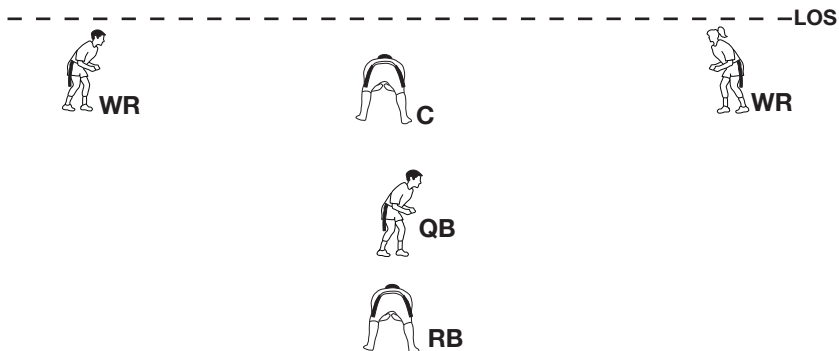
Advanced teams will practice enough to be comfortable changing the play after the team has left the huddle and are lined up to begin the play. This is called an audible.

The audible is a short combination of colours and numbers such as red 32 to symbolize plays/changes.

Lining up the Offence

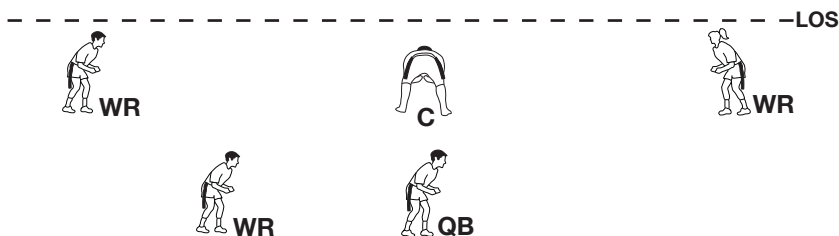


Standard Formation with a Running Back



QB can line up “under” the Center to receive the “snap” or in “Shotgun” formation 5 yards behind the Center.

Standard Formation without a Running Back

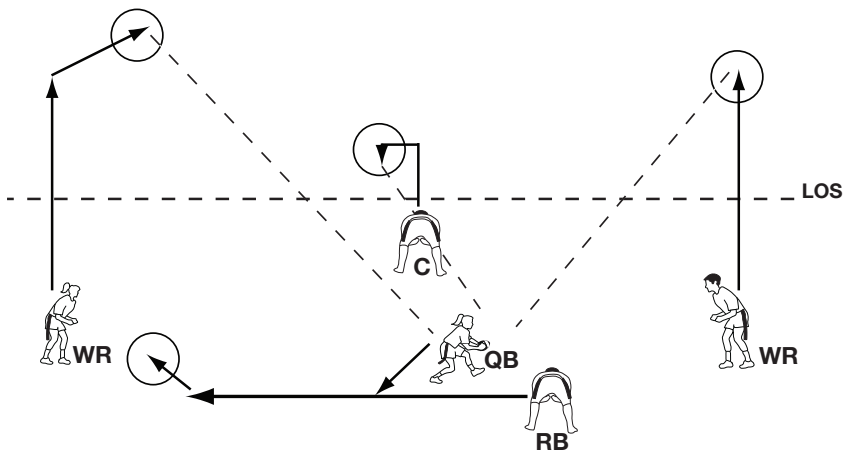


A coach should train each Player at every position.

Offensive Plays



Base Play



RB crosses the backfield to take a hand-off or fake.

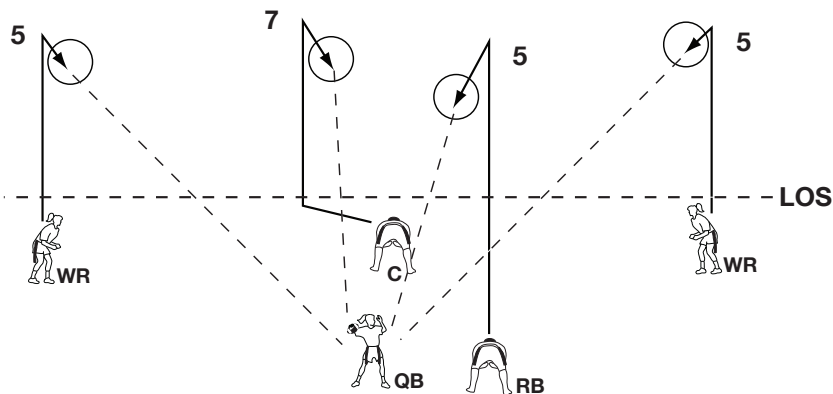
Left **WR** runs a post.

Right **WR** runs a fly.

C snaps ball then runs a short buttonhook.

*The offensive players are spread out to give the **QB** options.*

Hooks

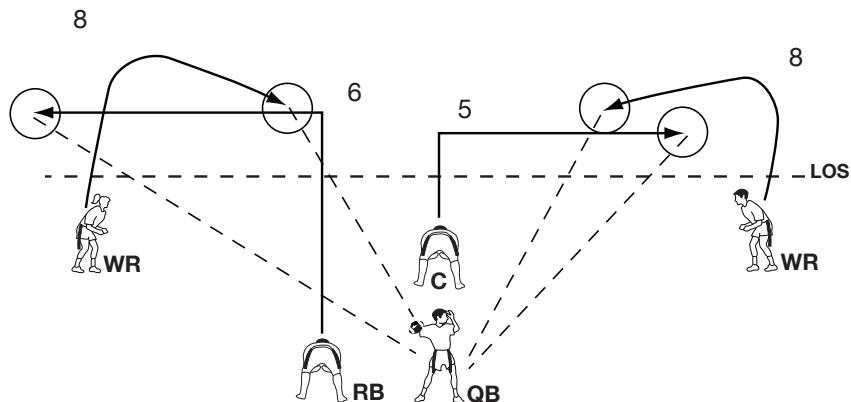


Both **WR** and **RB** run 5 to 7 yards*, stop, rotate and come back to the ball.

C takes 2 steps to the side before running to avoid being in the same area as the RB.

**The arm strength of the Quarterback and the strengths of the defense will determine this distance.*

Curls (and Outs)

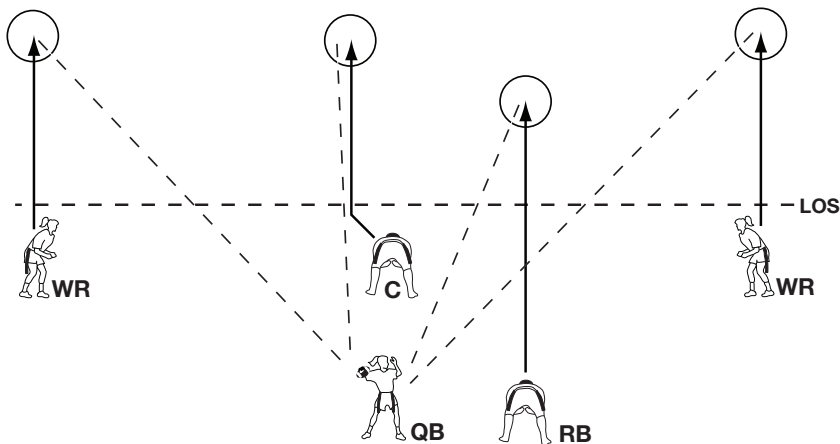


Each **WR** runs a curl pattern towards the middle of the field.

Each begins to curl in around 8 yards, and will end up facing the **QB**.

The **RB** and the **C** run 'out' patterns at 5-7 yards.

All-Go

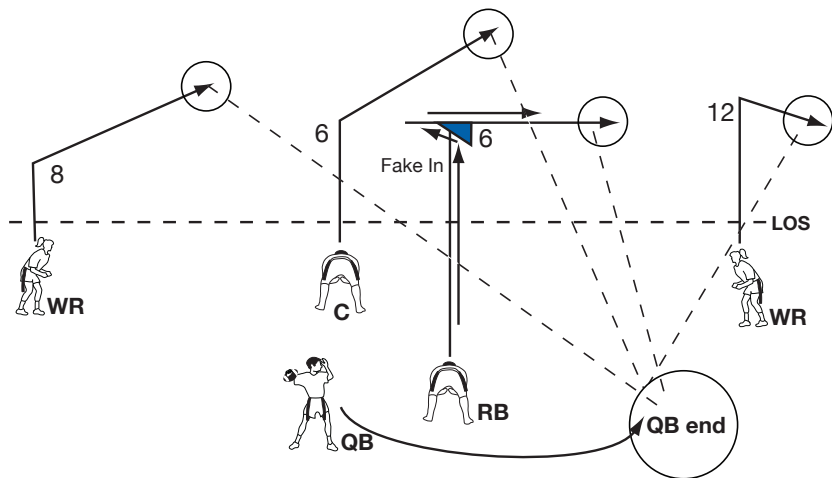


Used to stretch the defense.

All players run the straight go pattern downfield and look for the ball over their inside shoulder after about 10-12 yards.

The **C** must take 2 steps to their left at the start so to allow for spacing between the receivers downfield.

Roll Out



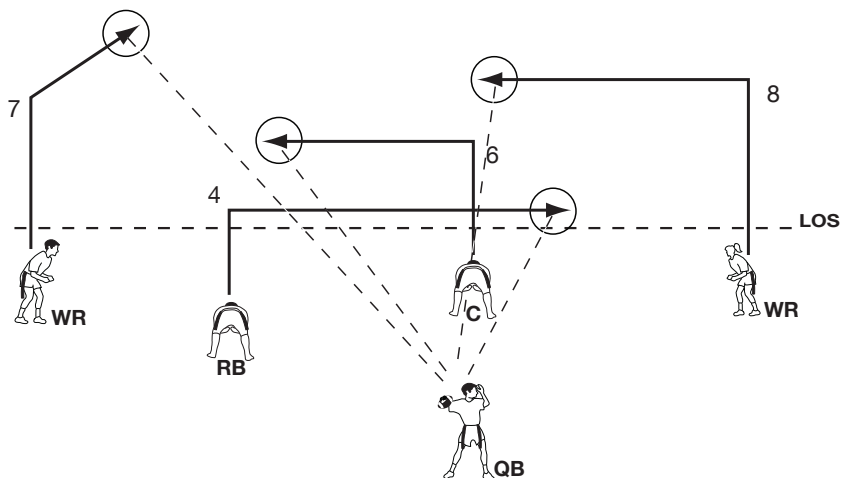
'Roll Out' can be run to the left or to the right.

Can be straight roll out or use play-action motion to **RB** before the route as shown on next page.

WR to the side of the roll must sell the deep route and break it off at 12 yards and come back toward the side line.

RB runs a whip route – sell the inside 2 steps before breaking to the out.

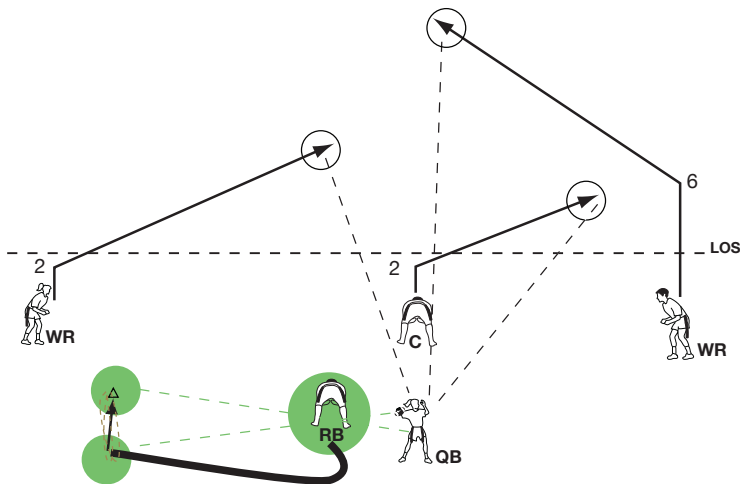
Crossers



When crossing patterns, it is important to get players to stick to their proper depths, so that there isn't more than 1 player at each level.

Rule Reminder: The QB cannot run the ball over the LOS unless he/she first hands off or laterals behind LOS then gets the ball back.

Swing Pass



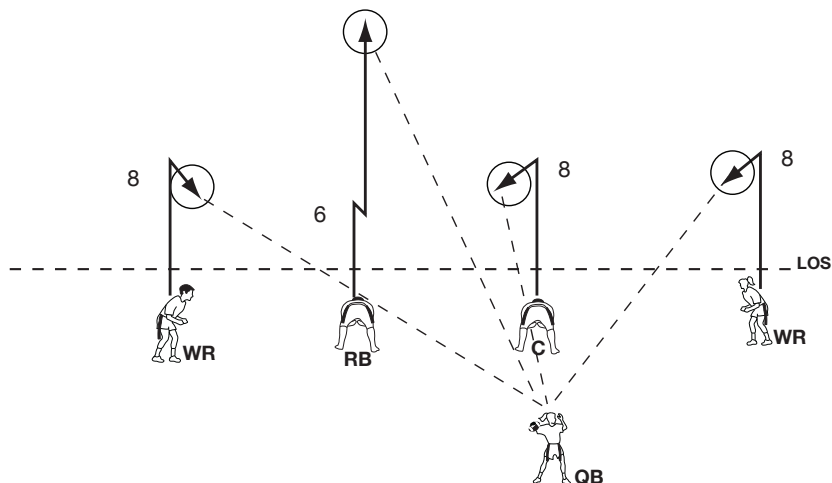
The idea behind this play is to get the **RB** outside and moving fast downhill, as well as creating flow away from the swing pass to the **RB**.

It can be run to either side, just flip the routes by the receivers.

The **RB** should delay a little bit off the snap and then bubble out to the side.

The **RB** is the first target, but if a defensive player is right there, then look backside to the **WR** from the right on the post.

Stop and Go



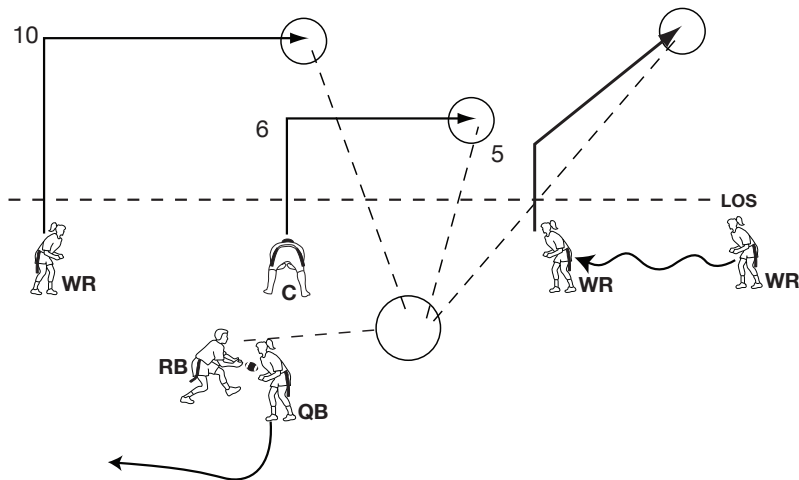
This play can be run with any of the 4 receivers doing the stop and go route.

The **RB** can even come out of the backfield and run the route if you wish.

It is important to set this play up by running the all hooks play a few times, then run this play.

The receiver running the stop must sell the hook and then take off up-field.

Option Pass



The **WR** on the right, motions towards the centre prior to the snap of the ball to gather more room to run their corner route.

The **QB** hands the ball off to the **RB** as the **RB** crosses to the right.

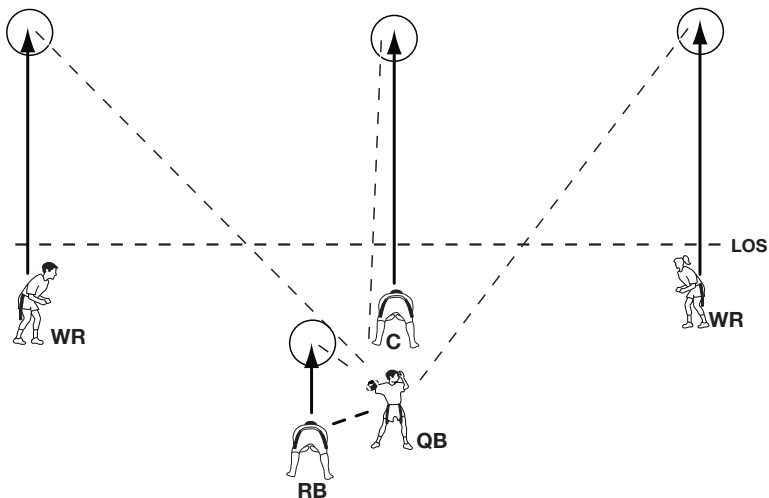
The **RB** now has the option to throw the ball to any of the 3 receivers or to take off and run with the ball depending on defensive coverage.

If there is someone open – throw the ball.

If there is lots of room to run – run with it.

This play can also be a straight run to the right. There would be no pre-snap motion from the **WR**, and then all 3 receivers run go routes and open up room for **RB** to run.

Draw

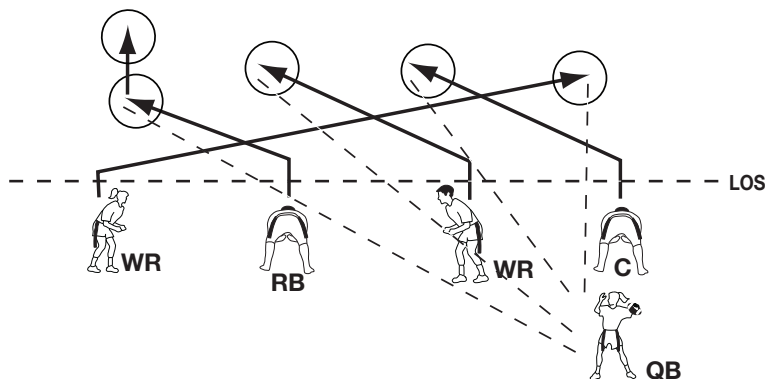


All 3 receivers take off downfield as they were running the 'All Go' pattern.

The **RB** delays a little bit then takes the hand off from the **QB**.

The **RB** then runs downhill and looks for the best path downfield.

Overload/Flood



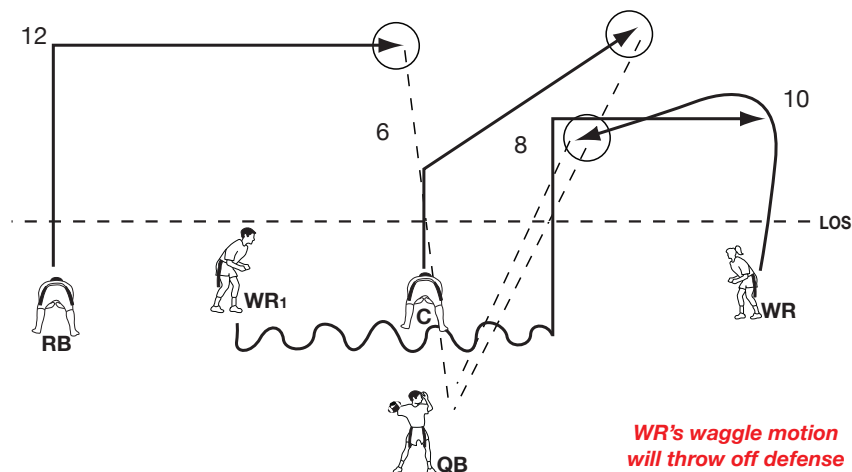
After breaking the huddle line up overload one side of centre (play can be run to either side and this graphic shows left overload).

The primary receiver is lined up farthest to the outside – he/she delays at the snap and then comes underneath the other routes on a slant pattern.

All other receivers take 1 step off the line and run slants to the outside.

The **RB**, or 2nd from the outside, turns up-field as the secondary receiver when he/she hit approximately 8 yards.

Motion Out

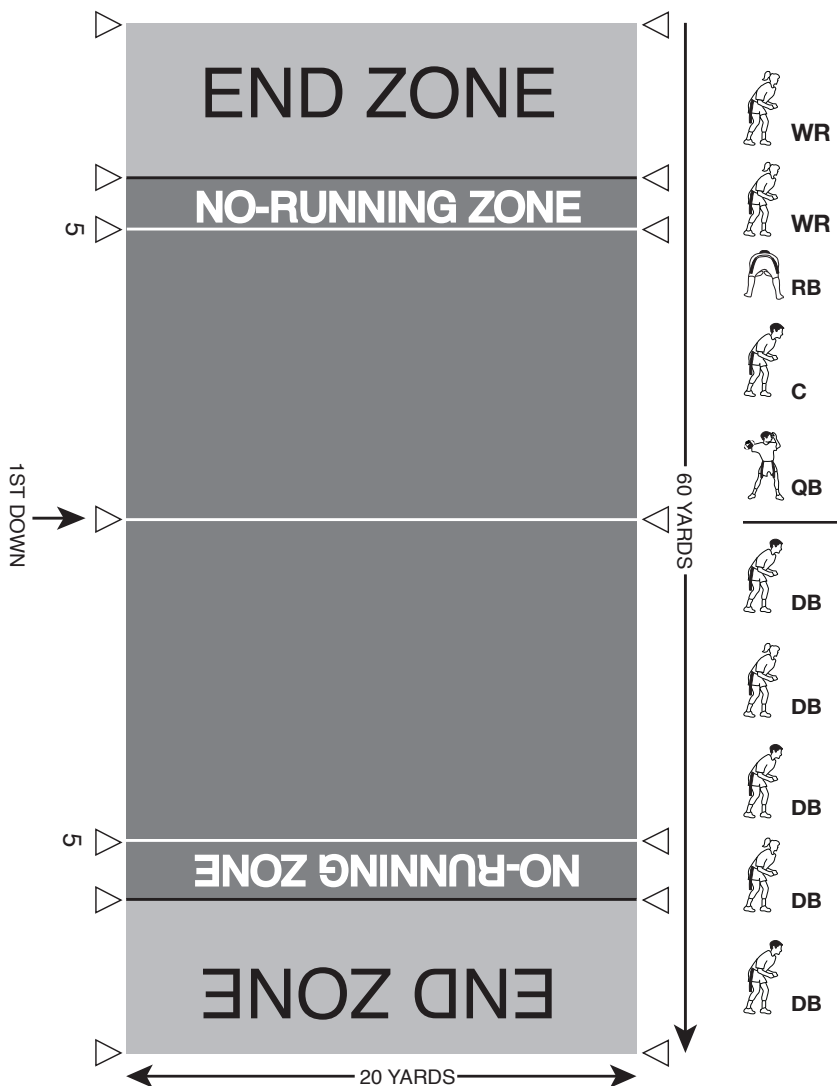


The receiver 2nd from the outside **WR₁** will motion across the formation to the same spot on the other side.

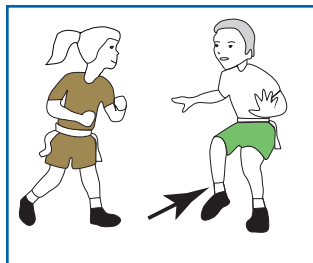
The snap should be timed so that as the motion receiver hits the line, the ball is being snapped – this gives that receiver an advantage on the defensive back.

The motioned receiver is the primary target on this play.

The other receiver should curl into the gap vacated by the motioned receiver and is the secondary target for this play.



Defense Position Description



- Each player on defense is a Defensive Back
- The DB will stop the ball carrier by flagging him/her or will interrupt an offensive play by intercepting or knocking down a pass play.
- One or more Defensive Backs may rush the passer.

Where do the Defensive Backs stand?

Defensive players can stand in one of two general formations:

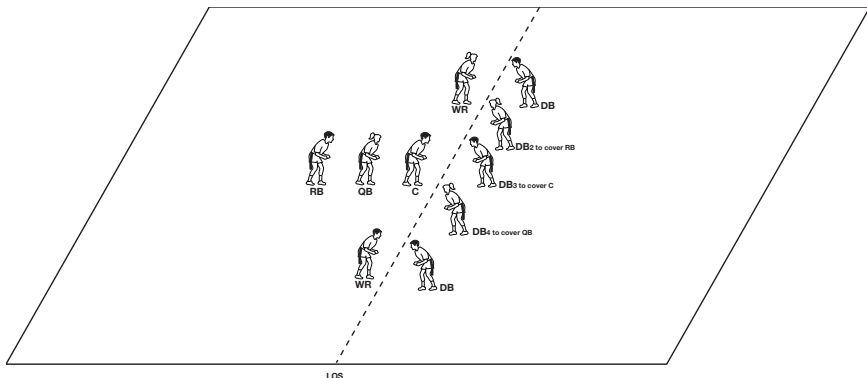
Player to Player

Zone

The main objective of the defense is to keep the offense from scoring. Defensive players should line up to challenge the strengths of the offense. Defense can change between Player to Player and Zone in a game if they want to change strategies.

Player to Player is usually used to gauge the abilities of the offense. If ability is about the same or less, Player to Player defense is good. If defense is continually stretched – trying to keep up with the pace of offense, it may switch to zone. Zone is good defense but is tough to grasp and should be introduced to players about 13 years old.

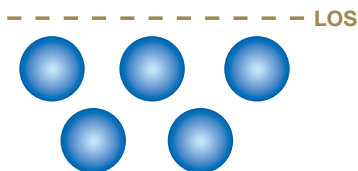
Person to Person Defense



Player to Player defense is often used initially in a game. Each DB is lined up against an offensive person who has about the same speed and ability.

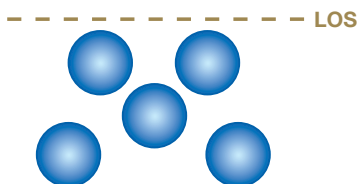
Playing a Zone Defense

3-2



3-2 Offense is strongest against short passes and hand-offs.

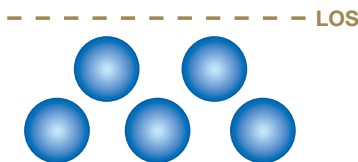
2-1-2



The 2-1-2 Defense is relatively balanced and is tight toward the inside or center of the field.

Offense can try to: Run, pass to the outside.

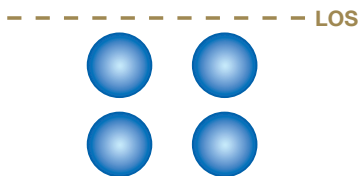
2-3



2-3 Defense is strongest in the backfield.

Offense can try to: Run or pass short plays.

2-2



The rusher is to put big pressure on the quarterback. 2 DB cover short and 2 DB cover long. This formation is generally used when the offense is near to getting a first down or touchdown.

Does your league need a little more emphasis on good, clean ball?

Hold pre-season and mid-season meetings with coaches and parents. Reinforce penalties by explaining as they are called.

Rating System

Rate level of behavior
of opposing team

A B C D

(A: accepted calls, courteous to team members and opponent. D: General disregard for team members and opponents.)

Rate conduct of coaches
of opposing team

A B C D

(A: Coach talked calmly throughout the game and gave positive comments to players on both teams. D: Coach raised voice to players, used harsh language, argued with officials.)

Rate parents' participation
in the event

A B C D

(A: Parents were cooperative and supportive of players and fans demonstrated by calm or positive cheering and offering water, fruit at breaks. D: Parents were giving yelling instructions to players in negative tone, swearing, placing emphasis on winning rather than enjoying the camaraderie.)

Any team receiving less than a B average will be reviewed and may not play in finals and/or may be suspended from league for a given period.

Give the Kid Some Credit

A coach is a leader by exemplifying good manners and enthusiasm for learning on and off the field.

Build individual confidence and team morale by demonstrating good knowledge and high ethics to your team.

Be ready with “good job”, “nice play”, “good hustle”, “it will come together with a little more practice”.

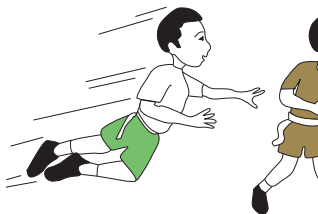
It is easy to lose track of what each player does ... so take notes. Keep a list of important tasks done by each player to ensure that all is fair.

You will shine as a coach if you can recall who has led each drill, who has played quarterback, who has helped set-up the field for practice.

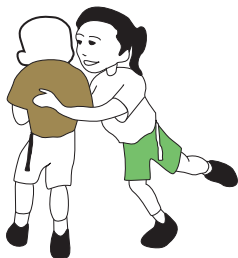
Penalties



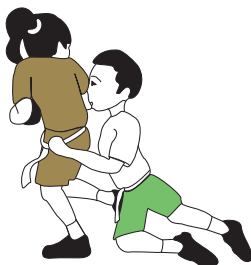
Shielding, guarding your flag



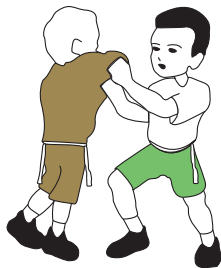
Diving



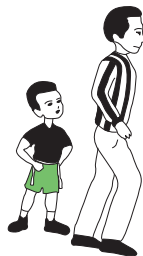
Blocking



Grabbing flag belt



Holding your opponent's jersey



Arguing with game official

Safety Considerations



To ensure that the activities, which will take place during the program, occur in a safe environment, here are some points to consider:

Fields

Fields have been checked for and cleared of any debris (glass, rocks, uneven spots, etc) to a depth of at least 10 yards outside of the playing area.

Goal Posts

While not required to play Flag Football, goalposts, if they are present, have been covered and/or activities do not take place in their vicinity.

Clothing

Ensure that players are wearing comfortable fitting clothing with no pockets. Shorts and pants should not have stripes, Cleats or running shoes should be appropriate for the playing surface. Jewellery should be removed. It is recommended that people with glasses utilize a shatterproof type and a band to keep them in place. Peaked hats are banned.

Mouthguards

Mandatory.

Blitz/Rusher

When a Defensive Back (DB) runs from 5 yards in front of the line of scrimmage towards the QB in an attempt to pull the QB's flag and stop the play.

Cadence

Is the command from the QB "Set Go". This will signal to the offense that Players can begin the down or play after the snap.

Coin Flip

A coin is flipped to determine which team will get possession of the football first. A representative from each team meets before the game in the centre of the field with the Referee. The visiting team will call heads or tails before the Referee flips the coin in the air. If they choose correctly, they will have first possession of the ball in the first half or to choose the end zone they will defend in the first half.

Defense

The team without the football, which protects its scoring area (end zone). (The same as in basketball, soccer or rugby.)

Down

1. The offense has three attempts (downs) to cross midfield and, if successful, receives three additional downs to score.
2. After the ball carrier is stopped, he/she is called "down".

End Zone

The area at both ends of the field are a maximum of 10 yards deep and a minimum of 7 yards X 20 yards wide.

Extra Point

After a touchdown, the offense has a chance to score more points with one play from either the 5 yard line (1 point) or 12 yard line (2 points).

First Down

When the offense crosses midfield with the football it earns a first down. An official can also award a first down on a penalty.

Flagging

To stop the Player running with the football, the defense must pull the flag of the Player with the football. When the ball carrier's flag is pulled, play is stopped and the down is over.

Flat

The area closest to each sideline directly on or behind the line of scrimmage.

Fumble/Down Ball

When the football is dropped (or “fumbled”) or touches the ground at any time, the play is stopped and the down is over. This prevents Players from diving on the ground after the football.

Goal Line

The line that must be crossed to get into the end zone for a touchdown or extra point.

Halftime

There are two 20 minute halves during the 40 minute game. Between the halves, play is stopped for two minutes. This time can be used as a water break and to discuss strategy. Teams will switch field direction when they return from halftime, and the team that lost the coin toss in the first half, starts the second half with the ball on its own 5 yard line.

Handoff

A direct exchange of the football from one Offensive Player to another.

Huddle

A huddle is when the offense and/or defense gather separately on the field, between plays to call plays or discuss strategy. Coaches are allowed in the huddle with younger Players.

Interception

When a Defensive Player catches a pass intended for an Offensive Player. The interception can be run back by the Defensive Player toward the opponent's end zone.

Line of Scrimmage (LOS)

The imaginary line showing the offensive position on the field. The ball is snapped and each play begins from the line of scrimmage.

Midfield

A line across the centre of the field that the team on offense must cross to earn a first down.

Mirror

When a Defensive Player closely follows an Offensive Player by copying (mirroring) his/her moves and direction.

Motion

When one Wide Receiver (WR) or Running Back (RB) switches his/her location before the ball is snapped. The RB or WR may run in either direction toward the sidelines but not toward the line of scrimmage.

No Running Zone

The area five yards from each goal line where running plays are not allowed. Handoffs, tosses, and pitches are also not allowed in this area.

Offense

The team with possession of the football.

Offside

When either team crosses the line of scrimmage before the football is snapped. This is a penalty.

Pass

When the QB throws the football to a teammate.

Safety

When an Offensive Player is caught in his/her own endzone with the football and a Defensive Player captures his/her flag, the play is stopped and the defense is awarded 2 points. The defensive team also is awarded possession of the football at its 5-yard line.

Shotgun

The formation in which the QB stands away from the Center, usually 3-5 yards, to take the snap. This will allow the QB more time to look for the WRs and watch for a blitz.

Snap

When the Center passes the football between his/her legs to a QB.

Substitution

Exchanging Players on the field. This is done at the end of a play, during time outs, and after touchdowns or turnovers.

Touchdown (TD)

A touchdown is scored when the offense runs or passes the football into the end zone and is awarded 6 points.

Time Outs

Each team is allowed two 60-second time outs per half. This time is used to stop the game clock and discuss strategy.

Toss

When the QB pitches the football to a teammate.

Turnover

A loss of possession of the football. When the offense fails to score or get a first down, or the football is intercepted, the defense gains possession of the ball.

For more information regarding Flag Football visit:

www.footballcanada.com