



FOOTBALL ALBERTA FLAG FOOTBALL STARTER KIT



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WHAT IS FLAG FOOTBALL?

Flag Football is a non-contact game that promotes skill development, cardio training, and mental strategy. People can play recreationally in parks, as part of school intramural programs, and on a more competitive level within organized leagues. Flag Football is a sport easily adapted to any age, any ability, and both males and females. It is one of the fastest growing sports being played in Canada with competition extending internationally.



One of the great advantages of Flag Football is that it can be played on any open field or gym. The play area can be simply and quickly laid out with small, rubber pylons. Indoor flag adopts the boundaries set by basketball. This usually ensures a safe distance between the lines and the wall.

Flag Football is all about inclusivity and versatility. With less players on the field and less players on a total roster compared to traditional tackle football, it gives each participant a chance at trying out different positions, getting lots of touches on offense, and plenty of chances to pull flags on defense.

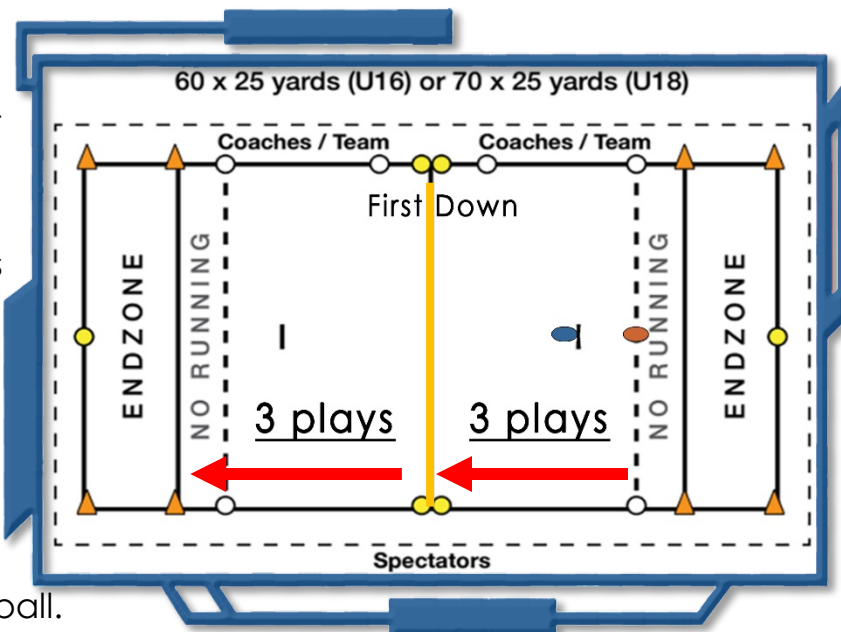
The flag football season typically runs in the spring and early summer as to limit its interference with tackle football. This can allow for tackle players to hone their skills and stay sharp before entering the season.

BASIC RULES OF FLAG

The full rulebook can be found [here](#)

THE FIELD

- Field Dimensions: 40 x 25 yards + 10-yard endzones on each end (50 x 25 for U18+)
- No Run Zones (NRZ)** exist 5 yards before each end zone. When the offense starts a play from inside the NRZ, the play must result in a pass that crosses the line of scrimmage.
- The Centre Line acts as a first-down line similar to regular football.



FLOW OF THE GAME

- Games consist of two 20-minute halves with a 2-minute half time.
- Teams are allowed two 1-minute time outs per half. They do not carry over if unused.
- The offense will start every possession from their own 5-yard line (except on interceptions, they take it at the spot they were down).
- The offense will have 3 plays to get to half. If they get to half, they get 3 more plays to score (downs do not stack once they cross half).
- To take down a player running with the ball, the defense must pull the flags of the offender.
 - The offense will be marked at the spot where the *hips* of the ball carrier were when the flag was pulled. *NOT* the ball.
- Touchdowns are worth 6 points. The offense can choose to go for a 1 point convert from the 5-yard line (must be a pass), or 2 points from the 12-yard line (run or pass).
- Any ball that hits the ground is a dead ball whistle is blown. Including fumble and bad snaps.
- There is NO intentional contact of any sort (tackling, holding, blocking)

BASIC RULES OF FLAG

OFFENSIVE RULES

- There is a 30-second play clock for the offense.
- All plays must begin with a snap from the center. The centre is an eligible receiver.
- All offensive players besides the centre can be in motion and lined up anywhere on their side of the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has 7-seconds to throw or get rid of the ball before the play is blown dead and a penalty is assessed for Delay of Pass (5 Yard penalty from the Line of Scrimmage + Next Down).
 - If the quarterback hands the ball off, fakes a handoff, or laterals the ball. The 7-second clock stops and the offense has unlimited time to run a play in the backfield.
- The Quarterback cannot run across the line of scrimmage unless they have handed off the ball and received it back.
- The ball carrier cannot jump, dive, or use their hands in order to prevent their flag from being pulled. However, they can jump for a ball thrown to them.
- The ball carrier must try and avoid contact with the defense. No 'truck sticks' allowed.
- When making a forward pass, the pass *must* cross the line of scrimmage for it to be considered legal. If it does not cross the line of scrimmage, it will be considered to be an Illegal Forward Pass (5-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage + Next Down).
 - A team can make a backwards or lateral pass behind the line of scrimmage. The player who receives that ball then has the option to either throw or pass.
- There are NO laterals downfield beyond the line of scrimmage.



BASIC RULES OF FLAG

DEFENSIVE RULES

- The defense must be a minimum of 1-yard off the line of scrimmage.
- When attempting to pull flags, the defense *can not* grab the runners shorts or jersey which results in the runner twisting or losing speed. This is a penalty for Holding (5-yard penalty from the spot of foul + Automatic first down).
- In order for the defense to rush past the quarterback, the player(s) must be standing 7-yards back of the line of scrimmage. This spot will be indicated by a referee or a bean bag.
 - The defense can rush multiple players, but all of them need to have started the play 7-yards back.
 - A rusher lined up within 2-yards of the central rush bag is entitled to a free rush at the quarterback. No offensive player may get in the rusher's way or else receive a Rusher Interference penalty (5-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage + Loss of Down).

PENALTIES – [LINK TO FOOTBALL CANADA RULEBOOK – PG. 44](#)

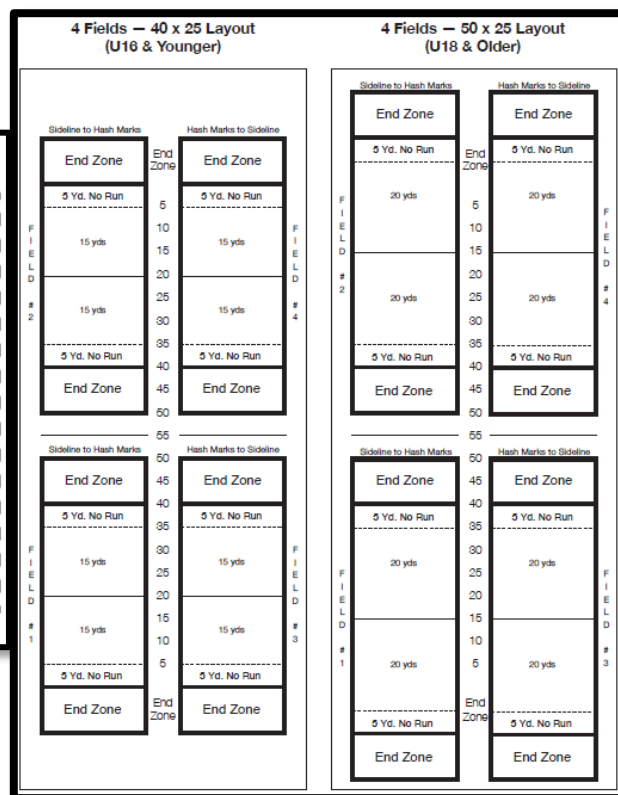
SOF = Spot of Foul **LOS** = Line of Scrimmage **LOD** = Loss of Down **AFD** = Automatic First Down

The rulings on penalties in flag football are more severe in compared to tackle football. Most penalties are accompanied with yardage as well as a loss of down or automatic first down. Below is a list of some of the most common penalties.

Offensive Penalties	
Delay of Pass (7 Sec) – 5 yards LOS + Next Down	Flag Guarding – 5 yards SOF + Next Down
Offside – 5 yards LOS + Repeat down	Rusher Interference – 5 yards LOS + LOD
Illegal Contact – 5 yards LOS + LOD	Pass Interference – 5 yards LOS + LOD
Defensive Penalties	
Offside – 5 yards LOS + Repeat down	Pass Interference – 5 yards SOF + AFD
Illegal Contact – 5 yards SOF + AFD	Holding – 5 yards SOF + AFD
Illegal Flag Pull – 5 yards SOF + AFD	







- ## Basic Guidelines

- ## Single Field







EQUIPMENT

Football Alberta is proud to be partnered with Skyline Athletics who have packages for individual teams and leagues to provide all the gear you need. Prices will vary depending on quantity and size. For specific inquiries of price, please contact Chris Kercher at ckерcher@skylineathletics.com. Below is a list of gear alongside *estimated* prices.

SKU	ITEM	PRICE	
	Teamline Reversible Flag Jersey	~\$34.98 (Numbers extra)	
	Alleson Reversible Flag Jersey	~\$56.00 (Numbers extra)	
SD1366	Popping Flag Belts	~\$8.98	
FB1098	Mouth Guards	~\$1.30	
	Nike and Wilson Composite Football	~\$25	
	Rhino Soft-Shell Helmet	~\$39.98	
	Cones	~\$1/each	
	Cone Stacker	~\$5	

EQUIPMENT

OFFICIALS GEAR

SKU	Item	Price	
REF1004A	Referee Jersey	~\$36.98	
WH100A	Referee Whistle	~\$6	
FB6011	Penalty Flag	~\$8.50	
SD1108	Bean Bags	~\$1.50/each	

INSURANCE/REGISTRATION

Football Alberta has made registering each team in your league and getting insurance for your players incredibly easy. In order to register and be insured, every participant of the league will have to become a Football Alberta member. Currently a membership fee (which includes player insurance) for flag football is just \$15/person. Full details about what is covered can be found on Football Alberta's website [here](#).

Once a member, you will be given access to RAMP, (MORE DETAILS ABOUT RAMP) where you can register your players, create schedules, and send them out to the teams. This will be the online hub for parents and players to check to see where and when their games are, as well as send out notifications when needed.

Member Benefits

- All teams that join as paid members will access all of our programs and at a lower cost including: Football Alberta Coaches Clinics, NCCP (Coaches Certification) program, Insurance, Officials Training, Manuals, Rule Books, Charitable Tax Receipts, Newsletters/Directory, Senior Bowl, AB Summer Games, U18 Team Alberta National Championships (Football Canada Cup), Funding, Equipment Inspections, Scholarships, Bantam Bowl, etc. Your support helps the amateur football programs that you will eventually access.



OFFICIALS

Referees or officials often go overlooked when creating a league, but having a good system for referees will increase the quality of games being played and increase the longevity of your league. It is highly recommended to have at least two referees per field.

Rules and instructional videos can be found on Football Canada, and Football Alberta's Website. Be sure to stay up to date with your officials, find out what is working and what isn't. They have an inside view of the efficiency of your league.

TIP: Try approaching the local high school or junior high for referees. Many football players would rather officiate football compared to other entry jobs.



GEAR

Officials should be provided

- One whistle (FOX 40 Classic)
- One penalty flag
- One jersey
- Scorecards
- Pens/pencils
- One black hat
- Stopwatch

OPTIONAL:

- Black shorts w/pockets
- Wrist down indicator

PAY

How much you pay officials is based on the leagues budget, the level of games they will be officiating, and how many officials you have. Some things to consider:

- Officials should not be getting paid any less than minimum wage. Game wages tend to fall between \$15-\$25/game depending on the level.
- Increasing pay based on how many consecutive years officiated is a great incentive (Increase by \$1 or \$2/game for every consecutive year officiated up to a cap)
- Increasing pay for higher divisions promotes officials to try and work through the system and become better.

OPPORTUNITY

- Officials have the chance to travel and officiate at regional and national events.
- The national tournaments take two referees from every competing province. Let Football Alberta know of any outstanding officials in your league.

COMPETITIVE PATHWAYS

On top of being a great developmental sport for youth, there are also opportunities for high level competition across the country and the world.

Below are the current competitive pathways for both youth and adult players.

YOUTH (U16/18)



PROVINCIAL

Every recognized league will have their top team(s) allowed for a chance to compete for a Provincial title to represent their province at your regionals (U16) or nationals (U18).



CANADA REGIONAL/NATIONAL

The winning team from provincials will travel to the site of the regional (for U16) or national (for U18) championships held once a year at the end of July/ early August/

ADULT (U18+)



REGIONAL

Winners of recognized adult flag leagues can participate in either the Western, Central, or Eastern regionals.



NATIONAL

Winners of their respective regionals will travel to compete at a national tournament.



INTERNATIONAL

The winner of the National Tournament will compete at the IFAF Flag Football World Championship which takes place once every two years

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- Practices should be ran with Football Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) in mind which can be found [here](#).
- The right drills should be enjoyable, allow for repetition, as well as have a clear focus of which skill(s) the kids are trying to learn.

The stages for football players in the LTAD are:

- Active Start (0-6)
- FUNdamentals (6-9)
- Learn to Train (9-12)
- Train to Train (11-16)
- Learn to Compete (15-18)
- Train to Compete (17+)
- Learn to Win (18+)



EXAMPLES OF SKILLS:

Technical: Ball handling, Catching, Control in the air, Jumping, Passing, Running

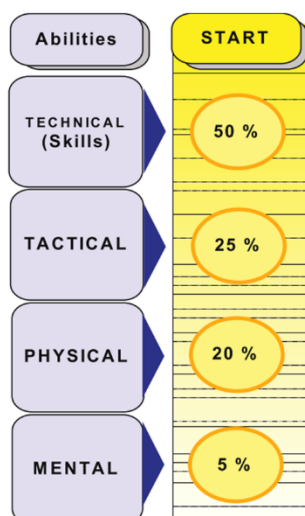
Tactical: Analysis (self + opponent), Decision making, Rules, Reading situations

Physical: Agility, Balance, Coordination, Flexibility, Power, Speed, Stamina, Strength

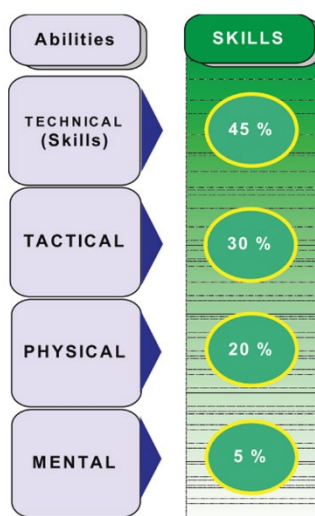
Mental: Communication, Concentration, Confidence, Emotional Control, Motivation

Allocation of Time in Practice:

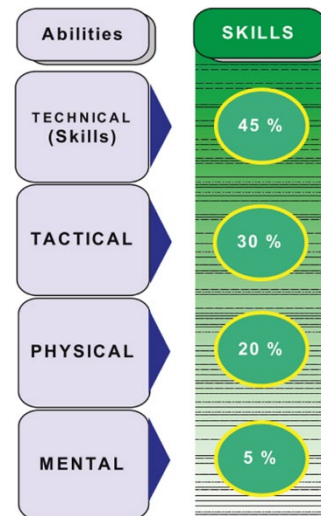
FUNdamentals (6-9)



Learn to Train (9-12)



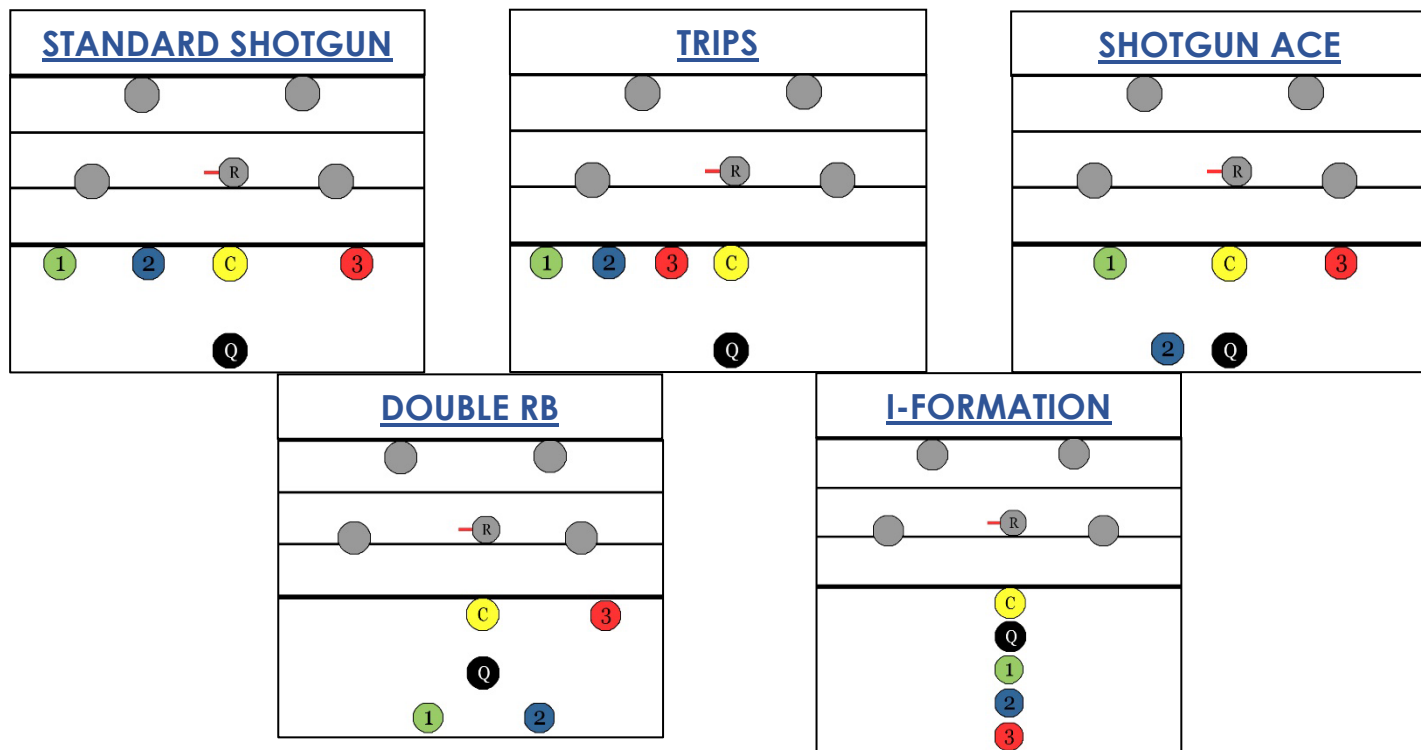
Train to Train (11-16)



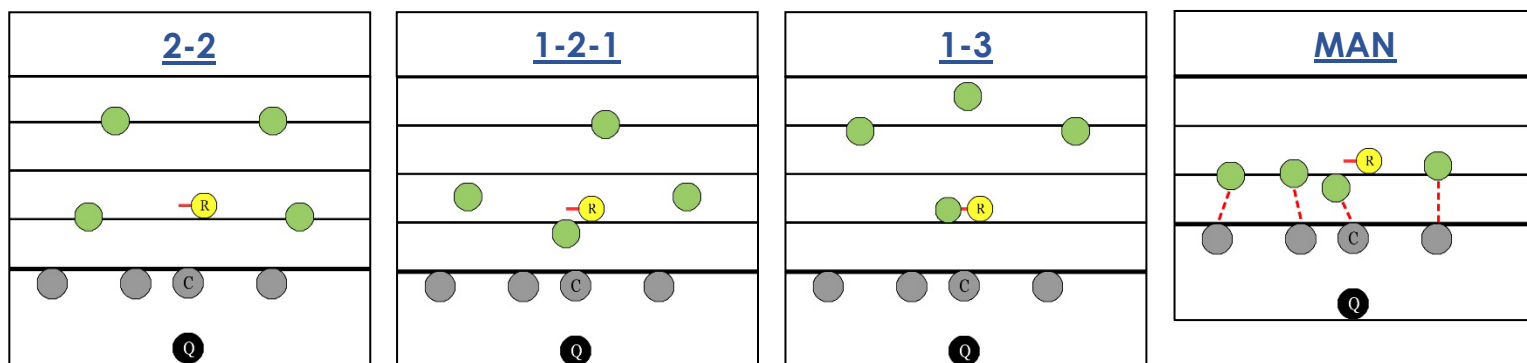
FORMATIONS

Here are some basic formations for both offense and defense. For more information, [Football Canada has an online playbook which can be found here.](#)

OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS



DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS

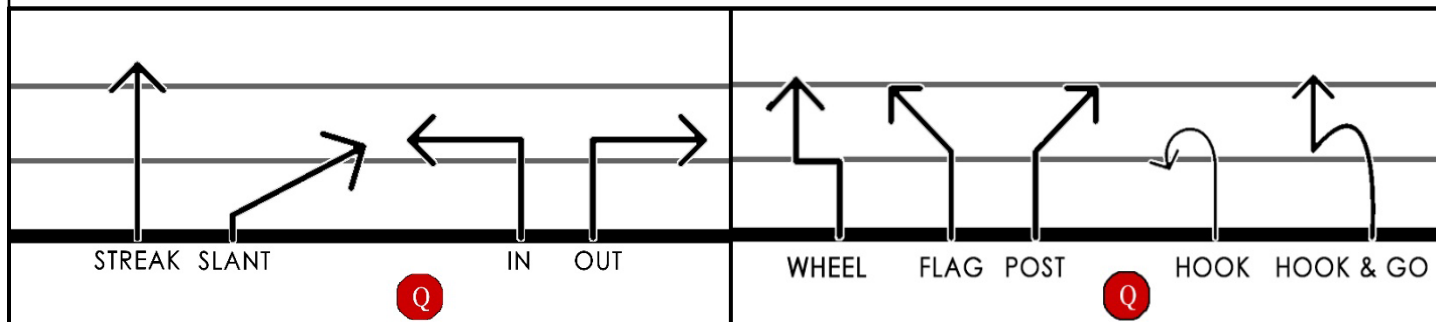


OFFENSIVE PLAYS

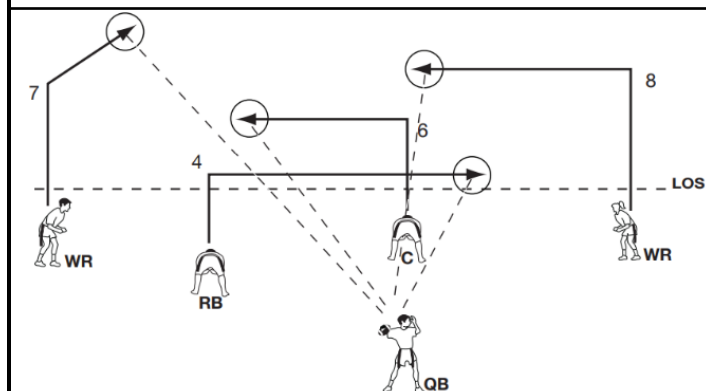
Here are a few sample plays to get going courtesy of the Football Canada Flag Playbook.

U12 PLAYBOOK

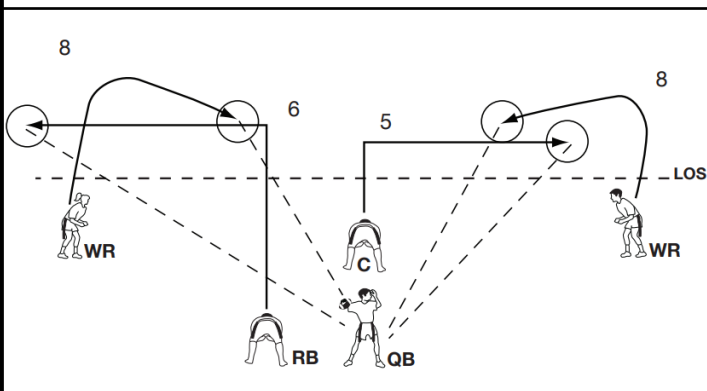
BASIC ROUTES



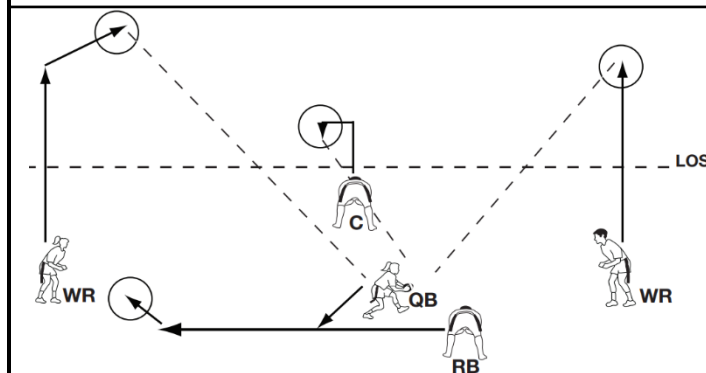
CROSSERS



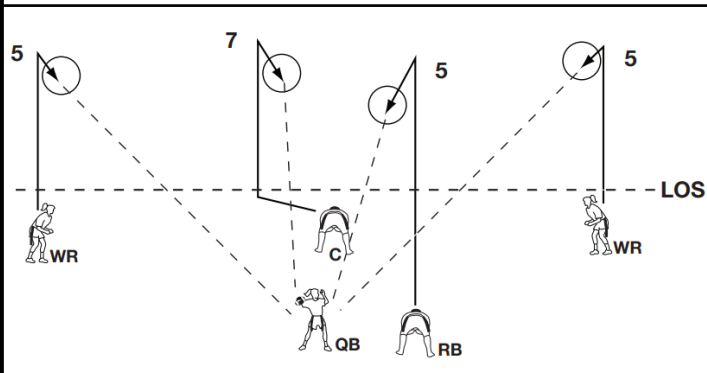
CURLS AND OUTS



BASE (handoff option)



ALL HOOKS

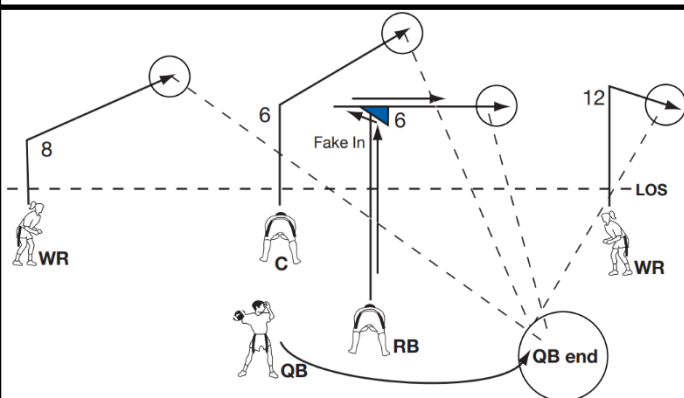


**FOOTBALL CANADA
FLAG FOOTBALL PLAYBOOK**

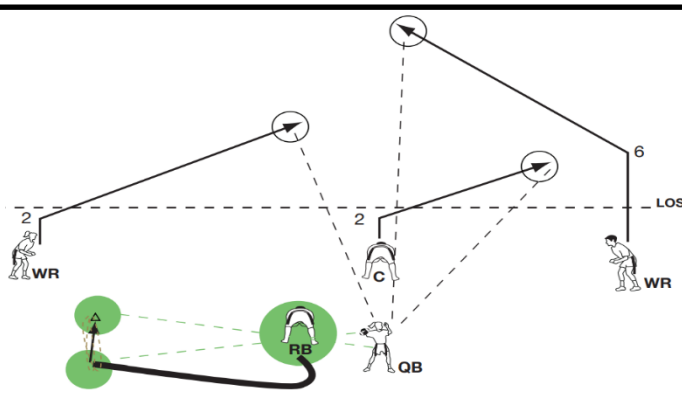
OFFENSIVE PLAYS

U18 PLAYBOOK

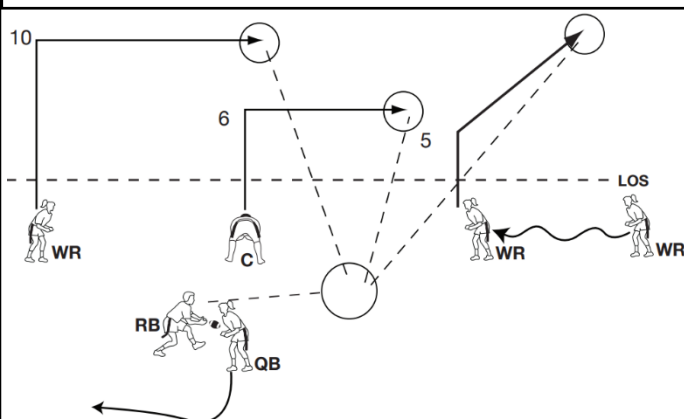
ROLL OUT



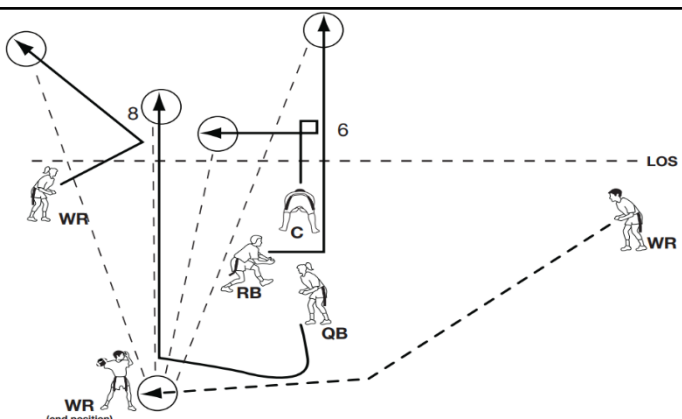
SWING PASS



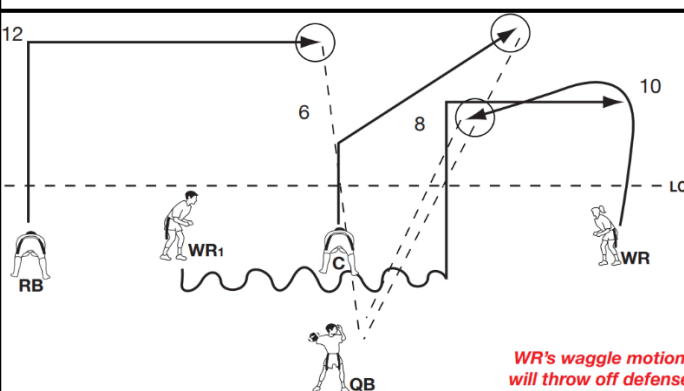
OPTION PASS



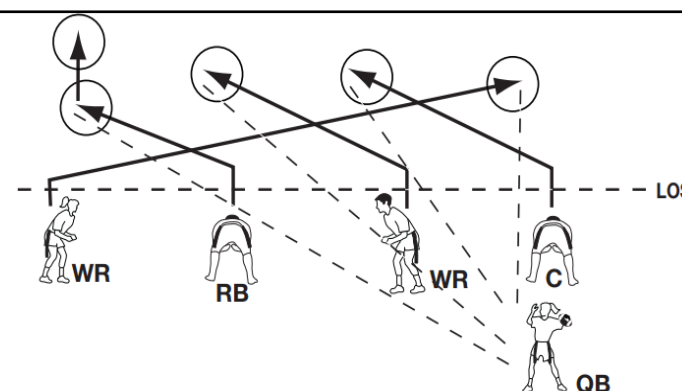
REVERSE PASS



MOTION OUT



OVERLOAD

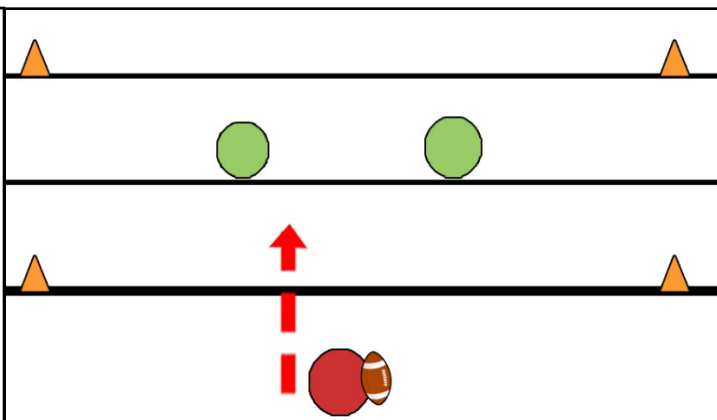


PRACTICE DRILLS

One of the most important 'Flag-specific' skills is the ability to pull flags on defense and avoid having your flags pulled on offense. These drills should help your players refine those skills.

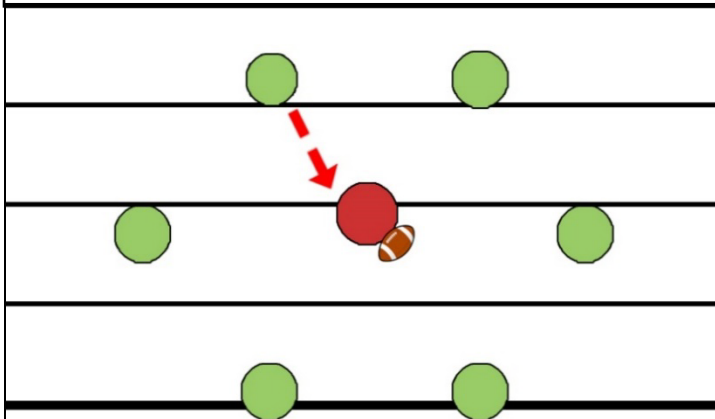
GAUNTLET

- This drill requires one ball carrier and two defenders.
- The ball carrier starts on the coach's whistle and tries to make it 10-yards past both defenders.
- The defenders need to grab BOTH flags of the ball carrier for it to be considered a win for the defense (In a game, you only need to pull one flag).
- Keep track of who makes it through and who doesn't to add a sense of competition to the drill.



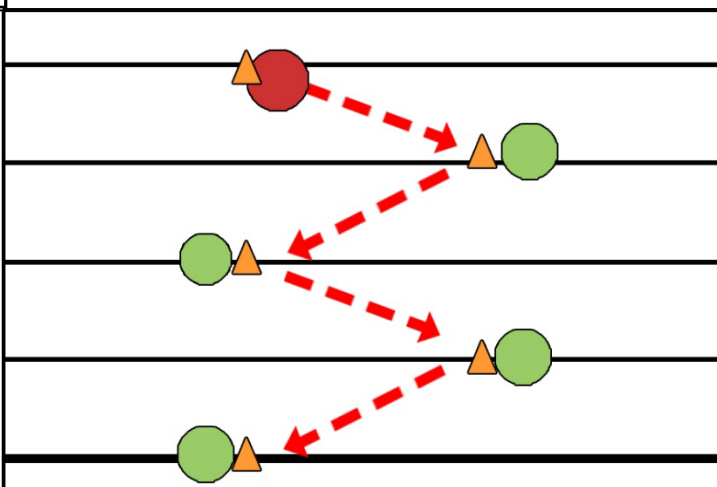
BULL IN THE RING

- One player stands in the centre with the ball while the rest of the team creates a circle around them.
- The coach will call out a random player's name from the outside circle.
- That person will have to try and get the flag from the ball carrier in the centre.
- The ball carrier has to try and avoid their flag being taken and make it to the spot the defender came from.
- The ball carrier must remain inside the circle.



SHUFFLE PULL

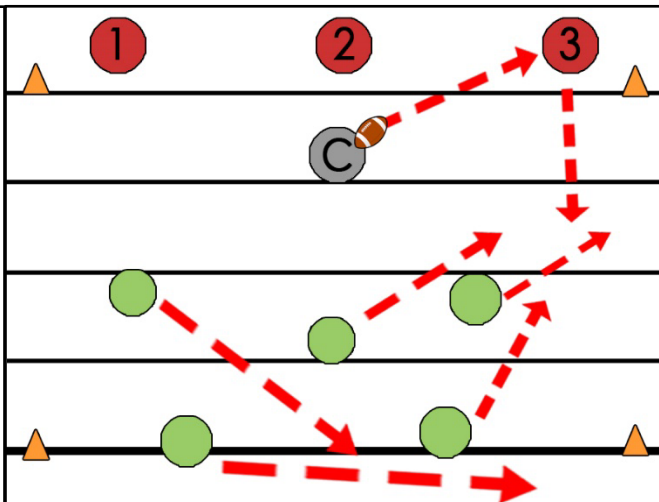
- Set the cones up in a zig zag pattern with a player at each cone.
- The person at the furthest cone back goes to each player at a cone and pulls their flag quickly before moving onto the next person.
- The person pulling the flags should shuffle between cones and keep their body square to downfield.
- This drill should be quick. Once the defenders get their flags pulled, they can just turn to the other side so their other flag is ready to be pulled by the next person in line.



PRACTICE DRILLS

PURSUIT

- Coach starts with the ball and has 3 offensive players behind them while 5 defensive players line up opposite,
- The coach will pitch the ball to one of the three players. That player will then have to try and make it past all five defenders.
- Defensive players need to work together to get the ball carrier.
- The first person to the ball carrier should cross their face to force the runner inside. 2nd and 3rd should attack the ball carrier. 4th and 5th players to the ball watch cut backs and chase down field.

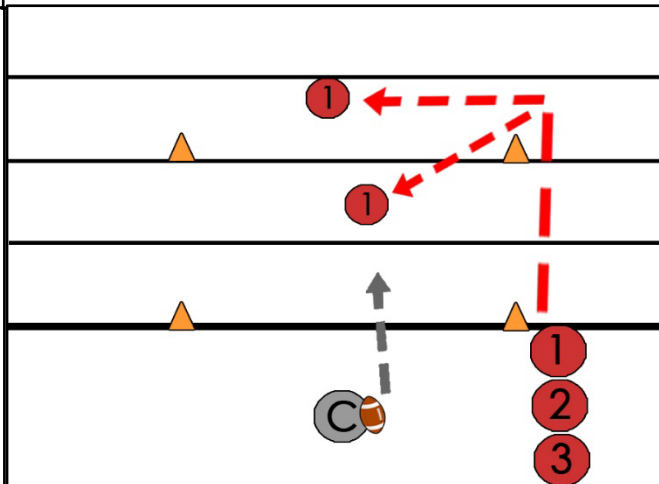


TIP/FOCUS DRILL

- This drill is to help receivers focus on the ball when catching in the face of distractions.
- Have one line of receivers and the other of defenders.
- The receivers will run a route and the coach (or QB) will throw the ball.
- When the ball is thrown, the defenders will jump in front of the ball as if to swat/intercept it, however the defenders must NOT touch the ball but come as close as possible.

FOUR CONE DRILL

- This drill focuses on route running for receivers.
- Set up 4 cones in a square and a line of receivers to one side of the QB or coach.
- Receivers will run straight to the far cone, break down and make a hard cut either inwards at 90 degrees or come back to the quarterback at 45 degrees and be met with a pass.
- Make sure receivers try and maintain speed through the cut and ensure that the turn is sharp.



ADAPTATIONS

There are several adaptations that can be made to the traditional flag football game that other leagues have found success with. Some are small rule changes, while others change the complete look of the game. Below is a list of adaptations that may suit your league/community better.

- **COACH THROW (CTFFL)**

- The coach will throw the passes in this league to ensure equal opportunity and consistent player development. Recommended for the younger age groups where throwing and catching while on the move is more difficult.



- **6 PLAY DRIVES**

- When the offense starts with the ball, they are guaranteed 6 plays regardless of first downs, interceptions, or touchdowns. At an extreme level, this could mean 6 touchdowns take place for the offense.

- **4-ON-4 (FFWCT)**

- Some leagues run a 4-on-4 league where they allow unlimited laterals beyond the line of scrimmage. This is usually meant for adults or more experienced players. More open space and laterals unlock countless creative options.

- **7-ON-7 w/CONTACT (EFFA, AFFL)**

- A 7-on-7 league with contact at the line is a popular format amongst adults. It allows for more body shapes, sizes, and skill levels. The fields are 100-yards and separated into 20-yard segments which act as first downs. Teams have 4 downs to reach each 20-yard first down line.

- **TOUCH FOOTBALL (ETFA)**

- Touch football also exists, in some leagues all year round. Another great non-contact option for all ages.

- **PASS ONCE EVERY 3 PLAYS**

- This rule change forces players at all ages to begin to throw the ball. At younger ages, running the ball is easier and therefore teams tend to use it as a crutch.

- **8-ON-8 FLAG**

- More geared towards tackle football players, this game plays on a full width field and looks very similar to a pass skeleton with flags added. Teams start at the 35-yard line and have 3 plays to get to the 20-yard line followed by 3 more plays to get to the endzone.

RESOURCES

There are many more flag football resources out there. Here is a list to all the resources mentioned in this document, plus some extras.

RESOURCES

<u>Football Canada Rulebook/Resources</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official rulebook • Sample Playbooks
<u>Edmonton Sport/Social Club Flag League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton recreational flag football league
<u>Flag Football World Championship Tour</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States-based tournament hosting teams from all over the world
<u>Football Alberta Membership/Insurance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full information about insurance, membership, and benefits
<u>IFAF Website (International Host)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officially recognized world championship organizer
<u>Skyline Athletics for flag equipment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full catalog of equipment. More than just football.

LEAGUES

<u>Airdrie Flag Football League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth program located in Airdrie
<u>Calgary Youth Flag Football League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large youth flag run out of Calgary
<u>Coach Throw Flag Football League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary's successful youth league with adapted rules
<u>Edmonton Eskimos Youth Flag Football League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton youth league information
<u>Edmonton Flag Football Association</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult 7-on-7 'contact at the line' game of flag football
<u>Metro Edmonton High School Flag Football League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton girls high school flag football league
<u>Lacombe Flag Football League</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flag Football League located in Lacombe