

The Community House Flag Football League

As a volunteer coach for The Community House Flag Football League, your main goal should be to create a fun and safe learning environment for your players. Whether you are an experienced coach or a novice taking the reins of your first team, there are several things to keep in mind as you begin your Flag Football season.

Everybody Plays

The Community House Flag Football games were designed specifically to make it easier for every player to have a role in a team's success. While size and skill certainly will come into play when the action starts, your coaching should emphasize the "working together" aspect of the games.

Tackle Tackling Early

Don't let your practices dissolve into a giant pile of rambunctious kids. For both their safety and your sanity, make sure to discourage any tackling or roughness early on. Remind them that they won't help their team in a game by tackling or being rough.

Sportsmanship Rules!

Help your players be good sports. After a game, shake hands with or do a cheer for the other team. Applaud good play by both sides. Treat officials with respect. While imitating you, your team won't even know it's being taught a good lesson.

Let Them Play Football!

The temptation to be another Don Shula or Bill Walsh will have to wait. This is The Community House Flag Football. While teaching football skills and strategies is important, keep your lessons as simple as possible. As your team grasps the basics, move on to more advanced ideas. Overloading young players with too much information too early can cause them only confusion...and you headaches.

Have Fun!

We thank you for your volunteer service. The Community House Flag Football League couldn't happen without you. But remember, this is fun for you, too.

Coaches Responsibilities

The coaches' responsibilities are as follows but not limited to:

1. **Team communication:** Coaches will let the team know the practice days, times, and locations. Inform players/parents about practices, cancellations, and make-ups. Inform team of any league information necessary.
2. **Practices:** choosing team practice times and locations. Plan the drills for practices, teach sport fundamentals and league rules. Bring first aid.
3. **Supervision:** Coaches are responsible for their players at any league activities. Coaches will ensure all players are picked up or depart on their own with parental permission. Coaches must arrange adult supervision in their absence.
4. **Games:** Set/rotate player positions, create game plan, ensure all players receive equal playing time, ensure game area is clean and picked up. Coaches must control their team fans and players during all games.
5. **Reporting:** Coaches have a responsibility to report any player disputes that cannot be resolved, all team injuries, and any players who choose not to participate to the Recreation Supervisor.
6. Coaches will set a good example to their players by showing good sportsmanship to referees, players, league officials, and other coaches at all times. Coaches will put the well being of the children before winning.
7. Coaches are responsible for picking up and distributing team items. This includes ensuring that all players receive team jerseys and trophies/medals.
8. Coaches will learn and follow ALL league rules, policies, and procedures.
9. Coaches must be enthusiastic, patient, organized, and dependable.
10. Coaches will create a FUN and safe environment for team.

WHAT TO COACH

FUN, FITNESS, TEAMWORK, SKILLS, DIVERSITY, RESPECT

Teams should focus on teaching the basic skills. Introduce 'finesse' skills slowly and one at a time, all the while ensuring that the basic skill is still being performed correctly.

Encourage and praise the performance of the team and the individual players, not so much on winning and losing. Many younger teams won't even know what the score was, so why remind them? A "Team Talk" after every practice and game is a great way to communicate with the team AND individual players.

Respect every child, and they will develop respect for you.

Challenge yourself to have every kid experience some level of success at every practice and game. Let them know that you are proud of them for their effort, accomplishment, concentration, discipline etc...

Try to use skill development exercises and drills that foster teamwork and cooperation, not competition amongst the players. You'll have enough trouble with this without encouraging it further.

Talk to the parents. They can do wonders to UNDO everything you try to teach if you don't communicate your expectations of the team and their child with them. Take a look at our sample **Parent Letters** (further down in this document) for some ideas.

RESOURCES

For resources on plays, basic flag football knowledge, or drills check out the links below! Please note we have adapted our rule book to be a hybrid of UA and NFL flag and some information may vary. NFL plays 5v5 but has great resources to check out. Look at our League Rule book for exact information on how we play the game!

LEAGUE RULE BOOK: [TCH RULE BOOK](#)

Under Armor UTL Plays: [UA Flag Playbook](#)

NFL Flag Football Glossary: [Flag Football Glossary | NFL Play Football](#)

NFL Flag Drills: [Football Drills \(nflflag.com\)](#)

NFL Flag Positions Guide: [Flag Football Positions - NFL FLAG](#)

NFL Flag Playbook: [5 on 5 Flag Football Playbook | NFL FLAG](#)

6v6 Flag Football Plays: [6v6 Flag Football Plays \(myfootballplays.com\)](#)

Coaching Tips

- Be knowledgeable with league rules, procedures, and policies
- Do not play favorites – EVERYONE gets to participate and play
- Make it a goal that your players improve every game, not win every game
- **As a volunteer coach make sure you have:**
 - A goal for the team: What do you want to accomplish by the end of the season? For example, is there a skill you want the players to be able to master?
 - A checklist
 - Practice schedule - Make sure parents know where to be and when to be there. Remind them to communicate with you if they are not able to be there.
 - Emergency action plan for practices (games are taken care of by the league)
 - Playbooks – keep them basic for young children.
 - Practice plan to keep you on task
 - Equipment
 - Contingency Plan - if it rains, do you have a backup plan for practice?
 - Communication - Make sure you have a way to communicate with the parents & players.
 - More parents to be a volunteer coach to help assist with the team.
 - More parents to be a volunteer coach to help assist with the team.
 - More parents might want to help but don't think they are needed.
 - They can help cover in case you can't make practice or a game or are running late.
 - More help allows you to break the team into smaller groups during practice.
 - Additional support on game day for sideline help to keep the players focused.
 - You can assign certain duties to take more off your plate.
 - Team Manager
 - They are a great resource for any team no matter the level or sport. It's another team position for a mom or dad that doesn't want to coach.
 - They help the coach with making practice/game attendance and team communication.
 - They are responsible for the treat schedule. It is not mandatory, but the team can vote on having treats. Ask the children or their parents about food allergies.
 - They bring an extra first aid kit just in case a coach forgets theirs.
 - Have them take pictures during practice to share with the team
 - They can help coach make announcements or reminders about the week.
 - They can help the coach make sure the players have all their uniforms and proper equipment for practice and game day.
- K.I.S.S – Keep it SUPER SIMPLE
 - The one thing a lot of coaches must understand is that children don't have the mindset of learning like you do and don't have the knowledge that you have. Every child might have a different way of learning, so you need to make sure you incorporate all the ways.
 - Visual Learners - learn through seeing
 - Put your playbook on paper, draw it up on a dry erase board, Use cones that allow the players see the spots on field.
 - Auditory Learners - learn through hearing
 - Listen to the coach, follow directions given by the coach.
 - Kinesthetic/Tactile Learners - learn through moving, touching or doing
 - Tell the players where to go then go do it, Show the players what to and then mimic it right after.

THE PRACTICE (Example Outline)

Warm Up (5minutes). This is especially important in developing long-term physical fitness awareness for your players and greatly reduces the risk of injury to your players. If your team is like most, the kids will 'wander' onto the practice field. Do low impact 'games' with them while waiting for everyone to show. When the warm-up 'officially' begins, first demonstrate the exercise and then begin the exercise. Be sure to explain the exercise in words the players can understand. Sometimes you will have to teach them new words for this to work. Be sure that you participate with them, because the players will learn quickest by example. And if you can, get the parents to participate as well!

Team Talk: (2 minutes, 1 minute to get them quiet!) Have a brief Team Talk with them and let them know what you want to accomplish today and what you expect of them today. Keep it simple and in words they can understand.

Skill Development: (25 minutes). Begin skill development drills and exercises. Spend the first 10 minutes improving skills taught in previous practices. You will need to focus on the less-talented players at this time to help them improve at a quicker pace. Consider providing these players a 'mentor', another player that can show them good execution of the skill. This mentoring approach also keeps more players busy and 'engaged' providing more fun and participation.

After the review, begin introducing a new skill 'game' or regimen. You should strive to introduce one new skill, or a variation or refinement of a skill at every practice session. This may require a brief Team Talk with the players to provide a foundation of words or expectations. First explain the skill, then with other assistants, if necessary, demonstrate the skill using proper technique. Then turn the players loose to try it themselves.

Once they begin the skill development exercise, try to keep further instruction and refinement to a minimum, and spend your time one-on-one with the players. Having other volunteers and coaches manage the 'team' allows you to spend some 'quality time' with each player while they are striving to learn. If you have an exceptional player or two, place them in a mentoring position with another player.

Water Break: If you are in warm or summer conditions, take a 3 to 5 minute water break. Have the players' gather in the Team Talk location and use this as a brief cool-down. You can have an assistant or player 'serve' the water and you can use this opportunity to reinforce the skill(s) just practiced.

Play: (20 minutes) Play a modified game or small-sided game / scrimmage. This will increase the likelihood that the skills you have just introduced or have previously introduced have real-world (read game-time) implications. Here are a few tips to ensure a successful (read fun and educational) scrimmage:

- Be sure to have the player's rotate positions so that each player can understand the requirements of the position, and possibly develop an appreciation of other players that play that position.
- Have a couple of players be assistant coaches and officials. This encourages these players to understand the rules and really teaches a sense of fair play.
- Play for a pre-determined amount of time, not until a scrimmage team reaches a certain score.
- Focus on only one or two rules or skills at a time. Trying to teach too many skills / rules at a time can be overwhelming for most players.

Team Talk: (5 - 10 minutes, 2 minutes to get them quiet!). This provides time for the players to cool-down and reflect on their recent accomplishments. It also provides a time for you to repeat today's instructions and to communicate with your players. Ask the players to tell the team what they learned today. Try to

refrain from using "Yes" or "No" questions. Don't force a player to make provide an answer to your questions. He may be too tired or mentally drained to answer your question. If they give you an inattentive answer, simply acknowledge their answer with a nod, smile or "that's interesting" and move on to the next player.

- Talk to the team about a particular rule or situation that may have happened in practice or the last game.
- Ask the players what they would like to do in the next practice. This will give you a good pulse on what part of the game is the most fun, and will let you use this in between "less fun" activities.
- If your team is old enough or if you choose to use the "mentoring" practice, assign some players to be officials, assistants or mentors for the next practice. This creates enthusiasm for practice for these players, and is especially useful with less enthusiastic players.
- If you're going to give the players 'homework', now would be the time to do so. Give them very specific instructions on skills and rules they should practice and learn. For younger children you should provide this information as note cards or flash cards. Then see how many of them completed last week's homework. Test them with simple questions.
- Summarize your discussion and repeat the important teachings of the day. With younger kids a small 'reward' can help keep the players' attention. (Bubble gum, etc...)
- Make a game out of wrapping up the practice. Have the players' pack up the equipment.

Example Parent Email

Let me be the first to welcome you to our flag football team. All the coaches are looking forward to coaching your child this upcoming season.

(Coaching Experience)

I have limited coaching experience as head coach for Flag Football, and assistant coach for Jodie Harrison Basketball League and Boys Little League. Jimmy Johns and I coached 3rd Grade Girls Basketball last year and are fortunate to have John Doe joining in the effort this season. We welcome all parents who wish to participate at practices or who will be able to assist when the coaches are absent or tied up. Your involvement is welcome, so please let me know if you would like to help in some capacity.

(Contact Information)

When attempting to contact me during the season, my cell phone (555-5555) is usually the fastest method to reach me urgently. Otherwise, email will be the best method for non-urgent issues. If anything comes up that you would like to discuss, I will do my best to be available to you.

The Community House has a web page dedicated to the Flag Football League You will be able to find our information regarding the league schedule rules and regulations, team standings, team rosters, game results and other useful information. Answers to most FAQs will also be available. www.thecommunityhouse.org/flagfootball

(Practice/Team Information)

I understand that many of you will be away for the Holidays. Nevertheless, we have been encouraged to hold 2 practices a week until the opening weekend of games. Once the season begins we will hold practice only once a week: **7-8 PM every Friday at Katherine Legge Memorial Park**. I will contact you via email regarding these additional open practices before the season starts once I know field availability. Please be on time to practices since we have such limited time. Let me know who will be picking up your son/daughter if you are carpooling. Our team name is **TEAM NAME**.

I have included information for you, including the dates and times of our scheduled practices and games, team roster, and other general information. You have been assigned to bring a snack for one of the games.

(Closing with General Mission)

As you know, our overall purpose is for the boys/girls to enjoy themselves and have fun. We also want to teach certain values and skills related to teamwork. It is my hope that each boy/girl will improve over the season and enjoy flag football more by the end than at the beginning of the season. We are partners in this, and I look forward to your input, your feedback, and your support.

I'm sure we will have a lot of *fun*!

Coaching Staff Names