

# Season Plan for 6 to 7-Year-Olds

These slightly older players will not only revisit the tactics and skills they learned earlier, they will also add new tactics and skills—such as new pass routes—along the way. The overview on the next page provides a weekly guide as described previously. The tactics and skills, rules and traditions, and fitness and character development concepts all will be detailed in the practice plans.

## Overview of the Season Plan


The Season Plan on the next page provides a weekly guide and addresses tactical and skill components, and other activities fully detailed in the Practice Plans document. The Season Plan has five components:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the practice is your main focus.
- **Tactics and Skills:** Tactics are knowing what to do during the game (and when to do it), and they require an understanding of the problems faced by each team during the game and how those problems can be solved. Ways to maintain possession of the ball would be tactics. Skills are the physical skills traditionally taught, such as controlling the ball during play.
- **Rules and Traditions:** You will teach the rules of the sport to young children gradually, as part of playing games and learning skills. Traditions are those unwritten rules that players follow to be courteous and safe, such as raising your hand when you foul someone or playing cooperatively with the others on your team.
- **Fitness Concepts:** Even young children can understand some simple concepts about health and fitness, such as the idea that exercise strengthens your heart, so some of these are suggested as the focus for brief discussions during practice.
- **Character Development Concepts:** The four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility—can all be related to many situations arising while playing team sports. For example, playing cooperatively with teammates shows that you care about them. Again, we'll suggest some specific ideas for briefly discussing character development values.

6- to 7-Year-Olds

Week	Purpose	Tactics and skills	Rules and traditions	Fitness concepts	Character development concepts
1	To learn basic offensive skills	Passing, catching	Passing rules	<b>General fitness</b> Hearts work without any rest.	<b>Four core values</b> Incorporate the four core values.
2	To learn basic offensive skills	Passing, catching	Receiving rules	<b>General fitness</b> Learn about lung function.	<b>Responsibility</b> Be responsible to your teammates.
3	To learn a pass pattern	Square-outs, carrying ball after a catch	No-block rule	<b>Cardiorespiratory health and fitness</b> Learn about cardiorespiratory exercises.	<b>Responsibility</b> Be a good sport.
4	To learn two new pass patterns	Curl, slant	Defensive rules	<b>Muscle fitness</b> Muscles need to be exercised every other day to get stronger.	<b>Honesty</b> Be honest if you make a mistake.
5	To stop offensive progressive	Pulling flags	Flag guarding	<b>Muscle fitness</b> Good flexibility helps prevent injuries.	<b>Responsibility</b> Stay under control.
6	To learn a new pass pattern	Streaks	Running rules	<b>Body type</b> There are three basic body types.	<b>Responsibility</b> Don't make excuses about mistakes.
7	To run effective pass patterns and get open	Passing, catching, running pass patterns	Offsides	<b>Training and conditioning</b> Warm up for 5 to 10 minutes before playing.	<b>Caring</b> Share the ball with your teammates.
8	To learn a new pass pattern	Post pattern	Illegal rushing	<b>Training and conditioning</b> The cool-down returns heart rate to a normal level.	<b>Respect</b> Respect your teammates.
9	To run effective pass patterns and get open	Various routes	Defensive holding	<b>Healthy habits</b> Water is great for replacing liquids lost during practice.	<b>Caring</b> Be supportive of your teammates.
10	To cover pass receivers	Covering receivers	Pass interference	<b>Healthy habits</b> Smoking causes many diseases.	<b>Respect</b> Respect the sport.

# Practice Plans for 6- to 7- Year-Olds



This chapter contains 10 practice plans to use with your 6- and 7-year-old YMCA Rookies flag football players. Before we get to those plans, though, we'll explain the modifications to the game that are used in YMCA Rookies play and give you a quick overview of what's in the practice plans and how they are to be used.

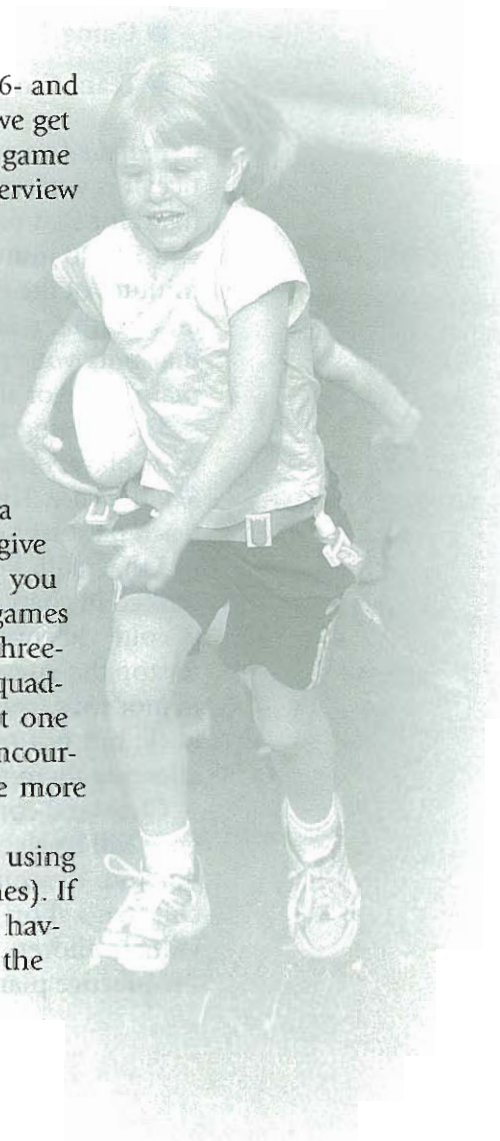


## Game Modifications

YMCA Rookies play 6 v 6 games. This speeds up the game and gives kids more opportunities to be involved in the play. Have no more than 12 players on a team.

The field is also smaller than regulation; we recommend a 30-yard by 60-yard field. Again, to keep kids active and to give them more touches of the ball and opportunities to learn, you will see that we quite often recommend having two 3 v 3 games going at once, on separate halves of the field, or having three-player teams performing games and skill practices in separate quadrants of the field. We highly recommend you have at least one assistant coach to help you watch and instruct the players. Encourage parents to help you; the more assistants you have, the more attention each child can get.

Another modification is in the ball itself: we recommend using either a Nerf ball or a youth-size ball (10 1/4 to 10 1/2 inches). If you do try the youth-size ball and find that your players are having trouble gripping or throwing it, be ready to switch to the Nerf ball.





Many of the rules for flag football have been adapted to make them more appropriate for the age and skill level of 6- and 7-year-olds. For example, at this level blocking is not allowed; kickoffs and punting do not take place; there are no running plays; and all offensive players are eligible to receive forward passes. See chapter 9 for more on flag football rules.



## Practice Plan Organization

Each plan contains the following sections:

- ⊙ Purpose
- ⊙ Equipment
- ⊙ Warm-Up
- ⊙ Fitness Circle
- ⊙ Game 1
- ⊙ Skill Practice(s)
- ⊙ Game 2
- ⊙ Team Circle

*Purpose* focuses on what you want to teach your players during that practice; it is your main theme for that day. *Equipment* notes what you'll need on hand for that practice (and the size of the field). The *Warm-Up* section gives you 5 to 10 minutes of warm-up activities. This segment will be followed by 5 minutes of the *Fitness Circle*, during which you briefly talk with players about an idea that relates to health or fitness. Then, in *Game 1*, you'll play a game that puts your players in a game-like situation and introduces them to the main tactic or skill that you want them to learn that day.

Then, using the games approach as described in chapter 4, you'll guide your players through a short question-and-answer session that leads to the *Skill Practice*. Here you will have one or two skill practices in which you will teach players the tactic or skill and then conduct a fun drill for them to practice that skill. Remember to use the IDEA approach to teaching skills, as described in chapter 4. (Note that in some games we say play a "hot" defense or a "cold" defense. A "hot" defense is one that is going all-out, trying its hardest to stop the offense. A "cold" defense is one that is playing at about half speed, in more of a "contain" situation—perhaps putting light pressure on the quarterback, but not trying to down him or her, or playing a bit off the receivers, allowing them to make catches and then closing in on them.)

Chapter 8 contains descriptions of all the tactics and skills, so a page reference will be given to guide you to the appropriate description there. The introduction, demonstration, and explanation should be very brief to fit young children's short attention spans. As the players practice, you attend to individual children, guiding them with *Coach's Cues* (which are provided through the practice plans) or further demonstration.

After the skill practices, you will go on to *Game 2* and have the kids play another game to let them use the skills they just learned and to see how those skills fit into the context of a game. We provide *Coach's Points* for you to help your players focus on the most important points. And for many practices we provide *Variations* to give you ideas on how to modify the games to make them easier or more challenging, based on your observations of your players' skill levels.

The practice concludes with a *Team Circle*, which focuses on character development. You take about 5 minutes to talk *with* your players about some aspect of the game that relates to one of the four core values—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Following this, you wrap up the practice with a reminder of the next practice day and time and a preview of what will be taught in that next practice.

A note about Fitness and Team Circles—these times are meant to be true discussions, not lectures where you do all the talking and the kids do all the listening. Ask the questions provided and wait for your players to respond. Don't feed them the answers that we provide; these answers are only meant to help you guide the discussion. The kids' wording of answers doesn't have to match what we give here; that wording is presented for your benefit, so you know where to guide them. Your role in team circles is as much to ask questions and get players to respond as it is to dole out information.

The plans in this chapter, combined with the information in the rest of this book, should give you everything you need to lead practices. Just remember to be patient and caring as you work on skills. Kids will progress at different rates, and it's more important that they learn the sport in a positive way than it is that they learn quickly.

### Key to Diagrams



Player movement without ball	—	
Player movement with ball	—	
Pass	—	
Offensive players	—	 
Defensive players	—	 
Other players	—	
Sequence of movement	—	1, 2, 3
Cone	—	

# Practice 1

## PURPOSE

To learn basic offensive skills

## Equipment

-  One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
-  Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Begin each practice with 5 to 10 minutes of warm-up activities to get players loosened up and ready to go. Have the kids jog one lap around the field and get into a circle. Lead them in jumping jacks and stretches for their legs and arms.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Following the warm-up, gather the players and briefly discuss the fitness concept for that practice.

### **Key Idea:** General fitness

Gather the children together. "Your heart (which is as big as your fist and is located in the center of your chest) pushes blood throughout your body through blood vessels (arteries and veins). Your heart must pump more than 100,000 times a day! That means your heart works without any rest (except between beats)."

### **Activity:** Open-close fist

"Let's see how amazing our hearts are. Place your fist near your chest and open and close your fist as I am doing." (Open and close your fist about 90 times a minute. After a minute or less, the children's hands will start to get tired.) "Is your hand getting tired like mine is?" [A lot of comments and groans.] "As you open and close your fist, think about your heart. Your heart is special. Take care of it with lots of exercise, healthy eating, and plenty of rest."

Ask the children these questions:

- "How did your hand/fist feel after opening and closing your fist 50 to 90 times?" [Tired, hard, achy.]
- "After thinking about your fist and what you just tried to do with it, tell me what you think of your heart now." [Amazing, cool, tough.]
- "What do you think happens to your heart when you play football?" [Heart goes faster, heart gets tired, heart helps you play well.]



# Practice 1

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

Following the Fitness Circle, get the kids playing a game. Then interrupt each game with a time of questions and answers, with you asking the questions and your players providing the answers (about what the goal of the game was and what skills and tactics they needed to perform to succeed in the game). For many games, we provide diagrams or figures showing how the game is played. We also often provide coaching points for you to pass along to your players during the games.

### Goal

Players will move downfield and score.

### Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games. On defense, play player-to-player. The offense starts at midfield and moves downfield in a nonstop passing game—no huddles, no plays, just receivers moving downfield and catching the ball. They are down where they catch it, and the receiver who caught the ball becomes the quarterback, as his or her two teammates immediately go out for passes farther down the field. The defense becomes the offense on an interception or incomplete pass—otherwise the offense keeps moving down the field until they score, so long as they keep completing passes. (You may want to allow the offense to have three incomplete passes before the ball changes hands; keep the game moving, but don't make it too confusing for the players.) Give one point for each completed pass and six points for each touchdown.

**Coach:** What's the goal of this game?

**Players:** To move down the field and score.

**Coach:** How do you do that?

**Players:** By throwing the ball so the receivers can catch it.

**Coach:** And how do you do that?

**Players:** By using the right grip and arm motion.

You'll follow game 1 with one or more skill practices, during which you'll introduce, demonstrate, and explain a skill or tactic, and then attend to your players as they practice it. The question-and-answer session, in which your players tell you what skills and tactics they need to be successful in the game, leads directly to the skill practice. We often provide coaching points with the skill practices; pass these points along to your players. We also give you cues—phrases you can use to help your players focus on the task at hand—in many skill practices and games.



# Practice 1

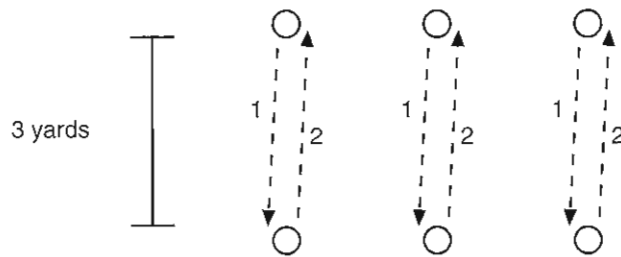
(cont'd)

## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *throw the football* (see page 120).
2. Have players practice throwing.

### Description

Players in pairs play catch, standing about 3 yards apart. Have them hold the ball high for good rotation and release.



### COACH'S cues



"Spread your fingers on the ball."  
"Hold the ball behind your ear."  
"Snap your wrist!"

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Pair up players and have them kneel facing each other about 3 yards apart. They throw 10 balls while on the right knee then switch and throw 10 balls while on the left knee. This will develop arm strength and wrist snap.

### COACH'S cues



"Keep the ball high."  
"Throw accurately and hard."



# Practice 1

## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will pass downfield and score.

### Description

Repeat game 1.

### Team Circle (5 minutes)

Conclude practice by gathering your players and discussing a character development concept. These aren't lectures; you want your players' active participation in these discussions. Following the discussions, wrap up the practice with a few comments.

#### Key Idea: Four core values

Gather the children into a circle with one ball. "Everyone hand the ball to the person next to you until it makes it around the whole circle." After the ball has gone around the circle one time, have it passed to you. "We play flag football to be more healthy and fit, but it also teaches us to become good teammates and good people. This season we will talk about four qualities of a good person and teammate: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Our team needs to have all of these qualities in our practices and games. Remember that we can't be a team without each of you doing your part. Let's pass the ball to each other and say one of the core values before you pass. This will help you remember to use all four of the qualities so that we can work together."

#### Wrap-Up

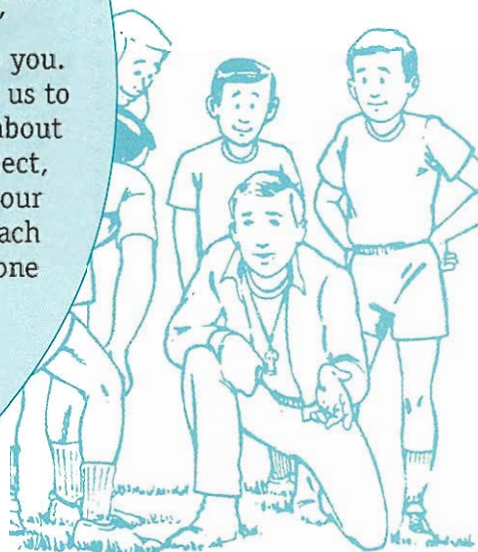
Make summary comments about practice. Remind players of the next practice day and time.



COACH'S  
points

☞ Make sure the kids are relaxed and are having fun throwing the football.

☞ Go over passing rules (see page 131).



# Practice 2

## PURPOSE

To learn basic offensive skills

## Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards
- Six hula hoops

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Have the kids jog for 2 minutes and then lead them in stretches for their arms and legs.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: General fitness

Gather the children together. "You have a left lung and a right lung in your chest. Each lung is about the length of a small banana and about the size of two small bananas together. Your lungs have the job of getting air in and out of your body. When you breathe air into your lungs, your lungs get bigger because they are holding air. When you blow the air out of your lungs, your chest gets smaller. You breathe in and out about 12 to 20 times in a minute. The number of times you breathe is called your breathing rate."

### Activity: Breathing—nose and mouth

"It is possible to breathe through either just your nose or just your mouth. Try it. Hold your nose shut and open your mouth. Breathe. Now close your mouth and breathe through your nose. Breathe. Do you notice anything different?" (Usually the mouth is easier to breathe through than the nose, although through the nose is preferred.)

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will move downfield and score by throwing accurate passes to teammates.

### Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games. On defense, play player-to-player. The offense starts at midfield and moves downfield in a nonstop passing game—no huddles, no plays, just receivers moving downfield and catching the ball. They are down where they catch it, and the receiver who caught the ball becomes the quarterback, as his or her two teammates immediately go out for passes farther down the field. The defense becomes the offense on an interception or incomplete pass—otherwise



# Practice 2

the offense keeps moving down the field until they score, so long as they keep completing passes. (You may want to allow the offense to have three incomplete passes before the ball changes hands; keep the game moving, but don't make it too confusing for the players.) Give one point for each completed pass and six points for each touchdown.

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To throw accurate passes and score.

Coach: How do you throw accurate passes?

Players: Throw smooth and easy; the ball rolls off your fingers.

Coach: Why did some teams have trouble scoring?

Players: The receivers ran too far away from the quarterback.

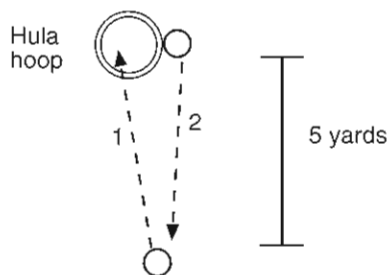
Coach: Is it better to use short passes or long passes?

Players: Short passes so the quarterback can get the ball to the receiver.



## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

Put players into pairs, with players in each pair standing 5 yards apart. One player holds a hula hoop to the side, as a target for his or her partner to throw through. The player holding the hoop tosses the ball back and continues to hold the hoop until his or her partner has had five throws. Then they switch positions and the second player throws through the hoop. Players score a point for each ball that they throw in the air through the appropriate hula hoop.



Repeat 5 times, then switch

### COACH'S cues



"Keep a secure grip on the ball."

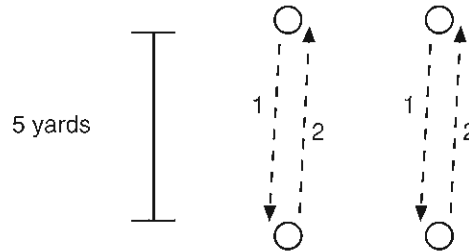
"Legs spread, weight on your back foot."

"Follow through."



## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Divide players into groups of two. Give each pair a football. Instruct them to throw 10 balls to each other from a sitting position. This drill is used for developing arm strength, wrist snap, and accuracy. Start out at 5 yards apart and increase the distance as players become stronger.



Keep a good position and use proper release when throwing the football.

Go over receiving rules (see page 131).

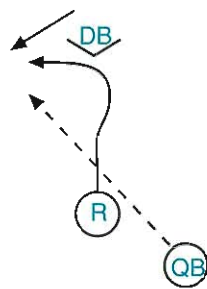
## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

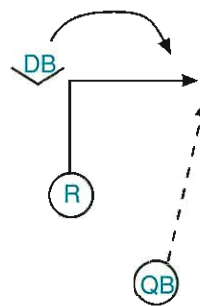
Quarterbacks will hit their receivers with good passes.

### Description

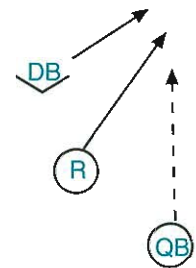
Divide the team into groups of three: a quarterback, a receiver, and a defensive back. The receiver runs three routes: one to the left, one to the right, and one down the middle; the quarterback attempts to complete all three passes. Then rotate players so that eventually everyone plays quarterback. For each pass completed, the quarterback and the receiver each receive one point.



Play 1



Play 2



Play 3

# Practice 2

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### **Key Idea:** Responsibility

Gather the children into a group. "When you come to practice, you should be ready to do at least three things. Who can tell me what those things are?" Ask players to shout out their responses. Many responses might be appropriate, in addition to the three you are looking for. Acknowledge all good responses, and then say, "One: be ready to play. Two: learn new skills and work on 'old' skills. Three: work with others. When you do those three things, you have *fun*. Who wants to have fun?" Again ask them to shout out their responses. "Then the way to have fun is to be responsible to yourself and your teammates by doing those three things—by being ready to play, by working on skills, and by being good teammates."

### **Wrap-Up**

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.







# Practice 3

## PURPOSE

To learn a pass pattern

## Equipment

-  One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
-  Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players run for 2 minutes and then lead them in stretches for their arms and legs. Conclude with a series of push-ups and jumping jacks.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea:** Cardiorespiratory health and fitness (moving your body)

Gather the children together. "Today I want to use a big word. It is *cardiorespiratory*. 'Cardio' means heart and 'respiratory' means lungs. Can you say the word? [Cardiorespiratory.] Cardiorespiratory exercises are those types that move most of your body for 15 minutes or longer without getting tired. Your breathing rate will increase and your heart will pump faster. Riding your bike, running, jumping rope, and playing tag are some exercises that are called cardiorespiratory exercises."

**Activity:** Yes, no, maybe so

"Put your thumb in the air if you think the statement I make is true. Point your thumb to the ground if you think the statement I make is false. If you are not sure, put one thumb in the air and the other thumb toward the ground."

1. "Running is a good cardiorespiratory exercise." After they vote ask, "Why?" [Yes, as long as it's not too fast.]
2. "Weight training is a good cardiorespiratory exercise." After they vote ask, "Why?" [No, it is a strength exercise.]
3. "Stretching is a good cardiorespiratory exercise." After they vote ask, "Why?" [No, it is a flexibility exercise.]

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Receivers will run routes and get open to receive passes.

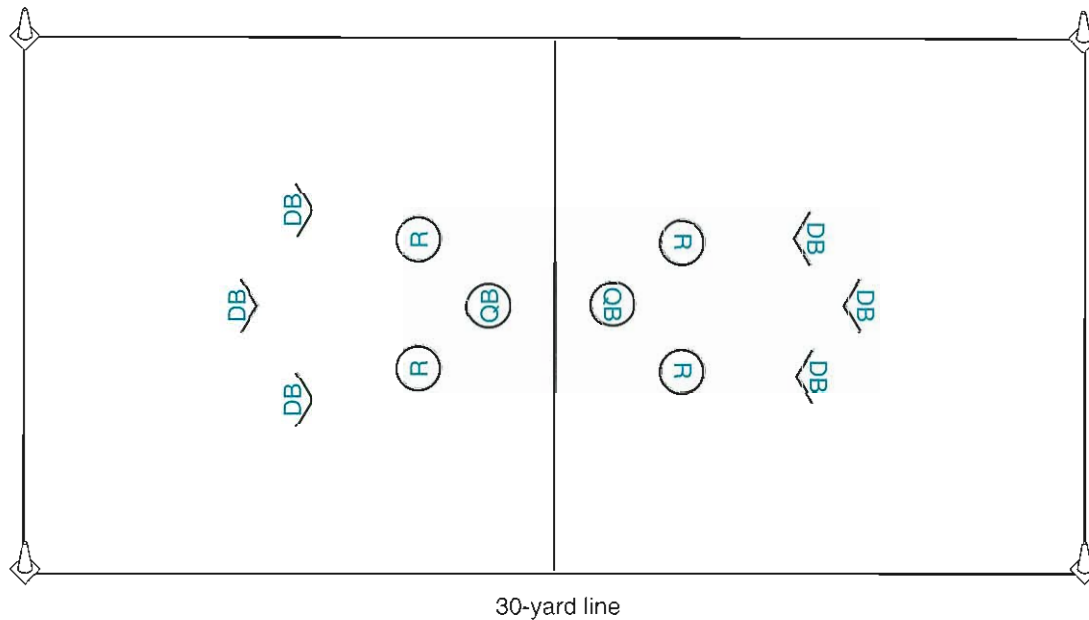
### Description

Split the players into four teams, two Team As and two Team Bs on two different parts of the field. Teams As begin and remain on offense for the first half of the game; Teams Bs are on offense for the second half of the game. The two Team As begin at midfield and move toward



# Practice 3

opposite goals. The defenses can play a zone (one player covers left, one middle, and one right) or player-to-player defense (with one player assigned to the quarterback). Receivers are to run however they want to in attempting to get open and receive a pass. Rotate offensive players to different positions after each play. Allow the receivers to run with the ball; the defenders must touch them with one hand to down them. Award one point for each pass caught.



Coach: What were the receivers trying to do?

Players: Get open to catch passes.

Coach: How do you get open?

Players: By running to where the defender isn't, using different routes.

Coach: That's right. Let's learn one of those routes: the square-out.

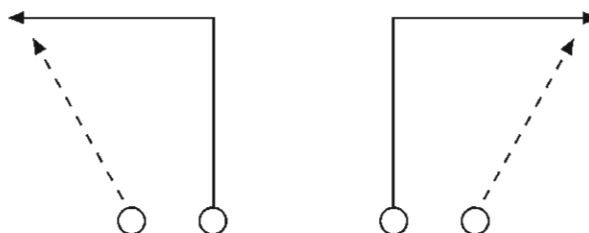


## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to catch the football on the run, using *the square-out pass pattern* (see page 117).
2. Have players practice catching the football using this pattern.

### Description

Pair up players, with each pair having a ball. The pairs of players then throw each other passes using the square-out pass pattern.



### COACH'S cues



- "Sharp cuts."
- "Be soft all over."
- "Look the ball into *your* hands."
- "Catch the ball with your hands, not with your body."

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Show players the proper arm position for carrying the ball once they have caught a pass. Pair up players and give each pair a ball. The partners will rotate every play between receiver and quarterback. The receiver runs a square-out and receives a pass, then runs a few more yards, tucking the ball away properly. The receiver returns to the line of scrimmage, still using proper arm position. Then the players switch positions and repeat the drill.

## Game 2 (10 minutes)

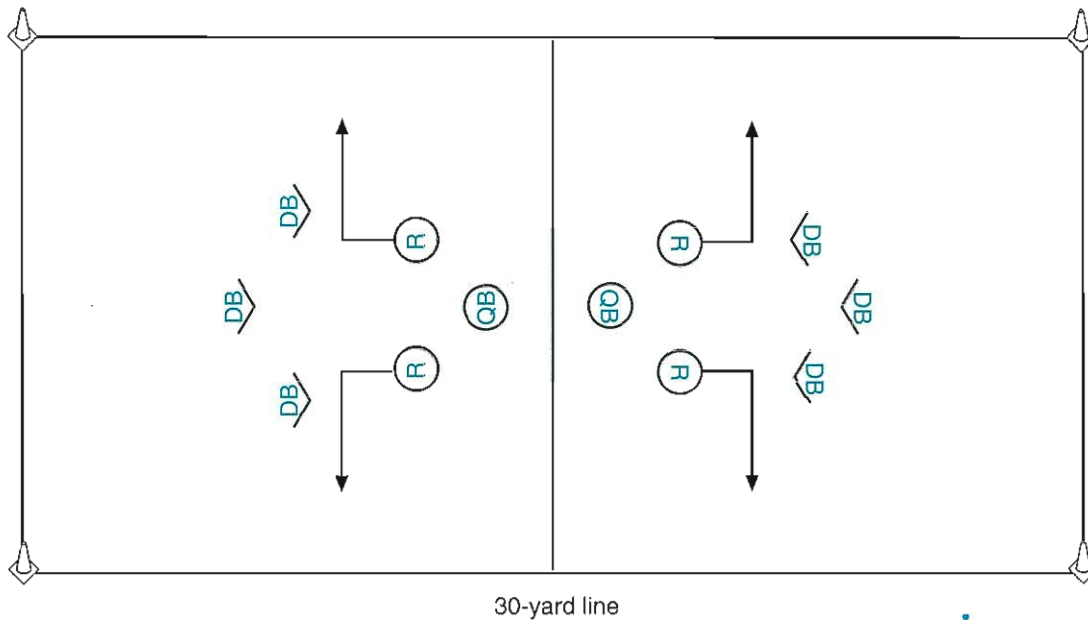
### Goal

Players will catch the ball while running square-out pass patterns.

### Description

Repeat game 1, with the receivers running square-outs.

# Practice 3



## Variation

Make the games and skill practices easier or harder for the kids by adjusting the length of the patterns.

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the children into a circle. Stand in the middle of the circle with a ball. "I'm going to show you two different ways to handle the same situation. Think about which is the best way to handle this." Choose a player to receive a pass from you. Make a bad pass and then stomp angrily away from the group. Retrieve the ball and make another bad pass. This time run to get the ball and make a pass that goes directly to the player. "If you think the first response is the way to handle making a bad pass, stand to my left. If you think the second way is better, stand to my right." Ask players to explain their choices. "It's important to be a good sport in flag football." Highlight how and why. "That's being responsible to your teammates."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.



- Being a good receiver involves more than speed.
- Go over the no-block rule (see page 132).





# Practice 4

## PURPOSE

To learn two new pass patterns

## Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog one lap around the field and then lead them in jumping jacks and stretches for their arms and legs.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### **Key Idea:** Muscle fitness

Gather the children together. "Muscle strength tells you how strong your muscles are. That is, muscle strength shows you how much your muscles can lift. Muscle strength is improved by making your muscles work harder—a lot harder. To get stronger, muscles need to be exercised every other day. The exercises must be hard enough that the muscles get tired after doing the exercise three to ten times. Some of the better exercises for getting stronger are those that you can do with weights. How many of you have seen someone lift weights? How many of you have tried lifting weights? How did it feel? If you don't have weights, you can use your body as weight."

### **Activity:** Three exercises

"You need to be strong to play football. In addition to strong leg muscles, you need arm and abdominal (belly) muscles that will help you do your best. There are three 'harder type' exercises that will help your muscles get stronger—push-ups, partner pull-ups, and abdominal curls."

# Practice 4

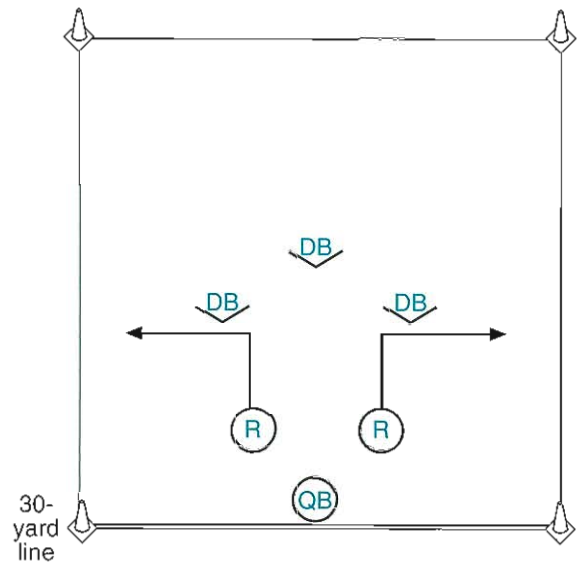
## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Receivers will run square-out patterns, catch passes, and score touchdowns.

### Description

Play games of 3 v 3. Have receivers run square-outs. The offense starts 30 yards away from the goal and has five passes to attempt to score. Play a zone or player-to-player defense. Each completion is worth one point; a touchdown is worth six. Switch offense and defense after a touchdown or after five passes, whichever comes first. The offense always begins 30 yards from the goal. The defense has to down the ball by touching the ball carrier with one hand.



Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To get open, catch passes, and score.

Coach: How can you get open?

Players: By running square-out patterns.

Coach: That's right. And two other ways are to run curl and slant patterns.

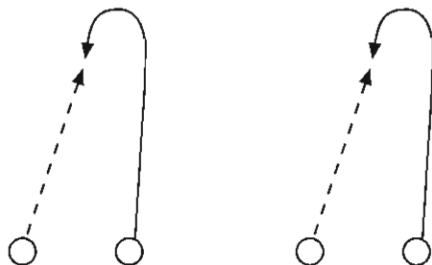


## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to catch the football on the run, using the *curl pass pattern* (see page 117).
2. Have players practice catching the football using the curl pass pattern.

### Description

Divide players into pairs, each pair with one football. One player runs a curl pattern while his or her partner throws a pass. Have receivers run five curls, then switch roles so that their partners can run curls.



## COACH'S cues



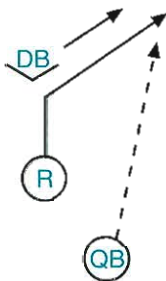
"Curl back!"  
 "Proper hand position."  
 "Tuck the ball away."

## Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Practice, demonstrate, and explain the *slant pattern* (see page 117). Have players practice running the slant pattern.

### Description

Split your squad into three-player groups. In each group, there's a quarterback, a receiver, and a defensive back. The receivers run slant patterns and attempt to catch passes. Rotate positions after a receiver has run the route three times.



## COACH'S cues



"Change your speed."  
 "Change your direction."  
 "Make sharp cuts."

## Game 2 (10 minutes)

### Goal

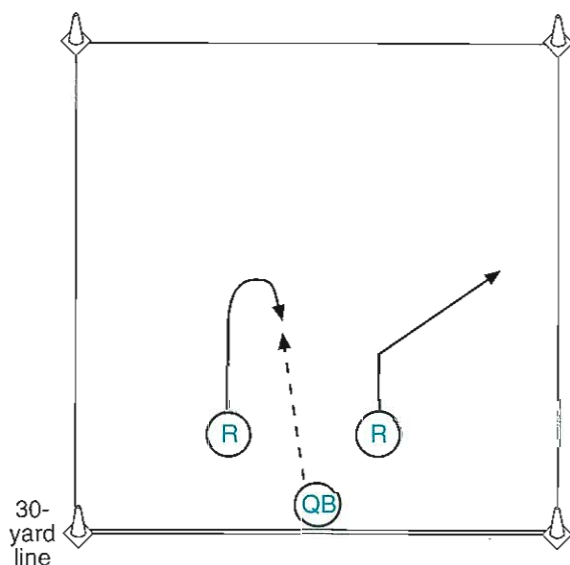
Players will catch the ball while running the correct pass pattern.

### Description

Divide the players into four groups of three kids each and set each group on a quadrant of the field. Designate a quarterback and two receivers for each team. Each team will begin at midfield and will proceed down the field, trying to score. The ball is down where it is caught. You call out the pass patterns for the receivers to execute. If a team scores a touchdown, they begin again at midfield. The team that advances the most down the field or scores the most touchdowns is the winner.



# Practice 4



**COACH'S  
points**

☞ Look the ball into your hands.

☞ Go over defensive rules (see page 132).

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Honesty

Gather the children into a group. "What is an offsides violation?" Listen to their responses. Choose a player to help demonstrate responses. "Should you admit to a violation if no official sees it? Those who think yes, stand to my right. Those who think no, stand to my left." Wait for children to choose. "When you know you've been offsides or committed another violation, you should raise your hand. You should never take unfair advantage of other players. Can you think of other ways honesty is practiced on the field?" Listen to responses and discuss. "All those show honesty."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.



# Practice 5

## PURPOSE

To stop offensive progress

## Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- 12 towels or cones to mark zones
- Flag belts for all players

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog around the field and then come back and run pass patterns. Put defensive backs on each receiver so that it puts pressure on the receiver and the quarterbacks throwing. Have two lines going with two quarterbacks throwing.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Muscle fitness

Gather the children together. "To move your body, you need muscles and joints. What is a joint?" [A joint is where two bones are placed close together and allow you to move.] "Let me use my knee as an example of a joint. There is a bone in my upper leg and two bones in my lower leg. When the muscles in the back of my leg contract, they pull on my bones to make my lower leg move backward. When the muscles on the front of my leg contract, they move my leg forward.

"If I want good flexibility, I need to make sure that my muscles contract and extend properly. If they do, I am said to have good flexibility. Good flexibility helps prevent injuries and helps you play your sport better. The quadriceps stretch and modified hamstring stretch are two good leg flexibility exercises for you to learn."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Defenders will stop the offense from scoring by pulling the ball carrier's flag.

### Description

Play two 3 v 3 games, with each offense beginning at midfield and going toward opposite end zones. The defense plays "cold," allowing a receiver to catch the ball, but then immediately tries to pull the flag. (The defense can play zone or player-to-player.) The receivers do not go farther than 5 yards beyond the line of scrimmage to catch the ball. The offense goes for five plays or until they score a touchdown, whichever comes first; then the defense and offense switch sides. Award the



# Practice 5

defense one point for not allowing the ball carrier to advance more than 5 yards beyond the point of reception and six points for not allowing a touchdown.

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To pull the flag.

Coach: What's the best way to pull the flag?

Players: Try to grab it.

Coach: Should you lunge for the runner or let the runner come to you?

Players: Wait for the runner to come to you.

Coach: Should you keep your weight back, on the balls of your feet (indicate what these are), or should you get up on your toes?

Players: Keep your weight on the balls of your feet.

Coach: Good. Let's practice pulling flags.



## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Practice, demonstrate, and explain how to *pull the flag* (see page 123).
2. Have players practice pulling flags.

### Description

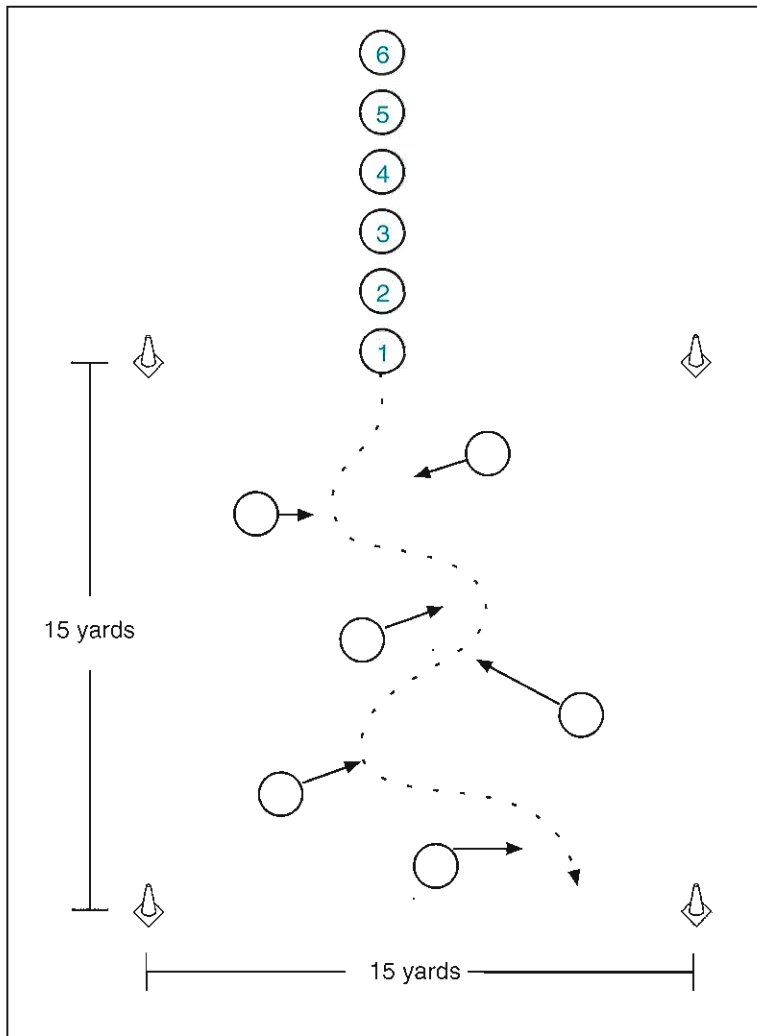
Mark two zones, each 3 yards wide by 3 yards long, with cones or towels. Assign six players (three on offense, three on defense) to each zone. The offensive and defensive players line up single file; this is a one-on-one drill. The first two players in the offensive line each have a football. The first player runs through the zone, attempting to elude the defender, who tries to pull his or her flag. After the play, the ball carrier tosses the ball to the second offensive player in line as the next set of players get ready to go. (In this way the players never have to wait, because the next offensive player will always have a ball and be ready to go immediately after the preceding play is over.) The ball carrier then goes to the end of the defensive line, and the defender who just pulled the flag goes to the end of the offensive line.

### COACH'S cues



"Use the wraparound method."  
"Keep your eye on the target."  
"Soft hands."





## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Mark a 15-yard by 15-yard zone with towels or cones. Assign half your players to offense, and half to defense. Give each offensive player a ball. They stand in line outside the zone; the defenders arrange themselves in random order within the zone, about 3 to 5 yards apart. Ball carriers try to run through the maze one at a time. The defenders can't swarm on the ball carrier; this is a multiple one-on-one exercise in which only the closest defender can attempt to pull the flag.

The ball carrier continues through the maze until his or her flag is pulled. When that happens, the ball carrier becomes a defender in the zone and the player who pulled the flag takes the ball and goes to the offensive line. (If the flag isn't pulled, the offensive player remains on offense.)

## Game 2 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Defenders will pull flags under game-like situations.

### Description

Play two 3 v 3 games, with each offense beginning at midfield and going toward opposite end zones. Each offense has five plays in which to score a touchdown; after a score or after five plays, the offense and defense switch sides. The defense can play zone or player-to-player. Give the defense one point for each flag pulled and six points when they don't allow a touchdown within the five plays.

## Variations

To make game 2 easier, play 3 v 4 or 3 v 5, rotating players in after each play. To make it harder, play 4 v 3.



Let the offensive player come to you—don't lunge and get faked out.

Go over the flag-guarding rule (see page 133).

# Practice 5

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

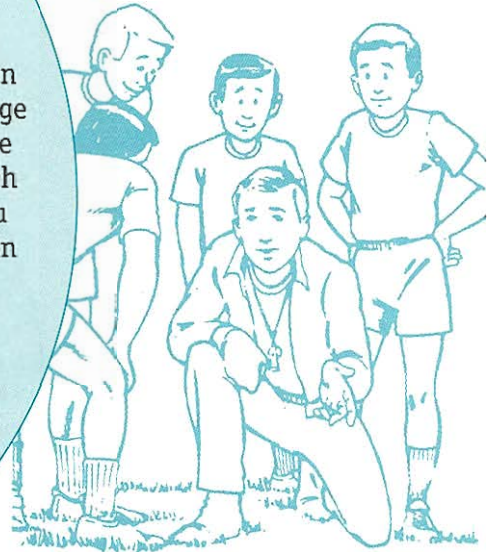
### **Key Idea:** Responsibility

Gather the children into a circle. "I want everyone to run in a circle following the person in front of you without bumping into each other. Keep a space about as long as a bicycle between you, and don't go ahead of the person in front of you." Encourage children to run slow enough to follow all the directions. Continue the activity for 1 minute. "Everyone stop. Did you bump into each other? Did anyone get upset with the person in front of you? You kept your body under control by not going ahead of the person in front of you. You kept your emotions under control by not getting upset with the person ahead of you—they couldn't move any faster since you were all running in a circle as a group.

Everyone can stay safe and learn when everyone is responsible for themselves."

### **Wrap-Up**

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.





# Practice 6

## PURPOSE

To learn a new pass pattern

### Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards
- Flag belts for all players

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog one lap around the field and then lead them in jumping jacks and stretches for their arms and legs. Choose two quarterbacks to throw to receivers running the pass patterns learned earlier (square-outs, curls, slants).

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Body type

Gather the children together. "Football players come in all shapes and sizes. Some are short, some are tall, some are heavy, and some are thin. Doctors say there are three body types—heavy, muscular, and thin. With children your age, there are usually only two—thin and heavy. As you grow older, each of you will become similar to one of the three body types.

"People with different body types do better at different sports and activities. The heavier player may do well in football since his size helps him block or tackle. Thin people may do well at things like running and bicycling. The muscular person might also excel at boxing, weight lifting, or wrestling. Each body type is important, and you should be proud of the body you have and of what it can do."

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Receivers will run routes against defenders and get open to receive passes.

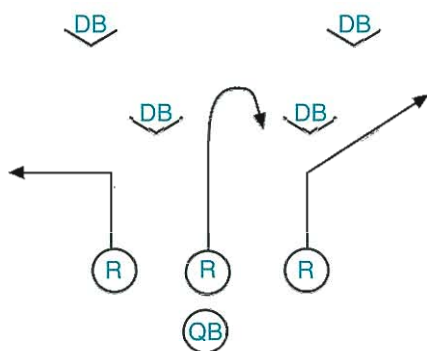
### Description

Play 4 v 4; have one quarterback and three receivers on offense and four defenders on defense, playing either a zone or player-to-player. After every three plays, the team on defense goes to offense, the team on offense goes to the sideline, and the team on the sideline goes to defense. The offense runs "hot" (full speed); the defense runs "cold"



# Practice 6

(half speed), allowing the offense to catch the ball when patterns are run correctly and then pulling the flag. Encourage receivers to run the patterns they've learned—square-outs, curls, and slants—but they can run whatever way they want to in attempting to get open and receive passes. Count one point for each pass caught.



Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To get open and catch passes.

Coach: Why is it so important to run a certain route?

Players: So the quarterback knows where to throw the ball.

Coach: What are the routes you've already learned?

Players: Square-outs, curls, slants.

Coach: Let's learn a new route.

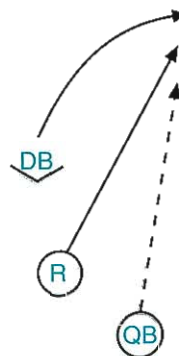


## Skill Practice (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the *streak pass pattern* (see page 117).
2. Have players practice running this route.

### Description

Split your squad into three-player groups. In each group, there's a quarterback, a receiver, and a defensive back. The same receiver runs the streak route and attempts to catch a pass. Rotate positions after a receiver has run the route three times.



# Practice 6

(cont'd)

## COACH'S CUES



"Change your speed."  
"Watch the ball into your hands."

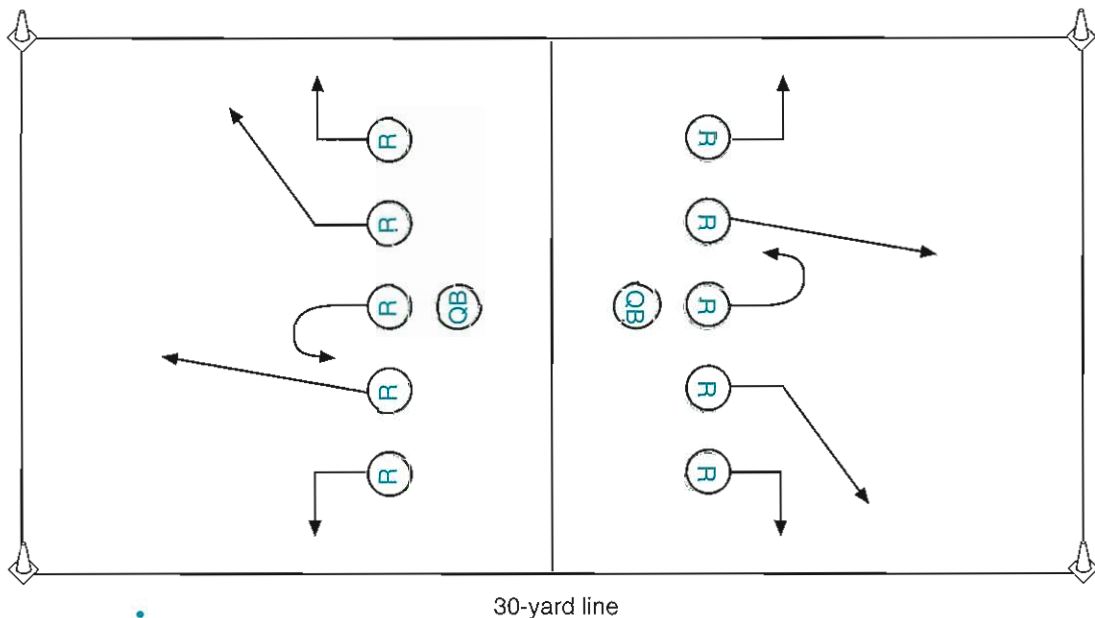
## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Receivers will run various pass patterns, move the ball downfield, and score.

### Description

Split your squad into two teams. Each team plays this game separately on one half of the field. Each team is on offense; there is no defense. Each team begins at midfield and works its way downfield by completing passes. The ball is down where caught. Tell wide receivers (the ones on either side of the ball, farthest from the ball) to run square-outs; the others can run either a curl, streak, or slant. Award one point for each completed pass and two points for each touchdown. A touchdown only counts if at least three different receivers have caught the ball. After a touchdown, rotate players so that someone else plays quarterback.



# Practice 6

## Variation

Make game 2 harder by playing defense.

### Team Circle (5 minutes)

#### Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the children into a group. Choose two players to help role play. Set up a triangle of you and the two players. Let the children know you're role playing with them. All three take turns passing. When it's your turn, miss the pass and role play yourself as a player: "I couldn't get that pass! It was your fault—you made a bad pass!" Now as coach: "I want you to think about players who make excuses and blame others for their mistakes. Stand to my left if you think it's OK to make excuses when you make mistakes. Stand to my right if you think you should try to learn and work harder to improve." Ask players about their choices. "Not making excuses is taking responsibility for yourself."

#### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.



COACH'S  
points

☞ Learn to find the open space on the field.

☞ Go over running rules (see page 131).





# Practice 7

## PURPOSE

To run effective pass patterns and get open

### Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards
- Flag belts for all players

## Warm-Up (10 minutes)

- Have the players jog for 2 minutes and then lead them in stretches.
- Have kids throw passes to each other taking turns being quarterback and going out for passes as a receiver.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### **Key Idea:** Training and conditioning

Gather the children together. "There are two important things to remember when playing sports such as flag football. You need to warm up and cool down properly. Today we'll talk about the warm-up. The warm-up prepares your muscles and helps get your heart ready for more vigorous exercise. The best warm-up exercises are walking, slow jogging, range-of-motion exercises like arm circles, and stretching exercises like the quad stretch. Usually, you should warm up for 5 to 10 minutes before playing a game."

### **Activity:** Warm-up for flag football

Do the warm-up exercises found in chapter 10. "Let's try a sample warm-up for flag football. Now you are ready to play!"

## Game 1 (15 minutes)

### **Goal**

Players will run routes that will get them open.

### **Description**

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games. Have receivers run various routes against defenders, with you telling the offense (so that the defense doesn't hear) the routes. The defense plays zone or player-to-player and must pull the flag. The offense gets six plays; then offense and defense switch sides. Give one point for each catch and an additional point if the catch was made while the receiver was running the correct route.

# Practice 7

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To run routes and get open to catch passes.

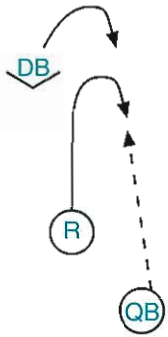
Coach: Why is it so important to run sharp cuts and make your fakes believable when running pass patterns?

Players: You take fewer steps when you run sharp cuts. Making your fakes believable will help you get open.

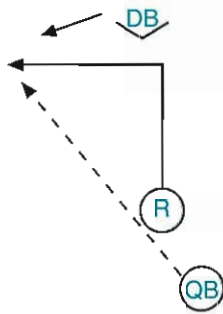


## Skill Practice (15 minutes)

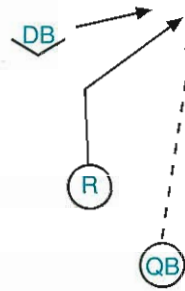
Split your squad into three-player groups. In each group there's a quarterback, a receiver, and a defensive back. The same receiver runs a curl, a square-out, and a slant, and attempts to catch passes. Rotate positions after a receiver has run the three patterns.



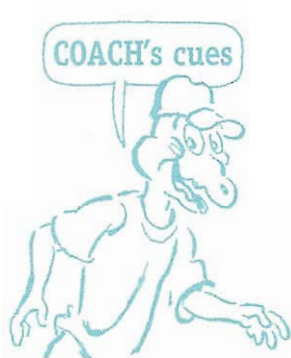
Play 1



Play 2



Play 3



"Make good fakes!"  
"Run an exact pattern."



# Practice 7

(cont'd)

## COACH'S points

☞ Playing smart is a large part of being a good pass receiver.

☞ Go over the offsides rule (see page 132).



## Game 2 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Players will catch the football in an open position on the field.

### Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games. The two teams on offense run a 2-minute drill and see how many completions they can make in that time limit. The receivers run any of the patterns they have learned (square-out, curl, slant, or streak). The defense plays zone or player-to-player and must pull the flag. Then switch offenses and defenses and repeat. Do this twice, and give one point for each completion in the time limit.

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Caring

Gather the children into a circle. Stand in the middle of the circle with a ball. Choose two children to pass the ball with you. "We're going to work on our passing skills." Pass repeatedly to them but not to the others. "Tell me how you felt to have only two players get the passes?" Listen to their responses. "Sharing the ball with your teammates shows you care about them. What other things can you do to show you care about your teammates?" Their responses should include encouragement, positive comments for good play, forgiving players that make mistakes, and so on. "Good. Those are all ways you can show you care."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.



# Practice 8

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Have the players jog for 3 minutes and then lead them in stretches.

### Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

**Key Idea:** Training and conditioning

Gather the children together. "Last time you learned about the warm-up. Today we will learn about the cool-down. The cool-down's job is to return your heart rate to a lower level, prevent muscle soreness, improve flexibility, and reduce tension through relaxation exercises. Think of the cool-down as a warm-up in reverse. At the end of the practice, we'll do a cool-down to finish up."

## Game 1 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Receivers will run good pass routes and score touchdowns.

### Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games on separate halves of the field. Have receivers run various routes against defenders, with you and an assistant telling the two offenses (so that the defense doesn't hear) the routes. The defense plays zone or player-to-player and must pull the flag. The offense gets five plays to score; then offense and defense switch. Give two points per catch *only* if the route was run correctly, and six points for a touchdown.

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To run good routes and score touchdowns.

Coach: How important is it to run the correct route?

Players: Very important, because the quarterback must know where everyone is on the field to be able to complete the pass.

Coach: We've learned curls, square-outs, slants, and streaks. What's another way you can get open?

Players: Run a different pattern.

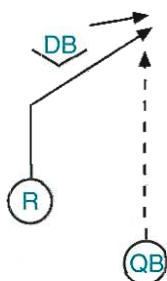
### PURPOSE

To learn a new pass pattern

### Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards
- Flag belts for all players



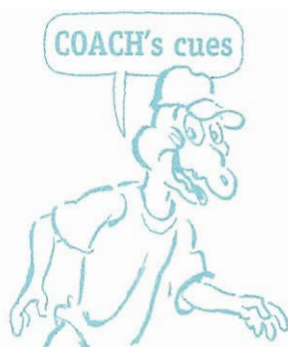


## Skill Practice (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to run the *post pattern* (see page 117).
2. Have players practice running post patterns.

### Description

Split your squad into three-player groups. In each group, there's a quarterback, a receiver, and a defensive back. The receivers run post patterns and attempt to catch passes. Rotate positions after a receiver has run the route three times.



"Make cuts believable."  
"Run your route!"



**👉** Everyone must know the routes and run them precisely so that the quarterback can find and throw to an open receiver.

**👉** Go over the illegal rushing rule (see page 132).

## Game 2 (20 minutes)

### Goal

Players will run routes correctly and score touchdowns.

### Description

Repeat game 1.

# Practice 8

## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### **Key Idea:** Respect

Gather the children into a group. "I'm going to ask you some questions about things I notice on this team. Tell me if you agree. Do you try to learn new skills at practice? Do you work hard to improve your skills? Do you help your teammates? Do you follow directions? Do you feel good about yourselves when you play well?" Listen to responses following each question. "Think about the teammates you play against in games at practice. It's important to think of your teammates in the same way you think of yourself. You respect yourself, and you should respect your teammates. They are a lot like you and are learning the same things."

### **Wrap-Up**

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.





# Practice 9

## PURPOSE

To run effective pass patterns and get open

### Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards
- Flag belts for all players

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Have the players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the children together. "Young people drink lots of different beverages such as soda pop, water, fruit juices, fruit drinks, and milk. Some of these beverages are better for you than others. Milk contains protein and lots of vitamins and minerals. Fruit drinks usually contain quite a bit of sugar and do not have much in the way of vitamins. Some do have vitamin C added. Fruit juices, like fruit drinks, can have lots of sugar, but they contain vitamins and minerals. Soda pop, on the other hand, is loaded with sugar (unless diet) and has no protein, vitamins, or minerals. Water is great for replacing liquids lost during practice."

### Activity: Choosing the best beverages

"Can you rank the following beverages according to nutritional value?"

- Water (unique)
- Milk (1)
- Fruit juice (2)
- Fruit drink (3)
- Soda pop (4)

## Game 1 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will use the routes they have learned to catch passes and score touchdowns.

### Description

Play 6 v 6. Have receivers run various routes against defenders, with you telling the offense (so that the defense doesn't hear) the routes. Have the defense play player-to-player. They must pull the flag to down the ball carrier. The offense gets five plays to score; then offense and defense switch. Give two points per catch *only* if the route was run correctly, and six points for a touchdown.

# Practice 9

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To run correct pass routes and score touchdowns.

Coach: Why is it important to run the correct route?

Players: Because the quarterback must know where everyone is on the field to be able to complete the pass.



## Skill Practice (15 minutes)

Put the kids into groups of four (a quarterback and three receivers). The receivers will line up and run a route, one at a time. You call the pass pattern for each receiver, varying it from receiver to receiver. Make sure the quarterback also rotates to being a receiver.

COACH'S cue



"Run your route!"

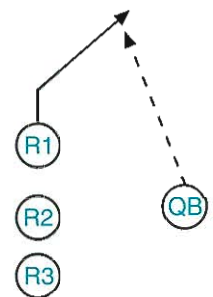
## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Players will correctly run routes with pressure on the quarterback.

### Description

Play 6 v 6. You call out the routes for the receivers, and the quarterback throws to one of the receivers (let only the offense know the routes, or instruct the defense to play a "cold" defense). Have the defense play player-to-player. They must pull the flag to down the ball carrier. A rusher puts pressure on the quarterback after 5 seconds, counted out by you or your assistant. Give a point for each catch made off of a pattern that is run correctly, and six points for a touchdown scored in five plays or less. Rotate offense and defense after a touchdown or after five plays, whichever occurs first.



☞ Running correct routes will spread the field and make it easy for the quarterback to find the open receiver.

☞ Go over the defensive holding rule (see page 132).



## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Caring

Gather the children into a group near midfield. Have a ball ready. Ask a child in the group to pass to you. Make a bad pass. "That pass wasn't very good, was it? That was a mistake. What should you say to your teammates when they make mistakes?" Listen to their responses. "What could you say to make your teammate feel better? What could you say to make him feel worse?" Listen to their responses. Have players change the negative comments to positive ones. "It's very important to forgive mistakes and to be understanding of others, just as you would want them to be of you. Making mistakes is part of learning. Saying something that makes your teammates feel better shows you care about them."

### Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice.  
Remind players of the next practice day and time.





# Practice 10

## Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Have the players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned.

## Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

### Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the children together. "Seven out of ten high school students have tried smoking, and one out of four young people smoke before the age of thirteen! Many young people try smoking because they want to be part of the gang or prove that they are cool or big (older). Besides causing lots of diseases, smoking also 'cuts people's wind.' That means when you play a sport such as football, you can't get your breath as well as a person who doesn't smoke.

"Once a person starts smoking it is hard to stop. Doctors use the word *addiction* to describe what it means when a person can't stop using cigarettes. They 'need' the cigarette to calm down or to 'pick themselves up.'"

### Activity: Voting

"I am going to read a statement to you. If you agree, put your thumb in the air. If you disagree, put your thumb down. If you don't know, put your arms across your chest.

1. How many of you think smoking causes heart attacks?
2. How many of you think smoking makes exercise harder?
3. How many of you worry because your parents, grandparents, brothers, or sisters smoke?
  4. How many of you think it's okay for doctors to smoke?
  5. How many of you think smoking is okay?"

### PURPOSE

To cover pass receivers

### Equipment

- One football for every two players (Nerf ball or youth-size: 10 1/4- to 10 1/2-inch)
- Grass field 30 yards by 60 yards
- Flag belts for all players

# Practice 10

(cont'd)

## Game 1 (10 minutes)

### Goal

Defenders will cover pass receivers to prevent them from catching passes and advancing the ball.

### Description

Play 6 v 6, with the offense beginning at midfield. On defense, play player-to-player and have a rusher put light pressure on the quarterback (that is, not downing the quarterback, but putting pressure on him or her). The defense must pull the flag to down the ball carrier. Give the offense two points for every completed pass and six points if they score a touchdown in five plays or less. The defense will receive one point for every incomplete pass that the defense doesn't touch, two points for an incomplete pass that is tipped or touched by the defense, three points for an interception, and six points for not allowing a touchdown. After five plays or after a touchdown (whichever comes first), switch offense and defense.



Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To prevent receivers from catching the ball or from advancing the ball if they do catch it.

Coach: When should a defensive back look for the ball?

Players: When the receiver looks for it.

## Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to *cover receivers* (see pages 124-125).
2. Have your players practice covering receivers.

### Description

Line players up and stand in front of them holding the football. Point to different directions on the field (back, forward, right, and left) and have the kids run with the proper footwork as they change direction.

### COACH'S cues



"Fast footwork."

"Drop step at the start."

# Practice 10

## Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

Divide the players into two groups. Each group has a quarterback and two or three receivers as well as two or three defensive backs. The receivers will take turns going one-on-one against the defensive backs, who will practice proper coverage. Call out pass routes for each receiver and help the defenders line up at the proper distance.

### COACH'S cues



"Stick with the receiver!"  
"Look for the ball when the receiver looks for the ball."

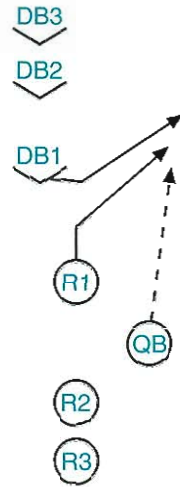
## Game 2 (15 minutes)

### Goal

Defenders will stop the pass.

### Description

Repeat game 1.



☞ Always keep the offensive receiver in front of you. Never turn your back on the receiver.

☞ Go over the pass interference rule (see page 132).





## Team Circle (5 minutes)

### **Key Idea:** Respect

Gather the children into a group. "What have you learned about flag football this season?" Listen to their responses. "What does respect have to do with playing flag football or any sport? It takes many years to master the game of flag football, so flag football deserves your respect. Every year there are new skills to learn and improve on; every year you play you'll get better. That's why you need to come back next year! What examples of players showing respect have you seen this flag football season?" Listen to their responses and discuss.

### **Wrap-Up**

Make summary comments about what everyone learned over the season. Encourage players to come back next year.