

Season Plan for 10 to 11-Year-Olds

Players continue to work on the tactics and skills they developed as 8 to 9-year-olds, but the tactics become a little more complex as they delve deeper into learning new pass patterns, new methods of blocking, and new defenses. (New tactics, skills, and rules are bolded.) The following outline provides an overview of each component of practice from Week 1 through Week 12. We based the plans on two practices per week for the first two weeks, and then one practice per week once the regular season starts.

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.

10- to 11-Year-Olds

Week	Purpose	Tactics and skills	Rules and traditions	Fitness concepts	Character development concepts
1A	To strengthen the offensive attack	Passing, catching; slants, curls	Passing rules	General fitness Your heart beats faster as you exercise.	Four core values Incorporate the four core values.
1B	To strengthen the offensive attack	Corners, square-outs; punting, punt returning and coverage	Receiving rules	General fitness Use your pulse rate to find your heart rate.	Caring Help both teammates and opponents if they're hurt.
2A	To set up the offensive attack	Pass and open-the-hole block review; hook blocks	Blocking rules	Cardiorespiratory health and fitness FIT—frequency, intensity, time	Responsibility Be prepared for practice.
2B	To set up the offensive attack	Offensive numbering system; one pass play; one running play	Rules for starting a play	Muscular fitness Strength is the greatest amount of weight a muscle can lift.	Respect Respect your opponents.
3	To play effective defense	2-3-1 defense, flag pulling	Flag-guarding and flag-pulling rules	Muscular fitness Stretch your muscles and tendons to improve joint flexibility.	Respect Respect officials' calls.
4	To strengthen the offensive attack	One pass play; one running play; posts	Dead-ball rule	Body type You should be physically active and eat healthfully rather than diet.	Honesty Be honest to coaches and to teammates.

(continued)

“YMCA Youth Flag Football Rules” do not include punting, kicking, and contact blocking.
Please disregard references to these activities throughout this Season Plan.

YMCA Winners Flag Football Season Plan

10- to 11-Year-Olds (continued)

Week	Purpose	Tactics and skills	Rules and traditions	Fitness concepts	Character development concepts
5	To strengthen the offensive attack	One new pass play; one pass play from the 8- to 9-year olds practice plans	Delay-of-game rule	Training and conditioning Specificity means exercising only one part of your body.	Responsibility Work hard in practices and games.
6	To play effective defense	Covering receivers and placekicking	Pass interference rules	Safety Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation	Caring Tell teammates—and opponents—when they’ve made a good play.
7	To strengthen the offensive attack	One new running play; one running play from the 8- to 9-year olds practice plans	Line of scrimmage, illegal use of hands, clipping rules	Safety Learn tips for exercising safely in different kinds of weather	Respect Respect yourself and your teammates by playing safely.
8	To strengthen the offensive attack	Streaks	Player-in-motion rule	Healthy habits Avoid peer pressure to smoke tobacco.	Caring Show you care about teammates on and off the field.
9	To play effective defense	2-4 and 4-2 defenses; rushing the passer	Rushing rules	Healthy habits Avoid alcohol.	Responsibility Work on improving your skills.
10	To strengthen the offensive attack	Returning punts	Stiff-arm rule	Healthy habits There are many alternatives to taking drugs.	Honesty Be honest with yourself about how you can improve.
11	To play effective defense	Defending against punt returns	Fair catch interference rule	General fitness It's important to warm up before physical activity.	Responsibility We win as a team and lose as a team.
12	To strengthen the offensive attack	Review passing and running plays	Handoff rules	General fitness You need to exercise every day, not just the days you have practice.	Caring Forgive teammates for mistakes.

Practice Plans for 10- to 11- Year-Olds

[“YMCA Youth Flag Football Rules”](#) do not include punting, kicking, and contact blocking. Please disregard references to these activities throughout this Season Plan.

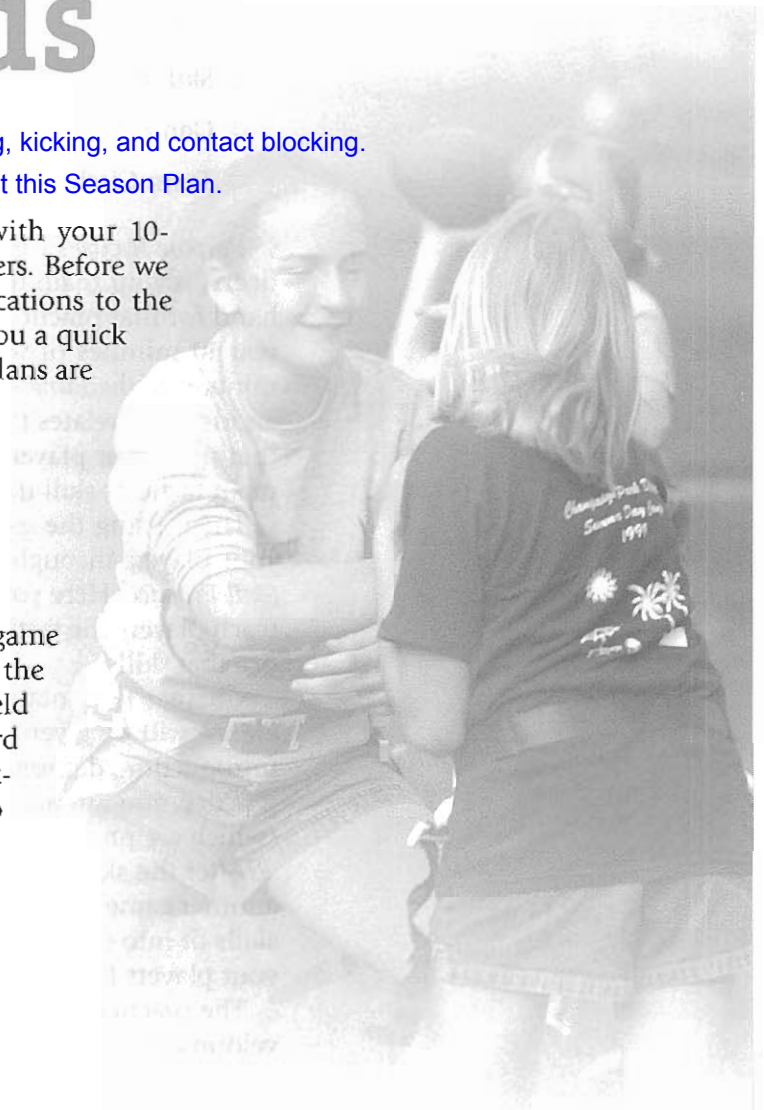
This chapter contains 14 practice plans to use with your 10- and 11-year-old YMCA Winners flag football players. Before we get to those plans, though, we’ll explain the modifications to the game that are used in YMCA Winners play and give you a quick overview of what’s in the practice plans and how the plans are to be used.



Game Modifications

YMCA Winners 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 40-yard by 80-yard field. Another modification is in the ball itself: we recommend using a youth-size ball (10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.).

Many of the rules for flag football have been adapted to make them more appropriate for the age and skill level of 10- and 11-year-olds. For example, at this level, kickoffs do not take place; punts and running plays are allowed (in YMCA Rookies they aren’t); and all offensive players are eligible to receive forward passes. See chapter 14 for more on flag football rules. (We do introduce the skill of kicking off, but it is not used in games until later.)



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 player can get.



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 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 8, 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.

Chapter 13 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 brief. As the players practice, you attend to individual players, guiding them with *Coaching 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.





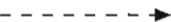















The practice concludes with a *Team Circle*, which focuses on character development. You take about 5 minutes to talk *with* your players about some

aspect of the game that relates to one of the four core values—caring, honesty, respect, or responsibility. Following this, you wrap up the practice with a reminder of the next practice or game 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		Defensive line player.....	
Player movement with ball.....		Linebacker	
Pass, snap, punt, or kick		Defensive back.....	
Block		Punter	
Sequence of movement.....	1,2,3	Punt returner.....	
Simultaneous sequence		Kicker	
of movement	1-,2-,3-	Kickoff returner	
Cone.....		Blocker	
Quarterback		Defender	
Center (snapper)		Teammate	
Running back.....		Kicking tee	T
Receiver.....		Ball	

Week 1, Practice 1

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Begin each practice with 10 minutes of warm-up activities to get players loosened up and ready to go.

Have the players jog one lap around the field and then do jumping jacks and stretches for the arms and legs.

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 players together. "Your heart beats or pumps 80 to 100 times a minute. If your heart beats 100 times a minute, how many times does it beat in an hour? [6,000 times, 100×60 minutes.] In a day? [100,000+ times.]

"You can feel your heart doing its job. You can feel your heartbeat at places all over your body."

Activity: How to take your pulse rate

"Find your pulse at your neck (left or right side) or inside your wrist (left or right)." Have them feel their pulse at whatever spot they find the pulse to be the strongest. Then have them tell you whether their heart is beating fast or slow. (This may be hard to answer, since fast and slow are relative terms.)

Have the kids stand and run in place for one minute or do a vigorous football drill for one minute. Then have them stop and check their pulses. Ask the players if their hearts are beating faster or slower than when they were sitting.

Week 1, Practice 1

Game 1 (10 minutes)

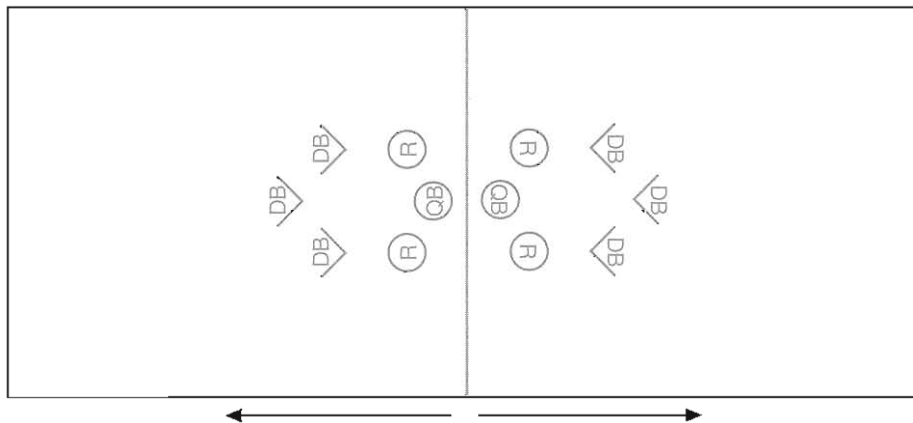
Following the Fitness Circle, get the kids playing a game. Then interrupt each game with a time of questions and answers—with you asking the questions and your players providing the answers (about what the goal of the game was and what skills and tactics they needed to perform to succeed in the game). 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

To move downfield and score through the passing game.

Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games. The two offenses start at midfield and proceed down the field heading toward opposite goals. The defenses can play zone or player-to-player. Give the offenses two points for each first down and six points for a touchdown. If time permits, switch the defenses to offense.



Coach: What were the offenses trying to do?

Players: Move downfield and score by passing.

Coach: What's it take to have a good passing game?

Players: Accurate passing, good catching skills.

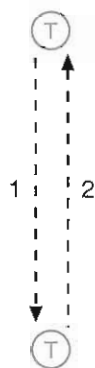
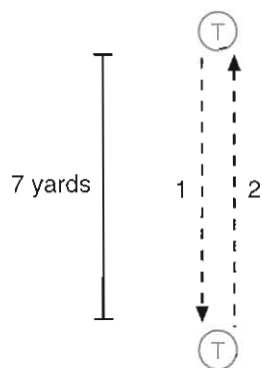
Coach: Why is the passing game so important?

Players: That's the best way to move downfield and score.



Week 1, Practice 1 (cont'd)

- 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 provide coach's
- cues—phrases to help your players focus on the task at hand—during many
- skill practices and games.



Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pass the football (see page 262) and how to catch the football (see page 263).
2. Practice passing and catching.

Description

Players in pairs play catch, standing about 7 yards apart. Have them hold the ball high for good rotation and release.



Make sure all players throw with the proper technique.



For passing:

- “Keep your fingers spread.”
- “Ball behind your ear.”
- “Snap your wrist.”

For catching:

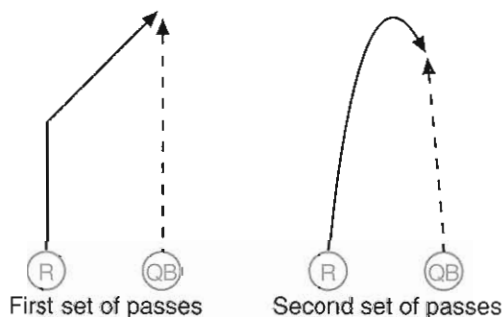
- “Be soft all over.”
- “Look the ball into your hands.”
- “Catch the ball with your hands, not with your body.”

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to run a slant pattern and curl pattern (see page 247).
2. Practice catching passes while running slants and curls.

Description

Pair players up and have them take turns running slants and curls. The receiver runs three slants, then switches places with the quarterback, who runs three slants. Repeat the process for the curls and keep switching back and forth in this manner.



Week 1, Practice 1



"Be soft all over."
"Catch the ball with your hands."
"Sharp cuts!"

Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

To catch the ball on the run using the slant and curl pass patterns.

Description

Repeat game 1, with the players running curls and slants.



☞ Correct hand position and remembering the coach's cues are keys to good pass receiving.

☞ Go over passing rules (see page 282).

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

Set up four markers (balls or towels or anything handy) about 5 feet apart. Gather the team into a group. "We're going to talk about four main values or qualities that good players include in their games and practices. What are the four?" Have players stand at a marker when they provide a value. Have another player provide an example of the value, then have that player join the other player at the cone. Help players if they cannot think of all four—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. "We'll work to improve our flag football skills and physical fitness, but these four values are just as important to learn and practice to help you become good players. We'll learn more about these values during our Team Circles."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind players of the next practice and give them a sneak preview of the next practice's emphasis—new pass patterns and the punting game.



Week 1, Practice 2

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Watch with second hand

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog around the field and then pair up to pass to each other, running the routes learned in the previous practice.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness

Equipment: Watch with second hand or counter

Gather the players together. "Last time you learned to find your heart rate. Today we will learn to actually count our heart rates. You know how to find your pulse rate, but let's try it again.

"To find your pulse rate, place the middle three fingers of your right hand on the right side of your throat just below where your jawbone makes a right angle. Or, if you prefer, turn your wrist up so your left palm is facing upward. Place the middle three fingers of your right hand just on the left side of your wrist. Your ring finger should almost be touching the fattest part of your hand.

"After you have found your pulse, look at the sweep second hand of a watch or the digital numbers of a digital watch or clock (or you can silently count the 15 seconds for the participants).

Count the number of beats for 15 seconds. Multiply that number by four and that will give you your resting heart rate for one minute. It should be between 80 and 100 beats per minute. Share your pulse rate with a partner. Are they similar or different?"

Week 1, Practice 2

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To advance down the field using slants and curls.

Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games. Instruct the right ends to run curls and the left ends to run slants—and double-cover the right end and instruct all defenders to overplay for the patterns that are being run. The defense knows what patterns will be run. Give one point for each reception and six points for a touchdown.

Coach: What was the goal of the game?

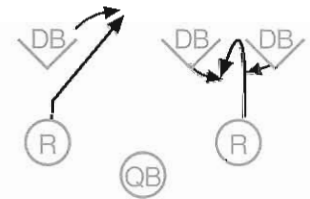
Players: To catch passes while running slants and curls.

Coach: How successful were you?

Players: Not very successful. The defenders were ready for what was coming.

Coach: How can we make it harder on the defenders?

Players: By running different patterns.

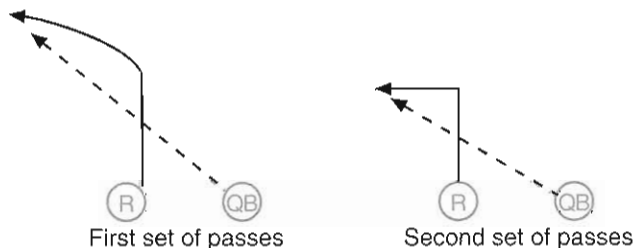


Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

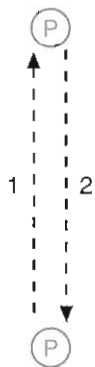
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to run corner patterns and square-out patterns (see page 247).
2. Practice running corners and square-outs.

Description

Pair players up and have them take turns running corners and square-outs. The receiver runs three corners, then switches places with the quarterback, who runs three corners. Repeat the process for the square-outs and keep switching back and forth in this manner.



Week 1, Practice 2 (cont'd)



COACH's cues



"Be soft all over."
"Catch the ball with your hands."
"Sharp cuts!"

Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to punt (see page 264).
2. Have players practice punting.

Description

Divide players into pairs. Have each player practice punting to his or her partner. (Player A punts; Player B receives the punt and then punts back to Player A.)

COACH's cues



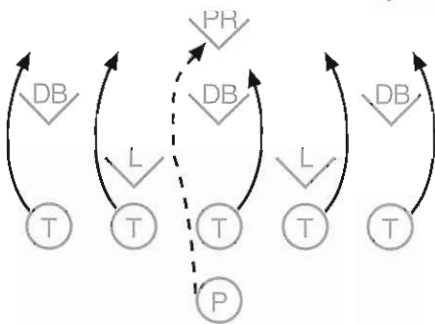
"Contact the ball's center!"
"Follow through!"

Skill Practice 3 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to properly cover punts (see page 266).
2. Practice punt coverage.

Description

Have Team A punt three times to Team B, then Team B punts three times to Team A. Each team fills their lanes and attempts to down the punt returner while allowing as few yards as possible.



Week 1, Practice 2

COACH'S cues



"Cover your lane!"

"Ends, don't let the ball carrier get past you on the outside!"

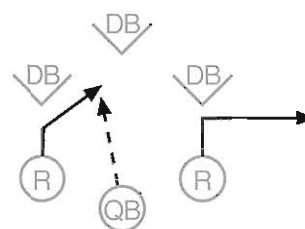
Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

For each team to gain the best field advantage it can through passing and punting.

Description

Play two 3 v 3 games. The offense starts on its own goal line and has four plays—three passes and a punt—to advance as far as possible down the field. On the fourth play, they punt, no matter where they are (the defense places one player back to receive the punt). Receivers run corners and square-outs. Defenders can play player-to-player or zone. Once the punt play is finished, the team that just received the ball starts on its own goal line. Whichever team is in best field position after receiving the punts wins.



👉 Always look the ball into your hands.

👉 Go over receiving rules (see page 283).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team. Ask one player to demonstrate with you. Have the player accidentally trip you. Fall down as if you're hurt. "James accidentally tripped me. What should he do? If you think he should apologize and help me up, stand to my right. If you think he should keep playing without helping me up, stand to my left." Encourage all players to vote. Discuss why they voted the way they did. Tactfully explain so players don't feel foolish for not realizing they should help. "When you accidentally trip or hurt another player, whether it's an opponent or a teammate, it's important to help them up or see if they're okay. That shows that you care about other players."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind players of the next practice and give them a sneak preview of next practice's emphasis—blocking.

Week 2, Practice 1

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog around the field and then pair up to pass to each other, running the routes learned in the previous practice. Have two players practice punting after jogging around the field.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory health and fitness

Gather the players together. "To get in shape, you need to use FIT. FIT is an abbreviation for three key words: frequency, intensity, and time.

"Frequency: you are to exercise at least three times a week. It should not be three days in a row. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday are best.

"Intensity: you are to exercise hard enough that you will get your heart beating faster—maybe 150 or 160 beats per minute. Exercises such as running, swimming, bicycling, and cross-country skiing usually get your heart rate up that high.

"Time: you are to exercise at least 20 minutes."

Activity: FIT

"Let's make FIT work for you. Tell a partner the exercise, activity, or sport you want to do at least three times a week. Tell your partner which three days of the week you plan to do the activity. Tell your partner if you think your exercise will get your heart rate up to about 150–160 beats per minute. Tell your partner how many minutes you plan to exercise each day. Your target is 20 minutes or more.

Summarize your exercise program for your partner."

PURPOSE

To set up the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Seven towels or cones
- ☒ Clipboard

Week 2, Practice 1 (cont'd)

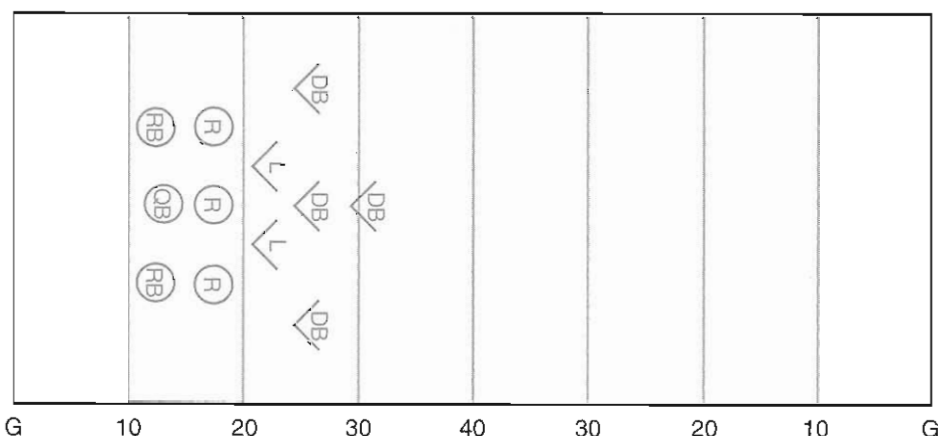
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use open-the-hole blocking to advance the ball.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense: two line players, three players playing zone in the middle, and a safety playing deep. The offense begins at its own 20-yard line and can use any of the three running plays learned in the 8- to 9-year-olds practice plans (or can devise its own simple running plays—perhaps with your help—in the huddle). Give two points every time the runner has a hole opened up to run through at the line of scrimmage.



Coach: What's the key to good open-the-hole blocking?

Players: Hit and stick, drive with the legs.

Coach: On sweeps, what's the key in blocking the end player?

Players: Seal the player off.

Coach: Let's learn a new block that will help you do that.

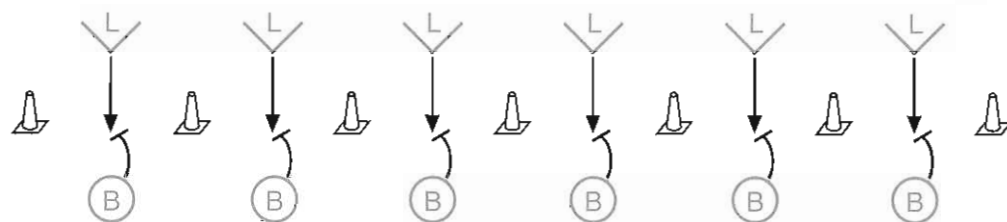
Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute the hook block (see page 259).
2. Practice hook blocks.

Week 2, Practice 1

Description

Divide the players into two groups, offense and defense. Set seven towels or cones down in a line, each one 3 yards apart from the one next to it. Six defensive players are lined up on one side of the cones, in the spaces between the cones. They are opposite six offensive players. On your command, the defensive players will rush through their lane and the offensive players will attempt to hook-block them. Defenders should not go at full strength. Switch offense and defense after three plays.



COACH'S cues



- "Hit between the waist and shoulders!"
- "Contact on the side the runner will run past!"
- "Swing your body around to block the rusher!"

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

Description

Review the techniques for open-the-hole blocks (see page 259) and pass blocks (see page 258). Practice these blocks by pairing up players and having them block each other, first doing open-the-hole blocks, then pass blocks. (Instruct players on which side to block.) Have one player in each pair practice three blocks, then the partner practices three blocks.

Week 2, Practice 1 (cont'd)



Open-the-hole block

"Low center of gravity."

"Hit and stick."

"Drive with the legs."

Pass block

"Weight evenly distributed."

"Low center of gravity."

"Hit and retreat."



It's not size, but technique, that makes a good blocker.

Go over blocking rules (see page 285).

Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

To execute good blocks in advancing the ball.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. Give each team 5 minutes on offense, and award two points for every play on which blocks are properly executed.



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team into a group. Have a clipboard and act as if you're writing or working. Do not pay attention to the group. Continue for one minute. "Hello, everybody. Now I am ready to talk about our team circle for today. How did you feel having to wait for me to get ready to talk to you?" Listen to their responses. "Waiting for someone to be ready during practice wastes time—even if it's a coach. I demonstrated how time is wasted if someone isn't prepared for practice. I read and prepare before practice so that I am ready. I want you to do the same. You have a responsibility to the team to be ready when it's time for practice to start. What do you do at home to get ready for practice?" Discuss their responses.

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice. Remind players of the next practice and give a sneak preview—learning the offensive system and two plays.

Week 2, Practice 2

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to play catch, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after jogging around the field.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Muscular fitness

Gather the players together. "Strength is the highest amount of weight a muscle or group of muscles can lift. The best equipment to make your muscles stronger is barbells and dumbbells. These weights are good, but you will need to be careful using weights. First, make sure the barbells you use are 4 1/2 to 5 feet long. Second, the weights should not be too heavy. It is best for you not to see how much you can lift. Doctors feel that lifting weights that are too heavy can injure key joints in young people's bodies. Third, before you lift, make sure you get good instruction on how to use weights. Fourth, when lifting weights, make sure you have someone who knows about weight training to watch or supervise you. Fifth, when lifting, you are to have a spotter who can catch the weight if you slip or the weight falls off."

Activity: Building arm strength

"The following two exercises will help strengthen your arm muscles (see biceps curl and arm press on page 295). Arm strength is very important in flag or tackle football.

(Note: If free weights or machines are not available, use Dyna-bands® [or similar type bands] or a partner.)

PURPOSE

To set up the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Clipboard and paper

Week 2, Practice 2 (cont'd)

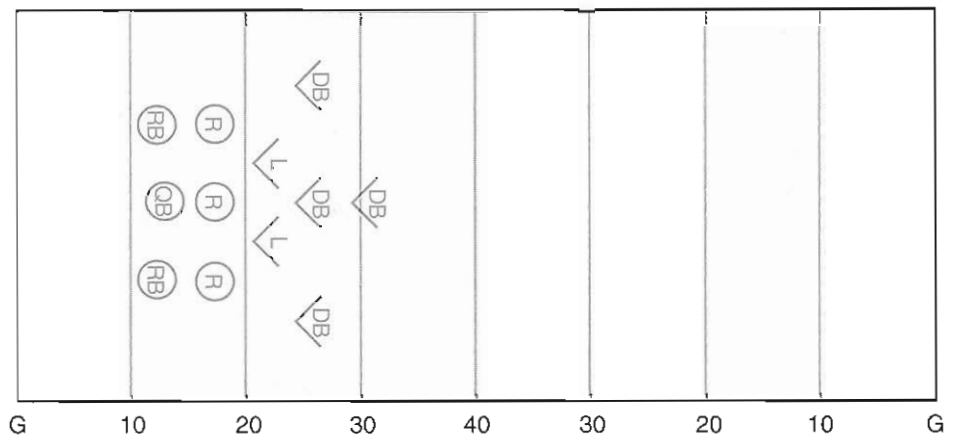
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use pass routes to get open and advance downfield and score.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The offense starts at its own 20-yard line and uses pass plays only to try to advance downfield. Give each team four plays to see how far it can advance. The team that advances farthest wins. No plays are called; the receivers just choose to run routes that they know: square-outs and slants. Defenders can play player-to-player or zone. The defense can rush the quarterback with any number of rushers.



Coach: What was the object of the game?

Players: To move downfield and score.

Coach: Was it confusing for the quarterback, not knowing where his [or her] receivers were going?

Players: Yes.

Coach: How can we make the offense run smoother and help the quarterback out?

Players: By running set plays.

Week 2, Practice 2

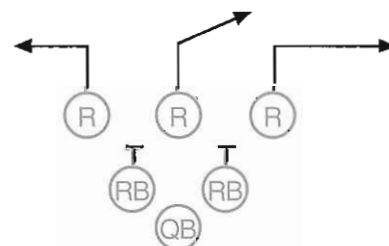
Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the offensive numbering system and how to run pass play #1—end square-outs (see page 249).
2. Practice pass play #1.

Description

Explain the numbered holes on the line of scrimmage and numbers for players (see page 248). Have the numbered holes and players drawn on a large clipboard prior to the practice.

Divide players into two teams of six; both teams are on offense and practice on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them run the pass play #1 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.

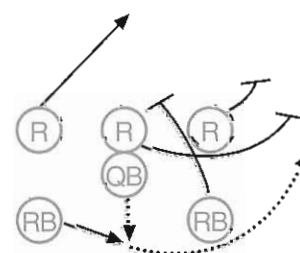


Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute run play #1—the 34 sweep (see page 250).
2. Practice run play #1.

Description

Run two offenses of six players each on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them execute run play #1 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.



Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

To advance down the field using a running play and a passing play.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A starts on its own 20-yard line and has six plays to advance as far as possible. Defenders can play player-to-player or zone. Then Team B goes on offense and does likewise. Each team runs the two plays just learned; the quarterbacks call the plays in the huddle. The team that advances farther wins.

**COACH'S
points**

Each player needs to focus on his or her responsibility for each play.

Go over starting a play rules (see page 281).

Week 2, Practice 2 (cont'd)



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team. "What's one important thing you can do at the end of every game to show respect for your opponent?" Listen to their responses. Discuss shaking or slapping hands and saying "good game." "Let's say some kids on the other team start walking away following a game. What should you do? If you think you should let them walk away without saying anything or trying to shake hands, stand to my left. If you think you should say 'good game' and hold your hand out anyway, stand to my right." All players should vote. Ask why players voted the way they did. "You should shake hands and/or say 'good game' following every game; this shows respect for your opponent. If the other team turns away and doesn't participate, you still shouldn't change your behavior."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give players a sneak preview of the emphasis for next practice—the 2-3-1 defense and flag pulling.

Week 3

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

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

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Muscular fitness

Gather the players. "Our joints are made up of bones, tendons, muscles, and ligaments. If a bone, muscle, tendon, or ligament is injured or not properly working, you will not have good flexibility. Your joint movement is limited by your body. Look at your hand. If you try to pull your forefinger back onto the top of your hand, you will notice that movement is quite limited. Yet, you are able to bring the finger forward.

"To improve joint flexibility you will work at stretching your muscles and tendons. The stretching of muscles and tendons is best done by doing the exercises slowly. To stretch properly, stretch to the point where you feel the muscle 'tug.' When you feel the tug, hold that position. Then think about the muscle under stretch relaxing. When it does, stretch it just a little farther."

Activity: Tug

"Let's try to see what it is like to stretch properly. One simple stretch is to sit on the floor with your legs extended in front of your body. Now bend one leg inward so that the bottom of the foot is touching the inside of the opposite knee. From this position, bend forward from your waist, toward your outstretched leg. As you do, most of you will feel a tug on the muscles of the back of your legs. When you feel a tug, hold the exercise at this point. Now try to picture the hamstring relaxing or stretching a bit further.

As the muscles do, bend a bit further until you feel another tug."

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ 8 cones

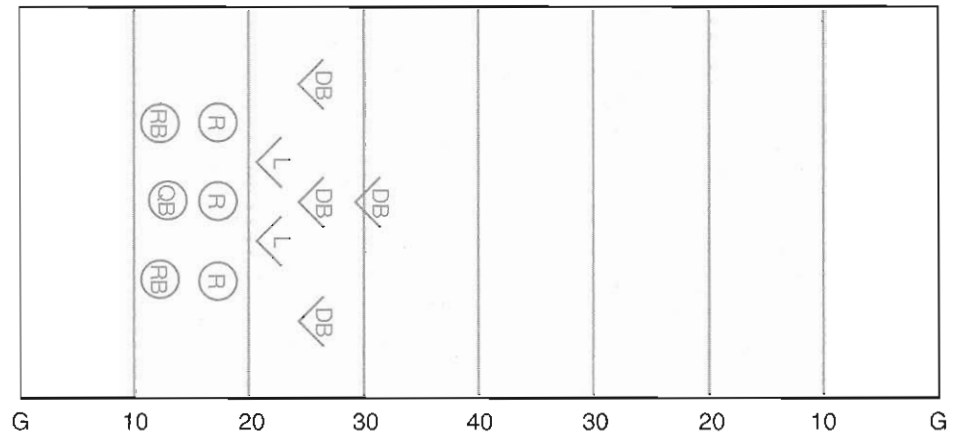
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To prevent first downs by pulling the ball carrier's flag.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A starts on offense on its own 20-yard line. It continues on offense until it is stopped from making a first down or it scores; at this point Team B takes over on offense and begins from its own 20-yard line (regardless of where the ball was stopped). Defenders can play player-to-player or zone. Give one point to the defense for pulling a flag before a first down is made, and three points to the offense for each first down made. A touchdown is worth six points.



Coach: What was the object of the game?

Players: To stop offensive progress by pulling the flag.

Coach: How do you pull the flag?

Players: Keep your balance, don't lunge at the ball carrier, slide to the side to avoid contact.

Week 3

Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

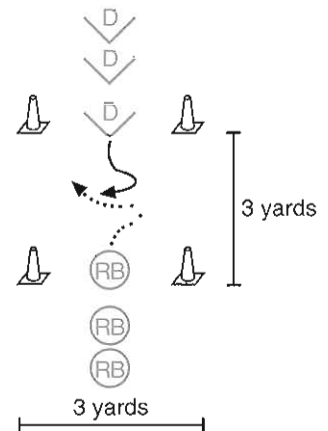
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pull flags in these situations: head on, angle, and open field (see page 270).
2. Practice pulling flags.

Description

Mark two zones with cones; each zone should be three yards wide by three yards long. Assign six players to each zone—three on offense, three on defense. An offensive ball carrier and a defender go one-on-one in each zone; the ball carrier attempts to elude the defender, who attempts to pull his or her flag.



- "Keep a low center of gravity."
- "Wait for the offensive player to come to you."
- "Keep your eye on the target and have soft hands."
- "Use the wraparound method."



Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the 2-3-1 defense (see page 252).
2. Practice the 2-3-1 defense.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Call out the play for the offense, alternating between pass play #1 and run play #1. If possible, have an assistant coach the two defensive line players while you coach the linebackers and defensive back. After each play is run, go over the responsibilities of each defender for that play. Switch teams halfway through so that all players get to play on defense.

Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

To prevent first downs by pulling the ball carrier's flag.

Description

Repeat game 1, playing a 2-3-1 defense.



- ☞ Encourage players to pursue the runner until they pull the flag or force the runner out of bounds.
- ☞ Go over flag-guarding and flag-pulling rules (see page 285).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team. "What are some of the official's duties during a game?" Discuss their responses. "Who makes the calls during the game? Can you disagree if you think an official's call is not right, or do you accept the official's call even if you think it's wrong? If you think you can discuss the call with the official, stand to my left. If you think the official makes the call and you accept it, stand to my right." All players should vote. "You need to have respect for the officials at all times. They are in charge on the field during a game. Don't argue with them; accept their calls and decisions. But if you have a question, ask the official or me during a break."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the first game.

Week 4

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

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

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Body type

Gather the players together. "Some people worry about being too fat. They weigh themselves often, thinking that dieting and weighing themselves will help. Dieting does not work. Instead, people should become physically active and eat healthfully. Being physically active includes playing sports and walking with the dog or grandparents, using the stairs rather than an escalator, and running in place when a commercial is on TV. Eating healthfully means eating foods that are rich in food value and low in fat and calories. These are vegetables, fruits, whole-grain breads and cereals, lowfat meat (lean beef, chicken, and fish), and lowfat dairy products (fat-free or 1% milk, yogurt, and cheeses). Healthy eating and being active help keep your body fat at a level that is best for you."

Activity: Pinch an inch

"Find out how much fat is on your body. To do that, you can pinch the fat on your body. Try pinching your calf, thigh, abdomen, and waist. As you pinched different parts of your body, you probably found that several places have more fat than others. More fat on one part of the body does not mean that you are too fat. Fat is on your body to help protect you from injury, provide insulation from the cold, and give your body shape. Too much fat is not good and too little is just as dangerous. If you eat well and exercise regularly, you will have the right amount of fat for your body."

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To use pass routes to get open and advance downfield and score.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The offense starts at its own 20-yard line and uses pass plays only to try to advance downfield. Give each team six plays to see how far it can advance. The team that advances farthest wins. No plays are called; the receivers just choose to run routes that they know: square-outs and slants. Defenders can play player-to-player or zone. The defense can rush the quarterback with any number of rushers.



Coach: What was the object of the game?

Players: To move downfield and score.

Coach: Was it confusing for the quarterback, not knowing where his [or her] receivers were going?

Players: Yes.

Coach: How can we make the offense run smoother and help the quarterback out?

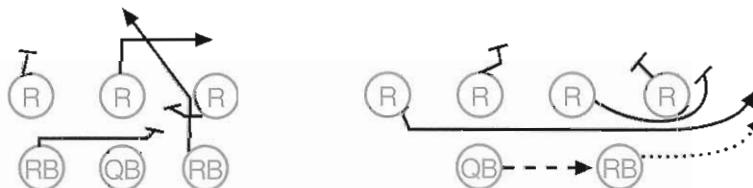
Players: By running set plays.

Skill Practice 1 (20 minutes)

1. Review pass play #3—the spread halfback slant (see page 249) and run play #3—the 24 power (see page 251).
2. Practice pass play #3 and run play #3.

Description

Divide players into two teams of six; both teams are on offense and practice on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them run pass play #3 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions. Then have them do the same for run play #3.



Week 4

Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the post pattern (see page 247).
2. Practice the post pattern.

Description

Pair players up and have them take turns running post patterns. The receiver runs three posts, then switches places with the quarterback, who runs three posts. Keep switching back and forth in this manner.

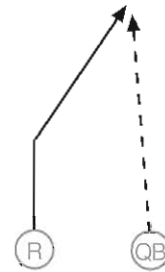
Game 2 (15 minutes)


Goal


To move downfield and score using the passing game.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The offense uses a run-and-shoot attack—where receivers respond to the defensive coverage and “shoot” to the open area. The defense plays a 2-3-1. Give Team A six plays to advance as far as possible, beginning from its own 20. Then give Team B the same opportunity from its own 20. Whichever team can advance the farthest wins.



 In the run-and-shoot, the quarterback—as well as the receivers—must read the defense.

 Go over the dead-ball rule (see page 283).

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Honesty

Gather the team. “Give me some examples of being dishonest in practices and games.” (Some examples might be telling a ref that you didn’t commit a violation just called, or saying you completed your warm-up activities when you didn’t.) Listen to their responses. After each response, have the players change the examples into acts of honesty. Take three examples. “Honesty is an important value that all players should be practicing every practice and game, especially if a coach isn’t there to help you make the right decision or if an official doesn’t see the play.”

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



Week 5

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Training and conditioning

Gather the players together. "Long ago, there was a famous Greek Olympic wrestler named Milo. Milo wanted to make himself stronger so he practiced lifting a young bull when it was born. Every day after that, Milo practiced lifting the bull on his shoulders as the bull grew to full size! Milo was able to do this because the bull grew from a light weight to a heavy weight gradually. The increase in Milo's strength is an example of *overload*. The bull got heavier, each day, but Milo's muscles adapted to the overload and he became stronger. As Milo lifted the bull, his whole body was exercised. His leg muscles, back, arms, and shoulders grew stronger. Sometimes we exercise only the arms and not the legs. That is called training *specificity*. Specificity means exercising one part of your body only. If you only exercise your arms, it does not mean your legs will get stronger. Instead, you need to work all parts of your body if you want to be a strong person."

Activity: Rank order

Tell the players: "Here are three types of exercise. Tell me which builds muscle strength best:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Soccer | 1. Bowling |
| 2. Football | 2. Softball |
| 3. Weights (answer) | 3. Push-ups (answer) |
| 1. Martial arts (answer) | 1. Badminton |
| 2. Swimming | 2. Calisthenics (answer) |
| 3. Running | 3. Pool |

What did you learn from this activity? What will you do with the exercise you picked?"

Week 5

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield, using pass play #1.

Description

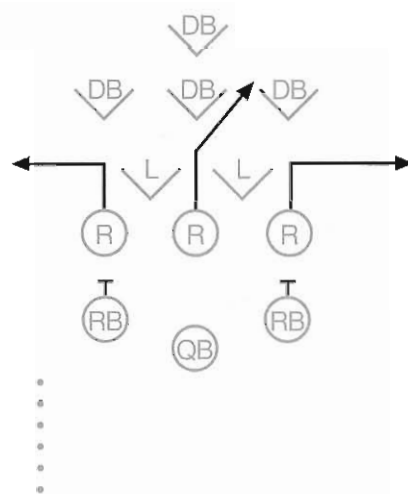
Play 6 v 6. The defense plays in a 2-3-1 alignment. Instruct the defense to rush one player; the other five defenders cover the three receivers that go out for a pass in pass play #1 (see page 249). The offense runs pass play #1 on all plays, beginning on its own 20-yard line. The defense overplays the receivers, knowing what routes they are running. After six plays or a touchdown, whichever comes first, switch the offense and the defense and begin again on the 20. The team that scores the most—or advances the farthest, if there is no score—wins.

Coach: How difficult was it to advance downfield?

Players: Very difficult.

Coach: How can we make it easier for the offense to advance?

Players: Use more plays.

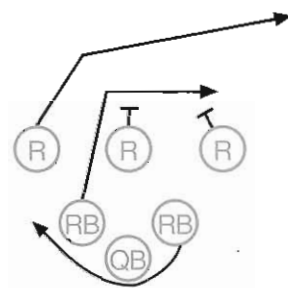


Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to run pass play #4—the 23 fake TD (see page 250). Remind players of the numbered holes on the line of scrimmage and numbers for players.
2. Practice pass play #4.

Description

Divide players into two teams of six; both teams are on offense and practice on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them run the pass play #4 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.



Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain pass play #2—the quarterback boot-leg (see page 249).
2. Practice pass play #2.

Description

Divide players into two teams of six; both teams are on offense and practice on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them run pass play #2 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.

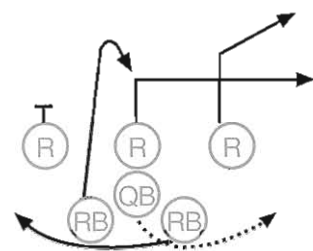
Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

To move downfield and score, using pass play #s 4, 2, and 1.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A starts on its own 20-yard line. You call the play in the huddle so only the offense can hear. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. Mix up the plays among the three pass plays. Give Team A five plays to advance as far as it can. Then give Team B five plays, beginning from its own 20, to advance as far as it can. Whoever gains the most yards (or scores) wins.



👉 Players enjoy learning new plays because it makes the game more fun.

👉 Go over the delay of game rule (see page 285).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team. Choose two players to demonstrate with you. Have one player be a defender, giving the other player a lot of space. You and the other player pass to each other. Instruct the player you're passing to to concentrate on getting into a good position for a pass. "What was I working on during this drill?" Listen to responses and, if necessary, lead them to talking about getting into a good position for a pass. "It's your responsibility to work hard to get into a good position for a pass. When you do that you're being responsible to your team." Split team into groups of two versus one so all players can try the activity.

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.

Week 6

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Safety

Gather the players. "A cramp or spasm is when a muscle contracts painfully. Prevent cramps by gradually increasing your exercise and making sure you drink plenty of water. If a cramp does occur, stretch the muscle in the opposite direction it is contracting and/or massage the contracting muscle.

"A sprain is when a ligament is stretched too far. A strain is when a tendon or muscle is stretched too far. Use protection, rest, ice, compression, and elevation (PRICE) to treat strains and sprains.

"Sometimes sore muscles occur from too much exercise. This may be caused by tiny tears in the muscle, a buildup of lactic acid in the muscle, or an inflammation of the muscle. These problems usually can be helped by stretching before and after exercising and by using protection, rest, ice, compression, and elevation (PRICE)."

Activity: PRICE

"PRICE helps you with sore muscles, strains, and sprains. (That is, P = protection, R = rest, I = ice, C = compression, and E = elevation.) The word (acronym) PRICE controls and limits swelling. P (protection): protect yourself from further injury. R (rest): the number of days you need to rest depends upon how badly you are injured. Most minor injuries respond with three days of rest. I (ice): works best if you use it immediately after the injury. Do icing for at least 20 minutes at a time two or three times a day for three days. C (compression): helps control swelling. Apply pressure using an elastic wrap. E (elevation): elevate the injured part of your body for at least three days. If the injury is more severe, several more days or weeks of PRICE is best."

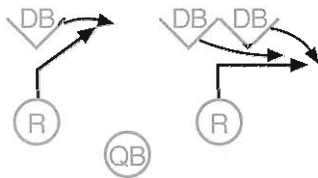
PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Tees for kick-offs

Game 1 (15 minutes)



Goal

To play effective pass defense, limiting the yards gained on offense.

Description

Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games—a quarterback and two receivers versus three defensive backs. The defense can double-cover one receiver or play a zone. Give each offense six plays, then switch defenses and offenses. The team that holds their opponents to the fewest yards wins.



Coach: What was the goal of the game?

Players: To limit offense yardage.

Coach: How did you try to do that?

Players: By playing good pass defense.

Coach: How do you do that?

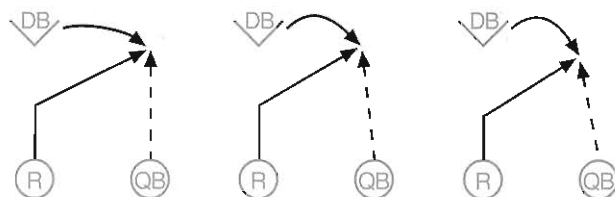
Players: By keeping your eyes on the receiver, maintaining a slight cushion, not getting faked out, and not turning your back on the receiver.

Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to cover receivers (see page 272).
2. Practice covering receivers.

Description

Divide the players into groups of three—each group has a quarterback, a receiver, and a defensive back. The groups will practice simultaneously; you call out the route that the receivers will run. Defenders practice the techniques that they have just learned. Rotate players after each play: defensive back to quarterback, quarterback to receiver, receiver to defensive back.



Week 6

COACH'S cues



"Use a good drop step at the start."

"Line up 7 or 8 yards away, on the receiver's outside shoulder."

"Look for the ball when the receiver looks for the ball."

Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to kick off (see page 268).
2. Practice kicking off.

Description

Divide players into three-player groups. Give each group a ball and a tee. Have two players behind each tee, and one player in each group down the field to field his or her team's kickoff. That player will return the ball to the tee and take his or her place in the kicking line. The player who kicks the ball takes the return player's place. Continue rotating in this fashion.

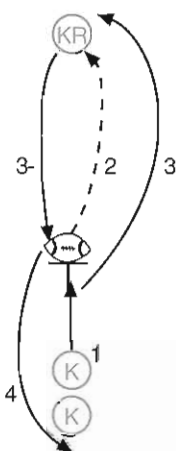
Game 2 (20 minutes)


Goal


To stop receivers from catching passes or advancing downfield if they do catch them.


Description

Play 6 v 6, with the offense calling its own plays. Start Team A on its own 20-yard line. Play a regular game, complete with punting. The defense plays in a 2-3-1 alignment. Give the defense one point for touching or knocking down an incomplete pass; one point for stopping a receiver from gaining additional yardage after a catch; and two points for an interception. The offense gets one point for each reception and two points for a touchdown.



 Instruct defensive backs to always keep the receivers in front of them—and never to turn their backs on the receivers.

 Explain that kickoffs are not used in games at this level, but introducing this skill now will prepare players for the next level. Encourage kids to try kicking off on their own; this is the only time they will do it in practice.

 Go over pass interference rules (see page 285).

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team. Discuss examples of good play during a game. Have them help give examples. "We talked about some examples of good plays. Raise your hand if you think it's a good idea to tell other players they made a good play. Do you think it's a good idea to tell opponents they have made a good play? If you think it is, stand to my right. If you think you should tell just your teammates they made a good play, stand to my left." All players should vote. Ask why players voted the way they did. "Telling other players, both teammates and opponents, that they have made a good play shows you care. It's an important value to show others."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



Week 7

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their laps.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Safety

Equipment: Heat chart

Gather the players together. "Here are some ideas to help you exercise safely in different kinds of weather. Hot weather: When the temperature goes above 75° F, pay attention to the humidity, or water in the air. If the temperature is 75° F and the humidity is at 95%, use caution when doing exercise. Other dangerous levels are 80° F and 80% humidity, 85° F and 60% humidity or 90° F and 30% humidity. When it is hot and humid, wear minimal clothing—shorts and T-shirts. Do not wear a rubberized sweat suit at any time. Make sure your sweat can evaporate. Drink plenty of liquids—water is best.

"Cold weather: In cold weather, it is best to wear layers of clothing that can be removed as your body heats up. Make sure you keep exposed skin covered. With the nose, cheeks and mouth, use a pullover ski mask."

Activity: Heat chart

"Let's see if we can learn to read this weather chart." (Show chart on page 294.) "To read the tables, find an air temperature on the left, then find the humidity on the bottom. Find where the columns meet. Note safe, caution, and danger zones.

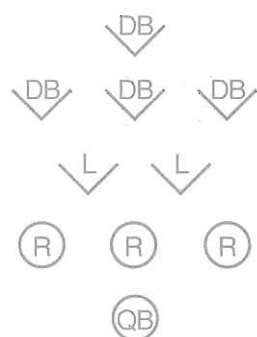
Now let's practice. What have you learned from this activity?"

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Heat chart



Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To move downfield using only passing plays.

Description

Play 4 v 6 (rotate sideline players in after each play so a player only sits out one play at a time). The offense can only pass. Give two points for a first down and six for a touchdown. The defense can use double coverage on each receiver or choose to rush one or more players.

Coach: I know this was an uneven match-up—4 v 6. But besides that, why was it difficult to move downfield?

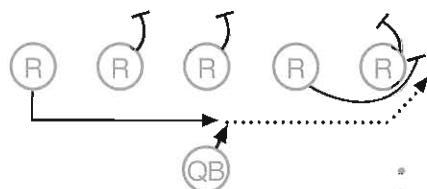
Players: Because the defense knew what was coming: passes. So they could overplay for the pass.

Coach: How can we make it tougher on the defense—make them more “honest”?

Players: By mixing in running plays.

Coach: Let’s work on two running plays—one new, one learned in the 8- to 9-year-old practices.

Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

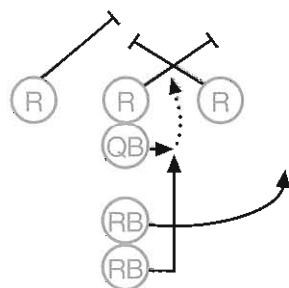


1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute run play #4—the 54 power (see page 251).
2. Practice run play #4.

Description

Run two offenses of six players each on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them execute run play #4 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)



1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute run play #2—the 32 dive (see page 250).
2. Practice run play #2.

Description

Run two offenses of six players each on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them execute run play #2 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.

Week 7

Game 2 (15 minutes)

Goal

To move downfield using a mixture of running and passing plays.

Description

Play 6 v 6, using a mixture of the running and passing plays the players have learned. First downs are two points; touchdowns are six. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team. "What are some examples of dangerous play for yourself or teammates during a practice or game?" Listen to their responses carefully and assess whether they are dangerous. Discuss their responses. Ask kids to agree or disagree with responses—are they a good practice or not? They can raise their hand to agree. Discuss three examples. "It's important to respect your body and your teammates' bodies. Practicing safe play is a way to do that."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



☞ Encourage a mix of plays to keep the defense guessing.

☞ Go over rules for line of scrimmage, clipping, and illegal use of hands (see pages 282 and 284).



Week 8

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the children together. "When a person smokes, smoke passes through or over his or her lips, mouth, throat, nasal passages, esophagus (tube to the stomach), and lungs. Upon inhaling, several dangerous chemicals enter the lungs. These chemicals set off bad body reactions. The nervous system is stimulated by the poisons. Saliva (spit) begins to flow in the mouth, the heart rate speeds up, and the blood pressure increases. The smoker may become jittery and the fingers and feet may get cold. After awhile, a change occurs and the smoker feels the body temperature going down. Blood vessels may become constricted and blood pressure rises. The person starts to feel relaxed because the nervous system causes more hormones to be produced. This is why smokers are able to say smoking 'picks them up' or 'relaxes' them."

Trigger story: Smoking

"You have been invited to a friend's home after school. When you arrive, you find that his or her parents aren't home. Your friend wants you to try a cigarette. He says his dad smokes two packs a day and it won't hurt you a bit. He says if you don't smoke, you are a chicken and he is going to tell all your friends. What could you do? What are the consequences if you do smoke? What are the consequences if you don't smoke?"

Week 8

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield using square-outs and posts.

Description

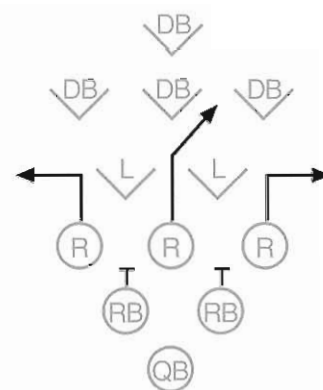
Play 6 v 6. The offense can use only two routes—square-outs and posts. Instruct the defense to play tight. Team A starts with the ball on its own 20-yard line. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. Play a regulation game, including punting, and award points this way: first downs equal two points, touchdowns merit six points.

Coach: How hard was it to advance downfield using only two patterns—especially when the defense knew which patterns to defend against?

Players: [varying responses]

Coach: How can we make it tougher on the defense, make it easier to move downfield?

Players: Learn another pass pattern.



Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

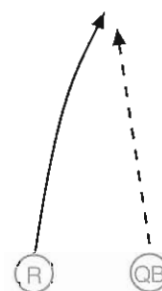
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to run streak patterns (see page 247).
2. Practice running streak patterns.

Description

Pair players up and have them take turns running streaks. The receiver catches passes while running three streaks, then switches places with the quarterback, who runs three streaks. Keep switching back and forth in this manner.



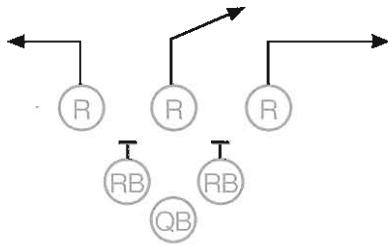
"Sell the fake!"
"Look the ball into your hands!"



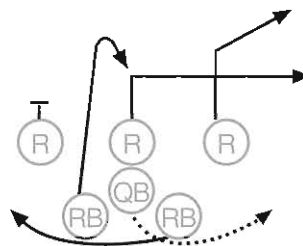
Skill Practice 2 (20 minutes)

Description

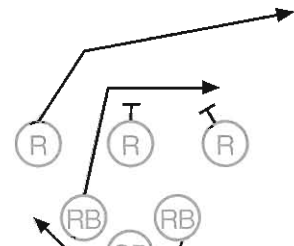
Walk through pass play #s 1, 2, and 4, and run play #s 1, 2, and 4. Then run through the plays at full speed. Use a 2-3-1 defense.



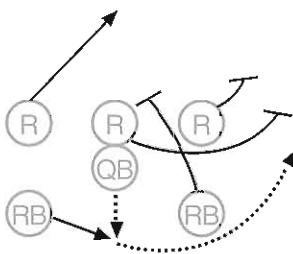
Pass play #1



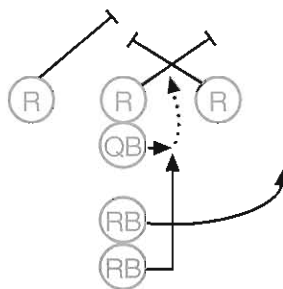
Pass play #2



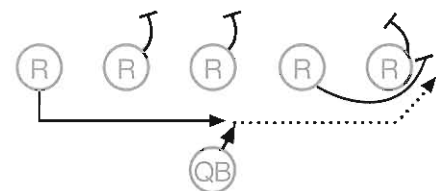
Pass play #4



Run play #1



Run play #2



Run play #4



☞ The best teams are the ones that execute the fundamentals.

☞ Go over the player-in-motion rule (see page 285).

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield mixing running plays with passing plays.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Play a regulation game using the pass and run plays just practiced. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. Teams score two points each for first downs and for receptions by receivers running streak patterns, and six points for a touchdown.

Week 8

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team. "What are some examples of showing you care about your teammates?" Listen to their responses. After each response ask for an example of the same sign of caring that players could do outside of practice. Discuss the on-field and off-field examples at the same time—then ask for another example. "Those were all great ideas to show caring to your teammates. Have you seen someone else show an 'act of kindness' toward another teammate?" Discuss their responses. "It's important to show caring on and off the field—that means both during practice and outside of practice. Teams that show they care about each other play better together."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



Week 9

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the players together. "Heavy drinking has been linked to fighting, destruction of property, poor performance in school and on the job, and getting in trouble with the police. Eight of ten high school students have tried alcohol. Three out of ten ninth graders have their first full drink of alcohol before they reach 13.

"Sometimes people think that drinking alcohol helps them in one of three ways:

1. They feel less pain or disappointment with life; it helps them escape.
2. They feel more pleasure; alcohol gives them a lift or makes them feel more relaxed.
3. They feel more pain; this sounds crazy, but some people drink alcohol because they feel unworthy of the successes they have had or because they feel guilty about something they have done in the past."

Activity: Why people drink alcohol

"Which of the following statements do you agree or disagree with? Why? People drink alcohol because

- of peer pressure.
- they need to feel that they belong and feel accepted.
- of advertising.
- of the easy access at school or at home.
- it makes them feel good.
- they lack the knowledge about its bad effects.

Why do advertisers use former football players to sell their alcohol products?"

Week 9

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To stop the offense from gaining first downs.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A, on offense, starts from its own 20-yard line. Team B is in a 2-3-1 defense. Instruct the defense to play off the receivers slightly farther than normal. Then—unbeknownst to the defense—have the offense execute only running plays. Give the offense two points for each first down and the defense two points any time they stop the offense from gaining a first down within four plays.

Coach: What was the object of the game?

Players: To stop the offense from getting first downs.

Coach: What made it difficult to stop the offense?

Players: We were laying back, playing for the pass.

Coach: How can we be better prepared to guard against the run?

Players: Learn different defenses.



Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the 4-2 defense (see page 253).
2. Practice the 4-2 defense.

Description

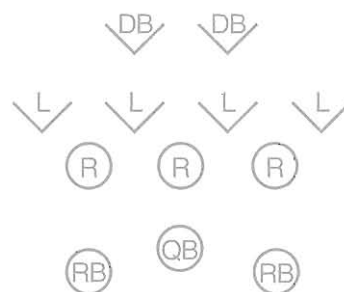
Play 6 v 6, using a 4-2 defense. The offense executes run play #s 1, 2, and 4 against the defense. The two defensive ends box in play; the two inside defensive line players rush; the two defensive backs play a zone. Run three plays, then switch defense and offense.

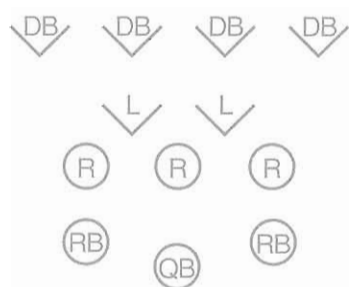
COACH'S cues



"Ends box it in!"

"Inside line players rush!"





☞ The best way to take the offense out of its rhythm is to effectively rush the passer.

☞ Go over rushing rules (see page 285).

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the 2-4 defense (see page 253).
2. Practice the 2-4 defense.

Description

Play 6 v 6, using a 2-4 defense. The offense executes pass plays against the defense. The two defensive line players rush and box in play; the four defensive backs play a zone. Run three plays, then switch defense and offense.

Skill Practice 3 (15 minutes)

1. Review how to execute the swim technique (see page 271) and the spin technique (see page 272) for rushing the passer.
2. Practice rushing the quarterback using the swim and spin techniques.

Description

Split into three-player groups, with each group having a quarterback, a blocker, and a rusher. Have the blocker block for the quarterback; the rusher uses the swim technique to rush the quarterback. Rotate players after each play: rusher goes to quarterback, quarterback to blocker, blocker to rusher. After each player has tried the swim technique twice, have them each try the spin technique twice.



for swim

"Bring your arm up!"

"Push off!"

for spin

"Make contact!"

"Spin!"

Week 9

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team. "I want everyone to think of one thing that you, personally, can do that can make you a better player. I'll go around and ask each of you what you think you can work on." Ask each player one at a time (assist them, if necessary). Allow them the option to pass their turn. "It's important to look at your own game to see where you can improve. This shows that you are being a responsible member of the team."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



Week 10

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather the children together. "Three of four high school students have tried marijuana and two of ten have tried other illegal drugs. A few of the illegal drugs include marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, and LSD. These drugs are mind-altering. They may give people a sense of well-being or give them a rush—a sudden surge of energy. These feelings are temporary and, in time, the person is let down. He or she may experience depression after using the drug. Sometimes people think marijuana is not harmful. Marijuana is a gateway (lead-in) to cocaine and heroin use. Cocaine and heroin cause lots of problems and frequently ruin people's lives and their families' lives, too."

Activity: Alternatives to doing drugs

"When you are tempted to do drugs, here are some things you might do instead:

1. Choose an activity* that you can do for at least 30 minutes.
2. Choose an activity that you can do easily, without much mental effort.
3. Choose an activity that you can do alone or with others, but that does not require others.
4. Choose an activity that has some physical, mental, and spiritual value for you.
5. Choose an activity that you can get better at, even if others don't see it.
6. Choose an activity that you can do without criticizing yourself."

*These activities may be exercises like running, bicycling, or swimming; skills like knitting, sewing, or playing a musical instruments; or praying.

Week 10

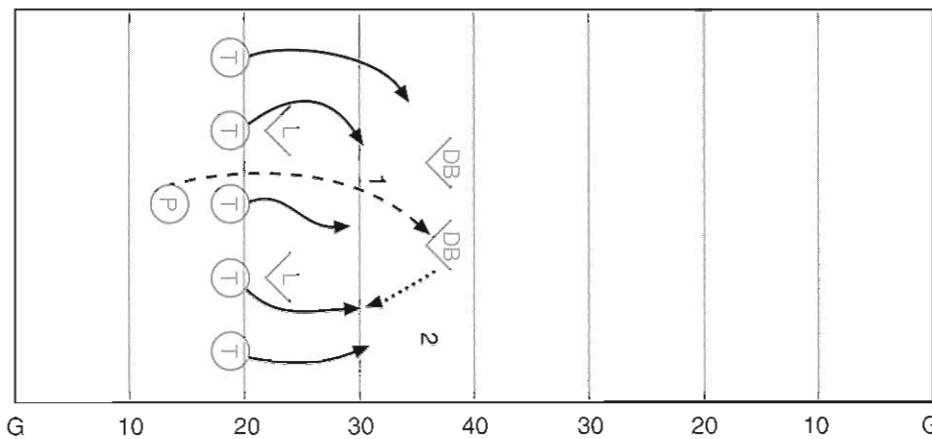
Game 1 (15 minutes)

Goal

To gain maximum yardage on punt returns.

Description

Play 6 v 4, with the six on the punting team (rotate players in on each play so that no one is out for more than one play). Team A punts three times from its 20-yard line; Team B receives and returns the punts. Then switch defense and offense; Team A returns three punts. Keep rotating in this manner. Give one point to the receiving team for every 10 yards gained on the return.



Coach: What was the object of the game?

Players: To return punts as far as we could.

Coach: Why was it hard to return punts very far?

Players: Because we were outnumbered. We had no blocking.

Coach: Let's learn an effective punt return formation—with six players.



Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to use a 2-3-1 punt return formation (see page 266).
2. Practice returning punts.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A punts six times to Team B, who is in a 2-3-1 formation. Team B returns the punts as far as possible. Then switch and have Team A return six punts. Put different receivers back to receive each punt.



"Look the ball into your hands!"
 "V formation!"
 "Follow your blocking!"

Game 2 (20 minutes)

Goal

To gain maximum yardage on punt returns.

Description

Repeat game 1, except play 6 v 6.



☞ A strong punting game can be a key to success.

☞ Go over the stiff-arm rule (see page 285).

Week 10

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Honesty

Gather the team. "I want you to think back to our last practice. Remember talking about improving our games? Each player talked about one thing they could improve. How many of you feel you have tried to improve your game from the last practice?" Call on players to tell what they did to try to improve. "All good players look honestly at themselves and how they are playing to see where they can improve their game. It's important to be honest with yourself about how you're playing; you don't need to feel bad about needing to improve your skills. The more you improve individually, the more you contribute to the team."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



Week 11

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness

Gather the team into a group. "Who can tell me what 'warm up' means?" Listen to their responses. They might mention getting the body ready to do more strenuous activity, increasing blood circulation, and moving muscles so they are more flexible and will help prevent injuries. Discuss their responses and other possible responses. "Raise your hand if you think the muscles actually get warmer during warm-up activities?" Listen to their responses. "They do get warmer from the blood circulating and your moving. Give me some examples of good warm-up activities." Choose one for the team to try. "The warm-up is an important part of a good fitness program. We will do a warm-up activity every practice."

Game 1 (15 minutes)

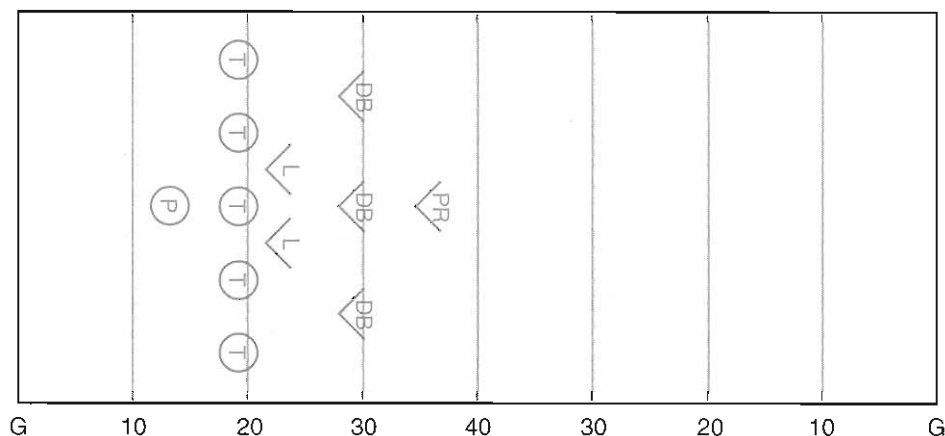
Goal

To limit punt return yardage.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A punts to Team B from Team A's 20-yard line. Team B returns the punt as far as possible. Then Team B punts to Team A from Team B's 20-yard line, and Team A returns the punt as far as possible. Whichever team limited the return team to fewer yards wins a point. Keep repeating this pattern, playing out as many points as time allows.

Week 11



Coach: How hard was it to limit the return team's yards?

Players: [various answers]

Coach: What's the best way to cover punts?

Players: Everyone stays in their lanes.



Skill Practice (20 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to cover punts (see page 266).
2. Practice covering punts.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A punts six times to Team B, who is in a 2-3-1 formation. Team B returns the punts as far as possible; Team A runs its lanes and pulls the ball carrier's flag as quickly as possible. Then switch and have Team A return six punts. Put different receivers back to receive each punt. See the figure with Game 1.

COACH's cues



"Run your lanes!"

"Let the ball carrier come to you!"

COACH's points



☞ The players in the outside lanes can't let ball carriers past them on the outside.

☞ Go over the fair catch interference rule (see page 285).

Game 2 (20 minutes)

Goal

To gain yardage on offense and limit punt returns on defense.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Team A starts on its 20-yard line and runs six plays (regardless of whether they make a first down or not). The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. During this time give two points for each first down and six points for a touchdown. On the seventh play, Team A returns to its 20-yard line and punts to Team B. Give Team A three points for holding Team B to a return of 5 yards or less; two points for a return of 6 to 10 yards; and no points for returns greater than 10 yards. Then flip-flop and have Team B on offense for its seven plays.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team into a circle. Create two imaginary situations for the players. One is a game that they win and score two touchdowns. In the second situation the team loses but scored one touchdown. Choose different players to step into the circle for each situation; they scored the touchdowns. "In this game we won. Even though Kyle and Andrew scored touchdowns, did all of you contribute?" Have the players who are demonstrating step back to the circle. "Yes, we all contributed and won as a team." Set up the next scenario. "In this game, we lost. Bill dropped a potential touchdown pass. Is he responsible for the team's loss?" Have the player step back to the circle. "No, he is not responsible for a loss. We all are responsible for wins and losses. We win as a team, and we lose as a team."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the next game.



Week 12

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have players jog one lap around the field and then pair up to throw passes to each other, running the pass patterns they have learned. Have two players practice punting after they have jogged their lap.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness

Gather the team into a group. "If you participate in flag football practice every week, do you think that's enough to keep your body's fitness to play flag football? Do you think you'll improve your body's fitness in the different areas?" Listen to their responses. "You need to be active outside flag football practice to keep your overall fitness at a level that helps your flag football. What are some activities you could do outside of practice?" Listen to their responses.

Discuss practicing skills such as running pass patterns, passing a football with a friend, and punting and place kicking.

Game 1 (20 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield using a mixture of running and passing plays.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The defense can play a 2-3-1, 2-4, or 4-2 defense (or they can alternate among those defenses). Give two points for each first down, six points for a score, and three points each for an interception and a "sack" (quarterback's flag pulled behind the line of scrimmage before he or she can pass).

Coach: What's the key to a good offense?

Players: Good execution, good mixture of plays.

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards



Skill Practice (15 minutes)

Description

Practice any of the running or passing plays that you feel the team most needs to work on, based on their play in game 1.

Game 2 (20 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield using a mixture of running and passing plays.

Description

Repeat game 1.



☞ Teach players to come back to the quarterback when they have run their patterns and the quarterback is under pressure.

☞ Go over handoff rules (see page 282).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team into two or three groups. Give each group a scenario in which one player makes a mistake. Direct them to problem solve and decide as a group what would be a good response. Give them two minutes to discuss. Bring the groups back to the larger group and discuss each group's decision. Have players agree or disagree with each group's response by raising their hands. "All of you have done a good job in problem solving. It's important to show you care about your teammates. You can do this by forgiving their mistakes."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and give reminders for the final game.