

Season Plan for 12 and Up

The players build on the tactics and skills they learned in the previous two years. (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.

“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

12- to 13-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, corners, square-outs, centering the ball	Passing rules, receiving rules	General fitness Trace blood flow through the heart.	Four core values Incorporate the four core values.
1B	To strengthen the offensive attack	Punting, punt returning and coverage; kicking off and receiving kickoffs	Kicking rules	General fitness Learn the outside structure of the heart.	Respect Respect opponents and officials.
2A	To set up the offensive attack	Review open-the-hole block, pass block, hook block; cross block	Blocking rules	General fitness Blood vessels are the subway system of the body.	Respect Shake hands with opponents after a game.
2B	To set up the offensive attack	Offensive numbering system; one pass play; one running play	Rules for starting a play	General fitness There are three types of blood cells in the body.	Responsibility Come to practice prepared to play.
3	To play effective defense	2-3-1 defense, flag pulling	Flag-guarding and flag-pulling rules	General fitness Learn about the benefits of exercise for heart health.	Honesty Be honest to coaches and officials.
4	To strengthen the offensive attack	One pass play; one running play; posts	Dead-ball rule	General fitness Pulse rate increases with exercise.	Respect Say positive things to opponents after a game.

(continued)

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YMCA Winners Flag Football Season Plan

12- to 13-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 10- to 11-year-olds practice plans	Delay-of-game rule	Cardiorespiratory health and fitness During exercise, your heart rate should be 70 to 85% of your maximum.	Responsibility Pay attention and be focused at practice.
6	To play effective defense	Covering receivers	Pass interference rules	Cardiorespiratory health and fitness RPE can be used to determine how hard you are working.	Caring Make positive comments to your teammates.
7	To strengthen the offensive attack	One new running play; one running play from the 10- to 11-year-olds practice plans	Running rules	Training and conditioning Learn the benefits of exercise for the circulatory system.	Respect Respect officials' calls.
8	To strengthen the offensive attack	Streaks	Dead-ball rule	Safety Learn alternatives to unsafe exercises.	Caring Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
9	To play effective defense	2-4 and 4-2 defenses; rushing the passer	Rushing rules	Healthy habits Tobacco is dangerous to the heart.	Respect Respect yourself by taking care of your body.
10	To learn two new defenses	3-3 and 2-2-2 defenses	Unnecessary roughness rule	Healthy habits When any drug is used unwisely, it is drug abuse.	Responsibility Pull together as a team.
11	To strengthen the offensive attack	Returning punts and kickoffs	Stiff-arm rule	Reversibility principle If you stop being active, you lose your strength and endurance.	Caring Support your teammates.
12	To play effective defense	Defending against punt returns	Fair catch interference rule	Healthy habits Drink water often; drink before you get thirsty.	Respect Celebrate victories in a way that doesn't embarrass opponents.

Note: The plan is for use with the 12 and Up age group referenced in the YMCA's "Coaching Flag Football" online course.

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Practice Plans for 12- to 13- 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.

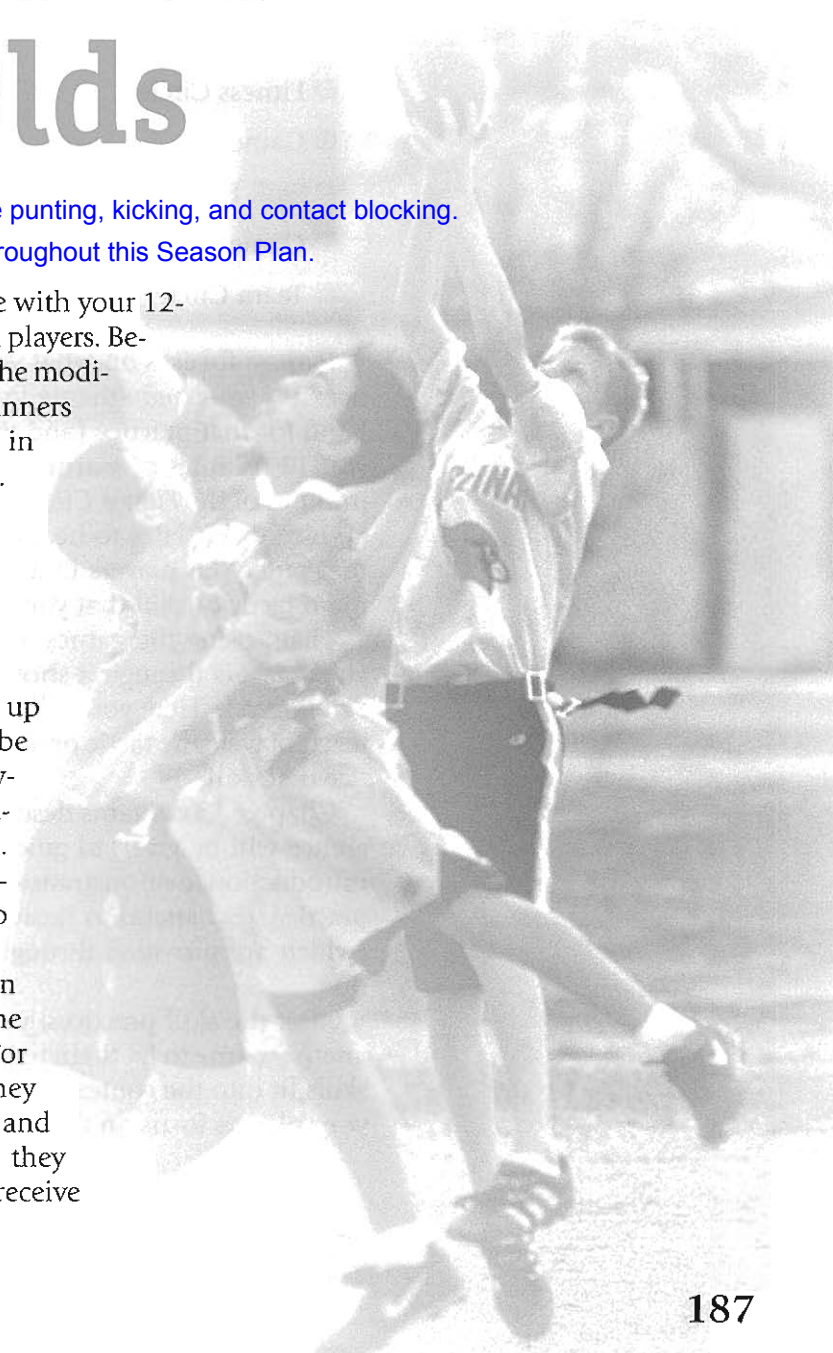
This chapter contains 14 practice plans to use with your 12- and 13-year-old YMCA Winners flag football players. Before we get to those plans, though, we'll explain the modifications to the game that are used in YMCA Winners play and give you a quick overview of what's in the practice plans and how they 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 5/8 to 10 3/4 inches).

Many of the rules for flag football have been adapted to make them more appropriate for the age and skill level of 12- and 13-year-olds. For example, at this level, kickoffs take place (they didn't at earlier levels in YMCA Winners); 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 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 throughout 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 5/8 to 10 3/4 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 (looking inside the heart)

Equipment: Picture of the inside of the human heart

Activity: Tracing blood flow

Gather the players together. "In football, we have plays that tell the players where to go. Your heart is the same way. Blood must go a certain way to get its job done."

Have the players describe the blood flow through the heart. "Large veins bring the blood from all over the body to the right atrium. When the right atrium fills with blood, the heart contracts and pushes the blood through a special valve into the right ventricle. When the right ventricle is filled, the valve between the right atrium and right ventricle closes. Then the right ventricle contracts and pushes the blood through another valve and the blood passes into arteries going to the lungs. In the lungs, the blood is 'filtered.' Carbon dioxide is gotten rid of and fresh oxygen is picked up by the blood.

"The blood, rich in oxygen, now goes from the lungs in pulmonary veins to the left atrium of the heart. The left atrium fills with blood, the heart contracts and pushes the blood through still another valve into the left ventricle. After the left ventricle fills, the valve between the left atrium and left ventricle closes and then contracts and pushes the blood through another valve. This valve leads to the largest blood vessel of the body called the aorta (about the size of your middle finger). This aorta then branches off into many smaller arteries that go throughout the body."

Week 1, Practice 1

Game 1 (10 minutes)

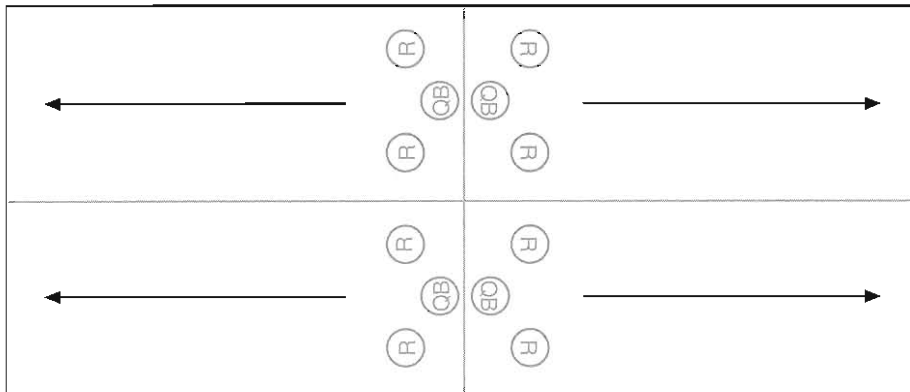
Following the Fitness Circle, get the kids playing a game. Then interrupt each game with a time of questions and answers—with you asking the questions and your players providing the answers (about what the goal of the game was and what skills and tactics they needed to perform to succeed in the game).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

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. There most likely won't be time to switch the defense to offense, but if an offense does score and time still remains, switch the opposing defense 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)

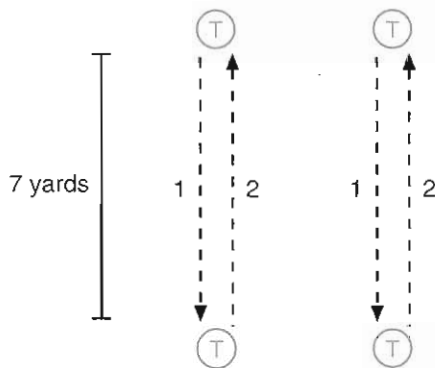
- You'll follow game 1 with one or more skill practices, during which you'll
- introduce, demonstrate, and explain a skill or tactic (or review it if your
- players have been taught it previously), and then attend to your players as
- they practice it. The question-and-answer session, in which your players 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 (10 minutes)

1. Review 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.



Passing

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

Catching

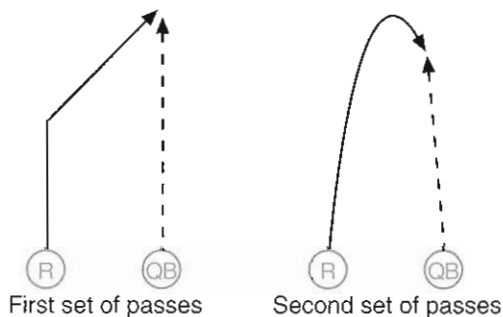
- “Be soft all over.”
- “Look the ball into your hands.”
- “Catch the ball with your hands, not with your body.”

Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Review how to run a slant pattern (see page 249) and how to run a 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



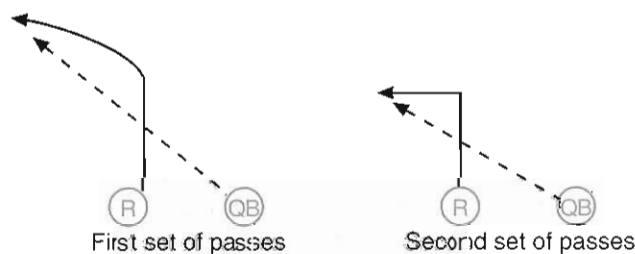
"Be soft all over."
"Catch the ball with your hands."
"Sharp cuts!"

Skill Practice 3 (10 minutes)

1. Review how to run a corner pattern (see page 247) and how to run a square-out pattern (see page 249).
2. Practice catching passes while 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.



Skill Practice 4 (5 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to center the ball (see page 264).
2. Practice centering the ball.

Description

Pair players up and have them practice centering to each other, using snaps for both a tight formation and the shotgun formation.

Week 1, Practice 1 (cont'd)

Game 2 (10 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) and receiving rules (see page 283).

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 players into a single-file line. "Everyone turn to your right so the person to the side of you is now in front of you. Put your arms on that person's shoulders. We are going to walk forward, as a group, using first the right foot and then the left. We will walk slowly, so take your time as we all move together. Get ready with your right foot, now step; get ready with your left foot, now step." Repeat for four steps. "Let go of your teammates. Did we have to work together to walk as a group? We did. All season we will need to work together, with everyone doing his or her part. We will talk about four values that all players should have—respect, honesty, responsibility, and caring. We need to understand and use these values, or qualities, every practice and game."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next practice. Give them a sneak preview of the next practice's emphasis—the punting and kicking game.



Week 1, Practice 2

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

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

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness (look at the outside of the heart)

Equipment: Picture of the outside of the human heart

Gather the players. "The heart is made up of a special kind of muscle that never seems to tire. That is because there are so many blood vessels and a special nerve supply. The left side of the heart is slightly larger than the right side. More muscle is needed to pump the blood to the entire body than just to the lungs. The blood vessels that give blood to the heart come from two main arteries—the left and the right coronary arteries. These arteries branch out in a way that a tree does. These special vessels supply the heart with blood so it can pump for a long time."

"How does your heart know when to pump? In the heart muscle is some specialized nerve tissue called the SA node. This node has the job of regulating your heart's pumping rate (heart rate). It is the sparkplug or pacemaker of your heart. Each time the pacemaker fires, it sends a wave of electricity across your heart. The wave travels much like ripples do when you throw a stone in the water. These waves make the heart contract or pump."

Activity: Outside the heart

"Look at the heart. See the blood vessels. These are the vessels that 'feed' the heart muscle with lots of oxygen. Now look a little closer. See if you can find the SA node. Remember, the SA node makes electricity or electrical impulses travel over the heart muscle.

"If you wanted the heart to last for 70, 80, or 90 years, what do you think you should do to keep the blood vessels and pacemaker healthy? [Exercise regularly, eat healthfully, say no to smoking, and keep your body fat lower.] What is one thing you can do today to keep your heart healthy?"

Week 1, Practice 2 (cont'd)

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To return kickoffs for touchdowns.

Description

Play 6 v 6. Have Team A kick off to Team B, who returns the kickoff anyway they want (no set plays). Have Team A kick off twice; then switch and have Team B kick off twice. The team with the farthest single return wins.



Coach: How far did you get in returning kicks?

Players: [Various responses.]

Coach: How can we be more effective at returning kicks?

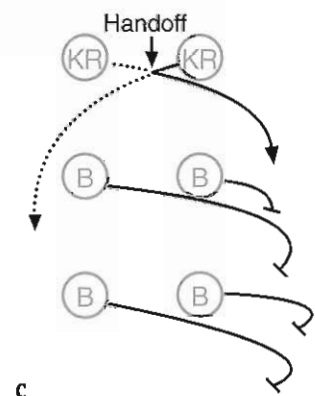
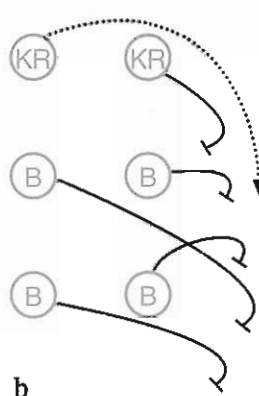
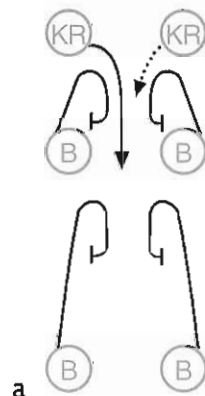
Players: By having set plays.

Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to kick off and coverage assignments for the team kicking off (see page 268) and how to return kickoffs, using up-the-middle, down-the-sideline, and reverse plays (see page 268).
2. Have players practice kicking off and returning kickoffs.

Description

Team A kicks off six times to Team B. Team B returns two times using the up-the-middle play (figure a), two times using the down-the-sideline play (figure b), and two times using the reverse (figure c). Before each play, huddle with the offense to tell them which return to run. Then switch, having Team B kick off to Team A six times. Keep track of total yards. The team with the most yards wins.



Week 1, Practice 2

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 three-player teams: a snapper (center), a punter, and a punt receiver. Have the snapper snap, the punter punt, and the punt receiver receive the punt three times before rotating. Rotate so that everyone gets to play all three positions.



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



Skill Practice 3 (10 minutes)

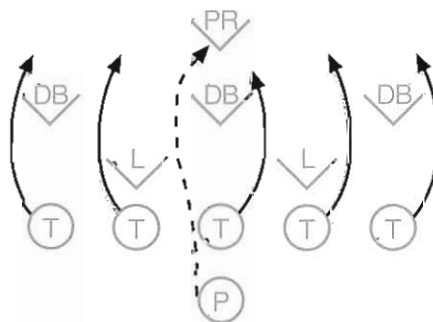
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to properly cover punts (see page 266).
2. Practice punt coverage.

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.



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



Week 1, Practice 2 (cont'd)

Game 2 (10 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 kicking rules (see page 283).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team. "What should you do if your opponents are breaking a rule, complaining to the officials, and doing things that are not fair?" Listen to their responses. "Stand to my right if you should continue to play your game and not try to commit fouls. Stand to my left if you should get back at the other team by playing the same way and complaining to the officials." All players should vote. Ask players why they voted the way they did. Have players who are to your left think of other options instead of complaining. "You should not change the way you play your game or stop showing respect to your opponents or the officials. It's important to show respect even if the other team is not."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next practice. Give them a sneak preview of the next practice's emphasis—blocking and the kicking game.

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. During warm-ups at each practice, have two different players practice punting and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness (blood vessels)

Gather the players. "If you were to compare the blood vessels to a subway system, the blood vessels would be the tunnels through which the trains run, the blood would represent the trains within the system, and the capillaries would be the stations where the passengers enter and exit. The passengers are the oxygen, carbon dioxide, and food. In the lungs, the passengers getting off would be the carbon dioxide and waste products and the passengers getting on would be oxygen. When the blood gets to the muscle cells, the passengers getting on would be the carbon dioxide and waste products and the passengers getting off would be the oxygen."

Activity: Reaction statements

"Now that you have learned about your blood vessels, give your thoughts on these statements:

1. Veins are more important than arteries.
2. Of all the blood vessels you have, you could do without capillaries.
3. Doctors could place metal pipes in your body to replace blood vessels.
4. The heart is the most important part of the circulatory system.
5. Red blood cells don't do anything special in the capillaries.

"What did you learn from the reaction statements?"

PURPOSE

To set up the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Seven towels or cones

Week 2, Practice 1 (cont'd)

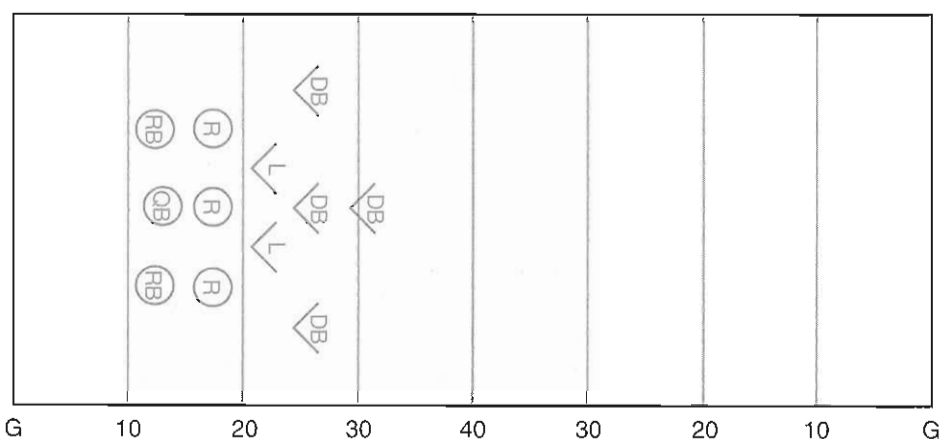
Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To open holes with blocks to advance the ball.

Description

Play 6 v 6. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. The offense begins at its own 20-yard line and can use any of the three running plays learned at the previous level of play (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 practice a block that will help you do that.

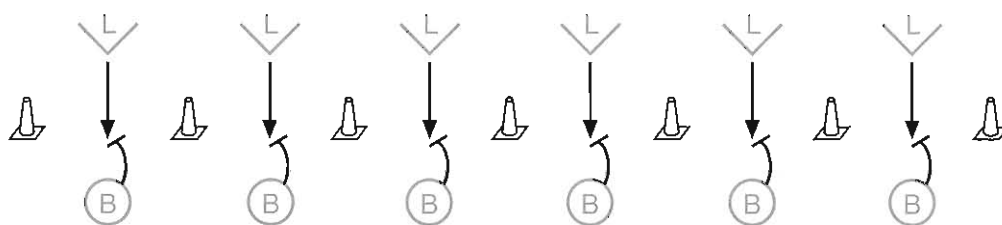
Week 2, Practice 1

Skill Practice 1 (10 minutes)

1. Review how to execute the hook block (see page 259).
2. Practice hook blocks.

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



"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. Have one player in each pair practice three blocks, then the partner practices three blocks.

Week 2, Practice 1 (cont'd)

COACH'S cues



open-the-hole block

"Low center of gravity."

"Hit and stick."

"Drive with the legs."

pass block

"Weight evenly distributed."

"Low center of gravity!"

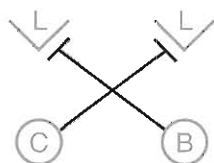
"Hit and retreat."

Skill Practice 3 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute the cross block (see page 260).
2. Practice cross blocks.

Description

Divide the players into four-player groups. In each group assign two offensive line players, each time naming a center and two defensive line players. Have them get set on the line of scrimmage. On your whistle, the defenders (from all groups) will rush and the offensive players will execute cross blocks, with the center moving first. Defenders should not go at full strength. Switch offense and defense after three plays.



COACH'S cue



"Explode off the line!"

"Offensive end, be right on the tail of the center!"

"Make it a bang-bang play!"



Week 2, Practice 1

Game 2 (10 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: Respect

Gather the team. "Remember the situation I talked about in the last practice—the opponent who wasn't playing fair? If you play against a team that does those types of things, how should you handle the end of the game? Stand to my right if you think you should still go to every player and the coach to shake hands. Stand to my left if you think you should just walk away." Ask players why they voted as they did. Then separate the team into two groups. Practice an end of the game lineup for both pleasant and fair opponents and for rude opponents. "You should always show your opponents respect by cheerfully shaking hands at the end of the game, no matter what happens during the game."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next practice. Give them a sneak preview of the next practice's emphasis—learning plays.

**COACH'S
points**

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

Go over blocking rules (see page 285).



Week 2, Practice 2

PURPOSE

To set up the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ Clipboard and paper

Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Have the players jog around the field and then pair up to pass to each other, running the routes they have learned. Have two players practice punting and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness (blood cells)

Gather the players. "There are more red blood cells than any other type of blood cell in your body. Adults have about 30 trillion red blood cells. Each red blood cell lives for three to four months and then dies or is remade. Each red blood cell carries hemoglobin, which contains iron and carries oxygen to your body.

"White blood cells are two or three times larger than red blood cells, but there are not as many of them. Some of these cells are made in the bone. When the body is fighting infection, the white blood cells increase and kill the germs. These white blood cells are part of the body's 'army,' which fights against infection.

"Platelets (shaped like tiny plates) are the third type of blood cell. When you have a cut, these platelets rise to the surface of the cut and stick together to form a 'net' that slows the blood down and causes it to clog to stop bleeding. This is called clotting."

Activity: What I learned today

Ask the kids to summarize what they learned today about their blood vessels.

1. I have learned that red blood cells
2. I have learned that white blood cells
3. I have learned that platelets
4. I have learned that adults have lots of
5. I have learned that red blood cells have
6. I have learned that clotting

Week 2, Practice 2

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 the farthest wins. No plays are called; the receivers just choose to run routes that they know: corners, square-outs, curls, 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.



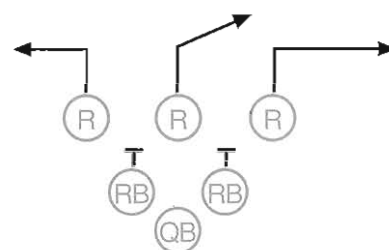
Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

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.



Week 2, Practice 2 (cont'd)

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

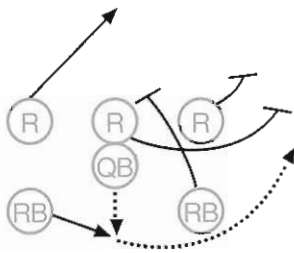
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute run play #1—the 34 sweep (see page 250).
2. Practice run play #1.

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 (10 minutes)

Play 6 v 6, with the defense in a 2-3-1 zone and the offense running the two plays they just learned. Give each team six plays and see who can gain the most yards.



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

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



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team. "What should be on your 'mental list' before you come to every practice?" Listen to responses and then lead a discussion about bringing proper equipment (a water bottle, proper shoes, uniform); being mentally prepared to work hard and learn new ideas; being well-rested; and having eaten well and drunk enough water during the day. "Each player is responsible for preparing for each practice before practice starts. It's your responsibility to the team to come to practice prepared. Good players are prepared for all practices and games."

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 and placekicking.

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards
- ☒ 8 cones

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness (benefits)

Gather the players. "Your heart is a muscle and, like all muscles, it needs exercise. If your heart is exercised properly and regularly, it will stay strong and healthy. A trained heart for an adult may beat 40-50 times per minute. The heart rate of an adult who doesn't exercise regularly may beat 70-90 times per minute. Exercise helps you control your weight by using up extra calories you get when you eat. Some of the best exercises for using a lot of calories are running, jumping rope, bench stepping, aerobics, swimming, and walking.

"Exercise makes bones stronger. When you run, play football or tennis, or jump rope, your bones are jarred by the pounding on the ground. The pounding causes your bones to produce more bone cells. The more bone cells you have, the stronger your bones."

Activity: Yes, no, maybe so

"Here are several questions. Vote on these. If you agree, put your thumb in the air like this (fist with thumb pointed upward). If you don't agree, point your thumb down like this (fist with thumb pointed downward). If you don't know, flip your thumb up and down.

1. A fit heart beats slower than an unfit heart when a person is resting.
2. Which of these are good exercises for a fit heart? (Ask individuals or the group.)
 - a. Football
 - b. Running
 - c. Bicycling
 - d. Bowling
 - e. Softball
3. Exercise hurts your bones. They may break if you exercise every day.
4. A trained heart of an adult beats how many times?
 - a. 40-50 times a minute
 - b. 70-80 times a minute
 - c. 80-100 times a minute
 - d. There is no heart rate difference between trained and untrained hearts."

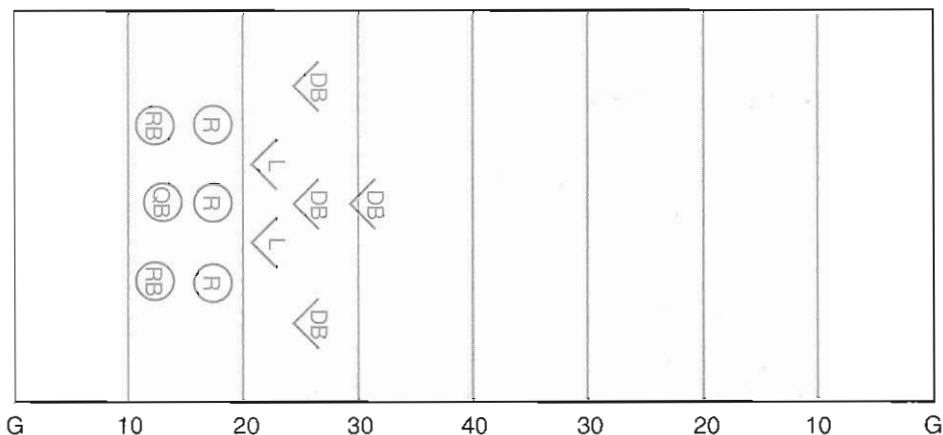
Game 1 (10 minutes)

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)

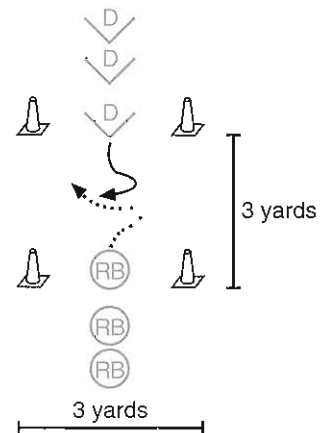
1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pull flags in these situations: head on, angle, and open field (see page 270).
2. Practice pulling flags.

Description

Mark two zones with cones; each zone should be 3 yards wide by 3 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 (10 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: Honesty

Gather the team. Identify three honesty situations that are important for your team to practice—e.g., committing a violation or breaking a team rule. First ask players how they would respond, and then discuss how you would prefer them to respond. "Being honest about a play during the game and in practice is an important part of the game. Good players are honest even when an official, coach, or opponent didn't see it happen."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of their 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 and placekicking.

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: General fitness (your pulse rate)

Equipment: Watch with second indicator

Gather the players. "At birth, your resting pulse rate was 130 to 140 beats per minute or higher. As you got older, your pulse rate dropped gradually until it is now about 80 to 90 beats per minute. When you graduate from high school, it will be lower.

"The pulse rate for boys is usually lower than that for girls. That is because girls' hearts are slightly smaller than boys' and girls have fewer red blood cells.

"Body position changes your pulse rate. Your pulse rate is lowest when you are lying down. It increases slightly when you sit and even more when you stand.

"Exercise causes your pulse rate to increase. When you stop exercising, it will drop back to normal. How fast it returns to normal depends on how hard or how long you were exercising. After easy exercise, it returns quickly. If the exercise is long or hard, it will take several minutes or more."

Activity: Pulse rate and body position

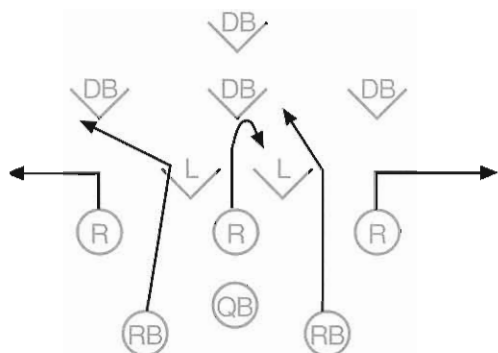
"Try checking your heart rate (pulse) at the following times:

1. After lying down for one minute.
2. After sitting for one minute.
3. After standing for one minute.
4. After walking for one minute.
5. After running for one minute.
6. Immediately after football practice.

What do you notice about your heart rate?

Why do you think this happened?"

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, curls, corners, 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?

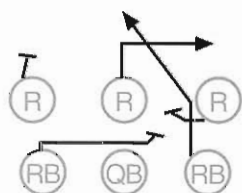
Players: To move downfield and score.

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.

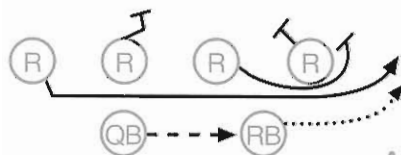


Skill Practice 1 (20 minutes)

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 they 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.

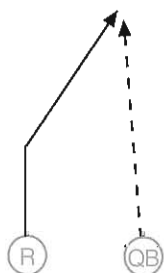


Skill Practice 2 (10 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the post pattern.
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.



Week 4

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 run. The defense plays a 2-3-1. Give Team A 6 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.

COACH'S
points

☞ 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: Respect

Gather the team into two groups. “Think about professional teams. How do they show respect for their opponents?” Discuss with players. Lead discussion to talking about saying positive comments such as “good game” and “nice play today” along with a hand shake. “Let’s say this is the end of a game. Your two groups are professional teams that played against each other. Show me what you do at the end of the game.” Use one of the discussion examples for players to try. “When you say positive comments to your opponents at the end of a game in addition to shaking or slapping hands, it shows your respect for opponents. Good professional players show they respect opponents.”

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next game.



Week 5

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 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 and placekicking.

Fitness Circle

(5 minutes)

Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory health and fitness (training heart rate)

Equipment: Training heart rate chart

Gather the players. "You can use your heart rate to tell you how hard you are exercising. Your maximum heart rate is the greatest number of beats per minute your heart can beat. During exercise, your heart rate should be 70 to 85% of your maximum. This is called your *training heart rate zone*. You should exercise at a heart rate of 70 to 85% of your maximum for 20 minutes. If you go over 85% of your maximum, slow down." (Refer to training heart rate chart on page 293.)

"The information on the chart is only a guide. Some people have lower or higher maximum heart rates than those on the chart. So, use the information wisely. If the exercise at your training heart rate seems too difficult, back off a little. If it seems too easy, push yourself just a little more."

Activity: Training heart rate

Tell your coach your age, your training heart rate, and your training heart rate range. Once you know these, check your pulse rate immediately after football practice.

Week 5

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield, using pass play #1.

Description

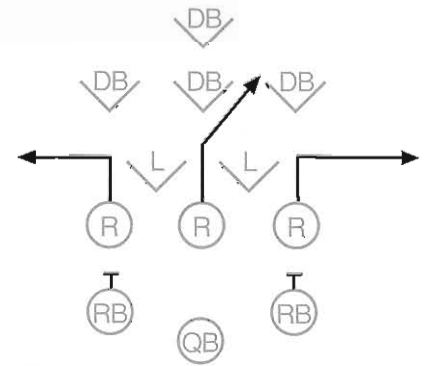
Play 6 v 6. The defense plays in a 2-3-1 alignment. Instruct the defense to rush one player; the other five defenders cover the three receivers that go out for a pass in pass play #1 (see page 249). The offense runs pass play #1 on all plays, beginning on its own 20-yard line. The defense overplays the 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.

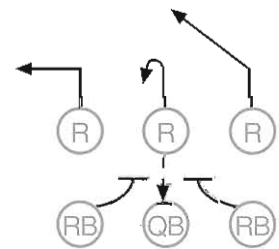


Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to run pass play #5—post (see page 250). Remind players of the numbered holes on the line of scrimmage and numbers for players.
2. Practice pass play #5.

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 #5 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 run pass play #4—the 23 fake TD (see page 250).
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 pass play #4 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.

Game 2 (10 minutes)

Goal

To move downfield and score, using pass play #s 5, 4, 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.

COACH'S points

☞ 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 into two groups. Give one group a ball. Have them pass to each other. Have one player try to distract the rest of the group. Continue this for one minute. Bring the team together. "How should you respond to someone who is trying to distract you?" Discuss their responses. "If you're at practice and talk to your teammates or distract other players, you're interrupting the practice. It's your responsibility to the team to pay attention at practices and games so you and your teammates can learn and play your best."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of 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 and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Cardiorespiratory health and fitness (rate of perceived exertion)

Equipment: RPE chart

Gather the participants. "Your rate of perceived exertion, or RPE, can be used to tell you how hard you are exercising. Many experienced exercisers are quite good at using RPE. Look at the chart. It shows you an intensity (how hard) number and the intensity level.

What most people don't realize is that the number corresponds to their heart rate. An 8 is the same as a heart rate of 80. An intensity of 15 means a heart rate of 150. That puts the exercise in the 'hard' category. Nineteen would be a heart rate of 190; that's in the 'very, very hard' category."

Activity: RPE

"Start walking. After walking for one minute, check your pulse rate. If the exercise seems fairly light, your pulse rate might be around 100 to 110 beats per minute. What was it? Now run for 1 minute, then take your pulse rate again. If the exercise seems fairly hard, your heart rate might have been in the 120 to 140 beats-per-minute range. What was it? Did the pulse rates seem to link with the intensity of the workout? What do you think of RPE? Try today during or after football practice."

Game 1 (15 minutes)

Goal

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

Description

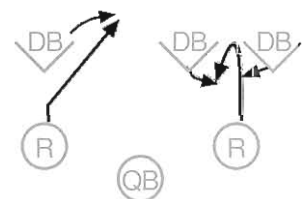
Play two simultaneous 3 v 3 games—a quarterback and two receivers versus three defensive backs. The defense can double-cover one receiver or play a zone. Give each offense six plays, then switch defenses and offenses. The team that holds their opponents to the fewest yards wins.

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards





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?

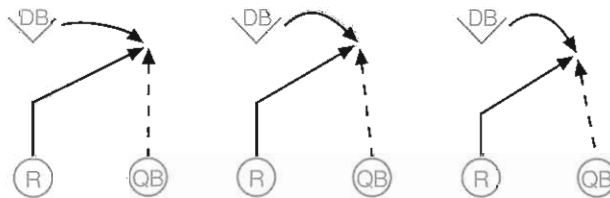
Players: Keeping your eyes on the receiver, maintaining a slight cushion, not getting faked out, and not turning your back on the receiver.

Skill Practice (15 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.



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."

Week 6

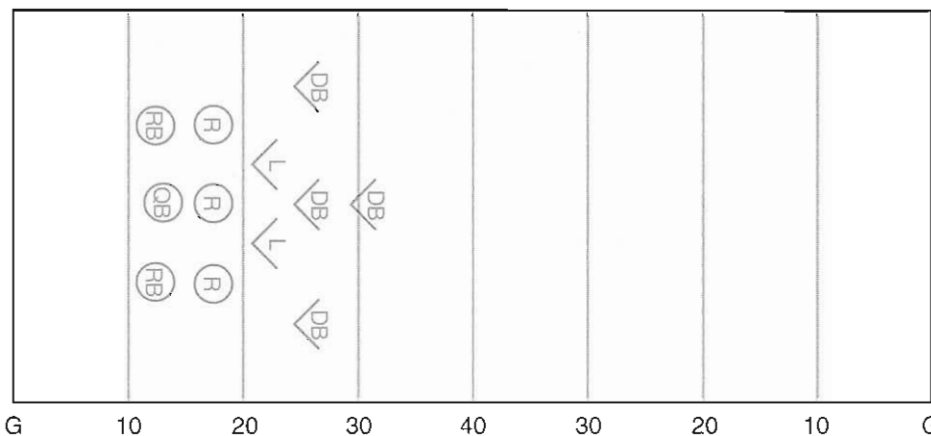
Game 2 (20 minutes)


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.

 Go over pass interference rules (see page 285).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team and separate into two groups, each with a ball. "Each group should pass the ball to each other. As you pass the ball, I want everybody to be saying something good about the pass and the people passing and catching. I should be hearing constant talk." Encourage excitement about the activity by clapping and making your own positive comments. "We will keep the passing going until everyone has had two turns passing and catching. Let me know when you're done." Wait for players to signal that they are finished.

"What are some of the positive comments that you heard?
Making positive comments shows you care."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice
and remind players of 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 and placekicking.

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Training and conditioning (peak period)

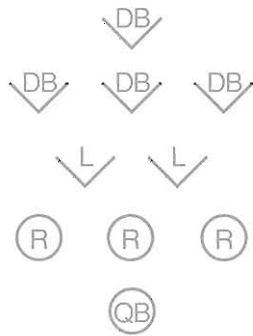
Gather the players. "Here is how exercise helps your circulatory system get stronger and more fit:

- Exercise increases the number of capillaries. It helps you run further and faster.
- Exercise lowers your resting heart rate and increases the amount of blood pumped with each beat. This gives your heart more rest each minute even though the same amount of blood is pumped through the body.
- Exercise lets the heart rate return to normal more quickly after exercise. This means that the body will recover from exercise more quickly.
- Exercise increases the blood supply. It helps you run farther and faster because more oxygen gets to the muscle tissues.
- Exercise makes the heart pump more blood with each beat. This means that the body's tissues are always receiving more blood and more oxygen."

Activity: Four-star general

"Movies are given a four-star, three-star, two-star, or one-star rating, depending on how good the people watching them think they are. Today you will have a chance to rate the exercises. Four-star exercises are usually continuous (nonstop) and you can measure the distance a person covered. Three-star exercises are continuous (nonstop), but you can't measure the distance covered. Two-star exercises are pretty vigorous but are stop-and-go, and you are unable to measure the distance covered. One-star exercises are those that are not vigorous, are stop-and-go, and there is no way to measure distance."

Basketball (2)	Ice/roller skating (4)
Bicycling (4)	Running (4)
Bowling (1)	Softball (1)
X-C skiing (4)	Swimming (4)
Downhill skiing (3 or 4)	Tennis (2)
Golf (1)	Volleyball (2)
Racquet sports (2)	Football (2)



Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To move downfield using only passing plays.

Description

Play 4 v 6 with the four players on offense (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.

Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute run play #5—the 33 sweep (see page 251).
2. Practice run play #5.

Description

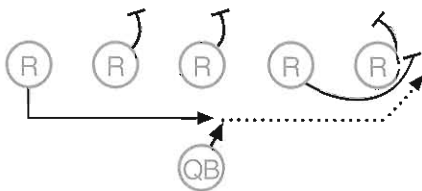
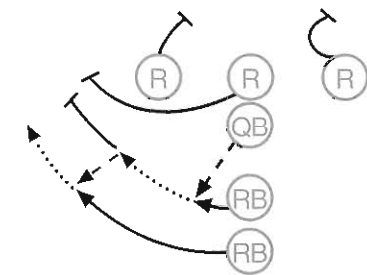
Run two offenses of six players each on separate halves of the field. Set the players up in the correct positions and have them execute run play #5 several times. Have players rotate positions after several plays so that they can experience the play from different positions.

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to execute run play #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.



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 and present this scenario, using two players in your example. "Devon is going out for a pass. Lavell accidentally trips him as the ball is in the air. The ball lands beyond Devon. The ball may not have been catchable anyway—it may have been thrown too far. You're the ref. What do you call?" Allow players to comment. Discuss responses and the importance of showing respect. "It can be difficult to be an official. It involves quite a few skills. Remember that it's a tough job, and always show respect for officials."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next game.



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

☞ Go over running rules (see page 282).



Week 8

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 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 and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Safety (dangerous exercises)

Gather the players. "Doctors know that several popular exercises may cause injury and should not be performed or should be modified to make them safe. For example, deep knee bends may injure your knees. When you do deep knee bends you force yourself all the way down so you are squatting as far down on your legs as possible. Do one-half knee bends instead.

"The hurdler's stretch is another no-no. In this position, the person's one leg is extended in front and the other leg is bent. This type of exercise causes excessive pain or stress on the bent knee. Do a modified hurdler's stretch instead.

"Standing toe touches are also not good. Here, people put their hands above their heads and then reach down and touch their toes. After touching their toes, they then try to straighten upward. This exercise puts the back in a very dangerous position and may injure it. Do the sitting stretch instead.

"Dangerous exercises are those that arch the back. Do flat-back exercises instead.

"Do not hyperextend the neck. This doesn't seem to be too much of a problem with young people, but it certainly is with older people. Do neck turns instead.

"Let's try some of these new exercises [see page 298] for flag football and exercise in general."

Week 8

Game 1 (10 minutes)

Goal

To advance downfield using square-outs and posts.

Description

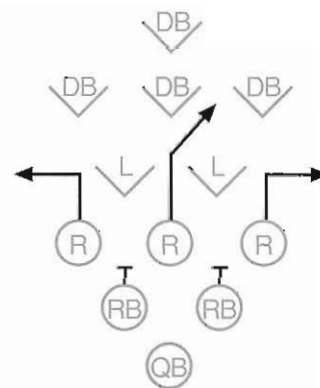
Play 6 v 6. The offense can use only two routes—square-outs and posts. Instruct the defense to play tight. Team A starts with the ball on its own 20-yard line. The defense plays a 2-3-1 defense. Play a regulation game, including punting, and award points this way: first downs equal two points, touchdowns 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 (10 minutes)

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

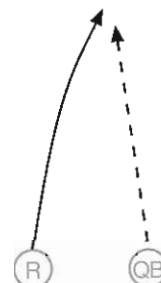
Description

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!"



COACH'S points

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

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



Skill Practice 2 (20 minutes)

Description

Walk through pass play #s 2 and 3, and run play #s 2 and 3 (see page 249). Then run through the plays at full speed. Use a 2-3-1 defense.

Game 2 (15 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.

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Choose two players to demonstrate. Privately tell them they will role-play a situation in which one player is passing to another. The pass goes out of bounds, and the player receiving the pass gets upset and yells at his teammate. Have them act out the situation with your assistance. "How would you feel if someone yelled at you for a bad pass?" Listen to their responses. "How about if you made a bad pass, but heard some encouraging words like 'It's OK, maybe next time?'"

Listen to responses, comparing the situations. "You show you respect your teammates by not yelling at them for a mistake and encouraging them to make a better play the next time they have a chance."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next game.

Week 9

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 and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits (tobacco)

Gather the players. "When a smoker inhales, she takes different gases or chemicals into her body. These gases compete with the oxygen in the blood. The heart must then beat faster for the smoker to get enough oxygen throughout the body. Smoking causes the heart rate to jump as much as 10 to 20 beats per minute. The reason for this increase is that carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke hooks onto the red blood cells and crowds out the oxygen. So, the heart has to beat faster to get the same amount of oxygen throughout the body. Smoking also causes a thickening of the blood vessels. This means that the heart has to pump harder to get blood through the vessels, causing your blood pressure to increase or your blood to clot."

Activity: Trigger story

"Your favorite 13-year-old niece has just started to smoke. What ideas could you think up to make her stop? In 2 to 5 minutes, list as many solutions as you can think of, even if they seem funny or unreal. Be creative.

Examples:

1. Take her to a hospital to see people with respiratory diseases.
2. Give her a supply of sugarless gum she can use anytime she gets the urge to smoke.
3. Go to the mall with her each week she keeps from smoking."

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

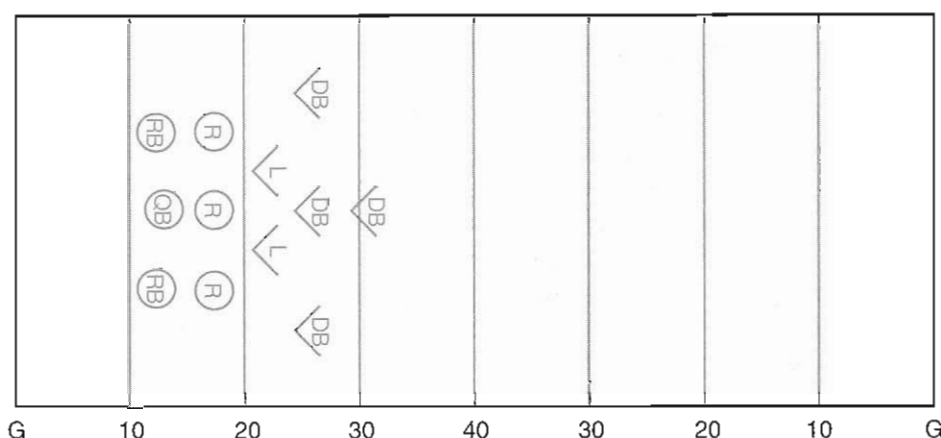
Game 1 (10 minutes)

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?

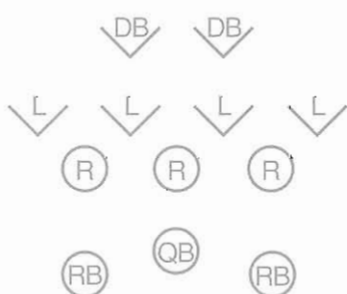
Players: By learning different defenses.

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.



Week 9



"Ends box it in!"
"Inside line players rush!"

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)

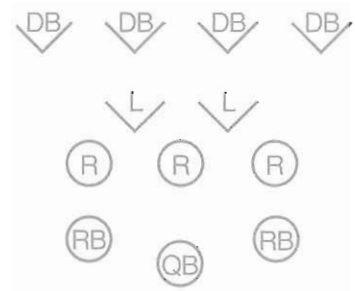
1. Review how to execute the swim technique (see page 271) and the spin technique (see page 272) for rushing the passer.
2. Practice rushing the quarterback using the swim and spin techniques.

Description

Put players into three-player groups, with each group having a quarterback, a blocker, and a defensive rusher. Have the blocker snap the ball to 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!"



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

Go over rushing rules (see page 285).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team. "What are three things you can do or not do that show you respect your body?" Listen to their responses. Main ideas might be not taking drugs, keeping emotional outbursts under control (swearing, kicking the ball away), and not doing dangerous things in practices and games. Encourage players' comments that are good examples of respect. "Those are all great ideas. When you practice those ideas, you show yourself and others that you respect your body."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next game.

Week 10

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 and placekicking.

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits (drugs)

Gather the players. "There are hundreds of drugs. Some you buy over the counter at the drug store and others are very dangerous, addictive killers. Drugs are used by doctors to prevent or cure sickness, but they are also being used unwisely by some people. This is drug abuse.

"Abuse of drugs can cause dangerous physical and mental changes in the person who uses the drugs. The abuse of the narcotic morphine, for example, can cause mental and physical dependence. The overuse of antidepressant drugs, such as barbiturates, can cause a decreased heart rate and drowsiness.

"Drugs that stimulate your body, such as amphetamines, speed up the heart rate and raise the blood pressure. Then, when the user is forced to go without the drug, mental depression, fatigue, exhaustion, and psychological problems may occur.

"Even 'socially acceptable' drugs (over-the-counter drugs) cause problems. Many popular cough and cold preparations, if used too much, can cause an irregular heartbeat, dizziness, and headache.

"Some football players and other athletes now use steroids to improve their performance. Steroids cause lots of problems."

Activity: Avoiding steroids

"List all the things you think could happen if you use steroids."

- Increase in aggressiveness
- Violent behavior
- Addiction
- Psychotic behavior
- Female hair growth on face and body
- Female male-pattern baldness
- Sexual dysfunction
- Female deepening of voice
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Liver damage
- Cancer
- Muscle deterioration

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 2-4 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?

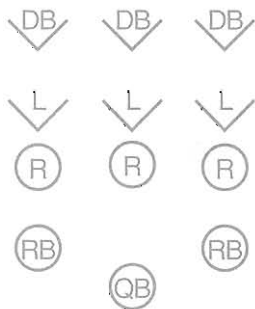
Players: By learning different defenses.

Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain the 3-3 defense (see page 253).
2. Practice the 3-3 defense.

Description

Play 6 v 6, using a 3-3 defense. The offense executes pass play #s 1, 4, and 5 against the defense. The two defensive ends rush wide and contain while the inside line player rushes up the middle. The three defensive backs play a zone. Run three plays, then switch defense and offense.



COACH'S cues



"Ends rush wide!"

"Inside line player rush!"

Week 10

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

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

Description

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



"Line players rush!"
"Backs play zone!"

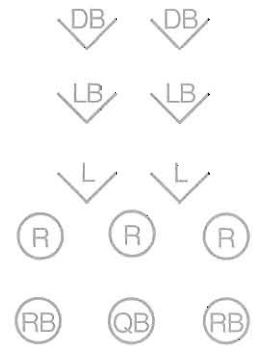
Game 2 (15 minutes)

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 either a 3-3 or 2-2-2 alignment (they can switch back and forth). 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.



- On defense all six players must work in unison to be effective.
- Go over the unnecessary roughness rule (see page 285).

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Responsibility

Gather the team into a circle. "I want everyone to count how many players we have in the circle." Wait while they count. "How many do you get, total?" Listen to their responses. "Well, that's good counting, but you know, the real total is one. That's right. We're one team with many contributions from each player. Remember there is no 'I' in team. If we don't play together as one, we will not play our best. To play together we all have individual responsibilities to the team like working hard on defense and offense, following rules, and getting in good position on the field. Making sure you take that responsibility seriously is an important attitude to practice."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next game.



Week 11

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 and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Reversibility principle

Gather team into a group. "What happens to your body if you do not stay active and keep training and conditioning your body?" Listen to their responses. Discuss losing conditioning when you stop being active. "What is that called? Right—the 'reversibility principle.' What should you do to prevent losing your conditioning? Participating in physical activity or another sport after the season will prevent you from reversing your conditioning. How will you stay active after the flag football season is over?" Listen to their responses. "Remember the 'reversibility principle'—you use it or lose it! You worked hard all season to improve your fitness, so keep it up for next year!"

PURPOSE

To strengthen the offensive attack.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 in.)
- ☒ Flag belts for all players
- ☒ Grass field 40 yards by 80 yards

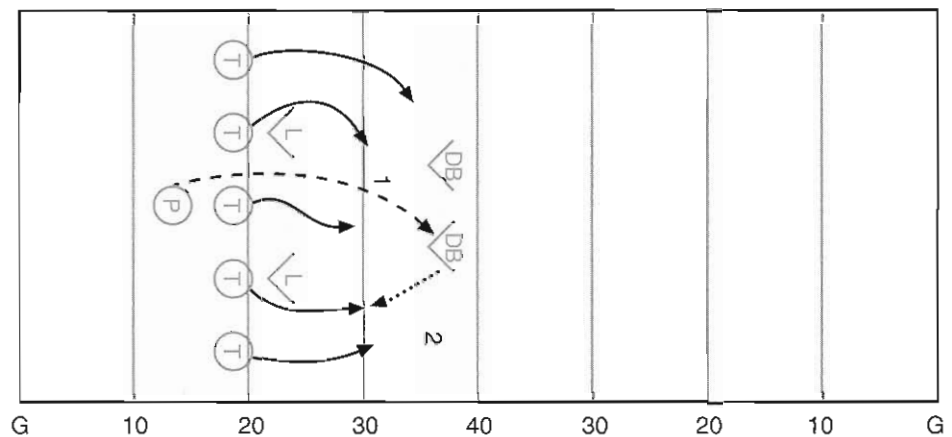
Game 1 (10 minutes)

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. 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.

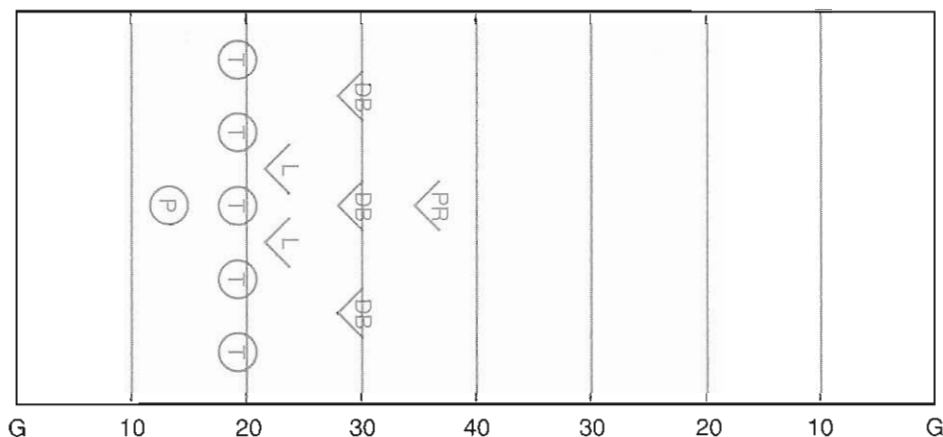
Week 11

Skill Practice 1 (15 minutes)

1. Review 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 are 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.



COACH's cues



"Look the ball into your hands!"

"V formation!"

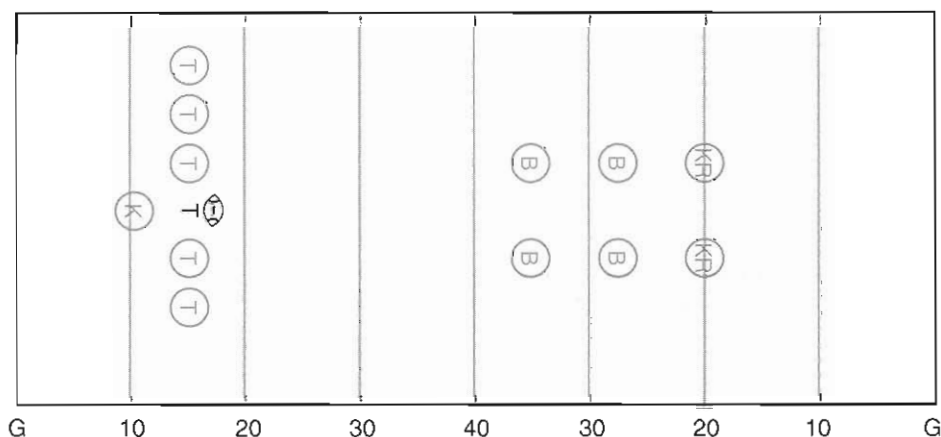
"Follow your blocking!"

Skill Practice 2 (15 minutes)

1. Review how to return kickoffs: up-the-middle, down-the-sideline, and the reverse (see page 268).
2. Practice returning kickoffs.

Description

Team A kicks off six times to Team B. Team B returns two times using the up-the-middle play, two times using the down-the-sideline play, and two times using the reverse. Before each play, huddle with the offense to tell them which return to run. Then switch, having Team B kick off to Team A six times. Keep track of total yards. The team with more yards wins.



Game 2 (10 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 11

Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Caring

Gather the team and choose three players to demonstrate. Have the three stand in a line. The two outside players should carefully lift the middle player. Have them problem solve to find a way to hold the player up. Continue for about 30 seconds and then have them set the player down. "Did you see how Jeremy was supported by his teammates? Victor and Leon showed you how to give physical support, but it's also important to support your teammates emotionally. What are some examples?" Listen to responses (e.g., positive comments, identifying good plays, encouraging comments during losses or mistakes) and discuss them. "When you support your teammates throughout the season, you show you care about them. You'll play better as a team when you show you care about each other."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the next game.



Week 12

PURPOSE

To play effective defense.

Equipment

- ☒ One football for every two players (youth-size: 10 5/8 to 10 3/4 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 and placekicking.

Fitness Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Healthy habits

Gather players into two equal groups. "I want the first group to take a ball and pass back and forth, going down the field until you score." After players finish, ask them to come over to the side and sit down. Have the second group go out and repeat the activity. "Following play like that, and after every time you come out of the game or during practice, what is one of the most important things you should do?" Listen to their responses.

"Drink a little water during every break and especially when you need it. Drinking regularly prevents dehydration. It's important to drink water *before* you feel thirsty, especially when it's hot and humid. Drinking plenty of water is a healthy habit to do every day."

Week 12

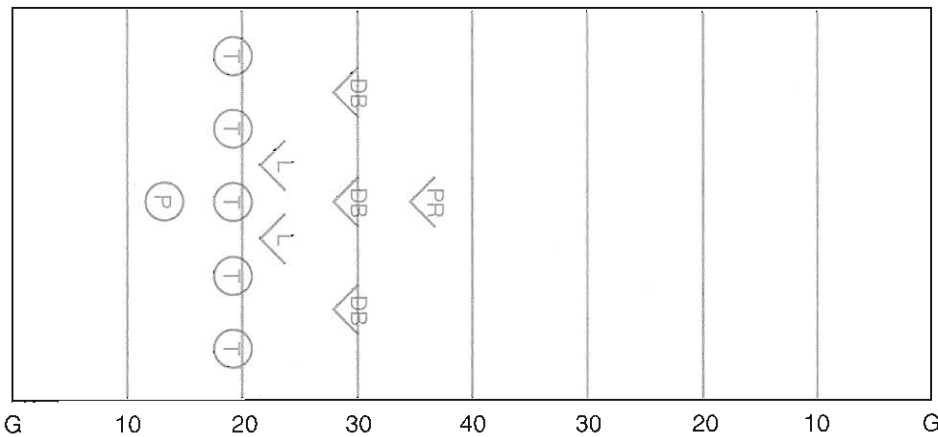
Game 1 (15 minutes)

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.



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 are 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!"

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.

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).



Team Circle (5 minutes)

Key Idea: Respect

Gather the team. Choose two players to demonstrate. "Let's say you just scored a touchdown. Justin, show everyone a way to celebrate or congratulate your teammates that won't make the other team upset. Now, Hassan, show the team how you would celebrate if you wanted everyone to know how happy you were and that you thought you played much better than your opponents. If you think the best way to celebrate is like Justin, stand to my right. If you think Hassan's is the better way, stand to my left. It's important to respect your opponents before, during, and after games. You can do that by saying 'good play' or slapping hands calmly with your team."

Wrap-Up

Make summary comments about practice and remind players of the final game.