



# COACHING HANDBOOK



**CITY OF SURPRISE**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION**

Parks & Recreation Department  
Direct: 623-222-2000 / Fax: 623-222-2001





Winter 2025

Dear Coach:

Welcome to the 2025 City of Surprise Parks and Recreation Winter Flag Football Season. The role of a youth sports coach can be a very rewarding experience. We greatly appreciate the dedication of your time and energy to make this season a success. There are some very important points to address, which, if applied, will make your experience more enjoyable.

**Communication**-One of the biggest complaints we get from parents is lack of communication from their child's coach. It is absolutely essential that you communicate initially and quite regularly with the parents/guardians of your team members. We've found that putting information in writing helps immensely. Moreover, it is imperative that your players know your name, email address, and phone number in case of emergency.

**Preparation**- It is equally important to be prepared for the task at hand whether it is practicing or getting ready for a game. Being prepared encompasses a wide variety of fundamental issues such as practice organization, proper equipment, rule knowledge, and program philosophy.

**Safety**- A thorough knowledge and understanding of good safety procedures will save time. Accidents occur most frequently when players are fooling around and not paying attention to your directions. You need to be constantly aware of safety needs and concerns.

Above all REMEMBER, you are dealing with children in a child's game where the best form of motivation is enthusiasm and positive reinforcement. If the experience is FUN for you, it will also be fun for the boys and girls on your team.

Thank you for volunteering your time and have a great season!

#### **FOOTBALL CONTACTS**

Jared Walsh  
Recreation Coordinator  
623.222.2247  
[Steven.day@surpriseaz.gov](mailto:Steven.day@surpriseaz.gov)

Ronny Roszak  
Recreation Coordinator  
623.222.2259  
[Ronald.roszak@surpriseaz.gov](mailto:Ronald.roszak@surpriseaz.gov)

Nick Sanchez  
Recreation Coordinator  
623.222.2228  
[Nicolas.Sanchez@surpriseaz.gov](mailto:Nicolas.Sanchez@surpriseaz.gov)

## **YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL**

### **Parks & Recreation Mission Statement**

To enrich and compliment the lives of Surprise residents through stewardship of our resources while providing responsive programs which promote and prioritize diversity, cultural, neighborhood, family, and educational wellness opportunities.

### **Philosophy**

The City of Surprise Parks and Recreation Youth Flag Football Program is designed to encourage maximum participation by all team members. The program aims to give boys and girls an opportunity to play under conditions in which health, safety, welfare, and fun for all participants is of primary importance. It is our belief that the development of the child is far more important than the outcome of the game.

### **Purpose**

This program is designed to provide youth with the opportunity to participate in an organized Flag Football program that will emphasize basic fundamentals, sportsmanship, enjoyment, and cooperative participation with peers.

### **Game**

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense or defer to the 2nd half. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Field Dimensions**

All divisions will play on fields that are 30 yards wide and 70 yards long, with two 10-yard end zones and a midfield line-to-gain. To prevent power football in tight spaces, no run zones are located 5 yards before the end zone and on each side of the midfield line-to-gain. If the ball is spotted on or inside the no run zone, the offense must use a pass play to get a first down or touchdown.

### **Game Time**

Two, 20 minute halves with a 3 minute half time

The clock will run continuously, except for timeouts, injuries, and official's timeouts

Teams receive 2 - one minute timeouts per game.

### **Scoring**

Touchdowns 6 points

Point after Touchdown 1 point (rushing) Ball is spotted at 5 yard line

2 points (passing) Ball is spotted at 5 yard line

*Team does not have to declare rushing or passing*

*Interceptions on a point after try are live, if a player runs back for a touch down they will be awarded 2 points.*

### **Tie Games**

There is no overtime in Flag Football. Ties will stand.

### **Coaching**

- Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times.
- Coaches are allowed on the field to direct players according to need and division. Coach must stay out of the play and may not shout instruction once the ball is snapped.
- Coaches are expected to adhere to City of Surprise philosophies, coaching guidelines and codes of conduct.

### **Equipment**

- Mini Footballs (5/6 year old division)
- Peewee Footballs (7/8, 9/10 year old divisions)
- Junior Footballs (11/12, 13/15 year old division)
- Flags, Cones

### **Team Formation**

**All divisions will play 5 on 5.** The City of Surprise Parks and Recreation Staff will assign all participants to teams that are registered. The youth sports program has adopted a “Save 5” program, allowing coaches to save 5 kids for their teams. While we will try to honor special requests there are no guarantees they will be granted.

### **Team Uniforms**

The City of Surprise Parks and Recreation will provide each player with a reversible Arizona Cardinals NFL jersey, and each coach with a coach’s shirt. Jerseys must be worn at every game. The team designated as the “Home” team per the schedule will wear the red side of the jersey, the team designated as the “Visiting” team will wear black.

### **Equipment**

Each team will be provided with at least 5 footballs, 10 flags and 5 cones for use at practices and games. This equipment must be returned at the end of the season.

### **Field Amenities**

Please advise your players and parents that water fountains are limited and insist that additional water be brought to practices and games.

### **Insurance**

The City of Surprise, Parks and Recreation, league director and staff or the league supervisors/officials do not provide insurance coverage for individuals participating in the Youth Flag Football Leagues. The Surprise Community and Recreation Services Department would like to inform all participants in the Youth Flag Football Program that the nature of the game of football is physically demanding and challenging, including but not limited to the acts of running, jumping, stretching, diving and collisions with other players or stationary objects, all of which may cause injury to participating players.

### **Injuries**

All City sites have first aid kits available in the event of an injury. Should an injury occur, stabilize the player and call 911 when appropriate. An accident report is to be completed describing the nature of the accident and submitted to the City of Surprise ASAP. Reports are located in the back of the handbook.

**Rainout Hotline**

In the event of inclement weather, coaches should contact the Youth Sports Division Rainout Hotline @ 623.222.2238, 1 hour before the start of the day's first game. In the event of cancellations, all efforts will be made to reschedule, time permitting.

**Awards**

Registered players will receive participation awards at the completion of the season. Coaches and parents are advised not to solicit funds for any purpose from players or parents.

**YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES****Mandatory Playing Time - All Divisions**

Each player is required to play half of each game. In addition, no player may sit out two consecutive series. Also see *Skill Positions* below.

**Equipment**

All players must wear rubber-soled shoes or rubber-cleat shoes. No metal spikes, bare feet or boots allowed.

Flag belts are provided. They must be secured correctly with the clasp. No tying of flag belts.

Shirts must be tucked in the shorts/pants and must not interfere with the attempt to pull the flag.

**Illegal Equipment Consists of:**

- Headgear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material, including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots.
- Any and all jewelry. Medical bracelets are allowed.
- Extra pads, braces or casts. If additional items need to be worn, they must be approved.
- Shirts, Jerseys, or clothing that cannot remain tucked in.
- Pants or shorts with any **POCKETS**, belt loop(s), or exposed drawstring(s).
- Towels attached at the player's waist

**RULES OF PLAY****Coin Toss**

Each game will start with a coin toss. The team that wins the toss can choose offense or defense first, which goal line to defend or to defer to the second half.

**First Possessions / Possession after a score / Possession after half (NO KICKOFFS)**

The starting team begins on its own 5-yard line and has four downs—essentially four plays—to cross midfield for a first down.

The only time the starting position changes is when the opposing team unsuccessfully attempts to convert a 4th down.

**The offense has a 30 second play clock to get each play off.**

Once on offense, a team has 4 plays to move the ball over midfield or into the endzone if they began their possession in the opposing teams territory. Failure to convert a 4th down will change possession on the current ball spot.

## **OFFENSE**

### ***Skill Positions:***

#### **All Divisions**

Unlike previous seasons, we will no longer be tracking skill positions for any divisions. Now that all divisions will be playing 5 on 5, essentially all positions will be skill positions. An effective coach will even draw up plays that use the center as a pass catcher. Mandatory playing time rules will still be in effect, and no player may sit out 2 series in a row.

#### **Live Ball/Dead Ball:**

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - The ball hits the ground.
  - The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
  - The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
  - The ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
  - The ball carrier’s flag falls off.
  - The receiver catches the ball after his flags have fallen off.
  - The 7 second pass clock expires.
  - Inadvertent whistle.
- There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.
- Once the referee spots the ball, the play clock will start and offense will have 30 seconds to hike the ball.

#### **RUNNING**

- The ball is spotted where the runner’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the players front foot.
- Direct handoffs and pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.
- Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
- The player who takes the snap is deemed the quarterback and is not permitted to be a rusher.
- The player who receives the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- Players may not leave their feet to avoid a flag pull. Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, while attempting to avoid a flag pull, is not allowed.
- Lateral moves (jukes) to the left or right are permitted.
- Spinning is permitted by the ball carrier.
- Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

## PASSING

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
- Shovel passes are allowed.
- **All Divisions:** The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, play is dead, the down is consumed and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect
- The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
- **All Divisions:** If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

## RECEIVING

- **All Divisions:** All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- A player must have a least one foot in bounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Interceptions are returnable.

## RUSHING THE PASSER:

- **All Divisions:** All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the 7 yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A special marker, or the referee, will designate a **Rush Line** 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
- A legal rush is:
  - Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
  - A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
  - If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the ball carrier.
- A penalty may be called if:
  - The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – Illegal Rush.
  - Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside
  - Any defensive player, not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush
- Special circumstances:
  - Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, 7 second clock in effect.
  - Teams are not required to identify their rusher before their play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher must verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
  - If rusher leaves the 7 yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back to act as defender with no offside penalty enforced.
  - Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.



- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a **moving** offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
- A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when flag is pulled.
- A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

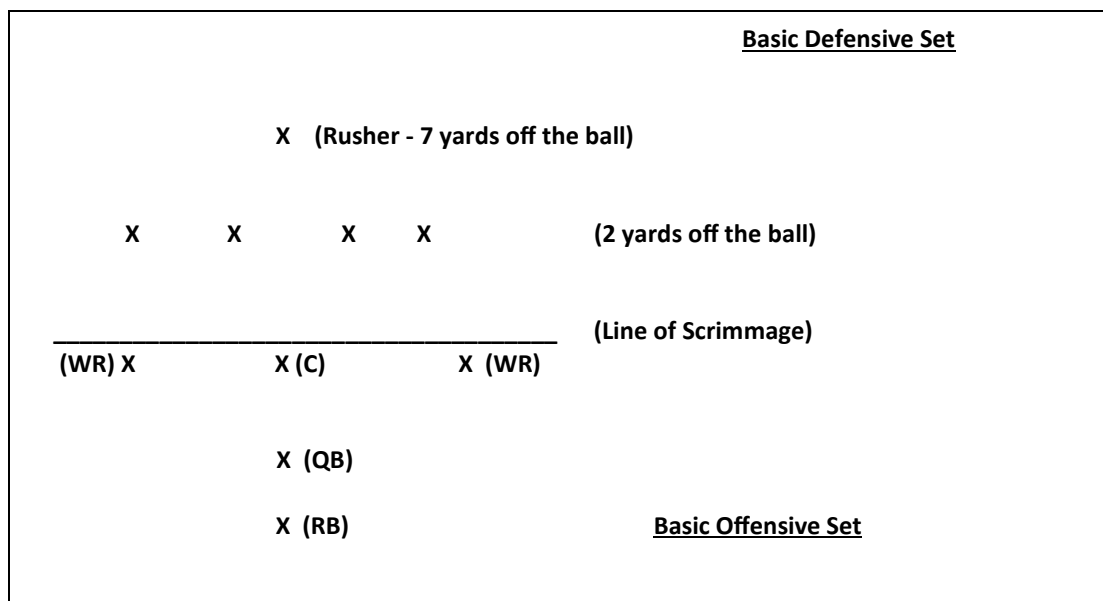
### Flag Pulling

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders cannot dive to pull flags, or hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.
- If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball, doing so may incur an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender’s access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

### Formations/Line of Scrimmage

#### All Divisions:

- Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and **up to** four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage. Offensive teams may position a maximum of 3 players on one side of the ball in any split formation. All defensive players must start each play a minimum of 2 yards off the ball.
- Defense player do NOT have to mirror the offense.



**MOTION:**

- One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
- All offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped, the motion player is an exception.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

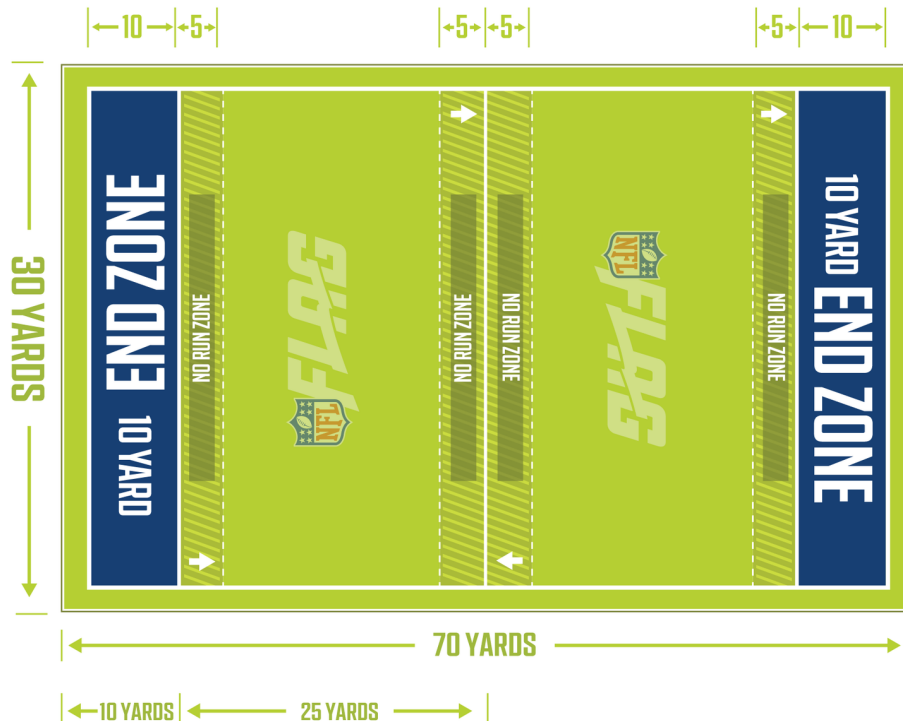
- If staff or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike action, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. Over-aggressive PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
- Offensive or confrontational language will not be tolerated. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
- Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- Fans are required to keep fields safe and kid friendly:
- Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents safely away from the field.

## LINE TO GAIN

**All Divisions:** Teams have four downs to cross half field, regardless of where the first play started. The field is made up of 2-25 yard zones. Once the team crosses half field a first down is awarded. The team then has 4 downs to put the ball into the endzone.

### Screen Blocking: All Divisions:

No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time. Offensive players must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.



**ILLEGAL CONTACT** – At or beyond the line of scrimmage will be ruled a 10 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and we will replay the down. If this contact is deemed excessive by the referee, an “unnecessary roughness” penalty of 10 yards can be assessed in addition to the “illegal contact.” This would make the total penalty 20 yards.

## **PUNTS**

**All Divisions:** There will be NO PUNTS. On 4<sup>th</sup> down, teams will have the option to go for the 1<sup>st</sup> down or turn the ball over to the opposing team. **When turning the ball over, the ball will be placed at the 5 yard line of the team taking over offensively.**

If the offensive team goes for it on 4<sup>th</sup> down and is stopped, the ball changes possession at the spot.

## **DEFENSE**

**All Divisions:** The defense may run any defensive scheme, man or zone, they wish. The defensive players must be a minimum of 2 yards off the ball, but there is no maximum distance they have to be off the ball. Only players 7 yards off the line of scrimmage or more can rush the quarterback. Once the ball is handed off any player may cross the line of scrimmage regardless of where they were originally lined up.

*Motion:* The defensive team will be given the opportunity to get set before the ball is snapped; this will be at the discretion of the referee. It is up to the defense to adjust but the offense does not have to wait for them. If an offensive player goes in motion and the defensive player does not adjust so be it.

**Defensive players hold equal responsibility to avoid contact. Ramming or Tackling an opponent will be a 10 yard penalty.**

## **Coach Field Procedures**

One coach per team is allowed on the field during their team’s offensive or defensive series. However, once teams are lined up coaches must stay at least 15 yards back from the play and remain quiet (NO calling out plays, runs, passes, etc). Doing so may result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

## **Huddle**

Offensive huddles must occur 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage. However, a substitution made after the huddle breaks will result in a five yard penalty and the player will not be allowed in the game at that point.

## Definitions/Penalties

**Tackling/Obstructing the Runner** – Intentional or unintentional tackling should never occur. The play must be for the ball carrier's flag. A defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of the runner when attempting to remove the flag belt.

**Flag Guarding / Stiff Arm** – Guarding of the flag or using the arms to ward off an attempt made for a player's flag is not permitted. The ball will be marked at the spot of infraction.

**Ramming** – A ball carrier cannot ram himself into a defensive player intentionally. An attempt to avoid contact with a defensive player must be made. Additionally, all players must make an attempt to avoid contact.

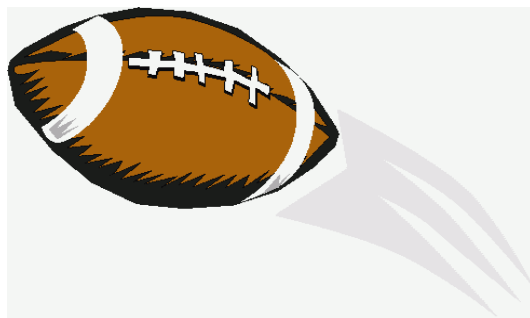
*\*\*\*Please emphasize these rules with your players throughout the season*

### Five-yard penalties

Off Sides  
Illegal Formation, illegal pass  
Too many players on field  
Illegal Motion  
Delay of Game  
Calling an extra time-out  
Illegal Rush

### Ten-Yard Penalties (Automatic 1<sup>st</sup> Down, if on Defense)

Unnecessary Roughness  
Offensive/Defensive holding or Pass Interference  
Unsportsmanlike conduct-players coaches, fans  
Ramming, extension of arms  
Shoving, tackling  
Illegal Contact or block



# Tips for coaching flag football

## Developing a Strategy

- Go for the first down
- This can be accomplished by using short passes and running plays
- Mix in long passes and trick plays to keep the defense honest and to catch them off guard

## Throwing a Spiral

- Hold the ball near the back with the fingers over the laces
- Keep your elbow in tight to your body and the ball up by your ear
- Point your non-throwing shoulder toward your target
- Throw the ball by letting it spin off your fingers as you follow through toward your target

## Leading the Receiver

- As a Quarterback you don't want to throw the ball to where the receiver is but rather where he/she is going to be.
- Practicing your routes with your receivers will help you figure out how far you can lead them with your throws.

## Receiving a Pass

- Form a triangle with your hands (between you index and thumbs)
- Keep your eye on the ball at all times
- Try to keep the ball away from your body
- Once you have caught the ball, tuck it away so that you don't fumble it.

## Short Passing Routes

- Short passes are safe and effective ways of moving the ball
- Short passes can be run towards the sideline (out), towards the middle of the field (in), or just by turning back toward the QB when you have found a few holes in the defense (button hook)
- Often a short pass can turn into a big gain with a few quick moves

## Long Passing Routes

- Long passes can be run toward the sideline (corner pattern, toward the middle of the field (post pattern), or just by running straight (fly pattern)
- A long pass is most effective when the defense is caught off guard. Using a mixture of running plays and short passes will open up the field for the long bomb

## Pulling the Flag

- Watch the ball carrier's hips as opposed to his/her feet or head, stay low and lunge at the flag
- If you grab anything but the flag, let go immediately so that you don't get a penalty

## Football Tips from Cardinals WR Larry Fitzgerald

**Running Routes:** The most important part of running a route is getting off the line of scrimmage. Once you get past the defensive back, you can run any of the following routes.

**Curl Route:** Run straight up the field and take a 45 degree angle back towards the quarterback.

**Hitch Route:** A hitch route is the easiest. You run straight up the field for 5 or 6 yards and make a quick turnaround so that your numbers are facing the quarterback.

**Slant Route:** A slant route is just like a hitch route, but when you get to the top of the route at the 5 or 6 yard mark, you cut in at a 45 degree angle.

**Quick Out:** A quick out is the same as a hitch but instead of turning around at the 5 or 6-yard mark, you break out towards the sideline.

**Fade Route:** A fade route is usually used on the goal line when you run 5 or 6 yards and break towards the back pylon looking for the ball over your inside shoulder. **Dig Route:** There is a short dig and a deep dig route. The shorter route is usually run for about 10-12 yards and the deep dig is 16-18 yards. You run straight up the field and when you get to your route depth, you turn in parallel to the line of scrimmage.

**Corner Route:** A corner route is a route you can run in the end zone like a fade route, but instead of looking over your inside shoulder, you look for the ball over your outside shoulder.

**Post Route:** A post route is a route you run 15 yards up the field where you do a 45 degree angle in toward the inside goalpost upright.

**Other tips:** Use good technique when running your routes, and then just catch the ball. If you are having problems catching the ball, have someone throw passes to you and have them throw some high, low, to your right and to your left to work on catching balls from all angles.

## Five Tips for Youth Football Coaches

Whether you're a veteran in the coaching world, or just starting to coach your son's city league football team, here are some tips to help make the experience enjoyable for you and your future stars.

### 1. Keep it Fun

Football is a game, it's not life. While there are wonderful life lessons to be learned from the game, we as coaches cannot be so caught up in pummeling our opponent that we forget this important principle. In youth football, you've been successful as a coach if you've made the game so fun that kids want to play it again next year. This may mean playing "Johnny Slow Shoes", while offering up a prayer that they don't run his way. Like you, I've always maintained that winning is more fun than losing, but winning is not the thing. Fun is the thing.

### 2. Teach the Fundamentals

The best football players of today learned the fundamentals of the game many years ago. This is in our job description as a youth football coach. We cannot give our kids a 100 page playbook and expect them to memorize it in a 6 week season. Simplify. Teach. This game gets more complicated the older they get. Take the time now to focus on fundamentals, and set them up for success in their future football career by laying a solid foundation now.

### 3. Teach Good Sportsmanship

We are privileged to have a role in the shaping of some young people, and we need to take that responsibility seriously. Our kids should be the ones breaking up the fights in school, not starting them. Our kids should be the ones leading by example with their grades, effort, and enthusiasm. And if we expect them to lead by example, it starts with us. This does not mean they have to gather up after every play and sing Kumbaya. We can encourage good sportsmanship and physical intensity at the same. I love to see players going as hard as they can between whistles, and after the play, helping each other up and going back to do it again.

### 4. Keep It Safe

Again, our goals are to make sure they come back to play the game, have fun, and grow into good people.

### 5. Build Lasting Relationships

Many of us reference our youth or high school football coach when we talk about who has made a big impact on our life. See beyond the scoreboard. You've got parents, neighbors, aunts and uncles involved (for better or worse). You've got Johnny's little brother, who actually *is* fast and physical, and might play for your team someday, if Johnny has fun with it. To me, it's not just about the game of football, it's about relationships. The 6 team city league that you're a part of may not seem like much, but it's an opportunity. I ask my fellow coaches the same thing I've asked my players; What are you going to do with what you've been given?

## **VOLUNTEER COACHES**

### ***Requirements and Expectations***

This is a program for young people. To win at any cost may be an attitude for a skilled professional team, but this is contrary to the basic philosophy of the City of Surprise Parks and Recreation. Our commitment is to benefit the majority of young people rather than produce an atmosphere of excellence for a talented few. All programs will emphasize maximum participation regardless of ability.

#### **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

All coaches and assistant coaches are required to complete and submit a volunteer coaches application and be background check prior to the start of the season. Please contact the Parks and Recreation Office at 623.222.2000 if you have any questions

#### **PRACTICES**

Practices may begin at any time after the organizational meeting. Coaches are encouraged to practice at a site convenient to the majority of players (consult the park map for locations). Practices should last no longer than one hour no more than twice a week. Coaches should avoid practices on Sundays. Set practices on a consistent basis so that it becomes a habit with players and parents. Make sure practices are well organized, safely conducted, and that water is available. The Parks and Recreation Department reserves facilities for practice. Available times will be provided to you at the coaches meeting.

#### **EJECTION**

Any coach or assistant coach ejected from a game for un-sportsmanlike conduct is automatically suspended from his/her team's next game. In the event of an ejection, the individual must leave the premises prior to the continuation of the game. Failure to do so results in an automatic forfeit. A second ejection will result in removal from the league.

#### **VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS**

Surprise Parks and Recreation have expectations on the conduct of a coach and his staff while on the field and working with youth and field leaders. Below you will find the guidelines established to ensure these expectations are met.

*Coaches conduct on the field includes:*

- Acting in a mature and responsible manner;
- Setting an example for youth;
- No abusive foul language;
- Avoiding the consumption of alcoholic beverages and no smoking or usage of tobacco products while in the dugouts, on the field, or any time before or during a game.

*Coach's conduct with youth includes:*

- Making a commitment to attend all practices. If you are unable to attend it is mandatory that a competent assistant is sent in your place;
- Treating all individuals equally and a hands-off disciplinary policy.

*Coaches conduct with field leaders include:*

- Treating field leaders with respect;
- Knowing rules prior to questioning a call and informing players, assistant coaches, and parents that only the Head Coach may discuss matters with the field leader.

*Coaches conduct in general includes, but is not limited to:*

- Acting as a leader;
- Setting an example
- Treating individuals as you would like to be treated
- Exercising control over your fans
- Following the established rules for the league
- Dealing in a fair and ethical manner with fellow coaches
- Being courteous and considerate of you player's parents and guardians
- Notifying Youth Sports Department of complaints or concerns regarding the conduct of another coach.
- Being aware of the advisement not to solicit any funds for any purpose from players or parents.



# HEADS UP CONCUSSION



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs or symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

### › SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

### › SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"



## ACTION PLAN

As a coach, if you think an athlete may have a concussion, you should:

1. **Remove the athlete** from play.
2. **Keep an athlete with a possible concussion out of play on the same day of the injury and until cleared by a health care provider.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a health care provider should assess an athlete for a possible concussion.
3. **Record and share information about the injury,** such as how it happened and the athlete's symptoms, to help a health care provider assess the athlete.
4. **Inform the athlete's parent(s) or guardian(s)** about the possible concussion and refer them to CDC's website for concussion information.
5. **Ask for written instructions from the athlete's health care provider** about the steps you should take to help the athlete safely return to play. Before returning to play an athlete should:
  - › Be back to doing their regular school activities.
  - › Not have any symptoms from the injury when doing normal activities.
  - › Have the green-light from their health care provider to begin the return to play process.

**IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.**



For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit: [www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP).

You can also download the CDC **HEADS UP** app to get concussion information at your fingertips. Just scan the QR code pictured at left with your smartphone.

The information provided in this document or through linkages to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to a physician or other health care provider.



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Injury  
Prevention and Control

## **NFL Flag Football Ten Coaching Guidelines**

- A coach should be enthusiastic without being intimidating. They should be sensitive to the children's feelings and genuinely enjoy spending time with them. A coach should be dedicated to serving children and understand that football provides physical and emotional growth for its participants. Remember, NFL FLAG is for the children.
- A coach needs to realize that they are a teacher, not a drill sergeant. They should help children learn and work to improve their skills. Personal gains are never a consideration. The job does not depend on winning. The best interest of the child transforms into the best interests of the game.
- The safety and welfare of the children never can be compromised. A coach will consider these factors above all others.
- Be patient. Don't push children beyond limits in regards to practice. Children have many daily pressures – the football experience should not be one of them. Playing football should be fun.
- Care more about the players as people than as athletes. The youth football program is a means to an end, not an end in itself.
- A coach should encourage players to dream and set lofty goals. It is important to remain positive and refrain from discouraging remarks. Negative comments are remembered far more often than positive affirmations.
- Remember that the rules of the game are designed to protect the participants, as well as to set a standard for competition. Never circumvent or take advantage of the rules by teaching deliberate misconduct. A coach who puts his or her opponents' team at risk should not be involved with children.
- Be the first person to demonstrate good sportsmanship. Take a low profile during the game and allow the kids to be the center of attention.
- Parents and players place a lot of trust and confidence in the coach. The coach has an important role in molding the athletic experience of the child.
- A coach can measure success by the respect he gets from his or her players, regardless of victories or defeats. Children who mature socially and physically while participating in sports are the best indication of good coaching.



### **Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge**

As a Surprise Parks and Recreation Department youth coach you have agreed to follow the Code of Ethics:

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of any personal desire to win.

I will remember to treat each player as an individual, remembering the large spread of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

I will do my very best to provide a safe play situation for my players.

I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all of my players.

I will do my very best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

I will insure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach and that I will teach these rules to my players.

I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.

I will remember that I am a youth coach and that the game is for children and not adults.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_