



# Youth Flag Football Coaching Manual



## **Message From OCPRD**

**We thank you for volunteering your time this season to coach a group of up and coming flag football players! The mission of OCPRD is to, through a coordinated effort, enrich the quality of life of the citizens we serve, by providing safe and accessible recreational facilities and a diversified program of recreational activities for all citizens. We would not be able to do that without flag football coaches like yourself, so thank you for making this program happen!**

**The philosophy of OCPRD's flag football program is to allow players to participate, develop skills, and learn the game in a fun and safe environment. We have all the confidence in you to help us make that happen for our players!**

**The OCPRD flag football program has grown to 290+ players, 30+ teams – which brings a necessity of 30+ volunteer coaches! You are such an integral part of giving the youth of this community an opportunity to get out and play flag football, so we cannot thank you enough for that.**

**The following manual will give you information on the season, specific things you need to do and a great collection of advice on the season to come. Please read through in its entirety, and know we are here for you if you have any questions on players, parents, practices or games throughout the season. Your direct contact will be the Youth Flag Football Program Coordinator, whose name and contact information can be found on our website, via the Youth Flag Football page.**

**We are looking forward to a great season!**

**OCPRD Team**

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## Coach Requirements

***All volunteer youth athletic coaches must complete the following:***

**1.** Complete a Volunteer Coaches Application online through Community Pass:

Form Link: [Community Pass](#)

**2.** All coaches must complete and pass online criminal history background check. Coaches must complete the background check before stepping on the field with their team:

Form Link: [Oconee County P&R Background Screening Form](#)  
[Volunteer Eligibility Criteria](#)

**3.** Complete free online concussion training:

Course Link: [CDC Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports](#)

**4.** Complete the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) training – NYSCA is offered twice a season. You must renew this certification every 12 months.

○ Renewal Options:

- Attend Pre-Season Coaching Meeting
  - August 5 at 6:00pm at OVP
  
- Attend 1 NYSCA Training, offered twice each season by OCPRD
  - August 11 at 6:00pm at OVP
  - August 18 at 6:00pm at OVP

## I volunteered to coach...now what?

Listed below are some tips to help coaches for the upcoming season:

- **Learn the league specific rules and policies.** As the coach, it is essential you attend pre-season organizational meetings and make sure you read and understand league rules. Be sure your assistant coach understands the rules as well, if you have one. Pre-season meetings are a great time to get clarification on rules and policies you may not fully understand.
- **Know what items the league requires you to complete.** OCPRD requires every coach (head or assistant) complete the following requirements:
  - Register as a coach on [Community Pass](#) – this will be the same process as signing up your child for soccer. There is no cost involved with registering to coach.
  - Fill out and complete the [Online Background Check](#). All coaches must complete the background check before stepping on the field with their team.
  - National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) training – NYSCA is offered twice a season. You must renew this certification every 12 months.
    - Renewal Options:
      - Attend the NYSCA training offered by OCPRD
      - Attend Pre-Season Coaching Clinic
  - HEADS UP online concussion training by the CDC. This certification only needs to be completed once in your OCPRD coaching career.
    - [CDC Concussion Training](#)
- **Understand the value of an assistant.** Assistant coaches not only help run practice, but they can also serve as a sounding board for you and for the players as well. Be sure to maintain an open line of communication between you and your assistant.
- **Have a parent from the team volunteer to be the team parent.** Designating someone for this position lets them feel like they're a greater part of the team. The team parent takes on the duties of organizing who will provide snack for each game, plan end of season parties and so forth. Having another parent focus on these things will allow you to concentrate on coaching.
- **Hold a team meeting at/before the very first practice.** Use this time to introduce yourself and your assistant. It is also the perfect time for parents of the team to meet and get to know each other. During this meeting you should make the parents aware of the league rules and policies so they will understand your coaching philosophy. At this time you should also let them know your expectations of the players and the parents. Be sure to explain the importance of players and parents exhibiting good sportsmanship. Make sure to find out from parents if their child has any medical conditions you should be aware of in the event of an emergency during a practice or game. Address any potential scheduling conflicts. Do this by finding out what other activities the players are involved in and find out from

parents ahead of time what days could potentially be problematic for them regarding practices or games. Make it known to parents it is expected for all players to attend all practices and games, and if they are unable to, you should be notified in advance.

- **Build a solid rapport with each player.** This is easily accomplished by getting to know everyone's name as quickly as possible. During practice spend a few minutes with each child, address them by their name and compliment them when they do something well. Name tags for players during the first few practices can help everyone get acquainted more easily if they are not familiar with one another.

- **Coach by walking around.** This provides a greater opportunity to bond with each player; the more you do it, they will begin to feel more comfortable. Also, in doing this, you are more likely to better understand the differences between each child and find specific ways to motivate them.

- **Additional Resources:**

- NFL Flag Football: [nfiflag.com](http://nfiflag.com)
- USA Football: [usafootball.com](http://usafootball.com)
- National Association of Youth Sports: [nays.org/coaches](http://nays.org/coaches)

## Oconee County Parks and Recreation Coaches Code of Ethics

***I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics:***

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

## Season Timeline

<b>Monday, July 12</b>	Fall Registration Begins – 8:00 AM ( <i>online only</i> )
<b>Thursday, August 5</b>	Youth Flag Football Registration Deadline
<b>Thursday, August 5</b>	Coach Meeting at 6:00 PM in OVP Community Center
<b>Saturday, August 7</b>	<b>Evaluations/Draft</b> <i>Micro (ages 5-6) No Evaluations</i> <i>Mite (ages 7-8) at 9:00am at Oconee Veterans Park</i> <i>Pee Wee (ages 9-10) at 10:15am at Oconee Veterans Park</i> <i>Major (ages 11-12) at 11:30am at Oconee Veterans Park</i> <i>Senior (ages 13-14) at 12:30pm at Oconee Veterans Park</i>
<b>Wednesday, August 11</b>	NYSCA Clinic at 6:00pm in OVP Community Center
<b>Wednesday, August 11</b>	Coaches Contact Parents Deadline
<b>Saturday, August 14</b>	ALL Youth Flag League Practices Begin (Oconee Veterans Park Multipurpose Fields)
<b>Wednesday, August 18</b>	NYSCA Clinic at 6:00pm in OVP Community Center
<b>Monday, September 6</b>	Labor Day – NO Team Activities
<b>Tuesday, September 7</b>	Games Begin
<b>Friday, September 10</b>	<i>Make-up Date from September 6</i>
<b>*Friday, September 10</b>	Picture Day
<b>Saturday, September 11</b>	<b>Saturday Game Day</b>
<b>*Friday, September 17</b>	Picture Day
<b>*Friday, September 24</b>	Picture Day
<b>Saturday, September 25</b>	<b>Saturday Game Day</b>
<b>Monday, October 11</b>	OC Schools Fall Break – We will have team activities
<b>Week of October 18</b>	Pee Wee Jamboree, Major and Senior Tournament

## Inclement Weather

- Cancellations due to weather on weeknights will generally not be made until 4 pm on weeknights and 8 am on Saturdays.
- We will make every reasonable effort to contact coaches/team managers with cancellation information as soon as a decision is made and coaches/team managers will contact parents/players.
- Please give your parents the Inclement Weather Hotline number: 706-769-3965 (select option 2)
- CodeRED Alerts: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BF3A63052F22>

### **My game has already started, but inclement weather pulled us off. What do I do?**

- O CPRD Staff will make an announcement when lightning is seen within 10 miles of the park and will assist the public in exiting the fields.
  - Every player, coach, and parent will be required to exit the fields and seek shelter.
  - Shelter locations may include the concrete areas beside the fields and personal vehicles.
  - Patrons cannot be on grass.
- Play will be suspended for 30 minutes after each lightning strike. The 30-minute timer will reset after each new lightning strike.
- The remainder of the game will be cancelled if lightning persists for 30 minutes.
- If a game is called after one half of play, the game will be considered official.
- If a game is called before one half of play, a rescheduled makeup game will begin at the time and place the current game is forced to end.
  - The score will also be carried over to the rescheduled game.

### **My player is injured – What do I do?**

Although flag football is considered a non-contact sport – players will get injured. It is inevitable, but what do I do when that happens?

1st – Assess the situation. Most injuries are minor and can be treated by a short period of rest, ice, and elevation. If player is able, have the player walk off the field. Do not put the player back in the game or practice until he/she is comfortable.

Each team will have a first aid kit in the team's equipment bag. A majority of injuries will be able to be taken care of by the contents of the first aid kit. O CPRD staff has a more extensive first aid kit, and they will be there to help.

O CPRD staff is first aid certified, they can help, but they cannot diagnose any injury. However, if O CPRD staff is suspecting a concussion, they reserve the right to hold a player out of the game until they are cleared by a medical professional.

## Team Management

### Discipline

- It's not necessary to have an extensive set of rules for the team; instead, have a few rules stand out that you will emphasize throughout the course of the season. Examples:
  - Having players show up at a specified time before practices and games.
  - Letting you know ahead of time if a player won't be able to make a practice/game.
  - Players and parents are expected to exhibit sportsmanlike behavior at all times.

### Running Up the Score

- There are times when games can become one-sided and one team scores a significant amount of points more than the other team. In this instance, do not allow your team to continue to run up the score. Instead, give less skilled players an opportunity to run or hand the ball off. In doing this, you are getting your team to work on their technique at different positions and thus making them better all-around players.

### Parents

- As a coach, you will have to deal with various issues and concerns from parents, ranging from playing time to game strategies. How you handle these things as they come up can affect the course of the season. During your first team meeting, let it be known to the parents the best times to approach you. When they do come to you with a concern, let them state their concern – uninterrupted – and let them know you'll take their suggestions into consideration and work on a way to best address their concerns. Always respond in a positive, non-confrontational manner and make sure everyone keeps a positive attitude.

### Losing Games

- Enduring a losing season is one of the greater challenges a coach will face. Rather than dwell on the negativity associated with losing, it is your job as the coach to remain upbeat and positive. Find things the team did well and focus on those items. Praise them for the effort they put forth in spite of the loss.

## Sample Practice Plan

**Introductions (5 minutes)** Take a few minutes to get to know your team. A good exercise is to form a circle, and go around the circle having each child introduce themselves and provide some basic information. (For example: school they attend, their favorite NFL team, their favorite NFL player, etc). Let your team know a little about yourself. This is also a good opportunity to let your parents know that there are lots of opportunities for them to help with the team, and that you welcome their participation.

**Warm-Ups and Basic Stretches (8 minutes)** Have your players go for a brief jog in an orderly fashion, stressing that it's not a race, and they should run at an easy pace. Toe touching their toes, quad stretches (flamingos), butterfly stretch, arm circles, etc. Have your team help identify stretches to do. *Micro and Mite may not need any or as much time to warm-up or stretch.*



**Snapping the Ball (8 minutes)** Each play begins with a snap, so this is an important skill to master. Begin by demonstrating the proper technique involved in snapping the football with the quarterback under center, shotgun, and from the side.

- Proper technique begins with the center grasping the ball in a similar fashion to which he would grasp the ball to throw a pass. The center's feet should be slightly more than shoulder width apart, and knees should be bent.
- The center executes the snap on the quarterback's signal (set - hike, or whatever cadence you choose).
- The laces of the football should be parallel to the ground when the quarterback receives the ball. Have each player perform a few under-center snaps, with players rotating at quarterback.
- The snap can start under center, shotgun, or snapped from the side. Have the center look at his target between his legs, or to the side, and execute the shotgun snap on the quarterback's signal.
- Have each player perform a few snaps, with players rotating at quarterback.



### **Passing Warm-Up (8 minutes)**

- Have players split into groups of three or four placed around 10 yards apart (adjust the distance for different age groups).
- Have the players begin throwing the football to one another to warm up their arms and demonstrate proper passing and receiving techniques.
- For passing, each player should stand with the shoulder of their non-throwing arm pointed directly at their target. He should use the shoulder kind of like a gun site. The ball should be held high (“on the shelf”, or basically at the letters).
- The Peyton Manning school of quarterbacking simplifies the basics of passing into three motions -- wipe the windshield (the quarterback’s non-throwing arm leaves the ball, and begins to open up the chest to make a throwing motion), elbow your brother (the quarterback’s throwing arm simultaneously moves backward, with the elbow remaining at the same height), and flick the booger (when the quarterback completes his throwing motion, he should flick his wrist and flick his finger at the target to follow through).
- For receiving, make sure that players are catching the ball with their hands, and not trapping it against their body.
- For balls received above the waist, the player’s thumbs and index fingers should touch, forming a diamond. For balls received below the waist, the player’s pinkies should touch.

**Break (2 minutes)** Have the players grab a quick drink and set up for your next drill. Use multiple breaks if necessary.



**Basic Route Running (8 minutes)** Set up two lines for receivers to run routes, and two separate lines for quarterbacks to throw passes. You should have just two quarterbacks, and should rotate quarterbacks during the drill. The receivers should run through four separate routes: the seven-yard out, seven-yard curl, go-route, and the slant.

- *Seven Yard Out* Receivers run seven yards up the field, turning out at a 90-degree angle at seven yards. Receivers should use the opposite foot to make their cut -- for example,

if the pattern calls for an out pattern to the left, the receiver should cut off of his right foot, and vice-versa.

- *Seven Yard Curl* Receivers work seven yards up the field and turn quickly. Receivers should place their hands out in front of them to create as much space between themselves and a defensive player. Make sure receivers STOP at seven yards, and do not continue to drift down field.
- *Go Route* Receiver is simply having the receiver run straight up the field. The quarterback should release the ball when the receiver is around seven yards down the field.
- *Slant* Receiver should take two steps up field and then break at a 45-degree angle. Again, receivers should use their off-foot to make their cut.



### **Defensive Back Technique and Flag Pulling (8 minutes)**

#### Defensive Back Technique:

- Their feet should be staggered with a heel-to-toe relationship, no wider than shoulder width apart. They should be bent at the waist and knees, tail up and shoulders down.
- Arms should be relaxed, hanging from the sides.
- The backpedal players should try and remain low to the ground during their backpedal to enable easy change of direction.
- Shoulders should be over the thighs, with feet slightly shoulder width apart.
- Mechanics should be similar to running forward, but in reverse.
- Players should reach back with each step, pulling their bodies over their feet as when running forward.
- Breaking on the ball, have players line up in the same manner as in the basic route running drills.
- On the snap, have the players backpedal. Call out “break”, and have the defender break forward.
- When the defender breaks forward, throw the ball to the defender.

#### Flag Pulling:

- Remind players to stay on their feet to reduce the chance of injury and remain involved in the play.
- Run through the ball carrier. This may sound a little odd, and it’s important to emphasize what this ISN’T. This isn’t a collision or tackle. There are 2 reasons to coach

this method. First, teaching your players not to stop and take a swipe a flag as the runner goes by at full speed. Second using your body to slow the runner's momentum.

- Use both hands. As the player approaches the ball carrier he should spread his arms out slightly with hands in front of him. The player should always attempt to grab a flag with each hand, one on each hip.
- Focus on the hip and swipe down. This is simple, but not something many kids come up with on their own, so they need to be coached. Players should start at the top of the flag belt and move his or her hand straight down the length of the flag.

Once your players understand proper flag pulling, the skills must be reinforced continuously with drills. Your entire flag football defense will benefit from your players learning and executing proper flag pulling techniques.

**Bringing it All Together -- Route Running with Defensive Back Coverage (8 minutes)** This drill brings together all of the skills taught during the practice. Have players line up the same way as they did for the basic route running drill. Instead of just lining up as receivers, players will rotate from receiver to defensive back to center, then back to the end of the receiver line. The quarterback will tell the receiver which route to run. The receiver will then line-up, with a defensive back in coverage. The quarterback will call for the snap from the center, and the receiver will run their route, while the defensive back tries to cover him. The routes should last no more than 3-4 seconds each. After a few practices, teams may choose to have a small scrimmage.

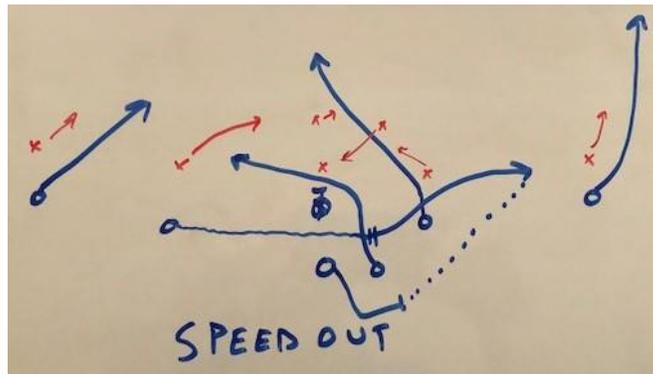
**Closing Practice and Homework (5 minutes)** Close practice by going over what was taught. Encourage players to do their "homework" by playing catch at home and going over the drills they practiced with a parent, sibling or friend.

## Sample Plays for Flag Football

### **Play # 1: Speed Out/Go/Bubble**

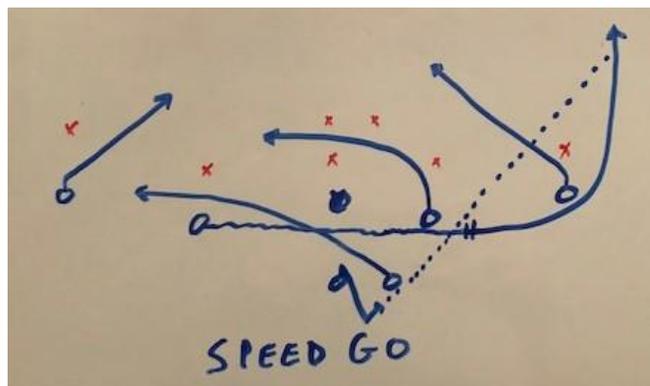
These are three plays built into one. How the defense is adjusting to your motion and how they align will determine which route will be called. If the defense isn't running or they aren't keeping up with the motion player, you will hit the Speed Out or Go route. If they are playing zone coverage or off man to man coverage you will have the motion player run the bubble. The bubble is a great way to get your athletes the ball in space and allow your athlete to get separation from the defenders. Not to mention that the bubble route is somewhat of an easy throw and catch for kids.

#### ***Out Route***



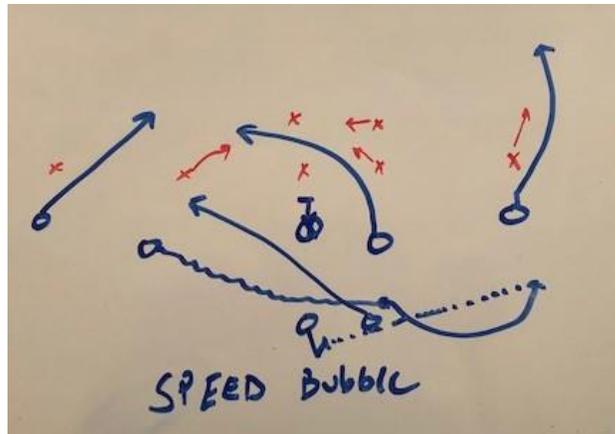
Have the motion player do a shallow out route when the defense is playing man to man coverage. Motion the player across so that he/she can be at full speed when the ball is snapped. Most of the time the defenders will not be able to keep up with the motion player. This is an easy throw and catch. This play will allow your receiver to get separation and it will allow him/her to make plays in space.

#### ***Go Route***



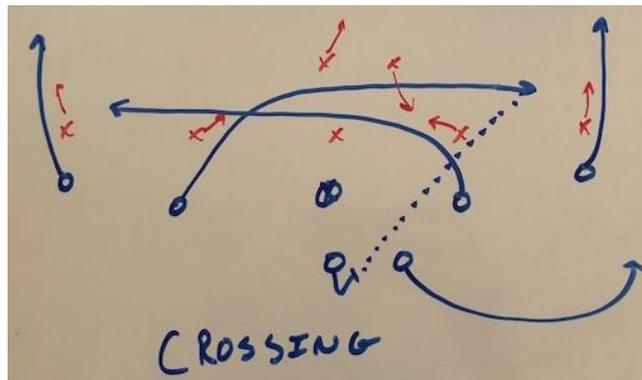
When the defense isn't running with the motion player call this go route. Motion the player across and have him/her turn up-field and run a go route. This is a great play against defenses that do not have a safety. Keep in mind that the receiver doesn't have to be 20 yards down the field before the pass is thrown. As soon as the motion player turns up-field, have the QB throw it. The deeper the throw the more difficult it is for the QB and the receiver to complete the pass.

### **Bubble Route**



This play is great against zone defenses and man to man defenses that are playing soft coverage. The bubble screen is an easy throw that has a high completion rate. The motion player must belly his/her motion back a couple of yards so that he/she creates an easy throw for the QB. This will give your athlete some separation and allow him/her to make plays in space. You may utilize motion to free up and to get your athletes the ball in space.

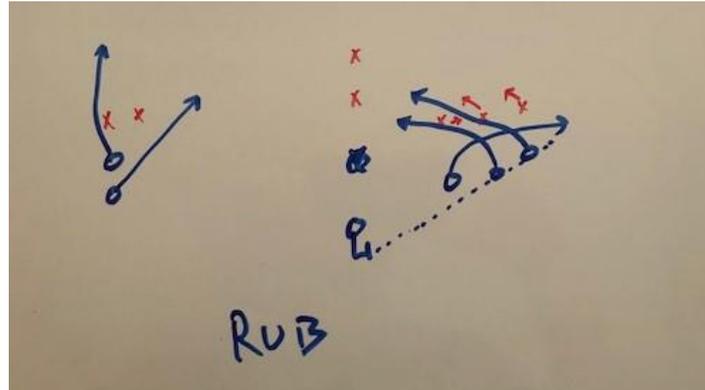
### **Play # 2 Crossing Routes (Mesh Concept)**



The crossing route concept will allow your athletes to use the width of the field. It is a great concept to run with your fastest players. It will allow them to out run the defenders and it will create coverage confusion. Crossing routes are very easy to complete and they work well

against both man to man and zone coverage. The left slot receiver will run 9-10 yard crossing route (deepest crosser), the right slot will run a 6-7 yard cross route. It's important that the crossing route players continuing running outside. Also, make sure they don't collide.

### Play # 3 Rub Concept (Outside Rub)



The rub concept is a good passing play in 7 vs 7. It's very effective against man coverage and it is also very good against zone coverage. The rub concept will allow your inside receiver to get a free release to the outside. This is a quick hitting play that is easy to complete and has big play potential. There are also options to the stacked side where the front receiver runs a Go Route and the back receiver runs a Quick Slant.