



# Rochester Youth Football Association

RYFA Flag Football aims to provide a fun, age-appropriate, learning environment where kids can play non-contact football, regardless of skill level. While the focus will be on the passing elements of the game (QB/C exchange, proper route running, proper throwing form, pass defense, and timing), the goal of the program is to give all kids a chance to throw and catch the ball, regardless of positions they may play in the fall program.

## Youth Flag Football Sample Practice Plan

This is a basic practice plan. Feel free to modify however you see fit. Rochester Youth Flag football focuses more on playing and having fun and less on practice. The first week you'll have about 1 hour for practice but in subsequent weeks you'll have around a ½ hour of practice time. Focus your time on warming up, stretching and fundamentals. Practice will go quickly and there are a number of basic skills to teach during this time. There is no need to focus a lot of practice time on running plays - have a playbook to show the kids what play to run during the games – they'll quickly figure it out.

If you have enough parent/coaching volunteers, split the kids into smaller groups and rotate them through the drills below (Quarterback / Throwing & Catching / Receiving / Defense). If you don't have any help – don't worry – you can run through these drills pretty quickly.

## Introductions

Take a few minutes to get to know the kids on your team. A great way to get to know them is to have each kid introduce themselves, talk about where they go to school, what grade are they in and what their favorite football team is.

Let the kids know a bit about yourself. This is your opportunity to let the kids know what the rules are and who is running the team. Make sure that they all understand that they need to listen, try hard every play, and most importantly – have fun!

## Warm-Ups/Stretching/Sprints (5-10 minutes)

Start off by having the kids do a quick jog to get them focused in that practice is ready to start. Then quickly move into stretching. Have the kids get used to lining up or getting in a circle. Have one or two kids lead the stretching and do some basic stretching like touching toes, quad stretches, arm circles, etc...

From there if you have time left – have the kids line up on the goal line and do 10 yard sprints from a cadence (down-set-hut). Do high knees, but kickers, karaoke, sprints, etc...

### **Quarterback / Throwing & Catching Drills (10 - 15 minutes)**

These are drills for kids to learn the quarterback/center position. These drills can be done separately or combined to put the whole package together.

#### **1. Snapping the ball**

Snapping the ball is an important skill to master. There are two types of snaps in flag football, under-center and shotgun. All kids on the team should play center at some point in the season – so knowing how to snap the ball is important.

Have each player perform a few under-center snaps, with players rotating at quarterback.

Then move to shotgun snaps. Go through the same rotation having each kid perform a few shotgun snaps with players rotating at quarterback.

#### **2. Drop back / Footwork**

Have the kids focus on dropping back after the snap. This helps them learn how to get the ball into the right position to throw (or to handoff for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade), how to have the proper footwork and where to focus their eyes and how to find a receiver. This drill can be done with or without a football and is good when combined with the snapping the ball drill.

#### **3. Throwing & Catching**

Have players split into groups of three or four. Have them stand 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.

Use this opportunity to demonstrate proper passing and receiving techniques. For passing, each player should stand with the shoulder of his non-throwing arm pointed directly at his 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 players pinkies should touch.

### **Water Break (2 minutes)**

Have the kids grab a quick drink while you setup for the next drills.

### **Receiver Drills (10 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.

#### **1. 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.

#### **2. Seven Yard Curl**

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.

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 players. Make sure receivers STOP at seven yards, and do not continue to drift down field.

### **3. Go Route**

As the name implies, a go route 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.

### **4. Slant**

Receivers 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 Drills (10 minutes)**

### **1. The Stance**

Start out by teaching proper stance mechanics.

Defensive backs should stand in a manner that will enable to backpedal easily. 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.

### **2. 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.

### **3. 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.

### **Water Break (2 minutes)**

Have the kids grab a quick drink while you setup for the next drills.

### **Team Drills (10 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 his route, while the defensive back tries to cover him. The routes should last no more than 3-4 seconds each.

### **Coaching Resources:**

Here are some great resources for coaching football.

- [www.ryfa.org](http://www.ryfa.org)
- RYFA passing tree  
([http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0096/8559/Basic\\_Passing\\_Tree.xlsx](http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0096/8559/Basic_Passing_Tree.xlsx))
- <https://www.nflflag.com/pages/coaches>