

Week 1 Practice Plan (Focus: Basic Movement & Flag Awareness)

Dynamic warmups and cool down at the end of practice should be a part of every practice plan. Water breaks 1-3 times during practice are also important. Take more breaks if the heat and humidity is high.

(5 minutes) Introductions and Expectations

- **Meet the Coaches**
- **Expectations**
 - **Respect your teammates, opponents and coaches**
 - **This is just like the classroom, when the coach is talking everyone is listening**
 - **Follow the rules of the game**
 - **Have fun!**

(5 minutes) Dynamic Warm-up

- **Activity:**
 - **Cone Touches:** Players jog around a designated area, and on your command, they quickly touch a cone with their hand. This helps with agility and reaction time.
 - **High Knees and Butt Kicks:** Short bursts of high knees and butt kicks to warm up leg muscles used in running.
 - **Arm Circles and Swings:** Forward and backward arm circles and across-the-body arm swings to warm up throwing muscles.
- **Progression:** In later weeks, incorporate lateral shuffles and quicker reaction drills.

(10 minutes) Flag Pulling Fundamentals

- **Activity:**
 - **Partner Flag Pulling (Stationary):** Players pair up. Each player wears flags. Taking turns, each player practices approaching and pulling the flag, emphasizing reaching for the flag and avoiding contact with the body. Switch roles.
 - **Flag Pulling on the Move (Slow Walk):** Repeat the above drill, but this time the offense player slowly walks or jogs. The defender practices proper angle of approach and pulling the flag while the "runner" tries to evade *without* protecting the flag.

- **Progression:** Increase the speed of the "runner" over subsequent weeks. Introduce the concept of taking proper angle pursuit to cut off the runner's path.

(15 minutes) Catching Fundamentals

- **Activity:**
 - **Catching Fundamentals Drill:** Form two lines facing each other. Practice throwing and catching at a short distance. Emphasize keeping hands being outstretched and hands together forming a diamond between the index fingers and thumbs. A "Camera" aperture for them to see and catch the ball with.
 - **Circle Catching with Movement:** Coach in the middle of a circle. Toss the ball to players, encouraging them to take a step towards the ball as they catch. Remind them to use the CAMERA technique.
- **Progression:** Introduce catching on the run (short distances), catching slightly higher or lower throws, and practicing looking the ball all the way into their hands. We recommend setting up cones where to start and then turn, for an out route at 3 or 5 yards. You can progress to post route, slant and go routes as well.



(15 minutes) Throwing Fundamentals

- **Activity:**
 - **Stationary Throwing to Coaches:** Players form 2 lines. Players take turns throwing to coaches. Focus on basic throwing mechanics:
 - Index finger near nipple of football, other three fingers across laces, thumb under football. Arm up at a 45 degree angle, with elbow at shoulder height and ball at ear height. Stepping with the opposite foot, pointing the non-throwing hand at the target, and following through.

HOW TO THROW A FOOTBALL

WITH A PERFECT, POWERFUL SPIRAL

BY ANDREW SNAVELY



- **Throwing to a Moving Target (Walking Pace):** One player acts as the stationary quarterback. The other player walks a simple straight route, and the quarterback practices timing and leading the receiver with the throw.
- **Progression:** Introduce different throwing distances and the concept of throwing the ball where the receiver *will be*. In later weeks, you can have multiple quarterbacks and receivers practicing simultaneously.

(10 minutes) Basic Route Running (Getting Open)

- **Activity:**
 - **Individual Cone Drills:** Set up cones in a line or a simple pattern. Players practice running straight, making a sharp cut at a cone (without blocking or pushing off), and continuing their run. Use the pass routes used shown above but now focus on creating separation from the defender.
 - **Partner Route Running** Pair players up. Coaches are the QB. One player is a defender; the other runs one of the routes above which the coach will tell the receiver. The quarterback throws to the receiver. Emphasize creating separation with speed and sharp cuts, *not* by obstructing the defender.
- **Progression:** Introduce more complex routes and having players play the QB role.

(5 minutes) Cool Down and Review

- **Activity:** Light stretching as a group. Ask the kids what they learned about flag pulling, catching, throwing, or route running. Reinforce key fundamentals.

Progression Ideas for Subsequent Weeks:

- **Week 2-4 (Preseason):**
 - **Introduce Center Snap:** Practice basic center snaps with the QB over the center. The center can either turn and hand the ball to the QB or an actual snap between the legs for older age groups.
 - **More Complex Route Combinations:** Introduce simple two or three-player route combinations. Have 7 players line up. One Center, One QB, Two linemen (center and lineman also run routes), three wide receivers or two with one running back.

- **Defensive Positioning Fundamentals:** Teach the basic concept of staying between the receiver and the endzone, and maintaining some distance to avoid being easily evaded.
- **QB Footwork (Basic):** Introduce very basic drop-back steps for quarterbacks.
- **Increase Drill Intensity:** Gradually increase the speed and complexity of drills.
- **Weeks 3-12:**
 - **Introduce Additional Offensive Plays:** Run through additional pass and run plays from your playbook. Give every kid an opportunity to catch, run and to be center. Typically, you want between 2 and 3 players to cycle through as QB.
 - **Non-Contact "Defensive Coverage" Drills:** Practice defenders mirroring receivers without attempting to pull flags yet. Focus on positioning.
 - **Scrimmage with Other Teams 7v7**
- **Weeks 5-12 (Regular Season):**
 - **Work on areas of improvement from prior games.**

Remember to adjust the complexity of the drills based on the age and skill level of your players. Consistency in teaching the fundamentals will be key to their development and enjoyment of the game!