

Heads Up Football is so easy kids can teach it

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[By Anthony Stone](#)



[Heads Up Football](#) is not just a tag line or a decal a team puts on its helmets. It is the future of football.

The USA Football program educates coaches on how to lay a foundation and teach the basics of the sport so important tackling and blocking skills can be taught at any level or individual skill level. It also encompasses all-sport player safety aspects of concussion recognition and response; equipment fitting; sudden cardiac arrest awareness; and heat and hydration.

Heads Up Football is taught by coaches at more than 6,300 youth organizations and 1,100 high schools across the nation. The program is designed to be simple enough for a first-year coach with no experience in the sport to pick it up and install it at practices but thorough enough for to benefit any veteran coach.

At St. Ann Catholic School in Chicago, John Krenkel serves as the Player Safety Coach. Each Heads Up Football organization or school appoints a PSC to serve as the conduit between USA Football and the community. Through an online course, an in-person clinic and continuing education at USAFootball.com, Krenkel and other PSCs make sure their coaches are teaching proper technique and are there to answer any questions they have.

I first met Coach Krenkel two years ago at a PSC Clinic. Last month, John tagged me in a Facebook post of his students performing USA Football's blocking techniques, and one of the players was teaching it to the rest of his teammates.

The players were really into it and having fun doing it. Watching the videos, is easy to tell that Coach Krenkel exemplifies what a Player Safety Coach should be. He understands that player safety comes first and is a firm believer that all youth programs should join Heads Up Football.

USA Football doesn't run leagues, nor does it tell you how to coach. USA Football is a resource to help make the sport that we all love better.

All across the nation, players will soon return to the football field for practice. From that first day, more than 1 million young athletes will either learn about Heads Up Football or reinforce what they learned the year before.

It all starts with the breakdown position - feet, squeeze, sink and hands.

As a teacher, I know how important it is to have unity within a coaching staff and players. The verbiage in Heads Up Football's tackling and blocking allows coaches to use a universal language that carries with players throughout their experience with the sport.

For example, if a coach or teammate sees a player overstriding or standing still before tackling a ball-carrier, anyone on the sideline can call out "Buzz" so that player realizes what to do. Buzzing the feet is a key to taking short, choppy steps in the leadup to a tackle so as to come under control and shut off cutback lanes.

Everyone on the team can communicate without frustration or confusion on what they need to do.

As a football coach, I understand that the idea of change, especially with terminology is difficult, but look at it this way: What if your high school players grow up with Heads Up Football and bring that inherent knowledge with them from the first day at the varsity level? Your players are already familiar with the terminology, and the learning curve is nearly cut entirely.

Players would be better learners, tacklers, blockers and their confidence in the system is already instilled.

Watch the video below, and think about it. A system so simple a child can teach it but sophisticated enough that 30-year veteran coaches are learning from it.

<http://usafootball.com/embed/12376>



At the end of the day, I want my children and the people I coach to be part of a better, safer game of football.

Anthony Stone is a USA Football Regional [Master Trainer](#) and a physical education teacher at Gregory Elementary in Rockford, Ill. He has coached football at the youth, middle school, high school, college and indoor professional levels. He has been a coach for the U.S. Women's National Team program and will coach the 2017 Australia Women's Outback National Team. Follow him on Twitter [@Coach_Stone_MT](#) and ask him questions with the hashtag: