

COACHING NFL FLAG 5V5

Teach quick passes and clean handoffs. The quarterback can't run, and 2 rushers come from 7 yards back. Some spots on the field are pass only. This guide covers 10U, 12U and 14U, which play the same rules. 6U and 8U each have their own guide.

You don't need to know football. Most new coaches are parents who said yes. This guide gets you through your first practice and your first game.

WHO

Coaches of NFL FLAG league and tournament teams, 10U to 14U.

AGES

Ages 9 to 14

LEVEL

10U, 12U and 14U

FORMAT

5v5

YOUR FIRST PRACTICE: 60 MINUTES

0:00

10 min

Warm-up: Dynamic warm-up

Agility and flag pulling at game speed.

Drills: 5-10-5 shuttle, Breakdown and pull

10:00

20 min

Skill stations: Position stations

3 stations. Swap every 6 or 7 minutes. One for passers and centers, one for receivers, one for defense.

Drills: Drop and throw, Cone cuts, Backpedal and break

30:00

10 min

Team period: Team period

Offense installs one play while the defense learns its zone drops, then swap.

Drills: Zone drops

40:00

15 min

Scrimmage: Scrimmage

Full 5v5 with game rules. Call plays from your sideline the way you will on game day.

55:00

5 min

Cooldown: Cooldown

Stretch, then two minutes on what the scrimmage stats showed.

Full plan with coaching points: breakawaydata.com/coaching-flag-football/practice-plans/9-10-year-olds/



POSITIONS IN 5V5

Carry 7 to 10 players so everyone rests and everyone plays. Rotate quarterback and center in practice: every player should know both.

OFFENSE

Center

Snaps the ball to the quarterback, then releases into a short route. In most 5v5 rulebooks the center is an eligible receiver, so they are your safety valve.

Quarterback

Calls the play, takes the snap and either hands off, pitches or throws. Teach a quick read and a quick release: the rush is coming.

Running back

Lines up beside or behind the quarterback, takes handoffs and pitches, and runs a short route on pass plays.

Wide receivers (2)

Line up wide, run the deeper routes and stretch the defense. One usually runs a go or post to pull the safety away.

DEFENSE

Rusher

Starts back at the rush line with a hand up. On the snap, she runs straight at the quarterback and reaches for the flag.

Cornerbacks (2)

Cover the wide receivers. Stay between her and the end zone. Pull the flag the moment she catches it.

Linebacker

Plays the middle: watches the center and running back, takes away short throws and fills fast on runs.

Safety

The last line. Stays deep, keeps everything in front of her and is the one who must not miss a flag pull.

WHAT TO TEACH FIRST

1. Flag pulling

Take the angle that cuts the runner off, not the one that chases her. Break down, near hand to the near flag, finish through it.

2. Route basics

Depth and timing. A 5-yard out is 5 yards every time. Receivers who run the same route twice the same way get the ball.

3. Snap and handoff

Add the fake: the quarterback shows the handoff and keeps it to throw. Fakes only work if the real handoff is clean.

4. No-contact habits

No screening on routes, no lowered shoulders, no stiff arms, hands off your own flags. Penalties here cost a down, so they cost drives.



10 RULES THAT CHANGE HOW YOU COACH (1 OF 3)

In our words, with the rulebook section to check. Your league can change some of these, so confirm before the first game.

1. Your quarterback does not run

The rule: Handoffs, pitches and laterals only behind the line. One forward pass. It must start behind the line and cross it. The quarterback can't run with the snap. No center sneak.

Practice handoffs every week. The quarterback can't run the ball past the line herself. Every run starts with a handoff or pitch behind the line. You get 1 forward pass a play, thrown from behind the line. On game day, a dropped handoff costs you the play.

NFL FLAG §X.2-3; §XI.1-2



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-a-rush

2. Two rushers, from 7 yards, on a pass clock

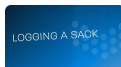
The rule: Up to 2 rushers, each with a hand raised. They start at the 7-yard rush line. Anyone may rush after a handoff or pitch. The passer has 7 seconds. A sack is pulling the quarterback's flag behind the line. No rushing in league play for 8U and younger.

Up to two defenders rush, each with a hand raised and starting at the rush line. Your quarterback has a short clock to throw, so build plays with a throw ready on the third step.

From a real game:

Trailing 16-13 late, Desert Ridge had 1st down 14 yards from the end zone. The quarterback's flag was pulled behind the line for a 5-yard loss. That is a sack. In NFL FLAG, up to 2 rushers may come from 7 yards back. The drive ended without a score.

NFL FLAG §XIII; §XI.3; NFL FLAG changes #2, #3



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-a-sack

3. Two no-run zones every drive

The rule: 2 on every drive: the 5 yards before midfield and the 5 yards before the goal line. No running plays across the line there. League play skips them for 8U and younger.

The 5 yards before midfield and the 5 before the goal line are pass-only. Practice two pass plays you trust from each spot.

From a real game:

A 13-yard run put Lakeview 3 yards from the end zone, trailing 7-0. Inside the 5, NFL FLAG allows no running plays. So Lakeview had to throw. After an incompletion, it scored on a 3-yard pass.

NFL FLAG §IV.1, 3; §X.5; §XVIII



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-a-rush

4. Four downs to midfield, three to score

The rule: 4 downs to cross midfield. Then 3 downs to score.

Midfield is the first down. Past it, the offense has three tries to reach the end zone. Call plays by series, and save your best play for the down you cannot waste.

From a real game:

SoCal Fire Elite faced 4th down at its own 22, 3 yards short of midfield. A 7-yard pass got them across. In NFL FLAG, crossing midfield earns a new set of 3 downs to score. They scored on the 3rd one.

NFL FLAG §I.3



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/move-the-ball



10 RULES THAT CHANGE HOW YOU COACH (2 OF 3)

5. Punts are declared, not kicked

The rule: No kicking. On 4th down (or 3rd) the coach calls punt or play. A punt gives the other team the ball at its own 5.

On the last down before midfield, you choose. Run a play, or give the other team the ball at its own 5. Decide before the game when you will punt.

NFL FLAG §I.3; NFL FLAG changes #5



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/4th-down-punt

6. Flag guarding costs a down

The rule: It means blocking a flag pull. That covers a stiff arm, or dropping your shoulder, arm, hand, head or the ball in the way. A jersey over the flags counts too. Penalty: 5 yards and the down.

Teach ball carriers to run with arms free and shirts tucked. Stiff arms are a foul. So is dropping a shoulder or covering a flag. On game day, it costs 5 yards and a down.

NFL FLAG §XIV.7; §XVII.iii



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-a-penalty

7. Nobody blocks, nobody screens

The rule: No blocking or screening. No holding the ball carrier or running through them.

Receivers clear space with routes, not bodies. Teach them to run past defenders, never to set up in a defender's path.

NFL FLAG §X.8; §XIV.2



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-a-penalty

8. Ball carriers keep their feet

The rule: No jumping, leaping or hurdling. The ball is spotted where you left the ground. Spins and jump cuts are fine. Defenders may dive to pull a flag or make a catch.

No jumping or hurdling to avoid a pull; spins and jump cuts are fine. Defenders may dive, but at youth ages we still coach them to stay up and pull.

NFL FLAG §IX.6j; §X.6-7; §XIV.2



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-a-flag-pull



10 RULES THAT CHANGE HOW YOU COACH (3 OF 3)

9. Interceptions come back

The rule: Yes, you can run them back. A return touchdown is 6 during regular play. It is 2 on a try or in overtime. A backward pass behind the line can be picked off and run back too.

Teach defenders to catch, tuck and run. A pick can be run back for a score. Teach your offense to chase the ball the moment it is picked.

From a real game:

Trailing 14-6, Harbor Point took over at its own 5 after a punt. Two plays later, a pass was picked off and returned for a touchdown. In NFL FLAG, a pick-six is worth 6 points during regulation. It made the score 20-6.

NFL FLAG §VII.3; §XII.4; NFL FLAG changes #4; NFL FLAG rules page



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/interceptions-and-the-pick-six

10. Pick the try before you snap it

The rule: Touchdown: 6. The try after it: 1 point from the 5 (pass only) or 2 from the 10 (run or pass). You call your choice. Changing it costs a timeout.

1 point from the 5 must be a pass. 2 points from the 10 can be a run or a pass. Have one play ready for each, and know which you want before the touchdown happens.

From a real game:

After the game's first touchdown, SoCal Fire Elite chose the 1-point try. It was good, making it 7-0. In NFL FLAG, the 1-point try starts at the 5 and must be a pass. The 2-point try starts at the 10.

NFL FLAG §VII.1, 2, 5



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/record-an-extra-point-plus-1-or-plus-2-xp-attempt-after-td



GAME-DAY CHECKLIST

- ☐ A flag belt and flags for every player, plus spares, in a color that does not match anyone's shorts.
- ☐ Mouth guards, water and a first aid kit.
- ☐ Game balls in the size your ruleset sets for this age.
- ☐ Your roster with jersey numbers, and who starts at quarterback and center.
- ☐ A short play sheet: three or four plays, one for the goal line, one for the try.
- ☐ A quick word with the other coach and the official on the rules you are playing.
- ☐ Someone to stat the game in the BreakAway app. Families follow along, and every player gets a stat card.
- ☐ Your call for every 4th down: go for it, or take the punt your ruleset allows.

FOR YOUR LEVEL

10U

Keep it to 4 or 5 plays and 1 zone defense. At NFL FLAG tournaments, girls' 10U uses the smaller black ball. Practice with the ball you will play with.

NFL FLAG §III, Tournament Play 3

14U

Players are ready for motion, option routes and disguised coverages. Many will play high school flag next, where the rules change: see the girls' high school guides.

Coaches stay on the sideline

From 10U up, you coach from the sideline. Only the younger divisions allow a coach on the field.

NFL FLAG §VIII.2

12U

Add a second read for the quarterback and a man coverage to go with your zone. Start coaching the try decision and the punt decision as real choices.

Gear every NFL FLAG player needs

Mouth guards are required for every player on the field, and the ball should suit the age group.

NFL FLAG §III.1

THE OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

NFL FLAG Official Playing Rules (Revised March 24, 2025)

https://cdn.mediavalet.com/usca/rcx/DgBtnnoMFUCXWCBQE3YN2w/XMiAtpBTH0er4fUrKeYJAQ/Original/NFL_Flag_Rulebook_21423.pdf

NFL FLAG Flag Football Rules (Web page, as of October 6, 2026)

<https://nflflag.com/coaches/flag-football-rules>

STAT YOUR GAMES FREE IN BREAKAWAY

- Statting is free.
- Pick the NFL FLAG 5v5 preset in the app. Change what your league does differently. Then stat every game.
- 100,000+ ruleset combinations, so your league's rules fit.
- Every game you stat gets a live game center families can follow from anywhere. You also get a box score and a stat card for every athlete. Team leaderboards, season totals and recaps come with it.

