

COACHING USA FLAG 5'S

Midfield is the only first down. After most turnovers, the new offense starts at its own 5. The only pass-only zone is right in front of the goal line. Youth teams get a coach on the field. Teach a few good pass plays for near the goal line.

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 USA Flag 5's league and tournament teams, youth to adult.

AGES

All ages, youth to adult

LEVEL

Youth (13 and under), junior (14 to 17) and adult

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/


Game day:

stat it free in the BreakAway app

Scan, or visit breakawaydata.com/stats

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. Midfield is the only first down

The rule: 4 plays to cross midfield, then 4 to score. Midfield is the only first down.

You get 4 plays to cross midfield, then 4 to score. There is no other first down. So 1 big play past midfield beats 3 short ones.

From a real game:

Northshore faced 4th down at its own 16, still 9 yards short of midfield. A 16-yard pass carried them across. In USA Flag 5's, midfield is the only first down. Crossing it gave them 4 new plays to score.

USA Flag 5's R1-1-2a



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

2. Turnovers restart at the 5

The rule: The other team starts at its own 5. That is true for every change of possession except an interception.

On every change of possession except an interception, the new offense starts at its own 5. Practice your opening play from the 5 every week.

From a real game:

Northshore reached the 5-yard line on its first play past midfield. Then 3 straight passes fell incomplete. In USA Flag 5's, you get 4 plays to score once you cross midfield. LC Legends took over at its own 5.

USA Flag 5's R1-1-2b, c, e



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

3. Pass only near the goal line

The rule: Just 1: the 5 yards before the goal line. Every play there must be a pass, even after a handoff. Leagues may drop it for beginners.

Inside the 5 in front of the end zone, every play is a pass, even after a handoff. Build two goal-line passes.

USA Flag 5's R1-7-1, R1-7-2, R4-2-3



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

4. The quarterback runs only after a handback

The rule: Any number of handoffs and backward passes, all behind the line. The quarterback can't run unless the ball comes back to them. No center sneak. Throwing the ball away on purpose is a foul.

She can carry it if a teammate hands or pitches it back to her. That reverse-and-return is a legal way to get your best runner the ball. No center sneaks.

USA Flag 5's R1-3-1b; R4-2-2; R4-3-1



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



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

5. Two signaled blitzers, from 7 yards

The rule: Up to 2 blitzers, each 7 or more yards back with a hand raised. Anyone may rush after a handoff. The 7-second clock ends only on a handoff or pass. A sack is pulling the quarterback's flag behind the line.

Blitzers start 7 or more yards off with a hand up; anyone may cross after a handoff. The pass clock stops only on a handoff or a throw, so the quarterback must make a decision.

USA Flag 5's R1-3-2; R4-5-1 to 6; R4-3-3



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

6. Leaving your feet is flag guarding

The rule: Leaving your feet to dodge a flag pull is flag guarding. That covers a dive, leap or jump. Avoiding a crash is the exception. Spins are fine unless out of control. Defenders may dive for a flag. Teach cuts and spins, not jumps. Diving or jumping to dodge a pull is flag guarding. The only exception is to avoid a crash.

USA Flag 5's R4-2-4b-d; R4-7-2



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

7. Blocking is a 10-yard foul

The rule: No blocking or screening: 10 yards and the down. The rulebook also explains shielding and aiming.

Screens and blocks cost 10 yards and a down. Coach routes that create space by spacing.

USA Flag 5's R4-2-5; R4-6; R6-3



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

8. Interceptions are returnable

The rule: Yes, you can run them back. The new offense starts where the play ends. A defensive touchdown on a try is 2.

And the new offense starts where the return ends, not at the 5. A pick is the one turnover that can flip the field.

USA Flag 5's R1-1-2d, R4-4-4; R4-1-2



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



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

9. Tries: 1 from the 5 (pass), 2 from the 10

The rule: Touchdown: 6. The try after it is 1 point from the 5 or 2 from the 10. From the 5 it must be a pass, since that is the no-run zone. From the 10 you may run or pass.

The 1-point try sits in the no-run zone, so it must be a pass. Have both plays ready.

USA Flag 5's R4-1-1, R4-1-2



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

10. 30 points ends it

The rule: The game ends at a 30-point lead, with no try. The league clock rule also says a 30-point lead means a running clock.

A 30-point lead ends the game. With a big lead, rotate players and positions instead of running up the score.

From a real game:

Up 26-0 in the 2nd half, Harbor Point threw a 34-yard touchdown on 3rd down. That made it 32-0. Under USA Flag 5's rules, a 30-point lead ends the game right there. There was no try after the touchdown.

USA Flag 5's R4-1-4; R2-1-1



Watch how to stat it:
breakawaydata.com/breakaway-u/halftime-quarters-or-running-clock



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

Youth: a coach on the field

Youth teams can have 1 coach out with the players. Use it to call the play and help kids find their spots. When the quarterback starts her count, stop talking and stand behind everyone. Junior and adult coaches stay on the sideline.

USA Flag 5's R1-1-3

The clock by age

For ages 5 to 12, league games should use a running clock. Tournament games are two 12-minute halves. Juniors play 15-minute halves.

USA Flag 5's R2-1-1; USA Flag 5's R2-2-1

Under 8: the ball and the no-run zone

Under 8 uses a peewee ball. Older youth games use a junior ball. A bigger ball is fine, a smaller one is not. For kids still learning to catch, leagues can drop the pass-only zone.

USA Flag 5's R1-5-2; USA Flag 5's R1-7-2

Mouth guards

Required for every player on the field.

USA Flag 5's R1-4-5

THE OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

USA Flag 5's Rulebook (v2026.2)

<https://resources.usafootball.com/assets/usawebsite/usa-flag-5-s-rulebook-2026.2-v2.pdf>

STAT YOUR GAMES FREE IN BREAKAWAY

- Statting is free.
- Pick the USA Flag 5s (League) 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.

