

AMERICAN FOOTBALL FLAG FOOTBALL FESTIVAL

Quick introduction

The Flag Football festival is an ideal introduction to American Football and has been designed to accommodate those who are new or inexperienced to the game in a fun, appropriate pace that works particularly well with children of all abilities. It is suitable for a large number of children, commonly up-to 20 per station. Activities are differentiated by outcome and can be refined to reflect the needs of all young people.

For more details on how to support this festival please download the BAFA Flag football festival toolkit from: www.britishamericanfootball.org/schools

Quick rules

- Each skill station (activity) should last for between 15-20 minutes.
- Teams of between 10 (up-to 4 teams per station).
- Teams work their way around the activity stations transitioning between the different skills that are required to play Flag Football.

Think tactics

- When throwing tell the Receiver their pattern so that the QB knows where to throw the ball. The Receiver will then have a better chance of catching it
- There are many different roles in American Football. Do you like defending, throwing, catching, or running? Choose a position that suits your strengths!

Equipment

- American Football challenge activity cards
- BAFA Flag football festival toolkit
- Flag/tag belts for every participant (rugby tag belts are perfectly fine. Most activities can be run without the need for any tag belts)
- Cones
- Junior/Youth size American footballs – these can be purchased through preferred suppliers at www.britishamericanfootball.org/schools

Getting started

Festival: 1.5 hours (3 skill stations) – 2hours (4-5 skill stations) – Duration can be modified based on number and time spent on each activity.

Introduction: 10 minutes.

Activities: Each activity runs for between 15 – 20 minutes (with built-in progressions for those for require additional challenge). Allow participants 5 minutes to move between each activity and have instructions explained.

Ideally these festivals would take place in a large, open space outside however many of the activities provided can be adapted to be played in a sports hall.

Health and safety

- Flag Football is a non-contact game – players should make efforts to avoid contact wherever possible.
- Ensure the playing area is large enough and each skill station has adequate space.
- All players should be given the opportunity to warm-up first.



Leading and volunteering

- Young people can be used to lead each skill station or manage individual teams – supported by teachers, SGOs and/or club officials.
- All organisers should refer to the Flag football festival checklist (toolkit) for advice and guidance.

Officiating

- Refer to the Flag football festival checklist (toolkit) for advice and guidance.

Hints and tips

- Consult the challenge cards for more details.
- If there are not enough tags play two touch to make a tackle.
- Keep the pace appropriate to all children – some may benefit from more challenge whilst others may not.

Think inclusively STEP

- Space:** For any throwing or catching challenges the distance of the throw should be adjusted to match the ability of the players.
- Task:** Rules and roles, speed and direction can be adapted to suit – for example:
- Good tacklers could be asked to try to take both tag belts.
 - Players who are less confident catching can do so at walking speed until they build confidence to move faster.
 - Alternate throws between above the head and below the waist catches.
- Equipment:** Use an appropriate (sized) ball for all throwing and catching challenges. If you do not have enough balls available, rugby or tennis balls can be used as an alternative in the festival format.
- People:** All challenges are about personal best so just ensure that all players have a chance to take part in each challenge multiple times.



Sporting ME: Spirit of the Games

Excellence through competition

Self-belief: If you found the challenge hard at first did you persevere and improve on your skills?

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL QUARTERBACK CHALLENGE

Quick introduction

The Quarterback challenge is about practicing the skill of throwing an American Football. The aim of the game is to throw the ball accurately to the player opposite you as you try to perfect that spiral!



Equipment

- One ball per team of up-to 10
- Cones

Getting started

- You should start this game with a catching and throwing warm-up. Line the participants in pairs facing each other 5-10 yards apart. Players should practice throwing back and forth concentrating on an overarm throw and catching the ball with palms facing outwards.
- For this challenge, teams of 5 or 6 (mixed or same gender) line-up one behind the other facing a cone with a football on it.
- The activity starts by the first player running to the ball, picking it up and then throwing it back to the next person in line.
- This player catches the ball (or recovers it if they drop it) and runs forward to the cone then turns around and throws in back to the next player.
- After each player throws the ball they must run to the back of their team line and wait for their next turn. All players must run, catch and throw three times each.
- The game ends with the winning team sitting down.

Health and safety

- Use an appropriate ball that every player feels comfortable gripping, throwing and catching.
- The player that has thrown the ball and is running back to their team line, must run to their right.
- Reinforce constantly that players should watch the ball into their hands (until they catch it).



Physical ME

- The ball should be held with a firm, but not too tight a grip with fingers spread from one end of the ball towards the middle on the top. The thumb squeezing the bottom of the ball, ideally with a small gap between the ball and the palm. At least one finger should be able to grip the lace.
- Instruct players to throw the ball using an over-arm one-handed throwing action.
- The pointy end of the ball should be facing your target with your throwing elbow at shoulder height.
- Players should stand side-on to their target with the non-throwing shoulder, arm and foot facing the target.
- Encourage players to make sure the inside of the index finger is the last part of their hand that touches the football as they release the ball to perfect the ball spiralling!
- Encourage throwers to step through as they throw.
- Discourage underarm passes.

Social ME

Leading and volunteering

- Leaders can be used to support players to choose the best distance to throw.
- Leaders should also support with the correct catching technique to ensure the passes are being completed – palms facing outwards. watching the ball in.

Thinking ME

- How hard should I throw the ball?
- How can I ensure the ball travels in the direction of my receiver?

Tactical ME

- I always make sure I have a firm but not too tight a grip on the ball and try to release the ball so that it comes off my index finger last by making a rainbow shape with my wrist as the ball comes out.

Sporting ME Spirit of the Games

Excellence through competition



Determination: I always give my best every time I play.



Determination: I support and listen to my teammates and provide positive encouragement.

Think inclusively STEP

Space: For any throwing or catching challenges the distance of the throw should be adjusted to match the ability of the players.

Task: Rules and roles, speed and direction can be adapted to suit – for example:

- Good tacklers could be asked to try to take both tag belts
- Players who are less confident catching can do so at walking speed until they build confidence to move faster
- Alternate throws between above the head and below the waist catches.

Equipment: Use an appropriate (sized) ball for all throwing and catching challenges. If you do not have enough ball available, rugby or tennis balls can be used as an alternative in the festival format.

People: All challenges are about personal best so just ensure that all players have a chance to take part in each challenge multiple times.

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL RECEIVER CHALLENGE

Quick introduction

The Receiver challenge is about practicing catching the ball in different ways – both standing still and whilst running. The aim of the game is to progress through different patterns (routes) completing as many passes as possible.



Hands for high catch without ball



Hands for high catch with ball



Hands for low catch without ball



Hands for low catch with ball

Equipment

- One appropriate ball per 5-6 players
- Cones to mark distance/direction for patterns

Getting started

- You should start the game with the most confident throwers taking the lead at Quarterback (QB). This can also be a leader or coach.
- Teams of 5-6 players should line up 10 yards to the side of the QB behind a cone, facing the same direction as the QB.
- On the QB signal of **“Hut”** the Receiver should run forwards 5 yards towards a cone, then turn around to face the Quarterback. When the QB sees the Receiver put their hands up ready to receive the ball they should pass the ball. – This is called a **“Hitch”** pattern.
- When all players have had 3 attempts catching the ball the Receivers should next be taught the **“slant”** pattern. – The Receiver should run towards a different colour cone at a 45 degree angle (forwards and towards the QB) with the hands up and ready to catch the ball straight away. The QB should throw the ball in front so the Receiver runs on the ball to catch it.
- After 3 attempts catching the **“slant”** pattern players should next learn the **“go”**, **“post”** and **“out”** patterns.
- After each route has been completed the QB should swap sides with the Receivers.
- **“Go”** = run straight but turn your head towards the QB and try to catch the ball in front of you (you don't have to run this at full speed!).
- **“Post”** = run straight for 5 yards then turn 45 degrees (towards the QB). Look for the ball to be thrown in front of you after you have changed direction.
- **“Out”** = run straight for 5 yards then turn 90 degrees (away from the QB). Look for the ball to be thrown in front of you as you run away from where the QB is standing.

Health and safety

- Reinforce constantly that players should watch the ball into their hands (until they catch it).
- Players should be encouraged to catch the ball softly (with relaxed hands, fingertips very slightly bent).



Physical ME

- Aim to catch the ball with two hands, palms facing the ball and thumbs and forefingers touching to make a diamond shape. If the ball is lower than waist height instead catch the ball with little fingers and side of palms touching to make the diamond shape.

Social ME

Leading and volunteering

- Leaders can be used to initially as the Quarterback until players have better practiced their throwing technique.
- Leaders should also support with the correct catching technique to ensure the passes are being completed – palms facing outwards watching the ball in the whole way.

Thinking ME

- Are there any other patterns that you could run?
- When it is best to run fast, and when it is best to slow down?

Tactical ME

- I always watch the ball into my hands to give myself the best chance of securing the catch.
- If and when I change direction during my pattern I keep running.

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Excellence through competition



Passion: I try to catch every ball thrown at me.

Think inclusively STEP

- Space:** Vary the distance the QB stands away from the Receivers – especially if many passes fall incomplete.
- Task:** Receivers can change their speed, from walking to running full speed as they grow more confident catching the ball.
- Equipment:** If you don't have enough American Footballs, use any other appropriate ball that can easily be thrown and caught.
- People:** Decrease the number of people involved in a group (the minimum number needed is just two).
You can add a defender who stands 5 yards in front of the Receiver, and without contacting them, tries to stop the Receiver from catching the ball by marking them.

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL

PULL THE FLAG CHALLENGE

Quick introduction

Pull the Flag challenge is about practicing how to tackle, by pulling a flag/tag from the ball-carrier (runner). The aim of the game for the defenders is to pull the flag before the ball-carrier gets past. The role of the runner is to evade all the defenders without going outside the lane to score a touchdown.



Equipment

- Cones to mark lanes and also the defender lines at 5, 10 and 15 yards, 0 yard line and goal line.
- One ball per team (3 defenders, 1 ball-carrier, 1 QB)

Getting started

- Make a 20-yard lane of cones, 5-7 yards wide.
- In teams of 5 with three defenders stand at 5, 10, and 15 yards away respectively with the 20-yard line being the touchdown line/goal line. They can only shuffle side to side and cannot take steps forwards or backwards. They try to pull the ball carriers' flags as the ball carriers run through the gauntlet (one at a time).
- The ball carrier starts on the '0' yard line next to the Quarterback who hands them the ball. They must run to try to get across the goal line with at least one flag. If one flag is pulled they continue running and try to evade the remaining defenders. If both flags are pulled, the challenge is over and the next ball carrier can begin.
- If a ball carrier runs outside the lane, they are disqualified, as are defenders that step forward or backward off their line.
- Once the ball-carrier has scored a TD or had their flags pulled they become the last defender. The defenders all move up one spot with the first defender becoming the QB, and the QB becoming the ball-carrier.
- Continue the challenge until every player has had multiple opportunities at each position.

Health and safety

- Defenders should try to reach for the nearest flag, always ensuring that they keep their head up and not place it in front of a charging ball-carrier!



Physical ME

- Support the ball-carrier to hold the ball properly by tucking it to one side of their body, hand towards the end of the ball with a firm grip.
- Defenders should be encouraged to move laterally (side-to-side) along their line.

Social ME

Leading and volunteering

- Leaders should stand by the side of the goal line and encourage all players. They should also continue to repeat the rules (defenders staying on the lines, runners staying between the cones).

Thinking ME

- As a ball-carrier, is it best to run as fast as possible, or change speeds?
- As a defender how can I make sure that I am in the best position to take the flag/tag?

Tactical ME

- If I run one way I can set up a defender before I cut back to go to the other side of them.

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Excellence through competition



Honesty: Ball-carriers should put both hands on the ball so that they are not tempted to 'flag-guard' by stopping the defenders from taking their flags/tags.

Think inclusively STEP

Space: Vary the width of the cones - the thinner the lane the more difficult the drill for the ball carrier, the wider the more difficult for the defenders.

Task: Rotate roles so that every player has a chance to be the defender at each stage and also the ball carrier. Progress the challenge to include a pass from the Quarterback from the 5, 10, 15 yard line or goal line to the ball-carrier before they can then run.

Equipment: Any appropriate ball can be used. If you don't have tag belts, tuck in a bib next to each hip.

People: Add an additional runner or defender to increase the level of challenge for each side.

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