



FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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CONTACT MANUAL

The Football Development Model is USA Football's adoption of the American Development Model





CONTACT MANUAL & COACHING OVERVIEW

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CONTACT MANUAL & COACHING OVERVIEW



“From a development standpoint ... it makes all the sense in the world to start with limited contact, or maybe with no contact and work to limited contact and then to full contact.”



John Benton
Offensive Line Coach
QB Collective
San Francisco 49ers



INTRODUCTION & HOW TO'S

WHAT IS THE CONTACT MANUAL?

This manual is USA Football's instructional guide for introducing and teaching the contact skills needed for success in football as well as other athletic activities.

This manual begins with a broad look at player development. It addresses preparing for contact and developing physical qualities to benefit young athletes.

The later sections focus specifically on Prep for Contact, Blocking, Defeating Blocks and Flag Pulling and Tackling in the context of the various game types within the Football Development Model (FDM). By rule, different game types allow for different forms of contact which can help coaches gradually introduce key contact skills.

The foundational concepts for contact skills and general physical development also hold value for all football athletes and coaches. While this is a "Contact Manual," it is relevant for all football game categories and contact levels.

WHEN SHOULD I USE THIS MANUAL?



This manual can be used year-round for an athlete's sports journey. The material spans from basic, non-organized sport athletic development to non-contact and full-contact practice drills.

As players enter organized contact football, the Prep for Contact curriculum is designed for all game types.

When implemented properly and consistently, this curriculum advances athletes' abilities and prepares them for contact skill success. Those who choose to stay in non-contact benefit from the sections' athletic development content.

The curriculum also develops more experienced, full-contact players, supporting their growing skills and physical capabilities as they continue to mature in size and strength.

This guide should be continually referenced during the football season to add drills, activities and games to practice that support high-quality athlete development. It also teaches how athletes may best position and use their bodies in space and in contact.

The skills and drills progression by game type should be referenced by coaches to keep practice fresh, fun and ensure core abilities are being addressed with every athlete under your care.

WHAT WILL I FIND INSIDE THIS MANUAL?

The material presented here is designed to help you develop both general sports contact abilities as well as teach football-specific contact skills to your athletes.

This manual is segmented and presented in a way that is consistent with the framework of the Football Development Model. The material is separated by game type to help coaches identify skills and techniques that should be targeted and taught for each game based on the rules and amount of contact allowed.

Each Game Category section will address:

- Prep for Contact
- Blocking & Defeating Blocks
- Flag Pulling & Tackling

This creates a long-term model that follows an athlete through their football journey and continues to layer new skills, based on the foundation of what has already been learned.

PROGRESSION CHART							
GAME CATEGORY		NON-CONTACT		LIMITED CONTACT		CONTACT	
GAME TYPE		FLAG		ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™	SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™	ROOKIE TACKLE®	SENIOR TACKLE™
BLOCKING	Progression	Coil	Focus on Prep for Contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Uncoil		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Fit		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Finish		Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes
DEFEATING BLOCKS	Progression	Coil	Focus on Prep for Contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Uncoil		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Fit		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Finish		Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes
FLAG PULLING & TACKLING	Equipment	TackleBar®	No	Yes	Yes	Practice Tool	Practice Tool
		Padded Flag	No	Yes	Yes	Practice Tool	Practice Tool
	Progression	Track	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Prepare	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Connect	No	Tackle Bar®: Yes Padded Flag: No	Tackle Bar®: Yes Padded Flag: No	Yes	Yes
		Accelerate	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
		Finish	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

The progression of contact skills is arranged by game type. Coaches can select their game type and identify the contact skills players will need based on rules. This manual presents a progression for introducing each contact skill as players enter a game type and the coach begins to teach them.

Coaches should consider the experience level of their athletes as well as the game types that were offered previously in their league to identify what most players have been introduced to and what is new learning. Coaches must be mindful that youth sports teams may have “first timers” as well as returners. Review and regression of teaching will be needed to enhance learning.

CONTACT WITH REGARD TO THINKING, FEELING & BEHAVING

Coaches should always consider more than just the physical aspect of a drill or game.

Athletes who lack the skills or experience in sport are often hesitant and seen as fearful. Consider the simple act of going to the ground. Those who have fears or hesitation going to the ground will struggle because this emotional response will limit certain actions during play, and it will certainly impact their enjoyment of the game.

These hesitations and fear happen in every sport. It could be being diving for a pass, a slide tackle in soccer or a shortstop laying out for a hard-hit grounder. In contact versions of the game, athletes routinely make contact with the ground throughout a game.

> MORE RESOURCES

.....
Please use this Contact Manual alongside USA Football’s Certification Curriculum.

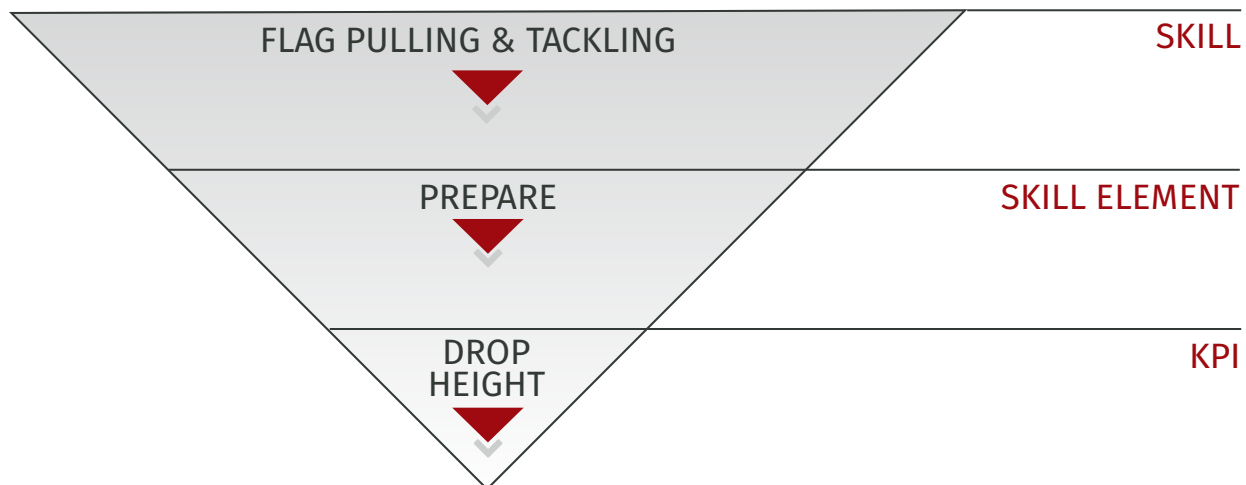
Within the Player Progression Guide, you’ll find Core technical skills and drills.

Click here to access the guide.

Make sure to also review USA Football’s Practice Plans, which will help you adhere to USA Football’s Practice Guidelines. **Click here to access.**

Check out USA Football’s Coach Planner app for Android and Apple. Learn more at **usafootball.com/coach-planner**.

HOW ARE SKILLS BROKEN DOWN?



WHAT IS A SKILL PROGRESSION?

Teaching the right fundamentals of a skill at the right time keeps sports fun and fulfilling. This outlook avoids overwhelming athletes while helping them grow at a steady pace.

A step-by-step approach for each skill – called a Skill Progression – helps athletes achieve success before adding complexity. It helps coaches identify where to start and helps them teach players in a layered approach.

Once the basics of a skill are mastered, coaches can add more KPIs to help that athlete develop and compete at a higher level to achieve more success.

Our contact skill progression is based on the experience and insight of coaches and medical experts. Building these progressions takes athletes' physical, thinking, feeling and behaving abilities and matches them up to the difficulty to perform the task at hand.

WHAT IS A SKILL ELEMENT?

Skill Elements are the major motor patterns that make up a singular football skill.

These have been selected because they are consistent within a specific skill at all stages of development and game types. While the detail and ability may vary, we know quality execution includes these items.

As an example, the Flag Pulling & Tackling Progression is made up of:

- Track
- Prepare
- Connect
- Accelerate
- Finish

So, regardless of an athlete's stage within the Football Development Model or their game type, the coaching they receive should cover at least those five Skill Elements within the Flag Pulling & Tackling Skill.

WHAT IS A KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)?

KPIs are root actions or movements that make up the larger Skill Elements.

They identify reasons for good or poor performance within each skill. KPIs illustrate what successful performance looks like.

Unlike most Skill Elements, an increasing amount of KPIs are highlighted as an athlete develops or participates in more advanced game types. This helps coaches further hone an athlete's overall skill development.

One of the great values of KPIs is the ease in which you can add complexity to a drill while doing the exact same activity. For example, you can introduce a Tackling drill and say that "Shoulder Accuracy" is the KPI every player should focus on.

After players have shown the ability to put their shoulder and head in a good place on contact, you could do the same drill, but ask the player to now display "initial shoulder accuracy," "arm clamp" and "leg drive." Adding Key Performance Indicators increases the complexity and technical demands of the same drill.



“Standardized skill progression takes the guessing game out of your plan ... It helps you script out your practice.”

Manuel Fraga
Football Coach
Miami Xtreme Youth Football

COACHING BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES: SMALL-SIDED GAMES VS. TRAINING

Early in an athletes' sports journey, they will not possess the mental capacity or maturity to understand what we might call, "training."

They may not understand that – as a coach – you have them do an exercise or drill because it will help them in their sport. Athletes see most tasks and activities as independent.

You can make it a game by saying, "We want you to crawl under this pad and not let your back touch it." This shifts their focus from the drill to an actionable item they can try to achieve.

Breaking down comprehensive concepts and skills into smaller "bite-sized" chunks is a very effective coaching/teaching strategy. Utilizing drills, games and activities that involve fewer players (e.g., 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4, etc...) and smaller defined spaces, is a great way for players to learn technique, movement and awareness with specific transfer to much needed sport skills. An example is playing tag games to teach agility and evasive running instead of cutting drills.

As athletes get older, they start to make this mental connection and may understand you are having them do "X" because it helps them get better at "Y."

This means you can begin to train in a more structured manner, asking them to get in lines and do traditional calisthenics, tumbling and crawling drills because they can relate it to future success in football.

That said, always remember, even professional athletes enjoy games and activities. To truly engage your learners, strive to utilize games, challenges and activities over drills whenever possible.

BEST PRACTICES: TRAINING AND CONDITIONING

It is important to remember that the drills in the Contact Manual have been deliberately selected to help produce better athletes and prepare athletes for contact within a wide variety of sports. Each drill or activity has key coaching points to focus on, as well as specific training objectives to accomplish.

While some of these drills demand concentration, high levels of effort and high muscular work, they should not be used as punishment or done for conditioning to a point that the core teachings fail.

Remember, the target goals are to develop things like spatial awareness, balance, coordination and shoulder girdle strength.

Using these exercises as punishment or conditioning often means an inappropriate volume or intensity. This means the drills lose the intended teaching and take on an objective of survival. Think of a poorly conducted Bear Crawl – while hard work is being done, the focus on good posture and core strength is lost.

RECOMMENDATION TO PROHIBIT SELECT DRILLS

In the interest of safer play and to remove high-risk drills which have limited transfer to skill development, USA Football recommends youth programs prohibit contact drills that meet the following criteria:

- Only promote or teach contact "down the middle" of an opponent with no intent to offset the contact point.
- Do not allow for players to win with speed or angles, but only through physical contact or collision.
- Game- or Pod-based drills that require no game-specific reaction such as a designated ball insertion point for the offense, a run/pass threat or designating a specific gap to control for the defense.
- Any full-contact drills that allow for greater than a 2:1 player-to-player ratio.
- Drills that include any of the essential elements listed in the above definitions.

This would include player-to-player contact drills such as:

- Board Drill / OL vs. DL In-Line Run Blocking with no variation of run, pass or play going right or left
- Bull in the Ring / King of the Circle
- Oklahoma Drill
- Pods / 3-Spot without Run-Pass Read

RECOMMENDATION ON THE TWO-POINT STANCE

For youth football programs playing any version of Non-Contact, Limited Contact and/or Modified Contact games (i.e., Rookie Tackle®), it is recommended that all players initiate movement from the two-point stance.

For youth tackle football played at the Senior Tackle™ level (traditional full field, full contact), programs are encouraged to instruct and use the two-point stance for players on the offensive side of the line of scrimmage.

“You don’t drop a young person who’s just learning the sport into a full team live period. That’s not beneficial to them, I don’t think it’s safe, I don’t think it’s smart.”

David Shaw
Head Football Coach
Stanford University

MANAGING CONTACT & LEVELS OF CONTACT

When working with contact or pre-contact skills, coaches need to be mindful of the total amount of contact the practice will contain and the intensity of the contact work being done.

Just like proper strength training or conditioning, you want to be mindful of the load being placed on the athlete and do what is needed for development, but not so much that it takes a negative toll on the human body.

A great place to start is by using **USA Football's Levels of Contact**. This defines the intensity of contact and allows coaches to manipulate the level used within the drills. Lower levels are best for teaching, while higher levels should be used periodically to test an athlete's current ability in competitive situations.

LEVELS OF CONTACT	Contact	Intensity	Description
No Player-to-Player	AIR	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
	BAGS	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill is run with a bag or against another soft contact surface.
Controlled Contact	CONTROL	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill is run at an assigned speed until the moment of contact. • One player is pre-determined the winner by the coach. • Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet.
	CONTROL to GROUND	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill is run at an assigned non-competitive speed or with players pre-engaged. • One player is pre-determined as the winner. • Players are allowed to take their opponent to the ground in a controlled manner.
Full Contact	THUD	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill is run at a competitive speed through the moment of contact. • There is no predetermined "winner." • Contact is above the waist. • Players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
	LIVE	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drill is run at a competitive speed in game-like conditions.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Always consider the entire practice and do not get lost in specific drills. To monitor daily and weekly contact load, it is highly recommended as a best practice that coaches assign a Level of Contact for all periods in their practice plans. This includes skill work and drills, not just group or team periods.

When it comes to how contact is used, different coaches may prioritize different periods of practice, but total load should have a threshold to keep your athletes fresh and healthy for gameday.

USA Football's Practice Guidelines on the next page outline these thresholds and serves as a recommendation for youth leagues.

Even when following **Practice Guidelines** and using the Levels of Contact appropriately, you should consider the following when creating matchups for training contact:

- For drills that involve physical contact, grappling or pushing and pulling, coaches should strive to achieve the best possible matchups.
- Physical size is one factor to be considered but is certainly not the only factor. While size is often associated with strength, this will not be the case in all situations, especially when it comes to athletes at different developmental stages.

When searching for proper matchups some items to consider:

1. Size, strength, athletic ability
2. Physical maturity
3. Temperament and aggressiveness
4. Confidence, risk taking, willingness to try new things
5. Mental maturity level
6. Ability to understand the goals of the activity
7. Experience level in the sport and familiarity with the drill
8. Friendships or social bonds

All these items should be considered in the thought process of coaches when identifying correct drill opponents/partnerships that will create quality environments for players to learn and develop.

“Drills have to equate to the position you play. You don't just do drills to do drills - you do drills to help the player become a better technician and position player.”

Herm Edwards
Head Football Coach
Arizona State University

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Preseason Heat Acclimation

Prepare Your Players to Exercise in the Heat

About 90 percent of heat stroke cases occur during the first few days of practice, when athletes are unprepared to cope with environmental conditions and physiological demands.

EXERTIONAL HEAT STROKE (EHS)

currently ranks among the top three causes of deaths in sports.

**GRADUALLY
INCREASE**

Intensity
Duration
Time with equipment



Intensity and Hydration

Keep players hydrated. Schedule rest periods.

Spend the first two weeks of practice gradually increasing the length and intensity of practice as well as the amount of equipment worn. Athletes should have access to fluids at all times and have periods of rest throughout a practice.

Preseason Heat Acclimation

Recommendations should not exceed 1 practice per day.

Practices interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions should only resume once conditions are safe. Modify work-to-rest ratio in extreme environmental conditions or reschedule to cooler parts of the day.

PRACTICE DAYS 1&2



HELMETS ONLY

NO FULL CONTACT DRILLS

PRACTICE DAYS 3&4



HELMETS & PADS ONLY

NO FULL CONTACT DRILLS

Intensity of drills and activities should slowly and gradually increase as part of the acclimatization period.

PRACTICE DAYS 5&6



FULL PADS
(optional)

FULL CONTACT DRILLS ALLOWED

Practice Time Guidelines & Recommendations

AGE	PRACTICE LENGTH (MINUTES)	PRACTICES PER WEEK
Age 5+	30-60 min	1-2 practice(s)
Age 8+	60-90 min	1-3 practice(s)
Age 10+	75-105 min	2-3 practices
Age 12 thru Pre-HS	90-120 min	2-3 practices

Note: This chart is strictly concerned with the frequency and duration of practices as it relates to age. Time limits of contact are addressed on the next page.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Preseason

FULL CONTACT DRILLS

LIMITED To reduce exposures to impacts

30 MIN
PER PRACTICE

75 MIN
PER WEEK Maximum

Preseason Practice Limits
No more than 1 per day.

Preseason practices should be limited to no more than 1 practice per day. No more than one live-action scrimmage is recommended per week. USA Football recommends that practices involving drills or activities considered to be full contact are not allowed on consecutive days. This includes the day following a game or live-action scrimmage. Full contact is defined as any drill or activity in which contact occurs at a competitive speed.

Please refer to USA Football's Practice Time Guidelines for practice frequency.

Use a Practice Planner

Manage teams and practice plans

Schedule practices and activities

Keep track of full contact limits. Share practice plan with others. No more than one full contact game or live-action scrimmage is recommended per week. In postseason, a minimum of three days should lapse between full contact games. USA Football recommends that practices involving drills or activities considered to be full contact are not allowed on consecutive days. This includes the day following a game or live-action scrimmage. Full contact is defined as any drill or activity in which contact occurs at a competitive speed.

Strategize

Plan when to teach or compete and when to adjust contact to promote a better experience for players.

Assign a level of contact to every drill

Plan when to teach or compete and when to adjust. Proper usage of the Levels of Contact system helps players improve their contact skills at a high level While instilling confidence. Employing the Levels of Contact system also helps reduce player fatigue, which can advance player safety.

Youth certified coaches can use the practice planner in USA Football's Coach Planner app.

Learn more at usafootball.com/coach-planner

See the full youth practice guidelines at usafootball.com/guidelines

Regular Season Recap

PRACTICES PER WEEK

Reduce exposures to full contact impacts

Limit Thud and Live Action drills

Please refer to USA Football's Practice Time Guidelines for practice frequency.

30 MIN
FULL CONTACT DRILLS LIMIT PER PRACTICE

60 MIN
MINUTES PER WEEK



FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

usafootball.com/fdm

CONTACT MANUAL

NON-CONTACT

FLAG FOOTBALL

Prep for Contact
Blocking & Defeating Blocks
Flag Pulling & Tackling



NON-CONTACT FLAG

“I believe in the Football Development Model because I believe that it sets a standard and it also gives a road map or a guide as to how to go from a beginning player all the way up to a professional.”

Derick Grant
Flag Coach
Frisco Football League (Texas)

INTRODUCTION

A recommended entry point through the Football Development Model is the Non-Contact game category.

Flag is the primary game type within this category, introducing football skills that serve as foundations for future learning.

By rule, flag football contains no contact. As with any sport, athletes will bump and battle for space within the rules of the game. Because of this, and because the athletes will compete for the same thrown pass or dive for a catch, athletes will go to the ground and need to learn those skills as well.

Even with no direct player-to-player contact, coaches can do their athletes a great service by helping set the foundation for aspects of the sport yet to come.

By using the Prep for Contact materials and Skill Progressions in this section, leagues and coaches can start training contact skills without player-to-player contact.





PREP FOR CONTACT

NON-CONTACT / FLAG

Prep for Contact is a critical step in the development of youth athletes entering both contact and non-contact sports.

Remember, most sports have some form of contact. While we use the vehicle of flag football to deliver this material and develop these traits, these principles and concepts apply across all sports and a lifetime of activity.

The purpose of the Prep for Contact material is to ensure certain physical traits are being developed in young players so that they can support the learning of technical skills later.

PREP FOR CONTACT SKILL ELEMENTS

- Falling
- Tumbling
- Grappling
- Crawling

PREP FOR CONTACT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

While there is no ordered Skill Progression for Prep for Contact, the KPIs below apply to multiple Skill Elements to help you identify athlete success.

KPI(s):

Head and Neck Control

- Hold head and neck in neutral or bowed positions
- Do not let head drop
- Keep head and neck in position while falling, tumbling, and going to the ground
- Prevent head from wobbling

Limb Coordination

- Move the four limbs in any number of combinations involving upper and lower body, same side or crossbody patterns as determined by the activity

Spatial Awareness

- Understanding your body in space in relation to other objects and people
- Understanding where body and body parts are in relation to an opponent or object

Kinesthetic Awareness

- Feeling and understanding where body parts are in relation to each other

Balance

- Keep body upright in various positions
- Maintain proper body position and alignment through various movements

Postural Control

- Establish, change and control spinal positions
- Ability to maintain proper positioning of the spine and limbs

Flexibility and Mobility

- Appropriate positioning of joints
- Appropriate movement of joints
- Ability to demonstrate full range of motion

Manage the Ground

- Ability to go to the ground calmly and effectively
- Learning to effectively absorb impact with the ground with proper body positioning
- Ability to transfer the forces caused by falling using rolling and tumbling techniques

Manage Outside Forces

- Maintain posture against outside forces
- Maintain head and neck position against outside forces
- Maintain coordination and balance against outside forces

Postural Strength

- Hold spinal positions relative to fatigue
 - Hold spinal positions relative to gravity
 - Hold spinal positions relative to outside forces of an opponent
-

PREP FOR CONTACT APPLICATION

While we use the following Skill Progressions to support and prepare young football athletes for contact, the KPIs list is also a collection of goals coaches should strive to develop in well-rounded athletes of all sports.

Training the abilities above may conjure up images of the weight room, but they can be developed via fun, engaging games and activities that promote physical activity and build athletic foundations.

Athletes participating at early stages of the Football Development Model should be introduced to the Prep for Contact curriculum for a proper start to their long-term development.

Athletes who choose to stay in the Non-Contact game through their entire football journey still need the foundation that Prep for Contact teaches to develop body awareness, coordination and postural strength.

While some coaches may not see all these skills, drills or exercises as Non-Contact specific, please don't sacrifice the goals of this material for the sake of winning. A common mistake is to train only flag football skills.

For youth athletes, it is key to train each player to be the best he or she can be by reaching important athletic developmental landmarks listed above. Consider this an investment in your athlete's future skill development and future sport endeavors. This is a great way to provide new and engaging activities in practice, not just a precursor to contact football.

The **Practice Plans** provided by USA Football will help players master basic falling, tumbling and crawling movements in a fluid manner. We will also introduce some push-pull games and grappling to spur development and growth.



Drills to Support

- Angle of Pursuit Drill
- Animal Crawl Relay
 - a. Bear Crawl
 - b. Seal Crawl
 - c. Crab Crawl
 - d. Shrimping
- Animal Walk Relay
 - a. Monkey Walk
 - b. Elephant Walk
 - c. Spiderman Walk
- Army-Navy Game
- Bear Crawl Heel Tag
- Crab Crawl Slapsies
- Forward Roll to Sprint Relay
- Forward Rolls/Backward Rolls
- Helicopters
- Hollow Rolls
- Knee Wrestling Drill
- Lateral Shuffle and Roll
- Learning to Fall Forward/Backward
- Log Rolls
- Log Roll Bonanza
- Mouse Trap
- Multi-Directional Get Up and Go
- No Hands Get Up
- Partner Cross-Tracking Tag
- Position Tag
- Seat Rolls to Bear Crawl Position
- Shoulder Rolls Forward/Backward

DRILL HIGHLIGHT: Position Tag

DRILL DESCRIPTION:

One or two defenders go into the middle of field. Other teammates count off as either QBs, RBs or WRs. One defender calls out a position and the players of that position must run across the field area without getting tagged by the defenders. Tagged players go to the sideline.

See more drills in the glossary

> REMINDER

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.



BLOCKING AND DEFEATING BLOCKS

NON-CONTACT / FLAG

Blocking and Defeating Blocks are two skills that maximize the balance between power and control on the football field.

To help achieve this, USA Football teaches these skills out of body positions unique to these core fundamentals, like those listed above. Therefore, Non-Contact game types will not feature blocking drills with a direct correlation to these skills.

However, the basic athletic development movements are being taught:

- Speed
- Power
- Posture
- Body Control
- Balance

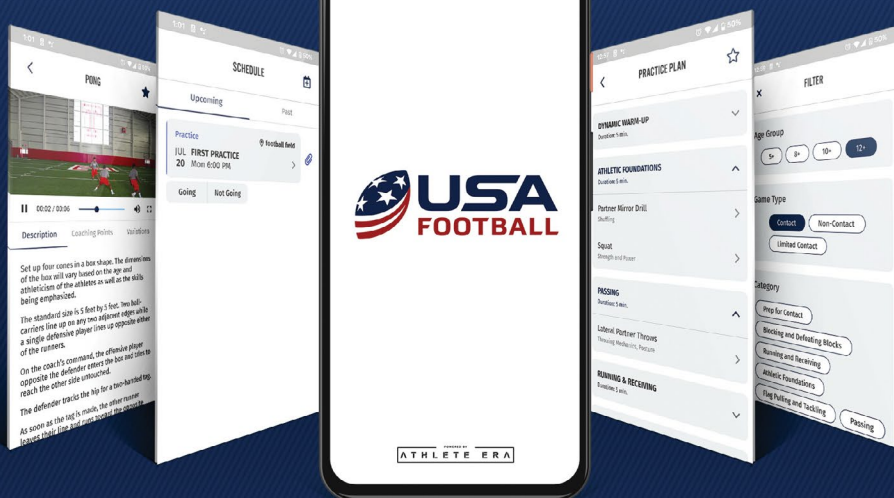
These should be taken seriously as they are needed athletic qualities and support the skills of Blocking and Defeating Blocks but are at best general in nature. Therefore, a focus on athlete development and the Prep for Contact curriculum is key at this stage.

These activities lay the groundwork for future skills, so no specific Blocking and Defeating Blocks preparation drills are listed in this section. The goal is general development.

RUNNING A TEAM IS HARD, USE COACH PLANNER TO MAKE IT EASIER.



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- Invite Coaches and Parents
- Find Drills for Your Age Range and Game Type
- Fill Out Your Team's Schedule
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FLAG PULLING & TACKLING

NON-CONTACT / FLAG

The nature of this game type makes tackling illegal. For those familiar with the rules of the game, impeding a runner is also a penalty. It becomes clear that most of the physically combative aspects of the tackle will not be part of one's training at this stage.

However, there are some key Skill Elements of the Flag Pulling & Tackling Skill Progression that can be taught in Non-Contact flag football.

These skills originated from USA Football's **Advanced Tackling System** – designed in collaboration with world renowned and multi-sport tackling expert Richie Gray.

By leveraging this Skill Progression in game types featuring less contact, coaches and athletes become familiar with the physical movements and coaching points for success as an athlete advances.



TRACK



The ability to get to the ball-carrier with speed – taking into consideration scheme, leverage and blockers – in order to make the tackle or pull a flag.



KPI(s):

Change of Direction

Ability to change direction with the ball-carrier, maintaining strong tracking stance and approach angle in leverage.

Approach Height and Speed

Depending on the play being run and the space the ball-carrier is in, a defender's body position is often defined by the amount of open field or traffic that must be managed to track and make the play.

Laser Focus

Maintain eyes on the target area amidst action on the football field, track the near hip and plot the path to where the ball-carrier will be.



Drills to Support:

- Pong
- 2-Player Fracture
- Mirrors Level

2 PREPARE

- The ability to transition from tracking to the correct body positions with proper foot placement for upcoming contact or flag pull, and the type of tackle being made.

KPI(s):

Balance

Be balanced at contact with the correct type of foot placement for the contact being made.

Drop Height

Athletes who are tracking will move in different body postures than at the moment they meet the ball-carrier. The ability to time a change in body height without losing acceleration is vitally important at the initial point of connection.

Dominate Contact Angles

Spine in line from hips to shoulders, from neck to eyes. A straight line through the body that delivers power through the defender's shoulder and into the opponent. Obviously, in Non-Contact football, the proper angles are not used for contact but to help athletes assume quality athletic positions for quick and explosive movements on the field.

Drills to Support

- Swoop
- Near Hip
- Run and Gather

Note: As coaches, because there is no purposeful player-to-player contact in this game category, we need to train Initial Grasp Accuracy and pulling the flag from the opponent.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

There are certain concepts that should be borrowed from USA Football's **Shoulder Tackling System** as well in Non-Contact Flag.

FUNDAMENTALS

The most common body positions and movements used in a tackle presented independently to ensure understanding.

Drills to Support

- Swoop
- Near Hip
- Run and Gather

LEVERAGE

The concept of getting to the ball-carrier during the play while maintaining an area of responsibility.

**Drills to Support**

-
- Same Foot, Same Shoulder
 - Near Hip
 - Run and Gather
 - 2-Player Tackle
 - 2-Player Rabbit

Note that these drills should be conducted with a proper finish in the Preparation body position from the Advanced Tackling System. This places athletes in a good body position to ultimately pull the flag.

For the complete list of KPIs when dealing with more advanced athletes, explore the later sections of this manual that show additional KPIs that can be layered into the Track and Prepare Skill Element of the Flag Pulling and Tackling Skill Progression.

> REMINDER

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.

“You’re not doing the tackling. But you’re getting yourself in position to finish the tackle when you’re approaching the ball carrier that has the flag. It’s teaching you spatial awareness; it’s teaching you how to understand where the rest of the players are on the field.”

Joe Thomas

Retired NFL Offensive Lineman



FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

usafootball.com/fdm

CONTACT MANUAL

LIMITED CONTACT

ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™

SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™

Prep for Contact

Blocking & Defeating Blocks

Flag Pulling & Tackling



LIMITED CONTACT

ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™
SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™

INTRODUCTION

The Limited Contact section of this manual might be the most important chapter. It is not to say this is the most important stage of a youngster's development, but as the game types are newer to the football landscape, coaches may need more guidance.

There are two Limited Contact game types within the Football Development Model. Athletes can play in Rookie Limited Contact or Senior Limited Contact. Each have the option to be played at different contact levels and with types of equipment – Padded Flag or TackleBar®.

The new contact skills added in both game types are Blocking and Defeating Blocks, meaning athletes will now engage in player-to-player contact with their opponents.

TackleBar equipment introduces physical aspects of tackling while Padded Flag continues to build on the Track and Prepare portions of our Flag Pulling and Tackling Skill Progression.

The reason for the Limited Contact game types is to provide athletes with exposure to key aspects of contact football but in a limited capacity to increase learning. This step allows players to better explore and become accustomed to contact before proceeding to the full-contact game.

Essentially, Limited Contact acts as a bridge between Non-Contact and Contact football.

This structure also allows coaches to hone in on specific skills at each step of the journey. Focusing more time on Blocking and Defeating Blocks allows for more concentrated learning and developing a strong base of skills before the full tackle is added into the game. This deliberate slowing down of skill introduction should result in more confident and skilled athletes.

The following sections can be incredibly useful to help coaches navigate the process of identifying the skills they should teach and provide progressions to do so.





PREP FOR CONTACT

LIMITED CONTACT / ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™ AND SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™

Athletes at this stage will be fully engaged in learning contact skills that are used in their game type.

Coaches must be aware of becoming overly technical in their teaching during practice. It is vital to ensure they continue to develop the whole athlete and the specific qualities that support contact via Prep for Contact, not just practicing the specific football skills.

For athletes at this stage, contact is a new skill and – for some – a completely new concept. Consider a young athlete learning new football skills; if he or she is simultaneously having to learn these contact principles and psychology, they can be easily overwhelmed.

PREP FOR CONTACT SKILL ELEMENTS

- Falling
- Tumbling
- Grappling
- Crawling

PREP FOR CONTACT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

While there is no ordered Skill Progression for Prep for Contact, the KPIs below apply to multiple Skill Elements to help you identify athlete success.

KPI(s):

Head and Neck Control

- Hold head and neck in neutral or bowed positions
- Do not let head drop
- Keep head and neck in position while falling, tumbling, and going to the ground
- Prevent head from wobbling

Limb Coordination

- Move the four limbs in any number of combinations involving upper and lower body, same side or crossbody patterns as determined by the activity

Spatial Awareness

- Understanding your body in space in relation to other objects and people
- Understanding where body and body parts are in relation to an opponent or object

Kinesthetic Awareness

- Feeling and understanding where body parts are in relation to each other

Balance

- Keep body upright in various positions
- Maintain proper body position and alignment through various movements

Postural Control

- Establish, change and control spinal positions
- Ability to maintain proper positioning of the spine and limbs

Flexibility and Mobility

- Appropriate positioning of joints
- Appropriate movement of joints
- Ability to demonstrate full range of motion

Manage the Ground

- Ability to go to the ground calmly and effectively
- Learning to effectively absorb impact with the ground with proper body positioning
- Ability to transfer the forces caused by falling using rolling and tumbling techniques

Manage Outside Forces

- Maintain posture against outside forces
- Maintain head and neck position against outside forces
- Maintain coordination and balance against outside forces

Postural Strength

- Hold spinal positions relative to fatigue
 - Hold spinal positions relative to gravity
 - Hold spinal positions relative to outside forces of an opponent
-

PREP FOR CONTACT APPLICATION

The steppingstone of Prep for Contact can help coaches provide solid foundations and psychology on which to build football skills.

For many athletes, sport will be the first time they are allowed in another person's personal space. They may have been taught since birth not to invade this social boundary. It applies to siblings, friends at school and on the playground.

On the sports field however, they will now be asked to not only invade others' personal space, but in the case of football, they are asked to do this with regularity, force and enthusiasm.

The athlete will encounter resisting forces and the friction of the opponent competing for that same space. For how many of your athletes will this be a new experience?

Overcoming this mental hurdle can unlock players' ability to use their technique because they are now comfortable in the situations in which they are being asked to apply football techniques.

Grappling and push-pull games become extremely important to lay the foundation for challenging opponents in one-on-one situations. It not only provides development of their physical abilities but also the psychological aspects of physical competition.

Fluidity, control of movements and postural control should see improvement from previous stages, but coaches need to continue to reinforce core KPIs to drive player improvement. This curriculum is not just items to be “done,” but selected to target and coach quality body position, posture and control.

Drills to Support

- 2-Player Rabbit Drill
- 3-Player Roll and Weave
- Angle of Pursuit Drill
- Animal Walk Relay
- Army-Navy Game
- Bear Crawl
- Bear Crawl Heel Tag
- Body Lock Game
- Crab Crawl/Monkey Walk Relay
- Flag Tag/Hip Tag
- Flag Tag/Hip Tag Corners
- Forward Roll to Sprint Relay
- Hand Fighting
- Hollow Rolls
- Lateral Shuffle and Roll Reaction
- Log Roll Bonanza
- Partner Cross-Tracking Tag
- Partner Tag Drill
- Push-up and Roll
- Quick Feet Reaction
- Scatter Run
- Seal Crawl
- Shoulder Rolls Forward/Backward
- Surfer Drill

DRILL HIGHLIGHT: Lateral Shuffle and Roll Reaction

DRILL DESCRIPTION:

Face your shoulder toward your target destination. Start with feet a little wider than your hips. Shuffle to one side by hopping with your outside leg and then bring your inside leg to meet it.

Continue this movement until the coach delivers a command to drop to the ground and roll in the same direction that you were shuffling. Continue to roll until coach tells you to get up off the ground and return to a standing shuffle.

See more drills in the glossary

> REMINDER

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.



BLOCKING AND DEFEATING BLOCKS

LIMITED CONTACT / ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™ AND SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™

Both Limited Contact game types leverage the full skills of Blocking and Defeating Blocks. While we say full skills, a quality progression must still be used to ensure proper teaching.

Different youth leagues will adopt slightly different versions of the pathway, so athletes may enter competitive blocking at different ages and maturity levels.

Coaches beginning their teaching must work to identify appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on age, maturity, skill and ability. This will go a long way to helping you teach these skills effectively.

As contact skills involved in the game of football evolve, all players must have the ability to engage an opponent, stop their charge and either move them to clear a path or disengage from them to stop the ball carrier.

These skills and the teaching of them will have a massive impact on how your players handle contact throughout a practice, game and season.

Poor teaching and improper cueing of these skills can result in using the wrong strike surfaces and potentially increase the likelihood of helmet contact – besides being less efficient.

With more players Blocking and Defeating Blocks than Flag Pulling or Tackling on every play, this is an area coaches must devote considerable time to getting right.

The step-by-step approach used by USA Football to teach Blocking and Defeating Blocks techniques is encapsulated in the Coil-Uncoil-Fit-Finish (C.U.F.F.) progression. The Skill Elements, KPIs and drills help coaches train and improve these skills.

1 COIL

✓ The foundational pre-contact posture that is necessary to move multi-directionally or mirror an opponent in space and to deliver contact with optimal power and the greatest degree of body control.

 **KPI(s):**

Base

1. Form a triangle with the feet, legs and torso – knees inside the ankles and hips inside the knees
2. Toes turned slightly out allowing weight to be distributed through the insteps

Condense

1. Lower the center of gravity by bending at the ankles, knees and hips
2. The upper body should have a slight forward tilt with the lower spine neutral
3. Eyes straight ahead

Guard

1. Carry the hands out in front of the body with the elbows close together and not visible from rear view
2. Elbows should be carried off the body around 4-6 inches, forearms should be parallel to the ground and thumbs should point to the sky

**Drills to Support:**

- Brace Pop
- Come to Balance Freeze
- Come to Balance Mirror
- Fire Drill
- Iron Core

2 UNCOIL

✓ Energy is transferred from the uncoiling of the hips into the arms and focused out through the densest part of the palm and into the contact surface of the opponent.

 **KPI(s):**

Extend the Hips with Cleats Grounded

1. Athletes transition their weight up through the feet and legs, rocking forward as the hips uncoil and force is driven through the hands and into the opponent
2. As weight rolls forward, knees go down and out
3. Hips come through
4. Ensure that the player does not arch the back as they transition to the fit stage, the neck and back should be neutral

**Drills to Support:**

- Wrecking Ball
- Teeter Long Jump
- Teeter to Foot Fire

3 FIT

▼ The strike or initial contact delivered onto an opponent.

KPI(s):

Note: See *Fits* section to see specific teaching points

Drills to Support

- Coil to Fit
- Fit to Uncoil
- Dowel Lift
- Come to Balance Fit

4 FINISH

— Securing control of an opponent after initial impact in order to accomplish the situational objective.

KPI(s):

Close, Climb, Fast Feet

1. All principles of contact apply: feet grounded and behind the center of mass, hands in front allowing the hips to drive power, remaining square to the target
2. Use a jab step and pop step to achieve vertical distortion and prevent getting crossed over
3. Keep steps short and tight, as long steps leave players vulnerable to being thrown
4. On the strike, thumbs rotate outward with contact landing on the lower corner of the breast plate below the nipples

Offensive players:

Once contact is secured, blockers close the hips, then climb in by taking small steps to eliminate extra space

Defensive players:

1. Once contact is secured and the charge of the offensive player stopped, players will utilize a release technique.
2. USA Football allows coaches to use the release technique they are most familiar with and comfortable teaching or the ones that suit their athletes best. Examples include:
 - Push-Pull, Shrug, Shed, Swim, etc.

Note: We encourage coaches in Limited Contact game types to minimize drills focused on the Finish aspects of the C.U.F.F. progression. Initial engagement, proper positioning and posture and reinforcing safety mechanics at entry levels should be made a priority.

➤ **REMINDER**

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.

All engagements will be guided by this progression. Depending on your playbook or the position being played, the number and direction of steps will change but once at the moment of contact, the core principles remain the same.

As an example, an offensive and defensive lineman may take two very short, sharp steps prior to contact. In that moment before engagement, we want them to be in the perfect Coil posture before Uncoiling their hips.

A receiver and defensive back may have to close a large distance to get into the contact zone, but just before contact, we want both players to find the Coil posture before Uncoiling and demonstrating their skills.

FITS FOR BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS

EXPERIENCE LEVEL	PILLAR FIT	BRIDGE FIT	BUCKLE FIT
Entry	Offensive Players Defensive Players	-	-
Experienced	Defensive Players	Offensive Players	Offensive Players Defensive Players

When it comes to making the “Fit” upon contact, USA Football always recommends starting with the Pillar Fit.

At the entry level of contact, using the Pillar Fit for both Blocking and Defeating Blocks helps to reduce helmet-to-helmet contact by maximizing “strength and length” as athletes are just learning how to engage and resist forces.

Specifically, the Pillar Fit does not allow for bend in the elbows, which increases the distance between two players.

As an athlete progresses, new blocking fits are introduced including Bridge and Buckle. Some athletes and leagues may spend multiple years using one Fit. As players progress in their thinking, feeling and behaving abilities, coaches will begin to explore up the progression.

Regardless of equipment and contact rules, let this be your guide to ensure players are ‘being met where they are’ and that they are learning skills that match their developmental abilities.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR FITS



PILLAR FIT

For use by offensive and defensive players of any experience level, including entry-level.

- Long Arms, Elbows In, Thumbs Out
- Able to rotate thumbs out at 45 degrees also rotates the elbows down, allowing the skeletal structure to serve as a pillar
- Able to strike the breastplate to disrupt an opponent by altering the angle of their spine
- Players strike with the hands, utilizing the densest part of the palm



BRIDGE FIT

Primarily for experienced offensive players

- Hands make contact at the bottom of the opponent's breast plate with thumbs rotated out as if carrying a heavy boulder
- The player's forearms must be perpendicular to the blocking surface of the opponent, giving the blocker the best opportunity to lift a player
- The elbows should be bent and facing down, and a coach standing behind the blocker should not see their elbows



BUCKLE FIT

For experienced offensive and defensive players

- Used when shoulder contact is required
- Player transitions from sprint to short, choppy steps
- Weight on insteps
- Toes widen out for more control and ability for the hips to uncoil
- Toes outside knees, knees outside hips

➤ DRILLS FOR TEACHING FIT

Make sure to look in the Blocking & Defeating Blocks section of the glossary for drills to help teach a proper fit.

“It’s really important to try to remove the head from the block as much as we possibly can. You don’t want players leading with their head or their helmet, because you’re going to be out of control and that’s when you’re going to end up on the ground.”

Joe Thomas

Retired NFL Offensive Lineman

TIPS ON KPIS FOR BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS

If players are demonstrating mastery of the first few KPis, begin to slowly add more detail. If players are struggling, coaches can limit the number of core items involved in teaching until a solid foundation has been established.

Football coaches should consider experience level, the number of years your league plays Limited Contact (a two-year age-block at the Limited Contact level will generally mean second year players are ready for a few more KPis), athletic ability, previous sports experience and cognitive development level.

➤ MORE RESOURCES

This Skill Progression includes Blocking and Defeating Blocks fundamentals and footwork from USA Football's Contact System, which is available at footballdevelopment.com/contact-system. Within the system, you will find more drills, teaching videos and schematic instruction.

“To back off on the contact aspect of it allows the player to focus on the techniques they are trying to develop.”

John Benton

Offensive Line Coach

QB Collective

San Francisco 49ers



FLAG PULLING & TACKLING

LIMITED CONTACT / ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™ AND SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™

For the Flag Pulling & Tackling Skill Progression, there are differences that are dependent on the type of equipment used. Please ensure you know which equipment you are using within your game types.

Leagues that use Padded Flag equipment employ the full Skill Progressions when it comes to Blocking and Defeating Blocks but continue to use the same Flag Pulling & Tackling Skill Elements from Non-Contact forms of the game.

Conversely, leagues that use TackleBar® equipment at the Limited Contact stage will add additional KPIs and Progressions to connect the third step to the Flag Pulling & Tackling progression – “Connect.”

Players will be asked to demonstrate some clamp and grapple techniques while trying to remove the bar from the back of the opponent but are not asked to complete full tackles – we are not taking ball-carriers to the ground. What this means is the tackle teaching still limited and shows our commitment to layering skills.

1 TRACK

✓ **Equipment:** Padded Flag, TackleBar

The ability to get to the ball-carrier with speed – taking into consideration scheme, leverage and blockers – in order to make the tackle or pull a flag.

KPI(s):

Change of Direction

Ability to change direction with the ball-carrier, maintaining strong tracking stance and approach angle in leverage.

Approach Height and Speed

Depending on the play being run and the space the ball-carrier is in, a defender's body position is often defined by the amount of open field or traffic that must be managed to track and make the play.

Laser Focus

Maintain eyes on the target area amidst action on the football field, track the near hip and plot the path to where the ball-carrier will be.

Angle-Approach-Leverage

The ability to choose the right angle and take the correct approach within the leverage of the defensive scheme allows players to make plays in the proper areas to set themselves and teammates up for success

Scan for Opponents/Threats (VDA)

While tracking the ball-carrier, consider what opponents are doing and where teammates are positioned. Going over, under or around other players will change tracking on the fly

**Drills to Support:**

- Pong
- 2-Player Fracture
- Mirrors Level

2

PREPARE

Equipment: Padded Flag, TackleBar

The ability to transition from tracking to the correct body positions with proper foot placement for upcoming contact or flag pull, and the type of tackle being made

**KPI(s):****Balance**

Be balanced at contact with the correct type of foot placement for the contact being made

Drop Height

Athletes who are tracking will move in different body postures than at the moment they meet the ball-carrier. The ability to time a change in body height without losing acceleration is vitally important at the initial point of connection.

Dominate Contact Angles

Spine in line from hips to shoulders, from neck to eyes. A straight line through the body that delivers power through the defender's shoulder and into the opponent.

Foot Placement

Defenders getting their feet close enough to the ball-carrier with bend in knees and hips to extend on flag pull or initial contact while generating power

Claws Up-Elbows In

Pre-tackle or flag pull posture with wrists above elbows and hands up as if guarding the chest. This limits backswing, allowing for a quick, strong jab with the shoulder.

**Drills to Support:**

- Swoop
- Near Hip
- Run and Gather
- Zombie Tackle (TackleBar only)
- Ricochet Choice (TackleBar only)
- Over and Under (TackleBar only)

3 CONNECT

— Equipment: TackleBar

Winning at the point of contact through technique, accuracy and the proper mentality



KPI(s):

Initial Grasp Accuracy (Padded Flag)*

Defenders making the flag pull while maintaining strong posture

Initial Shoulder Accuracy (TackleBar only)

Defenders connecting with their shoulder while maintaining strong posture

Top Frontal Strike Point

Applying force with the correct part of the shoulder pad to deliver a proper strike

Arrowhead

Spine in line and straight on contact, but post-contact using ear to helmet, helmet to body, squeezing into the ball-carrier to take away space

Arm Clamp

On initial contact, the hands and arms working in unison to close all space between the tackler and the ball-carrier

Iron Grip

Grab and clasp with the hands and strong fingers without letting go



Drills to Support

- Shoulder Jab Series
- Band Tackle
- Bag Bounce

Note: Coaches playing a flag version of Limited Contact will train Initial Grasp Accuracy but as this skill is less complex than shoulder contact, clamp, grip and grapple, more time can be focused on Tracking and Leverage.

➤ WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PADDED FLAG?

USA Football has resources, tools and flag belts to help you get started. [Click here to learn more.](#)

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

There are certain concepts that should be borrowed from USA Football's Shoulder Tackling System as well in Limited Contact game types.

FUNDAMENTALS

The most common body positions and movements used in a tackle presented independently to ensure understanding



Drills to Support

- Breakdown
- Swoop
- Near-Foot Position

LEVERAGE

The concept of getting to the ball carrier during the play while maintaining an area of responsibility



Drills to Support

- Same Foot, Same Shoulder
- Near Hip
- Run and Gather
- 2-Player Tackle
- 2-Player Rabbit

Note for Padded Flag: All of these drills should be conducted with a proper finish in the Prepare body position from the Flag Pulling & Tackling Skill Progression. This places athletes in a good body position to ultimately pull the flag.

➤ REMINDER

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TIPS

All of the above drills for either game type should be built around the “coach’s eye” and the KPIs listed above for proper execution.

Athletes will want to focus on the KPIs in order of their presentation. When initial contact is being introduced, we will focus on Balance, Body Position and Accuracy first to focus on properly playing with the shoulder. As players add years of experience in the game type, coaches can layer and grow their skills and focus on more performance-based KPIs.

➤ WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TACKLEBAR?

USA Football has partnered with TackleBar to provide a preferred player development tool for managing contact. [Click here to learn more.](#)

“There’s an approach to a tackle, there’s a body position to a tackle, and then there’s a finish - the physical part - of the tackle. You can work a lot of tackling without the finish element.”

Justin Wilcox
Head Football Coach
University of California



FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

usafootball.com/fdm

CONTACT MANUAL

CONTACT

ROOKIE TACKLE®

SENIOR TACKLE™

Prep for Contact
Blocking & Defeating Blocks
Flag Pulling & Tackling



CONTACT

ROOKIE TACKLE®
SENIOR TACKLE™

INTRODUCTION

The Contact game category offers two game types, Rookie Tackle and Senior Tackle.

This stage introduces athletes to the full complement of contact and tackling skills, building on the basics established in earlier game categories.

Blocking and Defeating Blocks will continue to be refined as athletes should have been introduced to these skills in the previous stage. Coaches must be aware that youth football teams almost always come with first-year players who are inexperienced.

As the most advanced game category, players will be older and generally able to handle more from a learning and emotional state. However, depending on when you start full-contact, certain concepts or physical skills may still prove difficult.

Remember to use the progressions and check for mastery while layering in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It is important to meet your athletes where they are developmentally. Stay focused on progressive skill instruction as you consider how and when you introduce certain concepts and techniques.





PREP FOR CONTACT

CONTACT / ROOKIE TACKLE® AND SENIOR TACKLE™

For athletes to make use of these growing physical abilities, players must put themselves in positions that allow them to best display those abilities.

Kinesthetic awareness (where the body parts are in relation to each other) and spatial awareness (where the body is in space) are more refined at this stage.

That said, increased speed and intensity while playing means athletes must maintain good posture and body position to move fluidly in and out of positions while tracking an opponent or to hold a position when engaged in contact.

PREP FOR CONTACT SKILL ELEMENTS

- Falling
- Tumbling
- Grappling
- Crawling

PREP FOR CONTACT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

While there is no ordered Skill Progression for Prep for Contact, the KPIs below apply to multiple Skill Elements to help you identify athlete success.

KPI(s):

Head and Neck Control

- Hold head and neck in neutral or bowed positions
- Do not let head drop
- Keep head and neck in position while falling, tumbling, and going to the ground
- Prevent head from wobbling

Limb Coordination

- Move the four limbs in any number of combinations involving upper and lower body, same side or crossbody patterns as determined by the activity

Spatial Awareness

- Understanding your body in space in relation to other objects and people
- Understanding where body and body parts are in relation to an opponent or object

Kinesthetic Awareness

- Feeling and understanding where body parts are in relation to each other

Balance

- Keep body upright in various positions
- Maintain proper body position and alignment through various movements

Postural Control

- Establish, change and control spinal positions
- Ability to maintain proper positioning of the spine and limbs

Flexibility and Mobility

- Appropriate positioning of joints
- Appropriate movement of joints
- Ability to demonstrate full range of motion

Manage the Ground

- Ability to go to the ground calmly and effectively
- Learning to effectively absorb impact with the ground with proper body positioning
- Ability to transfer the forces caused by falling using rolling and tumbling techniques

Manage Outside Forces

- Maintain posture against outside forces
- Maintain head and neck position against outside forces
- Maintain coordination and balance against outside forces

Postural Strength

- Hold spinal positions relative to fatigue
 - Hold spinal positions relative to gravity
 - Hold spinal positions relative to outside forces of an opponent
-

PREP FOR CONTACT APPLICATION FOR GROWING ATHLETES

Coaching in this Game Category can be highlighted by the differing maturity levels of athletes as growth spurts and their effects on players ranges widely. Some athletes may be years away from a growth spurt while others are deep into the peak growth years.

There is no doubt that you will have a wide range of skill and ability levels on your team. Coaches must be aware that during these sporadic and continual growth spurts, some players may appear to take a step backward regarding body control, awareness and coordination.

For those growing in height or weight rapidly, the changes can come so quickly that previously learned skills appear to be almost new. This is a function of players having to “relearn” the skills in their new body.

That said, balance, control and coordination must be refined. Going back to simple Tumbling and Grappling drills can help players learn new limb lengths, leverages and their own personal space.

Stay patient and continue to adjust your instruction to meet the needs of the individual player as much as possible. Keep in mind, they will gradually “catch-up” with these changes in their body make-up, laying a strong foundation is the key.

In addition to our standard Falling, Tumbling, Crawling and Grappling drills, you will notice a bit more focus on strength at this stage.



Drills to Support

- Bear Crawl
- Body Lock Game
- Crab Crawl
- Elevator Drill
- Elephant Walk
- Forward Rolls
- Forward Roll to Sprint
- Hand Fighting Tournament
- Hollow Rolls
- Learning to Fall
- Learning to Fall Forward/Backward
- Log Rolls
- Monkey Walk
- Pummeling
- Push-up Slapsies
- Shoulder Rolls
- The Bear
- Three Forward Rolls to Sprint

DRILL HIGHLIGHT: Monkey Walk

DRILL DESCRIPTION:

Get down on all fours with your arms straight, hands below your shoulders and your knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Only your hands and toes should touch the ground. While moving sideways, move your same side arm and leg to move laterally and bring your other arm and leg to reposition in original stance.

See more drills in the glossary

Note: Coaches need to create quality matchups in their drills to allow players to develop skills and confidence. This is not only about the less-developed athlete. Remember, athletes only progress when they are challenged and stretch their skills, so pairing more advanced athletes together allows them to grow by challenging themselves instead of easily winning a competitive drill.

> REMINDER

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.



BLOCKING AND DEFEATING BLOCKS

CONTACT / ROOKIE TACKLE® AND SENIOR TACKLE™

Depending on the age you begin contact football, athletes may or may not be of the age where they will begin to specialize in a position based on size and natural selections.

This means it is important to teach all athletes the skills of Blocking & Defeating Blocks. Athletes who have come through your league's game-type progression and participated in Limited Contact game-types should have a strong skill foundation.

Coaches must still evaluate current levels and should aim to ensure all athletes can play in-space and on the line-of-scrimmage.

CONTACT-FOCUSED ATHLETIC MOVEMENTS TO BE MASTERED BY ALL POSITIONS

- **Transition from sprint** to short, choppy steps with weight on insteps
- **Transition from short, choppy steps** to a balanced 2-point coil position prior to contact
- **Widen feet and turn toes slightly out prior to contact** to allow the hips to uncoil.
Ensure feet are outside the knees and knees outside the hips
- **Triangulate opponents off their center line** – aiming for the side of the schematic or tactical objective or assignment
- **Perform a Brace Step:**
 - Blockers: Footwork aligns the hips to the inside ear of the defender, putting the blocker in an optimal contact angle
 - Defenders: Must master the brace step at a 90-degree angle to blockers force to stop his charge
- **Perform a Pop Step** – tight, short steps with the instep of the foot
- **Return to balance** – upon conclusion, ensure feet are in the ground with weight on the insteps

1 COIL

The foundational pre-contact posture that is necessary to move multi-directionally or mirror an opponent in space and to deliver contact with optimal power and the greatest degree of body control.

KPI(s):**Base**

1. Form a triangle with the feet, legs and torso – knees inside the ankles and hips inside the knees
2. Toes turned slightly out allowing weight to be distributed through the insteps

Condense

1. Lower the center of gravity by bending at the ankles, knees and hips
2. The upper body should have a slight forward tilt with the lower spine neutral
3. Eyes straight ahead

Guard

1. Carry the hands out in front of the body with the elbows close together and not visible from rear view
2. Elbows should be carried off the body around 4-6 inches, forearms should be parallel to the ground and thumbs should point to the sky

**Drills to Support:**

- Brace Pop
- Come to Balance Freeze
- Come to Balance Mirror
- Fire Drill
- Iron Core

2 UNCOIL

Energy is transferred from the uncoiling of the hips into the arms and focused out through the densest part of the palm and into the contact surface of the opponent.

KPI(s):**Extend the Hips with Cleats Grounded**

1. Athletes transition their weight up through the feet and legs, rocking forward as the hips uncoil and force is driven through the hands and into the opponent
2. As weight rolls forward, knees go down and out
3. Hips come through
4. Ensure that the player does not arch the back as they transition to the fit stage, the neck and back should be neutral

**Drills to Support:**

- Wrecking Ball
- Teeter Long Jump
- Teeter to Foot Fire

3 FIT

▼ The strike or initial contact delivered onto an opponent.

 **KPI(s):**

NOTE: See *Fits* section to see specific teaching points

 **Drills to Support**

- Coil to Fit
- Fit to Uncoil
- Dowel Lift
- Come to Balance Fit

4 FINISH

— Securing control of an opponent after initial impact in order to accomplish the situational objective.

 **KPI(s):**

Close, Climb, Fast Feet

1. All principles of contact apply: feet grounded and behind the center of mass, hands in front allowing the hips to drive power, remaining square to the target
2. Use a jab step and pop step to achieve vertical distortion and prevent getting crossed over
3. Keep steps short and tight, as long steps leave players vulnerable to being thrown
4. On the strike, thumbs rotate outward with contact landing on the lower corner of the breast plate below the nipples

Offensive players:

Once contact is secured, blockers close the hips, then climb in by taking small steps to eliminate extra space

Defensive players:

1. Once contact is secured and the charge of the offensive player stopped, players will utilize a release technique.
2. USA Football allows coaches to use the release technique they are most familiar with and comfortable teaching or the ones that suit their athletes best. Examples include:
 - Push-Pull, Shrug, Shed, Swim, etc.

 **Drills to Support**

- King of the Ring
- Fit to Finish

> REMINDER

Refer to the glossary for full drill details or install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store.

All engagements will be guided by this progression. Depending on your playbook or the position being played, the number and direction of steps will change but once at the moment of contact, the core principles remain the same.

As an example, an offensive and defensive lineman may take two very short, sharp steps prior to contact. In that moment before engagement, we want them to be in the perfect Coil posture before Uncoiling their hips.

A receiver and defensive back may have to close a large distance to get into the contact zone, but just before contact, we want both players to find the Coil posture before Uncoiling and demonstrating their skills.

FITS FOR BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS

EXPERIENCE LEVEL	PILLAR FIT	BRIDGE FIT	BUCKLE FIT
Entry	Offensive Players Defensive Players	-	-
Experienced	Defensive Players	Offensive Players	Offensive Players Defensive Players

When it comes to making the “Fit” upon contact, new athletes – regardless of Game Category – should always start with the Pillar Fit.

At the entry level of contact, using the Pillar Fit for both Blocking and Defeating Blocks helps to reduce helmet-to-helmet contact by maximizing “strength and length” as athletes are just learning how to engage and resist forces.

Specifically, the Pillar Fit does not allow for bend in the elbows, which increases the distance between two players as they “land long.”

For experienced athletes, or those that display mastery, we will also introduce additional fits such as Bridge, predominantly used in blocking, and Buckle which may be used situationally by both sides of the ball.

Regardless of equipment and contact rules, let this be your guide to ensure players are ‘being met where they are’ and are learning skills that meet their developmental abilities.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR FITS



PILLAR FIT

For use by offensive and defensive players of any experience level, including entry-level.

- Long Arms, Elbows In, Thumbs Out
- Able to rotate thumbs out at 45 degrees also rotates the elbows down, allowing the skeletal structure to serve as a pillar
- Able to strike the breastplate to disrupt an opponent by altering the angle of their spine
- Players strike with the hands, utilizing the densest part of the palm



BRIDGE FIT

Primarily for experienced offensive players

- Hands make contact at the bottom of the opponent's breast plate with thumbs rotated out as if carrying a heavy boulder
- The player's forearms must be perpendicular to the blocking surface of the opponent, giving the blocker the best opportunity to lift a player
- The elbows should be bent and facing down, and a coach standing behind the blocker should not see their elbows



BUCKLE FIT

For experienced offensive and defensive players

- Used when shoulder contact is required
- Player transitions from sprint to short, choppy steps
- Weight on insteps
- Toes widen out for more control and ability for the hips to uncoil
- Toes outside knees, knees outside hips
- Triangulate opponents off their center line – athlete's nose to opponent's eye/ear to the side of the objective or assignment
- Power is generated from the foot that is opposite from the shoulder that initiates contact
- The instep of the brace foot should run perpendicular to the center line of the opponent's ear
- Just prior to contact, the contact shoulder should be down and forward
- After contact, squeeze into the opponent through the instep of the brace foot at a 45-degree angle, closing the hips and firing the feet to finish

➤ DRILLS FOR TEACHING FIT

Make sure to look in the Blocking & Defeating Blocks section of the glossary for drills to help teach a proper fit.

TIPS ON KPIS FOR BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS

The drill model looks like previous Game Categories with a few key coaching insights.

Coaches can alter the Fit used in the drills to meet players' development level more regularly due to their maturity and ability.

Secondly, coaches can layer more Key Performance Indicators into each drill as players' skill development advances and grows.

➤ MORE RESOURCES

This Skill Progression includes Blocking and Defeating Blocks fundamentals and footwork from USA Football's Contact System, which is available at footballdevelopment.com/contact-system. Within the system, you will find more drills, teaching videos and schematic instruction.

“The best blockers that I've ever been around in my career were guys that blocked with their hips and their hands, and their helmets had hardly any marks on it by the end of the season. Because when you're creating your power in a block, it's coming from your hips and it's being transferred through your hands, and then you're going to be able to control your opponent with your feet and your hands and the head doesn't really have a lot to do with the block.”

Joe Thomas

Retired NFL Offensive Lineman



FLAG PULLING & TACKLING

CONTACT / ROOKIE TACKLE® AND SENIOR TACKLE™

For USA Football's Flag Pulling & Tackling approach, you will notice that some sections are presented simultaneously. They are developed and taught at the same time to maximize learning.

USA Football has two tackling systems that work together to promote a better and safer approach to this skill. These come from the Shoulder Tackling System and the Advanced Tackling System.

For the Contact Game Types, at practice, we recommend starting with Shoulder Tackling System drills, which introduce three different types of tackles.

From there, any of the Advanced Tackling System drills can be used to teach those three types of tackles. Coaches can vary them for novelty or to focus on the tackle types they and their defenders most often use.

The Flag Pulling & Tackling progression comes from the Advanced Tackling System and can be applied to those three types of tackles, along with any others you use.

SHOULDER TACKLING APPROACH

Refreshing the Tracking and Preparation materials from previous stages can occur simultaneously while teaching new contact skills needed in full contact football.

It is important that coaches continue to reinforce skills that might have been introduced in other Game Types. These positioning and movement skills create a solid foundation and will be referred to often as coaches introduce the full tackle.

The following materials are taken from USA Football's Shoulder Tackling educational resources and serve as the starting point for introducing the tackle.

Concurrent Introduction:

Fundamentals and Intro to Tracking an Opponent

- Breakdown
- Swoop
- Near-Foot position
- Uppercuts
- Shoot

COACHING TIP:

Consult the Physical Development Section of the Player Progression Guide. Use Tracking and Evasive running, along with Tag, Sharks and Minnows, Capture the Flag and similar small-sided games.

Concurrent Introduction:

Leverage Series and Thigh and Drive Tackle

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Leverage Series</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same Foot, Same Shoulder • Near Hip • Run and Gather • 2-Player Tackle • 2-Player Rabbit | <p><i>Thigh and Drive Tackle</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kneeling Drive • Standing Drive • Two-Step Drive • Running Drive |
|--|--|

SHOULDER TACKLING COACHING POINT

START WITH THE THIGH & DRIVE TACKLE SERIES

We recommend you begin your teaching progression with the Thigh & Drive Tackle series. While the name Form Tackle may imply a basic form or starting point, there are several reasons why you should start with the Thigh & Drive Tackle.

1. Aiming for the midsection (belly button-to-thigh) keeps the tackler away from the ball-carrier's shoulder pads and helmet, reducing contact in those areas.
2. Smaller or less experienced players may find more success with this tackle, boosting confidence and enjoyment. They can bring their opponent to the ground without having to overpower or grapple them with the upper body.
3. Through Tracking and Leverage, the "near hip" is the landmark. Players can focus on that target, rather than having to shift their eyes.
4. The Thigh & Drive Tackle series is the most logical progression for athletes coming from flag football or other game types. They are used to establishing their leverage and targeting the near hip.

Once athletes are comfortable with this technique and with contact and the nature of tackling in general, other tackle skills can be taught.

This will give each athlete a greater "toolbox" of tackle skills and techniques which will assist them as they adapt to a variety of on-field situations.

Continued Tackle Type Development:

- Form Tackle
- Tight Angle Tackle
- Angle Tackle
- Sprint Tackle
- Kneeling Roll Tackle
- Standing Roll
- Two-Step Roll
- Running Roll

➤ TEACHING LESSONS & DRILLS FOR SHOULDER TACKLING

The Youth Coach Certification includes the Contact Course and Shoulder Tackling materials, providing detailed information on these areas. You can learn more and **access that course here**

Once you complete the Contact Course, we recommend accessing the **FREE** Shoulder Tackling System for more drills and teaching materials. Just use your USA Football account to sign up at **footballdevelopment.com/shoulder-tackling**

Finally, for quick access from your mobile device, install the USA Football Coach Planner app in the Android or Apple store for coaching points and tips. Learn more at **usafootball.com/coach-planner**

FLAG PULLING & TACKLING PROGRESSION

1 TRACK

- ✓ The ability to get to the ball-carrier with speed – taking into consideration scheme, leverage and blockers – in order to make the tackle or pull a flag.

KPI(s):

Change of Direction

Ability to change direction with the ball-carrier, maintaining a strong tracking stance and approach angle in leverage.

Approach Height and Speed

Depending on the play being run and the space the ball-carrier is in, a defender's body position is often defined by the amount of open field or traffic that must be managed to track and make the play.

Laser Focus

Maintain eyes on the target area amidst action on the football field, track the near hip and plot the path to where the ball-carrier will be.

Angle-Approach-Leverage

The ability to choose the correct angle and approach within the leverage of the defensive scheme, allowing players to make plays in the proper areas, setting themselves and teammates up for success

Scan for Opponents/Threats (VDA)

While tracking the ball-carrier, consider what opponents are doing and where teammates are positioned. Going over, under or around other players will change tracking on the fly.

Drills to Support:

- Pong
- 2-Player Fracture
- Mirrors Level

2 PREPARE

- ✓ The ability to transition from tracking to the correct body positions with proper foot placement for contact or a flag pull as well as the type of tackle being made.

KPI(s):

Balance

Be balanced at contact with correct foot placement for the contact being made.

Drop Height

Athletes who are tracking will move in different body postures than at the moment they meet the ball-carrier. The ability to time a change in body height without losing acceleration is vitally important at the initial point of connection.

Dominate Contact Angles

Spine in line from hips to shoulders, from neck to eyes. A straight line through the body that delivers power through the defender's shoulder and into the opponent.

Foot Placement

Defenders getting their feet close enough to the ball-carrier with bend in knees and hips to extend on flag pull or initial contact while generating power.

Claws Up-Elbows In

Pre-tackle or flag pull posture with wrists above elbows and hands up as if guarding the chest. This limits backswing, allowing for a quick, strong jab with the shoulder.

Drills to Support:

- Swoop
- Near Hip
- Run and Gather
- Zombie Tackle
- Ricochet Choice
- Over and Under

3 CONNECT

- ✓ Winning at the point of contact through technique, accuracy and the proper mentality

KPI(s):

Initial Shoulder Accuracy

Defenders connecting with their shoulder while maintaining strong posture.

Top Frontal Strike Point

Applying force with the correct part of the shoulder pad to deliver a proper strike.

Arrowhead

Spine in line and straight on contact, but **post-contact** using ear-to-helmet, helmet-to-body, squeezing into the ball-carrier to take away space.

Arm Clamp

On initial contact, the hands and arms working in unison to close all space between the tackler and the ball-carrier.

Iron Grip

Grab and clasp with the hands and strong fingers without letting go.

**Drills to Support**

-
- Shoulder Jab Series
 - Band Tackle
 - Bag Bounce

4 ACCELERATE

▼ The ability to generate force through the feet and into the ground, providing sustained pressure along with generating controlled power.

**KPI(s):****Cleats in the Ground**

Whether the whole foot or just the front cleats, this describes the ability to maintain grip through the feet to push back and generate force through the turf, continuing to drive.

Never Stop Working

Defenders must always fight back into the tackle and never give up, working to reshape, regain feet and restart acceleration when needed. Defenders also continue the drive until they have control of a runner.

Leg Drive

Tacklers cannot simply keep their cleats in the ground and pick their feet up and place them down. Footwork must be for the sake of leg drive, using the large muscles of the lower body to create force and speed through the contact point.

Control the Carrier

In addition to clamp and grip, use the hips and legs to remain attached to the ball-carrier and control the opponent all the way to the deck.

**Drills to Support:**

-
- Swoop-Drive
 - Regain your Feet
 - Wrestlers Spin

5 FINISH

- Taking the tackle to the ground in a dominant fashion and never allowing the job to be left to incomplete by controlling the ball-carrier fully, all the way to the deck.



KPI(s):

No Roll Off-Finish on Top

To complete the tackle in full control, defenders want to finish on top of the ball-carrier. This means the defender has forced the runner backward with momentum, finishing in the dominant position.

Tighten the Clamp

Give no space or daylight with a second squeeze after initial contact and keep contracting all the way to the ground.

Dominate to the Deck

After initial contact, remain in control of a ball-carrier through a secondary squeeze all the way to the ground.



Drills to Support:

- Hook and Handle
- Dominate on the Deck
- Double Bag

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO THE PROGRESSION & KPIS

Every Game Type features this model – from Flag through Senior Tackle. While there may be fewer Skill Elements in stages with less contact, this progression is systematically the same.

Just like how every Skill Element in this progression is applicable to every Game Type, different players have varying levels of readiness for individual KPIS within a Skill Element.

Coaches will naturally want to be detailed, but it's best to focus on the big Skill Elements (Track, Prepare, Connect, Accelerate and Finish) and keep in mind that younger or less experienced athletes will need a simpler task.

As athletes progress, coaches should slowly add more details and KPIs. This is a key reason why this skill and drill progression works from youth to college and beyond. Coaches can add complexity to the drill simply by the KPIs that are addressed and the number of areas where a coach seeks proficiency from an athlete.

It is highly recommended that Balance, Body Position and Accuracy are the focus when Flag Pulling & Tackling skills are learned. Because of the various age, maturity and experience levels throughout football, making these the first priority contributes to greater safety and better learning, especially when the skill is new for players. As athletes advance, new KPIs with more specificity can be added to drills.

➤ **IMPORTANT COACHING POINT:**

.....
Based on age, experience and maturity levels, not all players will learn every KPI within the progression. Coaches must judge when athletes are being overwhelmed or when they are ready to move on.

PROGRESSION CHART

PROGRESSION CHART							
GAME CATEGORY		NON-CONTACT	LIMITED CONTACT		CONTACT		
GAME TYPE		FLAG	ROOKIE LIMITED CONTACT™	SENIOR LIMITED CONTACT™	ROOKIE TACKLE®	SENIOR TACKLE™	
BLOCKING	Progression	Coil	Focus on Prep for Contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Uncoil		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Fit		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Finish		Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes
DEFEATING BLOCKS	Progression	Coil	Focus on Prep for Contact	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Uncoil		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Fit		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Finish		Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes
FLAG PULLING & TACKLING	Equipment	TackleBar®	No	Yes	Yes	Practice Tool	Practice Tool
		Padded Flag	No	Yes	Yes	Practice Tool	Practice Tool
	Progression	Track	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Prepare	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Connect	No	Tackle Bar®: Yes Padded Flag: No	Tackle Bar®: Yes Padded Flag: No	Yes	Yes
		Accelerate	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
		Finish	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

FITS FOR BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS

EXPERIENCE LEVEL	PILLAR FIT	BRIDGE FIT	BUCKLE FIT
Entry	Offensive Players Defensive Players	-	-
Experienced	Defensive Players	Offensive Players	Offensive Players Defensive Players



FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

usafootball.com/fdm

CONTACT MANUAL

GLOSSARY



PREP FOR CONTACT – DRILLS

FALLING

<p>Learning to Fall Forward/ Backward</p>	<p>FORWARD: Start in an athletic stance. Grab your shirt collar or the inside of your shoulder pads to keep from using your arms. When directed by coach, start to lean forward until you feel off balance. This is a full-body fall, so you should not be bending at the hips. Your first contact with the ground will be made with the outside portion of your knee, transitioning to the same-side hip followed by your same-side shoulder.</p> <p>Your hands should remain locked on their grips and your elbows should be positioned so that they do not contact the ground between the hip and shoulder. Keep your spine “strong” and straight, particularly through the neck so that your head does not make contact with the ground after the shoulder.</p> <p>BACKWARD: Start in an athletic stance. Grab your shirt collar or the inside of your shoulder pads to keep from using your arms. When directed by coach, start to lean backward to the comfort of your abilities. Lean with your whole body – you should not be bending at the hips.</p> <p>At the last moment before making contact with the ground, forcefully, yet under control, twist your body to align your side with the direction you are falling. You will use the knee-hip-shoulder roll technique to fall in line with the direction you were originally facing.</p>
<p>Learning to Fall Side-to-Side</p>	<p>Start in an athletic stance. Grab your shirt collar or the inside of your shoulder pads to keep from using your arms. When directed by coach, start to lean to either side until you feel off-balance. This is a full-body fall, so you should not be bending at the hips. Your first contact with the ground will be made with the outside portion of your knee, transitioning to the same side hip followed by your same-side shoulder. Your hands should remain locked on their grips and your elbows should be positioned so that they do not contact the ground between the hip and shoulder. Keep your spine “strong” and straight, particularly through the neck so that your head does not make contact with the ground after the shoulder.</p>



PREP FOR CONTACT – DRILLS

TUMBLING

Forward Rolls/ Backward Rolls	Start with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and place both hands on the ground in front of you. Place the crown of your head on the ground and tuck your neck. Keep contact with the ground with both hands, pushing off the ground with both feet and rotate 360 degrees around a horizontal axis while remaining in a tucked position. Pass your feet over your head and stand up once your feet have landed firmly on the other side.
Forward Roll to Sprint Relay	Start with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and place both hands on the ground in front of you. Place the crown of your head on the ground and tuck your neck. Keep contact with the ground with both hands, pushing off the ground with both feet and rotate 360 degrees around a horizontal axis while remaining in a tucked position. Pass your feet over your head and stand up once your feet have landed firmly on the other side. Once your feet hit the ground, get up to a standing position as quickly as possible and take off into a sprint for 5 yards. Try a variation of this drill by performing multiple somersaults before taking off in a sprint.
Hollow Rolls	Lay down with your back on the ground, face toward the sky. Keep your hands, elbows, feet and knees off the ground at all times, forcing rotation from your core. Rotate to either the left or right, keeping your core engaged. Only your torso and upper body should be touching the ground as you roll.
Lateral Shuffle and Roll	Face your shoulder toward your target destination. Start with your feet a little wider than your hips. Shuffle to one side by using small shuffle steps (sidestep with your outside leg and then bring your inside leg to meet it). Continue this movement until the coach delivers a command to drop to the ground and roll in the same direction that you were shuffling. Continue to roll until coach tells you to get up off the ground and return to a standing shuffle.
Log Roll Bonanza	Start with your feet shoulder-width apart and face coach. Coach will either point right or left. On their command, you will carioca the direction they are pointing. When they point down on the ground, you will lie down on the ground and begin to roll the opposite direction of your carioca. While on the ground, coach can also point toward directions for you to roll. When coach points up, stand up from your roll and begin to carioca the opposite direction of your roll.
Log Rolls	Lay down on your back, face toward the sky. Keep your arms and legs straight and force the start of rolling rotation to either the left or right by utilizing your core. Arms and legs can assist in the roll. They do not need to stay off the ground.
Multi-Directional Get Up and Go	Start in a sitting position. On the coach's command, get up and run 5 to 10 yards in the direction the coach is pointing.
No Hands Get up	Sitting on the ground with your legs crossed, stand up without using your hands.
Push-Up and Roll	Get down in push-up position, making sure hands are shoulder-width apart. Do a push-up and then roll over to either direction. Immediately do another push-up. Roll back the opposite direction.
Seat Rolls to Bear Crawl Position	Start in a Bear position: down on all fours with your arms straight, hands below your shoulders and your knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Only your hands and toes should touch the ground with your back flat. On coach's command, players will drop one hip to the ground while simultaneously lifting the opposite hand to roll across the seat of their pants and return to the Bear position. Coach will give multiple commands triggering multiple rolls before rotating athletes.
Shoulder Rolls Forward/ Backward	Start with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and place both hands on the ground in front of you. Place either your left or right shoulder on the ground, tuck your neck and keep contact with the ground with both hands until you push off the ground with both feet. Tuck and roll 360 degrees over either your left or right shoulder.
Surfer Drill	Starting on your hands and knees, quickly get up into athletic position upon instruction.



PREP FOR CONTACT – DRILLS

TUMBLING

<p>Three Forward Rolls to Sprint</p>	<p>Start with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and place both hands on the ground in front of you. Place the crown of your head on the ground and tuck your neck. Keep contact with the ground with both hands, pushing off the ground with both feet and rotate 360 degrees around a horizontal axis while remaining in a tucked position. Pass your feet over your head and return to a crouched position once your feet have landed firmly on the other side.</p> <p>Once your feet hit the ground, initiate a second and then third forward roll. On last roll, once feet hit the ground, get up to a standing position as quickly as possible and take off into a sprint for 5 yards.</p>
<p>Three Player Roll and Weave</p>	<p>Three players form a unit, all laying on the ground with about a foot of space between them. The middle player rolls toward one of the players on either side. Once he/she reaches the outside player, that outside player must get up and jump up and over the rolling player, toward the middle. The original middle player continues to roll to the outside until the player who just jumped over him/her is now the middle player, down on the ground rolling toward the opposite side. Continue and repeat this process.</p>



PREP FOR CONTACT – DRILLS

GRAPPLING

<p>Bear Crawl Tip Over</p>	<p>Assign partners and have one start standing while the other gets down in the Bear position: on all fours with arms straight, hands below shoulders and knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Only your hands and toes should touch the ground, back flat. Once drill begins, the standing player will attempt to tip the Bear over by pushing, pulling or lifting. Standing player sees how many 'tips' he/she can get in the designated amount of time while Bear works to stay strong and keep upright.</p>
<p>Body Lock Game</p>	<p>Pair up teammates of equal abilities. Have at least 5 yards between groups in all directions. Have pairs assume a neutral over-hook/under-hook setup with roughly one foot separating their chests. Each player will have one over-hook and one under-hook.</p> <p>On the coach's command, both players will work for double under-hooks. The players can use footwork, movement and upper body grappling skills but must always stay connected to their opponent. The goal of the drill is to gain double under-hooks and lift your opponent off his feet. Lifts only count if double under-hooks are present.</p>
<p>Crab Crawl Slapsies</p>	<p>Athletes start in pairs with both in the Crab position: hands and feet on the ground with backside facing the ground and hips extended skyward. Make sure to keep your hips up towards the sky so that your butt is off the ground.</p> <p>Coach will designate a desired body part for target: hip, knee, shoulder or foot. Players will maneuver around in the Crab position and try to take their partner's target area. Opponents may slap away an attempted tag (forcing both players to balance on three points of contact with ground). Reset after each point and keep score between opponents.</p>
<p>Hand Fighting</p>	<p>Pair up partners in groups of two in a grid with ample space between groups. Both partners have a square stance and are separated by 12-18 inches. Have each athlete grab the left wrist of his/her partner with their right hand and bend knees to find good athletic position to get in the ready position for the drill. Be sure to rotate each round so they players working different grip hands. The goal of this drill should be to gain double wrist control over the opponent by hand fighting, grabbing and gripping without moving the feet.</p>
<p>Knee Wrestling Drill</p>	<p>Athletes will start in pairs on their knees in front of each other. Each athlete will assume a grip with one arm over his/her opponents' shoulder and the other under the opposite armpit. This should lead to a natural setup where each player has an over and an under grip.</p> <p>On the coach's command both players will attempt to take the opponent over to the side. Coach your athletes not to push forward or back, only side to side and remind them to keep arm on the upper shoulder and stay away from opponents' neck. Allow athletes to grapple for designated time or until one player successfully takes down the other.</p>
<p>Pummeling</p>	<p>Pair up partners in a grid with ample space between groups, with their right legs forward. Both partners place the right arms under the armpit of the opposite and cup the hand and wrist to secure the back of the shoulder pad at the shoulder blade level. Note that this can be performed without pads. Players will place their left hand under their partners' triceps and clamp the elbow down to trap the arm underneath it. This drill helps warm up the upper body for close quarters contact.</p>
<p>The Bear</p>	<p>Pair up partners in groups of two in a grid with ample space between groups. The partner who is up first will start on their hands and knees and then push-up so that knees are off the ground and all their weight is on their hands and toes. The second partner, who will be the one providing the force to the down partner in an effort to move them off balance, will begin on one side of their partner. Ensure all groups start on the same side to avoid groups running into each other. Key pressure areas for the "pushing" partner are: shoulder – L/R and up/down, hips, rib cage, straight through the shoulders on a level even with spine height.</p>



PREP FOR CONTACT – DRILLS

CRAWLING

Animal Crawl Relay	Equally divide up relay teams (either 2 or 4) and have them stand approximately 10 yards across from their teammates. Using any of the crawling skills (bear crawl, crab crawl, seal crawl, etc.), have teams compete in a relay race.
Animal Walk Relay	Equally divide up relay teams (either 2 or 4) and have them stand approximately 10 yards across from their teammates. Using any of the animal walk skills (monkey, elephant, spiderman, etc.), have teams compete in a relay race.
Bear Crawl	Get down on all fours with your arms straight, hands below your shoulders and your knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Only your hands and toes should touch the ground. Keeping your back flat, crawl forward and backward moving opposite hands and feet in unison (right hand and left foot, left hand and right foot).
Bear Crawl Heel Tag	Pair up partners and start one in a standing, athletic position and the second in the Bear position: down on all fours with your arms straight, hands below your shoulders and your knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Only your hands and toes should touch the ground with your back flat. On the coach's command, the standing player will try to quickly juke, fake and circle his/her opponent aiming to tag his/her shoe or sock. Only tags in this area count. The player in the Bear position must stay within the boundaries of the drill but crawl in an effort to keep their partner in front of them, unable to get to their heel.
Crab Crawl	Walk backward on your hands and feet. Make sure to keep your hips up towards the sky so that your butt is off the ground. Then do the same walking forward.
Crab Crawl Toe Touch	Athlete starts in the Crab position: hands and feet on the ground with backside facing the ground and hips extended skyward. Make sure to keep your hips up towards the sky so that your butt is off the ground. Athletes will alternate trying to lift and bring together their right foot and left hand then left foot and right hand, touching them in front of the body.
Elephant Walk	Get down on all fours with your arms straight, hands below your shoulders and your knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Keeping your back flat, move the same-side arm and leg together to further challenge anti-rotation abilities.
Monkey Walk	Get down on all fours with your arms straight, hands below your shoulders and your knees bent 90 degrees below your hips. Only your hands and toes should touch the ground. Move sideways using your same-side arm and leg to move laterally and bring your other arm and leg to reposition in original stance.
Push-Up Slapsies	Pair up partners in groups of two in a grid with ample space between groups. Both partners will begin in a push-up position facing each other so that their heads are 6-to-12 inches apart depending on size and arm length. Each "match" is played in rounds. Only one point may be scored per round. Assign one partner to start on offense and one to start on defense. On the coach's command, "1-2-3, Go," the athletes on offense will attempt to slap the back of the opponent's hand while it is on the ground. The defending partner will move his/her hands to dodge. The goal of the game is to tap the top of the opponent's hand like the child's game slapsies. If any part of the body other than hands or feet touch the ground, that player is "out." Offensive players may not sprawl for the tap. Even after the tap is made, they must stay in the push-up position. Each round is played for 10-15 seconds and time is held by the coaches. Offensive player may use either hand to go after either hand of their opponent. As players pick up one hand to attack or move a hand to avoid, they will be placed in a one-armed push-up position that will challenge their shoulder stability and work on anti-rotational core strength. After a point is scored, athletes reset and begin again on the next coach's command switching offense and defense. After a set number of rounds, find a new partner and continue for desired number of matches.
Seal Crawl	Begin laying flat on the ground on your stomach. Press your upper body up off the ground until your arms are extended. Keep your hips, knees and feet flat on the ground. While keeping your feet and knees together, use your upper body to drag yourself across the field.



PREP FOR CONTACT – DRILLS

CRAWLING

Shrimping	Start on your back and bring your feet up toward your hips. Roll to one side, bracing your upper body and use your shoulder on the ground as a pivot point. Lift your hips off the ground and extend legs to push hips back. Extend from your waist until you are in a straight line with your head facing a target cone. Repeat this movement on your opposite side.
Spiderman Walk	Get into a push-up start position. Begin by extending your left arm forward as if reaching and at same time, bring your right knee up to your right elbow by bending your knee. Once right foot and left hand are on the ground, push through the right foot to extend right leg straight, bringing your left knee to your left elbow (which is not bent). Repeat for desired distance.



BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS – DRILLS

COIL

<p>2-Point Coil to Fit</p>	<p>Align in a 2-point Coil with feet parallel in the center of the padded pole or partner, a full arm's length away from the pole. Hands carried in proper guard posture. Rock forward (teeter), uncoiling your hips while maintaining weight on your insteps. Move your knees down and out, which allows your hips to fully uncoil.</p> <p>As you uncoil, your hands and hips ascend toward the striking surface and thumbs rotate outward and elbows turn down and in toward the ground. Strike the padded pole or your partner with densest part of the palm. Finish the drill in a posture similar to the Fit to Uncoil Drill (fully uncoiled, proper fit and arch in the back).</p>
<p>3-Point Coil to Fit</p>	<p>Align in a 3-point Coil with feet parallel in the center of the padded pole or partner, a full arm's length away from the pole. Hands carried in proper guard posture. Rock forward (teeter), uncoiling your hips while maintaining weight on your insteps. Move your knees down and out, which allows your hips to fully uncoil.</p> <p>As you uncoil, your hands and hips ascend toward the striking surface and thumbs rotate outward and elbows turn down and in toward the ground. Strike the padded pole or your partner with densest part of the palm. Finish the drill in a posture similar to the Fit to Uncoil Drill (fully uncoiled, proper fit and arch in the back).</p>
<p>Fire Drill</p>	<p>Begin in a proper 2-point coil posture. On the coach's command, advance forward 5 yards with short, choppy steps (foot fire) while moving a tennis ball back and forth between your hands. Feet shouldn't come off the ground. Steps are short and tight. Feet remain parallel with no long steps.</p>
<p>Iron Core</p>	<p>Start in a Coil position with a partner. As the focus partner, attempt to keep your hands within the midline of your body without letting your partner disrupt you through lateral pressure applied to your wrist/forearm. Respond to pressure by stabilizing through your torso and instep of your foot.</p> <p>When your partner releases tension, do not let your hands move outside your frame (keep your hands in your midline). Your partner will apply pressure to your left and right, going back and forth. Continue the drill for 30 to 90 seconds.</p>



BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS – DRILLS

UNCOIL

<p>Teeter Long Jump</p>	<p>Bend your knees in an athletic stance, place your weight in your heels and slightly arch your lower back so that your torso is upright. Displace your weight forward from your heels to the balls of your feet. While your knees move forward and down toward the ground, make sure you continue to push them out and activate your glutes.</p> <p>From this coiled position, use the uncoiling of your hips to generate power and jump as far as you can forward.</p>
<p>Teeter to Foot Fire</p>	<p>Bend your knees in an athletic stance, place your weight in your heels and slightly arch your lower back so that your torso is upright. Displace your weight forward from your heels to the balls of your feet. While your knees move forward and down toward the ground, make sure you continue to push them out and activate your glutes.</p> <p>From this coiled position, use the uncoiling of your hips to generate power and transfer to a foot fire, taking short, choppy steps to regain balance.</p>
<p>Wrecking Ball</p>	<p>Stand across from your partner and face each other. One of you will hold a medicine ball, and the other will hold a small shield or tackling pad. Holding the pad rigid, the shield holder engages his core in order to provide resistance. The player with a medicine ball is in a 2-point coil position, holding the ball with long arms at or around knee height.</p> <p>On the coach's command, the player with the medicine ball engages their hips and raises the ball into the pad. Once players are proficient with the medicine ball, they can progress without it.</p>



BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS – DRILLS

FIT

<p>Brace-pop (Blocking Only)</p>	<p>Starting from a 3-point stance, a player lines up offset, opposite a teammate or coach holding a soft surface a foot or two away.</p> <p>On the coach's command, the player takes a brace step and any necessary short steps while maintaining a wide base to close the distance to the bag.</p> <p>Once at the bag, the player uncoils the hips and delivers a strike.</p>
<p>Coil to Fit</p>	<p>Align in a 2-point coil position with feet parallel and in the center of a padded pole or partner. Make sure you are a full arm's length away from the pole or partner and that your hands are carried in proper guard posture. Rock forward (teeter), uncoiling your hips while maintaining weight on your insteps. Your knees move down and out, which allows your hips to fully uncoil.</p> <p>As you uncoil, your hands and hips ascend toward the striking surface, thumbs rotate outward and elbows turn down and in toward the ground. Strike the padded pole or partner with the densest part of your palm. Finish the drill in a posture similar to the Fit to Uncoil Drill (fully uncoiled, proper fit and arch in the back).</p>
<p>Come to Balance Fit</p>	<p>Start in a position-specific stance (2-point or 3-point) 5 to 10 yards from the coach or teammate holding a hand shield. Move quickly toward the target, transitioning to short, choppy steps as you approach your coach or teammate. Transition your hips under your body as your feet widen. Uncoil your hips to initiate a pillar strike on the pad.</p>
<p>Dowel Lift / Dowel Fit</p>	<p>Starting in the Bridge Fit with a dowel PVC pipe in your hands, extend the hips through the teeter and foot fire forward, keeping the spine in a neutral position through the lift.</p>
<p>Fit to Uncoil</p>	<p>Place both hands on a padded pole or partner with thumbs rotated out at approximately 45 degrees. Fully extend both arms with elbows pointed to the ground. Condense torso while maintaining a proper triangular base.</p> <p>Distribute your weight on the densest part of your palm. Begin the drill by teetering. The knees will move down and out, which allows the hips to fully uncoil.</p>



BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS – DRILLS

FINISH

Fit to Finish	<p>Position two players across from each other. They should be arm's length apart. Players will uncoil to "fit" and then work on "foot, fire, finish" while staying connected for the duration of the drill/play.</p>
King of the Ring	<p>Set up cones to outline a 3-yard by 6-yard box. Two players line up in the middle of the 6 yards in a neutral fit position. Unlike the Refit Drill, players stand straight up in the "ring" simulating a stalemate situation.</p> <p>On the coach's command, both players' first motion is the Brace-Hop followed by the Refit. Players attempt to move the other back and out of the ring of cones through the closing and climbing of the hips and feet, continually refitting and recovering leverage as needed. The coach blows the drill dead after five seconds or if a player loses. Players lose by being pushed back, by going to the ground or by turning.</p>



BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS – DRILLS

TYPES OF BLOCKS

2-Point Coil to Fit	<p>Align in a 2-point Coil with feet parallel in the center of the padded pole or partner, a full arm's length away from the pole. Hands carried in proper guard posture. Rock forward (teeter), uncoiling your hips while maintaining weight on your insteps. Move your knees down and out, which allows your hips to fully uncoil.</p> <p>As you uncoil, your hands and hips ascend toward the striking surface and thumbs rotate outward and elbows turn down and in toward the ground. Strike the padded pole or your partner with densest part of the palm. Finish the drill in a posture similar to the Fit to Uncoil Drill (fully uncoiled, proper fit and arch in the back).</p>
Catch and Close	<p>Begin in a pre-fit position that matches the block you are practicing. On the coach's command, take short choppy steps while keeping the elbows in to negate space between yourself and the defender.</p>
Close and Clamp	<p>Starting in a catch position, close your hips to the target and clamp the defender on the back hip.</p>
Come to Balance Freeze	<p>Start from a 2-point or 3-point position (based on position). When running in space, your sprint strides should remain long and linear to gain as much ground as possible. When approaching your opponent, widen your base and take short, choppy steps to get back into the 2-point coil position.</p> <p>Transition from a forward lean as your hips begin to gather underneath your body. Bring hands out in front of the body (the guard position). Freeze in this position.</p>
Come to Balance Mirror	<p>With a partner, take turns mirroring each other as you practice coming to balance. Start from a 2-point or 3-point position (based on position). When running in place, your sprint strides should remain long and linear to gain as much ground as possible. When approaching your opponent, widen your base and take short, choppy steps to get back into the 2-point coil position.</p> <p>Transition from a forward lean as your hips begin to gather underneath your body. Bring hands out in front of the body (the guard position).</p>
Deep-Gather-Gain Ground Sequence	<p>Start from a deep step position with a correct brace angle on the defender. Take a gather step to regain your balance, then take a short forward brace step to climb toward the defender and execute a reach block.</p>
Deep-Gather-Single Pillar	<p>Start from a deep step position with the correct brace angle on the defender and take a gather step to regain balance. On that gather step, make a Single Pillar Fit on the defender's sternum. Take short, choppy steps to gain ground on the defender and close the angle, working to a Double Pillar Fit.</p>
Find the Brace Angle	<p>Start from a 2-point stance and take a brace step with the foot opposite the target to triangulate the defender. The depth of the brace step will change based on the distance and angle you are from the target. As players progress, practice taking multiple brace steps against a moving target.</p>
Fit to Uncoil vs. Pole (or alternative surface)	<p>Engage in a Bridge Fit on a padded pole or partner. Condense your torso while maintaining a proper triangular base. Distribute your weight through the densest part of the palm. Connect with a padded pole on the densest part of the palm (opposite of the thumb).</p> <p>Rotate your thumbs out 45 degrees and bend your elbows approximately 120 degrees in front of the body. Point your elbows down toward the ground with back arched. Begin the drill by teetering. The knees will move down and out, which allows the hips to fully uncoil.</p>
Single Pillar to Double Pillar	<p>Starting in a Single Pillar Fit with the 90-degree rule from the back leg to the defender, fire the feet past the midline in order to fit the second pillar to the outside shoulder and finish.</p>
Squeeze Drill	<p>Face your partner in an offset 2-point coil position with shoulders aligned. Connect the shoulders (right-to-right or left-to-left) while remaining in a 2-point coil position.</p> <p>Position your shoulder down and forward to protect the shoulder capsule. Brace your opposite foot of the shoulder being used to engage. The brace foot is angled with the instep pointed at the V of the opponent's neck. At the coach's command, simultaneously squeeze into each other, driving off the brace foot without advancing.</p>
Step into the Bucket - Deep - Gather Sequence	<p>Starting from a deep step position with a correct brace angle on the defender, take a gather step with the far foot from the defender to regain balance, take a gather (gallop) step with the near foot to establish a reach angle, then another gather step to regain position again.</p>



BLOCKING & DEFEATING BLOCKS – DRILLS

LEVERAGE RECOVERY SKILLS

<p>Brace Hop</p>	<p>Begin as if you are doing the Refit Drill. Your goal is to push your partner backward. Your partner performs a short, tight hop backward. Cleats should barely come off the ground. During the hop, your partner's toes turn out even more to allow their hips to uncoil upon sticking/landing the hop.</p> <p>Your partner refits each hand back to a correct fit (one at a time). Finish by closing and climbing with the hips and feet. Rotate positions with your partner and allow them to push you as you perform a executing the Brace-Hop.</p>
<p>Brace Hop with Physio Ball</p>	<p>Begin in a 2-point coil position with hands behind your back. Your partner holds a physio ball 2 to 3 feet away even with their chest.</p> <p>On the coach's command, your partner fires their feet in place while holding the physio ball. You advance toward them and strike your chest on the ball. After you bounce back, you again close the distance between yourself and your partner to initiate contact with the ball. Repeat for four to five bounces.</p>
<p>King of the Ring</p>	<p>Begin in a 2-point coil position with hands behind your back. Your partner holds a physio ball 2 to 3 feet away even with their chest.</p> <p>On the coach's command, your partner fires their feet in place while holding the physio ball. You advance toward them and strike your chest on the ball. After you bounce back, you again close the distance between yourself and your partner to initiate contact with the ball. Repeat for four to five bounces.</p>
<p>Refit Drill</p>	<p>Begin with a solid triangular base with toes pointing out, feet outside the knees and knees outside the hips. Balance your weight on your insteps. With a partner, engage in a neutral fit position with arms extended outward and thumbs pointed up. One hand is on your partner's chest (correct fit position) and the other is on top of their shoulder (incorrect fit position). Hips are in an uncoiled position with arc strength in the body.</p> <p>With your partner, refit by moving your hands from your partner's shoulder to their chest while they simultaneously do the same movement. Bring your hands around your partner's triceps in a small circular motion with emphasis on a low to high trajectory when regaining the fit back inside on the chest. It is critical to respond to pressure instantly by refitting the hand in the tightest path possible without losing the shoulders. The refit helps you instill precise movement patterns as speed is ramped up gradually.</p>



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

TRACK

<p>2-Player Fracture</p>	<p>Place four cones in a 10-yard-by-10-yard square with a fifth cone splitting the side where the defenders will start. Defenders are designated as No. 1 and No. 2. The ball-carrier starts on the opposite side from the defenders.</p> <p>The drill begins when the coach yells out a number. On that command, the ball-carrier starts forward while the defender whose number is not called establishes near hip leverage on the ball-carrier and closes the space. The defender whose number is called circles the middle cone before joining his teammate and working to create a vice tackle.</p>
<p>2-Player Rabbit</p>	<p>Start with three cones placed five yards apart in an equilateral triangle. As players master the skill, widen the distance they have to move. With two defenders and a ball-carrier on the three cones, all three move forward on the coach's command. As the defenders narrow the gap to the runner, dominating their assigned leverage, the ball-carrier shifts and jukes in order to try to break contain. The defenders maintain leverage, swooping in with same foot, same shoulder to make a two-hand touch on the runner.</p>
<p>5-10-5 Touch the Cone (w/3 cones)</p>	<p>Place three cones 5 yards apart in a straight line. Start by standing behind cone 1 (middle cone) with one hand touching the cone. When instructed by coach, sprint to the right to cone 2. Touch cone 2 with your right hand. Change direction and sprint to cone 3. Touch cone 3 with your left hand and sprint back through cone 1, then repeat in the opposite direction. You should be running in a straight line directly behind the line of cones.</p>
<p>Angle of Pursuit Drill</p>	<p>Angle of Pursuit is also commonly called "The Rabbit Drill." Set up cones or markers along the sideline. Have one player on the sideline at the 50-yard line (the rabbit). Have all other players spread out in the middle at the 50-yard line. Have the rabbit begin running down the sideline toward the endzone.</p> <p>The goal is to have the defenders catch the rabbit before he/she gets to the end zone. Discuss the importance on taking a proper pursuit angle to catch the rabbit.</p>
<p>Army-Navy Game</p>	<p>Create a defined playing area of approximately 15 yards. The coach will call out these commands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Army:" Run to one side of the field area (designated by coach, i.e., right side) - "Navy:" Run to the other side of the field area (designated by coach, i.e., left side) - "Hit the deck:" Lie face down - "At ease:" Stand up <p>Try adding in some different movement skills like shuffle, skip and hop. Players must be careful to wait for the "At ease" command before getting up to run somewhere. Add your own ideas to modify this quick game to suit your needs.</p>
<p>Cone Circles (change of direction)</p>	<p>Arrange cones in any pattern. Players will run through the cones, alternating whether they approach the cones from the right or the left, forcing them to change direction each time they see a new cone along the path.</p>
<p>Cones In and Out (lateral)</p>	<p>Line cones up along a sideline or yard line. Start to the left or right side of the last cone in the line and remain lateral (face looking 90 degrees away from the cones rather than straight at the cones) as you shuffle through them.</p>
<p>Cops and Robbers Football</p>	<p>Divide players into "cops" and "robbers." The robbers try to get the footballs from the far side safely back to their home base without getting their flags swiped off by the cops. Place footballs along one end of the playing area. Robbers wearing flags line up along the opposite side from the footballs. Cops start in the middle. They will try to pull the flags off the robbers as they run by.</p> <p>On the signal, the robbers try running to take a single football at a time and make it back safely without getting caught. Robbers will go back-and-forth grabbing footballs one at a time until their flags are pulled. If they are caught, the robbers must sit. When sitting, they can try to pull flags off other robbers who are running by. Play until all footballs have been taken or until all flags have been pulled. Switch roles and play again.</p>
<p>Diamond Agility Drill</p>	<p>Place four cones 5 yards apart in a diamond shape. Assume an athletic stance on the right side of cone 1. Sprint to the left side of the cone 2. Quickly move your feet around the cone and sprint to left side of cone 1, making a figure 8. Quickly move your feet around cone 1 and sprint to the opposite side of cone 3. Quickly move your feet around cone 3 and run to the opposite side of cone 4, making another figure 8. Quickly move your feet around cone 4 and sprint back to cone 3.</p>



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

TRACK

Flag Tag/Hip Tag	The object of the game is to not get your flags pulled. When your flag is pulled, the player must hold it in their hand and can remain playing until their second flag is pulled. When a player's second flag is pulled, they must stay in place and try and pull the flags of other players running by. Everyone is "it." Coaches are encouraged to set boundary areas for the activity.
Helicopters	Move around with others in a set space while turning in circles with arms out like a helicopter to work on spatial awareness.
Helicopters - Modification	Move around with others in a set space while turning in circles with arms out like a helicopter to work on spatial awareness. Stop rotating and find a partner or race to a set place at signal of instructor.
L-Drill (w/3 cones, shuffle-sprint)	Set up cones one and two 5 yards apart. Set up cone three 5 yards to the right of cone two. This will create an "L" formation with the cones. Start at cone 1. Sprint forward to cone 2, turn and sprint back to cone 1, turn again and sprint back to cone 2. Run around cone 2, turn right and sprint to cone 3. Run around cone 3 and sprint past cone 2. This is where you finish the drill. Place an emphasis on quick change of direction and maintaining low body position.
Move and Sprint Reaction	Move laterally, left or right, following instructions for which direction and at what speed.
Near Foot, Near Shoulder	Divide players into two lines. Mark their starting points with cones about five yards apart. The ball-carrier holds the ball in front of him as a target point. On the coach's command, the two players progress toward each other. As players near, the defender plants the near foot toward the ball-carrier and brings his same arm forward, pushing off the ball and sending the two players back toward their cones. Players then repeat the process. The defender can continue to use the same foot/shoulder combination or alternate, depending on skill level.
Near Hip	Divide players into two lines. Mark their starting points with cones about five yards apart. The ball-carrier holds the ball in front of him as a target point. On the coach's command, the two players progress toward each other. As players near, the defender plants the near foot toward the ball-carrier and brings his same arm forward, pushing off the ball and sending the two players back toward their cones. Players then repeat the process. The defender can continue to use the same foot/shoulder combination or alternate, depending on skill level.
Partner Cone Weave	Two identical, parallel lines of cones must be set up. Two partners will hold onto each other with one hand at arm's length (Player 1's left arm extended to meet Player 2's right arm). They will weave through their individual lines of cones, using each other for balance.
Partner Cross-Tracking Tag	Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. A partner stands directly behind you and inserts a hand into your field of vision (i.e., lower left side, upper right side, middle right side, etc.). Without turning your feet, locate your partner's hand and touch it with your hand on the opposite side of your body (touch your partner's left hand with your right hand). Your partner will then pull the hand back and insert it in different location. Vary the hands and positioning.
Partner Tag Drill	Within the arms reach of a partner and without leaving his/her reach, attempt to tag him/her. Pairs will not leave their original area. You must tag your partner below the waist. Keep your feet moving in the tight space and keep track of how many times you tag them.
Pong	Set up four cones in a box shape. The dimensions of the box will vary based on the age and athleticism of the athletes as well as the skills being emphasized. The standard size is 5 feet by 5 feet. Two ball-carriers line up on any two adjacent edges while a single defensive player lines up opposite either of the runners. On the coach's command, the offensive player opposite the defender enters the box and tries to reach the other side untouched. The defender tracks the hip for a two-handed tag. As soon as the tag is made, the other runner leaves his/her line and runs toward the opposite side. The defender flips his/her eyes and tracks the second runner, attempting another tag.
Position Tag	One or two defenders go into the middle of field. Other teammates count off as either QBs, RBs or WRs. One defender calls out a position and the players of that position must run across the field area without getting tagged by the defenders. Tagged players go to the sideline.



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

TRACK

Quick Feet Reaction	Chop feet (running in place) and follow verbal instructions: left/right (turn 90 degrees and back, keeping feet square), down (burpee and return to standing position), up (jump).
Run-Shuffle-Run	Set up four cones in a straight line, each 5 yards apart. Start at the first cone and sprint to the second cone (5 yards). Laterally shuffle from the second to third cone (5 yards). Sprint between the third and fourth cone (5 yards). Immediately repeat in the opposite direction using the same pattern (i.e., run-shuffle-run).
Run and Gather	Start with a ball-carrier and a defender about 10 yards apart. The ball-carrier begins running down the sideline or a yard line, starting and stopping in intervals. The defender takes an angle to the ball-carrier, tracking the near hip, changing speeds to match the ball-carrier and maintaining leverage, then closing with a swoop for a two-hand touch on the runner.
Scatter Run	Run in a designated path (along the sideline) until the coach calls one of the following commands: crawl, hop, march (low, high, slow, fast). Adjust to the new command until the coach tells you to go back to running. Wait for the next command while running.
Slalom Weave Drill (w/cones)	Set up 10-15 cones in a straight line, each cone 4 yards apart. Weave in and out of the cones beginning at the left side of the first cone, then run to the right side of the second cone. Continue to go around the outside each cone and burst forward 5 yards when you reach the end of the cones. Walk or jog back to the starting position and repeat.
Swoop to Near Foot	Align players in front of either half-round bags, lines on the field or something to designate a straight line. On the coach's command, players take short, choppy steps forward, coming to balance and swooping into a left-foot or right-foot lead, depending on predrill instructions. Once in the breakdown position, players take a short, six-inch power step toward an imaginary ball-carrier. Weight remains distributed on the balls of the feet.
Tag the Runner with the Ball	One or two defenders go into the middle of field. Other teammates count off as either QBs, RBs or WRs. One defender calls out a position and the players of that position must run across the field area without getting tagged by the defenders. One of the offensive players will have a ball. It is the job of the defenders to quickly find and tag the one who has the ball.
W-Drill (w/cones, start with backpedal)	Place seven cones 5 yards apart in a zig-zag pattern. Start at cone 1. Sprint to cone 2. Planting into the ground with your outside foot, backpedal to cone 3. Sprint to cone 4. Repeat this pattern until you're finished with all the cones. Switch starting cone and repeat in opposite direction.
Zombie Tackle	A tackler and an offensive player start about 10 yards apart. Adjust the spacing based on your players' age, athleticism and primary positions. The offensive player does not carry a ball, instead assuming a zombie pose with arms straight out and palms facing forward. On the coach's command, the zombie walks, jogs or sprints toward the defender. On the second command, the defender begins moving forward toward the zombie. As the defender nears the contact zone, he drops his body height to initiate contact, dropping below the zombie's arms to deliver rising contact.



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

PREPARE

1-Leg Balance Reach	Stand on one leg and reach out, bending over, to touch a cone on the ground, all while maintaining balance.
1-Leg Diagonal Chop and Reach	Stand on one leg and reach out to touch a cone on the ground that is off to the side. The raised leg cannot touch the ground at any point.
2-Step Drive	Place a cone a few steps away from a coach or teammate holding a half-round bag or similar surface. On the coach's command, take two steps toward the bag, establishing leverage. As you approach the contact zone, swoop in using your same foot, same shoulder technique, punching your arms around the bag to make the tackle.
2-Step Roll	Place a cone a few steps away from a coach or teammate holding a half-round bag or similar surface. On the coach's command, the player takes two Swoop steps toward the bag, establishing leverage. As the player approaches the contact zone, he swoops in using same foot, same shoulder technique, punching his arms around the bag to make the tackle. The player then rolls to complete the tackle, finishing on top.
2-Step Thigh & Drive	Place a cone a few steps away from a coach or teammate holding a half-round bag or similar surface. On the coach's command, the player takes two steps toward the bag, establishing leverage. As the player approaches the contact zone, he swoops in using same foot, same shoulder technique, punching his arms around the bag to make the tackle.
Agility Ladder	Move in and out of an agility ladder utilizing jumping jack feet, lateral steps and visual commands from coaches.
Army-Navy Game	<p>Create a defined playing area of approximately 15 yards. The coach will call out these commands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Army:" Run to one side of the field area (designated by coach—i.e., right side) - "Navy:" Run to the other side of the field area (designated by coach—i.e., left side) - "Hit the deck:" Lie face down - "At ease:" Stand up <p>Try adding some rules like "first one to Army gets a point" or "last one to Navy is out." Players must be careful to wait for the "At ease" command before getting up to run somewhere. Add your own ideas to modify this quick game to suit your needs.</p>
Balance Beam Lean and Touch	Walk along a balance beam or yard line, balancing while stopping to squat down and touch cones to either side at set points.
Balance Beam Over and On	Follow commands to move laterally backward and forward over a balance beam (a yard line). On the coach's command, jump back and forth "over" the beam with both feet. When the coach says to land "on" the balance beam, hop directly onto the line and continue with the lateral movement.
Balance Strides	<p>All players grab a football and spread out so they have plenty of space around them. Players hold the ball in their right hands and balance on their left feet, then lean forward and touch the ground with their left hands.</p> <p>The player will do five reps then explode forward and make a quick cut after the fifth repetition. Every five reps, the player will switch hands. After 10 reps on one leg, the player will switch legs for a total of 20 reps.</p>
Beach Ball Rodeo	Hold a beach ball up with a partner, each using one hand. One person moves in different directions, forcing the other partner to move simultaneously so that the ball is not dropped.
Beach Ball Rodeo - Modification	Hold a beach ball up with a partner, each using one hand. The partners will be tied together at the waist by a chord, leaving about two feet of chord between them. Both partners then close their eyes. One person moves in different directions, forcing the other partner to move simultaneously so that the ball is not dropped.
Breakdown	Have players stand in rows and move upon the coach's verbal commands. Stop after each command to check that players are in correct position. Set a solid base by stomping the feet and setting them shoulder-width apart. Weight is balanced, and pressure is on the balls of the feet. Players extend their chests to get the spine in line and create a large surface area. Think "proud chest." Bend at the knees, keeping the chest out and spine in line. Shoulders over hips. Knees over toes. Bring the hands up in a relaxed position and ready to react.



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

PREPARE

<p>Elevator Drill</p>	<p>Place two athletes 1-yard apart with one holding a football. The athlete with the football assumes a fundamental athletic position. The defender will get into a near foot, near shoulder tackling position, bisecting the ball-carrier.</p> <p>The offensive player should start in as high a stance as possible and the defensive player matching his height but keeping a leverage advantage with shoulders under shoulders.</p> <p>On the coach's command, the offensive player will begin to perform slow, controlled squats. He/she should not complete standard reps but move in partial ranges only going slightly down and up, down and stopping, all the way down and halfway up, and down and up again. The defensive player will follow the lead of the offensive player and sink and rise in his defensive tackle position to maintain his leverage advantage.</p> <p>After allotted time (dependent on age, physical strength and condition of the athletes), the defender should switch his near foot, near shoulder to the opposite side and repeat the drill. Players should then rotate offense and defense repeating for two more reps (one on each leg). Both players should focus on ankle, knee and hip bend to warm up the joints and both should aim to keep cleats in the ground, especially the defender's back foot, for entire drill.</p>
<p>Follow the Snake</p>	<p>Follow a randomly drawn line on the ground, keeping feet on either side of the line. The "snake" can mirror a pattern or route, or it can help players with their change-of-direction skills.</p>
<p>Hop Guesser</p>	<p>Mark random places on the ground, using footballs, cones, ropes, ladders, etc. Instruct players to jump from one point to another in a certain number of hops (i.e., "Jump from the football to the cone in four hops."). The point is to give players a chance to work on evenly splitting the distance between two points. Reminder: players should keep both feet together when they hop.</p>
<p>Jump and Land (from a box)</p>	<p>Transition to an athletic stance after jumping off a box.</p>
<p>Jump and Land (horizontal)</p>	<p>Transition to an athletic stance after jumping horizontally.</p>
<p>Jump and Land (vertical)</p>	<p>Transition to an athletic stance after jumping vertically.</p>
<p>Mouse Trap</p>	<p>Divide players into two equal groups. Group 1 creates the mouse trap. Have those teammates hold hands to form a circle (the trap). Group 2 are the mice. Have the mice run in and out of circle under the arms of the other players. When the whistle blows, players in the circle are caught and join the trap. Have players adjust their height and speed as they move in and out of the trap.</p>
<p>Quick Feet Reaction</p>	<p>Start with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent and running in place. Whenever coach says left or right, turn your whole body in the direction he/she says and then return to your starting direction. If the coach says up or down, either jump up or drop to push-up position, respectively.</p>
<p>Surfer</p>	<p>Starting on your hands and knees, quickly get up into athletic position upon instruction.</p>
<p>Zombie Tackle</p>	<p>A tackler and an offensive player start about 10 yards apart. Adjust the spacing based on your players' age, athleticism and primary positions. The offensive player does not carry a ball, instead assuming a zombie pose with arms straight out and palms facing forward.</p> <p>On the coach's command, the zombie walks, jogs or sprints toward the defender. On the second command, the defender begins moving forward toward the zombie. As the defender nears the contact zone, he drops his body height to initiate contact, dropping below the zombie's arms to deliver rising contact.</p>



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

CONNECT

<p>Angle Tackle</p>	<p>Set four cones in a diamond shape. The defender starts at one cone. A coach or player with a half-round bag or similar surface, held at arm's length, starts at the opposite cone. On the coach's command, both proceed to the same unoccupied cone. The defender gains leverage and maintains it throughout, tracking the ball-carrier.</p> <p>As the defender approaches the cone, he/she breaks down and swoops in with a near foot, near shoulder technique, ripping through the bag and driving to the finish.</p>
<p>Body Lock / Body Lock Game</p>	<p>Pair up teammates of equal abilities. Have at least 5 yards between groups in all directions. Have pairs assume a neutral over-hook/under-hook setup with roughly one foot separating their chests. Each player will have one over-hook and one under-hook.</p> <p>On the coach's command, both players will work for double under-hooks. The players can use footwork, movement and upper body grappling skills but must always stay connected to their opponent. The goal of the drill is to gain double under-hooks and lift your opponent off his feet. Lifts only count if double under-hooks are present.</p>
<p>Cops and Robbers Football</p>	<p>Divide players into "cops" and "robbers." The robbers try to get the footballs from the far side safely back to their home base without getting their flags swiped off by the cops. Place footballs along one end of the playing area. Robbers wearing flags line up along the opposite side from the footballs. Cops start in the middle. They will try to pull the flags off the robbers as they run by.</p> <p>On the signal, the robbers try running to take a single football at a time and make it back safely without getting caught. Robbers will go back-and-forth grabbing footballs one at a time until their flags are pulled. If they are caught, the robbers must sit. When sitting, they can try to pull flags off other robbers who are running by. Play until all footballs have been taken or until all flags have been pulled. Switch roles and play again.</p>
<p>Flag Tag</p>	<p>The object of the game is to not get your flags pulled. When your flag is pulled, the player must hold it in their hand and can remain playing until their second flag is pulled. When a player's second flag is pulled, they must stay in place and try and pull the flags of other players running by. Everyone is "it." Coaches are encouraged to set boundary areas for the activity.</p>
<p>Flag Tag Corners</p>	<p>Within a defined box-shaped playing area of about 15 yards by 15 yards, start by making four coned areas in each of the four corners of the playing area. Create two teams (usually yellow and red, based on flag color). Once you have your two teams, split them in half again. Players of the same flag color/team will go into the corners, diagonal one other.</p> <p>On the "GO" signal or whistle, players will enter the neutral playing area and try to pull the flags of the opposite team. If a player gets his/her flag pulled off, he/she is "out." However, "out" means this player goes outside the playing area and performs a predetermined exercise (i.e., 10 jumping jacks, 10 sit-ups, etc.). Play continues until there is no one of a certain flag color left. Once the round is over, assign new exercises, get players to the corners and start again.</p>
<p>Kneeling Drive</p>	<p>Get down on one knee in front of a half-round bag or similar soft surface. Have your shoulder lined up with the bag and your corresponding foot forward. On the coach's command, split the bag in half with your shoulder, punching your arms around the bag, grabbing the back side. Roll to the leverage side, finishing on top of the bag.</p>
<p>Partner Knee Tag</p>	<p>Partners face each other in an athletic stance with the right hand on the right knee and the left hand on the left knee. Each partner tries to tag the other partner's knee when his/her hand is off it. It's a drill of anticipation, strategy and timing.</p>
<p>Partner Tag</p>	<p>With a partner and without leaving his/her reach, attempt to tag him/her. Pairs will not leave their original area. You must tag your partner below the waist. Keep your feet moving and keep track of how many times you tag them.</p>
<p>Pop Up Tackle</p>	<p>Set two cones on the ground 5 yards apart. The defender stands by one cone. Another player or coach stands at the other, holding out a half-round bag or similar soft surface at arm's length.</p> <p>On the coach's command, the defender runs toward the bag, swooping in and using a near foot, near shoulder technique, ripping double uppercuts through the bag. The defender drives through the bag, securing the tackle.</p>


FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS
CONNECT

Pummel	<p>Each player has a partner, and each pair should have ample space. Both partners have their right legs forward. Both partners place their right arms under the armpit of the opposite and cup the hand and wrist to secure the back of the shoulder pad at shoulder blade level (can be done without pads as well). Athletes place their left hands on their partners' triceps and clamp the elbow down to trap the arm underneath it. Both athletes will take their left hand, remove it from triceps and chop it between the near side pectoral between them and opponent.</p> <p>Partners will simultaneously switch feet and head position while snaking arm inside and underneath opponents' arm to gain "cup" position on shoulder blade. When they feel their opponent gain the grip on their opposite side, they will clamp the elbow and secure the triceps with the hand. Drill continues moving from side to side working the chop, dive, snake and secure of each arm causing limited chest-to-chest contact.</p>
Rip	<p>Have a coach or player holding a half-round bag in a horizontal position about three feet off the ground. From a solid Near Foot stance, players shoot the hips and rip the arms in an uppercut motion, making initial contact with the same-side shoulder as the foot that is forward. Players take the bag from a teammate, using an upward strike – low to high – with uppercuts. Players grab the backside of the bag while driving through the contact, carrying it for five yards to finish.</p>
Shoot	<p>Line players up on their knees in front of a half-round bag or other soft object to serve as a landing spot. Toes are pointed back so that no power can come from pushing off the ground. Back is straight. Hands and arm start at the side.</p> <p>On the coach's first command of "sink," players bend at the waist to set the hips. On the coach's second command of "shoot," players explode up and outward, uncoiling the hips and throwing two uppercuts to generate power, landing on the bag or soft surface. As players understand how to engage their hips, coaches can stand in front of the bags and hold up a number while players are in the air. Players shout out the number before hitting the bag. This ensures their heads remain looking forward with eyes up.</p>
Standing Drive	<p>Begin by standing in near foot, near shoulder position in front of a half-round bag or similar soft surface. On the coach's command, split the bag in half with your shoulder, punching your arms around the bag, grabbing the back side. Take an additional step to complete the drive and take the bag to the ground.</p>
Switch Tag	<p>One partner chases and tries to tag the other within a designated area. Roles are switched when one partner is tagged or upon coach instruction.</p>
Tight Angle Tackle	<p>Set up two lines five yards apart with a slight offset. In one line, a player or coach holds a half-round bag or other soft surface tight to the chest. The other line includes the defenders. On the coach's command, the defender progresses toward the bag, establishing leverage with the right or left side, making contact with a strong same foot, same shoulder technique. Defenders drive through contact, but nobody goes to the ground.</p>



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

ACCELERATE

Cone Jumps	Jump over cones in a line. Perform laterally as well, facing one side. When jumping, keep both feet together and bring the knees up to clear the cone.
Gear Runs	Run forward, with an instructor calling out what gear (speed) the participant runs at. Speed up, slow down and stop as instructed. Maintain body position and adjust height to an athletic stance when stopping.
Gear Runs (brake and reverse)	As instructed, run forward or backward at varying speeds with an instructor calling out the gear (speed) and direction.
Kneeling Roll	Set a player on one knee in front of a half-round bag or similar soft surface. The player is in a near-foot ½ kneeling position with his shoulder lined up with the bag and corresponding foot forward. On the coach's command, the player splits the bag in half with his shoulder, punches his arms around the bag, grabbing the back side. The player then rolls to the leverage side, finishing on top of the bag.
Red Light, Green Light	Line players along a marked starting line. When coach says, "green light," everyone will move towards the finish line at a designated pace (walking, jogging or running). When coach says, "red light," everyone must immediately stop. If a player is still moving when coach calls "red light," he/she must go back to the starting line. Start a new round when everyone gets across the finish line or when most players make it across the finish line.
Red Light, Green Light - Modification	Line players along a marked starting line. When coach says, "green light," everyone will move towards the finish line at a designated pace (walking, jogging, or running). When coach says, "red light," everyone must immediately stop. If a player is still moving when coach calls "red light," he/she must go back to the starting line. Start a new round when everyone gets across the finish line or when most players make it across the finish line. When "red light" is called, have players drop to a relevant height by performing a burpee, push-up, etc.
Regain Your Feet	Start by lying on your stomach, arms extended above the head with palms flat on the tackle bag and toes on the ground. The tackle bag is also flat on the ground in-line with the body. On the coach's command, regain your feet keeping your hands on the bag and drive the bag 4 to 5 yards across the field. On coach's second command, release the bag and then swoop over the length of the bag. Finish the drill executing with a controlled form tackle on a teammate, who is positioned at the end of the bag.
Running Drive	Place a cone 7 yards from a coach or teammate holding a half-round bag or similar soft surface. On the coach's command, the player sprints to the bag, swoops in with near foot, near shoulder technique, punch around the bag with his arms and drives through the finish. As players show proficiency, move the bag inside-out or outside-in to simulate the way a ball-carrier runs.
Running Thigh and Drive	Place a cone 7 yards from a coach or teammate holding a half-round bag or similar soft surface. On the coach's command, the player sprints to the bag, swoops in with near foot, near shoulder technique, punch around the bag with his arms and drives through the finish. As players show proficiency, move the bag inside-out or outside-in to simulate the way a ball-carrier runs.
Set, Set, Go	Select one person to be "IT." All other participants will sit in a circle. The person who is "IT" walks around the circle. As the person "IT" walks around, he or she taps players' heads and says "SET" or "GO." Once someone is tapped and hears "GO," they stand up and try and chase the person "IT" around the circle. The goal is to tap the person "IT" before he or she is able to sit down in the "GO" person's original spot. If a player is unable to tag that person, then he or she becomes "IT." A player is "IT" until he or she can tag someone or after three tries. This game is similar to Duck Duck Goose.



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

ACCELERATE

<p>Sprint Tackle</p>	<p>Set four cones in a diamond shape. The defender starts at one cone. A coach or player with a half-round bag or similar surface set tight to the chest and shoulder starts at the opposite one.</p> <p>On the coach's command, both proceed to one of the cones set at a 45-degree angle to the starting point. The defender gains leverage and maintains it throughout tracking the ball-carrier. As the defender approaches the cone, he breaks down and swoops in with a near foot, near shoulder technique, ripping through the bag and opponent, driving to the finish. Neither goes to the ground as a quick whistle stops the play.</p>
<p>Wrestler's Spin</p>	<p>Your partner will start on his/her hands and knees in a basic wrestler's position of disadvantage. Fit into your partner with shoulder and chest pressure on their side. Your cleats are in the ground and knees are off the ground.</p> <p>On the coach's first command, drive through your partner while they provide resistance. On the spin command, flip your hips and reconnect on the other side of your partner, resuming push.</p>



FLAG PULLING AND TACKLING – DRILLS

FINISH

Army-Navy Game	<p>Create a defined playing area of approximately 15 yards. The coach will call out these commands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Army:” Run to one side of the field area (designated by coach—i.e., right side) - “Navy:” Run to the other side of the field area (designated by coach—i.e., left side) - “Hit the deck:” Lie face down - “At ease:” Stand up <p>Try adding some rules like “first one to Army gets a point” or “last one to Navy is out.” Players must be careful to wait for the “At ease” command before getting up to run somewhere. Add your own ideas to modify this quick game to suit your needs.</p>
Deer Hunter Game	<p>Map out a square or circle with cones. The square is approximately 30-by-30 yards. Choose four players as “hunters” and put yellow shell jerseys on them to distinguish them from the “deer.”</p> <p>Put the four hunters in the center of the square and ask everyone else to spread out within the square. At the coach’s signal, the hunters try and tag the deer. Once tagged, the deer move outside the box.</p>
Kneeling Thigh & Drive to Standing Thigh & Drive	<p>Set a player on one knee in front of a half-round bag or similar soft surface. The player is in a near-foot half-kneeling position with the shoulder lined up with the bag and corresponding foot forward. On the coach’s command, the player splits the bag in half with his shoulder, punching his arms around the bag, grabbing the back side. The player then rolls to the leverage side, finishing on top of the bag. Try the same thigh and drive progression starting from a standing position.</p>
Kneeling to Standing Thigh & Roll	<p>Set a player on one knee in front of a half-round bag or similar soft surface. The player is in a near-foot ½ kneeling position with his shoulder lined up with the bag and corresponding foot forward. On the coach’s command, the player splits the bag in half with his shoulder, punches his arms around the bag, grabbing the back side. The player then rolls to the leverage side, finishing on top of the bag. Try the same thigh and roll progression starting from a standing position.</p>
Running Roll	<p>Place a cone 7 yards from a coach or teammate holding a half-round bag or similar soft surface. On the coach’s command, the player sprints to the bag, swoops in with near foot, near shoulder technique, punches around the bag with his arms and rolls through the finish, landing on top. As players show proficiency, move the bag inside-out or outside-in to simulate the way a ball-carrier runs.</p>

