



# Coaching Tips and Principles

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Coaching is an extremely important responsibility. A good coach always places the best interests of a player before winning. Coaching youth sports is a difficult job because parents expect professional results from people who are mostly volunteers. High school, college and pro coaches start as assistants and work their way up through years of intense professional training.

The players and their parents have placed you in a position of leadership, and you have a responsibility to give them your best effort. Additionally, this football experience will play a significant factor in determining whether the players continue participating in football. If you follow the coaching guidelines and general principles below, the players and their parents will be better served.

## Coaching Tips

Whether you are an experienced coach or a novice taking the reins of your first team, your main goal should be to create a fun and safe learning environment for your players. Many of the skills your players will practice and play with are just like those of their NFL heroes. Feel free to emphasize this connection to the real-life game!

## Everybody Plays

NFL FLAG games were designed to make it easy for every player to participate in their team's success. While size and skill certainly come into play when the action starts, your coaching should emphasize this aspect of "working together."

## Tackle Tackling Early

Don't let your practices dissolve into a giant pile of rambunctious kids. For both their safety and your sanity, make sure to discourage any tackling or roughness early on. Remind them that they won't help their team in a game by tackling or being rough.

## Sportsmanship Rules!

Help your players be good sports. After a game, shake hands or high-five the other team. Applaud good play by both sides. Treat officials with respect. While imitating you, your team won't even recognize the good lesson they're learning.

## Let Them Play Football!

The temptation to be another Don Shula or Bill Walsh will have to wait. This is NFL FLAG. While teaching football skills and strategies is important, keep your lessons as simple as possible. As your team grasps the basics, move on to more advanced ideas. Overloading young players with too much information too early can cause confusion for them and headaches for you.

## Have Fun!

We thank you for your volunteer service. NFL FLAG couldn't happen without you. Have a blast with these kids. This season may become a lifetime memory for both you and all your team. Have fun with it.