



FLAG FOOTBALL

COACH

PLAYBOOK

UPWARD
SPORTS

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO PROVIDING THE **BEST LEAGUE EXPERIENCE!**

DEVELOP SKILLS | STRENGTHEN CHARACTER | HAVE FUN





FLAG FOOTBALL COACH PLAYBOOK

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→ Goals For The Season

The goal of our sports ministry is:

Success looks like:

Success in our sports ministry is measured by:

➔ What You Do Matters

Thank you for coaching this season! You are about to influence the lives of families for the next several weeks but don't worry. This league and Upward Sports provide the tools you will need for the journey, even if you are new to a sport.

Matthew 5:13-16 – You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

→ Your Role in Sports Ministry

As a coach, you play a vital role in the sports ministry to players and families. You are on the front lines of what takes place this season.

Sports ministry requires that the sport and ministry are both done with excellence as you give your best effort in teaching the sport and caring for people through ministry opportunities. Your league is not “just an Upward league” or “just a church league.” Sports ministry is your chance to provide the best youth sports experience in your community and demonstrate the gospel to the families you serve.

HEBREWS 12:1-2 READS:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer, and perfecter of our faith.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AND AS A COACH THIS SEASON?

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➔ An Upward Sports Coach

Whether you are a first-time coach, veteran coach, or somewhere in between on the coaching journey, there are five crucial things to do as an Upward Sports coach.

FIVE KEYS TO COACHING:

- 1. Be organized to teach the sport** – Take time to teach the fundamentals of the sport and the rules through organized and detailed practices. Refer to the practice plans for drills and look to enhance each player's skill development.
- 2. Lead the practice devotion** – Coaches lead a devotion, discussion, and prayer during practices using the devotion materials. If you need help, let the league director or coach commissioner know, as they are ready to provide support.
- 3. Communicate with parents** – Parents on the team want you to communicate with them. Send a weekly email, text, or both to let parents know how the team is doing and remind them of upcoming events.
- 4. Instill sportsmanship, a competitive spirit, and a growth mindset** – Help your players learn how these work together.
 - ◆ Great sportsmanship involves valuing others and showing appreciation for opponents, teammates, and officials regardless of the scoreboard.
 - ◆ A competitive spirit is about doing your best in all situations during practice and games.

- ◆ A growth mindset focuses on growing and improving at each opportunity so that small improvements lead to more significant change as they compound over time. There is always growth potential.

5. Follow the Circle of Affirmation - Support game day officials by being their biggest fans and following the Circle of Affirmation on game days. Following the Circle of Affirmation will provide families with a positive experience and show we value people as God's creation.

As a coach, invest time in giving your best while considering Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7. Realize that God created the participants you are coaching and those around you. As image-bearers of God, we should treat everyone with the love that God treats them, as you promote the discovery of Jesus.



GENESIS 1:27

“So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

GENESIS 2:7

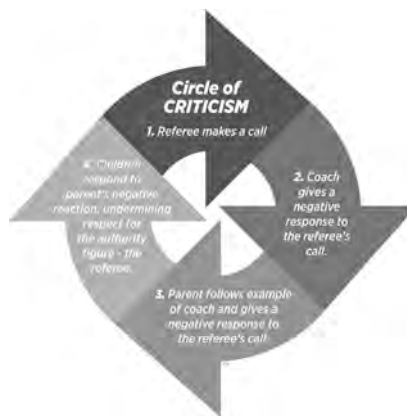
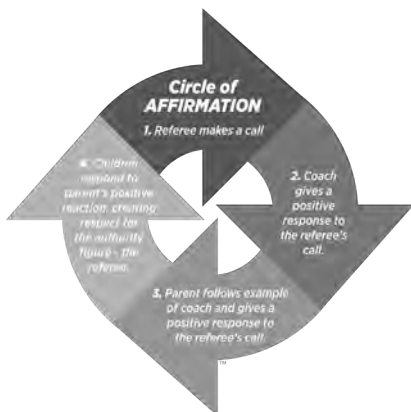
“Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.”

→ Circle of Affirmation

GAME DAY ATTITUDE

Choosing the right game-day attitude is a key to being an effective Upward Coach. Actions and reactions on the field can either open or close the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

Coaches and referees work together as a unified team. Coaches have the opportunity and the responsibility to stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.



The Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

➔ **Three Layers of Coaching**

The three coaching layers are essential to understand the dynamics of coaching a team. They include a player, the team, and the coach.

THE PLAYER A coach will need to observe each player's skill level and teach accordingly. You may have a wide range of skill levels, with players who have experience and skill and some who have never played the sport. Work one-on-one with players and give them direction on individual skills to try at home. Celebrate success as they develop and be patient with their mistakes.

THE TEAM As you coach each individual, you must also bring the team together. In a team sport, players must learn how to work well with each other. The team concept changes as players become more mature, advance in age, and can focus on others and not just themselves. Small-sided scrimmages and in-game scenarios at practices can aid in developing the team concept. Helping them communicate with each other by using participants' names and showing them how to encourage each other will help them come together as a team.

THE COACH You must prepare for practice and games to coach a team. Coaches should be willing to invest the time it takes to be ready to lead. Spend time reviewing practice plans and thinking about backup plans so that you can move forward if something isn't working. Take time to check the Scouting Report section of the practice devotion and spend time praying for your team.

➔ **Interacting with Players, Parents, Coaches, and Referees**

As you are in a coaching role, people watch how you respond at practices and games and how you lead the team. Your interactions influence the atmosphere of the league, if a family will return next season, and the league's and your ability to conduct ministry.

INTERACTING WITH PLAYERS

Interacting with players is pivotal for a coach. This coaching opportunity may place you as someone's first-time coach. In sports ministry, you have the chance to impact someone for eternity.

Here are ten tips on interacting with your players.

- ◆ Greet each player by name as they arrive.
- ◆ Always be mindful of speaking on a level that the player can understand.
- ◆ Tell participants the details of what you are teaching, show them what you are teaching, have them do it, and then apply it in a game scenario.
- ◆ Focus on one skill at a time as you teach so that players can learn each one thoroughly.
- ◆ Recognize differences in skill levels so that you can help each player improve.
- ◆ Be familiar with the devotion and allow time for discussion.

- ◆ Hold a ten to fifteen-minute meeting with parents at the end of the first practice to set expectations and answer questions.
- ◆ Allow players to be creative during the game. Teach at practice and observe and encourage during the game. You don't need to control all of the player actions.
- ◆ Understand that there is a lot of information a player is processing during a game. When a player is not in the game, one simple question to gain understanding is, "What did you see?" This question requires listening and patience to discover what they saw from their perspective.
- ◆ When distributing stars on game days, give specific reasons each athlete earned a particular game-day star. Don't underestimate the value of recognizing players!

WHAT ABOUT DISTRACTED AND DISRUPTIVE PLAYERS?

A challenge for coaches is what to do with distracted or disruptive participants. Here are four things to understand in these situations that will help.

1. Understand that players have short attention spans. Be patient.
2. Players come into practice and, like coaches, are influenced by things that have already occurred during the day. Greet them by name to welcome them into a new environment, so they know you see them.

3. Maintain engagement by cutting down on lines and lectures. To do this, ask parents to help run a drill, so there are multiple stations.
4. Praise desired behavior right away, use the player's name, and let them know how it helps the team. Other players will recognize this and follow.

If undesirable behavior continues, address it with the player and parent so that the player doesn't disrupt a learning environment. Let the parent know that you need their help, as they may be able to offer insight into working with their player.

INTERACTING WITH PARENTS

Start the season by getting to know your players' parents and families. Include parents in your first post-practice huddle. Here are a few tips for interacting with parents.

- ◆ Introduce yourself to parents, share expectations, and explain why you are coaching.
- ◆ Share your contact information.
- ◆ Each week take time to have a conversation with one family.
- ◆ Encourage parents to have fun working on skills at home with their players.
- ◆ Be ready to step into any spiritual conversation with parents and talk about what you teach during devotion time.

- ◆ Demonstrate care and concern for players, so parents know you are looking out for their players.
- ◆ Be organized and prepared for practice. Parents want to know you value their time by coaches being prepared and organized.
- ◆ Communicate one time per week through email, text, or both. Keep it short and simple.

After you receive your roster, contact the parents right away. Families are eager to hear from you, and it cuts down on the number of calls and emails a league director has to spend time answering.

INTERACTING WITH OTHER COACHES AND REFEREES

An Upward Sports league can set the standard in your community by how coaches and referees interact on game days. Parents, players, and families notice how both team's coaches and referees work together to provide a fantastic player experience. Remember, youth sports are about the youth.

Here are some tips on how to interact with coaches and referees.

- ◆ Introduce yourself to the other coaches and referees on game day, and remember their names.
- ◆ Realize that you would not have a game day without the other team and referees. It's essential to work together.

- ◆ Review Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 and understand that we are all God's creation, which should be reflected in how we interact.
- ◆ Be the referee's biggest fan. If you want to have referees for your league, critical behavior does not help.
- ◆ Coaches work together for the experience of all participants.
- ◆ Love one another, John 13:34.
- ◆ Thank the coaches and referees after the game.
- ◆ Review the Circle of Affirmation and follow it.

What sets this league apart from others is that when differences of opinion or mistakes are made during a game, we are all part of one team, providing a great player experience that honors God.

➔ **Create a Positive Culture**

A positive culture is one of safety, learning, and fun. A team's attitude and mindset often mirror that of its coach. Use the beginning of the season to set a tone of positivity through the weeks ahead.

- ◆ Set expectations of behavior and communicate them with players and parents.
- ◆ Start and end each practice on time.

- ◆ Encourage players to support each other by cheering for teammates.
- ◆ View mistakes as teaching opportunities, not a chance to be critical at the moment.

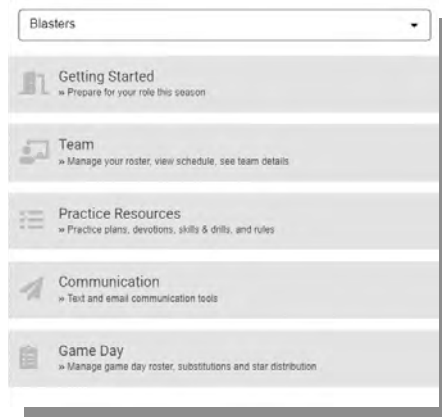
One practical way to create a positive team culture and teach communication is to establish a team huddle at the end of practice. Have players circle up and include the coach. The coach can talk about things done well in practice.

Next, have players look to the person on their right, use their name, and offer something they saw their teammate do well in practice. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a chance to speak. The topic could be different at each practice, such as something the player would like to improve on their own, something they appreciate about the other player or something they would like to see the team accomplish in the next game.

➔ Coach Resources and Tools

Many resources are available to help you provide a great experience for your team, plan and efficiently use your time this season.

MYUPWARD.ORG – This is the primary tool for you as a coach. The league director will send you an invitation to access resources on MyUpward.org. After you accept the invitation and create a username and password, you can also create an icon on your home screen when accessing from a mobile device.



- ◆ **Getting Started** includes how-to videos and other resources to help you this season.
- ◆ **Team** area helps you manage your roster and see participant information and the schedule for practices and game days.
- ◆ **Practice Resources** provide a step-by-step outline for each practice, devotions, skills and drills, and sports rules.

- ♦ **Communication** is where you will find email and text capabilities, as well as attaching a link to the team page.
- ♦ **Game Day** helps you to manage the substitutions with the Upward Sports game day rotation and the ability to track game day stars.

DEVOTIONS – Weekly devotion content for your practices is located on MyUpward.org under the “Practice Resources” and can also be found in the Coach Playbook.

GAME DAY STARS – Use these stars on game day to highlight each player’s contributions during the game. The Star Distribution Form can be found in the Appendix of the Coach Playbook.

GOSPEL VIDEO – Sent out from the league director to families to share a video version of the gospel message with them during the season.

GREEN PRACTICE STARS – Use these stars at practice to encourage participation in the practice devotion, scripture learning, or the goals your league has outlined for the devotion content.

PRACTICE CARDS – The practice cards show the bible verse associated with the weekly devotion. Depending on the devotion track, you will hand out cards every week or only at designated weeks noted in the devotion.

PRACTICE PLANS – Use the practice plans found on MyUpward.org under the “Practice Resources.” These can

be printed before practice or use them directly from your mobile device.

SEASON CELEBRATION – Celebrate the season with your team. Your league may have individual team parties or a league-wide celebration.

TEAM PAGE – Share the team page with your team to give them access to the practice and game schedule. The team page also includes your contact information and a team roster. The team page link is available to send from the communication area of the mobile view of MyUpward.org.

Team pages can be accessed on MyUpward.org through the “Team” tab. A link to the Team Page will be under the team name and division.



UPWARD.ORG/COACH – Helps you learn more about sharing the gospel using the 3 Circles.

➔ **Play with Purpose**

A coach can help develop not only a player but a person. That person has a long-term impact on the community, their family, and eternity. You coach, and they play with purpose. This relationship develops someone through a player development model that is remembered by the acronym M.A.S.S.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL = M.A.S.S.

As an Upward Sports Coach, you play a major role in encouraging your players mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially as they participate on your team.

This approach is based on Luke 2:52: “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.”



MENTALLY

Mental development for young athletes is a byproduct of the weekly practices and games where players participate. Players grow in confidence, courage, decision-making, and cognitive self-regulation.

- ♦ **Confidence and Courage** - As players learn and improve their skills and confidence will increase. Players then gain the courage to attempt new skills and recognize that mistakes are a part of the game that they can overcome.
- ♦ **Decision-Making** - The intricacies and complexities of sports, help train young athletes on making correct decisions quickly. When to pass a ball, when to attempt a move or make a defensive play are all part of building decision-making. Through observation and repetition, players improve their muscle memory and learn when and how to make individual and team decisions.
- ♦ **Cognitive self-regulation** - Through intense games and drills, players learn to self-regulate emotions and gain focus. Through sports, they will enter various experiences (practices, scrimmages, games, etc.) where they will learn to narrow their focus from a broad range to a specific individual focus and team responsibilities in the pursuit of attaining particular goals.



ATHLETICALLY

Athletic development compounds through small improvements over time. Players learn and grow in their sport to achieve long term growth

- ◇ **Exercise:** In a recent State of Play report, the Aspen Sports Institute reported only 24% of youth ages 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, down from 30% a decade earlier. With many kids spending over 6 hours in front of screens each day (TVs, computers, phones/tablets), the desire to get out and be active is waning.
- ◇ How can you tell if a child is getting proper exercise? Sweat. Sweat requires constant activity with little “downtime.” Practices should have drills that allow for continuous movement using various muscle groups. Avoid players standing in lines when possible. Keep practice fast-paced and fun, allowing for water breaks and short periods of rest.
- ◇ **Physical Development:** Physical development has enormous benefits for children, including stronger bones and muscles, improved heart and brain health, and lowered risk of diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Participants may learn fundamental movements that allow them to run, jump, throw, catch, balance, and change direction. Basic moves will help participants enjoy a variety of sports and begin a path to physical literacy.
- ◇ **Fun:** The key to getting kids interested in physical activity is by making it fun. Sports do just that, provided the coaches in charge are focused on the development of the athlete. Practices should teach the game using fun and safe methods.



SPIRITUALLY

Spiritual growth is an essential part of sports ministry. You play a vital role in the spiritual development of players on your team and help them discover a sense of self and a sense of purpose. This development happens in various ways.

- ♦ **Practice devotions** - By guiding discussion around the practice devotions each week, you plant seeds of discovery within the minds and hearts of young athletes. Remember to guide every practice devotion conversation back to the Gospel and what Jesus has done for us.
- ♦ **Your relationship with players** - You are a safe, trusted adult in the lives of young athletes. You hold a remarkable amount of influence. Listen intently, guide carefully, and be someone who continually points young athletes to Christ in your interactions.
- ♦ **Your relationship with parents** - The top spiritual influence in a child's life is their parents. What they learn from their home life will speak more into their spiritual development than anything else. Your relationship with a child's parents must be strong. Share with them what their child is learning each week in practice. Discuss the devotions. Talk about how their child is developing in their skills. When parents know you care and are investing in their child's well-being, they'll trust you and your spiritual influence on their child.
- ♦ **Your example** - Be ready to step into opportunities God provides during practices, games, and your communications to demonstrate and share the gospel message.



SOCIALLY

Participants develop socially by learning how to work as a team, communicate, and serve others through a sport.

- ◇ **Teamwork:** Through team sports, children learn how to interact with peers and adults in positive ways. These include numerous opportunities for “selfless” behavior, focusing all mental and physical efforts towards the goals of the team. Participants learn how to navigate relationships, encourage others, and recover from mistakes.
- ◇ **Communication:** Players learn how to communicate in complex social situations with teammates and competitors. This learning carries over to other areas of life, helping them communicate in school, at home, and in other environments.
- ◇ **Serving:** Serving others becomes a critical component for social development in team sports. Children learn to share the ball, encourage teammates, and give their best effort to help the team and not just themselves.



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PRACTICE

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➔ Invest in the team by preparing for practice

Your investment shows in the results each week. There are entire practice plans for each week of the season found on MyUpward.org. These plans have been designed for each age group and include age-appropriate skill development and devotion material that progress through the season.

As the season continues, you may need to modify the plans based on what takes place in practices and the game. Be sure to always focus on the fundamentals of the sport. As you become more experienced, you may begin to include other resources for practice. Be sure to use the weekly devotion material as you design a practice.

Coaches are named as the top reason parents and players return or not each season. Parents want to see organized and detailed practices.

➔ Practice Breakdown

OPENING PRACTICE HUDDLE (3-5 minutes)

Start on time the signal to the team parents that you are ready to begin. Point out a couple of things that you will cover in practice. Once games occur, use the first few minutes of practice to talk about the previous game and something you will work on from the game and highlights from the game.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY (3-5 minutes)

Provide players with the opportunity to warm up their bodies slowly.

PRACTICE SKILLS THROUGH DRILLS (20 minutes)

Focus on specific skills that matter to the sport. Use drills and game scenarios that reinforce skill development.

PRACTICE DEVOTION (5-7 minutes)

Share the practice devotion for each week. Be mindful of the opportunities to demonstrate the gospel throughout practice, so players see you living it out.

SCRIMMAGE / SKILL CHALLENGES THAT TEACH (20 minutes)

Use a controlled scrimmage or skills challenges to test their skills.

END OF PRACTICE HUDDLE (3-5 minutes)

Review the skills learned at practice and praise efforts. Hand out practice cards and stars and do things to create a positive team culture.

POST-PRACTICE TIME

After practice, take time to get to connect with one family each week.

Here is a chart that outlines the weekly practice plans you can find on MyUpward.org - Write out a plan so you can maximize your time and are organized. This should include a Practice Focus, practice meeting, skills review, devotion (provided for you in the next section), rules review, new skills and wrap-up.

Practice	Practice Focus	Team Meeting	Rules to Cover	Skills & Drills
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Evaluate skills · Learn basic offensive skills and formations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Get to know team members · Discuss practice ground rules · Introduce the offensive philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Field dimensions and layout · Offensive rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Catching (see page 39) · Receiving (see page 42) · Snapping (see page 35)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue working the offense · Introduce basic defensive skills and formations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Re-introduce players and coaches · Introduce the defensive philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Offensive rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Defensive coverage (see page 45) · Flag-pulling (see page 43)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue implementing the offensive playbook, spend time covering the play calling scheme · Continue working the defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Talk through the practice focus, highlight the things that they are doing really well and explain what needs to be the day's focus on both sides of the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Game format · Substitutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Work one-on-one · Coach through proper route running (see page 41)
4 <i>week of first game</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cover the game plan for the upcoming game · Scrimmage if possible to simulate game-type situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Review the play calling scheme and the plays you will be calling on Saturday · Give the players a play and have them discuss the assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Review the game format · Review substitutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Flag-pulling (see page 43)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue skill development · Work on areas that need improvement from the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Discuss practice focus · Review the last game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Review all rules as a fun quiz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Areas that need improvement from the game
6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue skill development · Analyze game performances, coach through improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Review the last game · Make adjustments to plays and assignments · Introduce new plays as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue to review rules for clear understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Areas that need improvement

◆ NOTES

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➔ Warm-Ups & Stretching

Use the first five minutes of practice to get the players moving. This can be done by incorporating athletic development exercises like the examples below. Warm-up first and then follow with stretching.

Here are warm-up activities that you can use. Add music, move to the beat and create a warm-up activity you will use at the start of each practice.

- ◆ **Arm Circles:** Hold arms out standing in a T and circle them.
- ◆ **Back pedal:** Run backwards while stepping back as far as possible.
- ◆ **Donkey Kicks:** In a standing position or moving forward, kick heels toward up toward your back side.
- ◆ **Feet on fire:** Running in place.
- ◆ **Heels to Hands:** Have players line up on one of the sidelines. On the coach's signal, players jog slowly with knees pointing toward the ground and their heels kicking upward toward their backsides where their hands are. Once all players have made it to the other side of the field, have them return to the starting point by sprinting back across the field.
- ◆ **High Knees:** With hands in front and waist high, lift knees up and alternate between knees. Vary speed as desired.
- ◆ **Hops:** This can be done in one spot or moving forward. It can be done on one foot or both feet.

- ◆ ***Jumping Jacks:*** Players jump in place, extending arms out to the side and kicking legs out to the side.
- ◆ ***Log Step:*** With both feet on one side of an imaginary log, high step sideways with one foot and then the other to cross over the “log.” Vary speed.
- ◆ ***Lunges:*** From a standing position, large step forward while keeping the back foot in place without the knee touching the ground.
- ◆ ***Push-ups:*** May use a modified version for very young players.
- ◆ ***Running:*** One minute around the room. If you have limited space, run in place and change the pace.
- ◆ ***Shoulder circles:*** With arms by your side, lift your shoulders and take them back down, creating a circular motion.
- ◆ ***Side lunge:*** Feet wider than shoulder width apart, keep one leg straight while the other bends into a squat position. Keep your back flat, chest up and rear out behind you.
- ◆ ***Sprint to Backpedal:*** Have players line up on one of the sidelines. On the coach’s signal, players sprint across the field then backpedal to the starting point. As players backpedal, instruct them to lean slightly forward and land on the balls of their feet so they don’t trip and fall backward.
- ◆ ***Trunk twists:*** From a standing position, twist back and forth slowly.

➔ Skills and Drills

This section reviews the fundamental skills of flag football, explains why each is important, and emphasizes the skill's key teaching points. Each skill is followed by a basic drill that reinforces it. These drills are acceptable for any age group as an introduction to the concept behind each skill. ***For more advanced age-appropriate drills for each skill, as well as complete practice plans, go to MyUpward.org.***

Many of the drills described in this playbook require one ball per player. If you are limited in the number of balls you have for practice, you will need to modify the drill by creating lines based on the number of balls available.

SNAPPING SKILLS

Because each play begins with the snap of the ball from the center to the quarterback, it is extremely important to have a successful snap on each play. Two types of snaps should be worked on: the under-center snap and the shotgun snap. Use the following directions to instruct players.

Under-Center Snap

- ◆ Center begins in a two-point stance with their feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, elbows resting on knees, head up.
- ◆ Players should reach their throwing hand out to the football, which is on the ground. Grip the football with the first knuckle of the thumb placed in-between the white line and the first lace furthest from the player. The palm of the hand should then rest on the outside of the ball, with the four fingers spread across the back closest to the ground.

Be sure to have players lift their head before snapping the ball.

- ◆ As the ball is snapped, their hand should turn inward so the ball is delivered sideways to the quarterback who is standing right behind the center.
- ◆ Release the ball and run the play.

At the direction of the league director any age division may use the side snap. The traditional snap can be difficult for players with small hands even when using two hands.

Shotgun Snap

- ◆ Center begins in a two-point stance (feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, elbows resting on knees, head up).
- ◆ Players should reach their throwing hand out to the football, which is on the ground. Grip the football with the first knuckle of the thumb placed in-between the white line and the first lace furthest from the player. The palm of the hand should then rest on the outside of the ball, with the four fingers spread across the back closest to the ground. Be sure to have players lift their head before snapping the ball.
- ◆ On the snap, flick wrist as the ball leaves the hand to deliver it several feet back to the quarterback.

Depending on the player's ability to grip the football with one hand, a center may shotgun-snap the football with either one or two hands. If two hands are needed, a player should use his non-

dominant hand to guide the football as it is snapped by placing that hand on the open side of the football.

PASSING SKILLS

Passing Techniques

The steps below will provide the foundation to becoming a good passer.

- ◆ Gripping the football correctly improves the throwing mechanics and balance of the ball. A correct grip varies from one person to another, as the size of their hands and length of fingers always influence the placement of the hand. There is no one “right” way to grip the football. To provide enough control and pressure on the surface of the ball, hold the top half with one to three fingers spread across the laces. Practice different grips to find which one works best.
- ◆ Turn sideways, with your non-throwing shoulder pointing toward the target.
- ◆ Pull your throwing arm back to an L position, with the football up by your ear and your elbow at or above shoulder level.
- ◆ Step toward the target with your front foot as you release the ball. The back foot and hips should rotate simultaneously as the passer drives forward, shifting weight from back to front to generate power on the throw. During the release, the back foot should come off the ground.

- ◆ Follow through toward the target, with your thumb pointing to the ground and palm facing out. Throw to a specific target (nose, chin, chest, hands).
- ◆ To get the most control, speed, and distance on the ball throw a spiral. A spiral is also easier for the receiver to catch. Proper release of the football will result in a spiral. Your index finger should be the last finger to leave the football.

Drop Back Pass

For quarterbacks, learning how to drop back properly is important. Being back from the line-of-scrimmage creates additional distance between the quarterback and the defense.

- ◆ As you receive the snap, turn sideways in the direction of your throwing arm.
- ◆ The first step is a reach step. It is a powerful, quick, deep step with the back foot.
- ◆ The next steps (middle steps) are crossover steps.
- ◆ The last step is the plant step. It is a small reach step. As the plant step takes place, your front shoulder should dip down slightly to help maintain balance.
- ◆ It is important to drop back quickly and keep looking downfield for an open receiver.

PASSING DRILLS

Distance Passing

- ◆ Players will pair off and begin 5 yards from each other.
- ◆ Have players throw the ball back and forth. Make sure players use the appropriate touch on the pass, based on the distance they are from one another.
- ◆ After a few throws, have each player take a step back.

Drop-Backs (no ball required)

- ◆ Have players work on dropping back and getting their feet set and ready to throw.
- ◆ Begin with a three-step drop, and work up to a five-step drop.
- ◆ Have players work on keeping their eyes downfield and keeping the imaginary football up in a secure position in front of their chest and between the armpits.

RECEIVING SKILLS

Catching

Proper technique for catching the football is a critical football skill. This should be incorporated into every practice and something you can encourage them to do at home.

- ◆ Always catch the ball with your hands away from your body so that the ball doesn't bounce off of your shoulders, arms or chest in an unpredictable direction. Arms should be extended out about three-fourths of the way to allow room to cushion the catch.
- ◆ To catch balls above waist-height, put your index finger and thumbs together to form a triangle. For a low ball, keep your pinkie fingers close together to cradle the catch. For deep passes that are over the shoulder, you want to have your pinkies and elbows close together to cradle the catch in front of your chest. This pass should be caught over the outside shoulder.
- ◆ Keep your eye on the ball. The most important part in catching the ball is to watch the ball all the way until it's in your hands.
- ◆ Once the ball is in your hands, secure it by quickly tucking it away, high under your armpit, clamping it tightly to your body. Cover the front tip of the football with your fingers. Use your free arm to maintain balance.

Routes

Running accurate pass routes will go a long way toward helping your team move the ball. An accurate route has four main parts: start, stem, break, and burst.

- ◆ **Start** – A good route begins with a good stance and start. It's important to gain as much ground as you can as quickly as possible.
- ◆ **Stem** – The receiver forces the defensive back up the field. Run toward the outside shoulder of the defender in an attempt to get him to turn his hips away from the line of scrimmage.
- ◆ **Break** – The receiver transitions from the stem to the burst by making a direction-changing cut. In order to get in and out of a break quickly, stay low and maintain proper balance by keeping your shoulders directly over your feet.
- ◆ **Burst** – The receiver comes out of the break and attempts to create additional separation from the defender. Different routes require different bursts. A curl requires the receiver to come off the break with two steps back to the quarterback and then stop. A post requires a full-speed, continued burst after the break.

Teaching the importance of everyone running his/her assigned route will be a challenge. This is a good time to explain and teach the importance of teamwork. Remember to be patient with your players, especially the younger ones.

RECEIVING DRILLS

Moving Catch

- ◆ Players will line up, single file, on one side of the field.
- ◆ One at a time, players will begin to jog across the field, looking toward the coach.
- ◆ The coach will pass the ball to each player.
- ◆ Players should work on catching the ball away from their bodies, using their hands with proper technique.
- ◆ Next, use the up, slant, curl, and out routes. This is a half-speed drill to work on catching the ball while in motion.

Cone Weave

- ◆ Line up four cones in a straight line, with about a yard and a half between each one.
- ◆ A fifth cone should be set up off the last cone to determine the route.
- ◆ Begin working on the curl route by setting up the fifth cone in the proper comeback angle to catch a curl.
- ◆ Move the fifth cone to different parts of the field based on the route (in, out, or post).
- ◆ After running through the drill a few times, add the catching part of the drill, in which a coach throws the ball on the break.

As players progress they will concentrate on catching the ball. Players will develop their footwork and the ability to come out of a break to catch the football.

FLAG-PULLING SKILLS

Breaking Down

The best way to make a flag pull is to be in a good position. Breaking down is a way of moving that brings the defender under control and gives him the best chance of having a successful flag pull.

- ◆ Shorten your steps. Use fast, choppy steps as you approach the ball carrier.
- ◆ Be balanced and in control of your body. Be ready for the ball carrier to make a move.
- ◆ Stay low, with your arms out slightly for balance and your shoulders above your feet.
- ◆ Watch the player's belly, and move toward your target (the flags).

Flag-Pull

Pulling flags is a skill that is developed only after ample practice, so go through these motions several times.

- ◆ Sprint to the ball carrier.
- ◆ As you approach the ball carrier, come to a good low, balanced defensive position and shorten your strides into short, choppy steps (break down), getting ready for the ball carrier to move in any direction.
- ◆ Reach for the top of the flag (near the plug). Firmly grab the flag and pull hard.

FLAG-PULLING DRILLS

Break-Downs (whole team drill)

- ◆ Have players run half-speed toward you.
- ◆ On the command “break down,” players should come to a good breakdown position using the proper technique.

Pull Tag (*drill to help player get used to pulling flags and avoiding defenders*)

- ◆ Have players spread out in a designated area (15 by 20 yards).
- ◆ On the coach’s command, players will begin to pull other players’ flags. The object is to see how many flags a player can pull.
- ◆ At the end of one minute, the player holding the most flags is the winner of that round.
- ◆ **Flag-guarding is illegal** and players may not knock away another players arm or hand attempting a flag pull. Be sure to let players know about this penalty.

COVERAGE SKILL

Backpedaling

In order to play effective defense, all players must learn how to backpedal. Backpedaling is necessary to keep a defender in a position where he can make a play on the receiver while maintaining a cushion so he is not beaten on a deep pass.

- ◆ Begin in a good defensive stance (knees bent, back straight, head and shoulders over feet).
- ◆ Push backward off the front foot and step with the back foot.
- ◆ Shoulders should be parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- ◆ When the receiver gets within three yards, the defensive back should turn to run with the receiver.

COVERAGE DRILL

Backpedaling Drill

All players will need to work on this move, and repetition is the best way to become comfortable with backpedaling.

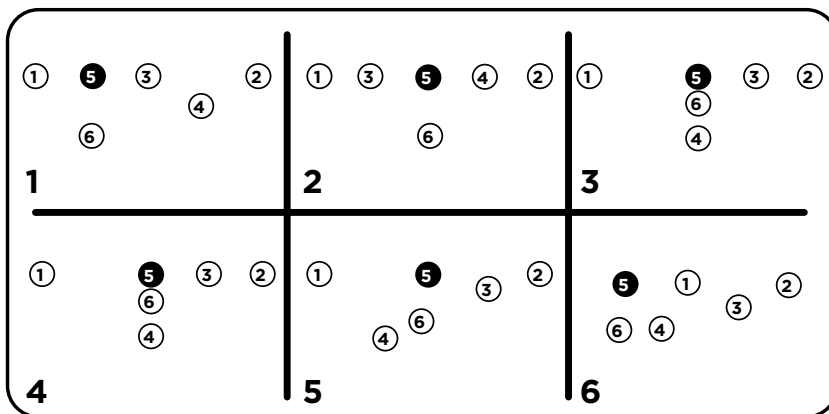
- ◆ Have players line up across a line.
- ◆ On the coach's command, players will backpedal 10 yards, focusing on proper form.
- ◆ Start slow, then encourage players to speed up as they become comfortable with backpedaling. The goal is to backpedal as quickly as the receiver runs forward.

➔ Plays and Formations

To assist you in play-calling Upward Sports offers wrist coaches for your players. A wrist coach allows for you to diagram or list plays for your players.

Keeping the system simple and advancing with age is important. To find sample play-calling cards visit MyUpward.org and see the sample below.

Each player may be appointed a number at the beginning of the quarter. This number will represent his position for the quarter. That way each player knows where to line up on each play.

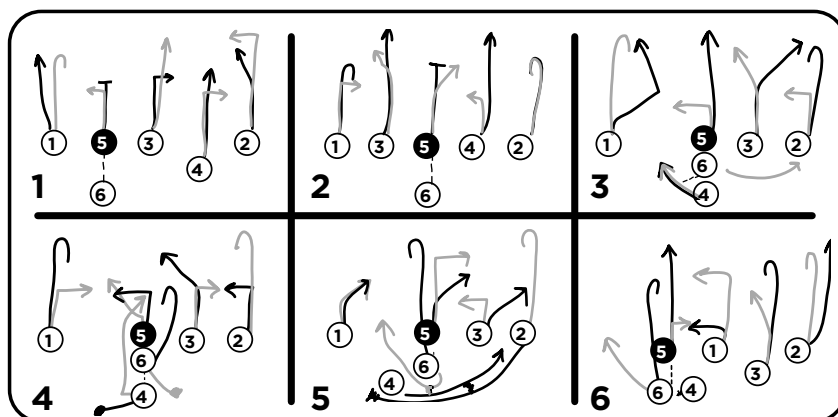


For younger players, we recommend you stay with a single formation and focus on running plays and simple pass routes.

To call the play, the coach will announce the play window number and then the color of the play to run.

EXAMPLE: 1—BLACK

In the example, players will run the routes in solid black in play window 1.



SECTION 3

PRACTICE DEVOTIONS

BIBLICAL VIRTUES

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→ Devotions

As an Upward Coach, you are not only teaching skills for the sport but also values for life. The devotion time allows you to teach the character of Christ through biblical virtues. This season will focus on virtues which are taught in your practices and are highlighted by Bible verses. The chart below is designed to assist you as you organize and prepare for your devotions. It shows the biblical virtues and verses for each group of practices.

PRACTICE NUMBER	BIBLICAL VIRTUES	VERSE
Week 1	<i>Perseverance</i>	No Key Verse This Week
Week 2	<i>Endurance</i>	God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. JAMES 1:12a (NLT)
Week 3	<i>Endurance</i>	God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. JAMES 1:12a (NLT)
Week 4	<i>Endurance</i>	God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. JAMES 1:12a (NLT)
Week 5	<i>Determination</i>	“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good.” GALATIANS 6:9a (NLT)

PRACTICE NUMBER	BIBLICAL VIRTUES	VERSE
Week 6	<i>Determination</i>	“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good.” GALATIANS 6:9a (NLT)
Week 7	<i>Determination</i>	“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good.” GALATIANS 6:9a (NLT)
Week 8	<i>Good News</i>	If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ROMANS 10:9 (NLT)
Week 9	<i>Perseverance</i>	I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. PHILIPPIANS 3:14 (NLT)
Week 10	<i>Perseverance</i>	I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. PHILIPPIANS 3:14 (NLT)
Week 11	<i>Perseverance</i>	I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. PHILIPPIANS 3:14 (NLT)

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

PRACTICE 1

PERSEVERANCE

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** This season, our devotions will focus on three virtues—endurance, determination, and perseverance—with perseverance being the overall theme. This first devotion will help the athletes on your team consider why it's important not to give up and to keep going in the face of adversity. This is an essential tool in their toolbelt for life and faith in God.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Psalm 37:23-24; Isaiah 41:10. *If you don't own a Bible, you can download the YouVersion Bible App for free.*
- **Encouragement:** The theme of perseverance is present throughout the Bible, from Noah to the apostles. You could even say that one of the main stories of the Bible is God helping His people persevere in the face of constant adversity. The good news for us is that God's promises are not limited to the pages of Scripture. They extend to us. He will be with us through the trials we face in life.
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** Do I give up easily, or am I someone who perseveres?



Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

Bottom Line: It's important not to give up.

This season, we're going to be talking about endurance, determination, and perseverance. All of these virtues are about not giving up when life gets hard.

There are many situations in life where it is important not to give up. If you give up a lot in sports, you probably won't be a very good player. You probably won't win many games. But if you don't give up, you will practice harder and become a better player. You probably won't win every game, but you'll be much more successful than if you don't try.

At school, if you give up, don't study, don't pay attention, and don't do your homework, you won't learn things that are important for you to know to be able to grow up, graduate, and get a good job or go to college. But if you don't give up, you can learn important and interesting things. You can find what you're passionate about and prepare for your future. Even when school is hard, there are people who can help you. Not giving up might mean asking for help when you're struggling.

Even with something like drawing a picture, building a LEGO masterpiece, or learning a new video game, it's important not to give up. Because if you give up, you'll never accomplish what you set out to do. But if you don't give up, you'll eventually do what you hoped to do when you started.

When it comes to following God, it's also important not to give up. You see, following God is not always easy. Sometimes, we run into tough circumstances where it's easier to do the wrong thing than obey God. Sometimes, we pray and pray for something, and God doesn't give us the answer we want. Sometimes we feel like we keep messing up, and we'll never be able to live the way God wants us to live. But the Bible, God's word to us, tells us not to give up. It tells us that God is always with us and that we can always trust in Him. God is faithful. That means He will never let us down. So even when life is hard, even when following Him isn't easy, we can stick with it and not give up because we can trust in Him and know He wants the best for us and will help us.

There are a couple of verses in the Bible that say this: "The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand." (Psalm 37:23-24, NLT)

God cares about you and every detail of your life. He wants to hold you by the hand and guide you, even through the hard times when you might stumble. Another verse says God walks beside us even in the darkest valleys. Perseverance is about deciding to keep going even when things get hard because you remember that God is by your side. God cares about you and is by your side no matter what challenges you face, big or small. Trust in Him, and don't give up.

LET'S PRAY

God, we are so excited for this season. Thank You for our team. Open our minds and hearts to learn about You and to trust You more. Teach us to have endurance, determination, and perseverance. We love You, Lord. Amen.



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** The first virtue we'll look at this season is endurance. The difference between endurance and perseverance is subtle but thought-provoking. Endurance is about withstanding difficult circumstances. Perseverance is about persistence in pursuit of a goal. Endurance is getting through. Perseverance is keeping on. But endurance is not a lesser virtue. It makes perseverance possible. Really, you can't have one without the other. Before World War II, the British government produced motivational posters with the now-famous phrase, "Keep calm and carry on." *Keep calm* is endurance. *Carry on* is perseverance. It takes both to come through adversity on the other side.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read James 1:12-18.
- **Encouragement:** All these virtues are as valuable for you as they are for the young athletes on your team. Consider what God might want to teach you about endurance, determination, and perseverance this season, and be open to learning and growing in these areas.
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** What comes to mind when I think of endurance?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

ENDURANCE is staying strong in tough situations.

KEY VERSE

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation.
James 1:12a (NLT)**Bottom Line:** I can stay strong even when things don't go my way.

For the next few practices, we're going to be talking about endurance. Can anyone tell me what endurance means? (*Let athletes answer.*)

One way to understand endurance is to think about what an endurance athlete does. An endurance athlete is someone who does a particular athletic activity for a really long time. They might run, bike, or swim long distances without a break. Marathon runners, long-distance swimmers, and cyclists on the Tour de France are all endurance athletes. Think about what they have to endure. We all know that running, cycling, or swimming for a long time starts to hurt. Your legs start to ache. You might get cramps or blisters. Your lungs start burning. An average person might quit when this happens, but an endurance athlete keeps going. They train to be able to push through and keep going despite the pain.

That's what endurance is. It's staying strong in tough situations. It's putting up with suffering because it will make you stronger and because you have confidence that you can get to the other side okay.

When it comes to our faith in God, endurance is about getting through tough times without giving into temptation, without getting a bad attitude, and while trusting in God. Christians can endure because they know that God is with them, and they have hope that no matter what they have to go through, it doesn't change their future. They will end up in heaven with God.

Are you ever tempted to quit when something doesn't go your way? Do you let a cut or a bruise make you stop playing? Do you get a bad attitude when something isn't easy? Have you ever used a bad situation as an excuse for doing something you shouldn't have done?

God wants us to stay strong even when things get tough. That means still doing what's right in tough situations. That means staying focused on Him and not having a bad attitude. That means treating others well even when you're not having a good day. That doesn't mean you shouldn't have emotions or stand up for yourself. But it does mean you shouldn't let bad circumstances change who you are.

That's what endurance is all about. Endurance is staying strong in tough situations. In James 1:12 (NLT), it says, "God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation." It doesn't mean the hard things go away, but it does mean that you'll be better off in the end because you refused to give up. When we're down a bunch of points, the referee misses the foul, or you fall and think you can't keep going, I want to challenge you to push yourself. You can keep going even if things aren't going your way! But this isn't just true in a game.

Having endurance means finishing that school project even when something breaks or doesn't work the first time. It's choosing to be kind even if the other person doesn't return that kindness. It's doing the right thing, even when everyone else makes a different choice.

I promise you can stay strong, even when you want to quit, when it gets tough, or when things don't go your way. As teammates, we can encourage each other, too. But there is someone even greater and stronger who can help us. And that's God! He is with you in every moment.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- When something doesn't go your way, what do you usually do? Does it make you want to work harder or give in?
- We usually think easy is best. Why might something that takes hard work be good?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- Can you think of a time when you saw someone keep going when you thought they would quit? What happened?
- What do you think of when you think of endurance?

(7th Grade and up)

- What do you think of when you think of endurance?
- Why is it worth it to endure tough situations?

LET'S PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for the chance to be a part of a team. Help us to remember to keep doing the right thing. We want to stay strong in tough situations. Thank You for loving and for caring about each one of us. Amen.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 2" at the end of practice.

Green Practice Star Reminder: If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** This devotion will look at the biblical figure of Joseph as an example of endurance. Joseph's attitude and actions in the face of much hardship are a good blueprint for what biblical endurance should look like. As far as we know, Joseph didn't let his situation get him down. Instead, he did his best to follow God in the situation he was in. He resisted temptation. He used his gifts to help others. He worked hard to do well at the tasks he was given. The purpose here is to help the athletes on your team get an idea of what it actually looks like to endure well.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Genesis 37, 39-50.
- **Encouragement:** "Why was Joseph so great? He was great because of his faith in God, which manifested itself in a magnanimous attitude toward others and his magnificent attitude toward difficulties. A strong faith leads to a good attitude. When those two essentials are in place, troubles become challenges to face not reasons to quit." – Charles R. Swindoll, *Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness*
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** When have I had to endure a difficult season of life? Did anything good come out of it?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

ENDURANCE is staying strong in tough situations.

KEY VERSE

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation.
James 1:12a (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can stay strong because it's worth it.

The Bible tells us about a guy named Joseph. Joseph had eleven brothers, but he was his dad's favorite. His brothers were so jealous that when Joseph was just a teenager, they sold him to traveling tradesmen and told their dad that a wild animal had killed Joseph. Joseph was taken far away to a new country surrounded by strangers and had to work for one of them as a slave. At one point, Joseph was accused of doing something wrong (even though he was innocent) and thrown into prison. He suffered for many years before he was finally able to be free. Joseph became an influential leader and ended up saving many lives during a famine. Eventually, Joseph was reunited with his family and forgave his brothers.

Joseph had to endure a lot. He wasn't perfect, but one of the most impressive things about Joseph is that even though he found himself in terrible circumstances, he was able to stay true to who he was. He did his best to do what was right, to help others, and to give his all in everything he did. He could do this because he trusted in God and knew God was with him. When Joseph forgave his brothers, he even said this: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." (Genesis 50:20, NLT) Joseph realized that everything he had endured was worth it in the end. He wasn't angry or bitter. He was grateful that God had brought him through it and used him to help others.

When we are hurting, it's hard to stay strong. It's hard to keep trusting in God. It's hard to think about what good might come out of what we're going through. But, like Joseph, we can endure. We can stay true to who we are. We can do our best to do what's right. We can help others even when we're hurting. We can give our all. Why? Because God is with us, and He can work everything out for good.

Maybe you started at a new school where you didn't know anyone, but you ended up being exactly the friend that someone else needed. Maybe you had a really hard time understanding something in math class, but because you had to work hard to learn it, you were able to help your little brother with it when he got to that lesson. Maybe you broke your arm and couldn't play sports for a while, but you got to spend more time with your family instead.

God can bring good things out of tough situations when we endure.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- How do you think Joseph was able to stay strong during all he went through?
- What is something hard that you've had to endure?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- What is something hard that you've had to endure?
- Why is it worth it to endure difficult situations?

(7th Grade and up)

- Have you ever kept doing the right thing even though no one else was? What happened?
- Why is it worth it to endure difficult situations?

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for the story of Joseph. Please help us to endure the difficult situations in our lives. Bring good things out of the hard times. We trust You, Lord. Remind us that You are with us and that You will always help us. Amen.

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

PRACTICE 4

ENDURANCE



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** Sometimes, the difficult things we must endure in life are not of our own design—they are just challenges that come with living in a broken world. But other times, we must endure the siren call of our sinful nature: temptation. Refusing to give in to sin is one way we are called to follow Jesus. It is part of the Christian's mandate to endure. Jesus endured targeted temptation from Satan in the wilderness right after He was baptized and His identity as the beloved Son of God was revealed. This story is reminiscent of the Old Testament stories of Adam and Eve and the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. Unlike these other biblical figures, Jesus stood firm. He trusted God completely. He didn't give in to any of the devil's lies or schemes (such as twisting the meaning of Scripture in Matthew 4:6). The temptations Jesus faced here could fall into three major categories of sin as listed in 1 John 2:16 (NLT): "a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions." In His enduring, Jesus was able to empathize with us. "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin." (Hebrews 4:15, NLT)
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:14-16.
- **Encouragement:** "Jesus experienced temptation more strongly than anyone else because he never gave in and sinned. The temptation always remained before him." (Craig L. Blomberg, *The New American Commentary: Matthew*) When you find yourself nearly overwhelmed by the temptation you're enduring, think instead about what Jesus endured on your behalf. Remember that His Spirit is with you and can give you the strength to endure.
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** Do I endure and fight against temptation? Or do I give in easily?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

ENDURANCE is staying strong in tough situations.

KEY VERSE

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation.
James 1:12a (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can stay strong because God is with me.

For the last couple of weeks, we've been talking about endurance. What does endurance mean? (*Pause for responses.*) Endurance is staying strong in tough situations.

Did you know that Jesus had great endurance? Before He started His earthly ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness to pray and fast. To fast means to go without food in order to focus on God. He fasted for 40 days. That's a lot of enduring right there! But then things got even more difficult. The devil came to tempt Jesus.

The devil wanted to get Jesus to stop trusting in God. He said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:3b-4, NLT) Even though Jesus was extremely hungry, He didn't give in.

The devil tempted Jesus two more times. He tried to get Jesus to test God and show off His power. The devil even tried to get Jesus to bow down and worship him. But each time, Jesus refused. He didn't give in. Instead, He fought against the devil's lies and temptations by quoting from the Old Testament. Jesus endured, and He didn't sin. In fact, He never sinned.

God wants us to follow Jesus' example and stand strong against the lies and temptations of the devil. Part of endurance means not giving in to sin when you're really tempted to do things your way instead of God's way. Like Jesus, we can stay strong in these moments. When you are tempted to lie to your teacher, disobey your parents, or say something hurtful to a classmate who said something hurtful to you, remember that God is with you and wants you to stay strong. Like Jesus, you can memorize Bible verses and bring them to mind in those challenging moments.

When you are tempted to say something mean, you can remember that Jesus said, "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other." (John 13:34b, NLT)

When it's easier to disobey your parents rather than obey them, you can remember that God said to "Honor your father and mother." (Exodus 20:12a, NLT)

When you feel afraid or tired or like you can't keep going, you can remember what God said in Isaiah 41:10 (NLT): "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

Just as God was with Jesus when He faced temptation and helped Him stay strong, God is with you in the tough moments. He can help you stay strong. He can help you endure.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- When was a time when you were tempted to do something wrong? What happened?
- How does knowing God is always with you make you feel?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- When was a time when you were tempted to do something wrong? What happened?
- How does it help you to know that when you do the right thing, you are never alone?
What is one way you can help yourself remember that God is with you?

(7th Grade and up)

- What does this story tell us about Jesus?
- How does it help you to know that when you do the right thing, you are never alone?
What is one way you can help yourself remember that God is with you?

LET'S PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us that we are never alone. We can stay strong and keep doing the right thing because You are with us. Help us to withstand temptation. Please bring Your words to mind when we need them most. Amen.



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** The apostle Paul wrote Galatians as a letter to a disunified church. When he tells them not to get tired of doing what is good, he likely has in mind how they are to treat one another within the church. It's true that we often take our frustrations out on those we are closest to—our families or even our church families. Imagine Paul's call for determination to do good in that context. Can you be determined not to snap at your spouse after a long day at work? Can you be determined to apologize to your children when you make a mistake? Can you be determined to listen well to the over-sharer in your small group at church when they ask for prayer? Can you be determined to encourage your pastor on a regular basis rather than taking his service for granted? The examples are endless. That's why Paul says we should do good whenever we have the opportunity.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Galatians 6:1-10.
- **Encouragement:** "Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." – Philippians 2:1-4 (NLT)
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** Am I truly determined to do good to the people around me?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

DETERMINATION is deciding it's worth it to finish what you started.

KEY VERSE

"So let's not get tired of doing what is good."
Galatians 6:9a (NLT)

Bottom Line: I want to be determined to do good.

When swimmer Michael Phelps was eight years old, he wrote down some goals on a piece of paper. At the top, he wrote, "I would like to make the Olympics." Further down the page, he wrote, "I will accomplish these goals by concentrating hard, working hard, and coming to every practice."

Michael stuck to what he wrote down on that paper. Just six years later, he qualified for the Olympics at age 15. He didn't win any medals that year, but he kept working hard. At the next Olympics, Michael won six gold medals and two bronze medals. But he wasn't done yet. Four years later, Michael won eight gold medals. That's the most gold medals anyone has ever won at a single Olympic Games. After that, Michael competed in two more Olympic Games, winning more medals. By the time he retired from swimming, Michael Phelps had won a total of 28 Olympic medals—more than any other athlete in history.

At eight years old, Michael had something we all need: determination. He set goals, made a plan to reach them, and then followed through. It led him to amazing success. And for the next few weeks, we're going to be talking a lot about determination and why it's important when it comes to following God.

There are some verses in the New Testament of the Bible that say this: "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone." (Galatians 6:9-10a, NLT)

These verses tell us that we should be determined to do good. If we don't give up on doing what's right and good, we will "reap a harvest of blessing." A harvest is when farmers finally pick the crops they've been growing all season. The Bible says that doing good will eventually lead to an awesome harvest. When we do good, more good will follow. That doesn't mean it will always be easy. Determination is all about working hard and keeping your mind set on what you want to accomplish, no matter what comes your way. And what does God want us to be determined to do? He wants us to be determined to do good!

What does that look like? When you can choose between something selfish and

something that will help someone else, do good! When you are tempted to disobey your parents instead of doing what they asked you to do, do good! When you notice that a teammate doesn't get the ball much, and you have the chance to let them make a play, do good! And don't just do good one time; keep doing good every day! That's determination.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- What is something you did because you were determined to do it?
- Why is it important not to give up on doing good?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- How do you think Michael Phelps was able to accomplish everything he did?
- Why does doing good take determination?

(7th Grade and up)

- When have you seen someone do something that took a lot of hard work and determination? Did it inspire you?
- Why does doing good take determination?

LET'S PRAY

God, we love You. We want to show determination in doing good. Help us to keep doing the right thing—not because we have to, but because we want to show others that Your way is the best way. Amen.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 5" at the end of practice.

Green Practice Star Reminder: If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

PRACTICE 6

DETERMINATION



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** For Christians, determination does not mean just powering through on our own. God will help us live in a way that honors Him. He wants to help us. Today's devotion highlights some of the ways God prepares us to live with determination to do the things we believe are important. Ephesians 6:10-17 introduces the imagery-heavy idea of the armor of God. "Paul's description of the Christian armor is much like the standard armor of a Roman foot soldier and would have been quite familiar to people throughout the Roman World." (John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters*) This is how God equips us to live for Him. In the context of the passage, the spiritual realm is also in play. This is not just how we stand firm for God in our daily lives. It is also how we are able to stand and fight against the spiritual forces of the devil that we cannot see. God has given us everything we need for victory—especially since Jesus has already won the ultimate victory over evil.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Ephesians 6:10-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.
- **Encouragement:** A lot of determination comes down to the small choices we make every day. Do the decisions you make line up with your goals? Like putting on armor for a battle—or even dressing for a regular day—preparing yourself to live with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, etc., will help you be ready to make the right decisions that align with your goals.
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** How would my life look different if I consciously chose to "put on" the armor of God every day?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

DETERMINATION is deciding it's worth it to finish what you started.

KEY VERSE

"So let's not get tired of doing what is good."
Galatians 6:9a (NLT)

Bottom Line: God gives me what I need to keep going.

Let's think about professional football for a few minutes. When those athletes go out on the field, they need protection. They wouldn't play without their helmet and pads. They need to cover their head, shoulders, and legs in case they get hit or tackled by an opponent. The guys on the other team are there to take them down, so if they don't put on those pieces of equipment, they could easily get hurt.

Today, I want to take a look at a part of the Bible that talks about some spiritual armor or protection that God provides to each of us who choose to follow Him. Last practice, we talked about being determined to do good. But we don't have to do that alone! God wants to help us, so He gives us this protection as we go about trying our best to live with determination. In Ephesians 6, we read about some of these pieces of spiritual armor we can put on.

There's the belt of truth. That's remembering what we know is right from the Bible and from God's Spirit in us. That's like that voice inside you that you hear telling you what's good and true and right.

Next up, we wear the body armor of righteousness. This is the armor that covers your chest. That's the choices we make every day to do things God's way, which is always the best way.

On our feet, we lace up shoes of peace. That means having confidence and peace from God so that you're ready to tell others the good news about Jesus.

We also hold the shield of faith, which is our belief that God is with us and will help us stand up against the enemy who wants us to do the wrong thing.

Then we have the helmet of salvation. That's the fact that when we believe in Jesus, we are saved by Him and belong to God's family. A helmet is very important on the football field and in battle. It's even more important in everyday life that we believe in Jesus!

Finally, there's the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Knowing what God has said in the Bible and being led by God's Spirit will help us stand up against an enemy, just like having a real sword in battle.

God knows it's not always easy to keep going with determination. He knew we would need protection. That's why He sent Jesus, His Spirit, and the Bible to guide us as we make decisions. I'm so thankful that God gives us what we need so that we can keep going as we follow Him. We can pray and ask God to help us put on each of these pieces of armor every day.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- What would happen if a football player went out on the field without his helmet or pads on?
- Why do you think God wants to help us as we follow Him?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- How does knowing that God is with you (just like the armor a soldier wears into battle) help you stand up and do the right thing?
- Which of the pieces of the armor of God do you have questions about?

(7th Grade and up)

- What does the imagery of suiting up like you're going out into a pro football game or onto a battlefield help you understand about following God?
- What does putting on the armor of God have to do with determination?

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for the ways You protect and prepare us for following You. We want to be determined to do good and honor You. Remind us that You are with us and that You always give us what we need. We love You. Amen.



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** In our final devotion on determination, we'll look at the determination of Jesus to do what He was sent to earth to do. Mark 10:45 and Luke 19:10 are just two of numerous instances in the Gospels where Jesus refers to Himself as the "Son of Man." This is most likely a reference to Daniel 7:13-14 (NLT) in the Old Testament: "I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven . . . He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed." Even in His preeminence and exaltation, Jesus came to humbly serve, sacrifice, and save. He came to seek us where we were. And He did so. His life and ministry were intentional and resolute. We, in turn, should seek to have this kind of commitment to the mission He has given us to follow His example and make disciples.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Mark 10:35-45; Luke 19:1-10; Daniel 7:13-14.
- **Encouragement:** "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne." – Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** Am I determined to follow Jesus' example?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

DETERMINATION is deciding it's worth it to finish what you started.

KEY VERSE

"So let's not get tired of doing what is good."
Galatians 6:9a (NLT)

Bottom Line: Jesus was determined.

For the last few practices, we've been talking about determination. Raise your hand if you can tell me what determination means. (*Let athletes answer.*)

Today, we're talking about one of the greatest examples of determination: Jesus. The first four books of the New Testament—called the Gospels—tell us all about Jesus' time on earth and show us just how determined He was to do what God had sent Him to earth to do.

To be determined, you need to have a goal or something you're working toward, right? So, what was Jesus working toward? There are a couple of verses where He explains just that. Both times, Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man. In Mark 10:45 (NLT), He says, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." In Luke 19:10 (NLT), Jesus says something similar: "For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Jesus came to earth to seek us, to serve us, and to save us by giving up His life for us. He was determined to do these things, no matter what. Everything He did was to meet these goals. He sought us by coming to earth to live as one of us. In His ministry, He would seek people out to talk to them and show them love—often people no one else noticed. He called His disciples by saying, "Follow Me!" and inviting them to join Him.

When it came to serving, Jesus healed people, forgave people, helped people, and even fed people. Then, through His death on the cross, He did give up His life for us and made a way for us to be saved from sin and death. He didn't turn away from any of these things, even though they weren't easy. He kept seeking and serving. He kept going until He saved us. That's some determination!

Next practice, we'll talk even more about what Jesus did for us, but right now, I want you to think about why Jesus had the determination He did. It was because this was part of God's plan and because He loved us so much that He would go through even the most difficult things for us. When we are struggling to stay determined to follow God, we can remember everything Jesus did for us. We can be inspired to keep going because we are grateful for His great love for us.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- What was Jesus determined to do?
- How does that make you feel?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- How did Jesus show determination?
- How does Jesus' determination inspire you?

(7th Grade and up)

- How did Jesus show determination?
- What's one way that you want to be more determined to follow God?

LET'S PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Jesus and His determination to seek, serve, and save us. Thank You for sending Him. Teach us to be determined to follow You and to tell others about the lengths You went to for us. We love You. Amen.

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

PRACTICE 8

GOOD NEWS

This week's devotion includes a gospel presentation.

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** This important devotion builds on the concept of Jesus' determination from the last practice to more fully flesh out the good news that He came to save us from sin and death. God didn't send Jesus to earth on a whim. Jesus didn't accidentally find Himself condemned to die. His life and mission were intentional, with the grand goal of our salvation and restoring our relationship with God. Think about the lengths God went to in order to bring us back to Him. This is what you want to communicate to the athletes on your team. God loves them so much that He orchestrated all this for them. They don't have to try to earn their salvation—and they can't. But they can face anything life throws at them when their hope is in Jesus.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Romans 10:9-10; John 3:16-17; John 19-20.
- **Encouragement:** "Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross." – Philippians 2:6-8 (NLT)
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** Do I truly believe that Jesus went through everything He did in order to save me?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

The GOOD NEWS is that Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins.

KEY VERSE

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe
in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:9 (NLT)

Bottom Line: Jesus came to rescue us from sin and death.

Last practice, we talked about how determined Jesus was to seek us, serve us, and save us. Earlier this season, we talked about how Jesus endured temptation and didn't sin. Jesus went through a lot during His time on earth, but He always kept going. He persevered. Why? He did it for you and for me.

You see, none of us are perfect. We do things our way instead of God's way. This is called sin. Sin is anything you think, do, or say that is disobedient to God. Because God is holy and perfect, our sin makes it impossible for us to have a relationship with Him. No matter what we do, no matter how hard we try, we can't fix our relationship with God on our own. The Bible tells us that the consequence of sin is death and separation from God.

The good news is that God still loves and cares about us. He wants to have a relationship with us. So He sent Jesus, His Son, to earth to live among us and to show us how much He loves us. The Bible says, "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NLT)

Jesus lived a perfect life and never sinned. He taught us and showed us a lot about who God is. But some people didn't like the things Jesus did and said. He was sentenced to die on a wooden cross. It was a terrible, painful death. But Jesus was determined to follow God and save us. Jesus endured all the pain for us, and when He died, He took our place and paid the price for our sins.

Then, three days later, God raised Him from the dead! He defeated sin and death. Jesus appeared to many of His followers, then returned to heaven, where He is still alive today!

So what does all this mean for us? The Bible says, "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9, NLT)

We can be rescued from sin and death through Jesus. Our broken relationship with God can be fixed when we believe in Him and ask Him to forgive us for our sins. Because of what Jesus did, when you trust in Him to save you, He will! When you believe in Jesus, you will live forever in heaven with Him after you die!

Think about how much Jesus loves you and wants a relationship with you. He did it all for you. Because He kept going and didn't give up, we are able to keep going and not give up. We are able to have hope for the future because of Jesus.

If you have questions or want to talk more about what all this means, I'd be happy to talk with you after practice.

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to rescue us. Thank You that we can have a relationship with You through Him. Forgive us for our sins. Help each of us to trust in Jesus to save us. We love You, Lord. Amen.

If someone has questions about following Jesus, let your League Director know and ask them about the follow-up process for your league. You can also let the parents know their child is asking questions. If the family does not attend church, this would be a great opportunity to invite them to come to church with you.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice8" at the end of practice.

Green Practice Star Reminder: If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** Our final virtue this season is perseverance. Perseverance combines endurance and determination to enable you to keep going until you accomplish what you set out to do. One of the words most commonly translated as “perseverance” in the New Testament is the Ancient Greek word *hupomone*. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines *hupomone* as “steadfastness, constancy, endurance” and “the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.” The athletes on your team will learn that perseverance is possible with God’s help.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Philippians 3:12-14; Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 23.
- **Encouragement:** Due to its beautiful words of comfort, Psalm 23 is perhaps the most famous psalm in the Bible. It compares God to a shepherd who is with us and cares for us as we journey through life. Take a few moments to read and reflect on Psalm 23. What does it teach us about perseverance?
- **Coach’s Question for Reflection:** Do I trust that God is always with me and will help me keep going?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

PERSEVERANCE is pressing on even when life gets hard.

KEY VERSE

I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the
heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.
Philippians 3:14 (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can persevere because God is with me.

Raise your hand if you like to run laps. What about running on a trail? I know we spend a lot of time running here. Some people love running, and some people think it's awful, but either way, it's hard work! And there are definitely times when you want to quit. That's when you need to have perseverance. That's what I want to talk about today. Perseverance is pressing on even when life gets hard. Let me repeat that: perseverance is pressing on even when life gets hard.

So far this season, we've talked about endurance and determination. Perseverance goes with both of these other virtues. You need both endurance and determination to persevere. If you're trying to run a marathon, which is 26.2 miles long, you have to be able to endure pain. It hurts! You also need determination. Because if you don't want to cross the finish line, you'll just give up. Perseverance is kind of like both of those things together. You're able to endure, and you're determined, so you keep going. You don't give up. If you make it all the way to the end of a marathon, you've got some awesome perseverance!

But perseverance isn't just needed in physical activities. We need perseverance in life, too—especially when it comes to making wise choices. When it comes to doing the right thing, do you ever want to give up? I know for me, it can be hard to do the right thing when it seems like no one else cares about what's right or when I'm the only one making the wise choice. Do you ever feel that way? Maybe you're the only one listening when the teacher is talking. Maybe you're the only one being honest. Maybe you're the only one being patient. Maybe you're the only one showing compassion.

When you want to quit, remember the importance of perseverance. Refuse to give up, even when it gets hard. Because guess what? Even if you feel like you're all alone, that's not really true. You're not alone. God is always with you. There's a Bible verse that says this: "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10, NLT)

God sees every choice you make, and He is so pleased when you choose to do the right thing. When life gets hard, remember God is with you. Ask Him to give you the strength

you need to keep going, to keep running, to keep doing the right thing both on and off the field.

I know it can be hard. And when things get hard, it seems like the best thing to do is just give up. But when you decide to persevere, your faith will grow. Your trust in God will increase as you learn to look to Him for help when you just don't think you can keep going. When life gets hard, think about perseverance and remember that God is with you.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- Why is it important for us to persevere when things get tough?
- What might help you remember God is with you?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- When you feel like quitting, what keeps you going?
- What might help you remember God is with you?

(7th Grade and up)

- When you feel like quitting, what keeps you going?
- Is there someone who encourages you to persevere in tough times? What do they do?

LET'S PRAY

Heavenly Father, we know that You are always with us. In every situation, no matter where we are, we are never alone because You are here! This week, we'll have opportunities to show perseverance. When we're tempted to quit or give up, remind us that You are with us. Please help us to trust You and keep going. Thank You, God. Amen.

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 9" at the end of practice.

Green Practice Star Reminder: If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

PRACTICE 10

PERSEVERANCE



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** This devotion is intended to give players a practical example of perseverance, especially in their relationships with others. Before we get to Peter's question in Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus talks about how to confront a believer living in sin, so the forgiveness they are discussing is not without accountability. However, it is still forgiveness that goes above and beyond. In Peter's day, "The rabbis taught that a Jew should forgive a repeated sin three times, but after that there need be no more forgiveness . . . Peter suggested seven times and probably felt very magnanimous doing so." (Thomas L. Constable, *Constable's Notes*) Jesus showed Peter that his concept of generous forgiveness wasn't even close to the overflowing forgiveness Jesus had in mind. The parable that follows this exchange further illustrates the importance of forgiveness. The truth is, a lot of persevering in love requires forgiving others both their big offenses and tiny flaws over and over again.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read Matthew 18:15-35; Ephesians 4:1-4; Romans 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.
- **Encouragement:** "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT)
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** Do I easily lose patience with people? Do I ever give up on people instead of persevering with them?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

PERSEVERANCE is pressing on even when life gets hard.

KEY VERSE

I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.
Philippians 3:14 (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can persevere in loving others.

Last practice, we talked about perseverance, which is pressing on even when life gets hard. We learned that we can persevere because God is with us.

One of the big ways God wants us to persevere is in how we treat others. God loves all people and wants us to love everyone, too. He wants us to treat others as we want to be treated. He wants us to be kind, generous, and gentle. But this isn't always easy, is it? People can be annoying or even mean. It can sometimes take a lot of effort to keep loving people.

But God is patient with us, and that can inspire us to be patient with others. Romans 5:8 says, "But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." God didn't wait until we were easy to love to send Jesus to save us. He sent Jesus while we were still sinners and still rebelling against Him.

A big part of persevering in loving others is forgiving them when they do something that hurts you. There was one time when one of Jesus' disciples, Peter, asked Jesus a question. "Then Peter came to him and asked, 'Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?' 'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied, 'but seventy times seven!'" (Matthew 18:21-22, NLT)

Peter thought he was being really generous by offering to forgive someone seven times, but Jesus' answer made his answer look pretty bad. Jesus said we should be able to forgive someone seventy times seven times! That's 490 times! That's a lot of forgiving. And what Jesus really meant by saying that big number was that you should keep on forgiving. Your forgiveness shouldn't run out. We all make mistakes, and Jesus wants us to persevere in forgiving one another.

Ephesians 4:2 (NLT) says, "Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." Another translation of this verse says we should be "bearing with one another in love." That means we need to put up with each other because we love each other!

Think about it. When do you need to have perseverance in loving other people? When

your little brother or sister is annoying you? When someone cuts in line in front of you? When a friend is having a bad day and says something mean? When your parents ask you to do something you don't want to do? When a teammate gets to play the position you wanted to play?

God wants us to keep pressing on and loving others, even when it's difficult.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- Why is it important to forgive?
- How can you show love to your family? Your friends? Your classmates?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- Why do love and forgiveness sometimes take perseverance?
- Why is it important to keep on loving and forgiving others?

(7th Grade and up)

- How can God's patience with us help us be patient with others?
- Why is it important to keep on loving and forgiving others?

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for being patient with us, for loving and forgiving us. Help us to extend that patience, love, and forgiveness to other people. Help us not to give up on loving others, even when it's hard. Help us to persevere. Amen.



Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion.

- **Background:** Last practice, we talked about persevering in loving others. People require perseverance. But people can also help contribute to our perseverance. We can encourage one another to keep going. You never know how much a kind word might mean to someone. It might be just what they need to keep going. There is a reason the Bible refers to the church as the body of Christ. Just like the human body works together to keep a person alive and thriving, the body of Christ works together to honor Christ and to continue His work on earth. We are all part of this body and ought to do our best to build each other up.
- **Big Picture:** For more insight, read 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.
- **Encouragement:** Think about what it does for you when someone is encouraging or helps you when you need it. Take a few minutes this week to write an encouraging note to someone else.
- **Coach's Question for Reflection:** How can I be more encouraging to the people in my life?

Practice Devotion | Share This With Your Team

VIRTUE

PERSEVERANCE is pressing on even when life gets hard.

KEY VERSE

I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the
heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.
Philippians 3:14 (NLT)

Bottom Line: I can help others persevere.

You know what I love to hear? I love it when I hear you all saying things to encourage each other during practice. (*Give them some examples.*) When you say things like that, it makes your teammates want to keep going and persevere. Remember, that's what we've been talking about—perseverance! Perseverance is pressing on even when life gets hard.

I'll bet you can all think of some times this season when you've wanted to give up. Maybe the other team was way ahead of us. Maybe all the players didn't show, and you didn't get to sub out of the game. Or maybe you got frustrated with each other, and you had to work through it if we were going to come together as a team. It's so tempting to quit when things get tough.

Here's where being part of a team is really awesome. We're at our very best when we encourage one another. You can help someone else persevere and stick with it, even when you're tired, too.

You can always encourage others to keep going. Let me give you just a few examples. You can help your little brother practice riding his new scooter. You can encourage a teammate when they're tired or nervous. You can help your mom or dad with dinner when they've had a hard day at work. Everybody has their moments when they just want to quit. Think about how you can help them persevere. Because you might need some help when you want to quit later on, too.

When life gets hard, remember you can help others persevere. That's a big part of being a team player. And it's what God wants us to do. The Bible says we should "encourage one another and build each other up." (1 Thessalonians 5:11a, NLT) God will always be there to help us, but He wants us to help others, too.

Discussion Questions

(K-2nd Grade)

- When life gets tough, what kinds of things can make you feel like giving up?
- What is something encouraging you can say to a teammate?

(3rd-6th Grade)

- Can you tell us about someone who has encouraged you to keep going? What did they do?
- What is something encouraging you can say to a teammate?

(7th Grade and up)

- Can you tell us about someone who has encouraged you to keep going? What did they do?
- Why do you think encouragement can help us persevere in hard times?

LET'S PRAY

God, we know that You are a mighty and powerful God. You never get tired! But we do get tired sometimes, and when that happens, we're tempted to give up. Help us to remember to encourage each other and help each other persevere. Thank You for a great season and a great team. Amen.

Note for Game Day: If your league uses the Upward star stickers to encourage players, use that as an opportunity for your team to encourage one another. Let each player give a teammate a sticker and an encouraging comment this week after the game.

SECTION 4

GAMES

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➔ Rules to Upward Flag Football

To assist you at practices and games, the following are the rules to Upward Flag Football. They include not only the rules of play, but also information on the field, down and clock format and offensive and defensive basics. For more details on the rules unique to Upward Flag Football, please refer to the referee handbook on MyUpward.org.

FIELD DIAGRAM AND RULES

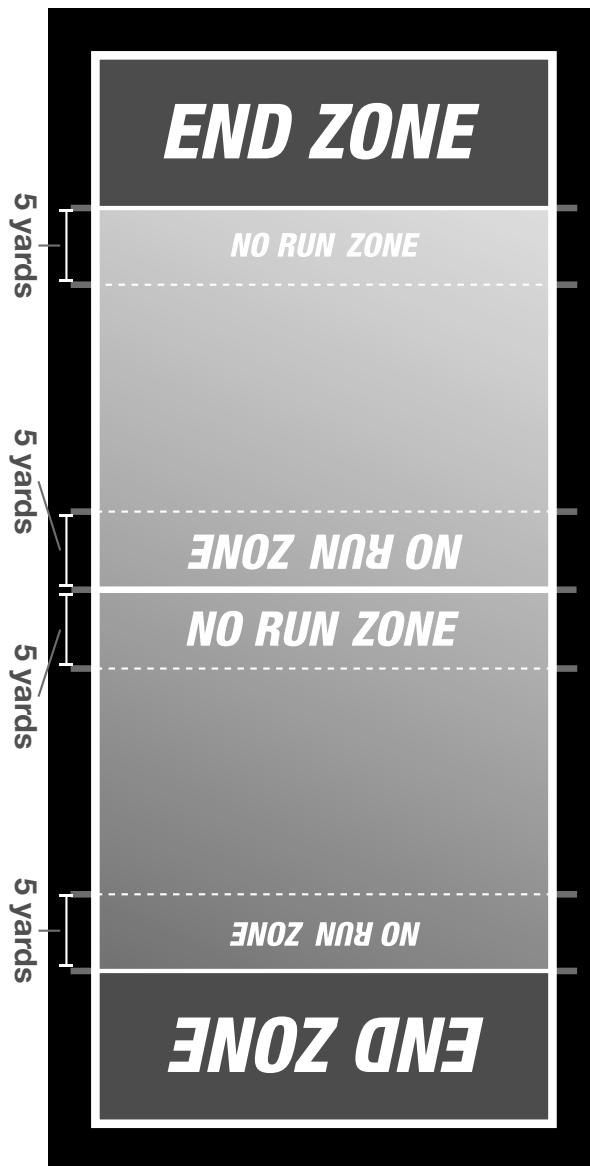
The offensive team is awarded a first down when it crosses the midfield line. Based on the field size, one first down is sufficient to advance the football for a score.

The lines 5 yards from each end zone and on both sides of the midfield line are no-run zones. No-run zones do not apply to the K5 division. The no run zones are designed to take away power running plays.

If an offensive team picks up a first down but is then pushed back into the no-run zone, the no-run zone will not apply, and the offensive team cannot pick up another first down.

If an offensive team is in the no run zone which applies to them and loses yardage due to penalty or any play (for example: taking a knee, running out of bounds, negative yardage play) they are still considered as being in the no run zone.

As there are no kickoffs, the offensive team begins the game and second half by taking possession of the ball at its 5-yard line.



DOWN FORMAT

K5 and 1st-2nd Grades

The offensive team has four downs to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown.

If the team fails to cross midfield in four downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5-yard line. There will be no punts for this division. All four downs will be used without the concern of giving up field position.

3rd Grade and Up

The offensive team has four downs to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown.

On fourth down, a team has two options:

1. A team may attempt to gain a first down or a touchdown. If a team fails to convert on fourth down, either by scoring or picking up a first down, the ball changes possession at the no-run zone, before midfield going into the first down.
2. A team may “punt” as its fourth-down play by notifying the referee. In this case, the ball will be placed on the opposing team’s 5-yard line, and there will be a change of possession.

OFFENSIVE STARTING POINTS

K5-2nd Grades

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Starting Field Position After Change Of Possession</i>
<i>After a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt</i>	<i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>
<i>After a turnover on downs</i>	<i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>
<i>After an interception</i>	<i>At the spot of the interception</i>

3rd Grade and Up

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Starting Field Position After Change Of Possession</i>
<i>After a touchdown and extra point(s) attempt</i>	<i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>
<i>After a "punt"</i>	<i>Offense's 5-yard line</i>
<i>After a turnover on downs</i>	<i>No-run zone going into the first down (midfield line)</i>
<i>After an interception</i>	<i>At the spot of the interception</i>

CLOCK FORMAT

- ◆ Games consist of four 9-minute quarters with an 8-minute halftime.
- ◆ The game clock stops briefly at the end of every quarter for predetermined substitutions.
- ◆ Each team has one 30-second timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the second half. The clock will stop during the timeout.
- ◆ A 30-second play clock begins after the referee spots the ball as ready for play.
- ◆ The clock will stop in the final minute of the first half and in the final minute of the game for the following situations:
 - ◆ After an incomplete pass
 - ◆ After the ball carrier goes out of bounds
 - ◆ After a touchdown
 - ◆ During an extra-point attempt
 - ◆ For an official's timeout
 - ◆ After an interception
 - ◆ During a called timeout until the ball is snapped
 - ◆ On a change of possession
 - ◆ For a penalty. Keep in mind the half or game may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines the penalty.

→ **Game Format**

- ◆ Referees lead both teams in prayer at midfield before every game. This is a good time to have players tuck in their jersey, make sure flags are on hips, jewelry has been removed and coaches to have their substitutions ready for the game.
- ◆ The visiting team (wearing the lighter-colored jerseys) calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense first or choose which goal to defend. The other team has the choice (possession or end to defend) not made by the team winning the toss. The team that plays defense first will play offense first to start the second half.
- ◆ Because the end of a quarter does not signal a change of possession, the team with possession at the end of the quarter will retain possession after substitutions take place.
- ◆ Teams will switch ends of the field at the half, not after each quarter.
- ◆ Score may not be kept in 2nd grade and under divisions.
- ◆ Each team will have six players on the field at a time. This equips the offense with an appropriate amount of players without crowding the field.
- ◆ Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area.

- ◆ In the 3rd grade and up divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle for the first two games of the season. In Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle throughout the season.
- ◆ Teams will use the Upward Sports substitution system to allow for equal playing time, every player to play offense and defense and the coach to not have to monitor playing time for each player.

SCORING

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra point:

- ◆ 1 point (played from the 5-yard line with a pass ONLY)
The 5-yard attempt is from the no-run zone
- ◆ 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run OR pass)

Safety: 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line. There are no actual kicks.

➔ Offensive Basics

- ◆ A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap, consisting of a center and then at least two receivers positioned anywhere along the line of scrimmage. ***This adds some structure to offensive sets.***
- ◆ Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped. This is intact to keep the integrity of the game.
- ◆ In the 3rd grade and up divisions, the ball is snapped between the center's legs to begin play. In any division, 2nd grade and under players may use the side snap. ***The traditional snap can be difficult for younger players with smaller hands.***
- ◆ Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete, unshared possession of the ball. This also helps clarify the center sneak play. ***A possession change between the center and quarterback must occur in order to run the play.***
- ◆ A low-profile field cone or beanbag is used to mark the line of scrimmage.

RUNNING THE FOOTBALL

- ◆ The quarterback cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage. ***This rule includes others in each offensive play and prevents a quarterback from dominating each play by advancing the football.***
- ◆ The person who receives the snap from the center (under center or shotgun) is considered the quarterback.

- ◆ Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and underhand or overhand forward or backward passes are not permitted.
- ◆ The five yards leading toward the goal line and the five yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones. The no-run zones do not apply to the Kindergarten division.
- ◆ A player receiving a handoff or backward pass can pass the ball (halfback pass) from behind the line of scrimmage.
- ◆ A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty. ***This is for safety and abides with the no contact rule.***
- ◆ The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football. ***This rule discourages a dive for advancement.***
- ◆ If a ball carrier who has established possession of the ball, fumbles the ball into an opposing player's hands without the ball touching the ground, the play is considered a fumble. This is a dead ball at the spot where the player lost the ball. If however, a ball carrier attempts a legal or illegal pass and the hand and arm are coming forward it is ruled as a pass and therefore an interception.

RECEIVING THE FOOTBALL

- ◆ All six players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or pitch.)
With the no contact rule, no blockers can be used thus allowing all offensive players to be eligible.
- ◆ A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot touch in bounds before going out of bounds. This rule is to keep the integrity of the game.
- ◆ If a player catches a pass with any part of his body (knee) other than their feet or hands on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion. This rule helps to keep the no contact rule intact.
- ◆ Simultaneous possession by an offensive and defensive player is awarded to the offensive player.

PASSING THE FOOTBALL

- ◆ All forward passes can be completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass can be completed per play. However, while in the no-run zone, only a forward pass completed beyond the line of scrimmage may advance the ball out of the no run zone.
- ◆ A backward pass can only be executed by the quarterback.
 - ◇ A backward pass can only occur while behind the line of scrimmage and only one completed per play.

- ◇ A backward pass (over or underhand) includes a pass from the quarterback that travels parallel to the line of scrimmage or away from the end zone where the offense is attempting to score.
- ◇ An incomplete backward pass is a fumble and a dead ball where it first hits the ground or before hitting the ground where it travels out of bounds.
- ◆ Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver
- ◆ The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff or pass will end the 7-second pass count. This rule keeps a scrambling quarterback from taking too much time with each possession.

DEAD BALLS

- ◆ Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:
 - ◇ The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out
 - ◇ The ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - ◇ The ball carrier's knee hits the ground
 - ◇ A touchdown or safety is scored
 - ◇ A pass falls incomplete
 - ◇ At the point of an interception
 - ◇ When the ball is fumbled. The ball will be spotted at the location where the player fumbled the ball.

- One exception to this rule is for 2nd grade and under division players only. If a center/quarterback exchange is mishandled, the quarterback and only the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play. If a defender gets to the ball before the quarterback, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble (treated like a sack).

➔ **Defensive Basics**

- ◆ Teams may run man-to-man, zone defenses or a combination of both. ***This rule allows for defensive schemes and helps equal ability match-ups. Players may have an easier time covering a zone vs. a receiver man-to-man in the open field.***
- ◆ Interceptions may not be returned. Change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception. ***This rule will force a substitution so players will not sit out more than one possession at a time and helps to maintain equal playing time.***
- ◆ Interceptions made in the end zone will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted at the 5-yard line. ***Interceptions cannot be returned. A touchback is used for all end zone picks.***

RUSHING THE PASSER AND THE RUSH LINE

- ◆ All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line with a small beanbag or low profile cone. The rush line extends in a straight line from sideline to sideline. With no blocking allowed, this gives the quarterback enough time to make a play or escape a rush.
- ◆ With the 3rd grade and up divisions, any number of players may rush the quarterback. The K5, 1st and 2nd grade division may only rush one defender.
- ◆ Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage. In the Kindergarten division, three defenders must line up 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Having three players line up 7 yards from the line of scrimmage for the Kindergarten group keeps the congestion from forming along the line of scrimmage. This is key since the majority of Kindergarten plays are running plays.
- ◆ Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and any defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier. This allows the defense to react quickly to a play behind the line of scrimmage.
- ◆ A league director may adjust the distance of the rush line to 10 yards.

➔ Penalties

- ◆ Referees will call all penalties so that players learn the game.
- ◆ If a penalty happens near the end zone, where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.
- ◆ The Neutral Zone is defined as the space between the forward and backward tips of the football while it rests on the field prior to the snap.
- ◆ A game or half can not end on a defensive penalty. The offense will be awarded one untimed play unless the penalty is declined.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

Defensive Pass Interference

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.

Pass Interference is contact or interference which hinders or restricts an opportunity for an eligible player to catch a forward pass after the ball has been thrown.

Encroachment

The whistle is blown, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Encroachment occurs when a defensive player enters the neutral zone and makes contact with an offensive player or the football prior to the snap.

Illegal Contact

Flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.

Illegal contact occurs by pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing, physically tackling, or knocking a player down while attempting to pull a flag.

Illegal Flag Pull

Flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.

This occurs when a defender pulls the flag of a receiver prior to catching the ball.

Illegal Rushing

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Illegal rushing is enforced when a player who starts in front of the designated rush line (7 yards from the line of scrimmage) crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass that leaves the quarterbacks hands.

There is no penalty for a player who starts from behind the designated rush line and moves in front of the designated rush line so long as they do not also then cross the line of scrimmage.

Neutral Zone Infraction

The whistle is blown, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

When a defensive player moves into the neutral zone prior to the snap causing a nearby offensive player to react.

Offside

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

A player on defense is offside if they line up in the neutral zone or move into the neutral zone at the snap.

Stripping

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.

A defensive player may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier.

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

Delay of Game

The whistle is blow, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Diving

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss down.

Ball carriers may not dive toward the end zone or first down.

False Start

The whistle is blown, flag thrown, and play is dead immediately.

The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

When prior to the snap an offensive player in a set position then moves their body or the football to simulate the start of a play.

Flag Guarding

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of the down.

Flag guarding is intentional or unintentional use of the arm or hands to prevent a defender from pulling the flag.

Illegal Formation

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

Illegal Formation occurs when there are not three players lined up on the line of scrimmage.

Illegal Motion

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

It is illegal motion if a player under center goes in motion and fails to come to a complete stop for one second before the snap.

One player in the backfield may be in motion prior to the snap but must be moving parallel to or away from the line of scrimmage.

If a player in the backfield or on the line of scrimmage is moving forward at the time of the snap, it is illegal motion.

If an eligible receiver on the line of scrimmage moves to another spot on the line of scrimmage they must come to a complete stop and may not be in motion prior to the snap.

Illegal Pass

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

A pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, more than one forward pass, more than one backward pass or a pass not completed beyond the line of scrimmage to advance out of the no-run zone.

Illegal Run

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down.

An illegal run is a running play that occurs in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage after taking the snap.

Illegal Use of the Hands

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and loss down.

Illegal use of the hands occurs by stiff-arming or a player using their hands or arms in an attempt to stop or block an opponent.

Intentional Grounding

A flag is thrown, whistle is blown, and the play is dead on the incomplete pass. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

Intentional ground occurs when a passer, who is under pressure, throws a forward pass without a realistic chance of a pass completion. Intentional grounding also occurs if a quarterback delays a spike and is or is not under pressure and throws the ball to the ground.

Intentional grounding if in their own end zone when the ball is thrown the result is a safety.

Offensive Charging

A flag is throw, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

Offensive charging occurs when an offensive player makes no attempt to avoid a defender and instead initiates contact and attempts to run through or knock down the defender.

Offensive Pass Interference

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss down.

Pass Interference is contact or interference which hinders or restricts an opportunity for an eligible player to catch a forward pass after the ball has been thrown.

This includes an offensive player shoving or pushing a defender to create separation in order to catch a pass and when the ball is in the air setting a pick on a defender.

Offside

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a replay of the down. A player on offense is offside if they line up in the neutral zone or move into the neutral zone at the snap.

Shielding

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

Shielding is a non-contact block that impedes a defender from making a tackle. This could be other offensive players running immediately side by side, in front of or behind a ball carrier to impede defenders from making a tackle.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A flag is thrown, and play continues. The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and if against the offense a loss of down or against the defense an automatic first down.

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes any form of rough play or unsportsmanlike behavior such as taunting. If the severity of the conduct warrants it, remove players for the remainder of the game.

➔ Substitutions

The substitution system is designed to provide every player equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures the following:

- ◆ No player sits out more than one possession at a time
- ◆ Every player plays offense and defense in every game
- ◆ Every player will start on either offense or defense in each game
- ◆ In most cases, each player will play against someone of equal ability
- ◆ Coaches are not to alter the substitution system or to be accused of doing so
- ◆ Coaches do not have to monitor playing time for each player
- ◆ Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season

Here are some basics about the substitution system:

- ◆ Each team fields six players at a time
- ◆ In each quarter, each team will have an offensive and defensive group, and these groups will change in each quarter according to the substitution rotation.
- ◆ The coin toss at the start of the game will determine which team elects to play offense or defense first for the game.

Note: If your team has 11 or 12 players, with 6 on the field and 5 or 6 off the field at all times, you will need to switch the offense and defense responsibilities each quarter so that players don't play one side of the ball for the entire game.

FILLING OUT THE SUBSTITUTION FORM

STEP 1 Place your two best passers in Slots 1 and 7. These slots are designated passer slots and ensure that the team always has a passer in the game.

Game 1

Player:		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def
1	Samuel								
2	Jacob								
3	Luke								
4	Caleb								
5	Ja'Marr								
6	Auggie								
7	Ledger								
8	Quinn								
9	Nick								
10	Felipe								

STEP 2 Fill in the rest of your form with remaining players according to ability levels starting with Slot 2.

STEP 3

Beginning with your first player in the first column, place an "X" for the first six players.

STEP 5 *Based on whether your team will start the game on offense or defense decided at the coin toss, circle the appropriate abbreviation in the first column. If "Def" is circled, this means that the players in the first column will start on defense. Continue circling this alternating pattern in the remaining columns.*

Game 1

Player:	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def
1 Samuel	X	X		X		X	X	
2 Jacob	X	X		X		X	X	
3 Luke	X		X	X		X		X
4 Caleb	X		X	X		X		X
5 Ja'Marr	X		X		X	X		X
6 Auggie	X		X		X	X		X
7 Ledger		X	X		X		X	X
8 Quinn		X	X		X		X	X
9 Nick		X		X	X		X	
10 Felipe		X		X	X		X	

STEP 4 *In the second column of the 1st Quarter, place an "X" with the first player not in the previous column (Player 7) and continue down the list to include six players total. Do NOT continue with the second quarter column until later.*

STEP 6 *To determine who will begin the 2nd quarter, place an "X" in the third column for the player who follows next in the rotation from the second column (Luke). Then fill in the remaining 5 players. Then, begin with the next person in the rotation for the next column. This process should be done quarter by quarter.*

GAME 2 - YOUR TURN

Are you ready to try? It's your turn to fill out the form. The first column has been done for you - now fill out the rest.

To determine who will be the first starter for Game 2, you will begin your form with Player 2 (Jacob). Then, continue in the lineup with Luke, Caleb, Ja'Marr, Auggie and Ledger. This will be your starting lineup playing either offense or defense.

In this scenario, the coin toss has determined that you will play offense first. Use the procedure you just learned to fill out the rest of the form.

Game 2		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
Player:		Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def
1	Samuel								
2	Jacob	X							
3	Luke	X							
4	Caleb	X							
5	Ja'Marr	X							
6	Auggie	X							
7	Ledger	X							
8	Quinn								
9	Nick								
10	Felipe								

Week 3 will start with Luke, Week 4 will start with Caleb and so on.

SUBSTITUTION SCENARIO

It’s Week 3 and, as game time approaches, Auggie has not arrived (he is supposed to be in the starting lineup for Week 3). He did not call prior to the game and inform you that he would not be present.

How to fill out the form:

Game 3

Player:	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def
1 Samuel		X						
2 Jacob		X						
3 Luke	X	X						
4 Caleb	X	X						
5 Ja’Marr	X	X						
6 Auggie	—	—						
7 Ledger	X							
8 Quinn	X							
9 Nick	X							
10 Felipe		X						

STEP 1 Begin with your original starting three (Luke, Caleb, Ja’Marr). For the first segment only, draw a line through the box for Auggie. Fill in the boxes for Ledger, Quinn, and then Felix.

Game 3

Player:	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def	Off / Def
1 Samuel		X	X		X		X	X
2 Jacob		X		X	X		X	
3 Luke	X	X		X	X		X	
4 Caleb	X	X		X		X	X	
5 Ja'Marr	X	X		X		X	X	
6 Auggie	—	—	X	X		X		X
7 Ledger	X		X	X		X		X
8 Quinn	X		X		X	X		X
9 Nick	X		X		X	X		X
10 Felipe		X	X		X		X	X

If Auggie arrives at the start of the second quarter, continue with the proper rotation including Auggie when his turn arrives. Then continue with the rest of the rotations through the end of the game.

As you can see in this example, it is important to NOT fill out your form prior to the game. If a player is absent, it is best to fill out your form segment by segment in case the absent player arrives at some point during the game.

Note: If a team has 11 or 12 players, with 6 on the field and 5 or 6 off the field at all times, the offense/defense responsibility switches each quarter.

➔ **Game Day Stars** (*if included in your Team Box)

If your league is using Game Day Stars you have an Award Stars booklet. These multi-colored stickers are given to each player at the end of every game. Star presentation should be an exciting time. Encourage parents to cheer as stars are distributed to each player. Make specific points why each participant receives a particular star. Notes you or your assistant coach take during the game should be used during this time as you encourage their efforts.

TIP: Find a location off of the field and take your time with this activity after the game.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO CONDUCT A STAR PRESENTATION:

“Today, this player hustled on each and every play, and played with great intensity and desire the entire game. On the fourth down before halftime, he came up with a huge tackle after hustling to the ball. Today’s blue star for effort goes to DeAndre. Let’s all give a hand for DeAndre. Great effort today DeAndre!”

Use the star distribution form on MyUpward in the Gameday area or in the back of your coach playbook to track which stars each participant has received. Make an attempt to award each participant all five stars throughout the season.



Blue is for Effort



Gold is for Sportsmanship



Gray is for Offense



Red is for Defense



White is for Christlikeness

Encourage players to display the stars they receive on their posters. Here is a list of the game day stars and what they represent.

SECTION 5

FORMS

Substitution Form115

Star Distribution Form123

UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
1								
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11								
12								

UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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UPWARD SPORTS
Flag Football Substitution Form



Game: _____

Player Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER	1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
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11								
12								

UPWARD SPORTS Flag Football Star Distribution Form



Use a pencil to record the color of the star that the players receive each game.

[illegible]

AWARD STAR MEANINGS + ABBREVIATIONS

BLUE (B): *Effort* | GOLD (GO): *Sportsmanship* | GRAY (GR): *Offense*

RED (R): *Defense* | WHITE (W): *Christlikeness*



Find tools online at MyUpward.org to teach the sport and share the gospel.

Accept the invitation from your League Director to MyUpward.org and have access to:

- *Team roster*
- *Practice and game schedule*
- *Practice plan and devotion material*
- *Videos for practice*
- *Communication Tools*
- *Game day management*
- *Tutorial videos*

