



BMFA
FLAG FOOTBALL
COACHES
HANDBOOK
April 2024
Version 1.0

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
LEAGUES & DIVISIONS	3
SEASON DATES AND GAME TIMES	4
COACHING ETIQUETTE & CODE OF CONDUCT	5
BMFA RULES	7
INCLEMENT WEATHER	7
FIELD SIZES	7
TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURES	12
COACHING TIPS	13
PLAYBOOKS & DRILLS	14
OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS	15
PRACTICE PLANNING	18
OTHER INFORMATION	20
THANK YOU!	21

INTRODUCTION

The Burlington Minor Football Association (BMFA) has designed a Flag Football program to give youth throughout Burlington and the surrounding communities an opportunity to participate in exciting and fast-paced Flag Football! Our non-contact flag football program is open to all boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 18.

Playing flag football provides opportunities to get active, learn new skills and get healthy. Best of all, anyone of any shape, size, experience, or skill level can play and contribute to their team. Games are played with 5 players from each team on the field at a time with all players being involved in every single play. The result is a ton of fun as everyone gets involved!

Games are played on turf fields and officiated by referees from the Southern Ontario Touch Football Officials Association (SOFTOA) and staffed with personnel capable of rendering first aid and treatment for on field injuries.

Each player will receive a uniform and equipment consisting of a team jersey, shorts, a flag belt, and a mouthguard.

The Burlington Minor Football Association (BMFA) is made up entirely of volunteers who work extremely hard to make our top league run. They always do their best. The BMFA Thanks you for your volunteer to be a coach within our wonderful organization. Without our volunteers there would be no BMFA.

Leagues and Divisions

Coed house league divisions:

- Tyke – players in grades 1 & 2
- Atom – players in grades 3 & 4
- Minor Peewee – players in grade 5
- Major Peewee – players in grade 6
- Minor Bantam – players in grade 7
- Major Bantam – players in grade 8
- Junior Varsity – players in grades 9 & 10
- Senior Varsity – players in grades 11 & 12

All Girls House League

- Bantam – players in grades 7 & 8
- Junior Varsity – players in grades 9 & 10
- Senior Varsity – players in grades 11 & 12

Season Dates

The season will commence in late April and will run for 10 weeks, ending in late June.

Game Days and Times

The season will be comprised of 9 regular season games and at least 1 playoff game to be held on championship weekend.

Games for the Tyke, Atom, Pee wee and Bantam divisions will be played every Saturday with champs' weekend being played on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday games will be played between 10AM and 4PM. Games for Senior Varsity and Junior Varsity will be played on Monday evenings. Monday evening games will be played between 6:30 PM and 10:30PM.

Game times will be set based on division play and will be played during a set time frame for the season. The entire season schedule will be posted at the beginning of the season.

Please refer to the BMFA website for specific dates and times.

Website: [Burlington Minor Football Association | The Home of Stampeders Football \(burlingtonfootball.ca\)](http://Burlington Minor Football Association | The Home of Stampeders Football (burlingtonfootball.ca))

COACHING ETIQUETTE

The BMFA encourages ‘fair play’ with all of our coaches within our organization. Below is the Code of Conduct from our Safety Management Policy created by our board of directors (BMFA Safety Management Policy, 2020).

Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Personnel

I understand that as a Coach (or Assistant, Manager, Trainer, Team Parent, etc.), I am in a position of trust and authority.

I will:

BE REASONABLE when scheduling games and practices, remembering that players have other interests and obligations.

TEACH my players to play fairly and to respect the rules, Officials, and their opponents.

REMEMBER that players play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.

REMEMBER that participants need a Coach they can respect. I will be generous with praise and set a good example; etc... I recognize that I am in a position of trust and power, and I will do nothing to take advantage of or abuse it.

BE a competent Coach, well prepared and adequately skilled. I will obtain proper training and will attempt to upgrade and improve my skills.

FULFILL my obligations and responsibilities toward the team and the Association, as established by BMFA, to the best of my abilities.

DIRECT comments at an individual’s performance and not at the individual. • Not ridicule or yell at players for making mistakes or for performing poorly

TAKE reasonable steps to see that equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to my players.

COOPERATE with Officials and refrain from public criticism of them or of other Coaches. I will put my concerns in writing and will send them to the proper individual.

LEARN the definitions and signs of harassment and abuse, and the process for responding to allegations or disclosures, and comply with BMFA’s safety guidelines, working to prevent physical, emotional/verbal, and sexual harassment and abuse.

COMMUNICATE with my players and with their parents, regularly throughout the season, so that everyone is clear about the rules and expectations, and so that we have a shared goal for the season.

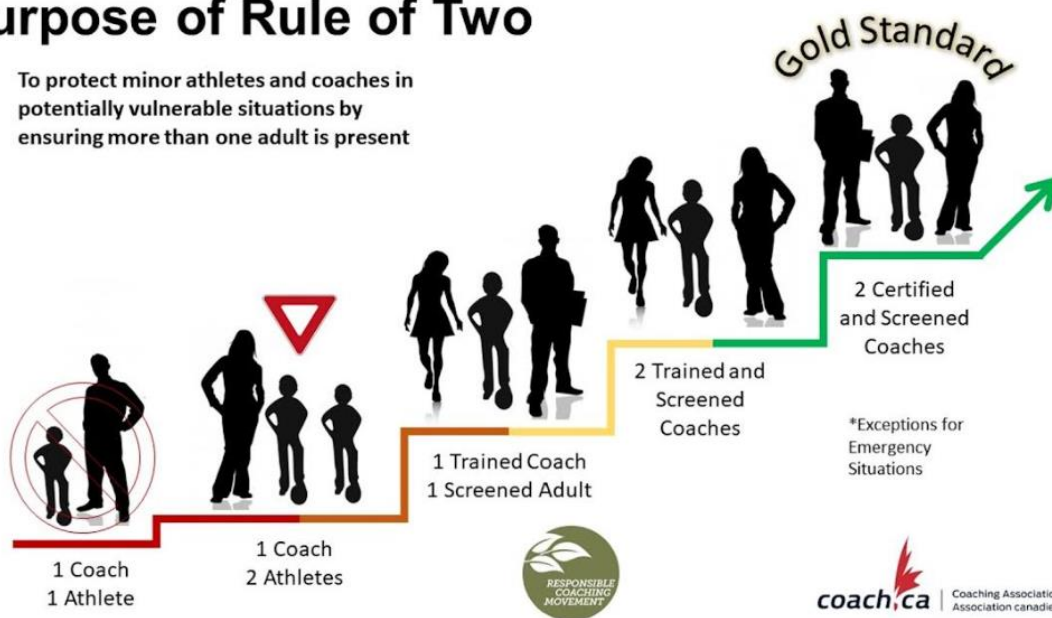
EMPHASIZE the importance of the Players’ and Parents’ Codes and hold my team members and their parents accountable for compliance.

RECOGNIZE and accept that violations of the Codes of Conduct may result in disciplinary measures being taken against me.

Rule of Two

Purpose of Rule of Two

To protect minor athletes and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present



BMFA FLAG RULES

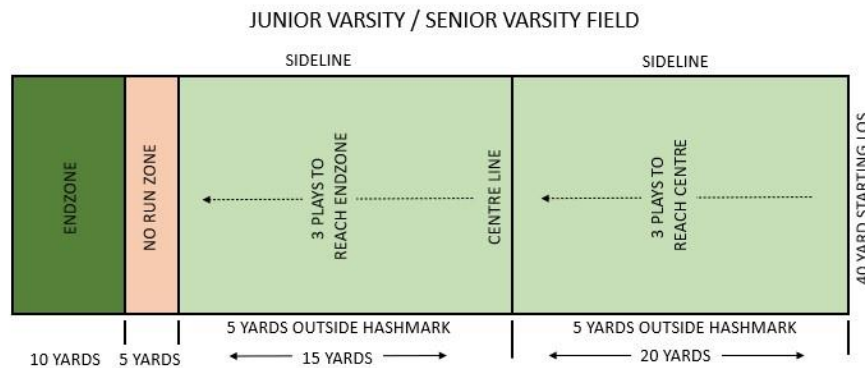
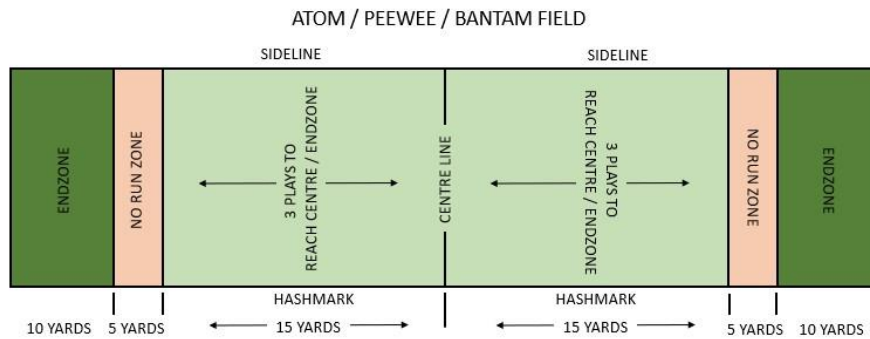
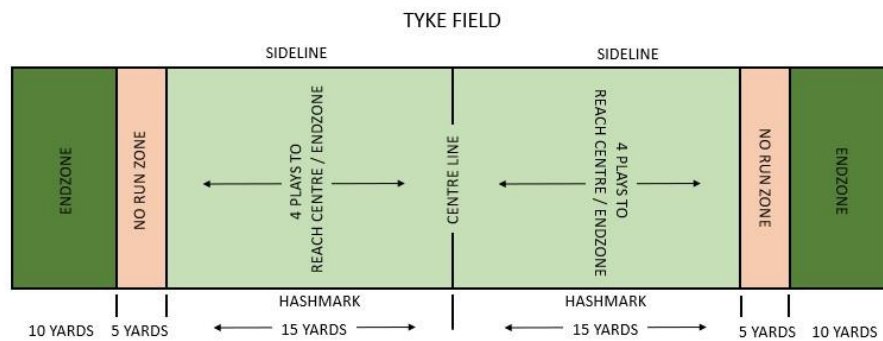
PRACTICE

The BMFA will not be supplying fields for practices or funds for practice fields. Practice times and practice locations are selected by each team's coaching staff.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of thunder and lightning game play will halt. Play can resume 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or hearing thunder. The referee will make the call on all weather conditions with No Exceptions.

FIELD SIZES



Rules - Tyke / Atom / Peewee / Bantam

- 4 on-field players (minimum)
- Winner of coin toss gets first possession on its own 5-yard line; loser chooses end, and gets possession at start of 2nd half; teams change ends for 2nd half
- Each team starts possession from their 5-yard line
- Tyke Division plays 4 downs for ½ field; all other divisions 3 downs for ½ field
- 3 downs (4 downs in Tyke) are given to gain center field; if achieved, a new series of 3 downs (4 downs in Tyke) is given to score a touchdown
- Failure to gain center field or to score in the given downs causes possession to revert to the other team, which then starts at its own 5-yard line
- Interceptions – defense can return interceptions until flagged; intercepting team will start with the ball at the point of flag; same first down rules apply from that starting point
- Each team is allowed one 60 second time-out per half, clock stops
- Team time out must be requested by a player on the field
- 25 seconds to put the ball into play after the referee “whistles in the play”

Rules – JV / SV

- 4 on-field players (minimum)
- All Games will go in one direction offensively into the proper field end zone starting at the 40 yard-line
- Winner of coin toss gets first possession on its own 40-yard line and loser gets possession at start of 2nd half
- 3 downs are given to gain center field; if achieved, a new series of 3 downs is given to score a touchdown
- Failure to gain center field or to score in the given downs causes possession to revert to the other team, which then starts at the 40-yard line going in the one direction
- Interceptions – no returning them; worth 1 point and intercepting team gets new possession at 40-yard line; same first down rules apply from that starting point
- Each team is allowed one 60 second time-out per half, clock stops
- Team time out must be requested by a player on the field
- 25 seconds to put the ball into play after the referee “whistles in the play”
- There will be no running plays allowed in JV or SV

Rules - Timing

- Tyke plays 2 x 20 minute halves running time
- All other divisions play 2 x 22 minute halves running time
- 2 minute rest at half time
- At the end of the half, referee announces 5 plays; then 5 plays will be played to the end of the period
- In the last 5 plays
- Only the last play will be repeated after an infraction is called
- Converts are considered a play
- If Touchdown scored on last play, team can attempt a convert

Rules – Rushing

- Rusher Starts at 10 Yards for Tyke, Atom, Peewee and Bantam; 7 Yards for JV & SV
- Rusher is deemed the first player to cross the line, in order to “maintain the privilege of a clear and direct path without interference”, the rusher(s) must line up no further than 2 yards to either side of the “rusher’s bag”; any player rushing outside 2 yards of the rushers bag can rush but does not have this privilege
- Designated rusher inside the 2 yard mark will declare by raising their hand prior to snap
- Tyke and Atom divisions only one mandatory designated rusher allowed; All other divisions can have any number of players rushing the QB
- If there is no rush, the QB has 7 seconds (5 seconds in JV & SV) from the snap to throw the ball; the count ends if the ball is given to another player; countdown to be called by official
- All defenders may rush once the ball has been handed or tossed or faked to a second player in the backfield, as this latter action cancels the requirement of the rusher rule

Rules – Other Game Play

- First to possess the ball will be deemed the QB (first to touch after snap)
- QB may be directly behind the center, or in the “shotgun” formation, any distance back
- Center must snap the ball between the legs
- Play action fakes in any direction by the QB are allowed
- Only one forward pass over the line of scrimmage per play (thrown, shoveled in the direction of the opponent’s goal line)
- Multiple handoffs are allowed.

- Defensive players must be at least 1 yard away from the LOS (line of scrimmage) prior to snap
- Any defender in front of center must be at least 3 yards away, before the snap
- Forward handoffs are allowed – **new Football Canada Flag Rule Change**
- Forward passes behind the LOS are allowed (i.e. screen passes) – **new Football Canada Flag Rule Change**
- Fumbles are dead; only exception is the QB-Center exchange, (the snap), if mishandled/untouched remains live to QB in order for play to continue; in these instances, the defense need only touch the QB or the ball to end the play, whether possession has been regained or not (1 hand touch)
- Lateral passes to secondary player behind the QB which strike the ground first are dead at point of contact
- Lateral pass muffed by secondary player that then strikes the ground, is live ball to that player only
- Losing a flag – player who has possession may continue to play until they are touched by the defense (1 hand)
- Ball in possession is defined as stop rotation
- Ball placement will be at the point ball held at time of whistle.
- One running play allowed per offensive possession unless at or in the no run zone (not applicable for JV & SV)
- Unlimited motion towards the offenses dead ball line (behind LOS) prior to snap
- Spinning is allowed during a run but at least 1 foot must be on the ground when spinning (no jump spinning)
- Penalties may result in additional downs being awarded
- Players are encouraged to hand flags back to opponents or drop flags at point of flagging after play is dead
- Players must exercise control to avoid unnecessary contact
- Tipped passes can be advanced
- Running play occurs when team A advances a backwards or lateral pass over the line of scrimmage; if stopped prior to gaining any yards, it is not considered a running play
- In JV & SV, a handoff or lateral where the runner advances the ball beyond the line of scrimmage will be considered a running play; this is not allowed and will result in loss of down

Rules – Not Allowed

- Kickoffs, punts
- “Guarding the flag” in any manner
- Jumping/hurdling past defender(s) to avoid “de-flagging”; play is dead at point of jump
- Attempting to advance the ball after being “down on the ground” – anything other than 2 feet and one hand contacting the ground constitutes “being down”; knee down rule applies
- QB running the ball across a line of scrimmage
- Running the ball over the line of scrimmage when scrimmaging on or within the opponent’s five-yard line (No Run Zone)
- No laterals after the catch
- Blocking/obstruction, holding/tackling
- Any defender contacting the QB’s arm during the throwing motion Rules – Scoring
- Touchdown – 6 points, when the ball breaks the plane of the goal line
- Converts
- 1 point, LOS on the 5-yard line, no runs allowed
- 2 points, LOS on the 10-yard line, run is allowed even if the 1 run has been used
- Interception on convert can be run back across the original LOS; points awarded based going for 1 or 2
- 1 point for reaching the 5-yard line
- 2 points for reaching the 10-yard line
- Safety touch – 2 points
- JV & SV Interceptions – no run back; 1 point and the ball at the 40-yard line for the intercepting team
- JV & SV Interceptions on converts are dead, no points for interceptions on converts so no need to return them to the LOS

Mercy Rule:

When one team is more than 30 points up on the other team, then the team behind gets to start at the opponent’s 10-yard line and has 4 plays to score. The team that is up by 30 or more points will start on their own 5-yard line (or 40 yard line in JV & SV). They will have 2 chances to get to midfield and another 2 to score. If the difference becomes less than 30 points at any time, it will revert back to regular game play.

Tie Breaking Procedures

The BMFA Flag encourages sportsmanship in all aspects of tie breaking procedures. We do not encourage running up scores for tie breaking procedure. It is for that reason why we use defensive points against as the measure instead of point differential in tie breaking procedures.

In instances of the following the standing will be corrected to follow the preceding rules for tie-breakers.

Two (2) TEAMS TIED:

Where two (2) teams are tied for playoff positions, the following steps will be used, in order, to establish a ranking of the tied teams:

- (a) higher standing to the team which defeated the other during league play.
- (b) Higher standing to the team with the greater number of wins against all teams in regular season play.
- (c) Higher standing to the team with the least defensive points against.
- (d) Higher standing to the team with the better point differential.
- (e) Once all the above steps have been exhausted, any remaining tied teams shall have their placing determined by a coin toss

Three (3) OR MORE TEAMS TIED

Where three (3) or more teams are tied for playoff positions, the following steps will be used, in order, to establish a ranking of the tied teams. At each stage, should the process identify a team, that team shall be added to the established ranking and the team, and its record shall be removed from the tie breaking process. Each step is to be repeated among the remaining tied teams until it is no longer relevant.

- (a) Higher standing to the team which defeated the other tied teams during league play.
- (b) Higher standing to the team with the greatest number of wins against all teams in regular season play.
- (c) Higher standing to the team with the least defensive points against
- (d) Higher standing to the team with the better point differential.
- (e) Once all the above steps have been exhausted, any remaining tied teams shall have their placing determined by a coin toss.

COACHING TIPS

When do practices take place and how are they organized?

Coaches organize practices at public parks, schools, etc. They typically find an open grass area to work on skills/drills and prepare for the games. Most coaches hold one practice per week but it will be up to each head coach to determine what they do for their team.

The importance of assistant coaches:

Assistant coaches are vital to running proper practices. Use them to your advantage. Get them to set up drills while you are still addressing the team. Have them help assess, plan, and prepare for games. The more coaches the better. No team can be successful without a full coaching staff.

Calling Plays:

Coaches are only allowed in the huddle for the tyke division. For Atom and Minor Peewee they will be allowed for the first 2 weeks ONLY. For all other divisions, plays must be called from the sideline. A good idea is to use QB wrist coach bands. You can have as many plays on them as you like. You can call plays into the team/quarterback using signals.

Some tips for the wristband:

- Number system.
- Color coordinated players.
- Easily readable (Font).



Where can I find ideas for drills and plays?

There is an infinite amount of information on web sites available that have playbooks for 5 v 5 flag. Here are some to help you get started:

PLAYS:

NFL Flag: [NFL Flag Football Playbook 5 on 5 | Basic Youth Flag Plays](https://nflflag.com/coaches/flag-football-rules/5-on-5-flag-football-playbook)

<https://nflflag.com/coaches/flag-football-rules/5-on-5-flag-football-playbook>

First Down Playbook: [5v5 Flag Football Plays - Formations - FirstDown PlayBook \(playbooktech.com\)](http://playbooktech.com)

DRILLS:

NFL Flag Drills: [NFL FLAG Football Drills: Quarterback, Running, & Receiver](https://nflflag.com/coaches/football-drills)

<https://nflflag.com/coaches/football-drills>

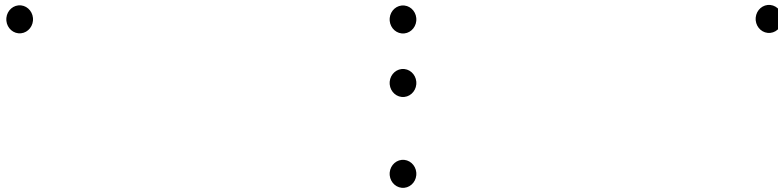
Football Academy: [Youth Flag Football Drills \(flagfootballacademy.com\)](https://flagfootballacademy.com/youth-flag-football-drills/)

<https://flagfootballacademy.com/youth-flag-football-drills/>

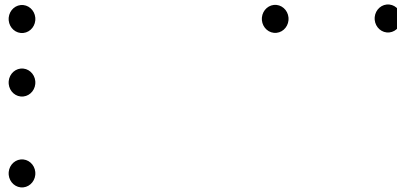
Offensive Formations

In 5 v 5 flag offence, the only requirement is that there is a centre who snaps the ball between his legs to the Quarterback. All other players can line up anywhere as long as they are onside.

Below is an example of a “base” formation (Equal balance on both sides).



Below is an example of a “twin” formation (two receivers to one side of the center):



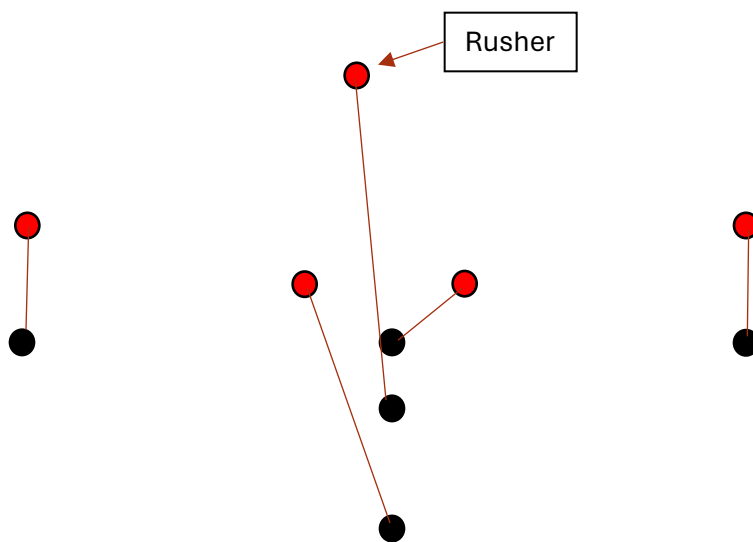
Below is an example of a “trips” formation (three receivers to one side of the center):



Defensive Formations

In 5 v 5 flag defensive formations the only requirement is that the rusher is a certain distance away from the line of scrimmage (See rules).

Below is an example of a basic **MAN COVERAGE** formation.



Responsibilities:

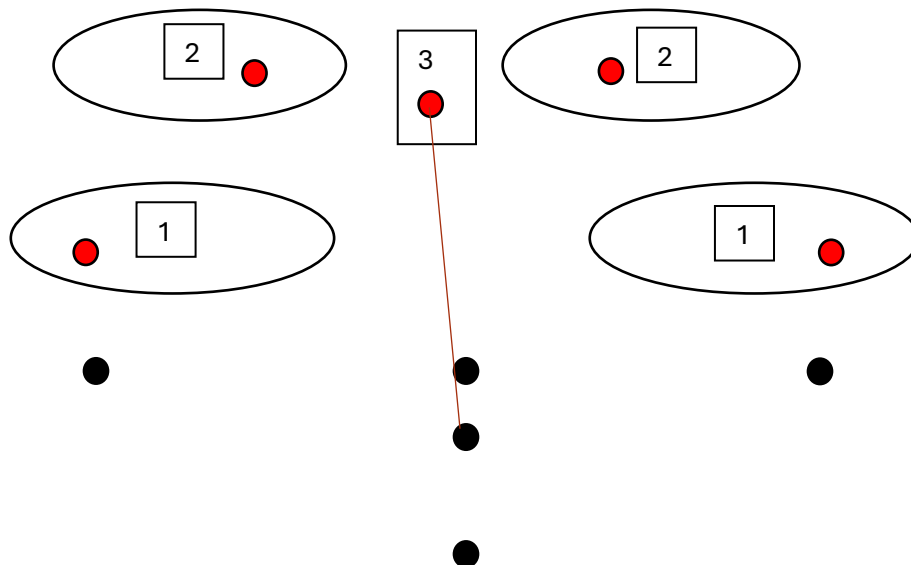
Rusher

- Rusher should be set 10 – 12 yards back from the line of scrimmage on either side of the yard bag (dependent on division – see rules)

Defensive Backs

- Defenders should guard opposite player.
- They should call out who they are guarding.
- Rusher can act as extra coverage OR rush the Quarterback.
- Defensive backs should only pursue the ball carrier once they have crossed the line of scrimmage.

Below is an example of a basic **ZONE COVERAGE** formation.



Responsibilities:

Defender #1: Should be lined up in the outside shade position of the most outside offensive player. Read and react. Keep the play inside them.

Defender #2: Read and react. Should be watching the play, to see where the ball is going.

Defender #3: Rusher can either rush the quarterback OR play in coverage with the defensive backs.

PRACTICE PLANNING

How should I organize my practices?

It is important to have a plan. Setting a practice plan helps with formulating ideas and keeping practices ***organized and on track with time***. This can be coordinated with other coaches on the team. The Head Coach should keep track of the timing of the practice plan.

What should I have in my practice plan:

Warmup

All practices should have warm up and stretching activities for the team. Warming up is vital to avoiding injuries and getting the team ready to play.

Examples of Warm up activities:

- Dynamic Warm up
- Light jog
- Calf stretch
- Heel to hip
- Karaoke
- Quad stretch

Play Installation

Installing plays is a vital part of practice. Doing it near the beginning of practice will ensure the team is not tired at the end of practice and trying to pay attention to new plays.

Individual Time

Individual time is vital for the team to learn important position specific skills. This time can be used for players to work on skills specific to their position. I.E.: Learning catching skills for receivers.

Team Time

Team time is where different units on the football team can spend working on specific concepts for that unit. I.E.: Offence can work on plays and defence can work on new concepts/coverages.

Scrimmage Time

Some time should be allotted to the team scrimmaging against each other. This is a great opportunity for coaches to stop plays, give feedback to players and adjust.

Game Time

Some time can be spent playing a fun game. This can be used as incentive if they practice well.

Here is a link to fun football themed games for kids to play:

Playworks: [Six Football-Themed Games for Kids to Play | Playworks](https://www.playworks.org/resource/six-football-themed-games-for-kids-to-play/)

<https://www.playworks.org/resource/six-football-themed-games-for-kids-to-play/>

Cool Down

A chance for the players to cool down their bodies after an intense practice.

OTHER INFORMATION

What is the league refund and equipment return policy?

There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS** to these rules!

- Should a player quit prior to the start of the season on April 20, the player is entitled to a refund of \$277.50. The Football Ontario fees of \$22.50 are non-refundable.
- All refund requests must be submitted to the Registrar at registration@burlingtonfootball.ca by email.
- Should a player quit after the start of the season on April 20, there are **NO REFUNDS**. The Football Ontario fees of \$22.50 are also non-refundable.
- Should a player quit after the start of the season due to injury, they are entitled to a \$100 refund. The Football Ontario fees of \$22.50 are non-refundable.
- Any issued equipment that is to be returned at the end of the season is the sole property of the BMFA and must be returned before a refund is given.

THANK YOU!

The BMFA is entirely made up of volunteers. The dedication to your players and to developing young athletes is held in the highest respects.

Thank-you from each and every player you coach and from the Burlington Minor Football Association!

“A coaches job is not to win football games. But, to do everything in their power to develop the abilities necessary to succeed in life”

- A devoted coach

