

# **Coaches' Orientation & Training Syllabus**

August 18, 2017

## **Introduction:**

Flag Football is fun and competitive. We want to keep it a family friendly, character and skill building program, where values come first with winning as a close, but definite second. We will accomplish that by being organized, transparent, supporting each other, and by acting like a community. We will not only share the responsibilities of teaching the kids, but we also need to share the responsibilities of setting up and breaking down the fields, locking and unlocking the toilets, and keeping the garbage cleaned up. This and all documents noted in this are on [www.allyonkers.org](http://www.allyonkers.org) on the Program's page under Flag Football.

## **Coaches and Assistant Coaches:**

AYYA is an all volunteer league. All teams must have a head coach and an assistant coach and everyone needs to be registered in our system and have a valid background check in place. The commissioner will confirm all coaches prior to setting up teams.

A great coach can make a difference in a child's life, the same way a not so great coach can. We don't expect any not so great coaches, but we ask everyone to help everyone else out and to communicate what they like and what they think can be improved.

We ask that coaches go beyond the training in this document and really learn how to teach, train, and practice flag football. Every child deserves solid training and guidance so that they can improve throughout the season.

## **Sportsmanship, etc.**

Sportsmanship, respect, good behavior, grace under pressure and adversity are the new cornerstones of this league. These are the things we need to teach and/or reinforce to the children. Winning and losing is secondary to these principles.

## **Dealing with Parents:**

Some parents get passionate about winning, about making sure you treat their child perfectly, and some just get touchy about stuff. The important thing to remember is that they just want to know they have a voice, are being heard, and that you are doing the best you can. When such a situation arises, keep it calm and light hearted. Listen, offer solutions, and actually carry them out. Follow up. If you can't do what they are asking, be very nice about it. Let them know there are rules and protocols and you are a volunteer doing your best.

## **Dealing with Children:**

Much the same as with parents, except they are young, immature, and... not adults. Keep it on their level, be kind and understanding. Go to their parents if you must.

## **Dealing with Officials:**

Our officials are good guys and good referees. They make mistakes, like we all do. They will make mistakes this season. Over the course of a season, they will make mistakes about equally to everyone. It doesn't matter how important or not the situation is to you, a mistake is a mistake. If you can, LET IT GO. This is a youth sport league. If you can't let it go, don't yell, don't scream, don't throw anything. Call a time out and very politely and very respectfully speak with the head referee. We are having referee meetings where we will go over and reinforce the rules and other procedures. Referees are being asked to reconsider a

call ONLY when there is a respectful challenge, but NOT if there is anything less than total respect and calm. Respect will pay off for you, in every way.

Don't make calls yourself, also dissuade others from doing so.

If you have trouble handling any of the above circumstances, please come find or contact myself or one of the deputy commissioners. One of us will be around during game day. I will send a contact list out before the season starts. If you or a parent feels the need to go above the Commissioner level, you can find the President's email on our website and above that, all Board Members, are also listed.

Our by-laws allow the Board, via vote, to allow a commissioner to coach. During a game, the commissioner is not the commissioner and has no authority beyond anyone else's. One of the other deputies will have full authority as well as the President and then the Board.

### **Trophies & Awards, progressive competitiveness**

All 10u, 8u, & 6u children will get participation medals.

10u's, 11u's & 13u's will receive 1st place medals or small trophies.

### **Coach's Game**

There will be a coach's game at the end of the season. It will be flag rules, generally, with maybe more players on the field, organized and fun. It will be called the Sean F. Kealy Memorial Coaches' Game. Details to follow.

### **Post Season Play**

There will be no organized playoffs in the 6u & 8u divisions per se, but the last week of games will be called Bowl Game weekend. 8u games will be organized according to Ranking based on wins/losses during the season..

All teams make the playoffs. Any team losing in the first round of the playoffs will participate in a Bowl Game the following week. All to be finalized and distributed later.

Monday/Tuesday Night Football. Each team, 8u & up, will play one or more Night Football Games. I will send out further instructions on field set up, turning on the lights, etc. as we get closer to the first Monday.

### **Practice Plan:**

6u's will practice in the first 40 minutes of their Saturday session.

All other divisions should practice during the week.

You must schedule all practices with the commissioner, UNLESS you practice on Monday or Tuesday.

You should all try to find a day and time that works for as many of your players as possible. I'm not saying to ask for opinions, but after you set a schedule, please be open to changes for anyone with a real conflict, if at all possible.

Don't overdo practices, an hour or an hour and a half is good. One per week is good, but there are no specific restrictions. Just think about the kids and their school work.

You can practice at Andrus Field afternoons until dusk, please see practice slot times below. There are no field lines.

You can practice at Bregano on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday, please see practice slots below. There are 4 half fields and 2 small practice fields. Make sure you practice away from an opposing team, never towards each other, please.

There will be 1 1/2 hour periods beginning at 4:30PM to 6:00PM and 6:00PM to 7:30PM. As the season goes on, we will shorten that to two - 1 hour sessions from 4:30PM to 5:30PM and 5:30PM to 6:30PM due to daylight issues.

Practices on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday must be scheduled and confirmed by the commissioner.

The Schedule will be on the schedule page of [www.allyonkers.org](http://www.allyonkers.org).

#### **Draft Plan:**

Each team will have 1 head coach and 1 assistant coach (no limit to assistant coaches in 6u.) All must be registered with NFL Flag and have passed the AYYA background check. This must be complete before the draft. We will confirm everyone coaching before the draft, so there are no issues that evening. If you don't hear from us by the morning of the draft, please contact us.

If we have too many coaches, we have a system to be fair about coach selection.

#### **Rules:**

AYYA's version of the NFL Flag Rules are on the website, [www.allyonkers.org](http://www.allyonkers.org). AYYA changes are clearly shown in red. Please read them a couple of times, know them, have them with you, and teach them to the children.

#### **Concession Stand:**

We are looking to set up a concession stand and will advise.

#### **Safety**

Every head coach is getting a basic first aid kit.

This is not a drop off league. All children must have a parent or designated guardian near them at all times. Please do not take that responsibility from a parent unless you really intend to look after them.

When there is an injury, take appropriate action. If you think you might need an ambulance, just call an ambulance and sort it out later. Treat cuts by cleaning them and bandaging them. Treat body impact with ice. Treat head impact with ice but be much more quick to call an ambulance. Head injuries can be tricky and there is no reason to take a chance.

You need to report all injuries to a commissioner as soon as possible. We want to not only take care of our children, but figure out how to do a better job next time and follow up and help people out.

Dogs, according to the City of Yonkers are allowed at the parks, but they must be leashed. AYYA would PREFER that dogs not be brought to AYYA events, but if they must, please keep them a respectful distance away from all events and other people. Mouth Guards are mandatory for all practices and games. No exceptions. Lack of a mouth guard during a play will result in a penalty being assessed.

### **Fields, Setup, Breakdown, & Clean Up**

We are all volunteers and everyone is asked to and expected to help with everything.

Setting up fields. There is a diagram that shows how the field is set up. Each of the first 4 teams playing each Saturday must have at least 1 rep who will set up one half of one of the 2 fields. Everything is in one of the storage lockers. The last two teams playing on a field must clean up one side of one field. Please let me know who is not pulling their weight and I will take care of it.

Again, we are all volunteer's, make time to prep your team as well as to help set up and breakdown the fields, please.

The toilet needs to also be opened in the morning and closed in the evening. The lock, while the toilet is open, should be kept locked to prevent anyone from being locked inside. I also ask all 4 head coaches to make sure it is open and then closed at the end of the day.

Garbage. Every team must clean up their entire side of the field after each game. Everyone must help with garbage as we go. If there is something on the ground, yours or not, AYYA or maybe not, please pick it up anyway.

Down markers. One rep from each home team must operate the down marker. The marker sits on the line of scrimmage and shows the current down.

Every lock (bathrooms, electrical panel, storage lockers) should be a combination lock box. I will send out the combination via email to all head coach's. Share only with assistant coaches and please pack the boxes neatly.

Attached are diagrams that show exactly how to set up each field and they are also on the website.

### **Playing Time:**

6u, 8u - Every child plays equally every game, and should play different positions. At these ages, they don't really know what they will be good at.

10u - Every player should play very close to equal every game and have a chance to play different positions.

11u & 13u- Every player should play at least 1/3 of the game, no one should play more than 2/3 of the game. You should have more than one quarterback and you should still be trying to

develop talent and let the children play different positions. This includes if you are losing. Don't try to win at the expense of any child's experience, please.

The Commissioners will be keeping a close eye on things and we will be asking for feedback from the coaches and parents throughout the season. Every year, we hear about a few or several children who have had a bad experience with playing time or an unfair coach. This year the goal is for there to be zero bad experiences. I will take all of us to accomplish that.

You can win by playing everyone equally, you just need to teach each child to get better and have a great plan and generally be a great coach.

### **Some Basic Stuff about communicating with your team and game day**

You should communicate with your team at least once per week and tell them what is going on for the next week or two. Parents should be able to get in touch with you. Communication makes everyone feel better. Remind everyone of what is going on, including times, what Jersey side to wear out and what time to show up.

In the 8u and up, teams should show up for warm ups and game plan review about a 1/2 hour before the game. Each team has 1/2 of each practice field to assemble and practice. If you are going to be late, let someone know.

During games, Children should be on the bench or near you. Spectators should not be on the bench and should be away from the sidelines. Parents need to be asked to be respectful of everyone and to stay out of the coaching or officiating of the game.

Have a couple of extra mouth guards.

Football is about discipline; make sure the kids are on time, ready, and they know the plan. Reinforcing basics like shirts should be tucked, mouth guards in, and flags on correctly will not only make your life easier, but are good life lessons.

Have set plays and give your plays to the kids so they can study them. It is best to have a visual look at a play right before the play, paper, chalk, dry erase, digital, but take the time to do it right and it will help you and the children succeed.

What to do if someone doesn't come to practice, games, etc. Speak with the parent, explain that we are a team and that the team needs to practice and play together. If the problem persists, it is OK to cut down playing time. Let the commissioner know if there is an issue.

### **Coaches Training:**

Ask your assistant coach and the parents to help out. Many will.

Where and how to get help: [www.nflflag.com/coaching\\_resources](http://www.nflflag.com/coaching_resources)

### **This section is for 6u & 8u only:**

#### **Fundamental Age Appropriate Skills to Teach and Reinforce**

Passing - Throwing a spiral, how to hold the ball correctly, fingers on the laces towards the back of the ball, sideways throwing stance, listen to the ball, throw with both hands.

Catching - Above the waist (diamond,) below the waist (pinkies,) absorbing the ball, tucking it in.

Hand offs - Arm positions on left and right side of the quarterback, with the correct arm above and below and open to the quarterback.

Hiking the ball - snap count, 3 step drop or 5 step drop.

Lining up at the line on offense, as a receiver and a running back.

Defense - Athletic stance, foot work, be on the balls of your feet. Chop your feet when someone coming at you. Pull flags with two hands up high, get close, eyes on the flag. At the sideline go for the outside flag to force the runner inside of you.

Knowing your job every play. Pattern to run, coverage area, or man to cover. Everyone is part of the play even if you are not getting the ball.

Make second, third, and fourth efforts. Don't give up.

**Important Dates:**

All dates, times, etc. are on [www.allyonkers.org](http://www.allyonkers.org). When teams are formed, game schedules will be in Sportsignup and can be found on the team wall. Sport signup has a great free app as well.

Practice schedules are also found on [www.allyonkers.org](http://www.allyonkers.org)

**Communication & Accountability Policy:**

In an effort to make the flag football experience as enjoyable and positive as possible, we want to try to deal with uncomfortable situations as early as possible. That that end, we encourage emails letting us know if there are situations developing at practices or games that you feel might escalate in the future, or that may have, unfortunately, already escalated. We promise to keep the information strictly confidential and only the Commissioners and/or other Board members will be privy to it depending on the issue. We will investigate and keep an eye on things and address issues via a balanced, fair process. The email address for both positive and negative observations and comments is [ffcomments@allyonkers.org](mailto:ffcomments@allyonkers.org).