

4 - Train to Train

Chronological Ages 12-16 (M) and 11-15 (F)

Training Age: 2-8 years in football

Objectives: Integrating Skills

- **GENERAL:** Key period for using developing mental skills to integrate motor skills into game patterns: understanding and reading the game
- Possible transfer from Flag to Tackle or late entry into Tackle game
- **PHYSICAL:** Major post-growth spurt windows of opportunity for building speed, aerobic power and beginning of strength-building period (late stage)
- **SKILLS:** Consolidation of basic game skills. Acquisition of more advanced skills: play recognition, zone coverage, blocking (tackle) and special situation skills

Development Opportunities:

Technical Skills:

- Throwing, Catching, Kicking
- Ball skills: carry, pass, punt, kick, catch
- Ball exchanges (hand off, pass)
- Tackling, flagging, touching
- Blocking and block protection

Tactical Skills:

- Identifying / Reading Offensive & Defensive Formations & needed adjustments
- Understanding offensive & defensive strategies
- Increase variety of positional tactics

Physical Skills:

- Build on earlier stages' physical skills
- Aerobic Capacity then power
- Speed #2

Mental Skills:

- Psychological Profiling, Goal Setting, Self-talk
- Visualization for training & competition
- Thought Stopping (cognitive restructuring & countering)
- Concentration Skills
- Game Preparation Plan (Pre-game routine)

Character - Life Skills:

- Communication Verbal & Non-verbal
- Partnership/Teamwork, Problem-solving, Discipline/work ethic, Fitness/Healthy Living
- Mental Strength/ Coping Skills, Confidence/Risk Taking, Respect/ Fair Play
- Pursuit of Personal Excellence
- Accepting Diversity

This stage represents development of a well-rounded set of Football skills, complimented by participation in other sports, and for many athletes, using Flag Football as an ideal introductory experience. Skill athletes develop basic and integrated Football skills and utilize these in competitive game situations. Guiding principles are:

- Athletes have the opportunity to develop skills in a variety of offensive and defensive football positions
- Training, competition and positional play is appropriate to the development and maturation of individual athlete
- Skill development is more important than winning

Game Options to Consider:

- Continue development through Tackle/Flag/Touch participation
- **Alternate:** Modified Tackle (6 A Side or 9 A Side) with rule modifications to promote skill development and confidence
- **Modified Tackle Defence:** person-to-person coverage, introduce "shifts", "blitzing" and "stunts", limiting numbers of defensive rushers (from 3 to 6 in different divisions), and no defensive line player opposite the center
- **Modified Tackle Offense:** introduce motion, a fixed requirement for number of backs, and a require for at least one pass attempt every three plays

Figure 8 - Allocation of time in practice

