

# AMERICAN FOOTBALL

# QB Drills

First, let's focus on becoming comfortable receiving a snap from the center and perfecting your throwing form. By practicing these drills ahead of time, quarterbacks and centers can find the right snapping rhythm for [each play](#).

## 1. Underneath snap drill

For this QB drill, the quarterback should be lined up directly behind the center, with knees bent and hands open. Upon hike, the center carries the ball through their legs and firmly places the ball within the quarterback's waiting hands. There should be no tossing between the center and quarterback—just a strong ball placement.

## 2. Shotgun snap drill

The shotgun snap is a little more advanced for both the center and quarterback. For this youth QB drill, the quarterback is positioned around five yards directly behind the center, with their knees bent and hands open ready to receive the ball. Upon hike, the center looks between their legs at the quarterback and strongly shoots the ball, like a shotgun, back. This technique can take some time to perfect, so practice ahead of time to determine the strength of snap needed for various distances.

## 3. Properly releasing the ball

Your throwing form should slightly alter depending on the type of throw you're performing. Need to make a quick pass to an open receiver at a short distance? Your form needs more of a follow-through to increase speed and solidify its direction.

Throwing a Hail Mary into the end zone? Release the ball a little farther back behind your head, giving it the arch it needs to go a long distance.

Take some time to feel out where the proper release point is for each kind of throw. As you complete these youth QB drills and gain more experience, these various release points will become second nature to your [gameplay](#).

### 1-step drill

**Setup:** To set up for this QB drill, the quarterback lines up directly behind the center, with their knees bent and their hands positioned correctly underneath.

**Directions:** After the center hands off the ball, take one step backward to survey the field and find an open receiver. Once you find a receiver, open up, point your shoulders, take a step, and release the ball.

**Tips:** Practice running this youth quarterback drill quickly, with several balls back-to-back. This will help you make game-time decisions quicker and more confidently during a game.

### 3-step drop drill

**Setup:** To do this drill properly, the quarterback is positioned right behind the center, with their knees bent and hands open directly underneath.

**Direction:** After receiving the ball upon hike, quickly shuffle backward or at a slight angle, distancing yourself from the line of scrimmage. Determine your intended receiver, correctly open and line up your shoulders, and step into a throw. When running this quarterback drill, take a special focus on shuffling at different angles. This movement needs to be quick and second-natured.

**Tips:** Use this quarterback drill to practice different types of fake outs. For example, try locking eyes with one receiver, but then quickly shifting your eyeline and throwing to another receiver. Also, we recommend using various levels of pump fakes. To do a pump fake, motion that you are throwing the ball to one receiver, but then throw to another. Various techniques like these can help you catch the defense off guard, leading to more openings for throws—and more touchdowns!

## 5-step drill

**Setup:** To set up for this QB training, the quarterback is positioned directly behind the center, with knees bent and hands placed underneath, anticipating the snap.

**Directions:** After calling hike and firmly receiving the ball from the center, briskly shuffle back five paces, either straight backward or on a slight angle. This shuffle provides additional distance between you and the incoming defense, allowing you more time to find an open receiver and complete a throw. Once you locate an open receiver, square your shoulders in the correct direction, step into and release a throw. Make sure that your shuffling is quick during this quarterback footwork drill, as it will be essential during gameplay.

**Tips:** This distanced shuffling will give you more time to connect with a receiver, but it can also give the defense more time to cover the complete offensive line. To combat this, practice doing different kinds of pump fakes. From near full-arm extensions to simply bobbing the ball in the opposite direction, these movements can fake out the defense, making it easier to complete a throw.

## 3-step roll out drill

**Setup:** For this setup, the quarterback should be located close behind the center, with knees bent and hands wide open underneath ready for the football.

**Directions:** Upon hike, take a three-step shuffle on a rounded angle backward and to a side, creating the roll out. Continue shuffling sideways until you locate an open receiver, then square off your shoulders and throw the ball. Make sure to practice this quarterback drill by rolling out to both sides. When shuffling in the opposite direction of your throwing arm, focus on shifting your hips and squaring your shoulders in the direction of the receiver. This motion may feel unnatural at first, but it makes it easier to complete these more difficult throws quickly.

**Tips:** Continuing to run to the side after rolling out can buy you extra time to find a receiver or accentuate a strong side of your offensive line.

## Shotgun roll out drill

**Setup:** To set up this quarterback drill, the quarterback should be standing about three to five yards directly behind the center, with both arms prepped to receive the snap.

**Directions:** After the center performs a shotgun snap, shuffle back on a rounded angle to distance yourself from the line of scrimmage and the defense. If you're being pressured by a defensive rusher, you can continue to run or shuffle to the side until you complete the throw.

**Tips:** While shotgun snaps can provide you more time to complete the throw, they are trickier to master. Make sure to link up with your center ahead of time and practice all types of snaps. You'll thank us in your next game when you have no fumbles, we promise.

# Running Back Drills

When it comes to being a successful running back, you can't skip over the basics. It's always important to learn the fundamentals, especially in youth flag football leagues where skill level can vary greatly.

# Receiving the football

Proper hand placement is key in a football handoff. Here's what yours should look like: Your arms should be close to your body, with your dominant arm across your stomach and the other across your chest. You want to cup your hands to create an oval shape so that when you receive the football, you can secure it tightly against your torso.

When you have the ball, keep it tight and secure it close to your body, decreasing the odds of defensive interference or incomplete handoffs. We recommend first practicing this simple ball-holding setup before running through our various drills. While it may feel simple, it never hurts to revisit fundamentals. You'll thank us later when you go through the season fumble-free!

## 2-step handoff

**Setup:** At hike, the running back should be just a few short paces behind the [quarterback](#), either at an angle or directly behind them. As long as they're able to reach the quarterback quickly, this setup can be customized to your [play's](#) needs.

**Directions:** After hike, the quarterback moves two steps to a pre-designated side, where they meet the moving running back. When their paths cross, the quarterback firmly puts the football in the running back's cradled arms. The running back then completes their forward route.

**Tips:** Make sure the running back is also moving when meeting the quarterback for the handoff so that they have momentum to complete their route as quickly as possible. This movement can be done on an angle or straight forward.

## 3-step handoff

**Setup:** For this youth running back drill, the running back should be close to the quarterback, either at an angle or straight behind. Make sure all players are behind the line of scrimmage.

**Directions:** The 3-step handoff is similar to the 2-step handoff, but the difference is—you guessed it—the quarterback runs three steps. Like the 2-step handoff, the two players meet close together, with the quarterback strongly putting the football in the running back's pre-setup arms.

**Tips:** This handoff can also be completed as a "stretch," where the quarterback positions themselves within arm's length and extends, or stretches, the ball in the running back's arms. Stretch handoffs can be especially effective during fake outs.

## 1-step fake handoff

**Setup:** For this running back drill, the quarterback will be moving one step before ball handoff, so the running back should only be a few quick paces away from them, on a slant or directly behind. You can customize this setup—just make sure that all players are behind the line of scrimmage at hike.

**Directions:** It's time to breakout your acting skills because fake handoffs are only effective if you sell them to the defensive line. Once the quarterback and running back meet, both players should over exaggerate the handoff, faking as if the running back now has the ball for a forward running play. After this quick "handoff," the quarterback quickly pulls back the ball and rolls in the opposite direction of the running back. They then release the ball swiftly before the defensive line repositions themselves from the faked handoff.

**Tips:** The key to this kind of handoff is the salesmanship. When the ball is "handed off," the running back should slightly lean forward, making it difficult for the defensive line to decipher whether they have the ball. The quarterback should also work on quickly pulling the ball back from the faked handoff, so the defense has a harder time following the play.

# Stretch fake handoff

**Setup:** Like the previous running back drills, the running back should start a few yards away from the quarterback so they can quickly get to the quarterback and perform the fake, which will be done behind the line of scrimmage.

**Directions:** Upon hike, the quarterback and running back move toward the pre-designated location. Once close to each other, the quarterback extends, or stretches, their arm to mimic firmly tucking the football into the running back's arms. The running back continues their route as if they just received the ball, aiming to convince the defense to follow them. Once this handoff fake is completed, the quarterback quickly wheels around in the opposite direction of the running back while the defensive line is distracted. But remember, these fakes are only successful in getting the quarterback more time to execute plays if they are tight and fully acted out.

**Tips:** When performing a fake, communication is key. The quarterback should let the running back and other receivers know ahead of time that they are performing a fake, so there is no confusion during the play.

# Hop and switch drill

**Setup:** The intention of the hop and switch drill is to feel more comfortable and confident with tucking the football in your arm, and potentially switching carrying sides, during a game. To get set up for this running back drill, bend over with your feet shoulder width apart, similar to if you were a [center](#) about to hike a football. The football should be tucked against the side of your chest in one arm. The opposite arm should be fully extended, flat on the ground in front of you. Once you are in a balanced position, extend the leg opposite of the arm that is carrying the football.

**Directions:** Hop a couple yards forward, switching the arm that is carrying the football, then landing on the hand that was originally carrying the football. During this motion, you should also alternate the foot that is planted on the ground and the leg that is extended. Remember, the leg that is extended should always be the opposite of the arm carrying the football. Perform a few more hops in this ball-alternating pattern, back-and-forth, to complete the drill.

**Pro-tips:** This running back drill is a bit more complicated, so first practice alternating the hand carrying the ball while standing in place. Then kick it up a notch and add the alternating foot. Once you've gotten the hang of transferring the ball while switching your feet, try incorporating the forward hop motion. When you nail down all three pieces together, you'll be able to complete the hop and switch drill no sweat. Well, there may be some sweat, it is a difficult drill after all.

# Fast footwork drill

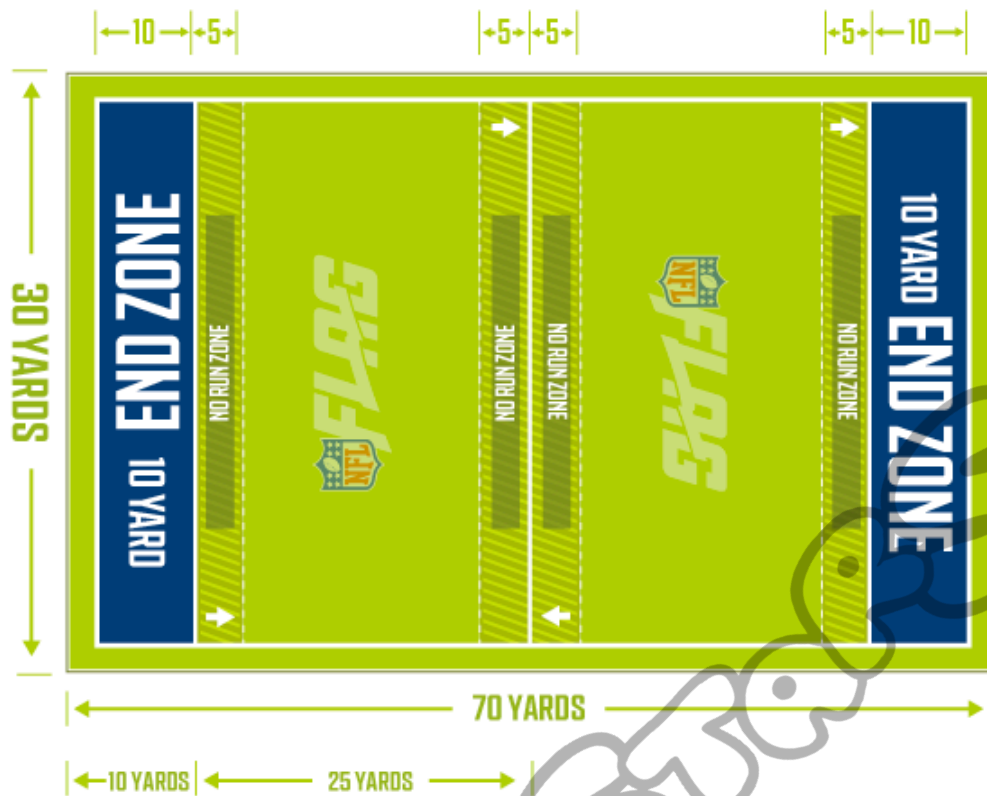
**Setup:** To set up this running back drill, have two players stand about 15 yards apart. One of the players will be on offense carrying the ball, while the other person will be on defense. Don't have a second player with you at the moment? Use a cone, or other type of marker, to indicate where they would be standing. This still gives you an indication of where to perform the drill.

**Directions:** To start this drill, run toward the defensive player and perform a technique to get around them. These techniques can range from dips, jukes, spins, and slides—whatever footwork and move is needed to get around the defensive guard, while still carrying the football. Quick feet drills are essential, so run through this drill several times, trying a wide variety of footwork techniques, until you feel confident in your maneuvering.

**Tips:** Want to add another element to the drill to further practice your footwork? Wear your [flags](#) and have the defensive player try to grab them as you're maneuvering. It forces you to be extra quick on your feet as you spin and juke around, making you even more prepared for a game. And, as an added bonus, it helps your defensive teammate practice their [flag-grabbing skills](#). This drill is an offensive and defensive two-for-one special!

Not only do running backs need to be fast to gain yardage, but they also have to be agile to dodge incoming defenders. Successful running backs have a strong sense of intuition and great vision of the field. By incorporating these running back drills into your practice, you'll develop fundamental skills and quick feet to help you map out your routes and stay—quite literally—two steps ahead of your opponents.

# Flag Football Game



In NFL FLAG football leagues, teams play 5 on 5 and each game consists of two halves, usually 15 to 25 minutes long. Tournament games are typically shorter with two, 10 to 12 minute halves. The clock only stops for halftime, timeouts (each team has 3), or injury, making games quick and competitive. Each player has a specific role on the field and every play counts.

The most important rule in flag football is that there's **no contact allowed, including tackling, diving, blocking, screening or fumbles**. Instead of physically tackling an opponent to the ground, players wear flags that hang along their sides by a belt. Defenders "tackle" the ball-carrier by removing one or both of their flags.

**While this rule is designed to keep players safe, there are several other rules that limit contact among players, including:**

- The quarterback isn't allowed to run with the ball, unless it was handed off first. They can run behind the line of scrimmage, but they can't gain yardage.
- All passes must go forward and be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Laterals and pitches aren't allowed—only direct handoffs are permitted.
- Center sneak plays aren't allowed.
- There are no fumbles. Instead, the ball stays in possession of the offense and is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were when the fumble occurred.
- The ball is dead when: the ball-carrier's flag is pulled, the ball-carrier steps out of bound, a touchdown or safety is scored, the ball-carrier's knee hits the ground, or the ball-carrier's flag falls off.
- Players can't obstruct or guard their flags.