

REGINA MINOR FOOTBALL

It's fun, it's fair, it's football!

Mighty Mites Division Coaches Manual

Introduction

Thank you for taking on the responsibility and privilege of introducing children to the great game of Canadian tackle football! The Mighty Mites division was created by Regina Minor Football to provide an introduction to the essential skills of football and the basic principles of the game in a fun, relatively non-competitive environment. If you volunteered to coach so that you have the opportunity to help young children learn and develop football skills, understand the concepts of the sport, appreciate team responsibilities, make friends and have fun, you are the right person for the job! If you volunteered to just focus on the athletic kids, hide the non-athletic kids in games, hand the ball off to your best player every play, and pad your winning resume on your way to the CFL, this isn't the place for you. We trust you are here for all of the children on your team.

Goals

Everyone will know you have been successful as a coach if the following statements are true:

1. All of your players come to practice and games excited to play football.
2. All of your players learn and improve in their basic football skills (blocking, tackling, ball carrying, passing, receiving, etc.).
3. All of your players leave practices tired but energised.
4. All of your players have the opportunity to play a variety of positions in game situations throughout the season.
5. All of your players enjoy being together and enjoy being with you and your assistant coaches.
6. At the end of the season, all of your players are sad that it is over, but are excited to come back and play next season (either in Mighty Mites or moving up to Atom).
7. All of your players' parents appreciate the investment you have made in the lives of their children, and are excited to register their children in RMF next season.

To-Do List

Before the Season

- Attend the RMF Coaches Symposium
- Get your equipment from RMF (shoulder pads and helmets, balls, field bags) (July)
- Contact the parents of your players by phone to welcome them to the team (June) and arrange for equipment pick-up (late July or early August).
 - Strongly encourage the players to wear the helmets prior to the Kick-Off Camp to get used to them.

- Find assistant coaches. A coaching staff of a minimum of four would be appropriate (June-July).
- Find a team manager.
- Attend practice sessions at the U of R Rams minor football camp to observe different coaching strategies for skill development, working with kids, running a practice, etc..
- Create a team manual to distribute to parents (see **Setting and Communicating Team Expectations** document included in this manual)
- Create a season schedule for weekday practices (RMF will schedule game days). You may want to primarily use Mondays through Thursdays so that you can reschedule a practice to Friday if you get rained out. Remember that you can't practice the day after you played games, so if you play Sunday, you must wait until at least Tuesday to practice.
 - You may practice three times in the week following the Kick-Off Camp (there are no games scheduled that week).

At the Beginning of the Season

- Attend the RMF Mighty Mites Kick-Off Camp with your coaches and players (coaches Safe Contact session Friday evening; camp Saturday and Sunday morning and afternoon).
- Designate a first aid person for your team to deal with injuries). This should be someone that will be at all practices (RMF provides first aid for games).
- Conduct a parents and players meeting prior to your first practice to introduce the coaches and manager, go over team expectations, and distribute the season schedule.

At the End of the Season

- Collect shoulder pads and helmets from the players right after your final game.
- Return the shoulder pads and helmets, balls and bags to RMF.
- Plan a team wind-up

It's fun, it's fair, it's football!

Gear Up with Jon Ryan Mighty Mites Division

Purposes

1. To provide a smooth transition for young players from flag football to tackle football.
2. To introduce and develop the essential skills of tackle football: blocking, tackling and ball handling.
3. To introduce the basic terminology and concepts of tackle football in the simplified context of the 6-a-side game.
4. To give all players the opportunity to play a variety of positions on both offense and defense (at least two different O – OL/QB/RB or WR and D – DL/LB position groups).
5. To emphasize personal competition (being better than you were yesterday; beating the player across from you) rather than team competition (scores and wins).
6. To provide an environment in both practices and games that promotes skill development and team responsibility in a fun and challenging environment.
7. To promote a love of and excitement for football in players, coaches and parents.

Division Director

Ryan Hall – ryan10hall@gmail.com

(306)585-6510 (h); (306)540-4030 (c)

If you would like drill ideas for your players, send an E-mail to the division director and he will send you some clinic notes from one of our RMF Coaches Clinics

League Details

1. The season will open with a weekend skill development camp (Kick Off Camp) for all players and coaches.
2. Teams will consist of approximately 16 players.
3. Teams will play 6-a-side football on a small field (20 yards wide for weeks 1 and 2; 25 yards wide for weeks 3, 4 and 5).
4. Teams will practice twice per week (90 minute maximum on-field) with the exception of training camp week (three practices)
5. Coaches will be given a manual that includes practice plans, playbook and information on leading their team.
 - a. Teams will use the same playbook and insertion schedule.
6. End players along the line of scrimmage will use a two point stance.
 - a. During weeks 1 and 2, the Centre will do a modified exchange with the Quarterback: the Centre has one hand on the ground, and the other hand with the ball between their legs; the Quarterback has both hands on the ball, and when the Centre comes out of their stance, the Quarterback can take full possession of the ball.
7. Teams will play two back-to-back games per week.
 - a. Each game time slot will be one hour.
 - i. 10 minutes pre-game practice
 - ii. 22 minute straight time half
 - iii. 3 minute half time
 - iv. 22 minute straight time half
 - v. No converts or special teams plays
 - b. In the second game, all players must switch from offense to defense and vice versa.
8. RMF's Fair Play and 12 On-12 Off (6 On-6 Off) policies will apply.
 - a. For Fair Play, only substitutions by series will be used.
9. To start the game, the home team will get first possession starting on the east sideline. To start the second half, the visiting team will get first possession starting on the east sideline.
10. One coach per team will be allowed to be on the field to help organize the players in order to maximize the number of plays that are run.
 - a. During play, coaches must stay out of the way of the players and officials.
11. Offensive teams will start on their 5 yard line and will have a maximum of three downs to get to/across mid field. If they get to/across mid field in three downs or less, they get a new set of three downs to get into the end zone.
 - a. If they do not get to/across mid field/the goal line in their set of downs, the ball turns over to the other team, who will start their possession on their own 5 yard line.
 - b. In the event of a turnover (fumble or interception), the team that makes the turnover will start their possession at the spot where the ball was blown dead and will have three downs, the same as a normal offensive possession.

12. If a player (offense or defense) goes offside (or offensive illegal procedure), the team will be given one warning per possession. If they go offside/illegal procedure again in that possession, they will be assessed a 5 yard penalty and down over.
 - a. If the offensive team is penalized and cannot be moved back, they will be penalized with a loss of down.
13. If a facemask, head tackle, horse-collar tackle or other unnecessary roughness infractions take place, the offending team will be penalized 10 yards.
 - a. If the offending team was on defense, the team on offense will be given an automatic first down.
 - b. If the offending team was on offense, they will also have a loss of down.
14. If an objectionable conduct infraction takes place, the offending team will be penalized 10 yards.
 - a. If the offending team was on defense, the team on offense will be given the down over (unless the play and penalty yardage results in a first down).
 - b. If the offending team was on offense, the penalty will also include loss of down.
15. The ball will be spotted based on where the previous play was blown dead (similar to hashmarks on a regular field).
 - a. When the field is 20 yards wide, the hashmarks will be 5 yards from the near sideline.
 - b. When the field is 25 yards wide, the hashmarks will be 10 yards from the near sideline.

RMF Mighty Mites Kick-Off Camp

Friday

6:00 Coaches meeting – Safe Contact session

Saturday

Leibel Field

Practice 1A

8:30 Teams gather and organize at their designated area on the field.

8:45 Welcome and Organization

9:00 Safe Contact practice (no equipment)

10:45 Wrap-up

Practice 1B

10:30 Teams gather and organize at their designated area on the field.

10:45 Welcome and Organization

11:00 Safe Contact practice (no equipment)

12:45 Wrap-up

Practice 2A

1:45 Teams gather at their designated area on the field - equipment check

2:00 Warm-up

2:15 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – tackling
- Group 2 – passing and receiving
- Group 3 - block defending and pass rush
- Group 4 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 5 - pass defending
- Group 6 - blocking

2:45 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – tackling drills
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – pass routes
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – run and pass blocking

3:00 Individual Skills

- Group 1 - passing and receiving
- Group 2 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 3 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 4 – pass defending
- Group 5 – blocking
- Group 6 – tackling

3:30 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 - pass routes
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – run and pass blocking
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – tackling drills

3:45 Wrap-up

Practice 2B

3:30 Teams gather at their designated area on the field - equipment check

4:00 Warm-up

4:15 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – tackling
- Group 2 – passing and receiving
- Group 3 - block defending and pass rush
- Group 4 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 5 - pass defending
- Group 6 - blocking

4:45 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – tackling drills
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – pass routes
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – run and pass blocking

5:00 Individual Skills

- Group 1 - passing and receiving
- Group 2 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 3 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 4 – pass defending
- Group 5 – blocking
- Group 6 – tackling

5:30 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 - pass routes
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – run and pass blocking

- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – tackling drills

5:45 Wrap-up

Sunday

Practice 3A

9:00 Warm-up

9:15 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 2 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 3 – pass defending
- Group 4 – blocking
- Group 5 – tackling
- Group 6 – passing and receiving

9:45 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – run and pass blocking
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – tackling drills
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – pass routes

10:00 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 2 – pass defending
- Group 3 – blocking
- Group 4 – tackling
- Group 5 – passing and receiving
- Group 6 – block defending and pass rush

10:30 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – tackling drills
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – pass routes
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – run and pass blocking

10:45 Wrap-up

Practice 3B

11:00 Warm-up

11:15 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 2 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 3 – pass defending

- Group 4 – blocking
- Group 5 – tackling
- Group 6 – passing and receiving

11:45 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – run and pass blocking
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – tackling drills
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – pass routes

12:00 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 2 – pass defending
- Group 3 – blocking
- Group 4 – tackling
- Group 5 – passing and receiving
- Group 6 – block defending and pass rush

12:30 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – tackling drills
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – pass routes
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – run and pass blocking

12:45 Wrap-up

Practice 4A

2:00 Warm-up

2:15 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – pass defending
- Group 2 – blocking
- Group 3 – tackling
- Group 4 – passing and receiving
- Group 5 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 6 – ball distribution and ball handling

2:45 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – pass routes
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – run and pass blocking
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – tackling drills

3:00 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – blocking
- Group 2 – tackling
- Group 3 – passing and receiving
- Group 4 – block defending and pass rush

- Group 5 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 6 – pass defending

3:30 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – run and pass blocking
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – tackling drills
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – pass routes

3:45 Wrap-up

Practice 4B

4:00 Warm-up

4:15 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – pass defending
- Group 2 – blocking
- Group 3 – tackling
- Group 4 – passing and receiving
- Group 5 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 6 – ball distribution and ball handling

4:45 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – pass routes
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – run and pass blocking
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – tackling drills

5:00 Individual Skills

- Group 1 – blocking
- Group 2 – tackling
- Group 3 – passing and receiving
- Group 4 – block defending and pass rush
- Group 5 – ball distribution and ball handling
- Group 6 – pass defending

5:30 1 on 1s

- Group 1 vs. Group 4 – run and pass blocking
- Group 2 vs. Group 5 – tackling drills
- Group 3 vs. Group 6 – pass routes

5:45 Wrap-up

1 on 1 Drills

- Tackling Drills
 - Angle
 - Square
 - ThighTackle
 - Sumo Tackle
 - Y angle
- Pass Routes
 - Slant
 - Hook
 - In
 - Out
 - Seam
- Run and Pass Blocking
 - Sumo Drive (Run) Block
 - Drive Block
 - Pass Protection
 - Stalk Blocking

Leibel Field Area Distribution for Individual Skill Periods

	Ball Distribution and Pass Ball Handling	Defending	Blocking
Tackling	Passing	and Receiving	Block Defend and Pass Rush

Bleacher Side (east)

Practice Planning

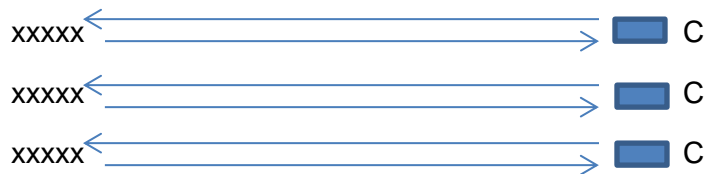
To aid you in coaching your team of young children, detailed practice plans are provided. Here are some important factors to remember as you run your practices:

- To start each practice, begin with a welcome and introduction. Tell the players that you are glad they are there, and give them a brief overview of what will be happening in the practice.
- The old tradition of starting practice with a static stretch has been shown to be an ineffective way to prepare athletes for activity. Instead, begin practice with a dynamic (moving) warm-up. Children (especially boys) at this age typically do not do well with standing or sitting around, so keeping them moving will keep them more focussed. Here is an example of a dynamic warm-up:
 - Short (50-100 yard) warm-up jog
 - High knee jog or Machine Gun (10 yards and back) – emphasize arm swing
 - Heel-up jog (10 yards and back) – emphasize arm swing
 - Backward run (10 yards and back) – emphasize big, reaching strides
 - Straight leg kick (10 yards, jog back) – emphasize hamstring stretch
 - Carioka (15 yards and back) – emphasize big strides and swinging hips
 - Lunge walk (10 yards, jog back) – emphasize big stride and hips level with front knee
 - Shuffle (10 yards and back) – emphasize tilt position, no bobbing head or heel clicks
 - Sideway lunge (10 yards and back) – emphasize both feet flat, back leg straight to stretch groin
 - Sprint and Shimmy (can end frozen in tilt position, end with uppercuts and drive for 5, end with shimmy break, uppercuts and drive for 5)
 - Bear walk (10 yards and back) – on all fours (hands and feet), walk without touching knees to the ground
 - Jumping jacks – count out 3, and on the 4th, clap and yell the team`s name
- Take time to work on important individual skills like blocking, tackling, ball handling, passing, receiving and footwork. Because players will be learning a variety of positions, they should all be involved in learning these skills. Remember that this period is not competitive; the emphasis is on learning skills. Explain the purpose of every drill, take a minute to explain and demonstrate, and then several minutes for the athletes to run the drill. Try to avoid spending more than 5 minutes on a drill. Once players have worked on individual drills, you can have players work together on combined skills (Centre exchange with Quarterback, Quarterback exchanges with Running Backs, Running Backs working together blocking and following blocks, Quarterbacks passing to Ends or Running Backs).
- For practices, half of the players should be in an offensive position and half should be in a defensive position. For practice 2 in the week, players should switch to the opposite side of the ball.
- Make sure to include regular water breaks for the players. To save time, keep their water bottles close to the area where they are practicing.
- Proceed to 1 on 1 drills. These should be competitive drills that utilize the skills developed during the individual skills period.
- Bring the team together to practice offensive and defensive plays. Begin by walking through the plays so that the players understand their assignments. When they are ready, increase the tempo.

- Conditioning is not a necessity, especially if players are kept active throughout practice. If you choose to do conditioning, it should be football specific, and can be competitive, fun, and an opportunity to work on football skills. At this level, the players should be too busy having fun while they work hard to realize that they are conditioning.
- Conclude your practice with a brief wrap-up. Tell the players how they did (compliment them on their efforts and improvements, and provide them with something they need to work on). Bring them together for a cheer.

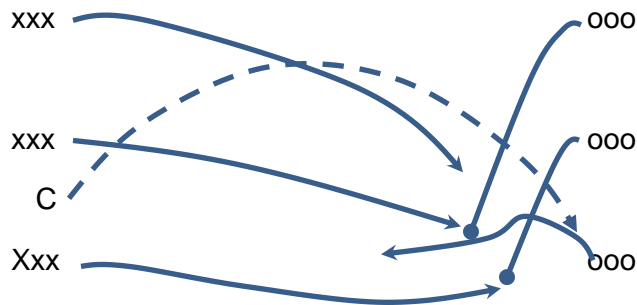
Conditioning Drills

- Bag Sprints
 - Have the players line up a set distance (20 yards or so) from coaches holding the tackling dummies (one line of players for every tackling dummy). On the signal, the first player sprints out, shimmies, and performs a good thigh tackle on the dummy. Then they get up and sprint back to the line and tags the next player to go.
 - You can vary the distances to make it like a ladder relay (below)
 - Coaching Points: full sprint, shimmy, eyes through the thighs, shoot hard double hooks, wrap and squeeze, cheek to cheek, finish on top



- Punt Return Drill

- On one side of the field, have half of the players in three lines approximately 7 yards apart. On the other side of the field (about 20 yards away), put the remaining players in three lines. The coach stands with one of the groups (the “punt cover team”, and on “Go”, the coach throws the ball to one of the front players on the other side of the field (the “punt return” team). The players on the punt cover team sprint down to make the tackle, with the players in the outside lines making sure to contain the punt returner. The two players that don’t receive the ball make open-field blocks for the punt returner as he tries to score. Players switch sides after each rep.
- If you want, you can add a “punishment” for the losing group: 5 push-ups for the punt team if the punt return team scores; 5 push-ups for the punt return team if they fumble the ball to the punt team, etc..
- Coaching Points
 - Punt Cover: full sprint, outside line players contain the returner, shimmy, take on blockers to squeeze the running lanes; get off the blocker to make the tackle, play to the whistle
 - Punt Return: field the ball in the air, secure the ball, blockers get into a legal blocking position on one of the tacklers, ball carrier read the blocks (go where the blocker’s butt is pointing), play to the whistle



- Ladder Relay

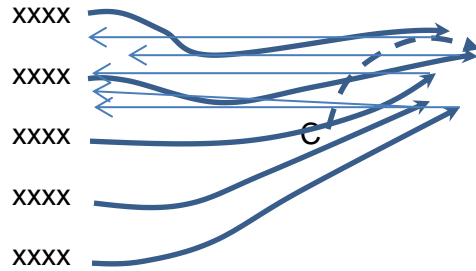
- Line the players up in groups of four or five. Set cones, balls or field markers about 25 yards away from the front of each line. On the command, the first player sprints out to the marker, touches the grass with their hand, and sprints back. They tag the next player in line who does the same thing.
- Once all of the players in the group have gone, the coach moves the marker five yards closer. Keep moving the markers five yards closer after the group has all run the distance, and finish with the marker five yards away from the front of the line for the last relay.
- If you want to add a “punishment”, make all of the groups that didn’t win do five push-ups (make sure the groups are fair)
- Coaching Points: full sprint, butt down when touching the ground

- Partner Drills

- Put players in pairs, with pairs matched up by size. Set markers at an appropriate distance (10-15 yards) for the players to do the following exercises:
 - Sprint (holding a football, the first partner sprints to the marker and back, touching the ground by the marker with the hand not holding the ball. They hand off to the second partner to run the sprint)

- Piggy back (first partner carries the second partner to the marker; at the marker, they switch and come back to the start)
 - Wheelbarrow (first partner carries the second partner to the marker; at the marker, they switch and come back to the start)
 - Bear Crawl (first partner goes there and back, then second partner goes)
 - Crab Walk head first (first partner goes there and back, then second partner goes)
 - Crab Walk feet first (first partner goes there and back, then second partner goes)
 - Ball Pass (first partner runs to the marker; second partner throws them a pass; if they catch it, they sprint back, and then the second partner runs to the marker and the first partner throws them a pass. If the receiver drops the pass, they must run back to the start line, then run back to the marker to try again.
- Coaching Points: these do not need to be races – safety first!
- Wave Drill
 - Put the players in lines of four on a line. The coach has a football and stands about 10 yards in front of them.
 - The coach used the ball to signal commands to the first group of players:
 - When the coach brings the ball to their chest, the players motor their feet forward and yell “Go! Go!”
 - When the coach extends the ball away from their chest, the players motor their feet backward and yell “Back! Back!”
 - When the coach extends the ball to their right/left, the players motor to their left/right and yell “Left! Left!” or “Right! Right!”
 - When the coach holds the ball low between their knees, the players do an up-down (drop to the ground with their chest while they yell “Down!” and get back up.
 - When the coach brings the ball over their head, the players yell “Through!” and sprint past the coach.
 - Each wave should last around 10 seconds.
 - Coaching Points: low, athletic position; loud communication
- Obstacle Course
 - Use your imagination to set up an obstacle course for the players. It can include stations like:
 - Carrying a football and ziz-zagging through cones
 - Tackling a dummy
 - Throwing a pass to a target
 - Blocking (pushing back a coach holding a hand shield bag as the coach gives a bit of resistance)
 - Punting the ball for distance
- Go-fer Drill
 - Put the players in four or five lines. The coach has a football and stands about 10 yards in front of the lines. On command, the players “go-fer” the football by running at the coach. The coach then throws the ball or rolls it on the ground, and the players try to recover it as soon as possible (they are on the same team, so should not fight each other for the ball). Once a player has secured the ball, they all sprint back to the line like they are returning a fumble or interception for a touchdown.
 - The coach can toss the ball in the air so the players have a chance to catch it.

- The coach should vary where they throw the ball (left, right, different distances).
- The coach can move around to make the players chase them before throwing the ball.
- Coaching Points: work together to secure the ball; when a teammate has the ball, everyone else gets in front to block for them



Training Camp Week – Field is 20 Yards Wide

15 minutes are scheduled for your players and parents meeting. If you think you will need more time than that, start a little earlier.

For training camp week, it is recommended that you divide the players into two groups. Put group 1 on offense for practice 1, and put them on defense for practice 2. Vice versa for group 2. For practice 3, you can do a skill circuit with everyone, and then practice plays in two sets, starting the players on O for the first half, and switching them to D for the second half (and vice versa). Hopefully you had a chance to assess your players at the Kick Off Camp, and can put them into positions to start the season (of course they should change positions throughout the season – at least two O position group spots, and two D position group spots).

Practice 1

0:00 Players and Parents Meeting

0:15 Warm-up

0:25 O/D Period

- O – explain positions (player name, number, responsibilities); explain hole numbers; explain pass patterns; walk through the Week 1 plays from the playbook
- D – explain positions (player name, responsibilities); explain gap letters; explain gap fill and gap squeeze, explain pursuit, introduce 24 Bandit (Defensive Linemen slant to B gaps)

0:40 Skill period

- O
 - Center and Ends – blocking
 - 2 pt stance (Tabletop position) and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Perfect Fit Drill (shoulder Block pg. 63) – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive footwork only (pg. 61) leverage step, then boxer step into forearm shiver to shoulder block – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive with defender head-up (page 61) – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive with defender slightly outside shade (drive them out) – 3 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive with defender slightly outside shade (use leverage step to get outside and drive them in) - 3 minutes
 - Run through plays (31/32 Lead, 33/34 Sweep, 21/22 Dive) vs. air – remaining time
 - Quarterback and Running Backs – play timing, exchanges, hitting the hole
 - 31/32 Lead (I Formation) or 21/32 Lead (Split Formation) – 4 minutes
 - 33/34 Sweep (I Formation) or 23/34 Sweep (Split Formation) – 4 minutes
 - 21/22 Dive (I Formation) or 21/32 Dive (Split Formation) – 4 minutes
- D – taking on blocks, containing
 - DL

- DE Tilt Stance and first step review – 3 minutes
- Fit up and gap squeeze – 3 minutes
- Dip and rip – 3 minutes
- LB
 - LB Tilt Stance and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Use the movement of a football, not sound, to initiate player reaction
 - Taking on blocks – inside flip and sit – 3 minutes
 - Taking on blocks – outside flip and sit (contain) – 3 minutes
- All defense
 - Review getting tackled (pg. 21) – 3 minutes
 - Kneeling Thigh and Drive vs. Teammate (pg. 36) – 3 minutes
 - Tabletop Thigh and Drive vs. Teammate (pg. 37) – 3 minutes
 - Flip and Sit Block Defend – remaining time

1:05 1 on 1s

- O vs. D run block/block defend (OL vs. DL/RB vs. LB)
 - Simulate plays

1:15 Team Period

- Scrimmage (Thud)

1:30 Conditioning

- Bag Sprints

1:37 Stretch and Wrap-up

Practice 2

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 O/D Period

- O – explain positions (player name, number, responsibilities); explain hole numbers; explain pass patterns; walk through the Week 1 plays from the playbook
- D – explain positions (player name, responsibilities); explain gap letters; explain gap fill and gap squeeze, explain pursuit, introduce 24 Bandit (Defensive Linemen slant to B gaps)

0:25 Skill period

- O
 - Center and Ends – blocking
 - 2 pt stance (Tabletop position) and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Perfect Fit Drill (shoulder Block pg. 63) – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive footwork only (pg. 61) leverage step, then boxer step into forearm shiver to shoulder block – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive with defender head-up (page 61) – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive with defender slightly outside shade (drive them out) – 3 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive with defender slightly outside shade (use leverage step to get outside and drive them in) - 3 minutes
 - Run through plays (31/32 Lead, 33/34 Sweep, 21/22 Dive) vs. air – remaining time
 - Quarterback and Running Backs – play timing, exchanges, hitting the hole
 - 31/32 Lead (I Formation) or 21/32 Lead (Split Formation) – 4 minutes
 - 33/34 Sweep (I Formation) or 23/34 Sweep (Split Formation) – 4 minutes
 - 21/22 Dive (I Formation) or 21/32 Dive (Split Formation) – 4 minutes
- D – taking on blocks, containing
 - DL
 - DE Tilt Stance and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Fit up and gap squeeze – 3 minutes
 - Dip and rip – 3 minutes
 - LB
 - LB Tilt Stance and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Use the movement of a football, not sound, to initiate player reaction
 - Taking on blocks – inside flip and sit – 3 minutes
 - Taking on blocks – outside flip and sit (contain) – 3 minutes
 - All defense
 - Review getting tackled (pg. 21) – 3 minutes

- Kneeling Thigh and Drive vs. Teammate (pg. 36) – 3 minutes
- Tabletop Thigh and Drive vs. Teammate (pg. 37) – 3 minutes
- Flip and Sit Block Defend – remaining time

0:50 1 on 1s

- O vs. D run block/block defend (OL vs. DL/RB vs. LB)
 - Simulate plays

1:00 Team Period

- Scrimmage (Thud)

1:15 Conditioning

- Go-Fer Drill

1:22 Stretch and Wrap-up

Practice 3

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 Skill Circuit (5 minutes per station)

- Blocking and block defending
 - Stance review, perfect fit review, Tabletop Strike and Drive (shoulder block) Drill (pg. 61)
- Tackling
 - Buratto drill, Square drill (both using thigh tackle)
- Ball exchanges (QB-RB)
- Passing, Receiving and Covering
 - 3 step drop for passers; In, Out, Hook, Seam for receivers; players also take turn covering routes (1 on 1s)

0:35 O and D run plays vs. air/bags

0:45 O and D run plays against each other (Crossface/Shimmy Pursuit)

1:00 Players switch O and D positions – O and D run plays vs. air/bags

1:10 O and D run plays against each other (Crossface/Shimmy Pursuit)

1:25 Stretch and Wrap-up

Regular Season Week 1

Practices 1 and 2

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 Offense/Defense period

- Offense
 - Run through plays (31/32 Lead, 33/34 Sweep, 21/22 Dive)
 - Install Pro End Double Outs
- Defense
 - Review alignment (24 Bandit) and gap responsibilities
 - Introduce pass coverage responsibilities ("Cover 0")

0:25 Skill period

- O
 - Centers, Ends and Running Backs
 - Stance and leverage step review – 3 minutes
 - Perfect Fit Drill (both shoulders) – 5 minutes
 - 2 Pt. Strike and Drive (both shoulders) vs. Defender head-up - 5 minutes
 - 2 Pt. Strike and Drive (both shoulders) vs. Defender slightly outside shade (block them out) - 5 minutes
 - 2 Pt. Strike and Drive (both shoulders) vs. Defender slightly outside shade (block them in) - 5 minutes
 - Quarterback
 - Footwork for all running plays (starting with exchange from Center, getting to the mesh point, handing off/pitching the ball) – 10 minutes
 - Passing progression
 - Standing and passing to a stationary target – 3 minutes
 - Exchange or modified exchange from Center, stepping away from Center, and bringing the ball up to the chest – 3 minutes
 - 3 step drop and passing to a stationary target – 3 minutes
 - Use Ends to catch
 - 3 step drop and passing to a moving target – 3 minutes
 - Use Ends to run hook routes
- D
 - Defensive Line
 - DE Stance and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Use movement of a ball to initiate reaction
 - Fit up and gap squeeze (use shoulder to take on a shoulder block) – 3 minutes
 - Rip and Sit – 3 minutes
 - Linebackers
 - Stance and first step review – 3 minutes
 - Get players reacting to pre-snap backfield motion
 - Rip and Sit – 3 minutes

- Inside LBs fit up and gap squeeze/contain – 3 minutes; Outside LBs backpedal and plant man to man pass coverage
- All players
 - Run Through to Profile Tackle Drill vs. Hand Shield (pg. 51) – 5 minutes
 - Run Through to Profile Tackle Drill vs. Teammate (have players only 3 yards apart) – 4 minutes

0:50 1 on 1s

- OL vs. DL Drive Block/Defend
- LB vs. RB Square Drill

1:00 Team Period

- Scrimmage (10 minutes profile/shimmy, 5 minutes thud, 5 minutes live)

1:20 Conditioning

- Practice 1 - Ladder relay; Practice 2 – 3 on 3 Punt Return Drill

1:25 Stretch and Wrap-up

Regular Season Week 2

Practices 1 and 2

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 Offense/Defense period

- Offense
 - Review 31/32 Lead, 33/34 Sweep and 21/22 Dive
 - Introduce Pro End passes (Double In, Double Hook, Double Seam)
- Defense
 - Review 24 Bandit
 - Introduce 24 Arrow (Defensive Linemen slant to A gaps)
 - Review pass coverage responsibilities (“Cover 0”)
 - Cross face and machine gun pursuit

0:30 Skill Period

- Offense
 - Ends
 - Stance, leverage step and release from the line to 10 yards downfield – 3 minutes
 - Route running – 2 minutes each with no passes (hooks, ins, outs, seams)
 - Route running – use remaining time for players to run routes and catch passes
 - Center and Running Backs
 - Hand Strike (pg. 58-59) - 3 minutes
 - Mirror Drill (pg. 65) – 3 minutes
 - Perfect Fit Mirror Drill (pg. 64) – 3 minutes
 - Inside pass rush – 2 minutes
 - Blockers should take a post (leverage) step inside to protect the QB
 - Outside pass rush – 3 minutes
 - Blockers should take a post (leverage) step inside to protect the QB, then a kick (backward) step with their outside foot to keep the rusher outside
 - Quarterback
 - Stationary passing – 3 minutes
 - Modified exchange from coach* (*coach kneel in front of QB and snap or hold the ball in front to the QB – do not snap between your legs), step away and bring ball to chest – 2 minutes
 - Modified exchange from coach*, 3 step drop – 2 minutes
 - Modified exchange from coach*, 3 step drop and pass to stationary target – 3 minutes
 - All Offense – run pass plays (10 minutes)
- Defense
 - Defensive Line
 - Stance and engage TEs with hand strike technique – 3 minutes
 - Rip move – 3 minutes
 - Recognizing pass blocking vs. run blocking – 3 minutes

- Pass rush using rip – 3 minutes
- Tackling the quarterback (“strike zone”) - thigh tackle vs. stand-up bag – 5 minutes
- Finishing pass rush on QB (stand-up bag) – 3 minutes
- Linebackers
 - Stance and first step – 2 minutes
 - Jam and trail man to man coverage – 4 minutes
 - Recognizing pass blocking vs. run blocking – 3 minutes (join DL)
 - Worm drill – 3 minutes
 - Jam and trail – in/out/hook routes – 4 minutes
 - Trail position and Bomb Drill – 4 minutes

0:50 1 on 1s

- OL/RB vs. DL/ILB pass
- QB/E vs. OLB pass

1:00 Team Period

- Pass plays (5 minutes profile/shimmy, 5 minutes thud)
- Pass and run plays (5 minutes profile/shimmy, 5 minutes thud)

1:20 Stretch and Wrap-up

Regular Season Week 3 – Field Changes to 25 Yards Wide; The Centre-Quarterback exchange may now be conventional

Practices 1 and 2

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 Offense/Defense Period

- Offense
 - Review Lead, Sweep, Dive, Pro End passes
 - Introduce Counter
- Defense
 - Review 24 Arrow and 24 Bandit
 - Introduce the concept of splitting the field
 - If backfield flow comes to your side, react hard to your flow gap; if backfield flow goes away from your side, initially be patient and slow-play (“I hope it’s a counter”)
 - Explain the concept of a counter play (when backfield flow goes one direction, and then the ball gets handed off in the opposite direction)

0:25 Skill Period

- Offense
 - Quarterback and Running Backs
 - Progress through footwork and timing for the Counter - 5 minutes
 - Review footwork and timing for Lead, Sweep and Dive – 5 minutes
 - Center and Ends
 - Tabletop stance and leverage step – 2 minutes
 - Perfect Fit Drill (pg. 60) both shoulders – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive Drill (pg. 61) both shoulders - 5 minutes
 - Ends and Quarterback
 - Pass routes – 6 minutes
 - Center and Running Backs
 - Fit Position Mirror Drill (pg. 65) – 2 minutes
 - Inside pass block – 2 minutes
 - Outside pass block – 2 minutes
 - All positions
 - Run through plays (priority on Counter) – remaining time
- Defense
 - All positions
 - Trail and punch down (when the tackler can see the ball, punch down and then pry up) – 3 minutes
 - Trail and punch up (when the tackler can’t see the ball, punch up and then pry down) – 3 minutes
 - Angle Tackle Drill – 4 minutes
 - Square Drill (thigh tackle) – 5 minutes
 - Outside Linebackers
 - Worm Drill (pass coverage) – 3 minutes
 - Jam and Train (pass coverage - ins/outs/hooks) – 3 minutes
 - Bomb Drill (pass coverage) – 3 minutes

- Inside Linebackers and Defensive Linemen
 - Fit up and gap squeeze (block defend inside) – 3 minutes
 - Fit up and contain – rip and sit (outside) – 3 minutes
 - Rip move – 3 minutes

0:50 1 on 1s

- Tackling circuit in three groups
 - Angle Tackle Drill
 - Square Drill
 - Hand Shield Profile Drill (pg. 52)

1:00 Team Period

- 10 minutes profile/shimmy, 5 minutes thud, 5 minutes live

1:20 Stretch and wrap-up

Regular Season Week 4

Practices 1 and 2

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 Offense/Defense Period

- Offense
 - Review Counter and Pro End passes
 - Introduce Ace Right/Left formation and plays
 - 25/36 Counter, 25/36 Sweep
 - Pro passes (double ins/outs/hooks/slants/seams)
- Defense
 - Introduce 24 Left/Right
 - Explain adjustment to Ace formation
 - OLB widens with the RC; other ILBs adjust slightly toward the RC side
 - OLB in coverage plays off man technique
 - If the RC motions before the snap toward the DL, the OLB covering him calls “Crack!” to warn his teammates of a crack back (blind side) block
 - If the RC motions before the snap toward the offensive backfield, the OLB covering him calls “Counter!” to warn his teammates that he is coming their direction to get a handoff

0:25 Skill Period

- Offense
 - Running Backs
 - Review getting tackled (pg. 21)
 - Practice crack blocking for Sweep – 3 minutes
 - Practice timing for Counter – 3 minutes
 - Ends and Center
 - Tabletop Stance and leverage step (for pass release, or to get leverage for blocking) – 2 minutes
 - Reach blocking footwork (getting outside of a defender who has outside leverage – 3 minutes
 - Reach blocking – 3 minutes
 - Quarterback
 - Warm-up throwing – 4 minutes
 - Work with Running Backs on Counter – 4 minutes
 - All Offense
 - Practice Ace Right/Left Pro passes – 15 minutes
 - Center can do regular snap or shotgun
- Defense
 - Outside Linebackers
 - Pass coverage stance and first step – 2 minutes
 - 5 yard race – 2 minutes
 - Plant drill – 5 minutes
 - Bomb drill – 3 minutes
 - Inside Linebackers and Defensive Linemen
 - Tackling technique

- Sprint and shimmy to tabletop position (pg. 40) – 2 minutes
- Sprint, shimmy and break (right/left) to tabletop position (pg. 40) – 2 minutes
- Sprint, shimmy, break and thigh tackle vs. bag (pg. 40) – 4 minutes
- Sprint, shimmy, break and thigh tackle vs. player (pg. 40) – 4 minutes
- All Defense
 - Defending the crack block – 10 minutes
 - Communicate (OLB covering the RC must call the “Crack!”)
 - Anticipate (ILB and DL must turn and see the RC coming when they hear the “Crack!” call)
 - Initiate contact (the ILB/DL that is being cracked must step into the blocker and take him on, controlling the inside gap – rip and sit)
 - Compensate (OLB covering the RC must understand that if a RC is doing a crack block, the offense will try to run outside of the block)

0:50 1 on 1s

- Half of the RBs and Ends (with QB) vs. OLB – pass routes
- Half of the RBs and Ends (with Center) vs. ILB and DL – pass block/rush
 - Switch groups half way through

1:05 Team Period

- 10 minutes profile/shimmy, 5 minutes thud, 5 minutes live

1:25 Stretch and Wrap-up

Regular Season Week 5

Practices 1 and 2

0:00 Warm-up

0:10 Offense/Defense Period

- Offense
 - Review Ace formation Sweep, Counter and Pro passes
 - Introduce Spread formation (Gun if the Center can do it)
 - QB Draw
 - Pro passes
- Defense
 - Review adjustment to Ace formation
 - Introduce adjustment to Spread formation
 - Audible to “Arrow!” to defend QB draw
 - Crossface finish machine gun pursuit

0:25 Skill Period

- Offense
 - Running Backs (RC)
 - Stalk blocking (pg. 68) – 5 minutes
 - Pass routes (with QB) – 5 minutes
 - Quarterback
 - Stationary passing – 2 minutes
 - 3 step drop and pass – 3 minutes
 - Ends and Center
 - Stance and leverage step – 2 minutes
 - Mirror drill (pg. 65) – 4 minutes
 - Tabletop Strike and Drive Drill (pg. 63) (have defenders lined up with different leverage) – 4 minutes
 - All Positions
 - Review all plays – 15 minutes
- Defense
 - Outside Linebackers
 - Stance and first step – 2 minutes
 - 5 yard race – 2 minutes
 - Plant drill – 4 minutes
 - Bomb drill – 2 minutes
 - Inside Linebackers and Defensive Line
 - Review taking on crack block – 3 minutes
 - Gap squeeze (rip and sit) – 2 minutes
 - Contain (rip and sit) – 3 minutes
 - Rip move – 2 minutes
 - All Defense
 - Angle Tackle Drill – 3 minutes
 - Square Drill – 3 minutes
 - Sprint, shimmy, break, thigh tackle vs. bag – 3 minutes
 - Review communicating “Crack!” and “Counter!” calls

0:50 1 on 1s

- Ends and Center vs. DL/ILB – 3 on 4 blocking (offense will block for a run or pass play, and defense will react)
- RB (RC) vs. OLB pass

1:00 Team Period

- Scrimmage (10 minutes profile/shimmy, 5 minutes thud, 5 minutes live)

1:20 Practice 1 - 3 on 3 Punt Return Drill; Practice 2 – Wave Drill

1:27 Stretch and Wrap-up

Game Management

Each game day will include two game periods, one hour each. If possible, do your warm-up prior to the beginning of your pre-game practice time. You will have 15 minutes of practice time before each game. For the first 6 minutes or so, put the players through individual drills. Divide them by position (get the Offensive Linemen working on blocking; get the Quarterbacks and Running Backs working on ball handling and exchanges; get the defensive players working on taking on blocks and tackling). For the next 8 minutes or so, bring all of the players together and work on your plays.

During the game, one coach can be on the field to help organize the players (make sure to stand where you won't interfere with the play). Run on and off of the field with your players when they come on for a series and go off after a series. According to the RMF Fair Play Policy, no player should sit off more than one series in a row. In Mighty Mites, all players should get close to the same amount of playing time.

After your first game, you have another 15 minute practice time to move to your next field, switch your players from offense to defense and vice versa, and repeat the pre-game practice in preparation for your second game.

Playbooks

Offense

Offenses will use the following formations and plays, with accompanying play insertion schedule (once a play has been inserted, it may be used in any subsequent week):

- Week 1 Insertion
 - Balance I
 - 31/32 Lead
 - 33/34 Sweep
 - 21/22 Dive
 - Pro End Pass
 - Double Outs
 - Balance Split
 - 21/32 Lead
 - 23/34 Sweep
 - 21/32 Dive
 - Pro End Pass
 - Double Outs
- Week 2 Insertion
 - Balance I/Balance Split
 - Pro End Passes
 - Double Hooks
 - Double Ins
 - Double Seams
- Week 3 Insertion
 - Balance I
 - 33/34 Counter
 - Balance Split
 - 23/34 Counter
- Week 4 Insertion
 - Ace Right/Ace Left (under centre or in shotgun)
 - 25/36 Sweep
 - 25/36 Counter
 - Pro Passes (Receiver and Opposite End)
 - Double Outs
 - Double Ins
 - Double Slants
 - Double Seams
 - Double Hooks
- Week 5 Insertion
 - Spread (under centre or in shotgun)
 - Pro Passes (Receivers)
 - Double Outs
 - Double Ins
 - Double Slants
 - Double Seams
 - Double Hooks
 - Quarterback Draw

Defense

Defenses will always be in Cover 0 (man to man defense with no “free” players). There will be no blitzes or stunts, and the defensive linemen must line up head-up on the guards. Defenses will use the following plays, with accompanying insertion schedule (once a formation has been inserted, it may be used in any subsequent weeks):

- Week 1
 - 24 Bandit
- Week 2
 - 24 Arrow
- Week 4
 - 24 Left
 - 24 Right

Setting and Communicating Team Expectations

Presented by

Ryan Hall

RMF Director of Coaching Development



Introduction

- The tradition of football is that it is a game of commitment, discipline and toughness.
- The RMF motto: "**It's fun, it's fair, it's football**" and the **fair play** rule does not mean that players (and parents) can do whatever they want and still get to participate. It is only fun if everyone is pulling **together**.
- If you don't set and enforce a reasonable set of expectations for your team, there is only one thing that will save you from a season of frustration: **luck**.

Setting Team Culture

- Start with **why** (what is the purpose/mission of the team)
- Create a mission/purpose statement

The 2014 Pee Wee Warriors exist to use the sport of football to develop the skills and athleticism, positive character and responsibility to the team in all players, while striving to have fun, work hard and play fair.

- Compile a list of essential **characteristics** that all team members should strive to demonstrate on and off the field.

Hard Working Coachable Respectful Energetic Positive

- Set a team **goal**. How will you know if your team has been successful?

For every player to experience improvement and success due to their hard work, commitment and coachability.

- Establish a list of necessary **expectations**.
 - *John Wooden – be on time; don't use profanity; don't criticize a teammate*
 - *Chuck Knoll (Dungy, Tomlin) – don't whine, don't complain, don't make excuses*

- *Lou Holtz – do the right thing, do the best you can, show people you care*
- Remember that the expectations should apply to everyone equally...including you
 - Commitment (practice/game punctuality and attendance, coordination with other activities, commitments, etc.). Establish a hierarchy of priorities that are appropriate for athletes at your level and clearly define them.
 - Behavior (respect for teammates/coaches/opponents/officials/parents, language, effort, sportsmanship, etc.).
 - Equipment and clothing (mouthguard, socks, pants with pads, helmets on, etc.).
 - Health and safety (pre-practice time, “fooling around”, not sharing water bottles, etc.).
 - Communication (phone/E-mail/text if player has to miss practice etc.).
 - Parent responsibilities/limitations (practice observation, drop off/pick up, etc.)
 - Process for dealing with problems (parents will need to be part of this).
 - Standard consequences for not meeting expectations (sitting on the side during practice, extra conditioning, cut playing time, etc.)

Communicating and Enforcing Team Expectations

- Create a concise **document** that outlines the information above
- Have a team meeting (including **players** and **parents**) where you distribute and present the team outline.
- Communicate how you will make important team decisions (player **positions**, choosing **captains**, etc.). This should fit with your mission and goals.
- Be very focused on the essentials of your team culture, especially **early** in the season. When you address players (or parents) that are not meeting expectations, make sure to refer to the team document (use the same language). On the other hand, make a **big deal** about players that do a great job of demonstrating the characteristics you want the players to display.
- If issues with a player begin to become a **pattern**, contact the parent(s) and address it directly with them to get their support. Explain the **consequences** if the inappropriate behaviour continues.
- If the situation comes to the point where the player needs to be **suspended** from a practice or **benched** for a significant part of a game, parents must be told.
- If the situation comes to the point where the player needs to be suspended for a prolonged period of time, communicate with the parents and **RMF**.