

Coach Education & Training

All football coaches should be certified through USA Football, either by attending an in-person clinic or completing the online curriculum. Coaches should also utilize resources to help player development, such as the Player Progression Guide, Skills Assessments and Coach Planner app.

 Preseason Meeting

Gather every coach together and review key points that your league will emphasize from the Football Development Model (FDM). Set goals and expectations. Discuss behavior and working together across rosters for the benefit of all players. Remind them that the focus is long-term athlete development.

 Practice Plans

Veteran coaches will likely be able to build the Football Development Model (FDM) principles into what they are already doing. For new coaches or coaches who are having trouble adapting to change, USA Football provides practice plans to certified coaches.

 Contact Policy

Be clear with your organization's limits on contact in practice. USA Football sets daily and weekly full-contact maximums. Tell your coaches what kinds of drills cannot be used. For example, Bull in the Ring and other drills that maximize contact without skill teaching should not be allowed. USA Football's youth practice guidelines can be accessed at usafootball.com/practice-guidelines.

 Regular Communication

Reinforce what you tell coaches in the preseason by continuing communication to them. Offer ideas on cultural and social goals that they can build into practices. Gather feedback from coaches on what's working and what needs tweaking, then filter that back to everyone. Communicate with parents as the season gets closer and throughout so they know what to expect for their athlete's experience.

 Managing Expectations

This is a lot of new information for coaches to take on, so patience is key. Likewise, old habits are hard to break. Consistently reinforce that the Football Development Model (FDM) principles are critical for the players, important to the league and part of a coach's duties.

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CONTINUE YOUR BEST PRACTICES

USA Football's League Excellence Program recognizes youth football organizations for implementing best practices and upholding standards. Learn more at usafootball.com/excellence