

U.P.A.F.A.

Uttar Pradesh American Football Association

Coach Certification — L2 — Certified Coach

State / Development Level — Instructor Guide & Participant Handouts

Total contact time: 16 hours over 2 days

Program Manual — Version 1.0 | July 2026

Session Schedule

This guide covers all 8 modules for Coach L2 — Certified Coach, combining an instructor script with printable participant handouts for each module.

1. Advanced Rules & the Coach–Referee Interface	1 hr
2. Offensive Systems: Route Trees, Formations & Spacing	3 hr
3. Defensive Systems: Man vs. Zone Concepts	2 hr
4. In-Game Management & Tactical Adjustments	2 hr
5. Conditioning, Periodization & Injury Prevention	2 hr
6. Talent Identification & Player Development Pathways	1.5 hr
7. Video & Data Analysis Basics	1.5 hr
8. Live Coaching Practicum & Evaluation	3 hr

How to Use This Manual

Each module below contains two parts: an Instructor Guide (learning objectives, a full delivery script, key teaching points, and a structured activity) followed immediately by a Participant Handout page designed to be photocopied and given to each attendee (notes/worksheet items, reflection prompts, and quick-check questions). An Instructor Answer Key for all quick-check questions is provided as an appendix at the end of this manual — it is not intended for participant distribution.

Module 1: Advanced Rules & the Coach–Referee Interface

Duration: 1 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Interpret less common rulings.
- Understand ‘guarding the flag’ and illegal motion/offside.
- Communicate with officials professionally.

Instructor Script

At L2 you'll encounter rulings that don't come up in a first-timer's session: illegal forward motion at the snap, defensive offside in the neutral zone, and ‘guarding the flag’ — a ball carrier using a hand to block a defender's pull attempt, or spinning the flag belt out of reach — which is illegal in most rulesets.

Review how scoring plays are confirmed and how a referee signals each call, so you can read the game the way officials do.

Cover the coach's role in the coach-referee relationship: you may request a rule clarification calmly between plays, but a coach who argues a judgment call rather than a rule fact undermines both the game and the officiating pathway their own club depends on. Certified coaches model the respect the referee pathway is trying to build.

Key Teaching Points

- Illegal motion and offside basics
- Guarding the flag (illegal)
- Scoring-play confirmation signals
- Professional coach-referee communication

Activity: Case-Study Video Review

1. Show 5 close-call video/photo scenarios.

2. Have participants call each one before revealing the correct ruling.
3. Discuss why each was correctly ruled that way.

Participant Handout — Module 1: Advanced Rules & the Coach–Referee Interface

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete the case-study worksheet, ruling on each of the 5 scenarios.
- ☐ Keep the rulings quick-reference card for gameday.

Reflection & Application

Describe a time (as a player, parent, or coach) you saw a coach argue a call badly. What would you do differently?

Quick Check

1. Is arguing a judgment call the same as requesting a rule clarification?
2. Give one example of ‘guarding the flag’.

Module 2: Offensive Systems: Route Trees, Formations & Spacing

Duration: 3 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Teach 2–3 core route concepts.
- Understand formation spacing principles for 5v5.
- Call and adjust a simple play pre-snap.

Instructor Script

In 5v5, spacing is everything — with only five attackers on a compressed field, route concepts exist to create width and clear space rather than to overload one side. Teach three foundational routes: the slant (quick, beats inside leverage), the out/comeback (creates width and a sideline target), and the post/go (stretches the defense vertically and opens underneath space for others).

Cover two base formations: a ‘spread’ (five receivers wide, used against man coverage to isolate mismatches) and a ‘bunch/stack’ (receivers grouped to create natural picks/rub routes, effective against zone).

Teach how to read pre-snap alignment to decide which of two called plays to run — a simple ‘kill/no-kill’ call system (one word changes the play based on what the defense shows) is enough at this level.

Key Teaching Points

- Spacing as the core offensive principle in 5v5
- Slant / out-comeback / post-go route family
- Spread vs. bunch-stack formations
- Simple pre-snap kill/no-kill adjustment

Activity: Route Concept Progression

1. Walk through each route concept without a defense (routes on air).
2. Run each concept vs. a token/passive defense.
3. Introduce the kill/no-kill call and practice one live read.

Participant Handout — Module 2: Offensive Systems: Route Trees, Formations & Spacing

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Label the blank route tree diagram with the slant, out/comeback, and post/go.
- ☐ Diagram the spread and bunch-stack formations.

Reflection & Application

Which formation would you expect to work better against a team that plays mostly man coverage, and why?

Quick Check

1. Which route concept is designed to beat inside leverage quickly?
2. Which formation creates natural picks/rub routes against zone coverage?

Module 3: Defensive Systems: Man vs. Zone Concepts

Duration: 2 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish man and zone coverage.
- Understand rush timing and lane discipline.
- Teach basic defensive communication.

Instructor Script

Man coverage assigns each defender a receiver and relies on athleticism and leverage — teach ‘inside leverage’ (forcing the receiver toward the sideline, where the boundary helps the defender) as the default technique.

Zone coverage assigns defenders to areas of the field and relies on discipline and communication — teach a simple 3-zone shell (two deep-half defenders, one shallow underneath defender) as the entry-level zone look.

Cover the rush: in most 5v5 rulesets, one designated rusher may cross the neutral zone at the snap to pressure the quarterback within a count (commonly a 5- or 7-Mississippi count) — teach a straight-line rush lane so the rusher doesn't drift and open an easy scramble lane. Loud, early communication (‘switch,’ ‘watch three’) is the biggest differentiator between an organized and disorganized youth defense.

Key Teaching Points

- Man coverage / inside leverage
- 3-zone shell (entry-level zone look)
- Rush lane discipline and count
- Defensive communication calls

Activity: Coverage Shell Walk-Through

1. Split the group and walk through the man-coverage look, then the zone shell.
2. Run a 5-on-5 defense-only rep against a coach-led offense.
3. Coach communication calls live during the rep.

Participant Handout — Module 3: Defensive Systems: Man vs. Zone Concepts

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete the coverage-shell diagram worksheet (man vs. 3-zone).
- ☐ Write down two communication calls you'd use and what each means.

Reflection & Application

Which coverage would you default to with a group that's new to the concept — man or zone — and why?

Quick Check

1. What technique gives a man defender help from the sideline?
2. How many deep defenders are in the entry-level 3-zone shell?

Module 4: In-Game Management & Tactical Adjustments

Duration: 2 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Manage downs and situational decisions.
- Make an in-game structural adjustment based on a defensive read.
- Coach appropriately to the scoreboard.

Instructor Script

Teach situational awareness: on the final down of a series near midfield, weigh the risk of turning the ball over on downs against a low-value punt-equivalent (many grassroots rulesets have no punt, so this is often a straightforward go/no-go decision).

Cover reading a half of tape or live look: if the defense is consistently beating a route with a specific coverage, that's the cue to switch formation rather than calling the same play louder.

Discuss scoreboard management: with a big lead, simplify calls and give more players game reps; well behind, prioritize player development and safety over forcing risk to chase the score. An L2 coach's job is long-term development, not just one Saturday's result.

Key Teaching Points

- 4th-down / final-down decision-making
- Reading a defensive tendency

- Adjusting formation vs. repeating a losing call
- Scoreboard-appropriate coaching

Activity: Situational Tabletop Exercise

1. Hand out game-situation cards (down, distance, score, time).
2. Each participant calls the next play and justifies the choice.
3. Group discusses alternative calls for the same situation.

Participant Handout — Module 4: In-Game Management & Tactical Adjustments

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete the situational decision-tree worksheet.
- ☐ Fill in an in-game adjustment log for a fictional half of tape.

Reflection & Application

Describe a game situation where you'd choose player development over chasing the scoreboard, and why.

Quick Check

1. What's the general principle for coaching with a big lead?
2. What should trigger a formation change rather than repeating the same play?

Module 5: Conditioning, Periodization & Injury Prevention

Duration: 2 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Apply basic periodization to a training week.
- Prescribe age-appropriate conditioning.
- Extend L1 injury-prevention knowledge to a competitive season.

Instructor Script

Periodization at this level simply means not running the same hard session every day — build a training week around a hard/easy rhythm (e.g., high-intensity change-of-direction work early in the week, technical/tactical work mid-week, a lighter tune-up session before game day).

Cover a movement-prep warm-up model (activation, strength, balance, plyometric, running elements) as a transferable injury-prevention template, adapted to flag football's cutting and sprinting demands.

Reinforce that at the developmental age range, conditioning should be built into game-realistic movement (shuttle sprints, change-of-direction shuttles) rather than generic long-distance running, which has little transfer to a sport played in 2–7 second bursts.

Key Teaching Points

- Hard/easy weekly training rhythm
- Movement-prep warm-up template
- Game-realistic conditioning over generic running

Activity: Build a Training Microcycle

1. Provide a blank weekly planning grid.
2. Participants build a one-week microcycle for a competitive-season squad.
3. Peer-review in pairs against the hard/easy rhythm principle.

Participant Handout — Module 5: Conditioning, Periodization & Injury Prevention

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete the one-week microcycle planning grid.
- ☐ Complete the movement-prep warm-up checklist.

Reflection & Application

Where in your own team's current training week is the hard/easy rhythm currently missing?

Quick Check

1. Why is generic long-distance running a poor conditioning match for flag football?
2. Name the five elements of a movement-prep warm-up.

Module 6: Talent Identification & Player Development Pathways

Duration: 1.5 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Identify transferable athletic markers when assessing players.
- Understand the club-to-state-to-national pathway.
- Avoid early over-specialization pitfalls.

Instructor Script

Talent identification at grassroots and development level should weight trainable athletic markers — change-of-direction speed, hand-eye coordination, competitiveness in small-sided games — more heavily than current technical polish, since technique is the most coachable variable and the one most distorted by who happened to get early exposure.

Walk through the representative pathway: club performance → district trial → state squad exposure → pathway toward L3-aligned national programs.

Caution against early over-specialization: research on youth athletic development generally supports multi-sport participation through early-to-mid teens, and pressuring a promising 12-year-old into flag-football-only training year-round often works against that player's long-term development.

Key Teaching Points

- Athletic markers over current technical polish
- Club → district → state → national pathway
- Over-specialization risk in early teens

Activity: Player-Profile Case Studies

1. Provide three fictional player profiles.
2. Participants rank them for a district-trial recommendation.
3. Groups justify their ranking and compare reasoning.

Participant Handout — Module 6: Talent Identification & Player Development Pathways

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete the talent-marker observation sheet for the three case-study players.
- ☐ Note the pathway diagram stages from club to national.

Reflection & Application

Which athletic marker do you personally find hardest to judge accurately, and why?

Quick Check

1. Should current technical polish or trainable athletic markers be weighted more heavily at this level?
2. What does research generally support for youth athletes through early-to-mid teens?

Module 7: Video & Data Analysis Basics

Duration: 1.5 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Film a session/game useably.
- Break down a simple defensive tendency from three possessions.
- Use a basic in-game stat sheet.

Instructor Script

Teach the minimum viable filming setup: a phone on a tripod or elevated position, wide enough to capture all ten field players, filmed from behind one end zone or an elevated sideline angle rather than ground level.

Cover a simple breakdown method: watch three defensive possessions and log, for each, the coverage shown (man/zone) and the rush trigger — three data points is often enough to spot a tendency at grassroots level.

Introduce a basic in-game stat sheet (completions/attempts, flag pulls, penalties) that an assistant or parent volunteer can keep, giving the coach objective information beyond memory and impression at the next session.

Key Teaching Points

- Usable filming setup (position, angle)
- 3-possession tendency breakdown method

- Basic in-game stat sheet

Activity: Clip Review Exercise

1. Show a short provided game clip.
2. Participants log coverage/rush tendencies for three possessions.
3. Compare logs as a group and discuss the identified tendency.

Participant Handout — Module 7: Video & Data Analysis Basics

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete the tendency log sheet for the three reviewed possessions.
- ☐ Fill in a blank stat sheet for a fictional quarter.

Reflection & Application

What's the most realistic filming setup you could actually use at your own club's field?

Quick Check

1. How many possessions are usually enough to spot a grassroots-level tendency?
2. Name two things logged for each possession in the breakdown method.

Module 8: Live Coaching Practicum & Evaluation

Duration: 3 hr

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Learning Objectives

- Run a full practice segment incorporating tactical content from this level.
- Be evaluated against the L2 rubric.

Instructor Script

Each participant plans and delivers a 15–20 minute segment that must include at least one tactical element from the offensive, defensive, or in-game-management modules (a route concept, a coverage shell, or an in-game adjustment scenario).

Assessors score against the L2 rubric: tactical accuracy, ability to coach a correction live, group management with a more advanced group, and use of the session-planning principles from L1.

This session doubles as the practical component of L2 certification and feeds directly into the submitted game-plan case study.

Key Teaching Points

- Integration of tactical content from this level
- Live correction under a more complex model
- L2 rubric criteria

Activity: Practicum Delivery

1. Each participant delivers their 15–20 minute segment.
 2. Assessor scores live against the L2 rubric.
 3. Brief feedback conversation immediately after each delivery.
- Participant Handout — Module 8: Live Coaching Practicum & Evaluation

Notes & Worksheet

- ☐ Complete your self-score on the L2 practicum rubric.
- ☐ Begin drafting your game-plan case study brief (due after the workshop for certification).

Reflection & Application

What tactical element did you choose to integrate, and why did you pick it over the others?

Quick Check

1. What must every L2 practicum segment include at least one of?
2. What does the L2 practicum feed into for certification?

Appendix: Instructor Answer Key

For instructor/assessor use only — not for participant distribution.

Module 1: Advanced Rules & the Coach–Referee Interface

1. Is arguing a judgment call the same as requesting a rule clarification? — No — judgment calls should not be argued; rule facts can be calmly clarified.
2. Give one example of ‘guarding the flag’. — Using a hand to block a defender's pull attempt, or spinning the flag belt out of reach.

Module 2: Offensive Systems: Route Trees, Formations & Spacing

1. Which route concept is designed to beat inside leverage quickly? — The slant.
2. Which formation creates natural picks/rub routes against zone coverage? — The bunch/stack formation.

Module 3: Defensive Systems: Man vs. Zone Concepts

1. What technique gives a man defender help from the sideline? — Inside leverage — forcing the receiver toward the boundary.
2. How many deep defenders are in the entry-level 3-zone shell? — Two deep-half defenders, plus one shallow underneath defender.

Module 4: In-Game Management & Tactical Adjustments

1. What's the general principle for coaching with a big lead? — Simplify calls and give more players game reps.
2. What should trigger a formation change rather than repeating the same play? — A defense consistently beating that route/play with a specific coverage.

Module 5: Conditioning, Periodization & Injury Prevention

1. Why is generic long-distance running a poor conditioning match for flag football? — The sport is played in 2–7 second bursts, so game-realistic shuttle/change-of-direction work transfers better.
2. Name the five elements of a movement-prep warm-up. — Activation, strength, balance, plyometric, and running elements.

Module 6: Talent Identification & Player Development Pathways

1. Should current technical polish or trainable athletic markers be weighted more heavily at this level? — Trainable athletic markers — technique is the most coachable variable.
2. What does research generally support for youth athletes through early-to-mid teens? — Multi-sport participation rather than early single-sport specialization.

Module 7: Video & Data Analysis Basics

1. How many possessions are usually enough to spot a grassroots-level tendency? — About three.
2. Name two things logged for each possession in the breakdown method. — The coverage shown (man/zone) and the rush trigger.

Module 8: Live Coaching Practicum & Evaluation

1. What must every L2 practicum segment include at least one of? — A tactical element: a route concept, a coverage shell, or an in-game adjustment scenario.
2. What does the L2 practicum feed into for certification? — The submitted game-plan case study.