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FLAG FOOTBALL

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INTRODUCTION

American Football is a sport in strong world expansion in the last twenty years. After almost 150 years from its first historic game, still in the year 2000, American Football was practiced only in 14/15 countries in the world while today it is played in more than 80 countries in the world, thanks to the advent of the Internet and digital channels. Especially the no contact version, known as Flag Football, has evolved into one of the fastest growing sports in the world.

Flag Football is a popular variation of American Football, which replaces the roughest forms of contact, particularly, tackling, with the detachment, by tearing action (pulling) of cloth or plastic Flags attached to the belt worn by the ball carrier, as well as all the players in the game.

Ultimately, flag football provides a means for men, women and children to stay physically active and enjoy the camaraderie and social quality of playing a team oriented sport, at nearly any age in life and is well valued for the ability to practice it mixed without losing level or quality of play, favoring gender equality.

IAAFL

IAAFL is an Italian association, member of the CSIT, which has as its goal the diffusion, development and practice of American Football in all its versions, especially among teenagers and young people for its high principles and values.

In Italy we organize local or international demonstration events and training in schools to promote Flag Football and in the world we collaborate with other associations and national federations offering them camps for players, training for coaches and referees and support in the administrative/legal stuff.

Flag Football is fun!:

The following text is a presentation of Flag Football with all the benefits it brings to all ages.

Our wish is to see the sport of Flag Football as a discipline regularly played in schools, Universities, multi sport organizations and at all amateur levels and to achieve this goal IAAFL helps to qualify technicians who will continue the diffusion at local regional or national level in Italy and the World.

We invite all Union members of CSIT to introduce Flag Football in their discipline and we are available to support and help the process in any aspect.

Cordially,

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FLAG FOOTBALL



Plain and simple. Flag Football is loads of fun.

As the game doesn't involve contact, it's a fun, strategic team oriented activity, for adults and children to even play together.

Therefore **anyone** can play Flag Football!.

Kids (boys and girls) and adults (men & women) of all ages may play in mixed or gender specific recreational, intramural, school & competitive programs, leagues or tournaments.

It is an emerging game that provides a fast, fun, active & safe environment for players to develop their running, passing & catching abilities in an environment of teamwork & fair play.

- Flag Football is also a sport easily adapted for people with disabilities.

Benefits of Kids Playing Flag Football



Health benefits:

Flag Football is a fast moving game with a lot of variety.

It requires players to sprint, run, jump, rapidly change direction, and stop and re-start, which improves cardiovascular health along with coordination, agility and speed.

Practice drills, complex running routes and defensive technique, all encourage speed, strength, and stamina while engaging motor skills and improving hand and eye coordination.

A recent study found that playing recreational team sports, such as Flag Football, has positive effects on bone strength.

Here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6180537/>

Practicing Flag Football, helps children stay strong, limber, and at a healthy weight.

The physical benefits of regular exercise, running around and having fun, helps them to catch the connection between their physical body and their moods, their mental and emotional well-being.

Learning Opportunities

Flag Football, as a team sport, is one of the best ways for children to learn how to work together and establish camaraderie with their peers.

Every position of the team has a purpose, strictly coordinated with the others and inserted into a play scheme.

Playing recreational Flag Football, kids get the opportunity to learn things that go beyond the physical activity. Skills that are valuable both on and off the field.



teamwork and Camaraderie:

Flag Football teaches kids **accountability**, leadership, and the impact of positive sportsmanship.

To execute a play successfully, each individual needs to fulfill his/her responsibility, while working together toward a common goal.

Playing Flag Football enforces children's ability to function as part of a greater whole.

They learn to strategize and plan with others, then coming to understand how their participation can impact a game and how important it is to think of benefits outside themselves.

Games can only be won with proper positioning, teaching responsibility, and the value of working together.





Socialization:

Flag Football teaches kids how to effectively communicate and work well with others. One player alone can't do everything.

They need and learn to rely on each other.

They develop a wide range of socialization skills as they interact with their teammates, members of opposing teams, and their coaches, while learning to respect each other and respect and accept the directions from authority – coaches and team managers.

Goal setting, self discipline and mental toughness:

Sports, in general, are a great platform to build mental toughness.

With teamwork comes the need for self-control and discipline.

Children and kids don't need to get involved with a high level of competition or focus on winning the game, to develop discipline and self confidence.

Being involved in a fun activity like Flag Football will help them to cultivate a work ethic; meet goals individually and with others.

Executing repetitive drills, routes and proper technique on the field is an important part of the learning process and takes a high level of discipline.

Working together as a team, kids learn and understand that the collective improvement is also individual. This is how to build leadership skills, too.

Anyone can make mistakes on the field and setbacks are bound to happen.



When things go well, it's great. When they don't go well, it's not the end of the world – no reason to feel distraught or lose self-confidence - there's always tomorrow and, in the case of team sports, there's always the next game.

Flag Football give kids an opportunity to experience both victory and defeat, teaching to put those events in proper perspective and maintain a stronger outlook on life.

The team game provides lot of opportunities to learn how to handle pressure, focus during chaotic situations, feel and control the need to comeback from a major upset, give your all on every practice, play every game to the best of your ability to not let your teammates down and, eventually, share the joy of victory.

Win or lose – and you can lose like a winner, if you decide to work harder to win next time!
- kids need to move forward and persevere.

Spirit!

Recreational Flag Football also promotes a positive “can-do” spirit.

Children will not get all the benefits that come with the sport, if they do not enjoy themselves.

“Fun” is a strong foundation to build on.

Flag Football in Schools



Flag Football, as a team sport is ideally suited and particularly useful for Physical Education classes in schools, as it offers various opportunities to experiment at the didactic, technical and methodical level.

Flag Football offers many playing possibilities in an inclusive teaching context for gender mixed classes – it is equally appropriated for both boys and girls - as well as didactic and methodological advantages

Furthermore, it often represents a novelty for most students.

Therefore the knowledge and specialist skills required are rather secondary and everyone has the opportunity to experience change and create something new.

Flag Football is a team game which focuses on the playful aspect and less on competitive spirit.

Promotes interdisciplinary skills as well as specific specialist skills of sport.

As seen in this presentation, social aspects, such as communication skills, the ability to work in a team, the sense of responsibility and tolerance are very present in this context and have a great margin for development.

At least, Flag Football provides ideally observable fields of action.

Here Below some didactic and methodological guidelines and advise, to make the game useful in the field of Physical Education in schools.

Didactics

- Introduce the game with reduced technical and tactical requirements, guided by the rules (introduce and adapt the rules to the learning group, the rules can be modified and changed at any time, no rules are indisputable)
- Avoid interruptions as much as possible (high intensity). Just suggest how to improve the performance.
- Keep the development of the game and of the rules open, oriented to the needs and abilities of the students.
- Allow players to score and get points (success orientation).

Methodology

- Make the students play from the start ("you only learn by playing"), with as few rules as possible
- Expand the rules gradually, in progress.
- The methodology reflects the practice,
- Involve and let students take some responsibility (reflect, present a problem, solve it, present).

For safety reasons, it is necessary to clearly indicate from the outset that the following basic rules must be observed:

- avoid physical contact, do not collide with the players, do not let the ball carrier fall to the ground;
- the ball must not be removed from the quarterback's hands;
- avoid to jump (except to catch the ball);
- the flag must not be covered.

At school

Pedagogical aspects

Defense without physical contact is just one of the elements relevant to school.

Flag football, as a team game and with the ball which is a "spheroid prolate" – oval – and may only be thrown and grabbed, places the group and cooperation at the center of the process.

- The game focuses on team game variants that place an emphasis on teamwork.
- From a technical point of view, passing and receiving require proper communication between the thrower and the receiver.
- Running movements and passing must be coordinated in such a way that they are successful for everyone involved.



It is important to note that the **ball is not a bullet**.

This reconciles students who have developed some fear of football during their school years as a result of possible negative experiences.

Playing Flag Football, they can focus their attention on the game of running and passing with no previous apprehensions.

On the one hand, less skilled students will find, in this game, different, simpler and more accessible conditions of engagement with the ball; on the other hand those already considered "talented" (for example, with their feet, but with a soccer ball), must re-orient their own momentum and restrain own impulses and "usual" strength.

As a matter of fact, in Flag Football, apart from "the pass" performed by the athlete who, in that circumstance plays the role of Quarterback, the technical skills with the round ball and the "solos" are not useful at all.

As we've seen, the peculiarity of this game / sport consists in providing roles accessible to practitioners of any physical conformation and ability, innate or not.

Flag Football, proves useful and effective in coeducational teaching (with harmonized methods for the peculiarities of boys and girls) and toward students with different levels of skills and performance.

The technical and tactical variables of the game are easy to learn while the practice, on the field / in the gym, promotes the elaboration of the concepts of integration and tolerance of one's fellowmen.

Benefits of Playing Adult Flag Football



The most basic benefit of team sports for adults is exercise.

Adults often feel the need to get back in shape or keep fit but, at the same time - except for the incurably loners - often grow tired of the same old cardio and weightlifting routine.

Flag Football as all team sports can be a great way to take a break.

Especially for those who do not enjoy running or going to the gym, joining an indoor/outdoor Flag Football team is a great way to get some exercise while having a good time. When looking for a change in their exercise regimen, one would probably come to like an activity that helps keep in shape through an inclusive invasion game which also represents an opportunity to develop agility, balance & coordination.

Confidence boosting - Exercise for your Brain

Sports are a great way to boost your confidence in your ability.

Not only will you see yourself becoming more fit, but you will see improvements in your skills as well.

If you begin a Flag Football season not being able to complete a pass and finish it as a Touchdown scoring contributor on your team, you will have a renewed confidence in yourself that is invaluable in every aspect of your life. Flag Football is innovative, useful and different.

Aside from training the legs, heart and lungs with a “recurrent” treadmill (tapis roulant), the concentration required to perform the actions and patterns of this fast-paced game helps improve the cognitive function of the brain.

Eye-foot coordination, the need to synchronize motor skills with visual stimuli, for example, strengthens the brain's neurotransmitters.

It's a Fun, Social Activity



Being on a team is a sociable activity. Weekly games and practices will provide the opportunity to meet people one would not otherwise meet. No need to be an extrovert to make friends on a sports team.

It is a casual, fun environment where just showing up and playing the game, people may be hanging out with the teammates after a game, within a short period of time. Many adults who learn to play Flag Football continue to play for many years because it is a lot of fun and often end up considering their team as a new family.

No Contact! Reduced risk of injury:

Players won't wear any heavy equipment, such as helmets and shoulder pads in tackle Football.

There's no tackling, blocking, low contact or diving, screening. Even the recovery of fumbles (lost and fallen balls) is not allowed.

These restrictions on the game greatly reduce the risk of injury for the players (of any age).

The game takes place in an approachable atmosphere where kids and young adults can learn and enjoy the play and develop their skills without the aspect of violent physical contact, therefore without damaging their confidence in the process.

This makes the sport extremely accessible for younger players and those with disabilities. It allows players to enjoy the sport whilst simultaneously increasing their self confidence levels too.



Accessibility and easy commitment:

Flag Football is an inclusive sport and opens the doors to many players, including female athletes.

The simplification of the rules from the original game of tackle Football, makes it easier to understand and fewer players are needed to form a team.

Flag Football practiced at a recreational level does not require an excessive commitment in terms of effort and time for training, but offers more individual playing time, enjoyment level higher and, consequently, higher participation.

Flag football can be played on fields and small areas; locker rooms and spaces to fit for the game may be much smaller, which makes the organization and hosting of the games more accessible.

Less players needed mean increased participation all round; Flag Football provides an 'extended' experience for everyone which prolongs and increases retention in the sport longer, in a perpetual cycling.

Of course, a competitive level will require, instead, greater availability and commitment.

Equipment and Kit

Flag Football is an easy and affordable Equipment and Kit

Flag Football does not require expensive equipment or, unsustainable costs for the game facilities, both in the outdoor and indoor version.

You NEED:

Balls

Any flag football game requires a football properly sized for your game or league. Sizes vary between juniors and adults, with different patterns on footballs affecting grip, texture and durability., sized to match the age and gender of the players (for the size of the hands)

Belts

– one for each player - with two (or three) colored **flags**

Flag belts are essential to any flag football game. They are usually strips of cloth 12 inches to 18 inches long by two inches to six inches wide, and come equipped with a strap-on surface, or plastic snaps, for attachment to the player.



Comfortable shoes

(with cleats, as for soccer, for outdoor games or sneakers for indoor hard surfaces),



Mouthguard,

for greater safety, even in contacts or “collisions” are rare and episodic.



Recommended:



Football Gloves,



Soft Shell Helmet, made of soft padding.

Padded flag football helmets are starting to become a trend, as now coaches, parents and players are more aware than ever of the potential risks of concussion in any sport that involves even incidental contact but today is expensive and absolutely not mandatory for the practice,

You may start with a group of players from six (two teams of three) to ten people (5 vs 5).