BACKYARD GAMES

USA FOOTBALL

RETURN TO YOUTH FOOTBALL 2020

If you're staying home this season, we don't want you to miss out on the fun of football.

We put these games together you can play with your kid(s) in the backyard. There's something in here for every age to enjoy. All you need is a ball and a few cones (or other markers like water bottles). Grab your family and find some space to play! Use this guide to bring the game into your own backyard.

Many of these games are appropriate for all kids, but a few are better for some ages than others. Use this chart to find the right ones for your family.

Game	5+	8+	10+	12+
Knockout	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cops and Robbers Football	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flag Tag/Hip Tag	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hot Potato	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monkey in the Middle	✓	✓	✓	
Obstacle Course	✓	✓	✓	
Red Light, Green Light	✓	✓		
Animal Crawl/Walk Relay	✓	✓		
Sharks and Minnows	✓	✓		
Mirror Your Partner		✓	✓	✓
Scatter Run		✓	✓	✓
Ultimate Football		✓	✓	✓
Punt Return Tag		✓	✓	✓
Find the Gap		✓	✓	✓
Hit the Target		✓	✓	✓
1v1			✓	✓
2v2			✓	✓
Bullseye Kicking			✓	✓

GAME DESCRIPTIONS

When we say players, we mean mom, dad, son or daughter – whoever is in your house!

Youth Coaches – looking for more insight on these drills in your USA Football resources like the Coach Planner App or the Player Progression Guide? Just look up the name of the drill in your favorite tool. If the drill name says "aka", search for that name.

Activity	Description
1v1	**Players Needed: 2-3** • 1 Quarterback (QB) • 1 Defensive Back (DB) • 1 Wide Receiver (WR) **Equipment:** • 1 Football **Step 1:** The WR lines up next to the QB and the DB covers the WR on defense. **Step 2:** QB hikes the ball. The WR runs a route to catch a pass while DB is working to prevent the catch from happening. **Scoring** 1 point awarded to WR for catching the pass. OR 1 point awarded DB for preventing WR from catching the pass. All players will rotate positions. First player to X points wins.
2v2	**Players Needed: 4+** • 1 Quarterback (QB) • 2 Defensive Backs (DBs) • 2 Wide Receivers (WRs) **Equipment:** • 1 Football (same goals as 1V1) **Step 1:** The WRs line up next to the QB and the DBs cover the WRs on defense. **Step 2:** QB hikes the ball. The WRs run routes to catch a pass while the DBs are working to prevent the catch from happening. **Scoring** 1 point awarded to WRs for catching the pass. OR 1 point awarded to DBs for preventing WRs from catching the pass. All players will rotate positions. First player to X points wins.

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GAME DESCRIPTIONS

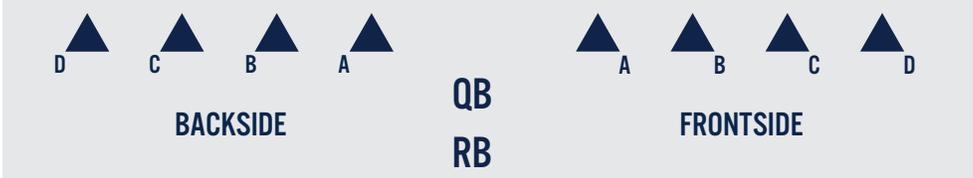|	

Animal Crawl/Animal Walk Relay	**Players Needed: 4+**
	
	Equipment:
	  • 2 Cones
	
	Step 1: Divide up into 2 teams and line up.
	
	Step 2: Place 2 cones approximately 10 yards apart for each team.
	
	Step 3: Select an animal crawl or walk:
	      • Bear
	      • Seal
	      • Monkey
	      • Crab
	      • Gorilla etc.
	
	Step 4: On your "go," the first player on each team will perform that crawl/walk down to the cone and back. Once they have returned, their teammate next in line goes.
	
	The first team to finish wins!
	
	*Level-Up: Make the race more challenging by selecting one crawl for the way down and a different for the way back.

Knockout	**Players Needed: 2-3**
	
	Equipment:
	  • 1 Football per Player
	  • 4+ Cones
	
	Set-Up: Set cones to outline an area of about 10 yards by 10 yards.
	
	Step 1: Select one player to be "it."
	
	Step 2: Every player starts with a football, minus the player that is "it." On "go," all players run around in the space as the "it" player tries to knock the ball out of their hands.
	
	*Level-Up: Make the game more challenging by also allowing players to try to knock each other's footballs away.

GAME DESCRIPTIONS

Cops and Robbers Football	**Players Needed: 4+** **Equipment:** • 4+ Cones • 2 Footballs or other ball per player • Optional: 1 Flag belt per player **Set-Up:** Create a playing space with cones. (the more players the bigger the space) **Step 1:** Split the players into 2 teams: Cops and Robbers. **Step 2:** Place Cops in the middle of the box and Robbers on one side of the box. Please the footballs on the opposite side of the box from the Robbers. **Step 3:** On "go," the robbers will try to get the footballs from the opposite side safely back to their side without getting tagged or flags pulled off by the cops. The cops' mission is to tag or pull all of the flags off the robbers as they are running back and forth. If a robber is tagged or a flag is pulled, they must sit. While seated, they can tag or pull flags off other robbers. **Cops Win:** If all of the robbers are caught **Robbers Win:** If all of the footballs are carried over to their side
Bullseye Kicking aka Directional Kicking	**Players Needed: 1** **Equipment:** • 1 Football/Kickball/Soccer Ball • Cones/Towels • Optional: Tee **Set-Up:** Use cones, towels or other objects to create two large 3-ring targets directly ahead of the player at 45-degree angles. **Scoring:** Outside ring = 1 point Middle ring = 2 points Bullseye = 5 points **Step 1:** The first player will kick the ball towards one of the targets starting from the ground or tee. If the ball hits in one of the rings of the target, that player scores that many points. **Step 2:** The next player kicks. The first player to reach X points wins!

GAME DESCRIPTIONS

Flag Tag/Hip Tag	**Players Needed: 4+** **Equipment:** • Optional: 1 Flag belt per player • Can use towels/t-shirts in place of flags **Goal:** Don't get your flags pulled/hips tagged. **Step 1:** Create a designated area for players to run around and everyone is "it." **Step 2:** When a flag is pulled or hip is tagged, the player must hold it in their hand. They can keep playing until their second flag is pulled or hip is tagged. **Step 3:** On the second flag pull/hip tag, the player is frozen in place and can try to pull the flags or tag other players running by. The last player remaining wins!
Find the Gap aka Gap Drill	**Players Needed: 1-3** • 1 Quarterback (QB) • 2 Running Backs (RBs) **Equipment:** • 8 Cones • 1 Football **Set-Up:** Align 4 cones in a horizontal line 2 yards apart and label A-D. Then, create a space of 3 yards and align the remaining 4 cones the same way did with the others also labeled A-D. Cones to the right are "frontside." Cones to the left are "backside." (Refer to diagram for an example) **Step 1:** The QB should set-up 3 yards behind the horizontal cones in the 3-yard vacant space. Have RBs align in the offensive backfield, 2 yards behind the QB. **Step 2:** On the QB's "go," RBs will run to take a handoff from the QB. Upon taking the handoff, you callout a cone. Ex. "Frontside B" **Step 3:** The RB should run to that cone and then burst 5 yards past it. Keep track of how many times in a row each player goes through the correct gap and have them try to beat their score.

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Hot Potato	**Players Needed: 1-2** **Equipment:** • 1 Football **Step 1:** Using underhand passes, toss a ball back and forth without dropping it. **Step 2:** Count how many times you can successfully catch the ball back and forth. ***Level-Up:** Increase the speed of the tosses each round or have the players take a step back after each catch for a challenge!
Monkey in the Middle	**Players Needed: 3** **Equipment:** • 1 Football **Step 1:** Have two players stand opposite of each other at distance they can are comfortable with throwing and catching. **Step 2:** Place one person in the middle to try to intercept or knock away the ball. **Step 3:** Rotate positions once the person in the middle successfully interrupts a pass. You can also award points for complete passes or for intercepting or tipping the ball.

Obstacle Course	**Players Needed: 1+**
	
	Equipment:
	    • 5 Cones
	
	Set•Up: Place 5 cones in a straight line with 5-10 yards in between each.
	
	Step 1: Select 5 fundamental movements:
	            • High Knees
	            • Lunges
	            • Jumping Jacks
	            • Somersaults
	            • Shuffling
	            • Running etc.
	Step 2: Assign a movement to each cone.
	
	Step 3: At each cone the athlete will have to complete one of the movements until they reach the next one.
	
	*Level-Up: For extra fun and difficulty, choose other patterns besides a straight line (i.e. circle or zig-zig). Also try adding obstacles for the athletes to move around (i.e. towels or cones). Get creative!

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Hit the Target aka Spot Throws	**Players Needed: 1+** **Equipment:** • 2+ Footballs • Optional: Hula Hoops or other objects for player to aim for that simulate a quarterback passing to a receiver • An extra person to retrieve the balls **Set-Up:** Create two targets to the right and left of the passer or have two other players to receive the catch. **Step 1:** On "go," the first player throws a football toward the target or person on the left and then immediately throws the next ball to the target on the right. **Step 2:** Continue to alternate for 30 seconds. Each time the target is hit = 1 point. Try to beat that score!

Mirror Your Partner	**Players Needed: 2-3**
	
	Equipment:
	 • None
	
	Step 1: Select one person to be the leader and one person to be the mirror.
	
	Step 2: Have players stand directly across from each other.
	
	Step 3: The person leading will perform different athletic movements:
	       • Carioca
	       • Shuffling
	       • Skipping etc.
	
	Step 4: The leader will move side to side doing these movements as the mirror follows along performing the same movements.

Punt Return Tag	**Players Needed: 4+** **Equipment:** • 1 Football • Optional: 1 Flag Belt **Step 1:** Place a receiver on one side of the yard. **Step 2:** Place the kicker with the ball and other players horizontally on the other side of the yard. **Step 3:** On "go," the kicker punts the ball to the receiver. The other players run downfield to try to tag the receiver. **Step 4:** The receiver attempts to run downfield while avoiding the taggers. **Scoring** 1 point to receiver for avoiding getting tagged 1 point to tagger for catching and tagging receiver Have all players rotate all positions.

GAME DESCRIPTIONS

Red Light, Green Light	**Players Needed: 3+** **Equipment:** • None **Step 1:** Line players along a marked starting line. **Step 2:** When the parent/leader says "green light," players will move towards the finish line by either walking, jogging or running. **Step 3:** When players hear "red light," they must stop immediately. If they are still moving, they must go back to the starting line or have them take 3 big steps backwards. **Step 4:** Start a new round when everyone or most players cross finish line. ***Level-Up:** Add in more rules or moves to make it more challenging. Example: When the coach calls out "yellow light," everyone must bear crawl.

Scatter Run	**Players Needed: 1**
	Equipment:
	  • 4+ Cones
	
	Set•Up: Scatter cones at least 5 yards a part of one another.
	Step 1: The player must run cone to cone until you call out a new movement:
	        • Crawl
	        • Hop
	        • March (low, high, slow , fast)
	        • Skip
	Step 2: Continue to call out commands including going back to running in between new movements.
	
	*Level-Up: Add in other movements such as animal crawls/walks, backwards run, etc.

Sharks and Minnows	**Players Needed: 4+** **Equipment:** • None **Step 1:** Identify who will be the "shark" or "sharks." A larger group requires more than one shark. Everyone else will be "minnows." **Step 2:** The shark stands in the middle of the play area and says, "Fishy, fishy, come out and play." The minnows slowly walk from the starting line of the designated area toward the sharks. **Step 3:** At any time, the shark can yell, "Shark attack!" The minnows must run to the opposite boundary line without being tagged. **Step 4:** If a minnow is tagged, they also become a shark. When there are 1 or 2 minnows left, they become the next round's sharks.

GAME DESCRIPTIONS

Ultimate Football	**Players Needed: 4+** **Equipment:** • 1 Football **Goal:** The offense must work the ball around the field while attempting to find an open teammate in the end zone. **Rules:** • Determine team possession with coin toss. • Change is possession happens after a touchdown, an interception, deflection or when the ball hits the ground. **Offense:** • Passing: All passes can be forward, lateral, or behind the passer. • After receiving a pass, the offensive player cannot move. • There are 5 seconds to pass the ball and 1 minute to score. There will be a change of possession if the offensive goes over the time. • Scoring: The offensive team must pass, shovel pass, or toss the ball into the end zone. *Teams cannot run the ball to score. • Once a touchdown is scored, the ball changes possession immediately and play begins at the midfield line. • If the offense drops or the ball hits the ground they must leave the ball where it landed and prepare to play defense against the other team. **Defense:** • The defender guarding the thrower ("marker") counts out the stall (5 seconds) count. • Players must attempt to avoid physical contact during play. • Defenders must give the thrower enough space to pass the football. • If a defender intercepts, knocks down or the ball hits the ground, the defensive team get possession and the offense goes to defense.

Looking for more Return to Youth Football resources? Visit usafootball.com/return for more activities and information.