



IWFFA

International Women's Flag Football Association

Let's Talk Flag Football

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March 2025

What Makes a Great Flag Football Team

You can have extremely talented players and you will not have a team. You can have a few extraordinary players and you still will not have a team. You might fill every position, have a well rounded squad and even still not have a team. Not until you develop a culture, a standard, a philosophy will you have a team. To do this you must have leadership. You must have off field leadership. Off field leadership, or sideline leadership, will come from starters. It will come from talented players but it does not necessarily have to come from the best players or the most gifted. Those players will be leaders on the field but they may not be the leaders that develop the team.

On the field you need to be cohesive. You must have a strategy and you will have leaders who implement that. Your QB may call the plays and lead the team. Your safety or linebacker may lead the defense and call blitz and change defense. What I am talking about is what makes a team special. What makes it your flag football family? Where people care so much about their teammates and want them to succeed even more than they want their own success. Where players put the team before themselves and success is measured in how well the team played, if you kept to your creed, and the score comes second. Of course winning is so very important but it can not be the most important thing. Winning at any cost destroys a team and players along the way. It can lead to finger pointing and destroy the culture that is an absolute must to have that special team.

My team has gone their separate ways. Not because we weren't family. Not because we didn't play at the highest level. Not because of winning or losing and definitely not because of drama. We worked tirelessly to ensure no drama. We removed talented players to ensure it. No, we grew old. Some moved across the country, some had illness or injuries but mostly we grew old. But while we were together it was magic. It was truly a family. That didn't happen overnight and it didn't happen without making sure that the right players, the selfless, non prima donna, supportive, hard working players were the only players on the team. Not talented, not gifted. Those things really do help but they are not the key to having a successful team. I've seen the most talented players yell at one another and completely fall apart because they did not have a culture in which that simply isn't accepted.

Everyone, regardless of skill level, was welcome as long as they were good teammates. We were never going to hurt anyone to win a flag football game. Each player would blame themselves and never anyone else. Each player would give another credit, not take it. We would never cheat. We accepted that everyone was going to make mistakes, flag football is a game of mistakes and the team that makes the fewest usually wins. We would support each other, encourage each other. We would respect the other team. We would not show boat. We would respect the referees and when the game was over we would have a beer with all and look back and appreciate the game we played and loved.

It doesn't happen often, when you get a team that becomes a family, but when it does it is like catching lightning in a bottle. When you have that team anything is possible. And if you don't win (trust me you will win plenty if you have a team like this) but if you don't you would have had such a great experience and isn't that what it's all about? The trophies we won or boxed up now. The memories I have of those summer days running around a flag football field with my flag football family are some of the best I've ever had