



# HEADS UP FOOTBALL® FAQs

## YOUTH

- **What is Heads Up Football®?**
  - Heads Up Football is a USA Football organizational membership program designed to create a better, safer game.
  - Key components of this program include coaches completing the only nationally accredited, football-specific certification course and training in concussion recognition and response; Heads Up Tackling; Heads Up Blocking; equipment fitting; sudden cardiac arrest; and heat preparedness and hydration.
  - Members of USA Football's Medical Advisory Committee and Tackle Advisory Committee as well as content from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) helped guide USA Football in the creation of the Heads Up Football program and its curriculum.
  
- **What are the benefits of a youth football organization adopting Heads Up Football?**
  - Participating organizations' coaches, players and parents will be instructed in Heads Up Football through in-person and online training using a train-the-trainer model. After selecting a Player Safety Coach, this person will be trained in-person by USA Football and will be responsible for bringing Heads Up Football back to the organization and its members through a prepared curriculum. The benefits include:
    - ✓ Comfort in knowing that your organization is taking a proactive approach to player health and safety.
    - ✓ Confidently answer parents' questions about the steps you are taking to make the game better and safer for their children.
    - ✓ Bring the credibility of a national safety program that is endorsed at every level of football to your organization.
    - ✓ Impart uniform coaching education for all coaches and give them online resources to assist with practice planning and improving how to teach fundamentals.
    - ✓ All coaches who complete the certification receive \$1 million of general liability coaching insurance.
    - ✓ Ensure all coaches are teaching essential football fundamentals, including tackling and blocking, resulting in greater player development.

- **What is a Player Safety Coach (PSC)?**
  - Each organization selects one PSC. Along with the commissioner, the PSC is responsible for overseeing the organization's implementation of Heads Up Football. A PSC attends a one-day training clinic with USA Football, ensures all coaches are certified, holds in-person clinics for head coaches, attends practices and games and serves as the organization's expert and point of contact for player health and safety. USA Football recommends a PSC does not have team coaching responsibility. This position's profile melds the roles of coaching mentor and parent liaison, specifically for Heads Up Tackling, Heads Up Blocking and other player safety matters.
  
- **What are the requirements of a Heads Up Football program?**
  - Each organization must register for the program online and agree to the Terms & Conditions.
  - Nominate the right person to be the Player Safety Coach (PSC).
  - Player Safety Coach must complete the following responsibilities:
    - ✓ Become certified by USA Football's Level 1 Coach Certification (Deadline: Labor Day).
    - ✓ Attend a one-day, in-person USA Football Player Safety Coach training clinic annually (Deadline: Aug. 16).
    - ✓ Conduct a Heads Up Coaches clinic for all head coaches.
    - ✓ Conduct a Heads Up Parent Meeting for all parents and players.
    - ✓ Mentor coaches, players and parents in elements of Heads Up Football in-season by attending practices and games.
  - All coaches (head and assistant) register for a USA Football Coach Membership, which includes Level 1 certification courses and member resources.
  - All coaches annually complete the Level 1 Coach Certification Course or Recertification Quiz. Require each player's parent or legal guardian to execute a legally valid waiver and release naming USA Football as a released party and submit a sample waiver to USA Football.
  - Maintain a minimum of \$1 million general liability and \$25,000 accident and health insurance policies, submitting a certificate of insurance to USA Football and naming USA Football as additionally insured.
  
- **How much does Heads Up Football cost?**
  - Youth football leagues – \$10 per coach (for all head and assistant coaches).
  - This rate includes the certification course coaches are required to complete and online Coach Membership resources. There are no additional costs for PSCs to attend the in-person clinic, materials received at the clinic or for the Heads Up Football curriculum.
  - The \$10 fee per coach can be paid by coaches themselves when they register for the Coach Membership or by the league or its member clubs during the fall season via check or online credit card payment.
  
- **How does an organization register for Heads Up Football?**
  - An organization's commissioner or president must become a FREE USA Football Commissioner Member in order to access the Heads Up Football program - <http://usafootball.com/commissioners>.
  - Once he/she becomes a USA Football Commissioner Member, an organization's commissioner or president can then complete the online registration for his/her organization. Simply visit: <http://usafootball.com/headsup>.

- **What happens after an organization has registered online for Heads Up Football?**
  - The PSC should begin to take the following steps:
    - ✓ Register online for a complimentary USA Football Coach Membership.
    - ✓ Complete the online Level 1 Tackle Course or Recertification Quiz.
    - ✓ Register online for and attend an in-person PSC Clinic run by USA Football.
  - If an organization is a league with clubs/associations under it, direct clubs to complete the online registration for Heads Up Football and their nominated PSCs to complete Steps 1-3 as outlined above.
  - As an organization moves forward in adopting the program, a USA Football Member Experience team member will contact the Commissioner who completed the registration to discuss best practices, outline next steps and answer any questions.
  
- **What is the length of commitment for Heads Up Football, and when does an organization become a participant?**
  - Heads Up Football is a calendar year-based program. An organization is only considered a participant and achieves Heads Up Football compliance once all requirements have been met.
  - Each year an organization wishes to participate in Heads Up Football, it must register online and meet each requirement again in that year, regardless of participation in previous years.
  - Each league is required to be in good standing, including having paid for the previous year's coach memberships in full before it can renew its Heads Up Football membership for the current year.
  
- **How does someone become a PSC?**
  - All PSCs must be nominated by their organizations through the Heads Up Football online registration.
  - They become PSCs when all of their requirements are met.
  
- **Can an organization have multiple PSCs?**
  - USA Football recognizes one Player Safety Coach per organization.
  - In some cases, the day-to-day monitoring and implementation of Heads Up Football can be a challenge for just one PSC. In these cases, USA Football recommends that commissioners of large organizations internally designate one or more Assistant PSCs who can support the primary PSC with the implementation of the program.
  - Assistant PSCs do not attend the in-person PSC Clinic run by USA Football.
  
- **What are the characteristics of a quality PSC?**
  - An experienced, credible coach, board member or official who has earned the respect of coaches and parents.
  - Leadership qualities, specifically related to communicating and interacting with coaches, parents and players.
  - Committed to better, safer game with a willingness to learn, adopt and implement the Heads Up Football program.
  - Strong reputation as a role model for players.
  
- **Can someone be a PSC for multiple organizations?**
  - Because of the duties and expectations of the position, a PSC can be responsible for only one organization.

- **What is a PSC Clinic, where are they located and how are these locations selected?**
  - A PSC Clinic is a full-day training led by a USA Football Master Trainer. Each Heads Up Football organization's PSC is required to attend one of the in-person trainings in the current calendar year. PSC Clinics focus on the technical materials covering Heads Up Football; your role as a Player Safety Coach; coach certification; proper equipment fitting; concussion recognition and response; heat preparedness and hydration; sudden cardiac arrest, Heads Up Tackling and Heads Up Blocking. PSCs also learn best practices and job responsibilities.
  - PSC Clinics are located throughout the United States. Sites are determined based on the number of participating organizations in the area and the availability of facilities.
  - Training consists of both classroom and on-field sessions.
  
- **How does a PSC register for a PSC Clinic?**
  - PSCs register through their USA Football memberships online at [usafootball.com](http://usafootball.com).
  - Registering online prior to the clinic is essential. Failure to do so can cause delays or failure for the PSC's organization to be recognized as a Heads Up Football member.
  
- **What if a PSC cannot attend a PSC Clinic?**
  - The PSC must attend a PSC Clinic. If the nominated PSC cannot attend a PSC Clinic, the organization must nominate a new PSC who can attend a PSC Clinic.
  
- **How do coaches meet the Coach Membership registration and certification requirement?**
  - Organizations receive Coach Membership promo codes soon after registering for Heads Up Football. After receiving the membership code, organizations should distribute the code to their coaches.
  - Each coach will register online for his or her own USA Football Coach Membership and will be prompted to enter the code at checkout, which will provide the appropriate discount. Using the code also will link the coach to the organization so commissioners can track when coaches complete certification online.
  - After coaches register for their memberships, they will have access to the certification courses. Coaches are certified upon completion of the Level 1 Tackle Course or Re-Certification Quiz in the current calendar year.
  
- **Do all coaches have to be certified every year?**
  - Yes. All head and assistant coaches are required to complete the Level 1 Tackle Certification annually. Coaches who completed the Level 1 Tackle Course in the past must only complete the Level 1 Recertification Quiz.
  
- **How can an organization track which coaches are certified this year?**
  - Organizations track their coaches as they register for memberships and complete certification. This tracking occurs online at [usafootball.com](http://usafootball.com) within Commissioner and PSC memberships.
  - When coaches register with their organization's membership code, the organization's commissioner and PSC have access to view coaches' certification progress and download detailed reports.

- **What is a Heads Up Head Coaches Clinic?**
  - After attending the USA Football-led PSC Clinic, a PSC is responsible for running a Heads Up Head Coaches Clinic for all of the organization's head coaches.
  - The purpose of the clinic is for the PSC to train all head coaches on the core elements of Heads Up Football: concussion recognition and response, equipment fitting, heat preparedness and hydration education, sudden cardiac arrest, Heads Up Tackling and Heads Up Blocking.
  - The clinic should be held prior to the first day of practice.
  - This clinic should emphasize hands-on, physical demonstrations to supplement the online training coaches received in the certification course.
  
- **What is a Heads Up Parent Safety Meeting?**
  - In addition to the Heads Up Head Coaches Clinic, a PSC is responsible for running a Heads Up Parent Safety Meeting for the organization's players and parents with the assistance of head and assistant coaches.
  - This meeting can be done in conjunction with existing team meetings.
  - The purpose of the clinic is for the PSC to educate parents on the core elements of Heads Up Football: concussion recognition and response, equipment fitting, heat preparedness and hydration education, sudden cardiac arrest, Heads Up Tackling and Heads Up Blocking.
  - The clinic should be held prior to the first day of practice or, at the latest, prior to the first day of contact drills.
  - This clinic should emphasize hands-on, physical demonstrations.
  - This clinic is an important step in helping to change the culture of youth football. By educating and involving parents in the process, we can increase communication and better monitor our young players at all times.