

An Effective Way to Teach Tackling

USA Football's Coaching Schools teach that the most important youth football fundamental is tackling. Learning how to properly teach this fundamental will help build better coaches. With proper instruction, players will learn to play the game more safely and become better athletes at the same time. Watch the Form Tackling video from USA Football's Film Room for more direction on how this fundamental should be taught to youth players.

Coaches should instruct their youth players to not put their heads down and not lead with their heads when tackling either. When making a tackle, athletes should be in the "break down" position: knees bent, eyes up, shoulder pads down. This allows the player to put his face on the ball, or "bite the ball" as some coaches would say. Two things every coach should stress most importantly are how to tackle safely and how to tackle successfully, and "biting the ball" is the best way to reach these goals.

Going into the tackle, the player should take his first step with the opposite foot of the shoulder that will make contact. The second step will be a little longer, and this is where the shoulder will drive into the opponent with the head slipping to the side. The defender's hands should shoot up through the ball carrier's arms and grab cloth in the back. Once this contact has been made, the defender should roll his hips in order to take power steps and complete the form tackle.

Here are the steps for making a proper form tackle:

- Assume the "break down" position
- Step with the opposite foot
- "Bite the Ball"
- Shoot the hands through to grab cloth
- Roll the hips
- Take power steps to drive the ball carrier back