

# Research on the Promotion Path of College Flag Football Centered on Competitions

Xiao Wang\*

Department of Physical Education, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing 100024, China

\**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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**Abstract:** In recent years, with the proposal and steady advancement of the national strategy of *National Fitness*, campus sports culture has witnessed vigorous development. As a new event added to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, flag football derives from the training system of American football. It replaces physical collisions with “flag-pulling”, featuring safety, competitiveness and teamwork, and has attracted extensive attention and emphasis in colleges and universities. Vigorously promoting flag football competitions in colleges and universities can not only provide students with diversified sports choices, but also effectively cultivate students’ tactical thinking, teamwork ability and physical quality through competitions, laying a solid foundation for their all-round development. Meanwhile, it enriches campus sports cultural life, further promotes the construction of campus sports culture to a new level, and drives the sustainable development of flag football competitions on campus. Therefore, this paper first expounds the competition-driven advantages of promoting flag football in colleges and universities, and then puts forward the promotion path of college flag football centered on competitions, so as to provide certain reference for relevant researchers.

**Keywords:** Competitions; Colleges and universities; Flag football; Promotion path

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## 1. Competition-driven advantages of promoting flag football in colleges and universities

### 1.1. Safety bottom line guarantees the normal operation of competitions

As a non-contact sport, the core rule of flag football is to pull down the flag on the opponent’s player instead of tackling the offensive player in traditional football, thus avoiding accidents such as fractures and concussions caused by intense physical confrontation. Compared with tackle football, flag football has moderate exercise intensity and wider adaptability to participants’ physical conditions. Regardless of students’ physical fitness, they can participate in this sport safely and enjoy it. Therefore, holding flag football competitions in colleges and universities can not only greatly reduce the pressure of safety guarantee and possible medical risks, but also enable the competitions to be carried out stably for a long time, gaining recognition and support from school leaders, students and parents, and providing a solid mass foundation for its promotion in colleges and

universities<sup>[1]</sup>.

## **1.2. Simple rules lower the threshold for competition participation**

On the basis of retaining the core tactical thinking of football, flag football has simplified its complex rule system. For example, it has easier-to-understand settings in terms of offensive advance distance, ball-carrying running restrictions and offside rules. The competition field is usually smaller than that of traditional football, and the number of participants is more flexible (usually 5-a-side), enabling students to master the basic rules and tactical cooperation in a short time. For college students with busy academic schedules, it is difficult to invest a lot of time in learning and training complex sports. The simplicity of flag football rules greatly reduces the learning cost and participation threshold. Students can quickly form teams and get started, and even participate in informal games or fun activities after the first contact. This is of great significance for stimulating students' enthusiasm for participation and expanding the competition participant group, providing convenient conditions for the popularization and promotion of competitions, and further promoting the rapid spread of flag football on college campuses and the normalization of competition activities<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **1.3. Comprehensive quality matches the competitive demand of competitions**

Students participating in flag football competitions need to have comprehensive qualities to meet the competition requirements, which is highly consistent with the all-round development education concept advocated by colleges and universities. For the sport itself, whether breaking through the opponent's defense with the ball or chasing and intercepting to pull down the opponent's flag, players need good running speed and direction-changing ability. In addition, actions such as passing, catching, running, direction-changing and blocking in on-the-spot performance can greatly improve their on-the-spot performance and judgment ability. In cooperation, wonderful football games result from mutual cooperation among multiple players, such as accurate passing by quarterbacks, ball-carrying breakthroughs by running backs, route selection by wide receivers, and double-teaming and marking by defensive players. All these rely on good communication and cooperation among students, thus effectively cultivating students' awareness and ability in teamwork. Meanwhile, tactical arrangement, on-the-spot application and analysis of opponents' tactics can cultivate students' tactical awareness and design ability<sup>[3]</sup>.

## **2. Promotion path of college flag football centered on competitions**

### **2.1. Build a hierarchical and classified competition system to consolidate the core carrier of promotion**

Based on the existing physical fitness levels and participation needs of college students, a four-level event pyramid can be established, namely "in-school class competitions - university department competitions - regional university competitions - national finals". The details are as follows:

First, class competitions, which are at the base layer of the pyramid, are open to all students. The competition format is simple and entertaining. For example, shorten the competition time to 20 minutes per game, set up a 3v3 mini field, aiming to attract students without experience in flag football to participate.

Second, department competitions, teams are formed by mixed genders from each department, with five members per team (at least including 2 female members), and the scoring cycle is repeated until the champion team is determined. The competition can last for a year and becomes a stable and iconic campus sports event<sup>[4]</sup>.

Third, regional university competitions, involving 5-6 universities with similar geographical locations, according to the standards of the Chinese University Sports Association, divide the participating students into male teams, female teams, and mixed teams, and conduct the competition using a group round-robin elimination method. The strongest team is selected based on the comprehensive competition score to participate in the national event.

Fourth, the national finals, this is the top-level event of flag football, held once a year, gathering outstanding athletes selected from different regions, held in either home or away matches or in a tournament format, and featuring rich awards and level certifications<sup>[5]</sup>.

At the same time, it is broadcast live through various sports media to create a nationally influential campus sports brand. This hierarchical and categorized event system can not only achieve the goal of “mass participation” for publicity and popularization, but also meet the personal development needs of “competition enhancement”, forming a national event ecological cycle system from campus to the whole country, thereby consolidating the core carrier of flag football promotion in colleges<sup>[6]</sup>.

## **2.2. Deepen campus implementation to promote the comprehensive penetration of competitions**

In order to ensure the establishment of a solid and effective execution system for flag football competitions, it is necessary to establish a complete and efficient system.

First, improve the internal guarantee mechanism within the school. Under the overall management of the school’s sports department, combined with the student union, the center for club management and other departments, form a committee specifically responsible for flag football competitions, and clearly define the responsibilities of each department. For example, sports teachers should undertake the tasks of professional technical guidance and training of referees; the student team should be responsible for organizing the competitions, promoting and publicizing, and conducting daily training activities. Through a three-level linkage system of “overall control by the sports department + specific implementation by the student team + support from the college”, ensure that all links are in an orderly state.

Second, start from the hardware, make full use of the existing facilities and conditions of the football field and running track, renovate them into flag football fields, and equip necessary equipment such as flag belts, training balls, targets, etc. Develop relevant equipment usage and maintenance systems to provide basic guarantees for the smooth conduct of the competitions<sup>[7]</sup>.

Third, for different levels of competition, universities need to formulate different participation plans. For example, for freshmen, hold the competition at the beginning of the new academic year, focusing on fun and popularization, simplifying the competition rules, shortening the competition cycle, and facilitating students to quickly familiarize themselves with the event; for all faculty and students, universities can set up regular and playoff competitions, and adopt a point system to determine rankings, increasing the competitiveness and entertainment value, and attracting more students to pay attention to and participate in the competition<sup>[8]</sup>.

Fourth, efforts should be strengthened in promoting the competitions and managing the registration process. Release competition information through various channels such as the school’s official website, official account, publicity boards, and school radio. Implement an online registration system to simplify the registration process. Focus on extensive publicity in each college and class to encourage teams to form and participate in the competition, expanding the coverage of flag football competitions<sup>[9]</sup>.

### **2.3. Promote multi-party collaboration to gather promotion forces**

To promote the development of college flag football competitions, close cooperation among relevant departments is indispensable. The following are specific measures.

First, actively seek support and cooperation from internal departments. For instance, the sports department is responsible for curriculum planning, daily training, and event scheduling; the academic affairs office incorporates flag football into the comprehensive quality education system, encourages students to participate in the competition, and appropriately gives preference in school's awards and honors evaluations; the publicity department can vigorously promote flag football competitions, the deeds of outstanding athletes, and the sports culture spirit through the school's official website, WeChat public platform, school newspaper, and radio station, etc., to expand the influence of this event in the school; the logistics support department must ensure sufficient supply of training venues, equipment, and competition tools to ensure the smooth progress of flag football competitions<sup>[10]</sup>.

Second, strengthen cooperation with external professional institutions and social forces. The university should contact local football leagues or professional sports teams, invite front-line coaches to conduct teaching guidance and referee training in the school, and bring the latest teaching concepts and event management knowledge into the school<sup>[11]</sup>. At the same time, the university actively seeks sponsorship from enterprises. On one hand, adopt the school-enterprise cooperation model to seek financial support and equipment support, which can provide certain material guarantees for the organization and promotion of competitions, such as obtaining sponsorship for flag football competition clothing from sports brands or seeking product sponsorship from sports drink manufacturers; on the other hand, the university can also form a mutual visiting and learning mechanism with surrounding schools, regularly hold friendly competitions and invitational events, improve the technical ability of participating students, expand the project's influence, and play a role of mutual publicity among different universities in the region. In this way, a "school-led, department-coordinated, and society-involved" positive mechanism can be formed, providing strong support for the sustainable development of college flag football competitions<sup>[12]</sup>.

### **2.4. Create a characteristic cultural atmosphere to achieve long-term project promotion**

The creation of a cultural atmosphere is the key to the long-term promotion of flag football in universities. The specific measures are as follows:

First, enhance the exploration and promotion of the spiritual connotations of flag football on campus. The sports spirit embodied in flag football, such as teamwork, tenacious struggle, respect for opponents, abiding by rules, and never giving up, aligns with the fundamental task of cultivating morality and character in universities. Schools can organize theme class meetings, sharing sessions, and essay competitions to guide students to deeply understand these spiritual connotations and internalize and externalize them in their actions, cultivating students' good sports ethics and sound personality<sup>[13]</sup>. At the same time, publicize the deeds of outstanding individuals and teams that emerged during the competitions and training, leveraging the exemplary leading role of these stories, to inspire and motivate more students, making flag football not only a sport but also a positive campus cultural symbol and value pursuit. Through continuous creation and deepening of a distinctive cultural atmosphere, flag football can truly integrate into campus life and become an indispensable part of campus culture, thereby achieving the long-term promotion and sustainable development of the project<sup>[14]</sup>.

Second, focus on shaping and disseminating the cultural symbols of flag football on campus. Universities

can design logos, event marks, and slogans with their own characteristics for flag football and incorporate these identifiers into the campus environment. For example, posting project publicity posters and cultural walls in the playground, main roads of the campus, canteens, and dormitory buildings, allowing students to feel the charm of flag football competitions at any time. At the same time, broadcasting or special episodes of the flag football program on campus radio, school newspapers, WeChat public accounts, and Douyin media, and regularly updating content, such as match news, player interviews, tactical explanations, and event replays, to enhance students' understanding of the project and increase their support rate and participation in the flag football events<sup>[15]</sup>.

### 3. Conclusion

In short, as an emerging sport integrating fun, safety and competitiveness, the promotion of flag football on college campuses not only enriches students' after-school life and strengthens their physique, but also plays a unique role in cultivating teamwork spirit and shaping positive character. Therefore, colleges and universities can start with the following paths: building a hierarchical and classified competition system to consolidate the core carrier of promotion; deepening campus implementation to promote the comprehensive penetration of competitions; promoting multi-party collaboration to gather promotion forces; and creating a characteristic cultural atmosphere to achieve long-term project promotion. In this way, flag football can take root and flourish on college campuses, contributing to the cultivation of socialist builders and successors with all-around development of morality, intelligence, physical education, aesthetics and labor. In the future, it is necessary to continuously explore and optimize promotion strategies according to the actual situation of each college and university, and continuously pay attention to students' needs and feedback, so that flag football can gain wider recognition and participation in colleges and universities, and truly realize its educational value and cultural communication value.

### Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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