

# TACKLING DRILLS

# ***Non Contact Tackling Circuit***

## **Tackle Progression**

Before we ever do a tackle circuit, all our players are taught the proper, safe way to tackle during a ten-minute tackle progression teaching session. The proper placement of the head, use of hands, and hip rotation is emphasized during each teaching progression station. This ten minute session is held during our first practice in the spring and during practice number one in fall camp. During this teaching progression, players are put into their circuit groups and rotate to each station to learn the fundamentals of tackling. The big difference between our circuit drills and our tackle progression teaching is that all coaches are teaching the same thing at the same time at each station. Therefore, it is not necessary to rotate groups from coach to coach but we feel it serves as a practice run for the circuit drill rotation.

1. Hit (breakdown position; knees bent (sink hips), tail back, arch in back, neck against helmet, eyes up)
2. Fit (numbers on numbers, helmet to side of ball carrier, eyes to sky, upper body between ball carrier and goal line)
3. Lock (At instant of contact, wrap arms around ball carrier's arms, lift his shoulder pads off)
4. Lift (forward thrust of hips drive your hips into his body this will create lift)
5. Drive (use legs, upper body holds tight, move ball carrier back or to sideline)

## **Hit Position (check proper hit position)**

1. Everyone gets a partner
2. Tackler gets in proper hit position – knees bent (sink hips), tail back, arch in back, shoulder pads over feet, feet under the armpits, neck against helmet, eyes up
3. Partner jumps on back
4. Hold for 3 count

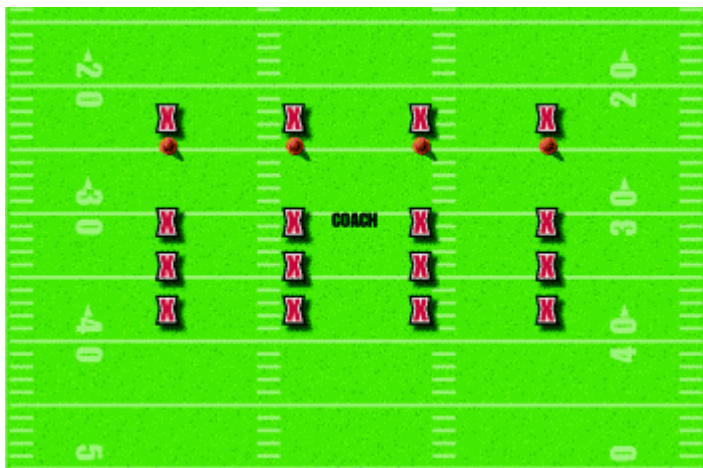
Coaching points: stress proper hit position. If the tackler is in proper hit position, he will not get knocked forward.

## **Form Tackle**

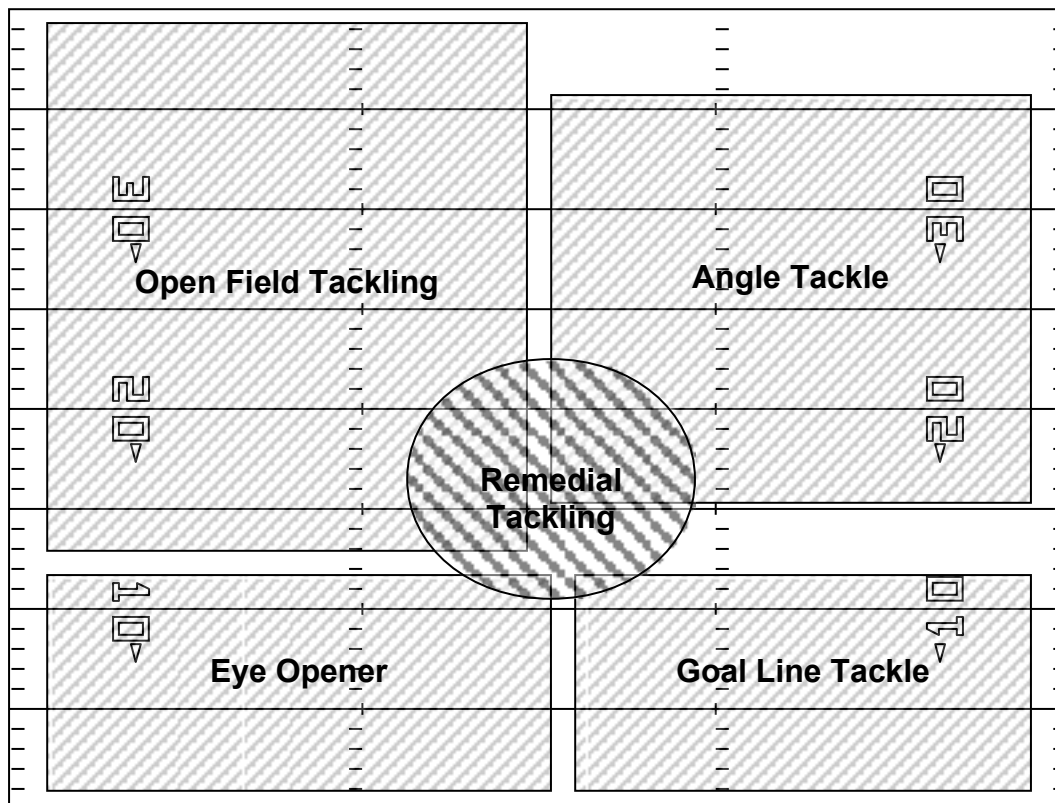
1. Runner – stand erect, hands together behind back, head up
2. Tackler – 6” from runner
  - a. Hit position
  - b. On command, chop feet
  - c. On command, fit, lock, lift
  - d. Drive for 5
  - e. Arch back and keep eyes to sky

## Form Tackle With Shield

1. 4 to 5 lines, with runners holding shields 3-5 yards from tacklers (see diagram below)
2. Runner – begin standing holding shield just below chin; back peddle upon contact with moderate resistance
3. Tackler
  - a. Hit position
  - b. Chop feet
  - c. Fit, Lock, lift
  - d. Drive for 5
  - e. Arch back and keep eyes to sky



**Tackling Circuit (with pads)**



## Tackling Drill Principles

1. Coaches main job is to remove fear
2. 5 minutes at each station – up tempo, work in as many reps in period as possible
3. Make stations position specific when applicable
4. Insist on successful reps to build confidence
5. Match drill participants by size and ability
6. Do not take ball carrier to ground; instead, Drive for 5
7. Teach tackling three quarter speed (“thump speed”) over and over until they’re really good
8. Do full contact only when they’re really good and confident

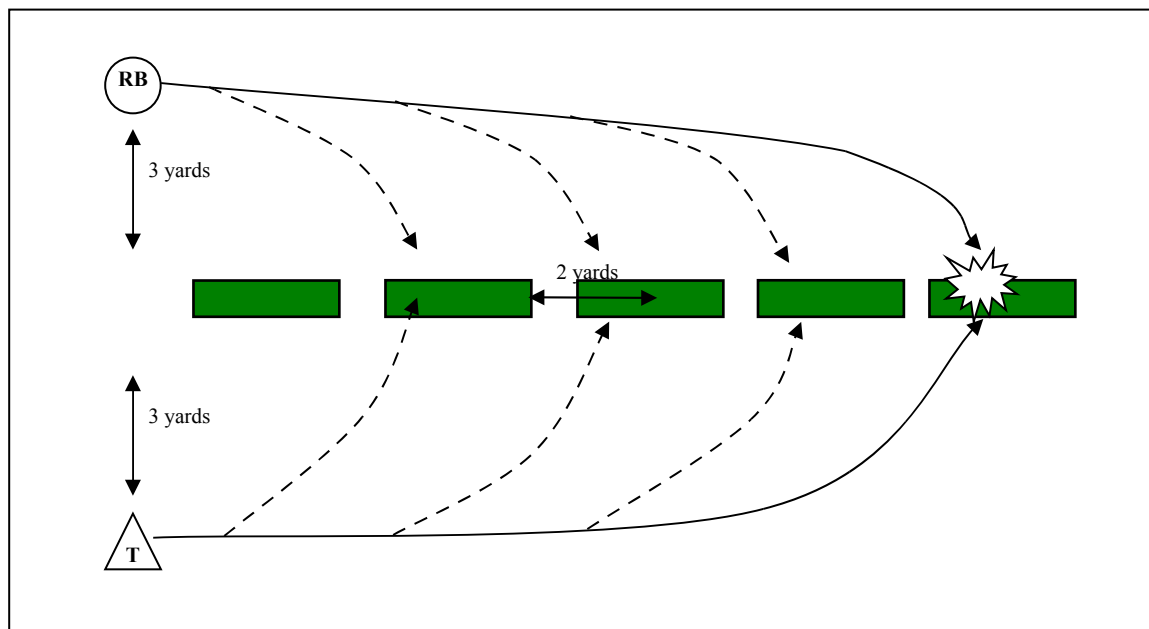
## Perfect Tackle Drill

At the beginning of the circuit, each station will do a perfect form tackle drill. Insist on sound technique.

1. Everyone get a partner
2. Runner – stand erect, hands behind back, on command jogs half speed towards tackler, give a small jump up and allow yourself to be carried
3. Tackler – 5 yards from runner
  - a. Hit position
  - b. Chop feet on command
  - c. Step into ball carrier

**Lock, lift, drive for 5**

### Station 1 – Eye Opener



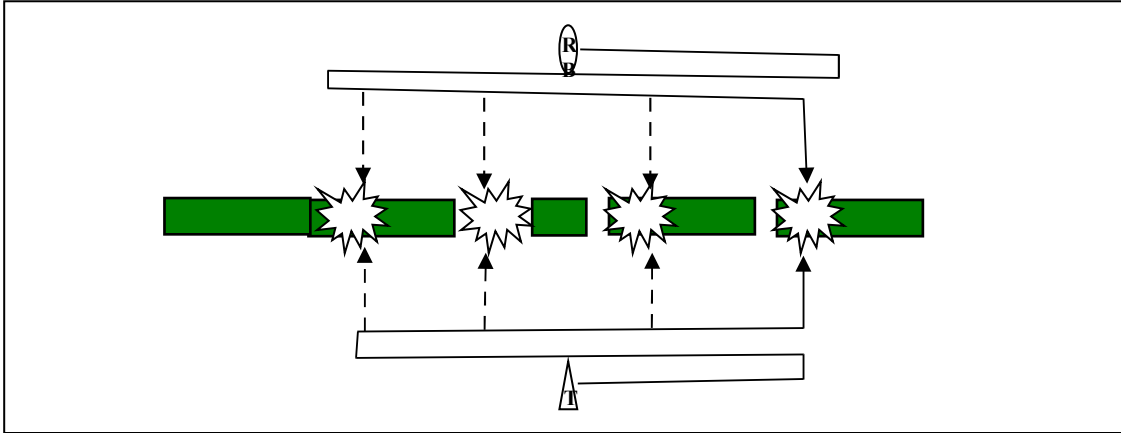
1. The Tackler (T) always aligns behind the RB and stays on his backside hip to prevent any cutback.
2. The RB can run through any of the gaps.
3. The T shuffles behind the RB but presses as the RB declares his open gap.
4. Hard, crisp collisions should result, although the T doesn't take the RB to the ground – lock and drive

Coaching points:

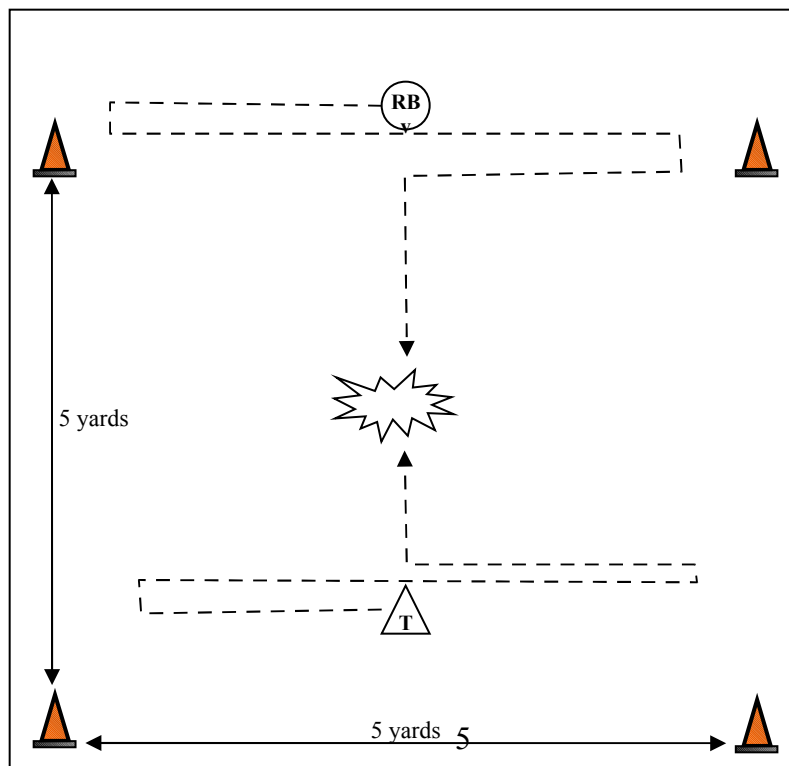
1. Prevent cutback by staying slightly inside (behind) to set up T-bone and close in to not give room for cut back
2.  Stay square - never cross your feet, body needs to remain in a good football position with hips down
3. Closest holes are more head on, further ones more sideline
4. Get head across RB – drive towards outside shoulder
5. During and after collision – keep feet moving, run through the RB, lock, explode hips

### Alternate Drill – Fill Drill

### Station 2 – Goal Line Tackle



The drill is performed in an area five yards square. The tackler assumes a two point hitting position in the middle of the box, two yards in front of the goal line. The ball carrier aligns facing him three yards away on a line representing the five yard line. On the command "Set" both players start chopping their feet. On "Go" the ball carrier starts moving back and forth laterally on his line. The tackler, keeping his shoulders square, shuffles on a parallel line, keeping the ball carrier on his inside hip. On the command, "Score" the ball carrier charges for the goal line and the tackler closes in and makes a full speed tackle.



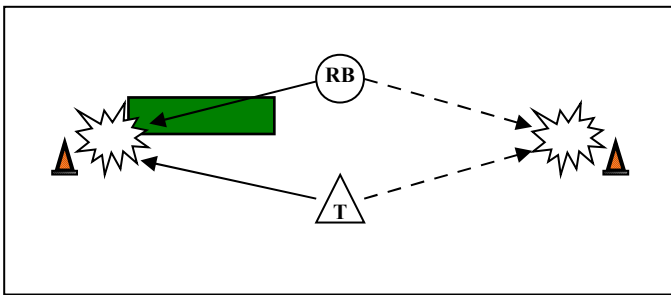
### Coaching Points:

1. Shuffle, do not cross feet, keep hips low
2. Stay on ball carrier's inside hip
3. Fit, lock, lift, and drive
4. During and after collision – keep feet moving, run through the RB, explode hips
5. Keep hips between the ball carrier and goal line

### Alternate Goal Line Tackle Drill

1. Tackler
  - a. Heels on goal line
  - b. Attack on command
  - c. Stay between runner and goal line until whistle blows
2. Ball Carrier
  - a. Fit position one yard from tackler with arms ready to receive handoff
  - b. Run through tackler, not side to side, head and eyes up
3. Coach
  - a. Give ball to ball carrier to start drill
  - b. Blow whistle when momentum is stopped or a score

### Alternate Goal Line Drill – Corner Score Drill

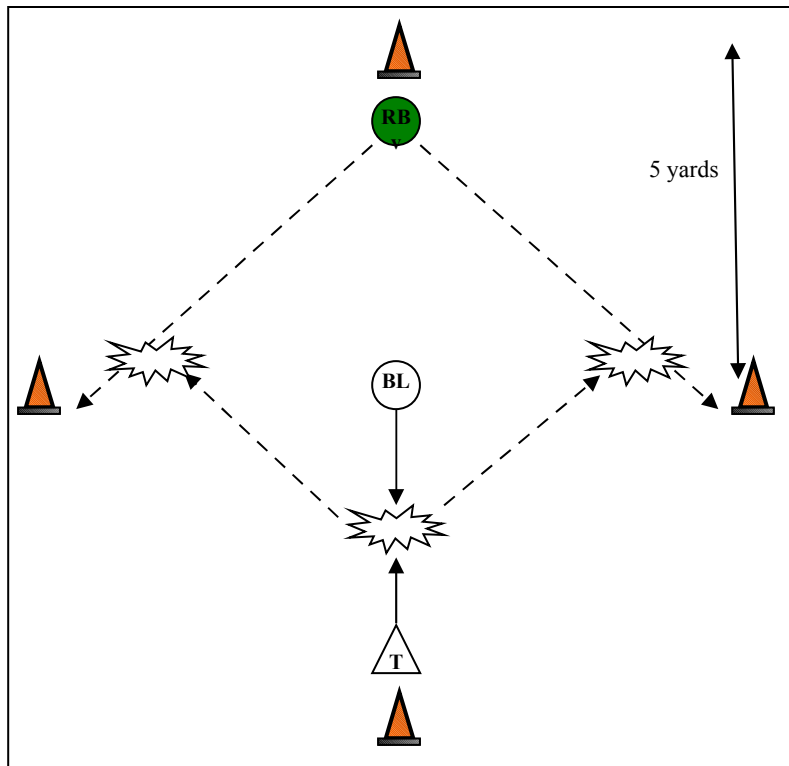


Other drills – “roll over” (tackler and runner start head to head on their backs and get up on command) and “over the top” (same as roll over except tackler and runner start on their stomachs and are separated by a step over bag)

## Station 3 – Angle Tackle

### Linebackers/Secondary – Butt, Bench, and Fury

This drill is performed in a five yard square aligned in a diamond. A line of defenders at one cone, the ball carrier at the opposite cone, and the blocker in the middle of the square. On first whistle, the blocker attacks defender square. Defender takes on block square, benches off, and controls blocker. Second whistle, the ball carrier runs to one cone designated by the coach. Defender, sheds blocker opposite and makes a form tackle.

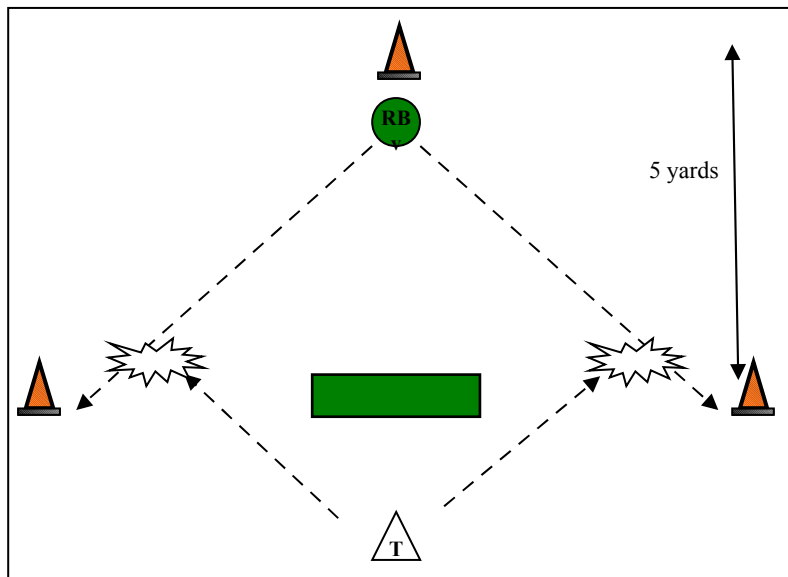


### Coaching Points

1. Shed
  1. Low shoulder pad/hide your numbers.
  2. Don't punch until you can step on his toes.
  3. Punch the blocker on the breasts plates with your thumbs up, elbows in to your midline.
  4. Do not look for the ball until you locked the blocker out and have separation.
2. Tackle
  1. Press the ball carrier, work up field
  2. Stay on inside hip preventing cut-back
  3. Get head across and run through the ball carrier

## Defensive Lineman

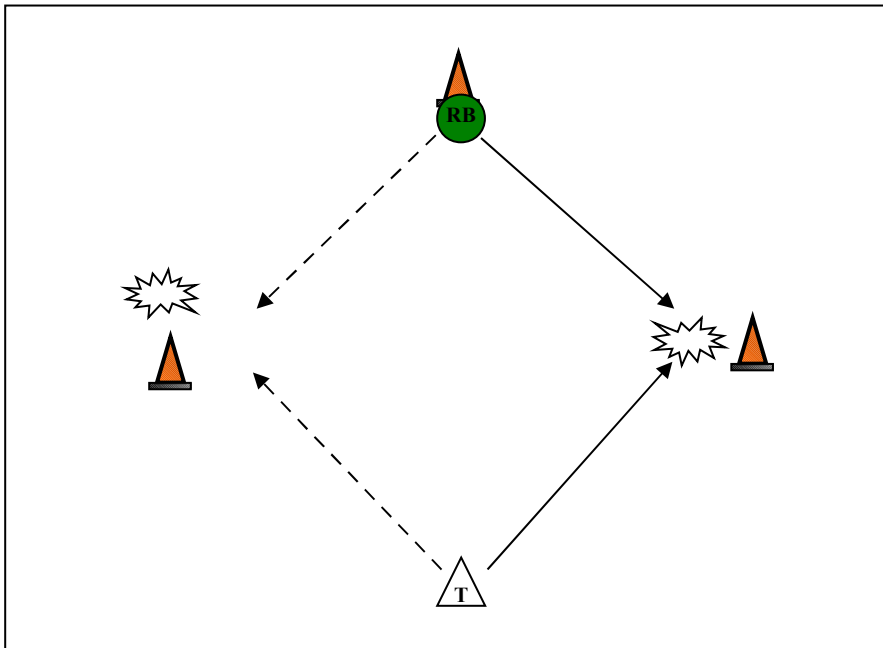
Similar set up as the linebacker drill except the blocker is removed and replaced by a step over bag placed perpendicular to the ball carrier and tackler. The tackler is placed in a six point stance behind the bag. On command, the ball carrier runs to the cone designated by the coach. The tackler gathers to his feet and executes a form tackle



### Coaching Points

1. Press the ball carrier, work up field
2. Stay on inside hip preventing cut-back
3. Get head across and run through the ball carrier

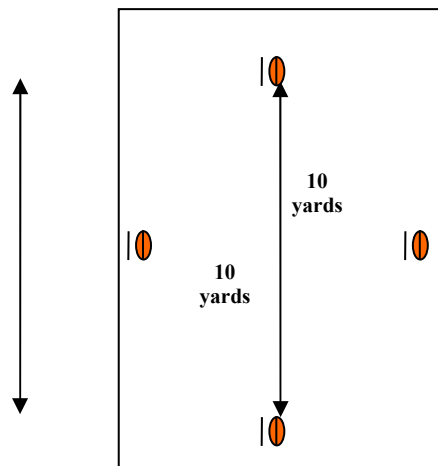
## Alternate Angle Tackle Drill





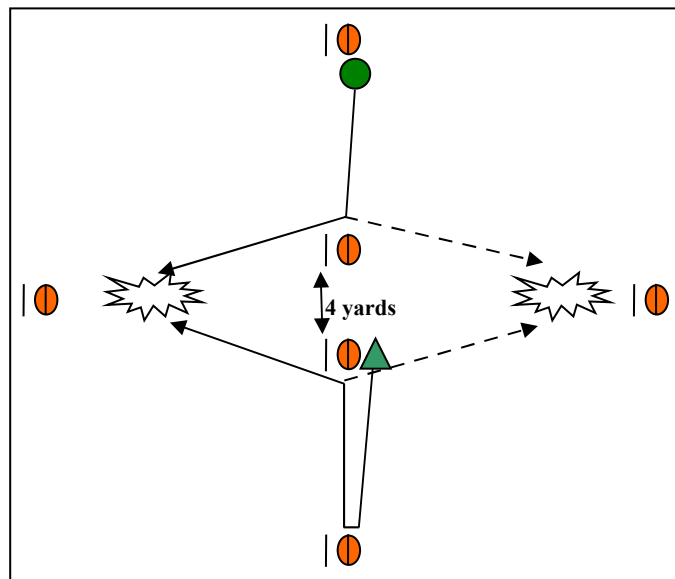
## Station 4 – Open Field Tackle

The set-up for Open Field tackling station starts by aligning four cones in a 10 yard by 10 yard square. In this drill, each defensive position (linebackers, defensive linemen, and defensive back) has a different starting point.



### Secondary

The defensive back is aligned in the middle of the side cones. The defensive back will stick his back pedal (plant and change direction) and advance back towards the middle cone. Once the defensive back has reached his drop, the ball carrier should sprint to the cone directly in front of him and then break to one of the side cones. The tackler should re-direct to the ball carrier and make form angle tackle.



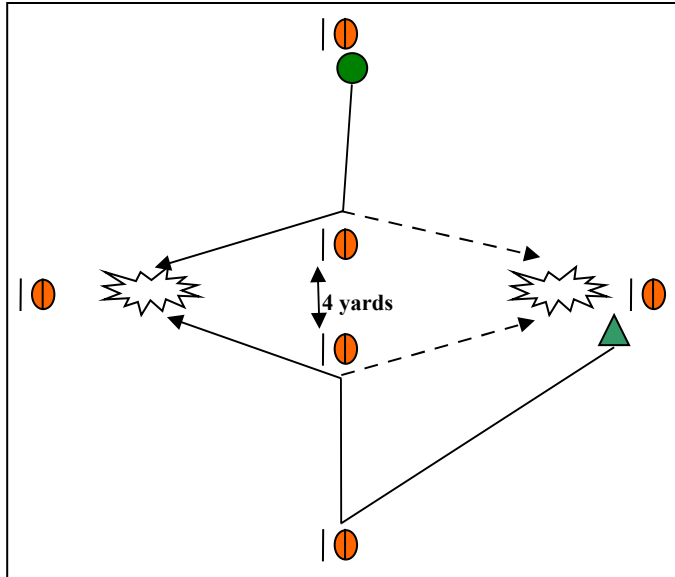
### Coaching Points:

1. Close in on ball carrier at full speed
2. Do not idle down to redirect while too far away from the ball carrier (within 4 yards)
3. Keep feet under your shoulders to maintain balance once you redirect to the ball carrier
4. In order to redirect, squeeze the knees and drop the hips and maintain the weight on the balls of the feet.
5. Press the ball carrier, work up field
6. Stay on inside hip preventing cut-back

7. Get head across and run through the ball carrier

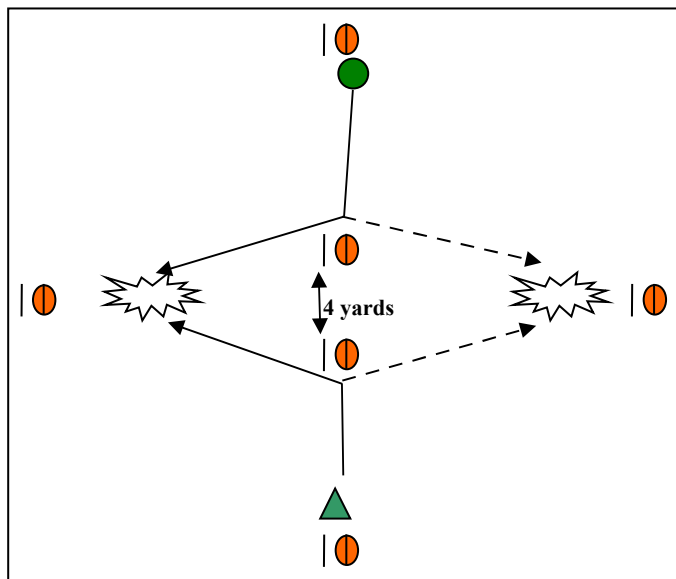
### Linebackers

Same as above except the linebacker starts on the side cone and drops in a 45 degree angle to the far cone.



### Defensive Lineman

The defensive lineman starts face down with his toes on the far cone (See Diagram 2D). Once the ball carrier moves towards a side cone, the lineman will get up and advance towards an angle tackle on the ball carrier.



## Remedial Station

Equipment needed: 1 tackling dummy or one man sled

Players will feel that remedial tackling is a punishment. This is not the case. Remedial tackling is a reinforcement of the correct tackling procedure. Upon incorrect execution of a tackle, the player will be sent to the remedial tackling coach with the phrase, "Liam, go over to Coach Walsh and work on keeping your head up while you tackle."

The player then sprints to the remedial tackling coach and informs him what portion of the tackle he needs to work on (sometimes the remedial tackling coach will get too busy to hear the original mistake.) The player will then execute five correct tackles, (start to finish) using the tackling dummy/"Popsicle" stick before sprinting back to catch up with his drill mates, who may have moved on in the interim.

If there are more than two players waiting to execute remedial tackles, they can use each other for slow motion tackling practice.

Coaching Points: Execute each of the points to a correct tackle as slowly as necessary to perform each step perfectly. Incorrect reps do not count.