



2003 COACHING ACADEMY PLAYBOOK



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Produced by NFL Creative. Project Manager: Joe Velazquez. Graphic Designers: Jim Hudgens, Susan Kaplan, Jackie O'Camb, and Will Tham. Cover Designed by Jim Hudgens.

Printed in Wisconsin by Banta Book Group.



CONTENTS

Section		Page
I	Coaching Academy Program Overview	1
II	Coaching Philosophy— Developing Winners In Football and Life	3
III	Football Skills—Successful Offense Successful Youth Offense	11 55
IV	Football Skills—Successful Defense Successful Youth Defense	75 111
V	Football Skills—Successful Special Teams Successful Youth Special Teams	131 174
VI	Coach–Player Communication Chapter 1: Communicating Effectively Chapter 2: Giving Effective Demonstrations Chapter 3: Giving Effective Feedback	187 187 198 206
VII	Program and Team Management Chapter 1: Organizing To Win Chapter 2: Effective Practice Planning Chapter 3: Effectively Dealing With Parents	213 213 266 275
VIII	Player Life-Skills Development: Developing Winners In Football and Life Chapter 1: Coaching Life Skills On the Run Chapter 2: The Power 4W Success System Chapter 3: The Coach As a Mentor Of Young People	291 291 302 318
X	Program Follow-Up	417



NFL/NFF COACHING ACADEMY

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Dear Coach:

Welcome to the National Football League/National Football Foundation Coaching Academy Program. The National Football League and its players are proud to be part of this program designed to support youth and high school football coaches.

Youth and high school football is the foundation of our game. For many of us, that is where our interest in football began.

Many current and former NFL players tell us that their youth and high school coaches played critical roles in their development both as players and as people. This program recognizes that one of the best ways to help America's young people is by supporting and enhancing the skills of youth sports coaches.

Developing outstanding youth football coaches is the mission of this Coaching Academy. The program explores coaching philosophy as well as the specifics of offensive, defensive, and special teams play. Planning and organization, coach-player communication, life skills, and player safety also are covered.

This program is an investment in the future. We salute your dedication to young people and football, and look forward to working with you in our Coaching Academy Program.

Sincerely,

PAUL TAGLIABUE
Commissioner
National Football League



GENE UPSHAW
Executive Director
NFL Players Association





Section I: Coaching Academy Program Overview

Section Objectives

This introductory section of your *Coach's Playbook* has four objectives. These include:

- Welcoming you to the NFL/NFF Coaching Academy Program (CAP);
- Introducing you to the CAP;
- Describing the CAP materials you will receive;
- Discussing how you can best use the CAP materials to improve your coaching.

About the Coaching Academy Program

Mission and Goals

The National Football League (NFL) and National Football Foundation (NFF) have formed a partnership to initiate the NFL/NFF Coaching Academy Program (CAP). The CAP was developed in an effort to facilitate the growth of the game and to insure the positive development of all those young people participating. The mission of the CAP is simple, but critical. It is designed to elevate the quality of football coaching at the youth and high school levels across America and expand the game of FOOTBALL. This mission is reflected in the program's guiding motto: "developing winners in football and life." By improving the quality of coaching, positive youth development will be fostered and the number of participants in the game will increase.

By participating in the CAP, you will enhance your football coaching knowledge and learn ways to impart that knowledge to your players. You will also learn how to maximize enjoyment for your players, while at the same time insuring that they participate in a physically and psychologically safe environment. Most important, you will learn ways to help your athletes develop as football players, good citizens, and productive members of society. Finally, you will interact with and better understand coaches from all levels of the football community. Your participation will help strengthen the network of football coaches in America.

Program Description

The CAP curriculum covers six essential areas needed to teach the game of football effectively to young people and run a successful and safe program in a positive learning environment. These areas include:

- Coaching Philosophy: Developing Winners in Football and Life
- Football Skills and Strategy (offense, defense, and special teams)
- Coach-Player Communication
- Program and Team Management—Organizing to Win
- Life Skills Development—Teaching Players How to Succeed in Football and Life
- Player Health and Safety—Playing It Safe



Program Materials and How to Use Them

Program Delivery

The CAP curriculum will be conveyed through four primary means.

(1) CAP Clinic. You will take part in a one- or two-day CAP Clinic. The clinic will consist of a series of both classroom and on-the-field sessions in which you will receive the latest information in the six content areas noted earlier.

(2) Coach's Playbook. As a CAP participant, you will receive the *Coach's Playbook*, a jammed-packed football notebook that contains clinic notes, written chapters, and reference information relative to the content areas of the program. The *Coach's Playbook* is also designed as a postclinic self-study and reference source.

(3) Coaching CD. You will also receive a CD that contains graphic illustrations of proper football skills and summarizes key teaching/coaching points. You can use this CD for your self-study, as well as an important teaching tool for players. The CD will work on both Windows and Macintosh computer operating systems. The Coaching CD also contains a number of helpful administrative forms, documents, and checklists to assist you in your team and program management duties. It will be invaluable in helping you manage both your program and team and in saving you a great deal of time. The forms are in Microsoft Word Format and are compatible with both Windows and Macintosh computer operating systems.

(4) NFL High School Football Website. To keep you up to date on the latest in football coaching, the NFL's high school football Website (www.NFLHS.com) contains a special coaching section. This section provides football skills and tactics information, as well as high school coaching stories and tips from around the country. As a CAP participant, make a habit of checking out this section of the Website and keep up with the latest developments in the game and football coaching community.

How to Maximize Your CAP Experience

You will begin your CAP experience by participating in the clinic portion of the program. During this one- or two-day clinic, outstanding football coaches and coaching educators will lead discussions and exercises and guide you through lively on-the-field sessions. Clinic handout sheets are contained in the various sections of your *Coach's Playbook*. Your clinic session presenters will use the *Coach's Playbook* in an interactive manner throughout their sessions.

As you will see, your *Coach's Playbook* contains much more than these clinic handout sheets. Each section of the *Coach's Playbook* contains a written chapter that summarizes and expands the content of the clinic session. Use this information after the clinic. Read it to expand upon and reinforce what you have heard. The *Coach's Playbook* also serves as an excellent reference source for you to use.

Finally, some sections of your *Coach's Playbook* contain additional materials that are not covered in the clinic because of time constraints. However, this material can be invaluable to you as a coach. After the clinic, thumb through your entire *Coach's Playbook* to see what is available.

Again, welcome to the NFL/NFF Coaching Academy Program. We are proud to have you as a member of the football coaching community. Enjoy the program, and thanks for all your efforts to expand the game and contribute to the positive development of young people.



Section II: Coaching Philosophy— Developing Winners in Football and Life

Daniel Gould, Ph.D.

Russ Medbery, Ph.D.

Karen Collins, M.S.

Section Objectives

Developing a well-thought-out coaching philosophy is critical for coaching success. This section of the *Coach's Playbook* will help you formulate and clarify your philosophy of coaching. Specifically, it has three objectives, which include:

- Explaining the importance of having a coaching philosophy;
- Describing the NFL/NFF CAP philosophy “Player Power Development: Developing Winners in Football and Life!”;
- Testing your coaching philosophy by examining real-life coaching dilemmas.

Coaching Philosophy - Developing Winners in Football and Life

“It is important to have a philosophy of life. I encouraged all our Spartans at Michigan State to have the ‘Three Bones’ philosophy. The first bone I wanted them to have is a funny bone; to always have a sense of humor and to enjoy and laugh each day, especially if it comes at their own expense, and to take responsibility seriously, but never themselves too seriously. The second bone I wanted them to have is a wishbone; to think big so their seeds will grow, to hitch their wagon to the proverbial star and to have goals and lofty ideals. The third and probably most important bone is backbone. This gives you the gumption, the get up and go, the courage, the desire to excel, the motivation to make all your dreams come true and to reach all your high goals and ambitions.”

—Duffy Daugherty, Collegiate Hall of Fame Coach, Michigan State University

Why Develop a Coaching Philosophy?

The football season is fast approaching. Just think of all of your duties. You must check all the equipment, schedule the fields, make sure all the players have their medical clearance and insurance, and meet with your assistant coaches to discuss the upcoming season. While these represent only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to your coaching duties, one of the most important preseason tasks you have is to establish a coaching philosophy. As the above quote from legendary coach Duffy Daugherty shows, having a well-established coaching philosophy is a key to coaching success.

The reason most experienced coaches feel it is so important to have a well-thought-out and established coaching philosophy is because it has an effect on virtually every aspect of your program. Think about it. Your goals and beliefs about football and life affect everything you do from interacting with players’ parents to decisions about playing time and the type of offense you run.

Having a well-thought-out coaching philosophy, then, is the essential foundation needed for successful coaching.



Developing Your Coaching Philosophy

One of the greatest aspects of coaching is the connection and impact coaches have on the lives of the young people with whom they work. What about you? Why do you coach? What do you like about coaching? Answer these and other important questions by turning to Exercise I on page 6. Your responses will then be used to form the basis of your coaching philosophy.

As can be seen in your responses to this exercise, there can be any number of varied reasons for coaching. Coaches want to win, help young people develop, and be close to a game that they enjoyed playing. However, if we look across these varied reasons for coaching, three general objectives emerge (ASEP, 1990; Martens, 1990). These include:

- To ensure that players have fun
- To help players develop as athletes and people
- To win and achieve success on the field

Most coaches tell us that all three of these objectives are critically important in football. What about you? Please indicate which of these three objectives is most important in your coaching philosophy by ranking them from most to least important (1 = most important, 3 = least important). Write your ranking next to each objective listed on the bottom of page 6.

Now, using Exercise II on page 7, write out your coaching philosophy while being sure to address the importance of winning, fun, and player development. Additionally, create a slogan that best describes your coaching philosophy.

Most youth and high school coaches indicate that while winning, fun, and player development are all critical coaching objectives and should all be emphasized, the single most important objective is player development. That is, the primary function of a coach is to develop the young man as both a player and person. This involves teaching football skills in a healthy and safe environment. Most important, a coach should be coaching young people to develop as good citizens and productive members of our society. For these reasons, the NFL and the NFF have adopted the following slogan to guide this Coaching Academy Program. We challenge you to use it to guide your coaching and interactions with players!

Player Development: Developing Winners in Football and Life!

Testing Your Coaching Philosophy

While most high school and youth coaches agree with the CAP philosophy of "Developing Winners in Football and Life," there are times when this philosophy will be tested. In these situations, the emphasis you place on winning, fun, and player development will guide your coaching decisions.

Exercise III on pages 7-9 contains six coaching scenarios that will test your philosophy. Read each one and circle one of the three options available. Then, indicate whether the action option you selected is consistent with the Player Power Development Philosophy of "Developing Winners in Football and Life."

Finally, given the above discussion and your answers to the exercises, refine your own philosophy of coaching (Exercise IV on page 9). Be sure to indicate your most important objectives and the roles of winning, fun, and player development. Also, think about your philosophy. Will you be able to abide by it in those difficult coaching



situations? How will you keep it in the forefront of your mind so that it guides all of your decisions as a coach? And, most important, is this philosophy in the best interest of the players and the growth of the game?

Conclusion

It is commonly believed in the football community that participating in the game teaches players to think like champions and become better people. This is a myth! While football is certainly a great game and has the potential to help players develop, it is not the game that does this. It is those who are responsible for shaping the players' experience—YOU THE COACH. You are the key element in the entire system!

For this reason, it is imperative that you have a well-thought-out coaching philosophy. Recognize the importance you place on winning, developing your players as people, and having fun. Better yet, adopt the Coaching Academy philosophy of "Developing Winners in Football and Life."

Finally, a coaching philosophy does little good if it sits on a shelf or is a forgotten slogan. Use the information conveyed in this program to become a more effective coach and to implement your philosophy on a daily basis.

References

American Sport Education Program. (1990). *Leader Level Instructor Guide*. (Third edition). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Martens, R. (1990). *Successful Coaching*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.



COACH PHILOSOPHY HANDOUT/WORKSHEETS

I. DEVELOPING MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Answer the following questions:

Why do I coach? _____

What are my objectives for coaching? _____

What do I get out of coaching? _____

Why did I get into coaching? _____

FUN

DEVELOPMENT

WINNING



II. CREATING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Use the space below to write out your coaching philosophy.

What slogan or key phrase best describes your coaching philosophy?

III. COACH'S CHALLENGE

Directions. We will now examine your coaching philosophy by testing it in some real-life coaching dilemmas. Read each scenario. After the scenarios are read, you will be asked to select the option that best fits what you would do in that situation. Finally, think about the coaching philosophy statement you developed in Exercise 2. Is the option that you selected consistent with your coaching philosophy? Please write the answer in the space provided.

- **Situation 1:** You have to make varsity cuts at the beginning of the season and there are three players on the bubble and only one spot available. Player A is a little better than the others, but his grades are not strong. Player B is a great kid and would be good for team morale. He always tries his hardest in whatever he does. He is probably the weakest athletically of the three players. Player C is the son of the booster club president, his older brothers played for you, and he expects to play as well.
 - Option 1: You pick player A.
 - Option 2: You pick player B.
 - Option 3: You pick player C.

Consistent with philosophy? _____



- **Situation 2:** In your youth football league there is a rule stating that all players must play an equal amount of time. During a youth game, you notice the other coach is sending second-string players in with plays, but then they run back to the sideline without participating.
- Option 1: Pull the referee aside and tell him that the other coach is not following the spirit of the rules.
- Option 2: Talk to the league director and ask him or her to do something about it.
- Option 3: Approach the coach at halftime and ask him why he is not giving his kids equal time.

Consistent with philosophy? _____

- **Situation 3:** You are faced with winning your conference for the first time. Your starting running back, kicker, and quarterback were spotted at a party the night before the game. There was alcohol and marijuana at this party. What do you do?
- Option 1: Let them play, it would hurt the team to keep them out.
- Option 2: Bench them for the game.
- Option 3: Kick them off the team.

Consistent with philosophy? _____

- **Situation 4:** Your starting receiver is injured during a game. The trainer says that he can fix him up so that he can finish the game, but it is your call. Your backup receiver can do the job, but he is young and inexperienced. It will be a close game.
- Option 1: Keep the player out so he can heal. You will make do.
- Option 2: Let the player decide if he is ready to play.
- Option 3: Put him in the game.

Consistent with philosophy? _____

- **Situation 5:** Your A.D. and your principal come to see you. They say that someone has accused two of your players of cheating in several of their classes. They want you to suspend them from the team until the 'matter' is cleared up.
- Option 1: You suspend the players.
- Option 2: You meet with the players and get their story before agreeing to anything.
- Option 3: You do not suspend them from the team until it has been proven that they cheated.

Consistent with philosophy? _____

- **Situation 6:** You have a senior who has put on 40 pounds of muscle in the past 3 months (over the summer). You know that he has been hitting the weights, but you are skeptical of the size and strength gains in such a short time. You have heard rumors that he is taking steroids, but nothing has been proven. What do you do?



- Option 1: You are just happy the player is putting on that weight. He will really help the team.
- Option 2: You ask around (other coaches and players) about steroid use. You have a private meeting with the player in your office to find out what is going on and look for ways to get him help.
- Option 3: You confront him and suspend him from the team.

Consistent with philosophy? _____

IV. REFINING YOUR PHILOSOPHY

A coaching philosophy is constantly being refined. Based on the exercises that you have just done, you can use the following space to refine your coaching philosophy.



OFFENSIVE OVERVIEW

Section III: Football Skills—Successful Offense

Tom Bass, Former NFL Assistant Coach

Section Objectives

Fundamental skills, as well as basic offensive formations and play calling, are the essential building blocks of an offense. This section of the *Coach's Playbook* focuses on three important elements of great offensive play:

- Fundamental offensive skill information via animated photos and key point checklists;
- Offensive drills for all playing positions;
- Various one-and two-back sets and play calling.

These elements are addressed for both high school and youth coaching.

Successful Offense

"I would plan with the team and practice being behind by two touchdowns, in practice and in training camp. I would work and plan on being ahead by two touchdowns, with just minutes to go, to use the clock, not fumble, go out of bounds, have a penalty, get sacked, or throw interceptions. We would isolate each contingency that we felt important, and practice it."

— Former San Francisco 49ers Head Coach Bill Walsh

The key to scoring in football is sound offensive execution and keeping the defense off balance. To best prepare your team to attack a stingy defense, a coach needs to:

- Effectively teach basic offensive skills and techniques
- Make your players understand offensive formations and play design
- Be able to have your players integrate these skills into performance on the field

In this section you will find offensive skills and technique information, offensive drills to use with your players, and offensive formation and plays. We begin by discussing these topics from a high school coaching perspective (pages 15-54) and then focus on special considerations relative to coaching youth football (pages 55-74).

Offensive Skills and Technique

Fundamental offensive skill sheets that contain animated photos and written checklists for high school and youth coaches are contained on pages 15-24. Whether you are a high school or youth coach you should read this material. In addition, youth coaches should study the special considerations on page 55. These skill sets demonstrate the proper execution and key coaching points of basic offensive skills. Specifically you will find:

- Two-point stances for all running backs and wide receivers
- Three-point stances for running backs, tight ends, and offensive linemen
- Taking the snap, pre-passing position, and throwing motion for quarterbacks
- Three-step, five-step, sprint out, and bootleg action for quarterbacks
- Taking a hand off, receiving a pitch, and cut block execution for running backs
- Receiving a pass and rip-and-swim releases for wide receivers
- Drive, angle blocks, double team, and reach blocks for offensive linemen
- Pulling footwork and snapping techniques for offensive linemen



OFFENSIVE OVERVIEW

There are two points to remember when teaching these skills to your players. First, be realistic in your expectations, and remember that players improve with practice. Be positive and communicate effectively with your players. Second, recognize that all the football knowledge in the world is useless without running an organized and effective practice. See the guidelines outlined in Section VII (Program and Team Management: Organized to Win).

Offensive Drills

Effective offenses must do more than understand and execute their plays; they must be able to perform proper fundamentals to move the ball down the field. Prepare your offensive players to challenge opposing defenses by teaching them these drills:

- Ball handling for quarterbacks
- Footwork and ball security for running backs
- Route running and pass catching for wide receivers
- Chute work and specific blocking techniques for linemen

High school coaching offensive drills are contained on pages 25-29. Drills especially designed for youth coaching are contained on pages 59-64. Practicing these drills will help your team move the ball down the field and score.

Offensive Formations and Plays

Although proper skills and techniques are essential for a team's success, to put points on the board, the offense has to have a complete understanding of the team's basic formations and "bread and butter" plays. Here, we will illustrate the following: **I-Formation, One Back, Split Pro, Wing-T, Double Slot.**

In all, we will show a handful of running and passing plays to build into your offensive arsenal. Running (pages 31-41) and passing (pages 43-54) formations and plays for high school coaches are included. In addition, running (pages 66-71) and passing (pages 72-74) for youth coaches can be found.

Walking through the plays is the first step in teaching your team the attack. Once they get a basic grip on what the play is trying to accomplish, gradually introduce them into the action at half speed, and then integrate full-contact work to prepare them for game situations.

Conclusion

Execution is key to a successful offense. Great execution starts at practice. A good offense has a good feel for the basic skills and techniques and they understand how the offensive sets and plays that they use are supposed to attack the defense. It is composed of players that can defeat defenders one-on-one to move the football downfield. In this section of the *Coach's Playbook* we have shown you the basic tools for constructing an offense ready to compete.



OFFENSIVE OVERVIEW

Offensive Player ID and Terms

<u>Player Identification</u>	<u>Terms</u>
OL: Offensive Line	1 Hole: Gap between center and left guard
LT: Left Tackle	2 Hole: Gap between center and right guard
LG: Left Guard	3 Hole: Gap between left guard and left tackle
C: Center	4 Hole: Gap between right guard and right tackle
RG: Right Guard	5 Hole: Gap between left tackle and tight end
RT: Right Tackle	6 Hole: Gap between right tackle and tight end
TE: Tight End	7 Hole: Area outside tight end on the left side of the formation
Y: Another symbol for a Tight End	8 Hole: Area outside tight end on the right side of the formation
WR: Wide Receiver	Arc Release: Lateral step then vertical release
X: Split End (Wide Receiver, usually on line)	Kick-Out: Block that pushes the defender away from the action
Z: Flanker (Wide Receiver, usually off line)	Play-side Guard: The guard to the side of the play call
A: Third Wide Receiver	Target Hole: The hole/gap the running back is focusing on
1/QB: Quarterback	Pitch Back: Player that receives the pitch from the quarterback
2/H: Halfback in 2-Back set or I Back	
3/F: Fullback in 3-Back set	
4/WB: Third back in Wing-T and Double Slot formations	
5/H: Halfback in 1-Back set	

Defense Player ID and Terms

<u>Player Identification</u>	<u>Terms</u>
DL: Defensive Line	M: Mike Linebacker (Middle)
LB: Linebacker	W: Will Linebacker (Weak Side)
DB: Defensive Back	RC: Right Corner
RE: Right End	LC: Left Corner
RT: Right Tackle	FS: Free Safety
RG: Right Guard	SS: Strong Safety
NT: Nose Tackle	
LG: Left Guard	A-Gap: Gap on either side of the center
LT: Left Tackle	B-Gap: Gap between guards and tackles
LE: Left End	C-Gap: Gap between tackles and tight ends
S: Sam Linebacker (Strong Side)	D-Gap: Area outside the tight ends
	Out Responsibility: Zone drop by a player where he defends the out route
	Hook Responsibility: Zone drop by a player where he defends the hook route
	Deep 1/3 Zones: Area from sideline to sideline which is defended by the defensive backs in three zone coverage

OFFENSIVE SKILLS



QUARTERBACKS

STANCE

- Stand up straight with feet even, shoulder width.
- Have weight even on each foot, toes pointing straight ahead.
- Bend knees, keep back straight and head up.
- Lean shoulders and head forward in front of hips.
- Extend both arms in front of waist.
- Bring hands together, below waist, with passing hand on top.



TAKING A SNAP

- Line up behind center and adjust knee bend to height of center.
- Place the heel of passing hand on top of heel of other hand.
- Extend and separate fingers and thumbs.
- Press up slightly with top hand to alert center you are ready.
- Secure the ball with the bottom hand the instant it comes from the center.



Shotgun

- From the shotgun, give the center a target.
- Look over top of center downfield to defense.
- When the ball is snapped, focus on making the catch and securing the ball.



GRIPPING THE BALL

- First finger near the end of the ball, off the laces, across seam.
- Place middle and third finger across the laces on ball.
- Little finger should just reach and be on the laces.
- Feel most pressure between the ball and passing hand just behind the center point of the ball.
- May need to adjust grip to the size of hand but try to keep pressure in this area.



OFFENSIVE SKILLS

QUARTERBACKS

3-STEP DROP



- Take first step with the foot on the side of throwing arm.
- Next is a crossover step with other foot.
- Hold ball securely in both hands close to the chest.
- Allow arms to move forward and back in a normal motion.
- Take third step with the foot on the side of throwing arm to stop backward motion.
- Step forward with front foot to begin throwing motion.
- Best used for short, quick passes, such as a quick out, slant, or hitch.

5-STEP DROP



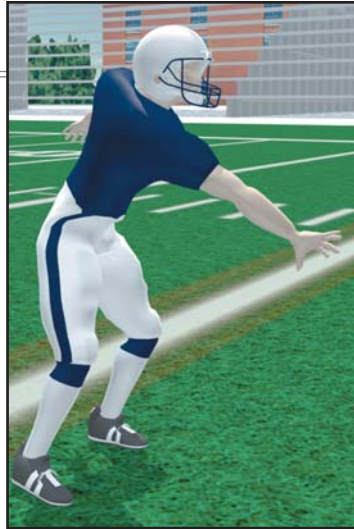
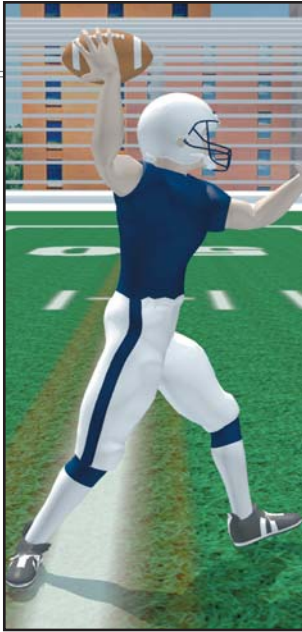
- Take first step away from the center should be with the foot on the side of the throwing arm.
- Next will come three quick crossover steps beginning with the foot opposite the throwing arm.
- Hold ball in both hands close to the chest.
- Allow arms to move forward and back in a normal motion.
- Take a fifth elongated step with the foot on the side of the throwing arm to stop backward motion.
- Bring other foot back so that both feet are under hips.
- Step forward with the front foot to begin throwing motion.
- Best used for medium passes that require more time to throw, such as an out, in, hook, cross, quick post, or deep up.

PREPASSING POSITION



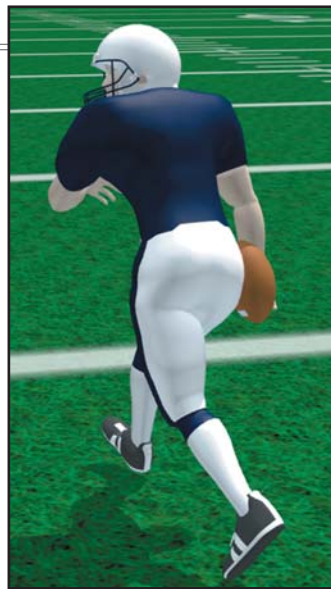
- Have fingers properly located for a correct grip on the ball.
- Hold the ball securely in both hands.
- Keep the ball even with the middle of chest.
- Have both feet directly under hips.
- Have front shoulder and hip pointed downfield at target.
- Step forward with front foot to begin throwing motion.

OFFENSIVE SKILLS



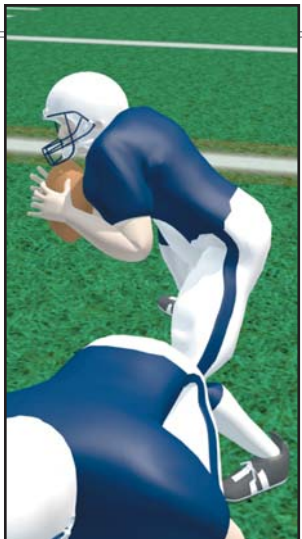
QUARTERBACKS THROWING MOTION

- Step directly at the target with the foot opposite throwing arm.
- Release nonthrowing hand from ball.
- Bring back throwing hand and ball.
- Keep the elbow bent on throwing arm.
- Have ball above the shoulder pad and slightly behind helmet.
- Move hips and shoulders toward the target ahead of throwing arm.
- Allow throwing arm to come forward with lower arm passing over and in front of elbow.
- Throwing hand and the ball should extend forward.
- Allow ball to come out of hand in tight spiral.
- Have throwing hand and arm fully extended and pointed directly at target.
- Allow throwing hand to rotate to the inside, with palm of hand facing down, to put a spiral on the ball.



BOOTLEG

- Fake handoff to running back.
- Move in the opposite direction, gain depth and width.
- After fake, hide ball on hip away from the defense.
- Focus downfield and select a receiver.
- Turn up field with hips and chest pointing directly at target.
- Bring the ball up prepared to pass.
- Step directly at receiver with foot opposite throwing arm, moving hips and shoulders toward target.
- Use normal throwing motion coming over front foot.
- If no one is open, be prepared to bring the ball down and run.
- Best used against defenses that pursue quickly to run action.



SPRINT OUT

- Take snap and open to the side of the sprint out.
- Gain depth and width.
- Hold ball in both hands at the middle of your chest.
- Focus downfield and select a receiver.
- Turn up field with hips and chest pointing directly at target.
- Bring the ball up prepared to pass.
- Step directly at receiver with foot opposite passing arm moving hips and shoulders toward target.
- Use normal throwing motion coming over front foot.
- If no one is open be prepared to bring the ball down and run.
- Best used to move quarterback away from defensive pass rush and give him a clear vision on one side of the field.



OFFENSIVE SKILLS

RUNNING BACKS

2-POINT STANCE



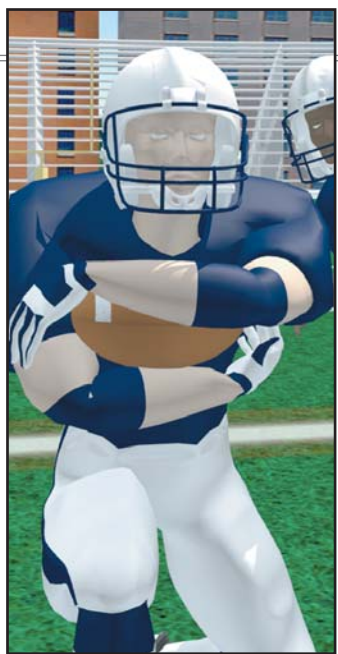
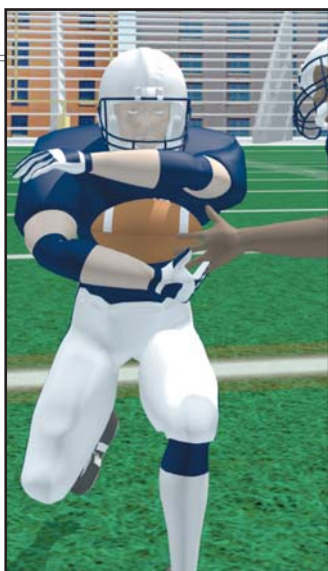
- Keep feet even, width of hips, with weight evenly distributed on both feet.
- Have a slight bend in knees.
- Lean forward with upper body so shoulders are over feet.
- Extend arms down so that hands can be placed just above knees with thumbs on the inside of legs.
- Keep back straight and shoulders square.
- Have head up and look straight ahead.
- Be prepared to move in any direction.
- Best used in deep position in "I," One-back, Wing formations, or when quarterback is in shotgun formation for pass plays.

3-POINT STANCE



- Keep feet even, width of hips, with weight evenly distributed on both feet.
- Bend knees so that forearms rest on the inside of thighs.
- Reach out and straight down with one arm.
- Place fingers of the extended arm lightly on ground.
- Fingers should be even with front of shoulder pads.
- Keep back straight and shoulders square.
- Have head up and look straight ahead.
- Be prepared to move in any direction.
- Best used in normal two-back formations.

TAKING A HANDOFF



- The quarterback is responsible for placing the ball in the pocket formed with both arms.
- Arm closest to the quarterback forms the upper part of pocket.
- Raise elbow of the upper arm so that it is just below shoulders.
- Place forearm of the upper arm across chest.
- Angle palm of hand on upper arm slightly downward to grasp ball quickly.
- Arm away from the quarterback forms lower part of pocket.
- Place forearm of the lower arm slightly below and across stomach.
- Have palm of the hand facing upward.
- Secure ball by coming up with bottom forearm and hand and down with upper forearm and hand.

OFFENSIVE SKILLS



RUNNING BACKS

RECEIVING THE PITCH

- Turn body and sprint to sideline.
- Look back for pitch, keeping eyes on the ball.
- Position hands with little fingers together to receive ball.
- See both ball and hands at the moment of the catch.
- Secure ball in the arm away from the defense.
- Look up to determine running lane.



CUT BLOCK

- Take a direct path at the man who is to be blocked.
- The quicker the blocker approaches the defensive man the better.
- Focus on blocking only one side of defender.
- Shorten stride in preparation to block, keeping head and shoulders in front of hips.
- Have hips over feet with knees bent.
- Make contact with shoulder pad and forearm to defender's hip.
- Allow helmet to slide to outside the defender's hip.
- Explode off of foot on the side of block and keep legs driving after contact.
- Best used against a bigger defender who is lined up on or just off the line of scrimmage.



PASS BLOCK

- For outside rusher, step forward and in with inside foot and swing outside leg and foot back.
- Have position facing out to sideline, both feet square, slightly wider than shoulders.
- Assume position between defender and quarterback.
- Bend at knees, keeping back straight, head up and eyes focused on defender.
- Bring both elbows in tight against waist.
- Have forearms up with hands in front of chest.
- Keep fingers and thumbs up and spread with palms facing forward.
- Stop defender's momentum by extending legs.
- Strike defender in chest with palm of hand away from line.
- Hit defender's shoulder pad with palm of other hand.
- Push arms out to create separation and keep feet moving.
- Lower hips, bring arms in and prepare to block again.
- Keep defender from quarterback until whistle blows.
- For blocking an inside rusher step forward and in with inside foot then up with outside foot facing directly down the field.
- Best used against defensive pass rusher during offensive pass play.



OFFENSIVE SKILLS



RECEIVING A PASS

RECEIVING A PASS AT OR ABOVE THE NUMBERS

- Have thumbs of both hands together and touching.
- Keep fingers spread with hands open forming cradle for catch.
- Keep palms forward and wrist cocked back.
- Reach out so ball and hands are in vision during catch.
- Focus on ball.
- Secure the ball immediately after catch.
- Expect to be hit.



RECEIVING A PASS BELOW NUMBERS OR OVER THE SHOULDER

- Have little fingers of both hands together and touching.
- Keep fingers spread with hands open forming cradle for catch.
- Keep palms forward and up with wrist cocked back.
- Reach out so ball and hands are in vision during catch.
- Focus on ball.
- Secure the ball immediately after catch.
- Expect to be hit.



RECEIVERS

2-POINT STANCE - WR

- Stagger feet with inside foot back.
- Adjust weight over front foot.
- Have toe of back foot on ground for balance.
- Have slight bend in knees.
- Bend forward at waist so shoulder pads are even with front foot.
- Hands and arms can hang down or forearms can be raised up.
- Check with official for onside.
- Turn head to inside to see ball.
- Begin forward movement with a step by back foot.
- Best used by receiver who is split out.

OFFENSIVE SKILLS



RECEIVERS

SWIM RELEASE - WR & TE

- Take quick inside step with back foot.
- Take a long second step with outside foot.
- Drive outside hand and forearm down on outside forearm of defensive man.
- Push defender's hand and arm into his chest.
- Step outside of defender with inside foot.
- Reach over defender's outside shoulder with inside arm, driving elbow into his back.
- Drive inside leg and hips to the outside and past defender.
- Run designated pass pattern up the field.
- Best used against defender who lines up in front of receiver and is the same height or shorter.



RIP RELEASE - WR & TE

- Take a quick inside step with back foot.
- Take a long second step with outside foot.
- Drive outside hand and arm into outside-under part of defender's shoulder pad.
- Push shoulder and arm up.
- Step outside of defender with inside foot.
- Drop inside hip and shoulder and rip inside arm under and past outside of defender.
- Bow back and push back with shoulders and neck.
- Drive inside leg and hips past defender.
- Run designated pass pattern up the field.
- Best used against defender who lines up in front of receiver and is taller than receiver.



OFFENSIVE LINE

4-POINT STANCE

- Stand up with feet even and width of hips.
- Bend knees so forearms rest on the inside of thighs.
- Reach straight out with both hands.
- Place hands on ground slightly ahead of shoulder pads.
- Shoulders should be even with the back straight.
- Have weight on hands and balls of feet.
- Keep head up and eyes straight ahead.
- Anticipate direction of block and listen for snap count.
- Best suited for straight ahead blocking and for short-yardage and goal-line plays.



OFFENSIVE SKILLS

OFFENSIVE LINE

3-POINT STANCE



- Stand up with feet even and hip width.
- Take small step back with outside foot so that the toe is even with instep of other foot.
- Bend knees so forearms rest on the inside of thighs.
- Reach straight out with hand on the side of foot that is back.
- Place hand on ground slightly ahead of shoulder pads.
- Keep shoulders even with back straight.
- Have weight on hand and balls of feet.
- Keep head up and eyes straight ahead.
- Anticipate direction of block and listen for snap count.
- Best suited for blocking that requires movement forward and to left and right.
- Can also be used by tight end or receiver as wing.

2-POINT STANCE



- Stand up with feet even and width of hips.
- Take small step back with outside foot so that toe is even with instep of other foot.
- Bend knees slightly with weight even on both feet.
- Bend arms at elbows bringing forearms and hands up and in front of chest.
- Open and spread fingers with palms facing forward.
- Keep shoulders even with back straight.
- Keep head up and eyes straight ahead.
- Anticipate direction of block and listen for snap count.
- Best suited for pass protection blocking that requires backward movement.

DRIVE BLOCK



- Start moving using short step with back foot on snap count.
- Stay low and aim to get under defender's shoulder pads.
- Keep wide base, feet spread apart, and take short steps.
- Keep shoulders square, back straight, head up, and eyes focused on defender.
- Anticipate contact on second step.
- Have elbows close to sides of body.
- Drive forward with both arms and hands into defender's chest.
- Push up and forward with hips to lift defender.
- Keep driving legs all through the block and move defender back.
- Best used for blocking defensive man directly in front of blocker either on or off the line of scrimmage.

OFFENSIVE SKILLS



OFFENSIVE LINE

REACH BLOCK

- Take short lateral step with foot on side of defender.
- Stay low and aim to get under defender's shoulder pads.
- Make second step directly at defender
- Drive palm of far arm into defender's chest.
- Stop defender's forward movement and continue to drive feet.
- Get in front of defender and drive other hand into his chest.
- Push up and forward with hips to lift defender.
- Keep driving legs all through the block and move defender back.
- Best used for blocking defensive man located out side of blocker either on or off the line of scrimmage.



ANGLE BLOCK

- Take short lateral step down line of scrimmage with foot on side of defender.
- Stay low and aim to get under defender's shoulder pads.
- Anticipate forward movement of defender.
- Keep head in front of defender.
- Position body into the side of defender on second step.
- Explode with shoulder pad and drive palm of hand on side of second step into the side of defender.
- Push hips forward and drive defender down the line.
- Stay low and take short steps.
- Best used for blocking defensive man located in front of another offensive lineman either to the right or left of blocker on the line of scrimmage.



DOUBLE TEAM BLOCK

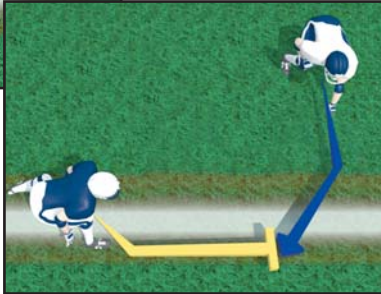
- Combination of DRIVE & ANGLE BLOCK
- Drive blocker takes short position step with foot on side of angle blocker.
- Angle blocker takes short position step with foot on side of drive blocker.
- Stay low and aim to get under defender's shoulder pads.
- Explode into defender on second step.
- Bring hips and shoulders together.
- Push hips forward and drive defender back and down the line.
- Stay low and take short continuous steps.
- Best used against a defender who is lined up on one blocker and must be driven off the line of scrimmage for play's success.



OFFENSIVE SKILLS

OFFENSIVE LINE

PULLING FOOTWORK



- Push off and back with hand on the ground.
- Take short step with foot in direction of charge.
- Swing arm and shoulder, on side of step, back and around with a quick hard motion.
- Shove off of opposite foot.
- Stay low and shorten stride in preparation of contact.
- Stay to the inside of the play and block with shoulder on side of defender.
- Keep back straight.
- Have head up and eyes focused on center of defender's chest.
- Use DRIVE BLOCK technique to make block.
- Best used against a defender who charges across line.

PASS BLOCKING



- Push back with down hand.
- Take short step back and in with inside foot.
- Bend knees to lower hips.
- Keep back straight, head up, eyes focused straight ahead.
- Bring both elbows in tight against waist.
- Have forearms up with hands in front of chest.
- Keep fingers and thumbs up and spread with palms facing forward.
- Stop defender's momentum by extending legs.
- Strike defender in chest with palms of both hands.
- Push arms out creating separation and keep feet moving.
- Lower hips, bring arms in and prepare to block again.
- Keep defender from quarterback until whistle blows.
- Best used against defensive pass rusher during offensive pass play.

THE SNAP

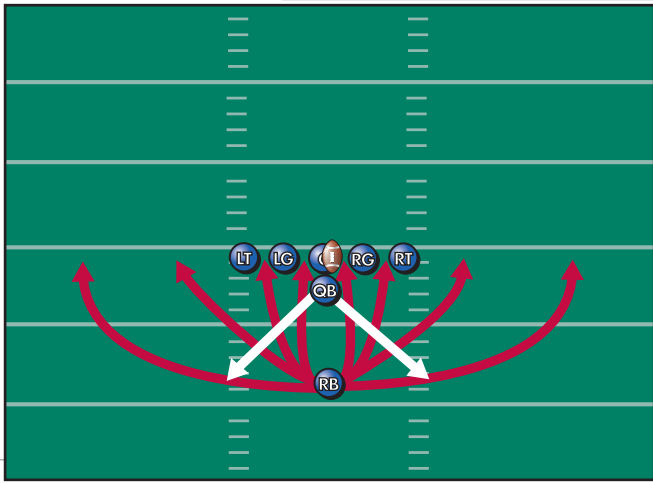


- Start in 4-point stance.
- Keep head up.
- Place ball under hand that is to generate snap.
- Have laces of ball opposite side of snapping hand.
- Keep snapping hand on outside and slightly to front of ball.
- Have fingers securely under ball with thumb on top.
- Bring ball up and turn sideways so that laces are on top hand of quarterback.
- Practice snap moving to right, left, forward, and back.
- Snapping the ball on time is center's primary job.
- During the week, it is good for every offensive lineman to practice snapping the ball.

OFFENSIVE DRILLS

Quarterbacks

BALL HANDLING



SET-UP—Have additional backs line up as the offensive guards and tackles. They can drop to one knee, turn, and face into the backfield so that they can observe the players making the handoff.

The next quarterback can go to one knee at the center’s position,

face into the backfield, and hand the ball to the quarterback on the snap.

DRILL—Coach should tell the players the play, signal SET, and the quarterback and running back should take their positions.

The quarterback can then call out the snap count, receive the ball, open to the running back, place the ball correctly into the ball carrier’s stomach, and then set up to pass.

The ball carrier should start with a crossover step, take a proper path to the hole called, position his hands and arms correctly, take the handoff, and sprint through the hole up the field for 10 yards.

REPETITION—Have each running back hit each hole one time.

GOAL—To insure proper steps by the quarterback and running back for plays to every hole, to perfect the handoff on all plays, and to have both players execute their proper maneuvers after the handoff.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

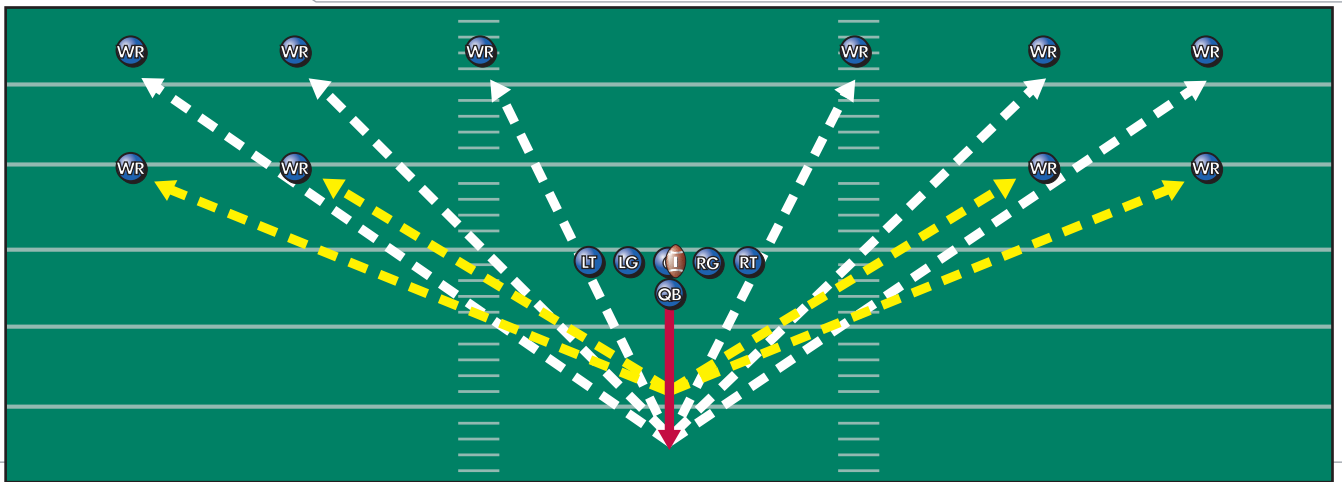
The quarterback uses a pivot for all 1 or 2 hole running plays or pitch type plays.

The ball carrier lines up in all positions [halfback, fullback, tailback, wing back] so that every play can be practiced.

You include any toss or pitch play that you plan to use in the game in this drill.

Have players repeat any play where there is a poor handoff or a poor path by either player.

DROPS AND THROWS



SET-UP—Towels can be placed on the ground to simulate the position of the offensive linemen.

The next quarterback can go to one knee at the center’s position, face into the backfield, and hand the ball to the quarterback on the snap.

Receivers should be placed at two levels, turning back and facing the quarterback—short at 5 yards and medium at 12 yards.

The short-level receivers should have 2 alignment positions—HITCH, halfway between the hashmarks and the sideline, and QUICK OUT, 4 yards from the sideline.

The medium level receivers should have 3 alignment positions—IN, on the hashmark; HOOK, halfway between the hashmarks and the sideline; and OUT, 4 yards from the sideline.

DRILL—Coach should call out the alignment position and level, signal SET, and let the receivers and quarterback line up properly.

The quarterback should then call out the snap count, receive the ball, and take the appropriate steps to set up and throw based on the

receivers location—3-step drop for 4 short-level alignments, 5-step drop for the 6 medium-level alignments.

REPETITION—Have each quarterback throw to each alignment location once.

GOAL—To insure that the quarterback:

Is taking the proper steps when dropping back.

Is setting up properly.

Is using the correct throwing motion.

Is delivering the ball to the receiver.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

All players are in the proper position prior to the snap.

The focus of the drill is on the quarterback’s set and throw and not the receiver’s catch.

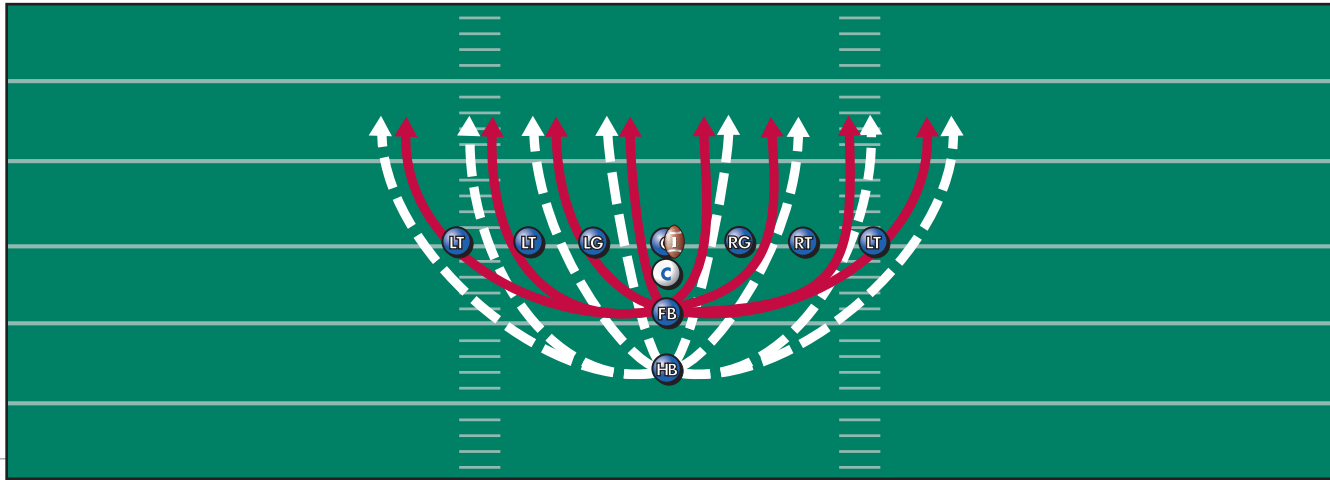
Eventually receivers can start in the HITCH or HOOK alignment position and move in or out when the quarterback has set up and is ready to start his throwing motion.



OFFENSIVE DRILLS

Running Backs

STEPS AND FOOTWORK



SET-UP—Have additional backs line up in the offensive line positions. They can drop to one knee, turn, and face into the backfield so that they can observe the players making the handoff.

The coach can serve as the quarterback and get the ball to the running back.

DRILL—Coach should tell the players the play, signal SET, and the coach and running back should take their positions.

The coach can then call out the snap count and place the ball correctly into the ball carrier's stomach.

The ball carrier should start with a crossover step, take a proper path to the hole called, position his hands and arms correctly, take the handoff, and sprint through the hole up the field for 10 yards.

REPETITION—Have each running back hit each hole one time.

GOAL—To insure that the running back is following the proper steps

to the hole, is securing the ball, and then sprinting upfield 10 yards.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The running back is taking the proper path to receive the ball and hit the hole.

The running back is securing the ball immediately after receiving the handoff.

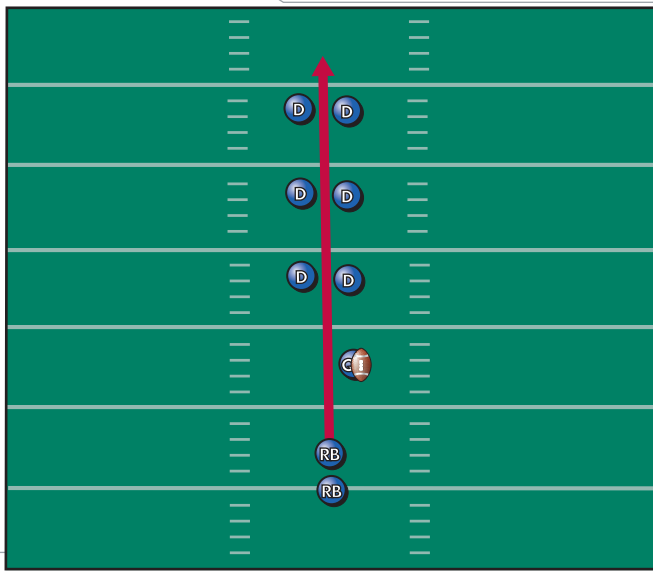
The running back has his eyes fixed on the target hole.

The ball carrier lines up in all positions [halfback, fullback, tailback, wing back] so that every play can be practiced.

You include any toss or pitch play that you plan to use in the game in this drill.

You have the running back repeat any play where he does not secure the ball or runs a poor path to the hole.

BALL SECURITY



SET-UP—Have three players line up on each side of ball carrier's path. Quarterback should be four yards away from first group, and ball carrier should be four yards away from the quarterback.

DRILL—Coach should get the players lined up for drill, and on the signal SET, the quarterback and running back should take their positions.

The quarterback can call out the snap count and place the ball correctly into the ball carrier's stomach.

The ball carrier should position his hands and arms correctly, take the handoff, and sprint up the field securing the ball as he runs between the other running backs. Players should reach out and try to strip the ball from the ball carrier.

REPETITION—Have each running back go through the drill two times with the quarterback alternating sides for the handoff.

GOAL—To insure that the running back is taking the handoff properly and securing the ball as he sprints upfield.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The running back is securing the ball immediately after receiving the handoff.

The running back has his eyes focused straight ahead.

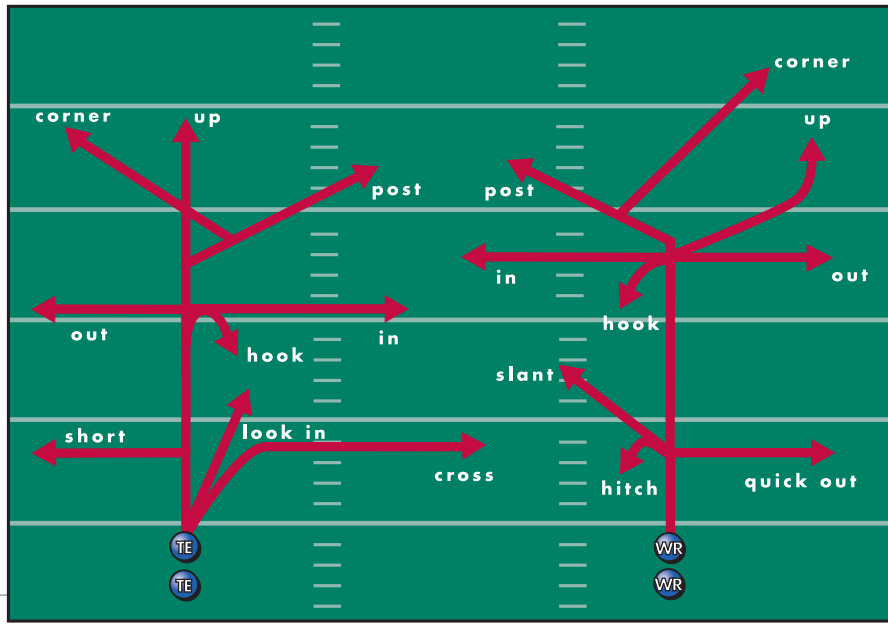
He keeps running even when contact is made.

He runs low with short powerful steps and stays on course.

OFFENSIVE DRILLS

Receivers

ROUTE RUNNING



SET-UP—Have wide receivers and tight ends line up on 5-yard line in position to run up the field.

DRILL—Coach should get the players lined

up for drill, and on the signal SET, the first wide receiver and tight end should get into their stance.

The coach can call out the name of the

pattern that he wants each player to run.

The coach can call out the snap count, and both players can run the pattern called.

REPETITION—Have each receiver run each pattern at least once from each side of the field.

GOAL—To insure that the receivers know the pass routes and that they are running each route properly.

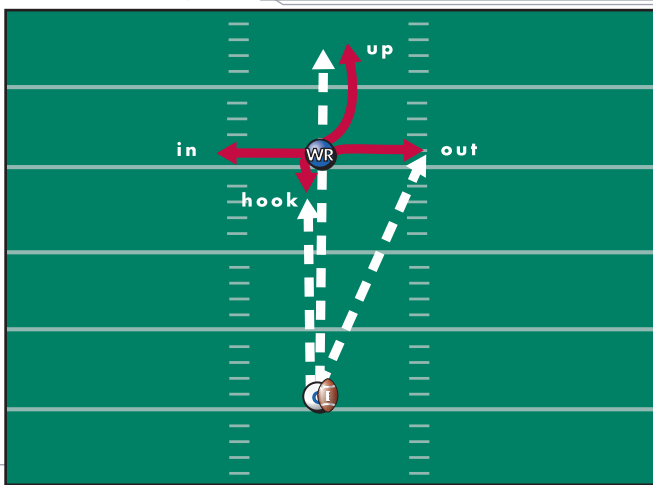
COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Each receiver runs the proper pass route at the correct depth.

They turn and focus on the coach as they make their break.

They keep their momentum when they change direction.

PASS CATCHING



SET-UP—Have wide receivers or tight ends line up 15 yards away and with their backs to the coach.

DRILL—Coach should get the player lined up for drill, and on the signal SET, the first wide receiver or tight end should begin running in place.

The coach can call out either Hook, In, Out, or Up, and the player turns and moves in the appropriate direction of the pattern called. The coach can throw the ball, and the wide receiver or tight end should make the catch.

REPETITION—Have each receiver move in all four directions and make the catch at least once from center and each hashmark.

GOAL—To insure the receivers know the correct way to make the catch.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Each receiver or tight end turns in the proper direction. They turn their head and focus on the coach as they make their break.

They have their hands in the correct configuration to make the catch.

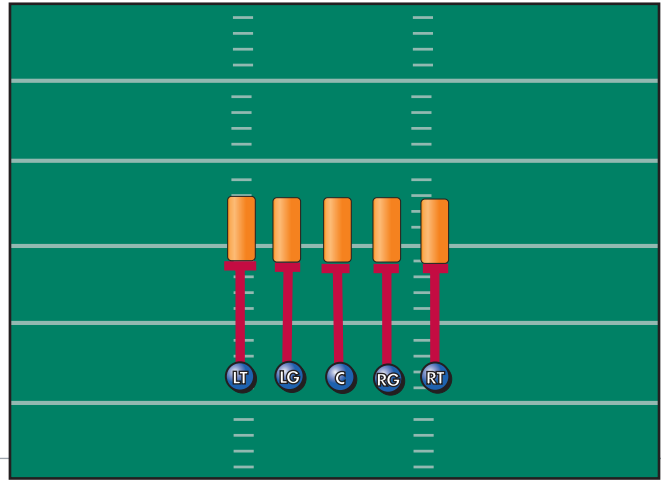
They can see their hands and the ball at the moment of the catch, and they secure the ball after the catch.



OFFENSIVE DRILLS

Offensive Line

LEG DRIVE



SET-UP—Have linemen line up on a line with another player holding a bag in front of each of them. Bag can be located a yard away to simulate the location of a defensive lineman or 3-4 yards away to simulate the location of a linebacker. Coach will designate the dis-

tance the bags should be from the blockers. The number of blockers who can go at one time will be determined by the number of blocking dummies the coach has at his disposal.

DRILL—Coach should get the players lined up for drill, and on the signal SET, the linemen will get down into their stances.

The coach can call out the snap count, and the blockers should drive into the bag in front of them.

The coach lets them continue to drive the bag for a few yards and then blows the whistle to end the drill. Players can rotate from blocker to bag holder.

REPETITION—Have each offensive lineman block and drive the bag with each shoulder with the bag located on and off the line.

GOAL—To insure that the blockers get off on the snap, stay low, make good contact with their shoulder pads, and keep their legs driving until the whistle blows.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Each blocker gets off on the snap count and explodes into the bag.

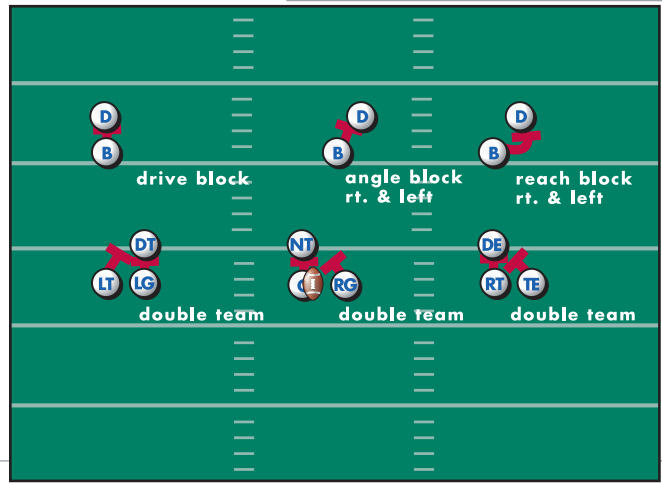
Each blocker keeps a wide base and drives with short powerful steps.

They have their backs straight, heads up, and eyes focused on the blocking bag.

They make good contact with the tops of their shoulder pads.

They keep their hips low, shoulders square, and continue to keep contact with and drive the bag until the coach blows the whistle.

BLOCKING TECHNIQUES



SET-UP—This drill has six different stations where blockers will be working on one block at each station. Have the blockers line up on a line with another player, acting as the defensive player, located in the proper position across from them. For both the angle and reach block, the defensive man should be positioned to the right and left of the blocker. The tight end can line up next to the left tackle for the next double-team blocking session, giving the other offensive blockers (LG & C, RG, & RT) the opportunity to work together. The number of blockers who can go at one time at each station will be determined by the number of players the coach has at his disposal to play

both the offensive and defensive positions.

DRILL—Coach should get the players lined up for the drill, and on the signal SET, the offensive linemen will get down into their stances.

The coach can call out the snap count, and the blockers should execute the block being practiced at that station.

The coach lets them continue to drive for a few yards and then blows the whistle to end the drill. Players can rotate from blocker to defensive player.

REPETITION—Have each offensive lineman execute each block, using each shoulder.

GOAL—To insure that the blockers get off on the snap, stay low, step with the proper footwork, make good contact with their shoulder pads, and keep their legs driving until the whistle blows.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Each blocker gets off on the snap count, steps with the correct foot, and explodes into the defensive man.

Each blocker keeps a wide base and drives with short powerful steps.

They have their back straight, head up, and eyes focused on the defensive man.

They make good contact with the top of their shoulder pads.

They keep their hips low, shoulders square, and continue to keep contact with and drive the defender until the coach blows the whistle.

In the beginning, only one player needs to block at a time so that the coach can give each player individual attention.

Use hand-held blocking dummies if you wish to work on good footwork on each block and reduce player contact.



OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS AND PLAYS

Offensive Play Introduction

Selecting Your Offense

Each of you may have your favorite offensive formation that you have selected to run your offensive plays. The following are running and passing plays that are diagrammed using different personnel groupings or sets [the players used] as well as different formations [the configuration of the offensive players].

Personnel Grouping or Sets

One trend that has evolved during the past few years is the use of multiple personnel groupings or sets. With this type of offensive thinking, basic plays do not need to change, but the people who execute the play may change. This is usually done to:

- Create favorable matchups between offensive and defensive personnel
- Dictate defensive fronts or coverages
- Create confusion for the defense by presenting different, continually changing looks to the defense
- Add better and bigger blockers for short-yardage and goal-line offense and better receivers on passing downs
- For ease of substitution and designing plays; personnel groupings or sets can be designated by a letter or by number. When calling personnel sets by a two-digit number, the first digit designates the number of backs and the second digit designates the number of tight ends in the game.

An example of the way different personnel can be designated:

Letter Designation	Personnel in Game	# Designation
A SET	2 Backs-1 TE-2 WR	21
B SET	2 Backs-2 TE-1 WR	22
C SET	1 Back-2 TE-2 WR	12
D SET	1 Back-1 TE-3 WR	11
E SET	2 Backs-No TE-3 WR	20
F SET	3 Backs-No TE-2 WR	30
G SET	3 Backs-1 TE-1 WR	31

Alignment Formations

Once you have the proper personnel in the huddle, you need to tell them how to line up [what formation to use] to run the play called by the quarterback. This designation should tell how the backs, tight ends, and wide receivers are going to line up. An example would be:

- A [or 21], 1 Right, 26 Power, on the second Hut:
This would tell everyone:
 - A or 21—that we are using 2 backs, 1 TE and 2 WR
 - 1—that the backs are lining up in I formation
 - Right—that the tight end is lining up on the right side of the formation (with X [split end] opposite the TE on the left and Z [flanker] on the right off the line)
 - 26—that the 2 back (tailback) is carrying the ball through the 6 hole (between the right tackle and tight end)
 - Power—that we will use power blocking at the point of attack
 - Second Hut—that the ball will be snapped on the second Hut in the cadence called by the quarterback at the line of scrimmage



OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS AND PLAYS

Set-Up

- Have the offensive team start in a huddle
- Tell the quarterback the Set, Formation, Play, and Snap Count you want called in the huddle
- Have the quarterback call the Set, Formation, play, and snap count and then call "break" to dissolve the huddle and send the team to the line of scrimmage

Drill

- The offensive team should quickly line up in the formation called in the huddle
- Formations can be set up to the left or right
- The defense should line up in the defense you expect to see in the game
- On the snap count from the quarterback, the offensive players should correctly run the play called

Goal

- Coaches should make sure that every player lines up properly, gets off on the snap count, and does his job correctly on each play before moving to the next play.

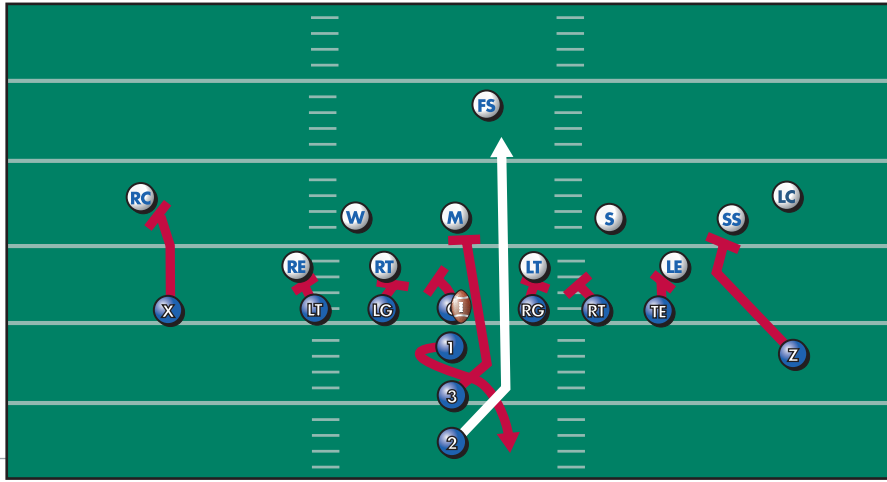
** All required techniques and skills involved in executing these plays are covered in the Skills areas of the Offensive and Defensive sections of this *Playbook*.

*** In your offense, the desire is to be able to run the same play from as many different personnel sets as possible, thus giving the defense multiple looks with very little new learning required on the part of your offensive players.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: I Right—Set A or 21

22 ISOLATION



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.

LT—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or LB].

LG—double-team block with center on

defensive man in front of you, RDT.

CENTER—double-team block on defensive man in front of LG and then slip off and block W backer.

RG—double-team block with RT on defensive man in front of you, LDT, then slip off

and block S backer.

RT—double-team block on defensive man in front of RG.

TE—drive block on man in front of you [LDE, or S backer].

Z—drive upfield and block SS away from center of field.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive into 2 hole, and drive block M backer any way he desires to go.

QB [1]—pivot to left, allow FB to clear, hand the ball to the HB, and set up in play-action pass position.

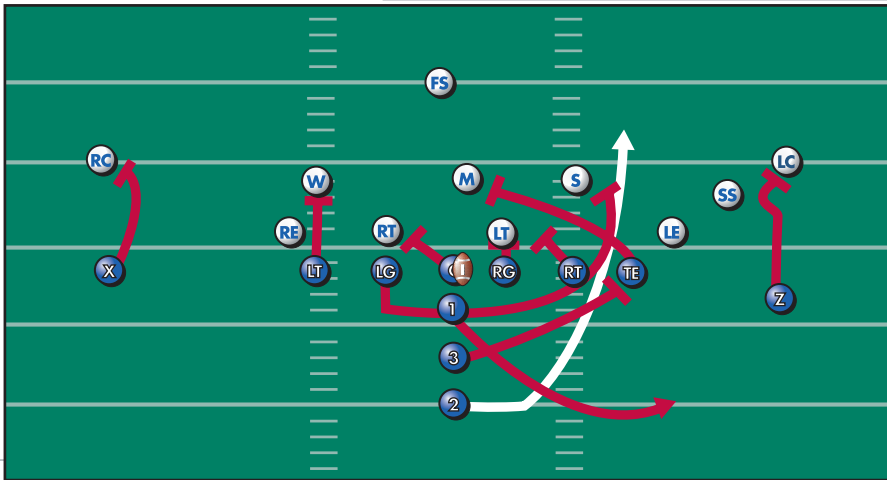
HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot, drive straight ahead to 2 hole [between center and right guard], take handoff from the QB, follow the FB into 2 hole, and be prepared to cut opposite of the direction of his block on the M backer.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to drop back to set up to pass.

If S backer is lined up in front of the tight end, RG and RT can stay with their double team and turn the defensive tackle to the outside.

Formation: I Right—Set A or 21

26 POWER



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.

LT—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or LB].

LG—pull and lead the 2 back through the 6 hole and block S backer or SS.

CENTER—angle block back on defensive man in front of LG.

RG—double-team block with RT on defensive man in front of you [LDT], drive him into the center of the field.

RT—double-team block on defensive man in front of RG.

TE—release inside of the man in front of you & block M backer.

Z—drive upfield and block LC away from center of field.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive into 6 hole, and drive block end man on the line of scrimmage to the outside.

QB [1]—open to right, allow FB to clear, hand the ball to the HB, and set up in play-action pass position.

HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot, drive straight ahead to 6 hole (between right tackle and tight end), take the handoff from the QB, cut inside FB's block, follow the LG into 6 hole, and be prepared to cut straight up the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to drop back to set up to pass.

Fullback will kick out S backer if S backer is lined up in front of the tight end.

Caution QB to leave the line quickly so LG has time to run behind the Center, RG, and RT.

If LE lines up in front of RT and S lines up on TE, TE and RT will double team LE, FB will block out S Backer, and LG will pull and block M or SS.

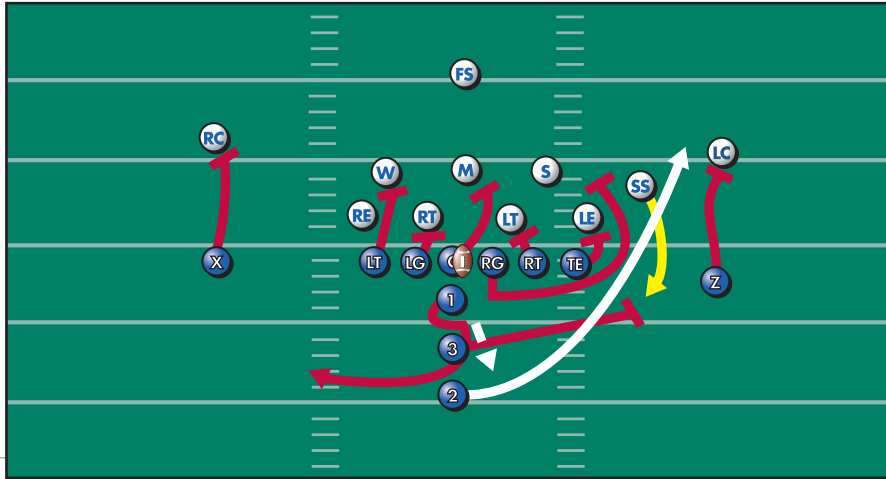


OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: I Right—Set A or 21

[Play can be run from I Right Formation with FB behind RT]

28 G - TOSS



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.
- LT**—drive block on W backer to keep him from pursuing.
- LG**—reach block on defensive man in front of you [RDT].

- CENTER**—drive block on man in front of you [M backer] to keep him from pursuing.
- RG**—pull to your right behind TE and then turn back to the inside and block the S backer.
- RT**—angle block on the defensive man in front of you.

TE—reach block on man in front of you [LDE or S backer], keeping him inside your block.

Z—drive upfield and block LC away from center of field.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive outside of TE, and drive block SS to the outside.

QB [1]—pivot to your left, allow FB to clear, toss the ball to the HB, and bootleg play-action pass to the left.

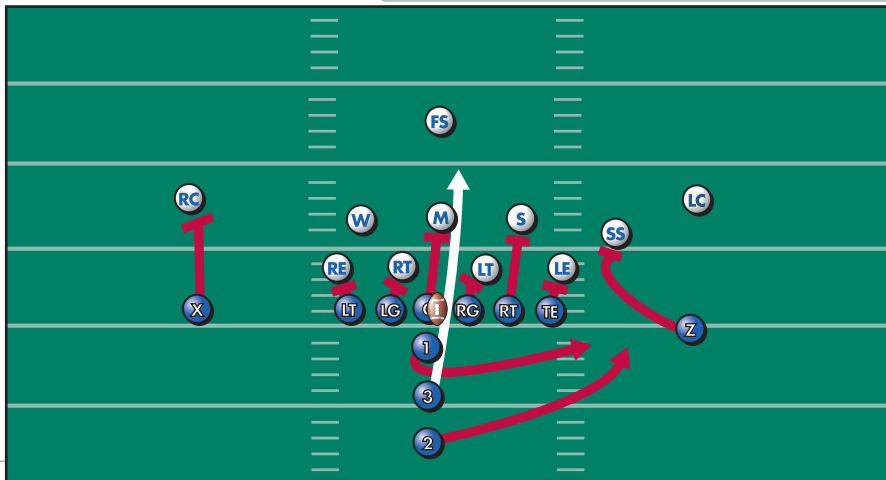
HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot, drive straight to sideline, turn head and shoulder back to QB, reach back and catch the toss in both hands, secure the ball, and be prepared to cut straight up the field inside of FB's block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues with bootleg action around left tackle.

If LC is defensive force man, the FB should block him to the outside and the Z would drive inside the LC and drive block the SS.

Formation: I Right—Set A or 21

32 PLUNGE



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or LB].
- LG**—drive block on defensive man in front of you [RDT].
- CENTER**—drive block on defensive man in front of you [M backer or NT].

- RG**—drive block on defensive man in front of you [LDT].
- RT**—drive block on defensive man in front of you [S backer or LDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or S backer].
- Z**—drive upfield and block SS away from center of field.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive into 2 hole [between center and right guard], take handoff from the QB, and be prepared to cut opposite of the direction of Center's block on the M backer.

QB [1]—pivot to your left, hand the ball to the FB, and continue down the line as if running 18 option.

HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot and run to sideline as if you are to receive the 18 option pitch.

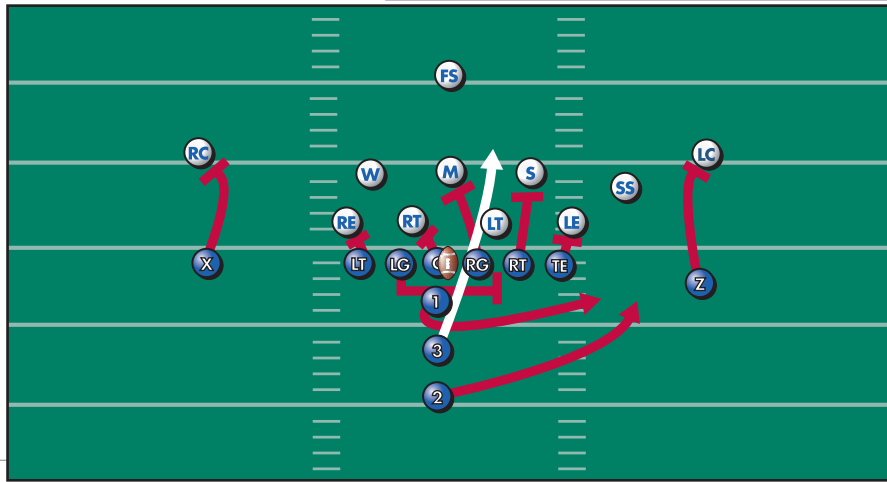
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out option fake.

This is a very quick hitting play, and it is vital that all blockers get off on the snap.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: I Right—Set A or 21

32 TRAP



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.

LT—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or LB].

LG—drop step back with right foot, pull behind center, gain ground across the line,

and trap block LDT to the outside.

CENTER—angle block back on defensive man in front of LG.

RG—release inside of LDT and drive block on M backer.

RT—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or LDE].

TE—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or S backer].

Z—drive upfield and block LC away from center of field.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive into 2 hole [between center and right guard], take handoff from the QB, and be prepared to cut opposite of the direction of RG’s block on the M backer.

QB [1]—pivot to your left, hand the ball to the FB, and continue down the line as if running 18 option.

HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot and run to sideline as if you are to receive the 18 option pitch.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out 18 option fake.

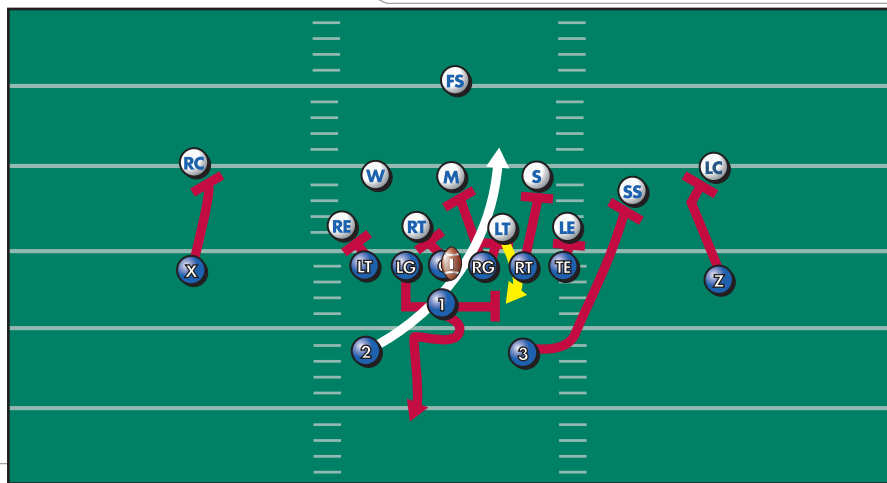
This is a quick-hitting play, and it is vital that all blockers get off on the snap.

Fullback must anticipate the trap block by the LG, cut back behind this block, and go opposite of RG block on M backer.

Formation: Split-Right—Set A or 21

[Play can be run using B set or 22 with 2 Backs and 2 TEs for short yardage]

22 TRAP



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.

LT—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or LB].

LG—drop step back with right foot, pull behind center, gain ground across the line,

and trap block LDT to the outside.

CENTER—angle block back on defensive man in front of LG.

RG—release inside of LDT and drive block on M backer.

RT—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or LDE].

TE—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or S backer].

Z—drive upfield and block LC away from center of field.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, run outside block of TE, and drive block SS to outside.

QB [1]—pivot to your right, hand the ball to the HB with underneath ball handling, and drop back in position for play-action pass.

HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot, drive into 2 hole [between center and right guard], take handoff from the QB, follow LG into hole, and be prepared to cut between the trap block of LG and drive block on M backer by RG.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out play-action pass fake.

This is a quick-hitting play, and it is vital that all blockers get off on the snap.

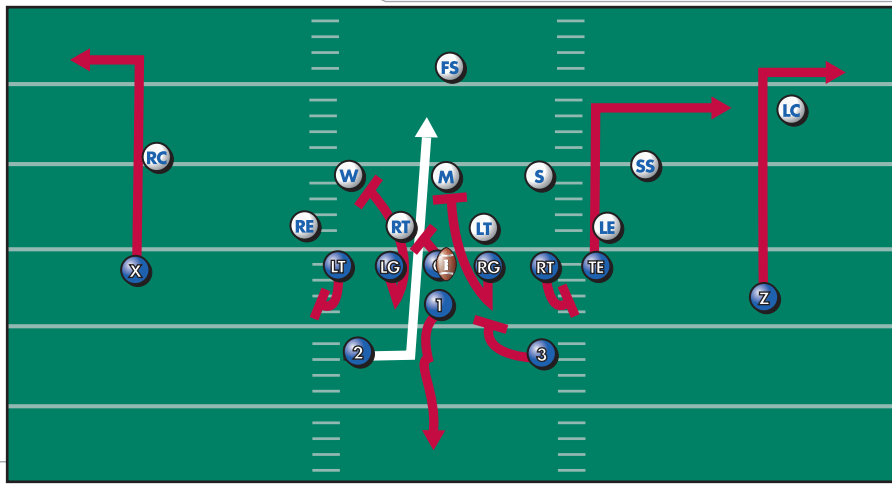
Halfback must anticipate the trap block by the LG, cut back behind this block, and go outside of RG block on M backer.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Split-Right—Set A or 21

23 DRAW



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield and run Out pattern to the sideline.
- LT**—pass set and pass block RDE up the field.
- LG**—pass set back with right foot and block RDT to the outside if he rushes that way. If he goes inside, turn him over to the center and release on W backer and drive him to the outside.
- CENTER**—pass set back with left foot and

- be prepared to block the defensive man [RDT] in front of LG to the outside. If the RDT goes outside, turn him over to the LG and release on W backer and drive him to the outside.
- RG**—pass set back with right foot, hit the LDT, force him to rush to the outside, release inside of LDT, and drive block on M backer.
- RT**—pass set and pass block RDE up the field.
- TE**—drive upfield and run out pattern.

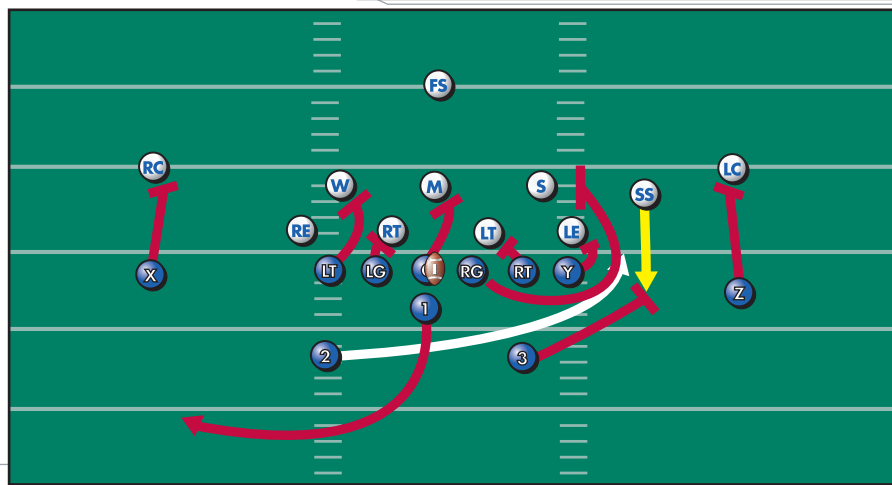
- Z**—drive upfield and run out pattern to the sideline.
 - FB [3]**—step up and in with your inside foot. Locate and block rushing LDT to the outside.
 - QB [1]**—take drop back pass steps away from Center, let the halfback come to you, hand the ball to the halfback as you pass him on your pass drop, and continue to set up to pass.
 - HB [2]**—take two slide steps to the inside with your inside foot, position your arms to receive the ball, allow the QB to place the ball in your stomach as he passes you, secure the ball, drive to open area, and cut off the block of the RG on the M backer.
- COACHING TIP**—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out his drop back pass fake.

The success of this play is based on everyone convincing the defensive players that it is a drop back pass play.

Fullback must anticipate the LDT rushing hard up the field outside of the RG and he must be in position to keep LDT to the outside and push him up the field.

Formation: Split Right—Set A or 21

28 SWEEP



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.
- LT**—release inside of RDE and block W backer.
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or backer] and stop penetration across

- the line.
- CENTER**—drive block on man in front of you [NT or M backer] and stop penetration across the line.
- RG**—step back with right foot, pull behind RT and TE, turn upfield, look to inside, and block S backer to the inside.

- RT**—angle block inside on man in front of RG and stop penetration across the line.
 - TE [Y]**—reach block on man in front of you [LDE or S backer].
 - Z**—drive upfield and block LC away from center of field.
 - FB [3]**—take crossover step to right, drive outside of TE's block, locate SS, and drive block SS to the outside.
 - QB [1]**—step back with your left foot and open to the halfback, hand the ball to the HB, and continue left with bootleg action.
 - HB [2]**—take crossover step with left foot, turn and run to sideline, take handoff from QB, follow FB and RG around TE's block, and cut off the block of the FB on the SS.
- COACHING TIP**—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out bootleg fake to the left.

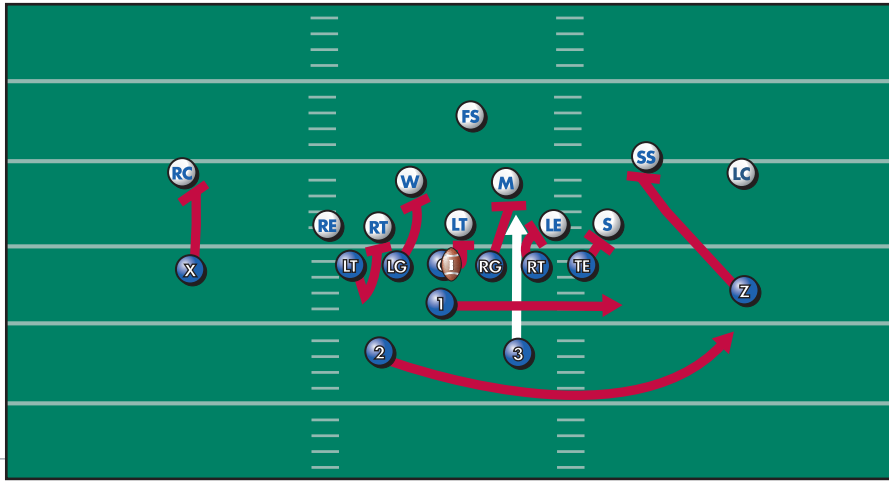
This play is slow to develop, and it is vital that there is no penetration across the line by defensive players.

Fullback must anticipate force by LC, instead of SS, and be prepared to block LC to the outside if he comes.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Split Right—Set A or 21

34 DIVE



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.

LT—reach block on man to your inside RDT and stop penetration.

LG—drive block on W backer.

CENTER—reach block on LDT, block him back to inside.

RG—drive block on M backer.

RT—drive block on man in front of you [LDE] and block him to the outside.

TE—drive block on man in front of you [S backer].

Z—drive upfield and block SS away from center of field.

FB [3]—drive into 4 hole [between right guard and right tackle], take handoff from the QB, and be prepared to cut opposite of the direction of RG’s block on the M backer.

QB [1]—crossover step with your left foot, come down the line, hand the ball to the FB, and continue down the line as if running 18 option.

HB [2]—take crossover step with left foot, run to sideline as if you are to receive the 18 option pitch

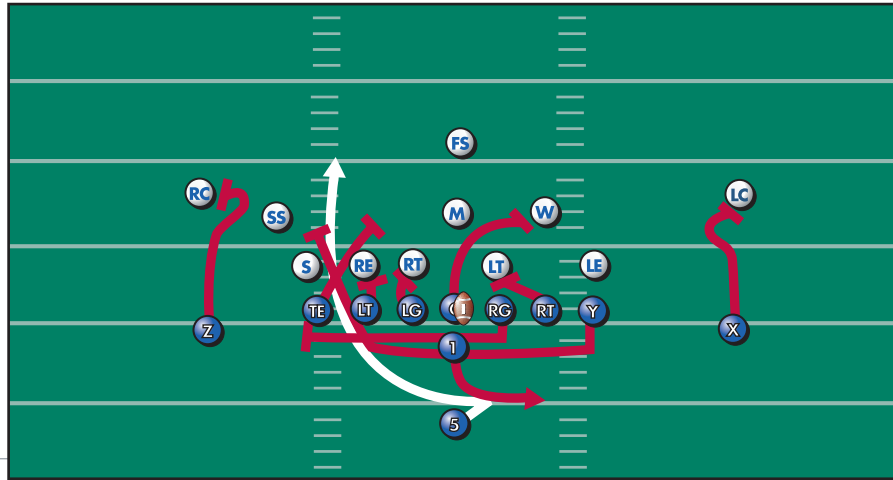
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out option fake.

This is a quick-hitting play and it is vital that all blockers get off on the snap.

Fullback take a path directly at the inside hip of the RT and be prepared to cut opposite of RG block on M backer.

Formation: Deuce Left—Set C or 12

55 JAB COUNTER



ASSIGNMENTS

Z—drive up the field and block the RC to the outside.

TE—release inside of S backer and block M backer to the inside.

LT—drive block on RDE and keep him from

pursuing outside.

LG—reach block on defensive man in front of you [RDT].

CENTER—drive block on W backer and keep him from pursuing to other side.

RG—drop step with left foot, pull to your

left behind center, gain ground across the line, and kick out block on end man on the line [S backer].

RT—reach block down on the defensive man in front of RG.

Y—drop step with left foot, pull to your left behind RT, belly back and turn upfield inside of RG’s block, and keep running and block first opponent who appears.

X—drive up and in and block LC away from center of field.

QB [1]—open step with right foot, move away from line, hand ball to HB, and continue to the right with bootleg action.

HB [5]—take jab step with right foot to the right, wait for QB to come to you, take the handoff, secure the ball, drive left at the 5 hole [between the TE and LT], and follow Y into the hole and up the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB quickly gets away from the line and continues the bootleg action to the right sideline.

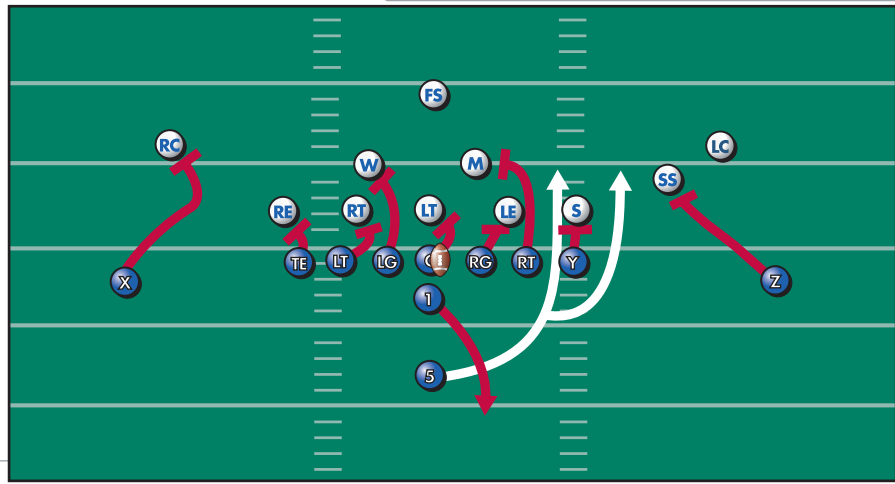
If S backer should charge hard to the inside, the RG should block him in and the Y and HB should go outside of his block.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Deuce Right—Set C or 12

56 OUTSIDE ZONE



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive up the field and block the RC to the outside.
- TE**—drive block on RDE and keep him from pursuing inside.
- LT**—reach block on RDT and keep him from pursuing inside.
- LG**—release inside of RDT and drive block

- on W backer.
- CENTER**—reach block on LDT backer and keep him from pursuing to 6 hole.
- RG**—reach block on LDE and keep him from pursuing to 6 hole.
- RT**—release outside of LDE and drive block on M backer.

Y—reach block on S backer and take him in or out.

Z—drive up and in and block SS away from center of field.

QB [1]—open step with right foot, move away from line, hand ball to HB deep in backfield, and continue to drop back for play-action pass.

HB [5]—take crossover step with left foot to the right, drive for inside hip of Y, take the handoff from the QB, secure the ball, drive right and key the block of Y on the S backer, and cut inside or out based on his block.

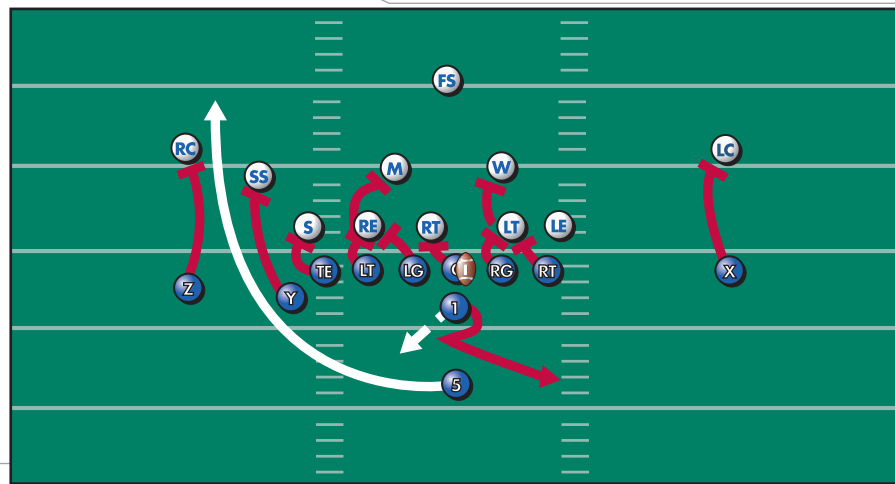
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB quickly gets away from the line and continues to drop back after handoff.

If S backer should charge hard to the inside, the Y should block him in and HB should go outside of his block.

If RG is having trouble blocking LDT, have RT angle block down on the LDT and the RG can pull behind the RT's block and block the M backer.

Formation: Triple Left—Set C or 12

57 ZONE TOSS



ASSIGNMENTS

- Z**—drive up the field and block the RC to the outside.
- Y**—step at S backer with right foot and block SS to the inside.
- TE**—reach block on S backer and keep him inside.
- LT**—hit RDE and release outside and block

- M backer to inside.
- LG**—reach block on RDE and keep him from pursuing to the outside.
- CENTER**—reach block on RDT and keep him from pursuing to outside.
- RG**—release inside of LDT and block back on W backer.
- RT**—reach block on LDT.

X—drive up and in and block LC away from center of field.

QB [1]—pivot to right, toss ball to HB underhanded with both hands, and continue to the right with bootleg action.

HB [5]—take crossover step with right foot to the left, drive straight to sideline, turn head and shoulder back to QB, reach back and catch the toss in both hands, secure the ball, and be prepared to cut straight up the field outside of TE and Y's block on SS.

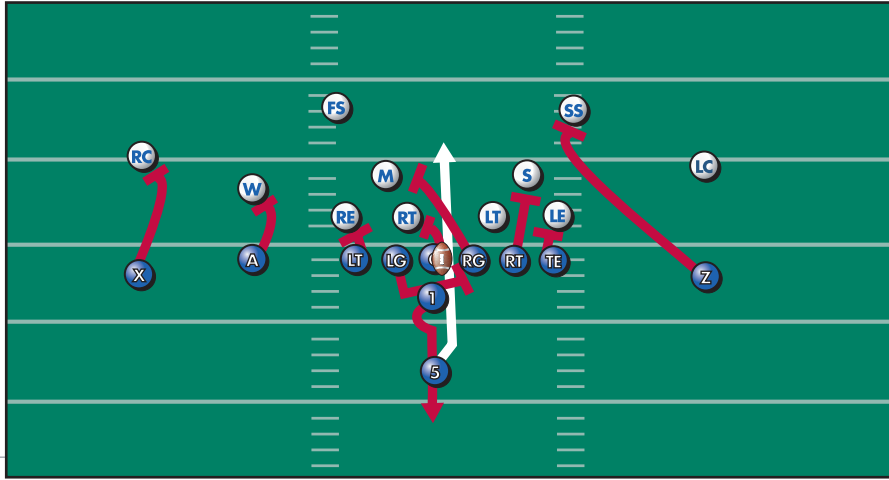
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB quickly gets toss away and continues the bootleg action to the right sideline.

If S backer should be playing hard to the outside, the Y and TE can swap assignments, the Y should angle block in and the TE can pull around behind and block the SS.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Ace Right—Set D or 11

52 TRAP



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield and block RC away from center of field.
- A**—drive block on W backer, keeping him to the outside.
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE

or LB].

- LG**—drop step back with right foot, pull behind center, gain ground across the line, and trap block LDT to the outside.
- CENTER**—angle block back on defensive man in front of LG.

RG—release inside of LDT and drive block on M backer.

RT—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or LDE].

TE—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or S backer].

Z—drive upfield and block SS away from center of field.

HB [5]—take crossover step to right, drive into 2 hole [between center and right guard], take handoff from the QB, and anticipate trap block from LG. Be prepared to cut opposite of the direction of RG's block on the M backer.

QB [1]—pivot to your left, move away from line, hand the ball to the HB, and drop straight back for play-action pass.

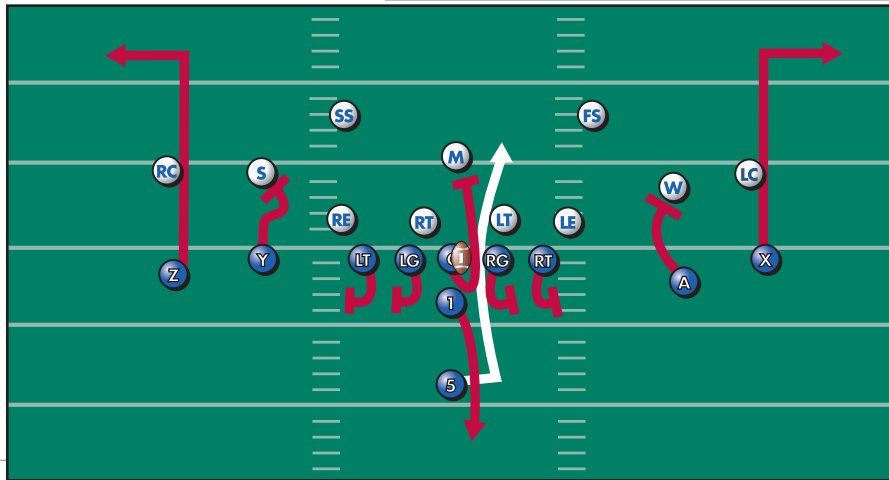
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB gets away from line, so LG can trap, and continues to drop back after making the handoff.

This is a quick-hitting play, and it is vital that all blockers get off on the snap.

HB must anticipate the trap block by the LG, cut back behind this block, and go opposite of RG block on M backer.

Formation: Ace Left Open—Set D or 11

52 DRAW



ASSIGNMENTS

- Z**—drive upfield and run out pattern to the sideline.
- Y**—drive up the field and then block S backer to the sideline.
- LT**—pass set and pass block RDE up the field.
- LG**—pass set back with right foot and block

RDT to the outside if he rushes that way. If he goes inside, turn him over to the center and release behind center and block M backer.

CENTER—pass set back with left foot and be prepared to block the defensive man [RDT] in front of LG to the outside. If the RDT goes outside, turn him over to the LG and release on M backer.

RG—pass set back with inside foot, hit the LDT, force him to rush to the outside, and block him up the field.

RT—pass set and pass block LDE up the field.

A—drive up the field and block W backer to the sideline.

X—drive upfield and run out pattern to the sideline.

QB [1]—take drop-back pass steps away from center, stay inside of HB, hand the ball to the HB as you pass him on your pass drop, and continue to set up to pass.

HB [2]—take crossover step with your left foot to the right, position your arms to receive the ball, allow the QB to place the ball in your stomach as he passes you, secure the ball, drive to open area, and cut off the block of the LG or Center on the M backer.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out his drop-back pass fake.

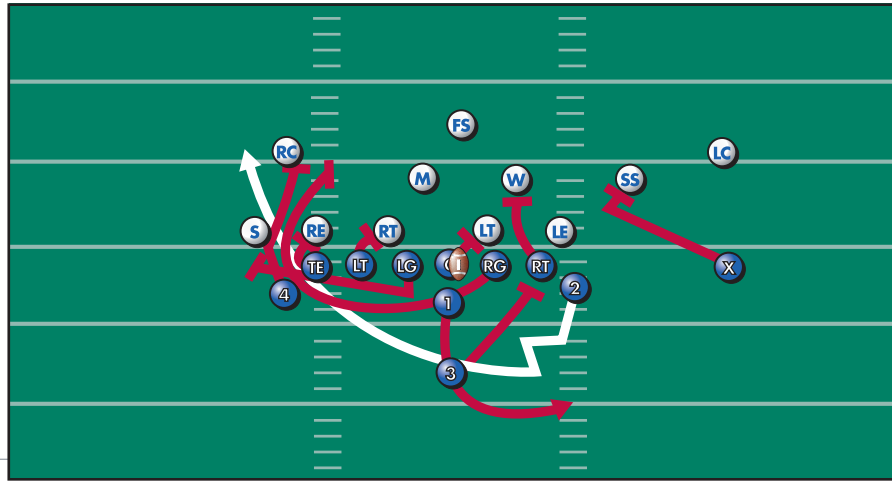
The success of this play is based on everyone convincing the defensive players that it is a drop-back pass play.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Double Wing Left—Set G or 31

27 SWEEP



ASSIGNMENTS

WB [4]—step at and then release inside of S backer. Drive up the field and block the RC to the inside.

TE—reach block on RDE and keep him from getting outside.

LT—step hard to inside with right foot and angle block on RDT.

LG—drop step back with left foot, pull to outside, gain ground to line, and block out

on S backer.

CENTER—step hard to right with right foot and angle block LDT.

RG—drop step with left foot, pull behind center, belly back and turn up inside of LG’s block on S backer, and block M backer to inside.

RT—release inside of LDE and block on W backer. Keep him from pursuing across the field.

X—drive up and in and block SS away from center of field.

FB [3]—crossover step with left foot, drive at inside hip of RT, fake handoff from QB, and block out on LDE.

QB [1]—step back with right foot, fake handoff to FB, allow the FB to clear, hand the ball to the HB coming around, and continue to the right with bootleg action.

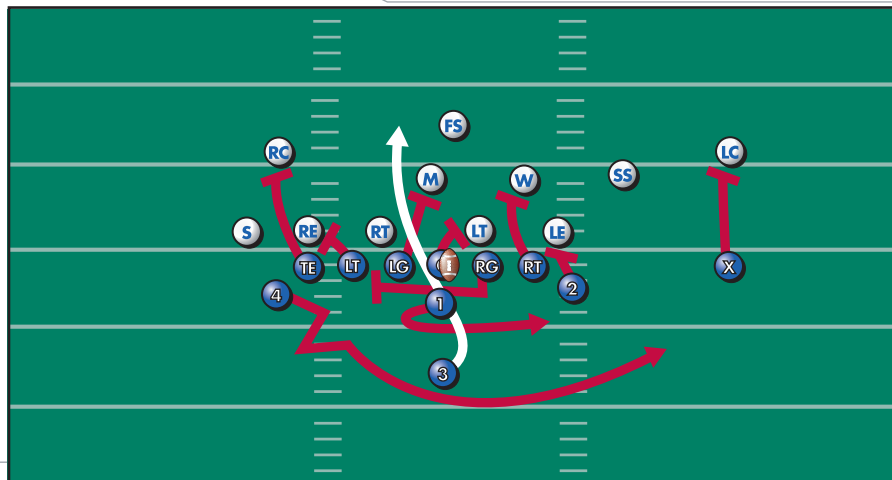
HB [2]—drop step back with left foot. Take slow, short, two-step motion. Take handoff from QB, secure the ball, drive over original position of FB, and follow RG up the field outside of TE through the 7 hole.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB quickly gets away from the line, makes space for the pulling RG and continues the bootleg action to the right sideline after making the handoff.

If S backer charges hard to the inside, LG can block him in and the RG and HB can go around this block before cutting up the field.

Formation: Double Wing Left—Set G or 31

31 TRAP



ASSIGNMENTS

TE—release outside of RDE and drive up the field and block the RC to the outside.

LT—drive block out on man in front of TE [RDE].

LG—release inside of RDT and block M

backer.

CENTER—angle block on defensive man in front of RG [LDT].

RG—drop step with left foot, pull behind center, gain ground across line, and trap block out on RDT.

RT—release inside of LDE and block W backer to the outside.

X—drive upfield and block LC away from center of field.

WB [4]—drop step back with right foot, take slow, two-step motion, drive over spot of FB’s original position, and run to sideline as if you are to receive the 18 option pitch.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive toward 2 hole [between center and right guard], take handoff from the QB, veer into 3 hole [between center and left guard], and be prepared to cut opposite of the direction of LG’s block on the M backer.

QB [1]—pivot to your left, hand the ball to the FB, and continue down the line as if running 18 option.

HB [2]—drive block into LDE. Keep him from pursuing down the line.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to carry out 18 option fake.

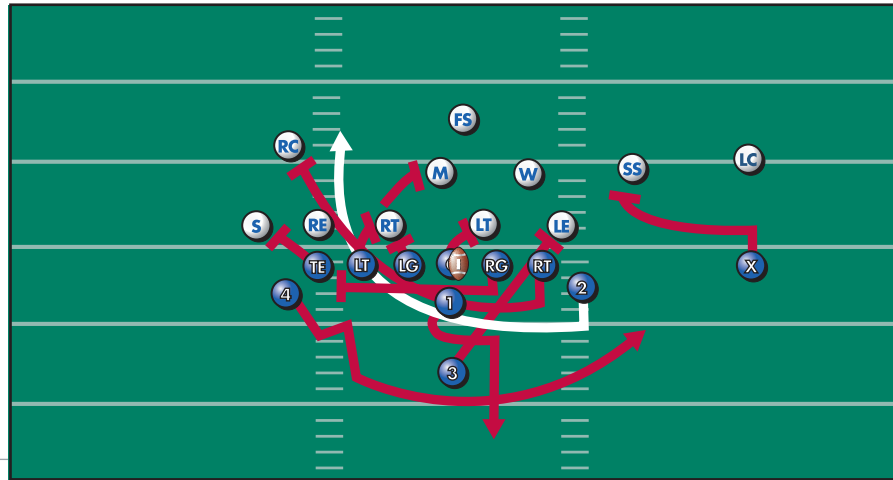
This is a quick-hitting play, and it is vital that all blockers get off on the snap.

FB must anticipate the trap block by the RG and cut back behind this block and then go opposite of LG block on M backer.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Double Wing Left—Set G or 31

25 COUNTER TRAP



ASSIGNMENTS

TE—step at RDE release outside and block S backer.

LT—double-team block on RDT, do not allow penetration, keep him from pursuing outside, and be prepared to slip off and block M backer.

LG—double-team block on RDT, do not allow penetration, keep him from pursuing outside, and expect LT to slip off and block

M backer.

CENTER—angle block on man in front of RG [LDT] and keep him from pursuing to other side.

RG—drop step with left foot, pull to your left behind Center, gain ground across the line, and kick out block on first defensive man past LT [RDE or S backer].

RT—drop step with left foot, pull to your left behind Center, belly back and turn up field

inside of RG's block, keep running, and block first opponent who appears.

X—drive up and in and block SS away from center of field.

WB [4]—drop step back with right foot, take slow two-step motion, drive over spot of FB's original position, and run to sideline as if you are to receive a swing pass.

FB [3]—crossover step with left foot, drive at inside hip of RT, and block out on LDE.

QB [1]—pivot to left, move away from line, use underneath ball handing to give the ball to the HB, and drop back for play-action pass.

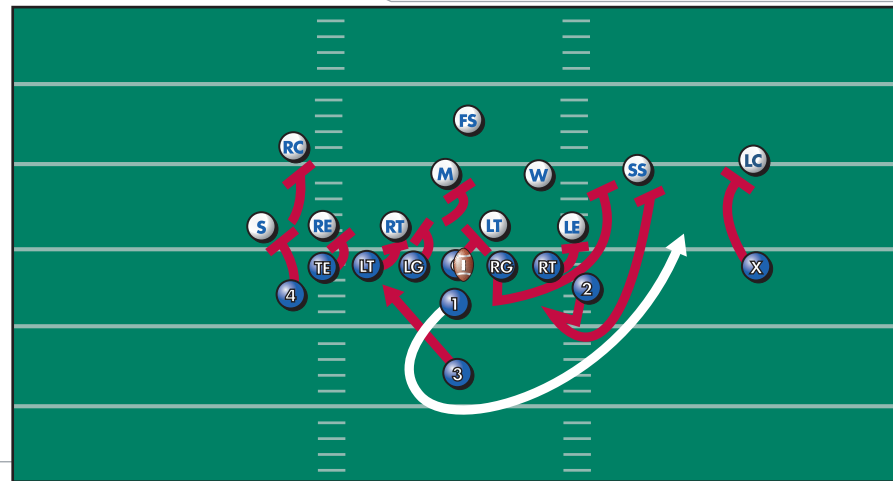
HB [2]—take drop step back with left foot, drive left, take underneath ball handling from QB, take the handoff, secure the ball, follow RG and RT to 5 hole between RT and RE, and follow the RT into the hole and up the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB quickly gets away from the line and continues the bootleg action to the right sideline.

If RDE should charge hard to the inside, the RG should block him in and the RT and HB should be prepared to go outside of this block and inside of the TE's block on the S backer.

Formation: Double Wing Left—Set G or 31

18 BOOTLEG RUN



ASSIGNMENTS

TE—drive block on RDE and keep him from pursuing inside.

LT—reach block on RDT and keep him from pursuing inside.

LG—hit the RDT, release inside of RDT, drive block on M backer, and keep him from

pursuing to his left.

CENTER—reach block on LDT backer and keep him from pursuing to 8 hole.

RG—drop step with right foot, pull tight behind RT, turn back to inside, and block W backer.

RT—reach block LDE and keep him from

pursuing to outside.

X—drive up the field and block the LC to the outside—see coaching tip **.

WB [4]—hit S backer, drive upfield, and block RC to outside.

FB [3]—crossover step with right foot, drive at inside hip of LT, and fake taking handoff. Be alert for possible block on RDE or S backer.

QB [1]—open step with left foot, move away from line, fake handoff to FB deep in backfield, secure the ball, and turn back follow HB up the field. Be prepared to cut off his block on SS.

HB [2]—drop step back with left foot. Take slow, short, two-step motion, turn back to outside on snap, and drive upfield and block SS in or out—see coaching tip *.

COACHING TIP—*Make certain that the QB quickly gets away from the line, makes a good fake, secures the ball, and runs hard up the field behind HB.

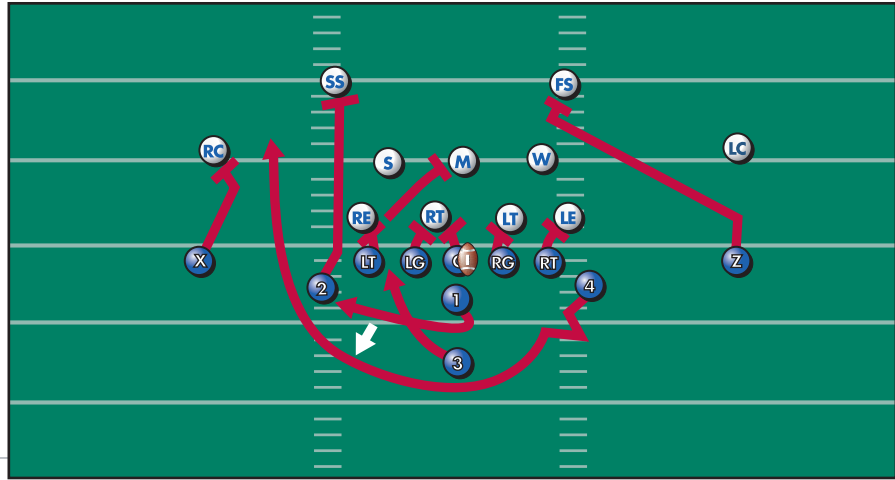
**If SS drops off the line and LC forces the play, the HB should be prepared to block him to the outside and the X should let the LC go and block the SS.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Wide Double Wing Right—Set F or 30

17 TRIPLE OPTION



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive up and block RC away from center of field.

LT—release inside and block M backer to the inside.

LG—double team RDT with center, keeping him inside.

CENTER—double team RDT with LG, keeping him inside.

RG—drive block on LDT, blocking him to the outside.

RT—drive block on LDE, blocking him outside.

Z—drive up and in and block FS.

HB [2]—step with right foot at RDE, release to the outside, and block SS.

FB [3]—crossover step with right foot, drive at inside hip of LT, be prepared to take or fake handoff from QB, and drive hard into 3 hole [between LG & LT].

QB [1]—pivot to right, give or fake handoff and allow the FB to clear based on play of RDE, read and option the S backer, and turn up field and keep or pitch the ball to WB [4].

WB [4]—drop step back with left foot. Take slow, short, two-step motion. Sprint to get in front of QB, be prepared to get pitch from QB, secure the ball, and drive up field.

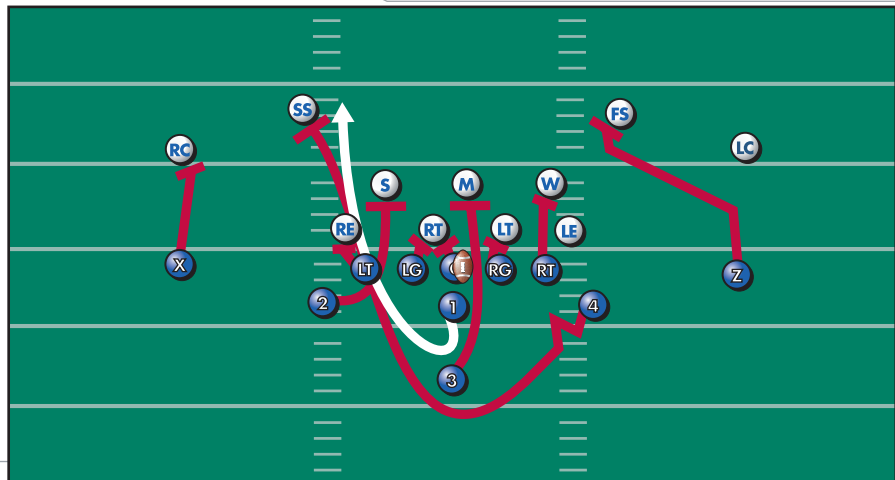
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB has space away from the line, controls the ball in both hands, and makes decisions quickly.

If S backer charges hard to the inside, LT can block him in and the QB can option the RDE.

If SS is playing deep, HB [2] can block in on the S backer and give QB more room to run up field.

Formation: Wide Double Wing Right—Set F or 30

13 MID-LINE FOLLOW



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive up and block RC away from center of field.

LT—drive block on RDE, blocking him outside.

LG—double team RDT with center, keeping him inside.

CENTER—double team RDT with LG, keeping him inside.

RG—drive block on LDT, blocking him outside.

RT—release inside of LDE and block W backer to the outside.

Z—drive up and in and block FS.

HB [2]—step back with right foot, drive inside of LT, and block S backer.

FB [3]—crossover step with left foot, drive at inside hip of RG, fake handoff from QB, drive hard into 2 hole [between CENTER & RG], and block M backer away from 3 hole.

QB [1]—step back and out with right foot, fake handoff to the FB, pivot back to left, and follow WB [4] through the 3 hole [between LG & LT].

WB [4]—drop step back with left foot. Take slow, short, two-step motion. Sprint to get in front of QB, lead QB into 3 hole [between LG & LT], and look to block SS.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB has space away from the line, controls the ball in both hands, and quickly gets into 3 hole.

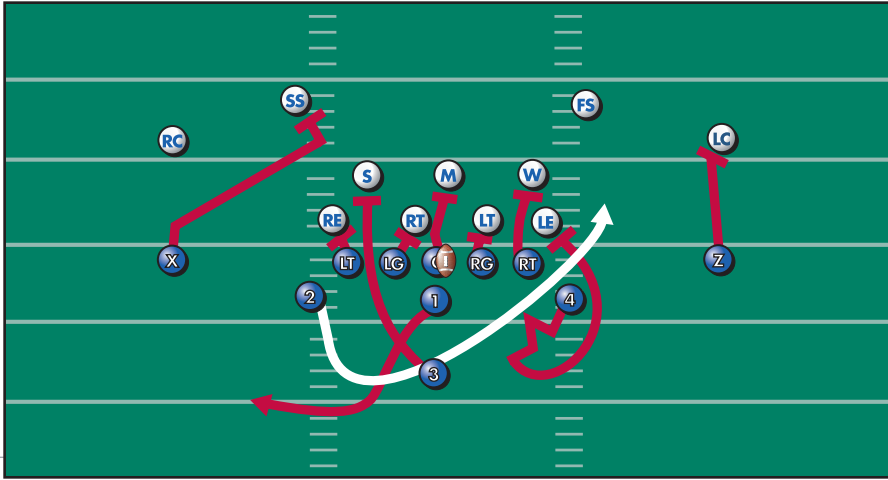
If S backer moves to the outside, HB can block him out.

If LDE is charging hard down the line, RT should block him first before going to block W backer.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (RUNNING)

Formation: Wide Double Wing Right—Set F or 30

28 DELAY REVERSE



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive up and in and block SS away from center of field.
- LT**—drive block on RDE, blocking him to the outside.
- LG**—angle block on RDT, keeping him from crossing line of scrimmage.
- CENTER**—step at RDT with left foot, release

- inside, and block M backer away from 6 hole.
- RG**—reach block on LDT, keep him inside and on line.
- RT**—step at LDT with left foot, release inside of LDE, and block W backer to the inside.
- Z**—drive up and block LC to the outside.

HB [2]—step back with right foot, give ground, drive to your right, take handoff from QB, secure the ball, and drive outside of WB [4] block on LDE.

FB [3]—crossover step with right foot, drive at inside hip of LT, fake handoff from QB, drive hard into 3 hole [between LG & LT], and block S backer away from 8 hole.

QB [1]—step back and out with left foot, fake handoff to the FB, make handoff to HB [2] on reverse, and continue to the outside on bootleg action.

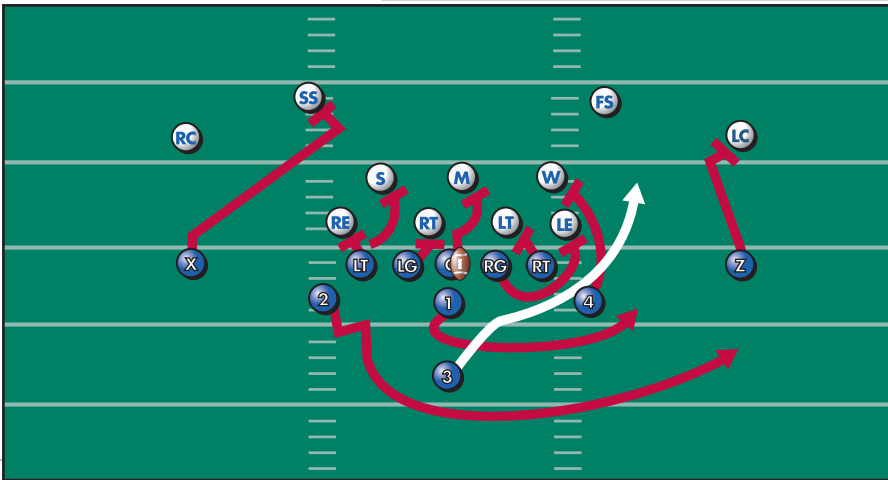
WB [4]—drop step back with left foot. Take slow, short, two-step motion, turn back to outside, and drive block LDE to inside.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB has space away from the line, controls the ball in both hands, and quickly gets to 3 hole.

If LDE is charging hard down the line, RT should block him in and WB [4] can block W backer.

Formation: Wide Double Wing Right—Set F or 30

36 G-LEAD



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive up and in and block SS away from center of field.
- LT**—release inside of RDE and block S backer to the outside.
- LG**—reach block on RDT, keeping him from

- crossing line.
- CENTER**—step at RDT with left foot, release inside, and block M backer away from 6 hole.
- RG**—drop step with right foot, pull behind RT, and block LDE to the inside.

RT—angle block on LDT and keep him from crossing line.

Z—drive up and block LC to the outside.

HB [2]—drop step back with right foot. Take slow, short, two-step motion, give ground, and drive to position in front of QB to fake 18 option.

FB [3]—crossover step with left foot, drive at inside hip of RT, take handoff from QB, secure ball, break to outside of RG's block on LDE, and drive up field.

QB [1]—pivot to left, give handoff to the FB, and continue down the line faking 18 option.

WB [4]—release outside of LDE and block W backer to inside.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB has space away from the line and carries out 18 option fake.

If LDE plays to outside, RG should block him out and FB [3] can run inside of his block.

Because all the action is going to the right side of the ball, the FB should be prepared to cut up anytime he sees daylight.

**OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS AND PLAYS****Offensive Pass Introduction**

In designing your pass offense, it is important that it be compatible with the style of run offense that you are teaching. On the following pages are examples of the four groupings of pass plays that could be incorporated into your pass offense.

The Sets or personnel groupings are based on the ones designated in the Run Introduction.

For best results, all play-action passes and screens should come off run or pass plays that are already part of your offensive package.

<p>Dropback Pass—three and five-step drop by QB SET A or 21—FORMATION <i>SPLIT RIGHT—PASS HITCH PASS—3 STEP</i> SET A or 21—FORMATION <i>SPLIT RIGHT—PASS STRONG FLOOD—5 STEP</i></p>	<p>Movement Type Pass—sprint and bootleg action by the QB SET A or 21—FORMATION <i>STRONG I LEFT—PASS 19 SPRINT—COMEBACK—OUT</i> SET C or 12—FORMATION <i>TRIPLE Y WING LEFT—PASS 18 BOOTLEG—IN—CROSS</i> SET C or 12—FORMATION <i>TRIPLE SLOT RIGHT—PASS 18 SPRINT—CORNER—COMEBACK</i></p>
<p>Play-Action Pass—faking a running play prior to passing by QB using 3-digit call to designate play-action pass in huddle SET A or 21—FORMATION <i>DOUBLE Z WING RIGHT—PASS 133 THROWBACK WHEEL</i> SET F or 30—FORMATION <i>DOUBLE WING OPEN LEFT—PASS 134 OPTION PASS</i> Screen Pass—delayed pass with OL leading receiver after dropback and throw by QB SET G or 31—FORMATION <i>DOUBLE WING RIGHT—PASS FAKE 133 FULLBACK SCREEN LEFT</i></p>	

These passes are run using various personnel groupings to show the diversity that can be attained by substituting one or more offensive players without designing and learning new pass routes or special blocking.

Examples:

SET D or 11—FORMATION *ACE LEFT—PASS SLANT PASS*
 SET F or 30—FORMATION *DOUBLE WING OPEN LEFT—PASS SLANT PASS*

SET A or 21—FORMATION *SPLIT RIGHT—PASS HOOK—FLAT*
 SET D or 11—FORMATION *ACE RIGHT—PASS ALL HOOK*

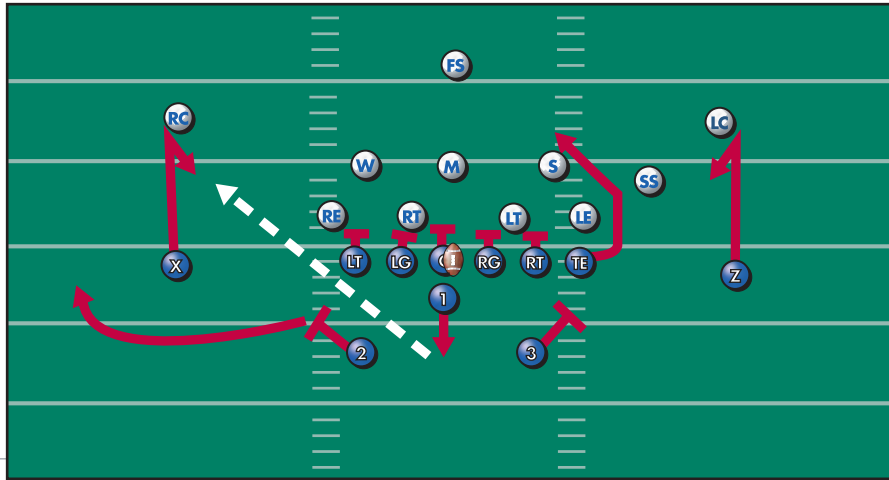
Although it is not shown in the following diagrams, you may want to incorporate some form of motion. This can be done by placing a back, tight end, or wide receiver in motion prior to the snap. The goals of this action should be to:

- Give your QB a presnap read on the coverage being used.
- Man-for-Man—a defensive player runs with motion.
- Zone—motion man is passed across the field.
- Place the motion man in a better position to run his pass route.
- Bring him in to run Crossing or In routes.
- Create space to run pattern to the sideline (Out or Corner patterns).
- Take him outside for deep routes on sideline (Comeback, Up).
- Place the motion man in a better position to block.
- Make it more difficult for the defensive player to hold up or bump a receiver when he releases off the line to run his route.

Your quarterback's ability to throw the ball accurately, your receivers' ability to make the catch, and your offensive line's ability to pass block will greatly determine the success of your passing game and also determine the amount of practice time you should dedicate to this phase of your offense. Practice time for your offense is precious and should be directly proportional to time it will be used in the game.

Formation: Split-Right—Set A or 21

HITCH PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield 7 yards turn back to the inside [Hitch route].
- LT**—set back, fire out on RDE, and bring his hands down.
- LG**—set back, fire out on RDT, and bring his hands down.

- CENTER**—set back 1 step and block M backer if he rushes.
- RG**—set back, fire out on LDT, and bring his hands down.
- RT**—set back, fire out on LDE, and bring his hands down.
- TE**—release outside of LDE, run Look-in

pattern, and look for ball right away.
Z—drive upfield 7 yards and turn back to the inside [Hitch route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to right and be prepared to block S backer or SS if he rushes.

QB [1]—take 3-step drop, step, and throw. If SS is up, throw to X.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left. Be prepared to block W backer if he rushes. If W backer does not rush, run Swing route to the sideline.

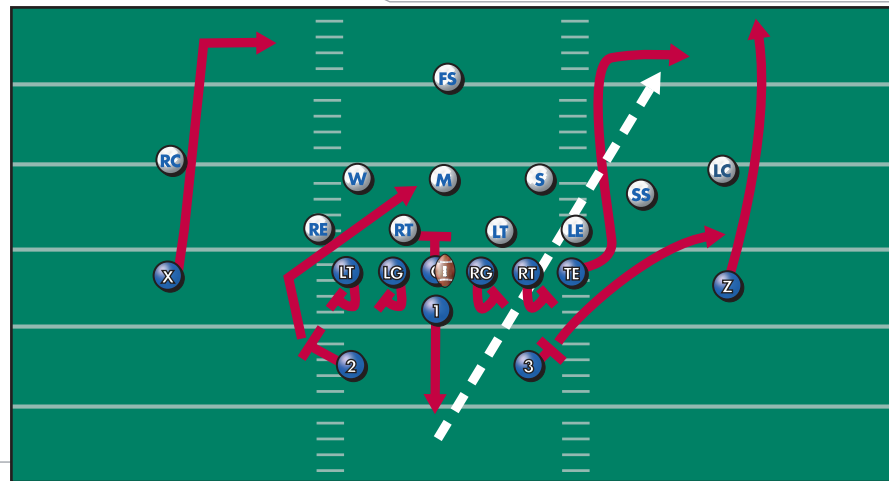
COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB turns his body and steps directly toward the receive.

This is a quick pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block right away. The QB is close to the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, X & Z should release outside on Up routes and QB should throw to TE or HB.

TE & HB must anticipate pass if corners come up.

STRONG FLOOD



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield 12 yards, roll over right foot, and break straight across the field [In route].
- LT**—set back and pass block RDE to outside.
- LG**—set back and pass block RDT to outside.
- CENTER**—set back and block M backer if he rushes.

- RG**—set back and pass block LDT to outside.
- RT**—set back and pass block LDE to outside.
- TE**—release outside of LDE, run up field 12 yards, roll over right foot, and break straight to sideline [Out route].
- Z**—release outside of Corner and drive straight upfield [Up route].
- FB [3]**—take crossover step to right and be

prepared to block S backer or SS if either one rushes. If there is no rusher, run Flat route to sideline.

QB [1]—take 5-step drop, step, and throw. Look to right for Z Up, TE Out, or FB in Flat.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left. Be prepared to block W backer if he rushes. If there is no rush, run Cross route to the center of the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB takes a full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body, and steps directly toward the receiver.

This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the Z Up should be open for the QB's pass.

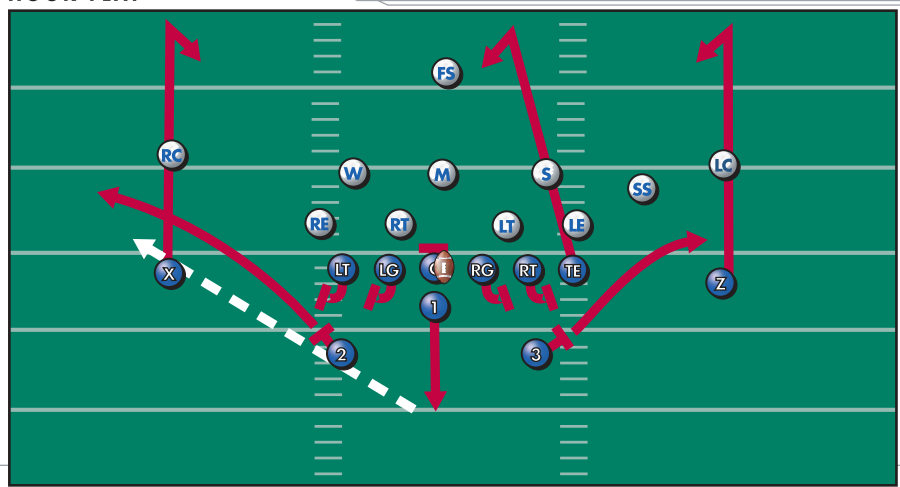
When the W and M backers drop deep to stop the X In route, the QB should think about dropping the ball to the HB on the Cross route especially on third down and 5 or 6 yards.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (PASSING)

Formation: Split-Right—Set A or 21

HOOK FLAT



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].
- LT**—set back and pass block RDE to outside.
- LG**—set back and pass block RDT to outside.
- CENTER**—set back and block M backer if he rushes.

- RG**—set back and pass block LDT to outside.
- RT**—set back and pass block LDE to outside.
- TE**—release inside of LDE, run upfield 12 yards to the center of the field, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].
- Z**—drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back

to the quarterback [Hook route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, be prepared to block S backer or SS if he rushes. If no rush, run Flat route to sideline.

QB [1]—take 5-step drop, step, and throw. Look left to X and HB combination.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left, be prepared to block W backer if he rushes. If no rush, run Flat route to the sideline.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB takes a full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

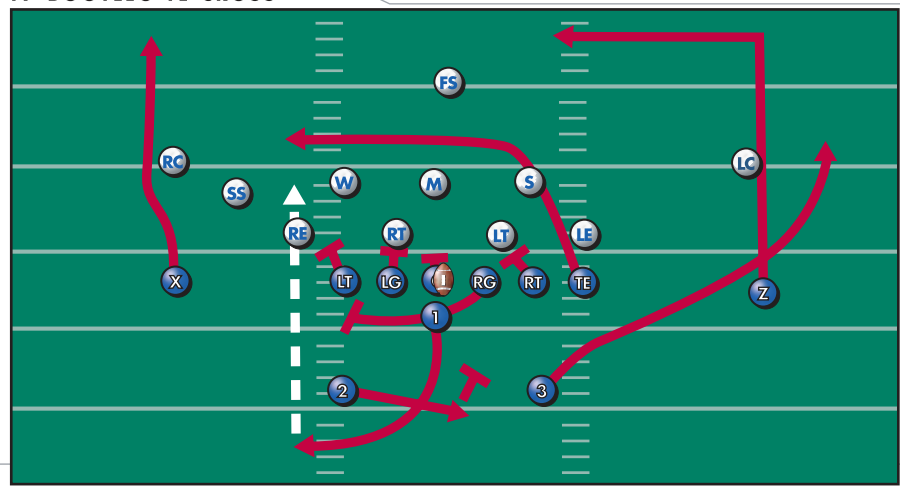
This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the TE should be open in the center of the field.

When the W backer drops deep to stop the X Hook route, the QB should think about dropping the ball to the HB on the Flat route especially on third down and 5 or 6 yards.

When using a B or 22 Set with 2 TE's and one WR, the TE on the side of Z should Hook to the outside and the TE on the other side of the formation can Hook to the inside of the field.

17 BOOTLEG TE CROSS



ASSIGNMENTS

- X**—drive upfield, release outside of RC, and run Up route to goal line.
- LT**—drive block out on RDE, set back, and stay on line.
- LG**—drive block out on RDT, set back, and stay on line.
- CENTER**—step with right foot to LDT, set back, and block M backer if he rushes.
- RG**—drop step with left foot, pull behind

- center, move away from line, and be personal protector for QB.
- RT**—angle block down on LDT, stop penetration, and stay on line.
- TE**—release inside of LDE, run up the field for 6 yards, roll over left foot, break across the field [Cross route], try to be 8 yards from the line, keep running, and look for QB and ball.
- Z**—drive upfield 12 yards, roll over left

foot, get to 14 yards from line, run straight across center of field [In route], keep running, and look to QB for ball.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, run just outside of LDE, and keep running to outside up the field [Wheel route].

QB [1]—step back with left foot to HB, fake handoff to HB, continue on Bootleg action to left, select target, turn body and step to throw to receiver, and look from X to TE.

HB [2]—take crossover step to right, fake taking handoff, and be prepared to block S backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to HB, gets depth from the line, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

If no receiver is open, the QB can yell GO and run the ball behind the block of the RG.

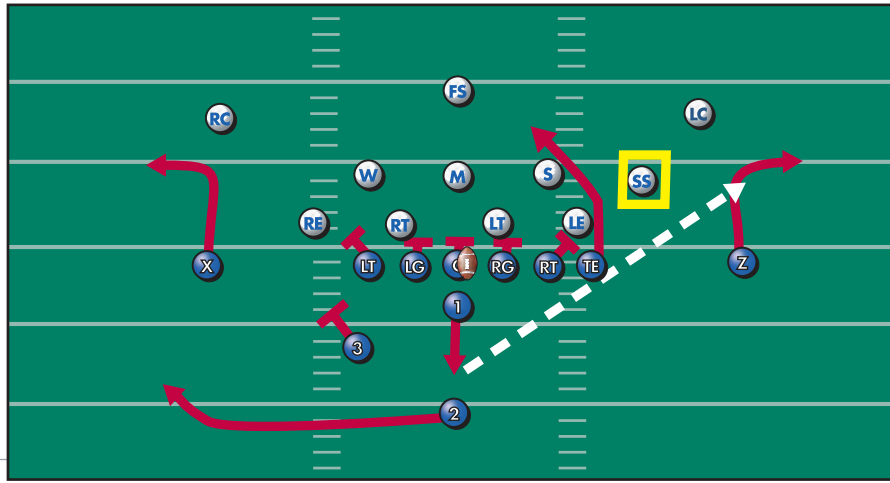
If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the X should be open running the Up route on the sideline.

The RG should be alert to block the W backer if he rushes, the QB should look for the TE running the Cross route.

When using a B or 22 Set with 2 TE's and one WR, the TE on the side of Z and Z should run their regular patterns and the TE on the other side of the formation should release outside of RDE and run a deep Corner route.

Formation: I Left—Set A or 21

QUICK OUT PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield 4 yards, roll over left foot, and break to sideline [Quick Out route].
LT—set back and fire out on RDE and bring his hands down.
LG—set back and fire out on RDT, and bring his hands down.

CENTER—set back 1 step and block M backer if he rushes.
RG—set back and fire out on LDT and bring his hands down.
RT—set back and fire out on LDE and bring his hands down.
TE—release outside of LDE, run Look-in

pattern, and look for ball right away.
Z—drive upfield 4 yards, roll over right foot, and break to sideline [Quick Out route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, and be prepared to block S backer or SS if he rushes.

QB [1]—take 3-step drop, step and throw, and if SS up throw to X.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left and run Wide route to the sideline.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB turns his body and steps directly at the receiver.

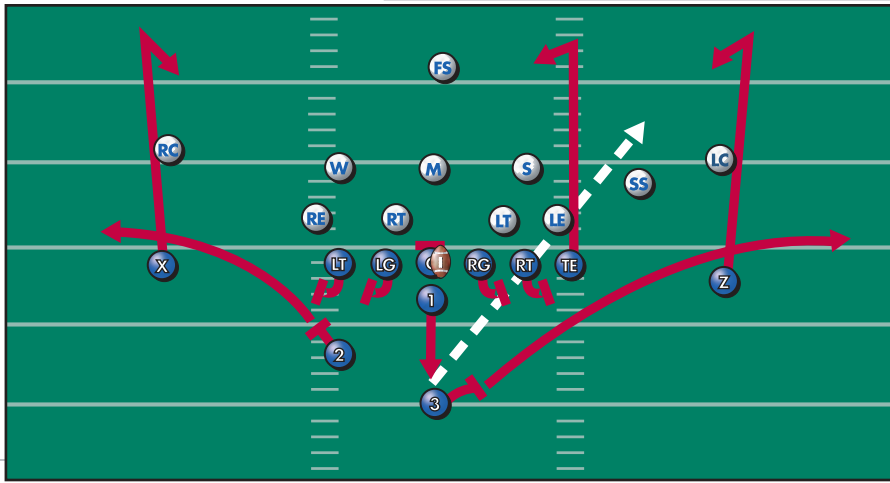
This is a quick pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and then block right away. The QB is close to the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, X & Z should release outside on Up routes and QB should throw to TE or HB.

TE & HB must anticipate pass if corners come up.

QB must key W backer. If W backer rushes, pass the ball to the HB on the Swing route. From I position, HB cannot block W backer.

HOOK FLAT



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].
LT—set back and pass block RDE to outside.
LG—set back and pass block RDT to outside.
CENTER—set back and block M backer if he rushes.

RG—set back pass block LDT to outside.
RT—set back and pass block LDE to outside.
TE—release outside of LDE, run upfield 12 yards to the center of the field, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].
Z—drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].

HB [2]—take crossover step to right, be prepared to block S backer or SS if he rushes. If no rusher, run Flat route to the sideline.

QB [1]—take five-step drop, step and throw. Look left to X and HB combination.

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, be prepared to block W backer if he rushes. If no rush, run Flat route to the sideline.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB takes a full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

This is a medium to deep pass and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the TE should be open in the center of the field.

When the W backer drops deep to stop the X Hook route, the QB should think about dropping the ball to the HB on the Flat route especially on third down and 5 or 6 yards.

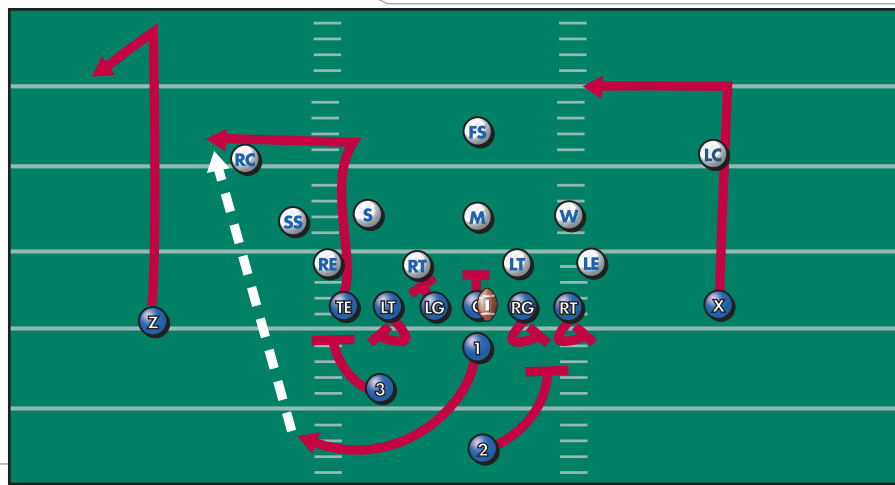
When using a B or 22 Set with 2 TE's and one WR, the TE on the side of Z should Hook to the outside and the TE on the other side of the formation can Hook to the inside of the field.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (PASSING)

Formation: I Left—Set A or 21

19 SPRINT COMEBACK-OUT



ASSIGNMENTS

Z—drive upfield 18 yards, shorten your stride, and gather yourself and quickly turn back to the sideline [Comeback route].

TE—release inside of RDE, drive up the field 10 yards, roll over left foot, break to sideline, and look to QB and ball.

LT—Step in with right foot, set back, and pass block S backer if he rushes.

LG—reach block on RDT, set back, and pass block RDT to inside.

CENTER—set back and block M backer if he rushes.

RG—reach block on LDT, set back, and pass block LDT to outside.

RT—step at LDE with right foot, set back, and pass block LDE to outside.

X—drive upfield 12 yards, roll over left

foot, break across the field [In route], and keep running.

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, drive at LDE's outside hip, and block LDE inside on the line.

QB [1]—drop step with left foot, open and run to left, get depth from line, select receiver, turn body and step to throw, and look from Z to TE.

HB [2]—take crossover step to right, drive at outside hip of RG, and be prepared to block W backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB opens up with his left foot and sprints to his left getting depth away from the line, turns his body up the field, and steps directly at his receiver as he throws.

The QB does not fake a handoff on this pass.

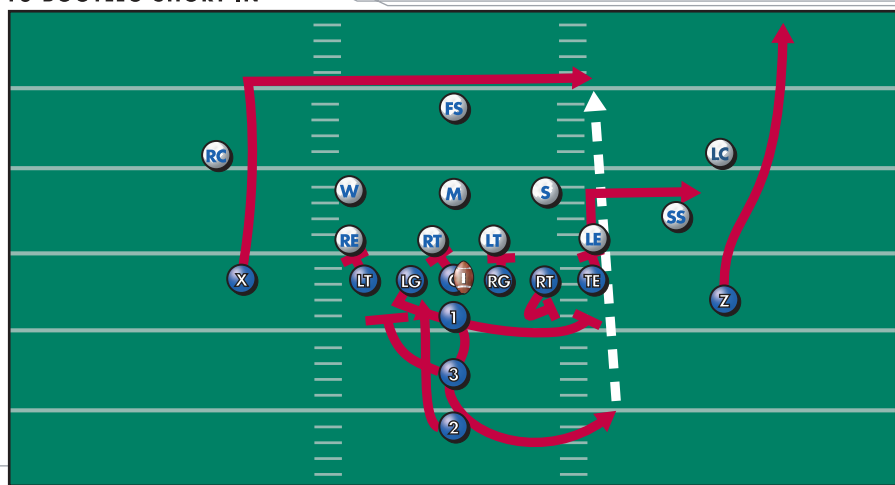
If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the Z should be first choice on the Comeback route.

QB should throw the ball away if he sees a SS blitz.

When using a B or 22 Set with 2 TE's and one WR, the TE on the side of Z and the Z should run their regular patterns and the TE on the other side of the formation can run a Cross route across the field at 8 yards.

Formation: I Right—Set A or 21

18 BOOTLEG SHORT-IN



ASSIGNMENTS

X—narrow split from LT to 6 yards, drive upfield 12 yards, roll over right foot, and sprint straight across the field.

LT—drive block out on RDE, set back and stay on line.

LG—drop step with right foot, pull behind center, move away from line, and be personal protector for QB.

CENTER—angle block back on RDT and

stay on line.

RG—drive block out on LDT, set back, and stay on line.

RT—set back, and be prepared to block S backer if he rushes or LDE after TE releases.

TE—reach block on LDE for 3 counts, release outside of LDE, run up the field for 4 yards, roll over right foot, break to sideline [Short route], and look for QB and ball.

Z—release outside of LC, drive up the field

toward goal line [Up route], and keep running.

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, drive at inside hip of LT, and block W backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—step back with left foot to HB, fake handoff to HB, continue on Bootleg action to right, select target, turn body and step to throw to receiver, and look from TE to X.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left, fake taking handoff, drive inside of center's block on RDT, and be prepared to block M backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to HB, gets depth from the line, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

If no receiver is open the QB can yell GO and run the ball behind the block of the LG.

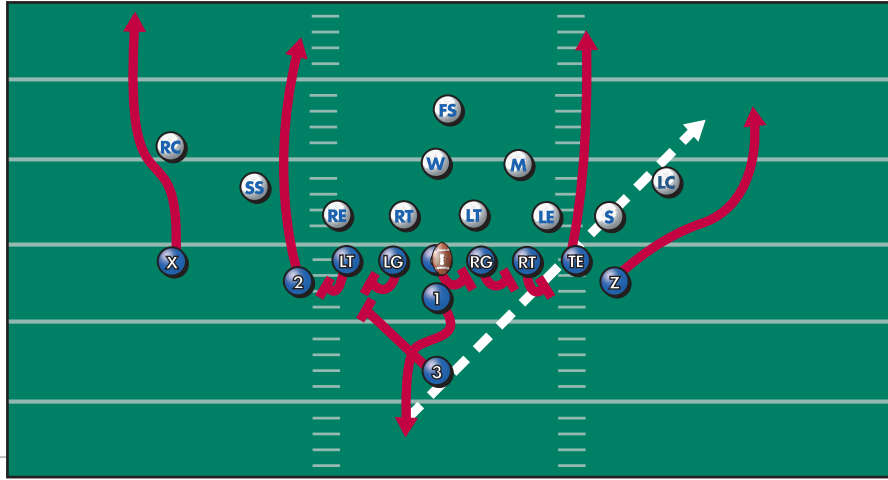
If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the Z should be open running the Up route on the sideline.

The LG should be alert to block the S backer if he rushes, the QB should then look for the X running the In route.

When using a B or 22 Set with 2 TE's and one WR, the TE on the side of Z and Z should run their regular patterns and the TE on the other side of the formation should release inside of RDE and run an In route.

Formation: Double Z Wing Right Set A or 21

133 THROWBACK WHEEL



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield releasing outside of RC, and stay 5 yards from sideline and run straight up the field [Up route].

LT—set back and pass block RDE to outside.

LG—set back and pass block RDT to outside.

CENTER—set back, move to right, and

block M backer if he rushes.

RG—set back pass block LDT to outside.

RT—set back, and pass block LDE to outside.

TE—release outside of LDE, and run upfield staying just outside of hashmark [Up route].

Z—swing to outside of S backer, and release outside of LC, staying 5 yards from

sideline [Wheel route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, fake handoff from QB, and look back to center of formation to block W backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—pivot to right, fake handoff to FB, complete 5 step drop, step and throw, and look left to Z and HB.

HB [2]—release outside of RDE, run up the field, bend into middle, and stay just inside of hashmark [Up route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to FB, completes his full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

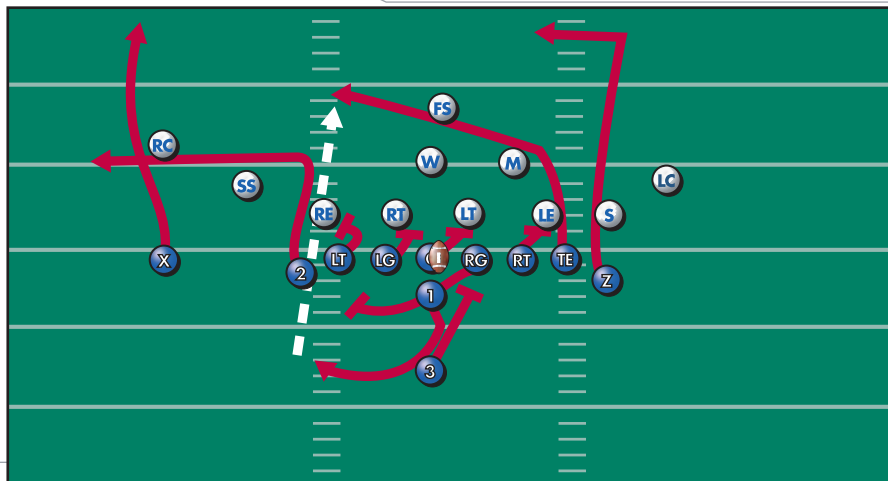
This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the HB should be open in the center of the field or the X on the sideline.

When the FS moves to his right to cover HB on Up route look to TE or Z.

When using a G or 31 Set with 1 TE and X, the WB on the side of the TE would take the place of Z and run the Wheel route.

17 BOOTLEG TE CROSS



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield releasing outside of RC, stay 5 yards from sideline, and run straight up the field [Up route].

LT—drive block on RDE and keep him on line.

LG—drive block on RDT and keep him on line.

CENTER—reach block on LDT and keep him on line.

RG—drop step with left foot, pull behind

center, give ground away from line, look to block anyone rushing from the outside [SS, RDE, W backer], and lead QB if he runs.

RT—step at LDE and pass block LDE to outside.

TE—release outside of LDE, run upfield 5 yards, break across field to sideline, get to 8 yards depth [Cross route], look for QB, and block downfield if QB runs.

Z—release inside of S backer and LC, run upfield 12 yards, roll over left foot, and

break straight across the field [In route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, fake handoff from QB, and look to block M or S backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—step back with right foot, fake to FB, turn back to left and give ground away from line, read progression from X to HB to TE, turn body upfield, step directly at target with lead foot to throw, and yell GO to RG if you run.

HB [2]—release outside of RDE, run up the field 5 yards, roll over left foot, break to sideline, look back to QB, and block downfield if QB runs.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to FB, turns back to his left, gives ground away from line [8 yards], and turns his body and steps directly at the receiver as he throws.

This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, X should be open on the sideline or the TE on the Cross route.

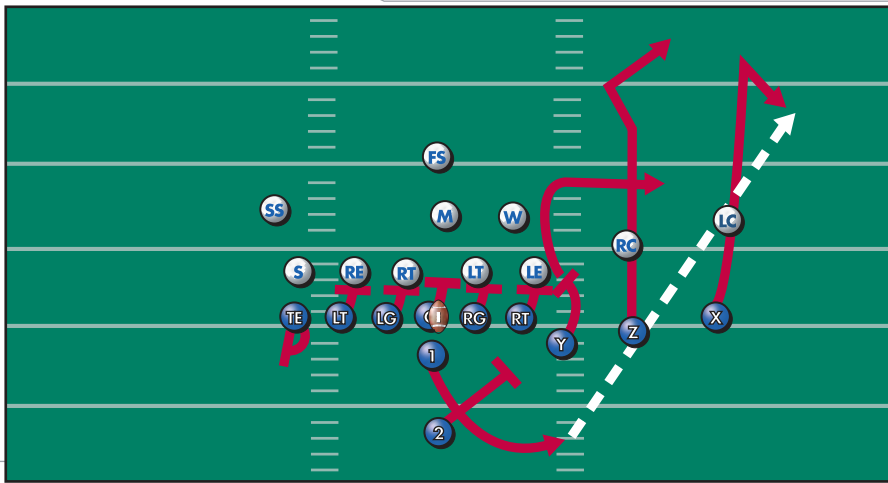
When using a G or 31 Set with 1 TE and X, the WB on the side of the TE would take the place of Z and run the In route.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (PASSING)

Formation: Triple Slot Right—Set C or 12

18 SPRINT-CORNER-COMEBACK



ASSIGNMENTS

TE—drop back off line and block S backer or SS if he rushes.

LT—step inside, pass block on RDE, and keep him to outside.

LG—step inside, pass block on RDT, and keep him to outside.

CENTER—pass block off line, block M backer if he rushes, and help LG if needed.

RG—reach block out on LDT, set back, and keep LDT on line.

RT—reach block on LDE, set back, and keep LDE inside on line.

Y—hit LDE, release outside, run upfield 8 yards, roll over right foot, and break straight to sideline [Short route].

Z—release outside of RC, run upfield 12 yards, break to post, then back out to corner

[Corner route] and keep running.

X—drive upfield 18 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself and quickly turn back to the sideline [Comeback route].

HB [2]—take crossover step to right, drive at RT’s inside hip, and block W backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—drop step with right foot, open and run to right, get depth from line, select receiver, turn body and step to throw, and look from X to Z.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB opens up with his right foot, sprints to his right getting depth away from the line, turns his body up the field, and steps directly at his receiver as he throws.

The QB does not fake a handoff on this pass.

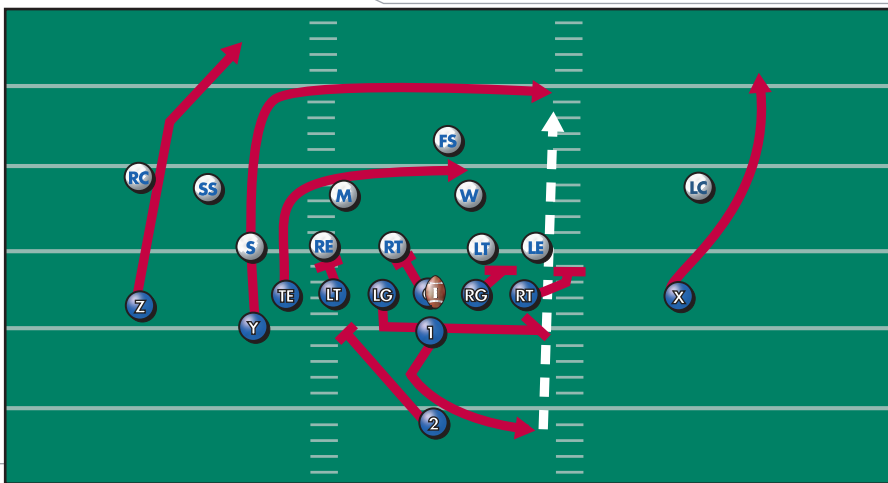
If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the X should be first choice on the Comeback route.

When both RC and LC drop deep, throw ball to Y on Short route or run the ball.

If D Set or 11 is used, A, the third WR, will take the place of Y and run the Short route.

Formation: Triple Y Wing Left—Set C or 12

18 BOOTLEG-IN-CROSS



ASSIGNMENTS

Z—release inside of RC, run upfield 12 yards, roll over right foot, break to post [Post route], and keep running.

Y—release outside of S backer, run upfield 12 yards, rollover right foot, and keep running across field toward sideline [In route] look for QB.

TE—release inside of S backer, run upfield 5 yards, roll over right foot, break at angle

across field at 8 yards from line [Cross route], and look for QB.

LT—drive block out on RDE, set back, and stay on line.

LG—drop step with right foot, pull behind center, move away from line, and be personal protector for QB.

CENTER—angle block back on RDT and stay on line.

RG—reach block out on LDT, set back, and

keep LDT on line.

RT—reach block on LDE, set back, and keep LDE inside on line.

X—release outside of LC, run straight upfield, and stay 5 yards from sideline.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left, drive at LT’s inside hip, fake taking handoff, and block M or S backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—drop step with left foot to HB, fake handoff to HB, continue on Bootleg action to right, select target, turn body and step to throw to receiver, and look from TE to Y.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to HB, comes back to the right, gets depth from the line, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

If no receiver is open, the QB can yell GO, run the ball behind the block of the LG, plus the TE and Y should block downfield when QB runs.

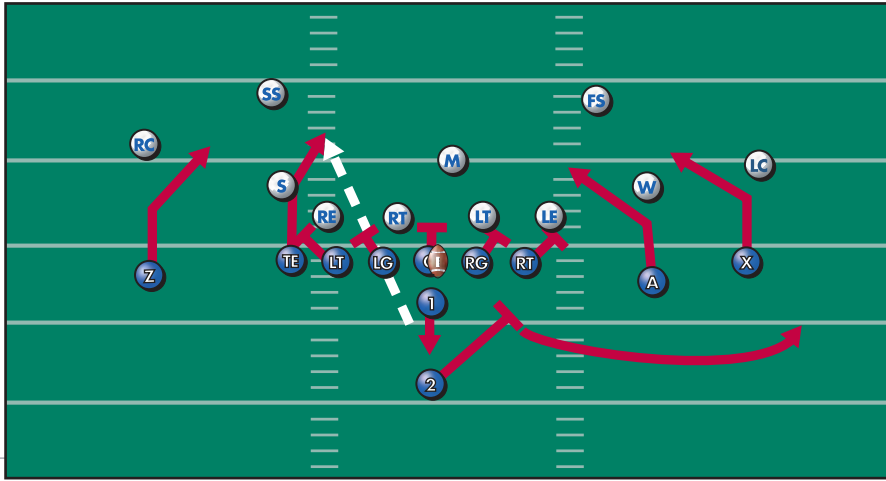
If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the X should be open running the Up route on the sideline.

The LG should be alert to block the W backer if he rushes, the QB should then look for the Y running the In route.

If FS leaves the center of the field, QB can look to Z on Post route.

Formation: Ace Left—Set D or 11

SLANT PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

Z—drive upfield 4 yards, and break inside at angle to hashmark [Slant route].

TE—release inside of S backer, run up field 4 yards, and angle to inside [Lookin route], and look for ball right away.

LT—set back and fire out on RDE, bring his hands down.

LG—set back and fire out on RDT, bring his hands down.

CENTER—set back 1 step and block M backer if he rushes.

RG—set back and fire out on LDT, bring his hands down.

RT—set back and fire out on LDE, bring his hands down.

A—drive upfield 4 yards, break inside at angle to hashmark [Slant route].

X—drive upfield 4 yards, and break inside at angle to hashmark [Slant route].

QB [1]—take 3 step, drop, step, and throw.

HB [2]—take crossover step to right and be prepared to block W backer if he rushes. If no rush, run release to sideline [Swing route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB turns his body and steps directly at the receiver.

This is a quick pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and then block right away. The QB is close to the line.

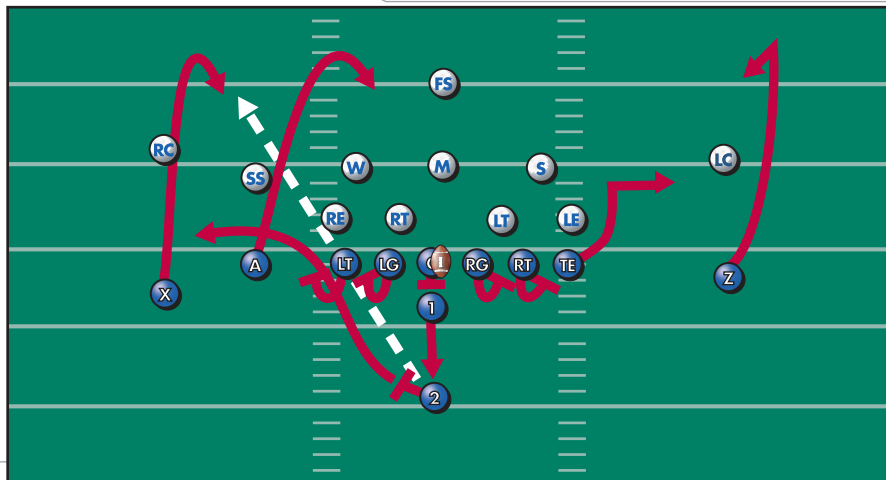
If both safeties go back and both corners come up, look to inside receivers A or TE.

HB must anticipate pass if QB scrambles and W rushes late.

If run from E Set or 20, the FB will take the place of TE and line up in backfield with backs split and moving up on the snap to be in position to block the outside backer [S and W] on either side if they should rush. If no rush, both backs should run a Swing route to their respective side.

Formation: Ace Right—Set D or 11

ALL HOOK



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].

A—release inside of SS, angle in to hashmark, drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].

LT—set back and pass block RDE to outside.

LG—set back and pass block RDT to outside.

CENTER—set back, block M backer if he rushes, and help either G as needed.

RG—set back pass block LDT to outside.

RT—set back, pass block S backer if he rushes. If no S rush, take over block on LDE from TE and block LDE to outside.

TE—set back, block LDE to outside, release inside of LDE if S backer drops, and break straight down line to sideline [Delay route].

Z—drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your

stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].

QB [1]—take 5-step drop, step and throw, and look left to X, A and HB combination.

HB [2]—take crossover step to left and be prepared to block W backer if he rushes. If no rush, run to line and break to the sideline [Flat route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB takes a full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body and steps directly at the receiver.

This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, A should be open on the hashmark.

When the W and SS drop deep to stop the Hook routes, the QB should think about dropping the ball to the HB on the Flat route especially on third down and 5 or 6 yards.

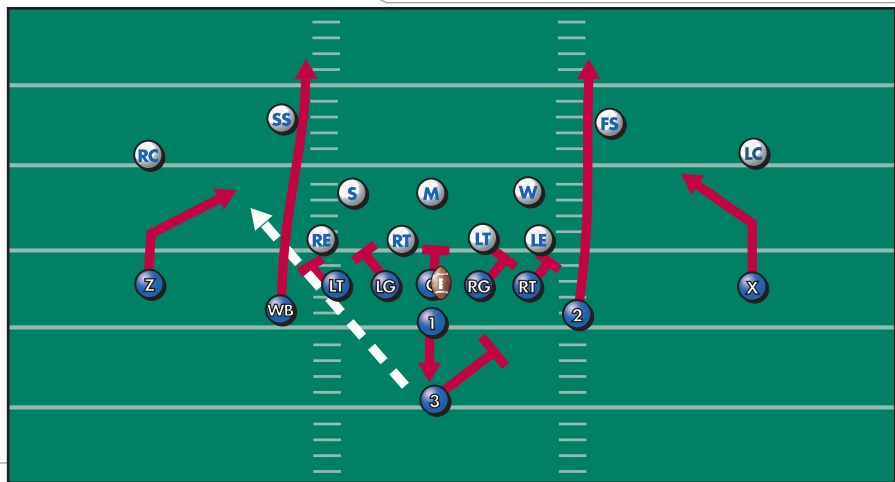
When using an E or 20 Set with 2 backs and 3 WRs [can be from shotgun], the backs should be split, the FB on the side of Z should block the S backer if he rushes, and the RT can pass block on LDE. No rush by S, the FB can run a Flat route to the sideline.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (PASSING)

Formation: Double Wing Open Left—Set F or 30

3 STEP SLANT PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- Z—drive upfield 4 yards, and break inside at angle to hashmark [Slant route].
- LT—set back and fire out on RDE, bring his hands down.
- LG— set back and fire out on RDT, bring his hands down.
- CENTER—set back 1 step, block M backer

- if he rushes.
- RG— set back and fire out on LDT, bring his hands down.
- RT—set back and fire out on LDE, bring his hands down.
- X— drive upfield 4 yards, and break inside at angle to hashmark [Slant route].
- WB—step down at RDE, release outside of

RDE, run up the field, bend into middle, and stay just outside of hashmark [Up route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, set up on outside hip of RG, and block W backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—take three-step drop, step, and throw.

HB [2]—step down at LDE, release outside of LDE, run up the field, bend into middle, and stay just outside of hashmark [Up route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB takes 3 steps, sets, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver as he throws.

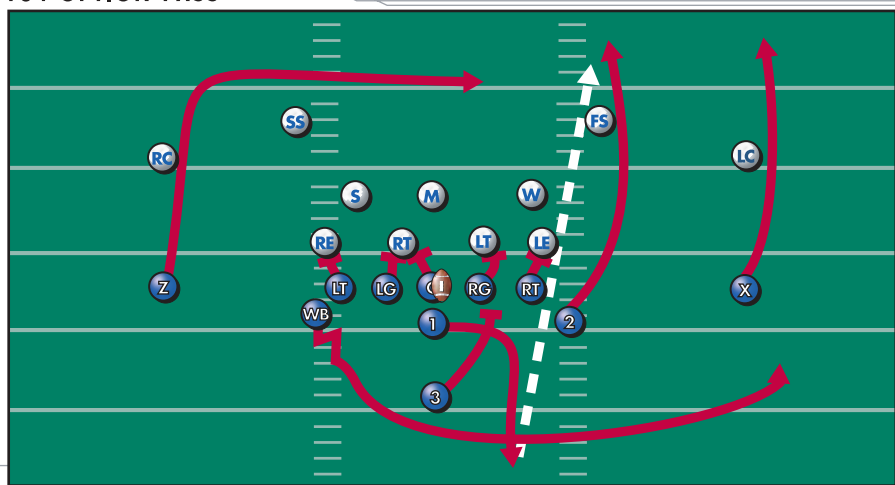
This is a quick pass with no fake to the FB, and it is vital that all blockers take a short set back and then block right away. The QB is close to the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, look to either outside receiver running Slant route.

Both WB and HB should look back to QB as soon as they start up the field, ball may come quick.

If S backer walks up in line, RG should block him and Center should block RDT. M backer would then be free.

134 OPTION PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- Z—release inside of RC, drive upfield 12 yards, roll over right foot, and break straight across field [In route].
- LT—set back and pass block RDE to outside.
- LG—set back and pass block RDT to outside.
- CENTER—set back, help LG stop RDT, move to right, and block M backer if he rushes.

- RG—step into LDT and set back pass block LDT to inside.
- RT—step into LDE set back and pass block LDE to outside.
- X—drive upfield releasing outside of RC, stay 5 yards from sideline, and run straight up the field [Up route].
- WB—drop step back with right foot, take short two-step motion, run option path to right, and turn upfield when 5 yards from sideline.

FB [3]—take crossover step to right, drive at outside hip of RG, fake handoff from QB, and block W backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—open step with right foot, move down the line, fake handoff to FB, take 2 steps as 18 Option, move back away from the line, complete 5 step drop, step, and throw.

HB [2]—step down at LDE, release outside of LDE, run up the field, bend into middle, and stay just outside of hashmark [Up route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to FB, completes his full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, the HB should be open in the center of the field or the X on the sideline.

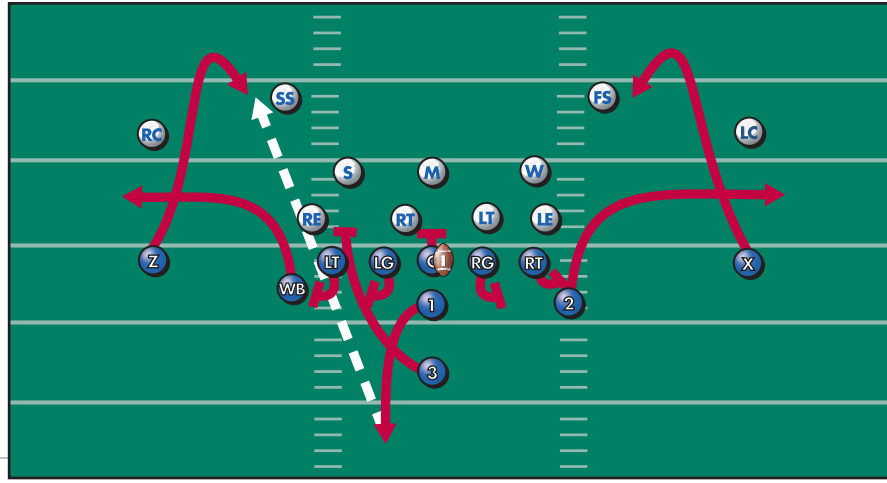
When the FS attacks line to take option, HB should be target.

When W backer rushes, QB should look to WB running wide to sideline.

LG and CENTER should be alert for S backer rushing.

Formation: Wing Open Left—Set F or 30

133 HOOK-SHORT



ASSIGNMENTS

Z—release inside of RC, drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself, and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].

LT—step at RDE, set back, and pass block RDE on line.

LG—step at RDT, set back, and pass block RDT on line.

CENTER—step at RDT, set back, help LG

stop RDT, move to left, and block M backer if he rushes.

RG—step to left, set back, and pass block LDT to outside.

RT—step to left, set back, and pass block LDE to outside.

X—release inside of LC, drive upfield 12 yards, shorten your stride, gather yourself and quickly turn back to the quarterback [Hook route].

WB—step down at RDE, release outside of RDE up the field 4 yards, roll over left foot, break straight to sideline, and look to QB [Short route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, drive at outside hip of LG, fake handoff from QB, and block S backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—step back with left foot, move away from line, fake handoff to FB, move back away from the line, complete five-step drop-set, step and throw.

HB [2]—step down at LDE, release outside of LDE up the field 4 yards, roll over right foot, break straight to sideline, and look to QB [Short route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to FB, completes his full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body, and steps directly at the receiver.

This is a medium to deep pass, and it is vital that all blockers set back and block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

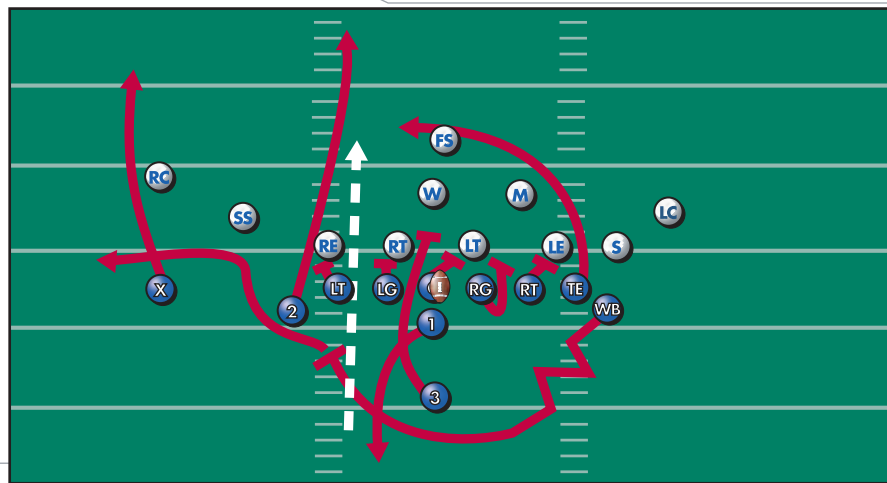
If both safeties go back and both corners drop, look for either WB or HB on Short route.

When the FS stays in center of field, QB should look to HB and X side of pattern.

When W backer rushes, HB should break route immediately to sideline and QB should get him the ball.

Formation: Double Wing Right—Set G or 31

133 TE CROSS



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield releasing outside of RC, stay 5 yards from sideline, and run straight up the field [Up route].

LT—drive block on RDE and keep him on line.

LG—drive block on RDT and keep him on line.

CENTER—drive block on LDT and keep him on line.

RG—step in at LDT, set back, and be prepared to block either M or S backer if either rushes.

RT—step at LDE and pass block LDE to outside.

TE—release outside of LDE, run upfield 5 yards, break across field to sideline, and get to 8 yards depth [Cross route], look for QB.

HB [2]—Step at RDE, release outside of

RDE, run upfield, bend to center of field just across hashmarks, and keep running [Up route].

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, fake handoff from QB, bend back to center, and block W backer if he rushes.

QB [1]—step back with left foot, fake handoff to FB, move back away from the line, complete five-step drop, set, step and throw.

WB—drop step back with left foot, take slow short two-step motion, sprint to get past QB, block SS if he rushes, and break on line to sideline if SS drops [Flat route].

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to FB, completes his full five-step drop, plants his back foot, turns his body and steps directly at the receiver.

This is a medium to deep pass and it is vital that all blockers block their defensive man for the entire play. The QB is back off the line.

If both safeties go back and both corners come up, X should be open on the sideline or the TE on the Cross route.

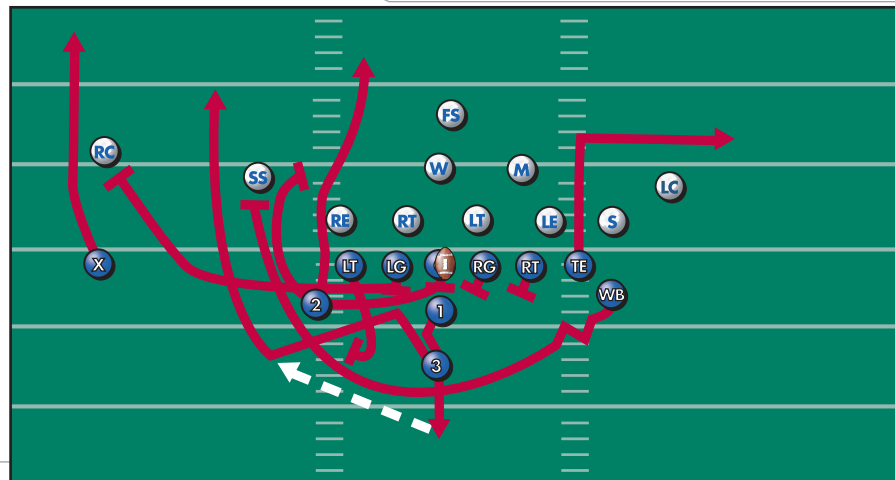
If all receivers [X, HB, and TE] are covered downfield, QB should look to throw the ball to the WB in flat.



OFFENSIVE SKILLS (PASSING)

Formation: Double Wing Right—Set G or 31

FAKE 133 FB SCREEN LEFT



ASSIGNMENTS

X—drive upfield releasing outside of RC, stay 5 yards from sideline, and run straight up the field [Up route].

LT—pass block on RDE, retreat off line, and allow RDE to rush outside.

LG—pass block on RDT for two counts, release him to inside, turn to left, and run down the line. Listen for GO call, and lead FB upfield after catch.

CENTER—pass block on line for two counts, turn to left, and run down the line. Listen for GO call, lead FB upfield after catch look back to center of field to block W or M backer.

RG—pass block LDT and block him to outside.

RT—pass block LDE and block him to outside.

TE—release outside of LDE, run upfield 5

yards, break across field to sideline, get to 8 yards depth [Cross route], and look to block on SS or LC.

HB [2]—Step at RDE, release outside of RDE, run upfield, bend to center of field just across hashmarks [Up route], keep running.

FB [3]—take crossover step to left, fake handoff from QB, settle, stay inside of LT, let LT pass you by, release after two counts to outside, look back over left shoulder for ball, yell GO to alert OL that you have ball, and they should turn upfield and run.

QB [1]—step back with left foot, fake handoff to FB, move back away from the line, take five-step drop, re-set and drop four more yards, step, and throw to FB.

WB—drop step back with left foot, take slow short two-step motion, sprint to get past QB, block SS if he rushes, break downfield and block SS when he drops.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB makes a good fake to FB, completes his full five-step drop, then drops back again and invites DL to rush before throwing to FB.

This is a screen pass, and it is vital that all blockers sell their pass blocks and that all receivers run their routes hard before running the screen pass.

SUCCESSFUL OFFENSE *(YOUTH)*



OFFENSIVE OVERVIEW (YOUTH)

Introduction

As a youth coach, it is vital to recognize the physical, mental, and overall football development levels of the players on your team. How you approach and select the offense that you teach to your young players should depend on this close team evaluation. It is helpful to think in terms of:

- What past football experience do the players bring to the team?
- How much can the players learn and absorb?
- At what skill level can they perform?
- How much can I realistically teach and practice so that the team can play effectively with a minimum of errors?
- That your offense will hold a much higher priority for you than it does with your young players.
- The time you spend focusing on and implementing the offense will be much greater than the time commitment of the players.
- That terms, ideas, and skills that you take for granted and understand may be completely foreign to your players.

Practice Organization

There are some basic practice organization rules that are applicable for any coach and especially the youth coach:

- Keep a constant structure to your practice so your players become comfortable at practice and can focus on learning.
- Establish a set pattern for your practice so the players know where to go and what to expect, and keep this structure throughout the year.
- How you divide the team for practice will depend on:
 - The number of assistant coaches you have.
 - The number of players who play both ways.
 - The time you have for practice each week.
- Keep it simple, and strive for perfection of execution with a minimum of errors. When players have trouble running plays because of assignment errors, it is usually time to cut back, remove confusion, and review rather than continuing to add more and more offense.
- Introduce offensive plays as a whole (the entire offense; walk through each player's assignment). Then separate and work on the parts: offensive line and tight end—each block needed for the play, wide receivers—proper block, blocking back—proper path to play, quarterback—proper foot work to deliver the ball, and running back—proper path to the receive the ball and hit the designated hole.
- Bring together offense and practice plays starting with ½ line work (center, QB, RB's, right side, left side of offense), and then incorporate the entire team.
- Immediately repeat any play in which an assignment error occurs.
- Always tell the players what you want them to do. *Be positive; correct don't criticize.* Players know when they make an error, you need to tell them what to do so that they can have success the next time.
- An example of your team's daily practice plan might be:

Period 1 = Stretching and warm-up.

Period 2 = Team walk through.

- Introducing anything that may be new in offense/defense/special teams.
- Try to keep comments to essentials and get players moving as you teach.

Period 3 = Teach general skills needed for each position.

- Keep drills fast.
- Divide team to afford maximum player participation and number of repetitions based on number of coaches available at each practice.



OFFENSIVE OVERVIEW (YOUTH)

- Have numerous drills, with each drill focusing on only one skill rather than trying to use one drill repeatedly to teach numerous skills.
- Repeat as many basic technique drills for each offensive position every practice, with only one or two individual repetitions per player, and make corrections quickly.

Period 4 = Segments offense against defense.

- QB, RB, REC against LB, DB.
- OL with RB against DL and LB.

Period 5 = Offensive period against opponent's defense.

Period 6 = Special teams practice segment.

Period 7 = Defensive period against opponent's offense.

Period 8 = Conditioning, offense, defense-running against air.

- With many players on youth teams playing both ways on the offense and defense, it may be necessary to work on offensive technique one day and defensive technique at the beginning of the next practice.
- The challenge is for you to allot proper time to guarantee that all areas (Offense, Defense, Special Teams) are properly taught to your team during your practice sessions.
- Coach the entire team, be firm, fair, and *allow the players to have fun*.

**OFFENSIVE SKILLS (YOUTH)**

Skills

In the “SUCCESSFUL OFFENSE” section are the skills and techniques that are needed to play each offensive position. The skills and techniques range from the basic to the more advanced.

As a coach you will find that players have the opportunity to achieve greater success and perform more effectively when basic skills and proper techniques are taught from the beginning.

Many youth coaches are familiar with the position they might have played, but are not really sure of the techniques needed for the other offensive positions. The Skills section is designed to help you and your staff in this area.

“The fundamentals that I learned as a ten-year-old were the same fundamentals that I used all during my football career.”

—Former NFL Quarterback Warren Moon

It is important that these techniques be reviewed and re-enforced at every practice so they become automatic and second nature to the player.

In determining the skills and techniques you will teach your offensive players, it will be necessary for you to look at:

- Where your players are in their football development.
- What skills will be required to run the offense you are going to teach.
- Do your players have the physical ability to execute the plays you wish to run?
- Can additional, more advanced skills be added later in the year as your offense takes on a greater complexity.

In looking at the Skills section, you may decide, for example, that you only want your offensive linemen to use a four-point stance. In this case, you would not take the time to teach and constantly review a three- or two-point stance.

You might want to throw an Out pass to a wide receiver near the sideline, but after practice you determine that your quarterback lacks the arm strength to get the ball there, so you might eliminate the pass or roll the QB to the sideline.

These are the types of decisions that can be made for every offensive position. If you determine the skills and techniques that you will teach and that your players will need to execute your offense prior to the start of the year, you will save yourself a great deal of frustration and valuable practice time. This also will help your players to become skilled quickly at the techniques of the game.

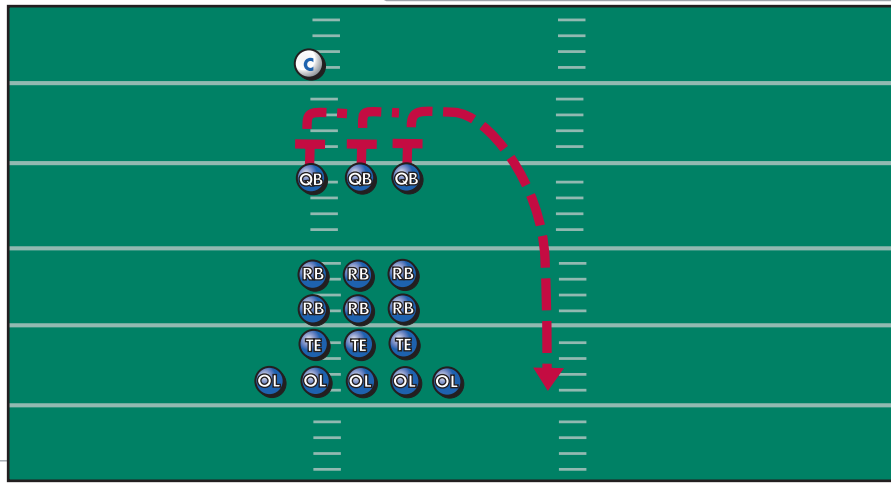
When a player misses a block, it may be that he used the wrong technique or he may have been confused with his assignment. Both can be a cause for a play losing yards.

Teaching assignments for your offense to your young players is important, but it is equally important to teach them the proper techniques to execute these assignments successfully. Learning assignments are the blueprints for your building; learning proper technique is the steel and brick that will make the building a success.

OFFENSIVE DRILLS (YOUTH)

Team: Warm-Up Drill

STANCE



SET-UP—Players line up by position facing the coach. Assistant coach can line up at the side of the players.

DRILL—On coach’s signal **STANCE**, each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

Coach can make corrections and then

POINT right or left (pointing, rather than calling right or left, insures that players have their head up and eyes focused on you) and players move in that direction and go to the back of the group.

REPETITION—Have each group line up once.

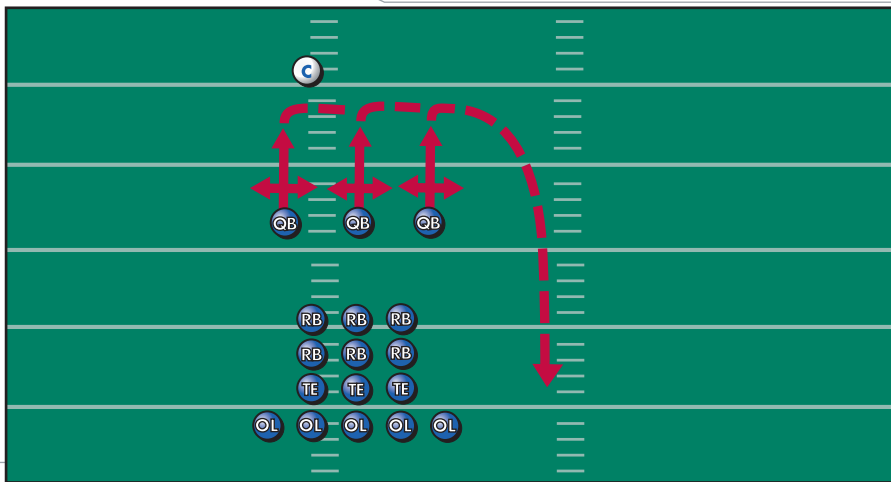
GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the

end of warm-up for the coach that the players are starting practice in a proper stance.

COACHING TIP—Make certain players are in the proper stance for their position. They have head up, shoulders square, back straight, weight evenly distributed, and knees bent.

Start: Team Warm-up Drill

START



SET-UP—Players line up by position 8 yards away and facing the coach. Assistant coach can line up at the side of the players.

DRILL—On coach’s signal, each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position. Coach points right, left, or straight ahead, and players quickly start in

that direction on coach’s signal of **HUT**. Then players move to the outside and go to the back of the group.

REPETITION—Have each group go once in all 3 directions.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach that the players

are starting practice with a proper start.

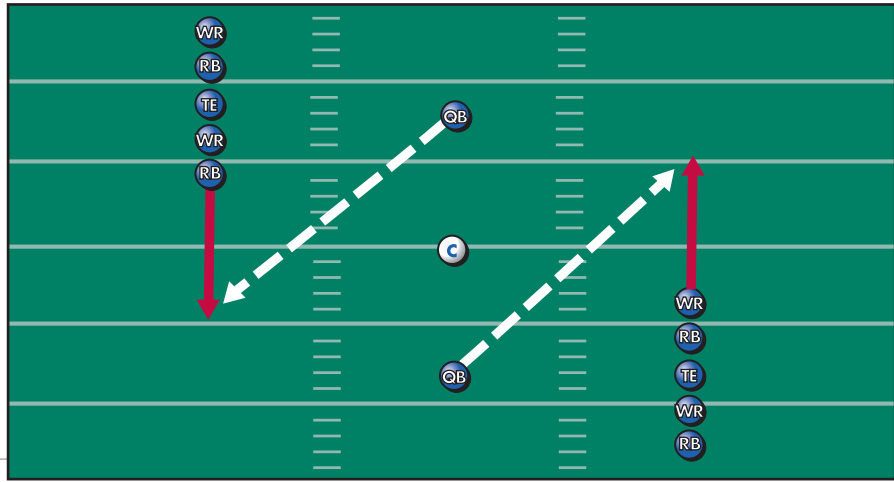
COACHING TIP—Make certain the players are not taking a false step back or up before going right or left, and make sure they are staying low and not raising straight up from their stance.



OFFENSIVE DRILLS (YOUTH)

Team: Warm-Up Passing Drill

PAT & GO



SET-UP—Players line up 10 yards apart and facing the coach.

DRILL—The first player in each line runs down the field at half speed, and the QB steps and throws to him. The player puts the ball down near the QB at the other end. The player moves to the back of the line in the group

going in the other direction.

REPETITION—Have each group go twice in both directions.

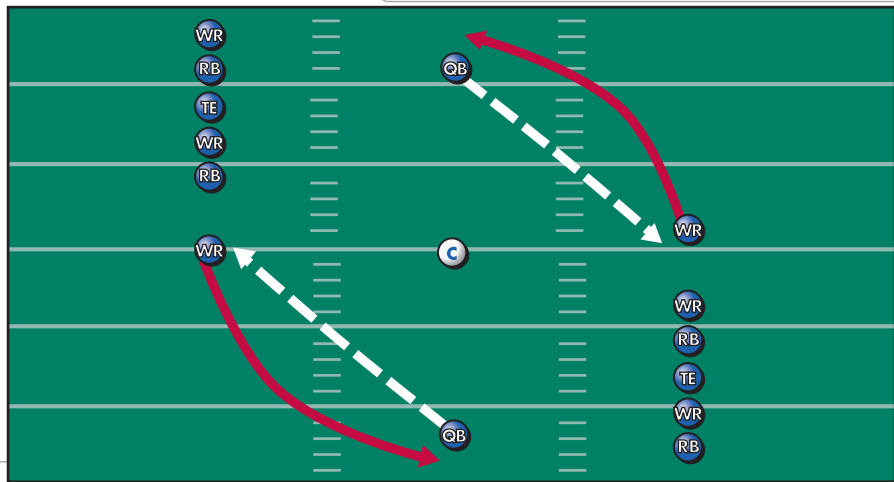
GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach that the players are starting practice with the QB loosening his arm and the players catching the ball with

their hands in the proper position.

COACHING TIP—Make certain the players: line up in the stance they will use in the game, are running straight up the field, and that the quarterback is passing the ball correctly.

Team: Receiving Drill

HANDS



SET-UP—Players line up 10 yards apart, facing the coach.

DRILL—The first player in each line steps forward 2 steps and faces the quarterback at the other end of drill. The QB steps and throws to him. After the catch the player: secures the ball, runs up the field, puts the ball down near the QB, and then moves to the back of the line

in the group going in the other direction.

REPETITION—Have each group go twice in both directions.

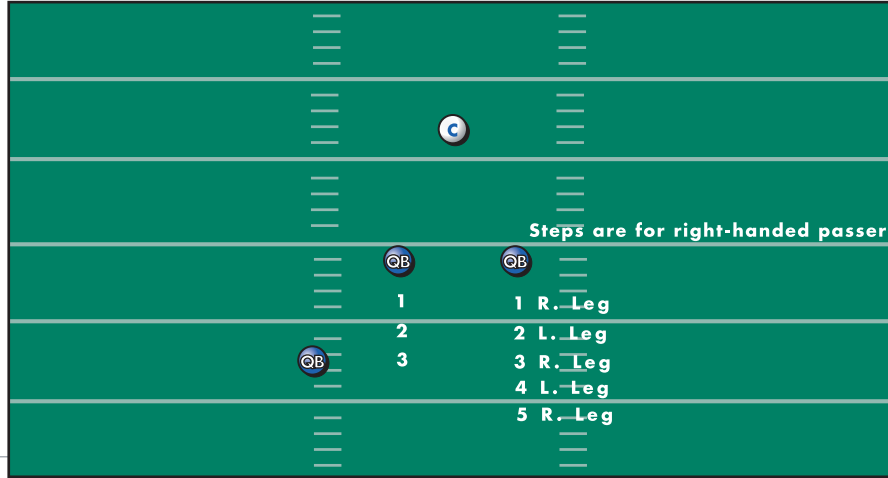
GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach that the players are starting practice with the QB loosening his arm and the players catching the ball with their hands in the proper position.

COACHING TIP—Make certain the players line up, hands up in front of chest and facing the QB; they have their hands in the proper position—with little fingers together with palms up for passes below numbers, and thumbs together, hands cocked back, palms forward, for passes at or above the numbers.

OFFENSIVE DRILLS (YOUTH)

Quarterback: Position Drill

3- & 5-STEP DROP



SET-UP—QBs line up 4 yards away and facing the coach.

DRILL—On coach's signal the QB moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

On coach's signal of HUT, QB takes 3- or 5-step drop, starting with foot on side of passing

hand. QB taking 3-step drop then moves over and does 5-step drop QB doing five-step drop goes to the back of the group.

REPETITION—Have each QB take both drops two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for

the coach that QBs are taking proper steps.

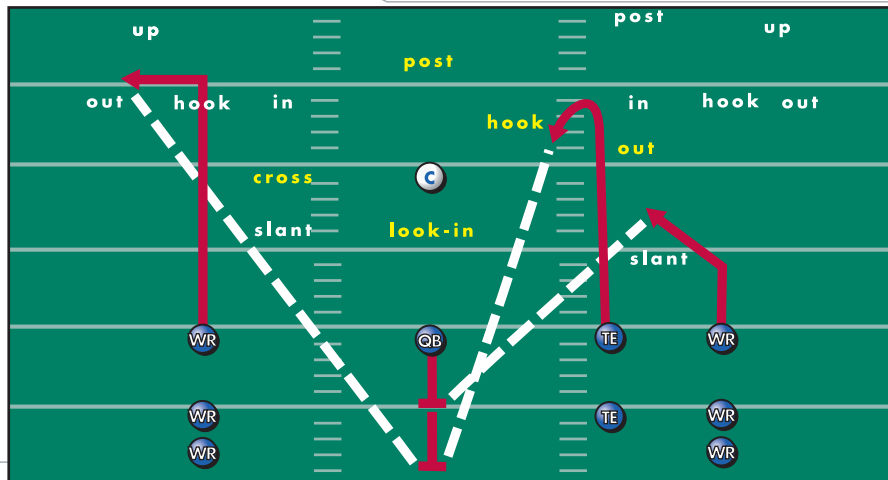
COACHING TIP—Make certain:

- The QBs are not taking a false step up with opposite foot.
- The ball is held chest high.
- Both feet are under hips.
- The third or fifth step should stop QB's momentum away from line.
- The front foot is pointed at the coach.
- The QB is looking directly at the coach as he sets up ready to throw.

Three-step drop is used for short passes, while a five-step drop is used for medium and deep passes.

QB, WR, TE: Passing Drill

HANDS



SET-UP—Players line up facing the coach.

DRILL—The first player in each line steps forward and faces the coach. Coach points to WR or TE and calls out pattern he wants them to run. WR or TE gets into his stance and runs the pattern, makes the catch, carries the ball back to the QB, and then moves to the back of the line in his group. QB takes 3-step drop for

slant or look-in pass and 5-step drop for all others and throws to player running the pattern.

REPETITION—Have each player properly run every pass pattern one time and then switch sides of field and repeat drill.

GOALS—This drill serves as a quick check for coach that:

•The WR & TEs can run patterns and make the catch.

•The QB is stepping at the receiver and delivering the ball accurately with good form.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

- The players run the correct pattern at the proper depth.
- They get their head around to the QB area on the break.
- They are ready to make the catch.
- The QB delivers the ball as they make their break.

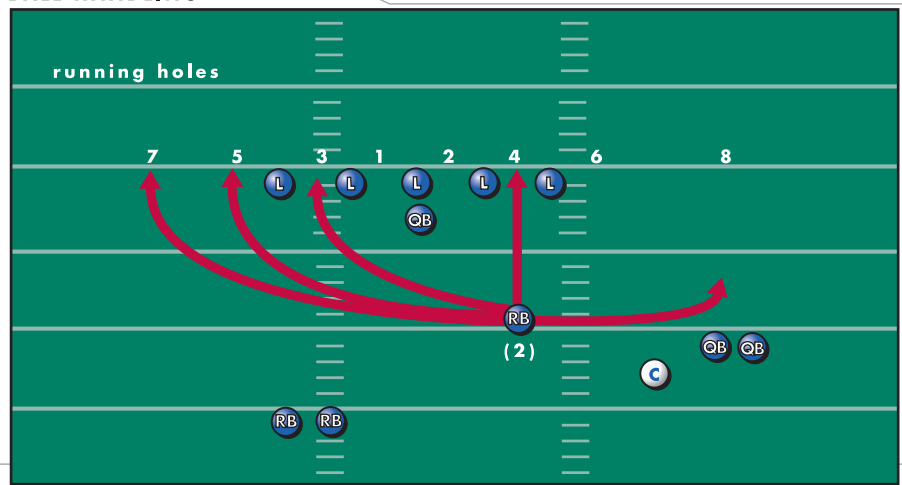
At the start of the season, you can run the drill only to teach how to run the pass patterns without the QB passing.



OFFENSIVE DRILLS (YOUTH)

Quarterback and Running Back Drill

BALL HANDLING



SET-UP—QB and RB line up in designated positions. Towels, T-shirts, or small blocking bags can be placed on the ground to simulate offensive linemen and show running lanes. Coach can take the position of QB if necessary.

DRILL—On coach's signal, the QB and RB move up and get into a proper stance for their position. Coach will then call out the play (28 [toss]—24 [dive]—23 [lead]—25 [power]—27 [sweep]) that they are to run. The QB calls HUT, and the QB and RB execute the proper footwork and ball handling for play called. Coach can then move the RB to left side of QB and run plays from the opposite side (27 [toss]—23 [dive]—24 [lead]—26 [power]—28 [sweep]) using opposite footwork and ball handling.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for the coach that the QBs and RBs are taking proper steps and are exchanging the ball properly.

REPETITIONS—Have each QB and RB run each play (5) correctly once. After running all 5 plays correctly, have a new QB & RB run the drill.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the RB is starting each play by crossing over with the far foot (left for 28, right straight for 24, and left across for all others).

On 28 [toss] check that:

- The QB steps back with his right foot at a 45-degree angle.
- He has the ball in both hands. He makes an underhand toss to the RB.
- The RB starts with his left foot. He turns his body to sideline.
- He turns his left shoulder back and is able to see QB.
- He makes the catch with both hands, little fingers together and palms up.

On 24 [dive] check that:

- The QB first steps down the line with right foot.
- On his second step, he places the ball in the stomach of the RB with both hands.
- The RB should start at inside of the 4 hole, take the ball with his left arm up and right arm down across the stomach.

- After handoff the QB should continue to the sideline.

For 23 [lead] and 25 [power] check that:

- The QB is taking his first step back with his right foot toward the RB.
- He is reaching back to make the handoff with his right hand.
- The RB starts with his right foot. He takes a path to the hole.
- He takes the ball properly with right arm on top and left arm on bottom.
- The QB can drop back (play-action pass) or roll out in the other direction (bootleg).

For 27 [sweep] check that:

- The QB steps directly away from line with right foot.
- On the second step, he is reaching back to make handoff with his right hand, straight back from his original alignment.
- The RB crosses over with his right leg to start.
- He turns his hips and body directly to the sideline.
- His right arm is up and left arm on the bottom to take the ball.
- The QB can drop back (play-action pass) or roll out to the other side (bootleg).

For all plays make certain:

- There is a close handoff.
- The RB receives the ball in his stomach.
- The RB secures the ball and runs through the proper hole up the field 10 yards.
- The QB continues his fake after making the handoff.

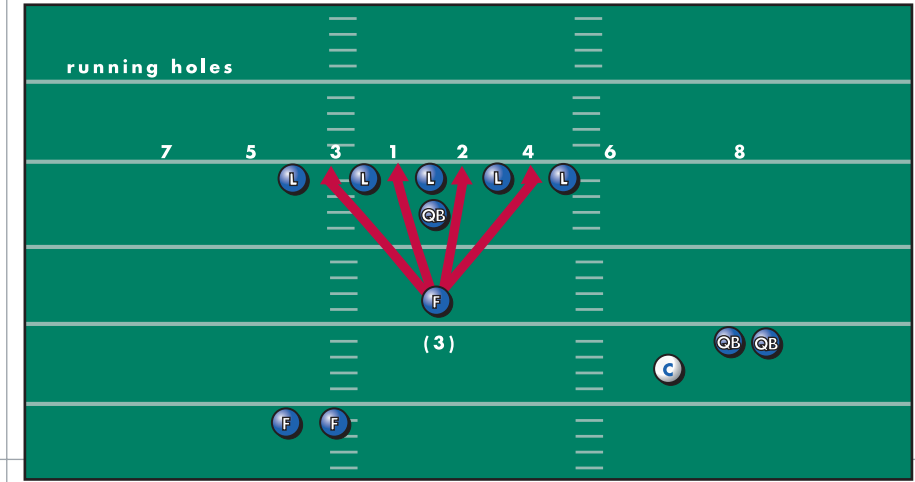
Used to insure that there is a good handoff on each play and that the chance for a fumble is greatly decreased.

All plays in this drill can be found in the Youth Offensive Plays section of *Playbook*.

OFFENSIVE DRILLS (YOUTH)

Quarterback and Fullback Drill

BALL HANDLING



SET-UP—QB and FB line up in designated positions. Towels, T-shirts, or small blocking bags can be placed on the ground to simulate offensive linemen and show running lanes. Coach can take the position of QB if necessary.

DRILL—On coach’s signal, the QB and FB move up and get into a proper stance for their position. Coach will then call out the play (33 [straight], 31 [plunge], 32 [plunge], 34 [slant]) that they are to run. The QB calls HUT, and the QB and FB execute the proper footwork and ball handling for play called. Coach can then run plays to opposite side (34 [straight], 32 [plunge], 31 [plunge], 33 [slant]), using opposite footwork and ball handling.

REPETITION—Have each QB and FB run each play (4) correctly once. After running all 4 plays correctly, have a new QB & FB run the drill.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for the coach that QBs and FBs are taking proper steps and exchanging the ball properly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the FB is starting each play by crossing over with the far foot (right for 33 & 31, left for 32 & 34).

On 33 [slant] check that:

- The QB steps back with his left foot.
- He has the ball in both hands.
- He reaches out to place the ball in the stomach of the FB. The FB takes a crossover step with his right foot directly at 3 hole.
- He has his right arm up on the top, across the top of his numbers, and his left arm on the bottom, across his stomach, to take the handoff.
- After handoff, the QB can drop back (play-action pass) or continue to the sideline.

On 34 [slant] check that:

- The QB steps back with his right foot.
- He has the ball in both hands.
- He reaches out to place the ball in the stomach of the FB. The FB takes a crossover step with his left foot directly at 4 hole.
- He has his left arm up on the top, across the top of his numbers and his right arm on the bottom down across his stomach to take the handoff.
- After handoff, the QB can drop back (play action pass) or continue to the sideline.

On 31 [plunge] check that:

- The QB pivots, by swinging right leg back and bringing his body completely around to face the RB.
- He reaches out to place the ball in the stomach of the FB. The FB takes a crossover step with his right foot directly at 1 hole.
- He has his right arm up on the top, across the top of his numbers, and his left arm on the bottom, across his stomach, to take the handoff.
- After handoff, the QB can drop back (play-action pass) or continue to the sideline.

On 32 [plunge] check that:

- The QB pivots, by swinging left leg back and bringing his body completely around to face the RB.
- He reaches out to place the ball in the stomach of the FB.
- The FB takes a crossover step with his left foot directly at 2 hole.
- He has his left arm up on the top, across the top of his numbers, and his right arm on the bottom, across his stomach, to take the handoff.
- After handoff, the QB can drop back (play-action pass) or continue to the sideline.

For all plays make certain that:

- There is a close handoff.
- The FB receives the ball in his stomach.
- The FB secures the ball and runs through the proper hole up the field 10 yards.
- The QB continues his fake after making the handoff.

This drill is used to insure that there is a good handoff on each play and that the chance for a fumble is greatly decreased.

All the Plays in this drill can be found in the Youth Offensive Plays section of Playbook.



OFFENSIVE DRILLS (YOUTH)

Offensive Line Drill

BLOCKING



SET-UP—Players line up facing each other with the coach standing behind the offensive linemen. Lightweight blocking dummies can be used by the DL if they are available.

DRILL—Coach calls out block that OL is to execute (Drive, Reach, Angle, Double Team, Pull Right or Left). Each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

On coach's signal of HUT, all offensive linemen execute the block called. Linemen switch sides after one group has done every block properly.

REPETITION—Each group does each block once to right and once to left.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for the coach that the players know the blocks and

can execute the block with the correct steps.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

- The players start in a good stance.
- They are stepping with the proper foot for each block.
- They are staying low and not raising straight up from their stance.
- They use their shoulder pads and hands to make the block.
- They keep their backs straight and heads up.
- They maintain good leg drive.

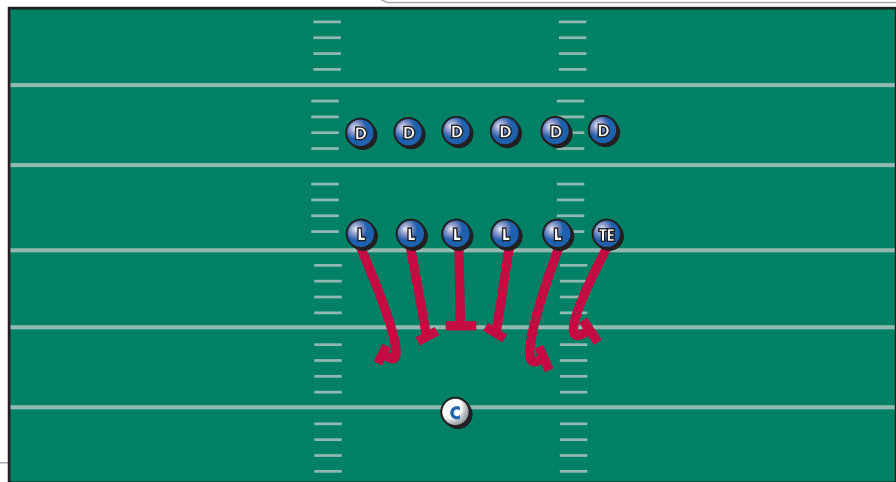
•In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run with only one OL blocking at a time at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

•For double-team block, coach must tell which two OL are doing double team and which DL is to be blocked.

•For angle block and reach block, have the DL move over and set up just outside the blocker's shoulder on the side of the block.

•DL should step forward on blocker's movement and then allow the block to happen.

PASS BLOCKING



SET-UP—Players line up facing each other with the coach standing behind the offensive linemen. Coach can line up where QB will set to pass or put a towel on the ground so the OL know the area to protect.

DRILL—Coach calls out pass block to OL and

TE. Each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position. On coach's signal of HUT all offensive linemen execute the pass block and DL rush at QB area. Linemen switch sides after one group has done pass block properly.

REPETITION—Each group does pass block three times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for the coach that the players know how to pass block and that they can execute the block with the correct steps.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

- The players start in a good stance.
- They are stepping with the proper foot for pass block.
- They are bending knees to lower hips.
- They keep their backs straight and heads up.
- They stop pass rusher by extending legs.
- They use their hands and arm extension to make pass block.
- They reset after extending arms.
- They maintain a position between the QB and the DL.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run with only one OL pass blocking at a time at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.



OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS AND PLAYS

Offensive Play Introduction

SELECTING YOUR OFFENSE

Each of you may have your favorite offensive formation that you have selected to run your offensive plays. In this section of OFFENSIVE PLAYS, I have chosen to use a base Wing-T formation. I feel this formation offers the following advantages for a youth coach:

- It is easy to get your players lined up properly.
- The base plays are easy to learn and remember.
- It is an offense that can easily be expanded to incorporate miss-direction plays including:
 - a wing-back reverse
 - option plays
 - play-action passing
 - roll-out passing for the quarterback.
- It also allows for the use of:
 - motion by the wing back
 - lining the half back in I formation
 - using spread alignments by the receivers in a more advanced form of offensive attack.
- The following plays are drawn up from a Left Wing Formation, but you can easily run the opposing plays from a Right Wing formation using opposite footwork and ball handling: 28 toss, 27 toss; 24 dive, 23 dive; 23 lead, 24 lead; 23 cross, 24 cross; 25 power, 26 power; 27 sweep, 28 sweep.

Set-Up

- Have the offensive team start in a huddle.
- Tell the quarterback the formation and play you want called in the huddle.
- Have the quarterback call the formation, play, and snap count and then break the huddle.

Drill

- The offensive team should quickly line up in the formation called in the huddle.
 - Formations can be set up to the left or right.
 - The defense should line up in the defense you expect to see in the game.
 - On the snap count from quarterback, the offensive players should correctly run the play called in the huddle.
- ** All required techniques and skills involved in executing these plays are covered in the Skills areas of the Offensive and Defensive sections of the *Playbook*.

Goal

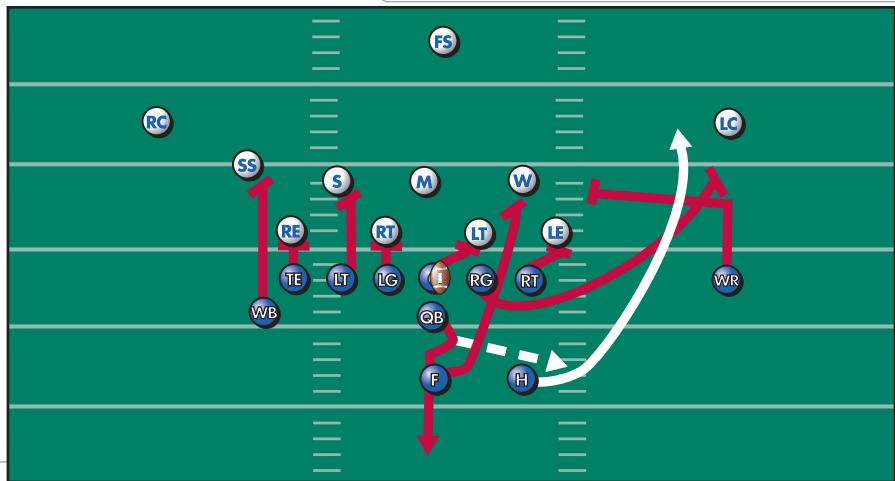
- Coaches should make sure that every player does his job correctly on each play before moving on to the next play.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

Formation: Wing Left

28 TOSS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—block inside on W backer.
- RT**—reach block on LDE.
- RG**—pull to outside and block on corner.

CENTER—reach block on LDT.

LG—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or LB].

LT—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].

TE—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].

WB—release upfield and block SS.

FB—take lateral step to right then drive inside of RT and block M Backer.

QB—take step back and out with right foot and toss ball to HB.

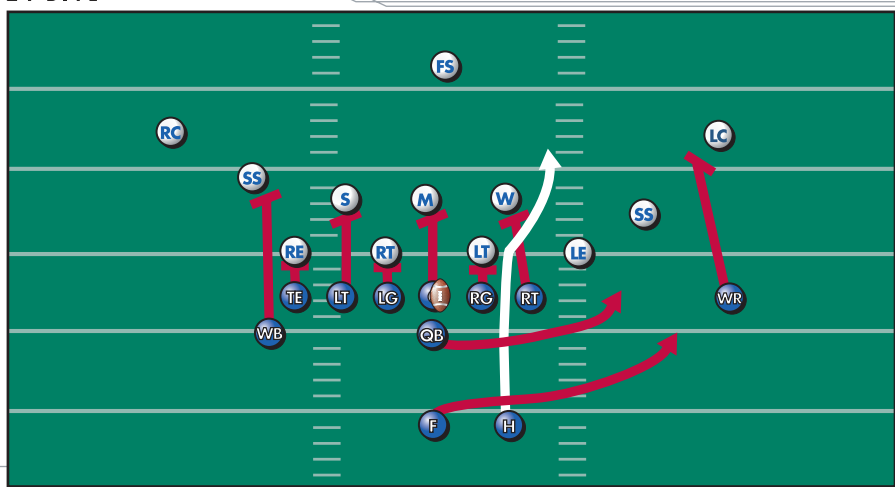
HB—roll over right foot, catch toss from QB, and follow RG up the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the HB turns his inside shoulder to be in position to make the catch.

Ball should arrive from QB at HB's waist or above.

If the LDT is lined up too wide for the Center to block, you can change the assignments of the Center and FB.

24 DIVE



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive up field and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or W backer].

RG—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or M backer].

CENTER—drive block on M backer or NT.

LG—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or S backer].

LT—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].

TE—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].

WB—release upfield and block SS.

FB—take crossover step with left foot run to sideline.

QB—take step down the line with right foot and hand the ball to HB.

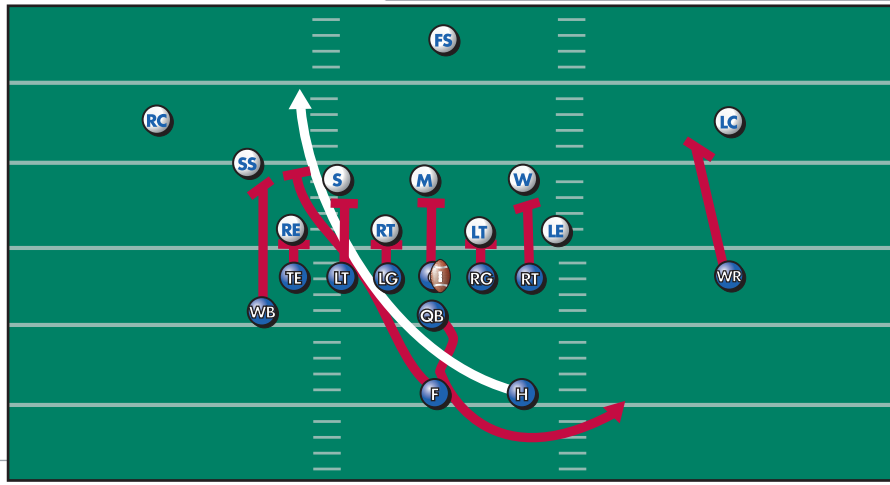
HB—step forward with right foot and take the handoff from the QB.

COACHING TIP—If LDE is playing wide to outside, have the RT drive block on the W backer do not block LDE.

Make certain that the QB continues to the sideline after the handoff as he would if he were running with the option to pitch the ball back to the FB.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

23 LEAD



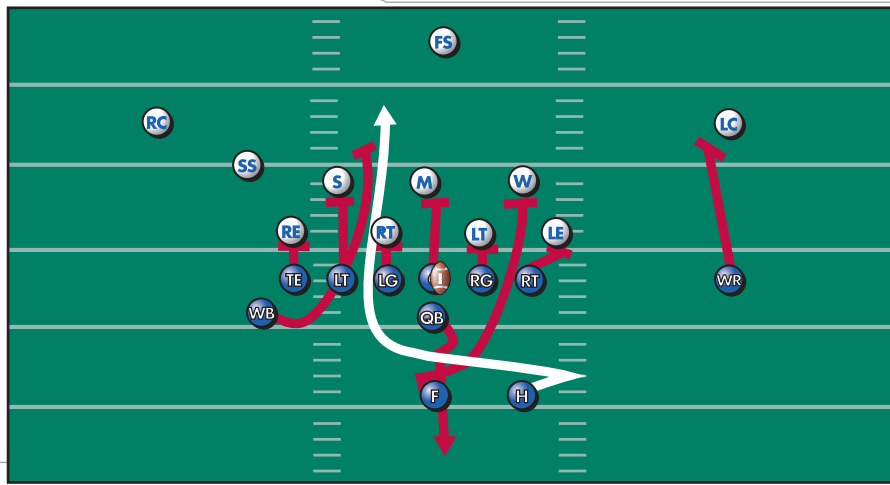
ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or W backer].
- RE**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or M backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on M backer or NT.
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or S backer].

- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].
- WB**—release upfield and block SS.
- FB**—take crossover step with right foot and lead into 3 hole looking inside for S backer.
- QB**—take step back with right foot and hand the ball to HB.

- HB**—take crossover step with right foot, take the handoff from the QB, and follow the FB into 3 hole.
- COACHING TIP**—Make certain that the QB continues to the roll out to the sideline after the handoff or drops back to set up to pass.

23 CROSS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on LDE.
- RE**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or W backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on man in front of you [M backer or NT].
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or S backer].

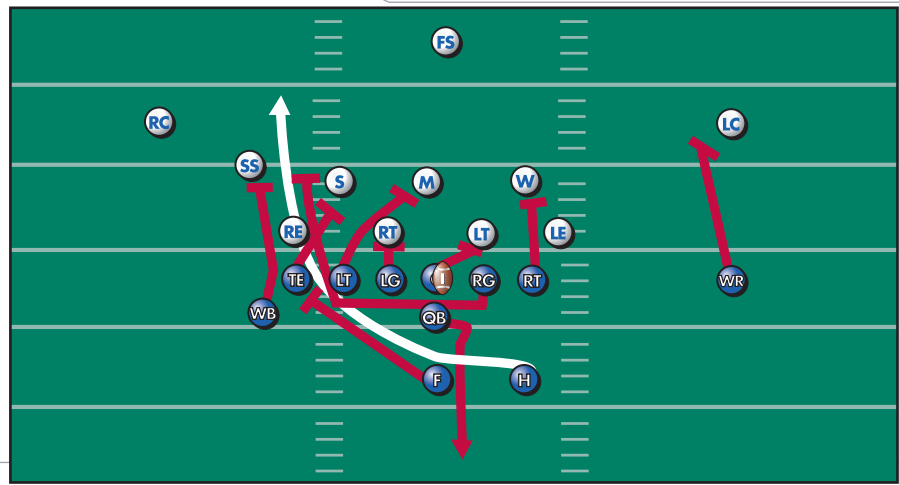
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].
- WB**—step back with right foot and lead into 3 hole behind LG and LT.
- FB**—take crossover step to right, fake handoff, drive into 4 hole, and drive block W backer.

- QB**—take step back with right foot, fake handoff to FB, and hand the ball to HB.
- HB**—take jab step to outside with right foot, take crossover step with right foot, take the handoff from the QB, and follow the WB into 3 hole.
- COACHING TIP**—Make certain that the QB continues to the roll out to the sideline after the handoff or drops back to set up to pass.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

25 POWER



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [W backer or LDE].
- RG**—pull left and lead HB through 5 hole.

- CENTER**—angle block to right on LDT or drive block NT.
- LG**—drive block on RDT or angle block LB from other side.
- LT**—angle block inside on M backer.

TE—angle block inside on S backer or block RDE.

WB—step at RDE or S backer with right foot then release outside and block SS.

FB—take crossover step to left, and drive block on end man on line [RDE or S backer].

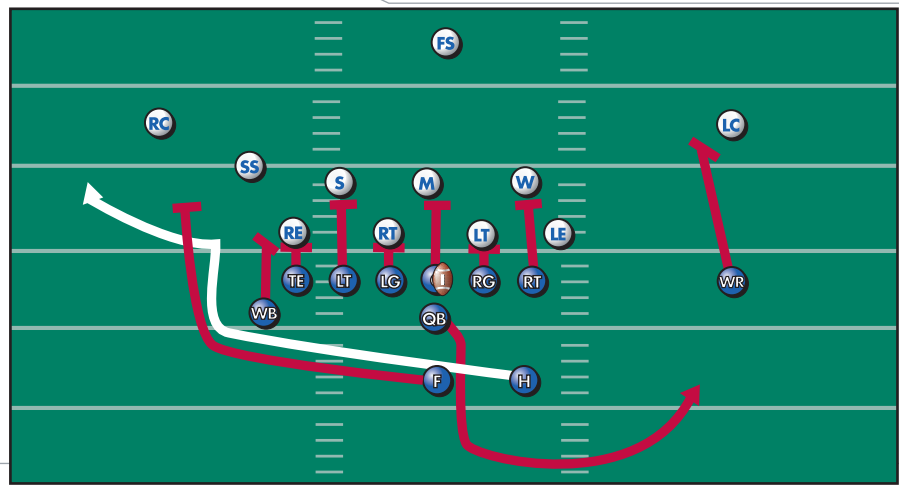
QB—take step back with right foot, and hand the ball to HB.

HB—take crossover step with right foot, take the handoff from the QB, and follow the RG into 5 hole.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to the roll out to the sideline after the handoff or drops back to set up to pass.

If the defense has the RDE in front of the LT, you should change the blocking so that the LT & TE double team the RDE and the FB blocks the S backer.

27 SWEEP



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [W backer or LDE].
- RG**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT

- or M backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on man in front of you [M backer or NT].
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or M backer].

LT—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].

TE—double-team block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer] with WB.

WB—double-team block on man in front of TE [RDE or S backer].

FB—take crossover step to left and lead HB outside of TE into 7 hole looking to block SS.

QB—take a step back with right foot and hand the ball to HB.

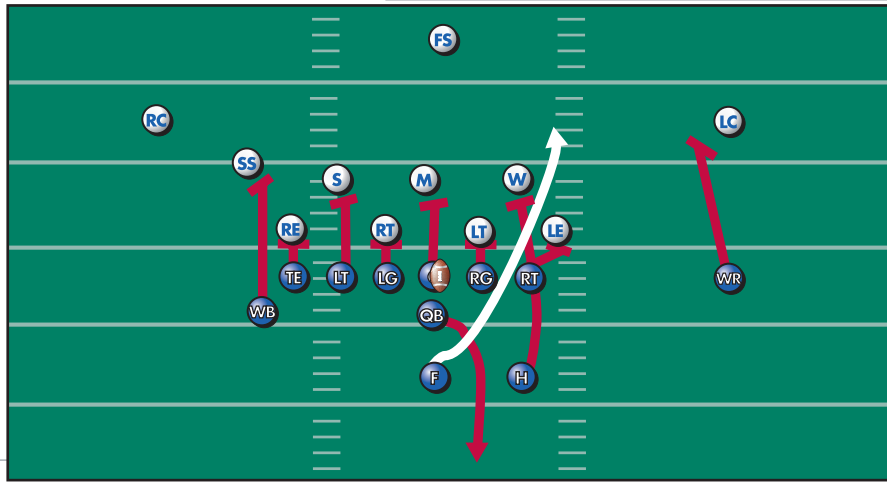
HB—crossover step with right foot, take the handoff from the QB, and follow the FB into 7 hole.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that the QB continues to the roll out to the sideline after the handoff or drops back to set up to pass.

If S backer lines up on the TE: you can have the TE reach block the S backer by himself, the WB could then block on the SS and the FB could lead the HB up the field.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

34 SLANT



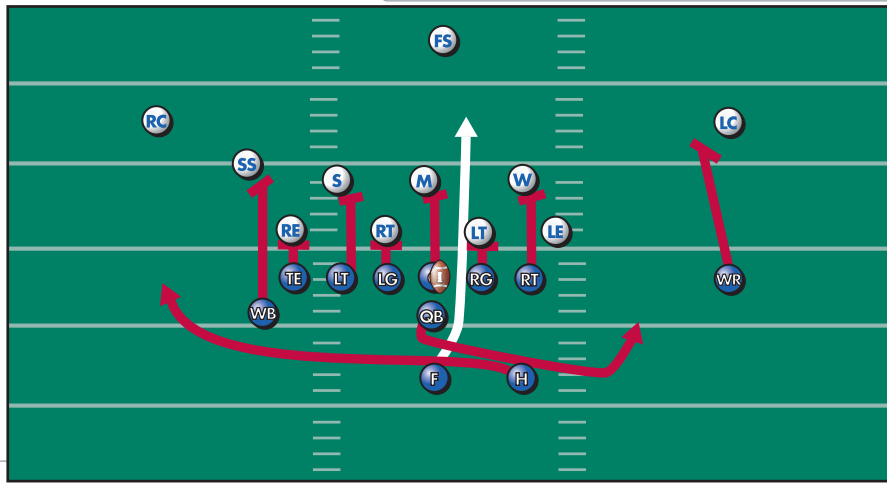
ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on LDE.
- RG**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or W backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on M backer or NT.
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or S backer].
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [S

- backer or RDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].
- WB**—release upfield and block SS.
- QB**—take step back with right foot and hand the ball to FB.
- FB**—take crossover step with left foot directly at 4 hole, take handoff from QB, and follow HB into 4 hole.

- HB**—step forward with right foot and drive into 4 hole and block W backer.
- COACHING TIP**—If W backer lines up outside of LDE, HB should lead to outside at 6 hole directly at the linebacker.
- After handoff, QB can drop back and set up for pass.

32 PLUNGE



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or LB].
- RG**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or W backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on M backer or NT.
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT or S backer].

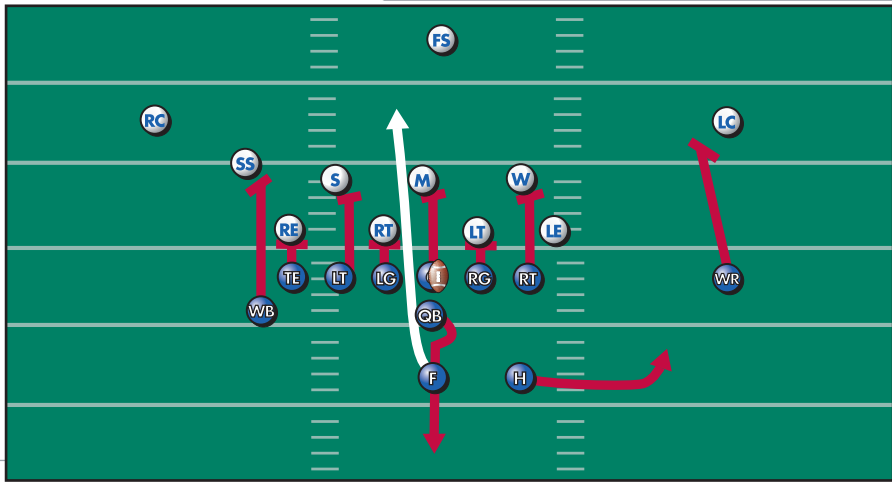
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].
- WB**—release upfield and block SS.
- QB**—pivot with left foot and hand the ball to FB.
- FB**—take crossover step with left foot directly at 2 hole and take handoff from QB.

- HB**—fake 27 sweep action.
- COACHING TIP**—FB should always run to the inside of RG block.
- After handoff, QB can roll out to right.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

31 PLUNGE



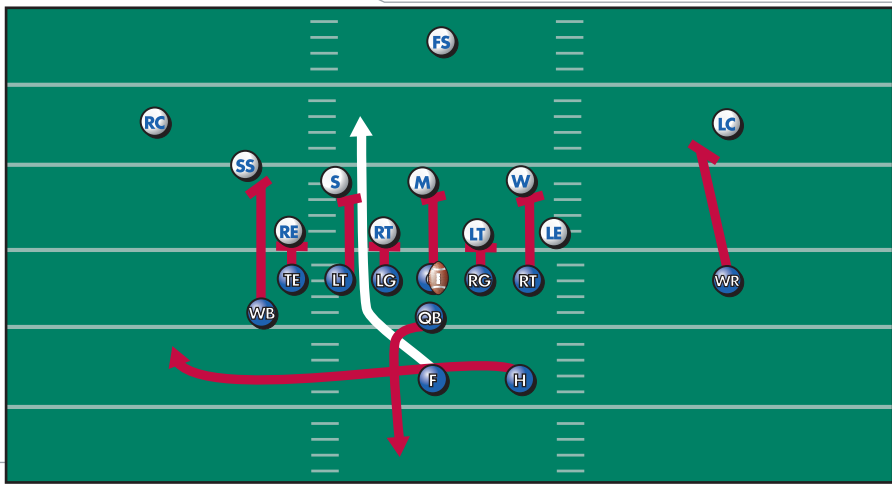
ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or W backer].
- RG**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or W backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on M backer or NT.
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT

- or S backer].
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].
- WB**—release upfield and block SS.
- QB**—pivot with right foot and hand the ball to FB.

- FB**—take crossover step with right foot directly at 1 hole and take handoff from QB.
- HB**—fake 28 toss action.
- COACHING TIP**—FB should always run to the inside of LG block.
- After handoff, QB can drop back and set up for pass.

33 STRAIGHT



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and block LC.
- RT**—drive block on man in front of you [LDE or W backer].
- RG**—drive block on man in front of you [LDT or W backer].
- CENTER**—drive block on M backer or NT.
- LG**—drive block on man in front of you [RDT

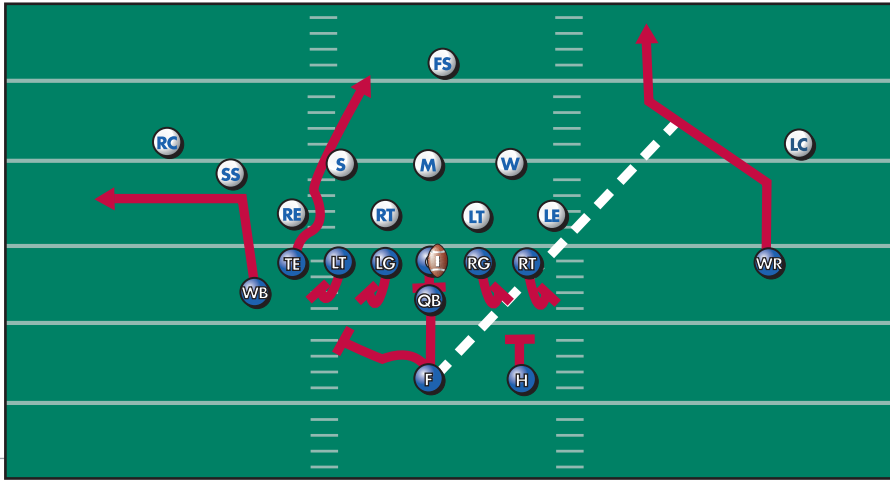
- or M backer].
- LT**—drive block on man in front of you [S backer or RDE].
- TE**—drive block on man in front of you [RDE or S backer].
- WB**—release upfield and block SS.
- QB**—take step back with left foot and hand the ball to FB.

- FB**—take crossover step with right foot directly at 3 hole and take handoff from QB.
- HB**—take crossover step with right foot and fake 27 sweep.
- COACHING TIP**—FB should always run to the outside of LG block.
- After handoff, QB can drop back and set up for pass.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

SLANT PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield 4 yards and run slant pass to inside.
- RT**—pass block on LDE on the line of scrimmage.

- RG**—pass block on LDT on the line of scrimmage.
- CENTER**—pass block on M backer if he rushes.
- LG**—pass block on RDT on the line of scrimmage.

LT—pass block on RDE on the line of scrimmage.

TE—release to inside and run Look-in pattern.

WB—release upfield and break to sideline at 4 yards.

QB—take three-step drop and then throw. Look for WR as first choice.

FB—take crossover step with right foot and block S backer if he rushes.

HB—take step up with right foot block W backer if he rushes.

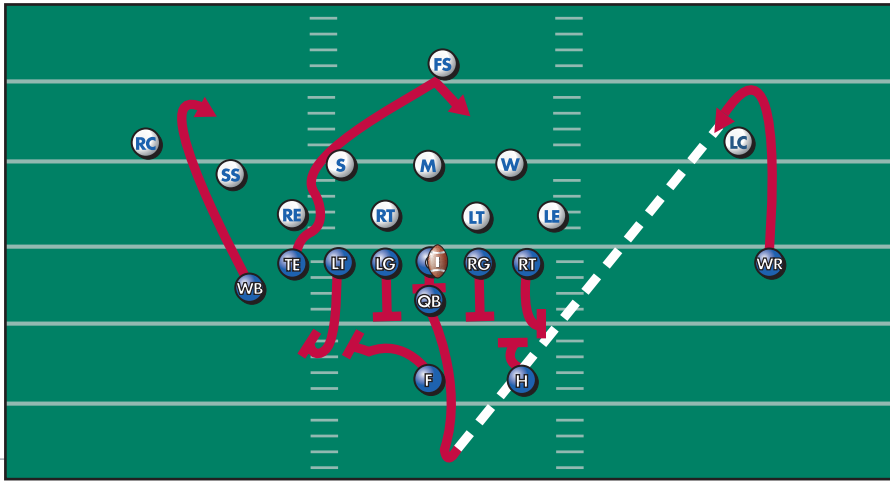
COACHING TIP—QB should deliver the pass as soon as the WR breaks to the inside.

Make certain that the HB and FB do not get in the way of the QB as he steps to throw the ball.

Check that QB is stepping at the WR as he throws.

Good pass against a defensive back who is playing off the line of scrimmage or is lining up outside of your WR.

HOOK PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield 10 yards, stop, and turn back to the inside on Hook pass.
- RT**—pass block on LDE dropping back off the line.

- RG**—pass block on LDT dropping back off the line.
- CENTER**—pass block on M backer if he rushes.
- LG**—pass block on RDT dropping back off the line.

LT—pass block on RDE dropping back off the line.

TE—release to inside 10 yards into center, stop, and turn back to the inside on Hook pass.

WB—drive upfield 10 yards, stop, and turn back to the inside on Hook pass.

QB—take five-step drop and then throw. Look for WR as first choice.

FB—take crossover step with right foot and block S backer if he rushes.

HB—take step up with right foot and block W backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—QB should deliver the pass as soon as the WR turns back to the inside.

Make certain that the HB and FB do not get in the way of the QB as he steps to throw the ball.

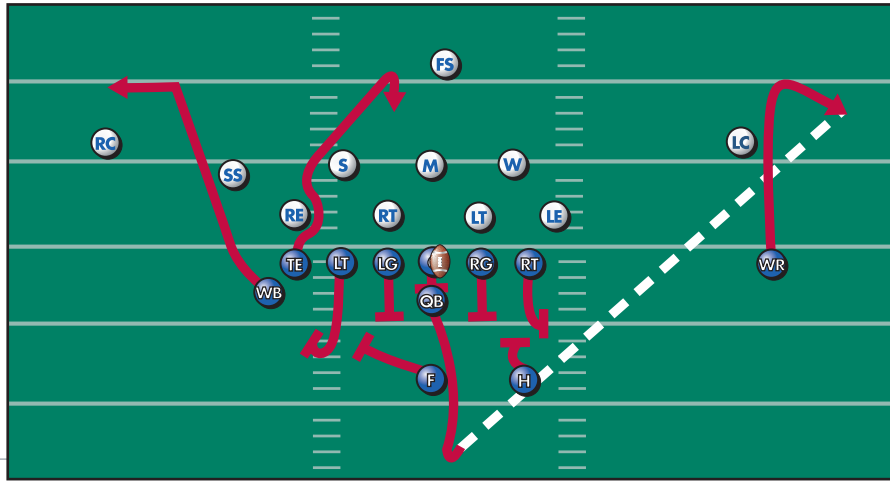
Check that QB is stepping at the receiver as he throws.

Good pass against a defensive back who is running deep or is lining up outside of your WR.

If two defensive players are covering your WR, the QB should throw to the TE or WB.

OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

OUT PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield 10 yards, and turn outside to the sideline on an Out pass.
- RT**—pass block on LDE dropping back off the line.

- RG**—pass block on LDT dropping back off the line.
- CENTER**—pass block on M backer if he rushes.
- LG**—pass block on RDT dropping back off the line.

LT—pass block on RDE dropping back off the line.

TE—release to inside 10 yards into center, stop and turn back to the inside on Hook pass.

WB—drive upfield 10 yards and turn outside to the sideline on an Out pass.

QB—take five-step drop and then throw. Look for WR as first choice.

FB—take crossover step with right foot and block S backer if he rushes.

HB—take step up with right foot and block W backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—When WR lines up, he should be 10 yards from the sideline. QB should deliver the pass as soon as the WR breaks to the sideline.

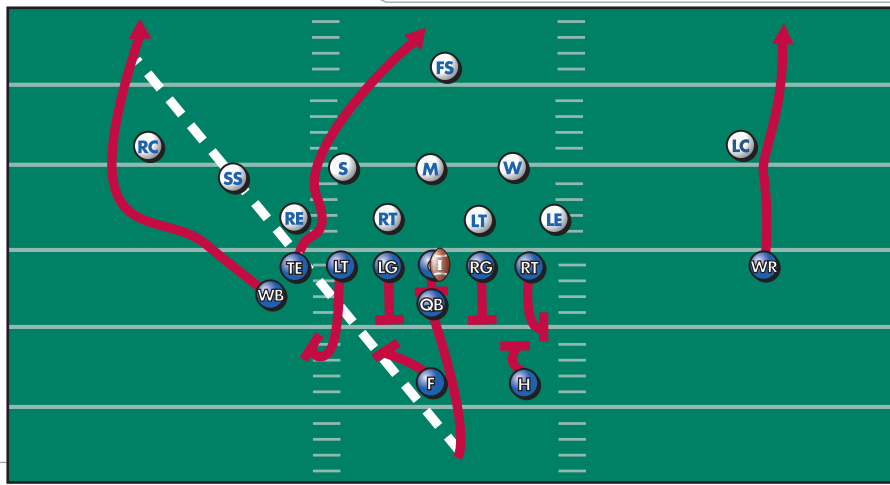
Make certain that the HB and FB do not get in the way of the QB as he steps to throw the ball.

Check that QB is stepping at the receiver as he throws.

Good pass against a defensive back who is running deep or is lining up inside of your WR.

If two defensive players are covering your WR, the QB should throw to the TE or WB.

UP PASS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and run outside of LC on an Up pattern.
- RT**—pass block on LDE dropping back off the line.
- RG**—pass block on LDT dropping back off the line.

- CENTER**—pass block on M backer if he rushes.
- LG**—pass block on RDT dropping back off the line.
- LT**—pass block on RDE dropping back off the line.
- TE**—release to inside and run upfield in center of field.

WB—drive upfield and run outside of RC on an Up pattern.

QB—take five-step drop and then throw. Look for WR as first choice.

FB—take crossover step with right foot and block S backer if he rushes.

HB—take step up with right foot and block W backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—When WR lines up, he should be 10 yards from the sideline. QB should deliver the pass as soon as the WR breaks past the defensive back.

Make certain that the HB and FB do not get in the way of the QB as he steps to throw the ball.

Check that QB is stepping at the receiver as he throws.

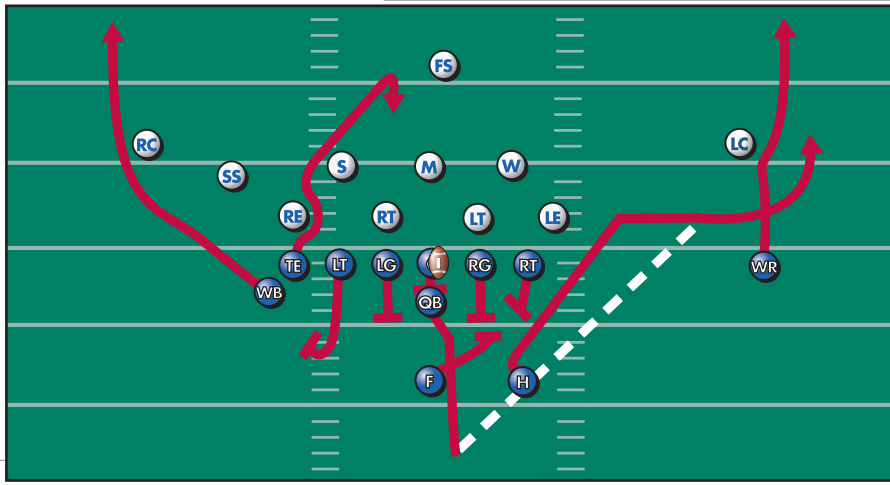
Good pass against a defensive who is playing up near the line of scrimmage to stop the run or playing inside of your WR and WB.

QB should throw to the TE if he sees that there is no FS in the middle of the field.



OFFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

PASS 34 SLANT



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and run outside of the LC on an Up pattern.
- RT**—pass block on LDE dropping back off the line.
- RG**—pass block on LDT dropping back off the line.
- CENTER**—pass block on M backer if he rushes.

- LG**—pass block on RDT dropping back off the line.
- LT**—pass block on RDE dropping back off the line.
- TE**—release to inside and run a 10 yard Hook pattern in center of field.
- WB**—drive upfield and run outside of the RC on an Up pattern.

QB—fake 34-slant handoff to FB, drop three more steps, and then look for HB as first choice.

FB—take crossover step with left foot, fake taking handoff from QB, and drive at and block W backer if he rushes.

HB—take crossover step with left foot, drive off RT, and break to sideline once you are across the line of scrimmage. Look back for the ball as soon as you break.

COACHING TIP—When WR lines up, he should be 10 yards from the sideline. QB should deliver the pass as soon as the HB breaks to the sideline.

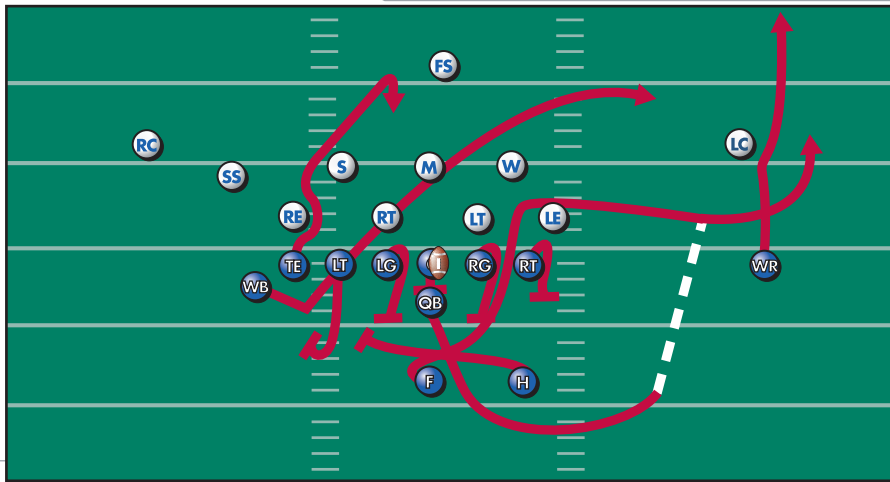
Make certain that the FB continues his fake across the line. Check that QB is stepping at the receiver as he throws.

Good play-action pass against a defense that is committing to the linebackers to stop the run too quickly.

QB should throw to the WR against a defensive back who is playing up near the line of scrimmage to stop the run or playing inside of your WR.

QB should throw to the TE if he sees that there is no FS in the middle of the field and linebackers are up playing the run.

ROLL OUT 23 CROSS



ASSIGNMENTS

- WR**—drive upfield and run outside of the defensive back on an Up pattern.
- RT**—drive block on LDE and then drop back off the line.
- RG**—drive block on LDT and then drop back off the line.
- CENTER**—pass block on M backer if he rushes.
- LG**—drive block on RDT and then drop back off the line.
- LT**—pass block on RDE dropping back off the

- line.
- TE**—drive block on RDE and then release to inside and run a 10-yard Hook pattern in center of field.
- WB**—fake 23-cross action and run across the field to the right on 10-yard Crossing pattern.
- QB**—fake 23 cross handoff to HB and roll out to right, moving back off the line of scrimmage and to the outside. Get hips and body turned upfield and then throw. Look for FB as first choice.

FB—take crossover step with left foot, drive across the line, and break outside to the sideline. Locate QB and look for pass as soon as you break.

HB—take crossover step with left foot, fake taking handoff and running 23 cross, drive across line, and block S backer if he rushes.

COACHING TIP—When WR lines up, he should be 10 yards from the sideline. QB should deliver the pass when the FB is running to the sideline.

Make certain that the FB continues giving hard fakes as he goes across the line before making his break.

Check that QB is stepping at the receiver as he throws.

Good play-action pass against a defense that is committing to the linebackers to stop the run too quickly.

QB should throw to the WR against a defensive back who is playing up near the line of scrimmage to stop the run or playing inside of your WR.

QB should be prepared to run and yell GO to FB if the defense is dropping off to play the pass.

When QB yells GO, FB, WB, and WR should all try to block defensive players.

For a left-handed QB, it would be better to let him roll out to his left by calling Right Wing Formation—Roll Out 24 Cross.

**DEFENSIVE OVERVIEW****Section IV: Football Skills—Successful Defense**

Tom Bass, Former NFL Assistant Coach

Section Objectives

Fundamental skills, as well as basic defensive fronts and play calling, are essential building blocks of a defense. This section of the *Coach's Playbook* focuses on three important elements of great defensive play:

- Fundamental defensive skill information via animated photos and key point checklists
- Defensive drills for all playing positions
- Basic defensive fronts and play calling

These elements are addressed for both high school and youth coaching.

Successful Defense

"My feeling on the sideline is like when you're having a nightmare. This was a true nightmare. We couldn't get anything going offensively because of their defense."

—Florida State Head Coach Bobby Bowden, after losing the 2001 Orange Bowl

Many coaches believe the old adage that "offense sells tickets but defense wins championships." Whether you coach in a Pop Warner league or in the NFL, good defense is critical to your team's success. Coaching good defense involves:

- Being able to effectively teach defensive skills and techniques
- Understanding defensive fronts, alignments, and coverages
- Being able to have your players integrate these skills into performance on the field

In this section you will find defensive skills and technique information, defensive drills to use with your players, and defensive fronts and alignments. We begin by discussing these topics from a high school coaching perspective (pages 77-109) and then focus on special considerations relative to coaching youth football (pages 114-129).

Defensive Skills and Technique

Fundamental defensive skill sheets that contain animated photos and written checklists for high school and youth coaches are contained on pages 77-82. Whether you are a high school or youth coach you should read this material. In addition, youth coaches should study the special considerations on page 111. These skills sheets demonstrate the proper execution and key coaching points of basic defensive skills. Specifically you will find:

- Two-point stances for linebackers and defensive backs
- Three and four-point stances for defensive linemen
- Front tackle execution for all positions
- Angle tackle execution for all positions
- Swim-and-rip move execution for defensive linemen
- Shedding blocks execution for linebackers
- Backpedal and turn and run execution for defensive backs



DEFENSIVE OVERVIEW

There are two points to remember when teaching these skills to your players: first, be realistic in your expectations, and remember that players improve with practice. Be positive and communicate effectively with your players. Second, recognize that all the football knowledge in the world is useless without running an organized and effective practice. See the guidelines outlined in Section VII (Program and Team Management: Organized to Win).

Defensive Drills

Defenses improve through repetitions during practice. Practicing proper technique and fundamentals creates good practice habits and carries over into game situations. You can help your team get to that level by practicing well-designed and well-executed defensive drills. The final part of this section illustrates drills that you can use to make your defense championship caliber by practicing:

- Stance get-offs and blocking recognition for linemen
- Shedding blocks and zone coverage drops for linebackers
- Fundamental footwork drills such as the backpedal for defensive backs

High school defensive drills are contained on pages 83-90. Drills especially designed for youth coaching are contained on pages 114-120. Using these drills will help your team shut down opposing offenses.

Defensive Fronts and Alignments

Although proper skills and techniques are essential for a team's success, it can not be forgotten that football is, first and foremost, a team game. Hence, your players must understand basic defensive fronts, alignments, and coverages in order to work well as a unit. In this section of the *Coach's Playbook*, four basic fronts are discussed: **The 4-3 defense, The 5-2 defense, The 6-2 defense, The 3-4 defense.**

With all of these, we begin by discussing base alignments, then examples of zone and man coverage. Defensive fronts and alignments are included for high school coaches (pages 93-109) and youth coaches (pages 122-129).

Once your players have a general idea of what the various coverages involve via walk throughs, have them practice them in partial contact (half speed) drills. Once they understand what to do, move on to full speed drills to teach them how to react in game situations. Then they will have integrated the mental and physical aspects of the game.

Conclusion

As Bobby Bowden found out in the 2001 Orange Bowl, a strong defense is key for overall success. To have a strong defense, coaches must school their players in fundamental techniques, familiarize them with basic fronts, alignments, and coverages, and allow them to integrate this knowledge into effective play by various practice drills. By incorporating the tools in this section of the *Coach's Playbook* to your daily coaching routine, you can start to build that winning defense.

FOR PLAYER ID AND TERMS, SEE PAGE 13

DEFENSIVE SKILLS



ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS

FRONT TACKLE

- Shorten stride, widen base, and lower hips by bending knees.
- Keep back straight, head up, with eyes focused on the center of the ball carrier's chest.
- Explode off of foot on side of shoulder making contact.
- Hit with shoulder pad and NOT helmet.
- Drive shoulder pad up and through ball carrier's chest.
- Allow head to slide to side of ball carrier.
- Wrap both arms around ball carrier, grab jersey.
- Continue leg drive, lift, and drive ball carrier to ground.
- Best to use if ball carrier is coming straight at tackler and does not have room to cut to right or left.



ANGLE TACKLE

- Shorten stride, widen base, and lower hips by bending knees.
- Keep back straight, head up, with eyes focused on the center of the ball carrier's chest.
- Explode off of foot nearest the ball carrier.
- Hit with shoulder pad and NOT helmet.
- Keep helmet in front of ball carrier.
- Drive shoulder pad up and through the side of the ball carrier.
- Hit across ball carrier's chest with front arm.
- Make contact with lower back area with back arm.
- Wrap both arms around ball carrier, grab jersey.
- Continue leg drive, lift, and drive ball carrier to ground.
- Best to use if ball carrier has cut to right or left or if he is between tackler and sideline.



DEFENSIVE SKILLS



DEFENSIVE LINE

4-POINT STANCE

- Stand up with feet even, width of hips.
- Bend knees so forearms rest on the inside of thighs.
- Reach straight out with both hands.
- Place hands on ground slightly ahead of shoulder pads.
- Keep shoulders even, with back straight.
- Have weight on hands and balls of feet.
- Have hips even with or slightly in front of both feet.
- Keep head up, eyes focused on ball.
- Be prepared to meet blocker coming straight ahead or from right or left.
- Best used for inside defensive linemen and for short-yardage and goal-line defense.



3-POINT STANCE

- Stand up with feet even, width of hips.
- Take step back with outside foot, aligning toe behind heel of other foot.
- Bend knees so forearms rest on the inside of thighs.
- Reach straight out with hand on the side of foot that is back.
- Place hand on ground slightly ahead of shoulder pads.
- Keep shoulders even, with back straight.
- Have weight on hand and balls of feet.
- Rest other arm on inside of thigh, forearm forward and up with palm of hand facing forward, fingers and thumb spread, pointing up.
- Keep head up, eyes focused on ball.
- Be prepared to meet blocker coming straight ahead or from right or left.
- May use more staggered, narrower stance with more weight on front foot to get faster start straight ahead on long yardage.
- Best used for outside defensive linemen and on passing downs.

DEFENSIVE SKILLS



DEFENSIVE LINE

DEFEATING THE DRIVE BLOCK

- Know blocker and start momentum at him.
- Keep wide base, take short, choppy steps.
- Have shoulder pads even with or below blockers.
- Slide helmet to side of gap responsibility (defensive linemen only).
- Extend both arms.
- Make contact with palms of both hands at blocker's numbers.
- Get separation from blocker, shed him, move to ball carrier.



DEFEATING THE REACH BLOCK

- Recognize block and blocker.
- Key on blocker's helmet and shoulder pads moving laterally.
- Extend both arms into blocker on first step.
- Keep taking short power steps.
- Drive blocker back across line of scrimmage.
- Keep head up, legs free from blocker's pads.
- Locate ball carrier, shed blocker, move to ball carrier.



DEFEATING THE ANGLE BLOCK

- Locate blocker and recognize block from right or left.
- Stop forward momentum.
- Take short step at blocker with foot on side of block.
- Keep knees bent, re-direct weight, momentum into blocker.
- Hit blocker with shoulder pad on side of block.
- Bring forearm on side of block up into chest area of blocker.
- Stop blocker's momentum.
- Turn entire body into blocker.
- Hit blocker's shoulder pad with palm of far hand.
- Keep wide base, take short-choppy steps.
- Locate ball carrier, shed blocker, move to ball carrier.



DEFENSIVE SKILLS

DEFENSIVE LINE

DEFEATING THE DOUBLE-TEAM BLOCK



- Recognize block and two players executing block.
- Step forward and attack drive blocker.
- Lower body and direct as much weight as possible to blocker from the side.
- Drop side of body to angle block to the ground.
- Turn body sideways in-between and splitting two blockers.
- Fight to hold position on line of scrimmage.
- Create pile in the running lane.

SWIM MOVE



- Take quick inside step with back foot.
- Take a long second step with outside foot.
- Drive outside hand-forearm down on the outside forearm of blocker.
- Push blocker's hand, arm into his chest.
- Step outside of blocker with inside foot.
- Reach over blocker's outside shoulder with inside arm, driving elbow into his back.
- Drive inside leg, hips to the outside, past blocker.
- Sprint to the quarterback.
- Best used against blocker who is the same height or shorter.

RIP MOVE



- Take quick inside step with back foot.
- Take a long second step with outside foot.
- Drive outside hand into the outside—under part of blocker's shoulder pad.
- Push shoulder, arm up.
- Step outside of blocker with inside foot.
- Drop inside hip and shoulder, rip inside arm under and past outside arm of blocker.
- Bow back, push back with shoulders and neck.
- Drive inside leg, hips to the outside, past blocker.
- Best used against blocker who is taller.



DEFENSIVE SKILLS

LINEBACKERS

2-POINT STANCE

- Keep feet even, shoulder-width, toes pointing straight ahead.
- If outside in front of tight end on line of scrimmage, have outside foot back, toe even with heel of inside foot.
- Keep slight bend in knees, shoulders forward of feet.
- Have weight on balls of feet.
- Keep elbows against body, forearms up.
- Have fingers, thumbs spread, pointing up, in front of numbers.
- Best used by inside or outside linebacker who is positioned on or off the line of scrimmage, directly in front of blocker.
- Stance allows linebacker to move easily in any direction.

DEFEATING THE LEAD BLOCK

- Locate blocker, recognize block.
- Move forward, meet blocker at the line of scrimmage.
- Focus on shoulder pads, helmet of blocker.
- Extend hands hard into the top of his shoulder pads when pads, helmet dip.
- Push blocker's head, shoulders to the ground.
- Keep legs, feet free from block.
- Locate ball carrier, shed blocker, and move to ball carrier.
- Best used by inside or outside linebacker against running back who is serving as a lead blocker for ball carrier.

BULL-&-JERK AGAINST RUNNING BACK PASS BLOCK

- Get off on ball, attack across the line.
- See where the quarterback is setting up.
- Determine blocker, attack straight at him.
- Grab front of blocker's jersey in both hands.
- Jerk blocker's body forward, to the side.
- Step across blocker's body with foot on side of jerk.
- Drive past blocker, attack the quarterback.
- Be prepared to jump and bat ball if quarterback attempts to throw your way.
- Best used by inside or outside linebacker who is being blocked by a running back who is lunging forward to block.
- For cornerback in short zone, rotate up and force receiver to inside.
- For any short zone, stop backpedal when quarterback sets to throw.
- For any deep zone, stay in backpedal until pass is thrown. Keep receivers in front of you.

BULL RUSH AGAINST RUNNING BACK PASS BLOCK

- Get off on ball, attack across the line.
- See where the quarterback is setting up.
- Determine blocker, attack straight at him.
- Drive the palms of hands into the armpits of the blocker.
- Push the arms forward and up, raising blocker up and back.
- Keep driving with short steps.
- Drive the blocker into quarterback.
- Keep driving until quarterback is in grasp.
- Be prepared to jump and bat ball if quarterback attempts to throw your way.
- Best used by inside or outside linebacker who is being blocked by smaller running back.

ARM UNDER AGAINST PASS BLOCK

- Get off on ball, attack across the line.
- See where the quarterback is setting up.
- Locate blocker, attack straight at him.
- Take quick step at blocker with inside foot.
- Take long step with outside foot to outside of blocker.
- Hit hard into blocker's shoulder pad with outside hand and arm, lifting shoulder, arm up.
- Step outside of blocker with inside foot.
- Drop inside shoulder, drive shoulder, arm under blocker's armpit.
- Push back with neck and back, drive hips up, past blocker.
- Attack quarterback.
- Be prepared to jump and bat ball if quarterback attempts to throw your way.
- Best used by inside or outside linebacker who is being pass blocked by bigger-taller offensive lineman.

PASS COVERAGE

- If man-for-man coverage, focus on offensive man you are covering.
- Backpedal at angle if running back/tight end is going outside or inside.
- Stay on one hip or the other of running back.
- Leave backpedal by leaning upper body, rolling over foot in direction of running back/tight end.
- Keep momentum going, feet under hips.
- Close to running back/tight end.
- Look for ball only when running back/tight end is within reach.
- If zone coverage, quickly sprint to assigned zone.
- Focus on quarterback.
- Stop backpedal when quarterback sets to throw.



DEFENSIVE SKILLS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

2-POINT STANCE

- Standing straight up, feet spread width of hips.
- Step forward with outside foot.
- Put toe of front foot directly under chin in center of body.
- Adjust weight to front foot.
- Lean forward with shoulders.
- Have arms and hands hanging down.
- Keep shoulders, head slightly ahead of front foot.
- Have shoulders even, back straight, head and eyes up.
- Best used by outside corners—strong and free safety may use a more upright stance with less stagger of feet.

PASS COVERAGE

- Focus on offensive man you are covering.
- Push off front foot on snap of ball.
- Drive hips back with push from front foot.
- Keep feet the width of hips, under hips.
- Have shoulders just ahead of hips.
- Allow hands, arms to swing to normal running motion.
- Reach back with each step.
- backpedal at angle if receiver is going outside or inside.
- Stay on inside or outside receiver based on coverage.
- Leave backpedal by leaning upper body, rolling over foot in direction of receiver.
- Keep momentum going, feet under hips.
- Close to receiver.
- Look for ball only when receiver is within reach.
- Best used by defensive back when covering a wide receiver or tight end in MAN-TO-MAN pass coverage.

ZONE PASS COVERAGE

- Know your assigned zone.
- Use backpedal to move to assigned deep zone.
- If corner is in short zone:
Rotate up and force receiver to inside.
Backpedal until zone is reached.
- If safety is in short zone:
Quickly sprint to assigned zone.
Use crossover step to widen to reach zone.
Look back over shoulder to quarterback.
Swing inside leg around, get into backpedal as zone is reached.
- For any short zone coverage:
Stop backpedal when quarterback sets to throw.
Keep feet moving in short, choppy steps.
- For any deep zone coverage:
Stay in backpedal until pass is thrown.
Keep all receivers in front of you.
- Look back, focus on quarterback, ball.
- Be prepared to move in direction of quarterback's pass.
- Roll over foot in direction of ball.
- For cornerback in short zone, rotate up and force receiver to inside.
- For any short zone, stop backpedal when quarter back sets to throw.
- For any deep zone, stay in backpedal until pass is thrown. Keep receivers in front of you.

RUN FORCE

- Understand when to force run.
- Attack the line of scrimmage. Determine blocker, attack the blocker.
- Know spot to meet blocker.
- Have shoulder pads under blocker's pads.
- Aim for up-field hip of blocker, hit hard with inside forearm.
- Bounce back, stay on feet, maintain outside position on blocker.
- If block is low:
Focus on shoulder pads, helmet of blocker.
Extend hands hard into the top of his shoulder pads when pads and helmet dip.
Push blocker's head and shoulders toward the ground.
- Keep legs, feet free from block.
- Turn ball carrier back to inside to defensive pursuit.
- Locate and move to help tackle ball carrier.
- Best used by defensive back who is being blocked by bigger back or offensive lineman.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

TEAM WARM-UP DRILL—ALL DEFENSE

STANCE

SET-UP—Players line up by position facing the coach.

Assistant coach can line up at the side of the players.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, each group of players moves up and gets into a

proper stance for his position.

Coach can make corrections and then POINT right or left [pointing, rather than calling right or left, insures that players have their head up and eyes focused on you] and players move in that direction and go to the back of the group.

REPETITION—Have each group line up once

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach to see that

the players that they are starting the practice in a proper stance.

COACHING TIP—

Make certain players:

Are in the proper stance for their position.

They have head up, shoulders square, back straight, knees bent, and weight properly distributed.

START

SET-UP—Players line up by position 8 yards away and facing the coach.

Assistant coach can line up at the side of the players.

DBs turn so that their back is to the coach.

DRILL—On coach's signal, each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

Coach points and calls right, left or straight ahead and players quickly start in that direction on coach's signal of HUT.

DBs start by running straight backward and then backward on an angle to their right and left.

LBs should shuffle to right or left and stay facing straight ahead then come up field on coaches hand signal.

DL should step with the foot in the direction of the call of right or left.

After each start, players move to the outside

and go to the back of group.

REPETITION—Have each group go once in all three directions.

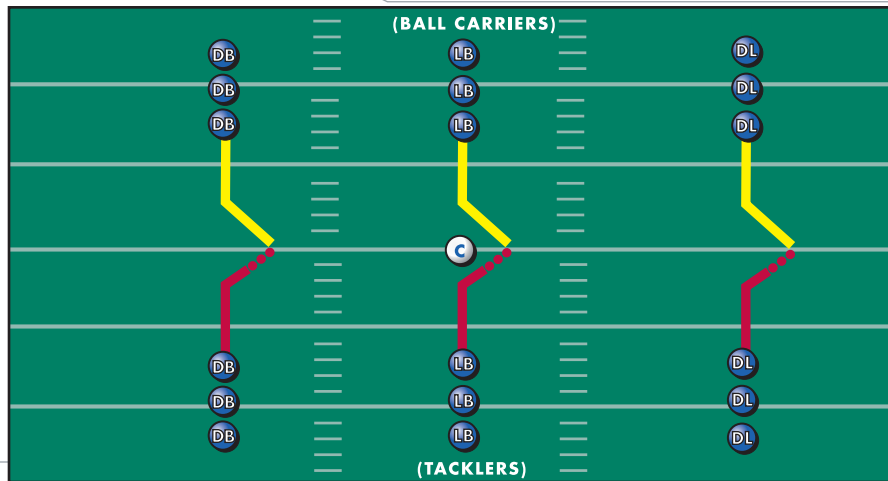
GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach to see that the players are starting the practice with a proper start.

COACHING TIP—Make certain the players:

Are not taking a false step back or up before going right or left.

They are staying low and not raising straight up in from their stance.

ANGLE TACKLING



SET-UP—Players line up by position in two groups facing each other 13–15 yards apart.

One groups serves as the ball carriers and the other as the tacklers.

If an individual coach is available for each unit, the three drills can be conducted simultaneously.

DRILL—On coach's signal, the first player in designated group takes one step forward.

Coach calls right or left telling the ball carrier which way to cut. On coaches command of HUT, tackler and ball carrier start forward 5 yards.

Then ball carrier angles in the direction of the call.

Ball carrier should keep running all through drill.

The tackler changes his path to meet the ball carrier.

The tackler should make good contact but should not take the ball carrier to ground.

After tackle, players change ends of the field.

Drill should be run at half to three-quarter speed.

REPETITION—Have each player tackle once in each direction.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach and the players that they are starting the practice by tackling properly. Drill is run for form rather than contact.

COACHING TIP—Make certain as the tacklers get near the ball carrier that they:

Shorten their stride and widen their base.

Lower hips by bending knees.

Keep backs straight, heads up, with eyes focused on the center of the ball carrier's chest.

Explode off of foot nearest the ball carrier.

Hit with shoulder pad on side of take-off foot and NOT helmet.

Keep helmet in front of ball carrier.

Drive shoulder pad up and through the side of the ball carrier.

Hit across ball carrier's chest with front arm.

Make contact with lower back area with back arm.

Wrap both arms around ball carrier, grab jersey.

Continue leg drive and lift ball carrier off ground.

Best to use if ball carrier has cut to right or left or if he is between tackler and sideline.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

TEAM WARM-UP DRILL—DEFENSIVE LINE

GET OFF

SET-UP—Have the two defensive ends line up outside of the cones representing the two offensive tackles on either side of the ball. The two defensive tackles should line up directly in front of the cones representing the two offensive guards. The coach can take a knee in the place of the center and place the ball on the ground in front of him. Additional defensive linemen can line up behind the defensive players in the drill, 5 yards off the line of scrimmage, and step up when the group has done the drill.

DRILL—Coach should tell the players SET, and the four defensive linemen should get into their stances in the proper position.

Once the players are in their proper

stances, the coach can move the ball (simulating the snap), and the players should charge straight ahead for 5 yards, then turn to outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The two defensive tackles can charge straight over the cones or go to the right or left as determined by the coach prior to the start of the drill.

In the beginning, the coach can have the players go one at a time, then the right and left side and then all four players at the same time.

A variation of the drill will be to place a cone back behind the coach at 7 yards (simulating a QB set up to pass) and have the players change their charge from straight up the field to the target area.

REPETITION—Have each player repeat each of the two drills four times.

GOAL—To insure your players are in a proper

stance, are lined up so that they can see the ball, and are moving forward the instant the ball starts to move.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

All the players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the players moves the instant that the ball moves.

The player's movement is forward and not up.

The players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The two defensive ends first step is with their outside foot.

When the defensive tackles are charging to the right or left of the cone, that their first step is with the foot on the side of the charge.

You continually emphasize speed and quickness in the drill.

DEFENSIVE LINE—DEFENSIVE ENDS

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the two defensive ends line up on the outside shoulder of the two offensive tackles, on either side of the ball facing the coach. Alternate side for the drill.

DRILL—Coach should huddle up the offensive players, tell them what block is to be used and by what player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The defensive end should move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and then when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the

outside, and go to the back of their respective lines.

The defensive end should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive tackle.

REACH block by the offensive tackle.

ANGLE block by the tight end.

DOUBLE TEAM block by the tackle and tight end.

PASS block by the offensive tackle.

In the beginning the coach can tell the defensive end what block is coming at him. Later, it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Have the defensive ends go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

REPETITION—Have each defensive end recognize and react properly to each of the five blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them, what types of blocks they will use, and the proper techniques needed to defeat each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The two defensive ends' first step is with their outside foot.

You repeat any block that is successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

DEFENSIVE LINE—DEFENSIVE TACKLES

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the two defensive tackles line up on the two offensive guards on either side of the ball facing the coach. Alternate side for the drill. Give the defensive tackle the side of his main gap responsibility.

DRILL—Coach should huddle up the offensive players, and tell them what block is to be used and by what player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The defensive tackle should move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and

then when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the outside, and go to the back of their respective lines.

The defensive tackle should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive guard.

REACH block by the offensive center.

ANGLE block by the offensive tackle.

DOUBLE TEAM block by both the center and guard and the guard and tackle.

PASS block by the offensive guard.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the defensive tackle what block is coming at him. Later, it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Have the defensive tackles go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

REPETITION—Have each defensive tackle recognize and react properly to each of the five blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them, what types of blocks they will use, and the proper techniques needed to defeat

each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

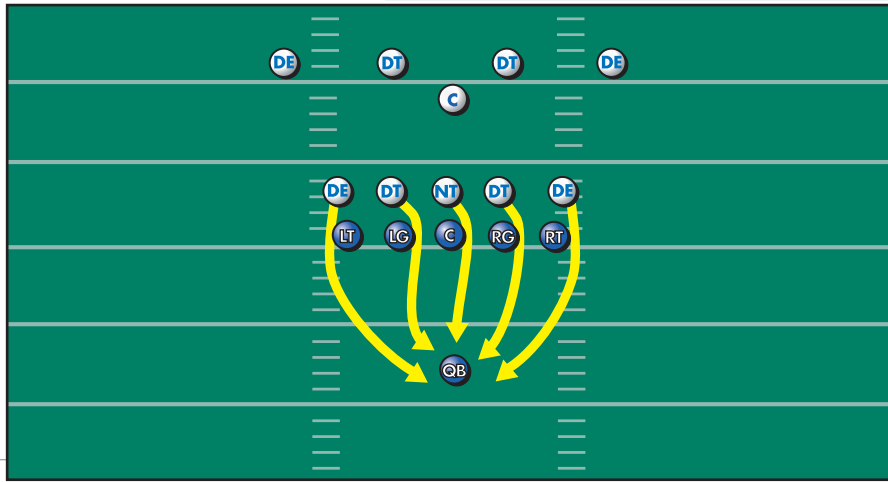
The two defensive tackles' first step is with their foot to the side of their gap responsibility.

You repeat any block that is successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

DEFENSIVE LINE—DEFENSIVE ENDS AND TACKLES

PASS RUSH



SET-UP—Have the two defensive ends line up on the outside shoulder of the two offensive tackles, the two defensive tackles line head up on the two offensive guards, and the nose tackle lines head up on the offensive center with the coach standing behind the defense. One defensive player can line up as the QB to give the pass rushers a target to work toward.

DRILL—Defensive pass rushers should go one at a time. The coach can hold up his fingers to tell the offensive man and center what the snap count will be.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP

count, and the designated offensive man can set back and execute his pass block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move.

The defensive lineman should move on the ball, react to the pass block, defeat the blocker, and attack the target area. The coach blows the whistle ending the drill, and the pass rusher should turn to the outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The defensive linemen should work on each of the pass rush techniques that they will use in a game.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the defensive lineman what pass rush technique to

use, and then, when the lineman is proficient at each technique, it is better if he decides what technique to use and tells the coach in advance.

Have the defensive linemen go one at a time, starting on one side and working across the line. The coach should position himself directly behind the rushing lineman so that he can observe and correct any mistakes.

REPETITION—Have each defensive lineman rush the passer using each of his techniques three times.

GOAL—To insure your players know how to rush the passer, to defeat the offensive pass blocker, and to attack the quarterback.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The correct pass rush technique is used to defeat the blocker.

You repeat any pass rush technique that is not successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly execute the technique.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement to the quarterback in the drill.

To avoid injury, it is best to go one player at a time or at the most two defensive players against two or three offensive blockers.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the inside linebacker line up on the offensive guard or center dependent on the defensive front that you are using. Alternate side for the drill. Give the inside **DRILL**—Coach should huddle up the offensive players, and tell them what block is to be used and by which player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The inside linebacker should: move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and then, when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The inside linebacker should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive center or guard.

ANGLE block by the offensive guard or tackle.

DELAY ANGLE block by the offensive tackle or tight end.

PASS block by the offensive center or guard.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the inside linebacker what block is coming at him. Later it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Once the inside linebacker reacts properly to the blocks from the offensive lineman, a running back, who will execute a **LEAD** block, can be added to the drill.

Have the inside linebackers go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

REPETITION—Have each inside linebacker recognize and react properly to each of the blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them (block progression), what types of blocks they will use, and the proper techniques needed to defeat each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads up, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The inside linebackers' first step is with their foot to the side of their gap responsibility.

They take the blocker on with the arm and shoulder opposite their gap responsibility.

You repeat any block that is successful, and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the outside linebacker line up on the offensive tackle or on the outside shoulder of tight end, depending on the defensive front you are using. Alternate side for the drill. Give the outside linebacker the side of his main gap responsibility.

DRILL—Coach should huddle up the offensive players and tell them what block is to be used and by which player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The outside linebacker should: move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and then, when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The outside backer should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive tackle or tight end.

REACH block by the offensive tight end.

CROSS block by offensive tackle and tight end.

ANGLE block by the tight end or wing back if Wing T offense.

PASS block by the offensive tackle or tight end.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the outside linebacker what block is coming at him. Later, it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Once the outside linebacker reacts properly to the blocks from the offensive lineman, a running back can be added to the drill who will execute a **LEAD** block along with an offensive guard who can **TRAP** block.

Have the outside linebackers go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

The offensive tight end can be eliminated for teaching block progression to an outside linebacker who is lining up and playing in a position without a blocker in front of him.

REPETITION—Have each outside linebacker recognize and react properly to each of the seven potential blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them, what types of blocks they will use,

and the proper techniques needed to defeat each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads up, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The outside linebackers' first step is with their foot to the side of their gap responsibility.

They take the blocker on with the arm and shoulder opposite their gap responsibility.

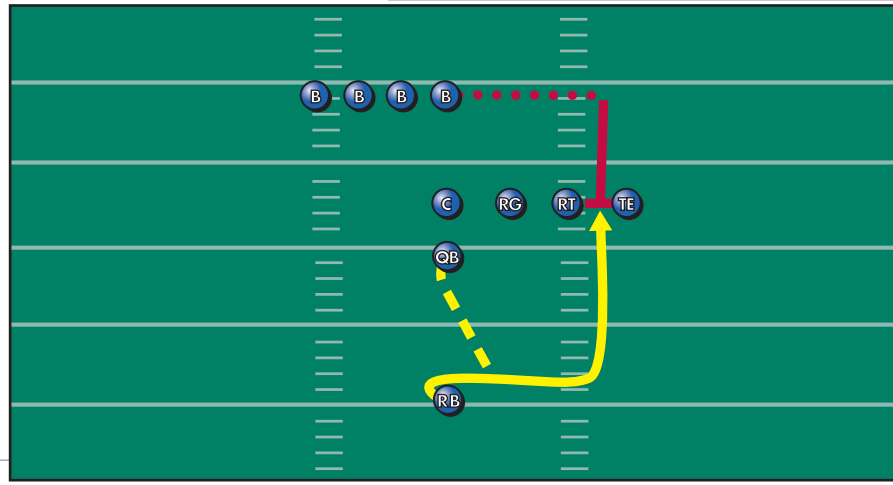
You repeat any block that is successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

LINEBACKERS

SHUFFLE AND REACT



SET-UP—Have the linebacker line up on the offensive center. The quarterback and ball carrier set up and are prepared to run a pitch action to their right. Since there is no blocking in the drill, you can use players, blocking dummies, or towels to designate the blockers and show the running lanes for the ball carrier. Allow extra width for running lanes.

DRILL—Coach should instruct the ball carrier where to run once he has received the pitch from the quarterback. Later in the drill, the coach can allow the ball carrier to cut in any gap. He should then give them the SNAP count.

The quarterback can call out the cadence, and the center can move the ball on the SNAP count. The quarterback should pivot and pitch the ball to the ball carrier.

The linebacker should shuffle to his left, staying inside of the ball carrier and checking each lane as he moves laterally.

The ball carrier should run laterally and then cut up into the pre-determined running lane.

The linebacker should shuffle laterally staying square to the line of scrimmage and focusing on the ball carrier.

The linebacker should attack the line, once

he determines that the ball carrier is making his cut, and make contact with the runner.

In the beginning, the drill can be run at half speed. You can increase the tempo of the drill once the players understand the drill and their responsibilities.

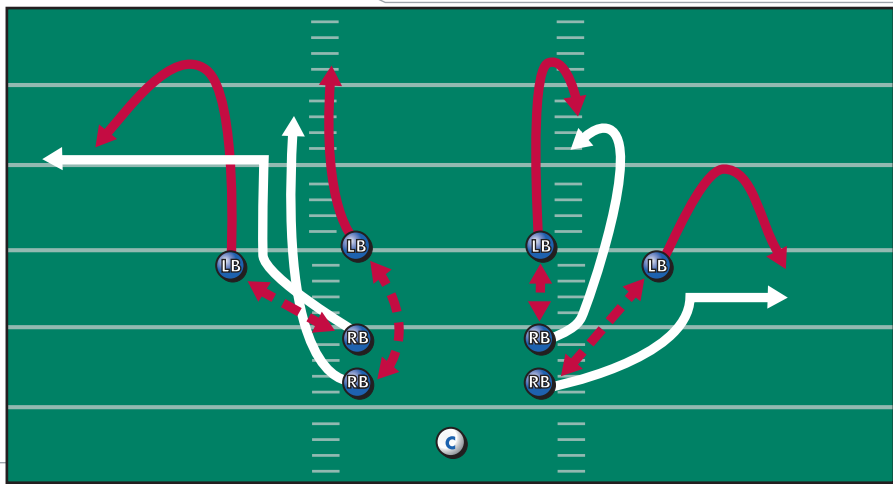
REPETITION—Have each linebacker shuffle and react twice going in both directions.

GOAL—To insure your linebackers shuffle properly, stay inside/out on the ball carrier, and attack the line in a good tackling position when the runner turns up the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

- The linebackers have their heads up, backs straight, knees bent, and are concentrating on the ball carrier.
- Each of the linebackers shuffle laterally, keeping their feet under their hips, and stay inside of the running back.
- The linebackers leave their lateral shuffle and attack the line of scrimmage the instant the ball carrier turns up field.
- Even though this is not a tackling drill, the linebackers should be in proper tackling position when meeting the runner.
- You repeat the drill any time the ball carrier eludes the linebacker, especially if the linebacker overruns the ball.
- You continually emphasize controlled lateral speed and then quickness and forward movement once the linebacker knows where the ball carrier is going to run.

MAN-FOR-MAN COVERAGE



SET-UP—Players line up facing each other with the coach standing behind the players setting up as running backs.

Coach can line up where QB will set to pass.

Outside backers can be lined up even with the M backer and directly in front of the running back, if that is the alignment you employ.

Do not have a ball in the drill.

Substitute linebackers can serve as the RB

and run the pass called.

DRILL—Coach calls out pass pattern (Flat, Stop, Cross, Out, Up) he wants RBs to run and points out the LB or LBs who will be in coverage.

Each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for their position.

On coach's signal of HUT, the RB runs the pass pattern and the linebacker executes the proper man-for-man coverage technique.

Once the linebackers have a feel for the drill, the coach should not call out the pattern, forcing the linebackers to recognize and react to it as it is being run.

LBs should switch sides after one group has covered all five pass patterns properly.

REPETITION—Each group covers each pass pattern two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for the coach to see that the players know how to cover the receiver using man-for-man pass coverage techniques and can roll over and break to the receiver once they have recognized the pattern being run.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

- The players start in a good stance.
- They are stepping with the proper foot to go to coverage.
- They are running backward with proper technique.
- They focus on the receiver and react to pass pattern being run.
- They roll over when leaving their backward run.
- They close to the receiver before looking back to the quarterback and the ball.
- In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run with only one LB in coverage at a time at receivers running half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

LINEBACKERS

ZONE COVERAGE DROPS

SET-UP—Have the M backer line up on the offensive center and the W and S backer head up on the two respective offensive tackles. The quarterback and ball carrier set up in I formation. The substitute linebackers can line up in the place of the offensive lineman. The quarterback can hold the ball in his hands under the center.

DRILL—Coach should call out the zone coverage to the linebackers and the SNAP count for the offensive players.

The quarterback can call out the cadence. On the SNAP, the offensive linemen can set up in pass protection, the quarterback can take a full five-step drop, and the running back can move to one side so that the QB can set up.

The linebackers should roll over the leg in the direction of their drop and sprint to their zones using a crossover run.

Once they reach their zone area, they should swing their inside leg around and go into a backpedal until the quarterback stops his drop.

The linebackers should then stop getting depth in their drops, settle, and start chopping their steps in preparation to move laterally, up or back.

The linebackers should focus completely on the quarterback.

The QB should then step directly at his target area.

The linebackers should immediately roll over the foot in the direction of the QB's step and move to where the ball would be thrown.

The ball should not be thrown in the drill.

In the beginning, the drill can be run at half speed. You can increase the tempo of the drill once the players understand the drill and their responsibilities.

REPETITION—Have each set of linebackers drop three or four times for each zone coverage with the QB stepping in a different direction each time.

GOAL—To insure your linebackers know where to drop for each zone coverage, that they use proper technique in their drops, that they focus on the QB, and that they react correctly the instant that the QB steps to throw.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The linebackers use a fast crossover drop.

They move quickly to their correct zone.

They swivel their head as they drop so that they never lose sight of the QB.

Each of the linebackers swings into a backpedal the moment he reaches his zone.

The linebackers stop their drops and begin to run in place when the QB stops his drop and sets to throw.

All the linebackers instantly roll over in the foot in the direction that the QB steps to throw.

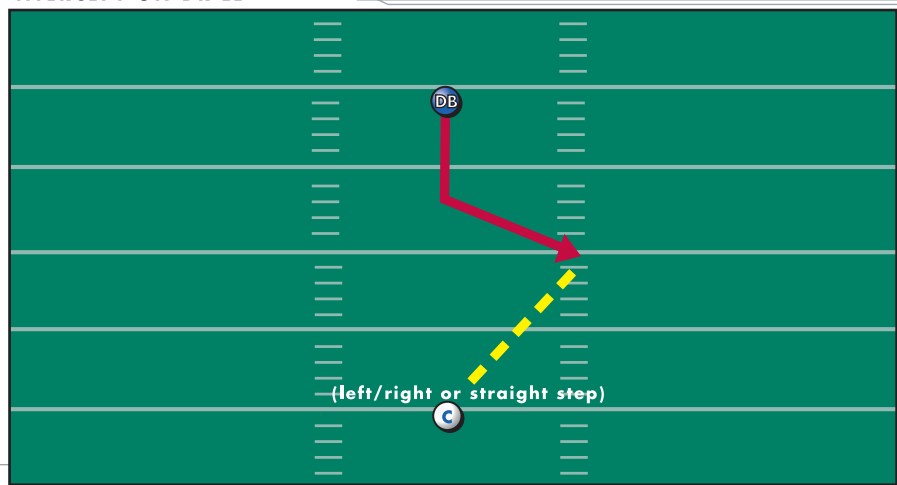
This is not an interception drill, so the quarterback should never throw the ball, as it will only slow down the drill and decrease the number of repetitions that you can give to each player.

Once the linebackers are moving correctly for a drop-back pass, you can have the QB fake a handoff to the FB and set up for a play-action pass, forcing the linebackers to step up before they start their zone drops.

You continually emphasize speed and quickness in the initial part of the linebacker zone drops.

All the linebackers understand that they must see the QB, and it is the QB who will tell them how far they can drop, when they must stop their drop, and where to go to react to the ball.

INTERCEPTION DRILL



SET-UP—Players line up facing the coach, standing 17 yards away. One at a time they move up to 15 yards and face the coach.

If two coaches are available to run drill, one

coach can pass to DBs on one side of the field and the other coach can throw to the LBs on the other side of the field.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player runs

forward 5 yards.

Player then breaks in the direction coach steps.

Player then makes interception and runs the ball back to coach.

REPETITION—Each DB and LB should make an interception going to his right, left, and straight at coach.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for the DB and LB to make interceptions and to ensure that they are catching the ball properly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start with body under control.

They break in the proper direction.

They have their hands in the proper position to make catch.

They reach out to receive the ball.

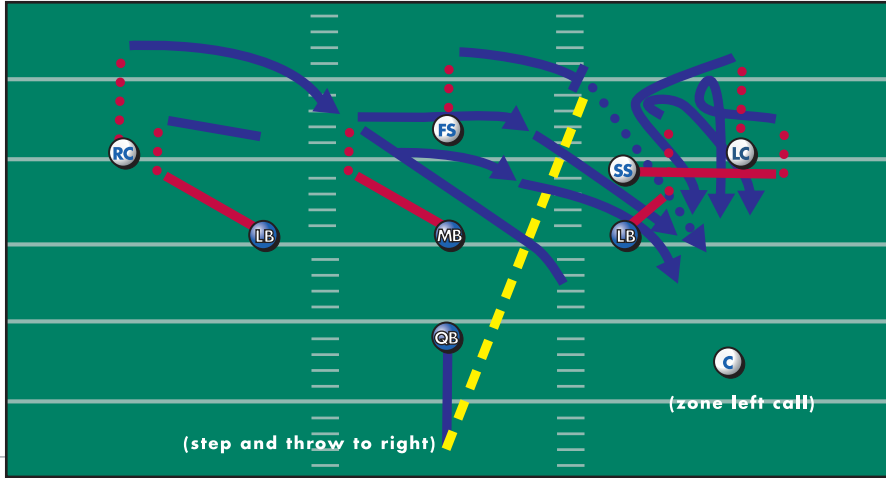
They focus on the ball and secure it after catch.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

LINEBACKER/DEFENSIVE BACK DRILL

ZONE INTERCEPTION



SET-UP—Players line up facing the coach, standing in normal positions.

Coach should call out the zone defense that they are to use.

QB lines up with the ball.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, players take drop based on call and QB takes a five-step drop and sets to throw.

QB steps and throws, and all players react to throw.

One player then makes interception, and the entire group runs the ball back up the closest sideline.

Next group moves over and lines up on defense.

REPETITION—Each group of DBs and LBs should make two interceptions going to their right, left, and straight ahead using all the zone defenses that the team has.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs and LBs know where to drop, stay focused on the quarterback, break on the ball properly, make the interception, and are moving as one unit after the catch.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly.

The group takes its proper drops for the zone called.

The unit settles when the QB sets to throw.

They break in the proper direction on the QB's throw.

The interceptor has his hands in the proper position to catch the ball.

They move as a unit to escort the ball carrier up the nearest sideline.

They focus on the ball and secure it after catch.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

BACKPEDAL DRILL

SET-UP—Players line up to the side of the coach, and one player at a time steps out and lines up in his stance facing the coach.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player should backpedal for 15 yards in a straight line.

Player then rolls right or left and returns to the end of the line. Next player moves over and lines up on defense in stance.

REPETITION—Have each DB backpedal two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs are running backward (backpedal) correctly and that they can backpedal for a full 15 yards.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly by pushing off their front foot and stepping back with their back foot.

Their feet are no wider than their hips.

They keep their feet under their hips.

Each player continues his run by stepping back with each step.

They bring their shoulders up gradually as they backpedal.

Their shoulders and head stay in front of their hips.

They move their arms in a smooth running motion.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

ANGLE BACKPEDAL DRILL

SET-UP—Players line up to the side of the coach, and one player at a time steps out and lines up in his stance facing the coach.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player should backpedal for 5 yards in a straight line.

Near 5 yards, coach points at an angle with right or left hand.

Player changes backpedal to that direction for 5 yards.

Coach then signals player straight back.

Player changes backpedal to straight back for 5 yards.

Coach then signals player to angle in the other direction.

Player changes backpedal to that direction for 5 yards.

Player then rolls right or left and returns to the end of the line. Next player moves over and lines up on defense in stance.

REPETITION—Have each DB angle backpedal two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs are running backwards (backpedal) correctly, and that they can angle their backpedal to mirror a receiver's route by moving left, right, and straight back for a full 20 yards.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly by pushing off their front foot and stepping back with their back foot.

They backpedal correctly.

They change direction by swinging the opposite hip around.

They stay in their backpedal.

Their feet do not cross during the drill.

Their feet are no wider than their hips.

They keep their feet under their hips.

Each player continues his run by stepping back with each step.

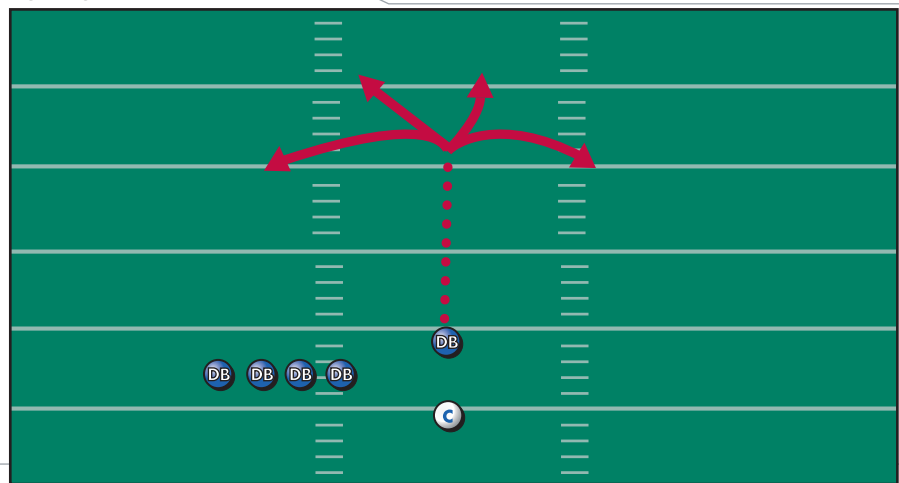
They bring their shoulders up gradually as they backpedal.

Their shoulders and head stay in front of their hips.

They move their arms in a smooth running motion.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

ROLL-OVER DRILL



SET-UP—Players line up to the side of the coach, and one player at a time steps out and lines up in his stance facing the coach.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player should backpedal for 10 yards in a straight line.

Coach will then point with his right or left

arm deep at an angle or straight to the side.

Player then rolls over to the right or left at the proper angle.

The player should sprint 10 yards in the new direction.

He then returns to the end of the line.

Next player moves over and lines up on defense in stance.

REPETITION—Have each DB roll over deep to the right and left sides 1 time.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs can leave their backpedal and move into a forward run by rolling over in the direction they want to go, keeping their momentum and avoiding slipping by keeping their feet under their hips.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly by pushing off their front foot and stepping back with their back foot.

They are maintaining a proper backpedal.

They leave their backpedal by leaning their upper body in the direction they want to run.

They roll over the foot in the direction they want to run.

They keep their feet under their hips.

They drive up after their roll on any change to side.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

TEAM WARM-UP DRILL—ALL DEFENSE

STANCE

SET-UP—Players line up by position facing the coach.

Assistant coach can line up at the side of the players.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, each group of players moves up and gets into a

proper stance for his position.

Coach can make corrections and then POINT right or left [pointing, rather than calling right or left, insures that players have their head up and eyes focused on you] and players move in that direction and go to the back of the group.

REPETITION—Have each group line up once

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach to see that

the players that they are starting the practice in a proper stance.

COACHING TIP—

Make certain players:

Are in the proper stance for their position.

They have head up, shoulders square, back straight, knees bent, and weight properly distributed.

START

SET-UP—Players line up by position 8 yards away and facing the coach.

Assistant coach can line up at the side of the players.

DBs turn so that their back is to the coach.

DRILL—On coach's signal, each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

Coach points and calls right, left or straight ahead and players quickly start in that direction on coach's signal of HUT.

DBs start by running straight backward and then backward on an angle to their right and left.

LBs should shuffle to right or left and stay facing straight ahead then come up field on coaches hand signal.

DL should step with the foot in the direction of the call of right or left.

After each start, players move to the outside

and go to the back of group.

REPETITION—Have each group go once in all three directions.

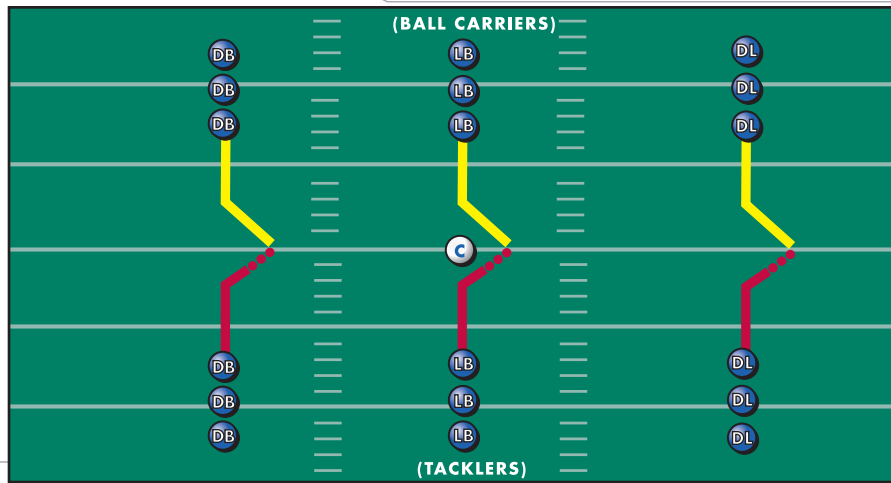
GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach to see that the players are starting the practice with a proper start.

COACHING TIP—Make certain the players:

Are not taking a false step back or up before going right or left.

They are staying low and not raising straight up in from their stance.

ANGLE TACKLING



SET-UP—Players line up by position in two groups facing each other 13–15 yards apart.

One groups serves as the ball carriers and the other as the tacklers.

If an individual coach is available for each unit, the three drills can be conducted simultaneously.

DRILL—On coach's signal, the first player in designated group takes one step forward.

Coach calls right or left telling the ball carrier which way to cut. On coaches command of HUT, tackler and ball carrier start forward 5 yards.

Then ball carrier angles in the direction of the call.

Ball carrier should keep running all through drill.

The tackler changes his path to meet the ball carrier.

The tackler should make good contact but should not take the ball carrier to ground.

After tackle, players change ends of the field.

Drill should be run at half to three-quarter speed.

REPETITION—Have each player tackle once in each direction.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check at the end of warm-up for the coach and the players that they are starting the practice by tackling properly. Drill is run for form rather than contact.

COACHING TIP—Make certain as the tacklers get near the ball carrier that they:

Shorten their stride and widen their base.

Lower hips by bending knees.

Keep backs straight, heads up, with eyes focused on the center of the ball carrier's chest.

Explode off of foot nearest the ball carrier.

Hit with shoulder pad on side of take-off foot and NOT helmet.

Keep helmet in front of ball carrier.

Drive shoulder pad up and through the side of the ball carrier.

Hit across ball carrier's chest with front arm.

Make contact with lower back area with back arm.

Wrap both arms around ball carrier, grab jersey.

Continue leg drive and lift ball carrier off ground.

Best to use if ball carrier has cut to right or left or if he is between tackler and sideline.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

TEAM WARM-UP DRILL—DEFENSIVE LINE

GET OFF

SET-UP—Have the two defensive ends line up outside of the cones representing the two offensive tackles on either side of the ball. The two defensive tackles should line up directly in front of the cones representing the two offensive guards. The coach can take a knee in the place of the center and place the ball on the ground in front of him. Additional defensive linemen can line up behind the defensive players in the drill, 5 yards off the line of scrimmage, and step up when the group has done the drill.

DRILL—Coach should tell the players SET, and the four defensive linemen should get into their stances in the proper position.

Once the players are in their proper

stances, the coach can move the ball (simulating the snap), and the players should charge straight ahead for 5 yards, then turn to outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The two defensive tackles can charge straight over the cones or go to the right or left as determined by the coach prior to the start of the drill.

In the beginning, the coach can have the players go one at a time, then the right and left side and then all four players at the same time.

A variation of the drill will be to place a cone back behind the coach at 7 yards (simulating a QB set up to pass) and have the players change their charge from straight up the field to the target area.

REPETITION—Have each player repeat each of the two drills four times.

GOAL—To insure your players are in a proper

stance, are lined up so that they can see the ball, and are moving forward the instant the ball starts to move.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

All the players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the players moves the instant that the ball moves.

The player's movement is forward and not up.

The players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The two defensive ends first step is with their outside foot.

When the defensive tackles are charging to the right or left of the cone, that their first step is with the foot on the side of the charge.

You continually emphasize speed and quickness in the drill.

DEFENSIVE LINE—DEFENSIVE ENDS

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the two defensive ends line up on the outside shoulder of the two offensive tackles, on either side of the ball facing the coach. Alternate side for the drill.

DRILL—Coach should huddle up the offensive players, tell them what block is to be used and by what player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The defensive end should move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and then when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the

outside, and go to the back of their respective lines.

The defensive end should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive tackle.

REACH block by the offensive tackle.

ANGLE block by the tight end.

DOUBLE TEAM block by the tackle and tight end.

PASS block by the offensive tackle.

In the beginning the coach can tell the defensive end what block is coming at him. Later, it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Have the defensive ends go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

REPETITION—Have each defensive end recognize and react properly to each of the five blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them, what types of blocks they will use, and the proper techniques needed to defeat each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The two defensive ends' first step is with their outside foot.

You repeat any block that is successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

DEFENSIVE LINE—DEFENSIVE TACKLES

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the two defensive tackles line up on the two offensive guards on either side of the ball facing the coach. Alternate side for the drill. Give the defensive tackle the side of his main gap responsibility.

DRILL—Coach should huddle up the offensive players, and tell them what block is to be used and by what player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The defensive tackle should move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and

then when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the outside, and go to the back of their respective lines.

The defensive tackle should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive guard.

REACH block by the offensive center.

ANGLE block by the offensive tackle.

DOUBLE TEAM block by both the center and guard and the guard and tackle.

PASS block by the offensive guard.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the defensive tackle what block is coming at him. Later, it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Have the defensive tackles go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

REPETITION—Have each defensive tackle recognize and react properly to each of the five blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them, what types of blocks they will use, and the proper techniques needed to defeat

each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

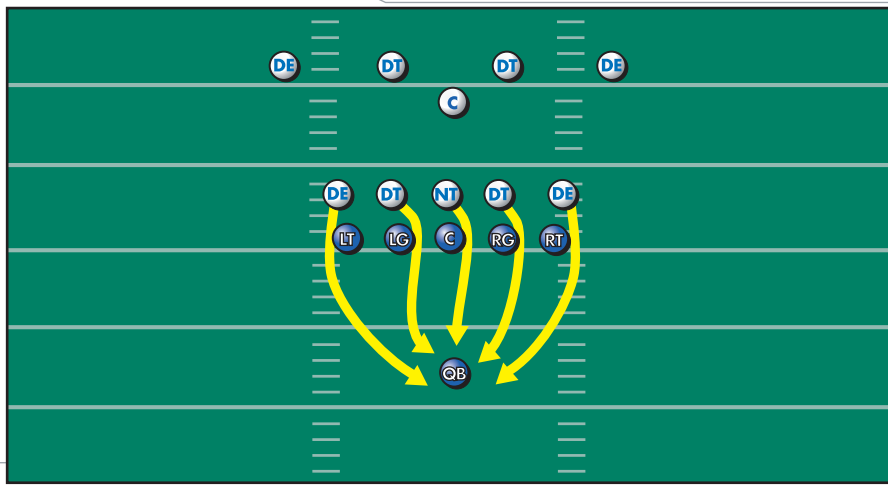
The two defensive tackles' first step is with their foot to the side of their gap responsibility.

You repeat any block that is successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

DEFENSIVE LINE—DEFENSIVE ENDS AND TACKLES

PASS RUSH



SET-UP—Have the two defensive ends line up on the outside shoulder of the two offensive tackles, the two defensive tackles line head up on the two offensive guards, and the nose tackle lines head up on the offensive center with the coach standing behind the defense. One defensive player can line up as the QB to give the pass rushers a target to work toward.

DRILL—Defensive pass rushers should go one at a time. The coach can hold up his fingers to tell the offensive man and center what the snap count will be.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP

count, and the designated offensive man can set back and execute his pass block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move.

The defensive lineman should move on the ball, react to the pass block, defeat the blocker, and attack the target area. The coach blows the whistle ending the drill, and the pass rusher should turn to the outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The defensive linemen should work on each of the pass rush techniques that they will use in a game.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the defensive lineman what pass rush technique to

use, and then, when the lineman is proficient at each technique, it is better if he decides what technique to use and tells the coach in advance.

Have the defensive linemen go one at a time, starting on one side and working across the line. The coach should position himself directly behind the rushing lineman so that he can observe and correct any mistakes.

REPETITION—Have each defensive lineman rush the passer using each of his techniques three times.

GOAL—To insure your players know how to rush the passer, to defeat the offensive pass blocker, and to attack the quarterback.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads turned in, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The correct pass rush technique is used to defeat the blocker.

You repeat any pass rush technique that is not successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly execute the technique.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement to the quarterback in the drill.

To avoid injury, it is best to go one player at a time or at the most two defensive players against two or three offensive blockers.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the inside linebacker line up on the offensive guard or center dependent on the defensive front that you are using. Alternate side for the drill. Give the inside **DRILL**—Coach should huddle up the offensive players, and tell them what block is to be used and by which player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The inside linebacker should: move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and then, when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The inside linebacker should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive center or guard.

ANGLE block by the offensive guard or tackle.

DELAY ANGLE block by the offensive tackle or tight end.

PASS block by the offensive center or guard.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the inside linebacker what block is coming at him. Later it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Once the inside linebacker reacts properly to the blocks from the offensive lineman, a running back, who will execute a **LEAD** block, can be added to the drill.

Have the inside linebackers go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

REPETITION—Have each inside linebacker recognize and react properly to each of the blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them (block progression), what types of blocks they will use, and the proper techniques needed to defeat each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads up, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The inside linebackers' first step is with their foot to the side of their gap responsibility.

They take the blocker on with the arm and shoulder opposite their gap responsibility.

You repeat any block that is successful, and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

BLOCK RECOGNITION

SET-UP—Have the outside linebacker line up on the offensive tackle or on the outside shoulder of tight end, depending on the defensive front you are using. Alternate side for the drill. Give the outside linebacker the side of his main gap responsibility.

DRILL—Coach should huddle up the offensive players and tell them what block is to be used and by which player. He should then give them the SNAP count, break the huddle, and send them up to the line.

Once the players are in their proper stances, the coach can call out the cadence, the center can move the ball on the SNAP count, and the designated offensive man can execute his block. The other offensive players can merely raise up but do not need to move forward.

The outside linebacker should: move on the ball, react to the block, defeat the blocker, and then, when the coach blows the whistle, turn to the outside and go to the back of their respective lines.

The outside backer should recognize and react to the following blocks:

DRIVE block by the offensive tackle or tight end.

REACH block by the offensive tight end.

CROSS block by offensive tackle and tight end.

ANGLE block by the tight end or wing back if Wing T offense.

PASS block by the offensive tackle or tight end.

In the beginning, the coach can tell the outside linebacker what block is coming at him. Later, it is better if he has to recognize and react rather than knowing in advance.

Once the outside linebacker reacts properly to the blocks from the offensive lineman, a running back can be added to the drill who will execute a **LEAD** block along with an offensive guard who can **TRAP** block.

Have the outside linebackers go one at a time, first the right and then the left side.

The offensive tight end can be eliminated for teaching block progression to an outside linebacker who is lining up and playing in a position without a blocker in front of him.

REPETITION—Have each outside linebacker recognize and react properly to each of the seven potential blocks two times.

GOAL—To insure your players know who can block them, what types of blocks they will use,

and the proper techniques needed to defeat each type of block.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The defensive players have their heads up, have the ball in their sight, and are concentrating on the ball.

Each of the defensive players moves forward the instant that the center moves the ball, reacting as he moves.

The defensive player recognizes who is blocking him and what block they are attempting to use against him.

The proper technique is used to defeat each block.

The defensive players stay low with their shoulders square to the line.

The outside linebackers' first step is with their foot to the side of their gap responsibility.

They take the blocker on with the arm and shoulder opposite their gap responsibility.

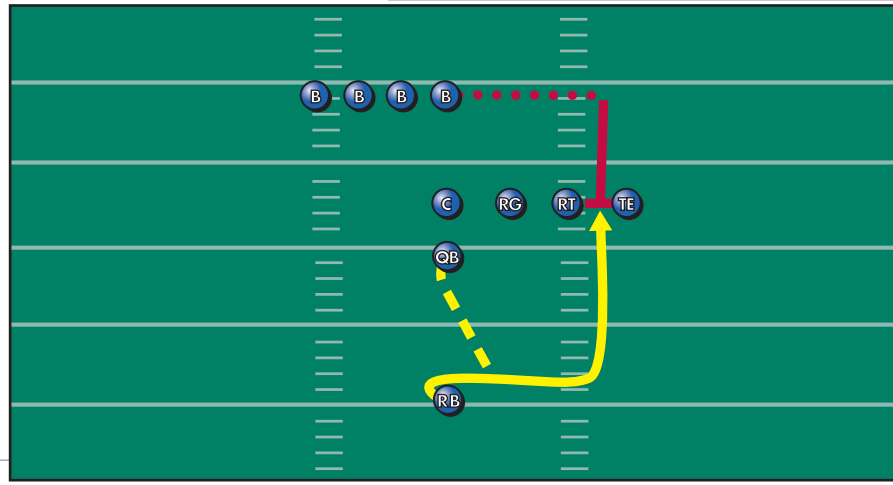
You repeat any block that is successful and review with the defensive player how he should correctly play the block.

You continually emphasize speed, quickness, and forward movement in the drill.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

LINEBACKERS

SHUFFLE AND REACT



SET-UP—Have the linebacker line up on the offensive center. The quarterback and ball carrier set up and are prepared to run a pitch action to their right. Since there is no blocking in the drill, you can use players, blocking dummies, or towels to designate the blockers and show the running lanes for the ball carrier. Allow extra width for running lanes.

DRILL—Coach should instruct the ball carrier where to run once he has received the pitch from the quarterback. Later in the drill, the coach can allow the ball carrier to cut in any gap. He should then give them the SNAP count.

The quarterback can call out the cadence, and the center can move the ball on the SNAP count. The quarterback should pivot and pitch the ball to the ball carrier.

The linebacker should shuffle to his left, staying inside of the ball carrier and checking each lane as he moves laterally.

The ball carrier should run laterally and then cut up into the pre-determined running lane.

The linebacker should shuffle laterally staying square to the line of scrimmage and focusing on the ball carrier.

The linebacker should attack the line, once

he determines that the ball carrier is making his cut, and make contact with the runner.

In the beginning, the drill can be run at half speed. You can increase the tempo of the drill once the players understand the drill and their responsibilities.

REPETITION—Have each linebacker shuffle and react twice going in both directions.

GOAL—To insure your linebackers shuffle properly, stay inside/out on the ball carrier, and attack the line in a good tackling position when the runner turns up the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The linebackers have their heads up, backs straight, knees bent, and are concentrating on the ball carrier.

Each of the linebackers shuffle laterally, keeping their feet under their hips, and stay inside of the running back.

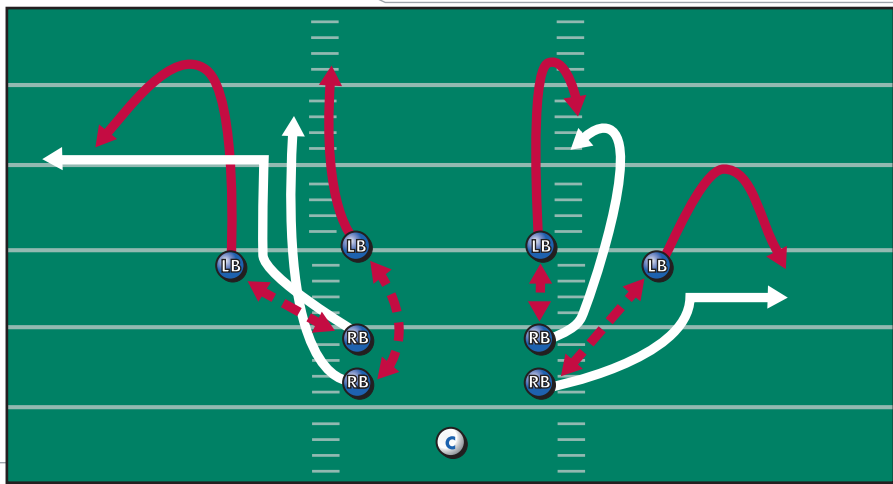
The linebackers leave their lateral shuffle and attack the line of scrimmage the instant the ball carrier turns up field.

Even though this is not a tackling drill, the linebackers should be in proper tackling position when meeting the runner.

You repeat the drill any time the ball carrier eludes the linebacker, especially if the linebacker overruns the ball.

You continually emphasize controlled lateral speed and then quickness and forward movement once the linebacker knows where the ball carrier is going to run.

MAN-FOR-MAN COVERAGE



SET-UP—Players line up facing each other with the coach standing behind the players setting up as running backs.

Coach can line up where QB will set to pass.

Outside backers can be lined up even with the M backer and directly in front of the running back, if that is the alignment you employ.

Do not have a ball in the drill.

Substitute linebackers can serve as the RB

and run the pass called.

DRILL—Coach calls out pass pattern (Flat, Stop, Cross, Out, Up) he wants RBs to run and points out the LB or LBs who will be in coverage.

Each group of players moves up and gets into a proper stance for their position.

On coach's signal of HUT, the RB runs the pass pattern and the linebacker executes the proper man-for-man coverage technique.

Once the linebackers have a feel for the drill, the coach should not call out the pattern, forcing the linebackers to recognize and react to it as it is being run.

LBs should switch sides after one group has covered all five pass patterns properly.

REPETITION—Each group covers each pass pattern two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check for the coach to see that the players know how to cover the receiver using man-for-man pass coverage techniques and can roll over and break to the receiver once they have recognized the pattern being run.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start in a good stance.

They are stepping with the proper foot to go to coverage.

They are running backward with proper technique.

They focus on the receiver and react to pass pattern being run.

They roll over when leaving their backward run.

They close to the receiver before looking back to the quarterback and the ball.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run with only one LB in coverage at a time at receivers running half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

LINEBACKERS

ZONE COVERAGE DROPS

SET-UP—Have the M backer line up on the offensive center and the W and S backer head up on the two respective offensive tackles. The quarterback and ball carrier set up in I formation. The substitute linebackers can line up in the place of the offensive lineman. The quarterback can hold the ball in his hands under the center.

DRILL—Coach should call out the zone coverage to the linebackers and the SNAP count for the offensive players.

The quarterback can call out the cadence. On the SNAP, the offensive linemen can set up in pass protection, the quarterback can take a full five-step drop, and the running back can move to one side so that the QB can set up.

The linebackers should roll over the leg in the direction of their drop and sprint to their zones using a crossover run.

Once they reach their zone area, they should swing their inside leg around and go into a backpedal until the quarterback stops his drop.

The linebackers should then stop getting depth in their drops, settle, and start chopping their steps in preparation to move laterally, up or back.

The linebackers should focus completely on the quarterback.

The QB should then step directly at his target area.

The linebackers should immediately roll over the foot in the direction of the QB's step and move to where the ball would be thrown.

The ball should not be thrown in the drill.

In the beginning, the drill can be run at half speed. You can increase the tempo of the drill once the players understand the drill and their responsibilities.

REPETITION—Have each set of linebackers drop three or four times for each zone coverage with the QB stepping in a different direction each time.

GOAL—To insure your linebackers know where to drop for each zone coverage, that they use proper technique in their drops, that they focus on the QB, and that they react correctly the instant that the QB steps to throw.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The linebackers use a fast crossover drop.

They move quickly to their correct zone.

They swivel their head as they drop so that they never lose sight of the QB.

Each of the linebackers swings into a backpedal the moment he reaches his zone.

The linebackers stop their drops and begin to run in place when the QB stops his drop and sets to throw.

All the linebackers instantly roll over in the foot in the direction that the QB steps to throw.

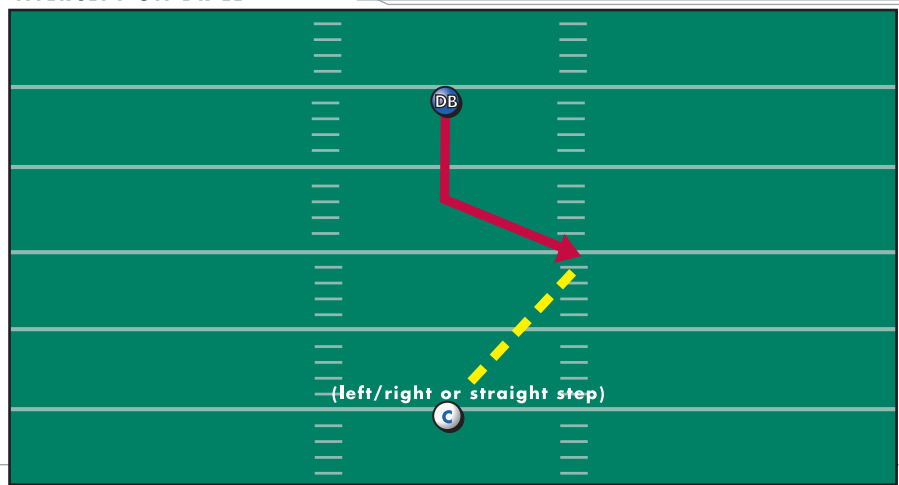
This is not an interception drill, so the quarterback should never throw the ball, as it will only slow down the drill and decrease the number of repetitions that you can give to each player.

Once the linebackers are moving correctly for a drop-back pass, you can have the QB fake a handoff to the FB and set up for a play-action pass, forcing the linebackers to step up before they start their zone drops.

You continually emphasize speed and quickness in the initial part of the linebacker zone drops.

All the linebackers understand that they must see the QB, and it is the QB who will tell them how far they can drop, when they must stop their drop, and where to go to react to the ball.

INTERCEPTION DRILL



SET-UP—Players line up facing the coach, standing 17 yards away. One at a time they move up to 15 yards and face the coach.

If two coaches are available to run drill, one

coach can pass to DBs on one side of the field and the other coach can throw to the LBs on the other side of the field.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player runs

forward 5 yards.

Player then breaks in the direction coach steps.

Player then makes interception and runs the ball back to coach.

REPETITION—Each DB and LB should make an interception going to his right, left, and straight at coach.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for the DB and LB to make interceptions and to ensure that they are catching the ball properly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start with body under control.

They break in the proper direction.

They have their hands in the proper position to make catch.

They reach out to receive the ball.

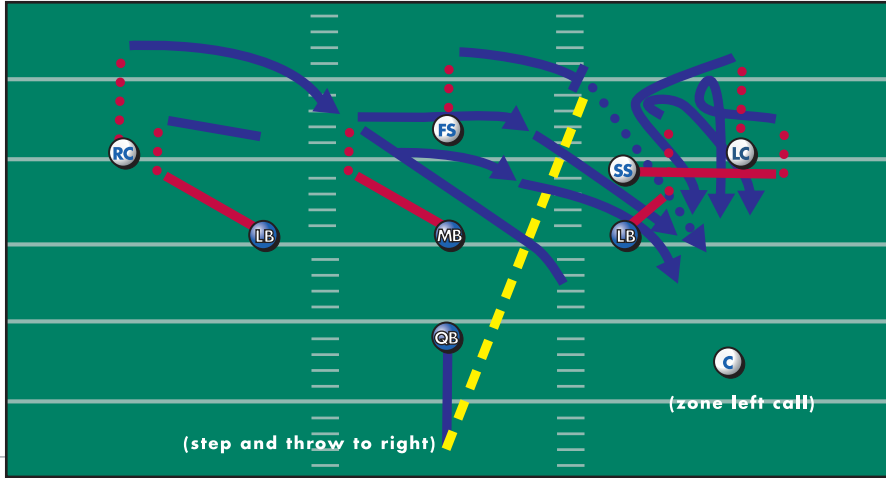
They focus on the ball and secure it after catch.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

LINEBACKER/DEFENSIVE BACK DRILL

ZONE INTERCEPTION



SET-UP—Players line up facing the coach, standing in normal positions.

Coach should call out the zone defense that they are to use.

QB lines up with the ball.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, players take drop based on call and QB takes a five-step drop and sets to throw.

QB steps and throws, and all players react to throw.

One player then makes interception, and the entire group runs the ball back up the closest sideline.

Next group moves over and lines up on defense.

REPETITION—Each group of DBs and LBs should make two interceptions going to their right, left, and straight ahead using all the zone defenses that the team has.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs and LBs know where to drop, stay focused on the quarterback, break on the ball properly, make the interception, and are moving as one unit after the catch.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly.

The group takes its proper drops for the zone called.

The unit settles when the QB sets to throw.

They break in the proper direction on the QB's throw.

The interceptor has his hands in the proper position to catch the ball.

They move as a unit to escort the ball carrier up the nearest sideline.

They focus on the ball and secure it after catch.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

BACKPEDAL DRILL

SET-UP—Players line up to the side of the coach, and one player at a time steps out and lines up in his stance facing the coach.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player should backpedal for 15 yards in a straight line.

Player then rolls right or left and returns to the end of the line. Next player moves over and lines up on defense in stance.

REPETITION—Have each DB backpedal two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs are running backward (backpedal) correctly and that they can backpedal for a full 15 yards.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly by pushing off their front foot and stepping back with their back foot.

Their feet are no wider than their hips.

They keep their feet under their hips.

Each player continues his run by stepping back with each step.

They bring their shoulders up gradually as they backpedal.

Their shoulders and head stay in front of their hips.

They move their arms in a smooth running motion.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.



DEFENSIVE DRILLS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

ANGLE BACKPEDAL DRILL

SET-UP—Players line up to the side of the coach, and one player at a time steps out and lines up in his stance facing the coach.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player should backpedal for 5 yards in a straight line.

Near 5 yards, coach points at an angle with right or left hand.

Player changes backpedal to that direction for 5 yards.

Coach then signals player straight back.

Player changes backpedal to straight back for 5 yards.

Coach then signals player to angle in the other direction.

Player changes backpedal to that direction for 5 yards.

Player then rolls right or left and returns to the end of the line. Next player moves over and lines up on defense in stance.

REPETITION—Have each DB angle backpedal two times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs are running backwards (backpedal) correctly, and that they can angle their backpedal to mirror a receiver's route by moving left, right, and straight back for a full 20 yards.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly by pushing off their front foot and stepping back with their back foot.

They backpedal correctly.

They change direction by swinging the opposite hip around.

They stay in their backpedal.

Their feet do not cross during the drill.

Their feet are no wider than their hips.

They keep their feet under their hips.

Each player continues his run by stepping back with each step.

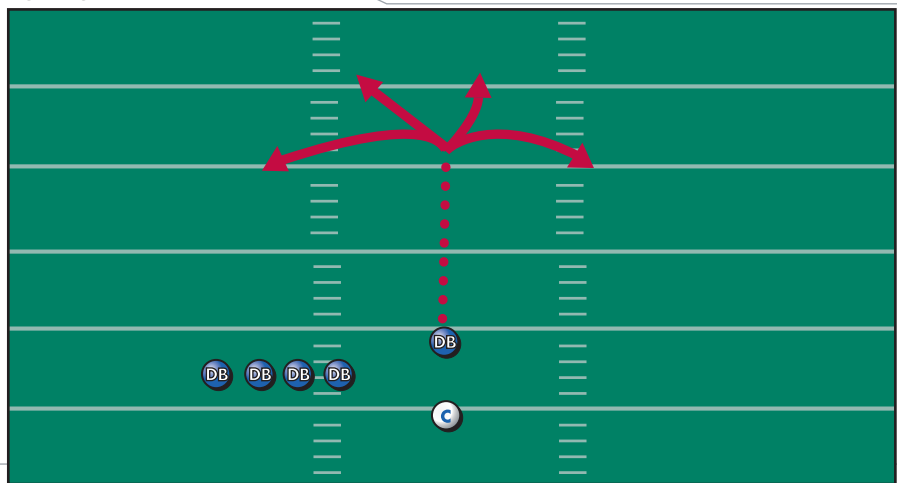
They bring their shoulders up gradually as they backpedal.

Their shoulders and head stay in front of their hips.

They move their arms in a smooth running motion.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.

ROLL-OVER DRILL



SET-UP—Players line up to the side of the coach, and one player at a time steps out and lines up in his stance facing the coach.

DRILL—On GO call from coach, player should backpedal for 10 yards in a straight line.

Coach will then point with his right or left

arm deep at an angle or straight to the side.

Player then rolls over to the right or left at the proper angle.

The player should sprint 10 yards in the new direction.

He then returns to the end of the line.

Next player moves over and lines up on defense in stance.

REPETITION—Have each DB roll over deep to the right and left sides 1 time.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick way for coach to determine that the DBs can leave their backpedal and move into a forward run by rolling over in the direction they want to go, keeping their momentum and avoiding slipping by keeping their feet under their hips.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

The players start properly by pushing off their front foot and stepping back with their back foot.

They are maintaining a proper backpedal.

They leave their backpedal by leaning their upper body in the direction they want to run.

They roll over the foot in the direction they want to run.

They keep their feet under their hips.

They drive up after their roll on any change to side.

In the beginning of the year, the drill can be run at half speed so there can be a maximum of individual coaching.



Selecting Your Defense

Each of you may have your favorite defensive fronts and coverages that you have selected to run your defenses. Following are defensive fronts and coverages that are diagrammed using different personnel groupings or sets (what players are in the game) as well as different fronts and alignments (the configuration of the defensive players on the field) plus various coverage that are compatible with the specific fronts.

Personnel Grouping or Sets

One trend that has evolved during the past few years is the use of multiple personnel groupings or sets on offense. With this type of offensive thinking, basic plays do not need to change, but the people who execute the play may change. This has necessitated the planned use of substitution defenses to match up with the offensive personnel on the field. This is usually done to:

- Create favorable match-ups between defensive and offensive personnel.
- Create confusion for the offense by presenting different, continually changing looks to the offense.
- Add better and bigger defenders for short yardage and goal-line defense and better coverage people on passing downs.

For ease of substitution and designing plays, personnel groupings or sets can be designated by number. When calling personnel sets by a two-digit number, the first digit designates the number of defensive linemen, and the second digit designates the number of linebackers in the game.

An example of the way different personnel could be designated:

# Designation	Personnel in Game	Type
3-2 Defense	3 DLs - 2 LBs - 6 DBs	Sub
3-3 Defense	3 DLs - 3 LBs - 5 DBs	Sub
3-4 Defense	3 DLs - 4 LBs - 4 DBs	Base
4-1 Defense	4 DLs - 1 LB - 6 DBs	Sub
4-2 Defense	4 DLs - 2 LBs - 5 DBs	Sub
4-3 Defense	4 DLs - 3 LBs - 4 DBs	Base
5-1 Defense	5 DLs - 1 LB - 5 DBs	Sub
5-2 Defense	5 DLs - 2 LBs - 4 DBs	Base
6-2 Defense	6 DLs - 2 LBs - 3 DBs	Base

[Type refers to substitution or base defenses you may decide to use.]

ALIGNMENT FORMATIONS—Once you have the proper personnel in the huddle, you need to tell them how to line up (what fronts to use), any stunts they are going to run with the defense, and the pass coverage called by the linebacker. This designation should tell how the defensive linemen, linebackers, and defensive backs are going to line up. An example would be:

4-3 Over - Ram - Cover 2 (Double Cloud)

This would tell everyone:

4-3 - that we have 4 DL, 3 LBs, and 4 DBs in the game.

Over - that the defensive tackle away from the tight end is going to line up in front of the center rather than in front of the guard, and that the Middle linebacker will line up off the line in front of the uncovered offensive guard. The two defensive ends will line up on the outside shoulder of the both offensive tackles. The Sam linebacker will line up in front of the tight end and the Will linebacker will line up off the line outside of the defensive end on his side.

Ram - that the two defensive tackles are going to protect the gap to their right.

Cover 2 (Double Cloud) - that both safeties will line up 12 yards off the line inside of the hashmarks, the two corners will line up directly in front of the two wide receivers either on the line or 5 yards off. If it is a pass, they are playing a two deep coverage with the safeties deep, with the five under zones covered by the two corners and the three linebackers and the four defensive linemen are rushing the quarterback. On a run, the corner to the side of the run must force and have responsibility for the pitch man on any option play.



SET-UP

- Have the defensive team start in a huddle.
- Tell the linebacker the Front, any Stunts, and Pass Coverage you want called in the huddle.
- Have the linebacker call the Front, Stunt, and Pass Coverage and then call Break to dissolve the huddle and send the team to the line of scrimmage.

Drill

- The defensive team should then quickly line up on the line of scrimmage.
- Defenses should be set up with the offense strong left and right.
- The offense should line up in the offensive formations you expect to see in the game.
- On the snap from the offensive center, all defensive players should execute their first movements.

Goal

Coaches should make sure that every player lines up properly, gets off on the snap, and does his job correctly on each defense before moving on to the next defense.

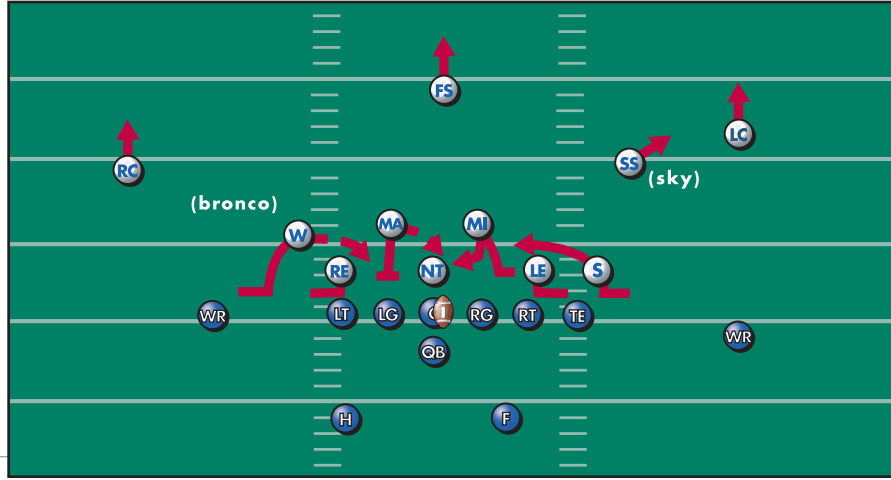
All required techniques and skills involved in executing these defenses are covered in the Skills areas of the Defensive and Offensive sections of this *Playbook*.

In your defensive scheme, the desire is to be able to run the same front and coverage from as many different personnel sets as possible, thus, giving the offense multiple looks with very little new learning required on the part of your defensive players.

Extra defensive backs substituting into the game should have the same responsibilities on each defense called as the players they are replacing.

TEAM DEFENSE

3-4 BASE



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] Line up shaded outside of the offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base C gap.

NT–[nose tackle] Line up on offensive center.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base A gap away from TE.

LE–[left defensive end] Line up shaded outside of the offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base C gap.

W–[WILL backer] Line up on line or 1 or 2 yards off line depending on down and yardage situation.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive called in huddle.

Base D gap on run to your side.

Check B gap and pursue on run away.

S–[SAM backer] Line up on shaded outside of tight end.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive called in huddle.

Base D gap on run to your side.

Check B gap and pursue on run away.

MA–[MAC backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive guard.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive called in huddle.

Base B gap on run to your side.

Check opposite A gap and pursue on run away.

MI–[MIKE backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive guard.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive called in huddle.

Base B gap on run to your side.

Check A gap and pursue on run away.

RC–[Right corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line depending on down and yardage situation and defense called on outside shoulder of wide receiver on their side.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

FS–[Free safety] Line up 10 to 12 yards off the line depending on down and yardage situation.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive called in huddle.

SS–[Strong safety] Line up 6 to 10 yards off the line depending on down and yardage situation and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive called in huddle.

LC–[Left corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line depending on down and yardage situation and defense called on outside shoulder of wide receiver on their side.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

COACHING TIP–Make certain that:

All players are in their proper position.

The linebackers and defensive backs are in the correct depth off the line.

In a 3-3 substitution defense, the additional defensive back (Sam Safety) will take the place of the S (Sam).

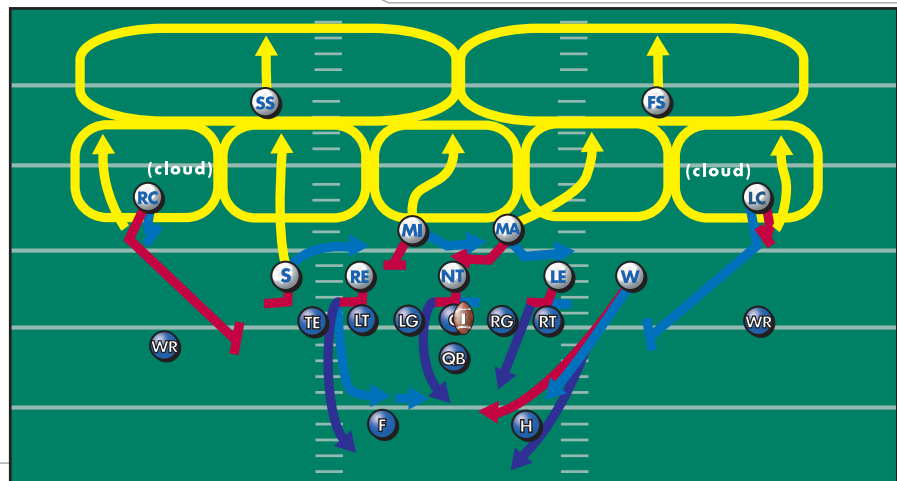
In a 3-2 defense, in addition to the Sam Safety, an additional defensive back (Will Safety) will be added and take the place of the W (Will).



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

3-4 WILL COVER 2 DOUBLE CLOUD



ASSIGNMENTS

S–[SAM backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RE–[Right defensive end–opposite W backer].

On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

NT–[Nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap to your right.

On pass, and rush QB through A gap to your right.

LE–[Left defensive end–on side of W backer].

On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier down the line on pass, rush through B gap.

W–[WILL backer] On run to your side, blitz through C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

MI–[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check opposite A gap, and pursue ball.

On pass, drop into Center zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

MA–[MAC backer] On run to your side, fill A gap.

On run away, check A gap and pursue on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RC–[Right corner] Only come up if TE blocks.

Think pass first.

On run to your side, if TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, force WR inside and drop in Out zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

FS–[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep half of the field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

SS–[Strong safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep half of the field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

LC–[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks. Think pass first.

On run to your side, if WR blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, force WR inside and drop into Out zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That both the Free and Strong Safety stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.

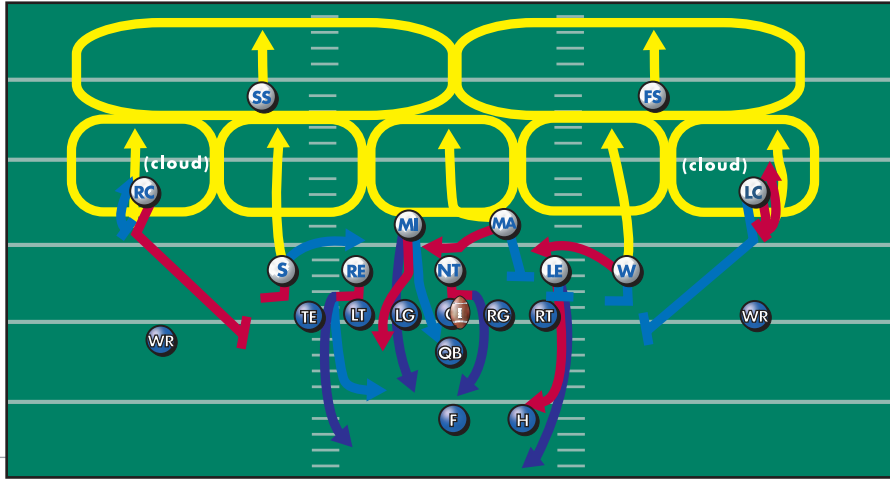
That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 3-3 substitution defense, the additional back (Sam Safety) will take the place of the S (Sam) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the S backer in a 3-4 Will defense.

In a 3-2 defense in addition to the Sam Safety, an additional defensive back (Will Safety) will be added and take the place of the W (Will) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 3-4 Will defense.

TEAM DEFENSE

3-4 MIKE COVER 2 DOUBLE CLOUD



ASSIGNMENTS

- S**–[SAM backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.
On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.
On pass, get hit on TE, drop into Hook zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is throw.
- RE**–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.
On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).
On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.
- NT**–[Nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap on side away from Mike backer.
On pass, rush QB through A gap away from M backer.
- LE**–[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.
On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).
On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.
- W**–[WILL backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.
On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.
On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side,

- look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- MI**–[MIKE backer] On run to your side, blitz through B gap.
On run away, blitz through A gap, and pursue ball on offensive side of line.
On pass, rush passer through A or B gap on your side.
- MA**–[MAC backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.
On run away, check opposite A gap and pursue on your side of line.
On pass, drop into center zone on field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- RC**–[Right corner] Only come up if TE blocks.
Think pass first.
On run to your side, if TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.
On run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.
On pass, force WR inside and drop into Out zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- FS**–[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

- On pass, drop into deep half of the field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- SS**–[Strong safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make the tackle.
On pass, drop into deep half of the field, look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.
- LC**–[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks. Think pass first.
On run to your side, if WR blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.
On run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.
On pass, force WR inside and drop into Out zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

- That both the Free and Strong Safety stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them, and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.
- That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.
- That the SS and FS make proper force calls to their side.

In a 3-3 substitution defense, the additional back (Sam Safety) will take the place of the S (Sam) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the S backer in a 3-4 Mike defense.

In a 3-2 defense, in addition to the Sam Safety, an additional defensive back (Will Safety) will be added and take the place of the W (Will) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 3-4 Mike defense.

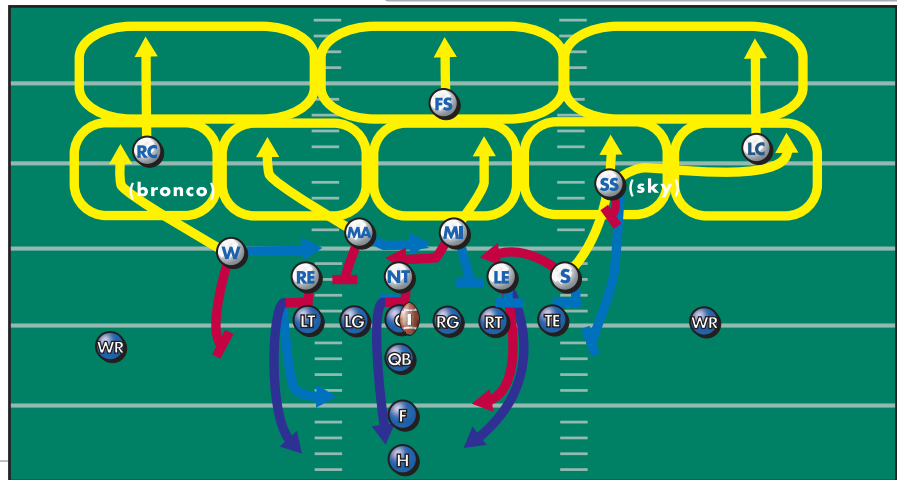
You can run 3-4 Mac Cover 2 Double Cloud, which would send the Mac on the blitz, the Mike and the Mac would swap responsibilities, and the nose would go to A gap away from the Mac blitz. All other players would stay the same.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

3-4 COVER 3 SKY



ASSIGNMENTS

W–[WILL backer] On run to your side, fill D gap, contain play, turn ball carrier back to the inside, and take on lead blocker with your inside arm and shoulder.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Out zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RE–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

NT–[Nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap on side of MAC backer.

On pass, rush QB through either A gap.

LE–[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

S–[SAM backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Slot zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

MA–[MAC backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check opposite A gap and pursue on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side of the field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

MI–[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check A gap, and pursue ball on defensive side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on side of TE, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RC–[Right corner] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside third of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

FS–[Free safety] Think pass first.

On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep center, stay deep

as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to ball.

SS–[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks.

Think pass first.

On run to your side, if TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, drop into Out zone on your side of field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

LC–[Left corner] Think pass first.

On run to your side come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside third of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That the Free Safety and both Corners stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them, and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.

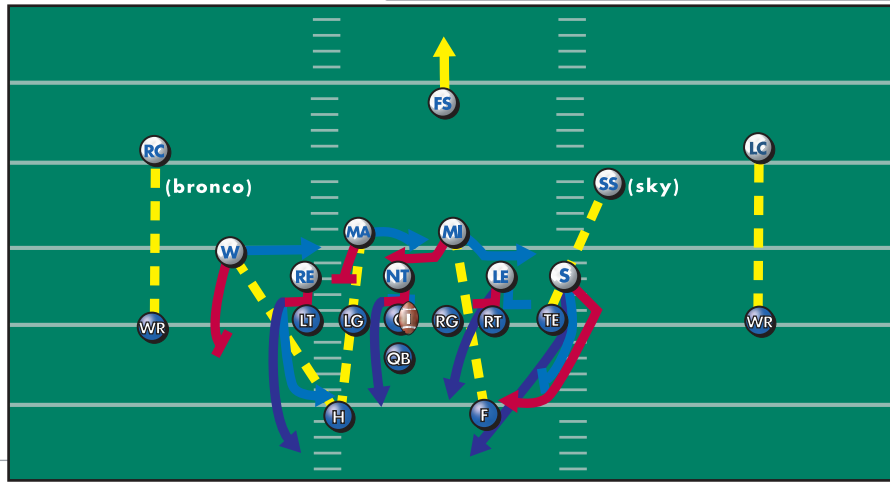
That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 3-3 substitution defense, the additional back (Sam Safety) will take the place of the S (Sam) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the S backer in a 3-4 defense.

In a 3-2 defense, in addition to the Sam Safety, an additional defensive back (Will Safety) will be added and take the place of the W (Will) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 3-4 defense.

TEAM DEFENSE

3-4 SAM COVER 1 SKY



ASSIGNMENTS

W–[WILL backer] On run to your side, fill D gap, contain play, turn ball carrier back to the inside, and take on lead blocker with your inside arm and shoulder.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, man-for-man coverage on HB on outside and deep routes.

RE–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

NT–[Nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap on side of MAC backer.

On pass, rush QB through either A gap.

LE–[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line. On pass, rush through B gap.

S–[SAM backer] On run to your side, blitz through D gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, blitz through D gap keep and QB in pocket.

MA–[MAC backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check opposite A gap and pursue on your side of line.

On pass, check draw, man-for-man on HB on any inside routes.

MI–[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill B gap unless FB releases to the outside.

On run away, check A gap and pursue ball on defensive side of line unless FB releases to the outside.

On pass, man-for-man on FB all over field.

RC–[Right cornerback] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when WR blocks and ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on WR to your side all over the field.

FS–[Free safety] Think pass first.

On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up.

On pass, drop into deep center of the field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come into post area, look at QB, and go to ball on run to your side.

SS–[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks.

Think pass first.

If TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on tight end all over the field.

LC–[Left cornerback] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when WR blocks and ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on WR to your side all over the field.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That all coverage men play pass first.

That the Free Safety stays deep in the center of the field keying the QB, keeping all receivers in front of him, and playing pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 3-3 substitution defense, the additional back (Sam Safety) will take the place of the S (Sam) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the S backer in a 3-4 defense.

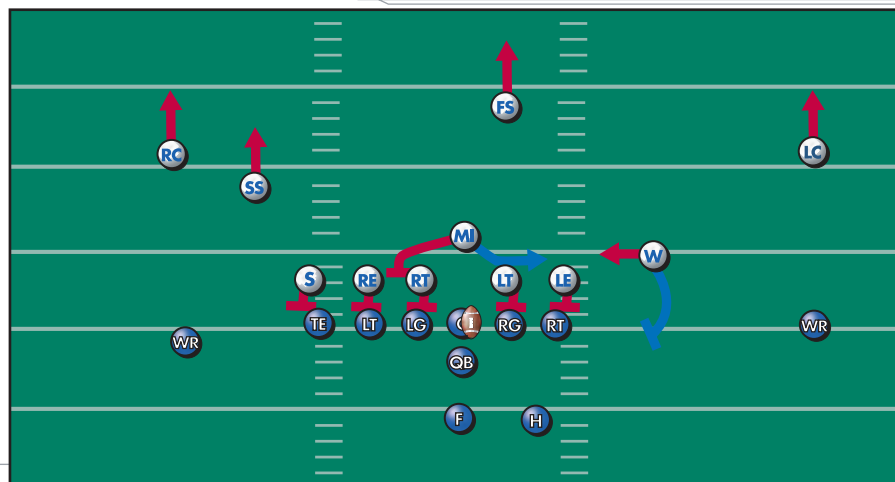
In a 3-2 defense, in addition to the Sam Safety, an additional defensive back (Will Safety) will be added and take the place of the W (Will) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 3-4 defense.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

4-3 BASE



ASSIGNMENTS

RE—[Right defensive end] Line up shaded outside of the offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base C gap.

RT—[Right defensive tackle] Line up on offensive center shaded outside or inside of guard based on defense called.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base A gap.

LT—[Left defensive tackle] Line up on offensive center shaded outside or inside of guard based on defense called.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base B gap.

LE—[Left defensive end] Line up shaded to outside of offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base C gap.

W—[WILL backer] Line up on line or 1 or 2 yards off line depending on down and yardage situation.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

Base D gap on run to your side.

Check A gap on run away and pursue.

S—[SAM backer] Line up shaded outside of tight end.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

Base D gap on run to you.

Pursue behind line on run away.

M—[MIKE backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive center.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

Base B gap on run to TE.

Check opposite A gap and pursue on run away.

RC—[Right corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line, depending on down and yardage situation and defense called, on outside shoulder of wide receiver on their side.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

FS—[Free safety] Line up 10 to 12 yards off the line depending on down and yardage situation.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

SS—[Strong safety] Line up 6 to 10 yards off the line depending on down and yardage situation and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

LC—[Left corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line on, depending on down and yardage situation and defense called on outside shoulder of wide receiver on their side.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense call in huddle.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

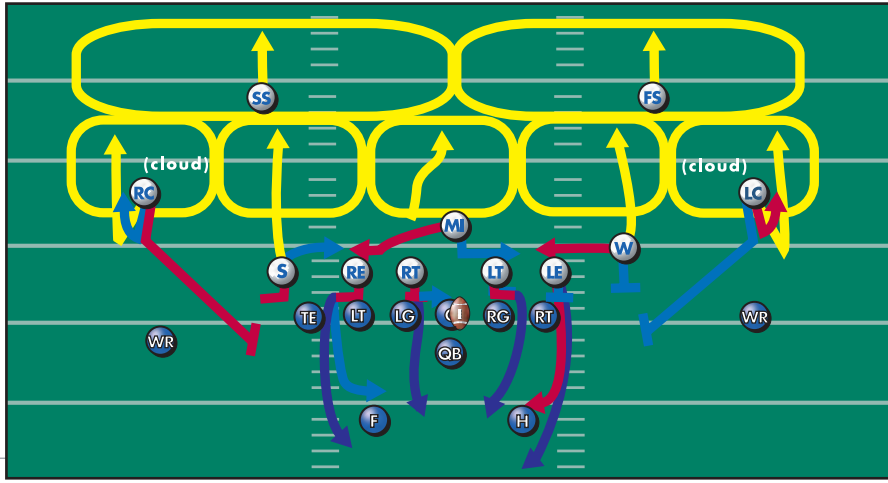
That all players are in their proper position.
That the linebackers and defensive backs are the correct depth off the line.

In a 4-2 substitution defense, the additional defensive back can take the place of either the S (Sam) or the W (Will) depending on the personnel the offense has in the game and the defense being employed.

In a 4-1 defense, two defensive backs are brought into the game and take the place of both the S (Sam) and W (Will) backers.

TEAM DEFENSE

4-3 COVER 2 DOUBLE CLOUD



ASSIGNMENTS

- S**–[SAM backer]–On run to your side, fill D gap.
On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.
On pass, get hit on TE, drop into Hook zone on your side.
Look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- RE**–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.
On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).
On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.
- RT**–[Right defensive tackle] On run to either side, take A gap on your side.
On pass, rush QB through A or B gap.
- LT**–[Left defensive tackle] On run to either side, take B gap on your side.
On pass, rush QB through A or B gap.
- LE**–[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.
On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).
On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.
- W**–[WILL backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.
On run away, pursue ball carrier on your

- side of line.
On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- MI**–[MIKE backer] On run to tight end side, fill B gap.
On run away, check A gap to side of run, and pursue ball on your side of line.
On pass, turn to side of tight end, drop into Center zone on field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- RC**–[Right corner] Only come up if TE blocks.
Think pass first.
On run to your side, if TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, turn ball carrier back to inside.
On run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.
On pass, force WR inside and drop in Out zone, look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.
- FS**–[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.
On pass, drop deep, stay deep as deepest receiver, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

- SS**–[Strong safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make the tackle.
On pass, drop deep, stay deep as deepest receiver, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.
- LC**–[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks.
Think pass first.
On run to your side, if WR blocks, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.
On run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.
On pass, force WR inside and drop into out zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

- That both the Free and Strong Safety stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.
- That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.
- That the SS and FS make proper force calls to their side.

In a 4-2 substitution defense, the additional back (Sam Safety) will take the place of the S (Sam) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the S backer in a 4-3 defense.

In a 4-1 defense, in addition to the Sam Safety, an additional defensive back will be added and take the place of the W (Will) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 3-4 Mike defense.

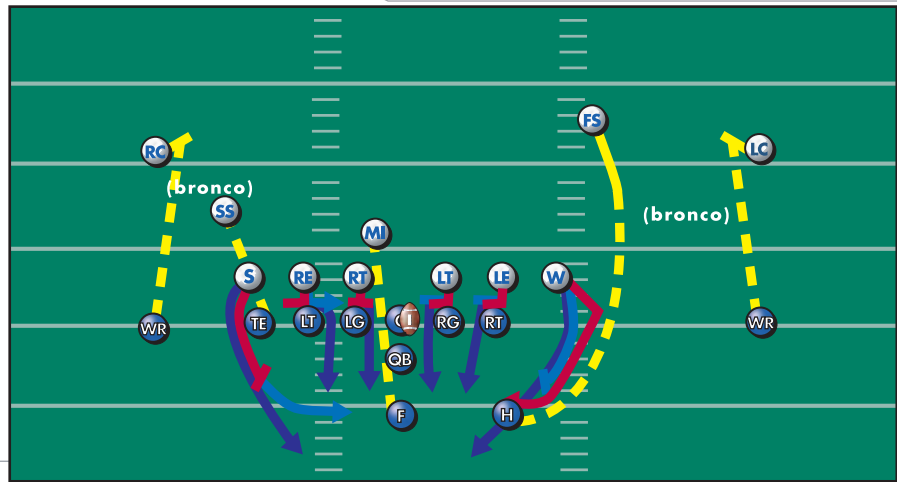
You can run 4-3 Will Cover 2 Drop Double Cloud. This is a **ZONE BLITZ**, which would send the Will on the blitz on the outside of the RT, the LDT would step into the RT on pass and then drop into the Hook zone normally assigned to the Will backer. These two players would swap responsibilities on run and pass.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

4-3 SAW COVER ZERO



ASSIGNMENTS

S—[SAM backer] On run to your side, blitz through D gap, take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, blitz through D gap, and keep and QB in pocket.

RE—[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through B gap.

RT—[Right defensive tackle] On run to your side, fill A gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through A gap.

LT—[Left defensive tackle] On run to your side, fill A gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through A gap.

LE—[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through B gap.

W—[WILL backer] On run to your side, blitz through C gap, take on lead blocker with right

shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, blitz through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

M—[MIKE backer] On run to either side and pass, man-for-man on FB all over field. Go where he goes.

If FB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of FB. Be alert for screen pass.

RC—[Right corner] Think pass first. Use inside technique on run to your side, come up when WR blocks and ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on WR to your side all over the field.

SS—[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks. Think pass first.

If TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on tight end all over the field.

FS—[Free safety] Move over to outside shoulder of HB prior to snap. Man-for-man coverage on HB all over the field.

On run to either side, stay with coverage first.

If HB blocks on W, come up into wide D Gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, turn ball carrier back to inside.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on HB all over the field.

If HB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of HB.

Be alert for screen pass.

LC—[Left corner] Think pass first. Use inside technique on run to your side.

Come up when WR blocks and ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man on WR to your side all over the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

That all defensive linemen, the Sam and Will linebackers get off on the snap and penetrate into offensive backfield.

That all defensive players who have man-for-man coverage play pass first and run second.

That the two corners and the Mike in coverage use inside technique in covering their men.

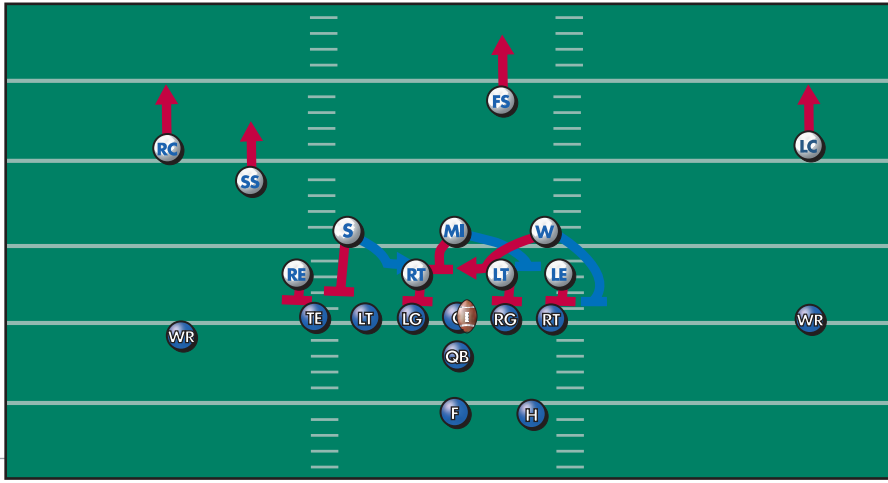
That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 4-2 substitution defense, the additional defensive back can take the place of either the S (Sam) or the W (Will)—depending on the personnel the offense has in the game the defense being employed and the blitz.

In a 4-1 defense, two defensive backs are brought into the game and take the place of both the S (Sam) and W (Will) backers and employ the blitz.

TEAM DEFENSE

4-3 WIDE BASE



ASSIGNMENTS

- RE**–[Right defensive end] Line up shaded outside of the tight end.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base D gap.
- RT**–[Right defensive tackle] Line up on offensive center shaded to outside or inside of guard, depending on defense called.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base B gap.
- LT**–[Left defensive tackle] Line up on offensive center shaded to outside or inside of guard, depending on defense called.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base A gap.
- LE**–[Left defensive end] Line up outside of offensive tackle.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap deter-

- mined by defense called in huddle.
Base C gap.
- S**–[SAM backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive tackle, depending on down and yardage situation.
Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
Base C gap on run to tight end.
Check A and pursue on run away.
- M**–[MIKE backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive center.
Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
Base A gap on run to tight end.
Opposite B gap on run away.
- W**–[WILL backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and On offensive tackle, depending on down and yardage situation.
Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
Base D gap to your side.

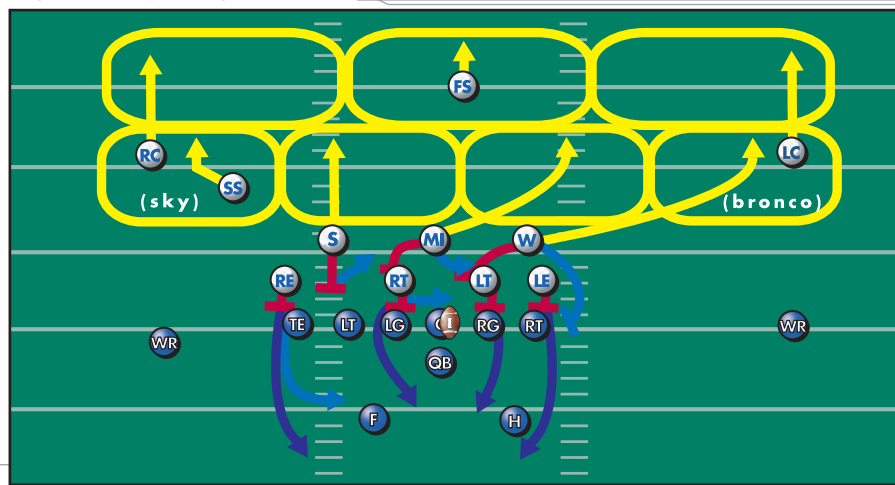
- Check opposite A gap and pursue on run away.
 - RC**–[Right corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line, on outside shoulder of wide receiver depending on down and yardage situation and defense called.
 - Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
 - FS**–[Free safety] Line up 10 to 12 yards off the line, depending on down and yardage situation.
 - Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
 - SS**–[Strong safety] Line up 6 to 10 yards off the line, depending on down and yardage situation and defense called.
 - Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
 - LC**–[Left corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line on outside shoulder of wide receiver, depending on down and yardage situation and defense called.
 - Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.
- COACHING TIP**–Make certain:
That all players are in their proper position.
That the linebackers and defensive backs are in the correct depth off the line.
- In a 4-2 substitution defense, the additional defensive back can take the place of either the S (Sam) or the W (Will) depending on the personnel the offense has in the game and the defense being employed.
- In a 4-1 defense, two defensive backs are brought into the game and take the place of both the S (Sam) and W (Will) linebackers.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

4-3 WIDE COVER 3 SKY



ASSIGNMENTS

RE—[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill D gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

RT—[Right defensive tackle] On run to either side, take A gap to your side.

On pass, rush QB through A or B gap.

LT—[Left defensive tackle] On run to either side, take B gap to your side.

On pass, rush QB through B gap.

LE—[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap keep and QB in pocket.

S—[SAM backer] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side. Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

M—[MIKE backer] On run to tight end side, fill B gap.

On run away from tight end, check A gap to that side.

Pursue ball on defensive side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on side opposite SS.

Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

W—[WILL backer] On run to your side, fill D gap, contain play.

Turn ball carrier back to the inside, and take on lead blocker with your inside arm and shoulder.

On run away, check A gap to your side, and pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Out zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RC—[Right corner] think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside 1/3 of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

SS—[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks.

Think pass first.

On run to your side, if TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, drop into out zone on your side of field, look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

FS—[Free safety] Think pass first.

On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep third center of the field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to ball.

LC—[Left corner] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside third of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

That both the Free Safety and both Corners stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.

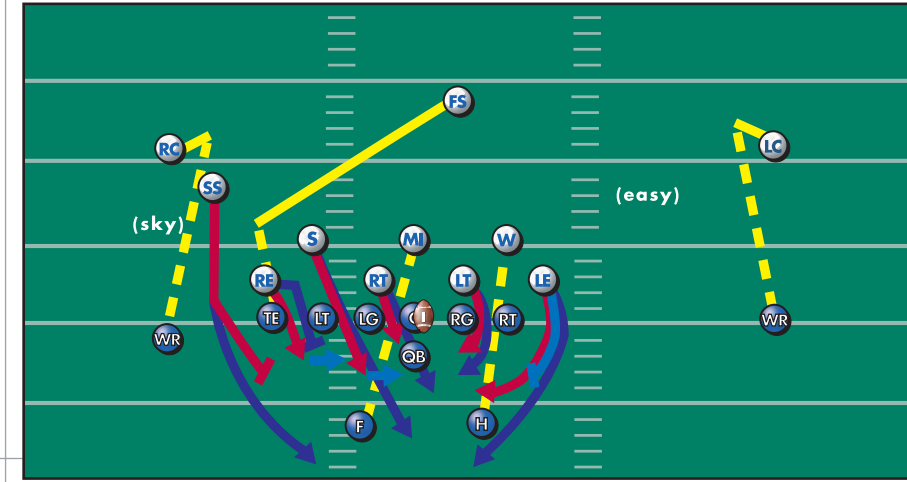
That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 4-2 substitution defense, the additional defensive back can take the place of either the S (Sam) or the W (Will) depending on the personnel the offense has in the game and the defense being employed.

In a 4-1 defense, two defensive backs are brought into the game and take the place of both the S (Sam) and W (Will) linebackers.

TEAM DEFENSE

4-3 WIDE SAM/HOUND COVER ZERO



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, penetrate across line in C gap.

On run away, cross the line and flatten down the line pursuing the ball.

On pass, rush tight through C gap into LT, and do not widen into path of SS.

RT–[Right defensive tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through A gap to your side.

On pass, rush QB through A gap.

LT–[Left defensive tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through B gap to your side.

On pass, rush QB through B gap.

LE–[left defensive end] [EASY–end must contain run] On run to your side, penetrate through C gap to your side, take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

S–[SAM backer] On run to either side, blitz through B gap on your side.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on offen-

sive side of line.

On pass, blitz through B gap, and pressure QB.

M–[MIKE backer] On run to either side and pass, man-for-man coverage on FB all over field. Go where he goes.

If FB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of FB and be alert for screen pass.

W–[WILL backer] On run to either side and pass, man-for-man on HB all over field. Go where he goes.

If HB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of FB. Be alert for screen pass.

RC–[Right corner] Think pass first man-for-man on wide receiver on your side all over he field. Move to inside technique.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

SS–[Strong safety] Walk up to line prior to the snap, and blitz outside of tight end through D gap.

On run to your side, come up into wide D

Gap, take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through D gap and keep QB in pocket.

FS–[Free safety] Move to outside shoulder of tight end prior to snap. Man-for-man coverage on tight end all over the field.

On run to either side, stay in coverage, only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, and then come up and make tackle.

LC–[Left corner] Think pass first. Man-for-man coverage on wide receiver on your side all over he field. Move to inside technique.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That all defensive linemen, the Sam backer, and Strong Safety get off on the snap and penetrate into offensive backfield.

That all defensive players who have man-for-man coverage play pass first and run second.

That the two corners and two backers in coverage use inside technique in covering their men.

That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 4-2 substitution defense, the additional defensive back can take the place of either the S (Sam) or the W (Will) depending on the personnel the offense has in the game and the defense being employed.

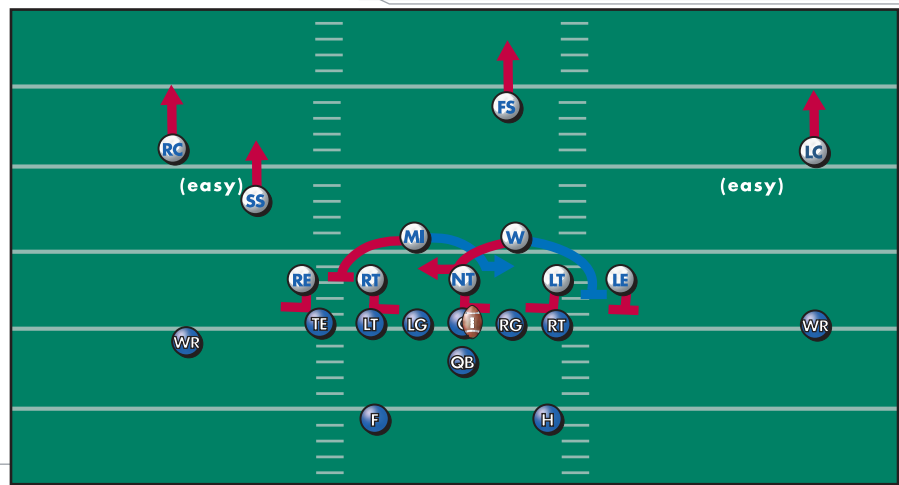
In a 4-1 defense, two defensive backs are brought into the game and take the place of both the S (Sam) and W (Will) linebackers.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

5-2 BASE



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] Line up on outside shoulder of tight end.

Run responsibility and pass rush or drop determined by defense called in huddle.

EASY force contain run. Take on lead blocker with inside shoulder turn ball carrier back to inside.

Base D gap.

RT–[Right defensive tackle] Line up shaded to outside shade of offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base B gap.

NT–[Nose tackle] Line up on offensive center.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base A gap opposite TE.

LT–[Left defensive tackle] Line up shaded to outside of offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.

Base B gap.

LE–[Left defensive end] Line up wide outside of offensive tackle.

Run responsibility and pass rush or drop determined by defense called in huddle.

EASY force contain run.

Take on lead blocker with inside shoulder turn ball carrier back to inside.

Base D gap.

MI–[MIKE backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive guard.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

Base C gap run to TE.

Check A gap and pursue on runs away.

W–[WILL backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line and on offensive guard.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

Base C gap run to your side.

Check opposite A gap and pursue on runs away.

RC–[Right corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line on outside shoulder of wide receiver, depending on down yardage situation and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

FS–[Free safety] Line up 10 to 12 yards off the line, depending on down and yardage situation.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

SS–[Strong safety] Line up 6 to 10 yards off the line, depending on down and yardage situation and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

Sky force contain run.

Come up outside of RDE take on lead blocker with inside shoulder, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

LC–[Left corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line on outside shoulder of wide receiver, depending on down, yardage situation, and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

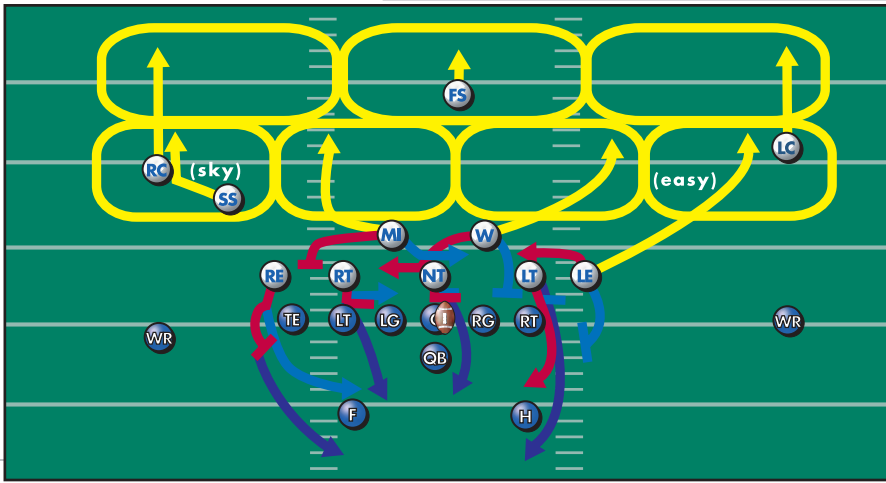
That all players are in their proper position.

That the linebackers and defensive backs are in the correct depth off the line.

In a 5-1 substitution defense the additional defensive back (Will Safety) will take the place of the W (Will backer).

TEAM DEFENSE

5-2 COVER 3 SKY



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill D gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through D gap and keep QB in pocket.

RT–[Right defensive tackle] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through B gap.

NT–[Nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap on side of Will backer.

On pass, rush QB through A gap on side of Will backer.

LT–[Left defensive tackle] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

LE–[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill D gap. Turn ball carrier back to the inside. Take on lead blocker with your inside arm and shoulder.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Out zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

M–[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, check A gap, and pursue ball on defensive side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on side of TE, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

W–[Will backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check opposite A gap and pursue on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side of the field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RC–[Right cornerback] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside third of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

FS–[Free safety] Think pass first.

On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop deep, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to ball.

SS–[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks. Think pass first.

On run to your side, if TE blocks, come up into wide D Gap, and take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm. Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, drop into Out zone on your side of field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

LC–[Left cornerback] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside third of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That the Free Safety and both Corners stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.

That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

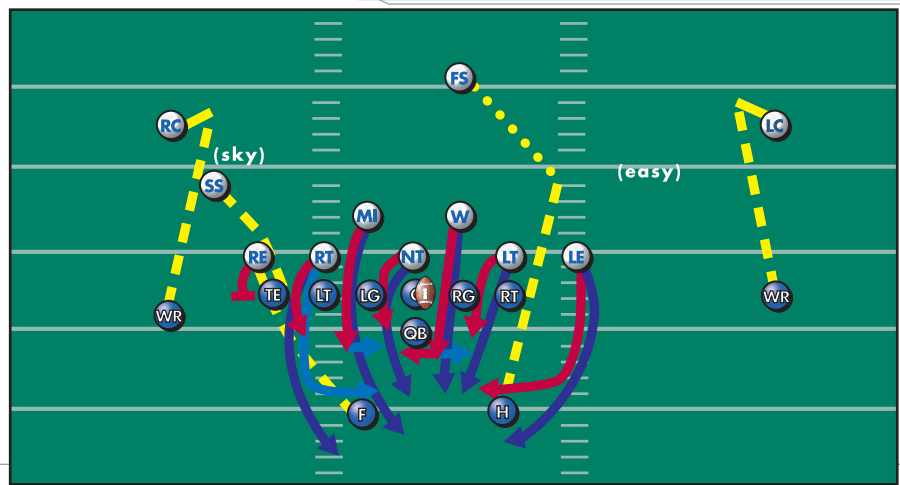
In a 5-1 substitution defense, the additional defensive back (Will Safety) will take the place of the W (Will backer] and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 5-2 defense.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

5-2 MILLIE COVER ZERO



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] On run to either side and pass, man-for-man on FB all over field. Go where he goes.

On run to your side, fill D gap.

On run away, react to FB's move.

On pass, if FB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of FB. Be alert for screen pass.

RT–[Right defensive tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through C gap to your side.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

NT–[Nose tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through A gap on side of Mike backer.

On pass, rush QB through A gap on side of Mike backer.

LT–[Left defensive tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through B gap to your side.

On pass, rush QB through B gap.

LE–[Left defensive end] [EASY–end must contain run] On run to your side, penetrate through C gap to your side, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and

turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse)

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

M–[MIKE backer] On run to either side, blitz through B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on offensive side of line.

On pass, blitz through B gap, and pressure QB.

W–[WILL backer] On run to either side, blitz through A gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on offensive side of line.

On pass, blitz through A gap, and pressure QB.

RC–[Right corner] Think pass first. Man-for-man coverage on wide receiver on your side all over the field. Move to inside technique.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

SS–[Strong safety] Move to outside shoulder of tight end prior to snap. Man-for-man coverage on tight end all over the field.

On run to your side, stay in coverage. If

tight end blocks, come up take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside. If tight end releases, only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On run away, only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, man-for-man coverage on TE all over the field.

FS–[Free safety] On pass, move to side of HB prior to snap. Man-for-man coverage on HB all over field. Go where he goes.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, if HB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of HB. Be alert for screen pass.

LC–[Left corner] Think pass first. Man-for-man coverage on wide receiver on your side all over the field.

Move to inside technique.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That all defensive linemen and the Mike and Will backers get off on the snap and penetrate into offensive backfield.

That all defensive players who have man-for-man coverage play pass first and run second.

That the two Corners, the Free Safety, and the RE in coverage use inside technique in covering their men.

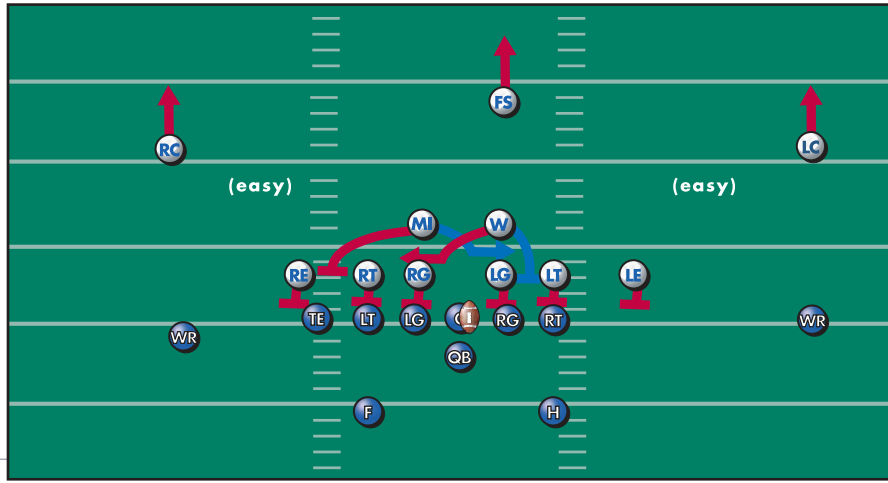
That SS and FS give proper force calls to their side.

In a 5-1 substitution defense the additional defensive back (Will Safety) will take the place of the W (Will backer) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 5-2 defense.

DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

6-2 BASE



ASSIGNMENTS

- RE**–[Right defensive end] Line up on outside shoulder of tight end.
Run responsibility and pass rush or drop determined by defense called in huddle.
EASY force contain run.
Take on lead blocker with inside shoulder and turn ball carrier back to inside.
Base D gap.
- RT**–[Right defensive tackle] Line up shaded to outside of offensive tackle.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base C gap.
- RG**–[Right defensive guard] Line up on offensive guard.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base B gap.

- LG**– [Left defensive guard] Line up on offensive guard.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base A gap.
- LT**–[Left defensive tackle] Line up shaded to outside of offensive tackle.
Run responsibility and pass rush gap determined by defense called in huddle.
Base C gap.
- LE**–[Left defensive end] Line up wide outside of offensive tackle.
Run responsibility and pass rush or drop determined by defense called in huddle.
EASY force contain run.
Take on lead blocker with inside shoulder turn ball carrier back to inside.
Base D gap.

MI–[MIKE backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line in B gap.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

Base wide C gap on runs to TE.

Check A gap and pursue on runs away.

W–[WILL backer] Line up 3 or 4 yards off the line in B gap.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

Base B gap on runs to your side.

Check opposite A gap and pursue on runs away.

RC–[Right corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line on outside shoulder of wide receiver, depending on down, yardage situation, and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

FS–[Free safety] Line up 10 to 12 yards off the line depending on down and yardage.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defensive call in huddle.

LC–[Left corner] Line up 5 to 8 yards off the line on outside shoulder of wide receiver, depending on down, yardage situation, and defense called.

Run and pass responsibility determined by defense called in huddle.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That all players are in their proper position.

That the linebackers and defensive backs are in the correct depth off the line.

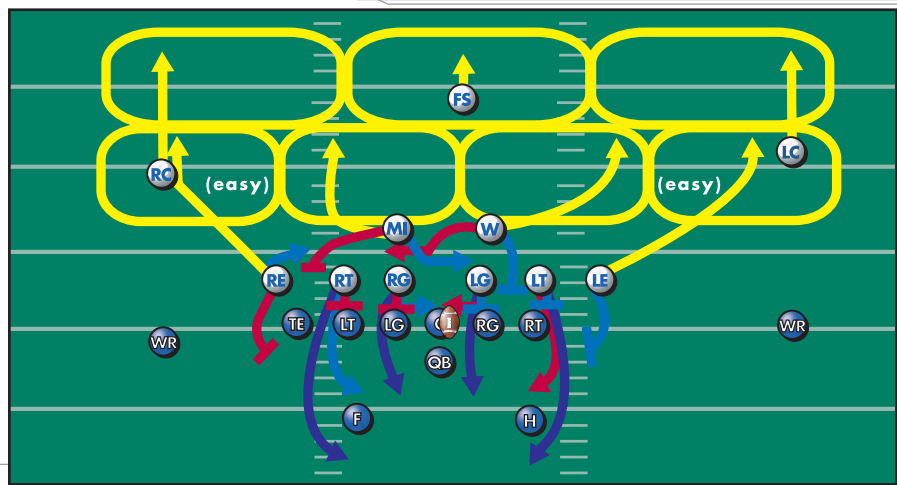
In a 6-1 substitution defense, the additional defensive back (Will Safety) will take the place of the W (Will backer).



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK

TEAM DEFENSE

6-2 COVER 3 EASY



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill D gap. Turn ball carrier back to the inside and take on lead blocker with your inside arm and shoulder.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into out zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RT–[Right defensive tackle] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

RG–[Right defensive guard] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through B gap.

LG–[Left defensive guard] On run to your side, fill A gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, rush through A gap.

LT–[Left defensive tackle] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep

as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

LE–[Left defensive end] On run to your side, fill D gap.

Turn ball carrier back to the inside and take on lead blocker with your inside arm and shoulder.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into out zone on your side, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

MI–[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, check A gap, and pursue ball on defensive side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on side of TE, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

W–[Will backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check opposite A gap and pursue on your side of line.

On pass, drop into Hook zone on your side of the field, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

RC–[Right corner] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside 1/3 of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

FS–[Free safety] Think pass first.

On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep center third of the field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to ball.

LC–[Left corner] Think pass first.

On run to your side, come up when ball crosses line, turn ball carrier back to inside, and make tackle.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep outside third of field, stay deep as the deepest receiver who is in or can come in your zone, look at QB, and go to where ball is thrown.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That the Free Safety and both Corners stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

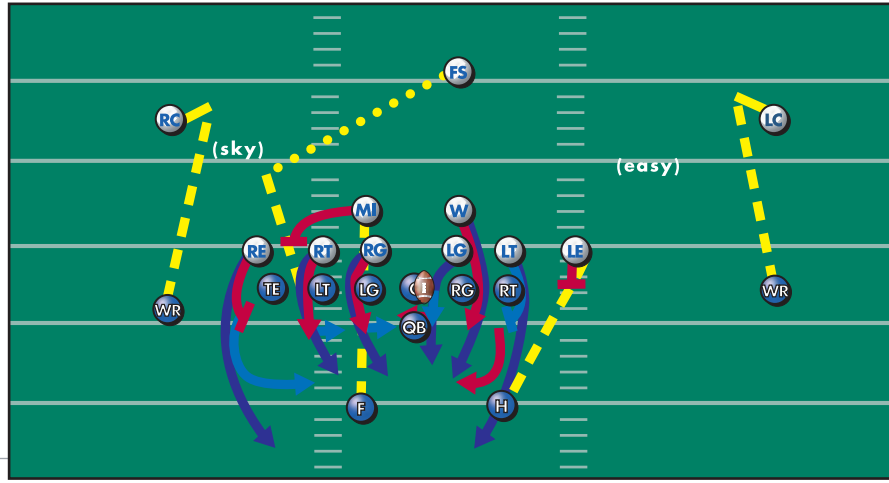
That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.

That FS gives proper force calls to their side.

In a 6-1 substitution defense the additional defensive back (Will Safety) will take the place of the W (Will backer) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 6-2 defense.

TEAM DEFENSE

6-2 WILL COVER ZERO



ASSIGNMENTS

RE–[Right defensive end] [EASY–end must contain run] On run to your side, penetrate through D gap to your side, take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through D gap and keep QB in pocket.

RT–[Right defensive tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through C gap to your side.

On run away, pursue down the line.

On pass, rush through C gap.

RG–[Right defensive guard] On run to either side, penetrate through B gap.

On pass, rush QB through B gap.

LG–[Left defensive guard] On run to either side, penetrate through A gap.

On pass, rush QB through A gap.

LT–[Left defensive tackle] On run to either side, penetrate through C gap to your side.

On pass, rush QB through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

LE–[Left defensive end] On run to either side and pass, man-for-man on HB all over field.

On run to your side, fill D gap, take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm, and turn ball carrier back to inside (EASY–contain run unless HB releases).

On run away, react to HB’s move.

On pass, if HB sets to pass block stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of FB. Be alert for screen.

M–[MIKE backer] On run to either side, man-for-man coverage on FB all over field.

On run to your side, fill wide C gap, unless FB releases.

On run away, react to FB’s move.

On pass, if FB sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of FB. Be alert for screen.

W–[WILL backer] On run to either side, blitz through B gap on your side.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on offensive side of line.

On pass, blitz through B gap and pressure QB.

RC–[Right corner] Think pass first.

Man-for-man coverage on wide receiver on your side all over the field. Move to inside technique.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

FS–[Free safety] On pass, move to side of TE prior to snap. Man-for-man coverage on TE all over field.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, if TE sets to pass block, stay 5 yards off line and 2 yards outside of HB. Be alert for screen pass.

LC–[Left corner] Think pass first. Man-for-man coverage on wide receiver on your side all over the field. Move to inside technique.

On run to either side, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line, then come up and make tackle.

COACHING TIP–Make certain:

That all defensive linemen and Will backer get off on the snap and penetrate into offensive backfield.

That all defensive players who have man-for-man coverage play pass first and run second.

That the two Corners, the Free Safety, Mike, and the LE in coverage use inside technique in covering their men.

That FS gives proper force calls to both sides.

In a 6-1 substitution defense the additional defensive back (Will Safety) will take the place of the W (Will backer) and have the same run and pass responsibilities as listed for the W backer in a 6-2 defense.

SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE *(YOUTH)*

**DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)**

Selecting Your Defense

Each of you may have your favorite Defensive Front and Coverage that you have selected to use. In this section of Defensive Plays, you will find a variety of fronts and coverages. I feel that using some form of defensive front (3-4 is my choice and is used in diagrams) where you put a defensive lineman directly in front of the center offers the following advantages for a youth coach:

- It is easy to get your players lined up properly
- The base defenses are easy to learn and remember
- It is a defense that puts immediate pressure on the center/quarterback exchange
- It is a front that can easily be expanded to incorporate:
 - a four-man rush by blitzing any one of the 4 linebackers
 - a slant charge by the lineman in to the right or left
 - a variety of run-gap responsibilities
- It also allows for the use of:
 - a wing-back reverse
 - Man-to-man pass coverage
 - 2-deep zone coverage
 - 3-deep zone coverage
 - Linebackers to cover easily any spread alignments by the receivers in a more advanced form of offensive attack
- It is a defense that creates doubt in the mind of the offense as to who they should block
- The following defenses and gap run responsibilities are drawn up against a Right Wing formation, but you can easily flop the defense over to run against a Left Wing formation (3-4 MIKE cover 1; 3-4 MAC cover 2; 3-4 SAM cover 3; 3-4 WILL cover 2; 3-4 SAW cover 0; 3-4 SAW pinch cover 0).

Set-Up

- Have the defensive team start in a huddle
- Tell the middle linebacker the defense you want called in the huddle
- Have the middle linebacker call the defense and then break the huddle

Drill

- The defensive team should quickly line up in the defense called in the huddle
- Offensive formations can be set up to the left or right
- The offense should line up in the formation you expect to see in the game
- On snap count, the defensive players should correctly react to movement of the offensive players to the play called in the offensive huddle (keep offensive play simple at start)
- In the beginning, teach defenses by walking through assignments without movement by the offensive players
- Next, run drill at half speed and then full speed with offensive movement
- Remind defensive players to go on snap of ball, not on the sound of the quarterback (this can be a problem for players going both ways)

All required techniques and skills involved in executing these defenses are covered in the Skills areas of the Defensive section of the *Playbook*.

Goal

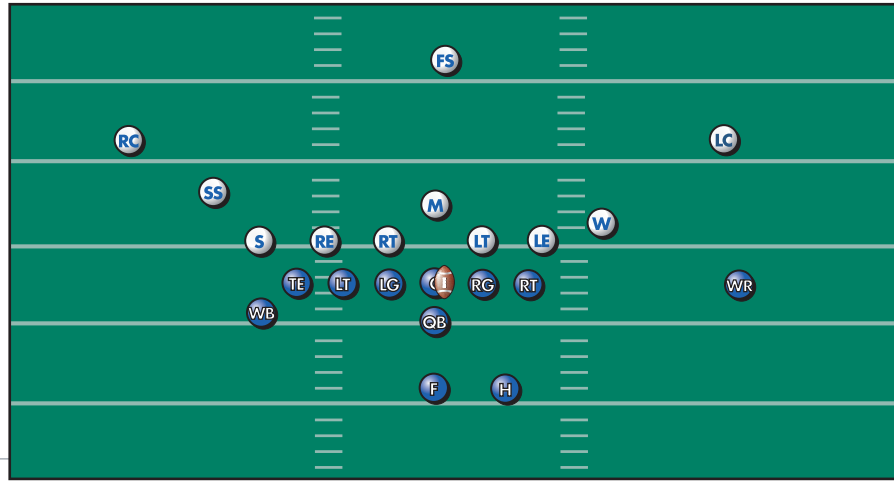
- Coaches should make sure that every player does his job correctly on each defense before moving on to the next defense.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

Team Defense

BASE 4-3 FRONT



- Strong against inside run—limited pursuit from linebackers.
- Coverage is limited if you blitz a linebacker.

BASE 4-3 WIDE FRONT



- Strong against run to outside with good movement by all three linebackers.
- Coverage is limited if you blitz a linebacker.

BASE 5-2 FRONT



- Strong against run—especially wide runs—fair pursuit by two linebackers.
- Coverage is limited in this defense.

DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

Team Defense

BASE 5-3 FRONT



- Strong against run—especially wide runs—good pursuit by three linebackers.
- Coverage is very limited in this defense.

BASE 6-2 FRONT



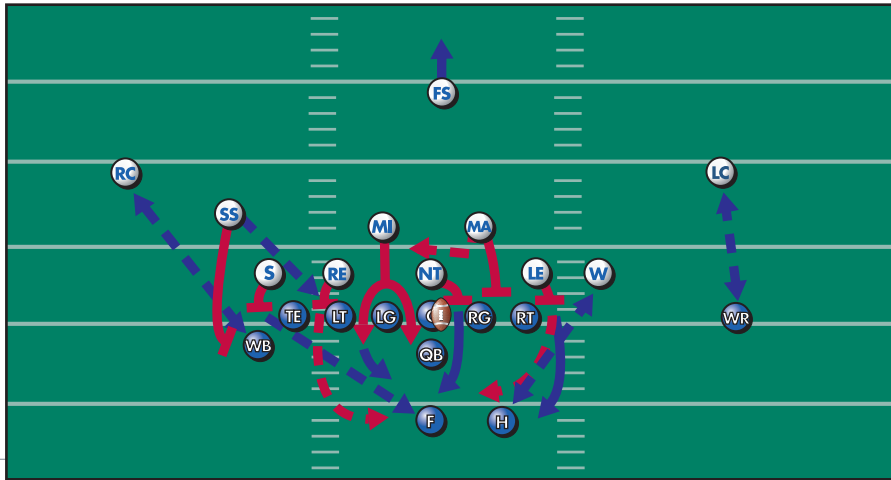
- Strong against run—especially wide runs—fair pursuit by two linebackers.
- Coverage is very limited in this defense.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

Man-For-Man Coverage—Mike Blitz

3-4 MIKE COVER 1



ASSIGNMENTS

S—[SAM backer] On a run to your side, fill D gap.

If TE and WB run upfield:

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On FB runs away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On a pass, man-to man cover on FB if he comes your way.

RE—[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball [look for QB bootleg and reverse].

On a pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

NT—[nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap opposite MI.

On pass, rush QB through A gap opposite MI.

LE—[left defensive end - opposite MI backer]

On a run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball.

[look for QB bootleg and reverse]

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

W—[WILL backer] On a run to your side, fill D gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away by HB, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, man-to man cover on HB if he comes your way.

MI—[MIKE backer] On a run to your side, blitz B gap.

On run away, blitz A gap.

On a pass, rush QB through either A or B gap.

MA—[MAC backer] On a run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, man-to-man cover on FB if he comes to side of W backer.

If backs divide, drop into center zone and check QB for run.

RC—[Right corner] Only come up if WB blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side.

If WB blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm. Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On a run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover WB man-for-man all over the field.

FS—[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into center of the field.

Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

SS—[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If TE blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover TE man-for-man all over the field.

LC—[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WR blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover WR man-for-man all over the field.

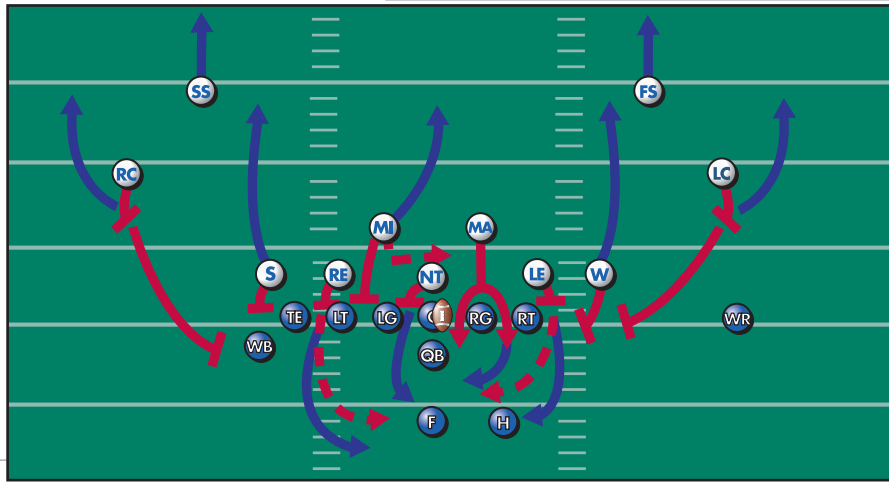
COACHING TIP—Make certain:

That all defensive players who have man-for-man coverage understand that they must play pass first and can only come up if the man they are covering blocks.

DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

2-Deep Zone Pass Coverage—Mac Blitz

3-4 MAC COVER 2



ASSIGNMENTS

- S**—[SAM backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.
On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.
On pass, drop into hook zone on your side.
- RE**—[Right defensive end, end opposite MA backer]. On run to your side, fill C gap.
On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).
On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.
- NT**—[nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap opposite MA.
On pass, rush QB through A gap opposite MA.
- LE**—[left defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap. On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

- On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.
- W**—[WILL backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.
On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.
On pass, drop into hook zone on your side.
- MI**—[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.
On run away, fill A gap on other side of center then pursue ball carrier.
On pass drop into center zone.
- MA**—[MAC backer] On run to your side, blitz through B gap.
On run away, charge through A gap.
On pass, rush QB through either A or B gap on your side.
- RC**—[Right corner] Only come up if WB blocks, think pass first.
On run to your side:

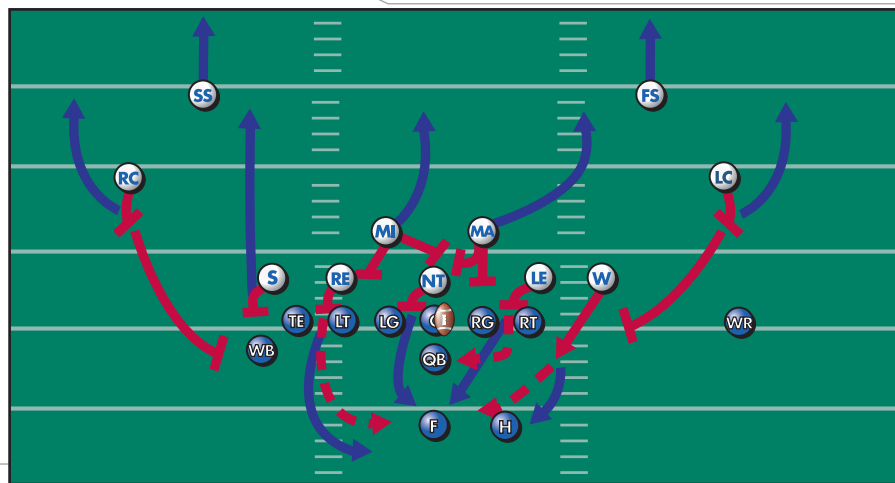
- If WB blocks, come up into wide D gap.
Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.
Turn ball carrier back to inside.
On run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.
On pass, force WB inside and drop in Out zone.
- FS**—[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line then come up and make tackle.
On pass, drop into deep half of the field.
Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.
- SS**—[Strong safety] On run to either side stay back until ball carrier starts across the line then come up and make tackle.
On pass, drop into deep ½ of the field.
Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.
- LC**—[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks, think pass first.
On run to your side.
If WR blocks, come up into wide D gap.
Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.
Turn ball carrier back to inside.
On run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.
On pass, force WB inside and drop into Out zone.
- COACHING TIP**—Make certain:
That both the Free and Strong Safety stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.
That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

2-Deep Zone Pass Coverage—Will Blitz

3-4 WILL COVER 2



ASSIGNMENTS

S—[SAM backer] On run to your side, fill D gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop into hook zone on your side.

RE—[Right defensive end, opposite W backer] On run to your side, fill C gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through C gap keep and QB in pocket.

NT—[nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap to your right.

On pass, rush QB through A gap to your right.

LE—[left defensive end, on side of W backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, pursue ball carrier down the line. On pass, rush through B gap.

W—[WILL backer] On run to your side, blitz through D gap.

On run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On pass, rush through D gap and keep QB in pocket.

MI—[MIKE backer] On run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check opposite A gap and pursue ball.

On pass, drop into center zone.

MA—[MAC backer] On run to your side, fill A gap.

On run away, check A gap and pursue on your side of line.

On pass, drop into hook zone on your side.

RC—[Right corner] Only come up if WB blocks. Think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WB blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, force WB inside and drop in out zone.

FS—[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep ½ of the field.

Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

SS—[Strong safety]—On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line, then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep ½ of the field.

Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

LC—[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks. Think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WR blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, force WB inside and drop into out zone.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

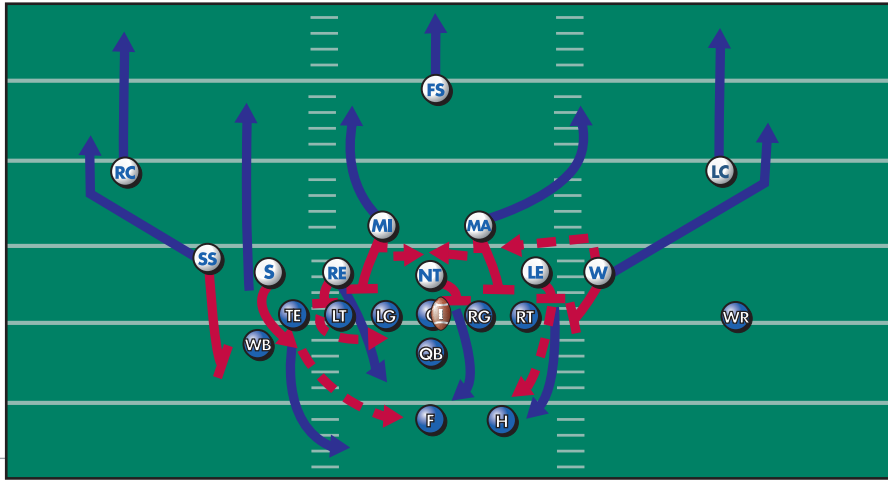
That both the Free and Strong Safety stay back, deep in their zones, keeping all receivers in front of them and play pass until the ball carrier runs across the line.

That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.

DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

3-Deep Zone Pass Coverage—Sam Blitz

3-4 SAM COVER 3



ASSIGNMENTS

S—[SAM backer] On a run to your side, blitz D gap.

If TE and WB run upfield:

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On runs away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball [look for QB bootleg and reverse].

On a pass, rush through D gap keep and QB in pocket.

RE—[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap on run away, pursue ball carrier down the line.

On a pass, rush through B gap.

NT—[nose tackle] On run either way, take A gap away from TE.

On pass, rush QB through A gap away from TE.

LE—[left defensive end, opposite S backer] On a run to your side, fill C gap on run away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball [look for QB bootleg and reverse].

On pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

W—[WILL backer] On a run to your side, fill D gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop to out zone on your side.

MI—[MIKE backer] On a run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check A gap and pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On a pass, drop to hook zone on your side.

MA—[MAC backer] On a run to your side, fill B gap.

On run away, check A gap on other side.

Pursue ball carrier on your side of line.

On pass, drop to hook zone on your side.

RC—[Right cornerback] Only come up if WB blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WB blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On a run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, drop to deep outside 1/3 zone on your side.

FS—[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into deep middle 1/3 of the field.

SS—[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If TE blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass and pursue across the field.

Go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, drop to out zone on your side.

LC—[Left cornerback] Only come up if WR blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WR blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, drop to deep outside 1/3 zone on your side.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

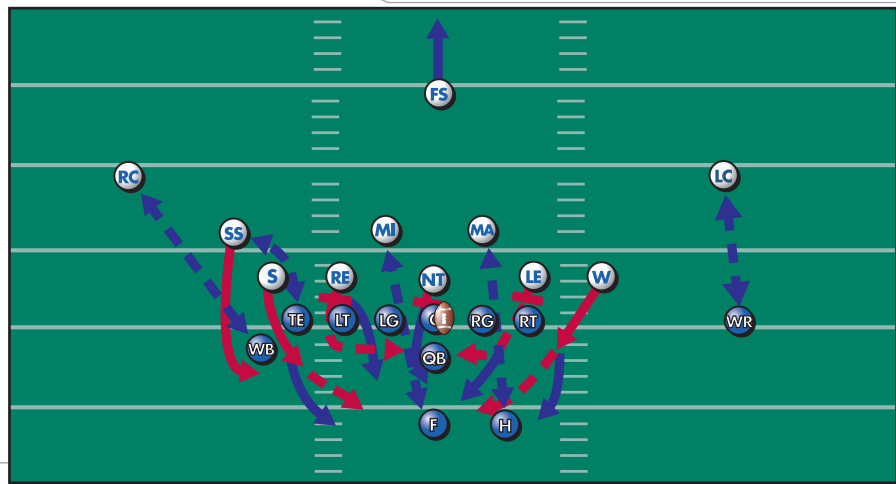
That all defensive players dropping in pass coverage look at QB and react to where ball is thrown.



DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

Man-For-Man Coverage—S and W Blitz

3-4 SAW COVER 0



ASSIGNMENTS

- S**—[SAM backer] On a run to your side, blitz D gap.
If TE and WB run upfield:
Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.
Turn ball carrier back to inside.
On runs away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball [look for QB bootleg and reverse].
On a pass, rush through D gap and keep QB in pocket.
- RE**—[Right defensive end] On run to your side, fill C gap on run away, pursue ball carrier down the line.
On a pass, rush through B gap.
- NT**—[nose tackle] On run to either side, take A gap to TE side.
On pass, rush QB through A gap to TE side.
- LE**—[left defensive end] On run to your side, fill B gap on run away, pursue ball carrier down the line.
On a pass, rush through B gap.
- W**—[WILL backer] On a run to your side, blitz D gap take on lead blocker with right shoulder

- and forearm.
Turn ball carrier back to inside.
On runs away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).
On a pass, rush through D gap and keep QB in pocket.
- MI**—[MIKE backer] On a run and pass, man-for-man cover on FB. Follow FB where ever he goes.
Play pass first.
- MA**—[MAC backer] On a run and pass, man-for-man cover on HB follow HB where ever he goes.
Play pass first.
- RC**—[Right corner] Only come up if WB blocks, think pass first.
On run to your side.
If WB blocks, come up into wide D gap.
Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.
Turn ball carrier back to inside.
On a run away, play pass.
Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover WB man-for-man all over the field.

FS—[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into center of the field.

Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown.

SS—[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If TE blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover TE man-for-man all over the field.

LC—[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WR blocks, come up into wide D gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover WR man-for-man all over the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

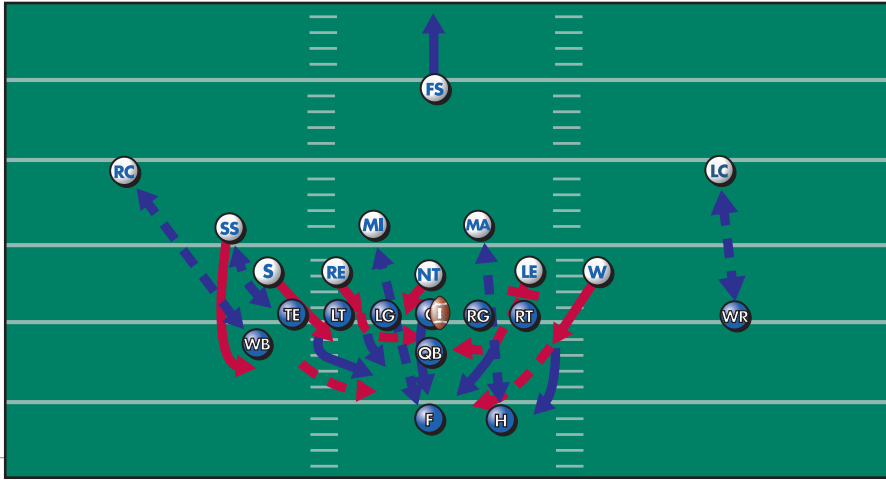
That all defensive players who have man-for-man coverage understand that they must play pass first and can only come up if their man blocks.

Good defense for wide running teams and on passing situations.

DEFENSIVE PLAYBOOK (YOUTH)

Defense: Man-For-Man Coverage—S and W Blitz

3-4 SAW PINCH COVER 0



ASSIGNMENTS.

S—[SAM backer] On a run to your side, blitz C gap.

If TE and WB run upfield:

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On runs away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball [look for QB bootleg and reverse].

On a pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

RE—[Right defensive end] On run to your side, charge B gap on run away, pursue ball carrier down the line.

On a pass, rush through B gap.

NT—[nose tackle] On run to either side, charge A gap to TE side.

On pass, rush QB through A gap to TE side.

LE—[left defensive end] On run to your side, charge B gap on run away, pursue ball carrier down the line.

On a pass, rush through B gap.

W—[WILL backer] On a run to your side, blitz C gap take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On runs away, cross the line and get as deep as the ball (look for QB bootleg and reverse).

On a pass, rush through C gap and keep QB in pocket.

MI—[MIKE backer] On a run and pass, man-for-man cover on FB follow FB where ever he goes play pass first.

MA—[MAC backer] On a run and pass, man-for-man cover on HB follow HB where ever he goes play pass first.

RC—[Right cornerback] Only come up if WB blocks, think pass first. On run to your side: If WB blocks, come up into D Gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On a run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier if he crosses line.

On pass, cover WB man-for-man all over the field.

FS—[Free safety] On run to either side, stay back until ball carrier starts across the line then come up and make tackle.

On pass, drop into center of the field.

Look at QB and go to where ball is thrown. **SS**—[Strong safety] Only come up if TE blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If TE blocks, come up into D gap.

Take on lead blocker with left shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover TE man-for-man all over the field.

LC—[Left corner] Only come up if WR blocks, think pass first.

On run to your side:

If WR blocks, come up into D gap.

Take on lead blocker with right shoulder and forearm.

Turn ball carrier back to inside.

On run away, play pass.

Only go to ball carrier when he crosses the line.

On pass, cover WR man-for-man all over the field.

COACHING TIP—Make certain:

That all defensive players who have man-to-man coverage understand that they must play pass first and can only come up if their man blocks.

Good defense for short yardage situations against inside and off-tackle running plays.

**SPECIAL TEAMS OVERVIEW****Section V: Football Skills—Successful Special Teams**

By Tom Bass, Former NFL Assistant Coach

Section Objectives

Good execution of special teams play is paramount to success in football. This section of the *Coach's Playbook* focuses on the fundamentals of great special teams play. The section includes:

- Fundamental special teams skill information via animated photos and key point checklists;
- Special teams drills for all positions;
- Basic assignments on each special teams unit.

These elements are addressed for both high school and youth coaching.

Successful Special Teams

"In a game involving two hard physical teams built alike, you knew it was going to come down to something unique."

—Baltimore Ravens Head Coach Brian Billick, after a victory over Tennessee in a 2000 AFC Divisional Playoff Game

In close ball games, a big special teams play is often the difference between victory and defeat. In seasons where every game counts, a special teams play could be the difference between winning a championship or finishing in the middle of the pack. As a coach, you need to be able to:

- Teach special teams skills and techniques effectively
- Understand how special teams play can change the course of the game
- Have your players integrate these skills into performance on the field

In this section, you will find special teams skills and technique information, special teams drills to use with your players, and special teams plays. We begin by discussing these topics from a high school coaching perspective (pages 133-173) and then focus on special considerations relative to coaching youth football (pages 177-186).

Special Teams Skills and Technique

Fundamental special teams skill sheets that contain animated photos and written checklists for high school and youth coaches are contained on pages 133 to 136. Whether you are a high school or youth coach you should read this material. In addition, youth coaches should study the special considerations on page 174. These skill sheets demonstrate the proper execution and key coaching points of basic special teams skills. Specifically you will find:

- Key points for the snapper, holder, and kicker on place kicks
- Key points for the snapper and punter on punts
- Keys to properly fielding kicks and punts



SPECIAL TEAMS OVERVIEW

Special Teams Drills

Great special teams units must be able to perform their assignments in a well-coordinated manner. Thus, practice of special teams skills is essential to your team's success. Like offense and defense, special teams players need to know their assignments in order to make the right plays. Hence, it is important that these skills be practiced on a regular basis with equal enthusiasm as offensive and defensive skills. Prepare your players to win the special teams battle by practicing:

- Punt coverage, protection, rush, and return
- Kicking protection (field goals and extra points) and rush
- Kickoff coverage and return

High school special teams drills are contained on pages 138-156. Drills specifically designed for youth coaching are contained on pages 177-186. Practicing these special teams drills will help your players develop the skills to win the special teams battle.

Conclusion

Along with a stifling defense, the 2000 Baltimore Ravens won Super Bowl XXXV with outstanding special teams play. It should be of no surprise that they had a Pro Bowl kicker on their squad and the league's top punt returner. To have strong special teams, coaches must school their players in fundamental techniques, familiarize them with kick coverages and returns, and allow them to integrate this knowledge into effective play through various practice drills. By incorporating the tools in this section of the *Coach's Playbook* to your daily coaching routine, your team can establish that edge to get it over the top. Not only will your teams be more successful, but also you will equip your players for higher levels of play.

SPECIAL TEAMS SKILLS



PUNTING

STANCE

- Stand straight up with feet even and width of shoulders.
- Take slight step forward with punting foot so back foot is in middle of punting foot.
- Have slight bend in knees and weight on balls of both feet.
- Keep shoulders slightly in front of hips.
- Have head up and eyes focused straight ahead.
- Extend hand on side of kicking foot straight out from shoulder with palm down.
- Extend other hand straight out at waist with palm up.
- Show center target area of numbers with hands.
- Bring top hand down even with bottom hand.
- Keep arms out, both palms up with little fingers touching.
- Be prepared to move in any direction to catch snap.
- See both ball and hands at time of catch.



PUNTING

- Take short first step slightly to outside with punting foot.
- Land on ball of foot.
- Take normal second step slightly across center of body.
- Keep weight on ball of foot.
- Be prepared to adjust first step to snap of ball.
- Keep ball in front of you and move forward on snap.
- Catch the ball in both hands.
- Adjust ball so laces are straight up.
- Keep back tip of ball in palm of punting hand.
- Have thumb on top inside panel.
- Place first and second finger on top outside panel.
- Keep third and little finger on outside bottom panel.
- Hold ball in this hand.
- Place other hand on front inside of ball with fingers on under panel and thumb on top.
- At beginning of second step, drop hand away from kicking foot off of ball.
- Allow hand to swing back behind hip, turning hips inward and opposite shoulder to rotate forward.
- Push hand with ball forward and outside of kicking leg.
- Turn point of ball slightly to inside.
- Keep ball pointing in direction of hip movement.
- Keep wrist locked and have ball level.
- Have hand with ball just above waist.
- Allow hand with ball to drop naturally to side.
- Have ball drop to kicking foot.



SPECIAL TEAMS SKILLS



PUNTING

LONG DISTANCE SNAP

- Have feet even, slightly wider than hips.
- Bend at knees, keep back level.
- Have shoulders square, shoulders and hips even.
- Keep ball slightly in front of helmet.
- Have laces of ball rotated down and outside of snapping hand.
- Place snapping hand under ball.
- Rest guiding hand lightly on top of ball.
- Tip front of ball up for snap.



GRIPPING THE BALL

- Place snapping hand under and outside of ball.
- Grip ball near center with first finger near tip of ball off laces.
- Place second and third fingers over laces on surface of ball with little fingers on laces.
- Have thumb on top panel in between first and second finger.
- Place guiding hand lightly on top of ball with hand open and fingers spread.
- Keep most pressure just in front of center of ball.



KICKING

STANCE

- Start with instep of plant foot even with kicking tee.
- Place kicking foot directly behind tee.
- Beginning with kicking foot take three normal steps straight back from tee.
- Take two steps sideways at right angle with plant foot.
- Turn slightly and face holder and tee.
- Have kicking foot behind plant foot.
- Lean forward and keep shoulders in front of hips.
- Allow arms to hang down in a relaxed manner.
- Keep head up with eyes focused on tee.

SPECIAL TEAMS SKILLS



KICKING MAKING THE KICK

- Start movement with normal forward step with kicking foot.
- Take second longer step with plant foot.
- Bring plant foot down even with and six inches outside of tee.
- Toe of plant foot should be aimed directly at goal post.
- Move hips forward to generate power for kick.
- Allow kicking leg to move in full arch.
- Keep toe pointed down and ankle locked on kicking foot.
- Have toe of kicking foot move to opposite side of tee.
- Allow center of inside of kicking foot to pass over tee.
- Make contact with ball with top inside of kicking foot.
- Keep entire body moving at goal post.
- Maintain forward lean with shoulders in front of feet.
- Widen arms to help have good balance.
- Keep head down, and eyes on ball.
- Allow kicking leg to follow through.



KICKING/HOLDER STANCE

- Line up on opposite side of tee from kicker.
- Kneel down with back knee 7 yards from center.
- Position front foot with the toe pointing straight along a hashmark
- Lean forward to center.
- Place fingers of back hand on center of kicking tee.
- Extend front arm and hand directly at center.
- Keep palm facing down for top part of target for center.



HANDLING THE BALL

- Ask kicker if he is ready.
- Bring hand off tee, palm up.
- Allow thumbs of hands to touch and form target.
- Be prepared to react for any off-target snap.
- Make catch in both hands.
- Use one motion to put tip of ball on tee.
- Try to have laces pointing directly at goal post.
- Rotate ball with front hand if laces are not in correct position.
- Place index finger of back hand on top point of the ball.
- Adjust lean and balance ball in correct position for kicker.



SPECIAL TEAMS SKILLS

KICK RETURNING CATCHING KICKS



- Focus completely on ball.
- Move to be in front of ball.
- Reach and catch ball in hands.
- Have palms up, fingers open and little fingers touching.
- See hands and ball at moment of catch.
- Make catch and secure ball.
- Try to return kick to designated area of field.
- Look for seam and run full speed.
- Can fair catch both punts and kickoffs.
- Kickoff is a free ball and must be covered.
- Punted ball does not have to be caught.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

Selecting Each Phase Of Your Kicking Game

Each of you may have your favorite Special Teams Play you have selected to use. In this section, you will find a variety of kicking formations and plays. It is important as coaches that we understand that the kicking game will usually be up to 20 percent of our plays during a game, so we must allot appropriate time to cover all phases of the kicking game during our prepractice and regular practice time. The kicking game requires special skills from certain individuals to have success, so you must develop:

- A punter
- A kicker
- A holder
- A long and short snapper
- A punt return man
- A kickoff return man

A successful kicking game can result in:

- Gaining a tremendous advantage in field position during the course of the game
- An increase in points scored when 2 points are awarded for kicking the PAT
- An opportunity to score through blocked kicks, punt returns, and kickoff returns

Set-Up

During Practice:

- Have the special-team players start in a huddle.
- Step in the huddle, and call the special-teams play that you want the players to execute.
- Have the opposing special-team huddle on the other side of the ball, and have an assistant coach tell them what to do.

Drill

- The special-team players should then quickly line up for the special-team play called in the huddle.
 - The opposing special-teams players should line up in the formation you expect to see in the game.
 - When the ball is centered or kicked, the special-teams players should correctly carry out their assignment.
 - In the beginning, teach special-teams plays by walking through assignments without movement by the opposing players. Next, run the drill at half speed and then full speed with opposing players' movement
- ** All required techniques and skills involved in executing these special-teams plays are covered in the Skills areas of the Special Teams section of this *Playbook*.

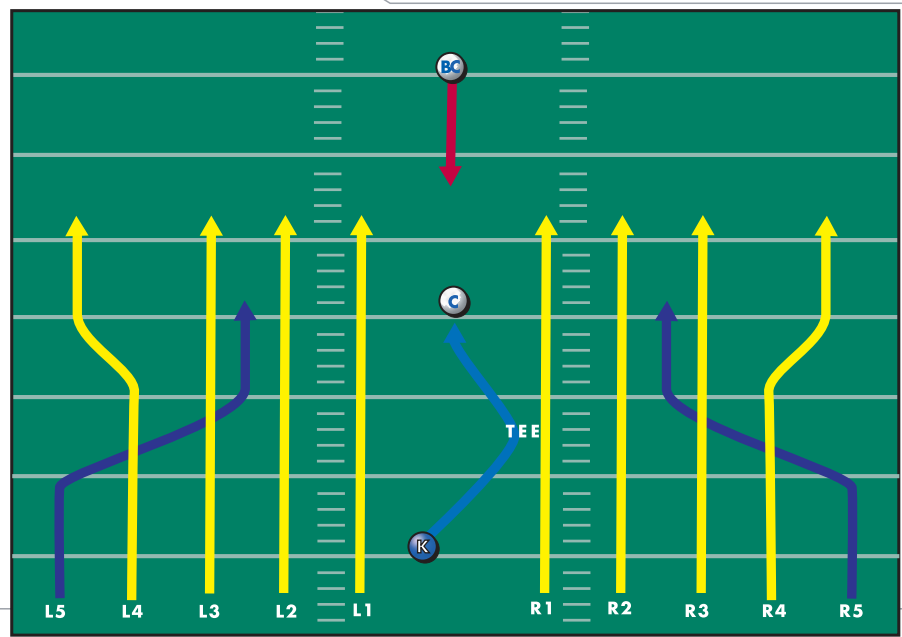
Goal

- Coaches should make sure that every player does his job correctly on each special-teams play before moving on to the next phase of the kicking game.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

KICKOFF COVERAGE



ASSIGNMENTS

L5—Sprint downfield 15 yards behind other players on your side and be a safety. Always keep the ball to your right.

L4—Widen out to 5 yards from the sideline as you sprint down the field. Keep the ball to your right.

L3—Sprint downfield, keeping the ball on

your right.

L2—Sprint downfield, keeping the ball on your right.

L1—Sprint straight downfield to the ball, keeping the ball on your right shoulder.

K—Approach the ball in a smooth motion and kick the ball as far as you can. After the kick, become a safety always staying directly in front

of the ball carrier as he comes up the field.

R1—Sprint straight downfield to the ball, keeping the ball on your left shoulder.

R2—Sprint downfield, keeping the ball on your left.

R3—Sprint downfield, keeping the ball on your left.

R4—Widen out to 5 yards from the sideline as you sprint down the field. Keep the ball to your left.

R5—Sprint downfield 15 yards behind other players on your side and be a safety. Always keep the ball to your left.

COACHING TIP—In the beginning, to provide individual coaching, you can have only one player cover at a time and then have one entire side cover before adding the other side and the kicker.

Make certain that every player on the kickoff team understands that once the ball travels 10 yards, it becomes a free ball and can be recovered by players from either team.

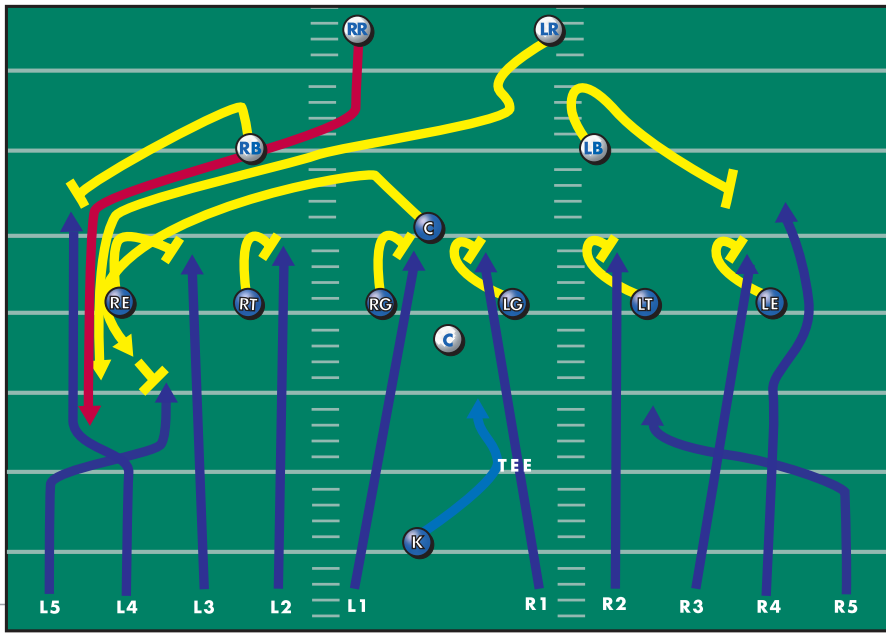
When return men are lined up away from the 10-yard line or back up as the kicker approaches the ball, consider making a short kick [Onside Kick] to the right and let your coverage players try to recover the ball.

All coverage men should understand that they should always avoid a blocker so that they keep the ball carrier on the proper side.

Have coverage men breakdown and come under control as they near the ball carrier to make the tackle.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

RIGHT KICKOFF RETURN



RB. If ball is kicked to LR, start up the field and then break to your right and lead him up the field.

COACHING TIP—In the beginning, to provide individual coaching, you can have only one player at a time drop and block and then have one entire side drop and block before adding the other side and the ball.

Make certain that every player on the kickoff return team understands that once the ball travels 10 yards, it becomes a free ball and can be recovered by players from either team.

Remind all blockers to get into good position and not to block in the back—eliminate penalties.

Check to see which opposing player is serving as safety, as you may have to change the numbering as to who your return men are blocking.

On any high, short kickoff, return players can signal for a fair catch and have a free opportunity to catch the ball. Receiving player cannot advance the ball after signaling for and making a fair catch.

If you anticipate an Onside kick by your opponent, you can move both your LB and RB up on the line with the center giving you nine players in position to recover the ball if it is intentionally kicked short.

For a kickoff return left, we would keep the same blocking assignments but reverse the direction that the blockers try to take their men. Plus, the center and lead back would lead to the left.

For a kickoff return up the middle, we would keep the same blocking assignments, but all the blockers will try to take their men away from the center of the field and toward the sidelines. Plus, the center and lead back would lead up the middle of the field between the RG and LG.

ASSIGNMENTS

RE—Make sure the ball is kicked long, then drop back 5 yards and block L3 into the center of the field.

RT—Make sure the ball is kicked long, then drop back 5 yards and block L2 into the center of the field.

RG—Make sure the ball is kicked long, then drop back 5 yards and block L1 into the center of the field.

LG—Make sure the ball is kicked long, then drop back 5 yards and block R1 toward the sideline.

LT—Make sure the ball is kicked long, then drop back 5 yards and block R2 toward the sideline.

LE—Make sure the ball is kicked long, then drop back 5 yards and block R3 toward the sideline.

CEN—Make sure the ball is kicked long, drop back 3 yards, and then lead outside of RE's block on L3 and look to block any free opposing player.

RB—Make sure the ball is kicked over your head, then drop back 3 yards and block L4 out to the sideline.

LB—Make sure the ball is kicked over your head, then drop back 3 yards and block R4 out to the sideline.

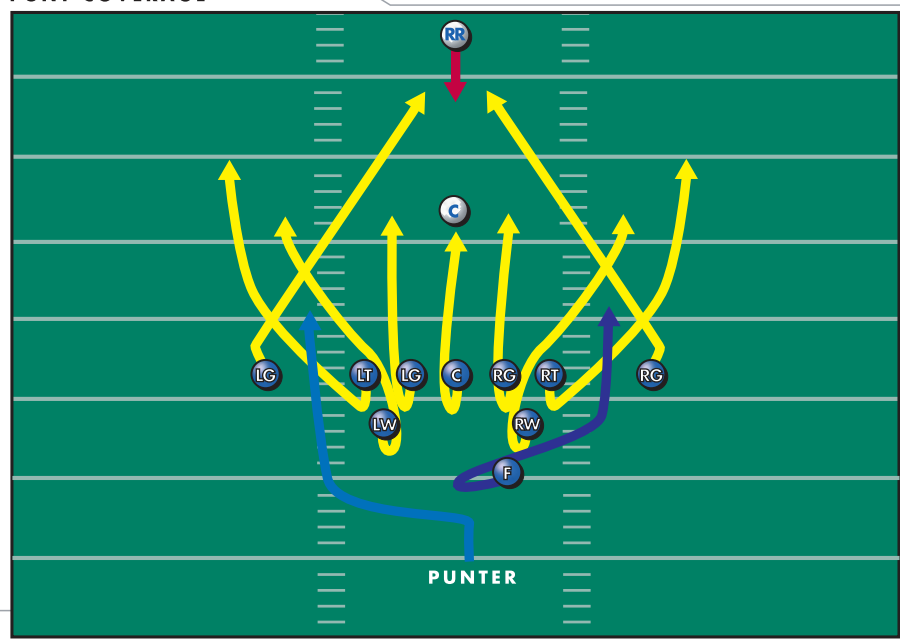
RR—If the ball is kicked to you, start straight up the field for 5 yards, and then break to the right trying to run inside to the block by your RB. If ball is kicked to LR, start up the field and then break to your right and lead him up the field.

LB—If the ball is kicked to you, start straight up the field for 5 yards, and then break to the right trying to run inside to the block by your



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT COVERAGE



ASSIGNMENTS

LG & RG—Both gunners should release on the snap of the ball and sprint straight to the punt return man.

PR—you should be prepared to down the ball (pick up and hold it) when the ball stops rolling toward the opponent's goal line.

LT & RT—Set back, block, and when the ball is kicked, the two tackles should widen out and keep the punt returner on your inside shoulder. Never let the punt returner get outside of you.

LG & RG—Set back, block, and when the ball is kicked, the two guards should widen out and keep the punt returner in front of you and on your inside shoulder.

CN—First make sure of the snap, help block, and then when the ball is kicked, sprint straight at the punt returner.

LW & RW—Set back, block, and when the ball is kicked, both wing men release between the tackle and guard on your side, widen out, and sprint to the punt returner keeping him on your inside shoulder.

FB—Set, block, and when the ball is kicked, you should move up the field and act as a safety on the right side of the punt returner.

PUNTER—Catch the snap, make the punt, and then move up the field and act as a safety on the left side of the punt returner.

COACHING TIP—In the beginning, to provide individual coaching, you can have only one player cover at a time and then have one entire side set up and cover before adding the other side, the fullback, and the punter.

Make certain that every player on the punt team understands that unlike a kickoff, once the ball travels 10 yards, it is not a free ball and can be downed but not recovered.

Emphasize that all blockers must set back and block for at least two counts before they fan out and sprint down field in coverage.

All coverage men should understand that they should always avoid a blocker so that they keep the ball carrier on the proper side.

Have coverage men breakdown and come under control as they near the ball carrier to make the tackle.

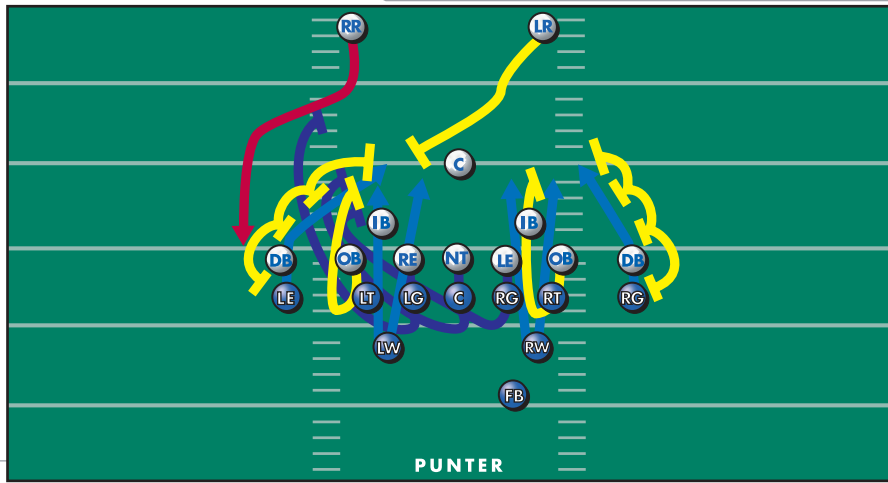
Once you feel that your punt coverage team is working well together, you might want to add: A pass to the fullback in the right flat if your punter can pass the ball.

A run to the left by the fullback with both wings leading around the left tackle. This requires the center snapping the ball directly to the fullback.

Both of these plays could be considered if you are punting from your opponent's side of the 50-yard line.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

RIGHT PUNT RETURN



ASSIGNMENTS

RDB—Step into left gunner [LG].

Try to keep him on the line.

Force him into the center of the field. Stay with him all the way down the field.

ROB—Step into left tackle [LT] and drive him as far back to the punter as possible.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Force LT to the center of the field. Stay with him downfield.

RE—Step into left guard [LG] and try to hold him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push LG to your left.

Sprint downfield 15 yards to the right and set wall on the hashmark for return (first man in wall).

NT—Step into center and try to hold him on the line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push center to your left.

Sprint downfield 10 yards to the right and set wall for return (second man in wall).

LE—Step into right guard [RG] and try to hold him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push RG to your left.

Sprint downfield 5 yards to the right and set wall on the hash mark for return (third man in wall).

LOB—Step into left tackle [RT] and drive him as far back to the punter as possible.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Force RT to the outside of the field. Stay with him downfield.

LDB—Step into right gunner [RG]. Try to keep him on the line.

Force him to the sideline. Stay with him all the way down the field.

RIB—Stay in front of left wing [LW].

Step up to keep him from releasing down the field.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Be alert for fake punt pass or run. Force LW into center of the field. Stay with him down the field.

LIB—Stay in front of left wing [RW].

Step up to keep him from releasing down the field.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Be alert for fake punt, pass, or run.

Force RW to outside of the field. Stay with him down the field.

RR & LR—If the ball is kicked to you:

Start straight up the field for 5 yards and then break to the right.

Try to follow the block of the other returner and run to the outside side of the wall.

If ball is kicked to the other return man:

Start up the field and then break to your right.

Be prepared to block the first cover man down the field [usually a gunner].

If no one is downfield, lead the returner outside of the wall and up the field.

COACHING TIP—In the beginning, to provide individual coaching, you can have only one player at a time step up and block, then have one entire side step up and block before adding the other side and the ball.

Make certain that every player on the punt return team understands that once the ball is kicked it becomes their ball and does not need to be caught or touched down.

Remind all blockers to get into good position and not to block in the back. Eliminate penalties.

On any high, short kickoff, return men can signal for a fair catch and have a free opportunity to catch the ball. Receiving player cannot advance the ball after signaling for and making a fair catch, or he can decide to allow the ball to roll dead if he cannot make a sure catch.

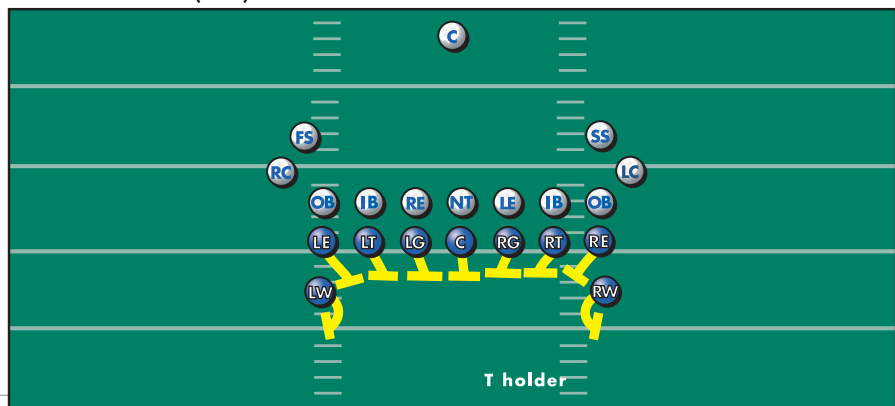
All players should be alert for a fake punt, pass, or run and be ready to react if he ball is not punted. For a punt return left, we would keep the same blocking assignments but reverse the direction that the blockers try to take their men.

When rushing the punter to block a punt, make certain that all rush men aim for a spot 3 yards in front of the punter's original position and cross their arms in front of their face when they go to block the ball.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

POINT AFTER TD (PAT) KICK



ASSIGNMENTS

LE-LT-LG—As the ball is snapped, each player should step back and to the inside with your right foot. As you step, you should bring both hands up to the center of your chest, extend your forearms and elbows to either side of your body, and block strong to the inside gap.

CENTER [CN]—Check to see that holder and kicker are ready, make the snap to the holder [number-one job], and set up to aid LG and RG in blocking the inside rush.

RG-RT-RE—As the ball is snapped, each player should step back and to the inside with your left foot. As you step, you should bring both hands up to the center of your chest,

extend your forearms and elbows to either side of your body, and block strong to the inside gap.

LW & RW—Bring both hands up to your chest and be ready to block any rush man coming outside of the end on your side.

HOLDER—Check with the kicker to see if he is ready.

Provide good target to the center.

Catch the snap.

Position the ball on the tee properly. Make certain that the laces are in front away from the kicker.

Be prepared to make the tackle if the kick is blocked or to run with the ball if the snap is bad.

KICKER—Line up correctly.

Alert the holder that you are ready.

Focus on the tee.

Make the kick.

Be prepared to make the tackle if the kick is blocked or to act as a blocker if the snap is bad and holder has to run with the ball.

COACHING TIP—In the beginning, to provide individual coaching, you can have only one player block at a time, and then have one entire side set up and block before adding the other side, the holder and the kicker.

Make certain that every player on the PAT team understands that if the kick is blocked or short, it can be picked up and run back.

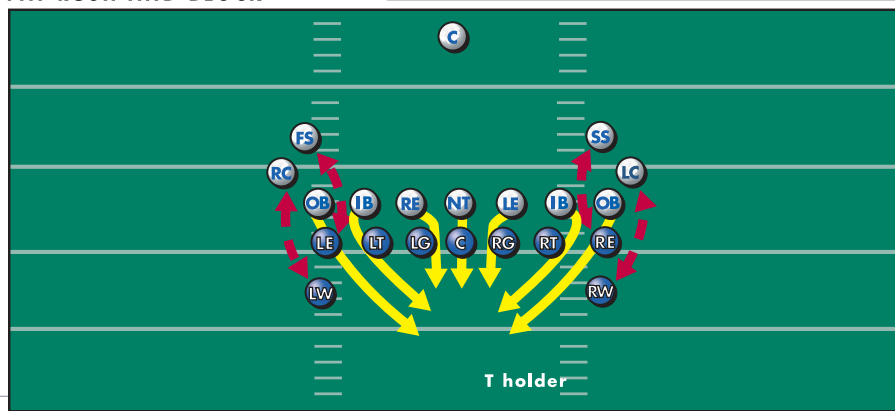
Emphasize that all blockers must set and block until the ball is kicked. On a field-goal attempt, the blockers should fan out and sprint down the field after the kick is made.

Once you feel that your PAT team is working well together, you might want to add: A *roll out* pass, if your holder can pass the ball, to the RE deep in the end zone or the RW just across the goal line in the right flat.

An *option run* to the left by the holder with the LW and LE blocking their men to the inside and the kicker trailing the holder for the pitch if it is necessary.

Both of these plays could be considered if you are near the opponent's goal line and are lined up to kick a field goal.

PAT RUSH AND BLOCK



ASSIGNMENTS

ROB & LOB—As the ball is snapped, rush through the gap between the outside shoulder of the end and the inside shoulder of the wing on your side. As you rush, aim for a spot 2 yards in front of the holder to block the kick.

RIB & LIB—As the ball is snapped, rush through the gap between the inside shoulder of the end and the outside shoulder of the tackle. As you rush, aim for a spot 2 yards in front of the holder to block the kick.

RE & LE—As the ball is snapped, drive through the inside shoulder of the guard in front of you. Try to get as much penetration as

possible. When you see kicker approaching the tee, raise your hands in the air to block kick.

NT—As the ball is snapped, drive into the center, pushing him back toward the kicker. Try to get as much penetration as possible. When you see kicker approaching the tee, raise your hands in the air to block the kick.

RCO & LCO—As the ball is snapped, you should step to the outside and look through the wing on your side to the holder and kicker. Make certain that the ball is kicked and that it is not a fake. If the wing on your side releases on a pass, you must cover him.

FS & SS—As the ball is snapped, you should step to the outside and look through the end on your side to the holder and kicker. Make certain that the ball is kicked and that it is not a fake. If the end on your side releases on a pass, you must cover him.

COACHING TIP—In the beginning, to provide individual coaching, you can have only one player at a time rush and block, then have one entire side rush and block before adding the other side and the ball.

Make certain that every player on the PAT rush and block team understands that once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, it becomes their ball and does not need to be caught or touched down.

Remind all rushers to get into good position and to look in at the ball and stay outside. Eliminate penalties.

Any blocked FG that does not cross the line of scrimmage can be picked up by the kicking team and advanced for a first down. Rushers can pick up the ball and return it for a score.

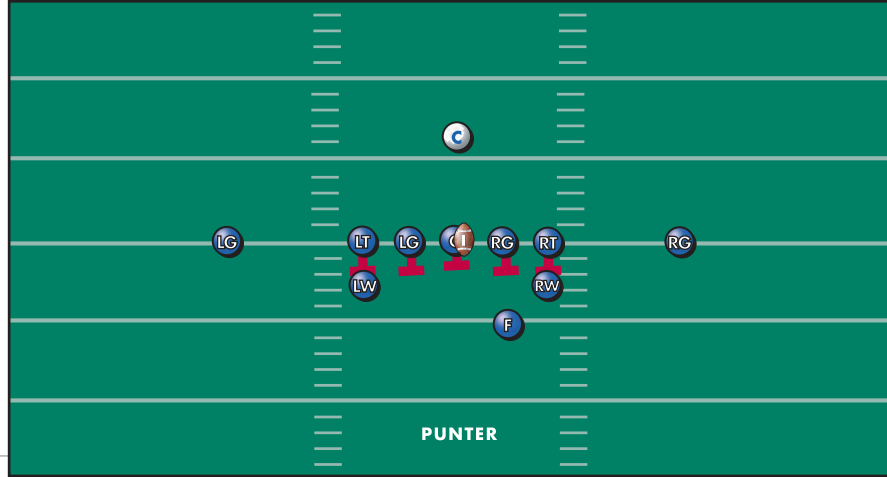
All players should be alert for a fake PAT or FG, pass, or run and be ready to react if he ball is not kicked.

When rushing to block a PAT or FG, make certain that all rush men aim for a spot 3 yards in front of the holder's position. Stay low and cross their arms in front of their face to block the ball. Stay away from the kicker.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT PRACTICE DRILL

TEAM SPREAD PUNT COVERAGE



SET-UP—All players line up in tight formation in a proper stance.

Coach can be in front of formation so he can observe all the blockers as they set up to block.

DRILL—On coach's signal **STANCE**, all players move up, get into a proper position with their inside foot up, outside foot back, and inside hand resting on the thigh of the inside leg. Weight should be on front foot.

Starting with the LT and going across the line to the RT, each player, on the coach's command of **HUT**, should:

Push back off of the front foot with the inside hand.

Give ground and bring both hands up to block.

After the punter gives the target to the center, the center should snap the ball to the punter.

REPETITION—Have each player (linemen and wings) set up in proper position to block two times, and then have the entire group set up three more times as a unit.

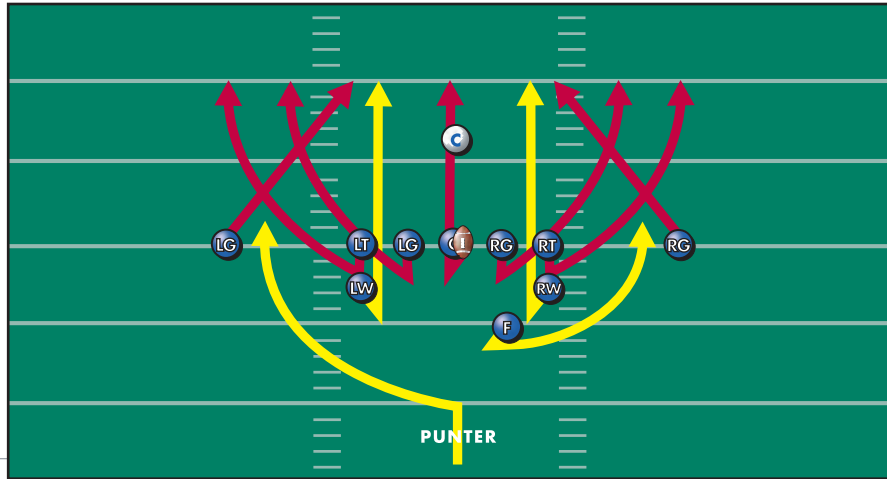
GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt team is setting up properly to block.

COACHING TIP—On each snap check that: Each player pushes back off the line.

They keep their shoulders square to the line. They bring both hands up ready to block.

They keep a good flex in their knees. They have their heads up and backs straight.

TIGHT TEAM PUNT COVERAGE



SET-UP—All players line up in tight formation in a proper stance.

Coach can be in front of formation so he can observe all the blockers as they release downfield.

DRILL—On coach's signal **STANCE**, all players move up and get into a proper position.

After the punter gives the target to the center, the center should snap the ball to the punter.

On the snap, both gunners should release

downfield 10 yards.

All blockers should set back, hold for two counts, and then fan out down the field for 10 yards.

Punter should go through steps but not kick the ball.

When punting the ball, FB should be the safety to the right and the Punter should be the safety to the left.

Coach can make corrections as players set up and then release down the field.

REPETITION—Have each group do drill three times without kicking the ball and then five times with the punter kicking the ball and everyone going to the ball. Early in the year, you can have each player cover one at a time and then have one side cover and then the other so that you can focus your coaching.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt team is setting up properly to block and releasing correctly down the field to cover the punt.

COACHING TIP—On each snap check that: All the players are moving properly.

The two gunners head directly for the ball. The two tackles widen out and keep the ball on their inside shoulder.

The two guards widen out and keep the ball in front of them.

The center makes sure of the snap and then sprints straight at the ball.

Both wing men release in-between the tackle and guard on their side and go to the ball.

The punter makes a good punt using correct form.

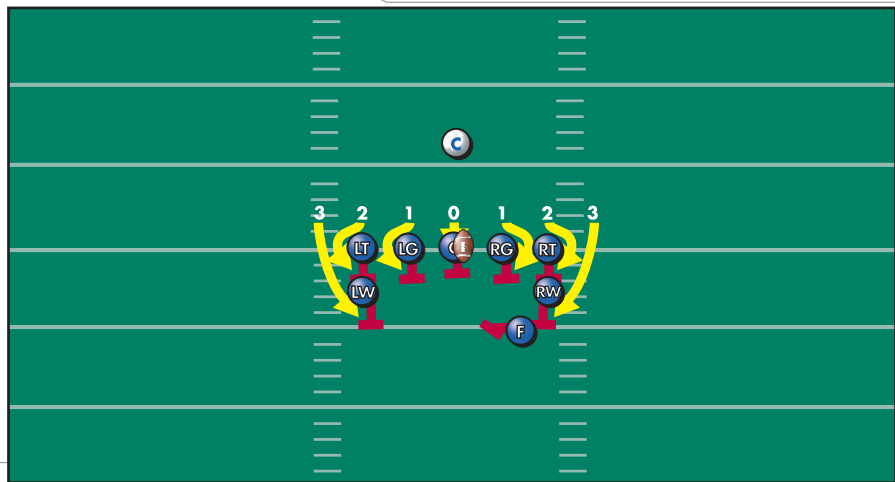
The fullback and punter move up the field and act as a safety on each side of the ball.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT PROTECTION PRACTICE DRILL

SPREAD PUNT BLOCKERS VS RUSH



SET-UP—Players line up in tight formation in a two-point stance with seven rush men opposing them.

All blockers should be lined up in a proper stance.

Rush men should be in a three-point stance looking at the ball.

Coach can be in front of blockers so that he can observe all the blockers.

Once blockers are performing correctly, the punter and two gunners can be added to the drill and the ball can be punted.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, both sets of players move up, and get into a proper stance.

Starting with the left tackle (LT) on coach's signal of HUT, blocker should set up and number two rush man should rush.

Blocker should engage rush man and block for two counts.

LG and RG will block number one rush man to their side.

RT will block number two rush man to his side.

Center should go through snapping motion and then shuffle back and block 0 rush man.

Both wings (LW and RW) will block three rush man to their side.

Fullback should have feet even and not back up, and help with any rusher who comes

free from any blocker.

Coach can make corrections as each player sets up and blocks, and then have the entire group of blockers and rush men move on center's movement.

Rush players' alignment can be changed, and his charge can be adjusted by the coach from inside to outside.

Rush players can cross charge causing the blockers to adjust on the move.

REPETITION—Have each blocker and rush man do drill two times and then have the two wings and tackles work together against two rushers followed by the entire group doing the drill five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt protectors are setting up properly to block, taking on the rush men for two counts, and keeping them from getting to the punter.

COACHING TIP—As each blocker sets up check that:

He is in proper position to block, square to the line.

He is in position to block an inside or outside rush.

He strikes the rush man in the chest with the palms of both hands, using the outside hand to stop the rusher's momentum.

He stops the rush man for two counts.

The fullback is alert to move to the side that has four men rushing and blocks free rusher.

PUNT PRACTICE DRILL

TEAM TIGHT PUNT BLOCKING

SET-UP—All players line up in tight formation in a proper stance.

Coach can be in front of formation so he can observe all the blockers as they set up to block.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, all players move up and get into a proper position, with their inside foot up, outside foot back, and inside hand resting on the thigh of the inside leg. Weight should be on front foot.

Starting with the LT and going across the

line to the RE, each player, on the coach's command of HUT should:

Push back off the front foot with the inside hand.

Turn body at 45-degree angle to face outside rusher.

Give ground and bring both hands up to block.

After the punter gives the target to the center, the center should snap the ball to the punter.

REPETITION—Have each player (linemen and backs) set up in proper position to block two times, and then have the entire group set up

three more times as a unit.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt team is setting up properly to block.

COACHING TIP—On each snap check that:

Each player pushes back off the line.

They turn their shoulders and body to the outside.

They bring both hands up ready to block.

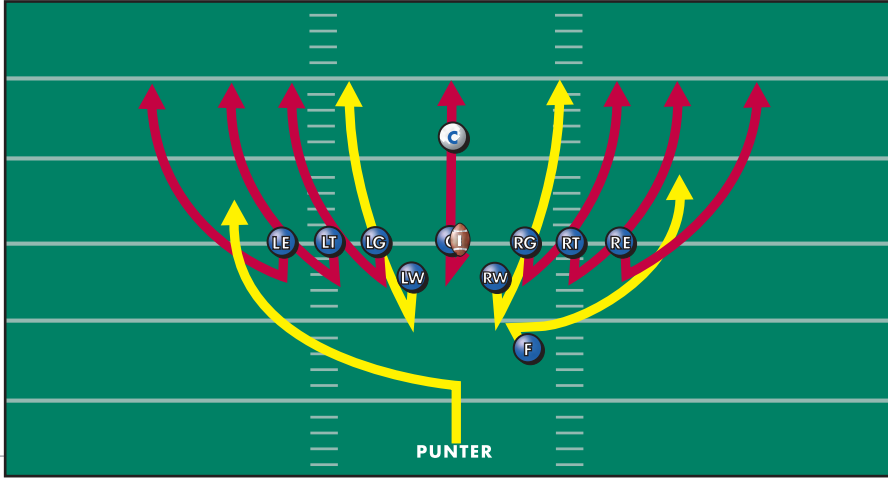
They keep a good flex in their knees.

They have their heads up and backs straight.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT PRACTICE DRILL

TEAM SPREAD PUNT COVERAGE



SET-UP—All players line up in tight formation in a proper stance.

Coach can be in front of formation so he can observe all the blockers as they release downfield.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, all players move up and get into a proper position.

After the punter gives the target to the center, the center should snap the ball to the punter.

On the snap, both ENDS should release

downfield 10 yards.

All blockers should set back, hold for two counts, and then fan out down the field for 10 yards.

Punter should go through steps but not kick the ball.

When punting the ball, FB should be the safety to the right and the Punter should be the safety to the left.

Coach can make corrections as players set up and then release down the field.

REPETITION—Have each group do drill three times without kicking the ball, then five times with the punter kicking the ball and everyone going to the ball. Early in the year, you can have each player cover one at a time, then have one side cover and then the other so that you can focus your coaching.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt team is setting up properly to block and releasing correctly down the field to cover the punt.

COACHING TIP—On each snap check that:

All the players are moving properly.

The two ends widen out and keep the ball on their inside shoulder.

The two tackles widen out keeping the ball inside.

The two guards widen out and keep the ball in front of them.

The center makes sure of the snap, sets back, and then sprints straight at the ball.

Both backs release in-between the center and guard on their side and go to the ball.

The punter makes a good punt using correct form.

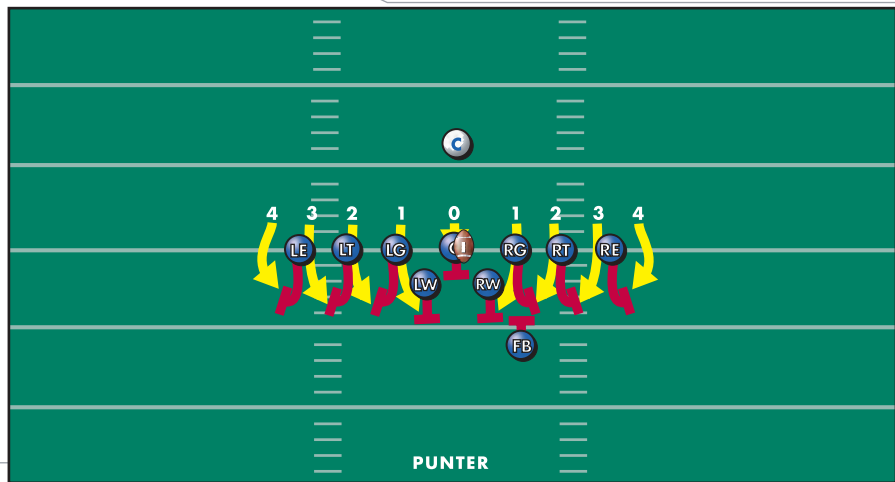
The fullback and punter move up the field and act as a safety on each side of the ball.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT PROTECTION PRACTICE DRILL

PUNT BLOCKERS VS RUSH



SET-UP—Players line up in tight formation in a two-point stance with seven rush men opposing them.

All blockers should be lined up in a proper stance.

Rush men should be in a three-point stance looking in at ball and charge hard up field for 5 yards.

Coach can be in front of blockers so that he can observe all the blockers.

Once blockers are performing correctly, the punter can be added to the drill and the ball can be punted.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, both sets of players move up and get into a proper stance.

Starting with the left end [LE] on coach's sig-

nal of HUT, blocker should set up and number four rush man should rush.

Blocker should engage rush man and block for two counts.

LT will block number three rush man to his side.

LG will block number two man to his side.

LB will block number one to his side.

RB will block number one to his side.

RG will block number two to his side.

RT will block number three rush man to his side.

RE will block number four to his side.

Center should go through snapping motion and then shuffle back and block 0 rush man.

Fullback should have feet even and not back up, and help on any rusher who comes

free from any blocker.

Coach can make corrections as each player sets up and blocks, and then have the entire group of blockers and rush men move on center's movement.

Rush players alignment can be changed, and his charge can be adjusted by the coach from inside to outside.

Rush players can cross charge, causing the blockers to adjust on the move.

REPETITION—Have each blocker and rush man do drill two times followed by having the entire group do the drill five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt protectors are setting up properly to block, taking on the rush men for two counts, and keeping them from getting to the punter.

COACHING TIP—As each blocker sets up, check that:

He is in proper position to block.

He is turned to the outside to pick up rusher.

He is in position to block a cross charge rusher, pushing outside rusher wide, and picking up inside rush man with inside hand to chest.

He strikes the rush man in the chest with the palms of both hands, using the outside hand to stop the rusher's momentum.

He stops the rush man for two counts.

Both backs and the fullback are prepared to aid the center if they have no one to block.

The fullback is alert to move to the side that has five men rushing and blocks free rusher.

PAT & FIELD GOAL PRACTICE DRILL

OFFENSIVE LINE AND WINGS

SET-UP—Have all players line up in tight formation in a proper stance. Coach should then designate what players he wants to execute correct steps for block—LW and LE, LT and LG, CENTER, RG and RT, RE and RW.

DRILL—On coach's command of HUT, designated players should take proper step and assume correct blocking position.

Coach can then have entire right side go, then the left side, and finally the entire team together.

REPETITION—Have each group go twice, then each side twice, and finally the entire team go twice.

GOAL—This drill serves to check the steps and body positioning of the blockers for PAT and FG attempts.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The ends, tackles, and guards step back

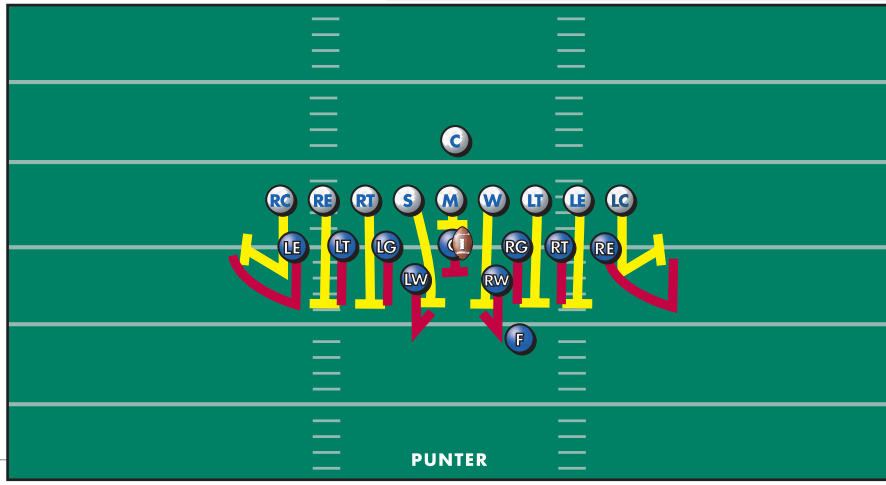
and in with their inside foot, bring both hands up to the center of their chest, extend their forearms and elbows to either side of their body, and block strong to the their inside gap.

The center goes through his normal snapping motion and then sets strong to aid both guards.

The two wings step with their inside foot, bring both hands up to their chest, and block inside to outside rusher.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

TEAM TIGHT PUNT HOLD UP



SET-UP—All players line up in their proper position: ends, tackles and backers in a three-point stance; corners in a two-point stance.

Coach can be behind punt return players so that he can observe all of them as they hold up.

Depth of punter can be adjusted back to 15 yards and should be set based on the depth used by the upcoming opponent.

DRILL—Coach should tell the punt return team to hold up coverage men.

Starting with RC, on coach's signal of GO, the RC should step into the LE, hit him in the shoulders with the palms of both hands, try to keep him from releasing down the field, and

force him to the sideline. Both corners have coverage on either end on fake punt pass attempt.

The coach should then work his way across the formation giving each player a chance to hold up the man in front of him.

Both inside linebackers (S and W) should each make contact with and hold up the LB and RB on their respective side. Cover back on fake punt pass attempt.

M backer should step into center, push him back, and check fullback for coverage on fake punt run or pass attempt.

Coach can make corrections as players set up and then hold up.

REPETITION—Have each player hold up twice individually and then do the hold-up drill three times as a group without kicking the ball.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt return team is moving properly to hold up the punt coverage players.

COACHING TIP—As each player moves to hold up, check that:

- They charge across the line on the signal.
- They move into the center of the blocker.
- They get their hands onto the shoulder area of the blocker.

- They drive the blocker back for two counts.
- Both DBs make contact and drive the ends to the outside.

- Both inside linebackers step into the line between the center and guard and make hand contact when the two backs release, driving them back, and keeping them on their side of the ball.

Against spread punt:

- Both corners should move out and line up on the inside shoulder of the gunners, forcing them to the sideline.

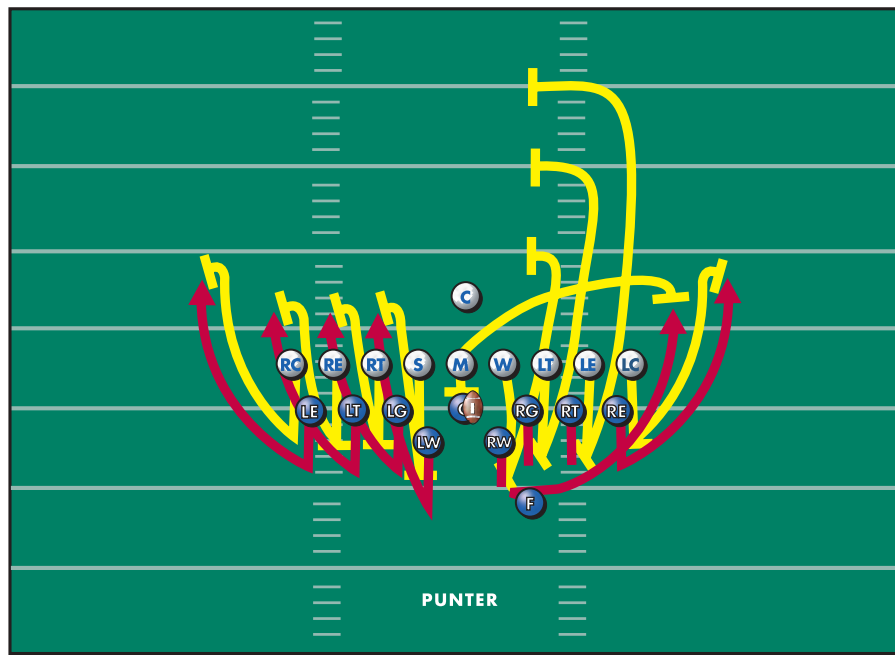
- Both the S and W linebackers should move off the line to the outside in front of the two wings, stepping up into the line between the guards and tackles to hold up the wings when they try to release.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT RETURN PRACTICE DRILL

TIGHT PUNT WALL RETURN LEFT



SET-UP—All players line up in their proper position: ends, tackles and backers in a three-point stance; corners in a two-point stance.

Coach can be behind punt return players so that he can observe all of them as they hold up or rush.

Depth of punter can be adjusted back to 15 yards and should be set based on the depth used by the upcoming opponent.

DRILL—Coach should tell the punt return team if he wants the return to go to the left or the right.

Starting with LC, on coach's signal of GO, the LC should step into the RE, hit him in the shoulders with the palms of both hands, try to keep him from releasing down the field, and force him to the sideline. Stay with him for the entire play. If he gets to the inside, drive him into the center of the field. You have coverage on the end on fake punt pass attempt.

The coach should then work his way across the formation giving each player a chance to hold up the man in front of him and take his position for the left return.

The LE should step into the RT, hold him up, and force him to release into the center of the

field. Then he should turn to the outside and sprint 20 yards downfield, turn back to the inside of the field and set the wall (first man in wall).

The LT should step into the RG, hold him up, and force him to release into the center of the field. Then he should turn to the outside and sprint 15 yards downfield, turn back to the inside of the field, and set the wall (second man in wall).

The W backer should step into the RB, hold him up, make certain the ball is kicked, and then force him to release into the center of the field. Then he should turn to the outside and sprint 10 yards downfield, turn back to the inside of the field, and set the wall (third man in wall).

The M backer should step into the Center, hold him up, check the FB, and make certain the ball is kicked. Then he should force the center to release away from the side of the return, move to his left, and prepare to block the safety on the side of the return.

The S backer, RT, RE, and RC, should all step into their men, drive them back, make certain the ball is kicked, force their men to release

away from the side of the return, and stay with them for the entire return.

Coach can make corrections as players hold up and then react correctly for return.

REPETITION—Have each player hold up and set return twice individually and then do the hold-up drill three times as a group without kicking the ball.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt return team is moving properly to hold up the punt coverage players and that they are taking the correct path to return the punt.

COACHING TIP—As each player moves to hold up, check that:

They charge across the line on the signal.

They move into the center of the blocker.

They get their hands onto the shoulder area of the blocker.

They drive the blocker back for two counts.

Both DBs make contact and drive the ends to the outside.

Both inside linebackers step up into the line between the center and guard and make hand contact when the two backs release, driving them back, and keeping them on their side of the ball.

As each player moves after hold up, check that:

They execute their proper assignment for the return.

The Wall personnel set at the proper depth.

The other players stay with their man for the entire return.

Against spread punt:

Both corners should move out and line up on the inside shoulder of the gunners, forcing them to the sideline.

Both the S and W backers should move off the line and to the outside in front of the two wings, stepping into the line between the guards and tackles to hold up the wings when they try to release.

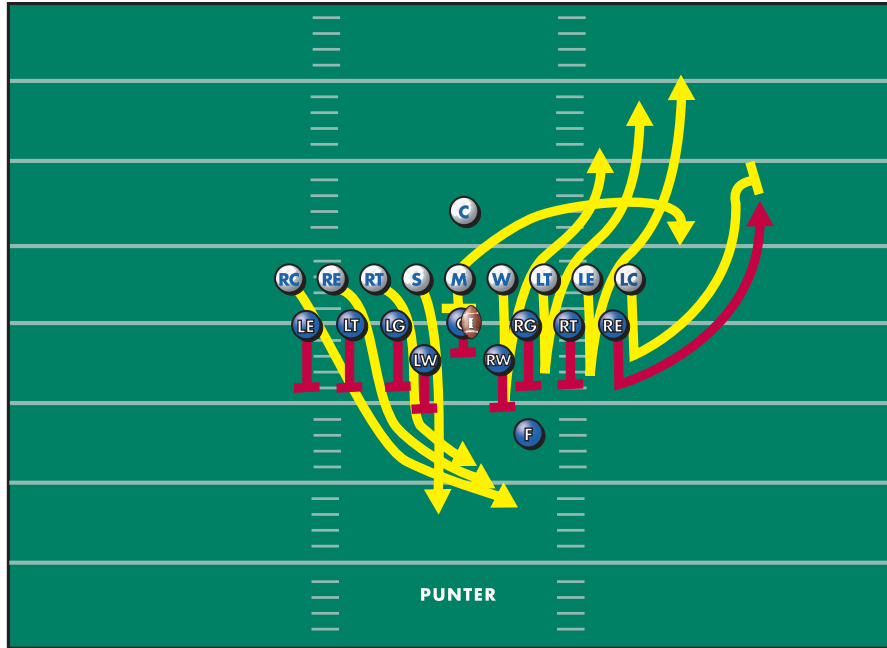
The W backer and LT will exchange positions on the wall for the Left return.

All assignments will be the opposite for a Right return, and it is good to work on both returns during your practice sessions.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT RETURN PRACTICE DRILL

TIGHT PUNT RUSH RIGHT



SET-UP—All players line up in their proper position: ends, tackles, and linebackers in a three-point stance; corners in a two-point stance.

Coach can be behind punt return players so that he can observe all of them as they rush.

Depth of punter can be adjusted back to 15 yards and should be set based on the depth used by the upcoming opponent.

DRILL—Coach should tell the punt return team if he wants the rush to come from the left or the right. Wall will automatically be set on the opposite side.

For a rush call, on coach's signal of GO, each player should rush to the inside gap of the man in front of him and aim for a point 3 yards in front of the punter. Go one at a time.

With a Rush Right call:

The RC, RE, RT, and the S backer will all rush through the inside shoulder of the man in front of them, using a crossover step with their right foot and a rip move with their right arm to clear the blocker.

All four players should aim for a spot 3 yards in front of the punter.

Have the rush men look at the punter's foot and the ball.

Have each of them rush so that their path is across the punter or to one side and never directly at the punter.

The LC, LE, LT, W, and M backers should execute their assignments for a Wall return left, but do not need to sprint all the way down field.

The punter can go through his normal steps but does not need to punt the ball every time you are practicing the rush.

REPETITION—Have each player rush twice individually and then have the entire side rush three times as a group, with the punter going through his steps but not kicking the ball.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt rush team is moving properly to avoid the punt blockers and that they are taking the correct rush path to block the punt without hitting the punter.

COACHING TIP—As each player moves to rush, check that:

They charge across the line on the snap.

They use a crossover step to get inside of the blocker.

They use a rip move to avoid the blocker.

They drive to a point 3 yards in front of the punter.

They cross their hands and arms as they go to block the ball.

Everyone understands a blocked ball is live and can be picked up and returned for a touchdown.

You can run a Cross Charge with the RE charging to the outside of the LT and the RC rushing behind the RE through the gap between the LG and LT.

Against spread punt:

Both corners should move out and line up on the inside shoulder of the gunners, forcing them to the sideline.

Both the S and W backers should move off the line and to the outside in front of the two wings.

The RE should rush outside the LT and then inside the LW, while the S backer should rush through the inside gap of the LT.

All assignments will be the opposite for a Rush Left and it is good to work on rushing from both sides during your practice sessions.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

PUNT RETURNERS PRACTICE DRILL

CENTER, PUNTER, PUNT RETURNERS

SET-UP—Depth of punter should be determined by ability of center making the snap (Right Return and Left Return) would base their position on the ability of the punter and will vary from 20 to 40 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Coach should be off to the side so that he has a clear view of:

The center snap.

The punter's catch, steps, and kick.

The returner's positioning and catching of the punt.

DRILL—On coach's command of READY, all four players should move into position with the center having the ball.

The punter should raise his hands and give the target area.

Center should make the snap when the punter is ready.

Punter should catch the snap, position the ball, make the proper drop, and punt the ball. Punt returner making the catch should call "I Have It," move under the punt, make the catch, and run the ball back 10 yards.

Other return man should move 10 yards in front of the catcher, call out "You Have It," and be in position to block once the catch is made. Players should then be positioned to repeat the drill.

REPETITION—Two return men can be rotated after every punt. Punter and center should punt at least five punts before they are changed.

GOAL—This drill serves as a check for the coach to see that the four specialists in the punting game—the center, punter, and punt returners—are using correct techniques for their positions.

COACHING TIP—Check that:

The center has a proper grip on the ball, that his hips and shoulders are even, and that he follows through on his snap with both hands.

The ball arrives at the target area.

The punter moves his body in front of the snap, catches the ball in both hands, positions the ball correctly as he steps forward, and that his drop and kick are smooth.

The punt return men are in proper position, that the returner moves in front of the punt, that he reaches up to make the catch seeing his hands and the ball at the time of the catch, and that he secures the ball and starts his return.

Both the return men and the punter can be closer at the beginning of the drill so that the center can gradually increase the length of his snap, and the punter can do the same with the distance of his punts.

PAT & FIELD GOAL PRACTICE DRILL

OFFENSIVE LINE AND WINGS

SET-UP—Have all players line up in tight formation in a proper stance. Coach should then designate what players he wants to execute correct steps for block—LW and LE, LT and LG, CENTER, RG and RT, RE and RW.

DRILL—On coach's command of HUT, designated players should take proper step and

assume correct blocking position.

Coach can then have entire right side go, then the left side, and finally the entire team together.

REPETITION—Have each group go twice, then each side twice, and finally the entire team go twice.

GOAL—This drill serves to check the steps and body positioning of the blockers for PAT and FG attempts.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The ends, tackles, and guards step back and in with their inside foot, bring both hands up to the center of their chest, extend their forearms and elbows to either side of their body, and block strong to the their inside gap.

The center goes through his normal snapping motion and then sets strong to aid both guards.

The tow wings step with their inside foot, bring both hands up to their chest, and block inside to outside rusher.

3-MAN KICKING DRILL

CENTER, KICKER, and HOLDER

SET-UP—Center lines up in position to make the short snap.

Holder lines up 7 yards away from and facing the center.

Kicker takes his steps and sets up facing kicking tee and holder.

If your practice field is lined, the center and holder can line up on a hashmark, allowing the kick to go down hashmark.

Goal post should not be added until the three-man group is working smoothly.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, all three players move and get into a proper stance for their positions.

For the first three kicks:

The holder should have both hands up with the ball.

The coach can then call out SNAP, the holder places the ball on the kicking tee, and the kicker moves forward and kicks the ball.

For the next five kicks after the holder and kicker are working together, the center should enter the drill.

The holder should check with the kicker to make certain that he is ready and then give the target to the center.

When the center sees the target position by the holder, he should snap the ball to the holder, the holder should make the catch, and place the ball on the kicking tee.

The kicker can move forward and kick the ball.

Coach can make corrections concerning the center's snap, the holder's placement, and the kicking motion of the kicker.

REPETITION—Have the holder and kicker kick three times, and then center, holder, and kicker kick at least five times together.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during prepractice for the coach to see that the center, the holder, and kicker are starting practice working together correctly as a three-man team.

COACHING TIP—Check that:

The center grips the ball correctly and makes the snap accurately.

The holder makes the catch and places the ball on the tee properly with the laces forward.

The kicker has a good approach and makes the kick correctly, and that he:

Leads with his hips.

Has his kicking leg moving properly.

Makes contact with the ball with the top inside center of his kicking foot.

Follows through toward the target.

The path of the ball is accurately kicked down the hash marks—do not emphasize distance.

If any of the three players is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until you feel that he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, remember to try a number of players at each of the positions until you find the winning combination that works smoothly.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

TEAM KICKING DRILL

SET-UP—Have the entire PAT/FG team line up with a rush team.

Ball can be placed on the 10-yard line, eliminating the need for the kicker to kick the ball for distance.

DRILL—During the drill, only rush one side at a time to allow for specific coaching and to avoid injury.

Defensive players should initially rush at three-quarter speed.

Drill should start with center snap.

Center is part of the drill for both sides.

REPETITION—Have each side take at least three snaps. Then you can have a full team rush live two times.

GOAL—This drill serves to demonstrate to the coach that the players know how to block properly against a rush for a PAT or FG kick and that the center, holder, and kicker can work under the pressure of the rush.

COACHING TIP — Make certain that:

Each blocker steps with his proper foot, protects the inside gap, and makes good contact with the rush man.

That all blockers hold their ground and are not driven back into the kicker.

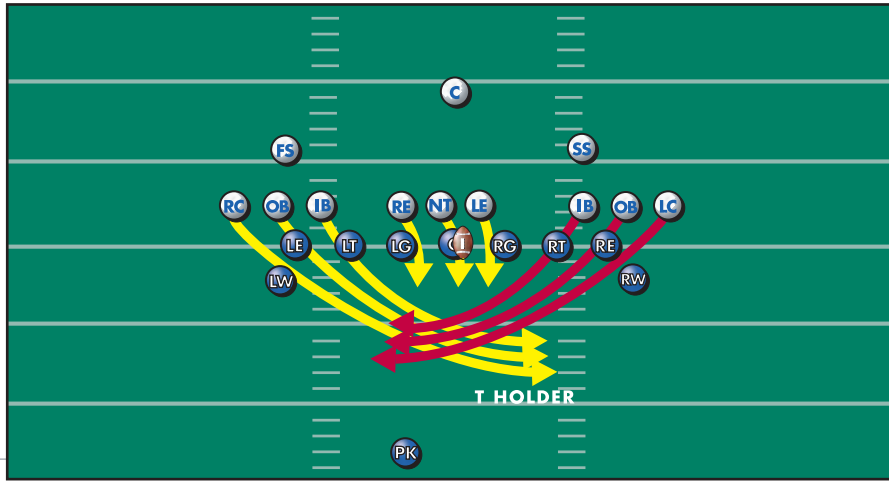
The center snap is accurate.

The ball is caught and placed correctly by the holder.

The kicker's motion is smooth and that his kick is good.

All players understand that a blocked ball is live and can be picked up and run for a touchdown by a defensive player.

TEAM RUSHING DRILL



SET-UP—Have the entire rush team line up against a PAT/FG team.

Ball can be placed on the 10-yard line in the center of the field and then on both hashmarks.

DRILL—Rush team should be divided into three units consisting of right corner, outside linebacker, and inside linebacker (RC, ROB, RIB); right end, nose tackle, and left end (RE, NT, LE); left corner, outside linebacker, and inside linebacker (LC, LOB, LIB).

During the drill, only rush one unit at a time to allow for specific coaching and to avoid injury.

Defensive players should initially rush at three-quarter speed.

Drill should start with center snap.

Center is part of the drill when interior men rush.

Kicker should go through motion of making the kick.

Ball should only be kicked at the end of the drill.

REPETITION—Have each rush unit rush for at least for four snaps—two without the kicker kicking the ball and two with the ball being kicked—then you can have each outside rush unit and the interior rush men rush live two times.

GOAL—This drills serves to demonstrate to the coach that the rush players know which gaps to rush through and that they know where to rush to block the kick.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Each rush unit lines up tight to one another in the proper position.

Both corners rush tight, just outside of the wing, and then flatten out aiming for a point 1 yard in front of the holder and anticipate the wing moving in to block OB.

Both outside linebackers rush through the gap between the wings and the ends and then flatten out aiming for a point one yard in front of the holder. They anticipate the end moving in to block the IB.

Both inside linebackers drive hard through the inside shoulder of the end through the end/tackle gap and then flatten out aiming for a point 1 yard in front of the holder.

The nose tackle should line up directly in front of the path of the ball, and the three interior rush men should rush over two blockers. After driving three steps, all three players should raise their hands to deflect the kick.

Any outside rush man who is not blocked should be prepared to leave his feet, turn his body so that his chest is facing the kicker, and cross his arms keeping his hands open as he dives to block the ball.

The safety on each side looks for a fake-kick pass any time his outside men are involved in the rush.

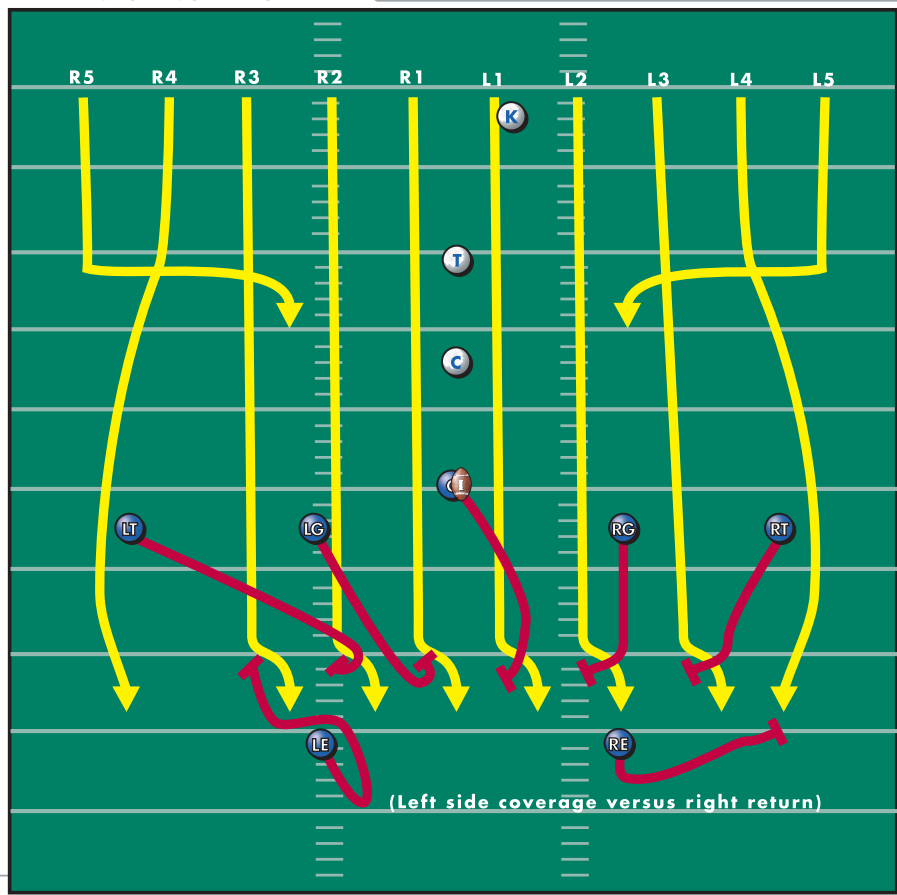
All rush people know that a blocked kick is a free ball and can be picked up and run for a score.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

KICKOFF

TEAM KICKOFF COVERAGE



SET-UP—Line up all 11 players of the kickoff coverage team in their proper positions.

Seven blockers should be lined up as shown in the diagram.

DRILL—Coach should designate which side, left or right, will be live in the drill.

On coach's command of **STANCE**, the five coverage men will get into their stance to cover the kickoff (three- or two-point stance).

Coach should then call **GO**, and the kicker should approach the tee and simulate making the kick. Initially no ball is kicked.

Five coverage men should sprint down the field to cover the kick and determine the man who is assigned to block him.

Coverage players should be taught to avoid

the blocker on the opposite side of the block or, if that is not possible, to avoid the block and then fight to widen out. Have hands up to attack blocker.

Blockers are assigned coverage players to block prior to Coverage.

REPETITION—Have each side cover twice with the return to their side and once with the return to the opposite side. Then have the full team cover as the ball is kicked with blocking for a right, left, and middle return.

GOAL—This drill serves to demonstrate that the kickoff coverage players know their coverage lanes and know how to adjust properly to the blocking being used on the return.

COACHING TIP – Make certain that:

The coverage men run full speed and that they are not offside.

Each man stays in his coverage lane.

Each player avoids the blocker on the opposite side of the block, using his hands to get free of blocker by hitting the blocker's hand down and thrusting both hands into the blocker's numbers to knock him off balance.

When that is not possible, he should run around the block by lowering his near shoulder and ripping his near arm up and back to clear the block. Then he must immediately get back into his assigned coverage lane.

When the blocker faces him square and does not take a side, he attacks the blocker with the palms of both hands hitting him in the numbers and then continuing down the field to the side of the ball.

Coverage men do not slow down when reaching the blocker.

Both R5 and L5 fall back in behind the coverage men and act as safeties to their side.

Both R4 and L4 keep the ball carrier to their inside.

Blocking linemen (LT, LG, C, RG, RT) drop back 10 yards to set up to block.

Blocking assignments for:

A right return against Left side coverage would be:

RE block out on L4

RT block in on L3

RG block in on L2

C block in on L1

A right return against Right side coverage would be:

LE block out on R3

LT block out on R2

LG block out R1

On a left return the blocking would be opposite.

On a middle return the blocking would be:

RE lead up field and block L1

LE lead up field and block R1

RT block out on L3

LT block out on R3

RG block out on L2

LG block out on R2

Center blocks straight ahead on the kicker.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

KICKOFF

KICKER & KICK RETURN MAN

SET-UP—Have the kicker place the ball on the tee and take his normal steps to line up for a kickoff.

Have the two return men line up down the field on the outside of either hashmark.

The distance the return men line up from the tee should be determined by the how far the kicker drives his kickoffs.

DRILL—Coach should tell the two return men the direction he wants the kick returned (Left, Middle, Right).

On the coach's command of GO, the kicker should approach the ball and make the kick.

As the ball is in the air, the two return men should decide who is making the catch.

Return man making the catch should move so that he is directly in the path of the kick and call out "I have it" to his partner.

Return man not making the catch should move up 4 yards in front of and 3 yards to the side of his partner and call back "You have it." He should see that the catch is made.

Once the catch is made, the return man without the ball should lead the ball carrier up the field to either the right, left, or middle for 20 yards.

The kicker does not need to cover downfield after he makes the kick.

REPETITION—Have each set of return men field and return the kick twice in each direction. Try to have both return men have an opportunity to make the catch.

GOAL—The drill serves to demonstrate to the coach that the two return men work as a unit clearly designating who is the returner, know how to get into position to insure making the catch, and they understand how to work together bringing the ball up the field on the return.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The kick return men quickly call out their responsibilities on the return.

The player calling for the ball:

Moves into position so that he is directly in the path of the kicked ball.

Times his catch so that he is moving forward as he makes the catch.

Makes the catch with his elbow in to his

sides, his arms extend forward and up so that he sees both his hands and the ball at the moment of the catch.

Makes the catch with his palms up, little fingers together, fingers spread, and wrist cocked slightly down to the ground.

Immediately secures the ball into his body.

Follows his partner up the field.

The player not returning the ball:

Moves to position 4 yards in front of and 3 yards to the side of the player making the catch.

Turns his head and looks back to insure that his partner makes the catch and secures the ball.

Then turns and leads the ball carrier up the field in the direction of the return called by the coach.

Both return men run hard up the field for 20 yards.

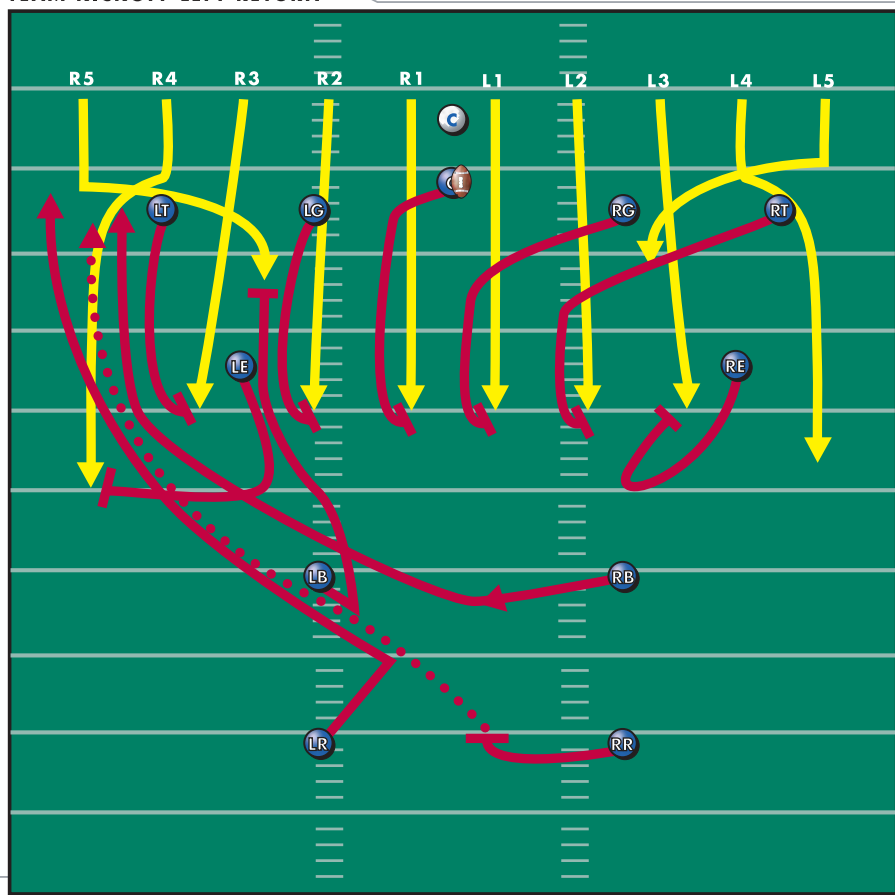
Both return men understand that a kickoff is a free kick, and the kicking team can recover and gain possession of the ball if the ball is not caught or downed.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

KICKOFF

TEAM KICKOFF LEFT RETURN



SET-UP—Line up the 10 cover men 5 yards away from the front line of the return team.

Line up return team with:

LT, LG, CEN, RG, and RT 11 to 12 yards from the tee.

LE and RE should be 10 yards deeper than the line.

LB and RB should be 10 yards deeper than the ends.

LR and RR should line up 10 to 15 yards deeper than the backs.

Ball does not need to be in the drill.

DRILL—Coach should designate which players he wants in the drill, starting with the center and players on the side of the return.

Coach should then tell the coverage people on the side of the return to take part in the drill.

On coach's command of GO, blockers should start dropping back into their proper locations to block 15 yards downfield.

When the coach sees that the blockers have dropped 5 yards, he should drop his arm, and the coverage players can begin running down the field in their lanes at three-quarter speed.

Two return men should make their calls, simulate making the catch, and return up the field on the designated return.

Blockers should stay with their men until the coach blows the whistle ending the drill.

Coach should then have the remaining blockers and coverage men from the other side execute the drill in the same manner.

REPETITION—Have each group of blockers run the drill twice.

GOAL—This drills serves to demonstrate to the coach that the blockers know how to drop properly, that they know which coverage man to block, and that they understand how to get into position to make the block correctly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The blockers sprint to their proper locations, turning to the side of the return as they drop in position to block.

They keep good eye contact with the coverage man they are assigned to block.

They get a good bend in their knees and keep their feet moving when they set to block.

They have their elbows in at their sides, forearms up, with the palms of both hands in front of their numbers and facing forward.

As they make contact, the hand farthest downfield should hit the coverage man's chest, and the other hand should be driven into the outside of his shoulder pad forcing him away from the return.

They stay with their block until the whistle blows.

The LT drops to a position outside of the R3 and blocks him in.

The LG drops to a position outside of the R2 and blocks him in.

The CENTER drops to a position outside of the R1 and blocks him in.

The LE drops to a position inside of R4 and blocks him out.

The LB drops to a position inside of R5 and blocks him out.

The RT drops to a position inside of L2 and blocks him out.

The RG drops to a position inside of L1 and blocks him.

The RE drops to a position inside of L3 and blocks him.

The RB drops back to the side of the return 5 yards in front of the return men, checks to see if L4 needs to be blocked. If not, he leads the ball carrier to the left with the other return man.

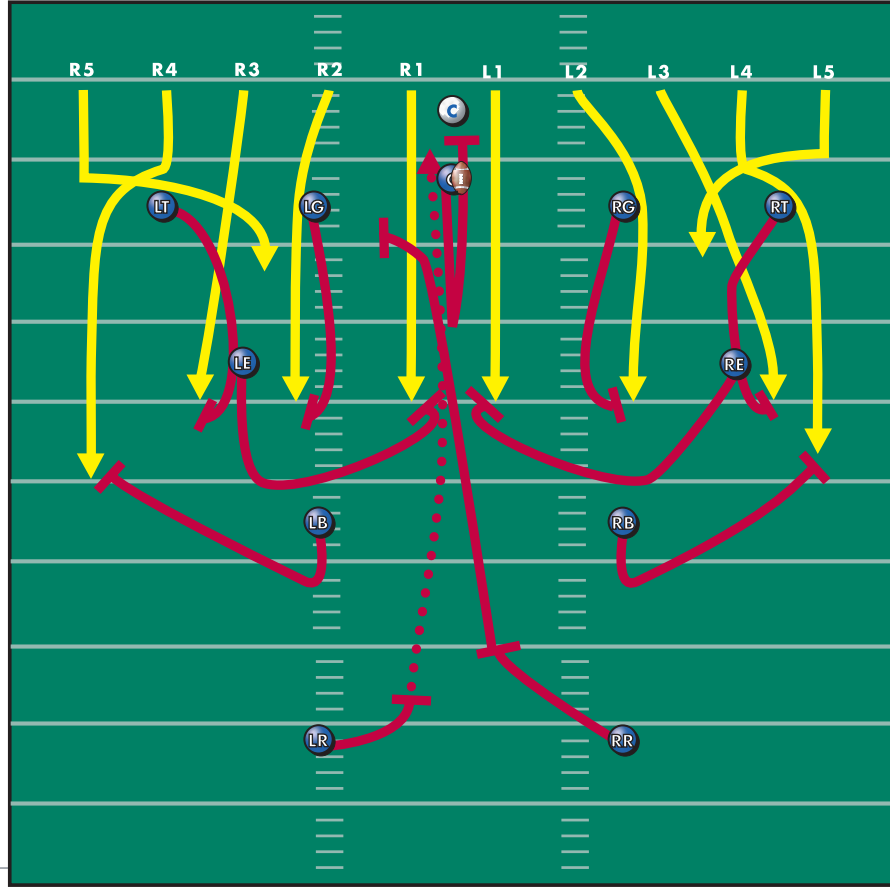
The return man not returning the ball should move up on the inside of the RB and then lead the ball carrier up the field to the left.

During the season, the two return men can be as deep as needed, based on the opposing kicker's ability.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

KICKOFF

TEAM KICKOFF MIDDLE RETURN



SET-UP—Line up the 10 cover men 5 yards away from the front line of the return team.

Line up return team with:

LT, LG, CEN, RG, and RT 11 to 12 yards from the tee.

LE and RE should be 10 yards deeper than the line.

LB and RB should be 10 yards deeper than the ends.

LR and RR should line up 10 to 15 yards deeper than the backs.

Ball does not need to be in the drill.

DRILL—Coach should designate which players he wants to work in the drill, starting with the guard, tackle, and back on each side and then the center and the two ends (3 groups).

Coach should then tell the coverage people (2, 3, 4) on one side of the return to take part

in the drill, then the coverage people (2, 3, 4) on the other side, and finally the number-one coverage people on both sides.

On coach's command of GO, blockers should start dropping back into their proper locations to block 15 yards down field.

When the coach sees that the blockers have dropped 5 yards, he should drop his arm, and the coverage players can begin running down the field in their lanes at three-quarter speed.

Two return men should make their calls, simulate making the catch, and return up the field on the designated return.

Blockers should stay with their men until the coach blows the whistle ending the drill.

Coach should make certain to have all three blocking groups run the drill against the appropriate coverage men.

REPETITION—Have each group of blockers run the drill twice.

GOAL—This drills serves to demonstrate to the coach that the blockers know how to drop properly, that they know which coverage man to block, and that they understand how to get into position to make the block correctly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The blockers sprint to their proper locations, turning to the center of the field as they drop in position to block.

They keep good eye contact with the coverage man they are assigned to block.

They get a good bend in their knees and keep their feet moving when they set to block.

They have their elbows in at their sides, forearms up, with the palms of both hands in front of their numbers and facing forward.

As they make contact, the hand farthest downfield should hit the coverage man's chest, and the other hand should be driven into the outside of his shoulder pad forcing him away from the return.

They stay with their block until the whistle blows.

The LB drops to a position inside of the R4 and blocks him out.

The LT drops to a position inside of the R3 and blocks him out.

The LG drops to a position inside of the R2 and blocks him out.

The RG drops to a position inside of L2 and blocks him out.

The RT drops to a position inside of L3 and blocks him out.

The RB drops to a position inside of L4 and blocks him out.

The LE drops to a position inside of R1, leads up the field, and blocks R1 to the outside.

The CENTER drops straight back 10 yards, turns, and then leads up the field to block the kicker, driving him toward either sideline.

The RE drops to a position inside of L1 leads up the field and blocks L1 to the outside.

The return man not returning the ball should move up and then lead the ball carrier straight up the field toward the kicker, looking for either safety man (L5, R5).

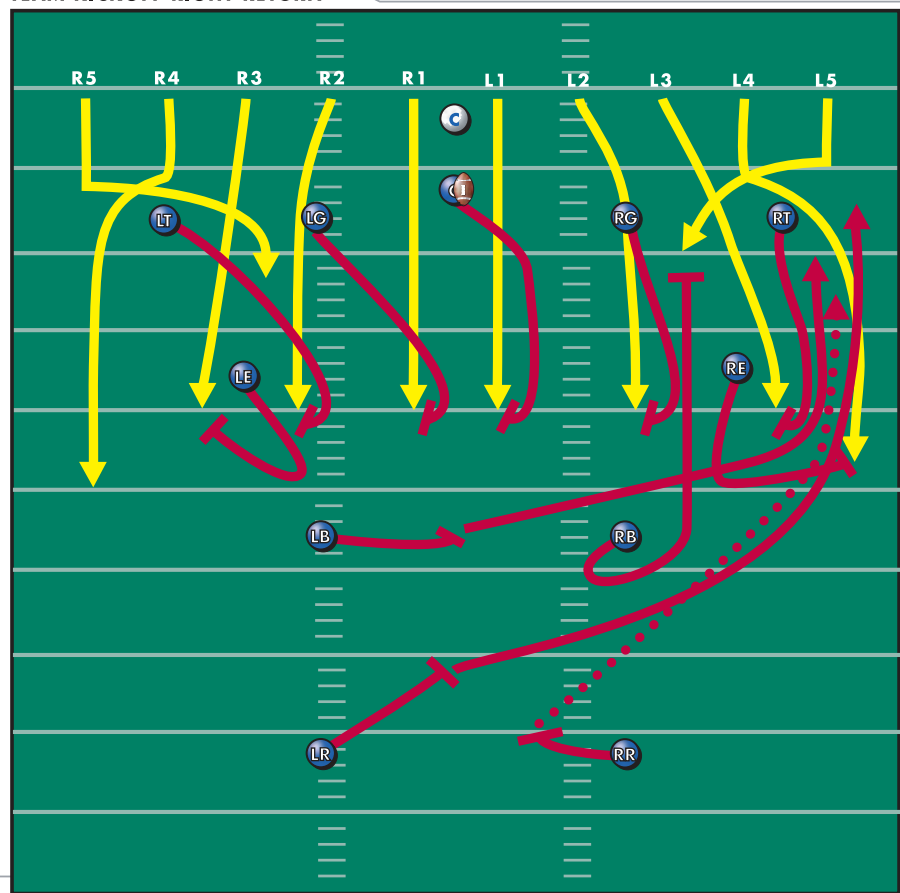
During the season, the two return men can be as deep as needed, based on the opposing kicker's ability.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS

KICKOFF

TEAM KICKOFF RIGHT RETURN



SET-UP—Line up the 10 cover men 5 yards away from the front line of the return team.

Line up return team with:

LT, LG, CEN, RG, and RT 11 to 12 yards from the tee.

LE and RE should be 10 yards deeper than the line.

LB and RB should be 10 yards deeper than the ends.

LR and RR should line up 10 to 15 yards deeper than the backs.

Ball does not need to be in the drill.

DRILL—Coach should designate which players he wants to work in the drill, starting with the center and players on the side of the return.

Coach should then tell the coverage people on the side of the return to take part in the drill.

On coach's command of GO, blockers should start dropping back into their proper locations to block 15 yards down field.

When the coach sees that the blockers have dropped 5 yards, he should drop his arm, and the coverage players can begin running down the field in their lanes three-quarter speed.

Two return men should make their calls, simulate making the catch, and return up the field on the designated return.

Blockers should stay with their men until the coach blows the whistle ending the drill.

Coach should then have the remaining blockers and coverage men from the other side execute the drill in the same manner.

REPETITION—Have each group of blockers run the drill twice.

GOAL—This drills serves to demonstrate to the

coach that the blockers know how to drop properly, that they know which coverage man to block, and that they understand how to get into position to make the block correctly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

The blockers sprint to their proper locations, turning to the side of the return as they drop in position to block.

They keep good eye contact with the coverage man they are assigned to block.

They get a good bend in their knees and keep their feet moving when they set to block.

They have their elbows in at their sides, forearms up, with the palms of both hands in front of their numbers and facing forward.

As they make contact, the hand farthest downfield should hit the coverage man's chest, and the other hand should be driven into the outside of his shoulder pad forcing him away from the return.

They stay with their block until the whistle blows.

The RT drops to a position outside of the L3 and blocks him in.

The RG drops to a position outside of the L2 and blocks him in.

The CENTER drops to a position outside of the L1 and blocks him in.

The RE drops to a position inside of L4 and blocks him out.

The RB drops to a position inside of L5 and blocks him out.

The LT drops to a position inside of R2 and blocks him out.

The LG drops to a position inside of R1 and blocks him out.

The LE drops to a position inside of R3 and blocks him.

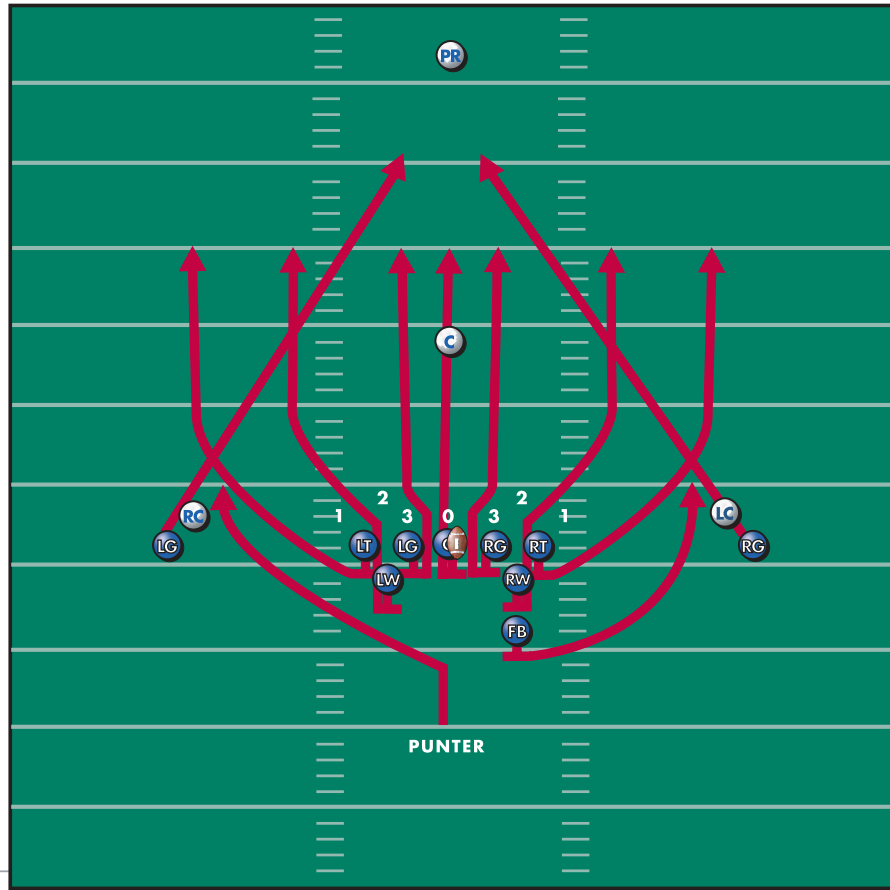
The LB drops back to the side of the return 5 yards in front of the return men and checks to see if R4 needs to be blocked. If not, he leads the ball carrier to the right with the other return man.

The return man not returning the ball should move up on the inside of the LB and then lead the ball carrier up the field to the right.

During the season, the two return men can be as deep as needed, based on the opposing kicker's ability.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

SPREAD PUNT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT AND RIGHT GUNNER-[LG and RG]

Release immediately on the snap of the ball, avoid blocker and sprint straight at the punt return man [PR].

Check PR for fair catch signal and avoid making contact if he does signal.

Near opponent's goal line and if return man signals for a fair catch, go past PR and turn back to try to down the ball before it can cross the goal line.

LEFT AND RIGHT TACKLE-[LT and RT]

Push back, set and block first man to your inside first.

Be alert for stunts between 2 and 3 or 1 and 2.

When ball is punted, release to the outside. Widen as you sprint.

Keep PR to your inside, and never allow PR to get outside of you.

LEFT AND RIGHT GUARD-[LG and RG]

Push back, set, and block first rusher to your inside first.

Be alert for stunts between 2 and 3 or quick A gap charge by O on center.

Release when the ball is kicked.

Widen slightly as you sprint.

Keep PR on your inside shoulder.

CENTER-[CN] Make certain of the snap, set back, block O, release when ball is punted, and sprint straight for PR.

LEFT AND RIGHT WING-[LW and RW] Push back, set, and check B gap, then block first rusher to the outside if free.

Release on punt between the tackle and guard.

Widen out keeping PR to your inside shoulder.

FULLBACK-[FB] Count players on the team.

Check to see that everyone is ready and set on snap.

Do not back up.

Always favor the side of any four-man rush.

Block any rusher who comes free.

Release to your right after punt, and serve as a safety to that side.

PUNTER-Adjust your position so that your body is in front of the flight of the ball.

Secure the snap.

Take your proper steps and make the punt.

Release to your left after punt and serve as a safety to that side.

COACHING TIP-The distance the punter lines up away from the line of scrimmage should be determined by the ability of your center. An ideal distance would be 15 yards, but that may not always be realistic.

All blockers must set and block for at least two counts before they release, widen out, and sprint down field in coverage.

All coverage men must try to avoid any blocker so that they keep the PR on their proper side.

Players must break down as they near the PR (shorten their strides, widen their base, bend their knees, backs straight, heads up ready to tackle).

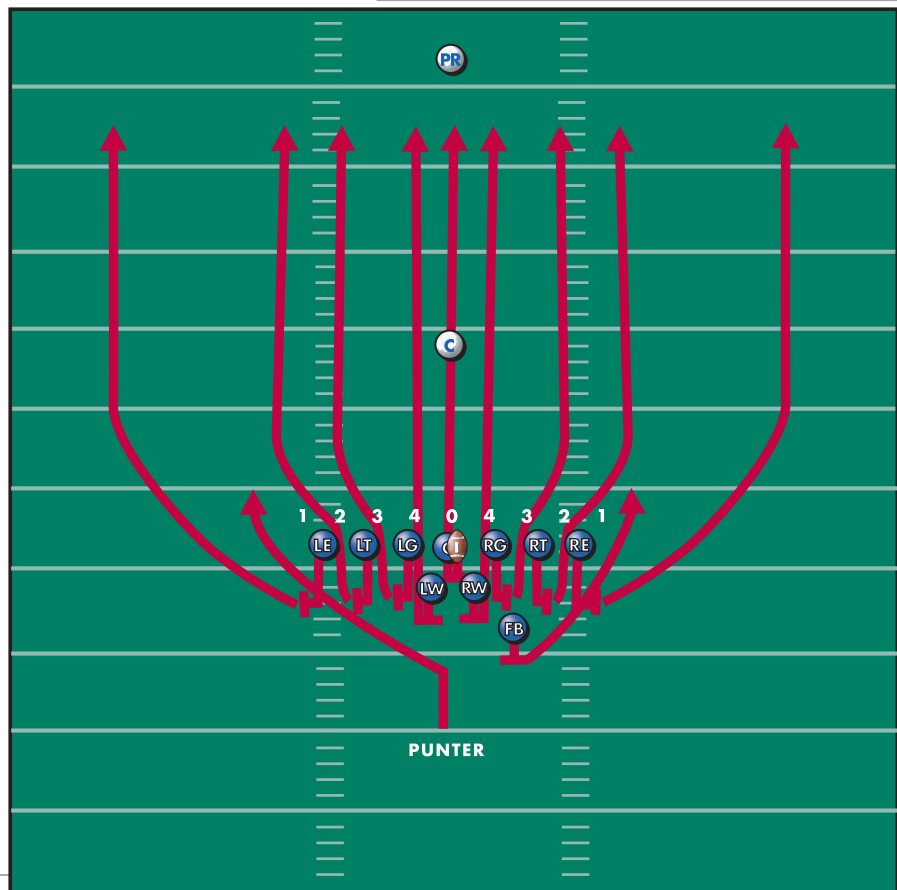
Make certain that every player on the punt team understands that a punted ball is not a free ball, and if the PR muffs the catch, the ball can only be recovered, it cannot be advanced.

All coverage men should be prepared to down (pick up the ball and hold it until the whistle blows) any punt that is not caught and is bouncing back to your goal line.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

TIGHT PUNT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT AND RIGHT END—[LE and RE] Set back and turn to outside.

Hit outside rusher #1 and push him wide.

Release to the outside and contain punt returner [PR].

Keep him on your inside shoulder.

LEFT AND RIGHT TACKLE—[LT and RT]

Push back, set, turn outside and block first man to your outside #2.

When ball is punted, release to the outside.

Widen as you sprint, and keep PR to your inside.

LEFT AND RIGHT GUARD—[LG and RG] Push back, set, turn outside, and block first rusher to your outside #3.

Release when the ball is kicked, and widen slightly as you sprint, and keep PR on your inside shoulder.

CENTER—[CN] Make certain of the snap, set back, block O, release when ball is punted, and sprint straight for PR.

LEFT AND RIGHT WING—[LW and RW] Step up, set, and check A gap.

Block first rusher into the A gap #4.

Release on punt between the center and guard, and widen slightly keeping PR to your inside shoulder.

FULLBACK—[FB] Count players on the team.

Check to see that everyone is ready and set on snap.

Do not back up.

Always favor the side of any five man rush.

Block any rusher who comes free.

Release to your right after punt and serve as a safety to that side.

PUNTER—Adjust your position so that your body is in front of the flight of the ball.

Secure the snap.

Take your proper steps and make the punt.

Release to your left after punt and serve as a safety to that side.

COACHING TIP—The distance the punter lines up away from the line of scrimmage should be determined by the ability of your center. An ideal distance would be 15 yards, but that may not always be realistic.

All blockers, except left and right end, must set and block for at least two counts before they release, widen out, and sprint down field in coverage.

All coverage men must try to avoid any blocker so that they keep the PR on their proper side.

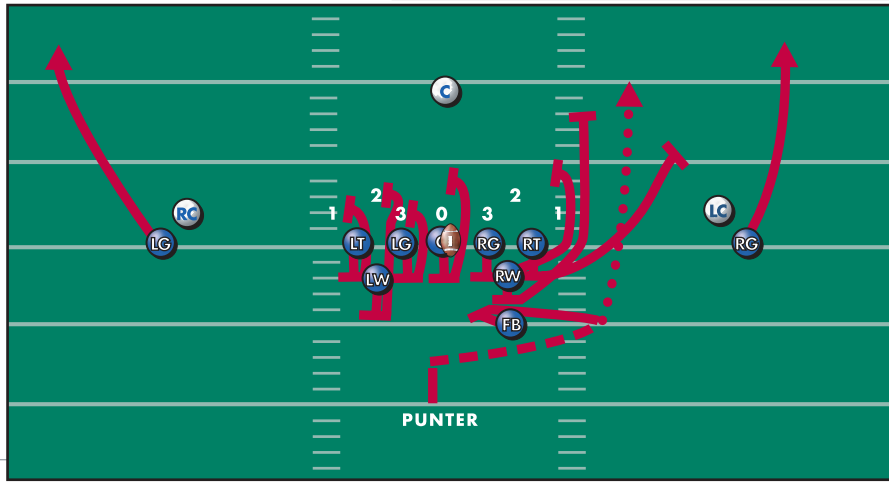
Players must break down as they near the PR (shorten their strides, widen their base, bend their knees, backs straight, heads up ready to tackle).

Make certain that every player on the punt team understands that a punted ball is not a free ball, and if the PR muffs the catch, the ball can only be recovered, it cannot be advanced.

All coverage men should be prepared to down (pick up the ball and hold it until the whistle blows) any punt that is not caught and is bouncing back to your goal line.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

SPREAD PUNT-SCREEN PASS TO FB



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT AND RIGHT GUNNER—[LG and RG] Release immediately on the snap of the ball to the outside, take corner with you down the field, and keep running but be prepared to block corner once he sees screen pass being thrown.

RIGHT TACKLE AND GUARD—[RT and RG] Push back, set, and block first man to your inside first.

Be alert for stunts.

Block for two counts and release wide to your outside.

Look up the field.

Lead FB after catch.

Right tackle be prepared to block out and guard be prepared to block in.

Keep running up the field as far as you can.

CENTER—[CN] Make certain of the snap, set back, block 0, try to force 0 to rush to your left side, release when ball is punted, and look to your left to block LB [#2] who may be reacting

to screen.

LEFT TACKLE AND GUARD—[LT and LG] Push back, set, and block first rusher to your inside first.

Try to force him to your left.

Stay with rush man.

Be alert for stunts.

RIGHT WING—[RW] Push back, set, and check B gap then block first rusher to the outside if free.

Block for two counts and release wide to your outside.

Look up the field.

Lead FB after catch.

Block most dangerous man, and keep running up the field as far as you can.

LEFT WING—[LW] Push back, set, and check B gap, then block first rusher to the outside if free.

Try to force him to your left.

Stay with rush man.

Be alert for stunts.

FULLBACK—[FB] Count players on the team, check to see that everyone is ready, and move up and in one step on snap.

Check rush man over center [0].

Push him to your left if he comes free.

Hold two counts release to your right.

Turn upper body and look back over right shoulder for the ball.

Make the catch and secure the ball.

Follow RT, RW, and RG up the field.

PUNTER—Adjust your position so that your body is in front of the flight of the ball, and secure the snap.

Start your steps forward.

Stop and turn your body to the right.

Step at FB with foot opposite your passing hand.

Deliver ball to FB's outside shoulder.

COACHING TIP—The distance the punter lines up away from the line of scrimmage should be determined by the ability of your center. An ideal distance would be 15 yards, but that may not always be realistic.

All blockers to the screen side must set, sell the punt, and then block for at least two counts before they release to the right, widen out, and sprint down field to block for the FB.

All blockers away from the screen should stay with their rush men until the play is over.

Screen pass is best run to the side of a return if the return team is running players down the field to set up a wall.

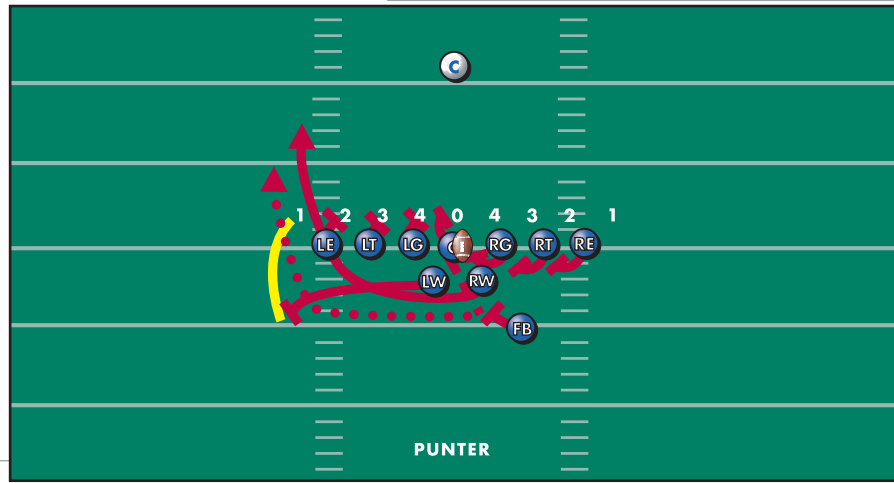
Only run screen if punter can accurately pass the ball and fullback has the hands to make the catch.

Emphasize to the fullback that he should always know the yardage needed to make a first down and run for the first-down marker.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

TIGHT PUNT-COUNTER LEFT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT END, TACKLE AND GUARD—[LE, LT, and LG] Angle block to your right on the first defensive man to the inside (LE on 2, LT on 3, LG on 4).

Stop rusher from penetrating across the line, and drive him in toward the center.

Stay with the block until the play is over.

CENTER—[CN] Make certain of short snap to fullback, set back, block O, and force him to your right.

Stay with the block until the play is over.

RIGHT GUARD, TACKLE AND END—[RG, RT, and RE] Push back, set, and block first man to your inside (RG on 4, RT on 3, RE on 2).

Stop rusher from penetrating across the line, and drive him in toward the center.

Stay with the block until the play is over.

LEFT AND RIGHT WING—[LW and RW] Pull to your left on snap.

LW trap block out on #1 rusher coming from outside of LE.

RW belly back and turn up the field between blocks of LW and LE.

Lead fullback up the field, keep running, look to inside first, and block most dangerous man.

FULLBACK—[FB] Count players on the team, and check to see that everyone is ready. Move to inside of RW.

Take the direct snap from the center.
Secure the ball.
Take short counter step to your right with right foot, and run to your left.

Follow RW, and cut up the field in between the blocks of the LW and LE.

PUNTER—Adjust your position so that your body is in front of the flight of the ball.

Jump in the air to simulate a high snap over your head.

Turn and run back to your goal line.

Try to make rushers chase you.

COACHING TIP—The distance the punter lines up away from the line of scrimmage should be determined by the ability of your center. An ideal distance would be 15 yards, but that may not always be realistic.

Because we are running the ball, all blockers must execute their blocks on the snap.

If #1 charges straight down the line behind the LE's block, have the LW block #1 in. The RW and FB can go around this block and run the play to the outside.

Fullback must cheat over to his left so that the center has a clear path to snap him the ball.

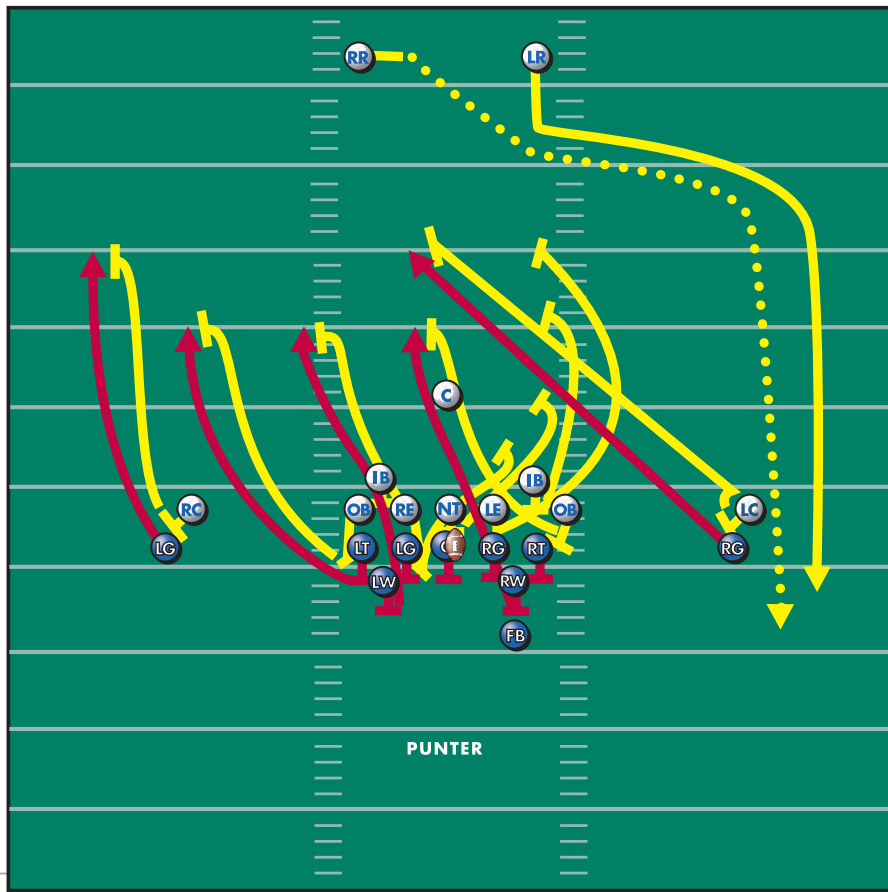
Counter play is best run opposite the side of a return.

Only run play if punt team players can execute the needed blocks.

Emphasize to the fullback that he should always know the yardage needed to make a first down and run for the first down.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

LEFT PUNT RETURN



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT CORNER-[LC] Line up shaded outside of Right Gunner [RG].
 Drive palm of right hand into RG's chest, and keep him on the line.
 Force RG to take inside release, and drive him into the center of the field.
 Keep contact all the way down the field.

LEFT OUTSIDE BACKER-[LOB] Step hard into RT, and drive him back toward the punter.
 Make certain that the ball is kicked.
 Force the RT into the center of the field, and keep contact all the way down the field.

LEFT END-[LE] Step hard into Right Guard [RG] and keep him on line.
 Make certain the ball is kicked.
 Push RG toward center.
 Turn back to your left.
 Sprint down field 20 yards.
 Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark.
 Be first man in the wall for the return.

LEFT INSIDE BACKER-[LIB] Keep coverage on RW until ball is kicked.
 If RW releases, keep him on line and force

him to the center of the field.
 Push RW toward center.
 Turn back to your left.
 Sprint down field 15 yards.
 Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark, and be second man in the wall for the return.

NOSE TACKLE-[NT] Hold up center [CN] with both hands, and keep him on line.
 Make certain the ball is kicked.
 Push CN to your right.
 Turn back to your left.
 Sprint down field 10 yards.
 Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark, and be third man in the wall for the return.

RIGHT END-[RE] Step hard into Left Guard [LG] and keep him on line.
 Make certain the ball is kicked.
 Push LG to your right.
 Turn back to your left.
 Sprint down field 5 yards.
 Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark.
 Be fourth man in the wall for the return.

RIGHT INSIDE BACKER-[RIB] Keep coverage on LW until ball is kicked.
 When LW releases, keep him on line and force LW to your right.
 Keep him to the outside, and stay with him all the way down the field.

RIGHT OUTSIDE BACKER-[ROB] Step hard into the LT, and drive him as far back toward the punter as you can.
 Make certain the ball is kicked.
 Force the LT to your right, and keep him to the outside.
 Stay with him all the way down the field.

RIGHT CORNER-[RC] Line up shaded inside of Left Gunner [LG].
 Drive palm of right hand into LG's chest, and keep him on the line.
 Force [LG] to take outside release, and put pressure on punter and make sure he punts the ball.
 Continue toward far sideline.
 Turn back to center of the field, and be prepared to block opponent who is the safety to the side of return.

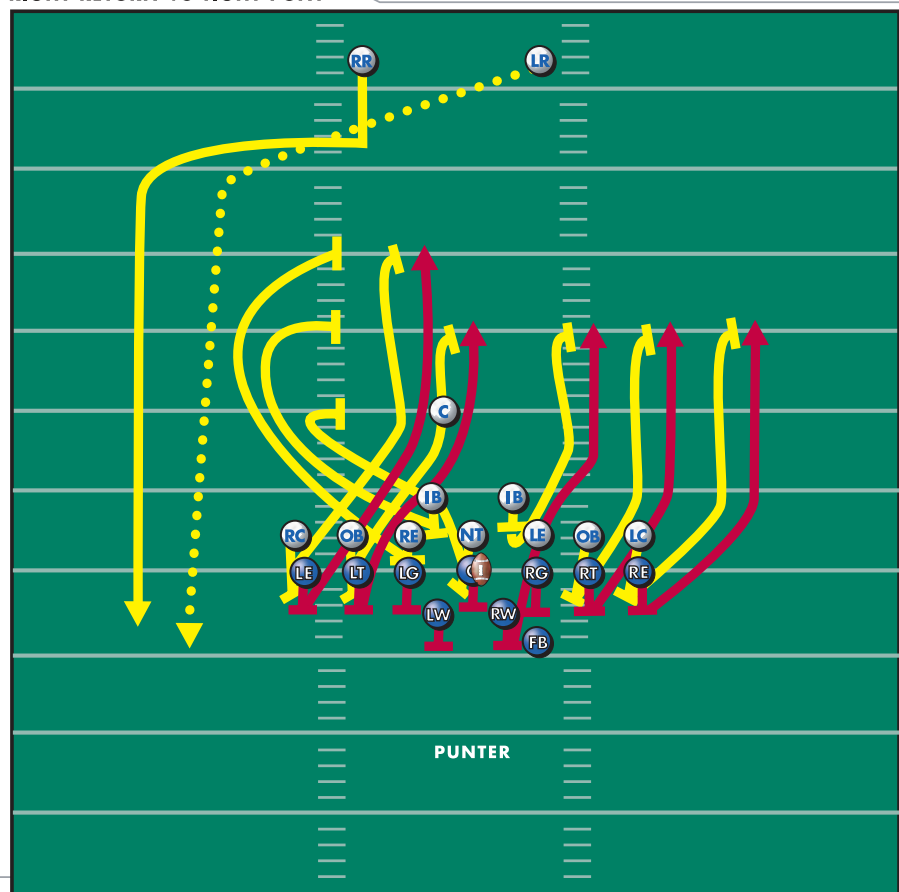
RIGHT AND LEFT RETURN MEN-[RR, LR] Man not making the catch should move up 6 yards in front and to the side of returner.
 Call back "YOU HAVE IT," and be prepared to block the first man down the field.
 If no one is there, he can lead up the field on the outside of the wall.
 Man making the return should call out "I HAVE IT," make the catch, secure the ball, break to his left, and try to get to the outside of the wall that is forming on the hashmarks.
 Return the punt as far as he can.

COACHING TIP-Make certain that every player on the punt return team understands that once the ball is kicked, it becomes their ball and does not need to be caught or touched down.
 Remind all blockers to get into a good position to block, to always block with their head in front of the coverage man, to stay balanced and avoid grabbing the coverage man, and to eliminate all penalties on a return.
 On any short kick or kick near the sideline, the return men have the option to run and make the catch, signal for a fair catch, or allow the ball to roll dead.
 When signaling for a fair catch, the return man must give a good signal. After the catch is made, he may not advance the ball.
 Make certain that all players are alert for a fake punt (run or pass) and that they react if the ball is not punted.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

RIGHT RETURN VS TIGHT PUNT



ASSIGNMENTS

RIGHT CORNER–[RC] Line up shaded outside of LE.

Drive palm of left hand into LE’s chest and keep him on the line.

Force LE to take inside release and drive him into the center of the field.

Keep contact all the way down the field.

RIGHT OUTSIDE BACKER–[ROB] Step hard into LT and drive him back toward the punter.

Make certain that the ball is kicked.

Force the LT into the center of the field and keep contact all the way down the field.

RIGHT END–[RE] Step hard into LG and keep him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push LG toward center.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 20 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark and be first man in the wall for the return.

RIGHT INSIDE BACKER–[RIB] Keep cover-

age on LW until ball is kicked.

If LW releases, keep him on line and force him to the center of the field.

Push LW toward center.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 15 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark and be second man in the wall for the return.

NOSE TACKLE–[NT] Hold up center [CN] with both hands and keep him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push CN to your left.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 10 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark and be third man in the wall for the return.

LEFT INSIDE BACKER–[LIB] Keep coverage on RW until ball is kicked.

When RW releases, keep him on line and force RW to your left.

Keep him to the outside, and stay with him all the way down the field.

LEFT END–[LE] Step hard into RG and keep him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push RG to your left.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 5 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark and be fourth man in the wall for the return.

LEFT OUTSIDE BACKER–[LOB] Step hard into the RT, and drive him as far back toward the punter as you can.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Force the RT to your left.

Keep him to the outside and stay with him all the way down the field.

LEFT CORNER–[LC] Line up shaded inside of RE.

Drive palm of left hand into RE’s chest and keep him on the line.

Force RE to take outside release and put pressure on punter and make sure he punts the ball.

Continue toward far sideline.

Turn back to center of the field, and be prepared to block opponent who is safety to side of return.

RIGHT AND LEFT RETURN MEN–[RR, LR] Man not making the catch should move up 6 yards in front and to the side of returner.

Call back “YOU HAVE IT,” and be prepared to block the first man down the field.

If no one is there, he can lead up the field on the outside of the wall.

Man making the return should call out “I HAVE IT,” make the catch, secure the ball, break to his right, and try to get to the outside of the wall that is forming on the hashmarks.

Return the punt as far as he can.

COACHING TIP–Make certain that every player on the punt return team understands that once the ball is kicked it becomes their ball and does not need to be caught or touched down.

Remind all blockers to get into a good position to block, to always block with their head in front of the coverage man, to stay balanced and avoid grabbing the coverage man, and to eliminate all penalties on a return.

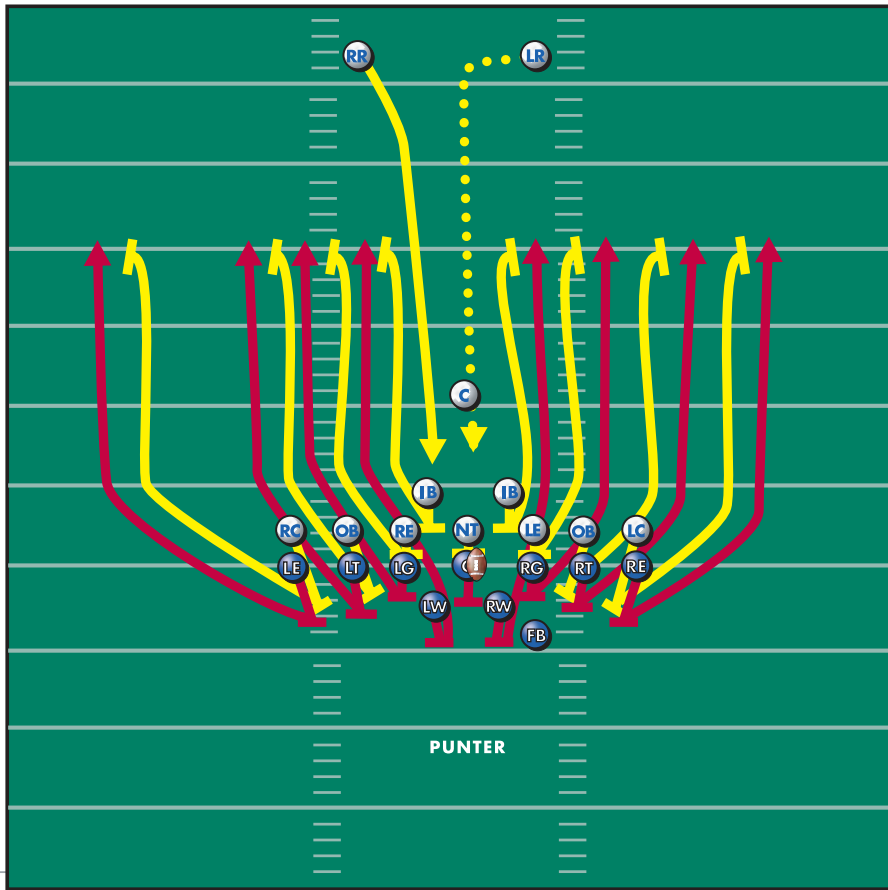
On any short kick or kick near the sideline the return men have the option to run and make the catch, signal for a fair catch, or allow the ball to roll dead.

When signaling for a fair catch, the return man must give a good signal. After the catch is made, he may not advance the ball.

Make certain that all players are alert for a fake punt (run or pass) and that they react if the ball is not punted.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

MIDDLE RETURN VS TIGHT PUNT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT AND RIGHT CORNER-[LC and RC]

Step into the end on your side [RE & LE].
Drive him back toward the punter.
Make certain the ball is kicked.
Force the end to your outside, and stay on his inside shoulder all the way down the field.
Keep him outside the hashmarks.

LEFT AND RIGHT OUTSIDE BACKERS-[LOB and ROB]

Step into the tackle on your side [RT & LT].
Drive him back toward the punter.
Make certain the ball is kicked.

Force the tackle to your outside, and stay on his inside shoulder all the way down the field.
Try to force him outside of the hashmarks.

LEFT AND RIGHT ENDS-[LE and RE]

Step into the guard on your side [RG & LG].
Drive him back toward the punter.
Make certain the ball is kicked.

Force the guard to your outside, and stay on his inside shoulder all the way down the field.
Try to force him all the way to the hashmark.

NOSE TACKLE-[NT]

Stay in front of center.
After snap, drive both hands into his shoulder pads, push him back toward the punter, and allow him to release to either side.

Stay on his inside shoulder all the way down the field, and force him as wide as possible.

LEFT AND RIGHT INSIDE BACKERS-[LIB and RIB]

Keep depth off the line for coverage on wing to your side [RW & LW].
When ball is kicked, step up and hit wing with both hands.

Delay his release, force him to your outside, and stay on his inside shoulder all the way down the field.

Force him as wide as possible.

LEFT AND RIGHT RETURN MEN-[LR and RR]

Man not making the catch should move up 6 yards in front and to the side of returner, and call out "YOU HAVE IT".

Be prepared to block the first man down the field.
If no one is there, he can lead straight up the field.

Man making the return should call out "I HAVE IT," make the catch, secure the ball, and break straight up the field.

Return the punt as far as he can.

COACHING TIP-Make certain that every player on the punt return team understands that once the ball is kicked, it becomes their ball and does not need to be caught or touched down.

Remind all blockers to get into a good position to block, always to block with their head in front of the coverage man, to stay balanced and avoid grabbing the coverage man, and to eliminate all penalties on a return.

On any short kick or kick near the sideline, the return men have the option to run and make the catch, signal for a fair catch, or allow the ball to roll dead.

When signaling for a fair catch, the return man must give a good signal. After the catch is made, he may not advance the ball.

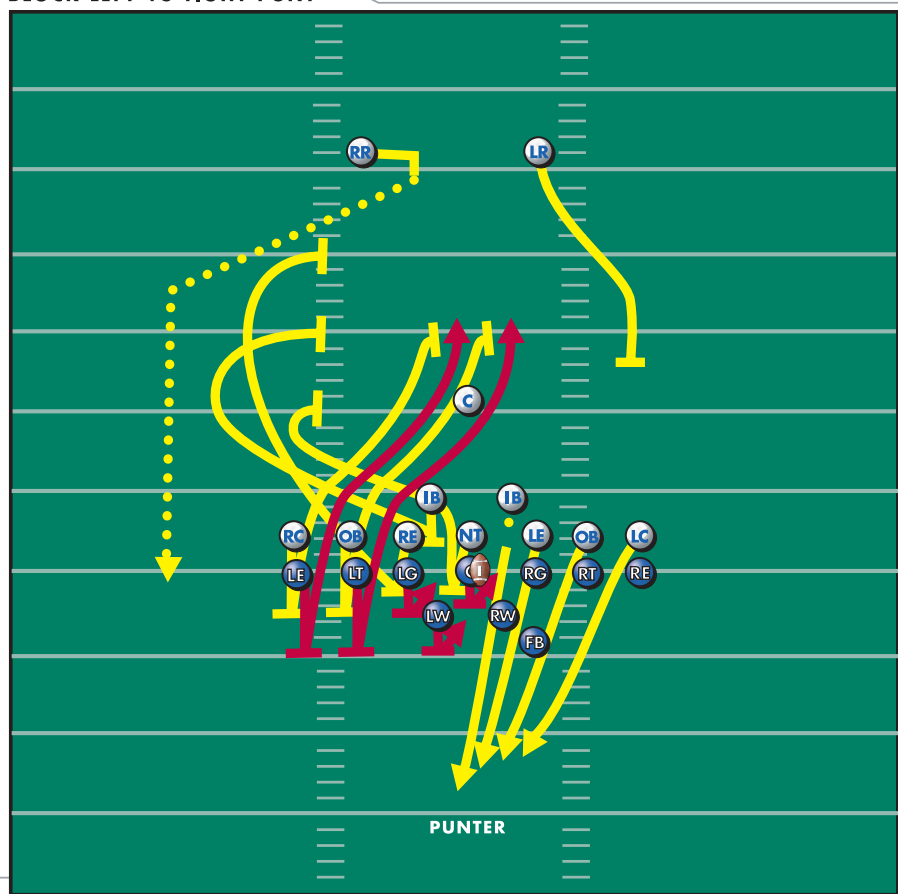
Make certain that all players are alert for a fake punt (run or pass) and that they react if the ball is not punted.

Players should be instructed to move away from any bouncing ball and understand that a punted ball, which touches a player on the return team, can be recovered by a player from the punting team.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

BLOCK LEFT VS TIGHT PUNT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT INSIDE BACKER–[LIB] Move up on the line at the last minute, and drive hard through the inside shoulder of the RW.

Aim for a spot three yards in front of the punter.

Drive across punter's path, focus on the ball, and cross hands and open hands when going to block.

LEFT END–[LE] Drive hard through the inside shoulder of the RG.

Establish path at outside shoulder of RW. Aim for a spot three yards in front of the punter, drive across punter's path, focus on the ball, and cross arms and open hands when going to block.

LEFT OUTSIDE BACKER–[LOB] Drive hard through the inside shoulder of the RT. Establish path inside of FB.

Aim for a spot three yards in front of the punter, drive across punter's path, focus on the ball, and cross arms and open hands when going to block.

LEFT CORNER–[LC] Drive hard through the inside shoulder of the RE.

Establish path outside of FB.

Aim for a spot three yards in front of the punter, drive across punter's path, focus on the ball, and cross arms and open hands when going to block.

RIGHT CORNER–[RC] Line up on outside shade of LE shoulder.

Drive palm of left hand into LE's chest, and keep him on the line.

Force LE to take inside release, drive him into the center of the field, and keep contact all the way down the field.

RIGHT OUTSIDE BACKER–[ROB] Step hard into LT.

Drive him back toward the punter.

Make certain that the ball is kicked.

Force the LT into the center of the field, and keep contact all the way down the field.

RIGHT END–[RE] Step hard into LG and keep him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push LG toward center.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 20 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark and be first man in the wall for the return.

RIGHT INSIDE BACKER–[RIB] Keep coverage on LW until ball is kicked.

If LW releases, keep him on line and force him to the center of the field.

Push LW toward center.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 15 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark, and be second man in the wall for the return.

NOSE TACKLE–[NT] Hold up center [CN] with both hands and keep him on line.

Make certain the ball is kicked.

Push CN to your left.

Turn back to your right.

Sprint down field 10 yards.

Turn back to the center of the field on hashmark, and be third man in the wall for the return.

RIGHT AND LEFT RETURN MEN–[RR, LR] On the snap, the Left Return man [LR] should move up the left side of the field and be ready to cover RE on side of rush if it is a fake punt pass.

Block the most dangerous man if ball is punted.

Right Return man [RR] should call out "I HAVE IT," make the catch, secure the ball, break to his right, and try to get to the outside of the wall that is forming on the hashmarks.

Return the punt as far as he can.

COACHING TIP–Make certain that every player on the punt block team understands that once the ball is blocked, it can be picked up and run in for a score.

Remind all blockers to get into a good position to block the punt, that they must avoid running into or touching the punter and strive to eliminate all penalties on the block.

On any short kick or kick near the sideline, the return men have the option to run and make the catch, signal for a fair catch, or allow the ball to roll dead.

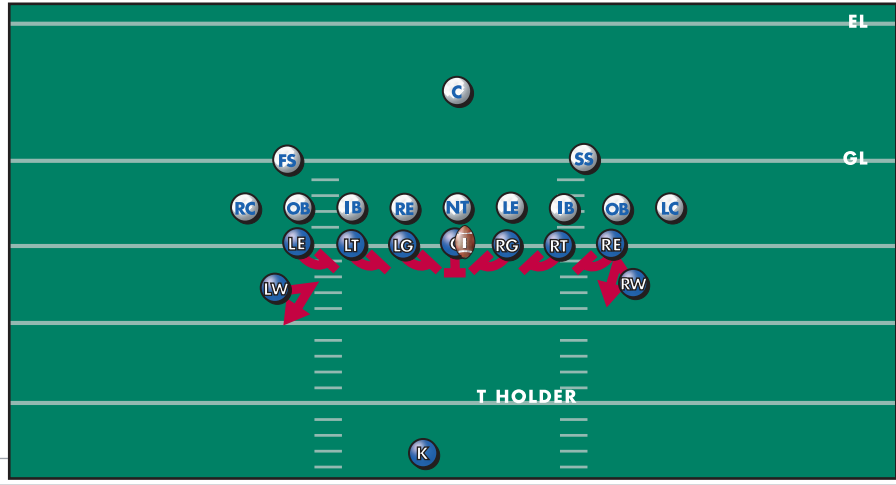
When signaling for a fair catch, the return man must give a good signal. After the catch is made, he may not advance the ball.

Make certain that all players are alert for a fake punt (run or pass) and that they react if the ball is not punted.

Players should be instructed to move away from any bouncing ball and understand that a punted ball, which touches a player on the return team, can be recovered by a player from the punting team.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

PAT & FG PROTECTION VS RUSH



ASSIGNMENTS

LE, LT, LG—Line up in a two-point stance with your forearms resting on the inside of your thighs.

On the snap, step back and to the inside with your right foot.

As you step, bring both hands up to the center of your chest, and extend your forearms and elbows to either side of your body.

Block strong to your inside gap.

CENTER—[CN] Look back between your legs to see that the Holder and Kicker are ready.

Snap the ball to the Holder (Number-one responsibility).

Set strong and aid LG and RG in blocking to two inside gaps.

RG, RT, RE—Line up in a two-point stance with your forearms resting on the inside of your thighs.

On the snap, step back and to the inside with your left foot.

As you step, bring both hands up to the center of your chest, and extend your forearms and elbows to either side of your body.

Block strong to your inside gap.

LEFT AND RIGHT WING—[LW and RW] Bring both hands up even with your numbers.

Protect the inside gap first.

Be prepared to lean to the inside and push with inside hand any rush man that is coming between you and the end on your side.

After making inside hit, lean back out and push any outside rush man with your outside hand and arm.

HOLDER—Check with the kicker to see if he is ready.

Give the center the target area.

Reach forward and catch the ball.

Place it on the tee correctly, spinning it to make certain the laces are in the front, away from the kicker’s foot.

Be prepared to make the tackle if the kick is blocked or to “roll right” and run or pass the ball if it is a bad snap [FIRE CALL].

KICKER—[K] Take proper steps to line up correctly.

Tell the Holder that you are ready.

Focus on the tee.

Start forward movement as the ball is being placed on the tee.

Concentrate on stepping correctly and see your foot hit the ball, drive through the ball, and be prepared to make the tackle if the kick is blocked.

Act as a blocker if the snap is bad and Holder must roll out with the ball.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that every player on the PAT/FG team understands that any kick that is short or blocked can be picked up and advanced by the opposing team.

If there is a bad snap, Holder should call out “FIRE,” pick up the ball, roll out to his right, and either run the ball or pass it to the RE running to the corner or the RW running into the flat.

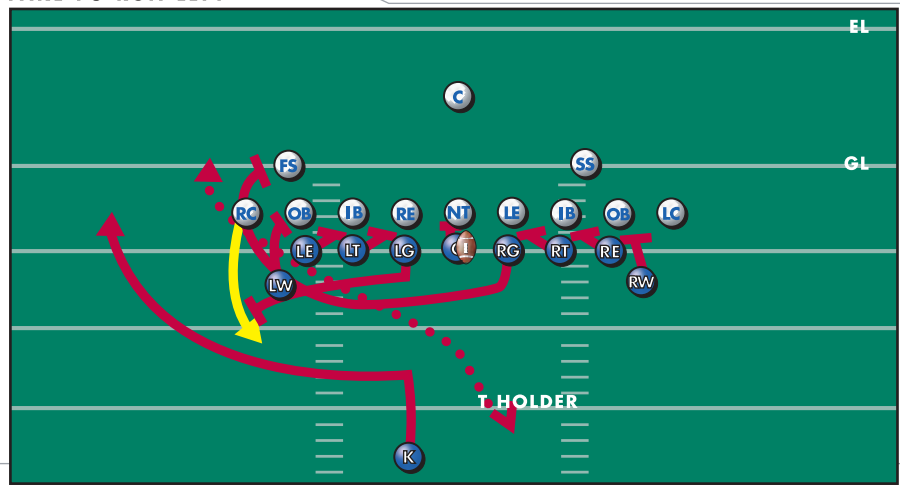
Emphasize that all blockers must hold their position until the ball is kicked.

On long FGs, where the kick may lack the needed distance, all the blockers need to be reminded that they should fan out and sprint down field once the kick is made.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

FAKE FG RUN LEFT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT WING–[LW] Angle block on ROB, and drive him in toward the center of the field.

LEFT END–[LE] Angle block on RIB, and drive him in toward the center of the field.

LEFT TACKLE–[LT] Angle block on RE, and drive him in toward the center of the field.

LEFT GUARD–[LG] Pull to your left behind the line and trap block out on the outside rush man (RCO).

If no one is rushing outside, turn and lead the runner up the field.

CENTER–[CN] Make the snap and block the NT.

Try to push him to your right.

RIGHT GUARD–[RG] Pull to your left, belly back, and turn up inside of left guard's trap block.

Lead up field.

Block the first defender that shows back to the inside.

Keep running.

RIGHT TACKLE–[RT] Reach block to your left on LE, and stop him from penetrating across line.

Stay with block.

RIGHT END–[RE] Reach block to your left on LIB, and stop him from penetrating across line.

Stay with block.

RIGHT WING–[RW] Reach block to your left on LOB, and stop him from penetrating across line.

Stay with block.

KICKER–[K] Start forward movement the minute the ball is snapped, and fake kick outside of tee.

Turn to your left and run wide outside of outside rush man.

Be in position to catch pitch.

HOLDER–Catch snap, raise up and secure the ball, start toward the line, break to your left, and follow RG inside of LG's trap block.

Break to the sideline as you clear the line of scrimmage and run up the field.

Know the distance needed for the first down and make that your initial priority.

COACHING TIP–Make certain that every player lines up just as he would for kick prior to the snap.

The Kicker should maintain his position outside and behind of the Holder as the ball moves up the field and keep running.

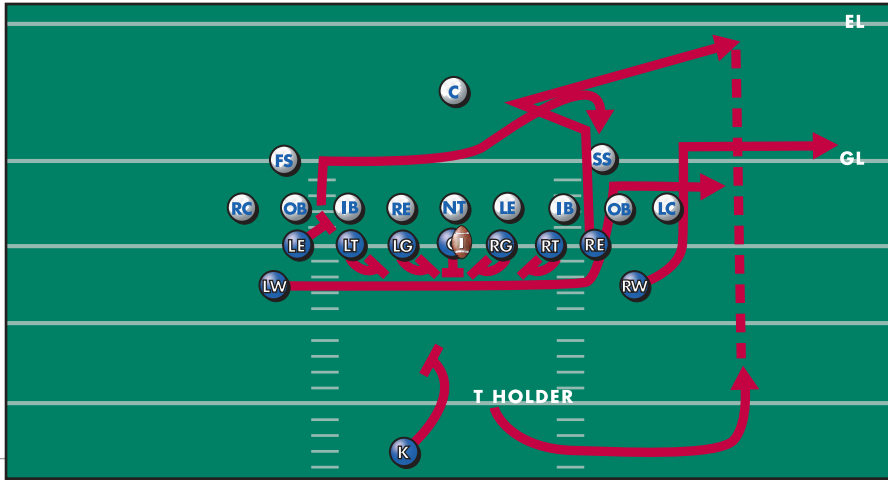
The Holder should only think of pitching the ball to the Kicker if he see that there is no chance for him to make the first down. It is his last choice.

All the blockers must know to hold their blocks and stay with their men until the play is completed.

If the Kicker has no ability to catch the pitch and run with the ball, you can have him jump in the air and turn and run back toward his goal line simulating a high snap.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

FAKE FG ROLL OUT PASS RIGHT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT WING–[LW] Pull to your right and run behind line.
Break flat on the line to the sideline.
Lead up the field if the passer yells GO.
LEFT END–[LE] Hit inside rush man.
Release on cross route.
Hook up at 10 yards just outside of opposite hash mark.
Turn back and provide a good target for the passer, and be prepared to block down field if passer yells GO.

LT, LG, CN, RG, RT–Block just as you would for a normal field goal attempt.
Only release down field if you hear the passer yell GO.
RIGHT END–[RE] Drive up the field on the snap.
Fake to post and break to corner.
Give yourself room to make the catch.
Number one choice on pattern.
RIGHT WING–[RW] Release inside of outside rush man.
Drive up the field for 5 yards and break to sideline.

Be prepared to block down field if passer yells GO.

KICKER–[K] Go through your normal kicking motion, then turn and block any rush man coming from your left.

HOLDER–Make the catch, rise up, and spin back toward the kicker so that you can roll out to the right side of the formation.

Turn your hips up the field.
Look to RE running to the corner, then to the RW running to the sideline, then look to LW and LE.

Step directly at the receiver and, as you throw yell GO.

Run the ball if you are not sure of a receiver.

COACHING TIP–Make certain that every player lines up just as he would for kick prior to the snap.

All receivers must get their heads around as soon as they make their break and find the passer.

Passer must quickly get turned to the line and allow his vision to pick up his receivers in order.

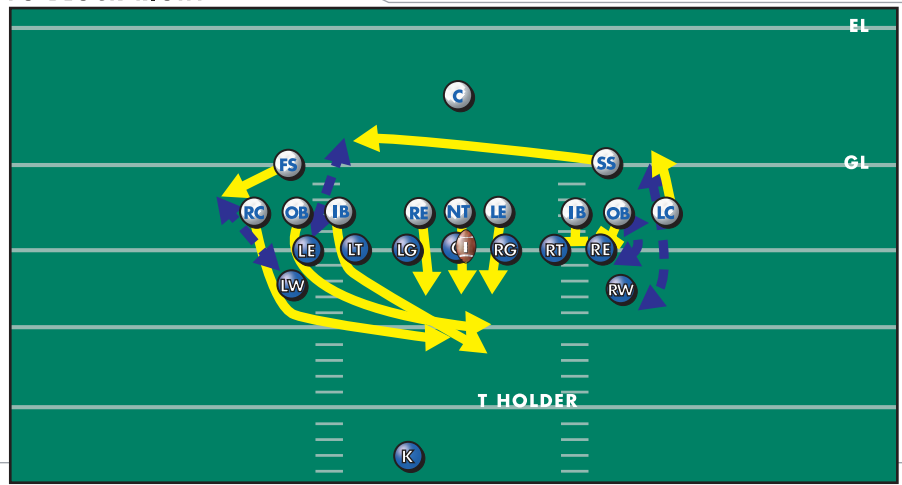
Passer should have the ball up in a throwing position the minute he rolls out and is turned toward the receivers.

Passer should be instructed never to make up his mind in advance as to his target and never to force the ball to any receiver.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

FG BLOCK RIGHT



ASSIGNMENTS

RCO, ROB, RIB—All three players should get into a good staggered stance with their outside hand down and outside foot back.

Turn your heads to the inside so that you can see the ball.

Charge forward the minute the center moves the ball.

Drive for a spot 1 yard in front of the holder.

Be prepared to dive and turn your body so that your chest is facing the kicker.

Cross your arms to protect your face and open your hands to block the kick.

RIGHT CORNER—[RCO] Aim for the left hip of the LW.

Anticipate the LW leaning inside to block the ROB.

The instant you clear the LW, flatten down the line.

RIGHT OUTSIDE BACKER—[ROB] Aim for the left hip of the LE.

Anticipate the LE leaning inside to block the RIB.

Be prepared to leap through the gap between the LW and LE.

RIGHT INSIDE BACKER—[RIB] Aim for the left hip of the LT.

Anticipate the LT leaning inside to block the inside gap.

Drive hard between the LE and LT.

RE, NT, LE—Line up tight so that the NT is in the gap directly in front of the path of the ball when it is kicked (position will change based on the location of the ball).

Three players should charge over two offensive blockers [LG & CN], look at the ball, charge forward the minute the center starts to move the ball, drive hard for three steps, and then get both hands high into the air.

Try to deflect the ball as it comes from the kicker's foot.

LEFT INSIDE BACKER—[LIB] Step out into RE.

Do not rush.
Make certain ball is kicked.
Pressure the ball carrier if run or pass comes to your side.

LEFT OUTSIDE BACKER—[LOB] Step into outside shoulder of RE, and stay with him.

If he tries to release on a pass, cover him man-for-man.

LEFT CORNER—[LCO] Drop off the line out of three-point stance.

Cover RW man-for-man if he releases for a pass.

FREE SAFETY—[FS] Move to outside position to LW.

Cover LW man-for-man if he releases for a pass.

STRONG SAFETY—[SS] Move across field to side of rush.

Get to an inside position on LE.

Cover LE man-for-man if he releases for a pass.

COACHING TIP—Emphasize to all rush men that they must focus on the ball prior to the snap so that they can initiate their charge the second the center starts his snap.

Make certain that all rush men know that if the kick is blocked, the ball can be picked up and run for a score.

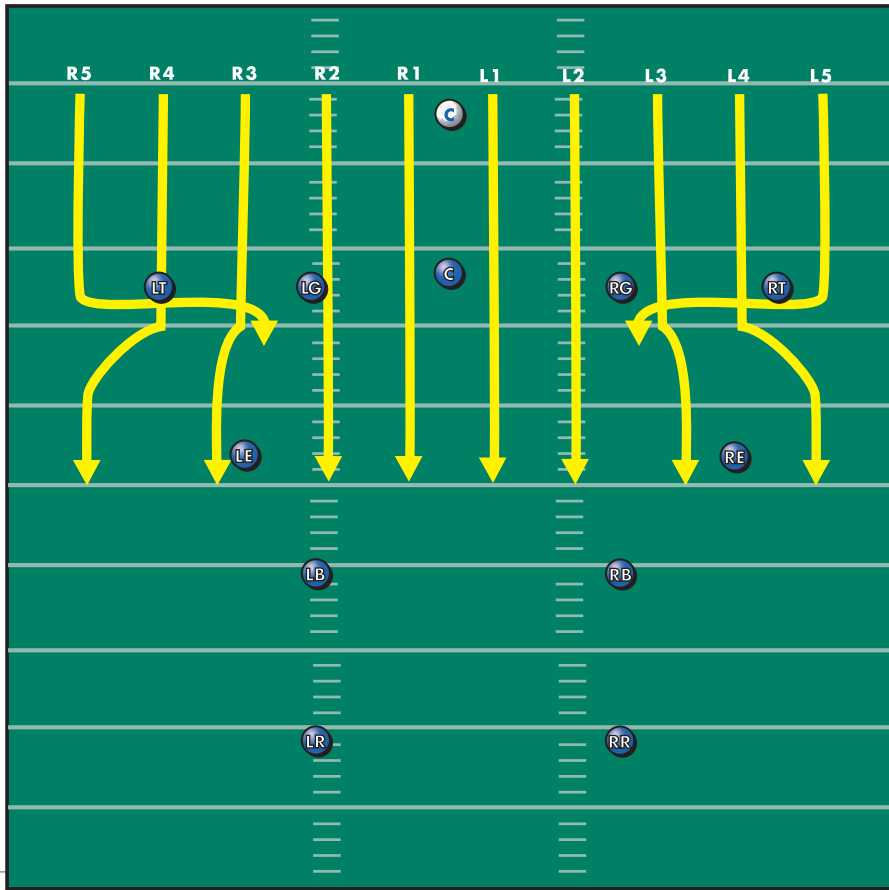
Only rush from one side at a time to avoid a collision and injury, and to allow for good coverage if it is a pass.

All players on the FG rush team must understand that if the ball is touched and crosses the line of scrimmage, it is their ball and does not have to be recovered. All players should stay away from the ball and let it roll dead.

Rush people from the outside should be alert to any bad snap or fake FG attempt and be prepared to go for the ball or tackle the holder or kicker if they try to run with the ball.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

KICKOFF COVERAGE



ASSIGNMENTS

L5 AND R5—Come down the field under control, and fall back in behind the other players of the coverage team.

Establish a position in between the 2 and 3 men on the coverage team, and serve as safety on your side.

Keep the ball on your inside shoulder.

L4 AND R4—Sprint down field and widen out as you cover.

Stay 6 yards from the sideline unless the ball

carrier threatens to go outside of you, then widen and force him out of bounds.

L3 AND R3—Sprint down field and maintain a position halfway between #4 on your side and the hashmark.

Keep the ball carrier on your inside.

Only widen when ball carrier threatens to go outside of you.

L2 AND R2—Sprint down field on the hashmarks.

Keep the ball carrier on your inside.

Only widen when ball carrier threatens to go outside of you.

L1 AND R1—Sprint down field between the hashmark and the center of the field.

Keep the ball carrier on your inside shoulder.

Only widen when ball carrier threatens to go outside of you.

KICKER—Make certain of kick to proper location.

Move down the field under control

Maintain a position directly in front of the ball carrier.

Serve as middle safety on coverage team.

COACHING TIP—All eight coverage men must sprint all the way down field until they are near the ball carrier and run through blockers.

Every player must stay in his designated lane until the ball carrier makes a cut to the right or left.

Coverage men should attempt to avoid a potential blocker on the side opposite of the block.

Coverage men should use their hands to get free of blocker.

Hit the blocker's hands down and deliver a blow to the numbers to get the blocker off balance and allow movement down the field.

Any time a coverage man is blocked out of his designated coverage lane, he should immediately try to regain that position the moment he is free from the blocker.

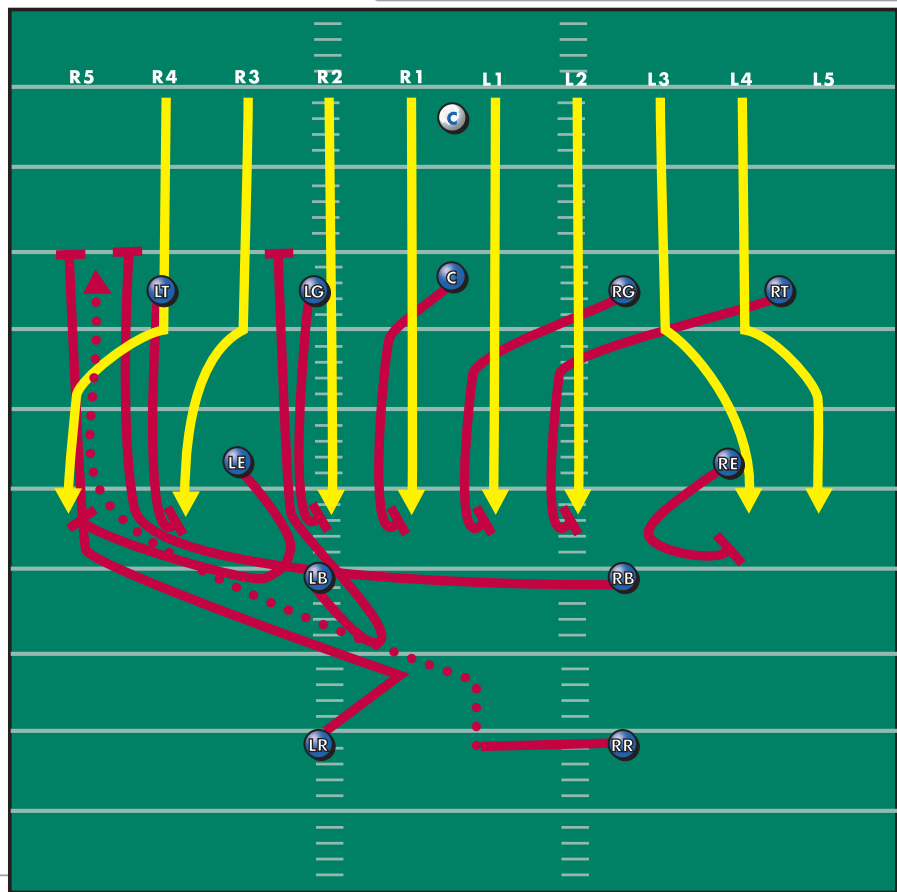
If blocker has position, the coverage man should lower his near shoulder, rip his near arm up and back to clear the blocker, and get back into his lane.

When blocker stays square and does not take a side to block, the coverage man should strike the blocker in the numbers with the palms of both hands and avoid the blocker on the side of the ball carrier.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

KICKOFF RETURN LEFT



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT TACKLE-[LT] Drop straight back for 15 yards.

Face in and maintain an outside position on R3.

Turn back to the inside and block R3 toward the center of the field.

LEFT GUARD-[LG] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Widen so that you are outside of R2.

Turn back to the inside and block R3 toward the center of the field.

CENTER-[CN] Open to your left and drop 15 yards.

Widen so that you are outside of R1.

Turn back to the inside and block R1 toward the center of the field.

RIGHT GUARD-[RG] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Widen so that you are inside of R1.

Turn back to the outside and block L1

toward the right sideline.

RIGHT TACKLE-[RT] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Widen so that you are inside of L2.

Turn back to the outside and block L2 toward the right sideline.

LEFT END-[LE] Drop back 7 yards toward the center of the field, set, and look to outside to determine outside coverage man.

Turn to the sideline, move out to block either R4 or R5, and block him to the sideline.

RIGHT END-[RE] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 7 yards.

Widen so that you are inside of L3.

Turn back to the outside and block L3 toward the right sideline.

LEFT BACK-[LB] Drop back 2 yards and then lead up the field between the blocks of the LT and LG.

Be prepared to block safety to your side.

Keep moving up the field.

RIGHT BACK-[RB] When the ball is kicked, turn and come across the field.

Lead up the field in between the blocks of the LE and LT.

Be prepared to block out any remaining coverage man on that side.

LEFT RETURNER-[LR] If not making the catch, move 4 yards in front and 3 yards to the side of the other return man.

Answer back "YOU HAVE IT." Turn back, and make certain that he makes the catch.

Lead the ball carrier up the field to the left.

RIGHT RETURNER-[RR] If you are returning the kick, call out "I HAVE IT," adjust position so that you are directly in front of the path of the ball, and try to be moving forward when you make the catch.

Start up the field for 5 yards and then break up the field on the left sideline.

Follow LR and RB up the field.

Sprint all the way up the field.

COACHING TIP—Coach all blockers to keep eye contact with the man they are going to block as they move into position to block.

Blockers need to sprint back, get set, and not allow the coverage men to run by them before they can throw their block.

Blockers need to bend their knees and keep their feet moving when they go to block.

Prior to contact, blockers should bring their elbows in to their sides, forearms up, with the palms of both hands in front of their numbers and facing forward.

On contact, the palm of the downfield hand should hit the coverage man in the chest, and the palm of the other hand should strike the coverage man's near shoulder, pushing him away from the side of the return.

Blockers should stay with their assigned coverage man until the play is blown dead.

No player on the return team should start his drop until they are certain that the ball has been kicked long.

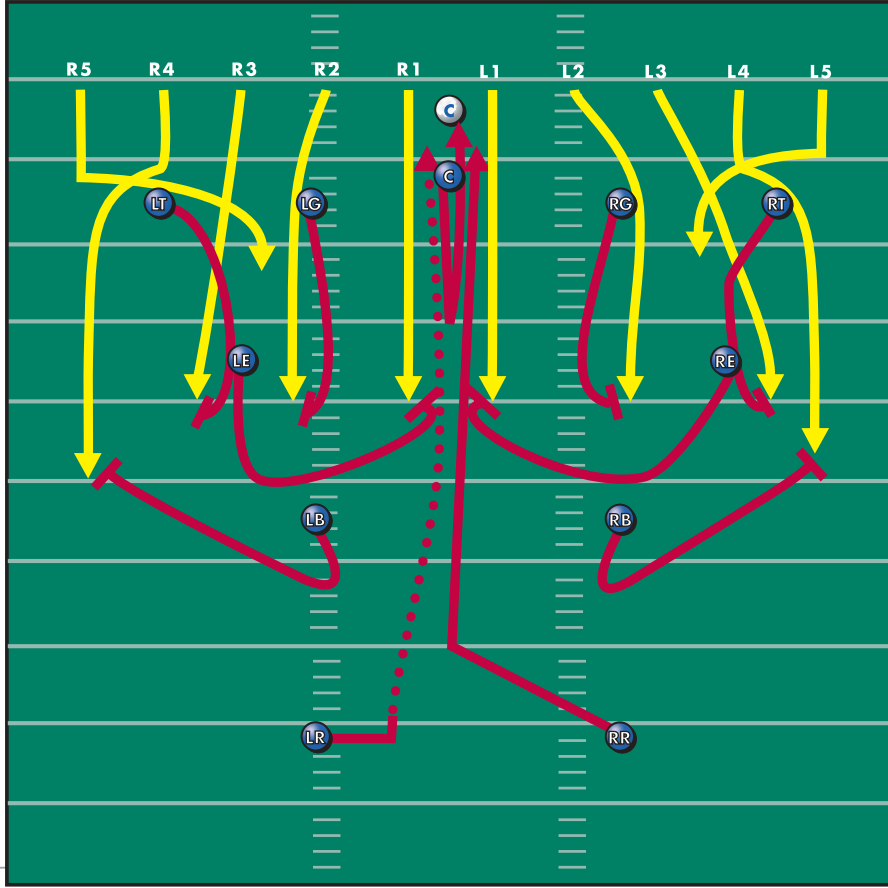
All players should be instructed to signal for a fair catch on any high, short kick.

Ball carrier returning the kick must sprint and anticipate the running lane opening up between blockers.

All players need to understand that a kickoff is a free ball and can be recovered by the kicking team. Down, return, or fair catch every kick.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

KICKOFF RETURN MIDDLE



ASSIGNMENTS

LEFT TACKLE-[LT] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Angle so that you are inside of R3.

Turn back to the outside of the field and block R3 out toward the sideline.

LEFT GUARD-[LG] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Angle so that you are inside of R2.

Turn back to the outside of the field and block R2 out toward the sideline.

CENTER-[CN] Drop straight back 10 yards then turn and lead up the field.

Block kicker to either sideline.

RIGHT GUARD-[RG] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Angle so that you are inside of L2.

Turn back to the outside of the field and block L2 out toward the sideline.

RIGHT TACKLE-[RT] Turn back to the inside of the field and drop 15 yards.

Angle so that you are inside of L3.

Turn back to the outside of the field and block L3 out toward the sideline.

LEFT END-[LE] Turn back to the inside and drop 5 yards.

Move inside of the hashmark.

Turn up the field.

Angle for a position inside of R1.

Block R1 out toward the sideline.

RIGHT END-[RE] Turn back to the inside and drop 5 yards.

Move inside of the hashmark.

Turn up the field.

Angle for a position inside of L1.

Block L1 out toward the sideline.

LEFT BACK-[LB] Turn back to the inside and drop 3 yards to the near hashmark.

Turn back to the sideline and move forward and out to block R4 out toward the sideline.

RIGHT BACK-[RB] Turn back to the inside and drop 3 yards to the near hash mark.

Turn back to the sideline and move forward and out to block L4 out toward the sideline.

RIGHT RETURNER-[RR] If not making the catch, move 4 yards in front and 3 yards to the side of the other return man.

Answer back "YOU HAVE IT," turn back, and make certain that he makes the catch.

Lead the ball carrier straight up the center of the field.

LEFT RETURNER-[LR] If you are returning the kick, call out "I HAVE IT".

Adjust position so that you are directly in front of the path of the ball.

Try to be moving forward when you make the catch.

Run for seam between the blocks of the LE and RE, and follow LR up the field.

Sprint all the way up the field.

COACHING TIP-Coach all blockers to keep eye contact with the man they are going to block as they move into position to block.

Blockers need to sprint back, get set, and not allow the coverage men to run by them before they can throw their block.

Blockers need to bend their knees and keep their feet moving when they go to block.

Prior to contact, blockers should bring their elbows in to their sides, forearms up, with the palms of both hands in front of their numbers and facing forward.

On contact, the palm of the downfield hand should hit the coverage man in the chest and the palm of the other hand should strike the coverage man's near shoulder pushing him away from the area of the return.

Blockers should stay with their assigned coverage man until the play is blown dead.

No player on the return team should start their drop until they are certain that the ball has been kicked long.

All players should be instructed to signal for a Fair Catch on any high, short kick.

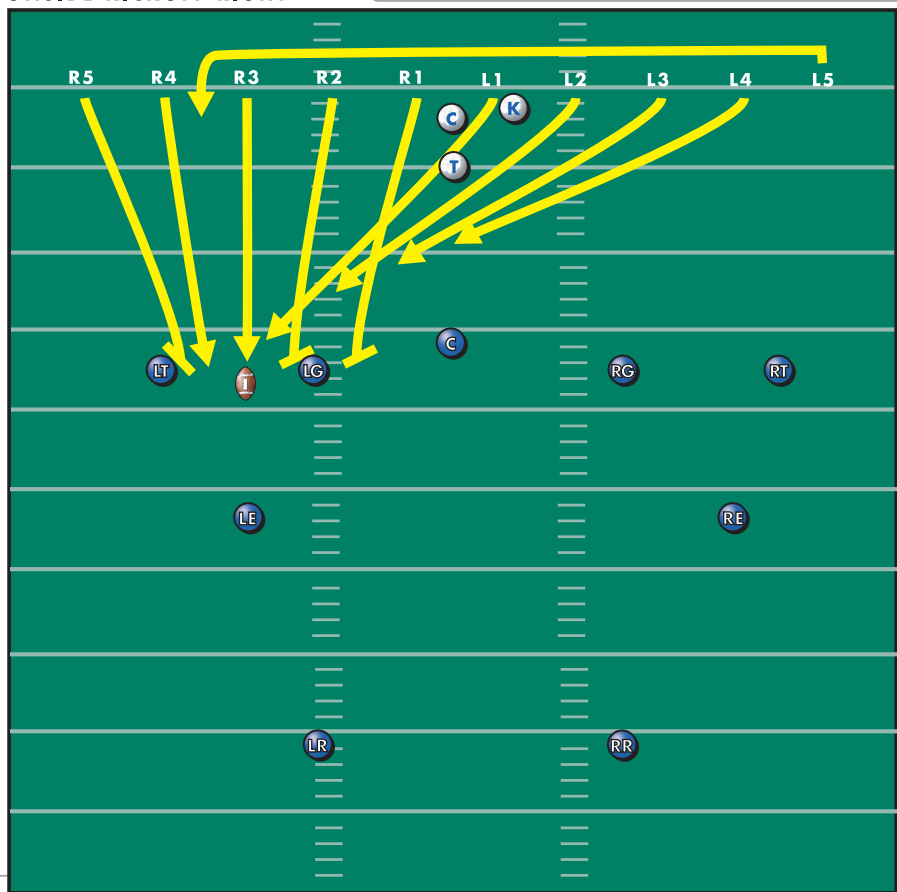
Ball carrier returning the kick must sprint and anticipate the running lane opening up between blockers.

All players need to understand that a kickoff is a free ball and can be recovered by the kicking team. Down, return, or fair catch every kick.



SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

ONSIDE KICKOFF RIGHT



ASSIGNMENTS

R5, R4, R3, R2, R1—Sprint downfield.

Turn your head in so that you can see the ball as it is kicked.

Pick up the flight of the ball to your side.

Try to gain control of the kick.

If the ball is past you, block players on opponent's front line.

L1—Release on right side of kicking tee

Follow the path of the ball.

Be prepared to gain control of ball if it is fumbled or to tackle opponent if they gain control.

L2, L3, L4—Sprint downfield.

Angle to the right side of the field.

Be prepared to gain control of ball if it is fumbled or to tackle opponent if they gain control.

L5—Move to center of the field as kicker makes his approach.

Sprint straight across the field to the right side.

Serve as safety on that side of the field.

K—Approach ball at an angle to kick the ball to your right.

Make contact with the top third of the ball.

Drive the ball into the ground.

Try to get a big hop as it nears opponent's front line.

Aim for a spot between the LG and LT.

COACHING TIP—Players should be instructed to recover the kick and secure the ball as quickly as possible.

Coverage players should make contact with any opponent who is going to field the kick.

Consider using an onside kick if the LT and LG on the return team are lined up deep or are turning and moving back before the ball is kicked.

A pooch kick (short high kick over the front line in front of the LE near sideline) can be used if LE is dropping back before the ball is kicked.

On a pooch kick, R5 should sprint down field and try to catch the kick while it is in the air before it goes out of bounds.

L1 and L2 can be moved to the right side prior to the kick, if your rules allow for additional players to be on one side, for any onside kick near the end of the game when the opponent knows that you are going to use it.

Coverage players must be alert to tackle any opponent who fields the kick.

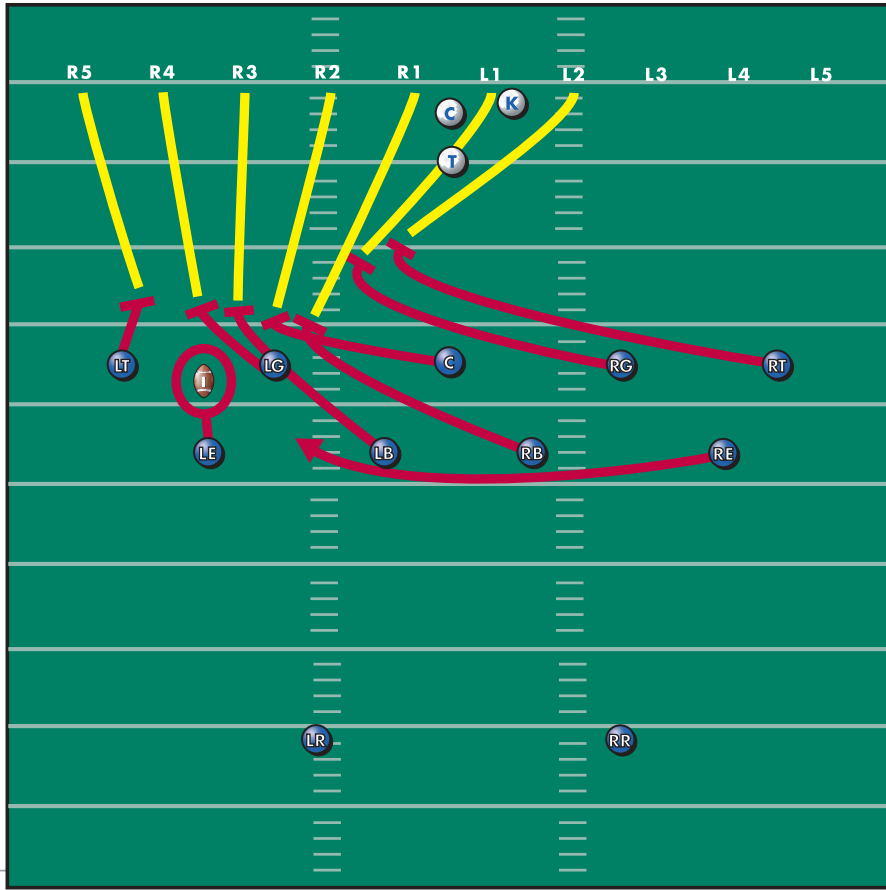
Coverage players must understand that any opponent may signal for a fair catch on a pooch kick that is in the air and has not bounced off the ground (opposing player can not be hit or advance the ball after catch).

Remind all players to be on side when the ball is kicked.

Kickers should try to develop the ability to onside kick to both sides of the field.

SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYBOOK

ONSIDE KICK PREVENT



ASSIGNMENTS

LT, LG, CN, RG, RT—Move up to line.

Focus on the ball and do not drop back.

If ball is coming to you, be alert for high hop, and try to catch the ball at the highest point.

If ball is going to another player, move forward and block coverage men.

LE, LB, RB RE—Line up in position 4 yards behind front line.

Be prepared to catch high hop.

Grab ball at highest possible point.

If ball is fielded by front line, move up in case of a fumble.

Be alert for pooch kick high into the air.

Move under ball and signal for a fair catch (cannot advance the ball after catch).

LR and RR—Move up the field prior to kick if kicker gives indication of onside kick.

Be prepared for long pooch kick.

Move up and signal for a fair catch.

COACHING TIP—Players should concentrate on fielding and securing any onside kick and not on advancing the kick.

All players not fielding the ball should move in front of and to the sides of the player making the recovery and block coverage men.

Return team should execute a middle return when the ball is kicked long.

If the kicking team overloads one side of the field, front-line and second-line players on the return team should move in that direction.

Remind all players to be on side when the ball is kicked.



SPECIAL TEAMS OVERVIEW (YOUTH)

Introduction

As a youth coach it is vital to recognize the physical, mental, and overall football development levels of the players on your team. How you approach and select the type of special-teams scheme that you teach to your young players should depend on this close team evaluation. It is helpful to think in terms of:

- What past football experience do the players bring to the team?
- How much can the players learn and absorb?
- At what skill level can they perform, and do you have players who can perform the required kicking duties?
- How much can I realistically teach and practice so that the team can play effectively with a minimum of errors.
- That your special teams will hold a much higher priority for you than they do with your young players.
- The time you spend focusing on and implementing the special teams will be much greater than the time commitment of the players.
- That terms, ideas, and skills that you take for granted and understand may be completely foreign to your players.
- That punting, placekicking, and kicking off are extremely important and require individual coaching for success.

Practice Organization

There are some basic practice organization rules that are applicable for any coach and especially the youth coach:

- * Keep a constant structure to your practice so that your players become comfortable at practice and can focus on learning.
- * Establish a set pattern for your practice so that the players know where to go and what to expect, and keep this structure throughout the year.
- * How you divide the team for practice will depend on:
 - the number of assistant coaches you have
 - the number of players who play both ways
 - the time you have for practice each week
- * Keep it simple and strive for perfect execution with a minimum of errors. When players have trouble with a phase of special teams because of assignment errors, it is usually time to cut back, remove confusion, and review rather than adding more.

**SPECIAL TEAMS OVERVIEW (YOUTH)**

- * Introduce a phase of the kicking game as a whole [the entire punt team—walk through each player’s assignment]. Then separate and work on the parts: [the long snapper and punter work on getting the ball back to punter and the punter’s steps into the kick] [blockers learn how to protect the punter and then what paths to take to cover the punt] [the two outside players (gunners) practice getting down the field first to down the punt or to make the tackle].
- Bring together special teams and practice each phase of the kicking game starting with group work [all blockers working against rush] [blockers and gunners working on coverage lanes] and then incorporating the entire team.
- Immediately repeat any phase of the kicking game where an assignment error occurs.
- Always tell the player what you want them to do, be positive, correct don’t criticize. Players know when they make an error, you need to tell them what to do so that they can have success the next time.
- An example of your team’s daily practice plan might be:
Prepractice = Spend special time with snappers, punters, kickers and holders working on form, not distance.

Period 1 = Stretching and warm-up.

Period 2 = Team walk through:

- Introducing anything that may be new in offense/defense/special teams.
- Try to keep comments to essentials and get players moving as you teach.

Period 3 = Teach general skills needed for each position.

- Keep drills fast.
- Divide team to afford maximum player participation and number of repetitions based on number of coaches available at each practice.
- Have numerous drills, with each drill focusing on only one skill rather than trying to use one drill repeatedly to teach numerous skills.
- Repeat as many basic technique drills for each defensive position every practice with only one or two individual repetitions per player, and quickly make corrections.

Period 4 = Segments offense against defense.

- QB, RB, REC against LB, DB.
- OL with RB against DL and LB.

Period 5 = Offensive period against opponent’s defense.

Period 6 = Special teams practice segment, try to cover one segment per day [punt team and punt return team], [kickoff team and kickoff return team and onside kick team and onside kick prevent team], [extra point team and extra point block team].

Period 7 = Defensive period against opponent’s offense.

Period 8 = Conditioning, offense, and defense running against air.

- With many players on youth teams playing both ways on the offense and defense, it may be necessary to work on offensive technique one day and defensive technique at the beginning of the next practice.
- The challenge is for you to allot proper time to guarantee that all areas (Offense, Defense, Special Teams) are properly taught to your team during your practice sessions.
- Coach the entire team, be firm, fair, and allow the players to have fun.



SPECIAL TEAMS OVERVIEW (YOUTH)

Skills

In the Successful Special Teams section are the skills and techniques that are needed to play each special teams position. The skills and techniques range from the basic to the more advanced.

As a coach you will find that players have the opportunity to achieve greater success and perform more effectively when basic skills and proper techniques are taught to players from the beginning.

Many youth coaches are familiar with the position they might have played, but are not really sure of the techniques needed for the other defensive positions. The Skills section is designed to help you and your staff in this area.

"It's not like an incompleting or a sack. If it's a bad play on special teams, it's a disaster. Everything is focused on that play."

Pete Rodriguez, Seahawks special teams coach

It is important that these techniques be reviewed and re-enforced at every practice in order to become automatic and second nature to the player.

In determining the skills and techniques that you will teach to your special teams players, it will be necessary for you to look at:

- Where your players are in their football development.
- What skills will be required to run the special teams that you are going to teach.
- Do your players have the physical ability to execute the special teams you wish to run?
- Can additional more advanced skills be added later in the year as your special teams take on a greater complexity.

In looking at the above area, you may decide, for example, that you only want to teach one punt formation. In this case, you would not take the time to teach and constantly review the drills needed to introduce multiple alignments when you punt. You might want to run three or four kickoff returns, but after practice, you determine that blockers and return men can only run one or two without making mistakes, so you might eliminate the other two or keep them in reserve and not make them a part of your kickoff return package in the beginning.

These are the types of decisions that can be made for every phase of special teams and for each special teams position. If you determine the skills and techniques that you will teach and that your players will need to execute your special teams prior to the start of the year, you will save yourself a great deal of frustration and valuable practice time. This will also help your players to become skilled quickly at the techniques needed to play special teams successfully.

When a player gets blocked or misses a block, it may be that he used the wrong technique or he may have been confused on his assignment. Both can be a cause for a play losing yards.

Teaching assignments for your special teams to your young players is important, but it is equally important to teach them the proper techniques to execute these assignments successfully. Learning assignments are the blueprints for your building; learning proper technique is the steel and brick that will make the building a success.

**SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)****Punter Practice Drill****STANCE, STEPS, GRIP, AND DROP**

SET-UP—Players line up by position facing the coach.

Coach lines up 7 yards from punter.

Coach can then throw the ball underhanded to punter.

Punter should not kick the ball at this stage.

If your practice field is lined, have the punter lined up straddling the line.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, each of the players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

On coach's signal of READY, punter should form target with his hands.

Coach then throws the ball to the punter.

Punter should make catch and correctly secure the ball.

Punter should then take correct steps and drop the ball properly to the outside of the kicking foot.

Coach can make corrections, and the punter can move to the outside and allow the next player to move into position facing the coach.

REPETITION—Have each player go through motion at least five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during prepractice for the coach to see that the players are taking a correct stance, catching the ball, stepping properly, then gripping, and dropping the ball correctly.

COACHING TIP—When the punter gets into his stance, check that:

His feet are spread the width of his shoulders.

His kicking foot is slightly in front of other foot.

He has a bend in the knees.

His weight is evenly distributed on the balls of both feet. His shoulders are in front of his hips.

His head is up and his eyes are focused straight ahead.

As the punter catches the ball in both hands check that:

His first step is short and that he is on the ball of his front foot.

His next step is a normal stride and comes to the center of his body.

His weight is evenly distributed on the balls of both feet. His shoulders are in front of his hips.

His head is up and his eyes are focused straight ahead.

The laces are straight up.

That the back of the ball is held in the palm of the punting hand.

His other hand is under and to the front of the ball.

He maintains a light grip on the ball.

As the punter takes his second step check that:

His front hand drops away from ball.

He pushes the ball forward and to the outside of the kicking foot with the other hand.

The front tip of the ball is turned slightly inward.

The ball is level with his wrist locked and above the waist.

He drops his hand to the side allowing the ball to drop naturally to ground.

If the punter is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find a punter, you may want to separate the drill into three segments so that you can look at and coach a number of players quickly in that one area.

Punter Practice Drill**MAKING THE KICK**

SET-UP—Players line up by position facing the coach.

Coach lines up 7 yards from punter.

Punter should start with ball in hands.

Punter can spin the ball to simulate catch to get proper rhythm for kick.

If your practice field is lined, have the punter lined up straddling the line.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, each of the players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

On coach's signal of READY, punter should take ball and spin it in his hands.

Punter should correctly secure the ball.

Punter should then take correct steps, drop the ball properly on to his kicking foot, and correctly kick the ball.

Coach can make corrections, and the punter can move to the outside and allow the next player to move into position facing the coach.

REPETITION—Have each player go through motion at least three times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during prepractice for the coach to see that the players are kicking the ball correctly.

COACHING TIP—As the punter drops the

ball, make certain:

He is looking the ball directly to his kicking foot.

His head and shoulders are in front of his hips.

His toe is pointed and ankle locked on his kicking foot.

The top of his kicking foot makes contact with the ball.

His kicking leg follows through in a high arc.

His form is smooth. Do not worry about distance.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Long Snap Center Practice Drill

STANCE, GRIP, AND SNAP

SET-UP—Players line up 10 yards apart, one player will snap, the other will serve as punter receiving the snap.

Ball should be placed on the ground in front of one center.

Players will alternate roles with each snap.

Coach should move from one center to the other so that he can observe both centers, stance, grip, and snap.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, the first snapper moves up, gets into a proper stance and correctly secures the ball.

The coach can signal SNAP once the center has the ball properly in his hands.

The other center can then raise his hands and arms giving a chest high target area.

The center can then snap the ball when he is ready.

Coach can make corrections as to stance, grip, and snap, and then the two players can change roles in the drill.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill at least five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the players are getting into a proper stance, gripping the ball properly, and making a correct snap.

COACHING TIP—As the center gets into his stance make certain:

His feet are even and spread slightly wider than his hips.

He has a bend in his knees.

That his shoulders, back, and hips are even

His shoulders are square.

As he grips the ball check that:

The ball is in front of his helmet.

The laces of the ball are rotated down and to the side of his snapping hand.

The snapping hand is under and outside of the ball with the fingers properly placed.

The guiding hand rests lightly on the top of the ball.

The front tip of the ball is up.

As he makes the snap make certain:

He is looking back at the other center.

He makes the snap with both hands on the ball.

He thrusts both arms back through his legs.

That both hands follow through directly at the other player.

His palms rotate out after releasing the ball.

If the long snapper is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find a long snapper, you may want to separate the drill into three segments so that you can look at and coach a number of players quickly in only that one area.

Center and Punter Practice Drill

PUNTING

SET-UP—Players line up 10 yards apart, center will snap the ball, and the punter will receive the snap and punt the ball.

Balls should be placed on the ground in front of the center.

Punter can go back farther if the center is capable of making a longer snap.

Coach can be at the side so that he can observe both the center's snap and the punter's kick.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, both play-

ers move up, get into a proper stance, and are prepared to punt.

The punter can raise his hands and arms giving a target area.

Center can then snap the ball when he is ready.

Punter should catch the snap, secure the ball, and correctly make the kick. This drill is for form and not distance.

Coach can make corrections, and the players can change.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill at least five times then rotate in second center and punter.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check dur-

ing practice for the coach to see that the center and the punter are getting the punt off properly.

COACHING TIP—As the center makes the snap and punter makes the kick, check that:

The ball arrives from the center to the target area formed by the punter's hands.

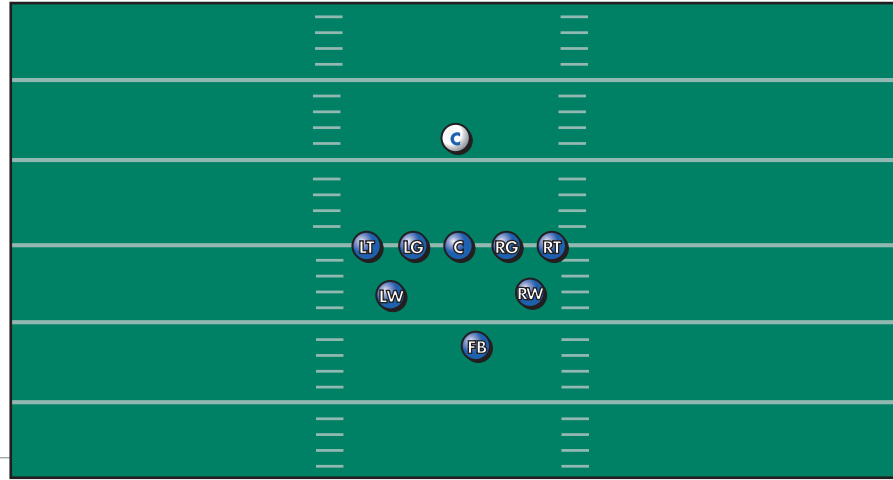
The punter moves to be in front of the snap and looks the ball into his hands.

The punter steps properly and kicks the ball smoothly. This drill should be set up to coach the punter, but anytime the punter is actually going to punt the ball, it is good to have your punt return men on the field to practice catching the punt.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Punt Protection Practice Drill

STANCE AND SET UP BLOCKERS



SET-UP—Players line up in tight formation in a two-point stance.

All blockers should have their outside foot back behind heel of inside foot.

Blockers should have most weight on front-inside foot.

Inside hand should be on the upper thigh of the inside leg.

Coach can be in front of formation so that he can observe all the blockers.

DRILL—On coach’s signal STANCE, both play-

ers move up and get into a proper stance.

Starting with the left tackle [LT], on coach’s signal of HUT, player should push back off his front foot with his inside hand.

As he pushes back, he should give ground and bring his hands up to block.

Center should go through snapping motion and then shuffle back bringing his hands up to block.

Both wings [LW & RW] should push straight back, bring hands up to block, and look from

inside to outside for free rusher.

Fullback should have feet even and not back up and look for free rusher.

Coach can make corrections as each player sets up and then have the entire group set up on center’s movement.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill two times individually and then five times as a group.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt protectors are setting up properly to block.

COACHING TIP—As the each blocker sets up check that:

His feet are under his hips.

His back is straight.

His head is up and his eyes are focused straight ahead.

His elbows are close to his waist.

He has both forearms up with his hands in front of his chest.

His hands are open, fingers spread, and palms facing forward.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Gunners Practice Drill

STANCE AND RELEASE

SET-UP—Both gunners line up facing the coach in a two-point stance, and the two defensive men line up in a two-point stance in front of them.

Both gunners should be in a proper stance. Coach can be in front of formation so that he can observe both of the gunners.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, both players move up and get into a proper stance.

Starting with the left gunner [LG], on coach's signal of HUT, player should take a step forward with back foot.

He should then try to get by the defensive man and run down field 5 yards.

Defensive man should try to keep gunner from releasing.

Drill can be done at half speed in the beginning.

Coach can make corrections as each gunner gets into his stance and releases.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill five times then switch positions.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the gunners are taking the proper stance and are able to release down the field to cover the punt.

COACHING TIP—As each gunner assumes his stance, check that:

His feet are not too wide and that his inside foot is back.

His back is straight.

He has his shoulders in front of his front foot.

His head is up and his eyes are focused on the ball.

His elbows are close to his waist.

He has both forearms up with his hands in front of his chest.

His hands are open, fingers spread, and palms facing forward.

As the each gunner releases check that:

He is moving off the line with first step.

He is using his hands to get separation from defensive man.

He is faking inside or outside and then moving in the other direction to get separation.

Once he clears the defensive man he is sprinting to center of the field.

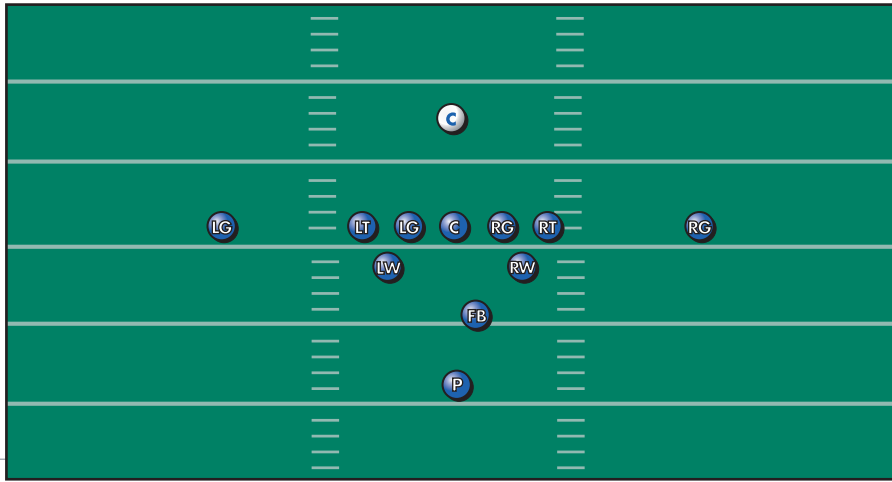
He breaks down ready to tackle once he is downfield.

If the gunner is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine both together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find gunners, you may want to separate the drill into two segments so that you can look at and coach a number of players quickly in only that one area.

Punt Practice Drill

COVERAGE



SET-UP—All players line up in tight formation in a proper stance.

Coach can be in front of formation so he can observe all the blockers as they release downfield.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, all players move up and get into a proper position.

After the punter gives the target to the center, the center should snap the ball to the punter.

On the snap, both gunners should release downfield 10 yards.

All blockers should set back, hold for two counts, and then fan out down the field for 10 yards.

Punter should go through steps but not kick the ball.

When punting the ball, FB should be the safety to the right and the Punter should be the safety to the left.

Coach can make corrections as players set up and then release down the field.

REPETITION—Have each group do drill three times as a group without kicking the ball and then five times with the punter kicking the ball and everyone going to the ball.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt team is setting up properly to block and releasing correctly down the field to cover the punt.

COACHING TIP—On each snap check that:

All the players are moving properly.

The two tackles widen out and keep the ball on their inside shoulder.

The two guards widen out and keep the ball in front of them.

The center makes sure of the snap and then sprints straight at the ball.

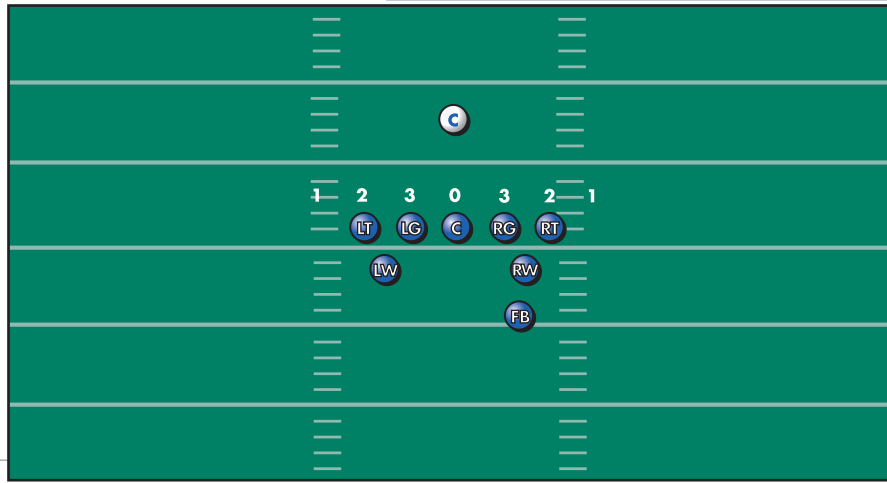
Both wing men release between the tackle and guard on their side, and go to the ball.

The fullback and punter move up the field and act as a safety on each side of the ball.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Punt Protection Practice Drill

BLOCKERS VS RUSH



SET-UP—Players line up in tight formation in a two-point stance with seven rush men opposing them.

All blockers should be lined up in a proper stance.

Rush men should be in a three-point stance looking in at ball. Coach can be in front of blockers so that he can observe all the blockers.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, both sets of

players move up, get into a proper stance.

Starting with the left tackle [LT], on coach's signal of HUT, blocker should set up and #2 rush man should rush.

Blocker should engage rush man and block for two counts.

LG and RG will block #3 rush man to their side.

RT will block #2 rush man to his side.

Center should go through snapping motion, and then shuffle back and block 0 rush man.

Both wings [LW & RW] will block #1 rush man to their side.

Fullback [FB] should have feet even and not back up and help on any rusher who comes free from any blocker.

Coach can make corrections as each player sets up, blocks, and then have the entire group of blockers and rush men move on center's movement.

REPETITION—Have each blocker and rush man do drill two times and then do the drill five times as a group.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt protectors are setting up properly to block, taking on the rush men for two counts, and keeping them from getting to the punter.

COACHING TIP—As each blocker sets up, check that:

He is in proper position to block.

He strikes the rush man in the chest with the palms of both hands.

He stops the rush man for two counts.

The fullback is alert to move to the side that has four men rushing.

Punt Return Practice Drill

PUNT HOLD UP AND RUSH



SET-UP—All players line up in their proper position—ends, nose and outside backers in three-point stances, others in two-point stances.

Coach can be behind punt return players so that he can observe all of them as they hold up or rush.

DRILL—Coach should tell the team if he wants to hold up coverage men or if he wants to go for a block.

Starting with RDB for a hold up on coach's signal of GO, the RDB should step into the LG, hit him in the shoulders with both hands, and try to keep him from releasing downfield.

The coach should then work his way across

the formation giving each player a chance to hold up the man in front of him.

Both inside linebackers [RIB & LIB] should each make contact with and hold up the LW and RW on their respective side.

For a rush call, on coach's signal of GO, each player should rush to the inside gap of the man in front of him and aim for a point 3 yards in front of the punter. Go one at a time.

Coach can make corrections as players set up and then hold up or rush.

REPETITION—Have each player hold up and rush twice individually and then do the hold-up drill three times as a group without kicking the

ball. To avoid the possibility of injury, only rush the entire team when running a predetermined punt block play.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt return team is moving properly to hold up the punt coverage players and that they are taking the correct rush path to block the punt.

COACHING TIP—As each player moves to hold up, check that:

They charge across the line on the signal.

They move into the center of the blocker.

They get their hands onto the shoulder area of the blocker.

They drive the blocker back for two counts.

Both DBs make contact and drive the gunner to the outside.

Both inside linebackers step into the line when the wing men release between the tackle and guard and make contact, driving them back, keeping them on their side of the ball.

As each player moves on a rush move, check that:

They crossover step with their outside foot to get past blocker into the inside gap.

They take a path so that they cross 3 yards in front of the punter.

They focus on seeing the placement of the ball.

They cross their arms, to protect their faces, as they go to make contact with the ball.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Kicker Practice Drill

SET-UP, STANCE, STEPS, AND KICKING MOTION

SET-UP—Players line up by position facing the coach.

If your practice field is lined, have the kicker line up in position to kick, facing the coach. The kicker then will take his appropriate steps, take his stance, and go through his steps and kicking motion.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, each of the players moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position behind the kicking tee. No ball is used in this drill.

On coach's signal of STEPS, the kicker should take the proper steps to set up to make the kick.

On coach's signal of KICK, the kicker should approach the kicking tee and correctly go through his kicking motion.

Coach can make corrections as the kicker sets-up, assumes his stance, attacks the tee, correctly completes his kicking motion, and when he finishes the kicking motion, by moving straight toward the coach.

REPETITION—Have each player line up and go through correct kicking motion at least five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during prepractice for the coach to see that the players are lining up properly and correctly going through the kicking motion.

COACHING TIP—As each kicker lines up, check that:

He has the instep of his plant foot even with the kicking tee as he lines up.

His kicking foot is directly behind the kicking tee.

He takes three steps straight back beginning with his kicking foot.

He then takes two steps sideways with his plant foot.

He then turns and faces the kicking tee.

As he gets into his stance, check that:

His kicking foot is behind his plant foot.

He is leaning forward and his shoulders are in front of his hips.

His arms are hanging down in a relaxed manner.

His head is up and his eyes are focused down at the tee.

On the signal KICK, check that:

His first step should be a short step forward with his kicking foot.

His second step is longer and brings his plant foot even with and six inches outside of the tee.

He generates the power for the kick by moving his hips forward.

His kicking leg is bent back.

His knee is in front of his kicking foot as he moves to the kicking tee.

He keeps the toe of his kicking foot pointed down.

His ankle is locked.

The center of the inside of kicking foot passes over the tee.

His body moves straight down the line.

His head is down and eyes are focused on the kicking tee.

He keeps his shoulders in front of his feet during the kick.

If the kicker is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find a kicker, you may want to separate the drill into three segments so that you can look at and coach a number of players quickly in that one area.

Holder Practice Drill

STANCE, CATCH, AND PLACEMENT

SET-UP—Holder lines up 7 yards away from and facing the coach.

If your practice field is lined, the holder and coach can line up on a hashmark.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, the holder moves up and gets into a proper stance for his position.

Once the holder has both hands up, the coach can throw the ball underhanded to the holder. Try to hit the holder's hands.

Coach can make corrections concerning the holder's stance, catch, and placement, and then have next holder take his place.

REPETITION—Have each player line up at least five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during prepractice for the coach to see that the holders are starting the practice in the proper stance, catching the snap, and placing the ball on the tee correctly.

COACHING TIP—As the holder gets into his stance, check that:

He is on the opposite side of the kicking tee from where the kicker will line up.

As he kneels down to get into position, that his back knee is 7 yards from the coach.

The toe of the front foot should be pointed straight along a hashmark.

He is leaning forward.

His back hand is placed on the center of the kicking tee.

His front hand and arm are extended at chest height toward the coach with the palm facing down.

He turns to where the kicker will be and asks if he is ready.

He then brings his other hand up to let the center know he is ready to receive the snap.

His thumbs should be touching to make the catch.

He is alert for the snap not being perfect.

When he makes the catch, check that:

He makes the catch and brings the tip of the ball to the tee in one continuous motion.

He places the first finger of his back hand lightly on the top tip of the ball.

He rotates the ball with his front hand so that the laces are in the front, away from the kicker's foot.

If the holder is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find a holder, you may want to separate the drill into three segments so that you can look at and coach a number of players quickly in only that one area.

**SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)****Short Snap Center Practice Drill****STANCE, GRIP, AND SNAP**

SET-UP—Players line up 7 yards apart. One player will snap; the other will serve as the holder receiving the snap.

Ball should be placed on the ground in front of one center.

Players will alternate roles with each snap.

Coach can move from one player to the other so that he can observe both center's stance, grip, and snap.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, the first snapper moves up, gets into a proper stance, and correctly grips the ball.

The other center kneels down in the position of the holder.

The coach can signal SNAP once the center has the ball properly in his hands.

The other center can raise his hands and arms giving a target area to the snapper.

Center can then snap the ball when he is ready.

Coach can make corrections concerning

stance, grip, and snap, and the players can change roles in the drill.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill at least five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the players are getting into a proper stance, gripping the ball properly, and making the short snap correctly.

COACHING TIP—As the center gets into his stance, make certain:

His feet are even and spread slightly wider than his hips.

He has a bend in his knees.

That his shoulders, back, and hips are even His shoulders are square.

As he grips the ball check that:

The ball is in front of his helmet.

The laces of the ball are rotated down and to the side of his snapping hand.

The snapping hand is under and outside of the ball with the fingers properly placed over the laces.

Most of the pressure on the ball should be in front of the center of the ball.

The guiding hand rests lightly on the top of the ball.

As the center makes the snap make certain: He is looking back at the other center.

He makes the snap with both hands on the ball.

He thrusts both arms back through his legs.

That both hands follow through directly at the other player.

His palms rotate out after releasing the ball.

If the short snapper is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find a short snapper, you may want to separate the drill into three segments so that you can look at and coach a number of players quickly in only that one area.

Center, Kicker, and Holder Drill**3 MAN KICK**

SET-UP—Center lines up in position to make the short snap.

Holder lines up 7 yards away from and facing the center.

Kicker takes his steps and sets up facing kicking tee and holder.

If your practice field is lined, the center and holder can line up on a hashmark.

DRILL—On coach's signal STANCE, all three players move and get into a proper stance for their position.

For the first three kicks:

The holder should have both hands up with the ball.

The coach can then call out SNAP, the holder places the ball on the kicking tee, and the kicker moves forward and kicks the ball.

For the next five kicks after the holder and kicker are working together, the center should enter the drill.

The holder should check with the kicker to make certain that he is ready and then give the target to the center.

When the center sees the target position by the holder, he should snap the ball to the holder. The holder should make the catch and place the ball on the kicking tee.

The kicker can move forward and kick the ball.

Coach can make corrections concerning the center's snap, the holder's placement, and the kicking motion of the kicker.

REPETITION—Have the holder and kicker kick three times and then center, holder, and kicker kick at least five times together.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during prepractice for the coach to see that the center, the holder, and kicker are starting the practice working together correctly as a three-man team.

COACHING TIP—Check that:

The center makes the snap accurately.

The holder makes the catch and places the ball on the tee properly.

The kicker has a good approach and makes the kick correctly.

Make sure that he:

Leads with his hips.

Has his kicking leg moving properly.

Makes contact with the ball with the top inside center of his kicking foot.

Follows through straight toward the target.

The path of the ball is accurately kicked down the hashmarks. Do not emphasize distance.

If the any of the three players is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until you feel that he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, remember to try a number of players at each of the positions until you find the winning combination that works smoothly.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Kick Protection and Kicking Practice Drill

STANCE & SET-UP KICK BLOCKERS



SET-UP—Players line up in tight formation in a two-point stance.

All blockers should have their inside foot back behind the heel of their outside foot.

Blockers should have their weight evenly distributed on both feet.

Both forearms should be resting on the upper thigh of both legs.

If allowed, rush men can be added to the drill once the coach is satisfied that all players are blocking properly.

Coach can be in front of the formation so he can observe all the blockers.

DRILL—On coach’s signal of STANCE, both

players move up and get into a proper stance.

Starting with the left end [LE], on coach’s signal of HUT, player should step back and behind the outside foot of the LT with his inside foot.

As he steps back, he should bring both hands up to the center of his chest and extend his elbows out to provide a maximum blocking surface.

Coach should then have the next player set up until all blockers have set up correctly.

Center should go through snapping motion and then shuffle back bringing his hands up to block.

Both wings [LW and RW] should bring hands up to block and be prepared to block inside gap rusher first and then the outside gap rusher.

Coach can make corrections as each player sets up and then have the entire group set up on center’s movement with the center making the snap and the ball being kicked.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill two times individually and then five times as a group. Once a week, do kick with rush.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the placekick protectors are setting up properly to block and that they can work as an entire group.

COACHING TIP—As each blocker sets up, check that:

He takes a hard fast step with his inside foot.

His feet are under his hips and knees are bent.

His back is straight.

His head is up and his eyes are focused straight ahead.

His elbows are extended out on each side of his body.

He has both forearms up with his hands in front of his chest.

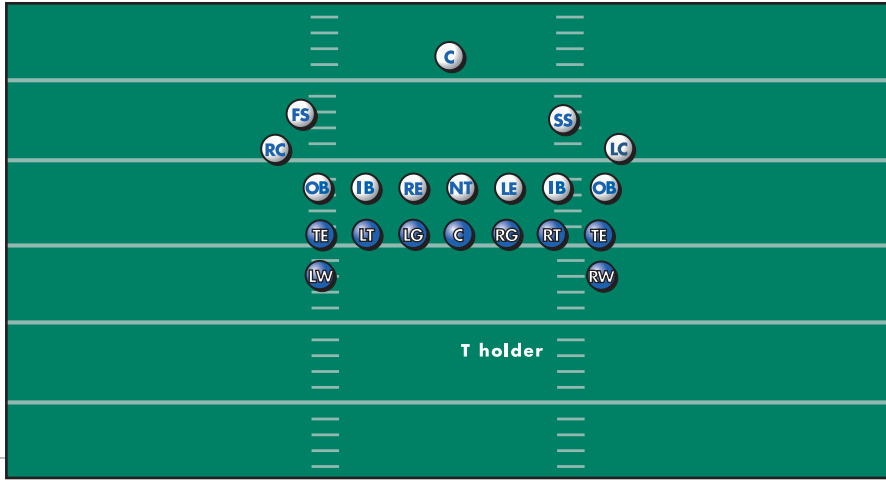
All blockers block their inside gap first.

The center, holder, and kicker work smoothly as one unit.

SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Kick Practice Drill

RUSH AND BLOCK



SET-UP—Kicking team players line up in tight formation in a two-point stance.

Defensive linebackers and linemen on rush team should line up in a three-point stance.

Defensive corners and safeties should be in a two-point stance.

Coach can be in front of formation so that he can observe all the rush men from behind.

DRILL—On coach's signal of STANCE, all players move up and get into a proper stance.

Starting with the right outside linebacker [ROB], on coach's signal of HUT, player

should rush just through the gap between the end and wing, aiming for a spot 2 yards in front of the holder.

Coach should then have next player set up and rush through their gap until all defensive players have rushed properly.

Inside backers should rush in gap inside of tackle on their side.

Defensive ends should rush through the guard-center gap on their side. Nose tackle can go to either side.

Coach can make corrections as each player

rushes and then have the entire group set up on center's movement with the center making the snap and the ball being kicked.

REPETITION—Have each player do drill two times individually and then five times as a group. Once a week, do rush with kick.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the placekick rushers are rushing properly and that they are taking the proper path to make the block.

COACHING TIP—As each player rushes check that:

He is rushing through the proper gap.

Ends and nose rush hard for two counts and then try to get their hands into the air to block the kick.

Linebackers take a path so that they cross 2 yards in front of the holder.

They focus on seeing the placement of the ball on the kicking tee.

They cross their arms, to protect their faces, as they go to make contact with the ball.

The four defensive backs are not rushing but are watching the two ends and wings on the kicking team for coverage if they come out for a pass after faking the kick [RCO has LW—FS has LE—SS has RE—LCO has RW].

Kickoff Practice Drill

SET-UP, STANCE, AND APPROACH

SET-UP—Have kicker place the tee on the ground at the intersection of the hashmarks and a yard line if possible.

The kicker should face the coach with his kicking foot behind the tee and his nonkicking foot at the side of the tee.

Coach can be in front of the tee so he can observe all the movements of the kicker.

DRILL—On the coach's signal of SET-UP, the kicker should turn and take eight steps away from the tee in a straight line, then turn to the side of his nonkicking foot and take five more steps, and then turn and face the tee and the coach.

Coach will then signal STANCE, and the kicker should take a half step forward with his kicking foot toward the tee and be in a comfortable stance.

Coach can then call out APPROACH, and the kicker should begin his movement toward the kicking tee by taking a short half step with the nonkicking foot then slow steps for 4 yards and then attack the tee for the remainder of the distance.

Coach can make corrections as the kicker sets up, gets into his stance, and then approaches the tee.

REPETITION—Have each kicker do the drill three times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the kicker is setting up properly, has a good stance, and approaches the kicking tee correctly.

COACHING TIP—On each repetition, check that the kicker is:

Stepping straight away from the tee.

Lining up at a 45 degree angle to the kicking tee after finishing his steps.

In a stance with a bend in his knees, his shoulders in front of his hips, and his arms hanging down in a relaxed manner with his eyes focused on the tee.

Maintaining a smooth motion as he approaches the tee and places his nonkicking foot [plant foot] three inches behind and six inches outside of the tee.

If the kicker is having trouble with any one phase of the drill, have him repeat only that part of the drill until he is ready to combine all three together again.

Early in the year, when you are trying to find kickoff men, you may want to separate the drill into three segments so that you can quickly look at and coach a number of players.



SPECIAL TEAMS DRILLS (YOUTH)

Kickoff Practice Drill

MAKING THE KICK

SET-UP—Have kicker place the tee on the ground at the intersection of the hashmarks and a yard line if possible.

The kicker should face the coach with his kicking foot behind the tee and his nonkicking foot at the side of the tee.

Coach can be in front of the tee so that he can observe all the movements of the kicker.

DRILL—On the coach's signal of SET-UP, the kicker should turn and take eight steps away from the tee in a straight line, then turn to the side of his nonkicking foot and take five more steps, and then turn and face the tee and the coach.

Coach will signal STANCE, and the kicker should take half step with his kicking foot toward the tee and be in a comfortable stance.

Coach can then call out KICK, and the kick-

er should begin his movement toward the kicking tee by taking a short half step with the nonkicking foot then slow steps for 4 yards, and then attack the tee for the remainder of the distance.

Kicker should go through correct kicking motion, first without the ball and then with the ball added to the drill.

Coach can make corrections as the kicker goes through his kicking motion.

REPETITION—Have each kicker do the drill three times without the ball and then five times with the ball.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the kicker is kicking the ball properly.

COACHING TIP—On each repetition, check that the kicker:

Lines up correctly, has a comfortable stance, and is approaching the tee properly.

Places his nonkicking foot [plant foot] three inches behind and six inches outside of the tee.

Has his plant foot pointing straight down the field.

Has his head down, eyes focused on the tee.

Keeps his shoulders in front of his hips.

Starts with his hips to lead the kick and his kicking leg:

Moves forward in a high arc.

Has his knee preceding his kicking foot.

Has the toe of the foot pointed down.

Moves forward so that the inside of he instep hits the ball just below the center of the ball.

Has power enough to lift the kicker off the ground.

Anytime the kicker is going to kick the ball, it is good to have your kickoff return men on the field to practice catching the kickoff.

Practice Drill

KICKOFF RETURN

SET-UP—Have kicker place the tee on the ground at the intersection of the hashmarks and a yard line if possible.

The kicker should place the ball on the tee and be ready to kick the ball to the return men.

Kick return men should line up at a distance that is consistent with the kicker's ability.

Coach can be at the side so that he can observe the return men as they move to catch the kickoff.

DRILL—On the coach's signal of SET-UP, the kicker should get in his stance to kickoff, and the two return men should move up prepared to catch the kickoff.

Coach can then call out KICK, and the kicker should begin his movement toward the kicking tee and kick the ball.

The two kick return men should call out who is going to make the catch "I Have It, I Have It"

or "Yours, Yours."

Player designated to make the catch should make the catch and return the ball up the field for 15 yards.

Coach can make corrections as the kick return men make their calls, make the catch, and return the ball.

REPETITION—Have each kick return man do the drill five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the kicker returner is fielding the ball properly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Both return men line up so they can see the ball on the tee.

There is agreement in the call between the return men. The player not returning the ball moves up in a blocking position for the kick returner.

The kick returner:

Moves to a position directly in front of the path of the ball.

Tries to be moving forward as he makes the catch.

Makes the catch with his little fingers together, palms up, with both hands forming the catching area.

Keeps his elbows in at his sides.

Reaches out so the he sees his hands and the ball as he makes the catch.

Secures the ball as he starts upfield.

All kick return men must understand that:

Every kickoff is a free ball and can be recovered by either team. They can call for a Fair Catch on a high, short kick.

Kickoffs must be aggressively returned.

This drill should be set up to coach the return men, but anytime the kicker is going to kick the ball, it is good to have your kickoff return men on the field to practice catching the kickoff.

Practice Drill

PUNT RETURN

SET-UP—Have punter line up on a hashmark and a yard line if possible.

The punter should have the ball and be ready to punt the ball to the return men.

Punt return men should line up at a distance that is consistent with the punter's ability.

Coach can be at the side so that he can observe the return men as they move to catch the punt.

DRILL—On the coach's signal of SET-UP, the punter should get in his stance to punt, and the two return men should move up prepared to catch the punt.

Coach can then call out PUNT, and the punter should begin his steps and punt the ball.

The two punt return men should call out

who is going to make the catch "I Have It, I Have It" or "Yours, Yours."

Player designated to make the catch should make the catch and return the ball up the field for 15 yards.

Coach can make corrections as the punt return men make their calls, make the catch, and return the punt.

REPETITION—Have each punt return man do the drill five times.

GOAL—This drill serves as a quick check during practice for the coach to see that the punt returner is fielding the ball properly.

COACHING TIP—Make certain that:

Both return men line up so they can see the ball.

There is agreement in the call between the return men. The player not returning the punt moves up in a blocking position for the punt

returner.

The punt returner:

Locates the ball as soon as possible.

Moves to a position directly in front of the path of the ball.

Comes under control as he makes the catch.

Makes the catch with his little fingers together, wrist cocked, palms up, with both hands forming the catching area.

Keeps his elbows in at his sides.

Reaches up so that he sees his hands and the ball as he makes the catch.

Secures the ball as he starts upfield.

All punt return men must understand:

That you do not need to field every punt.

They can signal for a Fair Catch on a short punt that he can catch, on a high kick, or if a tackler is right on top of him.



Section VI: Coach-Player Communication

Chapter 1: Communicating Effectively

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Chapter Objectives

This chapter of the *Coach's Playbook* focuses on skills of effective coach-player communication. It has four objectives that include:

- Recognizing the importance of developing effective coach-player communication;
- Being able to identify characteristics of effective and ineffective coach communicators;
- Learning the components of effective communication;
- Developing active listening and nonverbal communication skills.

Communicating Effectively

"A significant part of football occurs before the snap. Coaches must communicate critical information to players, and the players must communicate among themselves."

—Lou Tepper, former Head Coach, University of Illinois

"So much of coaching in today's football is believability and credibility. The players have to believe in what you're doing...When you stand in front of them, you have to exude confidence."

—Matt Millen, Former NFL Linebacker & Current Detroit Lions President and CEO

"Communication isn't all about talking. Just as much, it's about listening."

—Mike Shanahan, Head Coach, Denver Broncos

"If you are one of those who has trouble hearing what players are saying because you're too busy framing a response in your head, clear your brain. Concentrate on the other conversationalist's lips. Watch the way they form their words. You will suddenly start hearing them in new ways."

—Lou Holtz, Head Coach, University of South Carolina

COMMUNICATION—it is something we do throughout our lifetimes, but receive very little formal training in how exactly to do it. Just think of how much you must communicate as a football coach. You must interact with countless numbers of individuals, such as parents, coaches, league officials, referees, and most important, your players. Sometimes you simply communicate needed information. Other times, you are trying to change someone's attitude or behavior, and still on other occasions, you are trying to resolve emotional confrontations.



As the quotes that began this section show, great players and coaches recognize the importance of communication and its role in football success. They also recognize some of the keys of effective communication such as the importance of being a good listener and having credibility and trust. We will learn about these and other components of effective communication in this chapter.

Specifically, this chapter of your *Coach's Playbook* focuses on improving your coaching communication skills. In it, you will identify characteristics of effective and ineffective coach communicators and hone your active listening and nonverbal communication skills. We will begin by discussing what makes a coach an effective communicator.

Effective Communication

Think of the football coaches for whom you have played or that you have observed in your life. Who were the most effective communicators among them? What were the characteristics that made them effective? Now contrast these coaches and their characteristics with the least effective coach communicators you have known or observed. Record your responses on the Components of Effective Communication exercise contained on page 193 (Exercise I) in this section of your *Coach's Playbook*.

Looking at your responses, you will notice that effective and ineffective coach communicators differ on a number of important characteristics. Typically, effective communicators are characterized by the following:

- Credible and trustworthy
- Speak clearly
- Convey direct and straightforward messages
- Convey messages high in information
- Provide relevant and useful information
- Focus on one thing at a time when speaking
- Communicate with consistency
- Avoid hidden agendas in messages
- Reinforce points with repetition
- Demonstrate good listening skills
- Consistently communicate verbal and nonverbal messages
- Connect with the other person by making eye contact and nodding to show they are following what is said
- Look for feedback that their messages were accurately received by the listener
- Communicate with sincerity

How do these characteristics compare to the communication characteristics you listed? Which ones are similar and different? What differences did you observe in effective and ineffective coach communicators? Reflect on these questions, and then write down what you feel effective communication is in the space provided on page 193 (Exercise I).

Now, take the perspective of one of your players. How would they regard you as a communicator? Reflect on your ability to communicate. Specifically, rate your ability to communicate on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being very effective and 1 being not very effective, on page 193 (Exercise I).

How did you rate your ability to communicate? If you scored well, that's great. Use the communication skills and techniques discussed here to reinforce the good things you already do and identify additional ways to improve. Great communicators, like great football players, constantly work to get better. If you did not score as high as you would have liked, don't worry. Help is on the way. We will discuss numerous ways to communicate more effectively.



Finally, on the bottom of page 193 is the statement “players don’t care what you know until they know you care.” Take a minute to reflect on what you think this statement means and write your response in the space provided below the statement.

The statement “players don’t care what you know until they know you care” deals with one of the most important principles of effective coach communication: the trust and credibility you have with your players. As Super Bowl winning coach Mike Shanahan said, “Face it: without truth, there is no trust. Without trust, there can be no relationship. And without a relationship, the chances of achieving success decrease dramatically” (Shanahan & Scheffer, 1999, p. 56). Your players, then, must know that you care about them as people and players. This trust must be earned and is greatly influenced by your ability to communicate effectively. You can earn this trust in the following ways:

- **Get to know your players as individuals:** Learn your players’ names as soon as possible and try to learn something unique about each one of them (e.g., Christian is a “rapper,” Jeff plays baseball, Brian is good with computers, AJ works at the movie theater). Football players, like all of us, listen more to people who take an interest in them. More important, you will have a better connection with your players.
- **Caring is a fundamental part of coaching:** Think of the videotape of NFL legends you saw at the start of the clinic portion of this program. What did these great players remember about their coaches? They remembered coaches who took an interest in them and demonstrated that they cared about them, both as people and players. In fact, if you don’t care about the kids you are coaching, you shouldn’t be coaching!
- **In order to get athletes to do what you want, you have to connect with them:** Communicating is all about helping athletes learn skills, grow, become more knowledgeable, and make good choices. However, finding out what the players need to become better football players or people will be meaningless unless your players are receptive to your words and actions. Kids are much more receptive to teachers and coaches who understand and connect with them. The communication skills you learn in this section will help you become better connected with your players.
- **Players are not going to listen to you until they know that they matter to you:** This does not mean you have to be a buddy to the players or refrain from appropriate discipline. It does mean, however, that you must treat and interact with your players so that they feel you care about them as individuals.

So remember:

“Players don’t care what you know until they know you care!”

Components of Effective Communication

When most of us think about communication, we immediately see ourselves giving a pregame speech, talking to a group of parents, or discussing an issue with the athletic director. That is, we see ourselves as imparting information. We do this for a reason; conveying information to others is a critical part of communication and a critical part of our job as coaches. However, researchers have learned a great deal about communication and stress some other points that may not be so obvious. These include active listening and nonverbal interaction. Both of these important issues will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.



Active Listening

Active listening is the process of showing concern for the content and intent of the message and the feelings of the person with whom you are communicating. Think of your own experiences. When you talked to someone who paid little attention to what you were conveying and did not seem to care about what you were feeling, you probably became upset and did not listen to him or her. The same holds true for your players. Coaches who fail to listen actively fail to communicate effectively.

So how does one actively listen? It's relatively easy but requires commitment on your part. Monitor yourself to make sure that you do the following on a regular basis:

- **Mentally prepare to listen:** Coaching can be very hectic. Coaches often fail to listen, not because they do not care, but because they do not take the time to do so. Before communicating with someone, take a few seconds to clear your head and focus your attention solely on that person. Do not get caught trying to do two things at once (i.e., multi-tasking) or thinking about something else.
- **Show that you care by making a concerted effort to listen:** Listening is not hard, but you must make a concerted effort to do so. Take a tip from great coach communicators; focus on the speaker's eyes or lips to insure that you are attending to their words.
- **Allow players to complete their sentences before responding:** One common mistake made by those with poor listening skills is to interrupt the other individual constantly before that person has completed his or her sentence. The simple strategy of "not interrupting" and letting the speaker finish their sentences greatly increases your communication effectiveness. So try hard to allow players to complete their sentences before responding.
- **Monitor and limit your "yes/but" exchanges:** Listening is often dependent on the number of "yes/but" exchanges that take place between the two parties involved. Statements that begin with the phrase "yes/but" (e.g., "Yes, I know you are trying, but you are not as tough as you need to be") often lead to poor listening because the listener will only focus on what is said after the "but" and, consequently, will not feel that the coach is listening. In addition, "yes/but" communications often lead to disagreements, so being aware of and limiting the number of these statements you make is critical to communication success.
- **Paraphrase and ask questions:** Paraphrasing and asking questions show the person that you are indeed listening. They also allow you to check whether you are interpreting what they are conveying accurately.
- **Use supportive/confirming behaviors:** Like paraphrasing and asking questions, using supportive and confirming behaviors such as 'uh huh,' a head nod, or saying 'okay' tells the speaker that you are listening.

Now that you have reviewed the principles of active listening, test your listening skills by conducting the Communication Challenge exercise on pages 194 (Exercise III). You will need a partner for this exercise. After finding a partner, identify who will be the "Communicator" and who will be the "Listener." The Communicator should turn to page 196 (football play diagrams) of this section and look over the football plays listed. The Listener should turn to page 197 (blank diagrams) (Do Not Look at page 196 [diagrams]—your partner's



sheet). The Communicator should select a play to communicate verbally without letting the Listener see it. The Listener then draws the play based on what he or she has heard using the form on page 197 (blank football play diagrams). After two minutes, check for accuracy and have the Listener rate himself or herself on the listening skills listed on page 194 (Communication Challenge Exercise Rating Scale). Identify which active listening areas were strong and those that need to be improved.

Nonverbal Interaction

When most of us think of communicating, speech is the first thing that comes to mind. Yet communication research has repeatedly demonstrated that our nonverbal interactions are critical. Think of the award-winning actor, Denzel Washington, in the football movie *Remember the Titans*. Any of us could read his lines, but what made him so effective were his nonverbal actions such as voice tone, facial gestures, body movements, and physical interactions with the other actors (e.g. hugs someone, places his arm around a player when speaking to him). He is an effective communicator both verbally and nonverbally.

While most of us will never be a Denzel Washington, great coaches are effective because they possess strong nonverbal interaction skills. When communicating, they regularly do the following:

- **Make and Maintain Eye Contact:** Great coaches make a connection with the person they are talking with by making and maintaining eye contact. When you communicate with others, focus on their eyes or look at their lips when they speak. Note, however, that eye contact must be “comfortable” or “natural” because a coach who “stares” at a player can be perceived as intimidating.
- **Body Posture:** Act as if you are interested! Lean forward, stay relaxed, and face the player.
- **Head and Facial Movements:** Nod and let the player know that you are connecting with him. Use expressions that match the expressions of the player.
- **Vocal Quality:** Use appropriate tones and simple, precise language. Often times, coaches are misinterpreted by players not because of what they say, but how they say it.
- **Touch:** Touching a player on the shoulder or arm may be important to conveying empathy and understanding or gaining and maintaining attention. However, in today’s society, be careful that physical contact with any player is not misconstrued as inappropriate. If in doubt, do not initiate such contact.

Now that you better understand the importance of nonverbal interaction when communicating, turn to pages 195 (Exercise IV) of this chapter in your *Coach’s Playbook* and complete the “How My Players View My Nonverbal Communication” Exercise. When finished, be sure to indicate in what situations you are less likely to demonstrate appropriate nonverbal communication skills. For example, in the quotes at the start of this chapter, Coach Lou Holtz indicates that one may not show good nonverbal listening skills when he is thinking of what to say or framing a response to a player instead of listening. Similar situations might occur when you are preoccupied with some off-the-field hassle, or when you are emotionally upset. What situations are most likely to interfere with your nonverbal interaction communication skills?

Conclusion

One of the most important skills in coaching is communication. As stressed throughout this section, “players don’t care what you know until they know that you care.” The only way for players to know that you care is if you are able to communicate that you care. Communication can take the forms of active listening, nonverbal



interactions, giving effective demonstrations, and responding with effective feedback (the latter two are discussed in the next two chapters). As you coach, use these strategies. Remember that these are just strategies to help you communicate more effectively with your players. Communication skills are not a magic solution to effective communication—they do not replace genuine interest in your players.

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Notes

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COACH-PLAYER COMMUNICATION EXERCISES

I. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Directions: Think of coaches for whom you have played or that you have observed. Who were the **most effective** coach communicators and what were the characteristics that made them effective? Who were the **least effective** coach communicators and what were the characteristics that made them ineffective? Write your responses in the areas below.

Components of Effective Communication

“Effective” Coach Characteristics

“Ineffective” Coach Characteristics

What is Effective Communication?

Rate your communication effectiveness.

Not very effective 1 2 Somewhat effective 3 4 Pretty effective 5 6 Very effective

What does the quote *“Players don’t care what you know until they know you care”* mean to you?

“Players don’t care what you know until they know you care”

Points of Emphasis:

- Communication involves caring and getting to know your players as individuals.
- Caring is a fundamental part of coaching.
- In order to get the athletes to follow your lead, you have to connect with them.
- Players are not going to listen to you until they know that they matter to you.



II. COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Active Listening**
- **Nonverbal Communication**
- **Responding: Giving Effective Feedback**

III. ACTIVE LISTENING

Active Listening: Showing concern for the content and intent of the message and for the feelings of the person sending the message.

Active Listening Components:

- Mentally prepare to listen
- Show that you care by making a concerted effort to listen
- Paraphrase what the speaker says
- Ask questions to show that you are listening
- Use supportive/confirming behaviors (e.g. 'uh huh,' head nod)

Communication Challenge Exercise

Directions: Find a partner, and choose who will be the Communicator and who will be the Listener. The Communicator should turn to page 196 (football play diagrams) of this section and look over the football plays listed. The Listener should turn to page 197 (blank diagrams) (Do Not Look at page 196—your partner's sheet). Then, do the following:

1. The Communicator selects a play to communicate without letting the Listener see it.
2. The Communicator then describes the play to the Listener.
3. The Listener draws the play as communicated.
4. You will have two minutes. Your moderator will keep time.
5. Check for accuracy, and rate yourself on the listening skills listed above.
6. Switch roles and repeat the exercise.

**Once you finish, rate yourself on your listening skills on a scale of 1-5.
(1 = did not do this at all; 5 = did this all the time)**

- ___ I mentally prepared to listen.
- ___ I showed that I cared by making a concerted effort to listen.
- ___ I paraphrased what the communicator said.
- ___ I asked questions to show that I was listening.
- ___ I used supportive/confirming behaviors.



IV. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Here is a list of guidelines for nonverbal communication:

- **Eye Contact:** Maintain a connection with the person with whom you are talking. Eye contact is an important way to maintain a connection. Focus on their lips when they speak.
- **Body Posture:** Behave in a way that shows you are interested. Lean forward, stay relaxed, and face the player.
- **Head and Facial Movements:** Nod and let the player know that you are connecting with them. Use expressions that match the expressions of the player.
- **Vocal Quality:** Use pleasant tones and simple, precise language.
- **Touch:** Touching a player on the shoulder or arm may be important in conveying empathy or understanding or gaining and maintaining attention. However, be careful that physical contact with any player is not misconstrued as inappropriate.

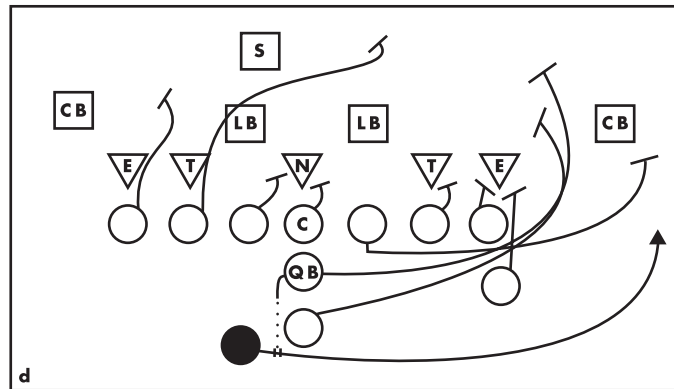
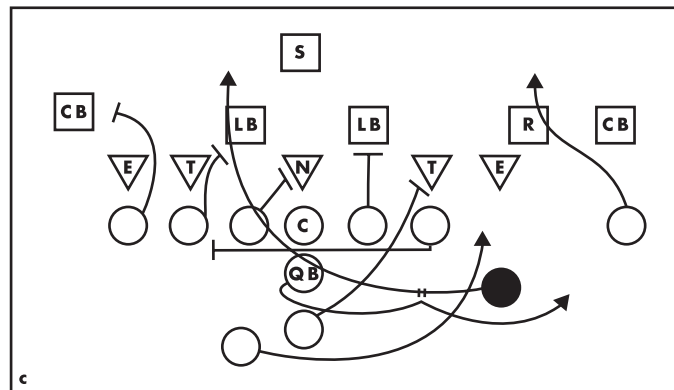
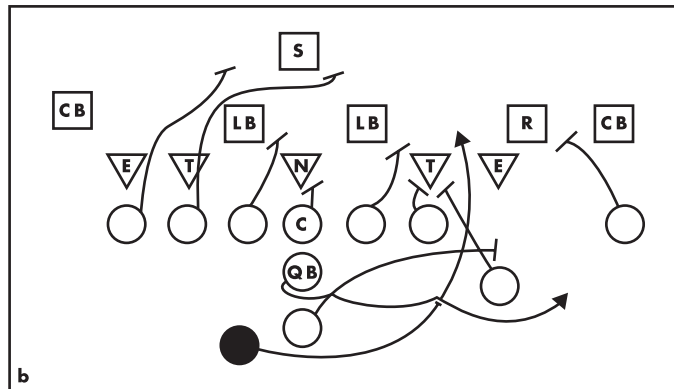
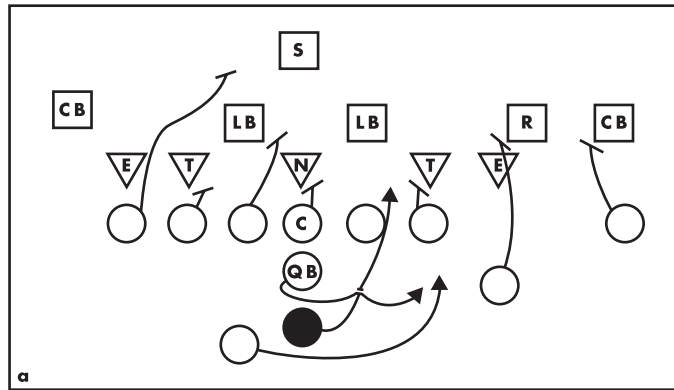
How My Players View My Nonverbal Communication Exercise

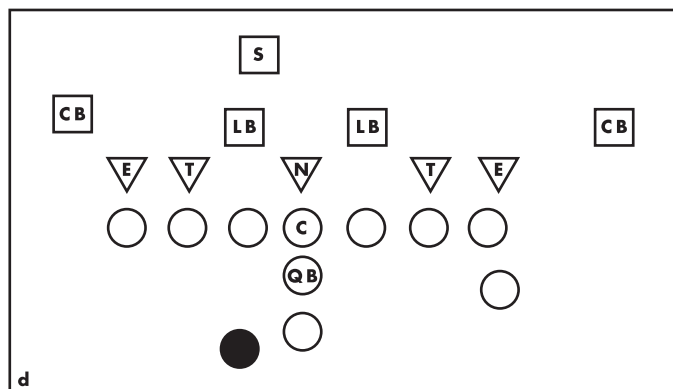
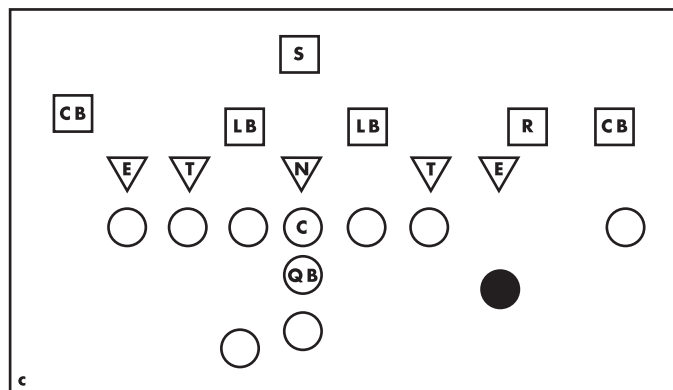
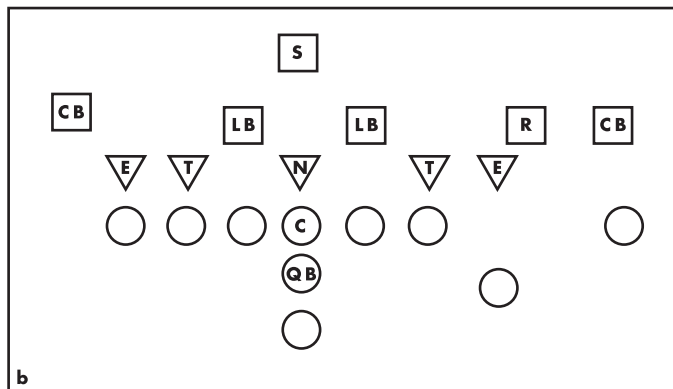
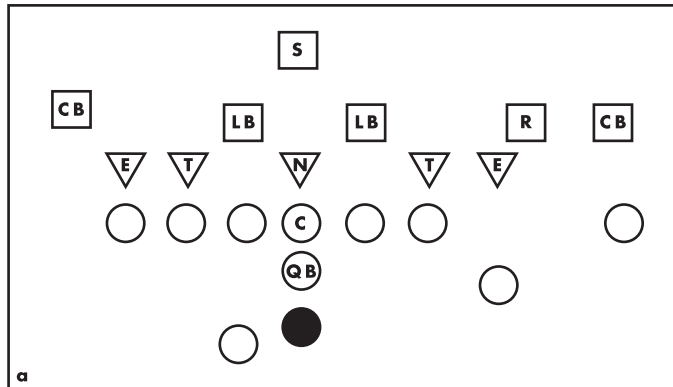
Directions: Think about your day-to-day coaching. How would your players rate your nonverbal communication skills on a scale of 1-5? (1 = did not do this at all; 5 = did this all the time)

- ___ Maintains Eye Contact
- ___ Body Posture Shows Interest
- ___ Head and Facial Movements (let players know you are connecting with them)
- ___ Vocal Quality (good voice clarity, uses clear understandable language)
- ___ Touch (uses touch appropriately to show empathy or make a point)

Indicate in what situations you are less likely to show appropriate nonverbal communication skills (e.g., When trying to talk to a player and do something else at the same time).

_____	_____
_____	_____







Chapter 2: Giving Effective Demonstrations

Daniel Gould, Ph.D.

Larry Lauer, M.S.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter of the *Coach's Playbook* highlights how to give effective demonstrations. It has four objectives that include:

- Learning the components of an effective demonstration;
- Understanding the steps needed to demonstrate and practice successfully a complex football skill;
- Becoming aware of the influence of player motivation in giving effective demonstrations and enhancing the learning of football skills; and,
- Practicing effective demonstration while integrating the principles provided in the chapter.

Giving Effective Demonstrations

"A picture is worth a thousand words!"

"Players must see the skill if they are to perform it correctly."

"Trick plays don't win big games. It is the team that best executes fundamental skills."

—Authors Unknown

As the above statements show, a critical element of successful football coaching is teaching fundamental skills of the game. A frequently used method of teaching skills is to tell your players what the skill is first and then break the skill down into its component parts. Second, a demonstration is given to players so they can see the skill in action. Third, players are allowed to practice the skill in its parts while coaches observe and provide feedback on skill execution (discussed in detail in the next chapter). This teaching method is widely used for a good reason, it is successful!

To improve upon teaching skills, we will focus on one of the most important, yet ignored, aspects of teaching—giving effective demonstrations. Research with young athletes reveals that many players learn visually, while others learn by feeling and doing the movement or by auditory methods. Thus, giving effective demonstrations will be important to your success in teaching the fundamental skills of football. Yet, many coaches do not spend time planning their demonstrations and execute them only when they think to do it. Moreover, many coaches avoid demonstrations because they do not feel comfortable performing the skill in front of their team and risking looking "bad" or "unskilled."

The initial section of this chapter outlines how to give effective demonstrations including getting the attention of your players, assisting players in remembering the skill, and helping them effectively practice a skill. Next, the role of player motivation in skill learning is included to aid coaches in successfully teaching football skills. Finally, you will have an opportunity to practice demonstrations and implement the principles outlined in this chapter.

Giving Effective Demonstrations

We have all heard the phrase that a picture is worth a thousand words. Football coaches support this axiom when using demonstrations as a method of teaching football skills. Unfortunately, not all coaches inherit the ability to execute a spin move while rushing the quarterback. In this situation, find an assistant coach or player that can correctly demonstrate the skill, or use the compact disc included with your *Coach's Playbook*. Be selective when using a demonstrator, because giving an incorrect demonstration can become an obstacle to future learning.

Demonstrations are not a skill that every ex-player coach can do effectively, and other coaches will never be able to do them effectively. In fact, many of the best demonstrators are not players, but students of the game. The reason why it takes more than being an ex-football player is that effective demonstrations rarely happen by chance; they require a coach to understand and plan a skill to be demonstrated. For a demonstration to be effective, four things are needed from your players:

- Players must pay attention to the demonstration
- Players must remember the key points of the skill demonstrated
- Players must have the ability to reproduce the skill
- Players must have the motivation to learn and execute the skill

Paying Attention

Giving effective demonstrations requires you to get your players' attention. To gain your players' attention you should follow several basic rules:

- **Position players so that they all have a clear view of the demonstration.** Having your players sit in a predetermined way so all can see and hear is critical. Arrange them in rows, columns, or a semi-circle rather than a circle so all of the players can view the skill from the front and not the back of the demonstrator.
- **Avoid distracting environments that will interfere with learning.** You want to have a background behind the demonstration with little movement or noise. For example, when demonstrating a bump and run technique to your cornerbacks, you do not want receivers running in their line of sight. Position your corners so their backs are to the receivers during a demonstration of a skill (two notes of caution: keep a safe distance between receivers running patterns and your corners, and do not allow receivers to run directly at corners). Additionally, position your players so they are not looking into the sun during a skill demonstration or into the stands when friends and family are present.
- **Speak loudly and clearly when giving instructions.** Avoid shouting, but be sure to project your voice so all team members can hear clearly. Shouting in a "coaching voice" all the time may create tension and interfere with player attention and learning.
- **Make and maintain eye contact with players while conveying instructions during the demonstration.** Eye contact can be more easily achieved if all players are facing the demonstrator and are all on a knee (rather than if some are standing, and others are on a knee).

Simply gaining your players' attention is not sufficient. Players must also attend to the specific points you are trying to communicate with the demonstration. Good communicators and strong coaches guide their attention to the key points before and during the demonstration. **A common mistake coaches commit is to include too much information in a demonstration. Athletes are overloaded with information and cannot remember the key points.**



When doing demonstrations with your players, keep in mind that young athletes can attend to only three or four basic points of a skill. Demonstrating seven or eight points of a complex football skill, such as defending the pass, will exceed your players' capacity to learn the skill and result in confusion. Thus, it is more effective to give your players a general idea of the skill first, and then provide details step-by-step. One other point to remember is that younger players cannot retain as much information as older athletes. For example, you should teach tackling differently depending on the age group. You will need to do a more basic demonstration for younger players (i.e., head up, look at the belt, hit with the shoulder and wrap) than for older players who can retain more subskills (i.e., low center of gravity, leg drive, lift player with legs).

Remembering

It is not enough to demonstrate a skill while players observe, even if the correct information is provided. Coaches must assist players in remembering what they have seen and heard. Frequently, coaches become frustrated because they demonstrate a skill, then they practice it, and it seems as if the players forgot everything that was demonstrated. To eliminate this problem, the rules for effective remembering must be followed.

Mental rehearsal. A great method for helping your players retain information is to have them mentally rehearse what is demonstrated. Mental rehearsal or practice should occur immediately following the demonstration. Research has shown that using one of three mental practice techniques can increase retention:

- Instruct players to close their eyes and picture what was demonstrated
- Ask players to summarize the key points
- Have players verbally repeat the important steps

All three of these techniques can be quickly implemented in under a minute. Most important, mental rehearsal techniques will help your players remember the skill demonstrated and decrease the number of times you will have to repeat a demonstration.

Instructions. A second method for facilitating learning is to help athletes remember by giving clear and concise instructions. Coaches should limit their instructions to one or two commands at one time. Moreover, ambiguous instructions serve only to confuse your players. Effective strategies for helping the athletes remember demonstrations are to name the subunits of a skill that is being instructed. For example, in teaching defensive line pass rushing techniques, coaches often refer to easy to remember codes such as the "swim" move or "rip" move.

Immediate application. The third method of facilitating athletes' learning of skills is to decrease the amount of time between a demonstration and practice of the skill. Research has revealed that the greater amount of time between demonstration and practice increases forgetfulness. Additionally, demonstrations should not be followed by lengthy verbal explanations (i.e., 5 – 10 minutes) because athletes will forget the demonstration. Ultimately, a good rule of thumb is to practice a skill immediately following its demonstration.

Practice

All effective demonstrations include a practice component. However, it is not as simple as sending players off on their own to emulate the demonstration. Coaches should be aware of several things that affect practice. As you know from your coaching experience, it is close to impossible to perform a new sport skill accurately without practice. When practicing simple sport skills, such as blocking, it is best to practice it as a whole. Conversely, more complex skills are composed of simpler subskills. These complex skills, such as a quarterback reading the defense, can be more easily learned when demonstrations and practice focus on the natural subunits of the skills prior to practicing the entire skill.



Subskills. A quality of outstanding football coaches is that they are able to identify natural subunits, or subskills, of a complex skill relative to the age group they are coaching. For example, in tackling, the subunits might be broken down into: focusing on the belt line of the ball carrier, initial contact with ball carrier with the shoulder and the head up, wrapping the ball carrier, and, finally, lifting and driving with the legs.

Coaches often learn through experience how to break a complex skill into its natural subskills. A great way for inexperienced coaches to learn how to break complex skills down is to observe other experienced coaches. Be a student of the game, and watch other coaches demonstrate how they teach complex skills to their athletes.

Demonstrating and practicing complex skills. Demonstrating and practicing complex skills require more time and effort. Attempting to teach a complex skill quickly without focusing on the details will deter players from learning the skill. To demonstrate and practice complex football skills effectively, the following should be included:

- Demonstrating the entire skill (e.g. running a 5-yard out with the hard cut, reception, and turning up field).
- Demonstrating the first subskill (e.g. demonstrating the plant foot and turn of the shoulders and hips to execute a sharp cut).
- Allowing the player to practice the first subskill until they have learned it completely (e.g. practicing body position and movement to execute a sharp plant and cut).
- Demonstrating the skill again and then demonstrating the second subskill (e.g. getting the head turned toward the quarterback while running toward the sideline and catching the ball).
- Allowing players to practice the second subskill (e.g. practicing the head turn and getting the hands into position to catch the ball).
- Repeating the last two steps for all subskills (e.g. catching the ball, tucking it, and then turning up the field).
- Repeating the demonstration of the entire skill while emphasizing the integration of the subskills.
- Having the players practice the integration of the entire skill, while incorporating all of the subskills needed to perform the skill successfully.

Please turn to page 203 (Exercise I) and complete the worksheet on breaking skills into subunit components.

Motivation and Player Learning

In the previous portion of this chapter, ways to help your players learn football skills were detailed. A significant factor in player learning that often frustrates coaches is motivation. Regardless of the quality of the demonstration or the amount of attention you receive from the athletes, correct performance will not occur unless the athlete is motivated to attend the demonstration, learn, and perform the skill. Coaches can facilitate player motivation via the following techniques:

- Point out the importance of the skill in football (e.g. reasons for good blocking).
- Discuss with your players how a professional athlete uses good technique effectively (e.g. Orlando Pace delivering a punishing run block and opening a hole for Marshall Faulk for a touchdown).
- Reinforce your players with positive statements and accurate feedback during skill practice. Positive, constructive criticism is an invaluable teaching tool. Using the feedback sandwich (see Chapter 3 of this Section) will help your players understand that you are giving critical feedback to help them and not belittle or embarrass them.
- Make sure you tell players when they are doing something correctly as well. This will enhance learning, as they will know when they have executed the skill correctly. When players are learning new skills it is important to encourage them while identifying correct and incorrect practice of a skill.



Additional Tips for Effective Demonstrations

The following are some additional tips to help you effectively demonstrate football skills to your players:

- When demonstrating a football skill, make sure your players are organized so they are not facing distractions.
- Players should view a demonstration from a position similar to that from which they will perform the skill.
- Complex skills may need to be viewed from several different angles.
- When teaching a complex skill, repeated demonstrations will be more effective than a single demonstration.
- Instructions should always precede the skill or subskill being demonstrated.
- Subunits of skills should be named to help players remember the demonstration of a complex skill. This is especially the case for young players.
- Slow-motion demonstrations should always be followed by at least one full-speed demonstration.

Now that you have received plenty of information on how to demonstrate sport skills effectively it is time to put it into action. Please see page 203-205 (Exercise II) to implement the principles of effective demonstrations detailed in this chapter. Specifically, work with partners to plan an effective demonstration of a football skill you will teach (Exercise II, pp. 203-205).

Conclusion

In this chapter, components of effective demonstrations have been outlined. Ways to facilitate player attention, remembering, practice, and motivation were detailed. Steps for breaking down a complex skill were listed as well as tips for effectively demonstrating skills. The most important thing a coach should learn from this chapter is that for demonstrations to be effective, you must plan them carefully. Refer to this chapter as you develop your football skills practices for the next practice or season. Putting in the time to plan your demonstrations will save you repeated demonstrations and the frustration of your players learning the fundamental skills needed to be successful in football slowly, or not at all.

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Giving Effective Demonstrations Exercises

I. ANALYSIS OF COMPLEX FOOTBALL SKILLS: BREAKING THEM INTO SUBUNITS

Directions. Select a complex football skill to break into subunits or subskills. List the appropriate subunits in the correct order. Discuss with a partner how they might break down the football skill you have selected.

Football Skill Selected: _____

Subunits of the Selected Football Skill

II. PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE DEMONSTRATION

Planning an effective demonstration is essential to successful skills teaching. Before doing a demonstration, you should ask yourself the questions located in the Effective Demonstration Checklist.

Effective Demonstration Checklist

Attention

- How can I get the attention of my players?
- What key points do I want to convey to my players?
- How many key points can my players attend without overloading them with information?

Remembering

- How can I get my players to remember the key points of the demonstration?

Practice

- Does the skill I am demonstrating need to be broken into subskills to facilitate learning?

Motivation

- How can I emphasize the importance of this skill to my players?
- What professional or college football player uses this skill effectively?
- How will I reward and encourage players who correctly perform the skill?
- How will I provide instructional feedback for players who perform the skill incorrectly?



Directions. Now that you have thought about how you might plan a demonstration, select a skill that you would like to demonstrate more effectively in the upcoming year. Use the aforementioned effective demonstration checklist to guide your planning. Make sure that you plan the demonstration completely because in the next exercise, you will be asked to demonstrate a football skill to other football coaches.

Skill To Be Demonstrated:

- How large will the audience be?

- How will I position my players?

- How can I get the attention of my players?

- What key points do I want to convey to my players?

- How many key points can my players attend without overloading them with information?

- How can I get my players to remember the key points of the demonstration?

- Does the skill I am demonstrating need to be broken into subskills to facilitate learning?

- How can I emphasize the importance of this skill to my players?



- What professional or college football player uses this skill effectively?

- How will I reward and encourage players who correctly perform the skill?

- How will I provide instructional feedback for players who perform the skill incorrectly?

- Other notes:

EXECUTING AN EFFECTIVE DEMONSTRATION RATING FORM

Directions. Coaches should be placed into groups of four. One coach will demonstrate the skill planned in the first part of this exercise while the other coaches will be the players learning the skill. Players will evaluate the demonstrator in the rating form below. Each coach should demonstrate the skill planned earlier in the exercise.

Rate the Demonstrator on the following criteria (1 = needs improvement, 3 = okay, 5 = great)

_____ Organization of the players so they have a good view of the demonstration.

_____ Elimination of distractions so players could concentrate on demonstration.

_____ Spoke clearly and loud enough so that everyone could hear.

_____ Made eye contact.

_____ Amount of information provided was appropriate.

_____ Skill was appropriately broken into subskills to ease learning.

_____ Used a technique to help players remember.

_____ Facilitated learning by using motivational strategies.



Chapter 3: Giving Effective Feedback

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Russ Medbery, Ph.D.

Karen Collins, M.S.

Chapter Objectives

This chapter of the *Coach's Playbook* focuses on the skill of giving effective feedback to players. It has four objectives that include:

- Recognizing the importance of giving effective feedback to players;
- Learning the principles of giving effective feedback;
- Developing the ability to provide effective feedback;
- Learning how to incorporate key principles of effective feedback into your coaching.

Giving Effective Feedback

"As a leader, it is vital that you don't let the authority of your position prevent effective feedback."

—Brian Billick, Head Coach, Baltimore Ravens

As a football coach, one area of communication that you spend considerable time involved with is giving players feedback. Whether it is in games or practices, after good plays or poor plays, or in victory or defeat, you must provide direction to your players. Feedback is the means by which you provide that direction.

Feedback is simply viewed as information about the athlete's behavior or the consequences of that behavior. Providing it will not only instruct the athlete about what should or should not be done, but it can also serve as an important source of motivation. Just think how you felt as a player when one of your coaches provided you with a pat on the back or a "good job" or, conversely, yelled at you for making a mistake.

Principles of Effective Feedback

Luckily, a great deal has been learned about the principles of effective coaching feedback (Smoll & Smith, 1996; Weinberg & Gould, 1999; Weiss, 1991). Many of these principles are discussed below.

- **Catch players doing things correctly—focus on cans, not cannots:** To be effective as coaches, we need to correct players' errors and mistakes. However, too often we become so focused on fixing players' mistakes that we forget to catch players doing things right. Never miss an opportunity to praise an athlete for doing something right. Praise and reinforce them. In fact, research suggests that for every negative statement made, you should be pointing out four or five positive things. So, focus on cans, not cannots!
- **Focus on players' strengths as well as weaknesses:** Closely related to catching players doing things correctly is the idea of focusing on their strengths as well as weaknesses. Confidence comes from being competent, so make sure your players not only learn the skills of the game, but also believe that they can execute them when it counts. Focusing on their strengths (not just their weaknesses) will help instill the confidence needed for success.



- **Give feedback as promptly as possible:** Feedback is most effective when it is given as promptly as possible. Hence, if an offensive tackle misses a block during a game, instruct him as soon as the defense takes the field. Note, however, that there are times when giving feedback immediately after a mistake is counterproductive, such as when a player is so upset he will not listen. In such cases, it is best to wait until emotional control has been re-established.
- **Give praise sincerely:** Too often people have misinterpreted the principle of positive feedback and reinforcement with the notion of hollow praise. Praising an athlete does little good and can even have negative consequences unless it is given sincerely. So, be positive but honest when giving praise to your players.
- **Develop realistic expectations when giving feedback:** It is difficult to give sincere praise to your players unless you have realistic expectations. You cannot expect a first-year novice to execute a play as well as a three-year starter. So, make sure the criteria you use to extend praise are based on the skill level and experience of the player.
- **Be consistent and fair in administering discipline:** Having credibility with your players is a key to successful coach-player communication. One sure-fire way of losing your credibility is to be inconsistent or unfair in administering discipline. For example, if a rule is implemented that players who miss practice without a legitimate excuse are not allowed to play in the next game, it is imperative that this rule is applied to all players in violation of the rule. Fair and consistent discipline should be used whether it is your third-string wide receiver or your starting quarterback. To earn the respect of your players, you must be consistent and fair in administering discipline.
- **Focus on players' observable behavior:** Another good rule to follow when providing feedback to players is to focus on their observable behaviors. For example, if you are stressing the importance of instilling a positive/hustle attitude in your players, be specific in defining this attitude in observable terms. In this instance, you may inform them that negative talk toward teammates will not be accepted, that you do not want to hear any complaining on the field or in the locker room, and that you expect them to run from one drill to another. Then provide feedback to reinforce and encourage the defined positive/hustle behaviors.
- **Reward effort as much as (or more than) outcome:** While it is important that you reward players and provide positive feedback when successful outcomes result (e.g. score touchdowns, win games, make great blocks and tackles), it is also important to recognize that some players will have more talent than others. This is a major reason you do not always get the outcomes you want. Hence, it is critical that you reward effort as much as outcome. What more can you ask when a player gives you 100% effort? Similarly, some talented players achieve successful outcomes with less than maximum effort. In such cases, you will want to let them know that you do not appreciate their lack of full effort, despite the successful outcome. Strong players need to be reprimanded for lack of effort and rewarded for good effort regardless of the outcome of a play. Send the message to your players that effort is as important, and even more important, than outcome!
- **Avoid moral or value judgments:** When providing disciplinary feedback, it is important that you avoid moral or value judgments about the player's personality. For example, if a player takes a cheap shot at his opponent, he should certainly be disciplined. However, in delivering the discipline, avoid telling him he is a "screw-up," even if he is acting like one. Instead, focus on his behavior ("I am disappointed in how you behaved today."). Ultimately, a coach should penalize a player's behavior, not his or her personality.



- **Be concise:** A common mistake coaches make in providing feedback to their players is that they sometimes talk too much. Young players learning new skills have limited information-processing capabilities. Hence, it is easy to overwhelm them with excessive information. A key to effective coaching communication, then, is to provide concise feedback.

Keeping these principles in mind, turn to page 210 (Exercise I) and complete the “Giving Effective Feedback” Exercise. Specifically, this exercise allows you to practice giving effective feedback to players. Divide into groups of five, and assign one coach to serve as the lead coach or feedback provider. Two other coaches will serve as players and the final two coaches as observers. Now look in the box contained on page 210 and briefly study the key components of a correctly executed drive block. Next, have one member of your group act as a player and execute the drive block several times on an opponent in *simulated, half-speed* action. The key, however, is for this player to make some mistakes relative to the correct technique (e.g., not having feet shoulder width apart). The lead coach will provide feedback after each of the player’s attempts at the skill. As this is happening, the two raters will use the form on page 211 (feedback form) to rate the lead coach relative to the feedback given. When all the attempts have been made, your group should discuss the lead coach’s ability to provide feedback relative to the characteristics listed (recognizing that it is unlikely that the lead coach will be able to hit all 10 feedback characteristics during any one execution).

Once you have completed the exercise, take a moment to discuss the performance of the lead coach. How did the lead coach do? Was his or her feedback concise? Did he or she focus on observable behaviors? Were his or her expectations realistic?

Think about your own coaching. How would you incorporate these principles of effective feedback in the same situation? How will you use them to help you become a more effective coach?

The Feedback Sandwich: Providing Feedback After Mistakes

One of the challenges of youth and high school coaching is providing positive feedback in an environment where young players will make many mistakes. One useful strategy is the Feedback Sandwich.

The Feedback Sandwich is based on the finding that it is easier for a player to receive corrective feedback when it is accompanied by compliments. Think about how you react to someone when they start statements with “that stinks” or “you did not do that very well.” How likely are you to listen to the rest of what the person has to say? The chances are slim. So, one strategy is to sandwich the feedback between two positive statements. Consider the following example of a response to a young player’s incorrect technique when learning the 3-point defensive stance.

- **Give a sincere compliment:** “Good! Your feet were shoulder-width apart and your head was up on that one.”
- **Give specific feedback:** “Now, this time, also keep your back flat.”
- **Finish with another boost:** “Great effort! You will get this soon—just keep working.”

In the previous example, the coach sandwiched the corrective information (“keep back flat”) between two positive, realistic, and sincere statements. As you can see, providing positive feedback can be as simple as two positives and a constructive statement.

Now turn to pages 211-212 (Exercise II) of this section and complete the “Feedback Sandwich” Exercise. Specifically, think of a player who makes some fundamental skill errors. Identify the skill, and then indicate how you will employ the feedback sandwich in your coaching.



Finally, in using the Feedback Sandwich approach, make sure your feedback is sincere and truthful. Your players will know when you are “blowing smoke.” In addition, always give specific feedback so that your players will know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Conclusion

Coaches influence their player’s learning. Much of this learning occurs from the feedback the coach provides to his or her players. Giving effective feedback is essential to your athletes’ learning and improving from the first practice to the final game of the season. A coach must take into account the principles of effective feedback if they want their players to learn from their communication. Using the Feedback Sandwich is a simple and effective way to provide consistently positive and constructive feedback void of negativity. As Coach Holtz alluded to in his quote on page 187, do not allow your position as head coach to restrict the quality of feedback. Make the commitment, and take the time to provide effective feedback to your players. You will reap the benefits of greater learning and improvement in your team.

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GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK EXERCISES

I. RESPONDING: GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK EXERCISE

Listed below are guidelines for giving feedback.

- Catch players doing things right—focus on cans, not cannots (Never miss an opportunity to praise an athlete for doing something right)
- Focus on players' strengths as well as weaknesses
- Give feedback as promptly as possible
- Give praise sincerely
- Be consistent and fair in administering discipline
- Develop realistic expectations when giving feedback
- Focus on players' observable behavior
- Reward effort as much (or more) than outcome
- Avoid moral or value judgments
- Be concise

Giving Effective Feedback Exercise

Directions. This exercise allows you to practice giving effective feedback to players. Please read the steps below.

- Divide into groups of five, and assign one coach to serve as the lead coach or feedback provider. Two other coaches will serve as players and the final two coaches as observers.
- Now look in the drive block key point box that follows and briefly study the key components of a correctly executed drive block (also see page 22, Section 3).
- Next, have one member of your group act as a player, and execute the drive block several times on an opponent in *simulated, half-speed* action. The key, however, is for this player to make some mistakes relative to the correct technique (e.g. feet are not shoulder width apart). The lead coach will provide feedback after each player's attempts at the skill.
- As this is happening, the two raters will use the form below to rate the lead coach's feedback.
- When all the attempts have been made, your group should discuss the lead coach's ability to provide feedback using the characteristics listed above.
- If time permits, rotate through your group, allowing several coaches to play the role of the lead coach.

Correct Drive Block Technique Key Points

- 3 power angles: ankles, knees, and hips
- Explode from stance with pads low and level
- Feet shoulder width apart
- Hands inside, thumbs up
- Thrust with hands
- Drive with feet—first step is a 6-inch step directly forward

**Teaching Drive Block Technique Coach Feedback Form**

Directions. After observing the lead coach provide feedback, indicate (YES, NO, or N/A [not applicable]) whether he incorporated each of the following feedback principles.

Yes	No	N/A	Caught the player doing things right
Yes	No	N/A	Focused on player's strengths as well as weaknesses
Yes	No	N/A	Gave feedback as promptly as possible
Yes	No	N/A	Gave praise sincerely
Yes	No	N/A	Was consistent and fair in administering discipline
Yes	No	N/A	Developed realistic expectations when giving feedback
Yes	No	N/A	Focused on player's observable behavior
Yes	No	N/A	Rewarded effort as much, or more, than outcome
Yes	No	N/A	Avoided moral or value judgment
Yes	No	N/A	Feedback was concise

II. HELPING PLAYERS STAY POSITIVE WHEN FRUSTRATED: THE FEEDBACK SANDWICH

Feedback is easier to receive when it is accompanied by compliments. Think about how you respond to someone when they start statements with "You didn't do that very well." How likely are you to listen to the rest of what that person has to say? The chances are not likely. One strategy is to sandwich the feedback between two positive statements.

1. Give a compliment: "I like the way you started low in your stance."
2. Give specific feedback: "I want you to explode up using your arms to push under your opponent's center of gravity."
3. Finish with another boost: "Great energy! You will get it soon."



Feedback Sandwich Exercise Reflection

Directions. Give an example of how you could use the Feedback Sandwich to correct an error typically made by your players.

Error Made: _____

1. Compliment: _____

2. Specific Corrective Feedback: _____

3. Positive Motivating Statement: _____

Now give an example of how you could use the Feedback Sandwich in response to a player who has an off-the-field problem.

Off-the-Field Problem: _____

1. Compliment: _____

2. Specific Corrective Feedback: _____

3. Positive Motivating Statement: _____

NOTES



Section VII: Program and Team Management

Chapter 1: Organizing to Win

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Chapter Objectives

Managing a football program and team can be a year-round activity. Whether you are a head coach, an assistant coach, or a volunteer coach, effective coaching requires that you develop good time-management skills to plan systematically for the season. This section of the *Coach's Playbook* will help you identify and prioritize your responsibilities throughout the course of a year. Specifically, this section's five objectives include:

- Explaining the importance of planning and organization with an emphasis placed on your priorities as a coach;
- Identifying four planning segments for the year to manage your tasks more effectively;
- Identifying some of your responsibilities during each of these four segments;
- Describing resources to help with your planning;
- Putting your plan to work for you and your level of coaching.

Organizing to Win

"No one aspect of coaching is more important than preparation. While coaches cannot actually control which team wins a game, they can determine how the team prepares to win."

—Bill Walsh, Pro Football Hall of Fame Coach, San Francisco 49ers

"The Will to Win Means Nothing Without the Will to Prepare"

—Author unknown

"The coach must have a definite plan in which he believes, and there must be no compromise on his part."

—Paul (Bear) Bryant, Hall of Fame Coach, University of Alabama

The Importance of Planning and Organization

By now you have learned that coaching effectiveness involves more than just football Xs and Os. In Section I you formulated and clarified your coaching philosophy to develop winners in football and in life. In Section VI you learned the importance of coach-player communication so players can learn to play the game of football more effectively. However, all of your efforts will be lost if you do not plan for success. Some experts say that failing to plan is planning to fail, and, as a coach, you do not coach to fail!



What coaches do in the way of program and team management is strongly tied to their coaching philosophy. The Coaching Academy's philosophy of "Developing Winners in Football and Life" suggests that when coaches are "Organizing to Win," they should not lose sight of three general objectives. That is, when coaches plan for the "season," they should ensure that players have opportunities to have fun, develop as athletes and people, and achieve success on and off the field.

The depth of planning will largely depend on the level at which you are coaching. High school coaches have more responsibilities related to planning and management than most nonschool youth coaches, because of rules and regulations established by high school state athletic associations. Each association governs when coaches can have contact with their players during the year as well as how and when colleges can contact players. Also, high school coaches may have to coordinate feeder programs (sophomore, JV teams) for maximum participation. A number of these responsibilities will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

However, regardless of the level, some basic management skills are constant. The first skill is to prioritize the planning and organizational aspects that place your players' well-being at the top of the list. The Coaching Academy has identified five priorities to help you begin to think about program and team management. Before you plan, your top priorities should be to:

- 1. Provide a positive educational experience.** You should develop a self-awareness, make a commitment to goals, adopt a democratic leadership style, determine what sacrifices you might have to make, meet standards expected of you as a coach, take on difficult and challenging tasks to make you a better coach, and handle successes and failures as positive growth opportunities.
- 2. Be aware of the health and welfare of players.** You should utilize the best equipment and training techniques, provide a safe environment, including the use of athletic trainers or medical staff when available, and know how your players are progressing academically and socially. In short, you should care about your players' physical and psychological development.
- 3. Display a positive public perception of the team and coaches.** Whatever you do, do it with class. Key traits to consider and teach include dignity, poise, respect, and playing tough but always in control. Athletes are special people and must accept responsibilities for their actions.
- 4. Define roles and give each player a chance to participate.** Find a way for each player on your team to contribute, and recognize him or her for his or her efforts. Develop a plan for the last player on the depth chart to have a reason to feel pride and experience a sense of accomplishment.
- 5. Help each player reach his potential.** If you plan successfully for your season, this will be a natural by-product of your program. This becomes a difficult task when you let winning take precedence over the other areas listed above.

Now, using Worksheet I on page 222 identify the priorities you have for yourself. If you are a head coach, identify what priorities you have for your assistant coaches as well as your program. Once you have identified these priorities, you are ready to learn how to "Organize to Win."

Program and Team Management as a Year-round Activity

Most coaches divide the calendar year into four separate, but interrelated, segments (see Figure 1). The four segments are offseason, preseason, in-season, and postseason. The length of each segment may have to vary to fit your particular level of coaching and program needs. Each of these segments will be discussed—with regard to major tasks, goals, and responsibilities—in greater detail later in the chapter. Remember that the beginning and ending points serve only as reference points and fit most interscholastic programs. They may need to be adapted for nonschool youth coaching.

Figure 1. Year-round organization and planning schedule - Organizing to Win.

											POSTSEASON	
OFFSEASON												
				PRESEASON								
						IN-SEASON						
FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	

High school programs, especially varsity teams, may require coaches to be actively involved in some aspect of their program and team management throughout the year. That does not mean you are coaching your players year-round; rather, coaches are putting time and effort into their program throughout the year.

For youth programs, coaches may concentrate their efforts into fewer time periods, such as the preseason and in-season segments, because most of these coaches will be volunteers and the season is shorter. For these coaches, their only “postseason” responsibilities may include collecting equipment and organizing a team recognition party immediately after the season. Given that program and team management can vary greatly based on the level at which you are coaching, youth sport coaches should not emulate more advanced programs at the expense of the young participants’ physical, social, and psychological development. For example, research has shown that children physically mature at different rates and that two players of the same chronological age can have great physical differences. It is important that “late maturers” receive the same skill instruction from coaches as their more physically mature counterparts, as these late bloomers will often outgrow the “early maturers” in high school.

Organizing to Win Model Components

Although your initial program and team management process begins when you are hired or volunteer, the best way to develop a successful program is to start planning for next season when the current season ends. It is during this time period that things are fresh in your mind. What were your success stories? What areas of your program need improvement? Did you accomplish all of your goals for the season? Based on the answers to these questions and your level of coaching, you will have the foundation to start planning. This is just a beginning! The “Organizing to Win” model consists of a number of activities coaches may have to consider as they begin to design their systems for program and team management (see Program and Team Management Resource Materials beginning on page 224.).

Postseason Responsibilities

There are a number of routine tasks you will need to complete during the postseason, such as taking equipment inventory, budgeting, reconditioning and ordering equipment, and completing seasonal reports required of coaches. Coaches are encouraged to meet with their athletic director or youth league administrator to discuss specific responsibilities regarding these routine tasks and what they must do to fulfill their coaching responsibilities. Then, once these routine tasks are completed, coaches are encouraged to take on the responsibilities of evaluating both players (departing and returning) and staff as well as generating a potential project list to be completed during the offseason.

Player evaluation. To grow with the game and help players develop both on and off the field, it is critical that you involve players in the evaluation process. This is best accomplished by asking departing players (those who are graduating as well as those who are leaving on their own) to complete an evaluation form for the season. Departing players are more apt to provide honest answers to questions because they no longer see their honesty as a threat to playing time. It is very important to ask questions directed at specific aspects of the



program. To assist coaches in the evaluation process, a list of “Twenty Questions” is provided on page 226 to help with an exit interview. While these questions are focused on high school coaching, they can be easily adapted to the youth football setting. Use these questions as a starting point, and alter them to fit your particular program.

For seniors, this also may be a good time for you to guide student-athletes’ endeavors toward future educational and career planning, and assist with the recruiting process when and where it is appropriate. Emphasize that the skills and attitudes learned from playing football—hard work, perseverance, goal setting, commitment, and teamwork—are transferable to other areas of their life.

Once nonreturning players have had an opportunity to evaluate the program, coaches will need to evaluate returning players and staff needs. For younger participants, coaches can gather this type of information by asking players a few exit questions when they turn in equipment. Example questions include: What did you like most? What did you like least? What was the most fun? What did you learn? What might you change, if anything?

Feedback from returning players. Coaches should provide individualized feedback to help players grow both on and off the field of play. Returning players should be evaluated so they can develop specific goals for the offseason that will ultimately impact their play in-season. “The Returning Player Report Card” is an effective way to help with this evaluation. A sample “Report Card” is provided on pages 227-228. As you can see, this form evaluates personal characteristics as well as football skills. Ideally, coaches should complete a report card for each returning player and then schedule an individual meeting to discuss the evaluation and expectations for next season. Holding individual meetings indicates to players that you care about them as people. This is also a good time to update player information (see page 229, Player Information Sheet) so that any correspondence you send out during the offseason and preseason will get to your players.

Evaluating assistant coaches. Finally, if you are a head coach or in charge of the program, do not limit your evaluation and feedback to just your players. Coaches should formally evaluate assistant coaches, team managers, and other team personnel. Also, evaluate your own coaching. Did you accomplish the goals you set for the season? Were you organized? Did you delegate tasks appropriately? Did you treat all players with respect? Did you communicate effectively with your players’ parents/guardians? Although these questions can serve as a guide, coaches are encouraged to develop a self-evaluation that is appropriate for their level of coaching and job description.

In fact, coaches may want to develop “Twenty Questions” for their assistant coaches to answer and then schedule individual meetings with each assistant during the offseason. During this evaluation, be sure to evaluate how your assistant coaches’ philosophies fit with the overall program goals and level of play as well as their professional goals. (Where do they want to be in 3, 5, and 10 years?) A “Coach Evaluation Form” is provided to help with your evaluation (see page 230). Once evaluations are completed, coaches are ready to think about potential projects for the offseason.

Potential projects for the offseason. The postseason is a good time to determine what projects to take on during the offseason to enhance your program. If you can, try to minimize your offseason activities related to football or delegate responsibilities to assistant coaches or support staff. This is important to your overall health and so that you do not experience burnout. Take some time to reflect on the season and recharge for next season. Listed below are several “postseason” projects coaches may want to consider. These are just suggestions, and your program may dictate that you consider other projects.

- Film evaluation
- Re-evaluate support staff duties
- Restructure offense/defense duties
- Design offseason conditioning program
- Develop videos for college recruitment



Optional activities. In addition to the responsibilities identified above, coaches may want to incorporate several other activities into their postseason management. These may include updating statistics, duplicating videos, firming up the schedule for next season, and counseling senior players on issues related to college recruitment.

Offseason Responsibilities

Referring back to Figure 1, the “offseason” generally begins in February and ends in May. For some high school programs, coaches may combine the postseason and offseason and refer to this time period as the offseason. For youth sport coaches, trying to control players’ time during the offseason may be inappropriate because players should be encouraged to experience a variety of sports or activities and develop into well-rounded individuals. For those high school coaches who want to follow the “Organizing to Win” model for program and team management, there are important routine and optional activities that they need to attend to during the offseason. Those three routine activities focus on:

- Conducting an orientation meeting
- Outlining the offseason conditioning program
- Organizing support staff assignments for the upcoming season

Orientation meeting. One way to build a football program is to organize and conduct an orientation meeting for returning and potential new players. This meeting will be one of several meetings you will conduct during the year. During this meeting, you should share your coaching philosophy, the program’s philosophy, and your expectations for player involvement. By sharing this information, you can demonstrate what you want to accomplish and the way you will go about accomplishing the stated objectives. Once you have discussed your philosophy with players, you will need to gather information on new or potential participants. To do so, you should have them complete the Player Information Sheet (see page 229).

You also need to explain the offseason and preseason voluntary time commitments players will have to consider in order to participate in the program and any mandatory meetings to be held prior to the start of the season that players and/or their parents/guardians will have to attend. It is important that players (and their parents/guardians) know ahead of time that several activities occur outside of the football “season.” It is important to be aware that participation in other sports/activities and some job or family responsibilities might curtail a player’s involvement during the offseason. Try to understand each player’s responsibilities and, if necessary, be flexible because your players must make good decisions and choices in their lives.

Developing players both physically and mentally should be an important objective for all coaches. Coaches may choose to distribute inspirational materials or motivational quotes at this time. These materials could carry messages of positive mental attitude, commitment, growth as a player and individual, as well as many others. Coaches may ask players why they are motivated to play football and then come up with motivational slogans for the team to adopt for the upcoming season. By emphasizing more than the physical aspects of players during the offseason, you are letting them know that their psychological well-being and life skills are important to their overall development on and off the field of play. Coaches will learn more about life skills in Section VIII (Teaching Players How to Succeed in Football and Life) of your *Coach’s Playbook*. Several examples of inspirational materials are provided in the Program and Team Management Resource Materials on pages 237-241.

Many youth programs conduct their registration meetings during the spring. Coaches are encouraged to check with their program administrators to determine whether they have any responsibilities during registration. You may want to be at the registration to meet prospective players and their parents/guardians. For more details on developing parent meetings, see Section VII, Chapter 3 “Effectively Dealing with Parents.”



Offseason conditioning program. The purpose of developing an offseason conditioning program is to improve the strength, agility, flexibility, and overall physical condition of athletes gradually in an effort to prevent injuries and maximize player performance during the season. As a coach, you should emphasize the six aspects of conditioning listed below. Focusing on these aspects of conditioning will assist you when making decisions about how and what to focus on during your offseason conditioning program.

- **Strength**—the ability to apply force and create movement. It is the foundation on which players will build all other components of physical fitness and should be stressed first in any conditioning program.
- **Power**—the force and velocity (explosiveness) of a player; the rate at which players can use strength.
- **Flexibility**—range of motion that guards against injury. Football players must develop flexibility as well as strength and power.
- **Conditioning**—ability to play the full game at peak efficiency. A player can be strong, powerful, and flexible, but these attributes are of little good to him unless he can sustain them over the length of a game. Good conditioning is essential!
- **Movement**—speed plus agility. Since football is a game of acceleration, make sure you are emphasizing speed and agility in training.
- **Skill**—Football is not just a game of strength, speed, and power. Skill at every position is required. You should consider the practice and mastery of football skills and techniques presented in Sections III, IV, and V of your *Coach's Playbook*.

Before you start an offseason conditioning program, you need to identify the specific purposes and objectives for each of the program's components, paying specific attention to the coaching level at which they are applied. Most offseason conditioning programs will focus on these general objectives:

- To develop strength of body and mind
- To develop individual and team pride
- To develop quickness, agility, and endurance
- To develop mental alertness and concentration
- To develop confidence through hard work and determination

In some programs, coaches will operate the conditioning program as an after-school activity with all of the characteristics of an organized sport. The program will be supervised and managed by coaches and/or other support personnel. This means that attendance will be taken and that players will be required to adhere to the scheduled time for conditioning, be disciplined, and participate with total effort. Other coaches may have the opportunity to schedule a time period for improving overall conditioning as a formal class during school hours. Finally, some coaches will make "offseason" conditioning a voluntary activity targeted at players who do not participate in other sports or physical activity.

Be careful—There are rules and regulations that govern how much time coaches may schedule for offseason conditioning programs. Be sure to check with your athletic director or high school state athletic association before scheduling an offseason conditioning program. Think about your program and what will work best for your specific situation.



Once you decide on how, when, and whether to offer an offseason conditioning program, the next step is to decide what baseline measures you will gather about student-athletes. That is, what data should be collected (e.g., vertical jump, sprint)? Drills and conditioning should progress from general overall improvements in strength to specific improvements related to performing football skills more efficiently. (Note: recognize league and school policy on practicing skills in the offseason.) Once again, you should emphasize the importance of injury prevention through proper conditioning and physical training. A sample "Offseason Conditioning Program" is provided in the Program and Team Management Resource Materials on pages 244-246.

Organizing coaching and staff assignments. Whether you currently supervise other coaches and support staff, you need to understand that head coaches will have added responsibilities to organize their support personnel. Coaching assignments should be made in the offseason to allow assistants time to plan their strategies, and if needed, to acquire additional skills or knowledge. Be sure to evaluate these individuals at this time and schedule a meeting to discuss their evaluation. Also, review current job descriptions, promotions, or changes in coaching responsibilities that may have occurred since the completion of the season with each of your assistant coaches. Establish what responsibilities each assistant coach will have during each phase of the year. Will each coach be expected to attend offseason conditioning practices and summer camps? Will each coach be required to attend coaching education sessions/clinics? In what capacity will they be expected to serve?

It is best to put job responsibilities in writing for each member of your staff. When this is done, it will be easy to reference these responsibilities if a problem arises or if some part of the job is not getting done in an acceptable manner. Also, written job descriptions provide the foundation on which to evaluate assistant coaches during the postseason or offseason. Be sure to check with your school's athletic director to determine whether a district-wide job description exists for each assistant position before reinventing the wheel. Those generic job descriptions, input from assistant coaches, and your experience as a coach will help generate the best job descriptions for all individuals involved in the program.

Another way to enhance a program's functional capacity is to secure the help of student assistants to assist with your program. Students who are organized and willing to get involved can be a big help! It is best to look for students who have an interest in football. Some good candidates may come from a list of student-athletes who are not big enough or fast enough to make the squad. Be careful, however, not to minimize these positions—they may be critical to your success! Coaches may want to interview prospective student assistants and have specific job responsibilities identified prior to selecting individuals. Since these are unpaid positions, coaches must determine how the team manager, statistician, and secretary will be recognized at the end of the season, and coaches should do this before they meet with the perspective students.

Optional activities. After coaches have taken care of their routine activities, it is time to take on the special projects identified during the postseason (e.g. updating stats, duplicating videos). Other optional activities to consider include film evaluation and scouting reports. If you take on the task of film evaluation during the offseason, be sure to evaluate from two perspectives—both as a coach and as a scout. These two perspectives will help you when looking for strengths/weaknesses in your offense, defense, and special teams.

Preseason Responsibilities

Your preseason responsibilities will generally begin in June and end at the beginning of August with the start of the season. During this and the next phase of program and team management, the majority of activities will be routine rather than optional. This phase should begin with a preseason organizational meeting to communicate expectations and policies to prospective players. This meeting will be the first contact coaches will have with players in the preseason. Coaches should check with their high school state athletic associations to determine how much contact they can have with players during the "offseason." It is important to hold your preseason meeting prior to the end of the school year. Thus, some coaches may have to move this meeting to the end of May. Check with administrators regarding your school's year-end activities so this meeting can be held before student-athletes begin their final examinations.



The spring meeting should clarify the following things for players: program information regarding summer workout schedules; available football skills camps; information about physicals; how and when football equipment will be issued; and a complete schedule of practices, scrimmages, and games for the fall. This information will allow players and their parents/guardians to plan ahead. Also, coaches must convey whether summer activities are deemed voluntary or mandatory. However, making the team should not be contingent on attending scheduled summer activities, especially if players are making every effort to work out and condition on their own. Some excellent players may have other responsibilities that curtail their involvement in these out-of-season activities. In fact, coaches should think about how they will handle these situations BEFORE they arise, and they should be consistent. As you will learn in Section VIII about life skills development, whether a player is a starter or the fifth player on the depth chart—a rule is a rule—try to make it work for all athletes. A sample agenda for the June (May) Organizational Meeting and supporting materials are provided in the Program and Team Management Resource Materials (see page 248).

Keep players and their parents/guardians informed. Coaches will need to keep players and their parents/guardians informed during the “preseason” through letters or other correspondence. This correspondence should go out in a timely fashion and share information on important dates and meetings. Coaches should explain that participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege that comes with expectations, rules, and regulations.

In addition to informing players and their parents/guardians in writing about the preseason and in-season activities, rules, and regulations, coaches are encouraged to develop a “Training Pledge.” The training pledge simply states what are appropriate and inappropriate training behaviors. Be sure to list examples of behaviors that violate team rules or school policies as well as penalties for breaking those rules. Samples documents are provided in the Program and Team Management Resource Materials (see page 252).

Finally, coaches should make sure that players know what will be expected of them when they show up for preseason fitness, strength, and agility testing. That is, will there be a specific circuit or series of tests that players will have to complete in order to make the squad? This is especially important if coaches have little contact with their players during the offseason or preseason. Post the tests as well as when and where the tests will be conducted. Samples of a schedule and agility circuit are provided in the Program and Management Resource Materials for coaches to review (see page 256).

In-Season Responsibilities

When coaches plan effectively during the year, the “in-season” will be the fruits of that labor. The importance of the prior planning and organization and how they lay the foundation to build a successful program cannot be stressed enough. A coach’s organization does not stop with the start of the season. You must continue to reinforce your efforts in the other three phases of planning.

For example, the first task to be completed during the in-season involves reviewing what you covered at the spring orientation meeting. At the meeting, you should do the following: cover team rules; discuss how players should act on and off the field; explain to players what it will take to “make” the team and receive their varsity or JV letter; discuss issues related to good health and injury prevention; and reassure players that they should ask for help when they need it. Finally, be sure to restate your coaching and program philosophy—players need to be reassured that coaches and their support staff are there to make them the best player possible. A sample agenda is provided on page 258.

Conduct a parent orientation meeting. Parental/guardian involvement is an important part of any program. Coaches need to hold a meeting at the beginning of the season, or earlier, to share information about the football program. Most important, parents/guardians should be introduced to the coaching staff and team members and be provided with a brief overview of the program and basic rules and regulations. Coaches should also share their personal and program philosophy. Additionally, coaches should inform



parents/guardians of when and how it is appropriate to contact them regarding their child. Coaches should be sure to share the priorities they have established (Exercise I, page 222). End the meeting with a short Q & A, so that they can ask general questions about the program. This meeting is also a good time to go over any materials (forms, schedules) that may require parental/guardian approval. For more information on parent orientation meetings, please see Section VII, Chapter 3 “Effectively Dealing with Parents,” pages 275-290.

Coaching responsibilities and practice planning. Coaches should clearly understand their role on the coaching staff and how their behaviors impact players on the team. This is a good time to review each coach’s roles and responsibilities as they relate to offense, defense, and special teams.

As a review, turn to Exercise II on page 223. Fill in the chart based on your program responsibilities during each segment of the football year. Compare what you wrote with the in-season responsibilities addressed in Chapter II of this section. Did you forget anything? If so, add it to your chart.

Organizing to Win: Putting It All Together

As this section of your *Coach’s Playbook* has shown, football is a complex game and requires considerable planning if you are going to be effective as a coach. It is no wonder that military generals see football as a great training ground for their men.

Remember that Rome was not built in one day! Football coaches are at different levels relative to their organizational needs and competencies. For example, a first-year high school coach would be overwhelmed if he tried to implement everything in this section. Similarly, some of the information is more appropriate for school versus youth coaches, and other information is for head coaches versus assistant coaches.

In closing, turn to page 224 and review the “Organizing to Win Components and Suggested Activities” list. Examine the postseason, offseason, preseason, and in-season activities listed in reference to your coaching assignment, time available for coaching, level of experience, and goals and priorities. Circle the activities that seem particularly relevant to you in your situation and stage of development as a coach. As you become more experienced or as your responsibilities change, other activities on the list should be implemented.

Conclusion

By now you should have a pretty good understanding that your planning does not start with the start of the season! Coaches need to put in some time throughout the year to plan successfully for the season. Start planning for your success NOW!

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PROGRAM AND TEAM MANAGEMENT EXERCISES

I. PRIORITIZE BEFORE YOU PLAN

Answer the following questions:

What priorities do I have for my program? Be sure to identify priorities for players, assistant coaches, and you.

My Priorities:

Assistant Coach Priorities:

Player Priorities:

How do I ensure that my priorities to have fun, develop players, and win are kept in perspective?



II. MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Directions. Examine the suggested organizing to win activities listed on pages 13-14, then complete the following chart based on the major coaching responsibilities needed during each segment of the year for your particular program.

Postseason (Dec./Jan.)	Offseason (Feb., Mar., April, May)	Preseason (June, July)	In-Season (Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.)



“Organizing to Win” Components and Suggested Activities*

Postseason (December-January)

- Inventory
- Returning Player Report Cards
- Staff Evaluation
- Budget
- Update Statistics
- Duplicate Video
- Senior Player Counseling
- Choose Priority Projects
- Non-League Scheduling

Offseason (February-March-April-May)

- Read Your NFL/NFF *Coach's Playbook*
- Film Evaluation
- Preliminary Sign-up
- Offseason Conditioning
- Scouting Reports
- Special Projects

Preseason (June-July)

- June Organizational Meetings
- Follow-up on Sign-ups
- Player Physicals
- Coaching Assignments and Responsibilities
- Preseason Practice Plans Review
- NFL-NFF Football Skills and Techniques CD
- Coaches' Meeting to Review Major Changes and Points of Emphasis
- Sports Guide Information (If appropriate)
- August Letter
- Group Planning for Two-a-days
- Team Assignments and Equipment Issues

In-Season (August-September-October-November)

- Testing and Evaluation
- Technique Review
- General Practice Plans
- Preseason Depth Chart
- Common Drills
- Scouting Assignments
- Player Evaluation

*Activities listed above are suggestions to help coaches get started with the process of program and team management. The activities you choose to do in each segment will be influenced greatly by the level at which you are coaching, your time availability, as well as the number of assistant coaches associated with your program.



Postseason (December-January)



PLAYER EVALUATION—TWENTY QUESTIONS

This Season

1. What did you like most about this past season?
2. What did you like least?
3. Why were we successful (not successful) this past season?
4. What could you have done without?
5. How did you feel about our practices (too hard, too easy, etc.)?
6. How did you feel about our pregame routine?
7. How did you feel about our halftime procedure?
8. Did we ever go too quickly with a new offense or defense that you got lost?
9. How would you evaluate the senior leadership?
10. Do you think the team as a whole kept their training pledge?
11. What things did the coaching staff do that helped you the most?
12. Did you feel comfortable going to your coaches for help or advice?
13. Who, on the team, did you feel had a positive impact on our season and why?

Next Season

14. What do you think the attitude of next year's seniors will be?
15. What personal goals would you set for next season?
16. What do you think our team goals should be?
17. What specific things in the offseason do you feel you have to work on to be an impact player?
18. If you could change one thing in your whole football experience, what would it be?

General Areas of Interest

19. How are you doing academically?
20. What are your plans for college or postgraduation?



RETURNING PLAYER REPORT CARD

Player's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Position(s) Played:

Offense: _____

Defense: _____

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

	Needs Improvement	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Attitude and coachability				
Athletic ability				
Strength				
Speed				
Agility				
Flexibility				
Mental toughness				

Comments:

OFFENSIVE TECHNIQUES:

	Needs Improvement	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Blocking				
Passing				
Ball carrying				
Running patterns				

Comments:



DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES:

	Needs Improvement	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Stance				
Lateral movement				
Shed block				
Tackling				
Play recognition				
Pass defense skills				

Comments:

DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES:

	Needs Improvement	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Punting				
Place kicking				
Center snap holder				
Special teams				

Comments:

GENERAL COMMENTS:



PLAYER INFORMATION

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

_____ Position(s) played: _____

Phone #: _____ Offense: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____ Defense: _____

_____ Speed (40 yd Dash): _____

Summer address: _____ Bench Press: _____

_____ Other sports: _____

What position would you like to play? _____

School Information

Guidance counselor: _____ Phone #: _____

College interest: _____ College entry exams: _____

Potential college major(s): _____ PSAT _____

_____ SAT _____

_____ ACT _____



COACH EVALUATION FORM

Name of coach: _____ Date: _____

Position coached: _____

of years coaching football: _____

First Aid Certificate: Yes No Date completed: _____

Coaching Endorsement (Certificate): Yes No Date completed: _____

Major Responsibilities	Outstanding	Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Squad management			
• Locker room			
• Showers			
• Field			
• Trips			
Knowledge of sport			
Planning and preparation			
Techniques and methods of teaching			
Game administration			
• Preparation			
• Bench conduct			
• Conduct with officials			
Effective Communication Skills			
Coach-player relationship			
Coach-staff relationship			
Coach-parent relationship			
Public relations			
Loyalty			
• To school			
• To administration			
• To fellow coaches			

Comments (Include areas such as professional advancement, recommendations, concerns):



RECRUITING RESOURCES

Table of Contents

1. Academic Information and Confidentiality
2. ACFSA Ten Commandments for Recruits
3. Questions High School Athletes Should Ask
4. Recruiting Checklist

General Statement

Coaches must understand there are rules and regulations that govern college recruiting. You should familiarize yourself with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) recruiting rules so that you can assist your athletes more effectively. For information about recruiting, you should contact the NCAA in writing at Post Office Box 6222, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222 or at <http://ncaa.org> to obtain a copy of the *NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete*.

Another important part of college recruiting involves eligibility. Coaches are encouraged to discuss their players' eligibility with high school counselors, so they can assist players with their application to the NCAA Clearinghouse. All players who want to play football, or any sport for that matter, at the college level, must apply to the Clearinghouse before they can be declared eligible. This process evaluates a pattern of courses required of all potential collegiate athletes. Coaches and counselors can obtain more information about the NCAA Clearinghouse in writing at 2255 North Dubuque Road, Post Office Box 4044, Iowa City, Iowa 52243-4044 or on-line at <http://NCAAClearinghouse.org>.

Academic Information and Confidentiality

Counselors and coaches should be advised that from time to time, they will be asked to supply some academic information on one of their athletes. This raises issues or questions regarding confidentiality of student records and whether the student/parents/guardians want information sent to any college/university without prior knowledge.

Listed below are a few steps counselors and coaches should follow prior to releasing any player information regarding academics or football.

1. If a request for academic information is received in writing from a college/university admissions representative and/or coach, please obtain the following:
 - Written permission from the student/parent is needed to send the information requested.
2. If a request for academic information is received by telephone from a college/university admissions representative and/or coach, please inform the individual of the following:
 - Whether the school policy prohibits the release of information by telephone without the written permission of the student/parent.
 - Suggest that you would be happy to obtain written permission and call the individual back with the requested information.



3. If you receive a request for academic information from one of the football coaches, please be advised of the following:

- This request does not or should not mean that they are asking for a copy of the student's transcript.
- A copy of the student-athlete's transcript **SHOULD NOT** be given out without written permission from the student-athlete.
- Coaches can receive only "school information" that has been approved by the school board as a way of tracking athletes' progress and maintaining pertinent data on each.

In general, coaches should check with the school's athletic director to determine what, if any, academic information is available to coaches for review prior to the start of the recruiting process and that they will ensure athletes' confidentiality.



AMERICAN COLLEGIATE FOOTBALL SCOUTING ASSOCIATION

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR RECRUITS

1. Determine what bachelor's degree you desire and what subjects you will have to take to obtain it.
2. Get the job placement percentages, from the universities that are recruiting you, in the degree you are pursuing.
3. Do not choose a school because of a winning tradition or TV coverage. Less than 1% of recruits, who sign a letter of intent, get their name mentioned on national TV coverage. Remember your education is the most important decision at this time of your life.
4. Know the conditions of the scholarship offers you may receive.
5. Check out the program to see how many players are on scholarship for the position your high school coaches feel you are capable of playing in college. The most frustrating thing for an athlete is not having the opportunity to play once recruited.
6. If you are a lineman, it usually takes two to three years before you are ready to play. Do not become impatient when you get to school.
7. Plan on redshirting one year, not only to improve as a player, but also to keep your grades up to a satisfactory level. It is best to take your most difficult subjects at this time.
8. Do not attend the university because you like the coach who is recruiting you. Chances are the coach will not be at that school when you graduate.
9. Do what your high school coach tells you to do—without his recommendation and other coaches against whom you played, your chances of a scholarship are minimal. Respect all coaches at all times; sometimes it takes only one to blow your career.
10. Be honest. Dishonesty in college athletics is the kiss of death for you as well as your future coaching staff. Remember, what you say will follow you for at least two years.



QUESTIONS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES SHOULD ASK

1. Is it a fully accredited, highly rated institution?
2. Does it offer my preferred major?
3. Will my high school grades be good enough to admit me?
4. What does my guidance counselor think about the colleges with respect to my academic ability and the major I plan to pursue?
5. How many hours a day will athletics and the other responsibilities involved in maintaining my scholarship take me away from my studies? (NCAA rules allow a maximum of 20 hours per week)
6. Will the athletic department pay for any tutoring I may require?
7. What happens to the scholarship if I am injured and unable to play?
8. How much will it cost me to go to school on top of the scholarship?
9. Will I have to work for my room and board? What are the hours of this job?
10. Can I afford to travel home during vacation periods, and can my parents afford to travel to the college to see me play as often as they wish?
11. Would I like to play for the head coach who is recruiting me? Will he be the coach next year?
12. What do the present and former athletes have to say about the athletic department and the institution in general?
13. Does my high school coach feel that I can play at this level?
14. Am I as big, fast, and strong as the player now occupying the position I desire to play?
15. Do my particular skills fit their style of play?
16. A college athlete is usually a person who participates in a highly competitive high school league, has unusual physical abilities, and a burning desire to excel. Do you have at least two of these attributes?
17. Is the present varsity team composed of men who were recruited as freshmen, or is it composed of junior college transfers and redshirts?
18. Is this team well publicized in the part of the country in which I plan to make my living?
19. Does the college environment (students, dorms, townspeople, social activities) appear to be one in which you care to spend four years?
20. What percentage of the varsity players receive a degree from this institution in four years? Five years?



RECRUITING CHECKLIST

Making a decision about the right college to attend requires some careful thought. As with any major decision, you will want to consider many factors—the academic environment, the athletic program, the location, and the people with whom you will work, study, and play. To help clarify this choice for you, we have listed specific factors to think about. The choice may not be as hard as it appears. Simply write the name of each college or university you are considering at the top of the table. Then, rate each of the items listed as 1=average; 2=good; 3=outstanding. When you have completed the analysis, total up the columns. The largest total will indicate roughly which college or university is best for you.

Factors	School Names and Ratings		
General Considerations			
• Mom/Dad/Guardian’s opinion of the school			
• My principal’s, counselor’s, or favorite teacher’s opinion			
• High school coach’s feeling			
Academic Programs			
• Academic reputation in my desired major			
• Academic offerings in other subject areas			
• Academic facilities in my major			
• Likelihood that athletes succeed in the classroom			
• Likelihood that I will compete successfully in the classroom			
• Tutoring help			
• Study hall			
Athletic Programs			
• Likelihood of team winning			
• Stadium			
• Practice and workout facilities			
• Schedule of games			
• Opportunity to go on to play professional football			
• Style of offense or defense			



Factors	School Names and Ratings		
• Likelihood that I will play right away			
• Team discipline			
• Quality of recruiting (How much do they want me?)			
• School's athletic policy if I am injured			
• Red shirt policy			
• Insurance policy			
• Off-season sports program			
People			
• Coaching staff's philosophy of education			
• Coaching staff's philosophy of football			
• My respect for the head coach and his staff			
• Position coach			
• Recruiting coach			
• Future teammates—type of players being recruited			
• Former players' opinions of their experiences			
Environment			
• Distance from home			
• Availability of air, train, bus transportation			
• Living conditions			
• Social life			
• Weather conditions			
• Size of student population			
• Character and spirit of the campus			
• Size of city or town			
• Attitude of community to the university			
• Opportunity to grow in my faith			
• Nearness to places of future employment			
• Availability of summer employment			



MOTIVATIONAL AND INSPIRATIONAL RESOURCES

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE AN ATHLETE?

Being an athlete does not imply merely wearing the uniform and just being a member of the squad. There are many more important facets to think about if you want to be a winner, not only in football, but in life as well. Your coaches want to impress upon you the importance of the following qualities that are absolutely necessary for every good athlete. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are you coachable? Can you take criticism without ever looking for an alibi? Are you a know it all? Will you always do your very best to try to improve?
2. Are you possessed with the spirit of competition that fires an intense desire to win? Do you want to win with a passion—never taking “no” for an answer when there is a job to be done?
3. Are you willing to practice? Not just reporting and putting in the necessary time, but working every day with the same zeal, speed, and determination you use during a ball game.
4. Are you willing to make sacrifices?
5. Do you have an ardent desire to improve?
6. Do you have the ability to think under fire?
7. Are you willing to be impersonal toward your opponents? Do you shut out all personal feelings for your opponents?
8. Do you believe in your school, your team, and your coach?
9. Are you willing to study just as hard as you did prior to coming out for football?
10. Will you strive daily to improve your muscular coordination and speed?



PRINCIPLES OF ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

- PRIDE** Group ethic, loyalty, not self-centered but self-assured. A sense of identity, a reason to fight and protect. A caring for your team, and school. A sense of dignity with exuberance.
- POISE** Self-discipline, must master yourself before you can master others. It is a choice you make in how you want to be perceived (self-imposed or externally).
- PERSISTENCE** Competitive spirit. Desire to meet any challenge. Be at your best when pressure is on. Never, never give up! Determination—something good will happen. Physical discipline and courage.
- PERSPECTIVE** Sense of humor. Be aware of life around you and define important things. You can be tough without being nasty. Team-oriented. Selflessness, willingness to sacrifice.
- PREPARATION** “P” principle. Time is the one factor equal to all. Confidence is gained through preparation. Get the tough part done first.
- PURPOSE** Identify goals and make a commitment. Find a success level. Pay whatever price is necessary. Strive for greatness—don’t just be you, be something special. Don’t apologize for excellence. Human nature is at its best when you make a total commitment to something.
- PRAISE** Recognize contributions of others. Positively and overtly reinforce team efforts. Sustained enthusiasm. Process of role identification and acknowledging each person’s worth.
- PERCEPTION** What makes the difference between a win or a loss? Priorities in order. Directed energy. Role definition. Focus on important issues. Control what you can.
- POSITIVENESS** Psychometrics—Power of positive thinking. Mental imagery and practice. When evaluating, reinforce the good. When you believe it, you’ll see it.
- PRINCIPLE** Be a person of character. Recognition of moral obligations. Set high goals, have equally high ideals. Have the strength of character to make choices of right and wrong. Sometimes we need a reason to choose the right things. The athlete with this inner strength will never fold. Be absolutely unyielding in matters of principle.



QUALITIES OF A GREAT FOOTBALL PLAYER

A player who:

- Has a burning desire to win.
- Is in school first and foremost to obtain an education—never cuts class.
- Prepares himself physically and is in top condition year-round.
- Is disappointed by defeat but who reacts to defeat with more determined effort and resolve, not by childish displays of temper or unsportsmanlike series of excuses.
- Loves to run, tackle, and block—football's three most fundamental actions.
- Learns his assignments thoroughly.
- Dominates his opponent; one who is more relentless, better conditioned, more confident, retains greater poise, and takes more advantage of the breaks than his opponent.
- Never quits or admits defeat, and plays every play as if it is the most crucial play of the game.
- Works on his weaknesses.
- Is intent on coming off the field every day a better player than he was when he went onto the field of play.
- Is willing to make sacrifices involving limited social activity and adherence to training regulations.
- Strives to be the best on the squad.
- Hustles all the time.

ARE YOU A GREAT FOOTBALL PLAYER?



THE WILL TO WIN

One of the main objectives to achieve is for sport participants to have FUN! We sincerely believe that it is more FUN to win. The player who has the courage and determination to prepare himself to be a winner will derive a considerable amount of personal, worthwhile advantages from participating in the game of football.

Preparation to WIN is a vital part of the approach to any football program. A winning attitude and the development of a tremendous WILL TO WIN should be part of all coaches' and players' way of thinking.

There are three qualities players must develop as part of the WILL TO WIN:

Players must—

- Contribute constructively to team morale,
- Have the courage and determination to get in BETTER physical condition than their opponent, and
- Concentrate and minimize mistakes.

Football is a PHYSICAL game, and the contact element of the game must be thoroughly enjoyed (not just tolerated) by players. Players must take a real delight in playing the game with all of the intensity with which the game should be played.

Football is also a MENTAL game, and those who play must have a belief in themselves, their teammates, and their coaches. If you believe there is anyone on your schedule that you cannot beat, you cannot play mentally tough.

Losing should be bitterly disappointing but in no way should your disappointment be shown by brooding, making excuses, berating your opponent, or lack of poise on or off the field.

The greatest measure of a player's worth to his team is found in the effect his actions and attitude have on team morale.

There is no more spectacular, more inspiring, and more enjoyable sports event for a player than participating in a championship game. The road to get there is made of many blocks, tackles, and hard work. If you want to be a champion, you must be fundamentally sound as a football player. Only proper conditioning, concentration, hard work, and responsiveness to coaching will get you there.

Our program believes in the dignity of every player on the squad. The player sixth on the depth chart is just as important as the first person on the depth chart.

Players who put forth their best effort all of the time will be the true champions.



CONDUCT YOURSELF AS A CHAMPION

1. Play with poise—it is demonstrated by:
2. Being courteous to officials.
3. Always running on and off the field when involved in a substitution.
4. When you are penalized, run to your spot in the huddle like a gentleman.
5. Keep your chin off your chest after you have made an error.
6. If a teammate makes an error, encourage him, do not criticize him.
7. Do not be a “tough guy” after the whistle, rather show tremendous mental toughness every second you play.
8. Turn down the things that will keep you from being a champion, even though you may be subject to criticism for not “going along with the crowd.” This sometimes takes guts; show that you have the necessary stuff.
9. Remember that what you do on AND off the field reflects on you and your teammates. Be a credit to your teammates, your parents, and your school.
10. At the half and at the end of the game, sprint to the locker room.
11. Make up your mind that you will try to beat every opponent you play, team for team and player for player. But first, do the necessary things to PREPARE to win.
12. Never think about how tired you are! Believe you have done a better job of conditioning than your opponent has conditioning, and think about how tired he is!
13. Delete words like can’t, easy, and soft from your vocabulary.
14. Make your goal-line stand hold up!
15. Get off the ground! Run back to the huddle.

Do you have what it takes to be a CHAMPION?



Offseason (February-March-April-May)



SAMPLE OFFSEASON CONDITIONING PROGRAM

Basic Plan of Activity

- 20 min. Stretching
- 10 min. Non-equipment strength developers (i.e., push-ups, sit-ups, dips, chins, and leg lifts)
- 45 min. Weight room
 - Upper body (bench, military, and curls)
 - Lower body (hip press, leg press, and dead lifts)
- 10 min. Plyometrics
- 15 min. Heavy ropes

Speed Development

- Arm pumping
- Arms and knees in place
- Marching
- March with skip
- Bounding
- Drum major
- Pigeon tow run
- Backward run
- Carioca (tapioca)
- Fast feet from form
- Perfect form run
- Various agilities then form run

F	A	S	T
o	t	t	e
r	t	r	c
m	i	e	h
	t	n	n
	u	g	i
	d	t	q
	e	h	u
			e

$$\text{Speed} = \text{Length of stride} \times \text{Frequency of stride}$$

Plyometrics

- Repeat long jumps
- One leg bounding
- Repeat vertical jumps
- Box jumping

Assistive and resistive running

Long slow distance

Speed play

Interval

Aerobic – Anaerobic

Partner Assisted Drills

- Wall running and stretching
- Face to face resistance
- Face to fact hip flexibility
- Ropes, towels, harness
- Rubber cord – power runs



SPEED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

An increase in speed, quickness, and running ability is a product of stride length X stride frequency.

Improvements:

1. Greater leg strength allows for greater push off and longer stride (2-inch increase in stride length means a 0.1-second reduction in player's 40-yard time).
2. Greater leg power allows for greater push off force within time restrictions of sprinting and longer stride (normal foot contact times in a sprint are between 0.1 and 0.15 seconds!).
3. Greater flexibility equals greater range of motion and longer stride (naturally).
4. Improved mechanics equals efficient utilization of forces.
5. Specific neuromuscular adaptation—run fast to be fast.
6. Assisted methods to increase rate of stride (i.e., treadmill, downhill run, slingshot tubing, etc.)
7. Resistive methods to improve push off (stride length, tow tires, harness, etc.)

Exercises:

Sprint drills (mechanics):

1. Arm action
2. Marching
3. Skipping
4. Form run
5. High knees
6. Fast feet

Keys-relaxation; hands to hips and chins; arm action push off; and knee lift

Starts:

1. 40-yard sprint from stance
2. Flying sprints
3. Stride frequencies
4. Stride lengths

Principles:

1. Frequency 2-3 times weekly
2. Duration 15-20 minutes
3. State of athlete
4. Number of repetitions 10-20
5. Recovery between repetitions—full recovery to minimal recovery

Conditioning Program:

Weeks 1-2:

Flexibility and stretching (8 minutes)
Duration run—6 sessions: 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20 minutes

Weeks 3-4:

Flexibility
Sprint

Weeks 5-6:

Flexibility
Sprint drills, starts, resistive, assistive
Duration and ITP (endurance)



INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP EXERCISES

Exercises (Strength and Agility):

- Pushups
- Sit ups
- Dips
- Chin ups
- Heavy ropes
- Agile dummies
- Cones
- Plyometrics
- Vertical jump
- Neck isometrics

Partner Exercises:

- Partner flexibility exercises
- Strength exercise with partner 1-on-1 competition
- Towel chin ups

LIFTS AND WEIGHT EXERCISES

Coaches need to set up stations to achieve program goals. How coaches set up their program will depend on the availability of facilities and the type of equipment they have at their site. Be sure to provide proper instructions about exercises and progression to all players prior to beginning a program, and have a member of the coaching staff supervise all workouts.

FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES AND PROGRAM

Lifting and Running:

Prelift stretch will include aerobic calisthenics followed by five (5) basic stretches:

1. Stretch crossover for hamstring (3 part)
2. Quad stretch and sit down
3. Calf stretch with wall
4. Trunk twist and rotation
5. Arm and shoulder rotation

Postlift stretch will be a 10-minute intense lower- and upper-body static stretch with the following exercises included:

1. Crossover upright (hamstring and back)
2. Seated straddle (hamstring)
3. Quadriceps and sit down quad stretch
4. Hip and groin stretch
5. Trunk and neck rotation
6. Seated high hamstring
7. Seated leg crossover buttocks stretch
8. High wrestlers arch
9. Partner shoulder and arm stretch (standing)
10. Standing one-leg quadriceps stretch



Preseason (June-July)

Resource Materials



SPRING ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING SAMPLE AGENDA FOR JUNE

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Strength Development-5 Basic Lifts:
 - Bench
 - Dead Lift
 - Military Press
 - Curl
 - Squat
3. Flexibility (see attached)
4. Skills Development
5. Dates and Times (see attached)
6. Physicals
7. Cost Expectations—shoes, jerseys, etc.
8. Athletic Admission Card
9. Envelopes with Summer Addresses
10. Football Camps—announce any available skills camps players may attend
11. Position Cards for Offense and Defense
12. Recruit Classmates Who Could Play
13. Returning Player Information Sheet
14. Captains Selected After Preseason



Supplemental Material for Spring Organizational Meeting

HEAD-TO-TOE STRETCHING ROUTINE:

<u>Stretch</u>	<u>Description and Repetitions</u>
Jumping Jacks	8 reps, leader count cadence, team reps
Straddle Stretch	Compress and hold; after 20 seconds, leader says count; count to 8 and clap hands
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Left• Right• Middle	Hold ankle-chin to knee Hold ankle-chin to knee Fold arms and try to touch elbows to ground
Bottoms up	Squat down, grab toes, chin on knees; slowly straighten until legs are straight as hamstrings relax, grab behind legs and compress as much as possible; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8
Crossover Quad Stretch	Cross right over left and touch toes; hold for 20, count to 8; then, cross left over right
Standing Quad Stretch	Lift right leg in flexed position; pull in with both arms and lift knee as close to chin as possible; hold for 20, count to 8, switch to left. Lean forward right leg behind right hand to right ankle, knee flexed lift up on ankle to limit of flexibility; hold for 20, count to 8 switch to left leg
Hip and Grain Stretch	Legs spread—drop tail; flex right leg and push left hip until leg straightens; hold for 20, count to 8
Trunk, Neck and Arm Rotation	On own



FLEXIBILITY (cont.)

GROUND STRETCHES:

<u>Stretch</u>	<u>Description and Repetitions</u>
Groin	Knees wide, soles of feet together, heels close to body grasp toes, elbows on inside of thighs pressing out on thighs; lift up on toes and lean forward; get knees as close to the ground as possible hold for 20 seconds, count to 8
High Hamstring	Grasp right ankle with both hands, knees flexed, left leg straight in front; lift ankle as leg is straightened and lift as high as possible to right ear; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8; switch
Outside Hamstring	Sit tall, left leg straight flex right knee, and lift leg parallel to shoulders with both arms under the leg lift and stretch; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8; switch
Upper Back	Lie on back arms at sides, palms down; tuck and bring feet overhead to the floor behind you; pull knees into shoulders and press shin and insteps into ground; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8
Lower Back and Shoulder	Lie on back with knees flexed, heels close to butt, hands behind shoulders with palms flat; push up and arch; straighten arms and press weight back toward shoulders; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8, switch
Arm and Shoulder	Sit tall with arms extended overhead; grasp thumb of one hand with palm of the other, press out from shoulders as high as possible; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8
Bent Elbow Arm	From sitting position, flex arms behind head, grasp elbow with left hand, pull across body and lean left; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8, switch
Shoulder	From sitting position, place both arms behind you as far as possible, little fingers close to each other with palms down, walk hip away and lean back to a point of discomfort; hold for 20 seconds, count to 8



IMPORTANT DATES AND TIMES

Supplemental Material for Spring Organizational Meeting

(Put Name of School and Year Here)

SUMMER WORKOUT:

Weight training and conditioning workouts will be held at (place and dates) from (time). (Coaches may want to generate a “flyer” to send to players and feeder schools announcing the conditioning program and what it will consist of.)

EQUIPMENT ISSUE:

(If your players will be attending a football camp, you will have to issue equipment two times in the preseason. The first time for the football camp, and the second time at the beginning of the season. Be sure to indicate whether there is an equipment deposit needed and when equipment will be collected after camp.)

SPORT PHYSICALS:

(If your school provides physicals, identify the dates physicals will be given and where. This may be set up by your Athletic Director, so be sure to check with him/her before scheduling a date on your own. Otherwise, inform players they must come to the first meeting with a physical from their own doctor.)

NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO TRY OUT, PRACTICE, OR PLAY PRIOR TO BEING APPROVED BY THE DOCTOR.

SQUAD MEETINGS:

(Indicate when and where you want your players to attend meetings prior to the start of the season. Times may vary and depend on the squad [varsity, JV, freshman, etc.] to accommodate size and information you want to disseminate.)

PRACTICES:

Noncontact Double Sessions

(When, where and how long; share any special instructions.)

Single Session

(When, where and how long; share any special instructions.)

Contact Double Sessions

(When, where and how long; share any special instructions.)

SPECIAL DATES:

INTERSQUAD SCRIMMAGE – (Date and Time)

SCRIMMAGE – (Date, Time, and Opponent)

FIRST GAME – (Date, Time, and Opponent)



TRAINING PLEDGE

Participation on <Name of School Football Team> is a privilege that should elicit great pride in both the athletes and their family. It is also a responsibility that demands extra commitment once they decide to wear the school colors and represent their teammates, coaches, school, and community. Standards of behavior are high, and a willingness to live up to them is part of being a member of a team. For this reason, each athletic team member is required to sign this statement of personal commitment indicating he and his parents recognize and understand their responsibility and are willing to adhere to the basic concepts of good citizenship, proper training regulations, and to serve as a positive role model.

Listed below are the basic training rules and some examples of behavior that will be considered to violate the athletic oath.

Examples of improper behavior:

1. Alcohol abuse
2. Smoking pot
3. Drug abuse
4. Poor school citizenship
5. Cutting classes or school
6. Cigarette or tobacco use
7. Being a negative influence in terms of team morale or effort
8. Being in public bars
9. Not making a sincere academic effort or complying with eligibility policy
10. Stealing of any kind, including athletic clothing—opponents or ours
11. Vandalism or property destruction
12. Any similar behavior that costs an adverse reflection on our athletic program

Basic Rule

Never do anything that will bring embarrassment or an unfavorable view to your teammates, coaches, family, school, or community.

Penalty

Abuse brings restrictions. A penalty may vary from a minimum of a two-week suspension from participating on the athletic team to permanent restriction for that season and the following sport season.

Sincerely,

Coach _____ Date _____

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO INDICATE THAT BOTH PARENT AND ATHLETE UNDERSTAND THIS RESPONSIBILITY.

Signature of parent

Signature of athlete



Dear Football Candidate:

Before I address this year's quest for football achievement, I would like to reflect for a moment on last year's performance. Last year's team was a study in perseverance, intensity, and a belief in each other. Facing five undefeated opponents in a row was a challenge of major proportion and only the commitment to excellence and each other allowed us to overcome the odds that faced our program.

Now, onto this season. I know that many of you have made an exceptional commitment to the offseason preparation and conditioning as well as attended various football camps. Early in the preseason, you will be tested, and I am confident we will have developed you into the strongest, fastest, and most skillful group of athletes in the last several years. This is essential for us to achieve the level of dominance and excellence to which we all aspire.

For us to have a great football team, our seniors must play the best football of their careers. Along with this, our younger players must identify their roles and assimilate into that team unit with a single-mindedness of purpose. The concept "We Are One" is truer in football than any sport. The journey we embark on is shared by coaches, players, parents, and community and involves a constant striving for the elusive quest for perfection and excellence. Many times this may mean you do things that are difficult and do not normally enjoy doing, but it's imperative that you acquire certain habits to enable you to cope with all the trials and tribulations you may face beyond football.

Our schedule this year, as usual, is one of the most demanding in the area, but I feel confident we can negotiate it successfully if we place our team's welfare ahead of our own. I want to thank you and pledge to help you in any way I can when your football experience. There is no greater thrill than playing on a championship team because that means you are with young men you can trust, who are committed, and who care about one another.

As your coach, I would like to point out my feelings about each team member. There is not an individual on our team who is not exceptionally important to our future success. This is a "Team" in every respect. It's just as though everybody has a piece of the puzzle in his pocket, and for us to put together the complete picture, everybody must be ready in August with their piece of the puzzle in good shape and ready to go. If we don't have all the pieces of the puzzle, there is no way we are going to be successful.

I felt at the end of last year that we enjoyed the greatness of the state championship teams of the mid '80s. We will soon know how much improvement and preparation has gone on this summer. I can assure you that winners do whatever needs to be done regardless of the price. I'm a great believer in W.I.T. (Whatever It Takes).

I'm often asked what makes our football squad so special. I'd like to point out it wasn't done with a lot of talented individuals with super, super egos. It was done with determined young men who absolutely refused to lose. They were willing to sacrifice and do Whatever It Takes. They were unselfish, loved one another, and cared for the program and their school. The team concept was first and foremost in their minds.

Now it is your turn. We all need to understand the potential we have as a team. We know we can win, and we've got to work hard enough to get to the point where we expect to win. Striving for perfection in all we do is our ultimate goal, and anything less is totally unsatisfactory. We must all acquire the self-discipline needed to focus on our goals. It is one of the greatest assets an individual can develop, and it can guide your life in all you do. This may be why we feel so inflexible when it comes to training rules, academic effort, and exemplary personal living. You can't serve two masters. You must make up your mind what kind of person you wish to be.

Finally, people keep telling me our football team can't always be expected to be good. Nonsense! We can be better. We will strive for perfection in every contest. Not some, not most, but ALL! From this point on, I want you to be the best, the very best, in all areas of your life. I want you to be the best student you can be. I want you to



be the best community member you can be as well as the best football player. The only reason a person exists is to be the best they can be. To play for _____ is to seek perfection. I've heard all the reasons why no one can get there, but I want to come so close that the average won't know the difference. If we settle for less, I believe our attitude is flawed. There is no reason to settle for less because it would be inconsistent with our goals, objectives, and beliefs. We are going to be positive as well as enthusiastic. Every practice, every game will be fun because we are all together working hard for the same dreams, hopes, and ambitions.

In closing, let me remind you that we meet on _____ at the Senior High School. Until then, think daily of the goals you set for yourself and the team. Remind yourself you are fortunate to be part of the great _____ football tradition.

Yours in Football,

Coach



PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER

Dear Parents/Guardian:

We are happy to have your son as a candidate for the _____ football team. We feel confident this team will carry on the tradition of outstanding <Name of School> football in the always tough <Name of League>.

At <Name of School>, we believe strongly that football is part of the total educational effort. The coaching staff believes that the game of football offers many opportunities to learn the lessons of life. We know you are intensely interested in having your son become a fine young man, and we assure you this is our keenest desire, also.

Three of the most important aspects of every man's life are his physical well-being, his strong moral character, and his mental alertness.

Physical well-being. You can expect your son to endure some bumps and bruises to match his sore muscles, but he will learn to bounce back and overcome adversity now as we hope he will later in life. When you meet and compete with your opponents and teammates each day, you soon acquire the confidence and courage for which all men are respected. You will see born in your son a new confidence and courage.

Moral character. We encourage your son to live cleanly and be a gentleman at all times. There was a time when only toughies played football. Today, all over the country, young men have discovered what a thrilling game football really is. We do not permit any form of inappropriate living—smoking, drinking, or late hours. Such behavior would mean dismissal from the squad. Your son will be playing for a coach who will not hesitate to drop a boy who does not keep training rules. We do not consider this to be a sacrifice on his part since it contributes to his well-being.

Mental alertness. Through football, we feel we can provide many experiences that will have a direct effect on life. Things, such as accepting responsibilities and carrying it through to a successful end and developing the will to win, that are important all through life. We want to win every game, if it can be done fairly under the rules. We want your son to have the same desire to make our season successful. If we can instill this desire to succeed, it should help him to become a winner in all his endeavors.

Finally, the coaches do realize that a boy's first obligation is to his family and school, and we are willing to make reasonable adjustments so that he can meet his commitments. Parents are always welcome at our practice and to the weekly meetings when we show game films. We hope you will feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Signature



SAMPLE FOOTBALL CANDIDATES PREPRACTICE ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

Players will be tested prior to the first day of practice in the following:

Date	Time	Test
Monday, August 6, 2001	6 A.M. or 6 P.M.	Bench Press
Wednesday, August 8, 2001	6 A.M. or 6 P.M.	Parallel Squat
Friday, August 10, 2001	6 A.M. or 6 P.M.	Power Clean
Wednesday, August 15, 2001	6 A.M. or 6 P.M.	40 yd. Dash 20 yd. Pro Agility Test
Friday, August 17, 2001	6 A.M. or 6 P.M.	Buffalo Run

SAMPLE PRESEASON AGILITY CIRCUIT

Format: 20 min. 9 Stations. 90 sec. plus 30 sec. rotation

- Agile Dummies-Run-Shuffle-Weave
- Cones and Forward Back Shuffle Figure 8-Cross Run
- Agile Dummies-Hopping and Stepping-2 X each 10 sec.
- Plyometrics-3 Long jumps-3 Right and Left-10 Sprint Jumps
- Grass Drills-Up and Down, Butt Rolls, Pass Pursuit-2 Reps
- Running Ropes
- Power Run-Bungee Ropes
- 10 Yard Mirror Shuffle and Run
- Push Ups, Sit Ups, Squats-2 sets of 10-12
- All QBs



**In-Season
(August-September-October-November)
Resource Materials**



AUGUST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

SAMPLE AGENDA*

1. General Rules and Regulations
2. Diet and Nutrition
3. Training Rules and Safety Sheet
4. Locker Room Assignments and Rules
5. Care of Equipment; Fitting; Maintenance; Shoes
6. Awards and Letters
7. Injury Prevention and Insurance Procedures
8. General Practice Plans
9. Pre- and Postpractice Drills; Specialties; Individual Help
10. Game Rules for Players; Penalties; Unusual Situations
11. Player Conduct
12. Important Facts About a Football Game
13. Offensive and Defensive Concepts
14. What does it take to be a _____(team name)_____Football Player?
15. Principles of Performance

*These are suggestions only; coaches are encouraged to develop their own agenda that addresses specific aspects of their program.



FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT ISSUE FORM

Year _____

Year in School _____

Name _____

Position _____

Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____

Articles	Size	Number	Date Issued	Date Returned
Shoes				
Practice Jersey				
Practice Pants				
Shoulder Pads				
Girdle Pads				
Thigh Pads				
Knee Pads				
Scrimmage Vest				
Socks				
T-shirt				
Notebook				
Game Jersey—"Home"				
Game Jersey—"Away"				
Game Pants				
Game Hose				
Special Equipment				

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Family Doctor: _____

Medical Exam Card _____

Patient Permission Slip _____

Transportation Slip _____

Locker #: _____

Lock #: _____

Combination _____

Homeroom _____

Signature _____

Date _____



ROSTER FORM

Level _____

Year _____

List players alphabetically with the last name first.

NAME	GR	AGE	D.O.B.	HT	ADDRESS	PHONE	POS



FOOTBALL SPRING ASSESSMENT DATA FORM

Name _____ Height _____

Position _____ Weight _____

Preference: Offense Defense

Test Items	Results	Comments
1. 40-yd. dash		
2. 800 meter run		
3. Buffalo Drill		
4. Step Test – 1 min.		
5. Heavy Rope – 1 min.		
6. Bench Press – max. at 135		
7. Leg Press – max. at 200		
8. Hip Press – max. at 100		
9. Push Ups – minimum		
10. Sit Ups – 1 min.		
11. Dips – maximum		
Flexibility:	Poor/Good/Excellent	
• Toe touch		
• Hurdle stretch		
• Back bend		
Vertical Jump – in inches		



DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

TACKLE	NOSE TACKLE	TACKLE	FORCE END

LINEBACKER	MIDDLE LINEBACKER	LINEBACKER

STRONG CORNER	STRONG SAFETY	FREE SAFETY	WEAK CORNER



OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

SPLIT END	LEFT TACKLE	LEFT GUARD	CENTER	RIGHT GUARD	TACKLE	TIGHT END

SPLIT ENDS	QUARTERBACK	FULLBACK	TAILBACK	SETBACK

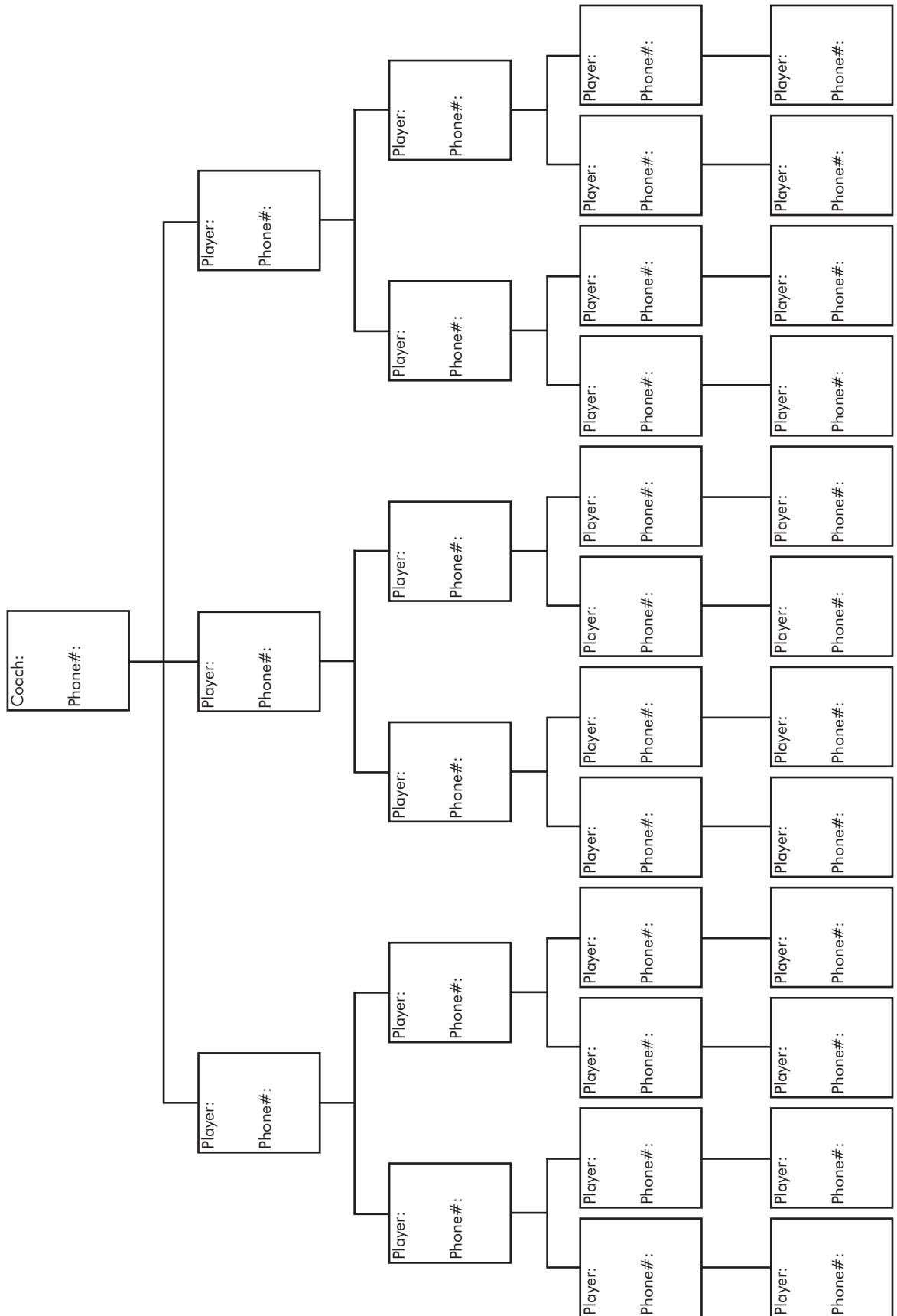


Directions for Telephone Tree

- In an organizational meeting, coaches should distribute a completed phone tree to all players.
- Coaches should explain the process of the tree and the responsibilities associated with passing messages and calling teammates.
- The Head Coach should start the process of the phone tree.
- Coaches and players should follow the lines on the tree to determine who they are responsible for calling.
- If a player cannot be reached, the caller needs to continue the phone chain. Therefore, the caller must call the next person on the chain.
- Coaches need to clarify for their players what to do if a teammate cannot be reached.



TELEPHONE TREE





Chapter 2: Effective Practice Planning

Karen Collins, M.S.
Daniel Gould, Ph.D.

Chapter Objectives

Conducting an effective practice requires planning, organization, and detail. Whether you are a head coach, an assistant coach, or a volunteer coach, effective practices are the key to helping young football players develop sound technical and tactical skill. This section of the *Coach's Playbook* will help you identify and prioritize keys to developing an effective football practice. Specifically, this section's objectives include:

- Discussing the need for practice planning;
- Identifying the phases of learning football skills and how you coach differently during each phase;
- Identifying effective practice principles;
- Discussing components of an effective practice;
- Learning to create an effective practice; and,
- Putting your practice plan to work for your level of coaching.

Effective Practice Planning

"Practice does not make perfect. Planned purposeful practice makes perfect!"

—Author Unknown

"You play like you practice!"

—Author Unknown

"We stress the point frequently that coaching is teaching of the highest degree, and a good coach is a good teacher."

—Paul (Bear) Bryant, Hall of Fame Coach,
University of Alabama

As a coach, organizing and running practices is one of your most important tasks, and how you conduct this aspect of coaching will do much to determine your program's success. Youth and high school players have so much to learn that you will need to convey the maximum amount of information possible to your players while at the same time not presenting so much that they become overloaded with information and learn little. This is no easy task. Award-winning high school football coach Brent Steuerwald has developed principles of practice organization for high school football programs. Before we get started, turn to page 273 and review "Prior Planning Prevents Pitiful Poor Performance." Read through Coach Steuerwald's principles, and see how they can relate to your football program.

This chapter will help you conduct effective practices. In it, you will learn about effective practice principles, how players learn football skills, and how to conduct effective practices. Let's begin by looking at some principles of effective practice that have been identified by successful coaches and experts in learning of sports skills.

Teaching New Skills: Understanding How Players Learn

It is likely that during the course of the football season you will spend a significant amount of time teaching new techniques and tactics to your players. It is critical that as a coach you understand what happens when a young athlete learns a new skill and how you effect the learning process. Typically, acquisition of a new skill involves three phases (Gould & Weiss, 1980; Christina & Corcos, 1988):

- the 'getting the idea phase,'
- the practice/retention phase, and
- the fine tuning phase.

The Getting the Idea Phase

In the initial, or getting the idea, phase of learning, the player is exposed to a skill for the first time and is trying to formulate a general idea of what it looks like and how to do it. For example, a youth player may know from watching television that defensive lineman get down in a stance but has never really looked closely enough to distinguish between 3- and 4-point defensive line stances. Further, he most likely does not understand the key points such as whether the feet should be squared or staggered or the flat position of the back. Hence, the youngster is trying to get the general idea of what the skill is and how to execute it.

The coach plays a major role in helping the athletes in the initial phase. A brief explanation of the entire skill combined with a repeated visual demonstration is often the most beneficial. Verbal directions and visual demonstration should be directed to essential information. Try to avoid overloading the player with too much information. Successful coaches also find it useful to compare the new skill with one which the athlete is already familiar. After allowing the player to practice the skill, the coach should provide immediate, precise, and positive feedback. At times, it may be useful for the coach to help the athlete align their body in the proper form. Once the athlete is able to generally perform the new skill, he moves to the second phase, the practice phase.

The Practice Retention Phase

The player enters the practice phase of skill acquisition once he knows what the skill looks like and has a general idea of the key points. However, he still cannot consistently perform it correctly, especially under high speed conditions, when distractions are present or where adjustments are needed. Often movements are not fluid as the player looks like he is thinking his way through the skill.

During the practice phase, your goal as a coach is to emphasize practice methods that will most efficiently and effectively lead to skilled performance. To help athletes move through the practice phase, the coach should focus demonstrations and explanations on the whole skill. Further, practiced skills should be attempted to be executed at game speed.

Repetition is important, as the player needs to develop the muscle memory patterns needed to perform the skill on command without thinking about it. However, while you are trying to get a large number of repetitions of a skill in, you must remember that these must be correct executions, so quantity of practice cannot be substituted for quality. It does little good to practice skills if they are being incorrectly executed. Initially practice the skill for shorter, fast-paced periods of time.

As the athlete becomes more proficient, longer time periods are recommended. Similarly, if the player cannot correctly perform the skill at full speed, work up to full speed by having them perform at progressively faster speeds (e.g. 50%, 70%, etc.).



The Fine-Tuning Phase

Finally, the player enters the fine-tuning phase of skill acquisition. In this phase, the player can execute the skill correctly on command and without a lot of conscious attention (e.g. a receiver can perform the rip release without thinking about how to do it). However, this does not mean the player is not still learning and refining skills. The more he practices, the more refined and automated his skill becomes. He is learning to perform with increasing ease and smoothness. Further, anticipation and the timing of specified movements become more fully developed (e.g. the quarterback more accurately anticipates when to pitch the ball on an option depending on the defenders' movements).

The coach's role in the final phase of skill acquisition is to help the athlete continue to refine skills and practice with intensity and enthusiasm. Coach with passion, and work to make drills competitive and fun.

Because anticipation is a primary characteristic of this phase, you should help the player by identifying and recognizing situations that precede the required skill. For instance, teach safeties to read the offensive players' eyes when covering wide outs. Thus, try to simulate game conditions as often as possible when designing drills.

Again, for optimal effectiveness, practice should be run at game-like speed, and try to introduce distractions into the situation. Also, teach players how to make adjustments and execute skills under less-than-perfect conditions. For example, have your punter and field goal kickers practice executing skills with less-than-perfect snaps and holds. This will help them learn how to handle less-than-perfect conditions.

Principles of Effective Practice

Having a general idea of how players learn will help you better organize your practices. However there are a number of principles of effective practice that have been identified by successful coaches and experts in learning of sports skills that you will want to incorporate. These are outlined below.

Plan Your Practices

How many times have we heard that "Practice Makes Perfect"? In making this statement, coaches emphasize the idea that without dedicated practice, a player will not learn the skills of the game and be able to execute on the field. However, this quote, while widely heard, is actually false. Practice will not guarantee that players will progress from learning drills to playing football. Rather, the "Planned Purposeful Practice Makes Perfect" is how the quote should be read. That is, just practicing is not the answer. As a coach, you must run a well-organized practice that follows some recognized principles. If not, your players will simply go through the motions and will not improve.

The key for you then is to "plan your practices." Ineffective coaches often take the field and try to figure out practice on the run. This does not work for a complex sport like football. So go into practice with specific goals and skills to cover and an estimate of the amount of time you want to devote to that skill. Also, have your assistant coaches do the same. For example, write out what skills players of various positions will work on that practice, how much time will be spent on individual versus team execution, what conditioning exercises will take place, and how much time will be devoted to special teams.

Relate Your Practice Planning to a Seasonal Plan

Do you have a seasonal plan? Do you rely solely on daily practice plans? If you forget to assess where you want to go (seasonal plan), you will be less effective with your daily practice plans. The more coaches can have an overall plan for the season, the fewer surprises you will encounter. It is important to include all coaches in the seasonal planning process. So, if you have not developed a seasonal plan, turn to Chapter I of this section of the *Coach's Playbook* and get started.

***Decide What Not to Cover: Focus on Fundamentals***

One of the hardest things to do in youth and high school coaching is to decide what not to teach to your players—there are so many skills and plays they need to learn! A common mistake made by inexperienced coaches is to try to teach too many skills and plays. When this occurs, nothing is learned well, performance suffers, and both the players and coaches become frustrated. So do what highly successful coaches do—focus on teaching fundamentals contained in Sections III, IV, and V of this *Coach's Playbook*, and teach them well.

Use Your Coaching Staff Wisely

Coaches should clearly understand their role on the coaching staff and how their behaviors impact players on the team. Make sure each coach understands the overall practice plan and his or her assignment within that plan. Give the practice plan to coaches prior to practice so they can prepare. Moreover, discuss as a staff new drills and activities that require more attention.

When Teaching, Organize Your Players for Instruction

In a complex sport with a large numbers of players, like football, it is important to organize your players for effective instruction. Some coaches even teach their team how to line up in a certain formation (e.g. kneel on one knee and form a semi-circle) to insure that all players can see and here. As you speak or demonstrate, watch you players to insure that they are listening to what you are saying.

Keep Players Active and Involved

In designing practices, be sure to include drills and activities that keep your players involved and active. Avoid drills that have one or two players active and the rest waiting in long lines watching. Also, teach your players to be good observers by making sure they pay attention to what is happening while watching drills.

Speak in a Way Players Can Understand

Before you speak to your players, remind yourself of their age and ability to understand what you are saying. Remember, they are not adults, so use words they will understand. Also avoid long, complex explanations. Someone once said to remember the KISS principle—"Keep It Simple and Specific" when talking to your players. It is also helpful to check your players' understanding. So from time to time, ask them to repeat (in their own words) what you said or the key points you emphasized in an explanation or demonstration.

Ensure Success and Make Practices Fun

Practice is hard work, and effective learning requires considerable attention and concentration on your players' part. Football is also a physical game where athletes fatigue quickly. So keep practices and games fun so that your athletes stay motivated. Teach your athletes when to be serious (e.g. teaching head position in tackling), but at the same time don't be afraid to joke and have fun at appropriate times (e.g. between drills). Also, keep drill sessions short and frequent, especially when teaching new skills. And, most important, have realistic expectations, and design drills that are appropriate to your players' abilities so they experience success. Players who feel successful will stay motivated and develop the confidence needed to execute skills and plays correctly in pressure situations.



Components of Effective Practices

It is also important to note that regardless of the specific content of a practice, all practices should include some key components (Martens, 1990; Beade, 1994). These include:

- **Objectives:** Briefly state the overall objectives or purposes of each practice.
- **Equipment needs:** Identify what equipment will be needed or used that day so you can be sure it is out and ready to go when practice begins.
- **Warm-up and stretching:** Practice should never begin before players have adequately warmed-up and stretched.
- **Practice previously taught skills:** Start practice on a positive note by reviewing and practicing those skills you taught in previous sessions. Skills need to be continually reinforced to become permanently established.
- **Teach new skills:** New skills will need to be clearly demonstrated and explained. In doing so, be sure to follow the communication and demonstration, guidelines presented in Section VI of your *Coach's Playbook*. In addition, as players begin practicing their skills, follow the principles for giving effective feedback included in that section.
- **Practice skills under competitive conditions:** Learning and performing skills in drill situations is important for effective practice. However, experienced coaches have learned that performing skills in practice situations is different than under game conditions. Thus, a fundamental principle of effective practice is to have players perform skills under game-like conditions such as full-contact scrimmages. This should only be done after players can correctly execute the skills in partial speed situations.
- **Physical Conditioning:** Each practice should include some emphasis on physical conditioning.
- **Cool-down:** Just as you have players warm-up and stretch at the beginning of practice, they should never leave practice without engaging in some type of cool-down activity.
- **Team talk:** End practice with a quick review of what was done and how things went. This is a good time to listen to player comments and to take care of organizational issues like passing out handouts or making announcements. Many coaches also use this time to end with a motivational team cheer.
- **Comments and evaluation:** After every practice, jot down a few notes regarding the practice. Overall, how did things go? What did and did not work? What needs more work? Obtain feedback from your assistant coaches on the strengths and weaknesses of the practice.

Developing a Practice Plan

You now have all the tools to create an effective practice. Think about what you want to accomplish in your practice and how to manage your time effectively. Now turn to Worksheet I Sample Practice Plan worksheet on page 273. Complete this form for a typical second or third week of practice for your team. Once you have completed the practice plan, compare your plan to the completed practice plan form on page 274. Did you cover all segments of the practice? Did your practice meet your objectives?



Continue to examine your responses. Did you include special teams, offensive, and defensive work in your plan? Many successful coaches feel these three elements of the game should be stressed in all practices. What about individual as well as group and team work? Finally, evaluate if your plan did the following:

- Cover too much or too little for the time allotted
- Involved appropriate progressions from simple to complex
- Kept players on task by having them all involved and by avoiding long lines and waiting around
- Kept things moving
- Have a specific coach assigned to each activity

If you are a first-year coach, this process may seem overwhelming. However, do not panic. Instead, you may want to purchase some reference books such as Beade's (1994) *Coaching Football Successfully* that provide sample practice plans for you to follow.

Putting Your Practice Plan to Work

Using a daily practice plan throughout the season will enhance your opportunity for success. However, it is critical that your daily plans parallel what you are trying to accomplish during the course of the season (seasonal plans). Be sure to review your season plans and objectives every few weeks to make sure you are on track.

As a new coach, daily practice plans will help keep you on track. As you become more familiar with your players and staff, planning practice will become easier. Also, as weeks, months, and years go by, your practice plans will be an added resource for what was effective and what was not. Therefore, it is important to keep your practice plans. It will serve as a valuable resource for years to come.

Conclusion

In this section you have learned the principles of effective practices, as well as the tools to develop a good practice plan. Effective practice planning will be one of the key variables in your success as a football coach. Whether a varsity head coach, or a volunteer youth coach, effective practices are a critical step in developing winners in football and life.

References

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- Martens, R. (1990). *Successful Coaching*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.



Practice Organization

“Prior Planning Prevents Pitiful Poor Performance”

1. If it's not written down it won't happen.
2. Progression should be from teaching drills to training drills (Coach on the run).
3. Drills repeated at length become conditioning drills.
4. Whole-part learning is the basis for teaching skills.
5. Practice things that make a difference.
6. Relate drills to game situations.
7. Work with coaching staff to set priorities.
8. Coach an error or point of emphasis, one point at a time.
9. Feedback should come in the form of high praise-selective praise and constructive criticism (Attack performance, never personality).
10. Correcting errors:
 - a. Breakdown and freeze elements of a skill.
 - b. Analyze and identify right and wrong parts.
 - c. Retrain the right way. High reps with feedback and encouragement.
 - d. Help athletes get the feel of proper execution (Proprioceptive).
 - e. Put parts back together; look for next most important error.
11. Teaching cues for effective performance:
 - a. Cognitive area—an athlete needs to think and do. Strategy of using skills—when and how to apply.
 - b. Fear of Failure—Loss of focus and improper breathing. Don't allow it in your coaching. Emphasize positive mental imagery and confidence in preparation (psychocybernetics).
 - c. Teach mental toughness—be a role model—Captain Leadership—group support. Courage is a group dynamic.

**BELIEVE IN OUR PLAN
NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS BY ACCIDENT**



I. Sample Practice Planning Exercise

“Prior planning prevents pitiful poor performance”

Date: _____

Objectives

Equipment Needs:

Minutes	Activity	Emphasis Points/Diagrams
	Warm-up and Stretching	
	Practice Previously Taught Skills	
	Teach New Skills	
	Practice Skills Under Competitive Situations	
	Physical Conditioning	
	Cool-Down	

Comments and Evaluation:



COMPLETED PRACTICE PLAN FORM

“Prior planning prevents pitiful poor performance”

Date: 9/20/02

Objectives

- Proper execution of “Blue 42”
- Begin scout team prep of Bears Offense
- Conditioning

Equipment Needs:

Balls, water bottles, 16 cones, dry-erase board, tackling sleds

Minutes	Activity	Emphasis Points/Diagrams
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up and Stretching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainy and raw...make sure kids get a good warm-up (Coach Smith)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 • 15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral defensive movement • Cone drills from line of scrimmage • Blue 42 Execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cone drills • On toes • Bend at legs, not back (Coach Schilling) • Timing of cuts • Essential blocks on line
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bears Scout Offense • Prepare our defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready for the run (Coach Greenleaf) • Backs fast and agile • Don't get caught creeping (Coach Schilling)
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes of game play • 2nd quarter with running scout offense and our defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner ladder patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push through fatigue • Encourage teammates • All-out effort (Coach Smith)
15	Cool-Down/Stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about Bears Offense • Visualize proper execution of Blue 42 (Coach Smith)

Comments and Evaluation:

Overall, practice went well today. Weather was misty and raw, but kids put forth good effort. Blue 42 still needs work. First-string defense looks good against Bears offense.



Chapter 3: Effectively Dealing With Parents

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Chapter Objectives

Effectively interacting with your players' parents is essential for successful coaching. However, for many coaches dealing with parents is one of their least favorite duties. This does not have to be the case. Therefore, in this chapter of the *Coach's Playbook*, we will provide information that will help you develop a plan to create successful relationships with parents. Specifically, chapter objectives include:

- Examining the negative effects parents can have on players;
- Identifying profiles of both problem and "supportive" parents;
- Listing strategies you can apply to interacting with problem parents;
- Testing your ability to work with problem parents;
- Developing a plan to prevent problems with parents and generating parent support;
- Creating and implementing a parent education program for your team.

Effectively Dealing With Parents

"I like to think that if success is going to be in any program, it's not only what a coach can do. I like to turn around and take it to the parents. We need their support. It's basically their students, their athletes, and their children."

—Award-winning high school football coach

As this quote shows, parents have a vested interest in your program and your coaching. After all, it is their child who is involved and will reap the benefits or suffer the consequences of your coaching. Moreover, highly successful youth and high school coaches, like the individual quoted here, realize that coaching success is a team effort—the team effort involves maximizing the support of good parents and minimizing the effects of negative ones.

Unfortunately, problems with parents in sports have escalated in recent years. In extreme cases, this has led to violence. More often than not, problem parents simply disrupt the program and your coaching efforts. They can also take a lot of the fun out of coaching.

The increase incidence of parent problems in youth football is the impetus for this chapter of your *Coach's Playbook*. Hence, the primary focus of this chapter is on how to deal with problem parents. However, it is important to recognize that the vast majority of youth football parents are good people who want the best for their child and your program. You do not want to forget this. It is easy to fall into the trap of focusing all your attention on the few problem parents you may have and forget to encourage and educate all those good football parents.

Given the above, this chapter will begin on a negative note—focusing on problem parents and how to deal with them. We need to prepare you for these worst-case scenarios. However, as we move through the chapter, you



will see that our focus shifts from dealing with problem parents or parent crisis situations to strategies for preventing parent problems in the first place. Finally, we finish by looking at ways to generate positive parent support.

Understanding the Negative Effects of Misguided Parents

Incidences of violence in youth football are becoming more commonplace every day. Many of these incidences occur off the field and in the stands between parents and spectators. Parent and spectator violence is the most salient and important problem that can occur, but many other problems can disrupt your team. These issues range from parents second-guessing the coach or berating their child to using foul and abusive language. Parents are increasingly becoming more involved in youth and high school football. Unfortunately, a small number of parents do not check their egos and/or emotions at the gate. As you are fully aware, it only takes one or two problem parents to make your job much more difficult.

The effects of negative parental behavior include:

- Disrupting team chemistry
- Decreasing enjoyment and fun
- Inhibiting learning
- Affecting player confidence negatively
- Sapping motivation
- Undermining coach authority
- Increasing coach, referee, and player dropout
- Increasing violent behavior
- Modeling of negative moral development

After reading this introduction to dealing with parents, you may be thinking why even try to work with them. Fortunately, all is not lost. Many successful coaches have learned effective ways to deal with problem parents. More important, they have learned to eliminate problems before they occur and partner with parents to form a stronger allegiance.

Now let's go to Exercise I on page 285 to reflect on the types of parents that are supportive as well as unsupportive. Specifically, reflect on your experiences in football and identify the characteristics of supportive/optimally involved parents and unsupportive/problem parents. When finished, compare and contrast these characteristics. What seems to separate the two types of parents?

Characteristics of Football Parents

As a football coach, you probably recognize the negative effects a problem parent can have on your team. However, not all parents are a negative influence on the team. The majority of parents are a positive source of support for the coaching staff and players. The following parent profiles loosely reflect the types of parents with whom you will interact:

- Over-involved parents
- Under-involved parents
- Other problem parent characteristics
- Supportive/Optimally-involved parents

The Over-Involved Parent

The most visible group of problem parents is the over-involved parents. These parents are always in your office or approaching you on the field to complain about your play calls, the playing time their child receives, and coaching decisions in general. Frequently, they comment on the mistakes made by team members and criticize

them like they are professional football players. One positive aspect of the over-involved parent is that they care and are involved in their child's life. Unfortunately, the over-involved parent often does things to disrupt or hurt the team.

Over-involved parents can create many problems for a coach. Some loose profiles typical of over-involved parents include:

- **Don't have a clue parent**—yells and screams at players without understanding the negative effect their behavior has.
- **Unrealistic expectations**—the ex-jock who expects his or her child to be a great football player, or the parent who demands perfection from their child in all situations.
- **Pressure-criticism**—close to the unrealistic parent in that they are always on their child. Support comes in the form of criticism.
- **Parent trying to coach child**—second-guesses and undermines the teaching of the coaching staff. Often turns time with their child into lectures about playing football the right way, not the way the coaches are teaching it.

The Under-Involved Parent

The complete opposite of the over-involved parent, the under-involved parent does not actively participate and support their child in their football endeavors. Frequently, the under-involved parent perceives football as a time when they do not have to watch or interact with their child. Football is seen as a babysitting service and the coaches are used to watch over their child.

Another type of under-involved parent is the one that does not hold their child responsible for their actions. They are more *laissez-faire* in their approach to parenting their child. These parents often do not consider football important to their child's psychological, social, and emotional development and allow them to do things on the field that might otherwise be punished (e.g., fighting, vulgarity, not on time).

Under-involved parents create problems for football coaches because they do not provide support for the team and, more important, their child. Successes achieved and lessons learned in football are not reinforced in the home. In general, the child may not receive parental attention or support. The child is possibly left out or alone and may look to the coaches as substitute parents. Serving as a mentor (See Section VIII, Chapter 3) as well as a coach for such a child is important and can have long-term beneficial effects on the player.

Other Problem Parent Characteristics

Other characteristics of problem parents that you may have already or will run into are parents who feel their child can do no wrong, be my buddy parents, parents who inappropriately view football as an arena for violence, and finally abusive parents.

Most coaches will run into a parent who believes their child does nothing wrong. This poses a problem when a coach attempts to punish or reprimand a player for not following the rules or policies of the team. It also poses a problem when the coach does not play the child as much as the parent thinks the child deserves. Moreover, issues about the child being in their natural position may develop. The coach frequently will be viewed as the problem. Parents who believe their child can do no wrong often have a completely different viewpoint of the events that occur on your team. This makes it difficult to approach the parent without creating tension and conflict.

The be my buddy parent creates a different set of issues. This parent allows his or her child to do whatever everyone else is doing because that is what everyone does. Research with football coaches has revealed that a



few parents may even buy alcohol and support inappropriate behavior because this is what a teenage football player does. This creates a major conflict when this parent goes against team policies (i.e., no drinking, cursing). The coach must explain to the parent that the community often holds higher standards for football players and that they represent their community, their school, and their team. Approaching the parent requires tact and sensitivity; otherwise, they will become defensive and may create additional problems within your team.

The parent who inappropriately views football as an arena for violence sees the game as a test of a boy's manhood, and men fight and are tough above all else. For example, a parent who falls in this category may reinforce their child's tendency to throw punches in a pile of players following a tackle. You may have heard something similar to, "Way to go Johnny, give it to him in the pile until he doesn't want anymore!" This parent does not realize the horrible lesson they are teaching their child. The idea that it is appropriate to use aggression can transfer off the field. The child may resort to aggression in dealing with confrontations in school, at home, or when they become frustrated. While successful football players must be tough and hard nosed, this does not mean they throw punches, taunt, or are violent.

Finally, the worst parent of all is the abusive parent. Dealing with an abusive parent is difficult because a coach must be careful of wrongful accusations of abuse. However, it is the duty of the coach to be aware of signs of abuse (e.g. the child is bruised and battered, but these injuries are not sustained on the football field, a parent consistently yells at and physically pushes their child around) and to act upon it when he or she recognizes those signs. If you suspect that abuse is occurring, you should talk to the school principal or league official and determine what the appropriate steps to take involve. Get some expert guidance to help you deal with the situation. Finally, know your school or league policies and rules on abuse and the steps for intervening.

The Supportive/Optimally-Involved Parent

Although this chapter focuses on problem parents, coaches should not forget about the positive influence the supportive/optimally-involved parent brings to their child and the team. The supportive/optimally-involved parent is a coach's dream parent. They provide support for their child, the team, and the coaches in all situations. They trust the coaching staff to make the appropriate decisions and consider second-guessing inappropriate. They also reinforce the philosophy of the coach through their actions and conversations with other parents. The supportive/optimally-involved parent appreciates the efforts of the coaches and understands that football is just a game. These dream parents are positive support sources for the team.

However, supportive/optimally-involved parents are not uninformed or uncaring individuals. In fact, they take great pride in their child and the team. Thus, they know how to be supportive of their child and how to guide them appropriately if problems occur. Supportive/optimally-involved parents understand the fine line between pushing and supporting.

Another characteristic of the supportive/optimally-involved parent is the expectation that football will be a safe and fun learning experience. These parents will monitor practices and games to make sure coaches are protecting the health and safety of the players. And, if an unsafe situation exists, they will approach you about it. Coaches should not consider this situation as a parent being nosy or overprotective. Parents want the same thing as you: the best situation for their players.

Supportive/optimally-involved parents can be a great resource in maintaining a positive atmosphere around the team and controlling the negative behaviors of slightly misguided parents. Coaches should make supportive/optimally-involved parents feel a part of the team by communicating with them following games and practices and explaining coaching decisions that may not be explicitly clear. These parents will back the coaching staff throughout the season and make a fun and enjoyable atmosphere where children can learn without the pressure of parental criticism.



To summarize, problem parents create major headaches and extra work for a football coach. Their misguided intentions disrupt the team and pull the coach away from his or her mission of developing their football players as good players and people. Negative parent influences can undermine a coach and, more important, destroy a child's confidence. However, most football parents are wonderful supporters of your program. Often they lose perspective in the emotion of the game. A coach should view parents as a resource and support system rather than a burden or obstacle to success. The next section will detail ways that you can appropriately deal with parent problems and, better yet, indicate how to implement preventive measures to stop negative parental behavior before it occurs.

Crisis Management Strategies for Handling Problem Parents

As all coaches realize, there will be situations during the season when you will have to confront a disgruntled parent. This problem parent may not understand why his or her child is not the starting cornerback or why you decide to use a prevent defense at the end of the game. In addition, you may not appreciate it when your fullback's father continually berates the officials. As the coach, you will inevitably have to put out fires involving parents throughout the season using crisis management strategies. Some of these effective crisis management strategies are outlined below.

One-on-One Meetings

Having one-on-one meetings with parents who create problems may be the first step to handling the situation. If a parent is yelling at a referee during a game and you do not want him or her to act this way, you can ask the parent to come meet with you the next day to talk about the problem. In this case, you will be confronting the parent with whom you are having a conflict or misunderstanding. There are five crucial steps in having a successful confrontation (Martens, 1987):

- Think
- Understand
- Care
- Be Tentative
- Proceed Gradually

Think. First of all, it is important to think about what you want to say way before you say it. For example, a reflexive response of "you are an idiot" to a parent complaining about your practice drills, and implying or saying that you are incompetent, may not be the best choice of words. Think carefully about the situation and why there is a problem. You will then be able to speak without letting your emotions get the best of you. Taking a moment to check your emotions and think about a professional response, as opposed to one in which you and the parent are screaming at each other because you are both angry, will help you to have a more successful confrontation.

Understand. Second, try to understand the parent's point of view. Work hard to listen to them—no easy task when you might be upset with the parent. So work to stay calm and in control. Ask them to clarify their points when you do not understand. For instance, every parent wants his or her child to play; you can probably empathize with that position. Communicate to the parents that you understand their concern and provide them with a truthful rationale (i.e., the first string running back gains 5 yards per carry, which is 2 yards more than your son). Let them know that you will do your best to get their child more playing time. When you are able to empathize with the parents and let them know that you understand their situation, they, in turn, may be more understanding of your position on the matter.

Care. Third, along with understanding and empathizing, show that you care about all the persons involved, including the athlete and the parents. A prominent sport psychologist Rainer Martens (1987) explains, "Your motivation should be to achieve your goal to help the other person achieve his or her goal, rather than to show



you are right, or to punish, or to be vindictive" (p. 63). It is important to remember that when you are having a confrontation, both parties may be upset or hostile with each other. If you can communicate that you care about the people involved as well as their relationships, the conflict may be resolved more easily. For example, explaining to a misguided parent that you appreciate their enthusiasm, but wish they would not criticize the players, would show that you care.

Be tentative. Fourth, it is important to confront a problem parent tentatively. You want to make the parent feel that you are trying to see if your perceptions of the situation are accurate. You want to do this without seeming accusatory, but rather you are trying to help the parent see your view as well. Therefore, your approach should not be offensive or defensive, but one of respect and concern. Finally, if you feel your emotions are getting the best of you, use the STAR technique discussed in Section VIII, Chapter 1 or keep your cool and proceed tentatively.

Proceed gradually. Last, a successful confrontation occurs more often when you proceed gradually. Think about what you are saying and deal with one problem at a time. Let the parent absorb what you are saying before you continue so that an understanding can be reached. Avoid proceeding to another situation before allowing all parties to share completely. Attempting to push past parent concerns by jumping to new issues will not solve the problem. Moreover, the parents may become more disgruntled and create more headaches for you later in the season.

Perspective Talking

When talking to and confronting parents in your meeting, perspective talking can be a useful strategy. Remind a parent that berates officials that while you take football very seriously, in the bigger scheme of things, it is still only a game and that there is more to be learned from it than winning or losing. Sometimes parents just lose perspective, and you can help them see this problem. A good way to get a parent to see an issue from a different perspective is to ask them to look at the problem from the players', coaches', or officials' point of view. This will help them acknowledge that they may have lost their perspective.

Parent Liaison

Having a parent advocate or liaison can help you handle problems as they arise. For example, if there is another parent present who supports your philosophy of the coach being the only one who talks to officials, this parent could remind other parents of that rule. In addition, if you have other parents who are supportive of you, they can help by talking to the problem parent without you ever having to say anything. Look for and approach supportive parents. Ask them to prevent problems in the stands. This will allow you, the coach, to spend more time coaching than putting out fires. As you will read later, generating parent support is crucial to having a good parent season.

Removal

Finally, if a parent continues to be a problem and you have approached this parent privately with little success, you may opt to have the parent removed from games and banned from other activities concerning your team. Knowing what level of administrative support you have through your league or at your school will be important, especially in this situation. For example, in some leagues, you cannot do this unless the parent has been informed and signed a parent code of conduct. Finally, a hearing needs to be held to show that they violated the code. Thus, make sure to have clear expectations and rules as well as a strong understanding of your league or school's rules and regulations. Also, explain to the parent why they are being removed.

Now that you have read about many different crisis management strategies for dealing with problem parents, go to pages 285-287, Exercise II. In this exercise, you and a partner will have an opportunity to test what you learned in the crisis management section of this chapter. You will be given a problem parent scenario and then asked how you will deal with it. Integrate the strategies listed in the crisis management section and write how you would effectively approach this scenario.



Preventative Measures for Dealing with Problem Parents

Some problems with parents are inevitable. However, coaches can play an important role in preventing these problems before they start, even before the first day of practice. Strong and supportive relationships between coaches, parents, and players do happen and can be cultivated using some simple strategies that are initiated by the coach. Knowing your coaching philosophy, having parent educational meetings and behavioral contracts, as well as some rules and policies will help to keep parents in line.

Coaching Philosophy

Having a clear coaching philosophy (See Section 2) is the start to not only a successful season, but also to measures that can prevent problems with parents. A clear coaching philosophy includes knowing why you are coaching football, what you believe the purpose of the sport is, as well as what you want your players to take from you and from football. You have to know what your team priorities are and in which order these priorities exist. Coaches should analyze their philosophy and determine the priority to place on the development of physical, psychological, and social skills in their players as well as fun and winning. Your team's mission and goals should reflect your own coaching philosophy, what you believe to be important, such as developing good people and football players in a safe, fun, and good learning environment. Once you are able to determine your mission as a coach and what is important about coaching to you, you will easily be able to create a team atmosphere that reflects your coaching philosophy.

Communicating your philosophy and setting clear expectations for behavior is essential to having successful relationships with parents. Your coaching philosophy must be understood and followed by your players and parents. Parents need to know that your number-one coaching priority for this team is to, for example, develop players' skills, and not, let's say, winning. As a result of the parents knowing your philosophy, your success should be measured on whether your players improve rather than win. It is also important that your coaching philosophy is written down, distributed, and explained to all parents at the beginning of the season. A Parent Orientation Meeting is the ideal time and place to hand out your philosophy in writing and to let parents know what you expect.

Parent Orientation Meetings

Parent Orientation Meetings give you, the coach, time to explain your goals and mission for the team, your rules and regulations, times that are appropriate for parents to communicate with you, and your expectations for the parents, including a code of conduct for them. Holding such a meeting also allows you to understand players' parents better and get their perspectives on important issues. An example of a parent orientation meeting agenda is located on page 290.

It is important to be prepared and specific when holding a parents meeting. Plan ahead to develop clear expectations for your program. Inform parents when it is inappropriate for them to talk to you, such as during the game or practice. Also, convey to them your expectations for their behavior on the sidelines, including how they react to referees' calls as well as your team winning. Your expectations and rules should reflect your coaching philosophy. If you don't want your players yelling at or even talking to the officials, you may expect parents to model that behavior as well. Let that be known. You want parents to know that their child and his or her development is what is important to you as well as to them, and that you all are on the same side.

To ensure that parents understand the rules and expectations for the team, you may have parents sign a behavioral contract that establishes your rules and regulations on how you expect the parents to act. All the parents at the orientation meeting should sign this contract. Signing the contract should mean to the parents that they understand and are in agreement with team rules and regulations as well as your philosophy and the team mission. Please see pages 287-288 for an example of a parent behavior contract.



To prevent problems with parents throughout the season, you should meet with parents periodically. Along with your preseason parent orientation meeting, you can meet with parents at midseason and prior to playoffs to obtain feedback and clarify any situations that may have occurred. For instance, some successful high school coaches have parents and players organize a team meal the night before each game that provides an informal setting to interact with parents. Coaches should also use meetings as an opportunity to reiterate the team mission and the coaching philosophy. Emphasizing the mission and philosophy may prevent parents losing perspective, especially around playoff time.

On pages 288-290, Exercise IV provides you an opportunity to develop a parent education program. Review the strategies forwarded in this chapter to create your own parent education program. Please complete the exercise and continue to read the follow-up information located on pages 289-290.

Finally, try to enjoy yourself during the parents meeting. Take the perspective that you will be meeting new people and developing relationships. In fact, awarding winning high school football coaches indicate that they have established lifelong friendships with their players' parents.

Working with someone's child is a privilege. It is also a privilege to be a football coach. Approach parents with a positive attitude, and you will be surprised with their response.

Generating Parent Support

Frequently, coaches say that parents take too much of their valuable time. Constantly putting out fires removes the coach from his first responsibility—the players. To avoid the trap of constantly dealing with parent problems, generating parent support is essential to having a successful parent season. In general, your season will probably be a lot smoother if you have parents who believe in you and back what you do as the coach. This is not to say that you are out there for parents to like you all the time. Realistically, you do not have to be their best buddy. However, having parental support will help you run your program more effectively and efficiently. This section details different ways of generating parent support including listening, making parents feel like they're part of the group, acting on safety and fairness issues, and having a parent advisory board.

Listening

Sometimes the most effective way of gaining parent support is simply by listening to what the parents have to say. By listening, the parents feel that their opinions are being heard, whether you agree with them. In addition, parents may have some good ideas that you might like. However, without taking the time to meet and listen to what they have to say, you may have never thought of their suggestions or ideas. Moreover, listening to parents also makes them feel that they are a part of their child's football experience. Finally, using the active listening techniques provided in the Coach-Player Communication section (See Section VI, Chapter 1) will improve your relationships with parents.

Making Parents a Part of the Group

Creating ways to make parents feel as if they are part of a special group, like your football program, is another way to generate their support. For example, having the parents be part of postgame activities by simply having them bring refreshments will help the parents feel as if they have a role in this group. As mentioned earlier, a team meal is a great way to get parents involved. Giving parents a simple role such as being the parent liaison may help them feel more valuable and important to the group. As a result, parents will take more pride in your football program because they feel they are a significant part of the group. Involving parents will also help to harness the energy of over-involved parents, and bring under-involved parents into the group.



Safety and Fairness Issues

Taking the time to act immediately on safety and fairness issues will also help to generate parent support. If parents feel their child is safe and being treated fairly while participating on your football team, their trust in you as the coach will increase. It is important, though, to act on safety and fairness issues immediately and to be consistent with your actions. For instance, if one of your players gets into a fight with his teammate because he fumbled the ball, you would need to address that issue immediately in accordance with your rules and philosophy. Once a parent feels that their child is in a safe and fair environment, they will be more supportive of you and your program because they will feel at peace leaving their child in your hands during practices and games.

Parent Advisory Board

Another way to generate parent support is through creating a Parent Advisory Board. This board could be in charge of any pregame and postgame activities that may occur. They also may make signs to show their support for the team on game days, such as ones that say simply, "Go Wildcats!" Another way parent advisory boards make your job easier is in monitoring parent behavior. Allowing the parent board to monitor and enforce parent behavior rules will take a lot of the responsibility off of the coaching staff.

By creating a Parent Advisory Board, parents will feel that they are an important part of the team and have a say in what goes on regarding the team, especially off the field. Again, this helps parents to feel as if they are a part of this exclusive group, which further creates more support for you and your team.

Realistic Expectations: You Can't Please Everyone

Generating parent support and knowing how to deal with problem parents can make coaching much more enjoyable and help contribute to team success. However, it is important to recognize that you cannot have a perfect relationship with every parent. Highly successful coaches who have great parent support are clear in indicating that despite their best efforts, they can never eliminate all parental problems. Hence, as a coach, you can't please everyone, and some parents will not be happy with you or agree with all your decisions. Recognizing this fact of coaching will help you maintain your sanity while working hard at getting the vast majority of your parents involved positively in your program.

Conclusion

Parents are an integral part of a child's youth football experience. Interacting with parents is a necessary component of coaching youth football. Unfortunately, parents can create problems that cause you to spend valuable coaching time dealing with parent crises. This section has provided a variety of crisis management strategies to help you put out the fires when dealing with problem parents. In addition, this section offered ways to develop a parent education program and preventative measures that can be implemented to deter future problems. Ultimately, the goal for the coach is to establish excellent parent-coach relationships built on trust and mutual respect. This does not happen by chance. Make a commitment today to develop a plan to elicit positive parent support for your program. Getting all parents to be optimally involved and highly supportive will make your program more effective and efficient. You will have more time to spend working with your players, planning for your next opponent or practice, or maybe even spending time with your family.



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DEALING WITH FOOTBALL PARENTS: GENERATING SUPPORT EXERCISES

I. IDENTIFYING POSITIVES AND PROBLEMS WITH PARENTS

Directions. Reflect on your personal experiences with parents in football. First, think about the **most supportive parents or optimally-involved parents** you have had on your team. What types of characteristics did they have that made them good football parents? Second, think about the **least supportive or problem parents** who have been associated with your team. What types of problems did they present? Please list your responses in the appropriate column below.

*Supportive/Optimally-Involved
Parent Characteristics*

*Unsupportive/Problem
Parent Characteristics*

II. PUTTING OUT THE FIRES: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Directions. Please read the following problem parent scenarios. After reading the scenario, work in pairs to answer the questions before moving to the next scenario. Reflect back on the strategies listed in the crisis management section of this chapter when developing a way of dealing with problem parents. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

• **Problem Parent Scenario 1:** Jimmy’s father is always pressuring him when his team loses. He preaches that his team does not have an attitude of winning at all costs. To Jimmy’s dismay, his father second-guesses the coaching staff in front of the team following a tough loss to their closest rival. The coaches do not appreciate the tirade, especially in front of the team and other parents. As a result of his father’s pressure, Jimmy decides he will not tryout for football his junior year.

As the head coach, how do you handle this problem parent?



• **Problem Parent Scenario 2:** Kevin is an excellent running back. He has been selected all-conference for two consecutive years. Unfortunately, Kevin’s parents do not attend the games and rarely pick up Kevin following practice. In fact, the coaches have driven Kevin home several times, because he did not have a ride and neither of his parents was home. The coach notices that Kevin does not talk much anymore and has begun to isolate himself from the team. When the coach asks Kevin how things are going, Kevin replies, “Who cares, my parents don’t!”

As the head coach, how do you handle this problem parent?

• **Problem Parent Scenario 3:** Michael’s mother loves to talk about Michael to anyone she can find. In fact, she told several parents that Michael will be receiving a scholarship to a major Division I school as long as he plays like he should. Michael starts the season slowly and develops a nagging injury that bothers him all season. Michael’s mother tells him that she is disappointed that he has had only 6 touchdowns in four games and that he needs to demand the ball from the quarterback. “Michael, you are the best player on the team, so you need to act like it.” When Michael’s mother picks him up after a practice or game, the car ride home turns into a critical analysis of every play. Michael feels that he can never do anything well enough and begins to ignore his mother.

As the head coach, how do you handle this problem parent?

• **Problem Parent Scenario 4:** Eduardo, first-team middle linebacker, was recently reported to be at a party drinking alcohol. Coach Johnson decides to talk Eduardo’s parents because he is concerned that Eduardo is getting into trouble more often this school year. When Coach Johnson approaches Eduardo’s mother and father about the alcohol incident, they reply, “Sure, we know about it. Kids do it all the time. What is it going to hurt if Eduardo has a beer or two? We don’t understand why the school is punishing him. Everybody else is drinking!” Coach Johnson has noticed in the past that Eduardo’s parents never punish him for the wrong decisions that he makes or even his poor grades in school. A rumor has started that Eduardo has been hanging out with a group of kids known for drug abuse. Coach Johnson is greatly concerned for Eduardo.

As the head coach, how do you handle this problem parent?



• **Problem Parent Scenario 5:** Bill Smith, a parent of one of your players, attends all of his child’s games and practices. He played football in high school and loves the sport. Bill is very supportive of the team and wants to see the team do well, especially in terms of winning. However, he tends to get overly involved in the games and gets very upset with the official’s calls. Bill will let the official, as well as everyone else at the game, know when he thinks the official is wrong. Your policy is that you and your assistants are the only ones who talk to the officials, not the players or their parents.

As the head coach, how do you handle this problem parent?

III. PARENT BEHAVIOR CONTRACT (Adapted from USA Hockey, 1998 and 1999)

PARENT’S CODE OF CONDUCT

- Do not force your children to participate in football, but support their desire to play. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make football fun.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember that children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches, or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your child. De-emphasize games and competition in the younger age levels.
- Know and study the rules of football, and support the officials on and off the field. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game.
- Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice. It is destructive. Work toward removing physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of youth football coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- If you enjoy football, learn all you can and dedicate time as a volunteer!

SPECTATOR’S CODE OF CONDUCT

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches, and officials.
- Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans. Enjoy the game together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play; profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive.
- Help provide a safe and fun environment; throwing objects on the field can cause injury to players and officials.
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety and remain alert to help prevent accidents.
- Respect locker rooms and sidelines as private areas for players, coaches, and officials.
- Be supportive after the game, win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork, and sportspersonship.



PUNISHMENT PROCEDURES

If I am in violation of any of the above conduct rules, I agree to the following:

- Compliance to a verbal warning from a member of the coaching staff, official, or Parent Advisory Board member for breaking the code of conduct.
- Compliance to leave the stands if asked to by a member of the coaching staff, official, or Parent Advisory Board member for breaking the code of conduct.

I have read the above. I will follow the code of conduct. I acknowledge the penalty incurred for any violations of the rules any time before, during, or after team functions.

Parent Signature: _____

IV. CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Directions. Read the vignette below and, in the spaces provided, list what you will do to prevent parent problems next season.

Dealing with Parental Problems: You love coaching—helping your players develop their football skills and develop into fine young men. However, when you signed up to coach, you never expected so much of your time would be taken up with parental issues. This year, two types of parent problems are most apparent. First, the parents of two or three players are over-involved in their children’s football experience. They constantly criticize their sons’ play, your coaching, and the officials’ performance. In one game, a father’s inappropriate behavior lead to an altercation with fans from the opposing team. In the last game, he started yelling at you because he was unhappy with his son’s play. The other type of parental concern you face is under-involvement—parents who play very small roles in their children’s lives. They view your program as a baby-sitting service and provide little guidance and direction to their sons.

Indicate what you will do in your parent education program to prevent these situations in the upcoming season.



Explain how you will implement a parent education program including, when and where to have meetings, and how you will get parents to buy into an education program.

Unfortunately, more and more coaches have to deal with parental problems and there is no indication that these problems are happening less often. In contrast, they appear to be on the rise.

The best way to deal with these problems is to stop them before they start. Many coaches have found it effective to hold a parent meeting prior to start of the season. At the meeting, you should:

- Introduce yourself and your coaching staff
- Explain your objectives for the program and your philosophy of coaching
- Briefly cover football rules and regulations
- Indicate when and where parents should contact you if they have concerns or questions
- Specify your policy on playing time
- Indicate how parents can help their child be successful
- Discuss team/school rules regarding eligibility
- Have the parents sign a code of good conduct

On page 290 is a sample parent orientation meeting agenda.

This is also a great time to hold a question-and-answer period for parents and to convey information about game and practice schedules. If you are a school coach, it is also a good idea to have your athletic director or head coach review your agenda prior to the meeting. That way, you will be sure what you say is consistent with school policy.

Finally, summarize this information in a letter, and send it home to those parents who were not in attendance at the meeting. Some coaches have found it effective to require that the parents return a signed form indicating they have read the information.

While holding a parent meeting will solve many potential parent problems, it will not eliminate them. You will have some over-involved parents who will confront you at times. The key to dealing successfully with these potentially volatile situations is to stay in control of your emotions and think before you speak. If at all possible, do not enter into a confrontation with a parent on the field or around the athletes. It is best to schedule a meeting away from the field and emotions of the game.

When you meet with the parent, you should also be prepared to use the STAR emotional control strategy you taught the players (see Section VIII, Chapter 1 page 302) to control your own emotions. Your meeting will not be successful if you lose control!



It is important to recognize that, at times, these parents need to express themselves. So, allow them do so without interrupting them, carefully listening and taking notes if needed. Then respond in a very business-like and unemotional manner (no easy task if they have called you names or insulted you). In responding, be sure to recognize any legitimate points made by the parent. Be firm and straightforward about what you will and will not do to address any issues raised, and make sure your decisions are based on your fundamental coaching philosophy principles and school policy.

Last, working with the under-involved parent also has its difficulties. One effective strategy is to give them a phone call to follow up on any letters that you sent home. Talk to them about their son and how they might support his involvement (e.g. talk about his game if they cannot attend). If they seem detached and disinterested, you might consider monitoring their son more carefully and providing more adult guidance—as this child may need extra attention from an adult mentor who cares.

V. PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING SAMPLE AGENDA

Parent's Meeting Agenda

- I. Introduction/Meet the Coaching Staff (Explain background/experience of all coaches)
- II. Philosophy of Coaching Staff
 - A. Coaching Code of Conduct
 - B. Appropriate time for communication between parents and coaches
- III. Team Mission
- IV. Program Objectives and Goals for the Season
 - A. Elicit Parent Goals for the Season
- V. Team Functioning
 - A. Selection Process
 - B. Determination of Player Positions
 - C. Playing time
- VI. Logistics
 - A. Practice and Game Schedule
 - B. Equipment Issues
 - C. Travel
- VII. Expectations of Players
 - A. Player Code of Conduct
 - B. Rules and Policies
 - C. Performance Expectations
- VIII. Expectations of Parents
 - A. Parent Code of Conduct
 - B. Behavior Contract
 - C. Volunteers/Advisory Board—generate support
- IX. Question and Answer Period



Section VIII: Player Life-Skills Development: Developing Winners in Football and Life

Chapter 1: Coaching Life Skills On the Run

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Chapter Objectives

The life-skills development section of the *Coach's Playbook* has three objectives. These include:

- Recognizing the important role you play as a coach in developing your players' life skills;
- Learning strategies for teaching life skills to your players that can be integrated into your coaching;
- Devising coaching strategies for solving common dilemmas faced by youth and high school coaches.

Coaching Life Skills on the Run

"What athletics teaches is the self-discipline of hard work and sacrifice necessary to achieve a goal. Nowadays, too many people are looking for a short cut. Life is the same as athletics, you have to work to accomplish anything."

—Roger Staubach, Hall of Fame Quarterback, Dallas Cowboys

"We need people who influence their peers and who cannot be detoured from their convictions by peers who do not have the courage to have any convictions."

—Joe Paterno, Head Coach, Penn State University

"Contrary to the opinion of many people, leaders are not born. Leaders are made, and they are made by effort and hard work."

—Vince Lombardi, Hall of Fame Coach, Green Bay Packers

"During my high school years, my head coach, Jack Leese, and his offensive coordinator, Bill Ohlson, were instrumental. They taught me the importance of unbridled commitment. They were there for their players every minute of every day. They were so determined to help other people through their coaching methods, providing them with the proper attitude they needed for life, that it couldn't help but rub off on me."

—Mike Shanahan, Head Coach, Denver Broncos

Teaching Players How to Succeed in Football and Life

Roger Staubach, Joe Paterno, and Vince Lombardi are football legends, and, as the above quotes show, they all believe in the character development potential of football participation and its importance for success both on and off the field. The life lessons that you teach as a coach will last long after one's playing days are complete—they last a lifetime.



Youth development experts define life skills as those mental, emotional, and social attributes, characteristics, and behaviors that athletes develop or refine through their sports participation. Teamwork, leadership, the ability to set and achieve goals, discipline, emotional control, and good moral values are just some of the life skills that great players report developing from their football experience.

For example, New York Giants Super Bowl winning quarterback Phil Simms credits his success in business to the organizational skills he learned through his youth, high school, college, and professional football experiences. Even more dramatic is the story of NFL legendary running back Walter Payton. Payton credited his Jackson State coach, Bob Hill, with helping to instill his never-give-up attitude—whether winning or losing. This never-say-die attitude instilled in Payton helped make him one of the best runners and players of all time. This life skill also helped him deal with his life-ending kidney disease. Hence, these life skills can be used to help players not only function effectively on the football field, but in their personal lives, socially, in business, and sometimes even in tragic circumstances like those faced by Payton.

Today, more than ever, there is a need for positive youth development in our society. Increasing drug use, youth violence, a lack of parental involvement, and teen pregnancy are but some of the obstacles that are faced by today's youth. However, kids do not have to fall victim to these circumstances. It has been recognized nationally that the single most important factor insulating kids from these negative factors and influencing them in much more positive and productive ways is contact with caring adult mentors. Coaches are some of the most esteemed mentors for youth today.

It is clear, then, that one of your most important roles as a youth and high school coach is helping develop life skills in your players. However, before we discuss ways to do this, take a few minutes to complete Exercise I on pages 298-300. Working on your own, answer the four questions listed on page 298, and read the key points on page 299, stopping prior to the Key Points Relative to Life-Skills Strategies. Identify the life skills you developed through your own football participation (note: use any organized sport you participated in if you did not have the opportunity to play football) and what life skills and attributes you hope to develop in your players.

Key Principles of Player Life-Skills Development

There are a number of important player life-skills development principles that must be understood if you are to influence youth in a positive manner. Some of these are listed and discussed below.

- ***As a coach, you play a critical role in the development of your players on and off the field:*** Coaches have such an important influence on young people because sport is one of the most highly valued and popular activities for youth. Children are intensely involved in these programs and spend a great deal of time practicing and competing under your guidance. Finally, kids find the sport experience meaningful and judge it as one of the most significant things they do.
- ***Any number of life skills can be developed through football participation:*** Such life skills may include the ability to communicate, leadership skills, the ability to set goals, the ability to exercise discipline, the breakdown of racial prejudice, and the ability to overcome adversity and obstacles that are faced when striving to achieve success.
- ***Participation in football alone does not develop a player's life skills:*** Although it is a great game, participation in football alone does not develop a player's life skills. Players learn life skills from interacting with significant individuals in their lives. Coaches are some of the most important people in youth and high school players' lives and, therefore, play a critical role in the development of life skills. Moreover, coaches who effectively teach life skills understand young people and their needs and consistently implement life-skills strategies in their programs.



- **The best approach for teaching life skills is for coaches to identify particular life skills they want to develop in their players and then use specific strategies to develop or coach those skills:** Just as you cannot teach your players everything there is to know about football in one season, you cannot teach every life skill they will need. It is imperative, then, that you determine which life skills (e.g. good work ethic, positive attitude, discipline, appreciation for diversity) are most needed by your athletes and then consistently implement strategies for teaching and developing these life skills.
- **Players must be taught how to transfer life skills from football to other aspects of their lives:** Just because one life-skills attribute is developed in the football situation (e.g. hard work ethic) does not mean that it will automatically transfer to aspects of a player's life outside of football (e.g. working hard in school). As a coach, you must continually emphasize and show your players how the attributes they develop for success in football can also be used in off-the-field settings.
- **Life-skills education is a never-ending process and must be continually emphasized through one's coaching:** Player life-skills development is a never-ending process that is emphasized daily in one's coaching. It is not just a slogan you tell parents at the start of the season. Nor is it something you address with your team only when a problem arises. You teach life skills everyday through your actions, the interactions you have with others, what you say, and what values you espouse and reinforce in your players.

Keeping these key points in mind, we will now turn our attention to strategies that can be used to develop life skills in your players.

Strategies for Coaching Player Life Skills

There are a number of strategies you can use to foster the development of life skills in your players. These include:

- **Identifying the specific life skills you want to develop:** As indicated in the key points previously discussed, there are a great deal of player life skills that can be developed through football. However, you cannot teach them all. Take a few minutes to review your responses to Exercise I (pages 298-300). Look at those responses in light of what you have read so far in this chapter. Identify the three most important life skills you plan to develop in your players, and write them in the space provided on page 299.
- **Modeling appropriate attitudes and behaviors:** Your actions speak much louder than your words. Hence, it is critical that you practice what you preach and model those life skills that you want to develop in your players. For instance, a coach who emphasizes hard work to his players should model hard work. If not, the players will judge his actions as hypocritical. Or, a coach who professes the importance of emotional control should model such control (e.g. maintain control when an official makes a poor call at a critical time in the game). If this modeling of appropriate attitudes and behaviors does not take place, players will copy what they see, not what you say as a coach.
- **Verbal persuasion and discussion of appropriate attitudes and behaviors:** Once specific life skills are identified (e.g. exercising discipline), they need to be defined and conveyed to players through team talks and individual meetings. For example, if a player exhibits poor sportsmanship, you need to talk to him about what good and poor sportsmanship involves. You should also ask him why he feels certain behaviors are right or wrong, what situations lead to the demonstration of good and poor sportsmanship, and alternative ways to handle the situations that led to his demonstration of poor sportsmanship.
- **Reinforcing appropriate actions and attitudes/Penalizing inappropriate actions and attitudes:** Coaches must reinforce appropriate life-skills actions and attitudes and penalize inappropriate



actions and attitudes. For instance, if you discuss the importance of respecting one's opponent and not engaging in trash talk, you should reinforce and recognize those situations in which players act in a dignified manner and refrain from trash talk. Similarly, you should penalize players (e.g. take them out of the game) when you find them engaging in inappropriate trash-talking behaviors. Finally, it is especially important to be consistent in all your reinforcement and disciplinary actions with players. If not, the life-skills lessons you teach will not be conveyed.

• **Facilitating good decision making:** One of the most important aspects of life-skills development for coaches to understand is that an athlete's peer group has a tremendous influence on his development. As a coach, you cannot control whom your athletes have as friends. However, you can have some influence in helping them make good decisions in this area. For example, insist that your team captains and veteran players be good leaders (e.g. exhibit the actions that you want to typify your program) and also look after the younger players. In addition, talk to your players about making good decisions about whom they hang out with at school and the consequences of making poor friendship decisions (e.g. hanging out with troublemakers increases the likelihood of getting in trouble and being ineligible for sport participation). Finally, emphasize that true friends will accept you for who you are, not how wild you can be or for getting into trouble.

• **Teaching emotional control strategies and skills:** Football can be a great training ground for teaching players emotional control. At times, your players will become frustrated from failure, get injured, receive bad calls from officials, and/or play against an opponent who plays dirty. Simply telling players not to lose control in these situations is not enough. You must teach players strategies for handling those situations. In such situations, teach your players to respond using the STAR approach to emotional control. Specifically, the four steps of the STAR approach are:

- S**—Stop
- T**—Think
- A**—Anticipate
- R**—Respond

S stands for **STOP** and take a deep breath. Too often, young people physically lash out or say the first thought that pops into their heads when frustrated. Instruct your players to take a deep breath and think "stop" for a moment when they get upset.

T stands for **THINK** of all your choices. For example, after a perceived bad call by an official, a player can mouth off to the official or say nothing. In response to a cheap shot from an opponent, he can talk trash, lash out, take a swing at him, or ask the referee to watch his opponent. The worst thing to do in an emotionally charged situation is to act before one thinks. Players need to learn this!

A stands for **ANTICIPATE** the consequences of each choice. When a player anticipates, he looks ahead. Explain to him that a consequence is what happens as a result of something else and that a consequence can be good or bad. For example, if he makes a choice to manage his emotions, he will remain in the game. However, if he loses control and mouths off to the official or hits an opponent, he will be penalized and most likely removed from the game.

R stands for **RESPOND** with the best choice. What makes something the best choice? We suggest that the best choice is the one that helps the player get closer to his overall goal (e.g. win the game, increase his playing time, play at a higher level).

Coaching Player Life Skills on the Run

Although it is best to have a preplanned approach to life-skills development (one in which you identify the particular life skills that you would like your players to develop, you model these behaviors, you discuss them with the players, and you reinforce them), this is not always possible. Much of your coaching will occur on the run.



when you react to various teaching moments that arise throughout the season. How you react to these situations will have a profound effect on your players.

Exercise II on pages 300-301 contains seven coaching life-skills situations that youth and high school coaches have had to face during their seasons. Read these (note: in your clinic, you will do this as a small-group exercise) and select one or two that are most relevant to your coaching situation. Then, indicate how you would respond in each of these situations.

With these responses in hand, we will take a look at some of the ways that experienced coaches have handled these situations and taught player life skills on the run. Remember that there is no single way to handle each situation. However, effective responses incorporate many of the key points and general principles of player life-skills development that have already been discussed in this section. Finally, be sure to read through the suggested responses to all seven situations—not just the one or two you chose for the exercise. While some of these scenarios may be more relevant to you, all are likely to arise at some point in your coaching career.

- **Situation 1—Learning Self-Control:** Kevin is a freshman tight end playing his first year of high school football. In his fourth game, Kevin encounters his first dirty opponent, a boy who takes cheap shots by hitting under the facemask, holding, elbowing after the whistle, and constantly engaging in trash talk. Being a typical 15-year-old, Kevin responds by trash talking back to his opponent. In the process, he becomes distracted and plays under his capabilities. Indicate how you would coach Kevin in this situation and what he could learn from it.

In this scenario, first explain to Kevin how to handle the situation physically. That is, how to protect himself from his opponent hitting under the face mask. For instance, you could instruct him about how to disguise his blocks, at times blocking high and other times low. That way, his opponent cannot anticipate his actions. At the same time, ask the officials to pay closer attention to what is happening.

Second, explain to Kevin that his opponent is trying to distract him by engaging him in trash talk. Moreover, his opponent will be successful in this if Kevin responds to his opponent's trash talk. Emphasize that by refraining from the trash talk game, Kevin will probably frustrate his opponent.

Finally, tell Kevin that trash talking, while popular with some high status athletes today, is a childish response and that actions speak louder than words—just play football. Tell him that you do not think trash talking is a classy way to act and will not tolerate it!

- **Situation 2—Making Good Decisions:** Jim is a linebacker on your middle school team. He is an average student who must work to do well in school and loves football. Jim comes from a tough neighborhood and a single-parent home. His mother mentions to you that he is starting to hang out with some gang members who are frequently in trouble at school and with the law. How will you handle the situation and get Jim to stay on the right track?

This is a difficult situation, but one that coaches frequently face. To handle this, it would be best to hold a short team meeting to talk to all the players about making good friendship choices. Give some examples of former players who made poor choices, hung around with gang members, got into trouble, and could no longer play football. Then give an example of a player who elected not to hang out with gang members and went on to play football at high school and college. Emphasize the importance of being a smart football player, both on and off the field, and that making good choices is part of being a smart player.

After a different practice, hold an informal discussion with Jim and ask how things are going. Do not necessarily mention poor choices (unless he does), but convey to him that you are glad he is on the team. By doing so, you will let him know that you care about him as an individual. If appropriate, indicate that you would like his help



with some of the first-year players. This will give him a leadership role and tie him more closely to the team.

Finally, check with Jim's mother to see how things are going. If he continues to hang out with the wrong group, pull him aside and discuss good choices and the consequences of those choices.

- **Situation 3—Learning Not to Steal:** After practice, Alex tells you that his new shorts and T-shirt were stolen from his locker. This is not the first report of things being stolen from lockers, and you are sure that the thieves are on the team. Unfortunately, you do not know who the specific thief is. Indicate how you will handle this situation.

Hold a team meeting and discuss your concerns about stealing. Ask the players how they would feel if someone stole their belongings. In addition, emphasize how important it is to overall success that they play as a tight, cohesive team, and that this will not be possible if one cannot trust his teammates. Finally, emphasize that stealing is illegal and that if the perpetrators are caught, they will be penalized.

- **Situation 4—Respecting Differences Among Players:** You just took a new position as a high school junior varsity football coach. It does not take long for you to discover that there is racial tension among the African American, white, and Latino players on the team. In fact, you start to see it on the field. Your team has the potential to do well this season, but only if they play together as a team. Indicate what you will do to handle this situation to facilitate the players getting along well and respecting their differences.

Begin by discussing the importance of playing together as a team. Indicate that the only way to reach the team's full potential is to maximize everyone's talent. Then indicate that this is not always happening because some of the players seem more concerned with subgroups than with the entire team.

Emphasize that it is important to take pride in one's cultural background and ethnicity and be proud of who they are. At the same time, they must appreciate people of different backgrounds. Moreover, make it very clear that while you appreciate differences among people, you judge them on how they act, their behavior on and off the field, and their attitudes toward their teammates and others with whom they interact. You do not treat players differently based on their race, gender, economic status, or where they live.

Last, make it clear that you will not tolerate racial prejudice of any kind, and those who act in a prejudicial way will be disciplined. Also, reinforce appropriate behaviors.

Note: If you are fortunate enough to have a coaching staff with coaches of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, have the coaches present the above information and discuss how they respect their differences while working together as a coaching unit. Also note that a long-term effort is needed to resolve this problem.

- **Situation 5—Persistence in School Achievement:** You are excited because your football team has a chance to contend for the conference title for the first time in a number of years. However, while your players love football, many of them show little interest in their schoolwork. In fact, last year, your chances for a good season ended when three starters became academically ineligible. More important, if many of these boys drop out of school, their futures are doomed. Several others could get the opportunity to go to college and play football if they stayed on top of their schoolwork. Devise a plan for helping your players combat their academic disinterest and stay on top of their schoolwork.

From the first day of practice, emphasize the importance of schoolwork and the possibility of being declared ineligible if their grades are not up to par. Take the time to have the players set some goals in this area (The Power 4W success system discussed in the next chapter is a great method for setting goals).



Hold a brief team meeting every week to check in with the players' academic progress. You might also consider holding a study hall period during school hours several days per week. We also recommend sending a letter to all of the teachers in school indicating that you want to monitor your athletes' academic progress by getting academic progress reports every two weeks. However, be sure to make it clear to the other teachers that you are not asking for any special grading treatment for your players. Finally, it is important for you to show interest in their academic development.

- **Situation 6—Learning Nonviolent Responses:** AJ is a good running back and one of your best players. He always gives you 100% effort and just loves to compete and win. However, he often takes his competitive spirit too far and gives cheap shots, late hits, and constantly engages in trash talk. Last season, he even got into a fight at school when several other students challenged him in the cafeteria. In the first quarter against Central High, your school rival, AJ got tackled hard as he went out of bounds. However, no illegal hit occurred. Subsequently, he threw a punch and received a 15-yard penalty. How will you handle AJ's situation?

Hold an individual meeting with AJ and let him know how much you appreciate his desire to win and overall competitiveness. Indicate that his competitive spirit does him and the team little good if he is sitting on the bench or the team receives a penalty. The key is for him to maintain his competitive spirit while learning to control his emotions. It is also important to mention that, while some high level players engage in trash talk and taunting because they think it is cool, you do not think it is a classy way to act.

This would be a good time to teach the STAR technique for emotional control that was previously discussed in this section. Also, make it clear that if he talks trash in a game, he will receive a warning for the first offense, be taken out of the game for a series after a second offense, and taken out for the whole game after a third offense. Any punches thrown will result in removal from the game. Moreover, losing his temper and fighting in school will lead to an automatic suspension from school and football.

Conclusion

NFL Hall of Fame lineman and high school football coach Anthony Muñoz said, "Quite honestly, the bottom line is you have to grow people," when summarizing his belief that a coach who can relate to kids is able to teach life-skills lessons. Coach Muñoz is not alone in this belief, as many of the most successful football players and coaches in America feel the same way. This program is based on a similar belief, but takes it one step further. That is, you, as a youth or high school coach, have a responsibility to develop winners off the field as well as on the gridiron. Hence, one of your most important roles is to serve as a life-skills mentor to your players. This means that you must recognize and accept the important role you play in player life-skills development, learn basic strategies for teaching life skills to your players, and devise your own coaching strategies for solving common life-skills dilemmas faced by today's youth. Finally, it is important to note that developing player life skills does not mean that your team will be unsuccessful on the field. In fact, players who develop such life skills as discipline, the ability to set and achieve goals, hard work ethic, the ability to communicate, the ability to work together as a team, and the ability to deal with adversity, usually make the most successful competitors. Players do not obtain life skills from merely taking part in your program. They must be taught these valuable lessons—from you, their coach!

Notes

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Coaching Life Skills on the Run Exercises

I. MY ROLE IN PLAYER LIFE-SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

KEY POINT: *Life skills* are those mental, emotional, and social attributes, characteristics, and behaviors that athletes develop or refine through their football participation. These life skills can be used to help players not only function effectively on the football field, but also in other aspects of their lives. Teamwork, leadership, the ability to set and achieve goals, discipline, emotional control, and good moral values are just some of the life skills that great players report developed in their football experiences and have helped them in their personal lives, socially, and in business.

Directions. Working on your own, answer the following life-skill development questions:

What life skills did you learn as a player through the game of football?

What did your former coaches do that influenced your life-skills development?

Think of your own team. Which life skills and attributes do you think your players need to develop? Why?

What can you do as a coach to influence your players' life-skills development?



KEY POINTS:

- (1) Coaches play a critical role in the development of players on and off the field.
- (2) A number of life skills can be learned through football. These include, but are not limited to, communication skills, leadership skills, the ability to set goals, the ability to exercise discipline, the breakdown of racial prejudice, and the ability to overcome adversity.
- (3) Although it is a great game, football alone does not develop these life skills. Players learn life skills from interacting with significant individuals in their lives. Coaches are some of the most important people in youth and high school players’ lives and, because of this, play a critical role in the development of their life skills.
- (4) The best approach for teaching life skills is for coaches to identify particular life skills they want to develop in their players and then to use specific strategies to develop or coach these life skills.
- (5) Just because an attribute is developed in the football situation (e.g. hard work ethic) does not mean it will automatically transfer to aspects of a player’s life outside of football (e.g. working hard in school). Players must be taught how to transfer life skills from football to other aspects of their lives.
- (6) Life-skills development is a never-ending process and must be continually emphasized through coaching.

KEY POINTS RELATIVE TO LIFE-SKILLS STRATEGIES:

There are a number of strategies coaches can use to teach the development of life skills in their players. These include:

• Identifying the specific life skills they want to develop.

5. List the three most important life skills you will teach and emphasize with your team.

• Modeling appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

- Actions speak much louder than words
- Practice what you preach, and model those life skills that you want to develop in your players

• Verbal persuasion and discussion of appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

- Life skills need to be defined and conveyed to players through team and individual meetings

• Reinforcing appropriate actions and attitudes/Penalizing inappropriate actions and attitudes.

- Reinforce appropriate life-skills actions and attitudes, and penalize inappropriate actions and attitudes
- Be consistent in all of your disciplinary actions with players



• **Facilitating good decision making.**

- Teach your players how to make good decisions
- Insist that your team captains and veteran players be good leaders and look after younger players
- Talk to your players about making good decisions about whom they hang out with at school and the consequences of making poor friendship decisions
- Emphasize that, while it is important to be accepted by your friends, true friends will accept you for who you are, not how wild you can be or for getting into trouble

• **Teaching emotional control strategies and skills.**

- Football can be a great training ground for teaching emotional control
- Simply telling players not to lose control is not enough
- Teach players strategies for controlling their emotions (STAR: Stop, Think, Anticipate Consequences, Respond)

II. COACHING LIFE SKILLS ON THE RUN

Directions. Below are seven coaching situations that youth and high school coaches have had to deal with during recent years. Working in small groups, select a situation that is most relevant to your coaching situation and indicate how you would handle it—virtually coaching life skills on the run.

- **Situation 1—Learning Self-Control:** Kevin is a freshman tight end playing his first year of high school football. In his fourth game, Kevin encounters his first dirty opponent, a boy who takes cheap shots by hitting under the facemask, holding, elbowing after the whistle, and constantly engaging in trash talk. Being a typical 15-year-old, Kevin responds by trash talking back to his opponent. In the process, he becomes distracted and plays under his capabilities. Indicate how you would coach Kevin in this situation and what he could learn from it.
- **Situation 2—Making Good Decisions:** Jim is a linebacker on your middle school team. He is an average student who must work to do well in school and loves football. Jim comes from a tough neighborhood and a single-parent home. His mother mentions to you that he is starting to hang out with some gang members who are frequently in trouble at school and with the law. How will you handle the situation and get Jim to stay on the right track?
- **Situation 3—Learning Not To Steal:** After practice, Alex tells you that his new shorts and T-shirt were stolen from his locker. This is not the first report of things being stolen from lockers, and you are sure that the thieves are on the team. Unfortunately, you do not know who the specific thief is. Indicate how you will handle this situation.
- **Situation 4—Respecting Differences Among Players:** You just took a new position as a high school junior varsity football coach. It does not take long for you to discover that there is racial tension among the African American, white, and Latino players on the team. In fact, you start to see it on the field. Your team has the potential to do well this season, but only if they play together as a team. Indicate what you will do to handle this situation to facilitate the players getting along well and respecting their differences.
- **Situation 5—Persistence in School Achievement:** You are excited because your football team has a chance to contend for the conference title for the first time in a number of years. However, while your players love football, many of them show little interest in their schoolwork. In fact, last year your chances for a good season ended when three starters became academically ineligible. More important, if many of these boys drop out of school, their futures are doomed. Several others could get the opportunity to go to college and play football if they stayed on top of their schoolwork. Devise a plan for helping your players combat their academic disinterest and stay on top of their schoolwork.



Situation 6—Learning Nonviolent Response: AJ is a good running back and one of your best players. He always gives you 100% effort and just loves to compete and win. However, he often takes his competitive spirit too far and gives cheap shots, late hits, and constantly engages in trash talk. Last season, he even got into a fight at school when several other students challenged him in the cafeteria. In the first quarter against Central High, your school rival, AJ got tackled hard as he went out of bounds. However, no illegal hit occurred. Subsequently, he threw a punch and received a 15-yard penalty. How will you handle AJ's situation?

COACHING LIFE SKILLS ON THE RUN RESPONSES



Chapter 2: The Power 4W Success Program

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Chapter Objectives

This chapter has been designed to help you put the NFL/NFF CAP philosophy “Player Power Development: Developing Winners in Football and Life!” into action on a day-to-day basis by teaching you how to implement the Power 4W goal setting success system. Specifically, it has four objectives, which include:

- Describing the Power 4W Success System of coaching;
- Discussing effective goal setting principles and practices to use within the Power 4W Success System;
- Explaining how to use the Power 4W Success System in football;
- Explaining how to use the Power 4W Success System for developing life skills in players.

The Power 4W Success Program

“If you’re going to provide skillful leadership, you must know which way you are going and which path you want the organization to follow. Goals and objectives are the tools that enable you to define the parameters of that path.”

—Brian Billick, Head Coach, Baltimore Ravens

“I have seen teams short on talent win famous victories simply because they were better prepared [and] more focused than their opposition. They had clearly defined goals and consistent work habits. And they weren’t afraid to make the sacrifices required to raise their play to another level.”

—Lou Holtz, Head Coach, University of South Carolina

These quotes illustrate that great coaches, such as Brian Billick and Lou Holtz, recognize the importance of goal setting in football success. Coach Holtz emphasizes that setting goals, developing strategies for achieving goals, and having the determination, discipline, commitment and persistence to work towards them are keys to winning football games.

This chapter is designed to help you work more effectively with your team on goal setting. In it you will learn the most effective ways to use goal setting to help you and your players to achieve success, both on and off the field. This will be accomplished by introducing you to the Power 4W goal setting success system—a method of efficiently and effectively teaching your players goal setting techniques that work.

The Power 4W goal-setting success system has been designed to help you put your coaching philosophy into action on a day-to-day basis. Recall, that in Section II of this Playbook the importance of having a well thought-out coaching philosophy was discussed and you had a chance to develop or further refine your philosophy of coaching. CAP’s philosophy of “Developing Winners in Football and Life” was also emphasized. However, a coaching philosophy does little good if it sits on a shelf or exists merely as a catchy slogan. Coaching philosophies must be put into action and guide day-to-day coaching behaviors and actions. This is what the Power 4W system is all about.



The Power 4W success system is based on the finding that successful people in football and life are positive, optimistic go-getters. They set goals, develop strategies for and work hard to achieve their goals, and see challenges and difficulties as opportunities versus insurmountable obstacles (Snyder, 1994). As the quotes opening this chapter show they are winners who see the cup has half full versus half empty.

The Power 4W system is built around four key components:

- **Wish Power:** Identifying dream goals
- **Want Power:** Setting realistic long- and short-term goals for achieving dreams
- **Way Power:** Developing multiple plans, pathways, and strategies for achieving goals
- **Will Power:** Developing the determination, discipline, and commitment needed to achieve goals and overcome any obstacles blocking goal achievement

Each of these key components is discussed below.

Wish Power

The first component of the program is WISH POWER. Wish power is the ability to dream whether it is winning a championship, earning a college scholarship, or making the first team. Champions achieve success because they are not afraid to dream. Unfortunately, many of today's youth do not dream of a bright future. Hence, the Power 4W system begins by tapping into players' dreams about what could be.

However, as Coach Lou Holtz says:

"Of course, any dream is mere idleness unless you act on it. It takes hard work and dedication to make your dreams real. You must also turn deaf ear toward those naysayers. Never listen to anyone who tells you your dream is impossible."

As illustrated by Coach Holtz, while important, dreams alone are not enough for achieving success in either football or life. For this reason, we turn to the second component of the Power 4W system—**WANT POWER**.

Want Power

Want Power focuses on turning dreams into reality by setting realistic long- and short-term goals. For example, the successful coach helps players turn their dream of winning a championship into a series of tangible long- and short-term goals. This might involve such subgoals as improving strength through an off-season training program, developing a more accurate passing attack, and improving the kicking game.

Way Power

WAY POWER is the third component of the system. Dreams and long-term goals cannot be achieved unless players develop specific plans, pathways, and strategies for achieving them. Thus, if the long-term goal is to develop a more accurate passing attack, a number of strategies such as improving the quarterbacks ability to read defenses by reviewing extra game tapes, having receivers learn to run better routes by attending summer football camps, and having the center practice 20 extra shotgun-to-quarterback snaps daily must be developed.

Will Power

Last but not least is the fourth component of the program—**WILL POWER**. NFL legends Walter Payton, John Elway, and Jerry Rice had the determination, discipline, and commitment necessary to achieve success. As Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach said, "all of us get knocked down, but it's the resiliency that really matters. All of us do well when things are going well, but the thing that distinguishes (great) athletes is the ability to do well in times of great stress, urgency, and pressures." Thus, it is especially important to prepare your players to effectively deal with obstacles that could potentially block goal achievement.



The problem you face as a coach is that many of your players will not have fully developed these four components of success. Hence, one of the most important things you can do is to teach them these skills. This is what the Power 4W system is all about. It is a coaching tool to help you develop winners in football and life!

Goal-Setting Principles and Practices

The Power 4W success system is built on the ability to successfully set and accomplish goals. To maximize the effectiveness of the system, then, an understanding of goal setting principles and practices is invaluable. Fortunately, both research and the experience of great coaches have taught us a great deal about this topic. It has been learned, for example, that setting goals is effective because goals: **direct attention** to important elements of the skill being performed, **mobilize** performer **efforts**, **prolong** performer **persistence**, and **foster** the **development** of **new learning strategies** (Gould & Weinberg, 1999).

Goals also affect a player's psychological state, including such factors as confidence level, anxiety, and satisfaction. For this reason it is important to understand how, when, and why goal-setting works or fails. We will give you some guidelines to help you to plan, implement, and evaluate your goal-setting efforts in order to make them more effective.

Effective Goal-Setting Principles

There are a number of basic goal-setting principles that are invaluable in helping you work with your players (Gould, 2001; Weinberg & Gould, 1999). These include:

- Set specific goals
- Set moderately difficult but realistic goals
- Set positive goals as opposed to negative goals
- Set long- and short-term goals
- Set performance and process, as well as outcome goals
- Set practice and competition goals
- Record goals
- Develop goal-achievement strategies
- Consider the participant's personality and motivation
- Foster athlete goal commitment
- Provide goal support
- Provide evaluation of and feedback about goals

Lets take a closer look at each of these principles.

Set specific goals. Specific goals are more effective than general "do your best" goals or having no goals at all. However, many coaches still simply tell their athletes to do their best. Goals should be stated in very specific, observable, and concrete terms. For example, a goal to improve your football game is too vague. A better goal would be to develop a more accurate passing attack by improving the quarterback's ability to read defenses by reviewing extra game tapes, or having receivers learn to run better routes by attending summer football camps.

Set moderately difficult but realistic goals. Effective goals are difficult enough to challenge a player's talent and skill levels, yet realistic enough to achieve. Goals that require little or no effort have little value. Consequently, athletes may lose interest in a goal-setting program because they are not being pushed to their limits. Conversely, goals that are unrealistically difficult to achieve may lead to frustration, decreased confidence, and performance decrements. The key is to find a balance between goal challenge and goal achievability. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task and will require your supervision. You as a coach must know the capabilities and commitment of your players. And remember, when you are unsure of how difficult to set goals, it is better to err on the side of setting goals that can be more easily achieved by your players, and then after some initial success set more challenging goals.

Set long- and short-term goals. In football, as in most endeavors, major changes in behavior and skill development do not happen overnight. Therefore, players and coaches should set long- and short-term goals. An effective way to teach the setting of long- and short-term goals is to think of a staircase. At the top of the staircase is the long-term goal for the season or dream goal, at the bottom step is the present level of player ability, and finally, a sequence of progressively linked, short-term goals connect the bottom of the stairs to the top. It is crucial to develop a progression of short-term goals that systematically and logically lead to a long-term or dream goal.

Set performance and process, as well as outcome goals. Frequently, football players list goals based on outcome such as winning games and championships, or beating a conference rival. Ironically, the best way to win championships or beat a conference rival is to avoid focusing undue attention on the outcome and instead focusing more attention on what are called performance or process goals. That is, goals that focus on improvements relative to a player's own past performance or technical aspects of the game (e.g., improve the rating of my blocks from the game video from 80 to 85%, focusing on wrapping up when tackling, maintaining my spacing on kickoff coverage). An overemphasis on outcome oriented goals may create competition anxiety resulting in the athlete spending undue time worrying instead of focusing on playing in the moment. For example, as with most teams, you are probably working with a football team that has set a goal to win the league championship. Consequently, you should emphasize relevant performance goals of improving such as increasing the amount of yards per carry of your running backs, decreasing the yards per carry against your rush defense, or increasing the number of passes defended. To then achieve those performance goals you should emphasize process goals, such as improving the drive blocking of your offensive linemen, decreasing the number of missed tackles by practicing "gang tackling," and improving the footwork of your defensive backfield.

Set practice and competition goals. When developing a goal setting program, it is important that you have your athletes set practice and competition goals. Most players, however, will focus on competition goals and not set practice goals. Often, the results are practices where athletes "go through the motions" or are bored. The importance of setting practice goals should be apparent as you spend more time practicing than playing games, and as your team spends a tremendous number of hours on skill development. To gain a competitive edge and maintain motivation throughout the season, players should set practice goals focusing on improvement. Just think how much a young wide receiver would improve if he set a goal and made a commitment to run each one of his patterns five times prior to every practice.

Record goals. The old adage "Out of sight, out of mind" has its use in goal-setting. It is recommended that once goals are set and strategies identified, they should be recorded and placed where they can be easily seen. There are several ways you and your players can record goals (e.g. see attached Football Goal Form, "No Goals, No Glory" on pages 316-317). The more simple and practical the method of recording, the more useful it is. For example, before each practice every player might write a practice goal on a piece of athletic tape and then tape that piece of tape on one of his pads. At the end of practice players could indicate whether they achieved their goal and turn their piece of tape into the coach. Charts posted in the locker room, cards with goals written on them taped in lockers, and posters with team goals listed are other good ways to record goals.

Develop goal-achievement strategies. Goal achievement strategies, or action plans, are a necessary component of any goal setting program to produce goal-directed behavior. Goals that lack achievement strategies are analogous to driving a car in a strange city without consulting a map. Strategies must accompany goals that you or your players set. For goal achievement strategies to be effective, they should be specific and indicate how they are to be achieved, and clearly state how often they are to be performed. For example, to improve tackling, a linebacker may set a goal to stay after practice each day and perform tackling drills for 10 minutes. Additionally, players should build flexibility in their goal-achievement strategies. If a player sets a goal to workout three times per week for 10 minutes following practice, then repeatedly has to skip a workout because his mother needs to pick him up, the goal should be altered to twice per week at 15 minutes per workout.



Consider the participant's personality and motivation. When working with individual players to set and achieve goals, personalities must be considered. A player's level of motivation will influence the type of goals he will adopt and how well the goal setting process functions. High achieving go-getters will readily seek out and adopt challenging but realistic goals. In contrast, low achievers will avoid challenging goals and seek to adopt either very easy or very difficult goals. Understanding and recognizing these personality differences will help you know what to expect from your players. High achievers should respond well to your goal-setting efforts. For low achievers and outcome-oriented players, you will need to repeatedly emphasize the importance of setting realistic performance and process goals.

Foster player goal commitment. Players will rarely achieve their goals without commitment. As a coach, you should promote goal commitment by praising and encouraging progress and providing consistent feedback. Moreover, allow your players to set their own goals while you monitor them. You should avoid setting goals, indirectly or directly, for your players. To foster goal commitment make your players a part of the goal setting process by soliciting their input and letting them set individual goals.

Provide goal support. Support or lack of support from significant others can greatly influence the effectiveness of your goal setting efforts. For example, a football coach whose team is competing for the district championship may have his players set a series of performance goals. Unknowingly, parents, teachers, and friends can undermine your efforts by constantly talking about winning the championship with your players. Education of significant others about the importance of performance and process goals can be accomplished by sending letters to parents, having educational meetings, and providing stories from your experience. Acquire the support from parents, teachers, and friends to make goal setting more effective.

Provide evaluation of and feedback about goals. Goal evaluation and feedback relative to goal attainment are essential parts of an effective goal setting program. Unfortunately, coaches often fail to evaluate goal attainment and do not consistently provide feedback about a player's progress. To remedy this problem, initiate goal evaluation strategies immediately at the beginning of the goal setting process, and continually evaluate them throughout the season. Evaluation can take many forms, such as game practice and competition statistics, or a coach giving player weekly report cards that rate practice concentration. The key is to be consistent. Too often, coaches and players spend considerable time defining and setting goals only to have their work wasted because they don't follow through with essential evaluation and feedback.

Set positive goals as opposed to negative goals. It has been suggested that, when ever possible, goals should be stated positively. That is, identify behaviors to be exhibited as opposed to behaviors that should not be exhibited. For example, a goal of not throwing interceptions can be better stated by setting a goal to throw to receivers that are in single coverage. This positive goal setting technique helps athletes focus on success instead of failure.

Smart Goals

According to Smith (1994) a good tip for helping you and your players remember characteristics of effective goals is to think of the word SMART, and remember the following principles:

- **Specific:** goals should indicate precisely what is to be done.
- **Measurable:** make sure you can quantify your goal.
- **Action-oriented:** goals should indicate something that needs to be done.
- **Realistic:** make sure the goal can be achieved given various constraints.
- **Timely:** make sure the goal can be achieved in a reasonable time.

Common Problems in Goal Setting

Goal setting is not a difficult psychological technique to understand. The breakdown often occurs in implementing goal setting in an effective manner, given the many demands of coaching. Reasons experts in goal setting



(Weinberg & Gould, 1999) have identified for why goal setting programs often fail will be discussed. This will help you anticipate and avoid these common pitfalls. These problems include:

- Failing to set specific goals
- Setting too many goals too soon
- Failing to adjust goals
- Failing to set performance and process goals
- Not providing follow-up and evaluation
- Not identifying and reinforcing specific goal achievement strategies

Failing to Set Specific Goals

One of the most common problems in goal settings is failing to set specific goals. For example, a general goal of “improving quarterback throwing accuracy” might be the stated goal, instead of a more specific goal of “improving throwing accuracy from 45 to 55 percent by spending 10 additional minutes each practice throwing to receivers running their routes.” For this reason it is important to monitor initial goals and give feedback about their specificity. More specific goals inform players of what needs to be done to improve and what he or she should be concentrating on when practicing in this area.

Setting Too Many Goals Too Soon

When getting started, players often make the mistake of setting too many goals. They want to improve every part of their game immediately. When players set too many goals it becomes virtually impossible for you (coach) to monitor, track, and provide individualized feedback across time. For this reason, goals are often abandoned. You can prevent this from happening at the beginning of your goal setting program. Initially, have your players focus on only one or two goals. Later, when you and your players develop goal setting implementation skills a larger number of goals can be set. The emphasis on working on only one goal at a time certainly does not imply that players will not be trying to improve in many areas. It only implies that one particular goal will have a special focus or priority for some designated time (e.g, a week, two weeks, first half of the season). Emphasizing one goal makes it easier for you to track goals and encourage progress and efforts toward goal achievement.

Failing to Adjust Goals

Sometimes after an injury or illness there is the need to adjust goals downward. Adjusting goals, especially lowering them, once they have been set may be difficult (e.g. failing to achieve your goal of winning the conference with three or four weeks before the final game). To alleviate this situation from the beginning of the goal setting program, discuss and emphasize the need to adjust goals upward and downward. This way, players can view adjustments as a normal part of the process.

Failing to Set Performance and Process Goals

A common problem that many football players have with goal setting is setting only outcome goals. Players fail to set performance and process goals which stunts their growth. Throughout the season emphasize to your players that they should be setting performance and process goals. Be careful not to unconsciously stress outcome goals. Instead, evaluate your player’s performance goals as thoroughly after a win as after a loss. Following victory and defeat, take a moment during your post-game talk to the team to emphasize strengths and weaknesses. It is especially important to focus on strengths following a crushing defeat. Finally, you may also want to spend more time on weaknesses when your team is easily defeating the competition and are lacking motivation.

Not Providing Follow-up and Evaluation

A frequent problem coaches commit is setting goals at the start of the season and then not effectively using



them throughout the season or year. Failure to follow up and evaluate goal setting is a major factor when goal setting programs are ineffective. You should develop a follow-up and evaluation plan for goals and examine it critically for ease and efficiency. Implementation of your evaluation plan should be simple and integrated into daily practice routines. Always remember that goal setting without follow-up and evaluation is simply a waste of time and effort. As a coach you will need to consistently ask your players how they are progressing relative to the specific goals they have set. In addition, remind them to practice the strategies they have outlined to achieve their goals or, better yet, schedule time during training for practicing strategies designed to lead to the achievement of individual goals. Finally, provide specific feedback relative to goal attainment. The key is to focus on one or two goals, reinforce goal progress, and assist players in evaluating their goals.

Not Identifying and Reinforcing Specific Goal Achievement Strategies

A fatal flaw often characterizing ineffective goal setting efforts is a failure to identify and reinforce specific goal achievement strategies. For instance, a coach and a player will set a goal, but will not discuss how the player should go about accomplishing that goal. It is absolutely necessary that achievement strategies (or Way Power) are developed. Moreover, you as a coach should consistently remind the player to do so and provide reinforcement when the player is observed working independently toward achieving their goals.

Implementing The Power 4W System

Now that we have a general understanding of the Power 4W success system and effective goal-setting principles, let's work through several examples. First, let's look at on-the-field applications. Then, we will turn our attention to using the Power 4W system to develop off-the-field life skills.

On-the Field Applications

Turning to page 311 of this chapter, you will find a Power 4W success story for Dan, a 16-year old aspiring high school center hoping to earn a starting spot on his high school team. Read Dan's story and respond to the four questions that follow (pages 311-312). Then check your answers with the ones that appear on page 313.

Finally, the beauty of the Power 4W system is its adaptability to any part of the game, and equally important transferability to non-football life settings. The following examples demonstrate the range of ways the system can be used in football.

Football Skills Example

Wish: To be the best blocking back on the team.

Want: Improve pass protection and downfield blocking.

Ways: Get extra blocking instruction from coach. Focus on keeping feet moving at all times.

Will: Get coach to rate my blocks each week.

Conditioning Example

Wish: To be a great defensive tackle.

Want: To improve strength and power.

Ways: Go on a strict weight lifting program in summer: 5 days per week (1 hour per day); do plyometrics 3 days per week.

Will: Train with several teammates to increase motivation.

Injury Rehabilitation Example

Wish: To play during my senior year.

Want: To recover from ACL injury by increasing strength, range of motion, and endurance.

Ways: Go to rehabilitation everyday. Work out and exercise everyday.

Will: Have coach check my progress. Visualize how running onto the field for a big game will feel.



These examples show a number of varied ways coaches can use the Power 4W success system when working with their players. With these examples in mind, apply it to your specific coaching situation. Turn to pages 313-314 and complete the Power 4W worksheet thinking of a particular player on your team. First, identify his wish or dream. Then, formulate specific wants or goals that lead to that dream. After you identify these specific wants, formulate ways or plans for achieving them. Finally, address how you will work with your player relative to the will power, determination, and commitment needed to achieve his specified goals.

Off-the-Field Applications

Not only is the Power 4W success system a good way to put your coaching philosophy into action and help your players accomplish their football goals it is also an extremely useful for developing life skills in your players. In fact, we recommend first using it to help your players become successful on the field and then use the same Power 4W principles to achieve success off the field. Thus, transferring what was learned about achieving success on the field to other aspects of their life.

Consider the case of Bruce. Bruce wants to play football in college, but needs to do better academically. What he needs to realize is that he can apply the same Power 4W system that helped him become a more proficient blocker to his goal of improving academically.

With the help of his coach, Bruce defines his dream or WISH as being admitted to the college of his choice. His WANTS or intermediate goals leading to his dream include earning a "B" in English and increasing his SAT verbal score by 100 points. The WAYS of achieving his goals include doing all his homework on time, studying English three times per week for 20 minutes (in addition to his homework assignments), and learning one new vocabulary word each day. Finally, Bruce will work on his WILL power by placing the *Sports Illustrated* fall football preview cover on the mirror in his room to remind him to study. He will also ask Mrs. Clark, his English teacher, to quiz him on the new vocabulary word he learned each day.

This is just one example of how the Power 4W program can be used for positive youth development off the field. You could also use it to help a player work on emotional control, become more dependable, or learn to use more appropriate language. Please complete Exercise III on pages 314-315 (Using the Power 4W Success Coaching System to Transfer Player Life Skills Off The Field). Think of a player on your team who has an off-the-field issue he needs to improve upon—that issue could be academic, social, or behavioral. When completed, make a commitment to carry out this plan with this player.

Conclusion

The Power 4W system has been presented as an easy and efficient method for implementing goal setting with your players. Following the format of having players think about the 4Ws, Wish, Want, Way and Will Power, will help improve their motivation, focus, and confidence. Another technique you and your athletes should remember is thinking about the word SMART (Smith, 1994) when setting goals. Also, remember the effective goal setting principles: specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and timely.

As a coach remember that you must be willing to use the goal setting system throughout the entire season – even when you become busy with other responsibilities. In essence, just as you ask your player to make a "commitment" to football, as a coach you must make an equal commitment to goal setting.

Finally, players who develop such life skills as discipline, the ability to set and achieve goals, hard work ethic, the ability to communicate, the ability to work together as a team, and the ability to deal with adversity, usually make the most successful competitors. So use the Power 4W system to not only help your players develop football skills, but life skills as well. They won't obtain life skills from merely taking part in your program. They must be taught these valuable lessons—from you, their coach!



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Author Notes

The Power 4W system is based on Snyder's (1994) will power and way power component model of developing hope through goal setting.

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The Power 4W Success System Exercises

I. THE POWER 4W SUCCESS SYSTEM

Directions. Read the Power 4W Success Story below and then respond to the four questions that follow.

Dan is 16 years old and will be starting his junior year of high school. He is trying to earn a starting spot at center on his high school varsity football team.

While Dan started at center for the JV team last season, he is competing with two other players (Jerry and Bill), who are slightly bigger, faster, and stronger. Dan really wants to play and dreams of earning the starting spot, but needs to figure out a way to play better than his two rivals.

Dan talks to his baseball coach, Ted Kerley, about the situation. Coach Kerley indicates that while Jerry and Bill might be a little bigger, faster, and stronger than Dan, the differences are not so great that Dan cannot beat them out for the starting spot. Talking the situation over, Dan and Coach Kerley concluded that in order for Dan to start he, will need to get stronger, play intelligently, get in great shape, and develop a tenacious never-give-up attitude on every play whether in practice, scrimmages, or games.

After thinking about the talk he had with Coach Kerley, Dan worked on the following ways to achieve his goal.

- Over the summer Dan lifted weights 4 days per week to increase his strength.
- He also ran 3 miles per day to build an endurance base.
- In the fall, as soon as he received his playbook, he began studying his blocking assignments as well as the assignments of the other linemen to minimize mental mistakes.
- Dan spent extra time snapping the ball to both quarterbacks in an effort to prevent any turnovers when he gets his chance to play.
- Dan learned how to be a very tricky blocker, especially when up against much bigger and stronger players. He would screen them and hold them up as they pursued the ball. Most importantly, he would never stop pursuing his assignment - staying on his man all the way and picking up secondary assignments whenever possible.

Dan worked very hard from the first practice until the last game of the season. Sometimes, he got beat in practice drills, made mistakes, and was devastated when he got called for a clip he did not think he committed. However, he developed a reputation for never giving up on a block, playing intelligently, and making few mental mistakes. His big break came in an early-season scrimmage where, after executing his primary blocking assignment, he continued down field and threw a block on a safety, which in turn took out four pursuing defensive players. Coach Dewey, the line coach, was ecstatic about the block and from then on, Dan had secured his place as the starting center. He started every game and ended up earning an all-conference honorable mention. Dan was also voted team captain in his senior year.

1. What was Dan’s **Wish** for the season? What was his dream?



2. . What was Dan's **Want Power**? What did he want to accomplish during the season? What were his goals for achieving his dream?

3. What were Dan's **Way Power** strategies? In other words, what were his strategies for achieving his goals?

4. What was Dan's **Will Power** commitment? How did he overcome obstacles that could block the achievement of his goals?

Use the following space to take notes.



Power 4W Success Story Exercise Worksheet Answer Key

1. What was Dan’s **Wish** for the season? What was his dream?

- *To earn a starting spot on his high school team.*
-

2. What was Dan’s **Want Power**? What did he want to accomplish during the season? What were his goals for achieving his dream?

- *He will need to be: (a) physically stronger, (b) play intelligently, (c) get in great shape, and (d) develop a tenacious, never-give-up attitude on every play.*
-

3. What were Dan’s **Way Power** strategies? In other words, what were his strategies for achieving his goals?

- *Over the summer, Dan lifted weights 4 days per week to increase his strength.*
 - *Dan ran 3 miles per day to build an endurance base.*
 - *Dan began studying his playbook and his and other linemen’s blocking assignments right away in an effort to minimize mental mistakes.*
 - *Dan spent extra time snapping the ball to both quarterbacks in on effort to prevent turnovers.*
 - *Dan learned to be a tricky blocker and would never stop pursuing his assignment—staying on his man all the way and picking up secondary assignments whenever possible.*
-

4. What was Dan’s **Will Power** commitment? How did he overcome obstacles that could block the achievement of his goals?

- *Dan worked very hard from the first practice until the last game of the season.*
 - * *He kept up his efforts even when he failed.*
-

II. POWER 4W SUCCESS SYSTEM ON-THE-FIELD WORKSHEET

Directions. Identify a player on your team and complete the following Power 4W steps to help him improve his football skills.

Player Name: _____

1. What is your player’s **Wish** for the season? What is his dream?



2. What is your player's **Want Power**? What does he want to accomplish during the season? What are his goals for achieving his dream?

3. What **Way Power** strategies will you identify to help him achieve his goals?

4. What is your player's level of **Will Power** commitment? How will he overcome obstacles that could block the achievement of his goals?

III. USING THE POWER 4W SUCCESS COACHING SYSTEM TO TRANSFER PLAYER LIFE SKILLS OFF THE FIELD

Directions. Earlier in this chapter you learned how to use the Power 4W system to help develop football skills with your players. The beauty of this system is that it can also be used to develop off-the-field life skills in your players. In this exercise, think of a specific player on your team who needs to develop a life skill off the field (e.g. improve school grades in a particular course, stay out of trouble in school, learn to be more independent). Complete the following four questions.

Name of Player:

1. What is his **Wish** relative to developing a particular life skill? What is his dream?



2. What is his **Want Power**? What does he want to accomplish? What are his goals for achieving this dream?

3. What are his **Way Power** strategies? In other words, what are his strategies for achieving these goals?

4. What is his **Will Power** or commitment? What obstacles will he face and how will he overcome obstacles that could block the achievement of his goals?



FOOTBALL GOAL SETTING PLAYER WORKSHEET SAMPLE

Football coaches have excessive time demands placed upon them. They do not have the time to complete additional complicated forms and track numerous goals for each team member. Below is an example of a relatively simple goal form that you can use with your players. Note, page 317 contains a blank copy of this form so you can duplicate it.

Football Goal Form



“No Goals, No Glory”

Name: Larry/Center **Date:** 9-17-02

Team: Golden Knights **Goal Target Date** (10 - 10 - 2002)

My Goal Is: Improve the Speed and Accuracy of snaps to the punter (deliver the ball with less arc, have all snaps hit the punter in the hand and chest).

I Will Achieve My Goal By:

- (1) Snapping 10 extra punt formation snaps daily;
- (2) Two days a week execute the practice snaps while having a defensive player lining up over me, firing off at the snap, and hitting me immediately.

Effective Goal Checklist

Specific **Hard, But Realistic** **Observable**
 Performance Focused/In My Control **My Commitment**



FOOTBALL GOAL SETTING PLAYER FORM

Football Goal Form



“No Goals, No Glory”

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Team: _____ **Goal Target Date (- -)**

My Goal Is: _____

I Will Achieve My Goal By: _____

Effective Goal Checklist

___ **Specific** ___ **Hard, But Realistic** ___ **Observable**

___ **Performance Focused/In My Control** ___ **My Commitment**



Chapter 3: The Coach as a Mentor of Young People

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Chapter Objectives

One of the most important roles a youth and high school football coach can play is that of a mentor. Mentors of young men are needed more than ever. The Coach as a Mentor chapter of the *Coach's Playbook* is designed to help you be a more effective coach-mentor and has four objectives:

- Recognizing the impact that you as a coach can make as a mentor on player development;
- Presenting characteristics of effective mentors;
- Recognizing the coaching role conflicts you may face when you try to be a mentor;
- Learning strategies for incorporating mentoring into your coaching practices.

The Coach as a Mentor of Young People

"All young people need more constructive contact with adults who can help them guide their talents into useful and satisfying paths."

—In *Forgotten Half* (1995)

"I don't even talk to my mother about things that I talk about with Coach."

—High school athlete, *ESPN* (1994)

Akim is a good athlete who loves football. However, last year he thought about quitting school and the team because he felt dumb and uncomfortable in the classroom. Alarmed by his increased absences and his declining grades, Akim's mother asked for Coach Johnson's help. Coach Johnson talked to Akim and his teachers. He arranged for tutors and personally met with Akim every week. They discussed how succeeding in school is like succeeding in football—you must set goals, practice, and perform when it counts. Akim made it through the year, is doing much better in school, and is looking forward to his final season of playing varsity football. He is especially excited because a junior college has showed interest in him now that he is doing better academically.

Alex was an all-league tackle for Coach Atkins two years ago. So you can imagine Coach Atkins' reaction when he heard about Alex's death in a drive-by, drug-related shooting. What happened to Alex? He did so well when he had football, but as soon as he finished his senior season, he lost interest in school, started hanging with the wrong crowd, and failed to graduate. In fact, that was the last time Coach Atkins heard of him until the news of his tragic death.

As the above stories show, players today have many needs that go beyond the football field, and you as a coach can play an important role in helping fulfill those needs. In fact, when asked about their most rewarding experiences in football, award winning high school football coaches emphasized how they played a role in changing young men's lives for the better. They cited examples of helping their players succeed in the classroom, learning discipline, developing the ability to set goals that transferred beyond the football field, channeling off-the-field aggression, and keeping players out of trouble and off the streets. Many of these coaches, then, clearly confirmed that the most rewarding moment in their highly successful careers was when they received a simple call from a former player thanking them for what they did in that player's life. These coaches recognized that one of the most important roles a youth and high school football coach plays is that of a mentor.



What about you? Turn to pages 324-325 and complete Exercise I. When finished, take a minute to study your responses.

What did you learn? If you are like most coaches, you identified a coach who played an important role as a mentor in your life. He took you under his wing, told you when you made mistakes, celebrated your successes, and served as an important adult model for you to look up to. He helped guide you into manhood.

Mentors have always been important, but today they may be more important than ever. Just think of the problems many youth face today—poverty, single parent homes, and the problems of drug use and violence. One thing is clear, today's players need mentoring. You can fill this important coaching role and have a lasting effect on a young person's life!

What Is Mentoring?

The coaching experiences discussed above overlap with what is called mentoring. The word mentor originated in Greece some 3,000 years ago. For the Ancient Greeks, a mentor was a trusted advisor and tutor who trained future leaders. In modern days, the word mentor became synonymous with advisor, friend, teacher, role model, protector, sponsor, and guide. But one thing has not changed—a mentor is one who has an important influence on the development of young people. And coaches are some of today's most effective mentors.

Coaching Versus Mentoring

You may notice some resemblances between coaching and mentoring. The multiple roles you juggle as a coach are similar to those of a mentor. More often than not, as a coach you have to wear many different hats, such as physical trainer, teacher, and friend. For some athletes, you may also be a father figure while with others you may be a big brother. Of all those different roles, being a mentor is one of the most powerful ones that a coach can and does play. In fact, youth development researchers have shown that having a mentor is the single most important factor in positive youth development.

Usually, mentoring is not designed solely for the purpose of enhancing athletic performance but is for the purpose of enhancing personal growth. Coaching, on the other hand, is often more task specific. Coaching deals with the development of particular skills more instructive in nature. Coaches tend to focus their primary attention on technical skills (e.g. how to block or pass) rather than on general attitudes and behavior. Moreover, mentoring is typically a more long-term, gradual process than coaching.

Some of you might argue, *"Wait a minute! I am a football coach, not a social worker. I am here to teach how to block, pass, tackle, and play this great game."* And you are right. You are first and foremost a football coach. However, because of your connections with young men, you can also serve as an important mentor in their lives. Our aim here is to help you fulfill a dual role, as coach and mentor.

This chapter, then, is designed to recognize what you as a coach can do to enhance your mentoring skills. Important mentoring principles will be discussed as well as possible conflicts between your roles as a coach and a mentor of young people.

The Difference That Makes a Difference—Characteristics of Effective Mentors

Research in the field of youth development has identified a number of characteristics of effective mentors. Some of these are applicable to coaching and are discussed below.

Long-Term Relationship

Effective mentors retain a relationship with kids longer than six months. As a coach (and many times as a teacher in school), you have the ability to stay in contact with your players throughout the year and establish



these long-term bonds Use this opportunity to your advantage. By building and maintaining quality relationships with your players, you will increase their trust and dedication as well as their investment in your program and the game of football.

Patience

Many times patience goes out the door in times of frustration (e.g. during a tough season, a bad referee's call, or a miscue by a player). Showing patience in these trying situations conveys an understanding, in-control, and positive attitude to your players. Additionally, players are more receptive and willing to improve under a patient coach and mentor than an impatient and sometimes hostile one.

Nonjudgmental

As a mentor and a coach, you should exemplify the qualities you are trying to instill in your players. If you judge them or others superficially or falsely, they will do the same. Additionally, a nonjudgmental atmosphere increases the comfort level of all players and maximizes the inclusive environment you are trying to create.

Connection

Yes, you are the coach, and there is a fine line between coach and friend. But, establishing a good rapport with your players expands that comfort, trust, and motivational climate. This in turn will lead to a harder work ethic, increased respect, and increased persistence as they feel a connection to you and don't want to let you or themselves down. At the same time, those fine lines need to be established early and clearly so situations you can't handle don't interfere with your relationship or the team atmosphere. For example, during the kickoff team meeting, you can discuss what you can do to help the player (e.g. listen to player's personal concerns or assign a tutor to help maintain eligibility) and can't do (e.g. cheat or lie to others to keep the player eligible) as a coach. In addition, emphasize those points repeatedly right before the individual meetings with your player.

Resilience

Your players look to you in every game situation as well as a lot of life situations. If, during a game, your body language or verbal language shows defeat, theirs will, too. The ability to convey resilience and perseverance is the best lesson you can model to your players just by bouncing back when things get tough. This also applies in everyday life situations as well. If you, as a coach, mentor, and role model, look beaten by a situation, your kids will display that kind of attitude as well.

The Coach's Dilemma

Coaches have a unique opportunity to make a significant difference by being a caring adult for their players. However, being a caring adult can, at times, conflict with some conventional coaching approaches (e.g. being assertive, pushing the limits of players). Some of you may say, "Sometimes a coach needs to chew the kids out when they make a mistake." It is true that there will be times that you will need to discipline a player. However, coaching research with youth athletes has shown that the positive approach outlined in Section VI, Chapter 3 of this *Playbook* is the most effective approach to use with your players. Whether you chew a player out also depends on the context and your personal coaching style. A coach is a very special type of mentor, and, as a coach, you need to integrate the coaching and mentoring roles.

One way to do this is to do what one outstanding high school coach labeled "attack player performance not personality." That is, be sure to separate your criticisms of performance from comments on personal attributes. Instead of saying, "How can you make that stupid mistake?" say something like, "You need to keep your eye on the ball." Additionally, if you yell at a player on the field, make sure you have extra personal time with him outside of that environment (e.g. locker room) to explain the problem calmly before he goes home.



Clearly, there are certain differences between pleasing your players and putting genuine efforts in youth development. Similarly, there is a fine line between being firm in sticking to the core values and being unable to change already set rules. One youth coach described his approach as tough love. While admitting he was extremely tough on players, he stressed that his actions were always based on unconditional love for his players. No matter how hard or tough he was on them, he always made sure that the players knew that he cared about them as people. The key was that their players' development as people came first.

Road Blocks for Effective Mentoring

Coaches by nature are faced with daily challenges. Similarly, mentors face many of those same challenges. Some challenges associated with being an effective mentor coach are outlined below.

Time

One of the biggest obstacles that a coach faces is time. Many mentoring researchers confirm that time is the single most important asset that effective mentors possess. Coaching is an extremely time consuming profession. You have a million other things to take care of before even thinking about mentoring your player. Prioritize your tasks first, and try to come up with an efficient way to save your time (e.g. utilize resources from the *Program Management* section of this book—Section VII).

Unrealistic Parental Expectations

Parents can be both positive and negative. When parents have unrealistic expectations for their child, it can undermine the player's satisfaction as well as the coach's ability to teach life skills. Educate parents as much as you can before the season starts, and make sure they understand that you will do whatever is best for their child. Furthermore, consult Section VII, Chapter 3, "Effectively Dealing with Parents" for further information on this important topic.

Confidentiality

When a coach starts to establish personal rapport with the players, players will talk about subjects that you feel should not be revealed to other people (e.g. divorcing parents, pregnancy, conflict with other teammates). However, you should be clear about your limits on certain issues. Essentially, when the content of discussion is related to harming themselves or others. In such cases, you should refer your player to the professionals who can properly help the individual. For school coaches it is also important that you understand school and district policies about such issues.

What Can You Do to Be a More Effective Mentor-Coach?

As a mentor-coach you have to work with each player differently. The one principle that applies to every player is that there is no one universal law or principle to guide action in every situation and with every player. So read your players' personal characteristics carefully and apply actions accordingly. Some players need a hard push from the coach, while others need more delicate attention. Sometimes, the same player needs a different approach depending on the situation. Notwithstanding the need to individualize, below are several general guidelines for positive mentoring.

Give Your Players a Sense of Purpose

Explain to your players why they are doing what they are doing. You might introduce bigger purposes of playing (e.g. representing your family, school, or community) to your players other than just playing football. Similarly, great coaches instill a can-do, optimistic attitude in their players by helping them dream big and not be afraid to seek out major challenges. It is also helpful to provide examples of how the skills needed to be successful in



football (e.g. setting goals, communicating with others, dealing with emotions, commitment, and teamwork) relate to life situations outside of football. Our studies of outstanding high school football coaches, for example, have shown they repeatedly relate lessons learned on the football field to other aspects of the players' lives. Coaches would say things such as, "Someday, when you are a working adult, you will need to learn how to get along with others for the good of the team, just like you learned to do this season in football."

Listen to What Players Want to Accomplish

After introducing possible purposes for playing football, ask your players to come up with their own reasons for participation. Ask what they want to accomplish both on and off the field. Chances of success are much better when they make their own choices. Be sure that they are thinking about something that is realistic but challenging.

Provide Possible Pathways for Achieving Their Goals

Thinking and talking about goals is the easy part. Establishing action plans and following through on those plans can be a real struggle. Discuss possible obstacles players might face along the way, and design specific action plans to overcome those obstacles. Better yet, use the Power 4W goal-setting success program discussed in Chapter 2 of this section.

Evaluate Player Progress

Once you and your players develop action plans, allow the players to try those plans out for a while. However, together you and your players have to revisit and evaluate the progress. Be sure to recognize why the original plan did not work out and come up with new alternative pathways to achieve the goals.

Discuss Your Mistakes

Discussing mistakes from your experiences growing up and playing football can be a powerful way to connect with your players. Many role models did not achieve their effectiveness by presenting only perfect success stories. Many mentors share their mistakes with their protégés, which helps these young people learn to associate with their mentor. For example, a coach might explain how he too found it difficult not to be a starter when he played college ball. However, once he worked through the blow to his ego, he refocused his efforts and earned a place on the special teams.

Build in Time Before and After Practice to Be Available

As mentioned earlier, time is essential to be an effective mentor. Build in five-minute discussion times before every practice where you and your players can talk about current issues around school or even society. After the practice, reserve five-minutes for you and your players to talk about issues they are facing. Let your players know that you will be available for them during this specific time. You should also involve your assistants in this process as well.

Spend Time With the Players Off the Field

Most successful coach-mentors repeatedly report that on-the-field coaching is only half of their job. They intentionally create situations in which they can interact with their players off the field. For example, one award-winning high school coach held unity night—a team social function where players and families got together the night before a game for a pregame meal and to socialize. Similarly, another coach took his junior and senior players to talk with younger players from the junior high program. Another coach engaged in community-service projects with his team.



The key point to remember is that you can build tremendous trust by just spending informal time with your players. Use these informal occasions to your advantage. Get to know the players off the field—their likes and dislikes, favorite music, if they have a pet, etc.

Foster Open Lines of Communication/Repeatedly Emphasize You Are There for Your Kids

If your coaching style is somewhat disciplinary, you may need to work extra hard to create the atmosphere in which each player can express how they feel. Repeatedly emphasize your philosophy whenever you can. Specifically, your core values (e.g. every role is important regardless of talent, I am interested in your development as a person not just as a player) need to be spoken and emphasized over time.

Develop Buddy Schemes, Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

One strategy that you can try is to develop a peer-to-peer mentoring system. You can ask your varsity players to mentor JV players (e.g. meet with them once a week and answer any questions they have about practices and the program). Match players based on similar characteristics. This strategy works well because seniors are looked upon with great expectation and respect. Moreover, research shows that the older players who do the mentoring grow as people from being in a leadership position.

Now that we have learned a great deal about being a mentor-coach, let's put our knowledge to use. Turn to page 325 (Exercise II) and work with a partner to identify how you can implement the characteristics of effective coach-mentors in your program. Strive to be as specific as possible in your responses.

Conclusion

Coaches are in a position to be some of the most powerful mentors in society today. Think about it—players love sports and are motivated to play. So use your position and power wisely by not only teaching football skills, but also making a difference in a young person's life. Sure, this will take extra work as both coaching and mentoring need careful planning and painstaking implementations. However, when you blend coaching and mentoring effectively, you will find the true reward of coaching—witnessing your players' personal development and growth as productive young men.

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The Coach as a Mentor of Young People Exercises

I. STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE MENTORING

Directions. In your own experience, both as a player and coach, think of one or two former coaches or teachers who did a great job in helping players develop as people. Pair up with the coach sitting next to you and discuss the following:

- **Step 1:** Share your stories of coaches/teachers who were mentors with your partner.

- **Step 2:** Identify what you have learned from those coaches and teachers—What are the lessons? What are the basic principles they emphasized in coaching young players?

- **Step 3:** Describe specific strategies they use to help young players—What exactly did they do to help their players develop as a person?

- **Step 4:** Now share stories of players that were problems, or just did not connect with you—Describe the situation as complete as possible.

- **Step 5:** Identify the player's problems—What are the factors that may have caused him to behave negatively?

- **Step 6:** Come up with three strategies that you as a coach can use to help this player.



II. BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE COACH-MENTOR

Directions. Listed below are a number of characteristics of effective coach-mentors. Working with a partner, discuss how you could implement these characteristics in your program. List specific ways you could do so, and, where possible, provide examples.

Have a sense of purpose (What would this be for your team and players?):

Listen to what players want to accomplish on and off the field:

Identify pathways for achieving player goals:

Evaluate player goal progress:

Discuss mistakes you made when you were growing up:

Build in time before and after practice to be available as a mentor:

Spend time with players off the field:

Foster open lines of communication/repeatedly emphasize you are there for your players:

Develop Buddy Schemes/Peer-to-Peer Mentoring:



Section X: Program Follow-Up

Congratulations—you have now completed the clinic portion of the NFL/NFF Coaching Academy Program. We at the NFL, the NFL Players Association, and the National Football Foundation greatly appreciate all of your efforts to improve as a coach. In fact, we applaud you for going the extra mile to enroll in this program and for your commitment to helping develop better football players and young people. We also hope that you have found the information presented in this program both interesting and helpful.

Just as one never stops learning as a coach, we are committed to learning continually and improving the Coaching Academy Program. Hence, we need you to complete one final task for us. Please complete the evaluation form and return it to your host before you depart. We will compile your responses and use them to update and revise the program.

While this clinic is the main component of the Coaching Academy Program, in order to maximize your learning, we highly recommend that you do the following.

1. During the next several weeks, read each section of your *Coach's Playbook* and complete any exercises or activities that were not covered in your sessions. These sections will provide an excellent summary of each content area and will help you retain the wealth of information contained in the program. It will also allow you to study the materials at your own pace and reflect upon the utility of the ideas presented.
2. View your football skills and drills CD to ensure that you understand all of the skills and techniques presented (note: it may be most helpful to do this as you read Sections I, IV, and V of your *Coach's Playbook*). As you do this, decide which information on the CD would be appropriate to share with your athletes.
3. Open the program management files on the CD and review the administrative and management support materials contained on it. Determine which of these resources would be useful for you to use before, during, and after your season.
4. Keep your Coaching Academy materials (*Coach's Playbook* and CD) handy during the season and refer to them like you would any reference source. That is, if you have a question about defensive play, program management, or life skills, check your materials for the answer.
5. Make it a weekly practice to visit www.NFLHS.com for useful information and tips relative to youth and high school football from around America.

Again, thanks for all of your efforts to contribute to positive youth development and advance the great game of football. Good luck with your upcoming season!



NFL Youth Programs

NFL FLAG

- The NFL's official youth league for boys and girls, 6-14 years old. The NFL Flag program exists nationwide and in all 32 NFL markets. NFL Flag provides the opportunity for kids and families to become involved in football through participation early in life. It also helps develop the first phase of player and coach development by teaching football skills at the earliest age, while structuring the first level of a feeder system to community tackle programs (NFL Junior Player Development) and high school (NFL High School Player Development).

NFL Punt, Pass & Kick

- Since 1961, boys and girls have participated in this national skills competition in punting, passing, and kicking. No registration fees are required to enter any phase of this competition. It is the most well-known youth sports competition in the world. Many current NFL players participated in PP&K as youngsters. Currently there are more than 6,000 local competitions run throughout schools nationwide (4-week program), as well as 3,000-plus local park and recreation centers during the months of August and September. This program is open to boys and girls (compete in separate divisions) ages 8-15.

NFL Junior Player Development

- The National Football League has developed an introductory/developmental youth tackle football program for boys 12-14. The program is designed to teach every participant every position, through a step-by-step progression of skill instruction packaged in a readaptive, fun, and entertaining manner. All participants receive instruction from NFL selected high school coaches from the local market. All participants receive counseling through a life skills/character development curriculum to be incorporated throughout all on-field activities. The NFL's all access answer to this program is the "Junior Player Development—Instructors Kit." This kit will provide broad access to servicing institutions and youth organizations nationwide. The contents of this kit will provide the tools needed by a prospective league organizer and school football administrator to structure his/her program shaped by proven NFL philosophies.

NFL High School Player Development

- This program focuses on academic counseling and specific football skill training by position for sophomores through seniors throughout an urban community. Each participant gains full awareness of what is necessary to become a successful collegiate student-athlete, along with the resources and information to meet NCAA Clearinghouse requirements.

NFL Player Development Camps

- These camps are designed to enhance NFL Junior Player Development and NFL Flag Football while extending the availability of football activities year-round, through the development and delivery of a customized template for each of the NFL markets. Camps will offer a noncontact and a tackle curriculum, each capable of accommodating 150 participants. This one week of innovative instruction will provide the equivalent of one full season of fundamental skill training and game preparation. Player Development Camps will be staffed with the best local high school and trained NFL Youth Program Staff, with appearances and demonstrations by local NFL players.