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LINEBACKERS

INDIVIDUAL SECTION

General Principles

Effort Habit

Is the most important in football. You must always strive to play at your highest level possible – physically and mentally. This habit must be formed in practices and transferred to Game Day.

What You Must Know Prior to Each Play

1. **Down & Distance** – This may dictate how we will play routes and gives us Tips on what to expect from the offense.
2. **Huddle Call** – Pay attention and get the call! Never leave the huddle unless You are certain of the call! If you are the signal caller you Must speak clear and commanding to defense.
3. **Personnel on Field** – Know offensive personnel on the field
4. **Formation Calls and Adjustments** – Make calls loud and commanding take charge of calls. Others will be depending on your calls.
(Film Study will help this process)
4. **Stance** – Position yourself in a stance that will eliminate wasted motion.
5. **Alignment** – A proper alignment will put you in the best position to execute your assignment.
6. **Keying** – You must focus on keys. This will get you started in the direction of Play quickly.
7. **Run Technique** – You must know where to support vs. all run plays.
8. **Pass Technique** – You must know coverage assignment vs. all pass plays.

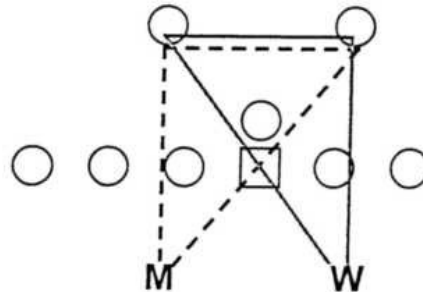
ALIGNMENTS USED BY LINEBACKERS

20 Tech	=	Head up on Guard
30 Tech	=	Outside half of Guard
40 Tech	=	Head up on Tackle
9 Tech	=	Outside half of Tight End
Point/8 Tech	=	Head up on Tight End
Walk Tech	=	Alignment on non-core Receivers
Gap	=	Aligned in Gap between adjacent Offensive Lineman
Plus	=	Alignment adjusted towards Tight End
Minus	=	Alignment adjusted away from Tight End

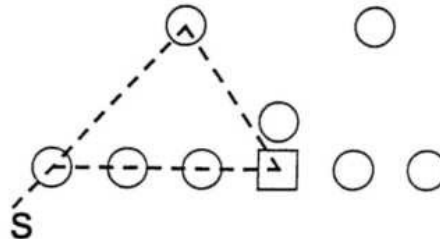
Keying

Proper Keying gives us a quick indication of what the play will be. Once you have made your initial read, block attack and effort will determine whether you will make the play vs. run or pass. Correct keying involves seeing the whole picture and reacting quickly to it. By expanding your vision, this will make you a more productive keyer, resulting into better overall PRODUCTION!

- A. Linebackers aligned off line of scrimmage – Key backs and under key offensive linemen for pullers.



- B. Linebackers aligned on line of scrimmage – Key triangle (Key tight end, backs and linemen for pullers).



SAM LINEBACKER REACTION TO BLOCKING SCHEMES

<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Base Zone Block – Attack and control TE with hands inside. Work 1 yard up field and restrict the running lane. Do not widen the line of scrimmage and create a running seam.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>TED Block – Attack tackle's ear hole while holding outside leverage. Do not allow tackle to kick you out or hook you.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>TE Cut Off Block – Shuffle, Shuffle, while playing cutback. Alert boot and reverse.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Off Tackle Power O – Take path one yard behind offensive tackle and attack shallow man. Shallow man principle and then get vertical.</p> <p>Keys: TE down block, near back at you, and near guard down block.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>G/O Hand Sweep – Attack fullback with outside leverage and work to deep pulling guard while holding outside leverage with a box technique.</p> <p>Keys: The near guard's deep pull will indicate sweep vs. power.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>G Pull – Take path one yard behind offensive tackle and attack guard with inside foot and inside shoulder. Hold outside leverage and restrict the running lane with a box technique.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Counter OT/OF/OY – Take path one yard behind offensive tackle and attack shallow man, then get vertical.</p>

MIKE LINEBACKER REACTION TO BLOCKING SCHEMES

<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Zone Blocking – Attack guard head up and protect "B" gap using frontal technique. Must attack guard before he gets up field.</p> <p>Key: Backs and under key linemen</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Bubble Lead – Attack fullback head up with near leg/near shoulder and win inside.</p> <p>Key: Backs and down block by guard.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Reduced Lead – Frontal technique on center. Stay square and protect "A" gap. Keep leverage on runner.</p> <p>Key: Backs and under key linemen</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Power O – Scrape for skin and two gap blocker on a vertical press.</p> <p>Key: Backs and down block by guard.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>G/O Hand Sweep – Scrape for skin and two-gap blocker.</p> <p>Key: backs and pull by guard.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Quick Trap – Attack trapper head up with inside leverage.</p> <p>Key: Backs under ball handling and both guards</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Wham – Attack guard using inside leverage key. Play will be run out of near set. Treat wham blocks as double team on nose.</p> <p>Key: Backs and under key lineman.</p>

WILL LINEBACKER REACTION TO BLOCKING SCHEMES

<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Zone Blocking – Attack guard using frontal technique and protect "A" Gap. Keep shoulders square and keep leverage on runner.</p> <p>Key: Backs and under key linemen</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Zone Lead – Attack tackle using scrape technique. Replace defensive end.</p> <p>With Cloud force – two gap blocker on scrape With Safety away – two gap and hold outside leverage on scrape</p> <p>Key: Backs and down block by guard.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Reduced Lead – Attack fullback with near leg and near shoulder and ISO win inside.</p> <p>Key: Back downhill, tackle blocking out.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Power O – Move square down line of scrimmage, alert for cutback runs.</p> <p>Key: Backs and pulling guard.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Bob-G – Ear hole attack pulling guard using scrape technique.</p> <p>With Cloud force – two gap blocker on scrape With Safety away – two gap and hold outside leverage on scrape</p> <p>Key: backs and pull by guard.</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Toss – Attack and defeat tackle's block. Play off end who will flatten out on fast flow action.</p> <p>Note: Weakside tosses usually cuts back. Keep leverage on runner.</p> <p>Key: Backs and under key linemen</p>
<p>TIGHT</p>	<p>Counter OF – Take shuffle read step and rocker step back, scraping for skin. Must be ready to two-gap fullback or puller.</p> <p>Key: Backs and pullers.</p>

GENERAL POINTS IN PASS DEFENSE

I. General Principles in Zone Coverages

A. Progression of drop technique

1. Recognition

This is the ability of the linebacker to know down and distance, get a pre-snap read and pass key.

2. Drop Point

Everytime we drop, we must work routes from inside out when applicable. Generally, the inside linebackers will stay inside the #2 and #3 receivers. When the outside may have to squeeze from outside in on #2 and #3. If receiver is removed from core or aligned in the backfield OLB will have opportunities to play inside out on receiver.

3. Pattern Read

On every zone drop, each linebacker will have a receiver to key that will determine your angle or drop. This will put you in coverage position quick.

4. Bang Receivers

Reroute receivers without distorting your drop. Try and work the tip of their shoulder pads and up into the air. Keep them out of the seams in 1 safety defenses and put them into the seams for 2 safety defenses.

5. QB Read

Once you have keyed out, disrupted the receiver and dropped to your zone. Get your head on swivel from receiver to QB. Keep your feet under you and your hips low. This will give you the ability to break quickly on thrown ball, break on the QB's indicators. (Head, Shoulder, Off Hand)

CP – QB Sets - 3 Step Drop – 6-8 yard routes
5 Step Drop – 8-12 yard routes
7 Step Drop – 15 yards or more

6. Break on Ball

Keeping a good base, react on short arm motion of the QB downhill to the football. React on long arm motion by sprinting to the ball in the air and attacking it at its highest point.

7. Intercept

Catch the ball with two hands and concentrate, secure it before you advance. If teammate intercepts ball, look to block intended receiver.

II. Principles of Man Coverage

A. Man Progression

1. Help

We will have varied types of man coverages. It is important to know in each where your help will come from. Inside, Outside or No help.

2. Footwork

Take short quick steps close on the stem of the receiver's route working to a leverage position. Never give him a two-way break. Keep your weight distributed evenly, hips down and feet moving.

3. Concentration

Concentrate on your man totally. Concentrate on his hip point.

4. Closing on Receiver

Once the receiver has committed, sprint to him and close the cushion. Stay focused on the receiver and don't look for ball until close enough to touch him. Once in position, shoot hips to receiver.

5. Closing on Ball

Once in hip position of receiver, look for football, accelerate and meet ball at highest point. If not in position, catch up!

6. Strip

When making tackle strip the up field arm, or arm you are closest to and drive it down and out. Be sure to tackle.

7. Tackling

In coverage be sure to be in good position to make a sure tackle to not allow a big play.

8. Intercept

Secure catch before running. Block intended receiver if teammate intercepts.

DEFENDING SCREENS AND DRAWS

Screens

The timing on defending against a screen varies from man to zone coverage. In man coverage react quickly and attack the receiver outside in. Assuming your man is the receiver. In Zone coverage there are two defenders to defend screens. The defenders assigned to the flat attacks outside in. While the hook defender attacks from inside out, adjusting to play of flat defender.

Draws

Draws can be detected by back movement such as stepping inside toward QB, positioning hands for hand off or back taking a hop step. We must quickly recognize play and alert others, by yelling "Draw".

1. Prevent ball from splitting defense vertically.
2. OLB must never lose leverage on ball.

LINEBACKERS PASS RUSH PRINCIPLES

- I. **Rush Lane Responsibility**

Each rusher will have an assigned rush lane, whether it be a certain or pressure responsibility. It is extremely important to keep a balance to our distribution.
- II. **Rush Plan**
 1. Have a plan every down – desire, quickness and tenacity.
 2. Down and distance
 3. Stance
 4. Pre-snap keys, protection
 5. Take off
 - (a) Focus, key
 - (b) Aiming point
 6. Block, grab or speed moves
 - (a) Eyes focused on blockers arms and hands
 - (b) Be violent with feet and hands
 7. Accelerate Passover or rip arm and inside hip driving hips up and through
 - (a) man.
 - (b) Never stall feet = acceleration is a must!
 8. Burst and finish to QB
 9. Counter if necessary without stalling feet or spinning
- III. **Pass Rush Moves**
 1. Speed
 - (a) Key ball – race OT (4 or 6 steps to corner)
 - (b) May use an inside or outside hand block
 - (c) Dip and get your inside shoulder under his arm pit
 - (d) Get hips skinny on edge to the QB
 2. Passover
 - (a) Same initial take off
 - (b) Use outside block or grab
 - (c) Get hips open to isolated shoulder
 - (d) Accelerate inside arm over and crank elbow down
 - (e) Get hips skinny on edge to the QB

3. Upper Cut

- (a) Same initial takeoff
- (b) Use outside block or grab
- (c) Open hips to isolated shoulder
- (d) Accelerate shoulder pad under arm pit and explode upper cut and eyes to the sky
- (e) Get hips skinny on edge to QB

4. Rip and Spin (Counter)

- (a) Same initial take off
- (b) Use block or grab
- (c) Open hips on outside shoulder
- (d) Explode shoulder under arm pit with an uppercut.
- (e) Leaning into blocker, pivot butt into him and crank outside elbow around (Ninja)
- (f) Burst and finish at QB

5. Butt and Move (use vs. RB)

- (a) Same initial take off
- (b) Get pad control under blocker
- (c) Butt and get extension
- (d) When he reacts snatch him down and forward
- (e) Use Passover or upper cut
- (f) Burst to QB

6. Bluff Butt and Move

- (a) Same initial take off
- (b) Initiate reach for butt, get him to lunge forward
- (c) Block and Passover
- (d) Burst to QB

7. Club

- (a) Same initial take off
- (b) Sprint to outside shoulder or blocker making him turn outside.
- (c) When shoulders turn, club inside arm and throw him outside
- (d) Accelerate to QB

8. Stunting from Off Line of Scrimmage

- (a) Use motion to help time rush
- (b) Don't give away stunt by body language
- (c) Notice receiver location to anticipate motion
- (d) Key ball

9. Pass Rush Coaching Points

- (a) Try to strip ball away from QB with outside hand as you make turn on edge
- (b) Raise arm in pressure lane but never leave feet
- (c) Once ball is thrown turn and chase. Help cause a turnover!

Tackling

Tackling is attitude, athletic ability and body position. A great linebacker must perfect his tackling skills each day. Linebackers are involved in two types of tackling. Close quarter interior tackling and open field tackling.

A. Closed Quarters (Hitting Zone)

Focus on ball carrier and explode through him with your eyes, hips and active feet. Near leg, near shoulder and violently uppercut grabbing cloth on the rise.

B. Open Field

Focus on the ball carrier and work to a leverage position on the ball, utilize pursuit help or the sideline. Work into a good football hitting position, as you close on ball carrier. Keep your head up and don't lunge, explode your eyes and hips through the ball carrier. See what you hit! You should club and grab cloth, shoot hips and drive feet to finish tackle.

Pursuit

- A. Pursuit is an important part of every great defense. For the linebacker positions it's the relentless attitude to chase down the football. Linebackers must first take care of there primary responsibility then react in the proper angles to pursue the football. The focus of your attention must now work on the next most dangerous blocker. It is very important to be coordinated with the entire defensive unit.
- B. Outside linebacker must glance ahead for reverse when pursuing the ball carrier.

Fumble Recovery

A. Strip

Always look to strip ball from ball carrier.

B. Intelligent Decision

Make an intelligent decision whether to fall on ball or pick it up.

1. Factors to Consider

- (a) Any opponent close enough to fall on it before you can
- (b) Score and time in game
- (c) Field position

2. Falling on the Ball

- (a) Don't jump on ball with chest touching first
- (b) Pull ball to stomach and curl body around ball with arms and legs covering it up, lying on your side
- (c) Make the official come down to you to get the ball

3. Picking Ball up

- (a) Bend your knees
- (b) Get position on the ball so it's in the middle of your body
- (c) Reach down and pick it up with both hands in front of you. Keep Eyes on ball.
- (d) Secure ball before you start to run (four points to pressure)
- (e) Get as many yards as you can. Score!