

## Defensive Back Football Drills

By Jeremy Conn

### INTRODUCTION:

During Individual Period there are two different groups of drills we do with our players. There are EDD's (Every Day Drills) which should be done every day. These are fundamental drills that teach, reinforce and simulate football movements. There are also alternate drills that are used periodically in the year to teach other skills or the same skills but in a different drill (keep players excited).

Drills used should simulate football situations. Never use a drill that isn't teaching or simulating a movement, action, or play that your players will have to execute in a game. There are thousands of different drills that you can use, use the drills that are the most efficient for your system.

Make sure to give the drills a name. This name will allow the players to get used to a drill and the coach can simply say the drill's name and the players should know what to do. Make sure to explain why they are doing the drill (what they are working on, improving) and when the skills being learnt are used in a game situation.

Have fun, get lots of reps with high quality execution. If one player is having problems with the drill have your positional assistant coach work with him or work with him at another time during practice or outside of practice. Do not let players stand around while you are helping only one player. Stop the drill and re-explain with demonstration if multiple players are not getting the drill. Keep in mind the players will get the hang of it and get better the more they do it, don't give up on a drill if it looks ugly at first. However, you may need re-evaluate the drill and decide if it is the best drill to use to teach that skill.

Drills are meant to isolate skills and have players execute those abilities. Reinforce the idea of "getting better every day" through drills. The drills may seem boring and repetitious to some players but let them know the real fun comes in scrimmage situations and game day.

Without these drills and learning these basic fundamental skills the players will never be able to succeed in a real football situation.

### **EDD's**

1) Stance

- 2 pt, narrow stance
- on balls of feet, ready to slide backwards
- knees bent, butt out, bent at waist, shoulders over knees
  - “cover the numbers” = coach should not be able to clearly see players front numbers. This ensures the players are bent over with shoulders over toes.
- pad level low, eyes up, head up and back
- arms hanging loose, hands inside of frame

## MOVEMENT DRILLS

### 2) Form Backpedal

- Start in stance, usually 3 lines
- On ‘go’ command by coach players execute back pedal 5-8 yds
- Maintain narrow base, keep pad level same
- Arms pumping, eyes up, good balance

### 3) Back and Up

- Backpedal on ‘go’, on ‘break’ quick feet stop and back up to coach
- Look for quick feet to change direction, not wide base
- Players must accelerate after break, not jog back up

### 4) Back and Out

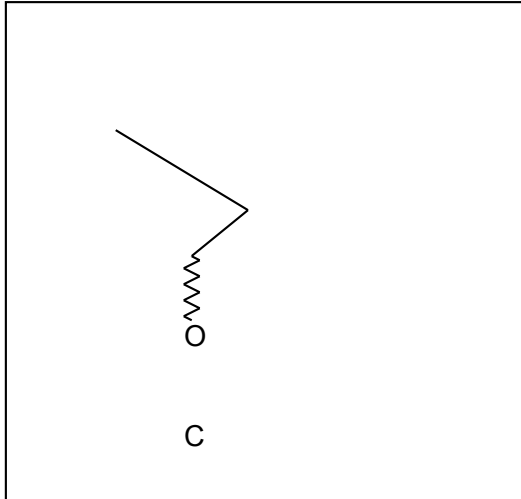
- Backpedal, break 90 degrees on coach’s ‘break’ command
- Go left and right, then go on coach’s point direction (react to stimuli)
- Keep eyes upfield, sprint after break at least five yds (use lines)

### 5) Back and Corner

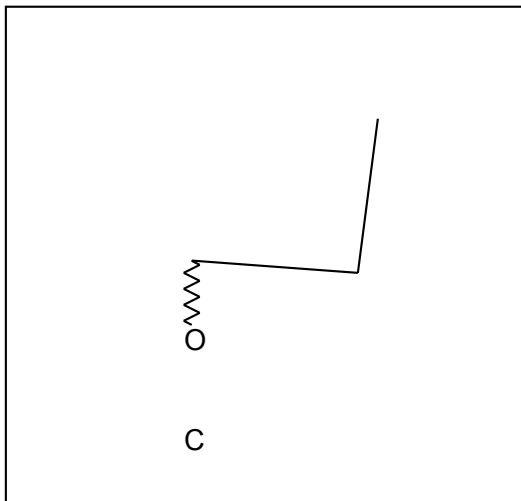
- Backpedal, break 45 degrees to corner or post
- Go left and right, then go on coach’s point direction (react to stimuli)
- Players must accelerate out of break

### 5i) Double Move Drills

- a) Back and corner, spin to other corner
  - Player backpedal, break to corner on command, on spin command spin around snapping head around and go 45 degrees other way



- b) Back and out and up  
 -covering the wheel or chair pattern  
 -Players backpedal, break to out on command, on 'spin' they spin (1/2 turn really – eyes stay on “man”) and turn upfield

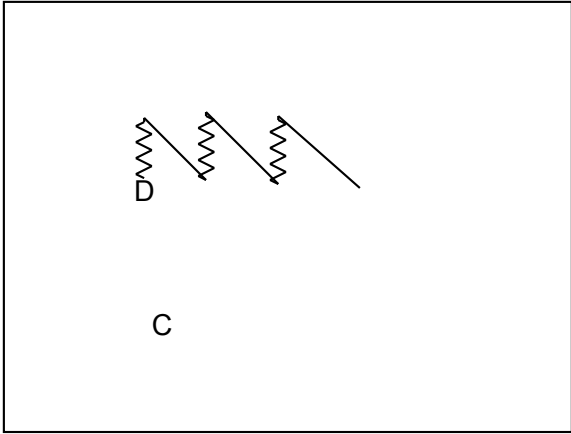


\*\*\*On these drills a ball can be thrown for the player to intercept once the movements have been executed correctly. Players must do these Everyday and the ball intercept will keep them into the drill. They must yell bingo on interception and hustle back to “SCORE”  
 You may or may not have a consequence of pushups for dropped interceptions.

#### ALTERNATE MOVEMENT DRILLS

##### A) M Drill

-Players back pedal on angle, plant, sprint 45 up and repeat down the line

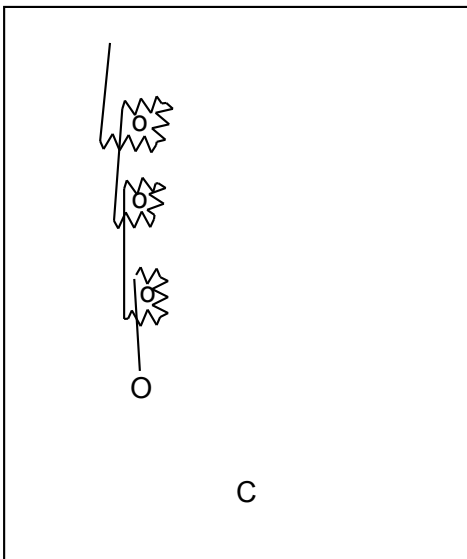


B) Small M Drill

- Quick feet, back 2 yds, plant, come up quick, repeat
- Short choppy quick steps, stay low, eyes up

C) Quick Feet Drill

- cones are place down line
- Players do quick circle feet around cones then accelerate up to next cone



D) Back and Spin

- Players backpedal, on command do 360 spin, continue back pedal
- Working on balance, coordination, footwork, maintain pad level, arm movement

E) Partner Chase

- Players are lying on back, one is 4 yds ahead of other

-On go command players spin around, get up, and back player tries to catch up to front player.

\*\*\*Hand slap technique to catch up to player can be taught  
-may want to start in trail position to teach hand slap on catch up

F) Wave Drill with tip return

-3 at a time, Players backpedal and react to coaches directional command  
-Drill can be 45 or 90 breaks  
-Coach throws ball, one player catches, then throws ball up simulation tip  
-Another player catches ball, yells bingo, and returns it with other players leading

G) Weave

-Defender faces mock receiver with proper cushion alignment  
-Mock receiver runs down line weave on either side of line 2-3 yds each way  
-Defender must mirror, maintain position, and cushion

H) Mirror Speed Stutter Drill

-Mock receiver runs directly at defender  
-When receiver stutters (simulates break coming) DB's must stutter and get ready to break  
-Teaches footwork and reading receivers route, see his break coming

## CATCHING

1) Come to Me

-Line facing coach  
-On coach's hand command players come to coach and catch ball  
-Highest point catch, low ball catch, and to each side catches  
-Player must yell 'bingo' after catch, give coach ball

## ALTERNATE CATCHING DRILLS

A) Break 90, 45 degrees

-Come to me drill, on coaches command players make break then catch ball

B) Tip Drill

-Come to me setup, first player comes forward, tips ball to next defender  
-May need coach to be tipper to get better reps (need thrower)

\*\*\*Drills with balls being thrown and tipped can also be COMBAT drills, this is when players in drill both attack ball and try to make catch or knock ball away without pass interference. Competition drills will rekindle players enthusiasm.

C) Turn and Go

- Players backpedal, turn on command and sprint
- Eyes upfield on 'receiver' until hear ball call as coach throws ball and teammates yell ball. Look back on 'ball' call, catch ball, yell bingo, and return it

D) Knock it Out

- First player holds ball up high as if just caught ball at highest point
- Mock receiver jogs forward, next player in line is defender
- Defender catches up, grabs back of receiver, punches ball out of his hands
- More reps, every rep has high quality

## TACKLING

1) Angle Tackle

- 2 lines, ballcarriers and defenders, switch after rep
- Players break at 45 degrees toward each other (use cones to set path)
- Tackler executes form tackle, head in front, pads low, arms club
- Defender must drive runner back after tackle

1a) Angle Tackle and Strip Ball

- Defender punches down with hand near ball (head side)
- Ensure proper angle while attacking ball in attempt to create turnover

2) Knee Tackle

- 3 lines, facing bags, one knee down
- Execute form tackle and lift bag
- Hit with shoulders and side of neck, arms club, hips explode, eyes to sky
- At beginning of year this drill should be first tackling drill

## ALTERNATE

A) Behind Strip

- Defenders in chase position of ball carrier
- BC jogs forward holding ball, defenders chase, grab, punch ball out
- Use uppercut or tomahawk chop to get ball out

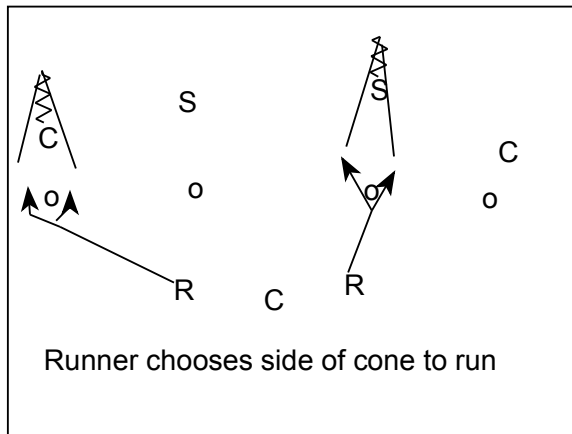
B) Open Field Tackle

- Ball carrier and defender in 10 yd box, defender must make tackle
- Start with form tempo tackles, finish with live speed tackles

C) Alley Tackle

- Cones set up to simulate offensive receivers, defenders are in their normal position
- Ball carriers in backfield, point to defender who is to make tackle
- Ball carrier runs to Point of Attack, defender comes up making form tackle
- Get players used to make tackle from their position

-Ball carriers can attack a point then bounce it either way, DB's must adjust



#### D) Ball Wrestle

- Gang tackle simulation and turnover drill
- Defender is put on ball carrier as if already has wrap
- Defender starts in fit position on side of ball, hands on ball
- On 'go' ball carrier runs up field, defender tries to rip out ball
- Defender must use violent arm rip to get ball out
  - a) Coach should be able to see this rip action
- Simulates joining gang tackle, 2nd, 3rd, 4th man goes for ball

#### E) Cross body Tackle

- Open field tackle, especially versus bigger man
- Come up to make tackle, breakdown, lay out sideways to bring ball carrier down
- Desperation tackle one on one, use bags to simulate ball carrier

#### GET OFF BLOCK DRILLS

##### 1) a) Rip Drill b) Swim Drill

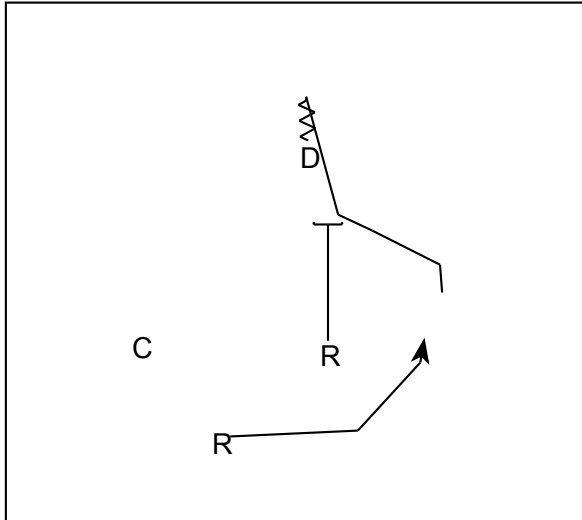
- Bag holders, defenders facing
- Player execute rip to both sides
- Teach in phases at first, juke step-elbow slap-arm rip-get skinny-step past

#### ALTERNATE

##### A) Force Drill

- Start with one defender versus mock blocker
- Player attacks blocker, squeezes him inside, maintains outside control
- Incorporate ball carrier for tackler to get to
- Can become 2 vs 2-Blocker and ballcarrier versus Corner force and Safety pursuit

-Simulate responsibility versus toss / sweep play (also reverse, bootleg run etc...)



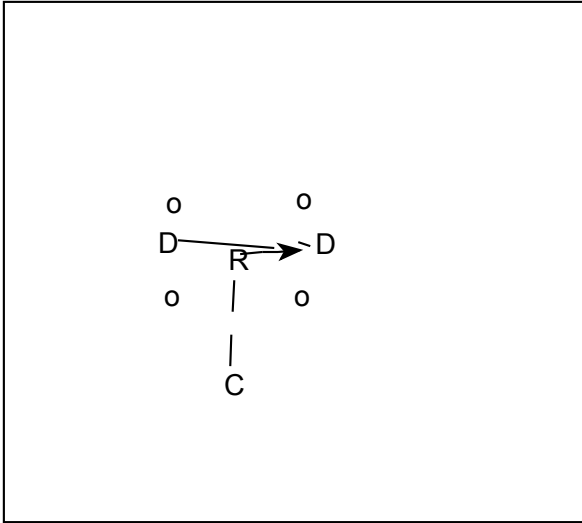
#### B) Mirror Escape

- Within 5 yd area
- Defender facing mock blocker
- On go command receiver shuffles side to side, defender mirrors maintaining position of leverage (Ink=inside, Orc=outside)
- On second 'go' command blocker attacks defender, defender must get by blocker as quick as possible, get Upfield break down on cone 5 yds behind blocker, -footfire till coach says break, switch lines

#### C) Go Get him

- Box drill, player in middle, player on each side of box
- Middle player catches ball from coach, turns and runs toward one defender
- That defender makes form open field tackle
- Other defender catches up, gang tackles, and rips ball out from ball carrier





## COVERAGE SKILLS

### 1) 1 vs 1 patterns

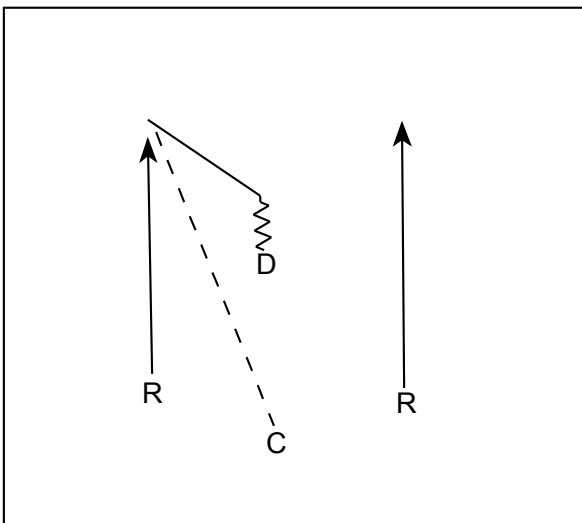
- Cover in man coverage simulation, no ball then with ball
- vs Hook, Out (short, medium deep), slant, post, Corner, Post corner (double move), go, comeback, wheel, hook and go etc...

### 2) Zone Drops

- Defensive backfield practice proper zone drop technique
- flats from position, deep thirds or halves from position

### 3) Two in a Zone

- Defender facing two receivers five yds in front 8 yds apart
- Receivers run upfield, defender back pedals
- Receivers look back to coach inside, coach turns to one receiver before throw
- Defender breaks on look, intercepts or knocks down ball



## ALTERNATE

### a) Trail drill

- Defender one yard behind receiver on a Ink / Orc position
- Defender follows receiver upfield
- Receiver makes break, defender mirrors
- Ball can be thrown, defender looks back on teammates 'ball' call

### b) Bump and Run

- Jam Receiver at the line
- Can use one hand or two hand jam
- Do not lunge at receiver, maintain balance
- Do not get beat at line, keep receiver in front of you
- Can also drill fake bump and bail, throw off receiver and QB reads

## CONCLUSION

These are some basic and complex drills that can be used with defensive back coaching. Only use drills that are needed for are defence. For example if we don't use bump and run then don't practice bump and run. There are many other drills you may feel are equally important. Check with me or your defensive coordinator before you use them.

Come to every practice with a plan. Usually you will have your group in Individual segment of practice for 20-30 minutes. Have your drill package and progression planned and on paper with you. Check with D.Coordinator before practice or during stretch. Realise he may want you to work on specific skills. Don't take anything personal, follow our plan. Any problems can be addressed in meeting after practice or by writing a note to D.coordinator.

Have fun, do your best, research teaching methods and other drills. Just like we tell the players, coaches too must also work to get better everyday.