

Top 10 QB Mistakes...

(and how to correct them)

1 Eyes Down

- Guys at all levels do it.
 - Neil O'Donnell (Super Bowl XXX to Larry Brown)
 - Just about every College game on the weekend
 - Your QB Probably does it right now (if not on passes, definitely on the runs)

Causes

- Lack of confidence
- Concerned about getting hit
 - Lack of confidence in line
 - A kid that isn't tough
- Lack of accountability by coach on all plays
- Looking down at the snap of the ball
- A shotgun snap that is poor
- A shotgun starting point of QB that is too deep
- Left shoulder and hip closed on drop
- Not seeing through players on drop back and roll out

Solutions

- Have QB call out the front and number of safeties on every play
- Ask QB periodically (once or twice a practice) what the coverage was even on run plays
- Have QB get and maintain eye contact with LB's or DB's on running plays
- Coach periodically stands at the FS position and watch his eyes (or let a defensive coach know before practice to let you know if he ever sees QB's eyes drop

Drills

- During track work with RB's have other QB's snap
- During throwing with receivers have QB go through his "reads"
- Down the Line Drill w/coach holding up fingers
- QB snaps ball to himself w/opposite hand to develop confidence in feeling and finding the laces

#2 Poor Leadership

- We tell the QB to be a leader but what does that mean?
- QB's can lead in a lot of ways but the great ones all do a few vital things in common
- For what ever reason, the kids don't believe in him

Causes

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of eye contact
- Young player
- Emotionally, he is either too high or too low
- Not willing to work harder than the other players
- Willingness to put up with either poor play out of himself or teammates

Solutions

- “If you don’t believe in yourself, how in the world can you expect your teammates to believe in you.” Joe Theisman
- Make sure player always speaks to you with good eye contact. If he does it with you...
- Put the kid in leadership positions off the field (weight room, classroom etc...)

Drills

- Huddle Drill
- Have the QB take charge of the team when a lull in practice occurs (tell him that you expect him to do it before it occurs)
- Expect the QB to reward the great plays and the great little things that never gets noticed on the field and in film sessions (blocks by linemen)
- Tell the QB what he should and should not say to the press
- Get the younger QB's involved and always have them lead drills whenever possible
- Off-season working with other kids (Camps etc...)
- Periodically have a kid line up wrong in the backfield

#3 No Look Off

- What do we always tell our DB's to do?
- We know when we see it done well and an announcer says, "he is really playing well now-- did you see how he got to his third read so quickly"

Causes

- Not understanding the offense (lack of preparation)
- Lack of trust in either himself or his receivers
- Poor drop technique
- Us not willing to allow him to go through a few bad reps (where and when must be taught)

Solutions

- Go through which plays and under what circumstances you want him to look off
- Make him understand that not only touchdowns are to be had be YAC
- Better balance while dropping
- Show him how much fun it is to be able to manipulate the guys that are trying to take his head off (his way of getting back at them)

Drills

- Three QB Drill
- QB and receiver drills have the QB look off to the other side
- On all air routes the QB's Know which receiver they have but they need to all look at the other receivers (like a progression)
- Half field work (if he can look off a guy there then he certainly can do it with all receivers)

#4 Fumbling the Snap

- Usually causes the greatest expletive from coaches
- The QB looks at the center and the center looks at the QB
- Why does it occur and on what plays is it most likely?

Causes

- Lack of pressure of the top hand of QB (a target is needed)
- Lack of slack in the arms by QB (so he can “ride the center”)
- Center going the total opposite way from QB (classic toss play or traditional trap play)
- Any new plays where natural anxiety or lack of concentration can occur

Solutions

- Have QB literally lift the center's ass with top hand
- Rep it until you can hear that good slap or thud of the ball
- Anytime you can use a center do it (Passing league or in the off-season workouts)
- Explain and show what slack in arms means to QB

Drills

- When taking snaps have the guys take a few step on your top 5 plays
- Rotate the QB's and centers often (Especially in off-season) to create confidence
- While tracking any new running plays with the RB's have a center there

#5 Poor Balance

- This is the root cause of all poorly thrown balls whether it be late, high, low, or the proverbial “wounded duck”

Causes

- Poor first step
- Ball in wrong position while dropping
- No side abdominal crunch
- Hips not aligned properly

Solutions

- First step needs to be at 6 o'clock
- They need to feel the side abdominal crunch while dropping
- Explain what a pole from the sky or swinging a gate means to the QB
- Explain to the QB the difference between a hitch step and a slide step
- Reps, Reps, Reps

Drills

- “Take your first step and stop”
- Down the line drill
- Down the line and stop drill (and with angles)
- Hash mark drill
- Reset Drill
- Tennis shoes drill (advanced and only in off-season)

#6 Ball Thrown too Low

- Nothing more frustrating to a QB

Causes

- Poor balance in drop
- Front leg gets too far out in front
- Hips not aligned properly
- Crossover step
- Throwing “platform” too far up

Solutions

- Left leg (right handed QB) needs to be “under” QB the entire time
- Good directional step
- Balance from step one
- Get low and “drive” the ball

Drills

- Down the line drill
- Kick step drill
- 10, 20, and 30 yard drill
- 6 inch drill

#7 Ball Wobbles

- It's the pass he is most embarrassed about and you turn your head away in agony

Causes

- “Laser” not pointed at target
- Left shoulder opens too quickly
- Ball not inflated enough
- Left leg out too far in front

Solutions

- Explain importance of his “laser” in all types of passes
- Show him how much harder and farther he can throw the ball when he “saves” his left shoulder
- Please inflate the balls

Drills

- Up on toes drill
- Hash mark drill (emphasize throwing to his open side)
- Deep ball drill
- Feet at 45, 90, etc...

#8 Ball Thrown Late

- Leads to backup QB quickly getting warmed up
- You can have a QB with a water pistol for an arm and you will win if he throws the ball “on time”

Causes

- Hitch step at the end of drop
- Lack of trust by QB for his receivers
- Dropping of eyes or lack of trust in his read
- Throwing the ball where the receiver is and not where he will be (it must be explained by coach on each and every route)

Solutions

- QB and coach must be willing to push the limit (see how early and quickly the ball can “get out”)
- QB needs to make mental notes of all of his receivers on every route
- Balance on drop
- Getting quickly away from center
- Explain where you want the ball caught on each and every route (obviously will vary some)

Drills

- Versus air drills with receivers
- One on one drills with DB's (filmed)
- 3 and 5 step drop drill (explain that the ball begins moving backward as the last step hits the ground)
- Any of that aforementioned balance drills
- Cheat step drill

#9 Slow Getting Away from Center

- This can occur and cause problems in both the passing game *and* the running game

Causes

- False step with either of his feet
- Poor directional step on both running game and passing game
- His knees bent too much (improper posture)
- Lack of “rock” prior to center
- Not anticipating his own snap count

Solutions

- Explain the importance of how he can actually protect himself (passing game)
- Explain his responsibility of getting the ball to the RB as deeply and as quickly as possible
- Shifting of weight back and forth prior to all plays
- Accountable delivery points and depths on routes

Drills

- Rock, rock go drill
- Track work with the RB's (challenge the QB)
- Multi-start drill
- Steve Axman QB Conditioning Drill

#10 Lack of Power

- It is true that even the guys with cannons don't get all they can out of their "arms"

Causes

- Improper take-away vs. Doug Flutie
- Lack of getting hip square in follow through
- Opening shoulder too soon
- Stiff front leg
- Left arm not being used properly

Solutions

- Push ball back from proper position with thumb down, up, and then down again.
- Good directional step
- Left leg remaining “below” QB and remaining “soft”
- Left arm needs to remain at 90 degrees
- Left elbow needs to come across and then down
- Teach QB to “drive the ball” (Phil Simms)

Drills

- Pushback drill (done at home)
- Drag the foot drill (Billy Cockhill)
- 10, 20, and 30 yard drill
- Re-set drill
- And yes, the hash mark drill

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