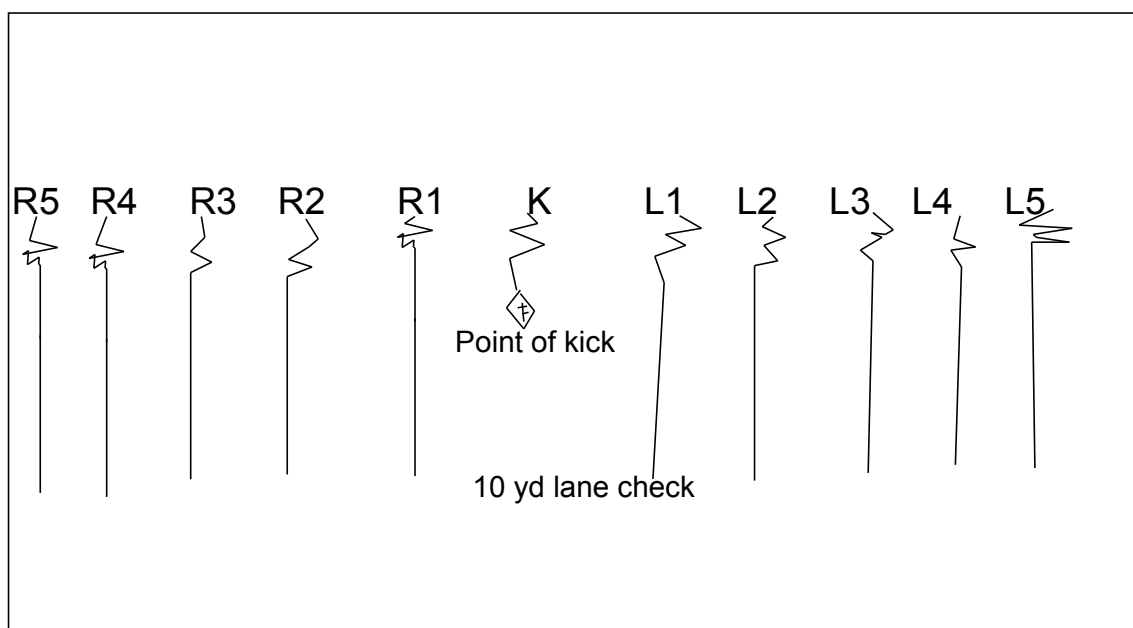


SPECIAL TEAM DRILLS

KICKOFF DRILLS

Take the line (no offsides ever)

Line team up. Use a whistle to alert the kickoff team they can proceed. It always amazes me but every year I see a team so excited they kickoff before the refs have blown it in. Kicker raises hand and drops on his approach. Rest of team times it up so they cross the line just after he makes kick contact. NO OFFSIDES EVER!!! Sprint 10 yards and review lanes. Practice for the onside kick too. Kicker's approach may be different for his onside kick technique so the timing will be different.



Accelerate and Avoid.

Teach phases of kickoff. Players must know that post-kickoff they are too get downfield and never get blocked. For the most part avoiding contact is better as long as they remain in their lanes, as they cannot avoid to get tied up on blockers and lost ability to make tackle for minimal gain.

Leverage fit drill

Practice players keeping the ballcarrier on their proper shoulder (for simplicity sake their inside shoulder). Practice different types of returns and how you want them to react (wedge, sideline, reverse). Where do you want your wedge breakers to make contact? If the returner tries to bounce it who should be there to make the tackle? Where? Don't assume they know. Don't just tell it to them. That is not effective teaching. Show them. Have them do it.

ALIGNMENT systems.

Use of #'s 1-10 & K

Use of sides -L 1-5, R 1-5, & K

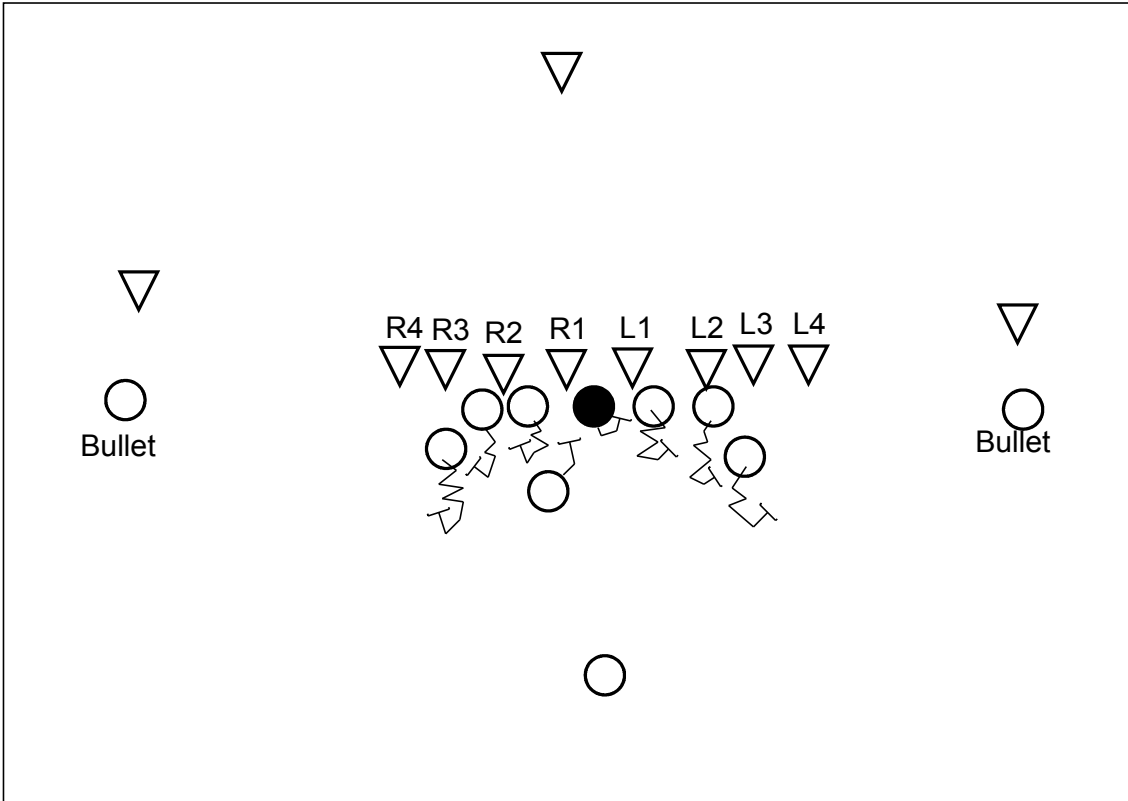
CP: Who do you want to keep the ball away from on their return team?

Practice it. Make sure they know, especially your kicker. Where will the ball go?

PUNT DRILLS

- Vertical set **protection** (inside gap first)
Punt protection blocking for the line is like offensive pass protection.
You have some room to take a few steps back to gain leverage, position,
Use proper power angles to make your block. This also allows you to see and pick up twists.
- Teaching Progression – Individual technique vs air, 1vs1, ½ line vs air, vs 4 or 5, Full vs air, vs rush

“Regular punt vs 44 Punt D”



- Escape and release
Once ball is kicked drill getting off block, release downfield, and getting into your coverage lanes
- Lanes and Leverage **coverage**
Use cones spread out five yards across the field where players must sprint to by assignment and breakdown. They must understand their proper position relation to each other.

ALIGNMENTS

- Regular = 2 Bullets (split ends), 2 wings, 1 UB)
- Tight (2 TE's, 3 UB's)

CP: Make sure you practice the bad snap drill for Punter. Have him try to get the kick off or know what to do for; low bounce ball, off to the side, over the head. Do you always want him to kick it out of the endzone? What if you are on your own 40 yard line?

PUNT BLOCK DEFENSE

- Sprinter's stance & BGO (green football?)
Stance should allow upfield quick explosion. Not so much for power but to split gaps with quick move. Be the first to the punch with a good Ball Get Off. Drill reaction to the ball movement. Use a green football in practice to focus players.
- Beat the block (get skinny)
Practice technique. You do not want to engage but to get by ASAP.
Reduce contact surface area.
- Block point & tech (flat football, volleyball, knee pads on hands)
Drill proper technique. Don't jump.
Run to the block point, where kicker makes contact with ball.
Use two hands together at waist level palms down to foot.
You can use volleyball so players get used to physical act.
Then you can use volleyball pads on their hands so they don't jam a finger
In practice some will wuss out and develop bad habits. Let them focus on form. In games they will tough guy it for you.
a) DO NOT USE YOUR STARTING PUNTER!!! He could get injured.
- Scoop and score (rules & technique)
Don't fall on the ball. If you miss and they recover we still get the ball as they did not gain enough yards for first down. Try to take it in for six.
Technique – bend knees, two hands, flick it up, catch on the move.

ALIGNMENTS

- Rush men sides, R 1-4, L 1-4, 2 CB's, Retuner(s) (see above diagram)

ASSIGNMENT

- 8 man rush (44 = 4 on left and right, 53 = 5 on left 3 on right, etc)

COACHING POINT *Even on all out returns have *spies* for bad snap*

- 1 or 2 players who show rush and come hard for block if the snap is bad or mishandled. They contain versus fake and if clean snap and punt off peel late to join return.

BENCH DRILL (last practice & pre-practice)

Everyone on sideline. Call out unit. Say starting specials player's name. He comes out. His sub must go in on his own (they have to know).

Too often penalties result in games because coaches assume all the players know and can carry out assignment. Go through the motions of gameday. Let them know how penalties can happen if they are not focused and prepared.

KO and PUNT COVERAGE can also be a good conditioning drill that is football specific.

Other things to prepare for;

- Onside kick & prevent (hands team)
- Fake punt & defending fake punt
- Fair catch rules (Canadians the 5 yd rule)
- Developing long snapper (must have 2!!!) www.longsnapper.com
- What do you do if you have no kicker?
- What is your Go for 2pt philosophy (#'s game)
- Squib kick & Return adjustment
- Defending the swinging gate on extra points.
- Taking a safety. When? How? Who?
- Kicking with the wind and into the wind (weather conditions)4

TABOR COLLEGE'S SPECIAL TEAMS RODEO CIRCUIT

How Tabor College uses Whole-Part-Whole teaching to drill the kicking game

When Tim McCarty came to Tabor College in the spring of 1999 there were 14 players remaining on the roster and one winning season in the 35-year history of the program. As the 2003 season approached, the Bluejays continued to build on last year's 6-4 record.

Our philosophy has remained consistent:

1. Recruit players of high moral and ethical character.
2. Offensively score early and often.
3. Get the offense the ball as quickly as possible.
4. Create turnovers and field position advantages – defensively and with the kicking game.

That sounds simple enough and basically everyone in America wants to attain those things each year. We've been able to compete partially due to some changes in how we've drilled and practiced our special teams.

During our two-a-day sessions we emphasize the Special Teams Rodeo circuit as part of our practice routine. This does a number of the following things for us:

1. Allows us to evaluate personnel.
2. Can be incorporated in 5, 10, 15 or 20 minute periods, and is as flexible and time efficient as you want.
3. Gets the entire team involved.
4. Is a fun, competitive change during practice.
5. Works as a conditioning period.

In one of the first meetings you have each year, I suggest getting on the board and handing out the field layout for the Rodeo as seen in Diagram 1.

Go over each drill you want to cover for that day prior to going on the field. Make sure the drill areas are set and marked.

We want to cover a multitude of areas within the framework of each special team and its scheme during August camp. Punt and Kick-Off Returners, Gunners, K-O Coverage, Front Line Blockers and protections are involved in what we consider our "Offensive" Special Teams Rodeo (see Diagram 2). Our punt and FG block, punt personnel and on-side units are what we consider our "Defensive" Rodeo (see Diagram 3). Even though we label units offense and defense the emphasis is always on being relentless and attacking aggressively in all phases.

The drills we use in the different areas are run at full speed to contact; at that point we will then either "shave" the returner, or use hand shields to absorb contact. The emphasis is on our alignment, assignment, technique and effort. In Diagram 2 our drills are as follows:

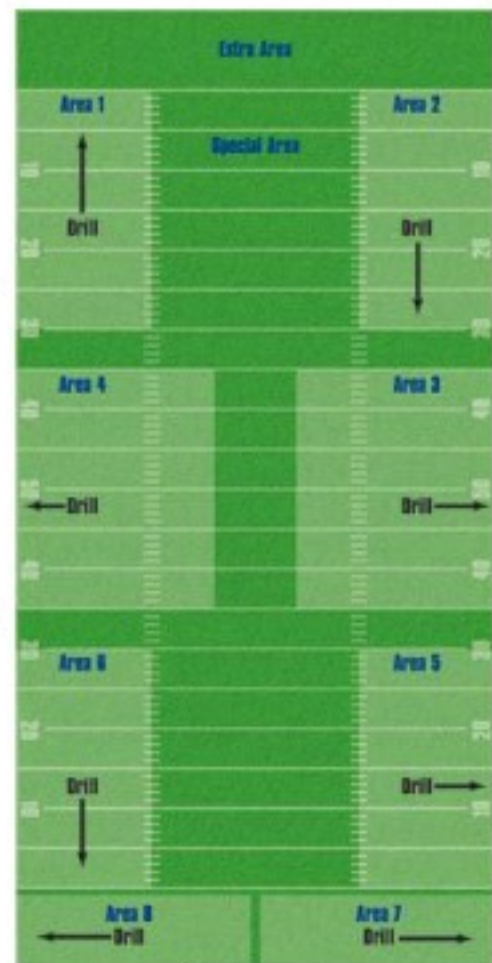
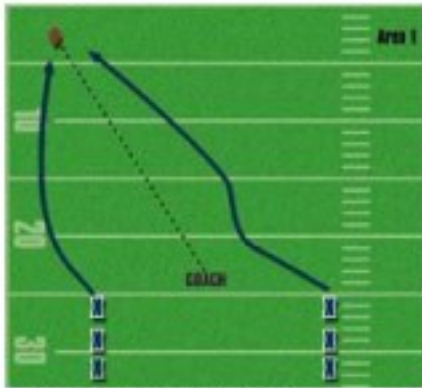


Diagram 1.

Diagram 2.



Area 1. Down-it-Drill



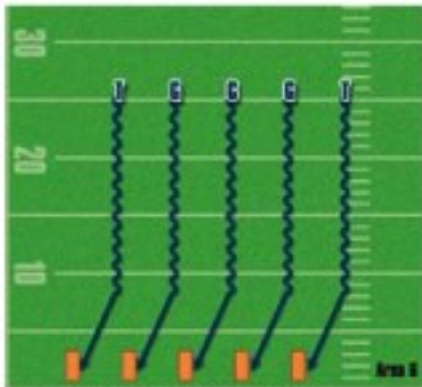
Area 2. You/Me Drill



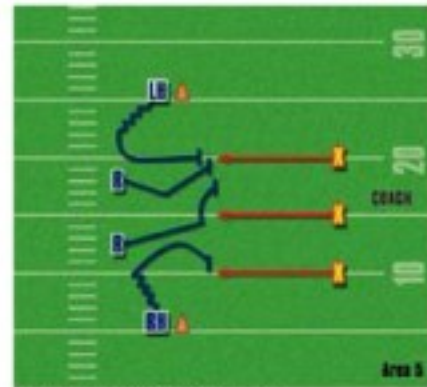
Area 4. 1/2 Line Drill



Area 3. Leverage Drill



Area 6. Landmark Drill



Area 5. 4-on-3 Drill



Area 8. Gunner Drill



Area 7. Jam Trail & Score Drill

Area 1: Down it drill - Gunners sprint to keep ball out of end zone by downing it, slapping it out of bounds, catching it, and doing whatever it takes to keep it out of the end zone. Change-up by having return man signal fake fair catches, or actually chasing punts. The coach should begin around the 25 or so, throwing it at first, then adding a punter or using a ball machine to mix up the velocity and height of the ball.

Area 2: You/Me drill - The gunners are bumped and mirrored by the DB for 10-15 yards. We tell ours to carry them to the cone and release to the return. The return men must communicate with a "You-You" or a "Me-Me" call. The Return Captain is the only one who talks when the ball is thrown or punted. The coach running the drill must make sure he is throwing the ball (or punter is "pooch" punting ball) 5-10 yards ahead of the gunners. We want to make sure we communicate the catch, make the block and avoid the odd color defender to the return.

Area 3: Leverage Drill - We've all done this one at some point with all five squeezing the ball but we eliminate a man, forcing our lanes to shift and squeeze on the run. Sometimes we eliminate two lanes. Once the coverage men engage the returner a coach yells out the lane number of the fallen coverage man. For example "3," if we eliminate the 2 and 3 he'll simply yell 23 or some other combination. Emphasis must be on keeping inside and in front leverage as the kick returner zig zags. The drill is done from the sideline to the hash using the yard lines as a lane pattern.

Area 4: Half-Line Protection Drill - The emphasis is placed on stance, technique, footwork and scheme. We continually mix up a 4-man or 5-man alignment and watch for unwanted space, shoulder turns, or lazy feet and hands. We use buzzwords consistently, emphasizing the "Stance, Split, Set, Strike and Sprint" execution phases of the punt unit.

Area 5: 4-on-3 Drill - This incorporates a kick-off return simulation. The emphasis is on communication, schematic changes on the run and block timing. With this drill we can kick out and double No. 1, drive and seal No. 3 and avoid 3 or switch it up to work our other returns. The drill area is 25-30 yards apart, the halfbacks and returners must be positioned at the proper width and depth for your own KO return scheme; that is why we use cones for start points. Keep in mind if you are a Wedge Return Team, or Man Return Team, this drill is excellent for whole-part-whole teaching with your back people. Change-up: Can be used as a 4-on-5 drill as well; just gear it to what you do.

Area 6: Landmark Drill - This is used to work on the break and attach phases of the KO return. At first we will run to our landmark break, drive and run through a pop-up dummy. As the drill progresses, we will use coverage men. The objective is to have our players understand spacing, assignment, landmarks and angles with returns to the right, left and middle.

Area 7: Jam Trail and Score Drill - This drill is used to work on our man-to-man punt-return scheme. We teach a jam on the line, a trail on the upfield hip, and a shield block on the inside number. As the coverage men engage the return, we read their hips and shoot our hands inside. In addition, we always emphasize to our returners to run at their own color and force the defender to break with them. Once this occurs the blocker can shield the defender, allowing our returner to get up field and score. Change-up: Make it live with open field tacking. Add two or more personnel or use with half-line drill (see Area 4).

Area 8: 2-on-1 Gunner Drill - This drill allows your gunners to work on releases. For example, use an inside release as if working numbers to the middle, or an outside release forcing leverage on the outside defender. Get hip-to-hip by using some combination of the rip or hand combatives, footwork and swim moves. The DBs must work together by staying flat and lateral on the jam. The two DBs need to communicate with each other on the way in which they want to force the gunner. They work on the press and jam technique as in Man Coverage. Once the gunner slips a defender he will get his eyes on the return man and work to the return side. The objective is to bump the gunner down the field and occupy him throughout the drill. To do this

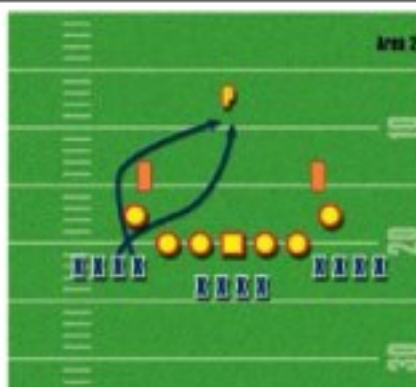
consistently can be the difference in securing a large chunk of field position. Remember to coach the Gunners and DBs simultaneously.

The second rodeo puts an emphasis on special situations and kick blocking (see diagram 3).

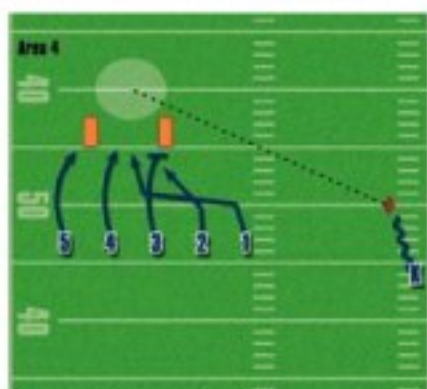
Diagram 3.



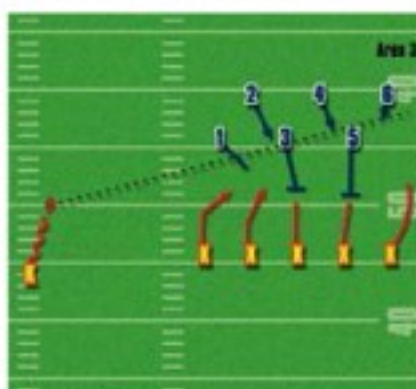
Special Area 1. Chaos Drill



Area 2. Punt Block Drill



Area 4. On-side Drill



Area 3. On-side Drill



Area 5&6. FG Block Situation



Half Line Kick Off Return

Purpose

To teach and practice kickoff returns. Evaluation of Players.

Description

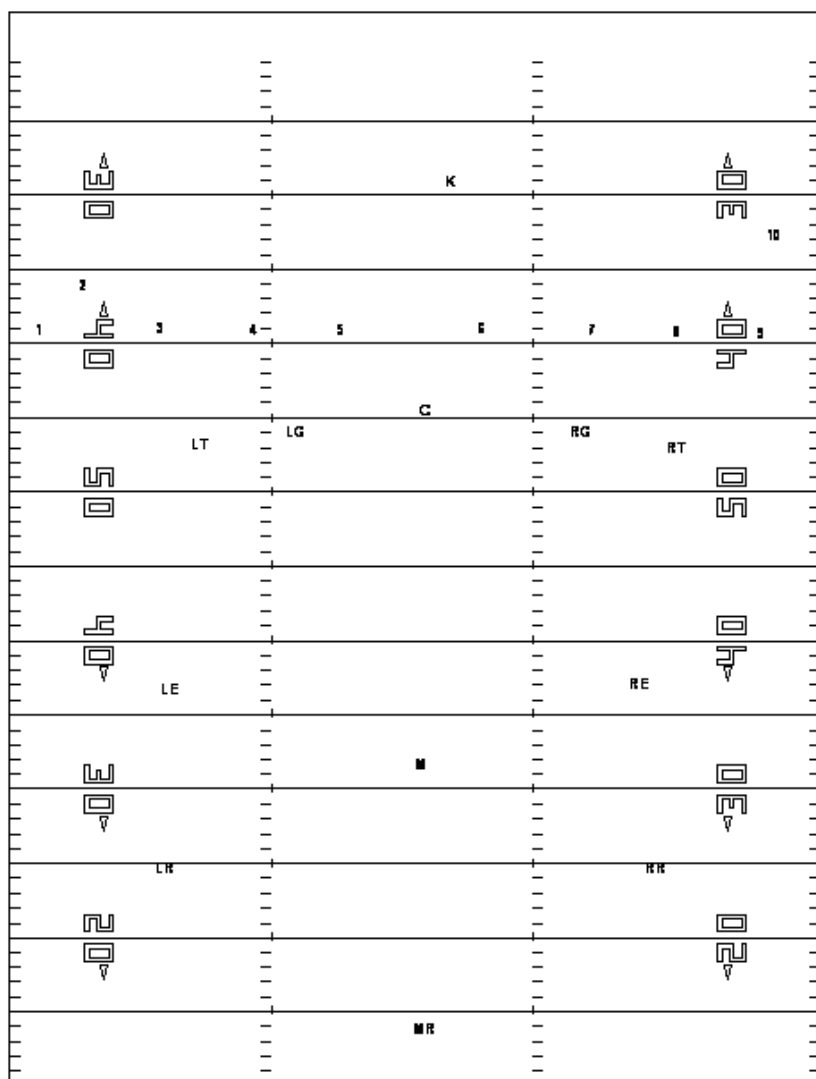
Based on the return split up the front line so you break up the field. This is so you can pin point who is doing the right job on the score team. Run all three returns Northern, Eastern, and Western vs. the opponent's kickoff. Each week there maybe a double team based on who the best player is on special teams.

Coaching Points

- Check for correct execution of each player

Equipment

- Footballs (Kicking Balls)
- Kicking Tee



Kickoff Return Half Line

Half Line Fieldgoal

Purpose

To teach and practice correct assignments and steps of the fieldgoal team members.

Description

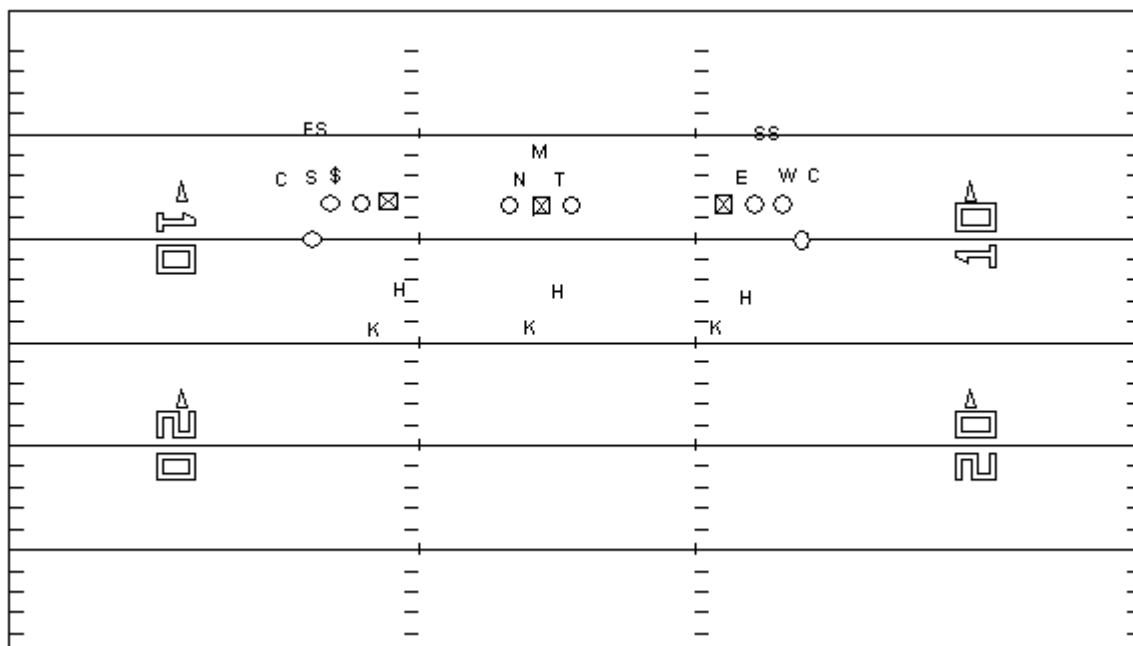
Working from left hash to right hash. You will need 3 holders, 3 long snappers and three kickers. This drill is done rapid fire so that you can get maximum reps. Each coach must spread around so that they can make sure each group is doing the correct responsibilities. After the kicker has made 3 kicks they will rotate to the next spot. You can also do this drill as a half line on each hash.

Coaching Points

- Rapid fire - so you get more reps
- Rapid fire - to accustom the snapper, holder and kicker to pressure

Equipment

- 10-12 Footballs (Kicking Balls)



Half Line Fieldgoal

Wedge Read Drill

Purpose

The purpose of the drill is for the score backfield to find their blocks and to help the return men find where the wholes of the wedge will be.

Description

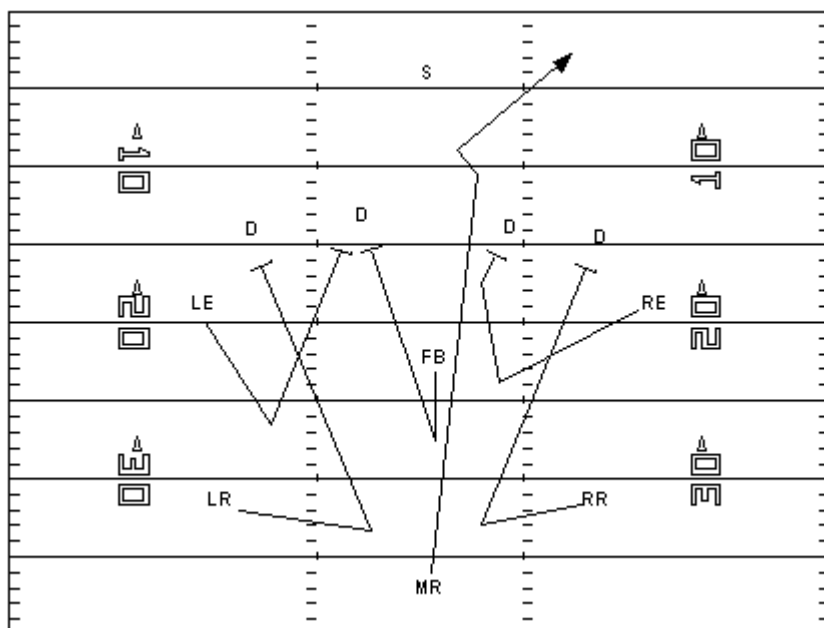
Run all three returns during this drill: Northern, Eastern, and Western. There will be a safety up field so the return man will need to make a move once he gets up field. The backfield blockers must hold their blocks until the whistle is blown.

Coaching Points

- Wedge must set up correctly
- Correct assignments of wedge players
- Blockers must hold their blocks
- Returner must make his read without slowing down

Equipment

- Handshields for Defenders
- Football



Wedge Read

Kickoff Return Blocking Box Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice the technique of the attack style front line attack to the Kickoff Front Line Players

Description

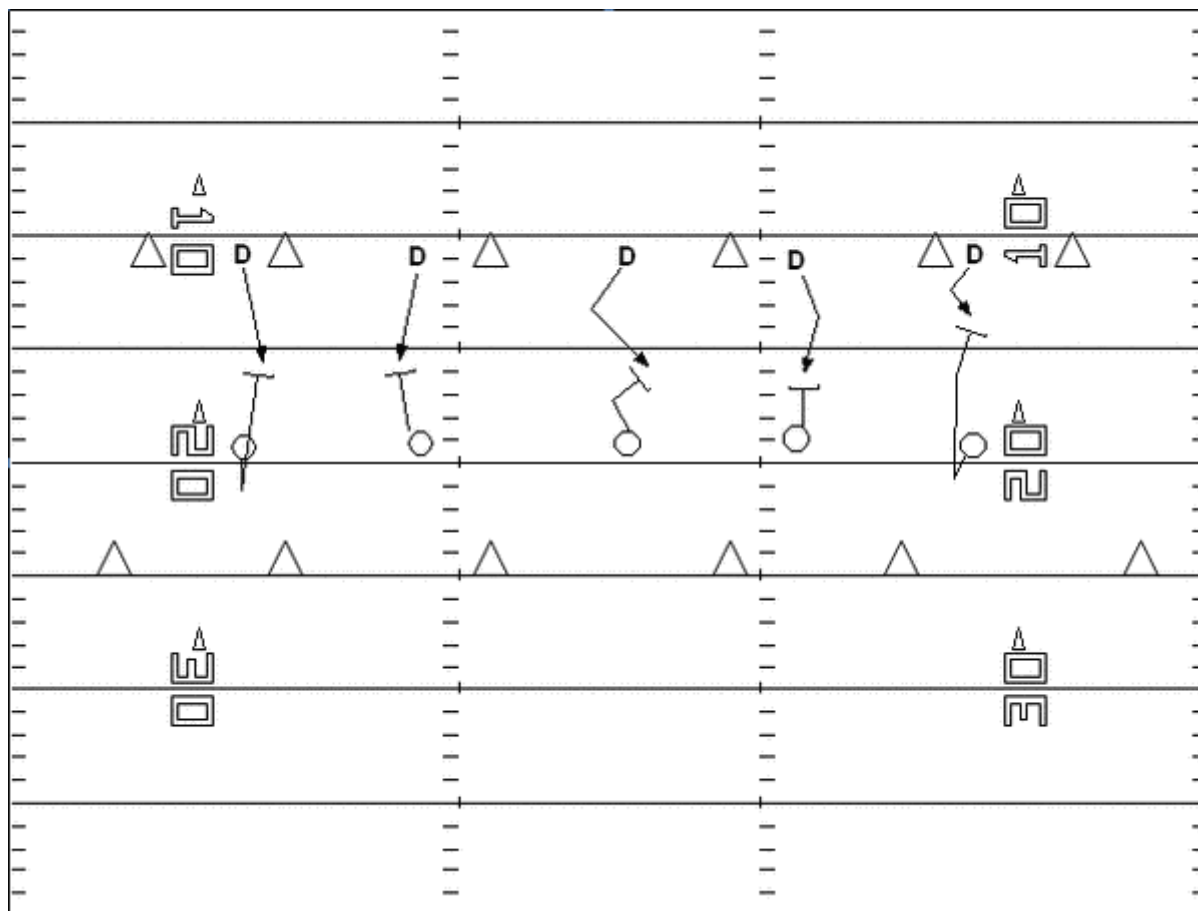
This drill is done with cones by making boxes 10-yards by 10-yards. The defenders job is to get by the offensive team member. The defender must get up field and make it as hard as possible for the offensive player. The offensive player will use our attack style front line attack. Their job is to lock up with the defender and force them to a sideline. You must continue to hold the block until the whistle blows. This drill can be done one at a time or as a whole group.

Coaching Points

- Work on good technique
- Correct angle to defender
- Maintain contact

Equipment

- 12 cones
- whistle



Box Drill

Half Line Punt

Purpose

To teach and practice correct assignments for the Punt Protection.

Description

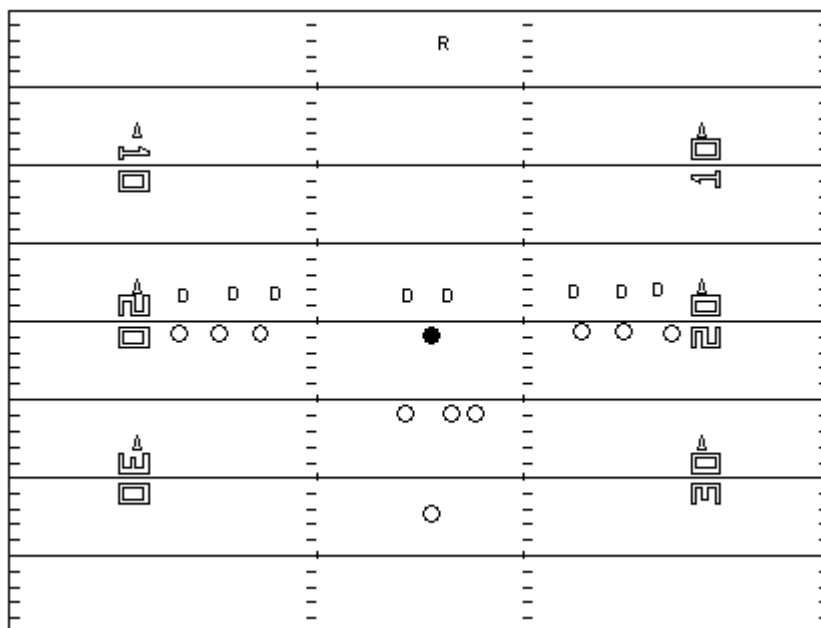
Split up the Pride team into three sections. Each group will go through their blocking responsibilities. The coach must change up the front. The idea behind this drill is to make sure everyone knows who they have. The shield must stay stout vs. the pressure. Punter must stay inside the shield.

Coaching Points

- Correct assignments
- Correct footwork

Equipment

- none



Half Line Punt

Punt Coverage Net Drill With Holdup

Purpose

To teach and practice getting into the correct coverage lanes when covering punts. By the introduction of the holdup-players the players of the cover-team learn to stay on their path even vs. blockers.

Description

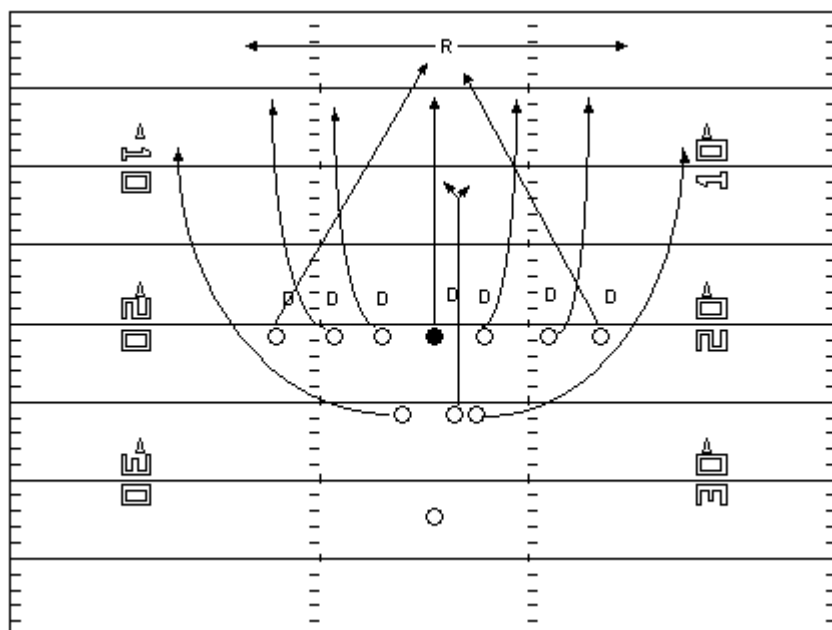
Net drill with holdup starts with a defender holding up each pride team member. The pride team must get off the block and get back into their coverage lanes. The punter will again throw the ball to the return man. The pride team will shuffle right and left with the return man and then each player will pin the hip.

Coaching Points

- Good release techniques help to get back on track
- Stress importance of correct paths into the coverage lanes
- Just tagging the return man gives the coach the chance to check if everybody is in his correct position.
- Tagging at the hip conditions the players on to aim for the right spot for tackling

Equipment

- Footballs
- Holdup Players (from the scout team)



Punt Coverage Net Drill With Holdup

Punt Coverage Net Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice getting into the correct coverage lanes when covering punts.

Description

Punter will throw the ball to the return man into the end zone. The pride team will get into their coverage lanes and breakdown the return man will move right to left and then up field. Pride team will tag the hip of the return man.

Coaching Points

- Stress importance of correct paths into the coverage lanes
- Just tagging the return man gives the coach the chance to check if everybody is in his correct position.
- Tagging at the hip conditions the players on to aim for the right spot for tackling

Equipment

- Footballs

Punt Coverage Net Drill

Bucket Step Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice proper Punt Protection Blocking.

Description

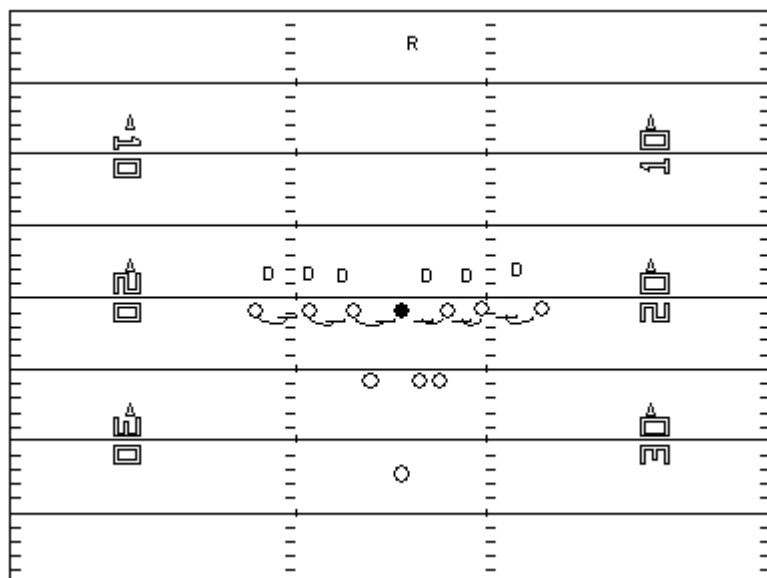
Defenders will line up in the gap. The O-line will take their bucket steps to cutoff the defender and force them into the shield. After the linemen pushes the defender into the wedge and will continue up field 5-yards.

Coaching Points

- Blocker has to keep his balance
- Correct Foot placement

Equipment

- none



Bucket Step

Chase and press Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice avoiding blocker and making a save open field tackle.

Description

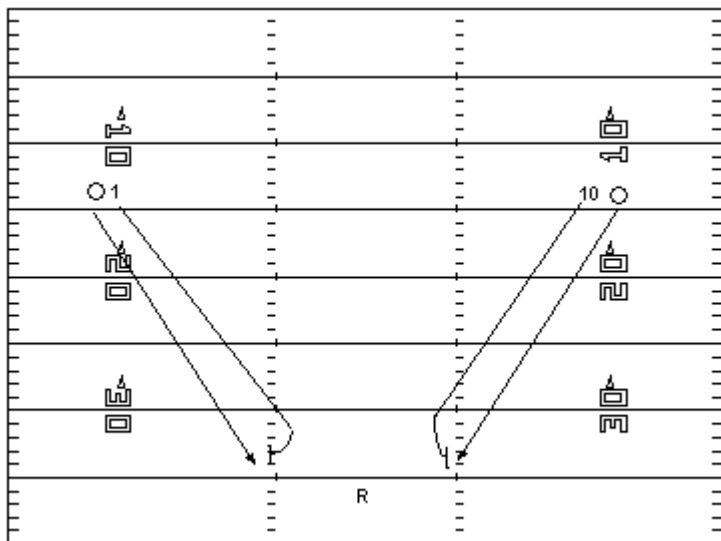
Tackler will start at the cone and sprint 5-yards. Coach will point at which blocker to come at Tackler. Tackler will give a move (Rip/swim) and find return man. Return man will go left or right and tackler must wrap up and drive him back.

Coaching Points

- Work on good technique on blocker
- Correct angle to returner
- Stress importance of save tackle

Equipment

- 4 dots
- 2 cones
- Footballs



Chase and Press

Cross Face Tackle Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice pressing the man up field and locking on.

Description

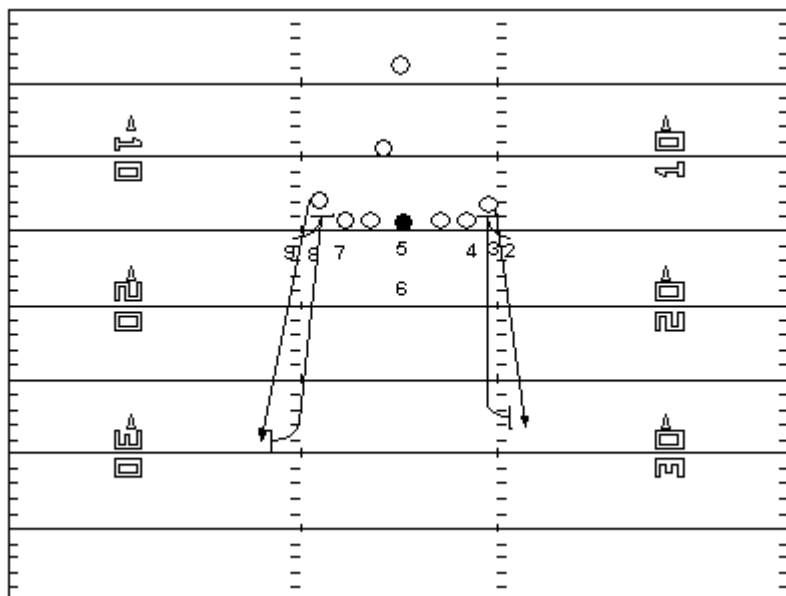
Practicing Husky return. Starting with the wings the 2 and 9-man will attack and force them to the outside. They will practice pressing the man up field and locking on. If there man releases they must chase and force them to the sideline. The tackles will go next with the 8 and 9-mans. The guards will go next with the 7 and 4-man. The last group is the Long snapper and personnel protector. The 5 and 6 man will attack them and force them to a sideline. After everyone has done it one on one the whole group will do it together 2-3 times.

Coaching Points

- While rushing be alert for the release of your man.
- After the release always maintain your inside position when blocking

Equipment

- Scout Players
- Footballs



One-On-One Hold Up

Run The Hoop Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice taking the correct path when trying to block a punt.

Description

Split into 3 groups. One person will go at a time out of each line. You can use dots or bell dummies to mark the splits. Outside defenders will attack up field and then run the hoop tight to the block point. The 5 and 6-man will rip up field and work to the side of the punter's leg. Make sure they do not run into the punter. The coach will be the punter and make sure that the defenders block the ball correctly.

Coaching Points

- Running to launch point, so they don't run accidentally into punter
- Check for correct hand placement

Equipment

- 6 dots
- 2 hoops
- 3 Footballs

Run the Hoop

Hand placement Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice correct hand placement when trying to block a punt.

Description

Defender stands a 1-yard from the coach and motions his hands like he is running. The coach will then hold the ball and pretend to punt football. Defender will place hands on the block point and block the football.

Coaching Points

- Since this drill is already reduced to the minimum, just focus on correct placement of the hands

Equipment

- 4 Footballs for each line

Hand Placement

M

i Shoot Drill r

Purpose

To teach and practice making a save open field tackle.

Description

Tackler and Return man stand 2 yards apart. Return man will move and tackler will form up. Tackler will grab and drive legs and finish the tackle. Each player will go one at a time and continue until coach blow the whistle. Great form tackle drill!

Coaching Points

- Stress importance of correct tackling position

Equipment

- 6 agile bags
 - Footballs
- Shoot Drill

D

Cross Face Tackle Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice avoiding blocker and making a save open field tackle.

Description

Tackler will start at the cone and sprint 5-yards. Coach will point at which blocker to come at Tackler. Tackler will give a move (Rip/swim) and find return man. Return man will go left or right and tackler must wrap up and drive him back.

Coaching Points

- Work on good technique on blocker
- Correct angle to returner
- Stress importance of save tackle

Equipment

- 4 dots
 - 2 cones
 - Footballs
- Cross Face Tackle

Lane/Tackle Drill

Purpose

To teach and practice discipline in staying in position on Kickoff-Coverage and making an open field tackle.

Description

Tackler starts on the numbers and takes off and sprints to the first hash and will avoid the first blocker (rip/swim). Get back in your lane and avoid blocker. Return man will go right or left and tackler will wrap up and make the tackle.

Coaching Points

- Work on good technique on first blocker
- Get back into lane as soon as possible
- Don't get out of position when avoiding second blocker
- Correct angle to returner
- Stress importance of save tackle

Equipment

- Hand Shields
- Footballs

Lane/Tackle Drill