

Running Backs Drill Catalog

University of Missouri-Rolla

1. Fight The Stripper

Objective: To teach the RB how to keep from putting the ball on the ground.

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 RBs

Drill: The first running back has the ball and the second RB is the defender. The defender holds on to the RBs shoulder pads with one arm from behind while trying to strip the ball loose by ripping it out, punching it from underneath, or chopping at it from the top. We do this for 15 yards or so. Once we complete the 15 yards, the RB and defender switch and do the same thing coming back. We will do this drill with either one or two hands on the ball to simulate all situations. This is done at a jogging pace.

2. (45 Degree) 1-2-1

Objective: To teach the RB how to properly switch the ball from one arm to the other while reinforcing the idea of keeping the ball in the outside arm.

Equipment: 1 ball for each RB

Drill: RBs all start out going at a 45-degree angle towards the sideline. Every time they come to a yard line (every 5 yards) they turn and run at a 45-degree to the other sideline. Each time they change direction, the ball should be moved from the outside arm (1 arm on the ball), become covered by both arms (2), finally into the "new" outside arm (1 arm on the ball). We carry this out for about 25 yards or so. This is done at full speed.

3. Drop And Recover

Objective: To teach the RB how to recover from a leg shot and still be able to run.

Equipment: 1 ball for each RB

Drill: Every 5 yards the RB must drop his hand, put it flush to the ground, snap his head back up, and recover into a running position. This is done for about 15 to 20 yards. We do the right hand going in one direction and the left hand coming back. This is done at a jogging pace.

4. Spin, Drop, And Recover

Objective: To teach the RB how to recover from getting hit during a spin and still be able to run.

Equipment: 1 ball for each RB

Drill: Every 5 yards the RB must spin to the outside, as he comes out of the spin he will drop his hand (left hand if spinning to the right), put it flush to the ground, snap his head back up, and recover into a running position. We will spin to the right going up the field and then spin to the left coming back. It is important that the RB protects the ball as he spins.

5. Spin Upfield

Objective: To teach the RB the proper way to spin while also being able to avoid the second tackler.

Equipment: 1 ball for each RB

Drill: Every 5 yards the RB must spin up the field. When we spin, we don't want to spin in place, but want to continue to gain yardage. We must continually gain ground and be able to avoid the hit from the second defender closing in on our location.

6. Outside Zone

Objective: To teach the RB how to read and react on the outside zone play.

Equipment: Ball, big bag

Drill: Place a bag where TE (or whatever the aiming point would be for your zone play) would be aligned. The bag represents the TE. As the RB reads the zone block by the TE he must make his cut accordingly. If the bag works for width, he must get inside it. If the bag works inside or gets pushed off of the line, then he must get outside of it. It is important that the coach watches the cut made by the RB. The RB should not break his feet, come to a stop, or round the cut. This is a full speed drill.

7. Inside Zone

Objective: To teach the RB how to read and react on the inside zone play.

Equipment: Ball, big bag

Drill: Now the bag is place where the play side guard would be and represents the DT. If using the Gun, the RB must line up opposite the play side. If the bag works for width, the RB cuts inside. If the bag works inside or gets pushed off of the line, then the RB stays outside of it. This is a full speed drill.

8. Lead Toss Drill

Objective: To teach the RB how to set up and then react to the block by the pulling lineman.

Equipment: Ball, big bag

Drill: Now the bag is placed where the OLB would be and represents the OLB. The RB takes the pitch and reads the action of the OLB. If the OLB works into the backfield or for width, then the RB cuts inside. If the OLB gets pushed off of the line or works inside then the RB stays outside of it. This is a full speed drill. It is important that the RB works to try and set up the block by pushing for width immediately.

9. Skip Cut

Objective: To teach the RB how to bounce without turning their shoulders to the sidelines.

Equipment: Ball

Drill: Because this is a specific type of cut, we need to work on this by itself. As the RB attacks the LOS he will skip cut to the outside. It is important to make sure the RB doesn't get too high on the skip and expose his pads too much. We also have to make sure he is keeping his pads square to the LOS as the cut is made. The skip cut is a sideways move and can be very effective in allowing us to bounce one hole wider while still being able to stay square and accelerate up the field with power. After the cut, the RB must accelerate up the field. Later, the coach can incorporate somebody with a hand shield just past the LOS to hit the RB after he begins to get up field. If the RB is square, there won't be a problem. This is a full speed drill.

10. Stutter Step

Objective: To teach the RB different ways to escape from the LB.

Equipment: Ball

Drill: Because this is a specific type of move, we need to work this by itself. The RB begins to run towards the LOS with another RB being the shadow LB. At some point, the RB must make the decision to either cut inside or stutter step the LB. If he is running even with a defender, all we have to do is step at him, dip our shoulder quickly, and this will cause the defender to kill his feet. Immediately after making the move, the RB must accelerate up the field. This is a full speed drill.

11. Sideline

Objective: To teach the RB how to get pushed while still getting up the field. It is important for the RB to know how to get square after being hit.

Equipment: Ball, 3 hand shields

Drill: Three RBs will be the defenders with hand shields set up on a 45-degree line every 5 yards. The last hand shield should be set up about 4 yards from the sideline. As the RB gets up the field, he gets hit, pushed, and bounces outside. This is a full speed drill.

12. Blaster

Objective: To teach the RB how to run hard, take shots, control his pad level, and still get up the field.

Equipment: Ball, blaster

Drill: The ball can be tossed or handed to the RB. After getting the ball, the RB must attack the blaster and run through as quickly as possible. This drill can be done with either one arm or both arms on the ball.

13. Fox Drill

Objective: To teach the RB the details of the screen game.

Equipment: Ball, hand shield

Drill: The bag is set up as the call side tackle. The RB attacks the inside hip of the DE, gives it a great shove to the outside, turns expecting the ball immediately, catches the ball, and then turns over his inside shoulder to get up the field.

14. Triangle (Pass Pro)

Objective: To teach the RB the proper protection reads at full speed.

Drill: You need a RB and 2 defenders. The defenders should be set up as an inside LB and an outside LB to the same side of the field. The coach can tell the inside LB to blitz, the outside to blitz, both, or neither. The RB must make the read on the run and attack the correct LB. If nobody comes, then the RB should be in the inside hip of the playside tackle. If both LBs show, the RB must make a call and attack the edge stunt immediately. The LBs can show blitz and bail, show and come, or come from depth. This is a full speed drill to contact.

15. RB Routes

Objective: To teach the RB the proper way to run routes, making reads, and catching the football.

Equipment: Ball

Drill: The coach simply reviews how to run the routes and then throws the routes to the RBs.

16. Best Move

Objective: To give the RB reps at his best escape technique.

Equipment: Ball, hand shield

Drill: A defender is set up in a hole (5 yards wide) or in the open field with the RB. The RB can use any move he wants: shake, stutter, skip, spin, or stiff-arm to try and escape the defender. The defender will only try to hit the RB with the hand shield. The RB must make his move and continue to get up the field.

17. Stiff Arm

Objective: To teach the RB the lost art of the stiff arm.

Equipment: Ball, hand shield

Drill: The RB begins to run at the defender. As the defender closes in, the RB must deliver a blow with a stiff arm to the hand shield and continue up the field.

18. Slip Screen

Objective: To teach the RB his steps and which way to turn on this screen play.

Equipment: Ball, hand shield

Drill: The defender with the hand shield is set up as the DT. On the snap, the RB attacks the hand shield, directs it to the outside, turns to the inside, catches the ball, turns over the inside shoulder, and gets up the field. This is a very quick hitting screen, so the drill needs to be equally quick. The coach should deliver a pass to the RB to make it more realistic. To change it up, the hand shield can become a D stunt that the RB has to work off of.

19. WR Screen Blocking

Objective: To teach the RB his blocking assignment on this screen.

Equipment: Hand shield or big bag

Drill: There are two ways that we block the WR Screen. 1. The defender must be set up either as the corner or OLE. On the snap, the RB will attack the defender and block him to the outside. The RB must be aggressive but not get beat. 2. The RB must step up and cut the big bag. The RB must be extremely aggressive and get to what would be the outside leg.

20. Cones (Run Through)

Objective: To teach the RB basic cutting skills while stressing proper ball placement.

Equipment: Ball, cones

Drill: Set up the cones about every 3 to 5 yards but only a few steps off of the center line for each cone. The RBs will have to change direction slightly each time. Every time they change directions, they must switch the ball to the outside arm. We don't want the RBs to have to make radical changes.

21. Cones (Hard Cuts)

Objective: To teach the RB balance and confidence.

Equipment: Cones

Drill: Set up the cones about every 2 yards and place them three or four steps off of the center line for each cone. The RBs will now have to make a hard cut to get around the cone. As they go to cut around each cone they will drop their inside hand and pivot. This must be done as fast as possible. For a change-up, you can add a ball into the mix so they have to keep switching sides, but this makes for a very difficult and more advanced drill.

22. Gauntlet

Objective: This is a combination drill which creates the most realistic look you can get in normal drills of an actual play for the RBs. It teaches cutting, switching the ball, running with power and good body lean, and then a move at some point to stay alive.

Equipment: Ball, cones, blaster, hand shield

Drill: There are three parts to this Cones (run through), Blaster, and Best Move. You can set it up so they work in any combination of the three. But, at some point, they must run through the cones, attack the blaster, and then make their best move on the coach holding the hand shield. Again, it can be done in any order.

23. Short Yardage

Objective: This is the best look we can create for either a play gone bad where there is a defender right on top of the RB, or as a goal line/short yardage look where the RB must help to become part of the push into the line.

Equipment: Ball, blaster

Drill: Stand at the edge of the big bags on the blaster and hand the ball to the RB. He has very little time to gain speed and must run through the blaster.

24. Cut Drill

Objective: You can not cut your own players but you have to make sure that you are able to rep this basic skill which is used on several different plays. This is the best way to make sure that happens.

Equipment: Big bag

Drill: The big bag is set up where ever it needs to be (OLB, ILB, DE, or DT) to represent a player on a specific play. The coach tells the RB what the play will be, sets up the bag, then the RB must attack the bag and cut it. It is important that the coach makes sure the RBs are cutting the bag properly. We want to attack the bag at thigh height, throw our arm through the knee, and then roll through the block. The coach has to make sure we are also cutting with the proper shoulder and that we attack the inside or outside leg depending upon the play.