



OREGON STATE BEAVERS

LINEBACKER TECHNIQUES

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Linebackers**





**OSU
DEFENSE**

LINEBACKERS:	<i>PERFORMANCE CHART</i>						
<u>CATEGORY</u>	<i>PLAYER NAMES</i>						
	<i>BRAY</i>	<i>ELLISON</i>	<i>SCOTT</i>	<i>DARKINS</i>	<i>COOK</i>	<i>DARLIN</i>	<i>DOGGETT</i>
TOTAL PLAYS							
<i>Tackles (+2)</i>							
<i>Asst Tackles (+1)</i>							
<i>Tackle for Loss (+3)</i>							
<i>Sack (+5)</i>							
<i>Take Two (+1)</i>							
TOTAL TACKLES							
<i>Tattoo (+2)</i>							
<i>QB Harass (+2)</i>							
<i>Big Hit (+4)</i>							
<i>Big Play (+3)</i>							
<i>Caused Fumble (+5)</i>							
<i>Recovered Fumble (+5)</i>							
<i>Deflection/ Break-Ups (+3)</i>							
<i>Interception (+6)</i>							
<i>Blocked Kick (+6)</i>							
<i>Saftey (+4)</i>							
TOTAL XTRA POINTS							
<i>Missed Tackle (-1)</i>							
<i>Loaf (-3)</i>							
<i>Mental Error (-2)</i>							
<i>Penalty (-3)</i>							
TOTAL POINTS							



A “PRO”

(A PROFESSIONAL WHO PLAYS FOOTBALL)

1. **Always early**

Needs to study on own: game plan, ready list, opponents film or notebook to prepare for start of day’s work.

2. **Mentally alert**

Adds to provided information by own additional observations.

3. **Mentally inquisitive**

Inquires of other players or coaches on their observations of situations.

4. **Mentally challenging**

Will not allow himself to error in practice - always reinforces defensive call with “reminders” prior to snap.

5. **Physically prepared**

Never tires in practice or game - motivates and pushes himself in practice - sprints to ball every time.

6. **“Competes”**

Thrives on challenges - the tougher the better. Especially one-on-one physical contests



1. Learns defensive scheme
2. Learns and habitize techniques
 1. Aligns properly and is ready to Adjust and play
 2. He always Finishes the play



*All good defenses have **GREAT** Linebackers! What we are looking for in our Linebackers at the OREGON STATE BEAVERS is a player who can **STUFF** the run with the athletic ability to cover both running backs and receivers in their routes. We must always **OUT HUSTLE, OUT HIT, AND BE MENTALLY TOUGHER** than anybody on the field.*

We look for the following characteristics in our Linebackers:

1. LEADERSHIP
2. GREAT FOOTBALL INSTINCTS
3. TOUGHNESS
4. ATHLETIC ABILITY
5. HATE TO LOOK BAD ATTITUDE

GENERAL:

There is not another position on defense that enables you to get as much action as linebacker. You are directly involved in the running game and must play a vital part in pass defense.

Because of the need for great linebacking in order to be champions, you must work harder than any other member of the football team must. Your time must be spent between run and



OUT HUSTLE

OUT HIT

BE MENTALLY TOUGH



A. Linebackers versus the Run and Pass

1. **Eyes**: The proper use of your eyes is as important to you as any other physical skill.
What a player keys and sees will help him react. You must see correctly in order to make the proper reaction.
2. **Feet**: Feet are important for every defensive football player. You can't be successful if your feet are slow.
3. **Hands**: Know how to deliver the "hand shiver" and where to "grab" the offensive player.
4. **Forearm/Shoulder**: We would prefer to use our hands, but sometimes the offensive play will dictate when we use a forearm/shoulder - valuable because of the size of opposing lineman.



ALIGNMENT

ASSIGNMENT

ADJUSTMENT



PRIOR TO THE GAME

1. Know and recognize formation and alignment sets.
2. Know individual and team strengths.
3. Know opponent tendencies.
4. Know our adjustments - game situations.

WHAT WE MUST BE AWARE OF DURING THE GAME

1. Know situation and time (down, distance, and field position).
2. During timeouts and on the sideline, find out where and how they are attacking.
3. Remember to loosen your depth on long yardage downs.
4. Remind team of opponent's tactics:
 - a. Draws
 - b. Screens
 - c. Bootleg
 - d. Delays
 - e. Reverses
5. Be a leader.

ALIGNMENT, STANCE, KEY, MOVEMENT

I. ALIGNMENTS

- A. **MACK** – Base, Align to execute
- WILL** - Base, Align to execute
- SAM** - Base, Align to execute

* Coaching Point - Your alignment may change according to coverage, backfield



II. STANCE

A. Most initial linebacker movement is made in a lateral direction. Therefore, the stance is a parallel two-point stance. Essentially, it is football's basic hitting positions.

B. The feet are shoulder width apart

C. Both heels are on the ground, but the weight is placed on the balls of the feet.

D. The knees are bent slightly.

E. The upper body is coiled, but not tense. The hands dangle at approximately knee level.

F. The eyes should be focused on the offensive key.

* ***Coaching Point*** - It is important to assume a stance that when you move laterally. You don't have to raise or lower yourself.

III. KEY

A. **Primary Key - Offensive Backs** - will provide basic read, we will Track him for our initial key, run to or away, or pass.

B. **Secondary Key** - Will be the offensive line.

C. We must know which back is our key ,prior to every `play we must identify if we are in or out of the box

WE MUST BE DISCIPLINED TO READ OUR KEYS AND REACT ACCORDINGLY EVERY TIME!



IV. MOVEMENT

A. Shuffle without crossing the feet, until you know where the ball is going.

- 1. Lean in the direction you want to go.**
- 2. Short jab step with the lead foot.**
- 3. Then slide the back foot laterally.**

B. Keep the elbows close to the body as you shuffle.

C. When the shuffle is not fast enough, it is necessary to run laterally.

- 1. Keep the shoulders parallel to the LOS and swing the arms naturally.**
- 2. Cross over with the back foot and open the hips, still keeping the shoulders parallel to the LOS.**

D. General thoughts regarding movement:

- 1. Turn the shoulders to run.**
- 2. Do not waste motion or become over-extended.**
- 3. All movement must be done with maximum effort.**



When you strike a blow it must be a coordinated explosion of the legs, hips, back, shoulder, and arm. It is essential in striking a blow to:

1. **Maintain a good base.**
2. **Keep the shoulders square.**
3. **Keep your head up.**
4. **Get chin under pad.**
5. **Unload - Do not catch.**

I. Blocker attacks above the waist - Deliver

1. **Shuffle and keep the leverage arm free.**
2. **Take a short step toward the Blocker with the inside foot.**
3. **Strike with the hands and lockout elbows up through the Blocker. The blow is struck with the palm of the hands under the Blocker's pads. Grip cloth lock out elbows.**

** Coaching Point - Do not wind up or waste motion as the blow is delivered.*

4. **The majority of your power will come from your hip snap and leg explosion.**
5. **Maintain a balanced position and do not over-extend.**
6. **Accelerate the feet upon contact with short, choppy steps, keeping the head up and the back arched.**
7. **Use the outside hand to push and throw off the offensive man. Do not stay blocked.**
8. **Keep the shoulders parallel to the LOS.**



II. Blocker attacks below the waist - Deliver hand shiver

- 1. Concentrate on the Blocker, but be able to see the ball carrier peripherally.**
- 2. React to the Blocker's head and slide in that direction striving to maintain leverage.**
- 3. Strike the Blocker's helmet and/or shoulder pads with your hands, locking your arms out, and thrusting your feet backward to gain separation. Try and get the Blocker's head turned.**
- 4. Keep the shoulders parallel to the LOS and be the first to move after separation.**
- 5. Use your hands when taking on Blocker in the open field.**



III. Dip and Whip

1. This technique will be used by the backside linebackers to defeat a cutoff block by the center or the guard, where the backs have taken a wide angle.

2. Give ground if necessary.

*** Coaching Point - Never give more than two yards, come under the Blocker.**

3. Dip the back shoulder and forearm and whip it through the Blocker's head.

4. Push off with the front hand, keeping the feet back.

5. Regain the ground lost and regain the proper angle on the football.

IV. Crack Block

1. Go under all crack blocks unless the Blocker is too flat to beat then use a dip and whip technique with the inside shoulder and forearm.

2. Turn shoulders and change up whether you avoid Blocker or run through the Blocker.

V. Shoulder Pull

1. This technique will be used when the Blocker has a cut off angle on you.

2. Strike the Blocker with your inside arm, working the outside 2/3's of the Blocker.

3. Pull hard with your outside hand on the outside pad of the Blocker, and get over the top of the Blocker.



VI. GAP FILL

- 1. This technique will be used when the Blocker has position on you and the ball carrier or second blocker is tight to the first blocker.**
- 2. Take the Blocker on right down the middle, make contact on the offensive's side of the LOS and explode through the blockers in the back field.**
- 3. Make the ball spill outside and backward, we must always go for the second man, weather he is a blocker or the ball carrier.**



I. PURSUIT

- A. Keep the ball carrier on your leverage shoulder against a wider play to your side.**
- B. Pursue laterally until the ball carrier has turned up field and then attack with proper leverage.**
- C. When the ball carrier goes away, maintain a position which will take away the cut back.**
- D. Make the ball carrier run in a lateral direction. Do not create a seam for him to run up field.**
- E. Take a deeper angle when the football is further away.**
- F. When you get to the ball, arrive in a bad mood.**
- G. Why do we pursue to the football? When we run to the football good things will happen like:
 - 1. Making a game saving tackle.**
 - 2. Making a hit that causes a fumble.**
 - 3. Recovering a fumble.**
 - 4. Making an interception.**
 - 5. Tipping a ball that causes an interception.**
 - 6. Throwing a block that breaks a runner on an interception.****



II. TACKLING

- A. A correct tackle results when the defensive man has collided with the ball carrier, where by the ball carrier is put on his back.**
- B. Stay square in a good football position when approaching the ball carrier.**
- C. Do not raise or lower yourself from a good hitting position. Hitters are knee benders.**
- D. Bow the neck, keep the eyes open and stay square with the ball carrier.**
- E. In tackling it is important to hit on the rise, by ripping the arms and shooting the hips through the ball carrier.**
- F. Accelerate the foot movement with the feet shoulder width apart and wrap the arms with authority. Grab cloth.**
- G. Always keep you head up and your back arched. Never hit with the top of your helmet.**
- H. Drive through the ball carrier and don't stop until the whistle has blown.**
- I. Also keep the following in mind in open field tackling:**
 - 1. Attack the ball carrier. Force him to make a decision. Take away a side and know where your help will come from.**
 - 2. When possible, use the sideline to your advantage by being under control and taking away the cutback.**



III. FUMBLE RECOVERY

- A. When the ball is on the ground, we must dive after it by extending our arms, pulling the ball into our body, and lying on our side in a cradle position.**

- B. When recovering a fumble on the sideline make sure to use your body as screen to keep the ball from going out of bounds.**

- C. When the ball is on the ground and you can scoop the ball, secure the football and score. If their doubt of recovery possession of the football is primary.**



I. LINEBACKER RULES REGARDING RUN RESPONSIBILITY OFF THE BALL

**A. If flow comes to your side, play fill responsibility. Fill to the
V of the neck of YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

**B. If flow goes away, play flow to partner's gap. Play over the top or cut back depending on run entry
assignment.**

C. When playing fill, attack the ball carrier with leverage, moving toward the LOS.

**D. When playing your gap, strike through the face with the inside or outside arm keeping your other arm free,
and force the ball
carrier back to your help.**



II. LINEBACKER PROGRESSION

A. In order to maximize our success as linebackers, it becomes necessary to follow a series of progressions. The following is the progression for running plays.

1. *READ* - Recognition of the key and reaction to it.

2. *MOVEMENT* - Proper footwork needed to get to your area of responsibility.

3. *STRIKE* - Utilization of the upper body and lower Body to defeat a Blocker.

4. *HOLD or AVOID* - Staying in control of the Blocker until the ball has declared or avoiding Blocker to get to ball carrier.

5. *SHED* - The quick acceleration off the Blocker to the ball carrier. The utilization of the hands and feet are critical.

6. *PURSUE* - Relentless desire to get to the ball.

7. *TACKLE* - A collision and take down between the linebacker and ball carrier.



Always key the most reliable player to initially direct your movement. A correct initial reaction to your key is vital if you are to make the play.

We will place keys into two categories:

A. Primary - The key which is the most reliable to initially give play direction to you.

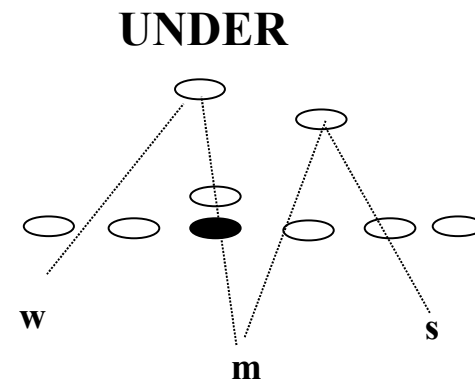
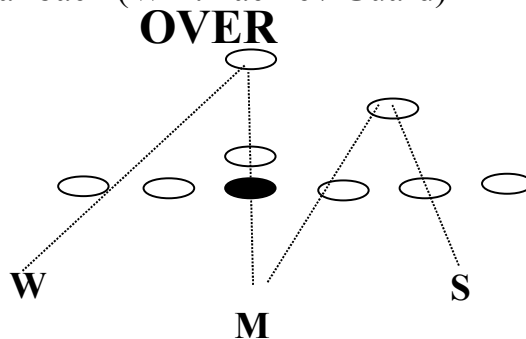
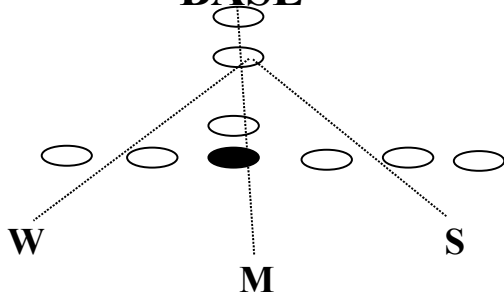
B. Secondary - Keys which will help you determine run, pass or where your play entry will be and how fast you should react.

Mack, Sam, and Will Keys (Base / Over/Under)

Look to the near back across pads of the offensive line. You must focus on the back and track his path, this will take you to your assignment.

A. Primary - Near back, or backs

B. Secondary - Guard, far back (Will: Tackle / Guard)





B. MACK / WILL/ SAM - in the “box” (Tackle to Tight End)

1. Keying:

a. Vision back key to playside guard. Pass responsibility and backfield set will influence keying. Your initial key will only trigger your first step. You must continue to key and locate the ball. You now play through your specific responsibility or attack point on L.O.S.

2. Basic Reads:

a. Tight Read - Backfield action is hard into A or B gap.

b. Perimeter Read - Backfield action is quick and outside.

c. Stack Read - Backfield action is less direct, but still inside and has cutback potential. The ball can hit anywhere inside the box (Tight End to Tight End).

d. Away Read - Backfield action is away from you. Ball can hit from the far A-gap to outside.

e. Counter Reads - Backfield action starts in one direction and ball carrier hits in the other direction.



3. Basic Tools

- A. **Stance**: The proper stance permits quick and powerful movement in any direction. Each individual will have subtle differences in their stance.

Base - Feet should be no wider than shoulder width. Feet should be parallel - can have slight stagger. Toes pointed up the field - heels behind toes.

Weight - On balls of feet with heels slightly raised.

Body - Legs slightly bent. Keep back slightly arched and head up. Height of stance is regulated by the bend in the knees.

Arms - Bent in a natural position, fingertips may be on thigh.



A. General Principles in Zone Coverage

1. Initial Drop Technique

a. Aiming Point

Every time we drop we will have an initial aiming point, We will relate to a receiver In coverage. The outside backers will relate to the number 2,3 receivers and the middle backer will relate to the number 3 receiver. We must slide to the receivers and not work for depth and look for new 2's and 3's underneath and check quaterback.

b. Vision Point vs. 3- Step QB Drop (“90 / 90”)

On any 3-Step drop by the QB, we can be a factor, but the receiver must be located (“visioned”) by 6 yards into his route. This usually is by the 3rd step of LBer drop. We must recognize formations and call out alerts to jump patterns.

2. Pass Key (Pattern Read)

On every zone drop, the LBer (inside/outside) pass receiver to key. Once the key is established, this will determine the angle of the drop. This angle will put the LBer in a better and faster cover position on a receiver. Remember, a pass key can only go:

- 2 or 3 Inside
- 2 or 3 Outside
- 2 or 3 Straight
- 2 or 3 Block
- 2 or 3 Release across formation in the backfield



3. Disrupt Receivers

Disrupt receivers anytime it is possible without disrupting your own drop. Be sure to communicate the receivers route to other defenders, especially crossing routes. Get to position quickly.

4. Head on “Swivel”

Once the pattern is read and the LBer is in the throwing lane, the head must get back to the QB and the ball. **Final Read in Zone is QB** to break on ball. Stay low in your stance with **shoulders forward**.

“Zone” close enough to threaten receivers to catch the ball. **Do not “Zone” empty area - Zone to receivers. Do not defend “grass”.**

5. Steel 2nd Base

When we key the **set and transfer** of the Quarterback we must treat him as a Pitcher that we are trying to get a jump on to steel 2nd base in baseball.



5. Breaking on Ball

The LBer must work back to QB, since the receiver is usually working back to QB. Be sure to get the ball at its highest point. You must sprint to the ball in the air - no matter where you are in relation to the ball and/or receiver.

6. Intercept

Catch the ball with two hands and concentrate on front tip of the ball. After catch **secure** the **ball** and get **outside the #'s** **immediately**.

NOTE:

The QB sets at various depths. This will determine the depth of the receivers route. We must recognize the set, transfer, and release by the quarterback.

3 Step Drop = Short / Quick Routes (5-6 yards)

5 Step Drop = Medium Routes (8-12 yards)

7 Step Drop = Deep / Crossing Routes (15+ yards)



C. General Principles of Man Coverage

1. Receiver Concentration

In M/M, the LBer must concentrate on his man totally. The exact positioning will vary based on where help is coming from in the coverage. Concentrate on the base of his numbers.

2. Help

There are basically three ways to play M/M - help inside, help outside, and no help. Your positioning will vary based on the help - but your techniques will remain basically the same. Always know where your help will come from.

3. Make Tackle

Always be in position to make the tackle - never be out of position to make the play



D. **Basic Coverage Techniques in M/M**

1. **Footwork**

Take short, quick steps. Shuffle as long as the receiver is vertical - never cross over. Shuffle forward early to get in “position” with proper footwork (try not to open gates and let receiver have a free release).

2. **Position**

When holding an inside position, “form a wall” and never allow the receiver inside. Extend the arms and catch the receiver. Don’t allow the receiver into your body. If the receiver gets his shoulders into you, he will be able to explode away. When you feel this technique, use your palms as cushions, “glue” on the receiver - do not give him a hard surface to use as a launching pad. Make sure you stay low, bend at the knees and ankles and keep your feet alive.

3. **Closing on the Receiver**

Once the receiver has committed, sprint to him. Close the cushion. Look to the receiver and don’t look for the ball until you are close enough to touch him. Once you can touch him, get in-stride, work your hips to the receiver and look to the QB.



4. Closing to the ball in the air

When the ball is thrown, accelerate and meet the ball at its highest point. If going for interception, get the ball at its highest point (work hips tight to the receiver). If the receiver is too far from you - catch up!

5. Strip Receiver

When making the tackle on the receiver, make certain you “strip” the arm you are closest to and drive the arm down. Be sure of the tackle - “strip and wrap”.

6. Block for man who intercepts

Block the intended receiver, he normally makes the tackle. A block on him usually means a long return.



E. M/M Coverage - LB's

1. Concentrate on base of #'s and hips of your man.
2. Know where you will get help.
3. Get to 2 yards from receiver quickly.
4. Build a wall on inside 3/4's of his body with shoulders square.
5. Soft catch receiver. Get inside hand on his inside hip.
6. Sprint to proper coverage position on receiver. ("Do I convert" or know when to convert").
7. Get control of your man
8. Strip and wrap or intercept.



A. General Points

1. Get off the ball quickly. A good start is critical - limit lateral movement. Keep feet moving at all costs. Keep hands inside Blocker's hands. Don't stop so you have to re-start. Keep separation from Blocker and be sure not to lose sight of the QB. Feel the Blocker and see the QB! If you make moves too soon, then Blocker can recover. If you make the move too late, you will be close to the Blocker and he will get into your body and hold.

B. Specific Pass Rush Technique - Have A Plan!

1. Speed Rush

Sprint up field, and once even, or just pass Blocker's shoulder, dip your inside shoulder and squeeze pocket to QB. You may step inside early to set the speed rush up. Once the drive to the QB has begun, if you are getting driven past the QB but are still closing on the QB, **reach** to the QB with the **outside** arm. If being driven by the QB and not closing on the QB:

A. Plant the outside foot and execute **ice pick move** and come under Blocker.

B. Plant the inside foot, lean into the Blocker and **spin under** to QB. Rip outside elbow and fist hard into the Blockers back.

When to use speed rush:

Use vs. slow "setter"



2. Counter Club Rip Technique

Drive to Blocker, step fake inside - then club outside hand on outside shoulder and “Dip / Rip” inside arm under Blocker’s armpit and close to the QB.

When to use Club Rip”

Use vs. extremely large Blocker

Use vs. blockers that are overly conscious of protection of the inside gap

Use vs. blockers that set too high

3. Swim Technique

Step - Fake Grab and Swim Past - Turn Blocker’s shoulders with a step fake inside, jump back outside and execute swim opposite the turn. **Grab cloth** behind outside shoulder pad, pull and go by, keep hips facing to QB!

When to use Swim:

Use vs. Blocker who is single blocking with no help.

Use vs. Blocker who turns his shoulders quickly, or over extends.



CLUB (GRAB) SWIM

- A. Time your stunt - don't give the stunt away unless stunt requires.
- B. Lineman - Back settles on you.
- C. Drive outside arm to his outside shoulder. Get your eyes in his ear hole.
- D. Work to half a man.
- E. Grab cloth and turn your shoulders. Release inside hand and pull down his shoulder with your outside hand. Throw your inside arm over his shoulder, clear your hips and step through.
- F. Get off the block.
- G. Point toe to Quarterback.
- H. Accelerate off the move to the Quarterback

ICE PICK SPIN

- A. This move can be used when the Quarterback rolls or scrambles. It also can be used as a counter move
- B. After your first move, stop and spin back into the Blocker.
- C. Point your elbow to his rib cage, then drop your hand to push off.
- D. Get off the block.
- E. Point toe to Quarterback.
- F. Accelerate off the move to the Quarterback



4. Power Rush

Use when you are stronger than Blocker or he is a soft setter (I.e., back) - Just get head up. Dip and explode. Lock out and keep separation. Drive Blocker into pocket and into QB. It is critical to keep feet moving in this technique. As you approach QB, reach with outside arm - if you can't, push Blocker into QB.

POWER RUSH

A. Time your stunt- don't give the stunt away unless stunt requires.

B. Lineman - Back settles on you. Drive both hands under his shoulder pads, get your chin under his pad level, punch and lockout elbows.

C. Accelerate your feet with quick steps, lower your hips and drive him backwards.

D. Move to Quarterback.

E. Always work to half a man!

5. Step Over

Anticipate “Chop” block, especially being blocked by a back. Step over to the side (low shed) and regain lost ground.

6. Chop Rip

Vs. a strong tackle who uses hands well. Turn chest away from him maintain separation - chop downward on wrists and immediately convert to rip under and turn into QB.