

## **Safer and Surer Tackling**

### **Written Guide to Safer Surer Tackling**

(Title is used by permission from Hugh Wyatt)

This document was created as a source document to compliment the “Safer and Surer Tackling” method that Hugh Wyatt advocates on his outstanding training video. You can find that video for sale at [www.coachwyatt.com](http://www.coachwyatt.com).

#### **Reasons for Methods:**

1. Safest Method
2. Kids won't need to relearn latter – now taught at most colleges and high schools
3. It's effective because it will minimize many common problems:
  - Taking eyes of the target
  - Arm tackling
  - Leaving feet
  - No lock up
  - No foot movement or drive
  - Not staying between the ball and the goal line

#### **Principles – Derived from Bud Wilkinson**

1. Coaches' job is to remove fear.
2. Teach tackling half speed over and over until they are really good
3. Rarely take ball carrier to ground
4. Do full contact only when they're really good and confident

#### **Form Tackling Technique**

1. Hit: breakdown position; knees bent, tail back, arch back, neck against helmet, eyes up
2. Fit: numbers on numbers, helmet to the ball side, eyes to sky, upper body between ball carrier and goal line
3. Lock: at instant of contact; wrap arms around ball carrier's arms, lift his shoulder pads off
4. Lift: forward thrust of hips; drive your hips through the ball carrier and it will create lift
5. Drive: use legs; upper body locks in, move ball carrier back or to the sidelines

## **Drill Principles**

1. Do not take ball carrier to ground; instead DRIVE FOR 5
2. Insist on successful reps to build confidence
3. Match drill participants by size and ability
4. Start as many as possible with practice snaps alternating between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> string QB/Center.

### **Drill 1 - No Pads; Piggy Back to Check Stance**

- Tackler in hit position
- Partner jumps on back
- Hold for 3 count

### **Drill 2 – No Pads; Form Tackle**

1. Runner – stand erect, hands together behind back, head up
2. Tackler
  - Hit position
  - 1 feet from runner
  - Lock, lift, drive for 5
  - Arch back and keep eyes to the sky

### **Drill 3 – No Pads; Form Tackle with Shield**

1. Wyatt suggests this on 2<sup>nd</sup> week of camp
2. 4 lines, with 4 runners holding shields
3. Runner – begin standing holding shield just below chin; back peddle upon contact with moderate resistance.
4. Tackler
  - Hit position
  - Lock, lift numbers on shield, eyes to sky
  - Drive for 5
  - Coaching point: This just like drive block drill (Wyatt’s Drill)

### **Drill 3A – Form Tackle with Shield (This drill and all below with pads)**

1. Runner - move forward into contact; shield just below chin; provide moderate resistance
2. Tackler, same as Drill 3

### **Drill 3B – Form Tackle from Back Peddle with Shield**

1. Tackler – back peddle 5 yards with eyes on target
2. Tackler reverse direction and runner and tackler run toward each other
3. Form tackle with drive for 5

### **Drill 3C – Form Tackle Up/Down with Shield**

1. Tackler – back peddle 5 yards, drop to ground, pop up, then do Drill 3B

### **Drill 3D – Form Tackle Wave Drill with Shield**

1. On GO from coach, runner and tackler side step to left 3 to 4 steps in fit position, on second GO, they go to the right for 3 to 4 steps, on the next GO they go left, on HIT, they execute Drill 3A.

### **Drill 4 – Form Tackling**

1. Do this at least once every day at practice. 3 lines of runners go to tackler line and vice versa
2. Everyone get a partner
3. Insist on sound technique – if not good, go to back of line
4. Runner – stand erect, hands behind back, give a small jump up and allow yourself to be carried
5. Tackler
  - Chop feet at start
  - Hit position
  - 6 feet from runner
  - Lock, lift, drive for 5
  - Coaching point: arch back and eyes to sky

### **Drill 5 – Pancake Drill for Tackling**

1. Set up 4 blocking dummies or a mattress for a pad.
2. Runner – stand at the edge of the pad with shield over bottom of face mask
3. Pancake drill just like blocking drill except execute tackling fundamentals (Wyatt's Pancake drill)
4. Runner put up some modest resistance and allow pancake

### **Drill 6 – Goal Line Tackling**

1. Wyatt's favorite drill
2. Tackler and runner must keep head up
3. Coaches AND players must be confident before doing this drill
4. Tackler
  - Heels on goal line
  - Attack on command
  - Stay between runner and goal line until whistle blows
5. Ball Carrier
  - Fit position one yard from tackler with arms ready to receive handoff
  - Run through tackler, not side to side, head and eyes up
6. Coach
  - Give ball to ball carrier to start drill
  - Blow whistle when momentum is stopped or a score occurs

### **Drill 7 – Over the Top**

1. Place blocking dummy sideways with players face down one yard from dummy
2. Tackler with palms on ground
  - Attack on command
  - Stay between the runner and the goal line until the whistle blows
3. Ball carrier face down holding ball with both hands
4. Coach start drill with snap count or center snapping to QB adjacent to blocking dummy

### **Drill 8 – Roll Over Drill**

1. Head to head on back
2. Ball carrier holding ball with both hands
3. Stress keeping head and eyes up
4. Coach start drill on GO or QB/center practice snap

### **Drill 9 – Shiver and Shed Drill (No Ball)**

1. Lay down 4 blocking dummies about 2 yards apart each
2. At snap or coaches command, blocker and tackler meet in first "hole", after contact quickly go back and run into second "hole"
3. Blocker use drive block technique/progression
4. Tackler – stress keeping outside arm free and helmet outside ball carrier's helmet; (Shed technique/progression)
5. After last bag, blocker becomes the runner
6. Tackler head to outside, lock up, drive for 5

## **Drill 10 – Sideline Tackle Drill**

1. Set up shields in triangle with points A and B about 10-12 yards apart with point C about 15 yards away; Coach stand between points A and B
2. Ball carrier and tackler stand behind points A and B
3. Coach pitch to ball carrier who runs to point C
4. Tackler
  - Stay square
  - Helmet in front of ball carrier
  - Run through ball carrier in T-Bone position
  - During and after collision: stay on feet, drive, try to lock up
  - While trying to lock up **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Turn neck and look into runner's rib cage

## **Drill 11 – Open Field Tackle Drill**

1. Ball carrier and tackler in hit position, each about 10 yards from blocking dummy that's set up perpendicular to line between players
2. On READY, both start chopping feet, on GO move forward to 5 yards and pause with feet chopping
3. Coach stands behind tackler and points left or right
4. Ball carrier goes that direction
5. Tackler begin sideline tackle
  - Stay slightly inside (behind) ball carrier
  - Take shortest route to T-bone collision
  - Helmet in front and run through ball carrier
  - While trying to lock up **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Turn neck and look into runner's rib cage
  - Don't need to finish him off – stop momentum and help will come

## **Drill 12 – Fill Drill**

1. Set up 4-5 blocking dummies about 2 yards apart
2. Ball carrier and blocker stand at end of first dummy about 2-3 yards behind it
3. Coach signal a lane for ball carrier to run through
4. Ball carrier
  - Both hands on the ball
  - Stay relatively upright with head up
  - Run sideways then run through "hole" as signaled by coach
5. Tackler

- Prevent the cutback by staying slightly inside (behind) to set up T-bone and close in to not give room for cut back
- Stay square
- Closest holes are more head on, further ones more sideline

### **Drill 13 – Eye Opener Drill**

1. Ultimate test of tackling skill; if kids struggle with this back up to simpler drills
2. Set up 4-5 blocking dummies about 2 yards apart
3. Ball carrier and tackler start in middle of dummies about 2-3 yards behind them
4. Ball carrier starts one direction (say  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of way to end of dummies) then reverses direction. Reverse direction again when  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of way to other side
5. Tackler mirrors runners movements
6. Coach yells GO and runner goes to hole and tackler meets in hole and drives until momentum is stopped and Coach blows whistle
7. Ball carrier
  - Both hands on ball
  - Eyes up and stay relatively upright

### **Drill 14 – Reed’s Side Tackle Drill**

1. Set up dummies like pancake drill
2. Ball carrier and tackler start about 3 feet away from pads
3. Ball carrier run perpendicular to tackler half speed not resisting
4. Tackler ensure head is in front of ball carrier and execute form tackle
5. Drive, lock, and lift (locking under the arm pit which will expose the ball to a strip) and pancake runner into pad