

# HEADSETS



WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 1

**HIRING A  
SUCCESSFUL  
STAFF**

*recruiting*  
**101**

**PLAY FAST  
KEYS  
TO  
SUCCESS**



# TABLE of CONTENTS

KEYS TO HIRING A SUCCESSFUL STAFF	2
JUST GETTING STARTED	3
DEVELOPING A SYSTEM	4
EVALUATING YOUR COACHING STAFF	5
PRE-SNAP DL STEMS/MOVEMENTS	8
BREAKING DOWN RECEIVER STANCES	9
PRE-PRACTICE OFFENSIVE LINE CIRCUIT	10
USING STATISTICAL ANALYSIS TO EVALUATE YOUR SPECIAL TEAMS	13
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PLAY BLACK SHIRT DEFENSE AT PALMETTO RIDGE HS	14
PLAYING FAST: KEYS TO SUCCESS	15
THE ORIGIN STORY	19
MY & GOLD BEACH'S DEFENSE AND WHY	20
IF/THEN OFFENSIVE PLAY CALLING FROM THE FIELD	22



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The coaching community is one of my favorite groups of people on the planet. When 2020 hit and our worlds and careers all changed, it was amazing to see how many coaches were able to work to help others. Adapting is not a word I have enjoyed much, but 2020 taught me, and all of us, that much good can still come from a bad situation.

My personal journey changed dramatically during quarantine and I made connections with coaches not just all over the US, but all over the WORLD! These connections would never have happened without quarantine. And because of these connections, I met several talented coaches that I am so glad to partner with to bring what we hope is a great tool for all coaches. These coaches have committed their time to give back to this community and I hope you are able to gain from their material.

The goal of this newsletter is for each coach to have an area they can glean from. We will cover everything in football coaching from the basics, to drills, to head coaching, to strength and conditioning, and of course cover some scheme in offense, defense, and special teams. Feel free to also reach out to me at [FBCoachSimpson@gmail.com](mailto:FBCoachSimpson@gmail.com) with any questions you may have.

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# PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

## KEYS TO HIRING A SUCCESSFUL STAFF



**Jeff Steinberg**  
Beaumont High School  
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Over the course of my career, I have been fortunate enough to have had success as Head Coach at five different high schools.

There are a variety of factors that go into a Program being successful, however, in this newsletter I would like to touch on one important consideration – the Coaching Staff.

Running a successful program takes a great deal of energy and effort every single day. However, the Head Coach cannot do it alone. In order to have an Elite Program it is imperative to surround yourself with great Assistant Coaches. A dynamic Staff, each with a complimentary skill set, will help maximize your Program. I have had the task and great fortune of assembling incredible Staff at five different high schools. If you are a High School Coach you will understand, that in many instances, when taking a job at a new school, you will not be able to bring your previous Staff with you. This is especially true if the school is in a different geographic location OR if there are not any certificated/classified Positions readily available at the school site.

At each school I have assembled a Coaching Staff comprised of a combination of; Coaches being retained from the previous Staff in addition to new Hires. As a result of trial and error early on in my career, I have developed an overall philosophy when bringing on new Coaches while retaining ones from the previous Staff. This philosophy ensures that I look for three important qualities in Assistant Coaches:

1. Above all else, Coaches on our Staff must be passionate about working with today's youth. Football is the "hook" with which we use to teach our players lessons about life and which can be readily applied. Given this, our Coaches must be able to connect well with kids and understand the current world that young men and women grow up in. Today's youth are growing up in the most challenging of times and it stands to reason that great Coaches should understand this so that they can guide and mentor them accordingly. In this regard, Coaches can be confident in helping young adults navigate their way through life's challenges and to not take any challenges personally.

2. It is of utmost importance for me, as Head Coach, to have a crystal-clear vision for the entire program. Everyone on Staff must be on board with my overall coaching philosophy & vision and be able to clearly communicate this on a daily basis. This vision must be communicated in a maximum of twenty-five words. This ensures that it is not only clear but also concise. When people are unclear as to what your vision is, it is difficult if not impossible to support you. Before I finalize bringing a Coach on Staff, I have to ensure that they fully understand my vision and overall coaching Philosophy. Through the interview process, I take the time to ensure that each potential Coach understands my Vision and what they will do to support it. It's important to have Staff comprised of people who are willing to put in the required effort & work on a daily basis. Energy vampires need not apply. Great Coaches are not only terrific at identifying problems but also dynamic at helping resolve them. I always provide coaching candidates, as well as others that ultimately come on board, with documentation so that everything is clearly laid out. This includes; what to expect from me, the expectations we have of our Players and what is ultimately expected of them. The Coach's Manual serves as an Operation Manual for Staff and has kept everyone on the same page successfully for many years.

3. Every Coach on our Staff must be competent and capable of doing an incredible job of transferring knowledge to Players. They must have a thorough understanding of the skills related to their specific Position Group in addition to a fully understanding our Schemes. I always look for individuals who possess a great understanding of The Game yet are continually on a quest to learn more. Great Coaches are great Teachers. They are extremely detailed in their planning yet find simplicity in transferring this knowledge.

Ensure you are doing your due diligence when hiring Coaches. Be organized in your interview with the questions you ask, the flow of the meeting and the length of time the interview will run. Be sure to have conversations with their professional references. Once you select a Coach to join your Staff, they should always meet with your Athletic Director and be required to fill out district paperwork. The district vetting process is necessary prior to any Coach ever stepping foot on the field with student-athletes. This is a legal requirement. Ensure it is followed.

Every person on your Coaching Staff should understand the role they play in a Program's success and the impact they can have in a young adult's life. I have found that in using the three qualities outlined above to hire Assistant Coaches ensures that our Program operates at a very high level, with both great Player-Coach interactions as well as incredible Staff chemistry.

# RECRUITING 101

## JUST GETTING STARTED



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### Introduction

Over the next year I will be taking you through the recruiting process and sharing with you the best practices for student-athletes, coaches and parents. Before I begin let me preface by saying, THERE IS NO SET FORMULA IN RECRUITING! What School A is looking for in a QB, School B isn't, and what School C believes the ideal size for an OLB is, School D has a totally different opinion. Way too many factors come into play with each and every school, but there are practices you can incorporate to better your chances at being recruited. At the end of the day, there is a school out there for EVERYONE; you just need to find which one fits best!

### I WANT TO PLAY AT THE NEXT LEVEL...

The dreams to play in college are something student-athletes all across the country share. An opportunity to continue playing the sport one loves after graduation is an incredible accomplishment, but where to begin?

### ACADEMICS

The recruitment begins and can sometimes end in the classroom. While the NCAA and other organizations have a minimum academic requirement, each school individually will carry their own. The pursuit of a student-athlete could come to an abrupt end if that individual doesn't come close to meeting the academic standards laid out by the institution. Upholding above average grades, keeping close to perfect attendance, and making sure there are little to no instances of being tardy should be all the expectation for the players in your program.

### ATHLETICS

The question to ask your players is this, "Did you do everything you possibly could to better yourself and the team out on the field?" As we know, this goes way beyond the Friday nights. Was every rep hit in the weight room? How about on the field, were all sprints finished all the way through? Was there goofing off going on in practice when everyone should've been locked in to the instructions given?

All of this and more will equate to what will be put on tape, and we know all too well that the FILM DOESN'T LIE! From there, honest conversations need to be had in regards to level of play. As coaches we always have their best interest at heart, and while we don't ultimately know what the college coach could say, we should offer up our honest opinion on what level fits them best. This can ensure they have the best, and most opportunities to play in college.

### ATTITUDE

This is the CHARACTER CHECK of the player. College coaches absolutely value what us coaches have to say about our guys, but they're also going elsewhere to find out about the student-athlete. Being the recruiting coordinator at my high school and speaking with many different college coaches, they've made it very clear they will go to others for their opinion of an individual player. Everyone from admin, to custodians, clerical staff to teachers and everyone in between; a coach will dig deep to see if you truly fit what they're looking for. The standards and values of the program must be upheld by every individual associated with it, so the student-athlete being recruited must be carefully evaluated in all areas beyond the on field production.

### CONCLUSION

What I plan to share with you is by no means the only way of doing things. These will just be the tactics we utilize that have worked for us at my high school. Since taking over as recruiting coordinator in 2017, we have sent 26 kids to play college football; 19 in the past two seasons. All of that may be subjective, but the reality is, our kids have gained more positive exposure and received more opportunities since we changed our approach. Our entire coaching staff does a heck of a job for all our kids and it has certainly paid dividends.

The recruiting process is an ever-changing game that requires all associated to evolve with it. Just like wanting to get stronger in the weight room, you have to be willing to put in the time and effort. Let's continue doing right by our kids and maximize our efforts so that the student-athletes we are blessed enough to coach, can fulfill their dreams of playing at the next level!





# PRACTICAL ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

## DEVELOPING A SYSTEM



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Social media has been great for coaches to grow their knowledge in terms of Strength Coaches adding exercises to their regiment or Football Coaches adding schemes to their playbook. It can however become paralyzing in terms of how much information is out there. In this regard it's important to develop a system where this new information can fit. One thing I have done in terms of our exercise selection is to group exercises in the following categories. Horizontal presses, vertical presses, horizontal pulls, vertical pulls, unilateral lower body movements, bi lateral lower body movements, dynamic movements and weighted carries. Each training session we do with our athletes has a movement pulled from each of these broader categories.

Each training block for each of these categories I select three exercises that fall into these categories. I have many more exercises overall, hundreds quite frankly but for each individual block (generally 4-6 weeks) only three are selected from each. This allows the kids to learn the movement, progress the movement and allows your coaches to actually coach and observe in the weight room rather than explaining

Horiz Presses	Vertical Presses	Horiz Pulls	Vertical Pulls	Unilater Lower	Bilater Lower	Dynamic	Carry
Bench	OHP	B.O.R	Chin up	RFE SS	Front Squat	OH MB Toss	Single Arm OH Carry
DB Bench	Lunged single arm OHP	Bird Dog Row	Plate upright row	Skater Squat	Goblet Squat	Clean Pull	Farmers Walk
Push Up	Hammer Grip DB OHP	Chest supported row	Shrug	Elevated Pistol	Lateral Lunge	Hang Snatch	Medball Walk



new exercises every single day. While you could build a solid program based on just these movements below, for your kids to not get bored and to not plateau I recommend changing some of the movements every 4-6 weeks. Some such as bench or front squat may stay in the program year round (they don't have to) but the others can be swapped out freely.

Pretty much any exercise I learn over the course of a year or see can be categorized into one of these movements. From here if I see something I like or want to implement I now have somewhere to put it according to what it is rather than just simply throwing it into the program randomly. Another suggestion is to create an album on your phone titled "things to implement". Think of how many things a year we as coaches run across and screen shot but then never utilize, rather it be a scheme, an exercise etc... It is good to not implement every single thing we see of course but a lot of times we are missing out on adding something good to the program by simply forgetting about it. From my end I want these articles to be simple and direct, I want coaches to be able to take this information and actually put it to use rather than giving you a bunch of ideas and science that you cannot do anything with!

# COACHING RESOURCES

## EVALUATING YOUR COACHING STAFF



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I constantly get asked the question, "What do you do when it's not football season?" I laugh and say something like, "well it never really stops." In order to keep your program vision and culture advancing, there can be no off-season for the Head Coach. Since most football coaches are working year-round now, it is more important than ever that you identify the things that will positively affect your program. During January-July, while there are no games being played, the roots of your program can grow.

One of the things I do in the early part of the off-season is evaluate our coaching staff. This evaluating happens formally and informally. We are very fortunate to have a great coaching staff. Our administration is extremely supportive and we have been able to hire quality men and coaches. We have several men on our coaching staff who have been coordinators or head coaches, as well as many who are just starting their career.

Now entering my 11th year as a Head Coach, it is becoming clear to me that "coaching the coaches" is a big part of success. We must use all of the lessons we are given during the season to grow and get better.

### STEPS FOR COACHING STAFF EVALUATION

- Coach completes Evaluation
- Coach schedules a conference a few weeks after the evaluation
- Post-Evaluation Conference occurs
- Follow up informal conferences

### COACH EVALUATION

A week or two after our last game of the season, I send out an evaluation to our coaches. We do this through Google Forms, but you could do it with pen/pencil or e-mail if that is your preferred method. This evaluation is comprehensive and consist of two parts: Program Evaluations and Individual Coach Self-Evaluation.

#### Program Evaluation

The coaches rate their opinion of our production on scale from 1-10 (10 being best). They also comment on what went well and what we need to work on within each of the following categories:

- Total Program
- Offense
- Defense
- Special Teams
- Strength & Conditioning
- Practice Schedule
- Game Day Schedule
- Scouting Schedule
- Sub-Varsity Teams
- Booster Club/Fundraising
- Academics/Character Ed
- College Recruiting
- Injury Prevention & Management
- Facilities & Equipment
- Community Relations
- Use of technology
- Player Intangibles

#### Self-Evaluation

Each coach is asked to answer the following questions honestly: How would you rate your ability as a coach to evaluate a player's strengths and weaknesses?

How would you rate your ability as a coach to know the scheme at your position?

How would you rate your work ethic as a coach?

What did you think were your strengths this year?

What did you think were your weaknesses this year?

What are some things you want to work on in the coming year?

What are some things the Head Coach can do to help you in the coming year?

A good football coach is able to evaluate player's strengths and weaknesses, understand the scheme, and is extremely hard working. We have identified these 3 qualities as the basic for our coach self-evaluation. Each coach rates themselves on that a 1-10 scale on these 3 traits. The Head Coach should also rate each coach on these and any big discrepancies should be discussed.

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### 2017 PICKENS FOOTBALL PROGRAM EVALUATION

[Click here](#) to see our actual Evaluation that each coach completes:

#### POST-EVALUATION CONFERENCE

After completing the online evaluation, the coaches then schedule a time to meet with me to review their responses. We also use this time to discuss any issues or ideas that either of us have for the coming year. The majority of time in each conference is typically spent focusing on the coach's answers to the three self-evaluation questions. The conferences follow this agenda:

Discuss any unique answers they had to the Program Evaluation – this has been very helpful for our total program at beginning positive dialogue.

Discuss the answers to each question on the Self-Evaluation

Discuss any notes or points the Head Coach needs to make

Provide the opportunity for the Coach to ask the Head Coach questions

We always have great dialogue in these conferences, and leave with a renewed sense of purpose for the next season. Obviously, if you have a coach in need of a formal performance improvement plan this can be the time for that as well, but we are fortunate to have men who have always wanted to improve and have used these conferences as a chance to get better. The Head Coach sets the tone in these conferences by listening and genuinely showing interest in what each coach has to say, while maintaining focus on the vision and mission of the program and working toward improvement.

#### FOLLOW UP INFORMAL CONFERENCES

The most important aspect of your coaching evaluation will be the follow up process. This is where most people accidently lose sight, and end up making the same mistakes each year. I truly believe all coaches are trying to win and trying to grow their program and be successful. Sometimes the ideas on paper just do not get translated to the field and the locker room. This is a struggle for everyone. Therefore, we have to constantly make an effort to ensure we are making the adjustments and positive improvements identified during the evaluation process. It is the Head Coach's responsibility to hold everyone to the standards that were set in the post-evaluation conference.

#### Example of Follow ups:

If most coaches wrote that the offense struggled on the goal-line, ensure they are working on goal-line offense during the season.

If you determine that a coach is going to work harder on his

special teams' responsibility, you must follow up and encourage him to do so as the season progresses. Don't wait until the next evaluation and let remain a key concern.

If a coach says he wants to learn more about strength and conditioning training, get him signed up for a course and remind him of clinics in the area.

When the calendar shifts from "off-season" to "in-season", everyone becomes really busy and it is easy to repeat mistakes. I try to make it a point to read the notes from all of the evaluations at least once every 2 months. This helps me to remember what we said we are going to do and motivates us all to keep working on those key improvement areas.

Remember, most coaches want to work and want to be successful. Use their self-evaluation as a tool to guide them to be a better coach. When they become a better coach, the entire program gets better!

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is no "off-season" if you want a successful program. We have to use the time when games are not occurring to get bigger, stronger, and faster in the weight room. We also have to use this time to grow as a coaching staff and learn from all opportunities that have been presented. We are constantly trying to evolve as a program and meet the changing needs of players and coaches. This evaluation has worked for us, and we continue to make updates each year. Our school is in the middle classification in Georgia and I would assume these principles would still apply to larger or smaller coaching staffs. I am always looking for ways to improve. If you have a great idea for evaluating coaches or have questions about how we do things, please contact me and let's talk some football!



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# DEFENSIVE RESOURCES

## PRE-SNAP DL STEMS/MOVEMENTS



Adam Gaylor  
Jenks HS - Oklahoma  
2020 State Champions  
Defensive Coordinator  
@CoachAdamGaylor

### Overview

"Stemming" or pre-snap defensive movements by the defensive line have been around in football for quite a long time. However, recently they have been utilized to create negative plays for the

offense, often without playing the down. For us, over the past two years, we have added defensive stems to our toolbox we have used to create tackles for loss (TFL's) and negative plays for the offense.

### Goals

**Create Confusion for the Offense:** Defensively, we want to be able to move from an odd-spaced front (3-4 Tite/Mint/Okie) into an even-spaced front (Heads front w/2s, Over front). This allows us to change how the offense can target us in various run schemes as well as pass protections.

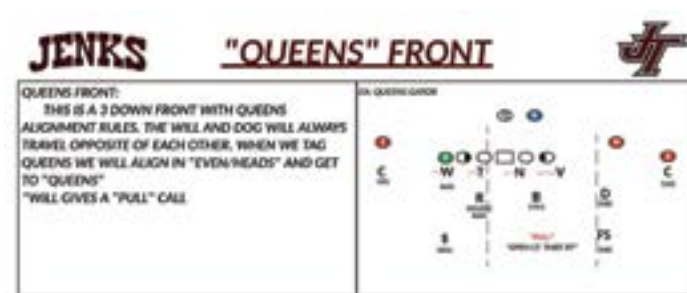
**Create Negative Plays:** Stemming the front pre-snap can create negative plays by increasing the opportunities for TFLs by confusing the offensive blocking schemes. Stems can also lead to negative plays by increasing the chances of drawing the offense off-sides.

**Limit Offensive Play Menu:** By being able to stem in and out of odd and even-spaced fronts and still have the ability to run stunts, movements, pass rush games, and pressures, we feel like we limit the number of offensive plays we see.

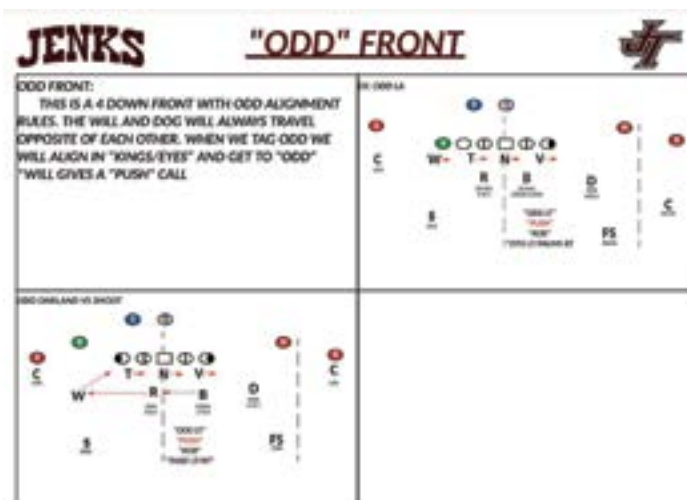
### How we call it:

Instead of putting both fronts into the call, like "Eyes Move Even" or "Heads Move Eyes". We utilize one name to align in one front and stem to another front. The words we use are "Queens" and "Odd".

Our base odd-spaced front is called "Kings" or a 4-0-4 front. We use the term "Queens" to from an even-spaced front, "Even or Heads", to our "Kings" front. Our Will LB will make a "Pull" call to stem the front to Queens.



Two of our even-spaced fronts are "Even" and "Heads". Our ends play either a 5 or 6 technique based on surface. Our Nose and Tackle play 2 techniques. To stem from an odd spaced front to Even or Heads we use the term "Odd". We will start in our Kings or Eyes front and with a "Push" call from our Will LB.



### Results

#### Efficiency:

In calls where we stemmed the front, we were 70% efficient. Basically on 1st Down, we gave up less than 3 yards. On 3rd or 4th downs, we didn't give up a first down.

#### Negative Plays:

In 54% of the snaps in which we stemmed our front resulted in either a no gain or negative play for the offense.

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# FOOTBALL 101

## BREAKING DOWN RECEIVER STANCES



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Football is a game of tendencies. Coaches who are able to effectively capitalize off of these tendencies will often

win the football game.

It's important we teach our players to look for these tendencies throughout the course of the game. In this article, we're going to break down the receiver's stance and different tendencies we can gather simply by how they line up.

Before we go into detail, it's important you watch [this video](#). Deion Sanders breaks down how receivers are put at a disadvantage simply by the way their hands are positioned, feet are pointed and how they come off the football.

### Hands

Starting with the hands, it's common for a receiver to have his hands crossed. This is often replicated from Odell Beckham Jr's stance, which he crosses his hands. Younger athletes want to mimic the star receiver, so they will often cross their and rest comfortably on their legs.

It's important to note to your players - OBJ is a super star. His quickness off the football is at an elite level. He's able to do this with his hands because of his extreme quickness and athleticism.

**Reasons To Avoid:** As Deion says in the video, corners should "choke out" receivers that line up like this. In order to

get the hands into proper fighting position, the receiver must break their hands apart, then off to the side to combat the defensive player. This motion, especially for a younger player, may not be quick enough before they are punched in the chest on a press by the cornerback.

**Alternate Techniques:** Have the hands in a ready position, right by the chest plate that way you're able to swat away any hands on the press.

### Split Stance

The next item Deion mentions is having a wide, split stance. If the receiver's feet are split apart, outside the frame of the body, it can lead to being thrown off balance against a physical defensive back.

**Reasons To Avoid:** When the receivers feet are split apart, they must first come to balance, in order to move forward or lateral. This gives the defensive player an advantage when the ball is snapped, as they're able to move forward while the receiver is gathering themselves.

**Alternate Techniques:** Position the chest to be over the front knee. There should be at least 80% of the weight on the front foot. With most receivers, there should be roughly 2 feet of space between the front and back foot.

### Back Foot Turned Out

Receivers must be able to move in multiple directions at the snap of the ball. They will push off of their front or back foot, depending on what the defensive player is doing to disrupt them.



**Reasons To Avoid:** If the receiver's back foot is turned out, they are losing power. The 20% weight differential on the back foot helps us generate initial movement off the football. If the foot is turned out, the only way the receiver is able to move is the side his foot is facing.

**Alternate Techniques:** Make sure the back foot is straight. This gives the receiver an even 50/50 weight distribution split on the back foot, which allows them to move in each direction. Defensive backs are not allowed to use this in their advantage.



# OFFENSIVE LINE DRILLS

## PRE-PRACTICE OFFENSIVE LINE CIRCUIT



**Lee Weber, CSCS**  
 Rose Hill HS - KS  
 Head Football Coach  
[Coaching Resources](#)  
[Children's Book: Coach Dad](#)  
 @coachlaw71

**POSITION:** OFFENSIVE LINE  
**FOCUS:** Pre-Practice Every Day  
 Fundamental Skill Work: Pass Sets, Zone Steps, Pad Level and Drive Steps, & Pass Punch

offensive linemen to get extra repetitions with some key skills in our offense. Our offensive linemen get dressed for practice and come out right away to do the circuit whether our offensive line coach is on the field or not. We encourage our offensive linemen to coach and lead each other through the techniques once we have it taught. I would not recommend using this drill before you have individually taught the technique in your pass protection footwork, zone blocking, and pass punches.

The finer points of how you teach your offensive linemen to pass protect, duck walk, zone step, and pass punch are of your own accord. In the case of Pass Set Grid, we want to work our vertical/kickslides as well as a lateral pass set to work on a defender trying to cross our face. While we set up our grid at 5 x 5, you might find it more useful to change the cones to reflect angles that you are using with your technique.

In our Duck Walk Chute Drill, we are working on pad level and hip flexibility, but having our players come out of their stance at

### DRILL SET-UP, LANDMARKS, & ROTATION:

**DIAGRAM 1 PASS SET GRID:** 9 Cones set up on a Grid 5 yards by 5 yards

**DIAGRAM 2 CHUTE DUCK WALK:** Use a trap chute or agility chute with room for players to go length wise through the chute.

**DIAGRAM 3 ZONE STEP BAG DRILL:** Agile 1 or Step Over bags set at the angle in which you teach your zone steps in a zig zag pattern. Boards may also be used.

**DIAGRAM 4 POP-UP PASS PUNCH DRILL:** Pop-Up Dummy or Multiple Pop-Up Dummies set up for use as partners.

**SET-UP AND ROTATION:** We put all for drills along the sideline near our "Lineman Land" where our linemen practice each day. Be sure to allow for plenty of space between drills to avoid lines bleeding into the drill. Our players start at Pass Sets Grid working both directions then progress to Chute Duck Walk then to Zone Step Bag Drill and finally to Pop-Up Pass Punch Drill. We have found this ordering to work the best to space out our players, but you may order it in a manner that works for you.

### COACHING POINTS:

These drills are meant to serve as a pre-practice every day warm-up for our

*continued from previous page*

one end of the chute and working a duck walk in the drive block position lengthwise through the chute.

In the Zone Step Bag Drill, we are working zone steps for either inside zone or outside zone and duckwalking over top of the bag to keep our feet wide and driving. It is a simple variation of the board drills that most offensive line coaches utilize, but we are using the zig zag pattern to work a zone path dependent on our emphasis that day. You could set these bags at different angles as well to reflect the path that you want to work that day.

In the Pop-Up Pass Punch Drill, our linemen have to find a partner to work with as they roll through the circuit. Partners line up across from each other in a pass set demeanor (pass set body positioning) and punch the pop-up up back and forth. My diagram does not do the pass set demeanor justice, but envision that they are in your classic pass set demeanor from a 2 point stance. Our elbows are tight and our wrists are close. We have good knee bend. Our chest is up and our heads are back. We work that short quick punch to the breastplate. The Pop-Up allows for the bag to ricochet back and forth between the linemen making them react to a defender closing space on them.

While these are four drills we identified as critical to our offense, you may have others that you would like to incorporate. My recommendation is to teach the initial skill or techniques in depth and then set up the circuit so that your offensive linemen can work through it efficiently to maximize the repetitions they are getting in practice. While you may not be able to coach each and every rep for each player, if you have done a great job initially teaching the skill then I believe that this circuit can be very valuable and can enhance the leadership, unity, and skill level of your unit if they coach each other through the reps as they work the circuit.



*continued on next page*

*As a younger coach, and even as I've grown as a coordinator, I didn't really understand what it meant to "fit the offense to your players". Is there a checklist, flow chart, or series of questions you look at when deciding what to major in as you go into spring camp? I learned very quickly that "we'll put it all in and then go with what works" is a terrible idea.*

*-Coach Martin Fredrick*

That is a great question coach and one that every single high school football coach must answer each season. I am a firm believer in a smaller number of plays with high repetitions will give you your best chance to be successful. Remember everything on a restaurant menu looks good, but you simply can't have it all, you must be selective in what you are choosing. Designing your offense can be approached with a similar way of thinking. It is important to have a system that you believe in that also allows you to tailor what you are going to run each season to the strengths of your players. Develop and utilize concepts in your offense that are diverse enough to have answers to not only what the defense is doing to attempt to slow your attack down, but is also user friendly and adaptable to your players.

When developing our weekly game plan we do so with the following in mind.

*Practice what you run, and run what you practice:* Simply put, you need to ensure that you have your offensive attack streamlined enough that you are able to get a high number of reps of each concept that you are going to run on gameday. Conversely, we do not practice plays that we do not have an intention of running on Friday Night, nor do we make up plays on the fly or grab bag concepts.

*Find ways to get the football to your best players against their worst players:* This may sound simple, but that will be the key to your success. How can you design your attack to get the ball into the hands of your best players as many times as possible. This ties back into your original question of "fitting the offense to your players". Always have diverse ways to get the ball to your best players and be prepared to use formations, motions, and shifts to create favorable matchups and numerical advantages for your offense.

*-Coach Shawn Liotta, Head Coach & Author*

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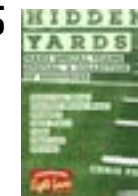
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## HIDDEN YARDS: MAKE SPECIAL TEAMS SPECIAL

### USING STATISTICAL ANALYSIS TO EVALUATE YOUR SPECIAL TEAMS



**Chris Fore**  
Veteran Coach  
[@chrisfore](#)  
[eightlaces.org](#)



There is no better way to evaluate the effectiveness of your Special Teams than performing a statistical analysis of each of your units. This can be a time-consuming effort, but there is not another way to

get a true understanding of how effective your Special Teams units are.

For instance, the goal of the Kickoff team is to put your defense in the best position possible each and every time it touches the ball. To pin your opponent as close to their goal line as possible. So, the begging question is, how did they do this past season? And a better question to examine this idea even further, is to ask how your Kickoff unit did compared to your opponents? The only way to answer these questions is by a statistical comparison. This means that you are using real-world statistics to analyze the effectiveness of your units. One thing that I have found as I've consulted coaches at both the collegiate and high school levels regarding their Special Teams is that they do not take the time to stat them out like they do with offense and defense. And I understand that. Coaching takes a lot of time. The average start after Kickoffs is not printed in the newspaper on Saturday mornings. Outside of an individual stat like punt return averages or field goal percentages, the media never reports Special Teams statistics.

Using statistical analysis to evaluate your special teams means watching every kick of the season, or the past week's game, and charting every kick. For instance, if your kickoff team kicked to the 9, 2, -2, 5, 3 and 4, then your averaged "Kicked To" is the 3.5 yard line. Let's say your opponent brought those kicks to the 24, 29, 36, 17, 20, and 53; then your opponent's average start is their own 29.83 yard line. This means that on average, your team allowed 26.33 yards per return since you kicked it to the 3.5 yard line. I believe that the most important stat for the Kickoff team is the opponent's average start. Obviously, you

want their average start to be worse than your average start. For example, at Sultana High School in 2016, our "Average Start After Kickoffs" was the 31.42 yard line; our "Opponent's Average Start After Kickoffs" was the 23.41. This is an eight yard difference every single kick of the game. Multiply that by 7-9 kicks, and the yards start to pile up. Those hidden yards can mean the difference between winning and losing a football game.

- DEVELOPING YOUR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ON A WEEKLY BASIS**
- Below is a chart that I use on a weekly basis. This type of organizational chart will save you and your staff a lot of time in trying to develop a system to evaluate your Special Teams statistically. I have done this a few different ways over the last thirteen years of being a Special Teams Coordinator. This is by far the best method I've used.
1. We use Hudl, and can bring up every kickoff in just a matter of seconds after labeling the game.
  2. I will watch every kickoff, every punt, etc. from the game, and simply enter my data on this form. I have found that trying to evaluate my player's efforts, while also inputting data can be distracting. So, I go through the film the first time, and just enter all of my data. This usually takes about thirty minutes at the most.
  3. Once the data has been entered, I can then find the averages. These averages go into the boxes on the right of each analysis in the document.
  4. I summarize all of this data in the box titled "Total Special Teams Effort."
  5. We want to be in the "+" category for each of the units.
  6. I will review this document with our coaching staff at our meetings on Sunday evening.

KICK OFF	OPPONENT'S START	RETURN YARD	TOTAL YARDS	AVERAGE
9	24			
2	29			
-2	36			
5	17			
3	20			
4	53			
Average	29.83			

***If this is helpful information to you, or if you are looking for a tremendous Special Teams resource, check out my latest Special Teams product. It's called HIDDEN YARDS: Make Special Teams Special.***



# DEFENSIVE CULTURE & FUNDAMENTALS

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PLAY BLACK SHIRT DEFENSE AT PALMETTO RIDGE HS



PJ Gibbs  
Palmetto Ridge HS - Florida  
Defensive & Recruiting  
Coordinator  
Author: [Book Available Here](#)  
[CoachTube Course Here](#)  
[@coachPJGibbs](#)

What does it mean to play for Black Shirt Defense at Palmetto Ridge High School? This article will hopefully give you so much information on culture building from a program level to a group level, by discussing what the Black shirt Culture means to our program.

When you first that name Black shirt of the University of Nebraska comes to mind with all that they have accomplished in their storied history. Looking at what it means to them really is what inspired me to bring that concept from NJ down to Gulf Coast High School, which was my 1st stop in Florida and now at my current High School Palmetto Ridge. To me this mantra gave our defense an identity and something that could hang our hat on throughout the season. It would push our kids to play at the highest level and compete every day to earn that right to wear the Black Shirt on Friday night. This was the ultimate accomplishment for those players after working hard all week that they got to put on the jersey and compete on Friday night. This became the goal and drive our mentality of what it took to be a Black Shirt and still does today.

Requirements for the Black Shirt start in the spring and carry through to the fall. The requirements are constantly monitored by myself and our staff, the Black Shirt can be taken away at any time if the requirements and obligations are not fulfilled.

BLACK SHIRT D REQUIREMENTS  
BE ON TIME  
GIVE GREAT EFFORT EVERY PLAY (NO TRAITORS)  
RESPECTFUL AND RESPONSIBLE  
BE A GREAT TEAMMATE  
DISPLAY LEADERSHIP  
BE A GREAT CITIZEN ON AND OFF THE FIELD  
UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE (SPOKE IN THE WHEEL)  
WEIGHTROOM WORK ETHIC  
HOLD YOURSELF TO A HIGH STANDARD  
SET A GOAL AS A DEFENSE AND ACHIEVE IT  
YOUR ACTIONS ARE A DIRECT REFLECTION ON YOUR TEAM  
#BLACKSHIRTD WE ARE ALL ONE UNIT

Our players rally around the logo, this is something that gives the defense a brand, a tangibility to the players. This represents the requirements that they follow also the code as to which they operate throughout the year. Hopefully they take the lessons that they learned being a part of this unit and apply them to their life at some point. After all that is the goal as a coach is to prepare your players for life after football, sending them into the world as better husbands, fathers and professionals able to contribute to better society as a whole.



# NO HUDDLE NO MERCY



## PLAYING FAST: KEYS TO SUCCESS



Shawn Liotta  
Burrell High School-PA  
Head Football Coach  
[@ShawnLiotta](#)  
Author: [No Huddle No Mercy](#)

Whether you are a coach that plays at a breakneck pace or one that wants to shorten the game and limit possessions, it is important to set expectations for your players on every snap. These non-negotiables will help you regardless of the offense that you run and whether you employ a no huddle mindset or slowdown tactics to shorten a game. These four keys each snap requires nothing but individual effort, require no talent to do them, and the defense can not dictate these whatsoever. They are 100% in our control each and every snap.

### Pre Snap Responsibility

- Get Aligned Quickly and Properly in a Position to Receive the Play Call
- Stance: Get Aligned in a Perfect Stance Each and Every Play
- Keys: What are my keys on the play. What defenders am I responsible for reading, blocking, ect.
- Responsibilities: Get yourself in position to execute your assignment properly, take the correct first step, departure angle, ect.

### Alignment Drill

This is a drill that we do in the offseason, spring, and even the summer when installing the offense to quickly teach our players the pre-snap operation of getting aligned quickly in the proper formation, learn the play calls, and explode off of the football. This drill can be done without a football, in a gym or indoor facility, and will quickly allow your players to start to condition themselves to how fast they have to be ready to execute each snap in this system. A coach will signal or call out a play and the players will quickly get aligned into the formation, echo the play call, a snap will be simulated and all players will sprint for 10 yards. A coach will then "spot" a new ball and the players will get the formation, personnel changes, play call and get aligned and get the ball snapped within 10 seconds from the previous snap.

This drill serves a few purposes, first and foremost it will

condition your players to the speed and tempo that you want to operate at. Secondly the 10 yard sprints after the play will get their bodies into "football" shape, and they will quickly learn all of your signals and play calls. We do not want to incorporate a football into this drill because it is not about the ball in this drill. It is about conditioning your players to the tempo you want to operate at while they are learning their plays and visualizing their keys and responsibility of each play.

### Attention to Detail

We strive to be very detail oriented in everything we do in our offense. This means our installation to our players is detailed and no stone left unturned. As coaches we also must be extremely detailed in our practice organization and teaching as the time will progress very quickly through our practice periods and we need to ensure that we have everything scripted and that we are following the proper teaching progressions daily.

### No Pre-Snap Penalties

Simply put we believe that we can completely control what happens prior to the snap. With that said we expect no mental errors or pre-snap penalties such as false starts, illegal shifts, motions, ect. We must have discipline and proper alignment at all times. To accomplish this we implement some mechanics in place that helps to cut back on any potential pre snap penalties. For example our quarterback is responsible for making sure that all players are stationary prior to the snap. The quarterback is also responsible for starting any shifts or motion and making sure that all players are properly set prior to motion or shifts beginning and the snap of the ball. I have provided for you in the final chapter of this book a series of helpful documents, one of which is the pre-snap checklist for our quarterbacks from our quarterback manual. It is also important to have a call that will reset the formation if multiple players happen to go into motion at the same time. For example when running a jet sweep if players on both sides start in jet sweep motion thinking that they are the "guy" rather than get hit with an illegal procedure penalty or taking a timeout our quarterback will simply say "EASY, EASY" this will reset the formation to the original alignment. The quarterback will then give the indicator to the proper player who was supposed to go into motion and the play can be correctly run. Having a call like this in your offense is a great way to avoid penalties and save timeouts for having too many men in motion at the snap.

### First Downs

If you are going to run this type of fast paced no huddle system you must be able to get first downs. We want to gain at least one first down on every drive. A three and out can be devastating on

*continued on next page*



our defense and the key to starting to wear down the defense is to make them have to consistently get aligned properly to our fast paced tempo. This can be easy for them to do on play one or two of a drive, but after they have to run and chase for three, four, five, or six snaps it will begin to have a drastic effect on them. Picking up first downs is critical to really squeezing the life out of the defense and leaving them gassed. This is why as you will see in our gamplanning and playcalling section we will have several drive starter plays each week that are designed to put us in a position to pick up a quick first down to start a drive.

### Developing optimum mental and physical conditioning

To run an uptempo style of attack your players must be in supreme condition. Your practices must be properly segmented so that each period will build off of another. This will allow you to be able to properly rep each of the play concepts daily that you are focusing on while getting your players conditioned to the tempo that you will employ on Game Day. Through our use of tempo during all of our practice periods our players will become supremely conditioned during that 2 hour window that we are practicing. We will also utilize extreme tempo periods at the end of our practice that will test how our players will handle the adversity of being physically and mentally tired at the end of a game. We will create situations where our players will have to execute at an extremely fast tempo while tired to ensure that we are staying both mentally and physically disciplined.

Conditioning is done through how we practice- no sprinting after practice.

During our practice sessions we never utilize a static stretch or a conditioning period at the end of practice. In our program the only time we will have players running sprints after practice is for a violation of team policies. We call this period a "Late Squad" and this occurs after the conclusion of our practice schedule for the day.

### Playing Fast is Fun

Simply put this style of play is fun for your players, coaches, and fans. Your players will love coming to practice and getting better each day because it does not feel like work. This offense is about having fun, attacking the defense each and every snap, and getting multiple players involved on every snap. For example in 2019 alone we had 10 different players score touchdowns, 8 different receivers catch passes, and 10 different players carry the football. By creating an extreme tempo and getting more snaps each game you are creating extra opportunities for your players to excel. Your players will love coming to practice each day and working hard to get better and make their teammates better.

### Offensive Goals

As we install and design our offense these are the critical components that we must ensure are in place each and every season. I will touch on all of these points throughout this book, but I wanted to provide you with a brief overview of some of the critical keys to being successful running a fast break mentality on offense.

*Play Fast-* We always want the immediate threat of the ball being snapped. This is not a check with me or stand around the line of scrimmage type of no huddle. We are a fast paced attacking unit. This places immense stress on the defense and the defensive playcaller. When we are operating at optimum speed we want the ball snapped within 10 seconds or the previous snap if using a 40 second clock or within 5 seconds or the ready or play signal if using the old NFHS playclock rules.

*Limited Line of Scrimmage Checks-* we want to have built in answers and adjustments to our base concepts that will allow us to recognize and attack weakness in defensive structure or technique rather than having to audible to another play. These "relief" concepts are often built into our base playcall.

*Wear Down Opponent Mentally and Physically-* Get the Defense to Play a Base Alignment. Force them into auto checks by formation. Physically and mentally wear them down in the second and fourth quarters.

*Increase Number of Play Opportunities Per Game-* more plays equals more opportunities to hit a home run.

*Shorten Overall Practice Time-* through our high tempo practice schedule our players will have more repetitions in a shorter amount of time, allowing them to get off of the practice field earlier each day. Our practice periods are streamlined to ensure optimum repetitions for all players.

*Limit Wear and Tear on Offensive Line-* they simply have to worry about finding the ball, getting locked into their stance, and awaiting the playcall from the quarterback. No more unnecessary jogging back and forth 6-10 yards each snap to break out of a huddle.

*Offensive Keys To Success* (I believe these pertain to any offensive system)

### Must Be in Top Condition

Regardless of the system that you employ you must be in top physical condition. By preparing and practicing to play fast and

*continued on next page*

developing a "Play Fast" culture at your school you will ensure that your athletes are in top condition.

### Make Defense Defend Entire Field

We want to force the defense through our formations and play design to defend the entire field from sideline to sideline and endzone to endzone.

### Have the Ability to Attack Entire Line of Scrimmage in the Run Game

We must have an ability when establishing our offensive menu to attack the entire line of scrimmage through our run game (A, B, C, D, Gaps) each and every game. We will utilize both zone and gap run schemes in our offense.

### Have the Ability to Execute Multiple Adjusting Routes vs Any Defensive Coverage

We spend significant time teaching our quarterbacks and receivers how to read coverages and defeat individual defensive techniques. By doing this and running multiple adjusting routes we can effectively attack any defensive coverage without the need to add extra play designs as "coverage beaters".

### Screens and Reliefs as Extension of Run Game

Spend time on our screen package as we value it as a third of our offense. It is critical for us as a standalone play or paired with our run game as a relief or (SRO) Screen Run Option. Many times a coach will only practice a slow screen to the running back 2 times a week at practice and will then wonder why it does not work in the game. At the same time coaches will throw a perimeter quick screen to a receiver and a defensive back will blow it up for no gain and the coach will stop calling it. My response to these two situations is would you practice your base run play two times all week and expect it to be successful in the game on Friday night- No. Likewise would you stop running your base run play for the entire game if it was stopped for no gain on the first play of the game- Absolutely Not!

### Have the Ability to Handle Pressure and Protect the QB

If you want to effectively throw the football at the high school level you must spend time on your pass protection daily. We will have pass protection and blitz recognition and pick up periods daily in our practice schedules. You must also have a plan to handle protection each week through protection adjustments, uncovered air-shot throws, screen package, and moving the quarterback launch point.

### Have Answers to Defensive Adjustments

As a coach you must recognize your deficiencies offensively. Each and every team will have them in terms of personnel

matchup, schematic advantage, ect. It is important to have built in answers for your offense that will handle any defensive tactic you will face on Friday night. This is difficult to pre-plan and is often the result on an in-game adjustment you will make.

That's why it is critical to focus on situational football at practice such as backed up, long yardage, blitz pickup. During these periods I do not script or have scout cards for what the defense is going to bring at us. It does not matter the front, coverage, or blitz. Let your assistant coaches be creative and try to find ways to attack you at practice. As a coach don't get upset and say "they will never run that blitz in a game". You have no clue as a coach what your opponent may be cooking up particularly against a high scoring fast paced offense in their attempt to slow you down. These practice sessions are where you and your staff will tweak your play design to handle these situations and have answers when unforeseen problems arise. I call this the tool box approach as you add ways to fix things that become broken in your offense. This is no different than the new homeowner who starts out with a simple tool box with a hammer, nails, and a few screwdrivers but as things quickly break down in the home that require fixing this homeowner will soon have a workshop of tools that would rival Tim the Toolman Taylor. The same holds true for us as coaches, as we encounter and learn how to fix things in our offense we are better prepared to attack these reactions from the defense.

### Statistical Goals For Each Game

These are the standards that we use to measure our performance as an offensive unit each week. The number one goal is the most important and that is to simply score enough points to win the football game.

Score Enough to WIN

Average 7.5 Yards per Play

Average 5.0 per Carry

Convert 4 out of 5 Short Yardage Situations

Less than 1 Turnover a Game

Never put our Defense on the field with less than 50 yards of operating room



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# THE GO GO OFFENSE

## THE ORIGIN STORY

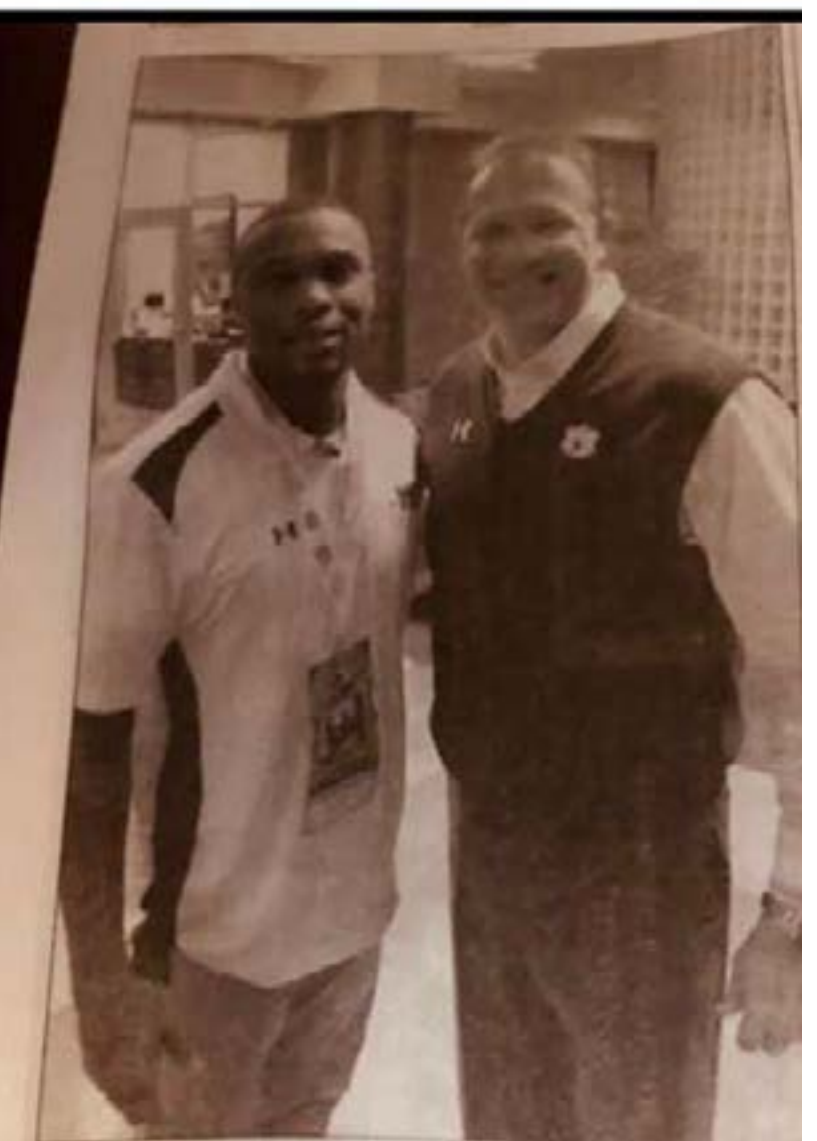


**Brennan Marion**  
Hawai'i Wide Receiver Coach  
@BrennanMarion4  
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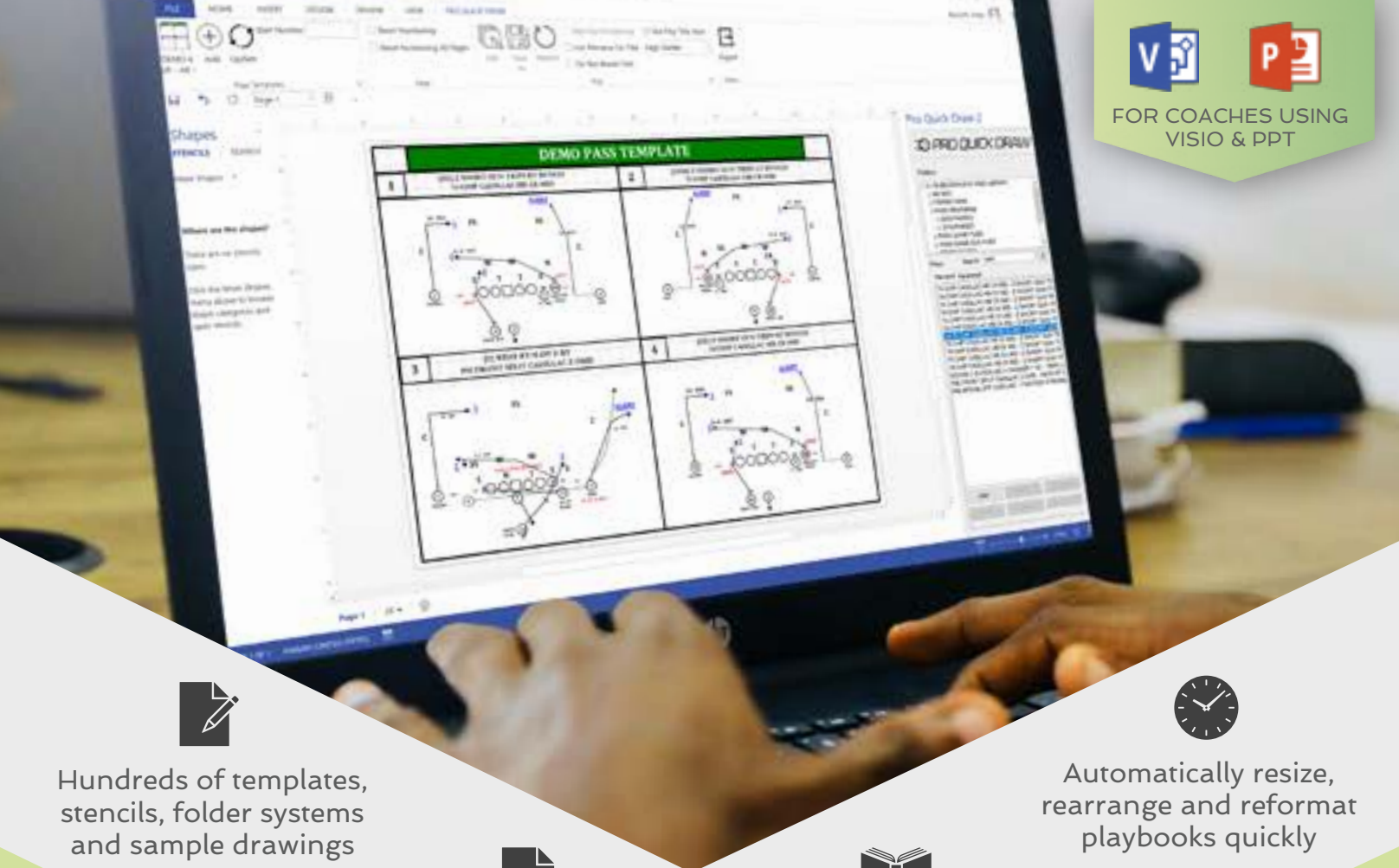
The GoGo Offense was inspired by losing in the first round of the playoffs with a 10-personnel offense during my first season as a head coach. I wanted to keep two backs in the game at all times and be a triple-option style offense. Every successful program I had played, or coached in, was a 2-back offense, so I felt it was time to create my own 2-back style of offense. I always felt like 11-personnel and 20-personnel teams were the teams you see in the championship games. I began to study option football, first watching twenty games of Barry Switzer's Sooners. They ran the option with complete precision. It was virtually fool proof as they dominated the 80's with their fast and physical brand of option football. I looked at the local powerhouse, De Le Salle High School, as they dominated teams year after year with their 2-back-veer attack. I went back through our dominant offense at the University of Tulsa under Gus Malzahn as the Offensive Coordinator. We were an 11/20 personnel team that set tons of NCAA records on offense. Lastly, I looked at Roger Staubach Navy Heisman trophy-winning quarterback clips and that's when I became completely sold on running a 2-back, uptempo style offense. It would be a tough task because I would have to come up with all the steps and sets, having no real offense to draw from that ran what I wanted to run.

My new team, which was 0-10 the year prior to my arrival, would be used as guinea pigs to run this new system. With the help of a great staff and lots of long nights, we were able to implement what is now known as the GoGo Offense. The best thing the offense gives you an advantage to do is dictate the defense. Unlike the triple-option and veer attacks, you don't miss a beat throwing the football. You have a vertical, intermediate and ROP throwing game with a triple-option running attack with seamless solutions to run/pass and the screen game. We are able to put our wide receivers in 1v1 matchups,

which gives our quarterbacks easy reads. Our running backs love it because unlike the pro style where there is a blocking back and one true running back, both our backs are utilized for running, blocking, and catching the football. The OL has the hardest job right now because we are new with our scheme. They get a lot of different looks upfront, but with our tempo, we still keep the power advantage upfront. Putting our backs side-by-side in the old far/near-formation or T-formation gives us the ability to out leverage defenses and use the entire football field to ultimately use any play that has two backs in the backfield. We are unlimited in what we can do. With our personnel we will take advantage of how great we can truly make the GoGo Offense. It's a player's game, and we will always adapt and adjust to operate in our strengths.



Waynesboro football coach Brennan Marion, left, poses for a picture with Auburn coach Gus Malzahn. Malzahn was Marion's offensive coordinator at Tulsa.



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# DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE

## MY & GOLD BEACH'S DEFENSE AND WHY



**Ken Swift**  
Gold Beach HS - OR  
Athletic Director  
@kdawgswift  
[Free Materials Here](#)

Greetings Coaches! My name is Kevin Swift and I am the recently retired head football coach at Gold Beach High School. It is my extreme pleasure to embark on this project created by Coach

Ken Simpson. I am truly honored to be a part of this and to share a little bit of what we did here in rural Oregon that gave us sustained success on the field and off.

When I was hired in 1997 to be the Panthers' head coach one of my first priorities was to create a vision for what I hoped would be a successful culture that would create sustained success – a “program”. Part of any school’s football “culture” is what they do scheme wise on offense and defense. I had leaned at a very young age from my late father (52 years an educator and coach) that a team’s offense and defense must fit together. What this means is that they should complement each other and create a good fit. Example: a high flying and risk taking Run n Shoot offense should not be paired with a high gambling blitz and stunt heavy defense. Again, this is just my humble opinion. I think this is even more vital or important at the smaller rural schools where players play both ways and rarely come off the field – Gold Beach Panthers.

So, in 1997, after moving my family from the hustle and bustle of Southern California to Gold Beach, on the rural Southern Oregon Coast, I had to make these decisions and more importantly the “why”. Gold Beach would be my first head coaching opportunity after serving as a defensive assistant, specialist and Defensive Coordinator since 1984. Needless to say, I had an idea what I wanted to do defensively at Gold Beach. I wanted to stay with what I had learned as part of Jim

Hartigan’s staff at Santa Margarita Catholic High School in the well-known Trinity League. While with Santa Margarita in 1990 and 1991 we used our spring breaks to visit University of Washington and Coach James’ defensive staff and learned their G and Tuff schemes. I fell in love with the sophisticated, yet simple, schemes and ideas behind their very good defense. However, could I use it and make it work at my new gig, a small rural school, with 30 to 40 players total in the program playing both ways? No separate JV or Frosh/Soph team – everyone from freshmen to seniors sharing the same practice field daily, only separating for the occasional four or two quarter game that would precede varsity games on Friday nights.

Here are my thoughts on the process I went through all those years ago to bring me to the why of the Panthers’ defense:

- 1) Running the ball and stopping the run are still the keys to sustained success at the high school level particularly at small rural community based high school football. This defense was created to stop the running games of Osborn’s Nebraska and, Johnson and Erickson’s Miami teams. It is a “why” I stayed with it.
- 2) Weather on the Oregon coast will limit most people’s ability to build an offense around throwing the ball and this defense was created in the Pacific Northwest with those similar views on throwing in rainy, soggy weather. It is “why” I stayed with it.
- 3) While sophisticated and complex, it can be broken down into some simple building blocks of concepts that with experience and practice should evolve in three to four years into the sophisticated and aggressive defensive style I wished to play at Gold Beach. It is a “why” I stayed with it.
- 4) With kids playing both ways I had to decide



on a run based offense to pair with this defense. I wanted one simple and physical so I selected I Back Veer. Simple blocking rules that allowed coaching and strong kids to make a difference. I believed simplicity on one side of the ball had to be paired with my idea of a sophisticated and complex defense. It is a “why” I stayed with it.

5) Our freshmen and sophomores would spend 80% of their time their first two years playing scout defense for us in a variety of our group and team periods. This would be a very tough two years learning the defense’s basics and getting physically pounded daily in practice. These kids would learn the defense and be physical beasts when they started to add offensive playing time to their careers in junior and senior years. It is a “why” I stayed with it.

6) It is often said as an educator it is not what you know, it is what you can teach the kids to know. I’ve always felt this was also very true in teaching/coaching football. I already knew this defense very well and knew there was a plethora of things I needed to learn about our new offense and coaching offense. I could take the defense and break it down and teach it in simple blocks then have other blocks taught and added to the blocks of our defense. By the time our kids would be seniors they would be running something very similar to a collegiate defense. It is a “why” I stayed with it.

7) While this defense was designed to stop powerful run games at the national level it was developed in the PAC 12 so it had the capability and flexibility to defend the game’s modern passing attacks. While I was relatively sure that I would not see Coach Leach’s offense at the 3A or 2A Oregon high school level the defense had the nuts and bolts to do it. It is a “why” I stayed with it.

So, there you have it. The “whys” of why we stayed with a defense I learned in the early 1990’s. While there were some other reasons for me to stay the course these are the major ones. In the weeks and articles to come I will introduce you to each of the building blocks of our defense. It is the hope that by the time the kids are juniors and sometime sophomores they are ready to compete.

*“How do you approach jealousy in your program?”*

Unfortunately, jealousy is a common problem in football programs. Like most problems, it comes down to relationships, communication, and presentation. I would say you must address these issues at the early stages and try to see them coming. Have individual conversations with those players and pump them up. Make sure you have a great relationship with players so you can have that critical conversation. Make sure you communicate and present to the players their value. If they know you care about them and value them, they can work on being jealous.

*-Coach Chris Parker, [Parker Resources.org](#)*

*“We are struggling with school spirit. This has not always been the case. What can we do to help this?” - Eric Knott*

It’s often said that football sets the tone for a great school year. During football season ensure that your program is continually finding ways to promote different groups in addition to continually showing your appreciation for their involvement on Friday Nights. Several ideas that have been successful for us include:

- Themes for each home game
- Student Section for students only
- DJ with fun (and appropriate) music
- ASB involvement in pre-game festivities for students

Additionally, I love going to visit the band and bringing them donuts Monday morning during the season after a home game as a way of saying thank you. Another thing our school community looks forward to is each home game our players select a teacher of the week and have that teacher come out with the captains for the coin toss. High School football games are a great opportunity to put your school community on display in an “Us against Them” event. Keep working to make your home games the place to be for students, families, and faculty. Set the example for the other sports, school activities, and student body to follow.

*-Coach Jeff Steinberg, Head Football Coach*



# GUEST WRITER



## IF/THEN OFFENSIVE PLAY CALLING FROM THE FIELD

As an offensive coordinator, I was lucky to coach the game from the box. Yes, that amazing climate controlled pod where I had good lighting, room to spread out my call sheets, and see everything from a bird's eye view. And there was normally a hot dog or two waiting for me when I returned from making half-time adjustments. It was glorious! But then I moved to the field.

What a terrible place to focus on calling an offense. The weather is very uncooperative, there is nowhere to write, everything has to be laminated, the fans are constantly giving you their brutally honest feedback, officials and players are running into your space and then there is the yelling. YES, SO MUCH YELLING! SERIOUSLY, EVERYONE IS YELLING AND GOING CRAZY!

This adrenaline filled environment is not ideal for the methodical, surgical-like precision of play calling that you had imagined when you played the game in your head. You imagined playing chess and it is more like a UFC fight with a GWAR concert in the background.

I was forced to the field because I was coaching an inexperienced QB and I had to be on call for all the support I could possibly give. Then, I became the head coach and we all know you can not hide in the box with that title. No matter what the reason for being on the field, you have to embrace the environment and figure out how to succeed.

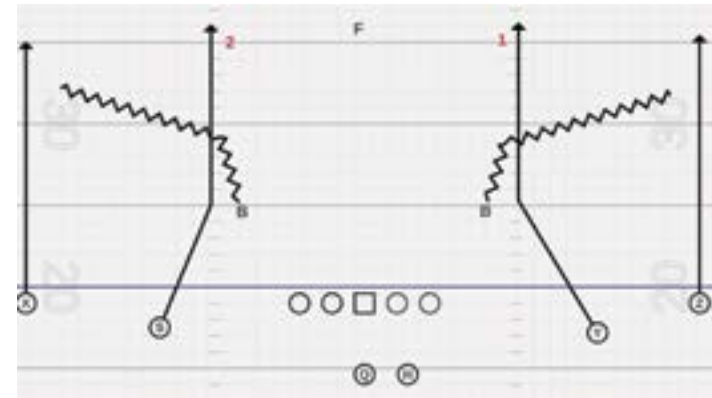
When designing a play/concept, I am always looking for solutions to potential problems. Then I do my best to strategically stand in a position to witness those potential problems. Based on what I see it triggers my if/then statements. I have been using IF/THEN statements since before they became popular. IF/THEN statements are simply a systematic or logical

way of approaching play design and calling. The easiest way is based on fronts/coverages. IF I see an odd stack defense, THEN I will call buck sweep. IF I see cover 3, THEN I call 4 verts.

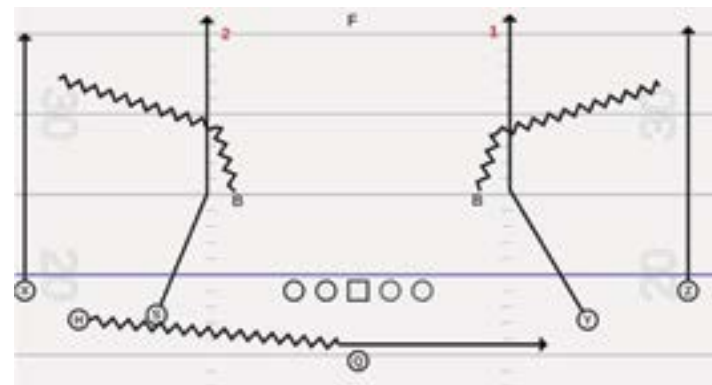
While calling a play based on front and coverage is an important skill, calling the next play is way harder. That's right, I am always looking for the next play. I believe in creating IF/THEN statements based on post-snap triggers to either call complimentary plays or tags off of plays. Below are some specific examples based off one of our situations.

### 4 Verts If/then Statements vs Cover 3:

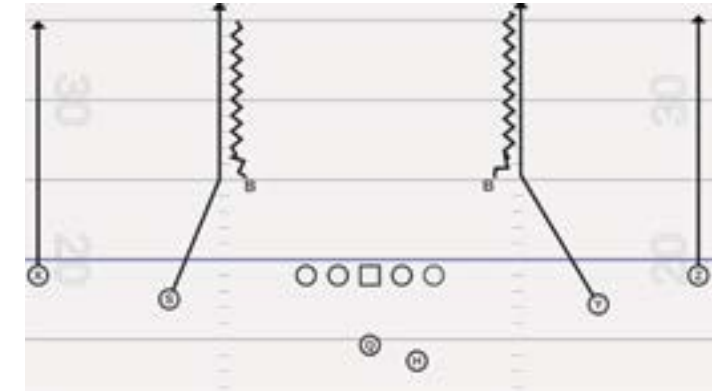
IF the Overhangs Re-route and get under # 1



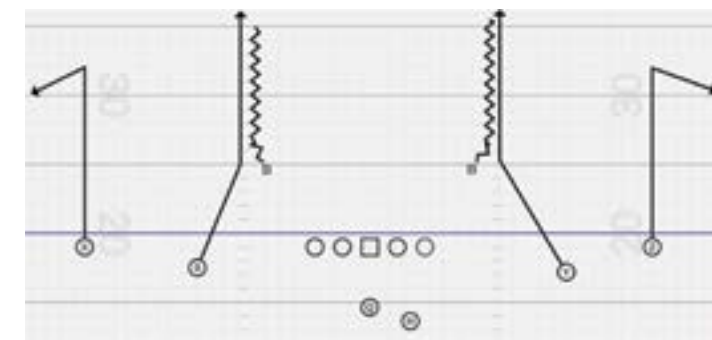
THEN keep calling the same play if you can beat the FS with the throw or add motion to get him to move and make a throw easier



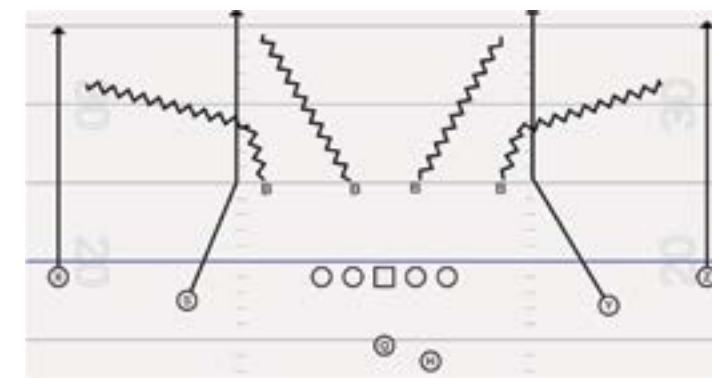
IF the overhangs carry 2 vertical



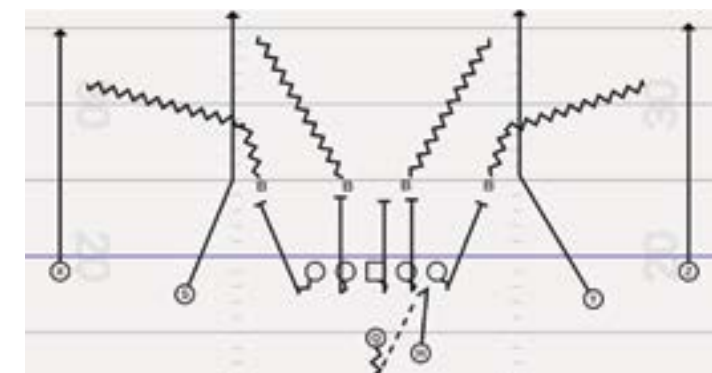
THEN tag a comeback on the outside or a slant or any other route that is caught outside the hashes out of a break



IF all the LB's drop to at least 12 yards of depth



THEN tag an H screen or draw



When building your IF/THEN statements here are some things to keep in mind:

Create tags or complimentary plays to help answer all the things that can be potential problems. While this can be very tedious and time consuming, it will pay off on game day and bring simplicity to you on a chaotic adrenaline filled football sideline.

These tags or complimentary plays can be developed in the off season by looking back through film and studying how opponents defended you. Looking at players techniques is way easier than trying to break down entire schemes.

The better you are at creating tags for solutions, then the fewer plays you will need. You don't need a million solutions to a single problem, just pick a few and get good at them.

These tags are answers for the coach to call, but teach your QB how to attack a defense with your if/then scenarios and he will understand why plays are called and be able to better communicate with you. He may also be able to audible to something based on how he sees things on the field.

Watch film with your QB's and staff and talk them through your thought process as you watch. This will let them better communicate with you on gameday.

Can you make tags or adjustments automatic? For instance if the corner bails can the outside receiver automatically run a comeback? Everyone has to be on the same page and your players need clearly defined rules. If the corner has maintained his vertical leverage at the 10 yard mark, then you will run a comeback. Leaving room for interpretation will typically result in a WR running deep.

This is something that should be organized for pass and run game. In fact, an RPO is simply adding an IF/THEN statement to a run play. IF the LB flows with the run, THEN throw the hitch. This is the most common way we teach a QB to play an RPO in our system.

Train your eyes to watch very specific things on a play. If you can not see them from the field then assign someone in the box to watch them. They need to be very specific with their communication. Based on the example above, if I call four verticals against a zone defense my eyes will go directly to the overhang linebackers to dictate future play calling. If I needed a box coach to communicate with me he would say, "the overhang carried vertical so tag comeback". I just got feedback and an

*continued on next page*



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educated play suggestion in 7 words. That is efficiency.

Examine your play call sheet and how it is organized. Can you incorporate IF/THEN statements to make play calling simpler.

Our staff works very hard to have answers for problems. That is what being an offensive coordinator is all about. Finding simple solutions to complex problems. Being on the field and trying to get a global perspective can be very difficult, but by simplifying and compartmentalizing you can make the most of the situation.

**BIO:**  
*Brent Morrison is a proud husband and father of two that has been the Head Football Coach at Westerville Central High School since 2018. The school was coming off two losing seasons when he took the position and in each of his first three seasons his team qualified for the Division 1(Largest) Playoffs in Ohio. During the course of each season the teams ranked in the top 10 according to the associated press and in 2020 made it to the Elite 8. In addition to being the head coach, he also serves as the offensive coordinator and a social studies teacher at the high school. Prior to taking the position he had been an assistant at Westerville Central since 2005. In his time as an assistant he served as the Offensive Coordinator and was recognized as Assistant Coach of the Year by the Central District. If you need have questions or would like more information please feel free to reach out to me directly. Email: [morrisob@wcohs.org](mailto:morrisob@wcohs.org), Phone: 614-282-5693, Twitter: @BrentMo03800724, Facebook Group: Lets Talk Offense*



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