

HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 3: ISSUE 4

pass protection
SCHEMES

MIRACLE
KO RETURN AND
HANDS: TEAM

HOW TO BEAT
ISOLATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO BEAT ISOLATION	2
CREATING A DEFENSIVE CALL SHEET	6
PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT COACHING JOB INTERVIEW	7
PASS PROTECTION SCHEMES	12
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS JUST AN ASSISTANT COACH	15
MIRACLE KO RETURN AND HANDS TEAM	18
FILM YOUR INDIVIDUAL DRILLS	22
MISTAKES TO AVOID	24
PART ONE: CRAFTSMAN PHASE	26
AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE GT(H) PLAY	32



Kenny Simpson
Author/Coaching Consultant
HC - Southside, AR
[@fbcoachsimpson](https://twitter.com/fbcoachsimpson)
FBCoachSimpson.com

We are so glad to run Headsets season three! It has been unbelievable to have so many coaches willing to contribute their time and efforts to the coaching community. A special thank you to the writers this season as we have a great line up in store covering:

- Head Coaching 101
- Special Teams
- Defense
- Offense
- Drill Work
- And More...

As you go through the articles, there are many live links to recommended materials, articles and videos.

If you would like to contribute to Headsets, email Coach Simpson: FBcoachsimpson@gmail.com and let him know.

Also, please help us spread the word via social media and email about our Magazine as it is our hope to help as many coaches as possible.

Thank you,

CLICK ON ANY TITLE TO GO STRAIGHT TO ARTICLE

TIME TO RAISE THE BAR

JAMESIMPSONDESIGNS
SPORTS GRAPHIC DESIGN

RURAL FOOTBALL REFLECTIONS

HOW TO BEAT ISOLATION



Kevin Swift
Retired AD/HC
Gold Beach HS - OR
[@kdawgswift](#)
[Football Tool Chest](#)

In the spring of 1997, I was sitting on my patio in Dana Point California celebrating a football job I had just taken. The job had come from the southern Oregon coastal community of Gold Beach. The faith and family priorities I work under were telling me this would be a great move for my family, and this was part of God's journey for my family. The small (2000 population) rural coastal community would be a great fit for my wife and 4-month-old daughter. Gold Beach was pinned against the beaches of the Pacific by the Siskiyou's Coastal Mountain range complete with the lush rainforest and Rogue River; it was breathtaking. We scored a great house in the woods for a deal in 1997, complete with a treehouse, a creek and less than a mile from the beach and the high school which sat overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The isolation from the madness of the hustle and bustle of Southern California would be a true blessing to my young family. However, it did not take long for the football part of my priorities to see our isolation as a huge hurdle to overcome for us to get the Gold Beach Panthers' Football program to the level we desired.

Isolation is a curse in a lot of ways for a rural high school football coach. It is not the distractions of rural life, like perfect waves to surf or great salmon and steelhead to catch or hunting for deer and elk, because those distractions occur everywhere rural or urban simply different distractions. The isolation that kills rural football programs is small ponds our athletes compete in, and the ever-present Good Ole Boy know it all's. LOL, I need to explain both for my urban coaches. What I mean by "small ponds our athletes compete in," is the 20 to 24 kids that make up 2 classes of athletes do not compete against much talent elsewhere because you cannot get there in less than 3 hours. This creates an illusion for your athletes that they are better than they are, because they are the home run king of this group of 20 to 24 athletes. As they get older, they will compete against other small, isolated communities along the Oregon coast that are 2 to 3 hours away with their 20 to 24 athletes, but the pond only expands to only 60 to 70 athletes. Very rarely or ever did our athletes compete in the big ocean of athletes of the Interstate 5 corridor of the west coast. I believed this type of isolation created complacency in athletic development and for competing at our highest level - state championships. I felt for us to compete at the highest level, we need to be exposed and compete against the best talent and teams we could in the off season and preseason games.

Fortunately for me I inherited a small team camp, the Gold Beach Football Team Camp. The previous Coach had started it as a small camp of 3 to 5 teams all small schools and all

running Markham's Double Wing. Because of our location as a high school, right on the bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean, with one of our practice fields on the beach I upsized it! We created 2 one-week sessions (5 days in pads on the beach) and advertised throughout the PNW, Nevada and NorCal for all sizes of schools. What we created was a heckuva fundraiser for our athletic programs and an economic boost to our main street, with 2 sessions of 10 to 14 teams a session. While it is easy to get caught up in the funds and revenue it was creating for the community and school, it was the size of the competitive pool we were creating that had me excited! My teams could now rub elbows with future NFLer, Tony Jefferson of Eastlake or many of the other future DI and Pro athletes that came through Beach Camp from 1997 to 2015. The coaching at this camp brought some of the best and brightest coaches in the region together, Tony Sanchez future Bishop Gorman and UNLV HFC, Todd Simis of Boise's Capital High School, Chris Casey of Aloha and presently HFC at George Fox University, Coach Starck of Thurston High School, Lassen's Tom St Jacques the Wing T Wizard of the High Sierras and the legend of Wing T football in south county San Diego John McFadden of Eastlake. We had a chance to compete with some of the outstanding programs throughout the west coast, our athletic fish could now swim with the big athletic fish of the big water Interstate 5 corridor. Over the summers from 1997 to 2015 little ole Gold Beach (enrollment of approximately 235) had a chance to get better and reach our goals of playing annually for state

continued on next page

“Next up, what to do with the town's Good Ole Boy Network of KnowitAll's? Trust me coaches, it does not matter where you are coaching at there is a Good Ole Boy Network. While these networks all have different goals depending on the location, they are not healthy for you as a coach or for your program's development.”

titles in Oregon by lining up against schools of 250 to 2500 kids. Our athletes would line up and compete with 6A Aloha or South Medford of Oregon or California High School from San Ramon with several DI athletes. We had found a way to enlarge our athletes swimming pond to an ocean in the summers thus taking care of the first issue with isolation in a rural community.

Beach Camp Videos:

[Gold Beach Team Football Camp](#)

[Capital Football at Gold Beach Football Camp](#)

Next up, what to do with the town's Good Ole Boy Network of Know it All's? Trust me coaches, it does not matter where you are coaching at there is a Good Ole Boy Network. While these networks all have different goals depending on the location, they are not healthy for you as a coach or for your program's development. My Good Ole Boys were Know it All's, anything I wanted as a coach was dumb and not necessary for success or "we do not do that up here coach it is not Cali anymore," these old farts were going to be a problem for our goals. I wanted summer lifting and volunteer workouts and they said we never have done that so why should we now and worse, yet the kids listened to them! It did not matter what we as a staff want it was constantly being second guessed by these guys. One day one of them said, "Coach we do not need to do all these new things to win league titles because we have won them in the past without doing them." I snapped and said I did not move my family 900 miles from everything they know

and love to win league titles, I was coaching to win state titles consistently and besides 7 league titles over a 40-year span is a tradition of sucking! LOL, that probably led to another petition to have me ousted. The problem, even though I was right and knew I was right my athletes because of familiarity and comfort were listening to the Good Ole Boys and not buying into our vision. It is about this time that I realized this current population of athletes were part of the "Show Me" generation and needed to see to believe that programs did indeed work out all summer long. So, in the spring of 2003 I did the unheard of for a Servite alumni and reached out to our archrival Mater Dei and Coach Bruce Rollinson. We had been having some of the Monarchs' coaches come up to Beach Camp starting in 2000 to serve as guest coaches and help us increase the knowledge of our small rural staff. Why Mater Dei and not Servite? Well Mater Dei in the late 1990's was one of the premier programs in the country along with De la Salle in NorCal, Servite was going through a coaching change, and I had no connections at my alma mater. So, I reached out to Bruce Rollinson and asked if a small group of Gold Beach seniors could hang out and practice with the Monarchs for 3 to 4 days this summer in July? He said sure no problem they would love to host us sense we had been so good to their coaches that had come north to help with Beach Camp. Next, I had to find a way to keep it affordable for all involved. My late parents provided this solution for us, we could ALL stay at their place in Dana Point, California at no charge. We would take some hard-earned Beach Camp money for gas and some meals, and the kids would bring

some spending money as well. This is the plan we put together;

- Nine-day trip to Dana Point, leaving at 9:00 PM from Gold Beach in 2 Surburban's loaded with kids, ice chest filled with food, surfboards (Coach Swift was looking forward to some warm water surfing) and an assistant coach with me to help supervise.
- Arrive at my parents' home at 8 AM in Dana Point and spend the day at the beach recovering from the 16-hour trip. Go catch some 7 on 7 contest at local high schools in the evening and get some pizza.
- Of the nine days, four days are committed to practice at Mater Dei from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM, this included on the field position work, group work and a team period, followed by a long weight room session. On these days we would hit In & Out Burgers for lunch and end the day at the beach catching some waves or visiting a college campus. We got our kids tours of Chapman University, Fullerton Junior College, and Saddleback Junior College.
- We would take the kids to an Angel game one day and Knotts Berry Farm Amusement Park on another day. Usually did this after a morning on the beach teaching Oregon kids how to surf.
- Finally on the last day we would have a great BBQ at my parents' place, load everything up and get on the road home by 9 PM.
- Arrive by 8 AM back in Gold Beach and return the kids to their parents.

What did our athletes get out of this trip besides a whole lot of fun in the sun, well they saw with their own eyes the following:

- There are high school athletes that show up and workout with their respective teams 4 to 5 days a week. Oh, and have fun and enjoy the work.
- These same high school athletes were able to find summer work that allowed them to get to workouts, that they had fun at and enjoyed the work.
- What separated the Mater Dei Program from other programs was their athletes' investment in getting better and making the program better.
- Getting better starts in the Weight Room, and that is where a Program's Culture's foundation must be.

You could literally see our seniors say to themselves, "We can do this." and they did! From 2004 to 2014, the Panther won 9 League titles, played in 5 State Championship Games, and won 2 Oregon State Titles (2007 3A & 2011 2A). We had solved the problem of isolation to create the program we all had wished and worked for.

DRILLS

CREATING A DEFENSIVE CALL SHEET



Chris Haddad
Bellingham HS - MA
Defensive Coordinator
[Coach Tube](#)
[@chrsviQtory](#)
[@viQtorySports](#)

viQtory

Analysis by paralysis. It's one of the more common coaching cliches that apply to defensive coordinators. We (myself included) tend to over analyze too much and leave our minds searching for essentially nothing.

Luckily, we can help ease your mind by rethinking the way you approach your defensive call sheet. Having structured templates and ordered lists can help you feel more prepared as you're prepping for your opponent.

When I design my call sheet, there are a few checklist items that I go through to make sure I've covered everything. These items are:

Down & Distance - What are their tendencies on certain down and distances. Breaking these down by long (7-10), medium (4-6) and short (1-3). This should be your main focus, as offensive coordinators are a creature of habit. Especially at the high school level, whatever they feel comfortable with on those certain downs, they will more than likely call it.

Personnel - Personnel driven calls are where you're going to see the biggest tendencies jump off the page. Coaches will run certain plays, based on the players they have on the field. Chart every player (have a chart of skill players as well as lineman) that plays so you then can break down what the coach is trying to do with that specific set of players.

Package Structure - How can you get creative based on your personnel. If the other team has a really good receiver, can you change up your front/coverage structure to dedicate more resources to him? Are there players on the sideline that don't normally play, but could help you?

Blitz Structure - What blitzes can you throw out the window. How dangerous is running 0 blitzes against the QB you'll be facing. Do stunts confuse the opposing OL? Take a long look at what makes sense to run blitz wise and insert it into the game plan.

Individual Tendencies - Think players not plays. Who can hurt you and on the flip side, who can you attack? Look at every player on the film and see who the glaring weakpoint is. Every team has at least one that you can expose.

If you want to learn more about creating a defensive call sheet, [we have more information here](#), as well as a defensive call sheet that you download for free.

As always, if you have any questions, [feel free to reach out contact@viqtorysports.com](mailto:reachoutcontact@viqtorysports.com)

JOB SEARCH PREP FOR COACHES

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT COACHING JOB INTERVIEW



Bill Vasko
Head Softball Coach,
Frostburg State University,
NCAA DII/Former College
Football/Baseball Coach
CEO: [The Coaching Portfolio](#)
[@xo_coach](#)

You Got the Interview... Now What?

Have you ever been in a coaching interview and absolutely bombed on answering questions you knew you should have nailed?

- Maybe you talked too much?
- Maybe you didn't talk enough?
- Maybe you didn't fully understand the question and you rattled off a response that was completely irrelevant to the question?

Being able to tell your story during a coaching interview requires three key points: Problems. Solutions. Results.

- State what the problems were in your former position
- Focus on what you specifically did to provide or implement solutions
- Finally, discuss your results and provide concrete evidence

No matter how tough the questions might be,

an AD or head coach is looking to determine your value in relation to *their* needs. Therefore, it is important that your answers demonstrate how you brought value to your previous programs or institutions. Using the three key points above will help you keep your answers brief and to the point.

Tips to Nail Your Next Coaching Job Interview

You finally landed that coveted job interview for your next coaching position. The hard part is over, but now another major challenge is on the horizon: the actual interview.

Here's how to go into it confident, prepared, and hireable:

Before the Interview: Analyze the job description:

When interviewing for a coaching job, you need to make sure you know what's at the core of the position you are interviewing for. What skills and characteristics are the hiring committee looking for? How can you demonstrate those things during the interview? Study the job description carefully for key words that clue you in to what the hiring committee will be looking for.

Research the school, program, or organization:

It sounds basic, but you'd probably be surprised at the staggering number of potential coaches who walk into an interview without researching the potential employer's background or even visiting its website. Showing up with virtually no knowledge of the school, program, or organization is an excellent way to get your

continued on next page

name crossed off the list. One of the main things you need to do if you want to nail your interview is to do as much homework as you can on the school/program you're interviewing with, including the people you are interviewing with, notable events in the program's history, big rivals or conference opponents, and key characteristics of the surrounding community. Pick out some of the most interesting points from your background research and have them ready for the interview. The interviewing committee may not ask you something specific about an event two years ago, but think of how impressed they will be if you just so happen to know an interesting fact about that event. This will show the employer that you're already invested in their school/program before you've even accepted the job.

Another important aspect of your background research: if you are interviewing in a community unfamiliar to you, get there the day before so that you can learn more about the area.

Demonstrate how much you want the job:

Some people want a job just to have a job - and that's perfectly respectable in today's economy - but if you're not in it to win it, it'll show in the interview. Don't bother if you're going just because you want any job. Demonstrate your passion for the position and why you are the best candidate for the job.

During the Interview: Be ready to engage in conversation:

You're not going into the interview just to answer questions. You should plan to ask

questions too - to feel out the position a little more, get a better understanding of what's required, and get answers to anything else about the position.

Rehearse Your Responses:

Don't memorize your answers to potential interview questions or you will come off as stale and unprepared. Instead rehearse your thoughts, ideas, and philosophies regarding the most common questions asked in a coaching interview. If you are completely confident in your coaching philosophies, there aren't many questions that will stump you. Have a friend ask you some of the most common questions to help you prepare.

Dress Professionally:

Sure, you're interviewing for a coaching position where khakis and a polo shirt may be your normal everyday attire. This still does not give you the liberty to dress casually during the interview. Keep it as professional as possible with your best suit, dress pants/blazer, or business dress.

Don't Make The Interviewer Want To Tune You Out:

Are you ever listening to someone speak about a topic you're only semi-familiar with, and they seem to go on and on and on? You find yourself staring at this person thinking, "Are they ever going to stop talking?" If you're drowning the interviewer in words - especially if the words aren't relevant to the job, stop right there, because you could be doing more damage than good. Remember that the hiring committee

wants to hear why you are a good fit for this position. Give them what they want and nothing more. You can do this by talking about recent employment and why it makes you qualified for the position you are interviewing for. Use your words to sell the interviewer on why you're a good match - don't waste time talking about things like your personal history which may be irrelevant in this scenario. If you feel like you're rambling, reign it in.

Stick to the point. Talk about what is relevant to the interview and the position -- your work experience, job qualifications, and your goals for the organization if you are hired. If you are asked questions about personal matters, of course answer, but do so honestly and briefly. Too much unrelated information can ruin an interview and your chances at the position.

Believe in yourself:

What sets you apart from other candidates? Your skill set, for one - but also your confidence. Go in with your head high, ready to nail it. Come in knowing you have value to bring to the school/program and show that confidence through the belief in your coaching philosophies and your past experiences and achievements.

Ask good questions:

Jot down a list of questions before your interview. Keep questions brief and intelligent. Ask questions about what the goals and expectations are for this position and the school/program, and how success will be measured. Not only does it provide you with information

continued on next page

Tips to Nail Your Next Interview:

- Before the interview, analyze the job
- Research the school, program, organization
- Demonstrate how much you want the job
- During the Interview: Be ready to engage in conversation
- Rehearse your responses
- Dress professionally
- Don't make the interviewer want to tune you out
- Believe in yourself
- Ask good questions
- After the interview, send a thank you note

you may need to determine if this will be a good fit for you, but it also shows you are ambitious and motivated to succeed.

After the Interview: Send a thank you note:

Sending thank-you notes is a lost art these days, but they're perhaps never more important than when sent as a follow-up to an interview. Email is okay, but a hand-written note sent via snail mail is better. Personalize the note and reference a memorable part of the interview for an extra edge.

Preparing for sport-specific questions in a coaching job interview

When you sign up for the Coaching Portfolio Guide, you receive a free copy of *The Complete Guide to the Coaching Interview*. This interview guide includes the most common interview questions asked in a coaching interview with some sample answers. But how does someone prepare for those tricky sport-specific questions during a job interview?

Quite frankly, it would be impossible to provide sport-specific questions for multiple sports with sample answers for those questions for each sport. In our webinars, which are archived on the Coaching Portfolio site, we discuss how your preparation in putting together your materials for the job search process is what most prepares you for answering sport-specific interview questions. If you have carefully thought out your philosophies and put them on paper, you will be confident in answering sport-specific interview questions.

There is no "correct" way to answer sport-specific questions in an interview, especially if there are multiple people sitting in on the interview. You're going to have 4 kinds of people sitting in on the in the interview, 3 of which are bad:

- 1-Someone who has no clue about your sport
- 2-Someone who thinks they have a clue about your sport, but in reality, really doesn't have a clue
- 3-Someone who actually does have a clue about your sport and disagrees with your philosophy
- 4-Someone who actually does have a clue about your sport and agrees with your philosophy

Don't worry about the "correct" answer, instead, be prepared and confident in your answers to sport-specific answers by frequently evaluating your coaching ideas and philosophies and putting them into practice.

Didn't Get The Interview or Job Offer? Here's Why!

There are several reasons why you may not get an interview for a position you applied for, or why you didn't get the offer after interviewing. Understanding what some of these reasons may be will help you prepare and limit any objections you may face during the process.

Reasons Why You May Not Get an Interview:

- The organization had somebody already in mind.
- Lack of experience for the position.
- Your experience does not meet the criteria of the position requirements.
- Resume does not stand out or does not

properly demonstrate your abilities.

- You didn't demonstrate interest in the position, or you did not follow up with the head of the search.
- Lack of supporting info/portfolio.
- Lack of references in your application material or poor reference check.
- Higher than normal competition for the position.
- Demographics – age, gender, ethnicity.
- Overqualified.
- Timing (materials received late).

Reasons Why You May Not Get the Job Offer:

- Not as qualified as other candidates that interviewed.
- Poor communication/interpersonal interviewing skills.
- Said something that raised a red flag.
- Did not outline a comprehensive vision for all aspects of the position/program.
- Lack of supporting info/portfolio.
- Showed lack of overall interest.
- Did not show that this was the #1 destination/position.
- Poor reference checks.
- Did not do well with player interviews.
- Did not have a plan for the specific needs of the position/program (lack of research).
- Another candidate was pegged as the leader to fill the position heading into the interviews.
- Salary requirements could not be agreed upon.
- First impressions (dress, timeliness, etiquette).

Need Additional Help?

If you've been overlooked for jobs that you've

interviewed for in the past, there's no shame in asking for help. That's why we created *The Complete Guide to the Coaching Interview*. This guide contains tips and advice to help you nail your next coaching interview. It also contains over 200 sample interview questions that you are likely to be asked during a coaching interview. Even better, we provide guidance on how to answer the toughest interview questions! Receive a FREE copy of *The Complete Guide to the Coaching Interview*, which includes over 250 sample interview questions specific to coaching jobs + the best answers to common interview questions, when you sign up for *The Coaching Portfolio* website at www.coachingportfolio.com!

O-LINE DRILLS

PASS PROTECTION SCHEMES



Michael Fields
La Grande HS, OR
JV Head Coach/OC
[CoachTube](#)
[@CoachMichaelF](#)

In Volume 3 Issues 2 I discussed pass protection, and specifically the kick step and how to work that

into practice and EDDs. In this article we will take a deeper dive into pass protection schemes and how to rep them in practice. While the 5 interior linemen receive credit for keeping the pocket clean, and take the heat is the QB is getting sacked, there is a lot more to pass protection than the 5 offensive linemen doing their jobs. For this article, we will stick to the linemen and mention a few other keys here to have some context and background.

The running back(s) usually have a big role in pass protection. This could be a specific gap or man to block, or they may have a fake to carry in play action passes. The receivers must run the correct routes for the QB to have his timing right in releasing the ball. The QB must make the correct reads and make the throw. The coaches need to have the right pass plays called for the defense, down and distance, time remaining, etc. So yes, there is a lot that goes into good pass protection.

For the linemen we generally use two types of pass protection, slide/zone or man protection.

In a slide or zone scheme the 5 linemen will use their kick steps to get to a certain spot and block any defender that comes to their zone. If no one enters their zone they should have a secondary responsibility to help or move to. With zone or slide protection, they will have a certain gap they are responsible for. In man protection they have a specific defender they are responsible for blocking, this could be a defensive lineman or defensive back that rushes the pocket.

In slide protection they can slide to a gap or to a side of the line of scrimmage depending on the pass play. This will vary based on the play and drop by the QB and timing of the release of the ball. For example, a 3-step drop pass play may use an inside gap zone blocking scheme where each of the guards and tackles step to and protect their inside gap. With this protection, the guards would block A gaps and tackles block B gaps, the center helps with both A gaps and keeps defenders from rushing straight up the middle. For this a running back would most likely have the C gap(s) to keep edge rushers off the QB. A 3-step pass play is most likely to have the balls out of the QBs hand quicker as he is setting up and releasing the ball in approximately 3 seconds from the snap. Using an inside zone scheme makes sense with this quick passing play as the biggest threats to reach the QB are the closest inside defenders.

To practice this, you can use a full line or half line and have defenders rush the inside gaps. The defenders should change their rush lanes to force the offensive linemen to stay disciplined to their inside gap responsibility. Incorporating

defensive linemen, linebackers and DBs into the rushing lanes will work various angles and approaches for the linemen to work on their gap protection.

Another zone or slide protection scheme is the outside gap protection. In this protection scheme the guards would have the B gaps and the tackles would have the C gaps the center takes the A gaps. The running back would help with A gaps or any other uncovered gaps along the line. Outside gap slide protection could be used for 3-step and 5-step pass plays.

The other zone or slide protection scheme is to step to or slide to one direction of the line. With the directional slide protection, the call is either made to the TE or away from the TE depending on the pass play or defensive alignment. For this protection scheme every lineman step slides in the same direction protecting their gap to that side. On a right slide each lineman would kick step back with their right foot and slide the left foot underneath. In some schemes the tackle on the side away from the slide direction may step to the opposite side to block the EMOLS keeping this edge rusher from reaching the QB. In man on man (MOM) or big on big (BOB) protection each offensive lineman is responsible for defensive player to block one-on-one. In MOM protection each offensive lineman may step in either direction depending on who he is responsible for blocking. Two linemen may step to the same gap to block the defensive lineman and a linebacker coming to the same gap. If a lineman is responsible for a linebacker who does not rush, he may then have a secondary duty to

help with his teammate on a specific defensive player. An example would be, against a 4-man defensive front, the center takes the nose tackle, the tackles take the DEs, and the guard on the side of the DT takes him, the other guard takes a backer that may blitz or helps with the nose. The running back would take any other linebacker or DB who rushes. In man blocking schemes the kick steps are still used to create the pocket for the QB to pass from. To rep this in practice you would show different defensive fronts to the offensive line and first walk through who is responsible for blocking who. This may change based on the different fronts you would see with your upcoming opponent. This could be done in EDDs, pod work and team offense time.

For rollout, boot and waggles passes, the line may use the slide zone scheme, or a rolling pocket. For this, depending on your offensive system you may even pull an uncovered lineman to "escort" your QB on his rollout. If you are rolling the pocket with the whole offensive line, you would have all five linemen use a pull and sit technique to the direction of the rollout.

Play action passes would utilize a drive or reach step to show run, then drop into the kick step for pass protection. This can be tricky as the linemen cannot go down field more than one yard, unless they are engaged in blocking a defender. A man-on-man protection may keep this a little safer. We teach the line to use a 3 step drive into a power kick step. If they use the proper 6 inch drive step this should keep them from getting too far down field and risk a

continued on next page

penalty. If using the drive step into the power kick step, be sure to teach the linemen to use their post foot as the first and third step so they are in position to kick step with the correct foot as step 4. If you use multiple play action passes, the footwork and directional steps would need to be repped regularly in practice. If your play action uses pulling linemen, you would again want to be careful that they are not getting too far down field. We use the pull and sit language to keep them from going downfield. This means that they pull until the point of contact would be on a typical kickout block and sit into a pass protection stance.

For more complicated defenses and pressure packages, you may install a mix of slide and man blocking schemes together. For example, you may slide to the TE side with the center, guard and tackle, while the backside tackle and guard are man on man with the defender across from them. For roll out plays you may use a deeper kick step on the back side and slide on the play side to protect the QB as he rolls.

You would also want to have a "max" protect scheme that keeps 6 or 7 players in to protect the QB. With this you would either keep the TE in to block instead of running a route or use 2 running backs to match the number of defenders rushing. This can be in the play call or even a tag used at the line of scrimmage when the defense shows its plan presnap.

Regardless of using a slide or man protecting scheme, you should rep your pass protection daily, not just the footwork in EDDs but the scheme as well. We utilize one day of offensive

practice to be our "passing day" for the upcoming game. In this practice we add in any new schematic changes, adjust to the front(s) we will see and talk about tags or call we may need to counter anything the defense brings.

If you are enjoying these articles, be on the lookout for an offensive play manual coming out this summer or email me at coachmichaelfields@gmail.com for more information.

In slide/zone, man, or a mix of pass protections you should always have a set of base rules that your linemen work on every day. These rules should be part of your playbook and have a little room for flexibility to adjust to different defenses and pressure packages you may see. If you are good at your base offense and the linemen know the rules, they should be prepared to block any look the defense shows. Repping the scheme daily on your base pass plays will translate into success on game day. Using time in POD or groups sessions so the linemen, RBs, TE and QBs are on the same page will help keep the chains moving and lead to putting points on the board.

OFFENSIVE TALK

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS JUST AN ASSISTANT COACH



Chip Seagle
Retired Full Time Coach
OC Heritage School, Newnan,
GA
[@ChipSeagle](https://twitter.com/ChipSeagle)
[Football Talk](https://www.facebook.com/FootballTalk)
seagle.chip@gmail.com

I heard a conversation on sports talk radio on my way home from school several years ago and the conversation, as well as the opinions made by the callers, got me to thinking. The topic was, is calling a quarterback a "game manager" a positive or a negative? The point was correctly made that being a "game manager" is not a negative moniker to place on a QB. And this is more proof that sports, especially football, can be an allegory for life. Let us dive deeper.

People all too often get caught up in the long passes and explosive plays, but little thought is given to the "little" plays that keep drives alive. When a QB that is a "game manager" checks to a better play or throws a shorter pass because the deep route was not open, not many people notice that play. Or how about when a defensive lineman takes out a pulling guard so that a linebacker can make a bone-crushing HUDL highlight tackle in the open field?

A coach friend of mine is fond of saying, "Not everyone can be the quarterback." Man, he is right! Someone has to do dirty work for the explosive play to happen. Everyone matters on the football field; that is why football is the ultimate team sport. When a player makes a big

play there are other players doing things that went unnoticed on that play. It is the same way in life, someone has to dig the ditch, pick up our garbage, and clean out our septic tank.

We must remember that Jesus had 12 disciples, but only one, Peter, was chosen as 'The Rock' upon which the Church would be built. Just like Jesus had his disciples, the Pope has his cardinals, every President has a cabinet of advisors, and Head Coaches need a staff that is willing to dig a ditch or pick up garbage. Behind every successful head coach is a loyal staff that does most of their work behind the scenes and out of public view.

Many of us saw this year's Final Four and Connecticut win their fifth national title in 24 years under three different head coaches. The cameras were constantly showing UConn's head coach, Dan Hurley, standing on the sideline shouting encouragement and barking out instructions. What most people did not see were the people sitting behind him; sometimes stationed behind the players. The cameras did not zoom in on the coaches with clipboards that were taking notes, keeping up with player fouls, minutes played, and whatever else Hurley wanted to know. We also do not see the countless hours of film study, practice, drills, board work, recruiting, and offseason conditioning that were done by all the Huskies' assistant coaches.

I was recently talking with someone that had been a church youth director for many years, and he was often asked when he was going to be the

continued on next page

pastor of his own church. He confided in me that this question, regardless of how innocent, was becoming tiresome and somewhat offensive. It was like people looked at his position as if it were a minor one. He said, "Everyone in the ministry is not going to be a senior pastor, nor do they all want to be." I responded, "It is the same way with football coaches."

How successful would General George Patton have been had he not had a legion of junior officers and non-commissioned officers (sergeants) to carry out his orders and strategies? Even the greatest singers need musicians and backup singers. Capillaries, the smallest, thinnest-walled blood vessels in the body, connect veins and arteries; the heart would be useless without them. Think about it, if every position on a team or staff does not matter, why do we have it? Capillaries, like assistant coaches, exist because they are needed.

Our players that may never start or make a meaningful contribution during a game matter too. Teams need these players to give the starters a good picture in practice to prepare them for the game. We need to do away with terms like 'scrub' and 'donk.' Come on, put yourself in their shoes, don't you think we would get more from them if they knew how valuable they were to the success of the team? Sure, we need to tell them, but we also need to show them.

When I was a lowly walk-on in college, they used to give out a weekly scout team player of the week award; one for offense and one for defense. They called it the "R.D. Award." R.D. stood for

Rodney Dangerfield. For you younger readers, Dangerfield was a stand-up comedian whose catchphrase was, "I don't get no respect!" That idea has caused me to recognize the great effort of our scout teamers for most of my coaching career. I will often recognize them in front of the entire team at the end of practice and then reward them with a sports drink and candy bar after practice. You might be surprised to see how something that small will motivate kids to make a better effort. Believe me, recognition matters, especially to young people.

How many of us would say that Bud Foster, former longtime Defensive Coordinator at Virginia Tech, had an unfulfilled career because he was never the head coach of his own program? Foster started coaching in 1981 and retired in 2019 as one of the greatest assistant coaches in the history of college football. Foster summed up his philosophy about being an assistant coach with this great quote that all assistants should make their philosophy, "You didn't need to be a Head Coach to be a head coach."

I have a similar philosophy that I often share with young assistant coaches. I tell them that they are already the head coach of their position or group, and they should act like it. They should have a sense of ownership and take great pride in their group. This approach will not go unnoticed by the players as they will start to emulate their position coach's attitude toward their group. Konstantin Stanislavski, considered the father of modern acting, said, "There are no small parts, only small actors." All coaches, in all sports at all levels, should take these words to heart.

In 2017, I attended the Alabama High School Hall of Fame induction ceremony. I was there to see our basketball coach inducted into the hall. During the ceremony they also inducted a longtime assistant football coach; that's right, he was never a head coach. His former head coach, a Hall of Famer in his own right, had this to say about his longtime assistant (37 years), "One might question why an assistant coach should qualify for the Hall of Fame. It is because he is the epitome of who and what a high school coach should be to young people. He demands the best from his players and, at the same time, inspires them to stretch beyond their abilities. Most of all, he has a love and concern for young people that goes far beyond the years they played for him. He truly does make a difference in the lives of the young people he teaches and coaches...He is a role model for commitment, loyalty, integrity, character, and love for his athletes. He is everything an assistant coach should be." All coaches, in all sports at all levels, should take these words to heart also. It does not matter if you are QB that is considered a game manager, a pulling guard, a career scout teamer (like me), or "just" an assistant coach;

you should do your job to the best of your ability because what you do matters. If it does not matter, why does the position or role exist? I am reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words:

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

I hope when I depart this world, they can say, "Here lived an assistant football coach, he did his job well."

#BeElite

Foot Note: People often ask me what I mean by, "Be Elite." To me, being Elite is being the best version of you. I believe that we become Elite by being better today than yesterday and striving to be better tomorrow than today.



SPECIAL TEAMS

MIRACLE KO RETURN AND HANDS TEAM



Stephen Mikell
Offensive Coordinator and
Offensive Line Coach
Stuarts Draft High School
Stuarts Draft, VA

All football coaches and serious football fans know about "The Play." Now, depending on where your allegiance lies for college football, "The Play" you are thinking of may be different than mine. However, those of us who've been around for a while, know that there is only one "The Play". November 20, 1982, the Stanford Cardinal were playing the Cal Bears. Stanford's QB, John Elway, had led his team down the field to score a go ahead field goal. With only a few seconds left on the clock, Cal set up to return the ensuing kickoff. The Cal radio announcer said that "only a miracle" would help. Stanford squibbed the kickoff, but the Cal return team refused to get tackled with the ball. The Cal players lateraled the ball FIVE times to score what is arguably the greatest touchdown in the history of college football.

At some point in your career as a coach, you will be in a similar situation. You're down by less than 7 points with seconds left in the game, and your opponent is kicking off. What will you do? Do you have a plan? Do your kids know your plan? Have you practiced the plan enough so your kids are comfortable executing the plan? In this issue, I'll share our plan for what we plan

on doing in the scenario described above. We call that our "Miracle" return. I'll also describe how we align for our "hands" return when we're up on a team and expecting an onside kick. I will admit though, we have had the "Miracle" return in place since 2007, but we never had the opportunity to use it. That being said, we practice this "miracle" return for a few reps each Thursday along with our "hands" return.

Personnel & Alignment:

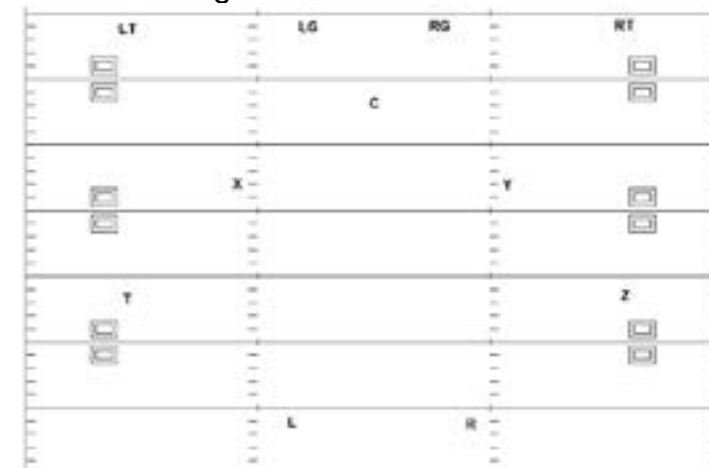
Just as with a traditional "Hands" team, our "Miracle" team is made up of the best athletes with the best hands on the team. Here are the personnel types we like for the positions diagrammed below.

First start with the Left Returner (L) & Right Returner (R): These are your two best athletes. They are your DUDES. They may be your normal deep returners for punts and kickoffs, but these are the guys you want with the ball in their hands when the game is on the line.

Next fill these positions, Left (LT) & Right (RT) Tackle, X & Y, and T & Z. These are your traditional hands team players. WR or Running backs. The LT & RT can be bigger, stronger guys, but you definitely want them to have great hands and be able to move.

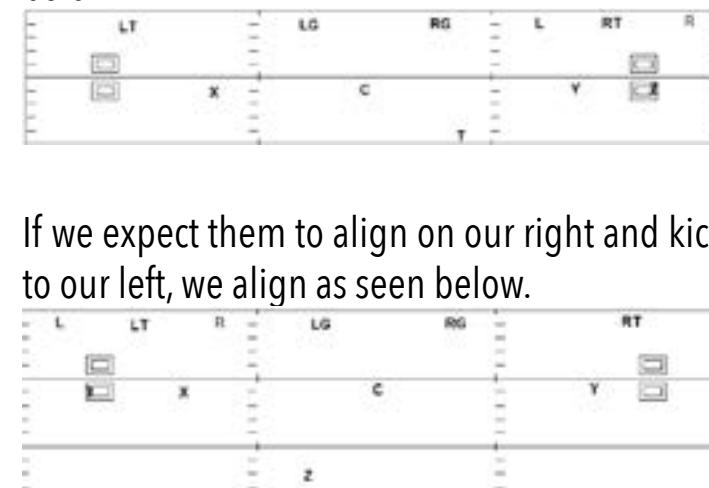
Finally, fill in your Left (LG) & Right (RG) Guards, & Center (C). These players are typically tight end type players. They can be athletic linemen with good hands, too. You want bigger, stronger guys who are still mobile.

If you've read the last few articles on our Crease and Punch Return, you'll remember we use 6 players within 7-10 yds of the 50 yard line. Our "Miracle" alignment varies that structure a little. It looks more like a "traditional" 5 man front kick off return. The image below shows our BASE alignment if we need a MIRACLE on kickoff return. When we install the Miracle Team, we start with this alignment, then we adjust to install the alignment our hands return.



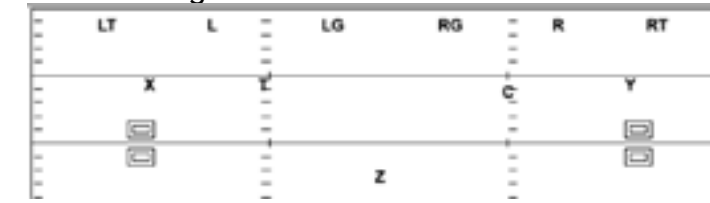
Traditional "Hands" Alignment

Everyone has a "hands" team when you expect an onside kick from your opponent. We base ours on the hash we expect the opponent to kick off from. If the opponent lines up on our left hash to kick to our right, we will align as seen below.



If we expect them to align on our right and kick to our left, we align as seen below.

If the opponent kicks from the middle of the field we align as seen below.



Coaching Points for the "Hands" Return

The returner's depth should be deep enough to field a deep kick if kicked deep, but not so deep to get to a short kick.

Since we want the ball in the hands of our returners (R & L), we rotate those players to the right, left, or center on the front line. Based on alignment, the RT or LT may get the ball on an onside attempt, but we typically want the R & L handling the ball and everyone else is protecting them.

We teach our front line players NOT to jump to catch a bounce. IF the ball bounces high off the on sides, we want our 2nd level players to field the ball and the front to protect them.

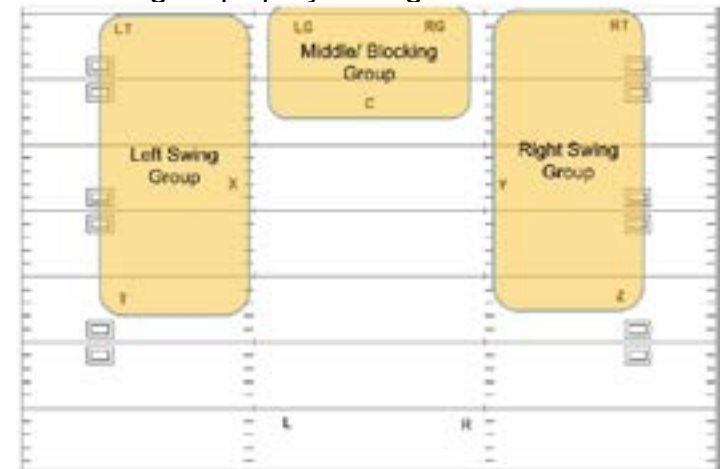
IF the ball does go to the front line, anyone NOT catching the ball should get in front of and protect the player recovering the onside kick.

The Miracle Return

When I was in college, I joined the Rugby Club. At that time, we didn't have spring football at the D3 level, so I wanted to try something new. My experience playing rugby played a big role in how I approached our "Miracle" return. I try to keep the rules for the concept as simple as

continued on next page

possible. The goal is to keep the ball in play for as long as possible, so we can swing the ball wide to one of our returners.. DON'T GET TACKLED WITH THE BALL. If we wind up turning the ball over to the other team, it doesn't matter, because this is a last ditch, desperation attempt. The diagram below will show how we align, and how we "group" players together for their role.



The team is divided into 3 groups. Each group has a role or job as a part of this return. The roles and personnel for each group are described below.

The Middle or Blocking group's role is to get in front of the ball to "block" or lead the ball carrier. In rugby terminology, this is the front line of your scrum. They MIGHT get the ball, but we don't want them as the primary runners. If the ball is out wide to one side or the other, then this group should try to get themselves open for a lateral.

There are two "swing" groups. Their role is to be outlets to pass the ball to the right or the left. Obviously, the right group tries to stay to the right of the ball, and the left group tries to stay to the left. Any one of these players can get the

ball and run with it. If one of them does get the ball, the other 2 in that group should try to block for or protect the carrier until one of the middle group replaces them.

The returners try to out flank the kickoff team and find space to run. If the ball is on or outside the numbers, to their side, they should be around the hash to their side to get the ball.

Coaching Points for the "Miracle" Return

Even though we want to lateral the ball to the deep returners, they shouldn't hold on to it if they're about to get tackled. The other groups should be out wide or in an alignment to take a lateral.

Think about the field as divided into 3 zones: Left, Middle, and Right.

If the ball is in your zone and you do not have the ball, you block.

If the ball is in the adjacent zone, you try to get open for a lateral by maintaining pitch relationship with the ball.

Players from the far zone will not cross midfield so they remain open for a throwback.

If someone in your group is being tackled, help hold them up or take the ball from them.

This is similar to a rugby "maul" technique. Look up "rugby maul" technique videos on YouTube to see that concept in action.

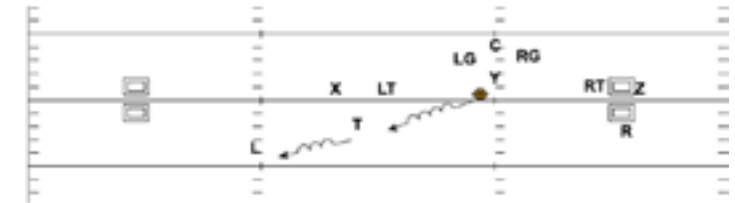
The ball must not be thrown forward.

Players must communicate if they have the ball, if they are open for a lateral, and where they are passing the ball.

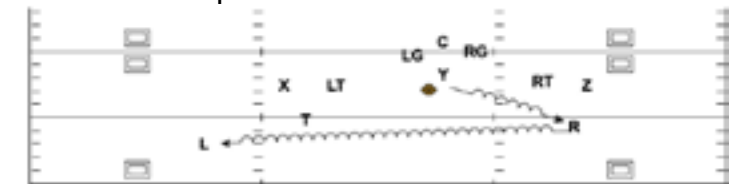
This is our last chance, so try anything.

An example of the "Miracle" Return

The diagrams below show possible returns if the ball is squib kicked and the Y picks up the ball. In both, the ball is in the middle zone, so the blocking group blocks for the Y, while the RT, Z, & R set up to receive a pass to the right, and the LT, X, & T set up to receive a lateral to the left. You will also note that the L is set up wide to the left to outflank the return team.



In the above diagram, the Y laterals the ball to the T who may then lateral to the L. In this scenario, the X, & LT would then try to get in front of the L, while the other groups would make themselves available for passes in their zones.



In the above diagram, the Y laterals the ball to the R. Since the Ball is on the short side of the field, the R is likely to run out of room. He may be able to see the L on the far hash, and pass the ball back to him.

Final Thoughts

An urban legend among the rugby community holds that the kick return team that Cal put out for "The Play" in 1982 was Cal's celebrated rugby team. I can't find any proof of that, but it's clear the returners knew what they were doing. These concepts can be easily practiced with your team. Give your players the basic rules, and let them have fun. This could also be an excellent way to condition your team in the summer. Have them play "ultimate" football (like ultimate frisbee), but instead of allowing forward passes, force them to lateral the ball. This would be a great way to teach the concepts and ideas while allowing the players time to practice in a meaningful way. If you'd like to talk about this or any other of our return schemes please reach out. I'm always happy to talk about special teams, offensive line play, or any other phase of football. You can find me on Facebook as Abe Mikell, Instagram as CoachMikell or via email at smikell@augusta.k12.va.us.

DEFENSIVE LINE BASICS

FILM YOUR INDIVIDUAL DRILLS



Quint Ashburn
Defensive Line Coach: Searcy
High School - AR
[Defensive Line Coaching
Group on Facebook](#)
[@CoachAshSearcy](#)
[Defensive Line Manual](#)

Film is an important tool to every football coach. We watch the opposing teams each week in order to come up with a plan to win. We watch our practice film in order to make sure we are preparing to be successful on game days. We also evaluate to see if the best players are out on the field. One part of practice that I believe is important to film if possible is your individual drill time.

Individual or "indo" time is a time that coaches have each day to work directly with their position group on drills and concepts that they specifically need to get better on as a unit. This is a very important time that coaches need in order to develop their players into what they need to be for their offense or defensive position. Unfortunately, as the season goes on, individual time usually decreases.

If possible, I believe that all position coaches should film their players during their individual time. I am going to give a few reasons as to why this is important and can help out how you coach up your players.

1) It is a great way to have a teach-tape for your players to refer to when getting new players to your position.

Most of us are preparing or are already participating in spring practices. If you have film of the individual drills that you do or are about to do in practice each day, this will prepare your players and will reduce the amount of confusion that happens when you begin to do these drills in practice. You will be able to explain the drill, show the drill, and have them perform the drill. Players

will feel more confident in performing the drills you prepare them for after seeing it performed on tape.

2.) You can track the progress of your players at their technique.

Watching individual drills from practice one to practice ten should give you a good picture as to which players are progressing and others who are struggling to pick up the basic techniques of the position that they are playing. This could help you show players where they need to improve in order to see more time on the field or how to become better at a specific aspect of the game.

3.) It is a great tool for teaching new coaches on your staff.

Showing examples of individual drills to the coaches you work with is a really good way to help them learn and become a better coach as well. For example, if you are a varsity defensive line coach and the head coach hires a new junior high defensive line coach, you will have plenty of clips to show him on how you teach the correct techniques within the defense that is run in your program. This will give him some guidelines and have an idea on how he needs to teach his defensive linemen.

4.) It can help you organize your drills into a drill manual of your position.

In coaching, organization of drills, schemes, and plans goes a long way in helping you succeed. Your head coach or coordinator may ask you or encourage you to come up with a drill manual for the position that you coach. Creating a drill manual with film accessible for each drill can keep you organized and able to review the different drills that you want to run. You can review how you need to set up as well as understand which points you need to emphasize for each drill by being able to quickly look up and watch each drill quickly on film.

Because of advanced technology in this day and age, filming individual drills is extremely easy. At the school I work at we use HUDL. Hudl has a free app on both the iPad and iPhone. If I want to use my cell phone to record in hudl, all I need to do is get on the app, go to the capture option on the menu, and I can begin to film my drills on my phone. Once I get to a place that has internet, I can upload all of my drills from practice to HUDL and I now have plenty of film to review and show to my players.

Even if you don't have a program like hudl, you can still make it work. By using your phone's camera you can record drills and upload it to your computer. You can then put it on your Google Drive and use the clips saved there in a free QR code making app or site for your players to scan with their phones. Below is an example of a QR code to a drill that I run with my defensive linemen during my individual time. I am not great at technology and once I figured it out, it was very

easy to rinse and repeat for all of my drills.



In conclusion, filming your individual drills has so many positives for both your players and yourself in mastering the process of coaching up your players to success. It keeps you organized, it gives players visuals to learn and grow within their position, and it helps you spread your coaching knowledge to other coaches that want to learn how to teach their player in the best way possible.

The Affordable Video Platform

REC F 2.8 HD 1080p 60 fps

Switch and Save
up to 50%

Learn More

00:13:47:55

QwikCut
VIDEO & ANALYTICS

Get Started Today
www.QwikCut.com
(407) 768-2011

HEAD COACHING 101

MISTAKES TO AVOID



Kenny Simpson
Author/Coaching Consultant
HC - Southside, AR
[@fbcoachsimpson](https://www.facebook.com/fbcoachsimpson)
FBCoachSimpson.com

An excerpt from [Find A Way: What I Wish I'd Known When I Became A Head Football Coach](#)

First mistake – What you allow to slide, you accept. As a coach I've seen it several times that I simply get tired or do not recognize something small and don't address it. Whatever you think is important must be upheld or it really isn't important. I've tried to have as few rules as possible, but those I have, I try to enforce.

Example– My second season as a head coach I had several very good players that were always "hurt" during the week, but were good to go on Thursday walk through practice and in Friday games were out there crushing people. One of my assistants even coined the phrase "Miracle Thursdays". As the season went on we had more and more injured players.

The fix– We now have every player dress out even if they are non-contact players. Everyone has a helmet and whatever gear they are allowed to wear. If they are actually injured they are in the ice bath or away from the field. Those who are injured somewhat are with their position groups with helmet and practice jersey. I've even had some with that and a boot on a foot. I explain to them that I don't expect them to violate a

doctor's order, but we will do everything we can to be a part of the team and not a distraction.

Second mistake – If we won the game I did a great job as a coach, and if we lost I did a terrible job. I've had the pleasure of going 10-2 recently with our first ever conference championship and I've also had the excruciating pain of going 0-10.

Example– My second season I was very fortunate to have some great players. We made the playoffs in 4A for the first time in school history. We hosted our first playoff game in 20-years and in general had a great season. While I did some things well, I was allowing our culture to become all about winning and sacrificing discipline. The next season we went 3-8 with an even more talented group.

The fix – I started holding myself to a much higher standard than some lousy scoreboard on a Friday night. Am I teaching these boys how to become great young men? Am I holding them accountable? Am I teaching my assistants what I expect from them? If I can answer these things with a yes, then I honestly don't care about the scoreboard. The irony is we are actually winning more now than ever before, and I don't obsess over winning at all cost.

Third mistake – Thinking everyone in my program cares as much about football as I do. I learned very quickly that someone with the desire to be a head coach has much more football obsession than your average football player and even your average football assistant. This does

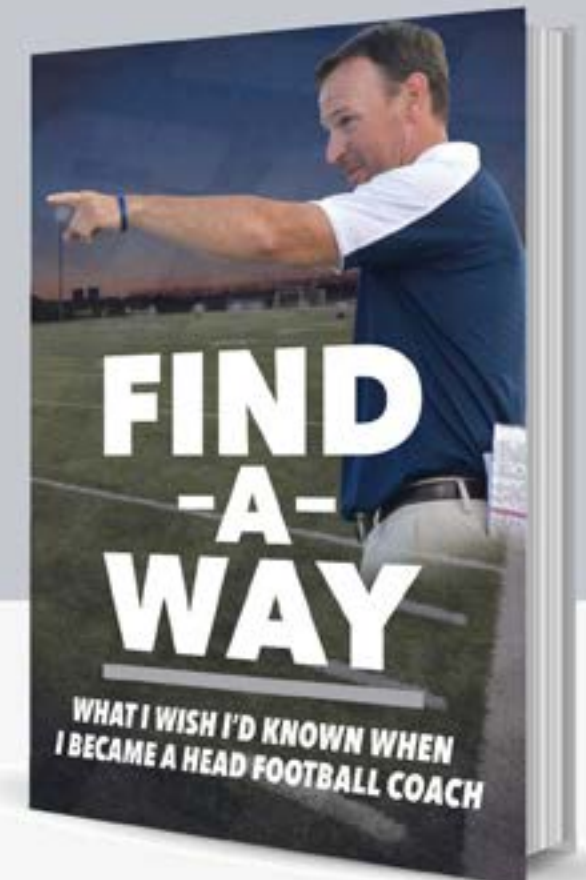
not make them bad people or people that don't care. It just makes them normal people.

Example – I can vividly remember getting frustrated early on in my career when I'd have a player that hadn't read his scouting report, watched his film and done all the other things I required them to do by Monday. I'd just finished jumping all over him (in front of the team) when I was informed by an assistant in private that he had to work all weekend because his dad had lost his job and he was now paying bills for the family. Talk about a humbling moment.

The fix – First I spend a lot more time getting to know the situation of my players. I also pick 2-3 guys that are obsessed with football on each side of the ball and give them much more responsibility of making adjustments during a game than the "average" player. Most teams have 3-4 guys that are film junkies and we give these guys roles within the team – For example, we try to have one safety (ability doesn't matter as much as long as he is good enough to be on the field) call the coverage adjusts and we do the same at linebacker and offensive line. The only position I must have a guy who loves the game as much as me is the QB position.

IN THIS BOOK

"...You will read about the ways I have had success building programs that were not very competitive into competitive teams. I am not a miracle worker and many of the parts to this book will be things many of you already know, but maybe one or two of the ideas I have used can help you on your journey as a coach. Each chapter discusses different elements of becoming a successful head coach with a focus on turning around downtrodden programs."



[CLICK FOR MORE INFO]

“I GOT THE JOB; NOW WHAT?”

PART ONE: CRAFTSMAN PHASE



Jay Gore
44 years of experience
2 Time State Champion
5 State Finals
jgore192@gmail.com

Bob Gecewich
17 Years of experience
Head Coach, Perry H.S.,
Perry, Ohio
gecewich_bob@dublin-schools.net

This is the 2nd article in the series titled “A Coaching Career: A Job Guide for Young Coaches”. As you may remember I am co-writing this article with a young coach named Bob Gecewich. Bob used to coach on my staff, but has since moved on to his own head coaching job. I count Bob as a friend and have enjoyed numerous conversations with him about coaching. Even though I am older, not wiser, he has taught me a lot, both schematically and administratively.

This is a 3-article series. In article one we dealt with the elements of getting the job and becoming an assistant coach. We called this the apprenticeship phase. Since there is no formal school for learning the art of coaching it is usually done as “on the job training”. Although there is no set time-table for when this phase ends or

how long it will take, for me it was about five years. At that point I was convinced that coaching was what I truly wanted to do and decided to commit myself to growing in the profession. It was also at this point that I realized just how little I knew about what I was doing. Although everyone is different and your time frame may be shorter or longer, the experience is the same. The good thing is that the components of this period never lose their importance.

In this article, we call the craftsman phase, the apprentice begins to shape their own coaching style. Taking lessons from their mentors and adjusting it to fit their own personality and demeanor. In this phase the newness of coaching has evaporated and the grind begins. In this installment we will discuss how to improve and grow in the profession to hopefully become a “craftsman” of your trade. We encourage you to seek out interaction with master craftsmen, select older coaches, who can remind you of where you want to go and the work required to get there. Coaches who motivate us to think beyond, stretch our interests and hone our skills. Numerous times in my career I have thought “if only I knew then what I know now”. None of us can go back but we can all try and learn from those that have gone before.

Here are 10 recommendations we believe will help you on your journey to becoming a craftsman of your trade and applied correctly will keep the fire alive.

- Create a drill book
- Build your community
- Take on more responsibility

- Work to see the bigger picture
- Stay curious- be a student of the game/read
- Learn how to interview
- Learn OL play
- Become a master of your position
- Honor family time
- Learn how to teach

Create a drill book. As teachers we call it “putting things in our toolbox”. I went to my first football clinic in 1982 at Notre Dame, and heard a receivers coach talk about drills “in the box”. I still have his notes and still use the drill when I coach receivers. I have added to it and tweaked it a bit, but the details of the drills are still relevant. One of my routines in the off season is to pull out that book and thumb through the pages. It always reminds me of something that I had forgotten. As seasoned coaches we are sometimes called up to coach another position than the one we are accustomed to. It is nice to have a collection of “go to” drills in that event. One of the nice things about clinics is that I get the opportunity to hear speakers discuss positions other than the one I coach. At a Mississippi clinic one year I heard a coach talk about QB fundamentals. When I became a HC, I found myself coaching the QB’s. I was thankful that I had paid attention to that guy and taken good notes. Several drills of his I still use today. As I hire new coaches I always ask them to start a drill book. I share mine with them and ask that they share with me whenever they run across a new one. As a young coach I was always looking for a new offensive play or defensive stunt that would be a game changer. As I have gotten older, and maybe wiser, I look for drills to teach

Here are 10 recommendations we believe will help you on your journey to becoming a craftsman of your trade and applied correctly will keep the fire alive.

- 1) Create a drill book
- 2) Build your community
- 3) Take on more responsibility
- 4) Work to see the bigger picture
- 5) Stay curious- be a student of the game/read
- 6) Learn how to interview
- 7) Learn OL play
- 8) Become a master of your position
- 9) Honor family time
- 10) Learn how to teach

continued on next page

with or easier vocabulary with which to teach. Having a book of drills allows me to change up the routine of practice and keep it fresh while still teaching the same fundamentals.

Build your community. In 1979 I coached against another young coach. After the game we sat and talked while kids changed and loaded the buses. Over the years we have had hundreds of conversations about all aspects of the job. Bob and I are writing this article together because of our friendship through coaching and shared experiences. We talk often about schemes, administrative issues, fund raising, and parent issues. In 2010 I called a coach that I did not know, but had heard good things about, and asked if I could come spend the day with him. He agreed and so I drove 3 ½ hours across the state to walk through his day with him. Since then he and I have met several times at clinics and on Zoom. Even though we live in different cities, miles apart, he continues to be a friend and a mentor. Don't be afraid to cold call coaches of successful programs, or guys that are in similar positions as you. You'd be surprised how many coaches will take time out to share with and speak with you. Never underestimate how much coaches love to talk! When I accepted my first head coaching position, I emailed future Ohio High School Football Coach Tiger LeVarde of Kirtland High School. Within 15 minutes, Tiger called me and we spoke for an hour and a half. He owed me nothing, didn't know me at all, but was willing to help me out and share his experiences. I'll never forget that and will do the same for others if I ever can. Zoom, Twitter and other social media platforms have made

this easier and allowed me to talk with people who otherwise would not have been within my geographical area.

Take on more responsibilities. The benefit for us is two-fold, we become more valuable to our HC and we learn something new that will serve us as we endeavor to advance our career. Showing proof of handling aspects of the job are also great resume builders. Administrators want to know that you have the ability to handle the job. The old adage is "Never ask someone to do something you haven't done or aren't willing to do yourself. Doing the "little things," like filling up water bottles, putting away equipment, making sure the cafeteria is clean after team meals shows players no one is above work. We are all stewards of the program and have a responsibility to each other to make sure everything is taken care of. As a Head Coach, I first look inside my own staff if we lose a position. Who is the coach I can trust to do the work? Who has taken on responsibility without being asked? That is how I have filled coordinator roles in the past and how I will continue to do so. With someone that I know and can trust. I'll take the worker over the chalkboard guru anytime.

See the big picture. In 1982 I joined a veteran staff of coaches as my second stop in my coaching career. I had been given the playbook to study and I can clearly remember the first staff meeting where I was asked if there was anything that I would like to add. Thinking that I knew something, I began to draw a play that we had used with great success at my previous school. When I finished presenting, quite

professionally I might add, I was bombarded by questions. "How does this fit with who we are", "how much new teaching time will this require", "are the steps of the QB, FB, TB something we already do", "does this require a new blocking scheme for the OL"? These were great questions to which I had no answer. In my limited vision I had not seen how everything was interrelated.

Stay curious, be a student of the game. The old 5-3 has evolved to the 3-3 stack, Wing-T from the gun, exotic formations, no-huddle tempo, RPO's, boundary reduction defenses, field blitzes, no-punt offenses driven by analytics, training regiments,the list goes on and on. To keep up you have to attend clinics, webinars, conversations with other coaches and read. Successful guys love to read. As a young coach and parent Bob reminds me "Reading has been such a large contributor to my growth as a coach, leader, educator, and parent. Reading about things that interest me as well as things that challenge me have forced me to reflect upon, and sometimes change, the way I go about daily interactions, organization, relationships, and the way I view situations". I especially like books about human struggle, survival, and people who have overcome adversity. My theme for the season and pre-game speeches usually come from these sources.

Learn how to interview. Even the act of preparing for an interview is beneficial. It forces you to evaluate everything you do or would do. If it isn't good enough to present to a committee for a job, why are you still doing it? It forces organization and helps you clarify who you are

as a coach and what your mission is. Vertical moves within an organization are hard because the job we want may be filled by someone else. We may have to change jobs in order to move up in our roles. Here are 3 areas to question when looking at a move: Does this move help me economically, professionally or personally? I will go sideways on an issue, but never backwards, and at least one has to be an improvement over where I am now. For example: more money helps me economically, becoming a coordinator helps me professionally, and moving back to be closer to family helps me personally (especially when kids are concerned or aging parents). Use the information and experiences that you have gained over the years and be able to explain how that will help you in this new position. Be able to explain why you are the right candidate for the job.

Learn OL play. The heart and soul of a football team is its offensive line. 5/11, 45% of your offensive unit is in the OL. When you combine the number of players, their footwork, stance, schemes, demeanor of blocks and types of blocks with tempo offenses and multiple defensive looks you get a huge amount of information that needs to be taught and executed on a single play. Regardless, if you coach offense or defense, you need to understand OL play. Offensive coaches are always trying to gain a numbers advantage by formation or by putting someone in conflict and defensive coaches are trying to negate that advantage by creating gray areas in OL rules, stemming fronts, or by reading "tells" of the OL or backs.

continued on next page

Become a master of your position. Learn all that you can about the fundamentals of your position and become an expert teacher of those things. Drills, vocabulary, footwork, stance, steps, etc. You can get a glimpse of the HC's job by being the HC of your position. Ask, "where do I want this unit to be by the end of the year? Make a yearly plan, break it into a seasonal plan, break that into a weekly plan, then break that into a daily plan. List the things that you need to accomplish the plan, the time that it will require and understand how it fits with other positions.

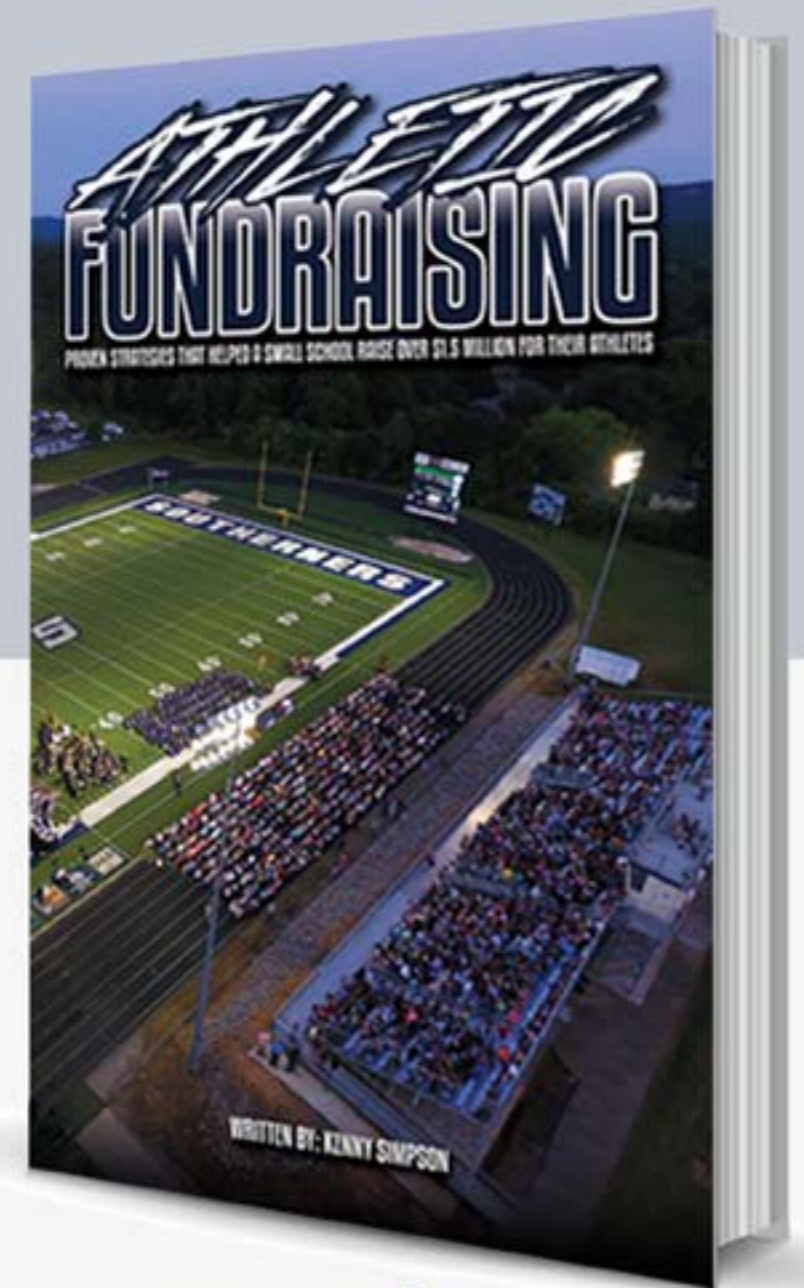
Honor family time. We have all heard the importance of "keeping first things first". In all careers, not just coaching, the landscape is covered by people who strove to be successful, but in the end realized that they had missed the things that mattered most. A mentor of mine once told me "be careful that you don't spend more time with other people's kids, than you do with your own". The satisfaction, fame, self-affirmation that comes from doing a job well comes with a price. I read once that "every encounter is a transaction". Make sure the price you pay is worth it. Coaching is a time consuming profession, especially in this time of technology.

If we are not careful we find that we are on the clock 24-7. Set limits and tell your players and parents. Let them know that you respect your family time and maybe you will be the example they need to learn to respect theirs.

Learn how to teach. At the secondary school level most of us are hired as teachers as well as coaches. Don't run from it, embrace it. Improve your teaching skills, it will only serve to make you a better coach. I have had the privilege over the years of working with some great coaches, and I can say without hesitation that they were also great teachers. In 2011, I took two recruits to a camp at a University. As I walked around the 800+ kids that were in drills in small groups, I realized the HC was working with the DB's. When I asked another coach why the HC was running a drill rather than just walking around watching, his response was "coach loves to teach". But even if you don't teach in a classroom setting, you are teaching on the field. Kids will remember you for one of two reasons: for the positive impact you made or for the negative one. Be the kind of coach/teacher that they remember for the positive impact that you made.

GOALS:

"We want to design all of our fundraising efforts in things that will produce 100% profit, will require as little time as possible, and will not risk losing any money or wear on our athletes or parents. While providing different opportunities to raise money is important, it is imperative to adjust to your community."



[CLICK FOR MORE INFO]

FLAVORS OF GT COUNTER

AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE GT(H) PLAY



Keith Fagan
Master Coach: NZone Football System
OC Yonkers Brave, NY
[@KF21WR](mailto:kf21wr@gmail.com)
kf21wr@gmail.com

In this series of articles, I will discuss how we run the GT(H) Counter Play with the Yonkers

Brave. The Yonkers Brave is a cop-op team, composed of student athletes from Saunders Trade & Technical High School, Lincoln High School, Barack Obama School for Social Justice High School, and Riverside High School, all located in Yonkers, NY, which borders the Hudson River to the West, and New York City to the South. In this third article, we will discuss using two backs and motion to further put the defense in conflict and combat various ways defenses will trigger their box players in an effort to negate the effectiveness of the play.

Why use two backs?

Adding a second back accomplishes two major objectives: one, it keeps the defensive front balanced, and two, it creates tremendous stressors for the defense. When an offense employs two backs in the backfield (some consider an "H"back, or sniffer, a second back, but we do not) it creates a situation where the offense can run counter to both sides of the formation with full flow run action. The reason we do not consider H backs, or sniffers, to be running backs is that our H backs will not receive a handoff, and we consider them pass catching (including a shovel pass) tight ends. That distinction is important for personnel reasons. The second objective of creating stressors for the defense is that with two backs in the backfield, the defense must respect the three receiver side (two receivers plus the running back), as well as the two receiver side (one receiver, one running back) of the formation as both running backs can easily attack the secondary with pass routes from their alignment. We like to run at the Nickel/Sam, or the second

defender to the single receiver side. We feel this player is the true "conflict" defender in that unless a defense is playing true zero (man-to-man) coverage, the secondary structure will have some sort of three over three and two over two alignment with a six man box. With our wide splits, the defender covering the single receiver is left to solo that receiver, which leaves the second defender to play the running back man to man when running a pass route, or to constrict the box if the running back is attempting to block.



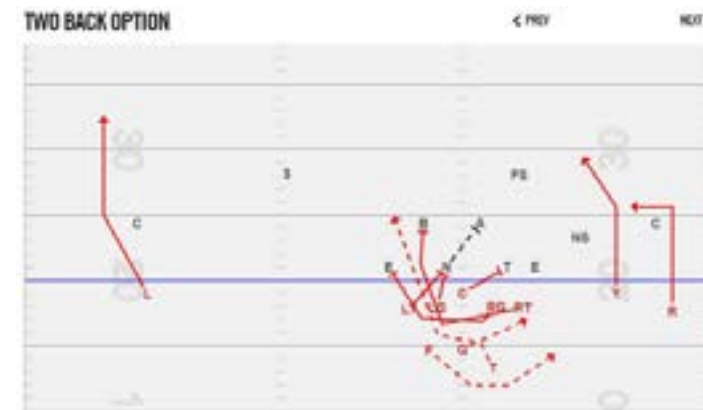
Adjustment Plays - Iso, Option, Wheel

There are three main adjustments we like to run with our GT scheme out of two back: Iso, Option, Wheel. The first adjustment we will discuss is the isolation play. If the defensive answer to two backs is to bring a seventh defender into the box, our first counter measure will be to run GT Iso. Our blocking rules (see Headsets Vol. 3 issue 1 for our base scheme blocking rules) stay the same for the superior, but the second back will block the first linebacker in the box.

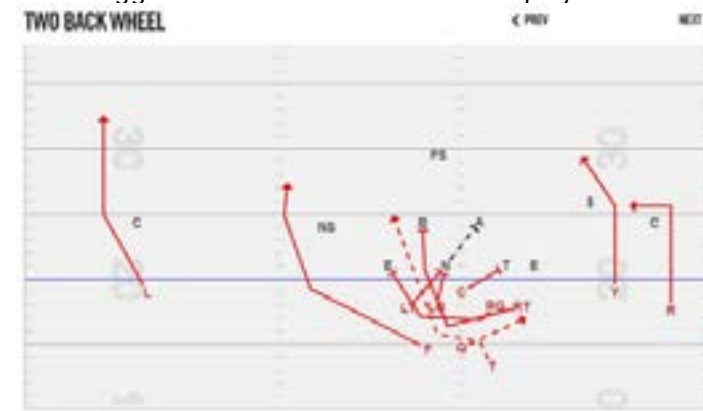


If the defense stays with a six man box, but brings the apex defenders closer to the line of scrimmage, we will run GT Option.

continued on next page

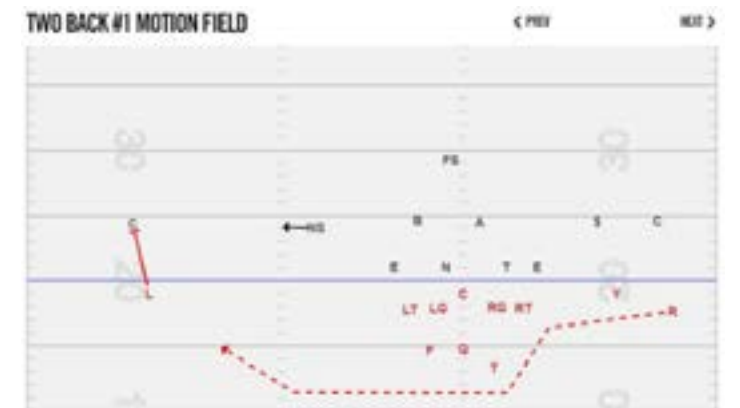
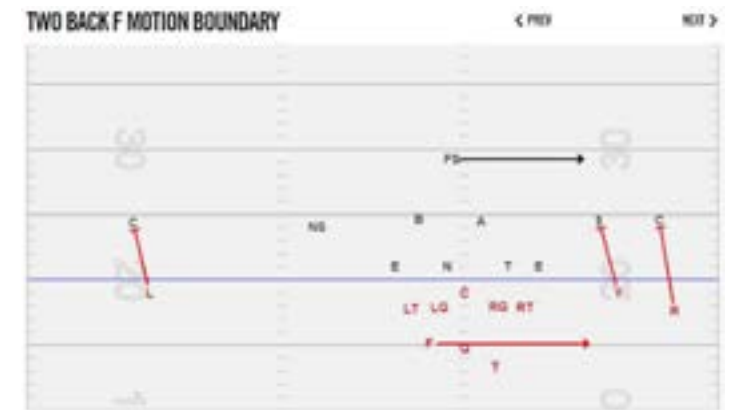
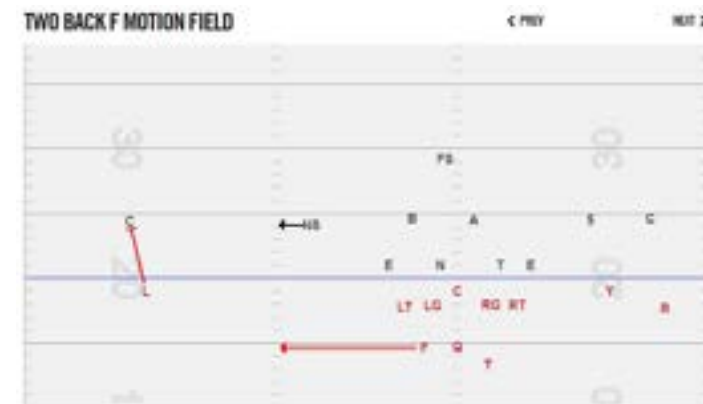


If the second defender to the two receiver side is causing issues by aggressively attacking the box when triggered by the back to the single receiver side, we will take advantage of that aggressiveness and run our Wheel play.



Utilizing Motion

We will use motion to further create stress for the defense, both by motioning our backs or by motioning the second receiver in our two receiver set. The coaching point for the quarterback is simply movement. If the secondary reacts to the motion, the quarterback will continue with the GT scheme. If the secondary does not react to the motion, the quarterback will abort the run scheme, and throw the quick/swing screen to the player in motion. We can motion to or away from the run scheme.



In the next article, we will discuss using the Quarterback to further put the defense in conflict and combat various ways defenses will trigger their box players in an effort to negate the effectiveness of the play.

FOLLOW THE GUARD



COACHING 101
PODCAST
A FIND A WAY PRODUCTION

CLICK TO LISTEN

NEW EPISODE DROPS
MAY 7TH | 8AM!
SPECIAL GUEST: BO GOULD
TOPIC: FOLLOW THE GUARD