

HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 3: ISSUE 6

defensive
DRILLS

DO'S AND DON'TS
OF COACHING
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

INSTALLING
SPECIAL TEAMS

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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,

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TIME TO RAISE THE BAR



JAMESIMPSONDESIGNS
SPORTS GRAPHIC DESIGN

RURAL FOOTBALL REFLECTIONS

OUR WHY



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I started coaching in 1984 at Claremont Mckenna College, a division III school in the Southern California Interscholastic Athletic Conference, for the late [Jon Zinda](#). He, along with my father, had the greatest influence on me as a coach. Zinda taught me our job was to create great young players that would over time become great husbands, great fathers, great community members and great church members. He believed if we did that, success on the football field would follow. Well like most of us over the years we get too caught up in the wins and losses and limit our views to that of just the gridiron. When I got to Gold Beach in 1997 Coach Zinda's message was not in the forefront of my mind for developing a football program, I like a lot of us had gotten up in the wins and losses. But as I look back now, in the building of the "Culture" we established at Gold Beach the message was indeed there:

- If you are on time, you are LATE! On time means 15 minutes early.
- Adversity is life and an opportunity for you or your team to experience their greatest growth in

overcoming this adversity. No Quit, Never Give Up, find a Way to Preserve and be Successful.

- Never be outworked, there will always be more talented opponents out there in the world, but your work ethic can be the great equalizer.
- Loyalty to your brothers and Coaches always, we will never give up on you and you can never give up on us- the team. Teammates Forever!

The better we teach these aspects of our desired culture the better our win and loss record would be. Now as you look at these teaching points, are these not the exact same qualities we want in the men in this country of ours? Over the years as the head coach at Gold Beach High School, we had enormous success on the field, but it was often that our culture made the difference in the contests. More on this later in the article Coaches, promise.

Another mentor of mine is a coach my dad coached with early in his career, [Ray Solari](#). It was from Coach Solari that I learned that "relationships" were as or even more important to a team's success than its schemes were. Truthfully from hindsight perspective relationships are everything in high school football! One of the first things I instituted was the Captain's dinners at our house, weekly during the season and monthly in the off season. If you want to guarantee a well-attended meeting with your student-athletes, have it based around about 15 pounds of tri tip, baked potatoes, salad, and cheesecake for dessert. Our 6 to 7 captains, student-trainers

(females) and a couple of players chosen by me would attend these dinners. Meetings consisted of leadership development, team morale and culture development, and healthy relationship building. But as I look back it was all related to relationships in one way or another. If you have read [Coach Bob Ladouceur's](#) stuff or have seen ESPN's documentary on De La Salle's program, he too was very in tune with relationships and creating a Brotherhood. I think one of the proudest things that came about in our Captain's Dinners was our kids, both players and student-trainers, saw what marriage and parenthood should look like. They saw me helping my wife, Julie, with preparing the meal, Kdawg usually grilling on the BBQ. Our two daughters would sit quietly when they were young but as they got older would serve as Student-trainers or football managers and contribute to these meetings. Julie would participate and talk to my players about how to remain respectful of women's equality and yet practice the age-old art of chivalry. We even hosted a couple homecoming dinners for the players and their dates to help them out with the costs. Man, the memories of these put a smile on my heart!

So why am I sharing all this with you in this final article for this edition of Headsets, when most of you already adhere to these same principles. Well, to share a story that brings our coaching "Why" home to some of you who are younger or have just started in the profession. I stepped away from coaching in 2018, after a great run at Gold Beach High School here on the Oregon Coast. Turing this tenure I was blessed to coach some amazing young athletes and some not-

so-great athletes but great teammates. We had some great successes and some gut-wrenching failures. However, we never lost sight of our coaching goals to raise great men and to have positive relationships with them.

On June 17th, Julie and I attended the wedding of one of my former players, at the other end of the Rogue River in Prospect / Shady Cove, Oregon. Prospect is where the spring that comes out of Crater Lake bubbles to the surface to start the national protected Rogue River. Tim Young, the young man getting married, was raised in Gold Beach, and had played on our 2007 State Championship and was named All State First Team Offensive Tackle. Julie and I had stayed close with Tim and his parents since he had graduated from Gold Beach, his parents had purchased 38 acres in Prospect where both are originally from. As we drove over from the coast, I did not really know what to expect at the wedding. While I had attended several weddings of former players in the past, most of the attendees were college and adult friends, they were from early in my career at Gold Beach and had not been in the culture that was still brewing during their careers as Panthers, Great kids and great weddings for sure, but this one just felt different for some reason as we headed over. Well, I was right, the wedding was a reunion of Panthers that had sipped the culture we had created. Tim's two best men were his teammates from 05 to 09, Jeff Knox (QB) and Joe Wegner (TE) and Mike Klein (LB) was a groomsman. My wife could see my pride and excitement to see, hug, and catch up with my former Panthers.

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Matt Wegner, who was part of the team (04) that was the first to have culture in the corner, was there with his parents as Joe's older brother. Hugo Rosa, a running back from 06 to 10 and Mitch McDonald, an All-State Linebacker from 04 to 08, were there as well! They were all there with the wives, and children, parents, or both, and were excited to see Coach Swift, but more excited to see Julie LOL.



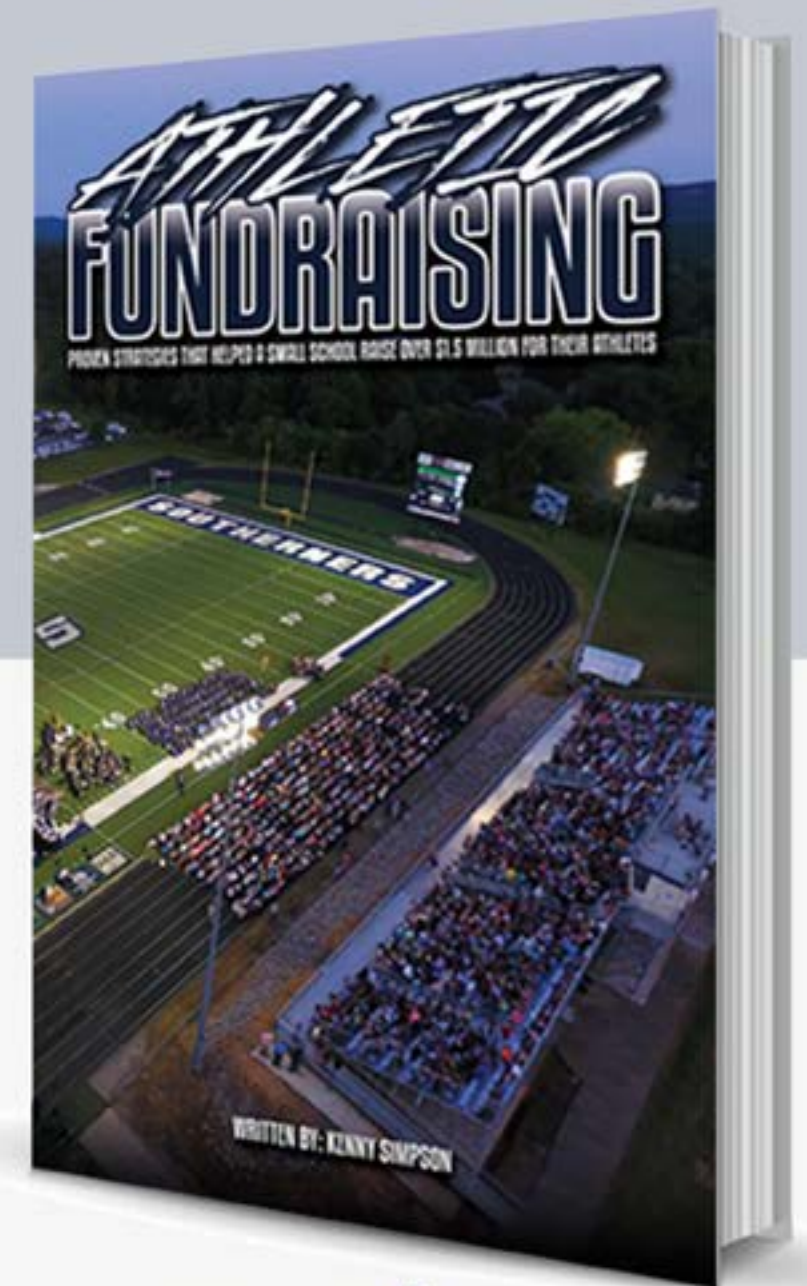
We would spend the night at the reception, deep in the woods of the Young's 38 acers, catching up with all of them! All had found good careers ranging from Rancher to Real Estate to Finance to Linesmen and more. Everyone was married except Vegas living Joe Wegner, who proclaimed it could never happen for him. Hugo and Mitch spent an hour talking to Julie about the wives and children, she was beaming when they asked for her advice on motherhood. I spent time with all of them catching up with their lives and often spending time with their parents reminiscing about the past. So why am I sharing all of this with an online football

magazine audience of coaches? Because at least 50 times during the night I heard from a player I made an enormous difference and impact in their life through our football program. Even better Julie and I heard it from their spouses and parents. So, when Julie and I got in our rig to head to our hotel, I turned to her with a tear in my eye and said there is our "Why" honey! So please when you are in the middle of the fall battles rapidly approaching, please remember our collective "Why."



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."



[\[CLICK FOR MORE INFO\]](#)

DRILLS

DEFENSIVE BACK TECHNIQUES: COMMON MISTAKES



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Defensive back training is one of the hardest things to do. It requires extreme patience, athleticism and discipline toward the technique. One false/wrong step from a defensive back can cause the receiver to buzz right by them for 6 points.

There are two different types of techniques we like to teach our corners for man coverage - motor out and 6 inch step.

The motor out technique requires short choppy steps as the ball is snapped and the receiver starts to gain ground. This allows defensive backs to have cushion as they start to assess what the receiver is running.

The 6 inch step requires a small, outside timing step which allows the defensive back to punch with 2 hands if the receiver is in their frame, 1 hand if they are outside of their frame, and angle cut off if they try to spray release.

When a player is motoring out or using the 6 inch step, these are common mistakes that defensive players often make:

Weight Distribution On The Heels - The player's chest should always be over their knees. The minute the chest comes up, all your weight will shift to your heels. If you're on your heels, you can't effectively move forward or laterally.

Opening The Gate Too Early - Reach with that outside knee and try to stay square as long as possible when you determine the receiver is breaking toward the inside/outside. If you open your hips too soon, the receiver now has control over your leverage.

Punching Too Soon - View your arms as weights. If you throw a 10 pound weight forward, you're going to lose balance and leverage. Win with your feet before you win with your hands.

These are the 3 common mistakes we often see from defensive backs who use both the motor out and 6 inch step techniques.

If you're looking to get a jumpstart on teaching your defensive backs the correct technique and how to drill it properly, check out our [video on YouTube with Coach Popino from Endicott College](#).

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out contact@viqtorysports.com

O-LINE DRILLS

DO'S AND DON'TS OF COACHING OFFENSIVE LINEMEN



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The game of football has evolved over the years. A few decades ago, when many of us coaches played there was little to no concussion protocol or return to play, you got your bell rung, sat out a couple plays maybe, and went back in. We did drills to make us "tough" like bull in the ring, Oklahoma or some variation. Hopefully, as the NFL, NCAA and state high school associations have banned many of these dangerous drills, that coaches are no longer using these drills and putting players health and safety at risk. This month this article will go over some of the dos and don'ts of coaching offensive linemen, and in some cases football in general.

To begin, we all know that football is a violent sport. It is a game in which one objective is to strike an opponent with as much force as needed to move or tackle him. To a degree mass wins in some situations. While we cannot remove the risk of injury, we can severely reduce the risk by teaching, practicing and playing the right way.

Some of the obvious don'ts would include not running the drills mentioned previously. A few more obvious don'ts would include teaching

illegal techniques like chops blocks. Some of the less obvious might be things like not using a 5- or 7-man sled or doing one on ones. I know some of you that just read that last sentence on the sled probably think I am crazy now. Hear me out. The old school blocking sled was a favorite of mine when I first starting coaching, we were a low budget program, so it was just a two man, and we used it at least once a week, and it was not even spring loaded! I have had to learn to evolve and hope you might too. The sled teaches a linear push, and if anything is conditioning these days. The safest and more effective block is force displacement and more of an upward strike taking the opponent out of his preferred posture. Essentially, this is a quick explosive movement (CUFF) that causes the defender to stand upright or lose his balance and/or have to change direction, a disruption of his intent. This type of hand blocking also helps to further remove the head from impact and again, making the game safer, and quite honestly, it's a very effective block.

Now the old favorite of one on ones. It falls into the don't category, okay, not completely a don't, but not often, and limited in number of times. Why? Well, this is again to reduce the head impact. In one on ones, guys are trying to show off, trying to get that big hit that makes everyone go crazy and cheer. When this happens, the risk of head impact increases. With all the available data out there, we know that small head impacts over the course of a season or playing career can be just as damaging as the big nasty lights out concussion, so why not limit the number of

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times we put guys in the position of possibly smacking helmets. Most states have a set number of minutes per day and week of going live, and technically, one on ones are a live play as there is not a declared winner. Know your association's rules and be a safer coach by not pushing those limits.

Some dos, do footwork every single day. If they complain that it's boring tell them if they do it perfectly you can move to the next drill, odds are, you'll do footwork for the scheduled amount of time. Have the players judge if the feet were correct on the group in for or behind them, have them hold each other accountable, then it's no longer boring. Use the footwork that you use in your blocking scheme.

Do board work. We have used 2 x 10 lumber and now we have a flat foldable pad that reduces rolled ankles. Board work doesn't need to be every day, but it helps them early in the season to keep their feet wide and drive off the instep. We still do this at least once a week all season to work on our basic mechanics. During camp and daily doubles this is probably a daily drill.

Do work on pass blocking daily with footwork and at least once a week on schemes depending on your offense. If you primarily pass the ball, you would do this daily. Pass blocking be done with the previously mentioned one on one drills, get creative and have fun. Work kick steps, work power steps, and work on your protection scheme.

Don't say things like "block somebody" or "get

out of the way" or some other phrase often heard from the stands. You're the coach, correct what they are doing wrong, teach them what they should have done so they can get it right on the next play. If they missed the block explain who they should have had on that play. If their technique was wrong, explain why it was wrong and how to fix it.

Do coach them on every rep at practice, even if it is just saying they made a good play. Players need reinforcement of habits, not just corrections. Yes, correct them when they make a mistake, but do it positively. Let them know when they get it right and praise them when they do. Remember, most of us are coaching kids or teenagers, they will make mistakes, so praise them when we can, build good men, not just football players.

Don't think linemen are not athletic, hopefully if you're a coach, this goes without saying. Yes, in the youth levels, there may be a big kid with little coordination, but he is still growing, it will come around, be patient and teach them. If you watched the NFL draft this past April, you would have seen 300 plus pound behemoth men running 40 times faster than most high school receivers. Linemen are big and athletic, they have to have very quick feet and be explosive. Linemen have to pull, run, break down and block a moving target, they are athletes, and they have to be smart.

Do work on being athletic with them, not just in the off-season, but in season too. They need to do agility work. They should run sprints, possibly

shorter as they need about 10 solid yards on most plays. Work on hip mobility and flexibility, getting in and out the three point stance can be enhanced by good hips.

Don't freak out when they have a bad game, it happens, we all have bad days. Evaluate what happened, why did it happen. Did you game plan properly all week? Did you watch film? Did you scheme it right? Don't make excuses, but know why it happened, correct it and move on, no need to dwell on it, it's in the past. That's not just for linemen either, that's for the team, it happens, love them hard correct it and move on. For linemen, who get little glory under the lights, this can be just what they need to rebound and prepare harder for next week.

To finish this up, do things that make your players better and be safe at the same time. Coach them up, mentor them to be men. Work on mechanics daily in practice, praise them when they do well, correct them when they need it. Be an advocate for them and help them be the best they can be. Don't put them in harms way. Don't do drills that do not lead to in game situations or is over your states association on contact rules, be safe, smart and coach them up.

SOME DO'S

DO FOOTWORK EVERYDAY

DO BOARD WORK

**DO WORK ON PASS
BLOCKING DAILY**

**DO COACH THEM ON EVERY
REP AT PRACTICE**

**DO WORK ON BEING ATHLETIC
IN SEASON**

OFFENSIVE TALK

WHAT IS GAP DOWN BACKER BLOCKING SCHEME?



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"Gap-Down-Backer" is the base blocking rule for the play side of offensive lines from the pros all the way down to youth teams. It is primarily used on Power, Counter, and Buck. It is a "progressive" blocking rule that is very simple for young offensive linemen (OL) to learn. Because it is simple, it enables the OL to be certain and sure of themselves. Football players that are "certain and sure" are more aggressive football players.

What do I mean when I say, "Gap-Down-Backer is a progressive blocking rule?" I tell our OL that they take each word of the rule one at a time and in order – they "progress" through the rule. I also tell them that the dashes in the rule are what make it a progression. G-D-B = Step 1 - Step 2 - Step 3 (easy as 1-2-3).

The rule reads:

Gap: If someone is in their Gap, they block down on him.

Down: If no one is in their Gap, they will block whoever is Down from them.

Backer: If no one is in their Gap or Down from them, they block the FIRST LB inside of them, or

on their track (I will explain "tracks" later).

Do you see what I mean by "progressive?" If someone is in their Gap, they do NOT care about blocking anyone inside of that player in their gap. They will NEVER block a Backer (LB) if all they ever get are defenders in their Gap or Down from them. EX: If there is a player in their Gap, that is whom they block; there is no need to progress any further.

Let's break down "Gap-Down-Backer" word by word; progress through it, if you will.

"Gap" = any down defender (DL) aligned between an OL's nose and the near shoulder of the next OL inside of him on the play side. Remember, the OL's gap is the space between his nose and the next OL's near shoulder.

- A DL on the inside shoulder of an OL is in his gap.
- A DL lined up in the middle of the space between two OL is in the gap of the outside OL.
- A DL lined up on the outside shoulder of an OL is in the gap of the outside OL.

NOTE: In high school football, a DL aligned on an OL's shoulder has an 80-90% chance of being responsible for that gap. That number is about 70% in college ball. ALL head-up defenders are 50/50 players; they can go either way. They may slant to or away from a Down Block.

The next word of the "Gap-Down-Backer" rule is "Down." That is any DL aligned on the nose (head-up) or the near eye of an OL inside of an OL on the play side. Ex: A DL lined up on the right

eye of the Center is considered Down to the RG. A DL lined up on the left eye of the Center is considered Gap to the C and NOT down from the RG.

The third word of "Gap-Down-Backer" is "Backer." "Backer" = When an OL has no one in his Gap or Down, he will work to the MLB or backside LB. To get to the "Backer" he will take a track through the imaginary rear end of the DL if there was a DL aligned inside of him. The OL will usually block Mike or a backside LB, but if a play side LB inserts and crosses his track, the play side OL will block him (more on that coming later).

The OL is not trying to knock the DL off the LOS, but down the LOS and get horizontal/sideways movement inside. They want to displace the DL from the gaps they are supposed to fit in.

The OL is not trying to knock the DL off the line-of-scrimmage (LOS), but down the LOS and get horizontal/sideways movement inside. They want to displace the DL from the gaps they are supposed to fit in.

- G-D-B is great for undersized offensive linemen. A 185-pound offensive lineman can move a plus 200-pound defensive much easier sideways than he can move him vertically.
- The angles of the Down blocks give the OL leverage that is not there on vertical Drive blocks.
- The offensive line does not have to knock people off the line with G-D-B; a stalemate can be a success.
- Usually, just getting between a 3-tech and the B gap or the A gap and the Nose is a win for the

offense.

Why should you use Gap-Down-Backer?

- Smaller OL can excel and be successful with G-D-B if they got a little dog in them.
- Big OL can also excel and dominate with the Gap scheme.
- The angles, did I mention the angles? They are from God.
- Speaking of angles, G-D-B operates from the strength of using leverage, leverage that comes from the angles.
- I believe it allows for more aggression by the OL because they know where they are going; they have tracks.
- G-D-B works against any front; the more DL, the better.
- The Down Blocks can make LB fits difficult.
- If the OL is well-coached, blitzing a Gap scheme team is NOT a good idea.
- The offense can still succeed with stalemates across the front, just do NOT allow penetration.

Gap Responsibilities in the Gap-Down-Backer Scheme

In the Gap scheme, every blocker is responsible for a gap; even the Wrapper. The Wrapper is the player from the backside that is responsible for the Funnel created by the play side Down blocks and the kick-out block on the DE. Each OL on the play side is responsible for the gap to their inside. In a scheme called "Gap-Down-Backer," every blocker has a "GAP" that they are responsible for – go figure.

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Because Gap-Down-Backer is a “progression” rule, you take it in order; check off each one in order.

1. The 1st word of the rule is “GAP.” That means the OL should look in their inside gap and if there is a defender in there, block him down. If no one is in his GAP, go to the next word.

2) The next word is “DOWN,” which means if no one is in the gap, check to see if there is a defender aligned on the OL beside and inside of you. If yes, block him. If not, go to the third word, the

3)...“BACKER.” The OL will block down/inside, toward the ball, usually getting a backside Backer, but if a play side Backer tries to cross his face (on his track), he will block him.

An important coaching point for G-D-B is, “Let NOTHING cross your face!” Nothing refers to any defender. Another is, “Do NOT chase linebackers.” Tell your OL that, “Linebackers are like buses in a big city, if you miss one, don’t chase it, there will be another one coming by in just a little bit.”

What Did I Mean When I Mentioned Tracks?

- All the play-side linemen have a track that they block; anything on their track is what they will block.
- They do NOT have a man so NEVER let one say, “I got my man.” That is NOT true, they have a track.

- They are like a train on a track and anything on their track is what they block.

- Trains cannot move off their tracks and will NEVER come off their tracks to hit something.

The “TRACK” is an arbitrary and abstract path that the Offensive Lineman follows when his rule is Gap-Down-Backer. It is important to note that the “TRACK” can change and will change from play to play, based on the alignment of the DL & depth of the LBs.

Examples of this include:

- The Playside Tackle NOT taking the same angle on his first step versus a 3-tech as he would versus a 2-tech or a 4i.

- The OL NOT taking the same first step when he is blocking a stack Mike as he would when he blocking a backside LB.

Note: Some very good coaches disagree with me and always have their OL on the same tracks, and that is fine

The Rump Line

Gap-Down-Backer creates a wall with the front side of the OL that I call the Rump Line. What is the Rump Line? I am glad you asked. The Rump Line is created when there are multiple down blocks on a play (Power, Counter, or Buck). It is the butts of all the down blocks. When executed correctly, it is kryptonite to the front side of a defense. To defeat a down-block, the DL must

fight over or under it. Most of the time, when the defender fights under a down-block, they will take themselves out of the play. Fighting over the top of a Down Block is very difficult; defenders often lose their aggression because they are playing sideways or flat. LBs are often left playing flat so they can go over the top of the wall of down-blocks. Aggressive LBs that step up, risk getting caught in the wash of down blocks.

The G-D-B is a very effective tool for offenses at all levels of football and a must for young and/or undersized offensive lines. For more info on how you can implement or get better at the scheme contact me or [click here to get your copy of my Offensive Line Manual for Gap-Down-Backer](#). The manual includes easy-to-read diagrams, pictures, coaching points, drills, complete blocking rules, and video clips of teams using the G-D-B scheme.

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SPECIAL TEAMS

INSTALLING THE SPECIAL TEAMS



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Over the course of the last several issues, I've shared a lot of detail on our version of kick off return.

Using those articles, you can install every aspect of our kick return team. In this issue, I want to share just a bit about how we install and teach our special teams. Pieces of this have been shared in previous issues of "Headsets" but this will tie everything together. As we all know, it's not really the scheme that matters, it's how your players execute the scheme that matters. Because of this, how to teach and install the scheme is of the utmost importance.

The way we practice in the preseason has evolved over the years, so the way we install our special teams has evolved quite a bit as well. We used to have two practices each day of the preseason, but we don't anymore. Our teacher work days start the same day as our first practice dates. We've cut back to 1 practice each day of the preseason, and if anything we've gotten better. We're certainly more efficient with how we teach and coach.

How do you teach and install your special teams during the preseason?

1) The week before practice starts, the players

are sent our Special Teams playbook through Hudl. We don't typically use the Hudl playbook, but will import PPT slides into Hudl.

2) The first day of practice, we post the pre-season ST depth chart in the locker room for each ST for everyone to see. We also post the installation schedule for camp as an overview. Each Day's practice schedule is also posted before the kids come in the next day. This way, the players know what to lookover BEFORE they come to practice.

3) During the first week of the preseason, we only do drills for special teams. Each day, during the middle of practice, we take 10-15 minutes to teach a drill. We will use that drill to teach and practice the skills that will be needed in special teams, i.e. down field blocking, avoiding blockers, fielding kicks & punts, as well as blocking kicks.

4) These drills install and teach techniques. Once the drills are taught, we use circuits during ST time to reinforce the technique. The drills are described in the playbook.

5) During the 2nd week of preseason is when we begin to install the kicking teams. We use the whole part whole. Whole team walkthrough for 3-5 minutes, 3-5 minutes w/ individual coaches for the skills and 2-5 reps of team on air or v. scout.

6) Specialists should get 15-20 perfect reps on their own before AND after practice each day. This is for snappers, holders, returners, punters and kickers.

How do you teach and install your weekly game plan?

1) Special teams players get a Hudl message on Sunday night with the weekly game plan and review of the previous game. The report gives 3 good things we did on Friday and 3 things we need to focus on for the week.

2) The weekly PPT has the weekly practice schedule, weekly depth charts, the opponent's diagrams, clips of the opponents teams, what the other team does well, and how we will attack. If we have any scheme changes, those will be drawn and usually animated on the PPT.

3) The days of the week are usually divided up into pre-practice, team defense, ST period, team offense and post practice.

a) We install schemes during pre-practice and sometimes drill for technique during pre-practice

b) Team Def is started w/ KO, but not on Mondays, then 1-2 live reps of defensive based ST during the team time

c) Team Off is started w/ KO return, but not on Mondays, then 1-2 live reps of offensive based ST during the team time

d) 10-15 min of specific special teams time each day is for reps or installation of anything new or special for the week. Special teams time each day has its own focus. Mondays are usually Punt and KO focused, Tuesdays are Punt Return and KO Return, Wednesdays are PAT and PAT Block.

e) Post practice is for 15-20 perfect reps for specialists

f) We also watch film on Monday

g) Kickers have their own practice schedule assuming we have a separate kicker.

4) Thursday practices, we start practice w/ a defensive walkthrough, then practice PAT live for 3 reps then do FGs on air. Finally we go through a simulated game and shuffle the ST on the field while the Off is doing plays on air. This simulates quick change and helps us practice substitutions.

Final Thoughts & Considerations

As I've mentioned in previous articles, I think it's really beneficial to designate one person on staff to be a special teams coordinator. This can be the head coach, someone passionate about special teams play, or a role given to a younger coach who wants more responsibility. Another option is to divide the special teams up amongst your staff and have each person responsible for 1-2 of the "teams". This is the current approach we use and it does work.

Finally, I'd like to thank Coach Simpson for allowing me to share my thoughts on special teams and some of the schemes that have helped us be successful since 2006. Please reach out if you have any questions. 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. Good luck this season!

GUEST WRITER

FOOTBALL AND CHESS



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In part one I discussed the general overview of football as a chess match, with focus on assessing the pieces on the board, and how to look at them within the context of a football program. This is a great first step that every coach experiences, especially at the beginning of every new season. As you can imagine, just knowing the players, their skill sets, and their personalities doesn't win you football games. In part two, let's look at how the strategy of chess translates to directly to the football field.

The Opening

The "opening" in chess is the initial stage of any match usually consisting of some sort of established theory, you can picture this as what we call scripting in the football world. As in football, every game, one side starts the attack, while the opposition begins on defense. In both cases the initial movements of a game are often established long before the first move or play is ever run. The Oxford Companion to Chess lists 1,327 named openings or move sequences, including a wide range of variants, and I would guess if Oxford created a companion to football, it may look very similar. Professional chess players will spend years studying these opening

sequences as well as the appropriate defenses to counter to prepare themselves for what amounts to the first third of a match. With such a vast number of possibilities, most professionals find themselves focusing in on a small fraction of them in order to prepare for the middle game and end game. If you've attended a coaching clinic, literally anytime in the history of football, you've likely heard this same principle in buzz phrases such as, "keep it simple", "jack of all trades, master of none", or any other version imploring the importance of simplicity. Sure, simplicity is a great buzz word, but what does that mean for me? How do I "keep it simple"? If you were to compare what simplicity looks like in chess between world champion chess players Garry Kasparov or Magnus Carlsen with myself, you'd quickly realize that the definition of "simple" is as vast as the ocean itself, and same holds true when trying to define "simple" for your football program. One thing of note when discussing chess strategy, particularly at the opening of any match, is that although the possibilities seem endless, almost all well-prepared plans seem to have similar goals. Sure, winning the game is a shared goal, but more specifically there are simple strategies and tactics more that help create better opportunities to achieve that primary objective. Most chess experts sum up these best practices into three areas: development, controlling the center, and identifying weaknesses.

Development

Many terms in chess and football aren't easily confused, but development may be the exception. Development of players and coaches is worthy of thousands of articles on their

own, but lucky for me I'm going to be using the term development in reference to a chess tactic in which a player engages and moves their key pieces. As with nearly every successful opening sequence in chess, the initial balance of a football game can often come down to the rapid mobilization of your best pieces. Simply put, we must make it a priority to get our best players involved, early and often. When looking to build a scheme, create a gameplan, or call a play, ask yourself, "Will this allow my best athletes the best opportunity to put consistent stress on our opponent?" Often, as coaches, we fail to utilize our array of weapons and try to win the game with one or two pieces. Sure, if you are just out classing your opponents, throwing the queen around the board likely isn't a problem for you, but if you're anything like me, every weapon matters. For me, the most helpful tool to promote this development idea, is to create and list out calls and concepts on a per player or position basis. For instance, if my best X receiver is "a dude" but plays both ways, and his backup is a significant drop off in talent, I want to make sure I utilize his time on offense to continually stress the defense. The best way I have found to make this happen is to create short list within my game plan to "develop" that piece.

Control the Center

No, I'm not about to go on an 80:20 run/pass rant. The idea of controlling the center of the board in chess is not about establishing power or dominance. Controlling the center, in short, is about one thing and one thing only, flexibility. We have all been there, the kickoff is blown dead, our unit takes the field, and the opposition does something on play number

“Scripting is fine, and developing those pieces is necessary, but don't stay married to a bad plan.”

one that is not anything we had planned for. We know the best move forward is to be flexible, but we stay stubbornly staring at our scripted game plan until half time adjustments can be made. Most true chess professionals would laugh at the silliness of this behavior, as their strategy requires a near fluid adaptability to an endless amount of surprise moves. By controlling the center, a chess player allows their pieces to have a greater impact on the game's initial movements and taking advantages away from their opponents. Scripting is fine, and developing those pieces is necessary, but don't stay married to a bad plan. Allow your program practice time to incorporate moments that require flexibility such as not having a certain player available or an unprepared change in front or scheme. For me, there is nothing I hate more than being ill-prepared, it's something I need to practice, or I end up giving up the center to my opponent.

The Gambit

Because of the often-predictable nature of opening sequences in chess, variations arise which often include a gambit or trap. To set a great trap, a chess player must first understand where the weakness in his position lies. Just as every chess strategy has its strengths and weaknesses, this too is mirrored on the football gridiron. For instance, when I say wing-t you don't often first think of waggles, just as when I say air raid, you probably don't picture HB draw, and a cleverly disguised defensive coverage can often cause devastating consequences on a lively offense. The gambit is then more of a tradeoff and is set up by consistent or predictable concepts in which the opposition is

attempting to overcompensate for, or in which the opponent sacrifices their own position to diminish the strength of their opponent. If you haven't already, find and practice a few ways to create advantages for yourself early in a game which mirror your more predictable concepts. For me, this has meant using a series or concept family style to allow the counter or gambit to mirror the base play.

Once a chess champion has established the opening by developing their pieces, allowing for maximum flexibility, and potentially deploying some sort of gambit, the game moves forward into what is called the middle game. We too can set ourselves up for success in the middle game by keeping your best players engaged and threatening, being willing to deviate from the script, and by trading our weaknesses for strengths.

COACHING YOUTH

WHAT I LEARNED COACHING YOUTH SPORTS THAT MAKES ME A BETTER VARSITY COACH: PART TWO



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In the last issue I wrote about staying positive in youth sports and how that applied to varsity coaches as well. This edition is about playing time and the most important thing, in my mind, just having fun. One disclaimer I wrote about was that this shouldn't be seen as a stepping stone to getting a varsity job. You don't usually start as a youth coach to become a middle school coach to high school to college. That's just not typically how it works. A second disclaimer for this particular article though: I am writing this right after my youngest son's 6u baseball team finally got their first win of the season. We're pretty pumped about that. So I'm reusing that pic of my boy Rocco, and the article might take a little different turn than I had originally planned for this topic.

"Parents Don't Come To Watch Their Kids Win, They Come To Watch Their Kids PLAY"

I've been blessed to coach a lot of youth basketball. Basketball was both my mom and dad's favorite sport. It was the first sport my dad taught me to play. And with my 6 kids in a small rural school they often needed basketball coaches. I was told once though, "You know,

parents don't come to watch their kids win, they come to watch their kids play." That made sense to me and I took it to heart. However, I really hate it when people say it doesn't matter if we win. Thus I had to find a balance.

In youth basketball I did my best to have mostly equal minutes of playing time. I didn't even really penalize kids for missing practice, that was usually their parents' decision. If you worked hard and were a good teammate then you got on the floor, period amen. But I would have my "5 starters", the best ball players that were on the floor in the crucial moments. The seasons we had a bigger bench I would even write out lines kind of like hockey and switch every few minutes. There were at least a couple of starters in each rotation though so that we actually stayed competitive. When I was younger I was at times one of those subs. Nobody was happy if we lost a lead or fell further behind. I didn't want to fail my teammates but I definitely wanted to play. Having our starting point guard or starting center in the game really helped out. If you are a youth coach of any sports you owe it to your players to have some sort of system to ensure playing. It's never going to be 100% equal or "fair". But get those kids in the game as much as possible in a way they can find some sort of success.

Now, I absolutely believe that from the High School Varsity level on up the best players should play. The 11 guys that give your team the best chance to win should be on the field at the most crucial moments. But the younger

continued on next page

you get, from JV to middle school on down, the focus should be on developing fundamentals, love of the game, and shared playing time. So how has this helped me at the Varsity level? Well, once you solidify your starters, who goes in next? ...and why? ...and how? ...in what situations? ...and how often? There's a million "what if" type questions we can add here. So I think it is important to plan for as much as you can, but also have this as part of your coaching philosophy to guide your decisions (in-game and otherwise).

Most of my High School Varsity experience has been as an OL/DL coach. Personally, I don't like subbing OL if I can help it. I want those five kids always together and working as a unit. So they have got to show me that they can communicate and work within that unit at practice if I am going to consider subbing them into a game. I am much more likely to rotate guys in on the DL. It's not because I think it's less important (on the contrary I played DL in college), it's just different. This is an advantage in some ways too, because I might leave the starting OL group in for an extra series while the JV backs are already getting subbed into a game. A sophomore QB and freshman RB hopefully feel a little more confident behind starting linemen. Sometimes you may find yourself on the wrong side of a blowout too. You don't want to concede victory too early, but at some point let that senior that has worked his tail for four years into the game. Special teams and 2-point packages can also be places to get kids some time. Special teams are important of course. But a fresh pair of legs from the second spot on the depth chart often gives you enough to be successful, as opposed

to the first string kid who already plays both O and D.

"IT'S MORE FUN TO WIN!!!"

Here's the crux of the playing time dilemma, for all coaches at all levels. Everyone wants to win. When I got to college I remember the upperclassmen saying all the time, "It's more fun to win." There was probably more to it, but that's what I remember. Our D coordinator always said we only had to do three things: "Play our technique, run and hit, and have fun." (Yes I know that's technically four things.) I LOVED this concept. It's the basis for my own coaching philosophy, "Keep it simple so we can Run, Hit, and Have Fun." We were at an NAIA school, certainly not D1 Power 5. But these were scholarship athletes recruited to compete for conference and national championships. Still, we loved this game, dedicated our lives to this game, why shouldn't we enjoy it? The responsibility then was put on us to be good enough to compete for playing time, to be successful, to win games, and have fun doing it.

Now this can be very difficult to do, even if you really prepare. But that is why coaches need to define this for themselves in their own coaching philosophy and expectations need to be laid for the staff as a whole. For example, last year we were talking about personnel in a coaches meeting and our head coach said something off the cuff that turned out to be really meaningful and insightful, "THE WEIGHT ROOM HAS TO MEAN SOMETHING!" Some kids are stars and obvious starters. Then you have the kids on the cusp. Any time we were hung up on a couple of kids Coach would open his spreadsheet and the player with better weight room attendance was

penciled in.

I have a few nonnegotiables as well: Safety, Discipline, and being a Good Teammate. I'll never forget when coaching my oldest son in T-ball I put a kid at pitcher that got smoked in the chest with a line drive. It isn't safe to put some kids in because they won't pay attention or they're just not physically ready for some situations. Discipline and being a Good Teammate are important in sports and in life. I will not ruin everyone else's fun and chance of success by putting in a kid that brings everyone else down. Even for 10u basketball or whatever, your parents may not ever drive you to practice but when you do show up you should (age appropriately) pay attention, work hard, and respect others.

At the end of the day your players want to play and we owe it to them to find every opportunity to get them into game situations where they can succeed. That does not mean everyone gets a participation trophy. Even at the youth level if you are a bad teammate, purposefully disobedient, or just have a toxic attitude then you will not play. My goal is that all my middle school players get game experience. But there are still only 11 starters and I will not take away time from a kid who works hard to be the best he can be just to let another knucklehead in the game.

Looking Ahead

I hope this article helps you in some way and encourages you to think more about playing time for your players. In the next few articles the plan is to look at things like practice planning,

drills, repetitions, and preparation at the youth and varsity levels. Happy [belated] Fathers' Day as well fellas, and God Bless.

“I GOT THE JOB; NOW WHAT?”

10 CONVERSATIONS EVERY HEAD
COACH SHOULD HAVE BY CHRISTMAS



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A sign above the door at my first coaching job read “failing to plan is planning to fail”. On day one as an assistant coach I was introduced to the idea of having a daily practice plan. As I gained experience I expanded that to a weekly plan. As a coordinator I expanded it to a seasonal plan, divided into fall camp, early season and late season. When I became a head coach I took it a step further and expanded it into a yearlong plan, consisting of winter, pre-spring practice, spring practice, summer, fall camp, season, and postseason. I found that this kept me focused on the job at hand but also compartmentalized things into manageable pieces. I liked what I was doing but still knew that something was missing. After stumbling in the dark for a while, I finally settled in on what was missing. I needed more input from our football community

about what we were doing and where we were heading. I had been drawing conclusions based on my own observations and feelings because I was the head coach and I was supposed to know these things. Boy was I wrong! Knowing the right questions to ask and the right people to ask began to pay off huge dividends. More people felt empowered to act, more buy-in from coaches who now felt their voices were heard and more positive results on the field.

Coaches like lists, especially ones that can be checked off as we go. So here is mine. 10 conversations that need to be had at the conclusion of every season. The data collected will help you create your yearly plan, make changes and adjustments to training routines, improve practice planning, make the season run smoother, and create a better game experience for your community.

- 1) Trainer
 - a. Number and severity of injuries / hospitalizations/ insurance issues
 - b. Were our injury problems related to S/C program?
 - c. Training room problems or procedures that need to be addressed
 - d. Staff needs/ Student volunteers
 - e. Other problems or concerns
- 2) Strength and Conditioning Coach
 - a. Share input from trainer/Seniors
 - b. Adjustments/Changes to be implemented
 - c. Calendar for winter and spring.
 - d. Problems or concerns
- 3.) Event Planner/Scheduling-

- a. Special Nights/HC/Senior Night/Mom Breakfast/Dads night
 - b. Calendar for upcoming year
 - c. Additions/deletions/changes
 - d. Problems or concerns
- 4.) AD/Administration
 - a. Recap the season. Where we are in the process.
 - b. What are our needs moving forward
 - c. Big Ticket items
 - d. Problems or concerns
 - 5.) Booster Club
 - a. Money/Events/Fundraiser ideas and opportunities
 - b. Banquet
 - c. Administrative changes
 - d. Problems or concerns
 - 6.) OC-Offensive breakdown
 - a. Stat Totals (points,yardage,run-pass,#1st downs earned, %3-4th down conversions,turnovers,explosive plays,starting drive position,formation breakdown,playcall breakdown by yardage gained and by call frequency,opponent defense breakdown)
 - b. Practice issues
 - c. Coach issues or concerns
 - d. What would we like to look at in the off-season/where to go/who to talk with
 - e. Personnel issues/Returners/Kids that need to step up for us to be successful
 - 7.) DC-defensive breakdown
 - a. Stat totals (W-L,points given up, takeaway, 3/4th down conversion rate, snap avg, run avg, pass avg, length of drives, missed tackles, total tackle game avg., tackle leaders, punt/possession rate)
 - b. Practice issues

- c. Coach issues or concerns
 - d. What would we like to look at in the off-season/where to go/who to talk with
 - e. Personnel issues/Returners/Kids that need to step up for us to be successful
- 8.) Special Teams Coordinator - spec teams breakdown
 - a. KO (KO avg, return avg/off starting position)
 - b. Punt (punt avg, return avg, blocking issues, cover issues)
 - c. KOR (#, avg return, turnovers, issues)
 - d. PR (avg return yds, turnovers, #fair catches, issues)
 - 9.) Ass't Coaches Evaluation
 - a. Use checklist of items important to you
 - b. Use input from OC/DC
 - c. Change position/rehire/upgrade responsibilities/things they would like to improve
 - 10.) Equipment/Facilities
 - a. Program improvements/reconditioning/new equipment
 - b. Visit with vendors-what's new
 - c. Evaluate playing surface conditions

The information I receive from these meetings helps me create our offseason program. It tells me where we are and gives me new insight into where we are going. This information also helps me shape my Senior Exit Interview questions. I try my best to have these interviews as soon as we come back from Christmas break. All of this information helps me be a better head coach and lead our program in the right direction.

FLAVORS OF GT COUNTER

AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE GT(H) PLAY



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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 sixth article, we will discuss using screens 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 screens?

In order to take advantage of an aggressive defense, an offense must be able to use that aggression against the defense, and a tried and true method of accomplishing that task has been the screenplay in football. One such creative approach is the utilization of passing screens to shield the GT counter running play, which has proven to be an effective method for gaining yards and confusing opposing defenses. In this article, we delve into the art of using passing screens as a means to protect and enhance the success of the GT counter running play in football.

Understanding the GT Counter Running Play

The GT counter running play has long been a staple in football offenses. It involves an agile running back receiving the handoff from the quarterback while the offensive line executes a series of counter movements to create misdirection and open up running lanes. In the series of

articles we have written on the GT play, it is evident that the GT counter relies on precision timing, skillful execution, and effective blocking schemes to disrupt the defense and create opportunities for significant gains.

The Role of Passing Screens

Passing screens serve as a complement to the GT counter running play, designed to confuse the defense and capitalize on their aggressive pursuit of the ball carrier. By employing passing screens, the offense can exploit the overzealousness of the defense, forcing them to abandon their positions and open up gaps in the secondary. Additionally, the screens can act as a safety valve for the quarterback, providing an respite for the quarterback in a read heavy offense.

Execution and Timing

Timing is crucial when incorporating passing screens into the GT counter play. The offensive line must initially sell the GT counter action convincingly to draw the defense in and create a sense of urgency. Meanwhile, the targeted receiver or running back must wait for the defense to commit before slipping out of the backfield or taking up a position behind the blockers on the perimeter. The screen pass should be delivered swiftly and accurately to capitalize on the defense's disarray and prevent potential tackles for loss.

Proper Blocking Assignments

Effective blocking is essential for the success of the GT counter play with passing screens. The offensive linemen must carry out their assignments diligently, initially blocking as if the play were a conventional GT counter. As the defense reacts to the run, linemen release from their initial blocks and establish key blocks downfield to impede pursuing defenders and create running lanes for the receiver or running back executing the screen. Proper communication and coordination among the offensive line are paramount to ensure the success of this integrated strategy.

Utilizing Personnel and Formation

The choice of personnel and formation can significantly impact the effectiveness of using passing screens with the GT counter play. Employing agile and versatile receivers or running backs with excellent catching abilities is crucial

for executing successful screen passes. Furthermore, formations that create confusion for the defense, such as trips or bunch sets, can force defensive adjustments and create mismatches advantageous to the offense.

Trips Tunnel and RB Swing Screen

With the Brave, we utilize two different GT Screen plays: trips tunnel screen, and RB swing screen. Both have been popularized by Lincoln Riley while at USC, and there is an abundance of video on the internet regarding the trips tunnel screen. The tunnel screen operates the same as the basic tunnel, with either #1, #2, or #3 catching the pass behind the line of scrimmage, and the other two receivers block the "most dangerous man" (MDM). We prefer using #1 to catch the screen because we feel that's the optimum use of momentum and timing.



The second screen we utilize, and it's also to protect the GT tunnel screen, is the RB swing screen. All rules stay the same for everyone on the tunnel side of the play, but now instead of the GT pullers kicking out the nearest defenders, they will slip inside of those defenders, continuing on their path blocking the MDM for the RB. The running back will roll over the ball initially for the run fake, then flatten out the path and swing away from the quarterback instead of veering into the line of scrimmage. The key coaching point for the quarterback in the swing screen is the ball has to come out now. Without blocking any of the front line defenders, the quarterback does not have time to waste with a "full arm motion fake". The deception in the play is the similar nature of the tunnel screen, and the expectancy the defense will react to that portion of the play. But once the front line defenders away from the tunnel screen see the ball is not being delivered to the tunnel, they will redirect to the quarterback.



Hopefully we have been able to help those that are unfamiliar with the GT (H) Counter play, or even those that run the scheme, but were looking for another perspective on running the scheme. This is just how we run the scheme, the variants we use to protect the base, and the philosophy we employ when teaching our kids. If I can be of any service, please do not hesitate to reach out to me via twitter [@KF21WR](https://twitter.com/KF21WR) or [email kf21wr@gmail.com](mailto:kf21wr@gmail.com). Until Next Time....

DEFENSIVE LINE BASICS

WORKING AGAINST THE SCREEN AND BACK BLOCKS



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[CoachTube](#)

When coaching block destruction, there are two types of blocks that defensive linemen tend to struggle with. They are the screen blocks and back blocks. These two blocks tend to give defensive linemen trouble and frustrated their coaches when grading game film. The problem is that oftentimes we as coaches tend to be a little too lax on coaching these blocks up and preparing our linemen to be successful against these situations on Friday nights.

Screen blocks:

Defensive linemen are used to getting aggressive blocks the majority of each game whether it's a pass or run, the offensive lineman puts their hands on them. All of a sudden, the defensive lineman reads pass and fires off into his pass rush. He gets through easily or the offensive lineman quickly grabs them and throws them behind them towards a backpedaling quarterback. To an untrained defensive lineman, this is a free pass to get to the quarterback as quickly as possible and get a sack. All of a sudden the quarterback throws it over the defensive lineman to the running back or wide receiver that is right behind the offensive lineman that passed the defensive lineman up.

If the defensive lineman reads the block correctly, he will retrace and follow the offensive lineman to the running back or wide receiver to find the ball. This will give him a great chance to make a play for the defense.

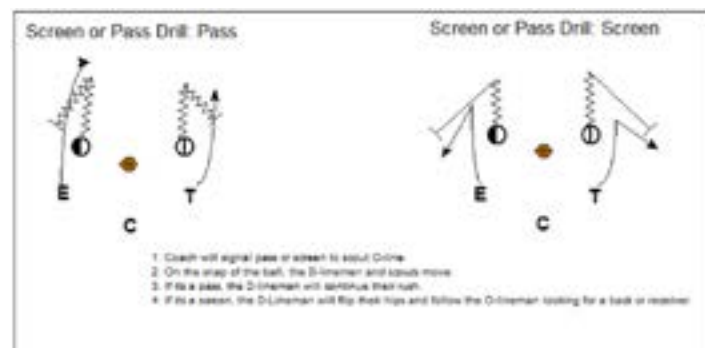
In order to train against this, I usually have a simple drill to get the reads right for my defensive linemen. I call it the screen or pass drill.

Drill Set-Up:

- 1) Pair up two defensive linemen together.
- 2) One will be the defensive linemen.
- 3) One will act as the scout offensive lineman.
- 4) A coach will stand behind the defensive lineman to signal screen or pass.
- 5) You can have a ball on a stick start the drill or have the offensive lineman start it on their movement.

Drill Progression:

- 1) On the snap of the ball or the offensive lineman's movement, the play will be started.
- 2) If pass, the offensive lineman will pass set and the defensive lineman should get into his pass rush.
- 3) If screen, the offensive lineman should take a quick pass set step and throw the defensive lineman behind him while running to a point of your choosing. The defensive lineman should recognize the screen and follow the offensive lineman to that point while yelling to the rest of the defense that it's a screen.



Back Blocks:

In the past few years, as the GT play has become more popular in our state/area, our defensive linemen get

a lot more back blocks. In our defense, I teach my defensive linemen to follow the puller to the play when the offensive lineman in front of them pulls. I also teach them that they won't get to go with the puller for free. Usually, when a puller goes to the other side of the formation, someone is blocking back to keep them away, thus taking them out of the play.

When teaching against this block, I tell my defensive lineman two ways to get past it.

- 1) If they get fast penetration on the line of scrimmage they can dip and rip past the blocker and get down the line to where the play is going.

- 2) If they begin to get blocked they will need to fight the block and get across the blocker's face in order to try to pursue the ball carrier and prevent getting washed out of the play and giving the ball carrier options.

The next drill specifically works the back block for my defensive linemen. I rep it with just the back block until they master it. Eventually, when they get the hang of it and can fight the block well, I will add it to my read and react drill where I include all blocks for them to work against.

Drill Set Up:

- 1) Pair up a defensive lineman with two other linemen to act as scout offensive linemen.

- 2) Use a ball on a stick or have the offensive linemen ready to start the play.

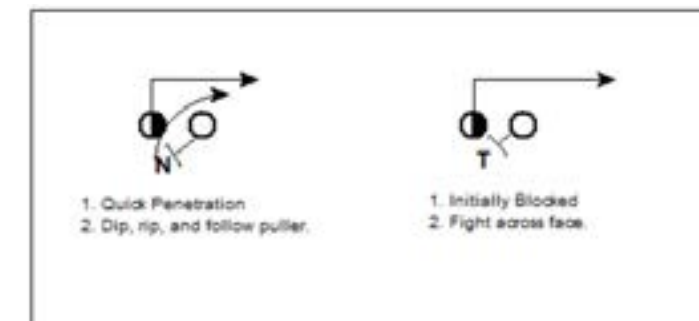
Drill Progression:

- 1) The snap of the ball or offensive line movement will start the drill.

- 2) The linemen in front of the defensive lineman will pull away from the side the defensive lineman is on.
- 3) The other linemen will block down on the defensive lineman to prevent the defensive lineman from

following the puller.

- 4) If the defensive lineman is able to get quick penetration on the line of scrimmage, they will dip, rip, and follow the pulling offensive lineman.
- 5) If the defensive lineman gets blocked initially, they will fight to get across the face of the offensive lineman.



SPREAD OFFENSE

EQUATING NUMBERS WITH QB RUN GAME

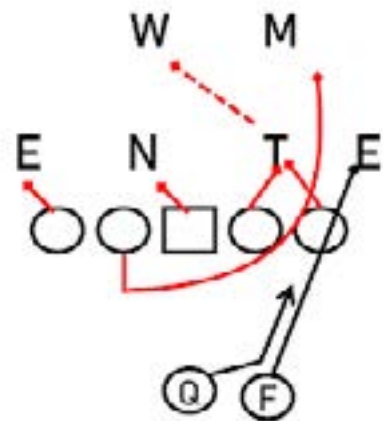


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QB's are the hidden gem when it comes to the run game. The past 2 years, the last 2 QB's I have had have rushed for 600+ yards and have been one of the main threats in the run game with these types of plays. By adding the QB to the run game, the box numbers become equal or +1 to your advantage. Here are a couple examples on different run schemes you can use to improve your QB Run Game:

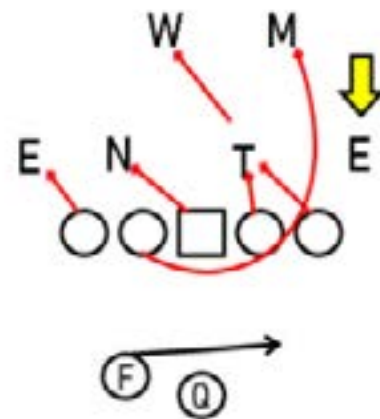
QB Power 10 Personnel

This is a great play out of 10 personnel to take advantage of numbers in the box. By staying 10 personnel, it is going to stress the linebackers and also equal out numbers in the box.



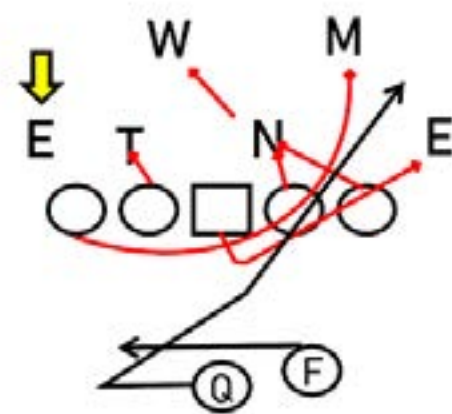
Power Read

Power read is one of my top QB runs due to the horizontal threat with the running back as well as a vertical threat with the QB. Power read is a great cap scheme that has the ability to be run out of multiple personnels and is a great to base around with different play action and slip screen options.



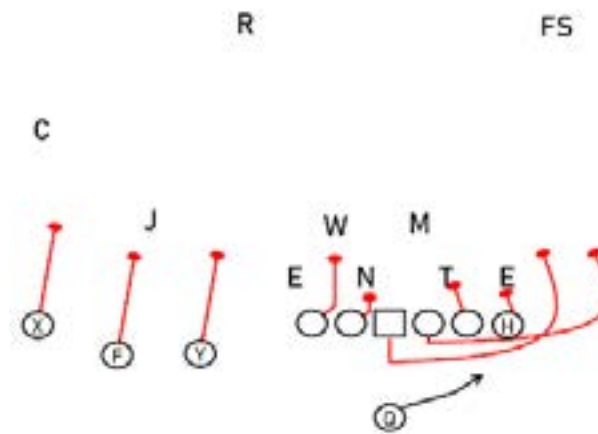
Counter Bash

Bash is one of the newer run schemes that has emerged into the scene. Bash is not just one scheme but is mainly a tag that is added to any scheme with a DE read. When I hear bash I think "Back Away", as in, the back is running to the read side, and the QB is running the run scheme side. If the DE widens, the QB will pull and run counter.



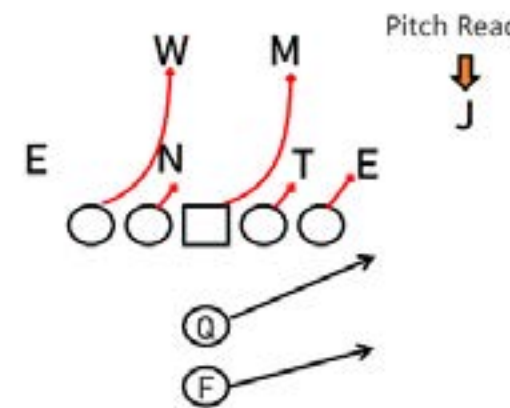
QB Pin and Pull

Empty pin and pull is a great play to take advantage of split-field defenses and 2 high teams. This will have the normal pin and pull rules with the QB taking the ball and attacking the edge. By being in empty, you force the defense to choose where they want to put their strength- to the field or to the TE.



Speed Option

This version of speed option is to run outside zone to the speed option side, This will delay the pitch a little longer with the QB pitch read being the force defender. This will give the chance for the QB to be an actual threat downfield while attacking the force defender.



JOB SEARCH PREP FOR COACHES

BEEN AT A BAD PROGRAM? BEEN OUT OF COACHING? HERE'S WHAT TO DO ON YOUR RESUME!



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What to do on a resume if you are at a bad program

Over the years, I have gotten questions from coaches about how to overcome unsuccessful coaching stints or experience at programs that did not have much success on the field or court. If you've been in coaching long enough, at some point you'll be involved with a bad program or a bad coaching staff.

This is where it is important to utilize your resume and portfolio to focus on all the positive impacts you made as a coach, both on and off the field.

You don't have to talk about wins and losses..... instead, talk about improvements made by your position group or individual player such as all-conference selections, team GPA, kids that went on to play at the college level. Was there a first-time achievement, such as the first player to make all-city first team, or the first time beating

a particular opponent in a long time?

Academic progress is an important component of any athletic program. It's also an area that AD's or head coaches will want to see on your resume. There are a variety of ways to help your athletes succeed in the classroom while also helping them achieve their goals upon graduating. Create a plan, document it, and modify and adapt it as you go.

You can also focus on community involvement aspects of the program. For example, community service activities, fundraising events, or clinics for the young athletes and feeder programs in your area.

Another area to highlight are professional development opportunities that you engaged in, for example, camps, clinics, professional organizations, and continuing education opportunities. Try to get involved in as many activities with your national or state coaches' association as possible.

Think outside the box for external activities that you were involved in. Were you a member of a committee or did you help coach an all-star game, or help select all-conference teams?

If you haven't been involved in those kinds of opportunities, you need to start doing it, and documenting it in your resume.

Sometimes, you really must sit down and think about all of the ways that you have made a positive impact on your program and your

continued on next page

athletes, even if you didn't have a winning outcome at the end of the season. Take the focus off the bad and instead focus on the good!

Bridging Gaps in Your Coaching Experience on Your Resume

There are two kinds of harmful gaps on a coaching resume. One is a lack of experience and the other is a lack of career-related skills. Both seem like insurmountable hurdles because you can't gain experience without a coaching job and it can take time to acquire coaching-related skills. Many coaches or aspiring coaches may be working a full-time job in an entirely different profession. This can make it even more difficult to obtain the experience and skills to climb the proverbial coaching ladder. However, there are ways to gain invaluable experience that will not only look good on a resume but will also hone your professional skills. Here are some ways you can accomplish this:

Join professional organizations

Join as many as you can. There are plenty of organizations related to each sport, such as state and national coaches' associations. There are also organizations related to other areas, for example, strength and conditioning, nutrition, or overall professional development.

Often, within your coaches' associations, there are opportunities for serving on a committee. This is not only a great opportunity for resume-filling experience, but also an excellent networking opportunity as well.

Clinics

Attending clinics within your sport or clinics associated with coaching in some manner is a terrific way to not only educate yourself and gain experience but is again an opportunity to grow your coaching network!

Camps

Camps can benefit you in so many positive ways. They are a source of extra income. They are also another opportunity to not only meet more coaches, but also a chance to learn from these coaches. Plus, you get to work with young athletes while working on your coaching techniques and methods.

Private training, instruction, and lessons

Training athletes and giving instruction/lessons locally is the best way to fill a gap when you aren't coaching. Especially if you are working in another job/profession. It's important to show that you are still involved in coaching and your sport in some manner. It's best to provide instruction under a company name. It is very easy to create your own company. I recommend going the route of a sole proprietorship versus an LLC. Having your own company is good for personal branding and looks much better on your resume than just listing "personal training" or "private lessons."

Side Businesses

Starting a side business is another great way to fill a gap when you aren't coaching. With the internet and social media, there are tons of ways to create content and resources that you may even be able to profit from while also helping other coaches or athletes. If you have a specific

skill or knowledge in an area that can benefit someone else, figure out a way to share that information.

In my early days, I created strength and conditioning program templates for coaches who were unfamiliar with the training aspect of coaching. I have also created resources that assist athletes, parents, and coaches navigate the recruiting process. The Coaching Portfolio Guide was created after I wrote a short article on developing coaching portfolios. And when I grew tired of working for other camps that were disorganized and poorly operated, I created my own camp company. There are so many opportunities for entrepreneurs in the coaching profession. You can even host your own clinics or webinars!

Continuing Education

Take additional college classes or take advantage of continuing education opportunities such as clinics, webinars, conferences, etc. Obtain documentation or certification whenever possible.

Certifications and Licenses

Many professional organizations provide opportunities to become certified in specific areas of coaching or training. These opportunities can help add valuable information to your resume while also giving you experience and training within the profession.

Need Additional Help?

If you need help with your coaching resume or portfolio, check out The Coaching Portfolio Guide. The Coaching Portfolio Guide is an instructional, membership-based website that helps you develop a personalized portfolio for any sport. We also have tips and templates for resumes and cover letters. 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 Guide at www.coachingportfolio.com.

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