

# HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 2

WORKING WITH  
**PARENTS**

*offensive*  
**DRILLS**

INSTALLING  
**BASIC**  
**DEFENSE**



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I have been blessed to be involved in many coaching resources, and this is quickly becoming my favorite. The ability to give back to the coaching community has been on mine and these coaches' who are volunteering to write hearts, and we are overwhelmed by the reception of this digital magazine. Just two days after releasing the first issue we had well over 2,000 downloads, and the number is continuing to increase.

This issue will feature 12 coaches working to expand their sections from offense to defense to special teams. However, one of the most popular sections has proven to be the "other" materials like head coaching guides, recruiting 101, and strength. While we aim to continue to produce great content for each coach, we are in need of questions or areas you would like to see us cover. Be sure to check out the Q and A section and feel free to email - [FBCoachSimpson@gmail.com](mailto:FBCoachSimpson@gmail.com) if you'd like to have a question featured in a future issue.

Our guest writer in this issue is a new friend of mine: Rick Stewart. Coach has produced a ton of football content, and we are grateful to him for his time to help us with his article for our second issue.

Be sure to share the magazine with all the coaches you feel would benefit from the knowledge, as well as thank and support our sponsors as they have supported us.

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# PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

## WORKING WITH PARENTS



Jeff Steinberg  
Beaumont High School  
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I have always loved the FAMILY aspect that a great football program brings to its players.

If you are going to stay true to your word of being a Football Family you will need to ensure you are welcoming the families of your players into your program, especially in this day and age. A successful program needs everyone moving in the same direction. Players must buy in and have a clear understanding of the expectations. It will always be easier when you have the support of their parents. With that being said this article will focus on ways to involve families while at the same time establishing boundaries and roles for the players' parents so that the program can run smoothly.

### MANDATORY PARENT/PLAYER INFORMATION EVENING

We begin each new football year with a parent/player meeting in the school auditorium. Whether it's a player's first year in the program or they will be entering their 4th year, we have all

the parents and players attend as I believe this meeting really sets the tone for ensuring we are all on the same page. During this meeting we review our mission statement, vision for the program and core values. It's also a great time to introduce the coaching staff, discuss the role of our coaches, athletes and parents in addition to reviewing our yearly calendar with important dates. When parents understand how our program operate, what the expectations are and know the practice/game schedule it's much easier for them to support what we are doing.

### PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS WITH PARENTS

During our Parent Meeting we discuss with our parents that we are trying to develop great relationships with our players and teach them how to be accountable and communicate on their own. Our coaches communicate with our players on a daily basis. Sometimes we need to have a meeting with a specific player and parent when expectations are not being met or we have behavior issues. It's very important that you establish clear guidelines with the parents as to reasons for meetings such as:

1. Physical & emotional treatment
2. Ways to help improve
3. Behavior/Academic concerns

We also let the parents know we don't meet to discuss the following:

1. Playing time
2. Strategy and play calling
3. Other kids/athletes (unless related to inappropriate behavior towards their child)

Meetings are generally held with the Position Coach, Head Coach, parent(s), player and possibly Athletic Director in attendance. This usually keeps the focus on the problem and having a team effort to come up with a solution. I also communicate to the parents that if we do need to meet, a meeting will always be scheduled. Our staff are usually busy after practice in coaches' meetings or are released to go home to their own families, so we make sure we schedule any coach/parent meetings ahead of time.



### OPPORTUNITIES TO GET THE PARENTS INVOLVED

**Football Booster Club** - Running a successful program requires a strong group behind the scenes. One of the best ways for parents to get involved is to join our Football Booster Club to raise money and run events. Our Football Boosters over the years have run golf tournaments, wine tasting events for parents, held a casino night, operated the snack bar, hosted weekly pre-game meals and put on our year end banquet. There are opportunities for parents to get very involved as board members, serve as directors or assist with various events.

**Family Barbecue** - Each season prior to our scrimmage against an opponent we have a Family Barbecue in conjunction with our intra-squad scrimmage. This is a great opportunity to bring everyone in the program together in a relaxed setting.

**Mom's Clinic** - In the spring towards the end of our Spring practices we have held a Football Clinic specifically for the moms. We make sure it's a fun and interactive event. We include door prizes and have snacks available as well. Each coach gives a short presentation of what skills are involved with his position group. We also review some X's & O's and basic rules. I have even had an equipment rep give a presentation on the pieces of equipment that help to keep players safe.

**Recruiting Information Evening** - This evening is open to any player in our program that is looking to play beyond high school. We do a presentation on what is required both on the field and in the classroom to qualify and hopefully be recruited. This is a great workshop and shows the parents that we want to help get their sons to the next level but even more important puts us on the same page with ensuring their son works hard in the classroom.

**Helmet Striping Ceremony** - Prior to our 1st regular season game we invite the parents to a special night. This event is usually held after a Wednesday practice. The parents are involved in assisting their son in decorating their helmets with our decals. I usually use this event as an opportunity to discuss the relationship between success and support. We remind the players in order for them to be successful they will need the support from their parents. They will need their parents to get them to practice at times, help keep them nourished and even have a shoulder to lean on when faced with challenges.

These are a few examples of ways to include the parents in your program. I have seen programs do incredible events to build a strong family atmosphere. When your program keeps the parents informed, offers ways to get them involved and work them into the program it creates a great overall environment. I encourage you to create opportunities where families can share the high school football experience together.

## GET PARENTS INVOLVED:

- BOOSTER CLUB
- FAMILY BARBECUE
- MOM'S CLINIC
- RECRUITING INFORMATION EVENING
- HELMET STRIPING CEREMONY

# PRACTICAL ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

## PERFORMANCE MARKERS



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Oftentimes the Strength and Conditioning coach will speak with the sport coach with regards to the amount of reps

or time that practice is taking. Lots of time the strength and conditioning coach asks for or suggests a reduction in practice volume by simply gauging how the athletes look in their movement. A lot of the time the coach can be right with simply using their coaches eye and calling for this however coaches are going to want more than simply a "gut feeling" with regards to practice adjustments.

One simple way to do this is through using simple performance testing markers from the pre season and comparing them to where you are at that part in the season. This does not require testing the entire team in these markers either but you can rather pull one to two individuals from each position group and retest them to compare. If there is a significant drop in performance then this has several scenarios that should be taken into consideration.

First as the strength coach before ever questioning the Head Coach or suggesting anything you need to look at from the standpoint of "am I providing these athletes an adequate stimulus in training over the course of the season" you also need to ask "am I providing these athletes too much of a stimulus in season". These both while on opposite sides of the spectrum could be one of the reasons an athletes performance declines. On the other hand it could be due to the amount of practice volume or number of repetitions in drills. It's

important to speak openly and freely about these issues behind closed doors but understand that once the doors open and you are around the athletes or kids that it is the strength coaches role to be an extension of the Head coach and that they must back them 110%.

Two simple performance markers I like to test over the course of a season are the 10 meter fly and the vertical jump. These can be done quickly and are not nearly as strenuous with regards to recovery as an athlete retesting on a max in the weight room during the season. The data taken from the test can serve as a guide for the football coach in terms of planning the upcoming week's practice. If a pool of athletes who during the pre-season had an average vertical jump of 29 inches and jumped say 24 inches as a pool on the Monday following a Friday game then that could indicate to the head coach that maybe we need to reduce practice volume or intensity on Monday/Tuesday and then we can go hard on Wednesday. On the flip side of this is this pool of athletes were to test an average of 31 inches then that would show the sport coach that we can ramp up early this week and get a couple more days of intense practice if we really like. It is also key for showing the effect the week before had on the athletes. Sure, it could have been a blow out and you beat the previous week's team by 28 points. However, what if this team was a run dominant smash mouth team, or a swarm defense type team that despite the score still played physical and tough. This is going to have a different effect on your team in the upcoming week than a team who you beat by 28 but may have thrown the ball every down.



One thing in the strength and conditioning field that irritates me is the idea of injury prevention, no one can prevent injuries unless they are a wizard that has been sent down from space with powers that no one else possesses. We can REDUCE the risk of injury. By interpreting the data of the vertical jump we can see that the athlete is truly fatigued and thus at a greater risk of injury going forward in the previous week's practice. It used to be common thought that athletes should maintain or would get slightly weaker due to the demands of the season but this is beginning to be the exception rather than the norm.

Matt Rhea from Alabama shared his teams testing data heading into the national championship with regards to watts of power they produced. Heading into the national championship game they were producing more power than they were in week 1!

Now we as High School coaches don't have the software and technology that he does to look at our athletes' watts of power output but we can test in the vertical or a 10 meter fly, or a 20 yd dash which all have correlation to speed or power output. That's the entire goal of my section is to give you simple, applicable ideas that you can blend into your High School program.

Nothing irritates me more than strength coaches speaking from a pedestal with all their scientific jargon with regards to what sport coaches should do in their program and then providing no real APPLICABLE ideas to be implemented. As High School coaches you often do not have gps wearables to monitor practice volume or perch sensors on each rack to monitor watts of power produced. These simple test can keep your athletes safe and help you plan practice appropriately throughout your season.

“Two simple performance markers I like to test over the course of a season are the 10 meter fly and the vertical jump.

The data taken from the test can serve as a guide for the football coach in terms of planning the upcoming week's practice.”

# COACHING RESOURCES

## THREE UNIVERSAL ANSWERS

### (TO MOST OF YOUR COACHING QUESTIONS)



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**\*Note - this is the first part of a 2-part series. In the next issue I will give examples.**

Here are some of the things people have asked me about recently.

- How do we handle dealing with parents better?
- How do we handle assistant coaches better?
- How do we get kids to buy into the team first mentality?
- How do you take over a winning program and grow it?
- How can your AD and principal help you more?
- How can we make our team culture better?
- How do we convince players/parents we are helping with recruiting?
- How do you deal with player discipline?
- How can we increase parent participation?
- How do we handle outside influences on the players?

These are all real questions asked of me over the past couple weeks. The more I started thinking about the answers to each question, the more I realized the answers were really close to the same for each one.

There are 3 universal answers to all these questions:

- **Build Relationships**
- **Communication**
- **Presentation & Delivery**

My plan is to address many of these questions separately over the course of the next several months, but I feel like a better understanding of these three universal answers is the best place to start. Keep in mind these 3 universal answers when you get a question on how to improve your program.

#### Building Relationships

We can't talk about relationships enough. If you have a good relationship with someone, you will be able to overcome most anything.

Some good things happen when you are a good relationship builder:

- You can tell people things they don't want to hear
- You can have hard conversations

#### You build better relationship by doing 2 things:

**1. Gain their respect** - If someone respects you they will listen to you when you have something to say. It seems that "back in the day" you could get that respect just by having the "Head Coach" title. Now it seems you really must earn that respect. You get respect from people by the relationship you have built with them over an extended period.

**2. Show them you care** - genuine, real care is a feeling people get for those they respect. If someone knows you care about them, they will listen to you when you have something to say. What are some ways you can be a better relationship builder and gain their respect?

- Talk to them constantly, not just when you need to - this is a common mistake! Always be talking to the people in your program. Build up that good relationship in the good times.

- Brag on their accomplishments - don't be "too cool" to say nice things about kids. They need to hear nice things when they do something well. Positive reinforcement is a real thing!

- Show empathy - things will not always be great. When they are down, show that you care and empathize with them.

#### Communication

People that know me know I may be an "over-communicator" (if there is such a thing). I like emails. If I have information I need to get out I like to post things on multiple social media platforms, email, text, Remind, etc. If you were in our program, I hoped I was giving you too much information instead of not enough.

*continued on next page*

Some good things happen when you are a good communicator:  
- People trust you have a plan and give you the benefit of the doubt  
- You can solve most problems before they ever arise

#### You get better at communicating by doing 2 things:

**1. Getting organized** - this is easy to say and harder to do but you must find processes that allow you to communicate. Use paper/pencil, smartphones and everything in between that fits your style to get yourself organized so you can communicate to other better.

**2. Getting consistent** - don't stay motivated for a week or two to get organized and communicate. Make communication a priority by keeping it at the front of your mind.

What are some ways you can communicate better?

- Embrace the new thing - When I started out as a Head Football Coach there was no Twitter, Instagram. We had to embrace those things as new ways to communicate. If a company comes out with a better way than what we have today, embrace it.

- Make notes - after an event is over, make notes on how it went and what can be done better next time. This is something I did constantly (as you can tell if you have seen all of our documents). I really think this is the best way to communicate because when we did make a mistake we didn't make it the next time we were in that same situation. Make notes and refer to those notes often.

- Set reminders - go ahead and admit to yourself that you are not perfect...you are going to forget things. Set a reminder in your phone to "tell parents about equipment pick up", "remind about booster club meeting", etc. Don't just assume you will remember to communicate. Use the most updated technology to help you remember.

#### Presentation & Delivery

"Everything is in the presentation." I have said this many times to questions people asked me as a Head Football Coach, Athletic Director or even as an HR Director. Everything is in how you present and deliver the information. You can tell people things they don't want to hear and have crucial conversations when you present the information in a way where they understand your point of view.

Some good things happen when you are a good presenter:  
- People follow someone who can clearly show you their vision  
- You gain respect from people by putting things in the proper context to make your point

#### You get to be a better presenter by doing 2 things:

**1. Being prepared** - organize your thoughts...think about what you are going to say when you are delivering messages as the leader of the organization.

**2. Thinking outside the box** - Don't go through the motions and just do what has always been done. Explore what other people do and expand on that.

What are some ways you can be a better presenter?

- Never just "wing it". I hate hearing people say "I'm good at winging it". No one is good at that. It just means you settled for less. Think about what you are going to say and then, if you can, give the same talk to yourself. When I taught history years ago I remember being a much better teacher in 3rd period than 1st period each day. That was not a coincidence.

- Never just do "what we always have done" - try new things. Be innovative. Give out some prizes at your parent meetings. Research as many ways as people do things as possible and then think of new things that stem from those ideas.



# DEFENSIVE RESOURCES

## HOW TO MANIPULATE YOUR RUN FITS TO DEFEND RPOs: EVEN 2 HIGH SPACING



Adam Gaylor  
Jenks HS - Oklahoma  
2020 State Champions  
Defensive Coordinator  
[Coach Tube](#)  
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The most significant change in football in my two decades of coaching is the inception of the Run/Pass Option or RPO. More so than fastball tempo or varieties of quarterback run game, the RPO has forced

defenses to change the way they operate. When I first got into coaching, our biggest issue was making sure we could defend quarterback run game by structure and coverage. Now, we go into every game talking about how we need to align our front and stunt or "chop" the front to alleviate strain or run/pass "conflict" placed on 2nd & and 3rd level defenders in 2 high or MOFO coverage.

In addition to front considerations, the evolution of the RPO has forced us to manipulate our run fits and take certain 'overhang' or 'apex' defenders out of the run fit based on the alignment of the back. In even 2 high spacing, vs. 2x2 formations, the conflicted apex player will be either what most defenses call the Sam/Nickel (our Dog position) or the Will (our Rock position). In 3x1 formations vs. 2 high spacing, the conflicted player will be the apex defender to the passing strength or the weak/boundary safety (our \$ position). The base way we manipulate our run fits is to take the apex defender aligned to the RB out of the run fit. If the RB is to me, I'm out of the fit. I'm a "Hold" player. If the RB is aligned away from me, I'm in the fit and I am a "Fit" player. We refer to this as "Pushing" our fits towards the side of the RB. Therefore, we actually fit the run like we are in single safety (Middle of the Field Closed/MOFC) spacing. I have also heard the term "Fall" fits (Bo Pelini)

and "Sling" fits (Kyle Cogan/Dante Barteel). This is due to most post-snap RPOs being to the side of the offset RB. The footwork of the QB with an RPO to the side of the offset RB is much easier than utilizing a "Flop" or a post-snap RPO that is away from the alignment of the RB.

Two common answers offenses have come up with to combat defenses Pushing their fits to the side of the RB is to utilize RPOs out of pistol and "Flop" RPOs. Defensively, for us to combat pistol RPOs, both apex defenders must key the opening and eyes of the QB. We must therefore Push our fits post-snap based on the intentions of the QB. If the QB opens/looks to me, I'm out of the run fit. If he looks away, I'm in the run fit and trigger my assigned gap. In order to defend "Flop" RPOs we must fit similarly. QB eyes to me=out of the run fit. QB eyes away from me=in the run fit.

If you plan on defending RPOs from a 2 High spaced defense: You must "Push/Fall/Sling" based on the alignment of the RB. If getting RPOs out of pistol or Flop RPOs, you must Push your fits post-snap based on QB vision, regardless of the RB alignment or mesh of the QB/RB.

You must teach your players where RPOs are coming from based on formation and back set. They must understand when they have potential to be targeted as a conflict player.

The next page has diagrams of our base even (Over front) 2 high spaced run fits and a diagram of an RPO breakdown we use in our scouting report to teach where pre-snap RPOs, post-snap RPOs, and the runs that occur off of them take place at:

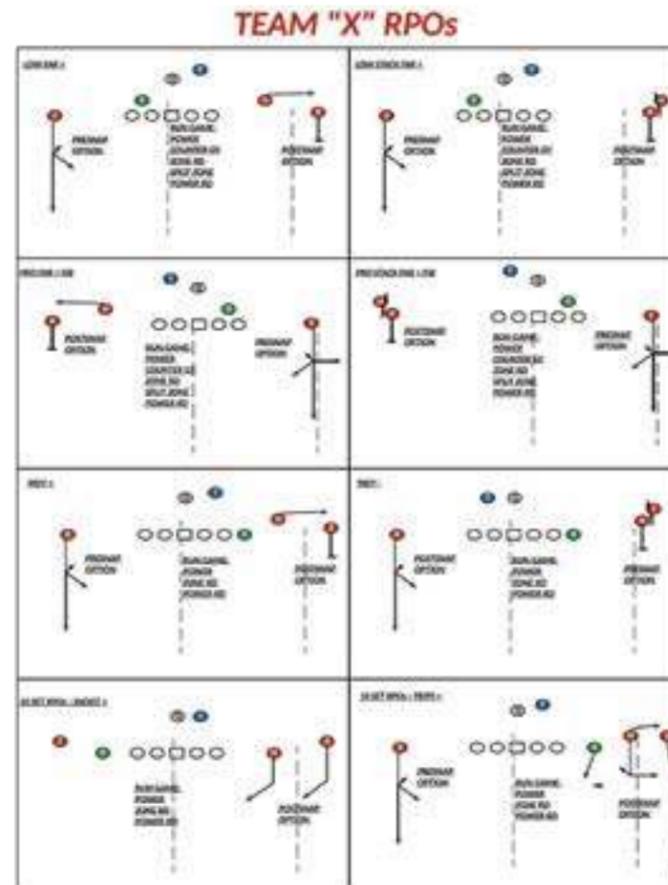
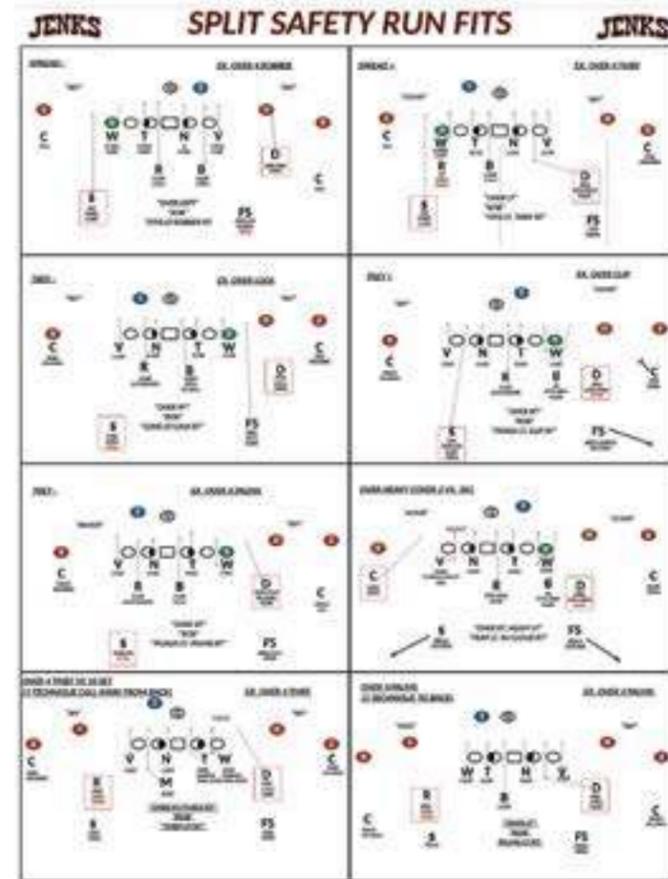
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*"What are effective ways to call your defensive calls when your opponent is going no hudl (sugar/check with me)?" - Joseph Wade*

For us vs. tempo offenses, we use as many single word calls as possible. In order to do this, we categorize all our calls on defense. For instance, cities (Miami, LA, Houston, Tampa, etc...) are base defenses. NFL QBs (Favre, Brady, Baker, Burrow, Marino, Manning, Aikman, Tua, etc..) are simulated pressures. NFL Teams (Falcons, Bills, Saints, Bears, Bucs, Ravens, etc...) are overload simulated pressures. Weapons are firezone pressures. Weather are zero blitzes. And so on...

It's also to have "Kill" calls built into calls. Meaning, you call a corner FZ and the offense checks. Have a tag that either flips the pressure to the other side or puts you in a base defense. For example, "Over Favre Kill Brady" so we would run a field simulated pressure unless the offense checked. If they check, we kill it to "Brady" or a boundary simulated pressure.

-Adam Gaylor, Defensive Coordinator

# FOOTBALL 101

## OFFENSIVE LINE TENDENCIES



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**vIQtory**

Recognizing and understanding offensive tendencies can not only help your players get a jump on the play if it's a run or

pass, but it can help players anticipate play direction. Last week we talked about wide receiver tendencies, this week we're going to look at the offensive line.

Offensive line tendencies should be studied by both defensive players and offensive players. Defensive players should study these tendencies and master how their opponent gets set in their stance. Offensive players should be aware of what they're tipping off so they can fix it.

The first offensive tendency that we're going to look at is the hip and butt height of the offensive lineman. Often times when the offensive lineman's butt is above their hips, it's a heavy indication that this is a run. This is often tipped off by offensive linemen who have tight hips and need that extra advantage in weight distribution to get to where they have to be. Often leaning too far forward on their hand will bring their butt above their hips.



Check out our [TikTok video here](#) for a full 60-second breakdown.

Opposite of that, if their butt is below their hips, it's a heavy indication of pass. This tendency is easier to dissect when the offensive tackle is in a 3 point stance. If they're in a 2 point stance, this tip-off is tough to identify, a balanced two-point stance often requires the butt to be below the hips.

Next, we found this great chart from Erik Burkhardt and the tendencies he drew up for Frank Clark before the Super Bowl against the 49ers. Erik spots two trends - the hands and the toe of the 49ers' offensive tackles.



The first trend is the toe. Erik noticed that when the toe pointed out, it was a pass set. This could be for the reason that offensive lineman will point their toe-out, in order to bring their knee and outside hip in. This helps them to keep square when setting for a defensive end.



In the run situation, having that toe point-up field can help push off on a down block or cutoff block to the second level.

As for the hands, it's common for offensive tackles to have their hands in a ready position before they pass set. Also, Staley has his hands apart or rested on the knees when in a run situation.

Regardless of who you're playing, make sure you study individual tendencies the best you can. If your team doesn't film the "tight" film angle, try to next season. It will help you find all of these tendencies that may appear for the next offensive line that you play.

Have other tendencies that you like to teach your players? Let us know [@vIQtorysports](#) or [@chrivIQtory](#) - we'd love to hear them!

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# OFFENSIVE LINE DRILLS

## OFFENSIVE DRILL: SCREEN DRILL



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

**POSITION:** Offensive Skill Players

**FOCUS:** High Tempo  
 Repetitions of Base Screen  
 Routes & Perimeter Blocking

quarterbacks and 2 running backs to maximize the work we can do. In the second phase of the drill in Diagram 2, we line up again in a base 2 x 2 formation, but with 3 quarterbacks and 1 running back if we have the numbers to do so.

Another tip in setting up this drill is to align a coach or cones ten yards beyond your line of scrimmage as a finishing point for your receivers to "score" through.

Lastly and most importantly, have plenty of football and have your receivers run the balls back to the quarterbacks. Having them throw the ball to the quarterbacks after they finish their rep only slows the drill down. If you want to go a high rate of speed, then you can't be chasing all the errant throws that your wide receivers and backs will undoubtedly have trying to get the balls back to the quarterbacks.

### COACHING POINTS:

This drill is designed to get you multiple and high tempo reps at screens. I would estimate we can get 20+ reps each of all of our screens in just a 10 minute period (80 total.) You have to be highly organized and up tempo to get that many repetitions, but it can be done.

Diagram 1 illustrates the first screen drill variation shows our jailbreak screen for our outside receivers to the left and for our inside receivers to the right. The Diagram illustrates our

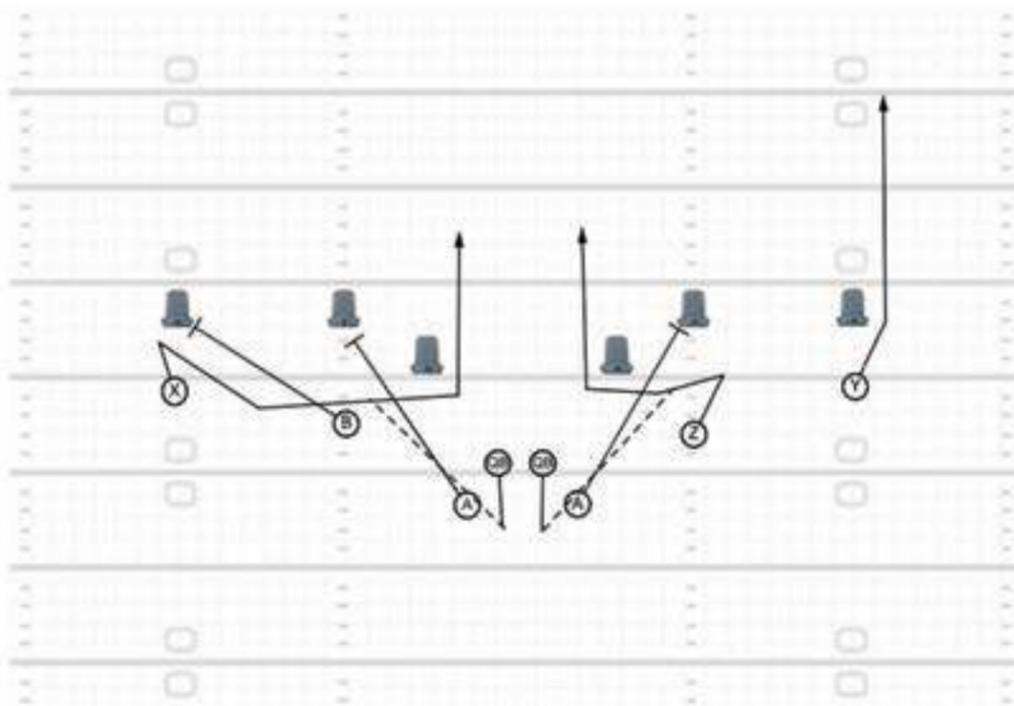
### DRILL SET-UP, LANDMARKS, & ROTATION:

This drill is set up using the entire width of the field mimicking our landmarks for our receivers (numbers & hash marks.) We utilize trash buckets as defenders on the perimeter. We will work to set up those trash barrels much like our opponents will align each week to give our receivers and backs aiming points for their blocks.

Those trash buckets could easily be replaced by defenders if you wish to adapt the drill, but we utilize this as a non-contact tempo based drill. Adding defenders may slow down the tempo of the drill which is why we only utilize buckets. Plus, we don't have to coach up the buckets where to line up.

On the interior, we have two trash barrels set up where our offensive tackles would be lined up to help serve as landmarks, but more importantly to be a funnel for our jailbreak screen portion of the drill.

In the first iteration of the drill in Diagram 1, we line up our receivers in our base 2 x 2 formation but utilize 2



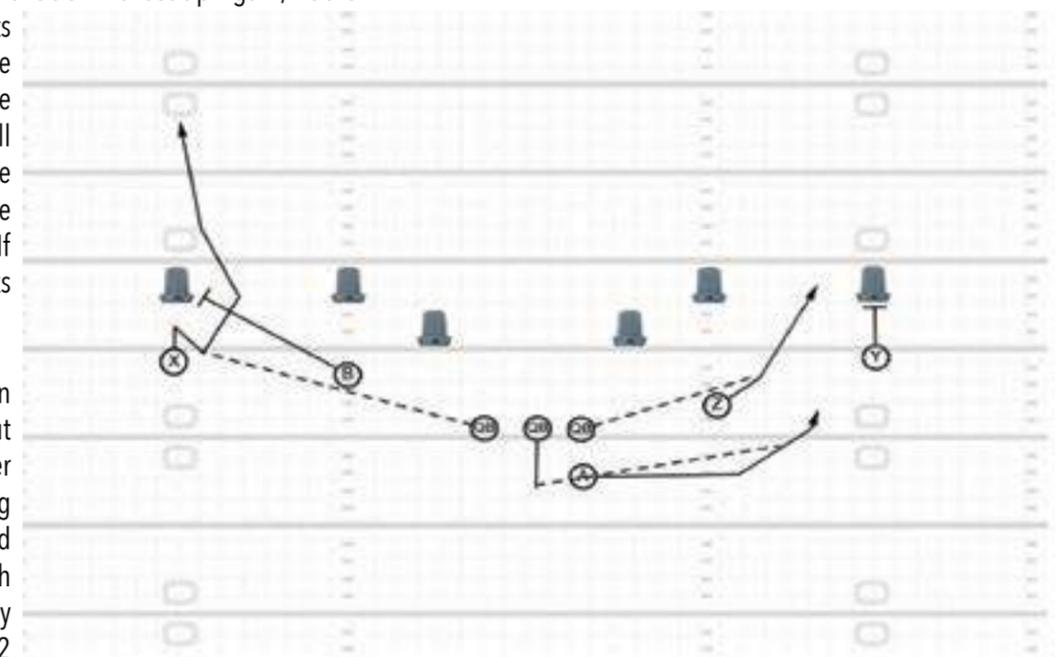
**Diagram 1: Jailbreak**

perimeter and skill play blocking assignments. Our perimeter players attack the trash barrels with correct blocking angles, breakdown and shoot their hands on the bucket. After they have blocked the bucket, they return it to its original position. On the side with the inside jailbreak, our outside receiver is working his take-off route to sell a deep ball. We at times will put a third quarterback on that side to throw a deep ball so we can use that effort and insure he goes full speed.

Our receivers running the screens work their footwork and aiming points coming back behind the line of scrimmage. They catch the ball and then get vertical between the two middle trash barrels. This is a key for us as we release our offensive line on this screen and this teaches our receivers to get behind the wedge of bodies that our offensive line creates. We also add a finish point to this drill with one of our coaches standing 10 yards beyond the buckets. We want this drill to be a race between those two receivers catching the ball to get there and score first. Our quarterbacks spin the ball to themselves and get their screen drop. Our quarterbacks' coach stands behind coaching them on the proper drop and back pedal path. We do not utilize bags or tennis rackets in this situation like other teams because we want this drill to be rapid fire and get as many reps as possible.

All of our receivers will get repetitions on one side and then switch to the other side and keep rotating until we have done this part of the drill for 2 minutes. We then quickly flip flop the drill to work the same screens on the opposite side. In Diagram 2, you see that we have a similar set-up. Again, we are working blocking assignments on the perimeter. The key here for us is to work the bubble and tunnel screens. We will work the swing screen to the bubble side as well if we have the quarterbacks to do so. If not, we fold our running backs into the bubble line.

Again, our quarterbacks spin the ball to themselves but we are working on quicker and faster throws. I am a big believer that you only get good at bubble and tunnel through a ton of repetitions so we try to get as many as possible in 2 minutes then switch sides and work for another 2 minutes on the other side.



**Diagram 2: Bubble, Tunnel, and Swings**

We again are having those receivers who catch the ball race 10 yards after they get the ball and try to be the first to score.

We will utilize our other formations in this drill as the season advances as we run key screen to #2 in a trips set, but in the beginning, we want a lot of reps for our quarterbacks and receivers so we stick with our base 2 x 2 set until we really get the drill humming and running smoothly.

### VARIATIONS

You can change the alignment of the trash barrels for the drill dependent on your opponent each week.

You can add live defenders or defenders with bags on the perimeter for live blocking work.

You can add managers or coaches with tennis rackets or bags to disrupt the vision of your quarterbacks in their drop.

Utilize the bones of this set-up with other screens or gadgets off of screens in the last couple minutes of the drill.

Utilize all your formations to get work on all your screen game.

# HIDDEN YARDS: MAKE SPECIAL TEAMS SPECIAL

## GAMEDAY SPECIAL TEAMS CHECKLIST - THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE THE GAME



Chris Fore  
Veteran Coach  
[@chrisfore](#)  
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Spending some time on the night of the game will most definitely help you in managing the ebb and flow of the Special Teams scenarios

during game night.

### 1. Condition of the field - wet, dry, damp, any holes around anywhere, slippery

How will the field conditions change what you're wanting to do tonight? Now, most of the time these days we are on Field Turf, and we don't need to consider poor field conditions too much. BUT, field conditions can play a BIG part on Special Teams. So, spend some time walking the field. How is the condition of the field around the plant spot for your kicker on PATs, you know that area right around the 10 yard line. How about around the places you want to kickoff from tonight? How about the areas you might want to onside kick to? Maybe you need to change part of your plan for tonight depending on the conditions of the field.

### 2. Weather conditions to consider - rain, damp, cold

I spent the 2014 season at Oak Hills High School, which is very close to the top of the Cajon Pass along the 15 freeway. If you know the area, you know that the wind whips through there something FIERCE! We had some real doozies there where you can hardly even punt the football. Like nights where I would just tell our Head Coach, if we punt while going this way coach, we won't have more than a 15 yard kick! So, game time weather conditions might change up what you want to do for the night.

### 3. Which way is the wind going, and how does this influence your plan?

Will you have the wind at your back during the first or second half? Maybe you have a fake punt in your plan, but in the first half, you're going against a pretty tough head wind. Can your kid make that throw against the wind? Maybe you have the wind at

your back during the second half. How will this influence your decisions to either kick a field goal or try to convert a fourth down? Do you know how many yards this wind will add to your kids' best effort? Is the wind going to affect your long snapper? If so, do you need to move the punter up a yard? Wind plays a huge factor sometimes! Think through these issues.

### 4. Find their place kicker by #

When you start your film breakdown, make sure to write down the numbers of your opponent's specialists, and then have those numbers on your play card for Friday night. Find those guys as soon as you can on game night!

When you find their place kicker, how does he look? Maybe he sustained an injury during the week and isn't playing? How will this affect your game plan? Your placement of your kick returners? Who is the backup kicker, do you even know? If he is dressed out, watch him. How does the wind affect his kick placement tonight?

How is his field goal kicking looking? How far out is he good from tonight? Write it down so you don't have to think when the time comes. Don't forget to account for the 7 yards from the ball to the kick point too!

### 5. Find their punter by #

When you find their punter, how does he look? Maybe he sustained an injury during the week and isn't playing? How will this affect your game plan? Your placement of your punt returners? Who is the backup punter, do you even know? If he is dressed out, watch him. How does the wind affect his kick placement tonight? Take note of his average kick distance tonight. Does it match what you charted out all week? This can play a huge role in how you set your punt returner!

### 6. Find their long snapper by #

Same things as above. Is he dressed out? How do his long snaps look? Same guys long snapping for punts and field goals?

### 7. Find their holder by #

Is he dressed out? Do you see him practicing throws at all? If he is, is he a regular QB? Or are they working on a fake of some kind?

### 8. Find their kickoff and punt returner/s by #

Who is returning kicks and punts before the game? Same guys that you're expecting based on your scouting and preparation? Do they look healthy? Any injuries that these kids might have sustained during the practice week? Are they limping at all? Favoring one side of their body or another? How are they catching the kicks/punts? Same way you saw them in your film prep?

### 9. Find the players not playing tonight - are any of them on your list of Special Teams players?

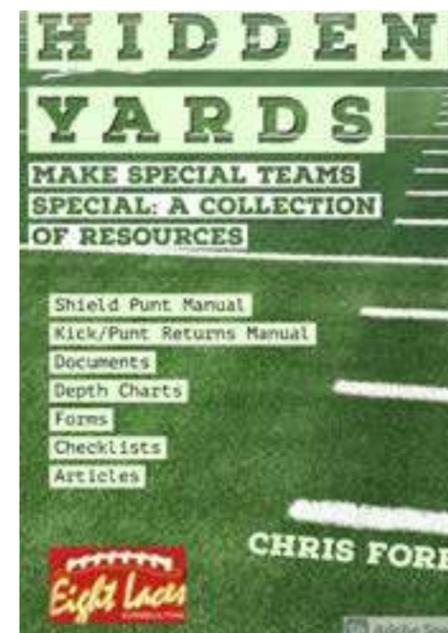
I made a crucial mistake during my first year as a Head Coach, and I learned a lot and made a change that I've held onto as a Head Coach ever since. Our star running back who was responsible for about 60% of our wing t offense was injured and not playing. Like most kids do, I had him out there in his jersey and sweat pants during pregame. So, right away their Head Coach comes out and says "40 isn't playing huh?" Then, he went over, got his team together, and informed them, to which totally energized their team as they started hooting and hollering. Ever since, I don't have my players wear their jerseys unless they are covered up, and I have my injured guys just sit on the bench during pregame. Sure, the opponent can still figure it out by looking at your entire team dressed out, but now I don't make it so easy for them!

So, take note of the injured guys who aren't playing. Cross reference this against your notes on your play card of their specialists.

For instance, maybe #10 is on crutches. You look at your card and see that he is their leading tackler on kickoff, the guy you are double teaming. Now, you can change that double team assignment, free up a kid perhaps. Or maybe #10 is their long snapper. Maybe you can call for that punt to be blocked a little more liberally now because you know their backup is NOT very good, and floats the ball back.

***If this is helpful information to you, or if you are looking for a tremendous Special Teams resource, check out my latest Special Teams product.***

***It's called HIDDEN YARDS: Make Special Teams Special.***



*"How do you sequence your defensive play calls? Do you ever script your defensive calls?" - Zach Hermsen*

Defense is "night and day" different from offense. Defenses have to adjust to what the offense does from a personnel and formation standpoint. So our calls defensively are dependent upon what the offense does. However, we always go into games with an understanding of what calls we like vs. certain personnel groupings or looks we get from the offense. We do want to set up calls by aligning in certain fronts on par (run/pass regular) downs or run certain blitzes to see how the offense is going to target them. Third down is especially important if you align in 'exotic' fronts that you haven't seen your opponent play against on film. Run the front or pressure early and see what their answer to it is. This will allow you to have your Plan 'B', 'C', 'D', etc..ready to utilize later in the game.

**-Adam Gaylor, Defensive Coordinator**



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Loganville High School, GA

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## DEFENSIVE CULTURE & FUNDAMENTALS

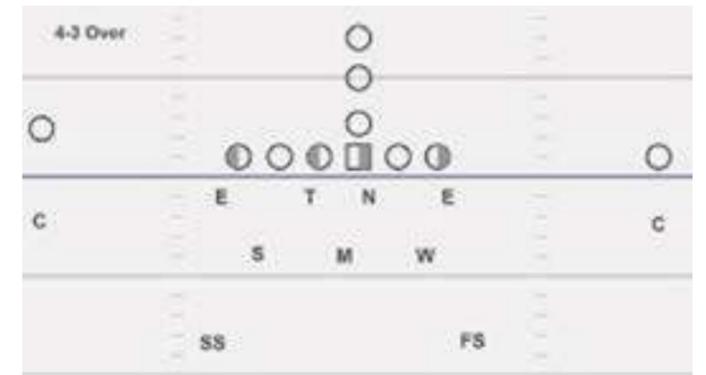
### INSTALLING A BASIC FUNDAMENTAL DEFENSE



PJ Gibbs  
East Lee County HS-Florida  
Head Coach & Recruiting  
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The 4-3 defense was something I can remember being educated in at the age of 12 as a Pop Warner player—and it still impacts my coaching life, today. The origin of this defense dates to its inception in 1950, by (at the time) New York Giants Defensive Coordinator, Tom Landry, who was trying to stop Cleveland Browns running back Jim Brown. With the evolution of today's offense—RPO and Tempo Offenses—it was very hard for me to stay true to my 4-3 roots from Manasquan High School, but the teaching principles from those who coached it to me remain the same today. Every spring, our coaching staff would visit the University of Virginia to learn from Coach George Welsh and his coaching staff. This defense—the fronts, the calls, the pressures and the coverages—is the foundation of my football knowledge. In fact, our defenses still use the same color coverage calls in 2020 that I learned back in 1993. It is a testament to the foundational teaching that was delivered to me as a young football player. The ensuing pages and diagrams will give you a basic understanding of our two main fronts, stunts, pressures, and coverages.

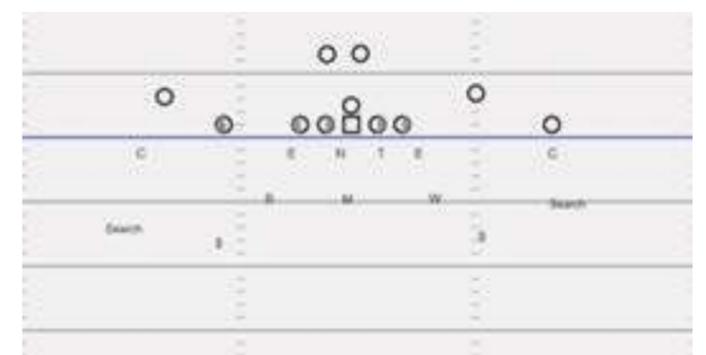
Our base defense (Figure 1) was an over front or "Tight," as we called it against 21 personnel, but today you will primarily see Spread offenses. We call it the Tight Front because we are setting the "3-technique" Defensive Tackle to the Tight End. Generally, coverages (often named by color, as aforementioned) we play in a Tight Front would be either Blue, which is either Progression Read Coverage 2 to the passing strength, and Tampa 2 to the single receiver side. Anytime we see a Twins package, or motion to Twins, we check to Green and play Coverage 3—with the Strong Safety rolling to the Twins' side and engaging as a force/flat defender. The backside corner would either play man or a true deep 1/3.



vs. 21 PRO BASE



vs. 21 PRO BASE



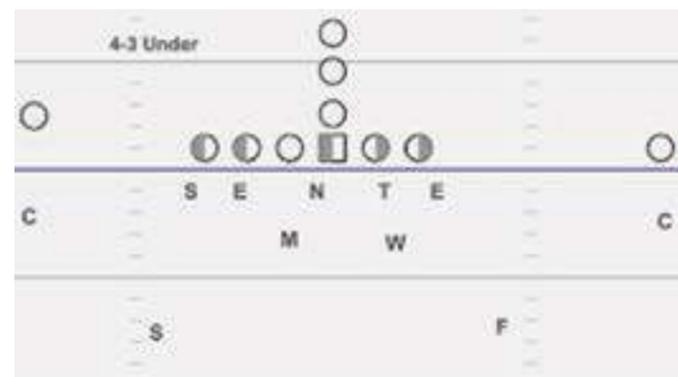
Your ability to determine if you are a 4-down team is up to you, your staff, and the personnel within your program. The Tight Front can be used today at multiple levels of football. As a coach, you must decide how you are going to attack offenses with it as part of your game plan. This is a gap control defensive front and

as the coach, you must stress that to your players. Everyone has a job and they do that job with preparation and execution during practices and games.

Fundamentals must always be stressed, no matter what the situation, or who the opponent is (on any given day). The fundamentals for your defensive line are to: emphasize using your hands, watching the ball, and controlling your gap. The Linebackers need to: set the front, diagnose run or pass, and be in the correct gap upon recognition. Lastly, the secondary must do the following: identify the formation, make the coverage call, diagnose run/pass, and finish the play in the respective correct gap or zone. The basic Tight Front can be great for you to install at various levels: youth, middle school, or you can implement it into a package in your high school program.

The next front was our Under Front or Split Front. We called it Split because we were making the strength call away from the Tight End and to focusing on the Split End. The defense was very successful against teams that like to run to the weak side and allowed us to be a 5-man front—we walked our Strong-side Linebacker up on the Tight End side. Generally, the front would be “married” with either Green Coverage (Cover 3) or Orange Coverage (Cover 4), because we would primarily play this defense on run-downs. When utilizing an Orange Coverage, it is up to how you want to play your corners—either Press or Off-technique—but you need to coach them up on how you want them to play and get after it all week.

Your Sam or Buck Linebacker needs to play in a 9-technique



and play physical with his hands on the TE. He is a “spill” player (one who “spills” the ball carrier in a specific direction) and depending on what coverage you dial-up, he will have some pass responsibilities. You can play a few different coverages with the Split Front, generally either Green (Cover 3) or Orange (1/4s). You can also play our White Coverage which is Cover 6 or 1/4, 1/4, 1/2. It depends on the tendencies that you see as you go through your game planning. Generally, we would use this against 21 or 20 Personnel, but you can use it against 10 or 11—you just really need to coach up your landmarks and

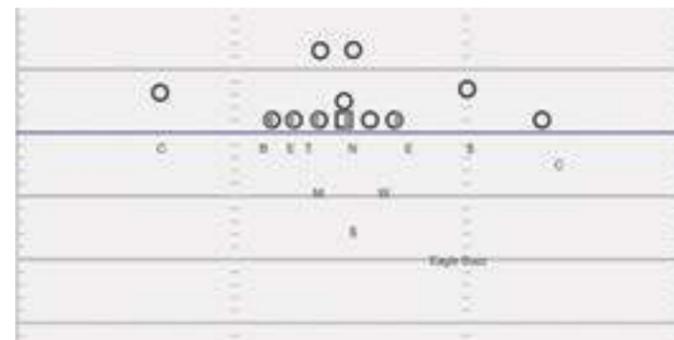
fundamentals. Below are diagrams that you can implement into your defensive scheme, depending on the formations that you will see during your season.

If you are going to play Cover 6 or White, you would play 1/4s



to the TE Side in the above Diagram, and Search or Palms to the Passing Strength. We would play this when we wanted to add extra run-support to the TE side and by playing Palms, we had run support to the passing strength side as well.

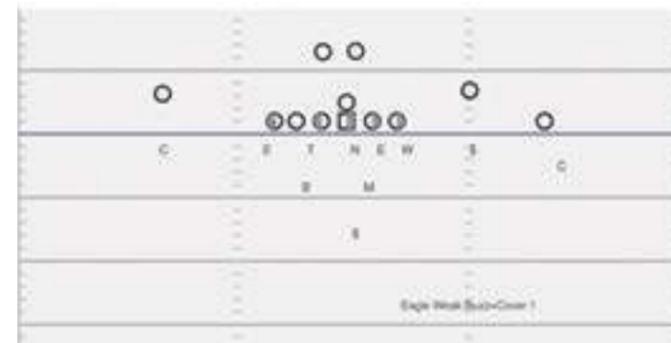
Another combination of fronts that can help are the Eagle and Eagle Weak Fronts—out of either Green (Cover 3) or Buzz (Cover 1). These fronts are effective against Gap-scheme teams; the first diagram is Eagle Buzz with the Buck/Sam Linebacker walked up on a 9-technique, kicking the DE into a 5-technique. You are going to have 9, 5, and 3 techniques on the TE side and Shade/5-technique on the backside.



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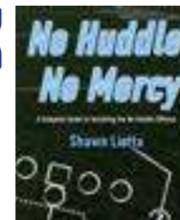
The diagram below demonstrates Eagle Weak, where we walk down the Will Linebacker to the Weak Side. On the Backside, away from the TE, you will have Shade/3- and 5-techniques. You can play Green or Buzz with Eagle Weak—again, this formation is great against Gap-scheme teams with pulling Guards. Another noteworthy point is that these fronts are great against Wing-T teams, as well.



With any of these fronts out of the 4-3, you can implement any part into your defensive scheme. I feel that with all the Spread (offenses) that we are seeing now as defensives coaches, you can have some of these base principals but might need to tweak some of the basics to accommodate unique looks.

# NO HUDDLE NO MERCY

## CODIFICATION & ORGANIZATION OF YOUR OFFENSE



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Author: [No Huddle No Mercy](#)

The importance of streamlined communication -  
Probably the greatest source of questions that I have received from coaches over

the years in regards to the no-huddle offense revolves around communication. “How do you get lined up so fast”, “How do you call plays”, “How do you get all of that information communicated to your players so quickly at the line of scrimmage”, are just a few of the common questions that I have heard from countless coaches over the years. This article will deal specifically with the communication process in the no-huddle attack, and how you can apply it to your own offensive system to allow your kids to put the pedal down and “Play Fast”. The secret to doing this is to take your entire offensive system and create a “language”. This language must allow you to codify all of your offensive play calls in a manner that you can use different terms to identify your core play concepts. For example in our offense we may have up to 30 different words or numbers that could be used to signify an Inside Zone run concept to the left. Now this may seem complicated, but to our players it is second nature because they understand our “football language”.

### Installation-

As you begin to layout the design of your play calling code it is important to remember that the code only has to make sense to your staff and your kids. Just like any language in the world your “play calling code” will be learned in the manner that it is taught. Many coaches struggle with this part of the process because they want the play calling code to share a common nomenclature. This is often a mistake, as we want our code words to make sense to us but to be very confusing to your opponent. We also teach our code from day one

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during installation with our players. For example our players do not know the inside zone run play as inside zone. They know it by a code word such as Red or Black. This is all they know. When teaching your "football language" to your players I do believe that it is very important to not bog your players down with extra terminology that will not ultimately apply to your offense. Your players do not have to know what you would typically call a three level flood route concept for instance, but they need to know only that you call it River and Lake for example.

#### Creating Your Play Calling Code -

As you begin the process of mapping out your play calling code, there are many factors that you must consider. First is that you want to make it very easy for your players to learn. If your players are thinking they are not playing fast. Make every effort to create code words in your system that will allow your players to quickly learn and retain the information. By teaching this code from day one as I earlier indicated, you will engrain this "language" into your players and will make your installation much smoother. As you create your code you will have your most success if you are able to place all of your play calls into either a number, color, word, or a combination of all of those. Each of these code words will also have a corresponding hand signal. Begin your installation process by making all of your play designs into one word or number calls. Remember it does not have to make sense to anyone but your staff and your players. Red could be a pass or Red could be a run, it does not matter as long as your kids know what that color means in your offense. This will make things very easy for your players to quickly learn and be able to execute the play called at a fast tempo. By using word association on play concepts you can quickly group common words together that will make sense to your players. This will allow you to quickly call plays and execute at a very up-tempo pace offensively.

#### All In One Calls -

As you organize your offense into code words you will have success if you are able to combine the formation, motion, and play call into one simple word or number. Now this is not always possible, but I have been able to do this for the past decade with no issues and it really has streamlined our communication and allowed us to play faster. The thought process behind this is as follows. At a fast food restaurant they will typically have value meals that are numbered such as #1, #2, #3. If you say I want a #1 you are ordering a hamburger, French fries, and a medium drink. By just saying that you want a #1 you are able to combine five or six words into one number that represents all of those. A #1 by itself says nothing about hamburgers, French fries, or soft drinks, however because that is the "language" used by that restaurant they will know exactly what you are trying to communicate. The same holds true in play calling. Let's say we have a jet sweep

play call that would typically be called as (Formation)=Base, (Motion)= Jet, (Play Call)= Sweep, (Direction)= Left. So in this very elementary play call to communicate this play design the quarterback would have to call Base, Jet, Sweep, Left. This could all be combined into a one word play call such as DELTA. Delta is a jet and the L in delta signifies that it is being run to the "left". The more play calls in your offense that you can successfully codify in this manner the faster you will be able to communicate and crank up the tempo.

#### Word Association -

From the previous "Delta = Jet Sweep" example you can see the power of word association. Other examples of how these word associations can branch off would be if you were calling your "Sail Route" passing concept. Here are a few examples of how it could be communicated with some word association that will make sense to your team but will be complicated to the defense. Sail Route= Code Words = Directions Such as North, South, East West. So one way to call sail would simply be to say a direction such as "North". Sail Route= Code Words= Columbus. Another way to call sail would be Columbus, because Columbus "Sailed" to America Sail Route= Code Words= Ohio State, Buckeye Another way to call sail would be Ohio State or Buckeye as Ohio State University is in Columbus, Ohio. This is just one example where you could quickly use word association and have seven ways to call the same Sail Route concept in your offense.

#### Let your players create some of the code words -

I suggest letting your players come up with some of the code words or signals that you will be using. This gives them some ownership of the offense and allows them to have some fun coming up with names for the plays. Remember it does not matter what the play is called as long as everyone understands the same language. I cannot stress this enough, you are simply creating your own football vocabulary for your program. If we are installing a new concept I will typically ask the players in our installation meeting, "hey what do you guys want to call this concept". You will get some crazy answers initially but some will start to make sense as the players understand the word association concept through your other play designs. For example one year we installed a new screen play, our players at this particular school wanted to name it after hip hop stars. So for that season this screen play was called "Birdman", "Drake", "Wayne", and "Cash" or "Money". This used the word association of Birdman, Drake, Lil Wayne all being a part of the "Cash Money" record label. Fast forward two seasons at another school when installing this play our players wanted to name it after major league baseball teams so it became known as; "Yankee", "Royals", "Mets", "Dodger", "Fastball". Just through these two examples you can see how you can quickly name a new play

concept with word association that will make sense to your players.

#### Dummy Calls -

While we are communicating many things quickly at the line of scrimmage to play fast we do want to have the ability to utilize some "dummy calls" into our offense. These calls will have no meaning whatsoever for your players. Some examples of this would be using a dummy color such as "Silver". This means anytime that silver is used with a play call it means absolutely nothing to our players. You could do the same thing with numbers, so any 200's number could be a dummy call such as 201, 250, 275. This allows you to add a bit of meaningless garnish to a play call at the line of scrimmage to cloud any attempts by the defense to try and get a line on your play call mechanics throughout the game. Because we use so many colors and numbers in our offense I would highly suggest always having a dummy color and a dummy series of numbers that you can use at any time.

#### Freeze Calls -

While we are always having the threat of an immediate snap on the defense we want to have the ability to take advantage of those defenders who are becoming conditioned to our quick pace and snap count. We want to use the snap count to our advantage to stop them from trying to anticipate and get a "jump start" on the play. We will utilize this "freeze tempo" usually 10 or 12 snaps per game. We will create several code words that will indicate that no matter what else is communicated at the line of scrimmage there will be no snap of the football. After the quarterback goes through his cadence he will look over to the sideline to receive a new play call and will restart the snap count. Usually you will get the defense to jump off-sides multiple times during the game. In addition to gaining the free 5 yard penalty, possibly even more advantageous is that you will slow down the get-off of those defensive linemen in trying to time up the snap count. Here is an example of the mechanics of a freeze call. Code Words For "Freeze" = No Snap = Green or 99 In either scenario if during the game "green" or "99" is called with any play there will be no snap. QB will get to the line of scrimmage with the play call code "Green 5, Green 5"...he will begin his snap count mechanics... Down..Set..Go...Go Go..Go If the defense does not jump offside the quarterback will look to the sideline for a new play and will begin the new snap count and execute the play that has been signaled in or called. This is also a great way to force the defense to "show their hand" with any potential defensive line stems, blitzes, or coverage rotations just prior to the snap. Remember the defense does not know that we are going to freeze them and they are conditioned to preparing for the immediate snap

of the football. One suggestion on this I will make is that you not make your "freeze" call have anything to do with cold, or ice, or freezing. Use words and numbers that the defense will not associate with a "freeze play".

#### Special Calls -

We will have terms or codes that we consider to be special calls in our offense. These may be different for your own individual offensive system but the premise will hold true regardless of the system that you are running schematically. We want to have the ability to use one word to quickly tell all of our offensive players to execute something very quickly and efficiently. Here are a few example calls that I believe you need to create and have as a part of your "offensive language" QB Wedge- We will have a code word that will immediately tell us to get lined up in the same formations and personnel grouping and for our quarterback to get under the center and run a quarterback wedge (qb sneak). We will typically use this on the goal line or in short yardage to quickly get the ball snapped prior to the defense being able to get their goal line or short yardage personnel or play call on the field. Repeat Same Play- After you gash the defense for a huge gain you want to have the ability to immediately line up and run the exact same formation and play call as fast as possible. As a play caller at the high school level particularly coaches will at times out-think themselves in play calling. If something is working because you have the defense caught in a bad alignment or simply they just cannot stop it at the point of attack with their current personnel, run the play until they stop it. Force the defense to have to adjust before they find themselves down by multiple touchdowns. This necessitates the need to have a few code words in your arsenal that will tell your players to line up and do exactly the same thing as fast as the referee will allow. Use a term that does not mean to repeat or copy. Some teams will use words such as Xerox, ext. and I believe that is a mistake. Use something like "Steeler" or "Pittsburgh" to indicate that you are going to repeat the same play.

#### Flip The Direction of the Play-

This is often used after the initial play call is signaled in when you do not like the alignment at the point of attack and simply want to change the direction of the play. Come up with a series of code words that will tell your players to flip the direction of the play but run the same concept. I would suggest avoiding terms that are obvious such as "mirror" or something of that nature. If you want to get creative use something that flips such as "pancake". So if you called your jet sweep to the left but wanted to flip the direction to the right you could call "pancake" and the exact same play would be run only to the right instead of the left. Nothing further would need to be

communicated, as your team would know that the "pancake" call was flipping the original direction of the play.

#### Double Snap Count-

There are times in our offense that we are going to shift or use some sort of deceptive motion or shift that we will use two snap counts. We have a code word such as "Purple" or "Barney" that will tell all players that there are two snap counts. Typically each week the "Purple" and "Barney" call will involve a special pre-packaged multiple shift or motion concept designed to draw the defense off-sides. I will discuss these types of deceptive shifts in later issues. The mechanics for this would be as follows:

1. "Purple" Call is made
2. Players align in predetermined formation
3. Quarterback begins the 1st snap count... Down .....Set-Go
4. On "Go" our players will move or legally shift into a new formation being careful of doing so in a smooth manner and not jerking so that we get a penalty for simulation of the snap.
5. After this if the defense has not jumped our offense will have shifted into a new formation and will be ready to run the play concept called
6. The QB will start the second snap count .... Down.....Set-Go, and the ball will be snapped at this time.

#### Hold the Snap, Reset, Restart the Snap Count-

With all of the motion and shifting in our offense there are times where a player will be confused and move when he is not supposed to do so. An example of this might be on the jet sweep where even though the quarterback is giving the indicator as to who is supposed to go in motion, both slot players will start moving towards the quarterback prior to the snap. An "Easy" call can be made that will tell all players to stop what they are currently doing, reset themselves in the formation called for one second and then the quarterback will send the appropriate player in motion. This is a little trick that will save you from having to call a timeout or getting an illegal procedure penalty that will bring back a long play. Having a troubleshooting call such as this in your offense will prove to be invaluable to saving precious timeouts because you are going to get called for an illegal motion or shift prior to the snap.

Coach Liotta has recently introduced an intensive 15 hour clinic seminar on his record setting passing game that combines principles of the Air Raid Offense and the Run and Shoot at the high school level. Coach Liotta has designed this course in conjunction with his soon to be released book on the passing game, creating a true interactive experience. To register for this seminar visit <https://nohuddlenomercy.com/487-2/>

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## DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE

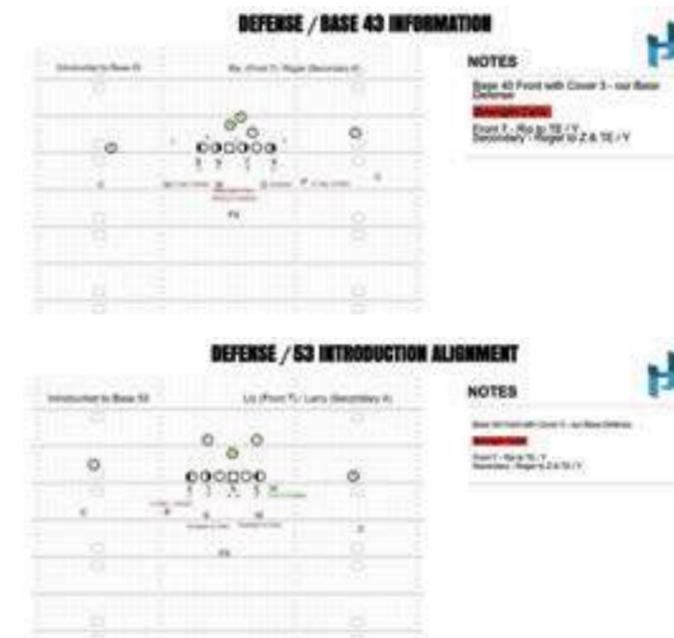
### STOPPING THE RUN IN RURAL FOOTBALL



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

This article will focus on our two Base Gap Control Defenses that we used throughout my 24 year career at Gold Beach High School. Our base coverage is Cover 3 with a single High Safety. I realize for many of you a single High Safety would spell disaster in today's sophisticated passing attacks. However, if you recall part of my reasoning for staying with Cover 3 as our base coverage is the style of offenses we would be seeing in rural Oregon. While we do have and play several other coverages we start with Cover 3.

We play an Even Front/Over Front that we call 43. Meaning 40 Front and Cover 3 behind it. We also play an Odd Front that we call 53. Again, meaning 50 Front with Cover 3 behind it. These two defenses can be seen below.



We love the idea of stemming between the 2 Fronts and other variations, but that will be the subject of another upcoming article. My focus for this article will be the details of these 2

Fronts and how we line up vs. various formations and why to stop the run.

How do we call strength? As you would guess it is the same regardless of Front or Coverage. We make two Strength Calls at Gold Beach. The first one a Rip or Liz call sets our front seven and the second one a Roger or Larry call sets our secondary. The Mike and Sam Backers will set the Front and all of the Front should echo the call. Our Free Safety will set the secondary and all of secondary should echo the call.

#### Front Strength Set Rules:

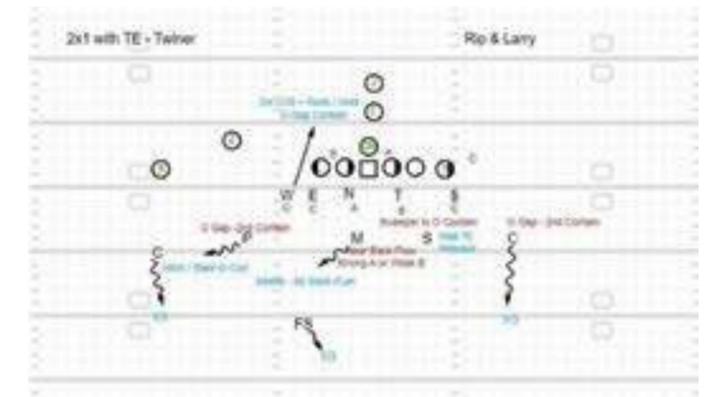
Set strength to TE/Y, if 2 TE set, set to wide side TE/Y or if in the middle of the field a Liz call because most offenses are right handed;  
No TE/Y we will set it to the two receiver side. If a balanced 2x2 set rule we will use same logic as with 2 TE/Y. Set strength to wide side or if in middle to defense's left or Liz;  
Trips with no TE/Y we set the strength away from Trips. This allows us to shift our linebackers and coverage towards the Trips. \*In rural football Trips are still primarily used to get you to take people out of the box so they can run at fewer in the box. When in doubt set strength to field or Liz. DO NOT BURN A TIME OUT!

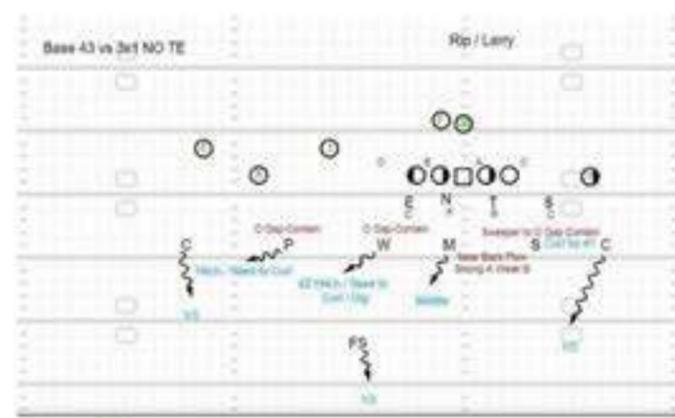
#### Secondary Strength Set Rules:

Set secondary to the side with the most receivers.

#### Additional Alignment Rules:

If #1 Receiver is outside #'s move to inside alignment. In today's game I'm toying with inside all the time;  
Whip or Weak OLB Alignment Rules in 40:  
If on same side as Panther/SS and only two receivers move to on LOS and rush - unless scouting report over-rides the rule.  
If Trips to your side - play coverage.  
If aligned on TE/Y move up to LOS and use TE/Y to collapse C Gap.





Most of you have seen these defenses in your careers and understand the idea of Gap Control Fronts. You are probably thinking "Is Swift going to share anything new to help me because both these Fronts are great but certainly nothing new"? Well, hopefully some of the following specific teaching points and cues we use will help you find something of value in this article. Let's dive into some of these nuances and details. Defensive Lineman:

You'll notice we have strong side and weak side defensive linemen. In my career at Gold Beach we have played a left and right side more often than we have a strong side and weak side. When we can and feel it will help us, we flip flop our defensive line. I believe in my 24 years as head coach at Gold Beach we have flip flopped for three reasons. The biggest reason we have for NOT flip flopping is our rural setting – our kids play both ways. I try to play my best linemen on the left side offensively. That way we can play our best linemen on defense to the opponent's right side, knowing most offensive coordinators are right handed. We will always use the strong and weak side identifications on defensive diagrams and in teaching so our kids understand the defense in more depth.

All of our defensive linemen play a play shade on offensive linemen. We have experimented with playing the End/Weakside DE in a 6 technique but have found they usually go too deep allowing run plays to come underneath them. We wanted offensive line shaded so we can strike them and use their body and our body to cancel or close a gap. This also ensures we don't get too deep before finding the ball. While we do not intentionally protect our linebackers this does help them fulfill their roles in our defensive schemes. In 2004 one of our community's special people would come to our practices and shout "Build a wall Panthers!" This is exactly what we want to do – Build a Wall on the heels of the opponent's offensive line.

### Inside Linebackers – Mike and Sam

Our Mike Backer is our Plug or Close the window Backer. He is also our only 2 Gap player in our 40 Front. If near back shows flow Strong, Mike will "plug" Strong A. If near back shows flow Weak, Mike will "plug" Weak B. We work a lot on not running or plugging into pile of bodies, we want to "plug" open windows/gaps. While we anticipate it to be Strong A or Weak B things can and do change in the battle on LOS.

Sam is our Sweeper or clean up player. While lined up with his crotch in Strong C Gap he will only fill the C Gap if the Stud End cannot close it with the offensive TE. We work hard on finding that instinctive tackler who is good at angles and staying inside out on the ball. This is where our bow hunters usually end up because of the knowledge of speed gauging and keeping angles. Flow Strong checks C Gap. If closed he slides into O Gap inside out knowing the Strong Safety/Panther is our run contain OLB and will force the ball back to Sam.



### Outside Linebackers – Panther/SS and Whip

Both of our OLBs are Strong Safety type kids. They align a little deeper to help them with pass responsibilities and also to allow them a little time to pick the correct angle to contain the ball on the run. They have to know our Ends are our "force or "edge" guys and if everything goes right the ball will give ground to bounce wide to them. When the ball goes away they are searching for that cut-back lane to fill.

### Secondary

Both of our Corners are secondary contain run supporters in action or flow at them. If flow goes away they take deep pursuit angle and check for the trickery of halfback or double pass. Our Free Safety after glancing to #1 on the side of flow is an alley player.

I realize we didn't cover pass coverage and Cover 3 in this article. I promise it will come later but as I stated in my previous article our defense is designed to stuff the run.

# OFFENSIVE RESOURCES

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR ALL OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS



**Brent Morrison**  
Westerville Central HS-Ohio  
Head Football Coach  
[@BrentMo03800724](#)

Since 1987, with the release of Tecmo Bowl we have been raising generations of aspiring offensive coordinators. The difficulty of this job has been masked by every person's ability to pick-up a joystick and have play calling success. Your

fellow coaches, players, parents, and fans will all be critical of what you do, but that is part of having the title of OC. Now get your visor, oakley sunglasses and starbucks ready to go. It is your responsibility to ask some essential questions of your offense. These are things that you will need to evaluate at least every season to make sure you put the best product on the field. Some of these may be questions that are asked on a weekly basis.

- Do you use a system or build your own?
- What will be your pace of play?
- How much is too much?
- Can you teach it?

### DO YOU USE A SYSTEM?

There are many pre-packaged systems that exist out there. No matter what style of offense you want, you can find someone that has created a system that will give you the foundation to run an offense. Some of the systems are playbooks, practice plans, call sheets, etc. and others are way more involved and will give you access to coaches for advice, game planning and film breakdown. While these can be very expensive, they can be extremely valuable especially to an inexperienced coordinator that has issues that he doesn't even realize he has. The biggest benefit is that most systems teach you a mindset. That understanding of how to plan, practice and play call could be worth the money. Before subscribing to a system make sure you do your research. Talk to coaches that currently use it and more importantly the coaches that used to use it and find out why they no longer subscribe.

There is a lot of information floating around, especially on the internet, that can easily fill a playbook for any style of offense. The coaching profession is one of generosity and openness. Most any coach is willing to share what they have with you and it is easy to fill your entire social media feed with coaches providing content. Again, do your research on your sources of information. Not all football teams are created equally and there are things that may not be applicable to your situation for a variety of reasons (roster size, staff size, player ability, etc.) If you are going to develop your own system, verbiage is one of the biggest issues that comes into play

### PACE OF PLAY

Do you try to melt faces with speed, milk the clock or some combination of the two? This is a question that needs to be discussed by the head coach and the rest of the staff. It is an issue that impacts the entire team and the staff needs to be on board. There are positives and drawbacks to each style of play but everyone needs to be on board. When it backfires, and it will, the message of the staff needs to be unified. Dissension on the staff will trickle down to the players and create a divide. For instance, I have always been a believer in up-tempo offense, and we have had times where we have had criticism because our 3 and out ran 12 seconds off the scoreboard and other times we scored too fast and left scoring opportunities for the other team.

Pace of play will also dramatically impact how you practice, communicate and call plays. Make sure you evaluate what is best for you by asking the following questions?  
Does our pace benefit us schematically?  
Does our pace cooperate with our roster size?  
Does our pace cooperate with how many guys play both ways?

**"These are things that you will need to evaluate at least every season to make sure you put the best product on the field. Some of these may be questions that are asked on a weekly basis.**

**Do you use a system or build your own?  
What will be your pace of play?  
How much is too much?  
Can you teach it?"**

How does our pace impact our ability to communicate?  
Does our pace help us win?

Find coaches that use a pace similar to what you want and start dialogue to figure out what is right for you. The trendy thing is to be up-tempo, but it may not be the right move for you. Most teams will be a hybrid and have the ability to kill the clock or go fast, but what will 85% of your plays look like?

#### HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

I grew up playing in a system that was wing-t based and we had 2 formations and ran trap, belly, buck, wing counter, waggle, and 2 drop back concepts. We won plenty of football games and even today I see offenses that carry about the same number of plays into a game and win. Then I watch some teams and they seem to run every play in the known football universe. Here is my advice when building an offense:

#1 Attempt to build a playbook that could last your entire career. See your playbook as a menu and each season you will select the items that work best for your program at that point in time. Our staff each season creates a priority list of plays and we begin to install in that order.

#2 Build language that can be universal and open enough to adjust and grow.

#3 Develop tags to easily take some basic concepts and make them more appropriate for more situations. Also, many plays are only one tag away from one another. Tagging will bring simplicity to the players.

#4 Have the ability to move players to different locations. Everyone has THAT GUY on their team that should touch the ball at least 10 times a game. Can you move them around the field in order to put them in a better position to touch the ball.

#5 Have some "go to" or base plays each season that you, your staff and your players believe in, especially in critical situations.

#6 When you add to your playbook look for plays that protect or compliment your base plays. In order to be able to call those base plays multiple times, you need to make sure there are ways to make sure defenses don't tee off on you. I once sat through a clinic presentation

by OSU's Ryan Day in which he said every base run play needed to have an RPO, playaction, reverse, and ability to have multiple ball carriers. If you build a play book with this mindset it will make gameplanning much simpler.

#### CAN YOU TEACH IT?

This is the most important factor. Can you and the offensive staff teach it properly to your players. This is a deep question with many layers. Do coaches work both sides of the ball, do players play both ways, how much meeting time do you have, how much practice time do you have, do you have an access to an expert, how many returning starters do you have, what is the prior knowledge of the coaches, and what is the prior knowledge of the players are just a few of the things that will factor into what you can effectively teach. One of the most valuable exercises I have ever used is making every position coach submit a position manual and then they have to teach the rest of the offensive staff about their position. I also use this in the interview process for a new coach. I was hired one time because the head coach walked by the room where I was student-teaching and he listened to my lesson about the Battle of the Bulge. When I approached him about a coaching opening he basically hired me on the spot because he heard me teaching a complex concept to freshmen with success. He figured I could easily teach football concepts. In my situation I am fortunate to have 9 coaches on staff that are trained as teachers. Those coaches that are not trained in such a way, may require help structuring their coaching methods to best meet the needs of their players.

If you take the time to evaluate all these questions there is no doubt that you can develop the offense that will fit your team now and for years to come. We all have goods and bads in our current situation and it just takes a little brutal honesty to evaluate where you are, see what you can control, and then move forward the best way you see fit.

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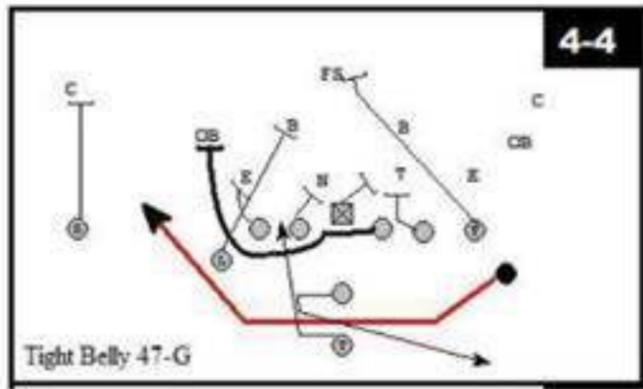
# QUEST WRITER

## PISTOL WING T SHORT YARDAGE



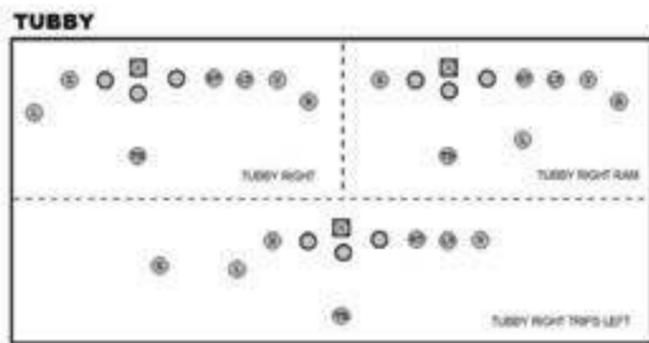
**Rick Stewart - Coach**  
**Creator of Pistol Wing T**  
[All Access Website](#)  
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[@CoachRikStewart](#)

We have two short yardage packages, TUBBY and THUMPER. However, Belly 47-G (belly sweep) is by far our best play on the goal line.



### Tubby

We put both tackles and our TE on one side of the formation and our X at the opposite tackle (sometimes we sub in our 2nd string TE). There is no split end.



"Lion" and "Ram" put both wings on the same side of the Quarterback if we want extra lead blockers.

**Tubby Lead:** The TB says "alpha-bravo-charlie-delta" so QB and Wings can hear him to indicate what hole he runs into.

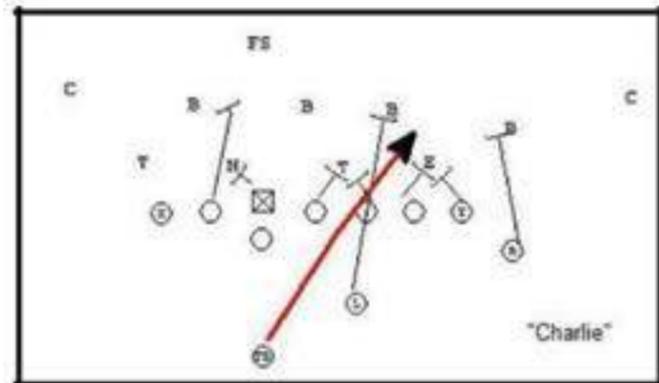
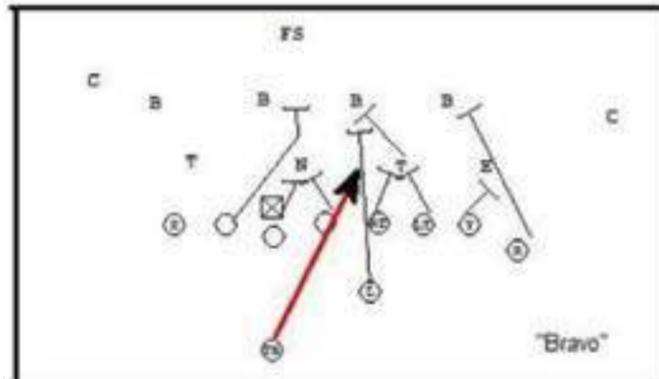
TE & Line blocking rule: On-Gap-Away. In a perfect world we want two double teams on their D-Line.

In Tubby, Gap includes a man head up on the man inside of him (double team) or on the man outside of him (another double team)

Very seldom does a D-Line not have someone on him or in an adjacent gap...which would release him to LB.

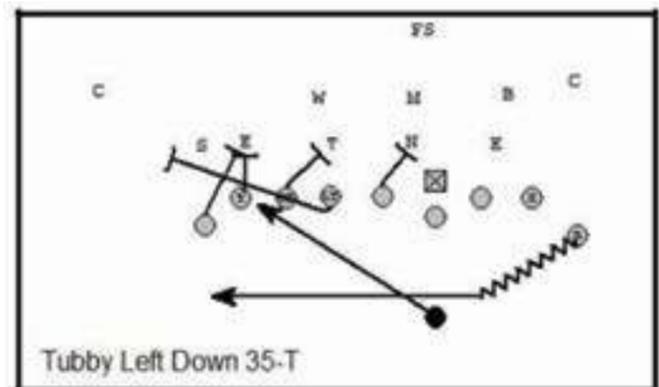
If in Pistol, QB still reads OLB and can keep ball and sprint for pylon.

Wings rule is to insert into the hole called and block linebackers.



**Down 35-T:** We pull the Left Tackle (who is between the LG and RT) and run Down. QB reads the OLB.

Out of Lion the RW who has come over leads blocks in the 5 hole (actually a 7 hole with extra linemen).

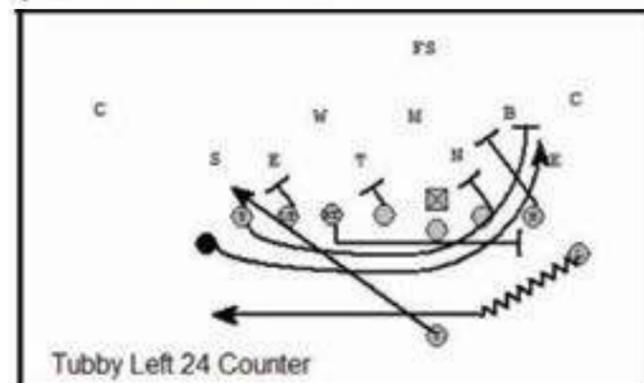
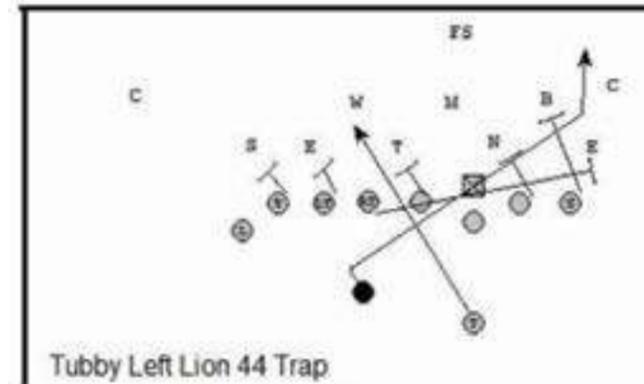


**35 Cal:** This is outside Veer. Everyone (5 players) cave down to make a wall. Handoff key is OLB. Pitch key is CB.

**Down 24 Counter:** Pull the LT and TE, same as regular offense. The X/TE who is at RT always blocks 2nd level LB. We kick out first man past RG.

**35 Down Pass:** The LT pulls & logs.

**Lion 41 Trap:** LT pulls and kicks same as all "1-Traps". We give it to the RW who is at 4yds behind the LT.



**34 Baylor:** If entire defense shifts over, we run 34 Baylor (inside veer) away from the formation strength.

Handoff key is first man past the RG (would like a 5-tech). Pitch is CB.

**Boot Pass Right:** Really like this out of Lion. Really sell the fake to TB with a lead blocker. QB boots to his right.

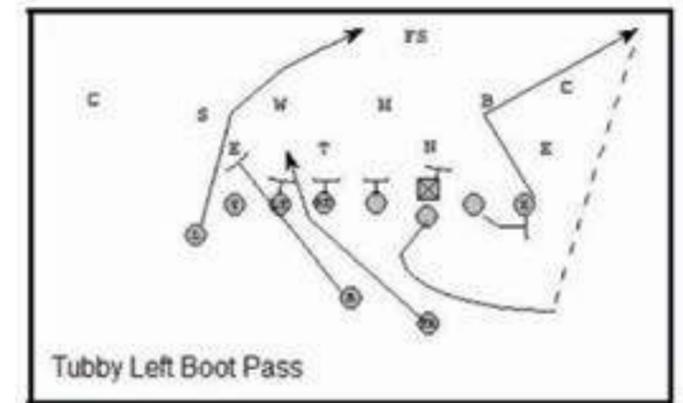
The X/TE at the RT spot "punch & pivots" the ILB and heads for back pylon in corner of endzone.

Backside Wing stands right under the goal post. We tell QB if you are in trouble just throw it towards the goal post because he knows the right wing will be there.

This is a naked boot, so the QB has to outrun the unblocked DE on the weakside

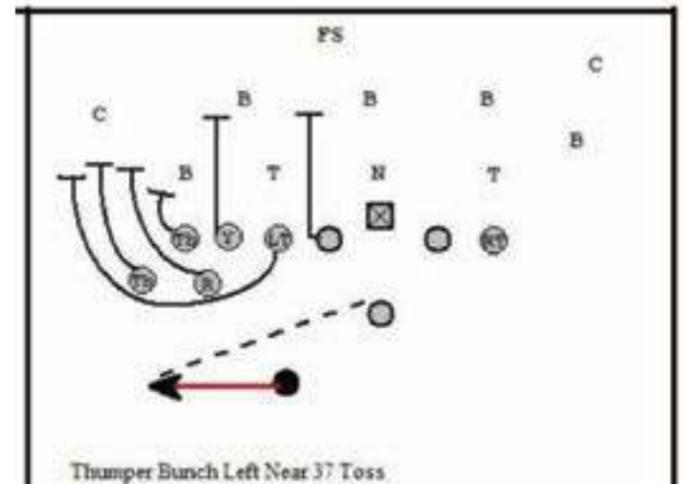
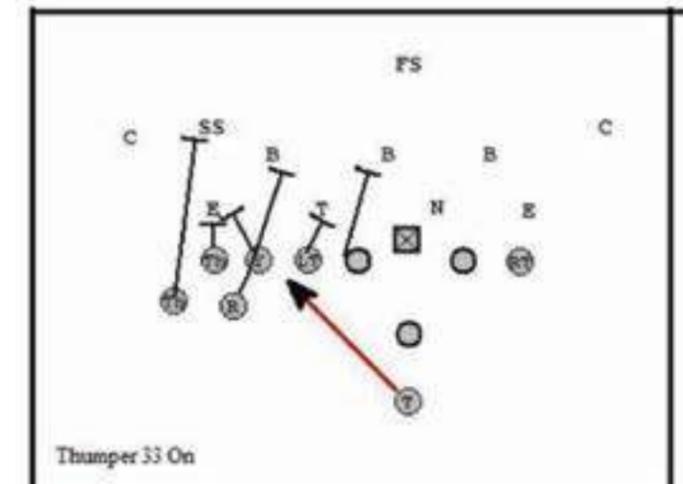
### Thumper Right

We sub out our X for our 2nd string TE or 3rd string tackle. We sub out both wings for our starting inside linebackers.



Our line goes LT-LG-C-RG-RT-TE-TE.

One linebacker gets in gap between 2 TE about 2yds off LOS. Other LB gets 1x1 off last TE. We call these our "thumpers"



"Thumper Right" is simply give to TB and he runs behind the 2 LB. All Line block gap-down-LB.

Thumpers have to go 2nd level after inside linebackers and rolled up safeties.

QB rides into the line and can keep the ball if he sees grass between him & the pylon.

We can pull the RT and run Down 36-T.

If the Thumpers have eligible numbers we will run Thumper pass. Routes are same as down pass.

If defense overshifts, we will run 33 Baylor to the weakside. One of the thumpers has to go in motion & be pitch man.

There are 10 pages dedicated to short yardage formations, blocking rules, and many more plays than is listed in this article in my [PISTOL WING T PLAYBOOK](#).

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**PISTOL WING T**

*Coach Stewart has coached football for 27 years, winning championships with 6th graders, 8th graders, high school freshman, and high school varsity. He has been a varsity head coach for 16 years, specializing in turning around losing programs. In California Stewart broke 24 and 19 game losing streaks in separate stints as Head Coach at McFarland, guiding them to the playoffs twice. He then broke a 27 game losing streak at Corcoran with an undefeated league title. At Porterville they won the first playoff game in 100 years and played for back to back section championships. The past two years he has turned around a losing program in Pennsylvania, winning 21 games with 2 league titles and a District Championship.*

*Coach has installed his PISTOL WING T Offense at over 70 schools, 12 of whom won state titles. He has spoken at over 50 football clinics for NIKE and Glazier, as well as published numerous books and videos.*

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