

# HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 2: ISSUE 1



*Keep it*  
**SIMPLE**

**INSTALLING**  
RPOS INTO  
**ANY OFFENSE**

**BEATING**  
**THE DOUBLE TEAM**



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Coaches helping coaches is an awesome thing to experience, and to be able to provide a material that gives a platform for coaches to educate others is the entire goal of Headsets Magazine. This is volume #2 of this magazine, and it will include six issues. Our goal is to cover all things football. As you read the articles, we have included links to each author. Be sure to connect with them and thank them for their time as they are doing this for free.

If you'd like to help contribute, please email [FBCoachsimpson@gmail.com](mailto:FBCoachsimpson@gmail.com) and I will get you set up. Coaches helping coaches is, and should always be, the goal in our profession.

Thanks,

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# DEFENSIVE LINE BASICS

## BEATING THE DOUBLE TEAM



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In this article, I will continue to go through how I teach my players to defeat different blocks and will provide some of the drills that I use in order to help them beat the blocks they will see each game. If you would like to look at my previous articles on defensive line play, please start with Headsets Volume 1, Issue 8.

Double teams are very tough for defensive linemen to take on and beat. In my opinion, there are two goals that a defensive lineman should have when thinking about taking on double teams. The first is to either beat or stalemate the double team coming at them. The second goal should be to keep the double team from getting up to the linebackers. I will talk about 3 drills that I use to prepare my players for double team blocks during the season.

Block Destruction from Fit (diagram below):

In this drill we will start to break down how to defeat a double team. I like to start from a prefit position before beating a double team from a 3-point stance in order to emphasize the coaching points of beating the block. You will need three linemen to work this drill. Two will start on offense and one will start on defense. The defensive lineman who is up will be locked in his starting position with the offensive lineman. On the coach's command, the defensive lineman will get extension on the offensive lineman and will move his feet. The offensive lineman in front of the defensive lineman will try to base the defensive lineman while the other will block down on him, double teaming them. Once the defensive lineman feels the pressure, he will turn his hips to it and get skinny through and will finish with an escape move.

Drill Progression:

Get defensive linemen into groups of 3.

Two will act as offensive linemen, side to side and one defensive lineman will line up on them according to how you run your defensive alignment.

On the coach's command, the two offensive linemen will double team the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will get extension on the offensive lineman in front of them first.

Once the defensive lineman feels the pressure from the down blocking offensive lineman, he will turn his hips to the down blocker and try to get skinny through the two blockers.

Finish with an escape move.

Coaching Points:

Violent separation from the initial blocking offensive lineman.

Stay low in your hip turn.

Active feet.

Block Destruction From a 3-point Stance:

This drill is almost exactly like the prefit drill except that the defensive lineman is going to work from their 3-point stance and will trigger the football's movement to start the drill.

Once again, the defensive lineman will fire out of their stance and attack the man in front of them. Once they feel pressure, they will turn their hips to the down blocker, run their feet and get "skinny" through, and finish with a rip or other escape move.

Drill Progression:

Put defensive lineman into two groups. Two linemen will act as offensive linemen and one will be the defensive lineman.

The coach will be beside the two linemen to represent the center snapping the ball.

On the snap of the ball, the offensive lineman in front of the defensive lineman will perform a base block while the other will block down on the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will fire out of his stance on the snap of the ball. He will get extension on the offensive lineman

in front of him and will turn his hips to the lineman down blocking on him.

The defensive lineman will run his feet and work to get "skinny" through the gap. Finishing with an escape move.

Coaching Points:

Fast and physical get off.

Active feet.

Hips turn to pressure.

Stay low.

Make a pile drill:

In this drill we will work on when we get a double team from opponents with a big or especially dominant offensive line.

If we know we can't beat the double team every play, we will work on stopping it and not letting one of the offensive linemen to make a pile. You can start this drill from a pre fit and progress to a 3-point stance just like the earlier drills.

This drill will require two players acting as the offensive linemen and one defensive lineman. The first part will be the player getting extension on the man in front of them. Once the player feels pressure from the down blocker, they will turn their hips to the block and will drop straight to their knee that is closest to where they are turning to. They

will need to grab the jerseys of the players blocking them so that they can pull them down with them in order to make a pile and prevent offensive linemen from getting to the linebackers.

Drill Progression:

Split defensive linemen into groups with two offensive linemen, a coach to snap or simulate the snap, and the defensive lineman themselves.

On the ball snap or command of the coach, the offensive linemen will double team the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will fire out of his stance or will get extension on the man in front of him.

He will turn his hips to the pressure.

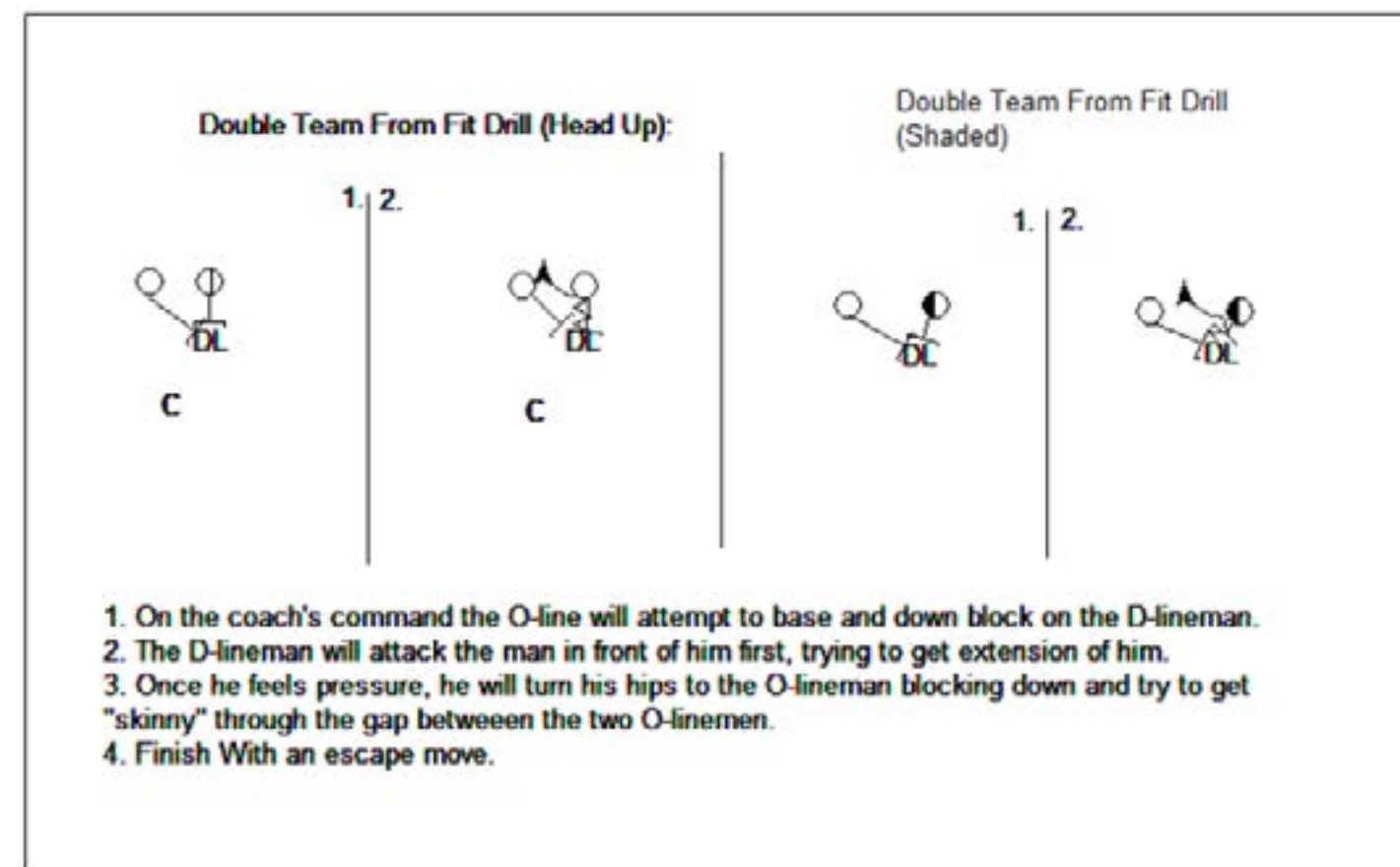
Grabbing the cloth of both offensive linemen, he will slam down to his knee, intending to bring the offensive linemen with him and making a pile.

Coaching Points:

Fire off low on the ball snap.

Fight against the initial block until you feel the down block.

Grab cloth.





# PLAYING FAST WITH A ROSTER UNDER FORTY

## INTRODUCTION



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In this series of articles, I will discuss how we play fast on offense at Bronxville with a roster of 38 one-platoon players; from how we practice to identifying the defense for game planning purposes, to designing our play calls and how we construct our play-call operation. In this first article, we will discuss and display how we organize practice to maximize our time, and prepare our players to perform at optimum levels for the maximum amount of time.

The first thing that must be understood is that playing fast on offense is a mindset, and a culture that has to be created with complete and total buy-in, from the Head Coach, to the assistants, to the players, and even from any managers you have on the team! Once the culture of "playing fast" is cemented, then it's just a matter of practice plan maintenance to accommodate for the natural fatigue that will occur over a two and a half hour practice with one-platoon players.

At Bronxville High School, we have a varied tempo, 10, 11, 20 personnel base offense, with occasional 01, 12, and 13 personnel packages. We will shift and utilize unbalanced formations in an effort to control the various tempos. In 2021, we had 5 players that only played offense, 5 players that only played defense, and 6 players that played both offense and defense. That is a higher number of two-platoon players than in the past, but it does not change the concept and philosophy of how to accomplish a varied tempo offense with one-platoon players.

When planning our practices, we utilize a "red, yellow, green" system of tempo that is implemented during various segments.

### Practice Segments

"Red" segments are walk-through, slow tempo periods with maximum instruction between reps.

"Yellow" segments involve jogging and are medium tempo segments with some instruction between reps.

"Green" segments involve sprinting and are maximum tempo segments with no instruction between reps.

The sample practice plan would be for a typical game week where Tuesday is "Practice 2" of the week. Period 1 would be preceded by a 10 minute "pre-practice" warm-up with either dynamic movements run by the strength and conditioning coach, or position coaches for each of their groups.

In this practice plan, the quarterbacks, tailbacks and half the Superior (OL - or as we call them, the "Superior", because they are more than "skilled" they are Superior!) are working on half-line blocking at up-tempo, maximum speed, with any corrections happening "on the fly", or as the cadence is being called, and the next ball is being snapped. Meanwhile, the other half of the Superior are going through a medium tempo drill with instruction from the offensive line coach, working on the blocking combinations required. At 5 minute intervals, the Superior will alternate between the high tempo "combo" drill and the medium tempo "individual" drill for a total of 20 minutes.

While the Superior, QB, and RB's are working on the run game, the remaining skill players will be going through the various RPO, quick game, and drop back passing route combinations at 1/2 - 3/4 speed. The emphasis during this drill is on the footwork and spacing of the routes.

After 20 minutes, the offense minus the receivers will gather and conduct a pure run period at high tempo, getting the maximum amount of reps. This period is sometimes called "Inside Run". That will conclude a 40 minute offensive segment of our practice. The next segment will be a 15 minute special teams period, where several players and/or

position groups are getting a full rest.

The final 30 minutes of practice will again be an offensive segment, which was preceded by a 20 minute defensive period split between green and yellow tempo. In this segment, we will start out with a 20 minute pass skel with the skill players at green tempo, while the Superior are working yellow tempo pass protection. After 20 minutes, we will come together as an offensive unit for 5 minutes, and work a yellow tempo period switching between the various tempo's we work in games, which include one word plays (as fast as you can go), regular play calls (ball is snapped with between 35 - 25 seconds on a 40 second play clock), and then our shifts and unbalanced tempo, where the ball is usually snapped with 25-10 seconds left on the play clock). Our 5 minute offense (when we have the lead and snap the ball under 10 seconds on the play clock, attempting to run as few plays as possible in an effort to end the game with the ball in our possession) will be practiced at a different time along with our 2 minute offense. During this "Game Tempo" segment the ball will not be advanced as we will offer instruction to the players after each snap to correct any mistakes that are made during the play operation. At the conclusion of practice we

have a 5 minute red period where players will walk through any individual position group mistakes those coaches have identified during practice, ending the practice session with a "de-facto" static stretch period.

This is a typical "Day 2" practice plan for us, and creates a mindset of going fast in everything we do; moving from drill to drill, working within the drill, and emphasizing the various tempo's within the drill periods. In all, no position group will have more than one and a half hours of green tempo. We never have to utilize practice (or post-practice) time for cardiovascular training (sprints), because our entire practice has cardiovascular training built into the practice plan. We are careful to accommodate possible fatigue from our players by carefully scheduling Green, Yellow and Red Periods throughout the practice.

In the next article, we will demonstrate how we identify defenses in an effort to create a universal language for our players and coaches. We do this so we can quickly get in and out of different scout team looks for our offense, instead of wasting time holding up cards or trying to position individual scout team players.

Period	Start	End	Opponent of the Week				
INSTALL			Game Plan - Day 2				
Tuesday			QB	T/F	Y/H	L/R	Superior
1	3:10	3:15	1/2 Line IZ left C/RG/RT		RPO 1		Front side of IZ left
2	3:15	3:20	1/2 Line IZ right C/LG/LT		RPO 2		Front side of IZ right
3	3:20	3:25	1/2 Line Power Read left C/LG/LT		RPO 3		Backside of Power Read left
4	3:25	3:30	1/2 Line Power Read right C/RG/RT		RPO 4		Backside of Power Read right
5	3:30	3:35	Group Run 1 IZ v Scout D		Quick Game Passing Concepts		Group Run 1 IZ v Scout D
6	3:35	3:40	Group Run 2 Power Read v Scout D		Drop Back Passing Concepts		Group Run 2 Power Read v Scout D
7	3:40	3:45					
8	3:45	3:50					
25	5:05	5:10	Group Pass 1 - Quick Game v Scout D				1/2 Slide Pass Pro Right
26	5:10	5:15					
27	5:15	5:20	Group Pass 2 - Drop Back v Scout D				1/2 Slide Pass Pro Left
28	5:20	5:25					
29	5:25	5:30	Tempo Tuesday				
30	5:30	5:35	Indy Fix				

# FOOTBALL: 101

## INSTALLING RPOs INTO ANY OFFENSE



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Spread offenses have evolved from simple read-option concepts to 2nd and 3rd level Run Pass Options (RPOs). While these reads may seem hard for a quarterback, they are actually quite easy to install, if taught properly.

The reason why RPOs are becoming more and more popular with today's spread offensive systems is because of the ability to take advantage of space by reading defenders.

The most common type of RPO (and easiest to install) takes advantage of linebackers. This is commonly known as a 2nd level RPO.

### Installing Stick RPO

The easiest RPO to install, in our opinion, is the Stick RPO. If you're a team that runs any 3x1 formation, the Stick RPO is a nice wrinkle that can stress any 2-high defense.



The basis of the stick RPO is to stress the inside linebacker and make him wrong.

### Formation

The stick RPO is commonly run out of a 3x1 formation. This means 3 receivers to one side of the formation, with a single receiver on the other side. Teams can use 3 wide receivers or a combination of 2 wide receivers and an H-back.

### Routes

**#1 Receiver** - Vertical route

**#2 Receiver** - Flat route This puts stress on the outside linebacker

**#3 Receiver** - Fixed hitch route. This route should be run at 5 yards, requiring the receiver to find space behind the vacated linebacker.

Along with the routes being run, the rest of the offense can run inside zone, or any play that blocks all defensive lineman. We recommend inside zone for the run play, while locking the backside defensive end.

### Read

The quarterback receives the snap and will put the ball in the stomach of the running back. We call this the "mesh point" between the running back and the quarterback.

The quarterback will then immediately get his eyes to the linebacker closest to the #3 receiver.

If the linebacker commits to the run play, the quarterback will pull the football from the running back's grasp and throw it to the #3 receiver.

### Important Notes

There are a few notes that you need to double-check while installing the stick RPO

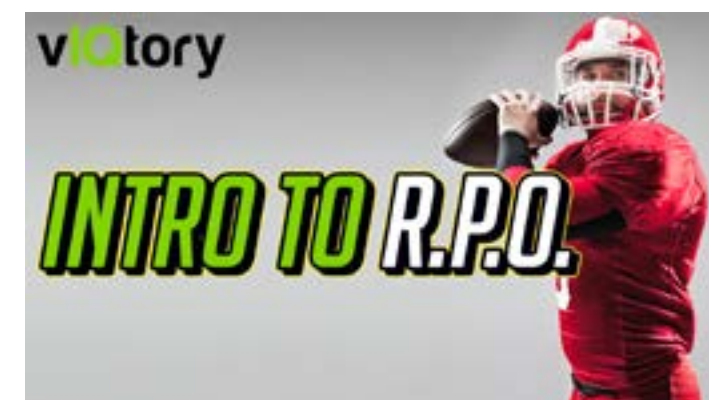
**Quarterback's Footwork** - The quarterback's footwork must point to the receiver when/if he throws. It's common for the quarterback to ride the mesh point of the running back and not get his feet turned into the direction of the receiver. This will cause an inaccurate throw.

**Running Back's Grasp** - When the running back is riding the mesh point of the quarterback, it's important to not have too tight of a grasp on the football. If the running back has too tight of a hold on the football, it will often cause a fumble.

**#3 Receiver Route** - It's important the receiver finds space when running the fixed hitch. The quarterback needs to be able to see the receiver. It's up to the receiver to find the window of the quarterback, to make an easy throw.

**Lineman Downfield** - It's important to let your offensive lineman know when an RPO is tagged, so they don't go running downfield. If they do, this will result in a penalty. Tell your lineman to hold their first-level blocks a little bit longer before getting to the second level.

If you want to learn more about RPOs and ways to install them into your offense, we have created a complete guide to RPOs [which you can find here](#).



If you have any questions about running RPOs, feel free to reach out [@chrisvictory](#) on Twitter or [@chris@victorysports.com](#).

**“The reason why RPOs are becoming more and more popular with today's spread offensive systems is because of the ability to take advantage of space by reading defenders.”**



# QB RUN GAME

## INTRODUCTION TO RUNNING THE QB



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At the High School level (really all levels), you must run the football (our Running Back ran it 297 times this past year). I do not care how

good you are or how many awesome Receivers are at your school. A good Defense can manage a simple Offense that only throws the ball and I know the immediate reaction is LSU's Offense led by Joe Burrow, but that to me is an outlier and until every team has their own Joe Burrow, that Offense is not a reliable measure of success.

Defenses have a plethora of options when they do not have to worry about the Quarterback's legs. Therefore, he is an asset throwing and running the ball that keeps the Defense honest.

In 2020, my Quarterback at Emmett High School threw the ball 194 times and ran the ball 220 times (the same year our back carried it 297 times). This means he had the ball in his hands over 400 times during the season. He helped us win the school's first 4A Conference Title, Quarter-Final game, Semi-Final game, and got us to our first 4A State Championship Game in school history. He ran the ball more than any Quarterback I have ever coached in the 22 years I have been doing this. Why would I make him do this? Simple answer is he had to. He was athletic and strong and he was our best player.

The game at our level still requires a semblance of balance and that balance is not always achieved by a Quarterback alone, however. In the case of our team at Emmett, we had a couple injuries to our faster players who played Receiver and quickly realized that throwing the ball down the field early in the year wasn't an option. We decided the Quarterback run had to be our great equalizer and so we started to run him. When the Receivers came back, we continued to use the Quarterback's legs, but had even better balance throwing the ball and went on a 7 game win streak that took us all the way to the State Finals.

So that brings us to the final point of this introduction. What if the QB gets hurt? 20 years ago, people said, "Do not run this guy, he will get hurt." Quarterbacks were wall flowers. They couldn't handle it and you couldn't risk it. (See Lamar Jackson as exhibit "A" and I could essentially stop writing, but I will continue.) I was told so many times early in my career not to run the Quarterback, because he would get hurt.

Then I started to run my own weight room.

I realized the Quarterback was almost always one of the strongest and hardest working kids in the room and I realized, "He does power cleans too, so why can't he run the ball and be a tough guy? He is doing all the same work the running backs and tight ends do." So we started to use him more as a runner.

Then my biggest realization: most of the big hits he took were when he was in the pocket and defenseless, staring down the field. He rarely took a big shot when he was running the ball.

I decided he was safer when he could control how the Defense was hitting him while running the ball, rather than waiting for them to come to him.

I watched Tim Tebow (still the best college player in my opinion) bulldoze Defenses. I watched Lamar Jackson, and more recently Trey Lance, run wild on Defenses and keep them honest with their legs while throwing the ball with effect. I watched bigger and stronger Quarterbacks throw and run their way into the record books for weeks in row, wreaking havoc on Defenses.

It was then that I came to the conclusion we should run the Quarterback for the following reasons:

- QB runs are effective.
- QB runs alter defensive adjustments.
- QB runs open up RPOs, PAP, and Drop Back Passes.
- QB runs simplify the box.
- QB runs give you +1 against man coverage and Red Zone Defenses.
- QB runs endear him to his teammates.
- QB runs keep him from taking big, defenseless hits.

While this is not a comprehensive list, it is enough of a list of reasons to run the Quarterback.

In closing I will say this: my Quarterback last year (2020) ran the ball 200+ times, and his only injury was when a kid yanked on his arm at the bottom of a pile. He had no concussions and no major injuries that caused him to miss any time (including the 2021 season). He played 13 straight games in 2020, 10 more in 2021, and brought his team to new heights. He is not a superhuman freak nor is he abnormally gifted genetically, but he is tough, strong, and takes weights very seriously. I am sure you have one of those at your place. You probably have a smart kid that can run and throw and is willing to put the work in.

When I was asked, "What happens if he runs too much and gets hurt"? I said, "Well, if he doesn't run, we won't win so we might as well run him and

see what happens." What I meant was I could 'save' him, but for what? If he didn't carry the ball, we wouldn't win so what was the point in saving him? The answer was simple: we would run him as much as we needed to win and work to keep him as healthy as possible. We didn't beat him up in practice, but we let him be tackled (and it should be noted that he never shied from contact).

**"Then my biggest realization: most of the big hits he took were when he was in the pocket and defenseless, staring down the field. He rarely took a big shot when he was running the ball.**

**I decided he was safer when he could control how the Defense was hitting him while running the ball, rather than waiting for them to come to him."**

# FEED THE CATS

HAL MUMME AND ME



Tony Holler  
Speaker/Author/Founder  
of Feed the Cats and  
Track and Football  
Consortium  
[Courses](#)  
[Football Content](#)  
[@pntrack](#)

In the summer of 2016,  
I read two amazing  
books written by S.C.

Gwynne, "Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History" and "Rebel Yell: The Violence, Passion, and Redemption of Stonewall Jackson". Three months later, I discovered that the same guy, S.C. Gwynne, had written a book about football, "The Perfect Pass: American Genius and the Reinvention of Football". I devoured it. I've read over a thousand books in my life and those three books written by S.C. Gwynne would all rank in my top 25

I've always had a love-hate relationship with football. My father coached football for 16 years but was better known as a head basketball coach at the high school and college level (47 years, 44 as a head coach). My mom had three brothers, Larry, Kelly, and Kevin Kane, who all played college football. Larry Kane and Kelly Kane were highly successful head football coaches. I played quarterback until a shoulder injury ended my career. I coached high school football for 25 years, but never as a head coach.

"The Perfect Pass" was written about a football coach who was different. Buckminster Fuller said, "You never change things by fighting the existing

reality. To change something, BUILD A NEW MODEL THAT MAKES THE EXISTING MODEL OBSOLETE." Hal Mumme was a football coach who built a new model.

I've never met Hal Mumme and probably never will. But, as I read "The Perfect Pass", I felt as though I'd met a kindred spirit.

Early in his career, Hal Mumme didn't have much success. "On paper Hal was beginning to look like one of those career losers, of whom there are thousands in the coaching world, well-meaning, somewhat sad men with a bit of wistfulness in their voices who lack whatever it takes to make his team win." The same could have been said about me when I was fired at the age of 31 after an eight year stint as a head basketball coach, going 79-128. With four kids and tons of debt, I was a washed up basketball coach, joining the group of somewhat sad men who didn't have what it takes to be a winner.

In 1989, Hal Mumme took the football job at tiny Iowa Wesleyan and hired a guy named Mike Leach as his offensive line coach. Before he got around to recruiting, he had to convince a talented wide receiver, Dana Holgorsen (now HC at University of Houston), not to transfer to another school. The revolution, now referred to as "Air Raid", had commenced. Ten years after Hal Mumme arrived at Iowa Wesleyan, I reinvented myself in 1999 with the genesis of "Feed the Cats". Hal Mumme and I may have been coaching different sports, but we both had the same approach to our task.

One of Hal Mumme's influences was Tiger Ellison. Ellison was the inventor of the "Run and Shoot" offense and formations like the "Lonesome Polecat". Ellison pioneered a new way of thinking about

football "that transcended the mud and mayhem, snot and slobber of the game on the field. It was, in fact, a way of thinking about life."

In "Run and Shoot Football" (1984), Ellison wrote, "We forgot about work: we began to play. We quit being serious; we commenced having fun. We stopped our blood and thunder pep talks; we started telling funny stories."

In 1994, Hal Mumme was coaching 9-0 Valdosta State (averaging 508 yards per game with a 75.6% completion rate). Sports Illustrated asked Mumme how his program differed from rival North Alabama. "We don't stretch, we don't run sprints, and we don't practice on Mondays and Fridays. And when we do practice we never go longer than an hour and forty-five minutes. We don't waste the player's time."

No wind sprints? Blasphemy!

S.C. Gwynn gives us the historical view of wind sprints: "Sprints had been part of football since its origins. They were the stripped down essence of the game, meant to increase endurance, toughness, and to weed out the mentally weak and spiritually suspect. There were variations that involved squat thrusts, burpees, sit-ups, and push-ups between runs, but in the simplest version the coaches marked off 40-yards on the field, and then the team, already exhausted from practice, ran 40-yard sprints with one minute rest between them, preferably until they vomited, which many of them did. Some passed out from heat exhaustion. Kids hated it. Coaches, especially sadistic ones, loved it, particularly in high summer temperatures."

Besides not stretching, not running wind sprints, and not practicing on Mondays and Fridays, Hal

**"I believe there are two ways to coach, old school (hard work and high effort) or new school (essential work and high performance). To those of you considering a move to my way of thinking, let me give you a warning: If you move away from the "hard work and high effort model", you will be considered a heretic. Your masculinity will be questioned. You will be deemed "soft" (football coaches are obsessed with "hard" and soft"). You may be called a 'snowflake.'"**

Mumme's practices would only involve "light hitting". By all accounts, Hal Mumme was, and is, a football renegade. S.C. Gwynne explains, "Most coaches considered hard, physical contact to be a part of the Darwinian selection process that lay at the core of the game. Hitting and taking hits all week long hardened players for games and allowed

*(continued on next page)*



(continued from previous page)

coaches to see who their meanest and toughest players were. A spectacular hit in practice that resulted in a teammate temporarily forgetting his name and country of residence might guarantee a player's place in the starting lineup."

Hal Mumme kept things simple so that practices didn't last more than an hour and forty-five minutes. Old school was being introduced to new school. Hal Mumme could have written the football version of Essentialism, 30 years prior to Greg McKeown's masterpiece. Simple and effective was antithetical to the legendary complexifiers that ruled the football establishment since the sport's inception.

Old school coaches still see the benefits of outworking opponents as an unquestionable, essential truth when it comes to winning football games. "Wasn't practicing till you dropped the way to build great football teams?" (Never forget, there's comfort in tradition.)

"Hal Mumme sometimes thought he was the only one in all of college football talking about the joy of playing the game."

I think Hal Mumme would like the mission statement of Feed the Cats.

Speed is the Tide that Lifts All Boats  
Rest, Recovery, Sleep (Foundation of High Performance)  
Record, Rank, Publish (Measure What Matters)  
Tired is the Enemy, Not the Goal (Racehorses not Workhorses)  
Never Let Today Ruin Tomorrow (Never Burn the Steak)

100% Healthy, 80% in Shape, Not the Other Way Around  
Perform in Practice (Moderate Exercise Never Leads to High Performance)  
Let the Game Be the Hardest Thing You Do  
Kids Are Good at What They Like, Great at What They Love  
Make Practice the Best Part of a Kid's Day

I believe there are two ways to coach, old school (hard work and high effort) or new school (essential work and high performance). To those of you considering a move to my way of thinking, let me give you a warning: If you move away from the "hard work and high effort model", you will be considered a heretic. Your masculinity will be questioned. You will be deemed "soft" (football coaches are obsessed with "hard" and "soft"). You may be called a "snowflake".

The problem with hard work for hard work's sake is that fatigue interferes with performance. If hard work is the destination, your players will be slow. Sore and exhausted football players are capable of high effort, but not high performance. I don't believe slow kids win games, regardless of their effort. I believe performance wins games. To perform, you must value performance, not hard work.

My good friend and national lacrosse guru, Jamie Munro, has counseled me to stop preaching against hard work. Jamie says that I'm simply REDEFINING HARD WORK. It's hard work to figure out what is essential and eliminate the rest. It's hard work to perform at top speeds. It's hard work to invest in rest, recovery, and sleep. Jamie Munro is right, but when you are fighting against the religious fervor of football in America, you can't go buffalo hunting with a BB gun. No sport is more traditional, more

patriotic, and more religious than football. Football is unique.

Hal Mumme's ideas came from the fringe, not the center. The center protects the center. The status quo protects the status quo. Ideas that change football don't come from an assistant working in the SEC. Big time assistants are loyal soldiers baked in loyalty and tradition. Revolutionary football ideas come from places like Iowa Wesleyan, or Plainfield North High School.

Like Air Raid, Feed the Cats didn't emerge from an NCAA powerhouse coached by a former Olympian. Feed the Cats came from a fired basketball coach reinventing himself as a track coach and trying to convince the best athletes in a school of 600 kids to run track. Like Hal Mumme recruiting kids to Iowa Wesleyan (700 students in a town of 10,000 people), I had trouble selling a run-your-ass-off track program to elite athletes who would rather not run laps. Track is a step child of the sports world. I often say that I coach orphans, because parents don't give a sh\*t about track. Many parents see track as recreational activity or a way for their kids to stay in shape for other sports. (Two of the worst words in sport: "in shape".)

My own son, Alec, told me in 1999 that he would play baseball in high school rather than run on my track team because "track sucks". Alec could dunk a basketball in the 8th grade. If I couldn't convince Alec to join the track team, I needed to create a new model for track and field. I started to feed the cats, and Alec chose to run track. Alec now coaches football and track at Edwardsville High School.

Starting in 1999, everyone on my team who ran the 100, 200, 400, 4x1, 4x2, 4x4, 110 hurdles, and 300 hurdles, as well as all six field events (14 of the

18 events in Illinois) stopped RUNNING in practice. We sprinted. We jumped. We haven't run a lap in practice for 22 years. We PERFORM in practice. We measure what matters and record, rank, and publish daily. My teams don't warm-up, stretch, or cool down. We practice less than an hour and we typically take three days off every week. And, we've achieved unusual success. For the athletes on my team, track practice is the best part of their day. I have found in my 37 years of parenting four kids, 38 years of teaching Chemistry, and 41 years of coaching, kids are good at what they like and obsessed with what they love.

Lombardi said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Football coaches memorized that quote and proceeded to crush their athletes. The goal was to get players so fatigued every day that they would never be tired in the game. My father used to say, "I'm going to make practice so hard, the games will feel easy". Athletes, beaten and battered all week, are diminished performers come game time. High performers are strong, fast, and fresh when it counts. When high-volume old school football programs win it's probably a case of dumb vs. dumber. When dumb plays dumber, dumb always wins.

It was never my intent, but Feed the Cats has made serious inroads into the football world. Feed the Cats is not an offensive system like Air Raid. Feed the Cats is not a recipe. Feed the Cats is a way of cooking, a way of thinking, and a system of beliefs that fundamentally changes the game.





# HEAD COACHING 101

## KEEP IT SIMPLE



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**"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication".** -Leonardo Da Vinci

Simplicity is not due to lack of creativity. In fact, it is very difficult to keep things simple for those you are leading. When working in a complex field with many moveable parts keeping the objective clear for those you coach can be very tough. This causes many coaches to either not give any information to those they lead or to give them way too much information. The job of a great coach is to take in information and learn who needs to know what.

Many of the most creative people are in fact great at making things simple. Think of your favorite educator, coach, or boss and ask what they did that made you remember them. Other than forming great relationships, more than likely it had to do with how they made learning "fun" or "easy". These people had figured out the power of making what could be difficult into simple steps to help everyone achieve. The ability to reach as many people as possible should be the number one goal of coaches/leaders.

Coaching requires being able to take in massive amounts of information and understand what your players and assistant coaches can understand as they work to gradually bring them from point A to point B. I call it the "Funnel effect". Many people are

capable of much more than they feel, they can just get overwhelmed if given too much information. The best leaders have been able to know how to give just enough information and to know how much each individual person can absorb.

**"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality".** -Warren Bennis

This is the way the "funnel" works (see image on the right).

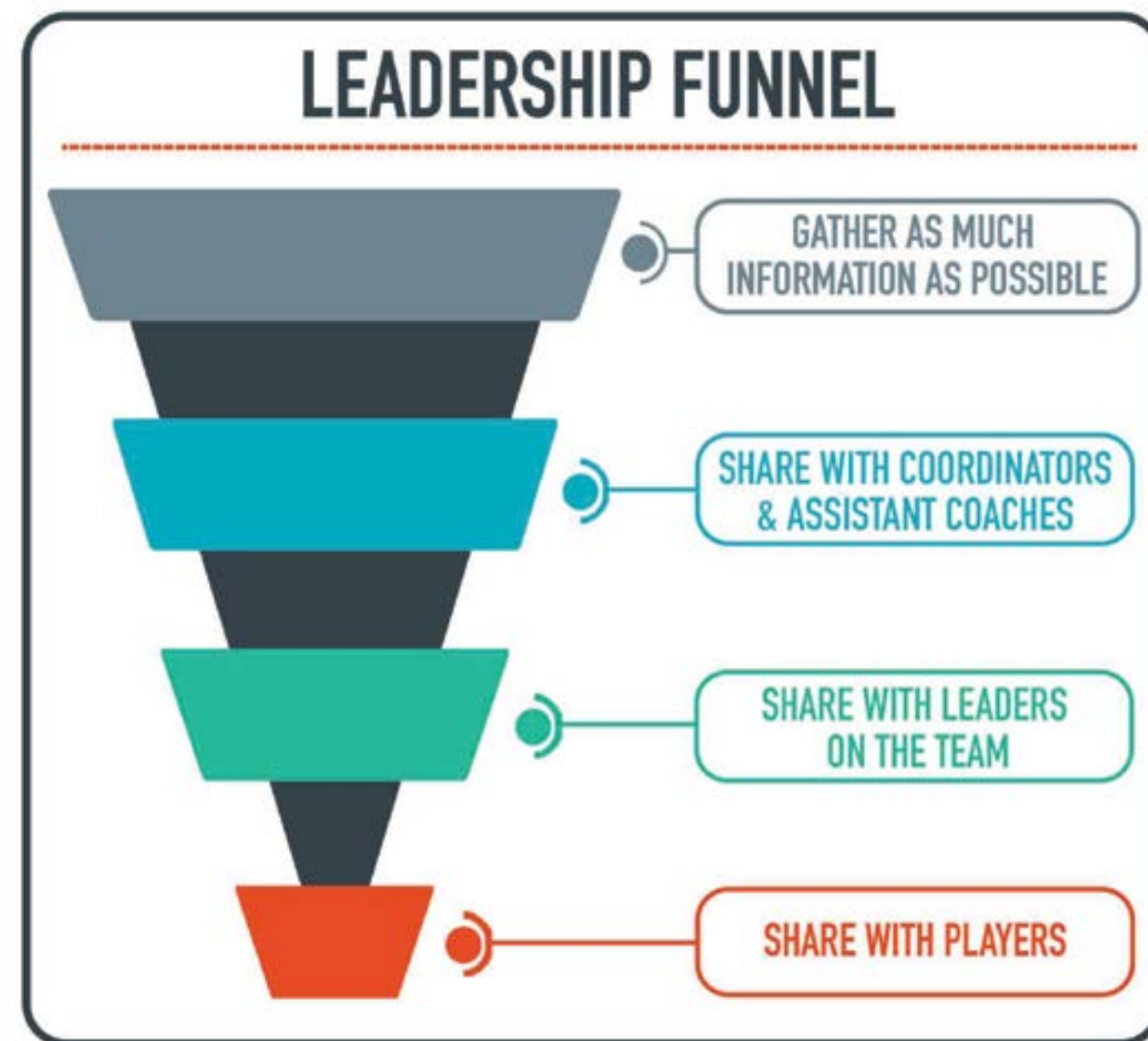
As the leader you are tasked with being the most knowledgeable in each aspect of your program. You must be the hardest working and most diligent student in your field or you cannot expect those underneath you to do so. While many great leaders understand they will not always be the most gifted in all areas, they must always have the trait of the hardest worker for their program to be successful. No amount of charisma or intelligence will make up for simple hard work - or as I call it GRIT.

As a football coach I am constantly gathering new information. Being knowledgeable is huge in any arena if you plan to succeed. When you think of a funnel, the top is getting massive amounts of whatever material is being passed down. As the leader of your program, this is what you must do. Have the capacity to take in large amounts of information.

To be successful in gathering information you must be very self-aware in the ways you learn and retain knowledge. I am by no means a genius, but I have figured out that I retain best by writing and practicing materials. This helps me to comprehend and apply what I am learning. We are all created differently, but that does not excuse us from being an expert in whatever field we are being called to lead.

The temptation to feel we have arrived when we become the lead is a real temptation, especially if you experience success early on in your career, but as a leader you must continue to build up your knowledge of your subject each year. My principal used to say, "have you taught for 30 years or have you taught for 1-year 30 times". His point was that we can simply choose to plateau in our field if we don't push ourselves as the leader. No one will be there to push you when you are the person in charge, so you must have excellent self-discipline.

Many people view those who preach simplicity as "lazy" or "unmotivated" or perhaps view them as someone stuck in the past. The reality is as far from that as can be. Great leaders will always look for new or better ways to gather information. Constant reading and gathering of information is what makes many leaders always stay at the top of their profession. A true thirst for knowledge is a great gauge into whether or not you are in the correct job. If there is not a natural desire to improve, I'd recommend re-evaluating your career choice.



# LOYALTY

## ARE YOU A PART OF YOUR PROGRAM, OR IS YOUR PROGRAM A PART OF YOU?



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The role of an assistant coach isn't always an easy one. That being said, assistant coaches have the power to build a program up, or tear it down. Whether you are in your first year as an assistant or

you have been an assistant for many years, whether you are a coordinator or someone at practice to help with drills, whether you are at your alma mater or someone making multiple stops, I hope I can encourage you to evaluate your role and your potential where you are right now. I have always loved the saying "be where your feet are". I had an administrator who used to always remind us that the grass may be greener somewhere else, but that place may also be built on top of a septic tank!

I am fortunate enough to have been a part of Springs Valley Football (French Lick, IN) for more than 30 years. I am a 2000 graduate of Springs Valley High School. When I was a student here youth leagues were pretty much nonexistent. Our first taste of football was your 6th grade football camp. So from the first time I could put pads on in 1993, I have been a part of Blackhawk Football in some way. After graduation I volunteered to film games each Friday night just to be a part of the program. Fortunately for me once I graduated college in 2004 I was able to get a teaching job back home where it all started for me. 18 years later I'm still here.

As a young assistant coach I was full of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm. I was single and all I knew was SV Football! Time spent in the weight room, on the practice field, or watching film were endless. I didn't know anything else. In just my second season on staff I was promoted to Defensive Coordinator. I was a 25 year old kid that had been a coach that held blast pads, copied some films, and wore his hat backwards to look cool! All I wanted was a

headset and now I had this responsibility!

Maybe you are an assistant coach that has received a promotion. Ask yourself the following questions and reflect on your promotion.

- Why was I promoted?
- What do I bring to the program that maybe others don't?
- What more could I bring to the program?

If I'm going to be honest with you, I became our DC because ours stepped down and I was just about the only guy in the building that wanted it! I do think our Head Coach saw something in me and he knew that I wanted to be a head coach myself someday.

As my career as DC continued our records were not improving. We endured a winless season followed by a 1 win season and I found myself thinking that I had all the answers. If only I could be the Head Coach, I could turn this thing around. I would be getting more kids out to play football, our offense would be much more "innovative" and I could restore our program to the success we had years ago. Just 4 years after my "promotion" our Head Coach was fired and a coaching change was coming. I was convinced it was "my time".

I spent such a great deal of time making flashy brochures to hand in, getting my references in line, pretty much doing anything I could to make sure that I was the next head football coach here! I had no clue what the future would hold for me.

At 29 years old I went from being the defensive coordinator at my school to working for a head coach that would bring in his own DC and his own beliefs and philosophies which couldn't have been any more different than mine! Our new head coach was "old school" to simply put it. While other teams on our schedule were trying to figure out how to spread the field and get as many kids involved as possible, we were going back to our roots and would be a double tight, full house backfield team. Our goals were simple. Be as big and strong as we could, pound the ball, and eat up clock. No longer did we have a defensive scheme. Defensively it was blitz as many as we could and hope the pass didn't beat us. As a coach, I had never seen anything like this before. No more clinics, no more new ideas, no

more input. My new role was simple. Coach the offensive and defensive lines and go to the JV games. That was it. What a turn my coaching career had taken. But looking back, this is when my affinity for our program would grow.

If you are an assistant coach that has been through a coaching change, reflect on that change and ask yourself some of these questions.

- How has my role changed?
- Why has my role changed?
- What do I have to offer this program (within the direction of my head coach)

Being a part of this staff for 3 years was the toughest thing I endured as a coach. I was miserable. I felt like my wings had been clipped. However, with each passing day I was growing closer and closer to the players I was coaching. My family at home was also growing so the time spent away from my wife and new son was beginning to weigh on me. I had to see a certain class out, but once they graduated I made the decision to step down and get out of coaching. I never thought I would see the day when I didn't have the desire to coach. I also never thought I would see the day that I was asked to go down and coach Jr. High football but that is exactly what happened.

The next few years would bring about some of the best years I have had in coaching. I had been coaching varsity football for almost a decade. I had aspirations of being a head coach, and in particular, OUR head coach. I would have never dreamed how much I would love coaching Jr. High football! Those were some of the best years (in coaching) of my life. In just a few short years my son would begin playing 3rd grade football and I would be entrenched in that level as well. I would leave Jr. High practice 2 nights a week and go to a different field on campus for 3rd and 4th grade practice. Again, I would have never dreamed how much I would enjoy this!

Some things to think about:

- How many different levels of football have you coached?
- Specifically, how many different levels have you coached at your current school?
- What levels could you see yourself branching out to and being a part of?

The time would come when another round of coaching changes would change my course again and take me back to the varsity level. This time I would serve as our Offensive Coordinator for 3 years before eventually becoming the head coach in 2021. I have just finished my 1st season as the Head Football Coach at Springs Valley High School. Some would say this was my "dream job". While I have never thought about it like that, this is certainly where I want to be.

All of that being said, back to my original question, are you a part of your program or is your program a part of you? I have been a part of Springs Valley Football for nearly 30 years! But it wasn't until about 10 years ago that the program became a part of me. Serving in different roles at different levels created a passion for my school and my program that I had never had before. Is it hard going from coaching on Friday nights to coaching on Tuesdays and Thursdays? Absolutely! What about Saturday youth league games? Here I was making sure 9 year olds didn't have their shoulder pads on backwards, shoes (not even cleats sometimes) on the wrong feet, or their chin straps buckled! Without me even knowing it I was completely entrenched in our program, nearly top to bottom.

What steps can you take to make your program a part of you? If you are a coach at the varsity level your Jr. High and/or youth league levels would love to have you assist them. I know your time is valuable. I can speak from experience that you will find value in branching out and assisting at these "lower" levels. Maybe you are a youth league or middle school coach just wanting to be around on Friday nights. Volunteer to film games, keep stats, chart plays, anything that could be of assistance to your program. Regardless of whether you are at a place you can see yourself being forever, or if you are just at a stop on the map, it's worth asking.....

Am I a part of our program or is our program a part of me?



# RURAL FOOTBALL REFLECTIONS

## OFF SEASON PROGRAMS IN RURAL SCHOOLS



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[Football Tool Chest](#)

Off Season Programs are necessary if you desire to be a Football Program with staying power, especially if at a

small rural school like Gold Beach, in Gold Beach, Oregon. When I arrived in Gold Beach 24 years ago football was an August to November activity for the football players, no off-season program, and no summer program and oh not much success. This was a shock for me, who had grown up in the highly competitive southern California football landscape, where off -season and summer programs were being done since the early 1970's in most schools down there. So not having one was a shock to me and getting one started was going to be vital to me in getting this rural program the staying power I wished to achieve. So, like most newly hired head football coaches, I asked about it. LOL the shock on administrators and community members' faces told me everything I need to know - we do NOT have an off-season program of any kind. More importantly, most of the community members that expected their Panthers to compete for state titles annually thought it was unnecessary. A local rancher said we do not need to lift year-round to be successful; it is coaching that will make the difference. I told the gentlemen that as the Coach, who was supposed to be making a difference, I wanted kids lifting year-

round. What I wanted and how we were going to get there was going to be the tricky part. While I had some administrative support it was vague and not clearly defined at best, and we had no weight room!

So, I am sure many of the readers have found themselves in similar situations both at small rural schools and large urban schools - not clearly defined off season program or expectations. What is a new Head Coach to do, well it is time to find a quiet spot in your office or home and figure it out? You do this by answering the following questions:

- What are the goals of the off-season program both short term and long term?
- How can football encourage participation in other sports while at the same time expecting participation in an off-season program?
- How can I make it an off-season that kids want to be in, not made to be in?
- How will this help and contribute to developing our football program's culture?
- Can we hire or get a certified Strength & Conditioning Instructor?

In the paragraphs below you will find my answers to these very questions.

### ***What are the goals of the off-season program both short term and long term?***

To build better athletes, not simply better football players. Small schools share athletes, and that aspect must be remembered by all involved in small school athletics. So even though I am the football coach, I must think of the impact whatever I am going to do in our off-season will have on sports in-seasons or upcoming seasons. So, the short-term goal would be lifting and conditioning to prevent injuries and add some basic overall strength and speed to all the athletes involved. Long-term is

to turn our student-athletes into healthy adults that stay in good shape by lifting, running, and eating right. Another long-term goal is to create athletes that can compete consistently every year for a league and state title. The last long -term goal for the off-season program is that it becomes the foundation of our programs culture.

### ***How can football encourage participation in other sports while at the same time expecting participation in an off-season program?***

This is the truly tricky part of small rural football, where do you put your off-season program without jeopardizing other athletic teams' practices and games. If you do not support multi-sport athletes a small school is not for you. Of the 30 to 40 kids, we had out for football every year, all but a few were 2 or 3 sport athletes. So, after school is not a good spot for it. Is during the school day in weightlifting classes? Not an effective idea in a small school Coaches, most of your kids will not have room in their schedules and there is no way a school of 250 or less is going to be able to lift 5 to 6 periods of lifting, most teachers / coaches carry multiple licenses and are in classrooms most of the day. Heck as the Athletic Director and HFC, I still taught 5 Social Studies Classes (2 to 3 preps) daily. It is just the nature of most small rural schools to stretch the resources very thin. So, the logical place to put it was from 6:45 to 7:30 AM in the morning, Zero Period - Championship Athletic Training Class. I wrote up a course syllabus and the points of emphasis in the course: Proper Lifting and Routines, Speed and Quickness Development, Proper Athletic

Nutrition and Habits, and Academic Support. It would be open to all the school's athletes, not just football players. I showed my administration the plan and if I were willing to teach it for free, they would support and take it to the school board. In 1999 Central Curry School District of Gold Beach, Oregon approved the - Zero Period - Championship Athletic Training Class. Our athletes would receive an elective PE credit and grade thus helping us in our fight to keep kids eligible. We now had an academic year long Zero Period - Championship Athletic Training Class. Our kids will be doing lifting and speed / quickness development going on in season and off season. Now we just had to get them in the class!

### ***How can I make it an off-season that kids want to be in, not made to be in?***

So, what is going to make a young athlete bounce out of bed at 6:15ish to get to a weightlifting class at 6:45 AM in the dead of winter on the Oregon

*(continued on next page)*



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Ted Neal - Fort Smith Northside HS

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coast? His Head Coach's charming personality? No! While an extra grade would seem enough it is not. The first few years our numbers were lean, but after a summer trip with our team to Mater Dei High School in southern California, things drastically changed, our seniors learned that the only difference between a Gold Beach Panther and a Mater Dei Monarch was a burning work ethic to leave a legacy at one's school. After that visit in 2003 our kids began to buy in and when we reached the state finals in 2004, the hook had been set, 30 to 40 kids were enrolled in Zero Period every year from 2004 to 2014. But for those of us that fish, we know hooks that appear set sometimes fall out. So, we had to produce other motivations for players to attend and make a great effort. One idea that I brought with me from my days at Servite, way back in 1970s, was Weight Clubs. We started a 700, 800-, 900-, 1000- & 1200-pound clubs, based on testing in 4 core lifts – Bench, Push Press, Squats and Cleans. Players are given patches representing the club they had attained, and these patches were sown onto their spirit pack shorts. When they reach 1000, they get two patches, one for shorts and one for letterman jackets. At 1200 they get a nice sweatshirt celebrating the accomplishment. The kids get excited about this, and their names go up on the appropriate club board in weight room for all to see during their 4 years in the program. Some other things help motivate the kids to show up all the time, we have amazing small school cooks. Our cooks provide a great breakfast after a great workout and a hot shower. eggs, with bacon or sausage, with pancakes or Gold Beach High School's famous Biscuits & Gravy. These breakfasts are available for entire student body but because of Zero Period the athletes were always first in line. You all know how important the nutrition component is to the gains we want to see, and our cooks accomplished that and every morning. Another thing that attracts

participation was academic support. In addition to the extra grade in the GPA eligibility formula, we could get them tutoring from their peers or the teacher themselves. Finally let us not kid ourselves, the success on the field in large part kept the participation ball rolling. I do not think if we were doing all this and going 2 to 3 wins a year that kids would have stayed in the Zero Period Off Season Program, but you get 9 to 14 wins in a year, and it is a completely different story.

### ***How will this help and contribute to developing our football program's culture?***

As I stated in the Goals paragraph, we wish for our off-season program to become the foundation of our Football Program's Culture. The weight room should be the cornerstone of that Cultural Foundation, for our program. I like to refer to the weight room as an "investment bank" the more work and sweat you invest in the weight room the greater the rewards or performance when needed in the heat of a contest. However, if it is truly an "Investment bank" access to the weight room to invest in, must be easy. One of the ways you can tell if your culture's foundation and cornerstone are taking root is the frequency; you will have to open the weight room up for a group of 2 to 5 kids who want to get some extra work in. One of the mottos of Gold Beach Football is "Traditions are for the alumni and fans, we as players have a responsibility to the 'Program'", a living organism (team) to pump breath into the "Program" to keep alive. That breath is our work ethic in our weight room, our efforts to obtain and maintain a high level of success. So, with that in mind our athletes have chosen on several occasions to have Monday holidays, during the winter and spring lifting days but from 9:00 to 10:00. If we, as the faculty, are having an in-service, they have chosen to come in regular time for class rather than take a day off. All

this work translates to success on the gridiron for us and is a key ingredient in our Football Culture. We are a program on the field that runs an offense and defense that suits our efforts and values created in the weight room. Our kids created another nice "Cultural Expression" of our Program's Work ethic Culture, LOL. So, our kids who did not play basketball, but wrestled or played a spring sport, would have me open our weight room before basketball games at home. Our weight room was upstairs in our gym. So, our kids would start Power Cleaning as the visiting teams would arrive, thus shaking the entire building! When contractors were retrofitting the gym, they discovered we had snapped all the joists in the upstairs floor and the weight room would have to be relocated. Another way our off season supports our Program's Culture is, as we break rubber coated plates from BFS we mount them on the walls of the weight room. Which leads us to the final way the off season contributes to our Football Culture? As a small school our locker rooms do not have team rooms in them, so there is no distinct Football Room. It is our weight room that serves as a Clubhouse, Shrine, and Team Building Room. We have created one that has action pictures of kids from all our state championship teams, a promise I make to every team. You play in the last game, and I will make sure your team is represented in the weight room. We also put up All State Teams and certificates to honor the past. There is a huge record board for our boy records that my girls now are demanding for themselves and will get. Nice sound system and visual monitors allow for anything from good music to college football games to team highlights. We want to make it and keep it a room our kids want to be in. Because as you know half the battle is just getting them in there!

### ***Can we hire or get a certified Strength & Conditioning Instructor?***

I think every school regardless of size should have a certified Strength and Conditioning Instructor. However, I think all schools regardless of size should have art classes, music classes and foreign language classes. The problem at small schools is not the need or want; it is the financial component that prevents most of us from getting these valuable educators. Small schools with limited resources must make exceedingly tough decisions and you must understand that. So, you are going to have to be a student and borrower of success. Go to clinics, get on social media or take classes but chase that knowledge of Coaches. Also remember this: whether you have an S & C guy or not, you HAVE TO BE IN THE WEIGHT ROOM! I cannot emphasize this enough, as the HFC you will give credence and value to what they are doing because you decide playing time and depth charts. I have seen too many Coaches hire someone and then never go in there again but cannot understand why gains are not being made. Kids lift to get strong and quick for Football and as the Head Coach of that program you need to be in there encouraging and evaluating.

### **[Link to Our Weight Room Story](#)**

These are the questions I personally dealt with in 1997 and 1998 when I was starting my career as a small rural high school head football coach in Gold Beach, Oregon. I will tell you the process was a huge part of our success for an amazing 10 year run and think it can help future head coaches regardless of school size.



# POUND THE STONE

## WINNING THEORY: BEST IS THE STANDARD



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In 1961, Paul "Bear" Bryant wrote "Winning Theory," his blueprint for how the University of Alabama was going to achieve success on the gridiron. The following five defined standards would separate his program from others across the country and give the Crimson Tide the best chance to win:

### Beat your opponent physically.

- Be in better physical condition.
- Be aggressive and "out-mean" them.
- Consistency – give 110% on every play.

### Genuine all-out desire for a team victory.

- Goal – to win them all.
- Personal sacrifice instead of personal gratification.
- What one can contribute, not what you can receive.
- When you win there is enough glory for everyone.

### The Winning Edge

- Second and third effort (run beyond initial contact).
- No penalties, broken signals, fumbles, or interceptions.
- Take advantage of sudden changes in the game.
- Something extra when behind in the 4th quarter.
- Know and play zone and field position.

### Defense

- No long runs.
- No passes for touchdowns.
- Force mistakes.
- Score on defense.

### Offense

- Never give up the ball without a kick.
- Be disciplined.
- Play with "intelligent recklessness."
- It takes all 11 doing their specific jobs to move the ball.

Bear Bryant's "Winning Theory" is just as applicable today as it was when it was written over sixty years ago. In fact, many of the cliches coaches use today fit into one of Coach Bryant's five standards. For example, coaches commonly use "WE > ME" to condense and convey Standard #2's second bullet point: "personal sacrifice instead of personal gratification." Coaching running backs, I emphasize Standard #3's first bullet point of running beyond initial contact by telling ball carriers their job is to "make the first defender miss."

Using Bear Bryant's "Winning Theory" as a model, Monarch Football has defined nine specific and measurable game goals, three for each phase of the game, that create a performance pathway to victory. These goals are presented to the team every Monday, emphasized throughout the week at practice, and evaluated by our coaching staff during our weekly Sunday meeting.

### Monarch Football's Winning Theory

#### Offensive Standards:

Game Goal #1: 3+ Big Plays

Our goal is to be explosive. Each "big play" is a gain of at least 20 yards.

Game Goal #2: 45% Efficiency

We will gain four or more yards on 1st Down, half the remaining distance on 2nd Down, and convert on 3rd and 4th Down, 45% of every offensive play we ran throughout the game.

Game Goal #3: 12% Rule

12% or fewer of our offensive plays will result in a loose ball, lost yardage, fumbled exchange, turnover, or penalty.

#### Defensive Standards:

Game Goal #1: Fill the Turnover Tub!

Force 2 or more turnovers.

Game Goal #2: <3 Big Plays

A stingy defense doesn't give up chunk yardage. We will

give up no more than 3 plays of 20 yards or more.

Game Goal #3: Force 3+ Punts

Get the defense off the field! Red Zone stops also count as a punt.

Special Teams Standards:

Game Goal #1: 100% Opponent Kickoff Returns <20 Yards

We will not give up a kickoff return that is greater than 20 yards.

All kickoffs out of bounds will count against our success rate.

Game Goal #2: 100% PAT Rate

We will execute the point after touchdown successfully 100% of the time.

Two point plays will NOT count against this metric.

Game Goal #3: 0 Substitution Errors

Our game goals are measurable and easy to understand by our players because they are simply defined. Every Friday night, we either achieve the goal or we do not. Throughout the 2021 season, standards were evaluated after every game and housed in a Google Sheet, which served as our team's quality control behavior tracker. Tracking your team's performance on specific goals will allow you to see trends and make the necessary adjustments to strive for continual improvement on the field. Throughout the season, trends and tendencies will emerge as the data is accumulated each week. One trend we saw throughout the 2021 season was that in order to win, we needed to meet or exceed at least one team

standard in each of the three phases of the game.

After the season, the quality control sheet can be used to identify areas of strength and weakness within your program. Creating Big Plays was an area of strength for the Monarch offense in 2021. Improving offensive efficiency will help our team achieve more success in 2022. Defensively, forcing turnovers and finding ways to stop our opponent's Big Plays will be focal points this offseason. On Special Teams, getting people on and off the field was an area of strength, as we did not have a single substitution error in 2021. The biggest opportunity for improvement in 2022 is to emphasize kickoff coverage and stress our opponent's starting field position.

In conclusion, you can create your own "Winning Theory" by establishing weekly game goals that can be measured and tracked throughout the season. Begin by asking yourself: What are the specific metrics needed to win? What do I currently emphasize with my team? What behaviors on the field will improve my team's performance? Challenge yourself to break these ideas down into all three phases of the game. If you would like help, or a copy of the Monarch Football Quality Control Google Sheet, which can be customized to fit your team, please email me or contact me on social media. Because when you know better, you do better.

Monarch Football 2021 Quality Control												
Category	Goal	Carroll W (28-7)	CSU (24-24)	Central (24-24)	Denison (24-24)	Spencer (20-23)	Weston (19-24)	Eastman (18-22)	East Dodge (18-22)	Weston (18-24)	Sumner (18-24)	
Offense - Department of Touchdowns												
Big Plays	3+	Yes (2)	Yes (0)	Yes (1)	Yes (0)	Yes (1)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	6/9 - 27 Total
Efficiency	45%	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	No (20)	4/9 - 28% Average
Negative Plays	12% Rule	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	No (20) - 0/20	4/9 - 22% Average
Defense - Department of Turnovers												
Turnover Tub	2+	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	2/9 - 20 Total
Big Plays	<3	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	4/9 - 24 Total
Punts/RT Stops	3+	Yes (1)	Yes (0)	Yes (1)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	4/9 - 20 Total
Special Teams - Department of Transitions												
Field Position	100% KOB <20 Yards	No (0)	No (0)	Yes (0)	No (0)	Yes (0)	No (0)	Yes (0)	No (0)	No (0)	No (0)	4/9 - 20/27
PAT	100%	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	Yes (0)	6/9 - 21/25 Total
Personnel	0 Sub Errors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/9 - 0 Total

# LESSONS LEARNED

## BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR TEACHING QUARTERBACKS



Emory Wilhite  
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This upcoming season, I have the great opportunity to be the quarterbacks coach. I am excited to help these players develop not only as quarterbacks, but as young men. As I enter my

fourth year of coaching, I have learned every year more and more about what is important and what is not important. When I started coaching, everything was important. I could not distinguish information worth paying attention to or not worth paying attention to. Therefore, I could not determine where I should put my focus. In other words, I was struck with paralysis by analysis. I wanted to know everything and understand everything. But that is impossible when there is not a strong foundation in place.

So, in a rather inefficient way, I have been building a foundation of knowledge but it is indeed there. And as it would be, the process of building that foundation has continually taught me to be intentional in building a strong foundation in all that I do. The process has taught me this when I begin something new, but also when I teach something to our players. And I should have known this better. When I was a child building a sand castle at the beach, my father would always tell us that we had to start with a firm foundation. But growing is about learning from mistakes. So, my ultimate focus in the beginning of this offseason is to help the quarterbacks under my care build strong foundations. I have identified three points of this foundation so that

myself and the quarterbacks can perform to the level of our potential.

### *Build meaningful relationships with each quarterback*

I have coached each of the quarterbacks previously when they were on Junior Varsity and know them well, but now I will be able to focus on these relationships better. In fact, one of the reasons I am excited to coach the quarterbacks is because there aren't many. As a more introverted person, I don't have the natural, dynamic personality that can easily navigate a large room and connect with a bunch of people quickly. So, I appreciate the small room which allows me to focus more time on each player. It also allows me to work on building that ability to connect with a number of players by starting small.

This is number one on the list because I want to always remind myself and our players that what we do is greater than whatever happens on Friday night. Football is more than just a game, and the experiences that these young men go through in meetings, in the weightroom, on the practice field, and under the lights will help them practice skills that are applicable in many facets of life. And one of the greatest skills quarterbacks can learn as the leaders of the team is the power of meaningful relationships. The team dynamic of football creates a fruitful place for relationship building. So, not only is my number one priority to continue to build my own relationships with these quarterbacks, but also to teach them the importance that their relationships with their teammates have. The only way to build these relationships is to spend time with each other and not just talking football. I must foster an environment in our quarterback room where they can compete with each other on the field and in the weightroom while also growing as teammates and friends. This work is not always easy for me, but it is my number one focus.

### *Stress the fundamentals*

After coaching for only three years and listening to veteran coaches, I am a firm believer that football wins

come down to which team has the better fundamentals. My job as the coach is to first identify the fundamentals, second teach the fundamentals, and third drill the fundamentals. This is a constant process as the amount of literature on the subject is overwhelming and at times conflicting. However, I have identified two areas to begin our focus: the feet and the eyes. Football throwing mechanics begin from the ground up and proper footwork is not only essential to throw an accurate ball, but for the release of the ball to be in the right timeline in coordination with the route the quarterback is throwing the ball to. Much of what I have learned on this subject comes from Dub Maddox's materials and most prominently, his book *Adapt or Die*, a most fitting title.

To maximize our quarterback's ability, the feet must guide the eyes. Meaning, the quarterback must develop the ability to use his footwork as a tool to read defenders' intentions and make accurate decisions. At the last step of a drop, the quarterback must be ready to make a decision to throw or move on. If those feet are too fast or too slow, his eyes will end up being in the wrong place. So, this skill of being able to manipulate the drop is essential to optimizing the passing game. To develop this skill, I have been using and will continue to use a simple drop drill I learned from Coach Maddox. The quarterbacks align in a row where I can see all of their drops. I then call out a drop and direction. One quarterback calls the cadence, and they all take the drop and freeze at the end to check their finishes. This drill accomplishes a few things, but first and foremost it allows the quarterbacks to check their own work and get used to throwing on rhythm. In the next issue of *Headsets* I will share more specifically about the work that we are doing to set this foundation.

### *Apply pressure*

Having solid fundamentals is a great thing until they collapse under the lights. In the past, I have not given our players the situations they needed in practice to develop their ability to handle pressure properly and perform to their abilities. The reality is, however, that abilities are

what they are under pressure, not in practice. Without pressure in practice, we can all fall under the ego driven idea that we will rise to the occasion. I am guilty of this myself and have failed because of it. In a pressure packed sport such as football, it is of the utmost importance as coaches to allow your players to practice under fire. The Ancient Greek poet Archilochus said that "we don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training." Unfortunately, the exact opposite sentiment is our first thought most often. We always expect we can do more than we are capable of. But I know firsthand that this is disastrous thinking.

I will use the drop drill mentioned earlier as an example of adding pressure to optimize the drill. The first thing we do to apply pressure is an immediate consequence for negative behavior. Every time one of the quarterbacks makes a mistake (wrong direction, wrong drop, imperfect finish) then every quarterback does 10 push ups. Most of the time, these mistakes come about because a quarterback is not focused, they are tired, or they are overwhelmed by the speed of the drill. Each of these reasons are fixable by learning to focus in moments of pressure. The peer pressure of causing the group to do push ups pressures them as well as the fact that we will not move on until we are all perfect. In future *Issues*, I will share other ways we are seeking to increase the stakes and apply pressure in practice.

My goal right now is simple: give our quarterbacks strong foundations which they can build skills upon for the rest of the year. The work that we are doing now, must be the foundation for the touchdowns they throw on Friday nights. I am excited to go through a whole offseason and do my small part in helping our team reach its potential. I am constantly learning how to do this better and know I will fail along the way this year. For that, I am excited to share this journey and hope that I can perhaps help someone from making the same mistakes that I make and maybe even learn something neat that we will do.



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