

HEADSETS



WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 2: ISSUE 2

defensive IDENTIFIERS

WHAT ARE
THE CORE VALUES OF
YOUR PROGRAM

DEFEATING
THE DOWN BLOCK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFEATING THE DOWN BLOCK	2
DEFENSIVE IDENTIFIERS	4
ZONE READ	7
BIG CATS AND THE TRUCK STICK	11
WHAT ARE THE CORE VALUES OF YOUR PROGRAM?	14
WAYS TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TEAM	16
GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE DRILLS	18
SMALL SCHOOL PRACTICES PART 1	20
HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?	26
LEARNING THROUGH LOSING	28



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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 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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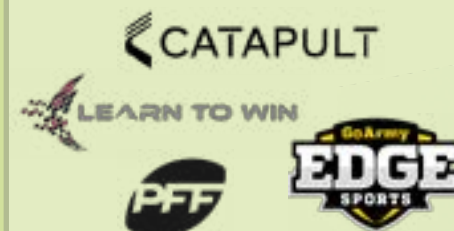
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DEFENSIVE LINE BASICS

DEFEATING THE DOWN BLOCK



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The next block we will work against in my D-Line 101 series is the down block. In a down block, the offensive lineman is usually avoiding the defensive lineman lined up to them and is blocking to the next down lineman or to the next level, usually the linebacker. To me, this is one of the more difficult blocks that I teach my linemen to react to. As defensive linemen, they want to be so aggressive and get off the ball fast but that usually leads to them getting too far upfield and taking themselves out of the play or getting a nasty block against them from the puller.

The way I teach my defensive linemen to beat the down block is to make aggressive contact with the offensive lineman and "squeeze" him down the line of scrimmage, delaying him from getting to the next level. When the pulling lineman gets to the defensive lineman, he will wrong shoulder the puller, putting his shoulder pad into the hip of the puller, and will turn vertically looking to make the tackle.

I am going to show you two drills that I use to help my defensive linemen work against the down block. The first drill teaches the technique of squeezing and wrong shouldering. This is not complicated and can be done in pads or with bags if you are in a padless practice. The second drill is similar to the first but will make the players read either an aggressive block like a base block or a down block where they will have to squeeze and use the wrong shoulder technique.

Squeeze/Wrong Shoulder Drill:

In this drill we will need a few bodies in order to set this drill up properly. You will need a defensive lineman performing the drill, a coach/player simulating the ball snap, a down blocker, and a puller.

On the snap of the ball, the down blocker will block down. The defensive lineman will squeeze with his hands targeting the shoulder of the offensive lineman. He will need to stay square and strive to delay or put the down blocker off his path to the linebackers. As the guard pulls, the defensive lineman will wrong shoulder the offensive lineman with his outside shoulder, aiming at the puller's hip. Once he has wrong shouldered the lineman, he should try to turn vertically from there, possibly putting himself in position to tackle the ball carrier.

You can do this with or without pads but I would make sure to have a dummy pad or bag for the puller so that the defensive lineman can wrong shoulder and press vertically.

Drill Progression:

Get defensive linemen into groups on each side of the football.

In each group you will need a defensive lineman, offensive lineman, and a puller.

On the snap of the ball, the offensive lineman will block down, trying to avoid contact with the defensive lineman and getting to linebacker level. The puller will begin a flat pull to try to kick out the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will squeeze the down blocker, staying square to the line of scrimmage.

The defensive lineman will finish by wrong shouldering and pressing vertically once contact has been made if possible.

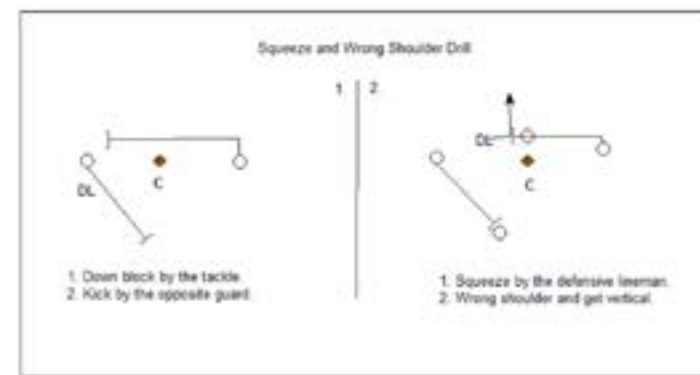
Coaching Points:

Stay low out of your stance.

Punch at the shoulder of the down blocking offensive lineman.

Don't squeeze too far down the line.

Physical wrong shoulder on the puller.



Aggressive Block or Down Block Drill:

In this drill you will need the same amount of bodies working on the offense as you did for the basic squeeze and down block drill. You will still go off of a simulated ball snap for this drill, whether it is the coach or a player moving their foot as the ball, a ball on a stick, or whatever else you can think to use.

As the coach, you will stand behind the defensive linemen to give the signals for how the play should be blocked by the scout team offensive linemen. You will point to the lineman that is lined up across from the defensive lineman and will indicate whether you want him to down block or base block the defensive lineman. If the block is a base block, the defensive lineman will beat the block and use an escape move. If the block is a down block, the defensive lineman will need to squeeze down the line and will wrong shoulder the puller, getting vertical after the collision.

Drill Progression:

Get defensive linemen into groups on each side of the football.

In each group you will need a defensive lineman, offensive lineman, and a puller.

Before snapping the ball, the coach will signal to the offensive linemen (scout group) on how they should block (aggressive block or down block).

On the snap, the offensive scout will either show an aggressive block or a down block with a puller coming.

If it's a down block, the defensive lineman will squeeze and wrong shoulder the pulling lineman.

If it's an aggressive block, the defensive lineman will take on the block and finish with an escape move.

Coaching Points:

Stay low out of your stance.

Take your read steps and determine whether the block is a down block or some type of aggressive block.

Don't go too far upfield.

Get hands on the offensive lineman.

Down Block or Aggressive Block Drill



1. Signal to your scouts if the play is going to be a down block with a puller coming or an aggressive block.
2. On the snap of the ball, the scouts will perform a down block with a pull or an aggressive block.
3. If a down block, squeeze and wrong shoulder. If an aggressive block, beat it and finish with an escape move.

In conclusion, these are a few drills that I use to train my defensive linemen to react to the down block. The most important part I like to stress to my defensive lineman is that we MUST keep the offensive linemen off of the linebackers. This is a great drill set to make sure that your linemen are not just getting upfield every single play and are taking the proper steps to read and react to blocks.

PLAYING FAST WITH A ROSTER UNDER FORTY

DEFENSIVE IDENTIFIERS



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With the proliferation of college schemes trickling down to the high school level, and high school offenses becoming increasingly sophisticated, high school defenses are matching that sophistication. With brilliant high school defensive minds such as Lou DiRienzo (Iona Prep - NY), Adam Gaylor (Jenks - OK), Ty Gower (DC in OK & TX), Chris King (St. John Bosco - CA) and Chris Vasseur (MDGA Podcast) dialing up some serious issues for an offense, coordinators better have a way to identify the different fronts, stunts and coverage teams are playing if they want to have success. Defense, however, is still reactionary by nature and must be fundamentally sound in their run gap fits, field zone pass defense, and pressure packages. It is with those spatial restrictions on a defense in mind that we have devised our defensive identifiers.

When labeling plays in Hudl, We are going to identify four things: fronts, coverages, reaction by the secondary to motion, and pressures. We feel these four indicators will allow us to understand the defensive principles used by coordinators, and allow us to put our players in the best possible position to be successful on a down-to-down basis during a football game. Paired with the new Hudl beta tool we feel the defensive picture becomes crystal clear.

Defenses can only be configured so many ways with their "box" defenders and still be able to defend all the run gaps, which is predicated on the offensive personnel packages. When using the two digit personnel numbering systems

(first digit is the number of running backs, second digit is number of TE's - including Y-off or "sniffer" in a formation) an offense has 6 run gaps in 00/10/20/30 personnel, 7 run gaps in 11/21/31, 8 run gaps in 12/22/32, and 9 run gaps in 13/23. In order to be fundamentally sound, defenses have to be structured to defend those run gaps. In a world before RPO's, most defenses would "borrow" a secondary player to add into the run-gap defense if the offense ran the ball or allow that secondary player to defend a field zone if the offense passed the ball. That player is commonly referred to by offensive coordinator's as the "conflict defender", as that player is technically being asked to be 1/2 run defender and 1/2 pass defender by the defensive coordinator (a conflict in responsibility if the offense was able to either run or throw the ball on the same play aka RPO). But as mentioned earlier, as offenses have become more sophisticated, and defenses have adjusted, most defenses today no longer have conflict defenders. They simply, as Coach Kyle Cogan (Benedictine College) says, "Sling the Fits" or vacate the run gap furthest from the point of attack in the run scheme, thereby no longer requiring a secondary player to defend both run and pass. It essentially removes the "conflict defender" from the defense. However, their Box structure is still going to dictate their secondary structure. Defenses do have options on how they react to motions by the offense, and pressure packages offer a third variation to how a defense is structured on any given play.

So, with all that in mind, this is how we identify the defense for each play in a football game:

Fronts: Because we are a base 10, 11, or 20 personnel offense, we do not face 8 or 9 man boxes (since teams only have to defend 6 or 7 run gaps, they do not need an 8th or 9th defender in the box). If you include 12/22/32 and/or 13/23 personnel in your offense, I would add those Fronts ID's.

FRONTS

Odd = 3-2 Box
Stack = 3-3 Box
Even = 4-1 Box
Split = 4-2 Box
Seven = 4-3 Box
Bear = 5-2 Box

The configuration of the box defenders is important for

us, and we need the ability to identify the total number and amount of defenders in the box at each level of the defense. Identifying the box configuration will also allow us to be able to identify how many pass defenders, and field zones, a team will be able to defend. With our offensive line blocking rules, we don't need to know the techniques of the defensive line (1 technique, 3 technique, etc.), but we do need to know the number of defenders at each level (first level/second level). That is why we label the different box configurations based on the total number as well as first & second level defenders.

Coverages: With defenses today playing multiple variations of coverages (Rip/Liz, Palms, Robber, etc.) they all have one thing in common; the middle of the field is either open or closed (a safety is either positioned in the middle of the field, or he/she is not). Being able to identify if the middle of the field is open or closed (number of safeties at third level) will in turn tell you the type of coverage a team runs, as teams cannot play certain coverages with the middle of the field open, and vice versa.

COVERAGES

Zero = 0 High/MOFO
Post = 1 High/MOFC
Split = 2 High/MOFO

Because all of our pass route combinations simply depend on the middle of the field being open or closed, zone or man, we just need to know the number of safeties in the defense, and if the middle of the field is open or closed.

Reactions by the secondary to motion: Defenses have essentially three options when determining how to defend motion from the offense. They can "Bump" the coverage, or pass off the motion while staying at the same level (3rd level passes off to 3rd level/2nd level passes off to 2nd level), they can "Spin" the coverage, or transition from one level to the next (3rd level becomes 2nd level, 2nd level becomes 3rd level), or they can simply "Run" the coverage,

or have defenders run with the motion.

REACTIONS

Bump = Defenders Pass off Motion
Spin = Secondary Rotation to Motion
Run = Defenders Run with Motion

Because we are dependent on our pass game knowing if the middle of the field is open (MOFO) or closed (MOFC), we need to know if a MOFO team will convert to a MOFC team with motion (Spin), or if they will remain MOFO (Bump). We also want to know if a team is playing man defense, and will be able to determine if the defense's reaction is to "Run" with motion.

Pressures: Chris Vasseur (Make Defense Great Again podcast) is famous for his catchphrase "The quarterback can't see with tears in his eyes", and we believe that is absolutely true. And if you can't see, you can't complete passes. So, it is imperative for an offense today to be able to identify the "personality" of a defense's pressure packages. Referring back to the spatial limitation placed on defense, it is inefficient for a defense to try and rush two defenders through the same gap. Therefore, there are only so many configurations a defense can utilize when creating pressure packages. Those pressure packages are usually given a name based on the number of pass rushers they are attempting to utilize; 5, 6, or 7 man pressures are commonplace in today's defensive football.

PRESSURES

6I = 6 Man A/B Gap
6O = 6 Man C/D Gap
6C = 6 Man 1 A/B 1 C/D
7I = 7 Man A/B Gap
7O = 7 Man C/D Gap
7C = 7 Man 1 A/B 1 C/D

I = "Inside"
O = "Outside"
C = "Combination"

We feel that since we have 5 offensive linemen, 5 man

pressures shouldn't bother us if we have done a good job coaching our players on the techniques used to block the different stunts and twists ("games") defenses use to rush the quarterback with 5 defenders. However, since we always run "empty" protection, that is, we "free release" our back(s) on every pass play, we must be able to identify 6 man pressures, and we do that by identifying which gap the 6th defender is trying to enter. If the 6th rusher is trying to enter either the A or B gaps, we label that pressure as 6i (i = inside gap). If the 6th defender is attempting to rush either the C or D gaps, we label that pressure as 6o (o = outside), and if the defense is playing a "game" with the 1st level defenders on one side of the formation, and also bringing a 6th defender, we label that as 6c (c = combination). Although we free release our back(s), and therefore do not see any fundamentally sound defense bring 7 defenders on a pass rush (if we release 5 players into the pass route and the defense covers all 5 receivers, they only have 6 defenders left to pass rush), we still will label any 7 man pressures we see on film to make sure we have designed the free release of the back to take advantage of any "blitz peel" rules utilized by the defense in a 7 man pressure.

Communication: How does all this translate to playing fast in practice? A typical scout team call might be "Split - Post - Run". The coach running the scout team defense will now be able to determine that the scout team should be aligned in a 6 man box with 4 first level defenders, 2 linebackers and a secondary playing post safety man-free. He simply yells out "Split Post Run", and our defense is able to function without seeing a scout card. With a veteran team, we have also created one word play calls for those defenses (Split-Post-Run = "Spore", Stack-Post-6i = "Sticks", etc.) which allows us to play even faster during team periods.



Our players are also coached on what "Split-Post-Run "

means, so the box defenders know they should line up with 4 first line defenders (aligned in whatever technique they want) and 2 linebackers, and the secondary knows to play post safety man-free coverage. It is utilizing this system of defensive calls that we can conduct a team period with a scout team defense and operate without using scout cards, or even our own defense. When facing a team that does run a similar defense to us, we will utilize our own defensive terminology (it has even helped our defensive coaches formulate 1 word calls for our defense). If our opponent does run a similar defense, but does something different with a particular scheme, we can still use the "scout team" terms, and our players will respond.

In the next article, we will demonstrate how we construct our play calls, so that we can segment the offense and allow us to enter each game with virtually the entire playbook at our disposal. We do this so we can take advantage of anything a defense does, particularly if they are showing a defense in the game they had not previously shown on film.

QB RUN GAME

ZONE READ



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Zone Read is really where this whole Quarterback run game journey began. Urban Meyer got the ball rolling with steam in this world back

when he was at the University of Utah, then Florida, and finally at Ohio State University, but many other coaches have worked on this and many more deserve credit as well. What Chris Ault did at the University of Nevada with the Zone Read from the Pistol Offense or even what Bobby Petrino did at Louisville with Lamar Jackson should be taken into the conversation (not to mention Rich Rodriguez when he was at West Virginia). Many coaches have contributed to this scheme.

The reason the Zone Read is so important is because it is what first gave the Spread Quarterback more than a simple QB draw to defend himself with the run game.

We have taken an entirely new and evolutionary twist on this play and made it our own inside The Surface to Air System. This chapter is designed to take you deep inside the nuts and bolts of what we do with Zone Read. From this point forward, we will simply refer to blocking 'Inside Zone' because that is the base blocking for all these plays, but the way we block the edges and read them varies greatly as we get into the weeds. When we block the Inside Zone play under center, the aiming points change

to resemble more of a 'Duo' play, and so the focus of this section will be on shotgun-based runs.

Basic Zone Read with RPOs

This book is not an offensive line manual, but let's first address how we would block Inside Zone versus an Over Front (Figure 4-1), Under Front (Figure 4-2), and Okie Front (Figure 4-3).

Figure 4-1

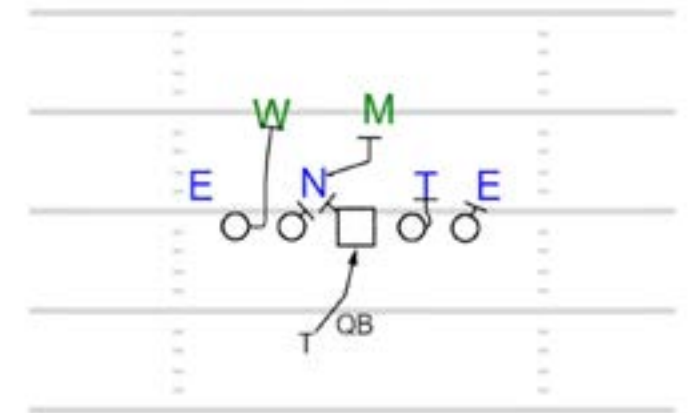


Figure 4-1

Figure 4-2

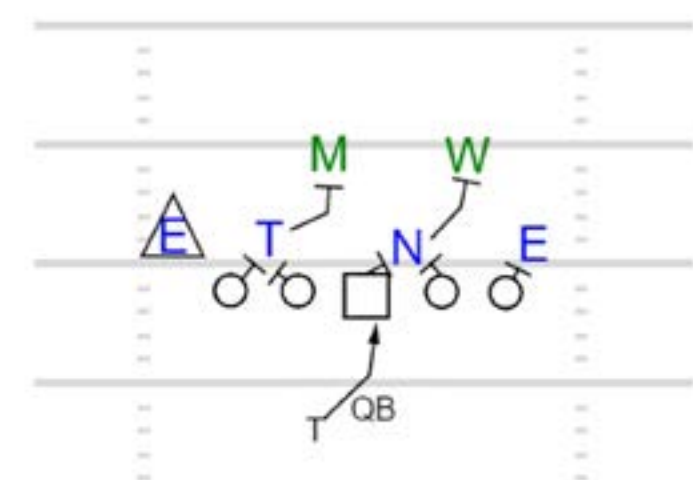
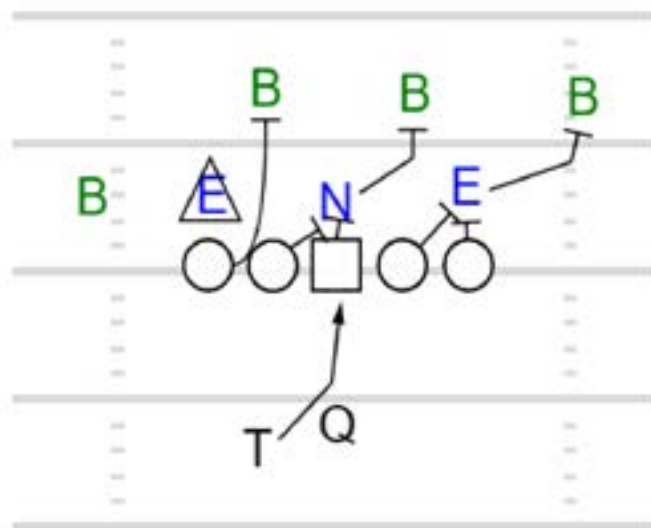


Figure 4-3



Split Zone

One of the best ways to help the Quarterback to be a better weapon is to not let him run at all. The Defenses we see now often want to employ a version of 'Squeeze and Scrape' as their main method to stop the Quarterback from pulling the football. This calls for the Defensive End to dive inside and tackle the Running Back while a Linebacker shifts outside to take the Quarterback as soon as he pulls the football. In order to prevent this from being an option that the Defense might employ, I will often call a Split Zone RPO early in the game to scare the Defense.

We teach our Offensive Linemen to "step to their cover" when blocking Inside Zone. We do this so we can create double teams whenever and wherever possible. These types of plays allow us to leave the backside C Gap Defender unblocked and read him. We do not over-teach this type of read by the Quarterback, we simply ask him to place his eyes on the C Gap Defender and make a quick and easy decision. We tell the Quarterback that if he can pull the ball and outrun the C Gap Defender, then he should do so, but if he is unsure if he can, then he should hand the ball to the Running Back. We do not want this to be overemphasized or overly complicated. It gives the Quarterback an easy-to-understand concept to follow and determine if he should pull the football, or if he should simply leave it with the Back.

This has long been one of the main ways that Quarterbacks read the Defense and get the ball on the perimeter. It is not, however, the only way it can be done and certainly not the most used form of Quarterback runs that we feature in The Surface to Air System.

Figure 4-4



This type of play "kicks" the Defensive End or C Gap Player out and allows the Linebacker (in this diagram the linebacker behind the Defensive End) to widen incorrectly. The pulling Tight End will trap the Defensive End and so both the Defensive End and the Linebacker will be trapped in the C Gap, and no one will be in the B Gap to tackle the Running Back. If the Linebacker should realize what has happened and fall back in, the Quarterback is also able to pull the ball and throw the RPO outside of him. This play is necessary, in my opinion, to slow the defensive reactions to a strong Quarterback run game. If the Defense sees that the Offense will employ a solid Split Zone scheme, then they will often not be so likely to use a Squeeze and Scrape tactic which allows the Offense more options to run the ball. As we progress, we will look at more

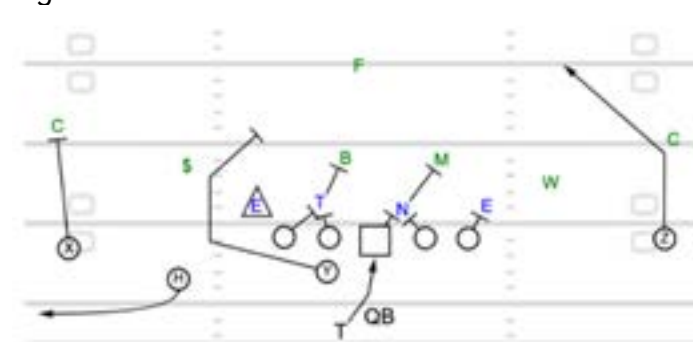
specific ways that we get the Quarterback free on zone based runs.

Load Scheme

The key to making a Quarterback run the football effectively can be boiled down to several key items. Some of these include his toughness, his ability to key defenders, and run with the ball in his hands with physicality. However, many Offenses fail to note one of the greatest keys to a good Quarterback run game is to have a selfless and effective blocking Tight End.

At Emmett High School, we have been blessed to have great kids that block well and do the "dirty work" so that our Quarterbacks can be successful with the ball in their hands. One such blocking scheme is one in which the Tight End fakes the Split Zone block and travels around the C Gap Defender, in effect "missing" this player, and blocking the D Gap Player.

Figure 4-5



The Tight End will miss the C Gap Defender and block the next player outside and behind the traditional Defensive End. We refer to this as the D Gap Defender. When this happens, we will see the C Gap Defender squeeze and take the Running Back late and the Quarterback is able to pull the ball and follow the Tight End around the end of the line of scrimmage with a lead blocker in front.

“The reason the Zone Read is so important is because it is what first gave the Spread Quarterback more than a simple QB draw to defend himself with the run game.”

The fact that we put an RPO on the perimeter will also allow us to account for any Safety or third level player that attempts to run downhill and get involved in the run fit.

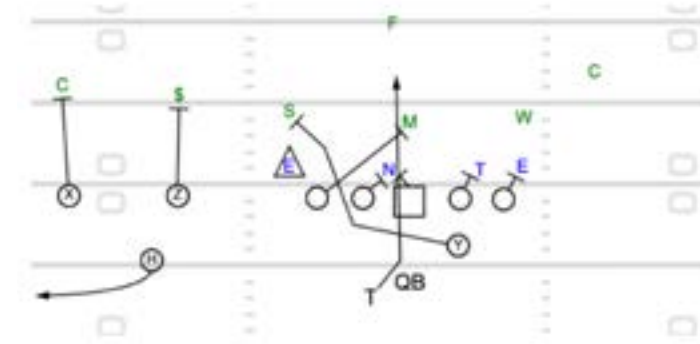
This type of play puts tremendous pressure on the Defense. It is these sorts of plays that allow the modern zone based Spread Offense to emulate the Triple Option Offense that has been largely replaced in the High School ranks today. The old Triple Option teams of yesteryear would employ very similar blocking schemes and use them to get the ball to the perimeter when teams ganged up on the Fullback or Diveback.

These are simple and time-tested ways to get the football on the perimeter in your Quarterback's hands without exposing your Queen of the Chessboard to unnecessary collisions.

Ice Blocking

The modern Defenses that we face will often attempt to 'fall in' to stop the Zone Read and this type of action needs an effective reaction from the Offense. In this case, we are going to see a 4-3 style Defense. When we see this type of Defense, we like to use unbalanced sets and try to get the Safeties out of alignment as much as possible. The Defense will attempt to set the C Gap Player outside and then run the Linebacker from outside the box back into the Running Back's path late after the handoff. When this happens, the Quarterback is tempted to hand the ball off or hold it too long, pull the ball and be tackled by a slow playing C Gap Player. To prevent that, we will create an Ice - short for Isolation Block - by the Tight End.

Figure 4-6



The Tight End will simulate the Split Zone or the Load Block, and then dive inside the C Gap Player and kick out or isolate the Linebacker attempting to fall back into the box. This allows the Quarterback to hand the ball off initially, but will also slowly cause the C Gap Player to come back inside and tackle the Running Back.

The Ice Block, Split Zone, and Load Option are all complementary and so the C Gap Player and his accompanying Linebacker are constantly placed into conflict. The Ice Block builds a wall from inside out and forces the C Gap Player to get involved, setting him up for the other types of blocks. These simple and highly effective Tight End blocks allow the play caller to select the best way to get the ball into the hands of his Quarterback and counteracts what the Defense is trying to do in terms of moving their pieces.

FEED THE CATS

BIG CATS AND THE TRUCK STICK



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[Courses](#)
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Feed the Cats
celebrates speed
and athleticism. The
development of "Apex

Predators" requires 1) sprinting fast, 2) lifting heavy, 3) jumping high, and 4) jumping far. To create apex predators, coaches must prioritize performance over "the grind". Grind as a verb refers to crushing or grinding things into smaller and smaller particles until there is almost nothing left. THE GRIND (noun) refers to dull, hard work. In order to value performance over "dull, hard work", you must build a foundation of rest, recovery, and sleep. Tired is the enemy, not the goal. Never let today ruin tomorrow. Don't burn the steak.

Football coaches celebrate speed and athleticism, but sometimes that love of athleticism begins and ends with "skill players". Offensive linemen are often treated as beasts of burden or affectionately referred to as "hogs". Football coaches who were not speedsters as players often reject the speed argument, knowing that they, themselves, were good players without being the fastest on their team. Big fast guys are terrific football players even though they will never beat the wide receiver in a race.

Among offensive tackles invited to the NFL combine (6'5", 320 pounds, and good football players), only

the fastest will go high in the draft. Fast offensive tackles are great performers, play at a higher level when fatigued, and have much longer careers than slow offensive tackles.

In spite of this FACT, high school and college football coaches do little or nothing that can be considered speed training with their bigs. I've been told that up to 90% of the offensive linemen at the high school level lift and condition, but do NO speed training. Some programs claim to lift weights and do sprints, but their sprints are repeat sprints with incomplete rest, and never timed. This is NOT sprint training. This is conditioning, and conditioning detrains speed.

In a FTC program, players are timed, jumps are measured, and everything is recorded, ranked, and published. Speed is celebrated with MPH wristbands. My track team wears 20, 21, 22, and 23 mph wristbands. Of my 35 sprinters, only two have not earned the entry-level wristband (20 mph). Sprinters that can't run 21 mph typically don't travel with our team.

But, how do we celebrate the big cats? Our best thrower (6'2" 237, starting offensive tackle in football) sprints at 20 mph. 20 mph is no big deal in the sprint world but it's freaky for a big guy. If speed is a KPI of football's big cats, how do we train, promote, and celebrate it?

Garrett Mueller is the head football coach at Stewartville H.S. in Minnesota. Stewartville is a school of 600 kids whose football team finished last fall's regular season undefeated.

Coach Mueller runs a Feed the Cats football program (aka, Sprint-Based Football). In order to create speed motivation for his bigs, he's come up with

the Madden-influenced idea of the "Truck Stick". Big guys who move fast can create tons of momentum. Would you rather get hit by a 150-pounder going 21 mph or a 250-pounder going 20 mph? Let's reward the big guys. Let's understand that gravity prevents the fastest big cats from running as fast as the skinny wide receivers.

Garrett Mueller simply plugged numbers in the physics equation for momentum, $p = m \times v$. Momentum equals mass (kg) x velocity (m/sec). It's pretty easy. If someone weighs 220 pounds, that converts to 100 kg. It's super easy to convert using Google or you can simply divide pounds by 2.2. To get velocity in meters per second, I would use google to convert mph to meters per second or simply divide mph by 2.237.

For those of you new to mph, you must time a "fly" with Freelap or some other timing device. Make sure you allow a FULL run-in (25-30 yards) or top speeds will never be reached. For a 10y fly, 20.45 divided by 10 fly time = mph. For a 10m fly, 22.37 divided by 10m fly time = mph. For 20y flies, double the number (40.90).

What's a good number for "Truck Stick"? This is what Garrett Mueller has found...

To be an impact varsity player, offensive and defensive linemen need to be 700+, big skill positions (RB, LB, TE) need to be 650+, and small skill positions (WR, DB, QB) need to be 600+. To be an all-conference player, those numbers need to be 800, 750, 700.

We have an offensive lineman who is 6'3" 252 lbs and just posted a 1043 truck stick (the unit of momentum is kg-m/s or newton-second, Ns). That's a 6'3" 252 big cat running 1.00 in the 10y fly which

converts to 20.5 mph! This is the biggest Truck Stick we've ever recorded at Stewartsburg H.S. He was a first team all-conference left tackle last year and will be a freak for us next fall.

In 2021, seven of our top eleven truck stick numbers were all-conference picks. All ten of our all-conference players were in the top 25 of our truck stick rankings.

Obviously, Truck Stick numbers go much higher at elite levels of football.

The best OT in the NFL this year was Trent Williams of the 49ers. Everyone went crazy when Kyle Shanahan lined Trent Williams up in the backfield and ran "18 Zorro". Williams motioned from left to right and proceeded to truck stick #52 Rashan Gary of the Packers (Gary is 6'5", 277). High school coaches all over America made note, thinking... "Maybe we will do that next year". However, we must ask ourselves, was the success of "18 Zorro" due to the play or the player?

Trent Williams ran 4.81 in the 40 at 315 pounds. My research says you must hit a top speed of around 20.7 mph to hit 4.81 in the 40y dash. 315 pounds = 142.9 kg. 20.7 mph is 9.25 m/s. The equation is $p = m \times v$. Therefore, Truck Stick for Trent Williams would be $142.9 \times 9.25 = 1322$ Ns. 1322 is a dangerous football player.

Jonathan Taylor was the NFL's top running back this year with 1811 yards. At 5'10", 226, Taylor ran 4.39. My research indicates that you must hit 23.6 mph to run 4.39 in the 40. That's a Truck Stick of 1085. By the way, Jonathan Taylor has verified speed, having run 10.49 in the 100m and 21.53 in the 200m in high school. Taylor also ran track at Wisconsin. Nobody questions Jonathan Taylor's

speed, but his momentum is nowhere near the momentum of Trent Williams. MPH may define Jonathan Taylor, but MOMENTUM defines Trent Williams. #TruckStick

Andrew Peterson of Fillmore Central H.S. (MN), learned about momentum from Garrett Mueller's presentation at the Track Football Consortium. Coach Peterson took momentum to another level creating dog tags for his athletes. To win a black "HIT STICK" dog tag, you must reach 600, the silver "TRUCK STICK" requires a momentum of 700, the gold dog tag, "JACKED UP", 800 kg-m/s.

On a technical note, you may wonder why we use kilograms and meters instead of pounds and yards. Well, you CAN use pounds and yards but your truck stick numbers will not be 600, 700, 800, and 900 for high school kids (1000 is a high school super-freak). The 252 pound offensive tackle that runs a freaky 20.5 mph would have a truck stick number of 2500 lbs-yd/s. I like those easily recognizable 600, 700, 800, 900, and 1000 lots better than 1500, 1750, 2000, 2250 and 2500.

On a second technical note, the record keeping is easy. Weigh your kids at the start of the month, that's their weight for the month. Enter their weight in pounds into a spreadsheet. In the next column, enter the pounds to kg formula (and fill down). Then enter their 10y fly time or 10m fly time. Next column write formula for mph conversion. Next column mph to m/sec. Next column write the formula for truck stick (kg x m/sec). Sort the team. Sort by linemen. Sort by big skill. Sort by small skill.

Record, Rank, and Publish.

Wristbands for miles per hour, dog tags for momentum.

I think we might be onto something.



**Feed the Cats
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and athleticism. The
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Predators" requires:**

- 1) sprinting fast**
- 2) lifting heavy**
- 3) jumping high**
- 4) jumping far**

LOYALTY

WHAT ARE THE CORE VALUES OF YOUR PROGRAM?



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If someone were to ask you what the core values of your program were, what would you tell them? If someone asked your players the same question, what would their answer be? If you're unsure what the answer to these kinds

of questions would be I would recommend that you ask yourself what your program is lacking. For me, leadership was an area of weakness. We were constantly looking for players to "step up" and "be leaders" year after year. I have seen coaches offer classes and curriculum to try and teach kids how to become leaders. This didn't seem to produce any kind of leaders in our program.

I made the decision that if I were to take over a program that I wanted to establish some core values in our program. During the application process I came across a tweet using the word LEAD as an acronym (L.E.A.D.). Again, leadership was something that I saw as a weakness. I saw this as a weakness in our young people but also in my ability to create leadership in them. This acronym used the letters to represent LOVE.EFFORT.ATTITUDE.DISCIPLINE. These 4 words would soon become the core values of our football program and I had no idea.

I was hired as head football coach in February of 2021. The Indiana Hoosiers had just finished one of the most exciting football seasons in their history and the state was buzzing about Tom Allen's LEO (Love Each Other) mantra. So naturally I was quickly drawn into the Love portion of this acronym. What would our players think of this though? Not only was this a word in the acronym, it was the first one! I could see some reluctance when I first started telling the players about L.E.A.D. and the word love. But back to leadership.....can one be a great leader if they don't have some sort of love for their teammates or those around

them? I don't think we could easily come up with a list of great leaders that didn't have love for those they were leading.

I was hired to be the head football coach of a program that hadn't had a winning season in exactly 10 years. Being an assistant here for the past 17 years I had been around long enough to know that EFFORT had been an issue. Not just effort from the players but I was guilty of not giving our program enough effort myself! In regards to leadership, what kind of a leader doesn't give their best effort? This was another area that would need to be focused on in our football program. We all had to be accountable for the effort we were giving.

I will be 40 years old in a few months. I have two sons. Mack is 13 and Mox is 8. I feel like I get a lesson on attitude each and every day! That being said I have 2 wonderful sons but I think we would all agree that our kids live in a drastically different world than we did. I will admit it's easy for me to see the ATTITUDE that adolescents display today and think back to the way that may have been handled or viewed when I was a teenager. However, I have learned that this type of thinking is counterproductive. It is my job to try to keep the attitudes in our program positive and productive. In a program that isn't accustomed to outworking opponents or beating opponents this would be difficult. But if leadership is trying to be cultivated then positive attitudes would be necessary.

I probably had no idea at the time, but looking back at my upbringing I had 2 choices when it came to DISCIPLINE. I would be a disciplined student, athlete, son or I would be disciplined! This was the message that I shared with our players in our 1st team meeting. Disciplined players won't need to be disciplined! If you can be a player that comes to school, works hard in the classroom, is accountable, and does things the right way, then you aren't going to have to be disciplined. In fact, you are being a disciplined person! I'm very thankful for my parents raising me this way. There's no doubt our players could understand the confidence I had in this. In regards to leaders they are usually the most disciplined people in an organization or program. Our leaders are the ones doing what is right no matter who is watching.

From day one I told our players that the word L.E.A.D. would be anywhere we could put it and we would speak it and do our best to live it out as coaches and the same would be expected of our players. All of our breaks, our warm up routines, the bumpers on our helmets, the press box, and the clothing we wore would all bear the word L.E.A.D. 1 simple word, 4 simple values. I would love to share that we had complete buy-in from day 1. However, I have had players tell me that when I came in talking about LOVE they thought I was crazy and the last guy that should be leading our football program. But we did have buy-in and that buy-in translated into kids that had been the best athletes on the field the past year or two stepping up and now being "leaders" without them even knowing it. Our players started to care for one another. Guys were looking out for each other. Guys were staying after practice with teammates or coaches to get extra reps on what we worked on that day. Effort was contagious. This spread through the players and coaches. My phone was blowing up with our coaches watching film non-stop and wanting to talk ball. Our attitudes were great far more than they were bad. Our coaching staff was becoming more disciplined in what we were trying to teach and our players saw this and bought into these concepts.

I will be the first to admit that I was blessed with some great athletes, some really good football players, and some phenomenal young men in my first season as a head coach. We finished the year 9-2, were the only undefeated team in our conference, and hosted the sectional championship game. We accomplished things that hadn't been done here in a decade or two. We made a lot of great memories but the best memories were watching our young men (and our coaches) live out the core values that some rookie head coach established for our program. One of the most exciting things for me these days is to see our players wear their L.E.A.D. gear, hear us go through the words in warmups, or get a break at the end of a workout with the word L.E.A.D. I believe these core values changed the culture of our team and allowed kids that aren't your natural-born leader type kids to live out these core values and bring others along with them. Isn't that what leaders do?

So whether you are a young head coach or a seasoned veteran, if someone were to ask you what the core values of your program are, what would your answer be? Better

yet, if they asked your players, parents, or members of the community how would they respond? For our program it was as simple as looking at the areas we needed to improve on the most and building our core values around them.

L.E.A.D.

“If someone were to ask you what the core values of your program were, what would you tell them? If someone asked your players the same question, what would their answer be?”

HEAD COACHING 101

WAYS TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TEAM



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In order to lead your team, you must know as much as possible about them. In order to learn about them,

you must gather information. Use those around you to assist in the process. Working hard to gather information is a must, but using those you have tasked to help and allowing them to have input into your organization is also key. My personal goal is to have "experts" in many different areas surrounding me and giving me as much information as they have. I then become the "funnel" and decide what we will need to use and keep and also what we will give to other areas in the organization.

Other ways to gather information on your team would be:

- 1) Take a survey at the beginning of the season
- 2) Have athletes compete in several "non-sport" related team activities and see how they interact with each other
- 3) Meet with players and families during the off-season.

[Learn how each person in your organization processes and learns best.](#)

Personality tests are a simple way to gather

information from those in your program. While a coach could spend hours looking over the results, they can also be used to see how players learn best or how they will interact with teammates. These can be a quick way to learn about those in your organization. These can be quick and accessed for free.

Once a coach has the information, it will help with many of the issues that can arise during a season. Knowing that player "X" has issues learning or is naturally a certain way, will explain some of the issues that may arise. We use the phrase:

"It explains it, but does not excuse it."

While we want our players and coaches to know that we each have struggles, we will not allow that to become an excuse to break the rules of the team or to operate in a way that would hurt our team. Coaches need to adapt to help players, but never cater to lack of discipline or give preferential treatment to players. While not all are created equal, and we must work with our players, we must be sure not to cause a split among the team.

[Understand how much information to give each group.](#)

Not to state the obvious, but people are different. As the leader we must understand who wants or needs more information to do their job correctly. I had a very difficult time early in my career with those who were less passionate than I was about football. I took it personal that they were not as interested in learning every nuance of the game. I had gone to school and dreamed of this career choice, but they did not. Many of my players, or even assistant coaches, had other aspirations and that did not make them lazy or unmotivated, it just meant they had different goals and dreams for their lives. Once I reached this understanding, I recognized that many of them did not care to know the "why" on every issue like I

did. Learning this I have realized to give them the amount of information they need to do a great job, but not overload them with details they do not find as interesting as I do.

Another issue I have run into when I give information overload is paralysis by analysis. Often a person can have too much on their plate to be able to handle a large amount of information. As a leader, I try to limit who I communicate with on "if-then" parts of our plan. The last thing I want to do is overwhelm people. This also extends from players to assistant coaches. It will cause you to decide what is the most important issue, the next most and so on.

In the past we have gone with an 80/20 rule for most players. If part of an opponent scouting report does not occur over 80% of the time, we are selective with who needs to know, but if it does occur 80% of the time, we put it in the report for our players. Those who can retain more information we will give a larger portion of the scouting report to and those who cannot will get the most valuable information only.

["Shrink" the world for your players and assistant coaches.](#)

Going back to the funnel concept, remember as a leader your job is to make those you are serving be able to do their job at the highest level. That often means to give very simple rules and make what could be a very complex or abstract job easier. I've always felt my goal was to make my players be able to process smaller doses of information very fast before we would advance them to the next level.

This also applies to assistant coaches and others in your program. Know what each is capable of before you give out information. Not each assistant coach has the same goals. Find those wishing to move up in the coaching world and give them more

opportunities. Those that are happy in their position are taught what they need to know, and while I offer to teach them more, I do not require to learn as much.

"The most complicated skill is to be simple."

Dejan Stojanovic

"In order to lead your team, you must know as much as possible about them."

FOOTBALL: 101

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE DRILLS



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Drills are the foundation of football. It's where

players develop skills that will directly impact the game on Friday night/Saturday morning. Lousy drills often translate to poor execution during the game.

To get the most out of your drills, it's important that you piece them together in a style that fits your players.

The internet is scattered with drills. Even on my Twitter page ([@ChrisvIQtory](#)), I post 2-3 drills a day.

Which drills do you use, and which ones do you discard? I've created a checklist below that will help you get the most out of the content you see on the internet.

Before we get into the checklist, I want to reshape how you look at drills.

Never look at a drill on the internet and say "that's stupid" or "that's dumb." Instead, I want you to look at the drill in its entirety and see if you can pull out pieces of the drill and create

your version of it.

Don't let ignorance suppress creativity.

Not every drill will be the right fit for you and your players. But if you can pull pieces out of "bad" drills, you can ultimately make it better. This also helps with creating your own drills that fit your system.

Drill Checklist

Game Relation - First and foremost, the drill should relate to the game in some manner. Cone drills are necessary in some instances, but for the most part, the drill should help improve a skill that a player will encounter during the game.

Time To Complete - How long does the drill take to complete? How many reps can a player get in a 5-8 minute period? Players should consistently be moving or standing in a line that is 3 players deep at the max. Slow-paced drills often cause players to phase out, fool around, or not be engaged.

How Fast Can It Be Set Up & Taught? - Complicated drills often take longer to set up and teach. Can you take your drill and set it up in 15 seconds, as well as explain it in 15 seconds? This should be the goal for your drill.

Does It Have a Finish? - One of the common mistakes with drills is there is no finish. Players often just backpedal into space, don't make contact with anything, or just sprint forward aimlessly. Make sure every drill has some sort of finish to it. Players are wired to finish plays and

react to whistles.

Drill Manual - Create a drill manual or some sort of organization of your drills. Share this manual with your coaches. I recommend giving each drill a name that way, you can shout it to your coaches, and they know what drill to do.

Take into consideration the checklist above as you continue to organize all of your drills in the off-season.

If you're looking for drills to add to your library, be sure to join our Facebook group, the [Football Coaches Forum](#).

"Never look at a drill on the internet and say 'that's stupid' or 'that's dumb.' Instead, I want you to look at the drill in its entirety and see if you can pull out pieces of the drill and create your version of it."



SKYCOACH HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE. WE SWITCHED OVER FROM HUDL WHERE WE WERE CONSTANTLY HAVING ISSUES AND SKYCOACH WORKS PERFECTLY. CUSTOMER SUPPORT IS ALSO THE BEST WHEN YOU ARE TRYING TO SET IT UP FOR THE FIRST TIME OR YOU HAVE A QUESTION. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE WOULD DO WITHOUT SKYCOACH.

Ted Neal - Fort Smith Northside HS

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RURAL FOOTBALL REFLECTIONS

SMALL SCHOOL PRACTICES PART I



Kevin Swift
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[Football Tool Chest](#)

In this edition of Headsets, I am going to discuss Small School Practices and Practice Plans. Before jumping in, I think we should define Small School Football. It is a school playing 11-man football, with anywhere between 18 to 35 players in the entire program. It is where all 4 classes (9th, 10th, 11, & 12th) of players are on the same team. There is one varsity team and JV only breaks off for the occasional game, usually 4 to 5 games. During my tenure, Gold Beach was a school of 190 to 145 students, and we average 27 kids a year, with anywhere between 5 to 8 freshmen included in those 27 kids.

Next let us look at some of my early learning curve issues I had to learn. See I was for the first 12 years of my career a Big Suburb School Coach. I was coaching in programs that had 12 to 18 coaches in the program, 4 to 5 lower-level teams, and over 180 kids in entire program. So, my learning curve was STEEP the first few years on the rural Oregon Coast.

Some Basic Overall Learned Lessons:

Rural or Small School kids usually do not play in well-organized youth programs or middle school programs. This is a generalization I know, and I

apologize, but this was my experience here in Gold Beach. So, the overall knowledge of the game is extremely limited. Scheme selection is critical here; choose a scheme that is not dependent on very highly skilled and football savvy players. Teach the kids to know 2 positions on offense and 2 to 3 positions on defense, because you will never escape depth issues.

Protect and nurture your freshmen, they truly are the lifeblood of your program. If they have an unpleasant experience, why would they continue to play? We talk extensively to our upper classmen about nurturing them in our program's routines and expectations. Teaching is something we expect our upper classmen to help us do with freshmen. We also put freshmen in yellow practice jerseys and everyone else in black; this tells EVERYONE color verse color! Black vs black in tackling, drills or scheme work, and yellow verse Yellow in tackling, drills, or scheme work. Freshmen gradually earn their black jersey through slow and careful very calculated reps monitored by the staff. An example would be by the third week of the season a freshman is volunteering to get some reps against a second-string upper classman in one-on-one blocking and is holding his own. So then at end of practice the team captains would honor the young man by awarding him a black jersey in front of the entire team. There is NO timetable for earning the black jersey, but most have earned by week 5 or 6 of the season. This practice has served us very well.

Finding ways to get JV or Fresh/Soph games are critical for long term health of program and ensure numbers are where they need to be. We often played 2 quarters of JV games before our varsity contest. This allowed coaching staff to be involved in games and not miss any varsity time. Kids practicing all week and never getting any playing

time will slowly destroy a team's numbers. Injuries will kill not just a game but potentially an entire season, so when practicing frequency and intensity of hitting must always be on your mind. We do a lot of Thud and match up work to avoid too much full contact. So, we are only in full pads on Tuesdays & Wednesdays. Mondays are the longest practice day due to Scouting Reports is just in helmets and Thursdays are dress rehearsals (Game Uniforms) for Friday's Game.

Indo time must reflect your numbers. Little story to illustrate my point. In summer of 2005, our seniors were at Mater Dei; in southern California working out for the summer like had been our practice each summer. After the workout, my All-State Defensive End told Coach Rollinson and myself that our practices at Gold Beach were harder than the Monarchs. Bruce and I chuckled, and then I asked why he said that. Matt said, "here the defensive line goes to Indo period for 20 minutes and there are 18 defensive linemen, back in Gold Beach we get a 20-minute Indo period with 7 defensive linemen.", this was eye opening to me. So, over the years we have gone to 10-minute Indo periods and spent more time in group scheme work. Indo cannot become conditioning.

Team Defensive Scrimmages in practice are a waste of time and do more harm than good for your overall team. As I stated earlier, I came to rural Oregon as a seasoned defensive coordinator in large suburb schools in southern California and team periods verse a scout team were an integral part of our daily practices. So, when I arrived at Gold Beach in 1997, I expected Team Defensive Periods to be used here. Holy cow, I was wrong! On a squad of 25 or 26, with 5 to 8 being freshmen, creating a competent Offensive Scout Team is just NOT going to happen.

(continued on next page)

“Protect and nurture your freshmen, they truly are the lifeblood of your program. If they have an unpleasant experience, why would they continue to play? We talk extensively to our upper classmen about nurturing them in our program's routines and expectations. Teaching is something we expect our upper classmen to help us do with freshmen.”

game. We would like each player to get 4 to 6 good form tackles during these weekly tackling periods. This means each player would average between 16 to 24 controlled and coached tackles each week of the season. We think this part of our daily practices is why we have usually been good tackling teams.

Special Teams:

Special Teams are 1/3 of the game and can have enormous impact on a high school game, so we practice one or two Special Teams a day. We will put the period in the middle of the practice plan, so our players know it is important. I think when you practice it at the end or very beginning it can send the wrong message about its importance. In the beginning you could not have all your players there for a variety of reasons and if at the end players and coaches all tend to lack the attention they need. We spend a little more time on our Punt Team than most because we will run a full offense out of it. We do this for two reasons, one it excites the kids with trickery and two opponents are going to have to take away practice time to deal with it. In each of our 5 trips to the state finals, special teams played a huge role in us getting there and we use this as an example for all the teams I have coached here in Gold Beach.

Option Drill:

This is our most important period because it involves everyone on the squad, and it brings together everything we do offensively. It also inadvertently benefits our defense by giving them very physical reps against double teams and a strong inside running game. We usually turn the offense to come out from the bleacher sidelines so we can get informative video of drill for teaching and the offense must work uphill slightly.



So, as you can see in diagram above, we created a coaching or safe area between left side of our offensive line and our right side of our offensive line. What we do next can vary daily, but we usually start with our starting offensive line in the spots. Starting Center, Starting TE, and starting backfield will always start out on left side. Second string center or JV center, second string or JV TE and back up backfield or JV backfield always starts on right side. Defensively where most of our youngsters are we can go bags by DL and rip pads on LBS or we can go live, or thud and our kids prefer that over bags and pads. To go LIVE, Defensive Linemen MUST be a BLACK Shirt! We will NOT beat the tar out of a not ready freshman. When it is live it is very physical with a quick whistle to prevent injuries, I had a young coach ask me the purpose of this drill once and I said it was to get inside veer and outside veer reps in and beat the tar out of each other to make us ornery and physical. We will pull a starter out of offensive line who also starts on defense periodically to get best verse best, but this drill has created great depth for us on the defensive line. In 2007 our first state championship we played 7 kids regularly on the defensive line, it was wonderful and attracted more kids to come out in following years. During the period, we switch our left side center, TE, and backfield with right side, so we are

going both ways in drill. We can run all our base veer option game in this drill. This drill honestly gives us our identity I believe. It has served us well for over 14 years.

1/2 Line:

Along with Option Drill this is another drill that helps us be the physical team we desire to be. It is like Option Drill but now we will add aspects of our quick 1 step & 3 step passing schemes in this period. We get best verse best which gives our defensive kids great reps, a lot of time; even though we are going right we will put our young kids / JV on backside to work backside blocking and defensive play. It truly is a defensive and offensive period; we coach the heck out of both sides of the ball. We get enough reps and run fills in Option Drill and 1/2 Line to help us play solid team defense. Counters, backside fills, and pursuit angles are taken care of in Set Recognition Period.

Set Recognition:

We talk about this period earlier going over Monday and Tuesday's version of it, heavy teaching periods and reteaching periods. Wednesday is the cutback, counter, and pursuit version. We call a defense and kids get set and then we put a ball carrier somewhere and we pursue or scrape for cutback. We will work reading near backs and distinguishing color going other way for counter fills or angles, with entire defense. Still a lot of teaching but faster pace with some pops involved in period. Not anything like Option Drill or 1/2 Line but there will be some Thuds or Pops.

Team Offense:

We end Monday through Wednesday practices with Team Offense. While it is called Team Offense, players rotate out or to the other side of the ball the entire period. Our kids and backups know that they

must get reps on both sides of the ball, and we are playing our defense and our opponents through the entire period. Our defense playoff book is based on multiple fronts all playing gap control, so most of our opponents defenses we run ourselves. We are working on our offensive game plan which really does not change much from week to week.

[Link to Practice plans for Bandon 2010 Season](#)

Well, this takes us through our practices Monday through Wednesday. I hope it provides some ideas for coaches in similar situations to ponder. I will take everyone through Thursday practice in the next edition of Headsets.

POUND THE STONE

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?



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Willie Mays will forever be remembered as #24.

Rickey Henderson wore #24 in honor of Mays, who was his childhood hero.

Ken Griffey, Jr. wore #24 to honor his hero, Rickey Henderson.

While each of these men are enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, the #24 remains part of baseball and its legacy lives on for future generations of athletes yet to come.

Each season, jersey numbers are issued to every member of a team. Athletes forge their identity through the number issued to them, which can be used to determine their position on the field or, as described above, represent their heroes. But jersey numbers are rented, owned by an organization, not an individual. At the end of the season, every jersey will be collected, stored, and reissued the following year. However, the accomplishments earned and the memories made while wearing that number are the athlete's to keep. These become part of each number's legacy.

Athletes can define their legacy by asking themselves one question: how do you want to be remembered? Dan McCarney first posed this question to our football staff at Iowa State University in 2004, and for nearly twenty years, I've thought a lot about these seven words. In 2003, McCarney's Cyclones finished 2-10, dead last in

the Big XII. The next spring, Coach Mac challenged our coaching staff to change the trajectory of Cyclone Football and rewrite the legacy we were leaving.

The 2004 campaign was one of the most successful in Iowa State football history. Our mantra became "OOTMITIA," which stood for "One Of The Most Improved Teams In America." By focusing on growth and improvement, our team added four wins to the previous season's total, finishing the regular season as co-Big XII North Champions. We also earned a bid to play in the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, Louisiana. With one more opportunity to add to the 2004 team's legacy, Iowa State defeated the Miami Redhawks, one of just five bowl wins in school history. Today, I celebrate the greatest turnaround in Cyclone Football history whenever I wear our team's bowl championship ring. When I stare at the encrusted diamonds, my mind drifts back to our team mantra, "OOTMITIA," and the question that made it all possible: How do you want to be remembered?

Every organization has its own unique history. Bo Schembechler, the legendary coach of the Michigan Wolverines, believed it is the leader's responsibility to pass that history on to future people inside the organization. Schembechler used to tell his players: "It's your job to learn it, respect it, and to teach it." A football team's history can be told through team accomplishments, individual accolades, or a combination of the two. But how do you honor the contributions of others when a team experiences limited success?

The final week of the regular season has become Legacy Week in Monarch Football. Like Coach McCarney, I challenge our team to think about the legacy they are leaving behind for future Monarchs. Legacy Week is a time to think, reflect, evaluate, and appreciate where an athlete's football journey started and compare it to where they are now. Legacy Week means something different to each member of our team. For underclassmen, it is the opportunity to dream; to state their future goals and create a plan to attack them. For coaches, Legacy Week is a time to uphold the traditions and values of Monarch Football, as well as honor those who came before us and

carve out the path for players who are yet to be. Legacy Week hits hardest for the Seniors, whose time in Monarch Football is coming to an end. It signifies the last time they will wear purple and gold, bask in the Friday Night Lights, enjoy the company of their teammates, many of whom they have known since elementary school, and the opportunity to create one final memory that will be burned into their minds long into adulthood.

During Legacy Week, every Senior is invited to complete a brief Google Form, which consists of the following questions:

What years did you participate in Monarch Football?

What number did you choose to wear?

A picture is worth 1,000 words. Upload your favorite picture of you wearing your jersey.

Describe your best memory as a Monarch.

What advice do you want to pass on to future Monarchs?

Responses are collected and stored in a Google Sheet, which is organized by number.

If you would like a copy of the Google Form we send out

"Once A Monarch, ALWAYS A Monarch"							
Monarch Football's Jersey Legacy							
#	Player Name	Favorite Photo	Position	Year	"The reason WHY I wore this number is..."	Favorite Memory as a Monarch:	Advice for Future Monarchs:
1							
2							
3	Hunter		QB/RB	2019-2021	Because it was the only single digit number when I was a sophomore.	My best memory as a Monarch was starting the game at QB against Hartman as a Junior. The picture I submitted is from that game.	Talk to people, get to know your coaches, and make practice fun because then everyone wants to be there.
4							
5	Matthew		WR/TE	2019-2021	I wore 30 freshman year because it was my favorite number growing up. Sophomore year I wore 83 just because there really wasn't any other options. The last two years I have wore the number 5 just for the fact that I wanted a number in the single-digits and I thought the number 5 was the best option.	Playoff win against Carroll during the 10-21 season.	Don't take your time in football for granted. The four years of high school go by faster than you think.
6	Evah		WR/TE	2017-2020	Smallest number available.	Missing homecoming my senior year against Creston. Friday night lights is the best feeling in the world as a high schooler, play like every game is your last.	
7							
8	Devin		WR/TE	2019-2021	As a kid I wore 8 and I was going to be the closest looker wise that I was going to get.	Scoring my first touchdown this season at Wingback, a new position for me in offense.	Your time will come when you need to help the team no matter how small it may be. I didn't touch the field my freshman and sophomore year because of how small I was, but I was given a chance my junior year and made the most of it. You may have to wait for your time but it's come, just be ready for it.
9							
10	Tray		WR/TE	2019-2021	My older brother wore this number and he was someone I always looked up to.	Being Bishop Heber for the first time in school being my sophomore year 8.	Regardless of how hard it can be, stick with it because once it is over you will wish you could go back and do it all again.

LESSONS LEARNED

LEARNING THROUGH LOSING



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In an old playbook, I read the following description for the team's quarterback and it stated that "without question, mental toughness, physical toughness, and caring

are the three most important intangibles in a winning quarterback." I appreciated this playbook for specifying what they wanted to see in their quarterback. As a coach, however, it is not enough to just list these traits – we must also define them. I could go to my quarterbacks and tell them that I want them to be mentally tough, physically tough, and caring, but if I am not able to teach them how to do such things, what good is it?

I must admit that in the past, I have always felt the term "mental toughness" to be too abstract for meaningful use. As I researched the term for this article, I found that I was not alone and the definition for mental toughness is slippery. But in this article, I don't just want to seek a definition for mental toughness, but also explore that definition in a story about how I learned more about it through a season of losing. By looking at mental toughness and what I learned through learning, I argue that you must have a vision beyond the game to succeed in coaching.

Let's begin:

Defining Mental Toughness

When you ask coaches what mental toughness is, you will hear many different answers that revolve around the same ideas and are held in high esteem, yet no clear consensus. The consensus is in its importance, not

the precise definition. One paper that I have read on the subject reported that in a study of wrestling coaches, 82% of the coaches rated mental toughness as "the most important psychological attribute in determining wrestling success" (Jones 2002, 206). In that same study, "only 9% of these coaches stated that they were successful in developing or changing mental toughness in the performers they worked with" (Jones 2002, 206). This is but one study, but it certainly tracks with how I always felt about the term – easy to use, but hard to grasp.

We must still seek to define the term if we as coaches want to have a chance in teaching it or cultivating it. In the past, "researchers and theorists have defined mental toughness in terms of coping effectively with pressure and adversity so that performance remains little affected" (Crust 2007, 271). In other words, circumstances do not affect the actions we need to take to complete the mission, whatever that may be.

But just like those wrestling coaches who felt mental toughness was so important but did not feel they were a part of its development, I have also struggled with knowing how to teach a player mental toughness.

A definition gives a starting point and to round out understanding, we must look to the end point. In other words, we've got to have a clear, specific vision.

Applying Mental Toughness

To create a learning situation where you can teach mental toughness, there must be an endgame insight that makes sense. In the words of a friend, you've got to show them there's a light at the end of the tunnel. Being good at anything does not happen overnight as much as we want it to. The acceptance of that fact is in fact the first step in becoming mentally tough – being able to see the end of the story where you are good at what you've been working toward. When we are learning something new, we are going to be bad at it. This is a true for our players, but also for us as coaches. I am a young coach and I know that I am not as good a coach as I will be. At times, that reality is hard to deal with especially when it bares its ugly head in losses.

The truth I must face – as well as all coaches – is that if we are going to demand mental toughness from our players, we ourselves must be in the constant pursuit of mental toughness for ourselves as well. And I will be the first to admit – I have not always been mentally tough, nor have I been consistent. I have failed time and time again. Last year, I was the head coach of the JV team and we went 0-8. The experience was brutal and embarrassing and I did not like a single moment of it. But these moments of failure forced me to explore my own mental toughness through my failures and my successes.

After our third loss of the year, I called Coach Simpson for some advice because I was distraught for my players and at a loss on what to do, so I decided to seek counsel. Amongst other things, Coach Simpson told me I needed to teach my players mental toughness. I agreed, but I realized that I myself needed to examine my own mental toughness.

How am I handling these losses?

When you're losing games, self-doubt does not creep in, but leaps in. You start to blame yourself and then when that becomes too uncomfortable, you start to blame everyone but yourself. How could I as the coach look to my players and demand them to be mentally tough when I was doubting my abilities to be the right coach for them? I could blame my situation and say that I was never going to succeed with the hand I'd been dealt, or do the most dreadful and blame my players. At that point in the season, I had to look at myself and learn to be mentally tough. I had to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

And that light was not just the end of the season when the losses would stop. That light – those lights – were the players themselves. As much as I hurt for my players, I was still too focused on myself and my failures as a coach. I'm a coach trying my best to be a great coach – but for what? To be the smartest, the most creative, the winningest? Or to serve the young men that walk into our fieldhouse every year who need the guidance, lessons, and love that the great sport of football provides?

I have failed as a coach more times in this past year than I ever could've imagined when I started coaching. But I am not defined by my failures because I am defined by my relationship with the one who has never failed – Jesus Christ. And so, despite the many trials, those I cause and those I do not, the mission remains the same: love others just as Christ loves me.

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