

# HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 2: ISSUE 5

*special teams*  
**DRILLS**

**TEN**  
**SURVIVAL TIPS**  
**FOR COACHES**

**CALL SHEET**  
**CULTURE**

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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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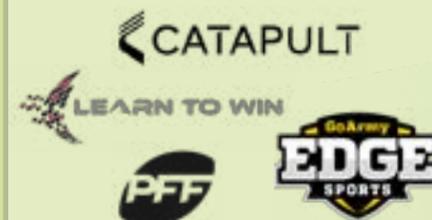
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# QB RUN GAME

## BUCK SWEEP & BELLY



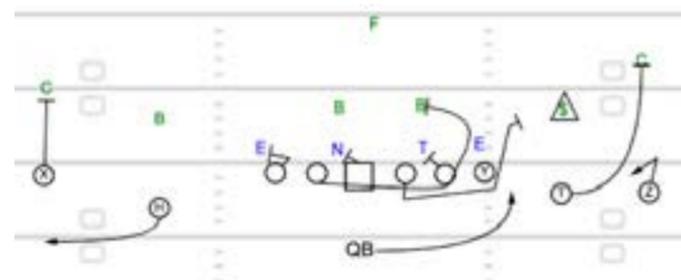
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### 01P Buck Sweep

A simple way to attack Defenses is to utilize the Buck Sweep play. The Tight End and play side Tackle both are required

to block down while the play side Guard pulls and kicks out. The Center blocks back and the backside Guard pulls and wraps for the Linebacker. The final player is the backside Tackle as he cuts off the backside C Gap.

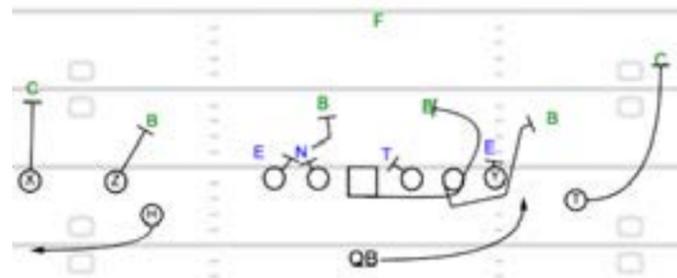
This style of blocking is very simple and will feature the Quarterback as the runner. This complicates the surface for the Defense by placing the Running Back on the Sweep side of the play and then putting the force player in conflict.



In this instance, the Quarterback has a pre-snap throw to the backside of the formation and a post-snap read to the call side of the formation. This structure forces the Defense out of a Two High Safety Defense and into a predictable structure.

The one countermeasure the Defense might execute would be to set an Under Front to the Tight End side. The Offense can counter the countermeasure

by pulling the play side Tackle and Center instead of both Guards to create better angles for the Offensive Line.



In this instance, we can set the Trips to the field and empty the Running Back to the boundary to block the Corner to that side. This style of play allows us to "load" the boundary side run, potentially outnumber the Defense to the field side of the formation and throw any number of easy RPOs to that side. The beauty of these Sweep plays is there are many to dress up the formation. We could align with a Wing, employ Motion, or tag any number of RPOs to make the structure of the Offense harder for the Defense to relate to.

### 01P Belly

The Belly and Down play have long been a staple of off-tackle style football. These plays are also great ways to attack in the modern power spread run game world. We like to keep the Tight End attached and empty the Running Back to the same side as the Tight End as he and the playside Tackle both block down onto the first defender to their inside gap.



The rest of the Offensive Line will execute Inside Zone and push their gaps toward the call side of the formation. We require the Quarterback to take a lateral step and then Belly step towards the line of scrimmage. This allows him to read the playside pair of Receivers and determine if the flat defender to that side will come off his coverage assignment and play the run or stay true to his coverage responsibility.

This type of play is effective in that it allows the Quarterback to throw pre-snap away from the call or post-snap towards the call. The fact that he has the ball in his hand forces the defense to freeze and hold their assignments and be late for their run-fit responsibilities.

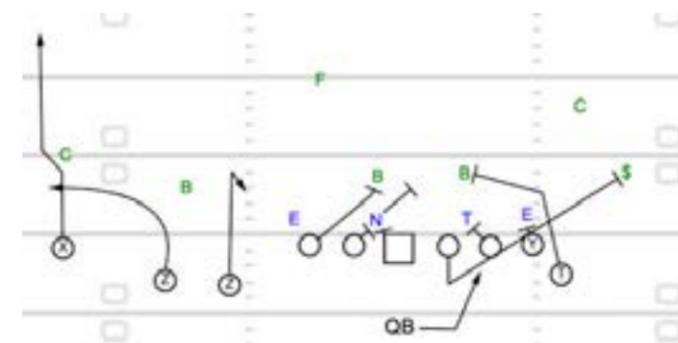
The Belly play is also a great play to the open side of the formation as well, but requires a slight change for it to remain effective. One of the ways we, in The Surface To Air System, have modified the play to the open side is to pull the Center.



We only employ this answer when we have a Shade technique to the open side of the formation. We feel the angle of the Tackle down to the Linebacker, the Guard down on the Shade, and the Center kick out on the End are advantageous for our Offense. We will again run the rest of the Offensive Linemen on an Inside Zone track back to the call to cut off pursuit by the Defense.

In the diagram above, we have the Tight End working with the Offensive Linemen, but he could also be released and allowed to work as part of the RPO.

We also like the idea of running the Belly play as a part of a true Tight End/Wing or Power Pair alignment.



This structure allows us to place a 3x1 set, most likely to the field, and the Tight End and Wing back into the boundary. We now have an 'extra hat' to block Down and seal the Linebacker so the Quarterback has an easy path to the perimeter.

This blocking scheme forces the Cornerback to become the force player and thereby forces the Defense to usually play Cover 0 to the field. The Free Safety must either play off and give us a free access Hitch or close the distance on the inside receiver and make himself vulnerable to a vertical throw. We have also achieved the widely accepted offensive advantage of putting our Quarterback on their Cornerback. We are making their cover players tackle and that is an advantageous position for the Offense to be in.

# FEED THE CATS

## TEN SURVIVAL TIPS FOR COACHES



Tony Holler  
Speaker/Author/Founder  
of Feed the Cats and  
Track and Football  
Consortium  
[Courses](#)  
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I grew up in a coach's house and witnessed the toll that coaching takes on a family. My

father coached for 47 years and won 644 games as a high school and college basketball coach. By the time I was 15, my dad had coached at five schools and we had moved four times. By then, we were trading water financially. Our family car was a broken-down station wagon with a defective gas gauge and a dented driver's side door that wouldn't open. Needless to say, I didn't drive to my prom.

My mom was the glue that held it all together. Somehow, mom found ways to provide food, clothing, and shelter for six people with limited resources.

I wanted the life that my father had. I was certain at age 19, and that same certainty has never left me. I wanted to wake up every day excited... excited about the players on my team, the next game, and the next season. I wanted the emotional connection that coaches have with their athletes. I wanted the winning and losing, and everything that went with it.

Most coaching careers end badly. Many are train wrecks. Marriages suffer. Families become dysfunctional. Every year, hundreds of coaches

resign "to spend more time with their family." If a coach is going to survive the long haul, he must take care of his family first. Nothing ends a coaching career faster than problems at home.

I write this with a proud but humble heart. This article is not an attempt to impress anyone. As I complete my 41st year of coaching, I believe I have something of value to share with others. My survival guide may not be your survival guide. Even though my ten tips are unique to my life, some of them are universal. I hope young coaches may benefit.

### #1 GO HOME FOR LUNCH

I live four minutes from Plainfield North High School. For 38 of my 41 years in the game, I have lived within a mile of my workplace. To my knowledge, I was the only teacher at Plainfield North who went home for lunch. Rain, sleet, or snow, I ate lunch at home. Stale air and fluorescent lighting can distort your senses. In addition, eating lunch with unappreciated, underpaid, curriculum-driven teachers is no way to keep your spirits high. But here's the more important issue. If you live close enough to go home for lunch, you also have a quick drive to work and a quick drive home. I work with teachers who endure a two-hour round-trip commute. I guarantee you one thing: those teachers aren't going to coach long. It's no secret, coaching can seem like a full time job in addition to teaching. If you add 6-12 hours of driving to a work week, something is going to break.

### #2 CHOOSE WISELY

In my introduction, I mentioned my mom. She was a mother of four by the age of 30 and gave up a promising career in order to become a wife and a mother (common in the 1950's). My dad chose wisely. Not only did he marry an attractive high school valedictorian from a solid family, but he

also married a girl who understood sports. Three of my mom's brothers played college football; two of them became career football coaches. Venus & Mars marriages may not work so well for coaches. I married Jill in 1983. We were both teachers. Before we got together, I knew Jill attended every home basketball game at Harrisburg High School. I was the head basketball coach. I also learned Jill was a huge football fan. To this day, my wife enjoys sports as much as I do.

### #3 BUY A BACKYARD POOL

In 1993, I won a small settlement for a wrongful dismissal as head basketball coach. We invested around \$3,000 into a backyard pool for our family of six. For the next 11 summers, our pool was the center of family life. A picture of the Holler backyard pool, circa 2001. Resort living for a small price.



As a coach, I worked long weeks from August until May. In my first eight years of teaching, I coached football, basketball, and track. Over the past 41 years, I've coached 78 teams. And, as every coach knows, coaching doesn't end when the season is over.

For the career coach, summer must become summer vacation. Creating a backyard playground makes sense. Today, youth baseball is the tail that wags the dog for many American families. An

alarming number of kids age 6 to 18 are paraded all over the country to play in tournaments and gain national exposure. Parents invest thousands into a sport that was once relatively free. When families follow their prodigies from game to game, the fabric of family life changes. Forget about that backyard pool.

When I think of a coach giving up summer vacation in order to follow their kids' baseball teams from Tucson to Tucumcari, I just shake my head.

### #4 RETHINK OBLIGATIONS

I was blown away by the book, Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less, by Greg McKeown. I believe it to be the best coaching book ever written, even though it was not written for coaches.

I've learned to say no. I have declined hundreds, if not thousands, of graduations, graduation parties, baptisms, first communions, confirmations, funerals, weddings, school plays, family get-togethers, coach's parties, and just about everything else you can imagine. The only sport I watch on TV is football.

Remember, these survival tips are mine. You may disagree. Throughout my coaching career, I've made decisions to simplify my life by going big on the things that mattered most to me. I've de-emphasized or eliminated many things that others hold dear.

Please understand I am not criticizing those who live lives of duty and obligation. I respect those who show up for their niece's middle school graduation. I respect people who attend the funerals of distant relatives and friends of friends. Those people have made their choices and I have made mine.

*(continued on next page)*

## #5 READING, RUNNING, AND WRITING

Books are always available. They never demand my attention, and they don't make appointments. I've read around 1,000 books in the past 50 years. To me, reading allows me to travel without leaving my home. I can't imagine my life without reading.

When money was tight, I got my books from the public library. Reading quiets my mind and feeds my spirit. Because of reading, I'm never bored. Never being bored is highly underrated.

Running and reading have become the common thread of my life. Both are relatively free. Both can be done without going somewhere in a car. Both make me feel healthy. When I'm feeling stressed or out of control, I always find that two things are missing in my life: reading and running. If you can't run, walk. We often must resort to the "next best thing".

I did not write my first article until I had coached for 30 years. Writing does not quiet my mind like running and reading, but there's a special relationship between all three.

How is my writing related to running and reading? When I run, my mind gets creative. Almost all of my ideas come to me when I'm running. No one taught me to write. Reading provides my only training as a writer. The knowledge that a sentence either sounds right or sounds awkward is a product of being a reader.

Writing forces you to organize your thoughts. Writing helps you to refine your coaching philosophy and articulate your beliefs.

## #6 ALL YOU NEED IS ENOUGH

My father never carried a wallet; never slipped me a 5-dollar bill. His pockets were always empty. Dad

brought his paychecks home and handed them to my mom. Some people's minds never stray from the profit margin. The struggle for the legal tender is the alpha and omega of many American men. Not my dad.

As a first-year teacher in 1981, I was assigned five classes of low-level science in a 100-year-old building with no air conditioning and plaster falling off the walls. I coached football, basketball, and track. My paycheck was \$499, twice a month. Renting a trailer cost me \$160 and my school loan payment was more than my rent. My teaching salary didn't exceed \$50K until I was 50. If I measured success based on my paycheck, I am a career failure. Teachers and coaches measure success on a different scale. Our success cannot be quantified (though poorly informed people think otherwise). I grew up in a family who had enough to live on. My kids grew up with enough.

There's nothing divine about living paycheck to paycheck. Small setbacks cause high anxiety. One of my life's regrets is not being able to pay for my kids' college education. All four of my kids borrowed around \$100K to attend college.

In my Hall of Fame speech, I told the audience, "When Jill and I got married, we were about \$20,000 in debt and we rented a house. Here I am 30-some years later, and we are \$20,000 in debt and we rent a house."

## #7 TAKE YOUR KIDS TO WORK

There was no separation anxiety when our kids went to kindergarten because they went to school with their mother. Whether Jill was teaching 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade, her classroom was right down the hallway from Adrienne, Alec, Troy, and Quinn. The perfect job for a mother puts her in the same

building as her kids.

All four of my kids attended my high school. I had the privilege of teaching Chemistry-I, Chemistry-II, and Anatomy Physiology to Adrienne and Alec at Harrisburg High School. In Plainfield, I taught Honors Chemistry to Troy and Quinn.

I never coached my daughter, but I coached Alec's freshmen and sophomore football teams. I was varsity offensive coordinator when Troy started as a wide receiver during his junior and senior years. Quinn was my quarterback in sophomore football. Alec, Troy, and Quinn ran track, and all three were hurdlers.

By the way, I quarterbacked my father's sophomore football team and started for his varsity basketball team. Dad was my World History teacher at Princeton High School in 1973.

Having keys to the gym is one of the few perks of coaching. On most Sundays, I would take my kids to the gym. It seemed like they could play there forever.

I don't think there was ever a track meet where a couple of my kids didn't ride the bus. They witnessed every locker room and every sideline. Not many jobs are as kid-friendly as coaching. To this day, I share coaching with two of my boys. Alec coaches football and track at Edwardsville H.S., Quinn coaches football and track at Tinley Park Andrew H.S.

#8 YOUR WIFE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A SUPER-FAN I've known many coaches who expect their wife to support them by attending their athletic events. This is unhealthy.

Attendance at events should never be required. After a week of teaching 2nd grade (aka, "The Death

*(continued on next page)*

March"), Jill would often require an extensive period of rest and recovery. Heading out to a Friday night football game or an all-day Saturday track meet would have done her in.

By the very nature of a coach's job, the wife of a coach will be involved; very involved. Coaches take their work home. During the season, I am a coach from the time I wake in the morning until the time I go to sleep at night, and then I dream about it. Your wife may want to be your assistant, or the team mom, or super-fan. She may want to sit in the stands and bask in your popularity and hear all the lovely things parents say about you. No problem. Just make sure the involvement is her choice and not yours.

# 10 Survival Tips for Coaches

1. Go home for lunch
2. Choose wisely
3. Buy a backyard pool
4. Rethink obligations
5. Reading, Running, Writing
6. All you need is enough
7. Take your kids to work
8. Your wife doesn't have to be a superfan
9. Raise free range kids
10. Feed the cats

## #9 RAISE FREE RANGE KIDS

It's strange that so many people prefer free-range chickens, but choose to cage their kids. I don't know when all of this changed, but parenting today can be a soul-crushing job.

At the risk of sounding like an old codger who talks about the good old days, here goes. Jill and I were born at the end of the Baby Boom. We were born before the pill made it much easier to plan births and limit family size. As kids, we walked to school and walked home. We went barefoot in the summer, climbed dangerous trees, and ate wild berries, green apples, and anything else that looked edible. We made up our own games in the backyard, made our own rules, and fought our own fights. Our dogs ran the neighborhood with us. Bikes would take us places we had never been.

When Jill and I became parents, necessity demanded we raise our kids the way our parents raised us. We were busy people with four kids and no money. Our kids walked from their school to my practice without supervision. Ninety-nine percent of my kids' athletic development took place without uniforms, travel teams, or personal trainers. Needless to say, we didn't arrange playdates for our kids.

If we would have raised our kids like the zombie apocalypse parents of today, there's no way I could have continued to coach. I don't know how modern parents do all they do. I'm sure it takes lots of sacrifice. I'm just not sure it's necessary.

Here's the good news: Kids don't have to take up all of your time. Free-range kids grow up to be strong and healthy adults. As a bonus, parents of free-range kids also get to live as strong and healthy adults, instead of babysitters and soccer moms.

## #10 FEED THE CATS

Less is more. Tired is the enemy, not the goal. Performance > Hard Work. Content > Process. Excellence > Busy Work. Limit practice time, perfect the essentials and go home to your families. Eliminate six-hour coaches meetings. Sleep at night. Don't burn the steak. Never let today ruin tomorrow. Decomplexify. Make practice the best part of kid's day. Reflect the enthusiasm of your athletes. Build racehorses not workhorses. Understand that teams who are 100% healthy and 80% in shape will always beat the teams who are the opposite.

Too many people fail to make a high level of contribution because they spread themselves too thin. Their career becomes an attempt to look good, rather than actually being good. Their fraudulent performance forces them to echo the ideas of their bosses to appear competent and important.

I am a coach. I am also a husband, father, and grandfather. Balancing coaching, teaching, and home life allowed me to be reasonably good at all three.

To all of you young teacher-coaches out there, always appreciate the uniqueness of your job. You inspire kids and chase excellence on a daily basis. You have the opportunity to share your work with your spouse and kids. When you fight through those tough weeks, remember summer vacation is coming soon.

I am very fortunate to have a job that still stirs my blood. I hope my survival tips will help coaches stay in the game.

# RURAL FOOTBALL REFLECTIONS

## CAPTAINS



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The subject of Team Captains is always met with skepticism by people and coaches.

Many feel that Captains divide a team or are not needed for a team to be successful. My feeling on Captains goes back to my high school days and Servite's Curia (Captains); and the belief that one of our jobs as Educators / Coaches is to develop and teach leaders for the future. The late John Madden had a great quote "Leadership cannot be taught in a classroom, but must be taught on battlefields or athletic fields," I agree with his thoughts on this topic. The following article will be on how we select our captains, how we teach our captains and finally what we expect of our captains.

### **How We Select our Captains:**

I would love to tell you our kids are mature enough to select our captains, but that would be a false statement. We / Staff select our captains, with the kids unwittingly helping us to select the right ones. Democracy is a fantastic way to govern our country and I honestly believe in it, but you cannot run a high school football team like a democracy. It would end up being a popularity contest, much like most of our Student-Body elections. At the conclusion of the season, we let our returning squad members and returning captains know

that the observation window will be opening with the start of off-season workouts, and it will close with the conclusion of summer team camp in June. During the observation period we as a staff are looking for the usual traits –attendance, accountability, and effort. We also are looking for some other leadership traits. The willingness to do extra work or football chores, relationship with team and teammates, coachability, and potential for leadership, are additional traits we look for in each candidate. I, as the Head Football Coach, have always told our teams that there is only one whip on this team, and it is ME. I expect our assistants and more importantly our players to be nurturers and brothers to build up a player after they have been reprimanded for their performance in a practice or a game. This make up has served us well, I am the quality control guy and everyone else is working to support and correct. I am not sure this model would work everywhere but it works in Gold Beach. So, this model allows us to see who truly is a brother and nurtures players on their team. At the conclusion of our team camp in June, we will select our 7 Captains. We selected 7 because we put them each in charge of a squad in our pregame routine and each squad is 5 to 6 players. We also want diversity in our captains, meaning we will always have 1 to 2 underclassmen, we will have a strong silent type of kid, we will have the vocal get'm fired up kid, and we will have a non-starter as well. This is the diversity we are looking for. Each player selected will be invited to a Captain's Dinner hosted by my wife and myself at our home. Captain's Dinners will become an important part of their football life for the next 6 months.

### **First Captains Dinner:**

Players arrive around 6:00 PM at our home which is roughly a half mile from campus. They are greeted by my lovely wife and myself. We congratulate them

and explain that these meetings are for learning to be the best leaders they can be, and maturity is expected. I have been asked many times why I have them in my home, why I assume some dangerous liability. Two reasons, one I want to model what a quality husband and father does around the house for dinner time and how I treat my wife with respect and kindness. Second is what I am modeling and teaching in terms of leadership to me is worth the liability risk. I explain that each player is to bring 7 dollars towards the meal and that if any cannot afford it simply tell me and I will take care of it, first Captain's Dinner is on Coach Swift all others are shared as to not strap my family financially. 7 young men can eat up a storm! At this dinner / meeting I will lay out what being a Panther Captain means, it means we are going to develop you into a leader of men. I explain that the dictionary definition of a leader oversees a group that will help determine the group's success. I go on to explain that a leader really means doing more not less or simply telling someone else to do something. I explain how by being a team leader and leading by doing more not less will in turn inspire their teammates to work as hard to meet their example. We talk about our monthly meetings for the rest of the summer and our meetings / dinners during the season and how they are designed to teach them lessons on leadership. We talk about how we will be talking about sensitive topics and team morale issues and that what is said in these meetings stays in these meetings. I will explain the weekly chores and duties they will oversee during the rest of the summer and during the season. These duties will include but not be limited to helping with daily laundry, cleaning, and sanitizing the weight room and locker room, dressing the field for games, laundry and locker clean up on Sundays after games and supervising players at the Youth Center Friday nights after the games where they will watch

the game without coaches or adults. I explain that they are NOT team disciplinarians but instead team nurturers that if they see something going wrong or sideways try to positively correct the situation. If they cannot make it a positive, they must let the coaching staff know immediately. I explain that this characteristic is the most important to me; they must be positive builders of team morale and effort. This will be the key to their success as captains and key to the success of THEIR team. Next, we let them tell each other what it means to them to be selected as captains and what are their goals or desires for their team in the upcoming season. This is important to me, because listening to what they say will help me mold them into the leaders we need, and they want to be. I should point out my best and most loyal assistant is there too, helping and nurturing, these young men - my wife. LOL, she spent years polishing my approach, so she knows how to polish the expressions of young men and their goals. It is just a terrific time of relaxed yet meaningful conversation about leadership and team building. After this lively yet relaxing time, we bust out their summer reading. We have alternated between two books over the years for this, two non-fiction - One Great Game by Don Wallace and When the Game Stands Tall by Neil Hayes; both are books about Coach Ladouceur De La Salle's Teams. We also will use John Grisham's fiction Bleachers. In the summer we will have them read one of the De La Salle books and Bleachers and answer some questions that will be discussed at the next Captain's Dinner. Yes, it is an assignment and if it is not done, I will find another quality captain to replace them. I am this serious about the reading. After this as we get ready to send them home, I remind them that true leaders are the first to arrive and the last to leave, I will always beat them but a real leader with goals should be shortly after me. By now they know I love them, but I am serious

about developing leaders for the Panther Football Program.



### **Monthly Summer Captain's Meetings:**

During the summer is when we build the Captains Foundation for Leadership development. We meet in July and August before fall camp starts for the season. During these meetings we will discuss team morale during the summer, player development and depth, and we will discuss the questions from their summer readings. These are in depth and great discussions on what leadership looks like, what a winning culture looks like and scenarios that could play out in the upcoming season. At this time, our student trainers have been invited to these dinners, and they are responsible for bringing desserts for after dinner. I like having the young ladies there for one simple reason - so our captains can learn to treat them as respectful equals in the team's success and to teach a little chivalry! I have always wanted to teach more than just football.



### **Painting the Field for Fall Camp and Watering of Field:**

A couple of days before Fall Camp starts the captains will help our assistant coach in charge of field prep paint the fields for Fall Camp. They will learn the ropes from Coach Yoda by lining the field completely with numbers and hash marks. They will need to learn this skill, because they will do it every other Sunday throughout the season with only a little staff supervision. It is also their time to take over watering the field from me, who has been doing it all summer. Coach Yoda will teach them how to lay out the hoses and water cannon. This is important because they will be watering during the school day going down and moving the cannon to other locations and then after practicing their respective squads will be responsible for laying out hoses and starting the water after practice. Since I am the last one to leave the locker room, I will shut the water off on my way home. I am a firm believer in kids taking care of the facilities they use because they will treat them better and take some pride in them.

### **Weekly In Season Captain's Dinners:**

During the season we meet each week with our captains over dinner at the Swift hacienda. Captains and Student-trainers come over around 6:30 PM after practice on Thursdays for away games and on Wednesdays for home games. Home game weeks I got to take my lovely bride out on "Date Night" on Thursday a tradition as long as our marriage. At these in-season dinners we spend most of our time on team morale, academic issues they are hearing about from players, and our team's present performance level. They are my ears for potential issues and my crew for potential solutions to these issues. It is also at these dinners where we select a guest player to dinner to honor his efforts and performance in practice and / or games. Over

dessert before leaving each captain, student-trainer, guest player, my wife and I will share what we intend to do to help us win on Friday night. These are goals we hold each another accountable for during the season, stole this from De La Salle. At De La Salle they did this with all the players at team meal a night before the game, I modified for Gold Beach. These dinners are truly the backbone of our leadership training.



### ***Weekly Responsibilities in Season:***

All Captains help with laundry during the week, this is starting towels after Zero period showers and making sure we have clean dry towels after practice. Yes, our kids shower here after practice, it is healthy and helps avoid MRSA. They will grab my keys during passing periods to do this and make sure everything is going the way it is supposed to. After Zero Period each morning one captain's squad will go down to field and position and start the water. This same squad will reposition between 2nd & 3rd period, getting late passes from me for class. Then at lunch after eating they will turn off and remove hoses from filed in preparation for practice.

At the conclusion of practice each day during announcements, I will select a Captain's Squad to

**The late John Madden had a great quote "Leadership cannot be taught in a classroom, but must be taught on battlefields or athletic fields."**

clean and disinfect our locker room and to start the night's laundry of players practice gear and / or towels. Captains are reminded to lead by example, not standing around telling players what to do. The squad cannot leave until dismissed by Coach Yoda or myself. This little chore by our captains and players has endeared us to our janitors, to the point they will do anything to help our kids and program. On HOME Game Days, Captains will help our moms set up for our team meals during home games in the cafeteria. After the team meal they assign underclassmen to clean up, while the check with moms to make sure everything went as planned. Finally, after everyone on the team thanks the moms, they will thank them.

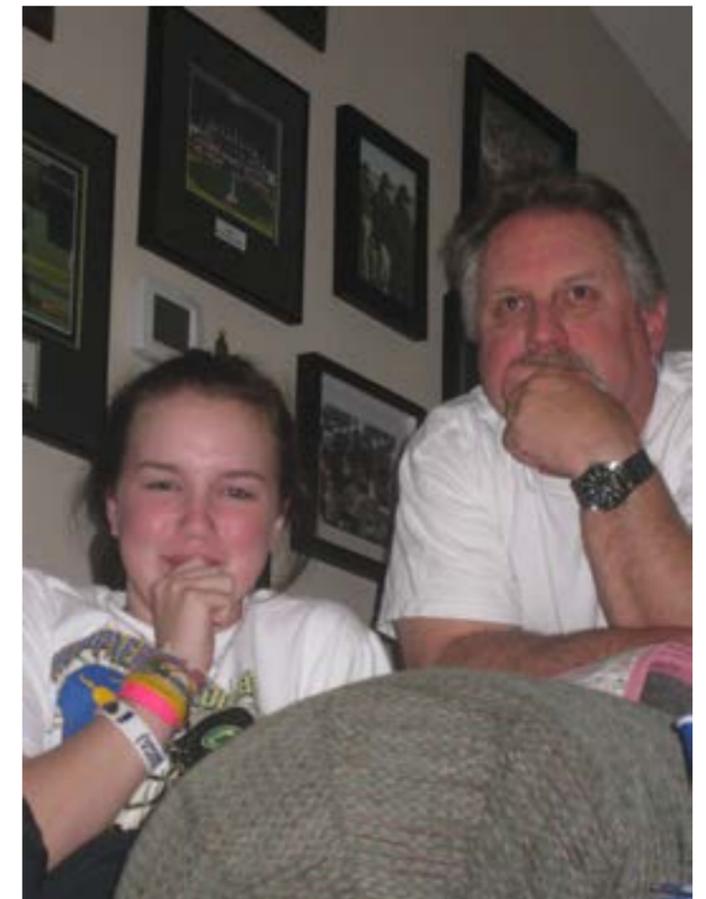
On HOME Game Days, they will dress the field right after school before our Team Meal. This means water, ice, portable training table, sideline markers etc. They will have our freshmen assist them NOT do but assist.

Friday Nights Home or Away – Captains oversee getting locker room cleaned up laundry started, or laundry loaded on buses for trip home. NO Team Member is to leave locker room until I dismiss them. When I dismiss from home games, I will give the captains a DVD of the game to take to the Bethany Youth Center where players congregate after home games for pizza and to watch the game with no coaches around. Captains are to make sure our players treat the volunteer church members who serve the kids pizza and pop, are treated properly and it is cleaned up correctly.

Sundays during the season is a busy day for our Captains. They will arrive after Church around 11:30 AM. We will split them up with half of them doing laundry and putting clean laundry away and the other half with clean and disinfect our weight

room. I will keep one with me in my classroom to help me with scouting reports being copied and getting all our lunches that will be ready around 12:30 or 1:00 PM. While we eat lunch we will talk about the past Friday's game and things they think we need to work on to keep improving. After lunch they will go down to the field and start watering. By now it is 2:00 or 2:30 PM and the team will arrive around 3:30 PM for films and lifting weights. There day will be done right around 5:00 PM.

So, this is a snapshot of what we do and how we train our Captains. Obviously, we do a lot more than just this, but these are the highlights. Hope this helps new head coaches!



# MORE THAN THE GAME

## CALL SHEET CULTURE



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Few things in coaching are as personal or as meticulously cultivated from week to week as a coordinator's call sheet. Each game's call sheet is a reflection of that team's coaching philosophy, preparation, installation, practice structure, and game management. While every coordinator has one, the best coaches use their call sheets to organize the game and build their players' Football IQ. A well-written call sheet is often the first step toward achieving victory and can be used to mirror your team's culture, either explicitly or implicitly.

Atop Monarch Football's offensive call sheet are each game's "openers," which are divided into halves. The 1st Half openers are a short script of plays we think will be successful against our opponents right away, based on the defensive tendencies our coaching staff has identified on film. These openers are installed on Monday, then run on-air at the beginning of practice throughout the week leading up to the game. We always finish in the endzone, simulating the result we expect to achieve on Friday night. While the number of openers varies from week to week, my philosophy as a play-caller is to script at least one touch for each of our playmakers. This emphasizes their role in the game plan and gets them involved in the game as soon as our team has the ball. The 2nd Half openers' box is intentionally left blank at kickoff, as this space is reserved for halftime and in-game adjustments.

The next five sections of the call sheet are organized

according to the specific field zones we use and teach to our players, as described in the previous issue of *Headsets*. Each field zone has its own defined coaching philosophy, which is stated in short-hand terms along the left edge of the call sheet. By including our philosophy on the call sheet, our coaching staff is reminded of our team values and having it written down helps prevent poor coaching decisions that are based on emotions throughout the game. While there is a time as a play-caller to go with your gut, our philosophy keeps us grounded and unified. Aligning our philosophy to a field zone also makes play-calling systematic and predictable for our players. Each field zone's philosophy is taught prior to practice and coached situationally throughout the week during our team periods. Knowing why certain plays are called from each field zone increases our players' knowledge of the game plan and helps them build Football IQ.

### **Black Zone Philosophy**

When thinking about play-calling in the Black Zone, great Offensive Coordinators look for ways to take advantage of a defense's aggressiveness. One way to do this is by mixing up the snap count. I like to go on two in the Black Zone, especially if we are inside the -10 yard line because a false start is only half the distance to the goal, not its normal 5 yard penalty. On the other hand, if we can get the defense to jump offsides, our offense gains 5 yards. The upside of going on two simply outweighs the downside of a false start. Another way we use aggressiveness against a defense is to utilize spread formations to stretch the field beyond the hashes. Spreading a defense out lightens the box and helps us run the ball downhill between the tackles. In our offense, every one of our inside runs has an RPO tag which gives the quarterback a run/pass option, making the Black Zone a field zone with big play potential, especially if a defense chooses not to adjust to the spread. If we like a certain match-up or coverage, we will challenge the defense vertically downfield by taking a shot.

### **Red Zone Philosophy**

The Red Zone gives our offense a chance to build momentum and establish our identity. We can also vary the tempo of the game to adjust to what our players need

at the time. If our defense has been on the field a lot, we will slow the game way down by breaking the huddle with :15 or less on the play clock, then snapping the ball under :05. If we want to speed the game up, we can go to our "gas" plays. The pace at which we play is determined by our offensive efficiency. Our team goal is to gain four or more yards on 1st Down, half the remaining distance to the next 1st Down on 2nd Down, and to convert the 1st Down on 3rd and 4th Down, 45% of the time. If our offensive efficiency is above this benchmark, we tend to quicken the pace. The key to life in the Red Zone though is to "take the hamburger," not the steak. When eating at a restaurant, I seldomly order a steak because the Iowa beef I have in my freezer at home is usually of better quality than the steak in the restaurant. However, I love to order cheeseburgers, which rarely disappoint me and are more economical. Our offense will "take the hamburger" by calling plays that are having success against the opponent. We don't want to go three-and-out from this part of the field, so we rarely "eat steak" by wasting downs and taking shots, which tend to be unsatisfying and costly.

### **Yellow Zone Philosophy**

Offensive efficiency continues to be a priority in the Yellow Zone. Too often a drive will reach midfield only to see its momentum fizzle out. We want to continue to build our rhythm by sticking with what is working. One opportunity the Yellow Zone offers is the chance for a sudden change play. Sudden changes in the game can happen after penalties, turnovers, or elite special teams play, and we want to be ready to take advantage of these momentum-building moments. If our offense can break away from the defense with a big play, which we define as a gain of 20+ yards, our play-calling tends to be more aggressive.

### **Gold Zone**

An extension of the Yellow Zone, the Gold Zone is the part of the field where we look to create big plays by taking shots at the end zone or utilizing our gadget plays. We script these scenarios so when the timing is right, we take advantage. Traditionally, the time our offense is most likely to call a shot play is the first time we have 1st

and 10 inside the +40 yard line. We are also way more likely to go for it on 4th Down from this field zone, so there are more opportunities for aggressive play-calling as our offense has four downs to convert instead of just three.

### **Green Zone**

Success in the Green Zone comes down to our offense's ability to win the "4-Point" plays. 3rd Downs in the Green Zone are often the difference between settling for a field goal and scoring a touchdown, a four-point swing in the game. We aren't necessarily looking to make big plays in the Green Zone, as our team mantra is to "Pound The Stone" with methodical, well-executed plays that demoralize a defense. Pounding The Stone in the Green Zone keeps our offense on the field in search of finishing the drive with a touchdown.

### **Down and Distance Packages**

While many coaches script plays using the hashes as guidemarks, I prefer to organize plays according to the down and distance, which are listed from left to right on the call sheet in a progression that mirrors the ball moving downfield. Because our offense runs similar play concepts out of multiple formations, I like to include these play packages on the call sheet and rotate through them throughout the game. Moreover, scripting plays according to down and distance helps me utilize specific personnel packages for various in-game scenarios. For example, our "thunder" package" features a bigger, more punishing, downhill runner in the backfield, which is ideal for short yardage situations. In contrast, our "lightning package" features a smaller, more fleet-footed running back and is ideal if we are looking to attack space. By organizing our call sheet according to down and distance instead of the left, middle, and right hashes, I am able to make our offense more dynamic, both in scheme and personnel.

### **The "Middle 8"**

How many times have you seen a team botch their chance to score right before halftime, then start the 3rd Quarter with the ball only to come out flat and have to punt right away? The last four minutes of the 1st Half and the first

four minutes of the 2nd Half can impact the game more than the other forty minutes. Together these two time increments make up the "Middle 8" and each possession is about creating an efficient 4:00 offense that is focused on moving the chains, building a rhythm, and executing a sustained drive. Scripting a series of plays specifically for these two scenarios will help your offense control the clock and move the ball toward the end zone.

**2:00 Offense**

Every coordinator stresses the importance of moving the ball during 2:00 O, but can you go fast and be efficient? Our 2:00 offense features a 3x1 set using 11 personnel. We will only stray from this package if there is a stoppage in play, such as a timeout, and feel that our chances of success are greater with a different look. 11 personnel allows us to spread our playmakers out, while offering the option of max protection with a running back and tight end. This is important because, next to a turnover or penalty, giving up a sack is the worst thing we can do. We teach our quarterbacks to use the sideline for quick rhythm throws and to use the middle of the field to pick up 1st Downs, as the clock stops on every 1st Down. But while most fans keep their eyes on the clock, coaches should be doing "football math" by dividing the time remaining into plays, as an inefficient team will run out of downs before they run out of time. For a trailing offense, the time remaining on the clock must be represented in the maximum plays that can still be run. Each play in football takes about :06. That means that if there is :54 left on the clock, elite coaches know they have time to run approximately nine more plays. By valuing plays more than time, and 1st Downs more than yards, you can build your players' Football IQ and coach your team to an efficient and effective 2:00 offense.

**Two-Point Plays**

The final component of our call sheet is a space reserved for two-point plays. Every coordinator should carry a chart that tells them when to kick the extra point and when to go for two. I print my version of this chart on the back of my call sheet so the entire coaching staff is on the same page with this mathematical decision. We run the

*(continued on next page)*

**“By including our philosophy on the call sheet, our coaching staff is reminded of our team values and having it written down helps prevent poor coaching decisions that are based on emotions throughout the game.”**

swinging gate, so whether we choose to go for the point after or for the two-point conversion after a touchdown, our field goal unit can quickly and easily transition to meet the needs of the team. One way we can go for two with the swinging gate is by executing an option run between the holder and kicker. A second way to convert a two-point play is by throwing a quick screen to a WR along the line of scrimmage. Finally, a third option is for the holder to throw the ball to receivers running leveled routes toward the front pylon and back pylon. These options or other scripted variations of your two-point plays can be easily stored in this small, but important section of the call sheet.

In conclusion, a football game is often won or lost before it is played. Preparing a call sheet allows coaches to establish a game plan that can help their team perform at a high level from the opening kickoff to the final whistle, no matter what situation they find themselves in. A well-organized call sheet aligns a program's values, culture, philosophy, personnel, and situational packages, all while helping players build their Football IQ. And alignment is the key to winning.

2022 Monarch Football				
Extra Point OR Two-Point Conversion?				
Points	Lead	Trail		
1	Go For 2	Go For 2	Go For 2	
2	Go For 1	Go For 2	Go For 2	
3	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
4	Go For 2	Go For 1	Go For 1	
5	Go For 2	Go For 2	Go For 2	
6	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
7	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
8	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
9	Go For 1	Go For 2	Go For 2	
10	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
11	Go For 1	Go For 2	Go For 2	
12	Go For 2	Go For 2	Go For 2	
13	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
14	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
15	Go For 2	Go For 1	Go For 1	
16	Go For 1	Go For 2	Go For 2	
17	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
18	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
19	Go For 2	Go For 2	Go For 2	
20	Go For 1	Go For 1	Go For 1	
When To Take A Knee				
Opponent's Timeouts	0 Left	1 Left	2 Left	3 Left
1st Down Victory	2:00	1:20	:40	:05

2022 Monarch Football					
Opponents vs.					
Philosophy:	1st Half:		2nd Half:		
PLAYERS, NOT PLAYS!					
Black Zone (Goalline to -20)					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Go on 2					
Shut Down - Run					
Shut Down - Pass					
Go All Out!					
Tip Taps Spread					
Take The Shot?					
Red Zone (-20 to -10)					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Establish Identity					
Defensive Efficiency					
Pass					
Take The Shot?					
Yellow Zone (-10 to +10)					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Defensive Efficiency					
Stick with Works					
Balance Changes					
Gold Zone - Take A Shot (+10 to Endzone)					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Follow Back Plans					
Stick to Plans					
Balance Changes					
Green Zone (+20 to Endzone)					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Pass the Stone					
Stick to Plans					
Pass					
4:00 Offense					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Pass the Stone					
Intermediate Pass					
Move The Rocks					
2:00 Offense					
Philosophy:	1st and 10	2nd and 5+	2nd and <5	3rd and 5+	3rd and <5
Personnel					
Passing Options					
Run Protection					
1ST DOWNS					
2nd Down, 3rd Down					
Two Point Plays					

# HEAD COACHING 101

## HOW TO BE A STUDENT OF THE GAME: PT. 1



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### Find a mentor

Today's technology has made it possible to connect with many people. Unfortunately, it has made it so easy to connect with a lot of people, but at times it can be hard to really "connect" with a mentor. As a young coach, I felt I knew about everything there was to know about pretty much everything. But even back then I would always seek out an older coach and attempt to see what they were doing, then work to see if it is something I wanted in my program.

If you are blessed to coach long enough in this sport, there will be times you need a coach to help you through a difficult time or situation. Having a mentor who you can trust has become vital to me. I will call and talk with 3-4 people (in different fields of work also) to bounce ideas off and to talk through situations. These must be people you can trust and usually people that are not directly involved with your situation. Usually, the best are older or even retired coaches that are willing to listen and offer advice.

Most coaches will be flattered to even be asked to work in this role and will gladly give of their time to mentor a young coach. There is nothing that can help you more than talking with a coach who has lived through many of the situations that will come up for coaches. Having the ability to have honest and open conversations with another coach is invaluable. Choose wisely, but even learning what not to do is also valuable.

If at all possible, I've always attempted to hire an older coach on my staff that has already been there and done that and not looking to become a head coach. This coach becomes someone that I can go to with issues and be a good sounding board. If you cannot do this, I'd suggest searching for a retired coach in your area. While phone calls are great, nothing is better than going to eat and forming a real relationship with a mentor. This will give you a chance to vent frustrations and be open and honest with someone that can help.

While talent and ability is important, having an example that has experience is priceless. Often as a young coach, or even older coach, we learn the "hard way". Those that seem to have earlier success are those that learn from the lessons of the generation before them. Be unique and make your own decisions, but understand that experience can be helpful.

### Visit other staffs

It has amazed me how willing coaches are to share with each other. Many times, I have been nervous to ask for things, but rarely am I ever told "no". Find the time to ask those you respect at ANY level to see if you can simply sit in or watch their practices. College coaches are usually very gracious to allow this. However, I feel most knowledge is gained through watching a practice and the preparation leading up to that practice. Learning how others organize, structure, and perform a practice can help any coach. With all of the online resources it is easier than ever to connect with coaches across the country. And while I'd suggest going to the campus, using a video-conferencing source is better than not connecting.

While going to watch colleges can be fun and exciting, I'd highly recommend finding a program that has similar demographics as your program and is very successful and going to spend some time with that staff. This can help as you evaluate areas your

program needs to improve upon as well as see some scheme that may help your athletes. Most of the time these visits will be the most effective for a coach. Seeing how other coaches motivate and seeing that most are dealing with the same problems you are dealing with helps.

Learn why something works for a program. Anyone can get a playbook or find something online, but to be able to see the inner workings of a successful program you must see it up close. Watch how the team practices, how the coaches meet, the structure of the organization and more. Seeing this in-person will be the best way to learn any type of offense/defense or culture.

### Go to clinics

Since I first started coaching, I have always loved going to clinics. There are now 100's of options to learn more about your craft. Hearing different perspectives from multiple coaches is one of the best ways to learn and grow as a coach. While many coaches have a specific style, it is always good to hear how other coaches run their program or position group.

Networking is also key as coaches work to grow in the profession. The ability to know coaches from your own area and other areas of the country is key. While some of this can be done through social media, nothing beats face-to-face. At many clinics you can start those important relationships that may ultimately help you land a job.

One thing I started doing a few years ago was to look up the speakers at the clinic I was going to attend. I then would reach out a few weeks before the clinic and work to set up a time to meet with them. Most of the time this was easily done and granted me the opportunity to make a strong connection. It also helped me to learn more than I would have by simply

going to a session or two.

There are now multiple ways to reach out to coaches or watch clinics online. While I do believe the networking is not the same, it has given each coach more opportunities to reach out to others to begin a relationship. It has also allowed for clinics to become much more specialized on subjects that may help coaches.

Learn about more than just "your position" or "your system" if possible. As a younger coach I just wanted to learn the game. The goal was to see what other people were doing so that one day I could choose what I thought would be successful for me when I had my own program. I'd suggest you search for as much football knowledge as possible and file it away. While you may be a defensive line coach now, one day you may have the opportunity to move up and it will help if you can prepare as you go. As your players change each year it may require running another scheme to be successful. If you have learned along the way, it will be much easier.

## How to Be a Student of the Game (Part 1)

### 1) Find a Mentor

### 2) Visit Other Staffs

### 3) Go to Clinics

# SPECIAL TEAMS

## DRILLS FOR SUCCESS



**Stephen Mikell**  
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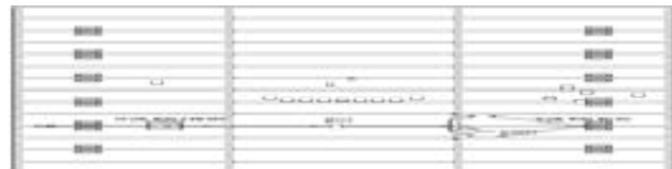
In the last issue of HEADSETS, I wrote about organizing your special teams and how we plan for a week of practice.

This issue, I want to share some drills that we use to practice specific skills for special teams. Just with offense and defense, practice time should be divided among walkthrough team time, individual or group skill development, and lastly full team time either on air or against a scout team. During the preseason, the drills we use can often be done by the whole team at once and double as conditioning while working on the skills that will transfer to our schemes. We will also use circuits to cycle players through quickly and work on multiple skills in a short amount of time. Some of the drills below have been adapted specifically for our schemes. However, they're easy to adapt to fit your schemes as well.

### Coverage Drills

#### Sideline Coverage Drill

One coverage drill we really like is very simple. We call it "Sideline Coverage Drill". While it's primarily for kick off coverage, the skills are applicable to punt coverage as well. I got from AFCA's Complete Guide to Special Teams in an article by Greg McMahon. The diagram below shows how we set up the field for this drill.



#### Equipment Needed:

8 Cones or something to be used for landmarks, 2 hand shields, Bag or dummy large enough to be tackled

#### Description:

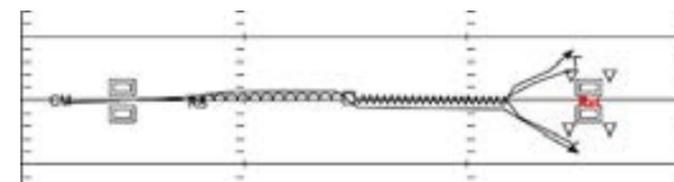
Cover man (CM) starts on one sideline, then on coach's command, sprints across the field. He must avoid the first bag while staying w/in the 3 yd box, he then regains his coverage lane to the next scout player. The CM then uses a two-hand butt technique in the ATTACK zone to defeat and shed the 2nd block. Once past this point, the player will sprint to the cones and settle his feet (chopping) in a good football position. The returner will then be released by the coach to run full speed to one of the landmarks. The CM will shuffle to the side that the returner is running to and execute an open field tackle on the bag the returner is holding. The players will then rotate to the starting position at the opposite sideline. One coach will be on each side to release the CM and returner. Variation: This could also be done using a kicker or punter, so that the returner gets practice fielding kicks and the CM gets accustomed to moving on the kicker's movement.

#### Coaching Points:

- Players should use any means possible to avoid the first blocker, but must stay w/ in the 3 yd box and regain lane integrity.
- On attacking the 2nd bag, players should gather feet to prepare for contact. On contact, they should stun pad with heel of their palms and shuck pad to one side.
- Do not release the return man until the CM has gathered feet at cones.
- Ensure proper form tackle on the returner's bag. Have CM execute form tackle and bring the bag to the returner's spot while still in form tackle.

#### Defend the Box Drill

Another drill that's very similar to the sideline coverage drill is one we call "Defend the Box. This drill works on both coverage and on blocking someone in space on a return team. The set up is almost identical to the sideline cover drill with a few changes. The diagram below shows how we set up the field for this drill.



#### Equipment Needed:

8 Cones or something to be used for landmarks

#### Description:

Cover man (CM) starts on one sideline, then on coach's command, sprints across the field. A return team blocker (RB) starts the drill aligned 2-3 yds outside of the hash. As the CM sprints, the RB must back pedal to give a 5-7 yd cushion just like a defensive back would for a wide receiver. When the cushion is broken, the RB must then open his hips to "alley run" with the CM. The RB is trying to force the CM to go outside the cones to protect the ball carrier on the opposite numbers. The CM is simply trying to tag the ball carrier. Players will rotate from CM to returner to RB. A coach will be on the side to release the CM. Other coaches should be coaching up the blockers.

#### Coaching Points:

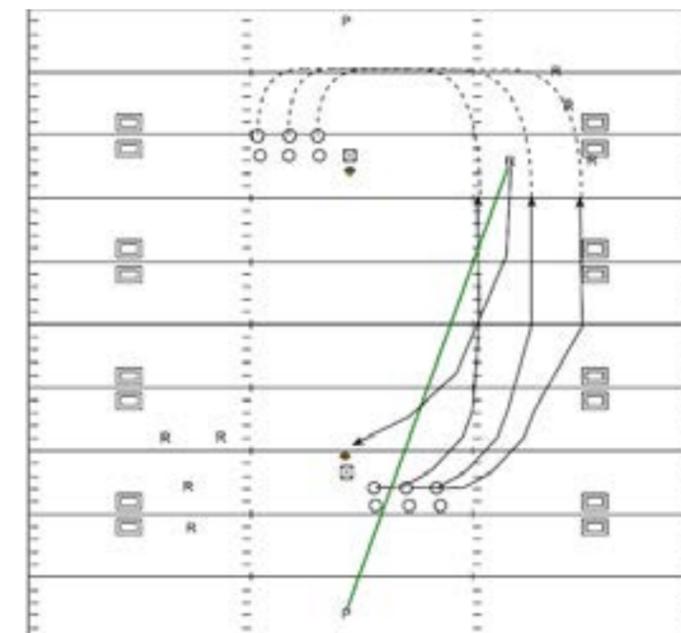
- The CM should use any means possible to avoid the RB but must stay w/ in the 3 yd box and regain lane integrity.
- The RB should delay contact as long as possible and does not need a "kill shot" to guide the CM past the box. When contact must be made, we teach blockers to put one hand (hand furthest from Returner) on the

CM's hip and the other (hand closest to the returner) on his chest and "ride" the CM past the returner.

- When the RB opens his hips to alley run, we teach the CM to "cut to his butt". This means that as soon as the blocker opens his hips up, the CM will cut to his other side forcing the blocker to flip his hips again.

#### 6 Line Drill

Another drill that works multiple skills at once that we REALLY like is called 6 line drill. I used a variation of this drill when I was in high school in North Georgia in the 1990's. We've adapted it for us. We use stretch zone blocking for our punt protection as part of a rugby punt scheme and we always directionally kick to the right. This drill is great for everyone. When run at a fast pace, you can accomplish a lot with this. Long snappers get lots of snaps, punters get lots of punts, returners get lots of catches IN TRAFFIC, and everyone else gets lots of conditioning by covering down the field. The diagram below shows how we set up the field.



#### Equipment Needed:

Balls and cones. The cones can be used to help the coverage men line up correctly and to give specific coverage landmarks if you want.

*Description:*

There will be two punting groups and return groups. Each on either side of the field. The drill is the same for both sides. The snapper aligns on the ball and three covermen/blockers align as they would on punt to his right. We use 2' splits on our punt team. Then the snapper goes through his cadence as normal. On the snap the blockers/covermen execute their stretch zone steps and release down field to the returners. Their focus should be on proper spacing, NOT surrounding the returner. Once across the field, they will fill in the lines on the other side of the field. After receiving the snap, the punter will directionally kick toward the returners. The returners will field the ball in traffic and run the ball to the snapper on the opposite side of the field. Essentially everyone except the punters and snappers are moving in one big circle around the field. Variation: This could also be done with the six lines on the same side of the field if you would prefer. You could also have the cover men surround, contain, and breakdown around your returners. You can also provide defenders for the blockers to "rip" across.

*Coaching Points:*

- Coaching points are largely based on the schemes you use for punt protection. For us, we want the blockers to step flat, rip across the face or outside shoulder of the defenders. We also want them 3-5 yds apart as they cover down the field.
- Returners must focus to catch the ball. We have found this particularly helpful in getting players to field punts when under pressure from the coverage team.
- In order to be most effective, players must SPRINT. We get a ton of reps and our kids can get gassed quickly, but this is a GREAT mental toughness and conditioning drill.

**Kick Return and Block Drills**

**Drop and Block Drill**

Our kickoff return team uses a cross blocking scheme. To work on executing this block from the front 6, we will use the Drop and Block Drill.

*Objective:*

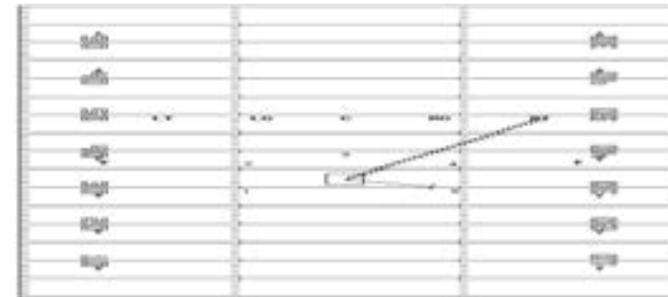
- To teach proper drop and blocking techniques on kickoff return.
- To be able to identify and execute blocking assignment on the run
- To be able to adjust blocking angles at the last moment

*Equipment Needed:*

4 Cones for landmarks, 5 bags large enough to be blocked.

*Description:*

Align the front line with proper spacing for KO return. On the coach's signal, the designated player will execute a drop to the spot in the middle of the field. The player will arrive at the drop point, and gather his feet. As he does this, the coach will call out a number as given for one of the five bags set up in an arc around the drop spot. Once the command is given, the player will execute an open field block on the designated bag. The player will drive the bag 5 yds with proper form and head placement. He will then take the bag and set it up where it was. Variations: The blocking assignment can be given with either a voice command or hand signal. This drill could also be used to work communication on double teams. If using live personnel, you could also have the arc drop with the blocker. This drill can also be done with or without the Ends.



*Coaching Points:*

- Players should turn and sprint to the drop point, but head should be on a swivel looking up field to the oncoming KO team.
- Yell out blocking assignment just as or just after the player gathers feet in the center of the arc.
- When executing the block on the pad, check head placement as if the return is a middle return.
- Make sure the players gather feet just before making contact with the bag. Have players drive the bag 5 yds when executing the block.

**Punt and PAT Block Drills**

We spend most of our reps with the Punt and PAT block teams in team time, but early in the season and once every few weeks, we will use a block circuit to refine our kick blocking technique and even the technique used when forming a wall on punt return. We use three main drills to work on the skills needed to succeed in this phase of the kicking game.

**Superman Drill**

*Objective:*

- To teach the proper placement of hands and arms when blocking a kick.
- To teach the blockers to work their arms until the very last minute
- To help identify players who will be successful on the block teams.

This drill requires that the players dive onto the ground and not catch themselves. The players that perform the drill exactly as described and can keep their eyes open will be on the block teams and have

the greatest chance at success.

*Equipment Needed:*

No equipment is required for this drill, but you can use volleyballs to have the players actually blocking a ball when extending their hands from their hips.

*Description:*

The whole team begins on a yard line going across the field. The players start out on their knees, then on ball movement or coaches' sound, begin moving their arms as if they are running. I take this time to emphasize form running with their arms bent at the elbows and pulling their elbows back as far as possible. Then on the whistle, the players will shoot their hands straight out from their hips. Their arms should pull their body out onto the ground and their hands should cross at the wrists. If done properly, they should look like Super Man taking off.

*Coaching Points:*

- The arms should go straight out from the hips, not up into the air. The arms will pull the player's body out. If they shoot their hands into the air, they will end up doing a belly flop on the ground.
- The hands should be crossed at the wrist, not parallel. This way, the ball will not go in between their hands.
- The players should also keep their eyes open as they hit the ground, so they can watch the ball come off the kicker's foot.

**Get Off Drill**

*Objective:*

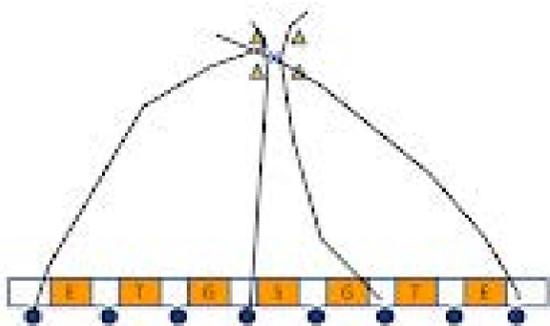
- To work on the get off phase of punt and PAT block
- To work on Proper Angles used when blocking a punt or PAT
- To work on running through the block point and not leaving your feet
- To get used to making contact with the ball at the block point

### Equipment

You will need a spacing tape, a snapper and a punter and several balls. Depending on the variation of the drill, you may also need blocking bags or volleyballs to use instead of footballs.

### Description:

The players will align in A-D gaps on the spacing tapes. They should be in a 3 point sprinter's stance. On the movement of the ball, one player at a time will execute a perfect get off and run through the block point to block the punt or kick. A punter or coach will be catching the snap and punting the ball. The punter will take slow steps initially to allow the blocker to block the ball. The drill should be performed as rapidly as possible to get the maximum number of reps. Variations: This drill can be done using volleyballs instead of footballs because the volley ball will be softer on the players' hands and make repeated contact easier. The players will not shy away from contact with a volleyball. Also, bags can be added to the OL to force the rushers to get skinny through their gaps.



### Coaching Points

- Shoot your hands through the block point, not your body. This will limit the chance of running into the kicker/punter/holder.
- Players must run past the block point. You cannot simply run to the block point. You must run your hands through the whole block point.

- If you are in the A or B Gaps on punts, you cannot cross the punter's face. You should run your hands through the block point as you pass by the punter.

# FOOTBALL: 101

## THREE MUST HAVE PASS CONCEPTS IN YOUR OFFENSE



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



At the youth and high school level, finding

easy pass concepts for the quarterback to read can be tough.

Teams that don't have a progression system or a roadmap of where the quarterback should go with the football based on the defense's coverage can lead to poor decisions and turnovers.

Limiting the quarterback's decision-making based on quick reads and progressions can help you push the ball down the field quicker and more accurately.

Below is Y Cross, a simple pass concept that can easily be installed into any offense.

Notice how the offense can easily adjust the crossers route based on the coverage or leverage the defense is playing

When developing a passing attack, our philosophy is to keep it simple for the play-caller, the player, and the receivers running the routes. If any of the 3 is in doubt, it could strain your overall system.

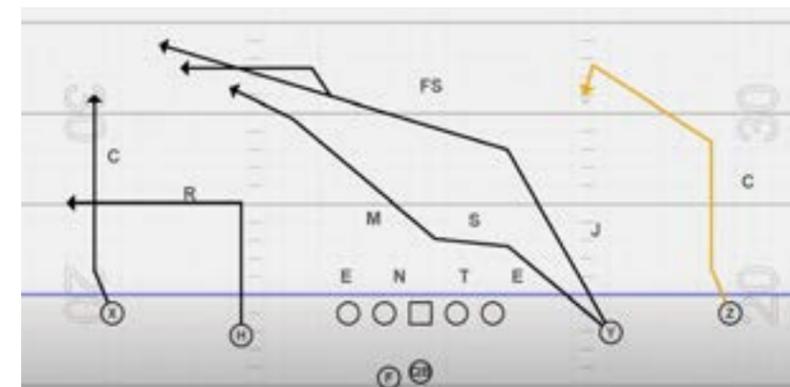
This week, we spoke to Coach Danny Haddad who broke down 3 must-have pass concepts that you can install into your offense.

Coach goes in detail on the whiteboard, showing you all the different variations of each play. After the whiteboard drawings, coach relates each play to actual game footage and how each play is run against common defenses.

The plays coach goes over in the video are:

- Y Cross
- Shallow Cross
- Switch Verts

Watch The Video [Here:](#)



# PLAYING FAST WITH A ROSTER UNDER FORTY

## CREATING CONFLICTS FOR THE DEFENSE



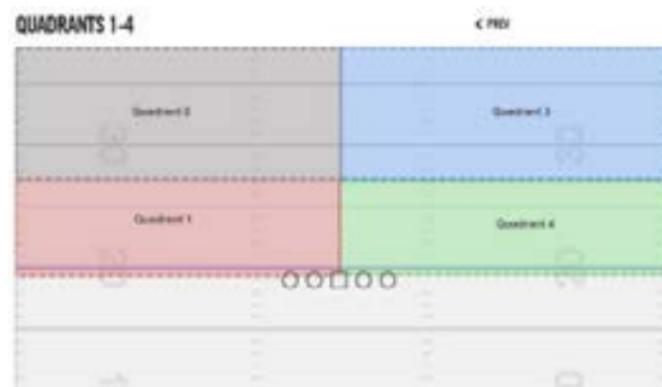
**Keith Fagan**  
**Master Coach: NZone Football System**  
**OC/OL/DL: Bronxville High School- Bronx, NY**  
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Run Pass Options (RPOs) first came into existence to take advantage of the fact that some defensive players had both run and pass responsibilities on any given play. It was just a natural evolution from the flood pass concepts that took advantage of the fact that linebackers and secondary players sometimes have multiple zones to cover (hook/curl, curl/flat, etc.) in the pass game. But defensive coordinators have evolved, and now most defensive schemes look to eliminate the run/pass "conflict" from their players' responsibilities. Whether it's eliminating the run gap fit farthest away from the point of attack in a run scheme (or, as Kyle Cogan, assistant coach at Benedictine College says, 'slinging the fits'), or by separating the run/pass responsibilities into different segments of the defense (box players/secondary players), the "conflict player" in defenses has essentially been eliminated, rendering the traditional run/pass conflict RPO no longer effective.

As defenses evolve, so do the offenses trying to attack them, and vice versa. Thus the never ending cat-and-mouse game that makes football such a unique sport. It is with that in mind that we create our play calls, so we can take advantage of the new evolution of defenses that have eliminated the "conflict player".

With each play call, we are trying to eliminate the age old defensive drill: pursuit drill. Our aim is to make "pursuit drill" a liability for the defense as opposed to a strength. Ask any defensive coordinator the ultimate goal of any defense and they will invariably tell you to get more defenders at the point of attack than offenders. They are

trying to outnumber the offense in an attempt to stop the ball carrier. The traditional way defenses have done this is to design drills to accentuate the necessity to "run to the football". Donnie Brown, current head coach of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, is famous for stating "If you can't run to the football, you can't play for me." Our play calls are designed specifically to turn that former advantage into a disadvantage for the defense. If you run to the ball vs us, or more importantly, where you think the ball is going, you will vacate areas of the field we are able to attack. All our play calls are designed with the thought process of separating the football field into 4 areas or "quadrants".



In all our play calls, we want to be able to attack all four quadrants, thereby eliminating "pursuit drill" as a viable option for the defense. By doing so, we feel we are able to create more one-on-one matchups for our offense and not allow the defense to outnumber us at the point of attack.

When studying the great offensive schemes of the past, the one thing they all had in common was the ability to attack defenses in a variety of ways. Playing a wishbone team and want to take away the fullback dive by "stacking the box"? Not a problem, they will fake fullback dive and pitch the ball to the halfback outside. Want to overload a wing-t team to the side of the motion? Not a problem, here comes waggle back the other way. To me that is the beauty of the wing-t offense. The wing-t has a "series" of plays that all look the same; with the ability to attack inside and outside as well as pass the ball, such as the Buck series (fullback trap - inside, halfback sweep - outside, quarterback bootleg - pass). The problem in my opinion is that they are unable to do those things simultaneously. The series contain "answer" plays, in that the play series has the answers for how the defense

is attempting to outnumber the offense, yet by definition they are always a play behind the defensive reaction.

The next evolution for offenses to have the "answers" within the play call was to create the ability to attack the defenses simultaneously inside and outside, and the triple option was created. Watch any of the Service Academies play football, and you'll see how those offenses are able to attack the defense with multiple points of attack in any given play call. The issue those teams face is the lack of ability to attack all four quadrants of the defense within the down. Because the third phase of the triple option remains in the same quadrant as the second phase, defenses are able to run to the ball for the second phase, and then continue on the same track if the third phase of the option is triggered within the down.



With our play calls, we are trying to emulate the great offenses of the past and their ability to attack the defense but with the option to attack all four quadrants within the down. We are trying to simultaneously have answers built into the play, for however the defense is attempting to outnumber the offense at the point of the attack. In short, we are trying to make sure each defender assigned to a "quadrant" of the defense must stay in that quadrant in order to be fundamentally sound.



As an example of what we are trying to accomplish is the zone read play out of a 3x1 formation set to the field. As labeled in the previous "quadrant" diagram, we are going to have the ability to attack quadrant 2 with a pre-snap slant-in or fade route from the single receiver into the

boundary. Since the defense has no way of knowing pre-snap if the route is a viable option throughout the down, they must honor the route until late in the down when the ball presents to a different player. That leaves the defense with 10 players for the other three quadrants. The offensive line (we call them Superior, because well, you have to be a superior athlete to play on the offensive line) and the running back will attack quadrant 1. If the defense does not account for the running back and superior with at least 6 defenders, they are outnumbered at the point of attack. That leaves 4 players for the two remaining quadrants. The third receiver in the trips formation will attack quadrant 3 with a 5 step slant-in (glance route), holding the third level defender (field safety) in quadrant 3 until late in the down. That leaves 3 defenders remaining for the final quadrant. The quarterback, first and second receivers in the trips will attack the defense in quadrant 4, resulting in one-on-one matchups for the offense and eliminating the ability for the defense to "run to the ball" at any one point of attack. If the defender(s) in any quadrant vacates their quadrant in an attempt to outnumber the offense, the quarterback has the ability to distribute the ball to the player on offense in the quadrant with favorable numbers within the down. With the ability to distribute the ball down the field within the down, we feel we have successfully eliminated the problem triple option teams face when they keep the third phase of the triple option in the same quadrant as the second phase. By merging the traditional RPO scheme with the triple option scheme we believe we have created the ability to attack all 4 quadrants of the defense within the down.

In the next article, we will explain the thought process behind our playscript, and how we are able to get in and out of different formations efficiently in an effort to stress the defense.

# DEFENSIVE LINE BASICS

## ADVANCED BLOCK DESTRUCTION DRILLS



Quint Ashburn  
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In my opinion, block destruction is the most important skill a defensive lineman needs to have. Defensive line coaches need to devote most of their individual drill time each day to this. In the past few articles, I have described how to deal with the different types of blocks individually. In this article, I will show you how I begin to test defensive linemen's skills at identifying and beating all of the blocks that they could possibly see.

### Part 1: Pick 2 Block Destruction:

In this drill I will need a defensive lineman and a scout offensive lineman. You will need someone to simulate a ball snap as well. I will choose two different blocks that they could possibly see. The defensive lineman knows that they will get one or the other so they will need to read the block and react to it. Once they beat the block they will need to finish with an escape move. It will be very easy to tell if the defensive lineman is guessing or reading the block. This is a great time to slow down and teach the importance of the technique to players.

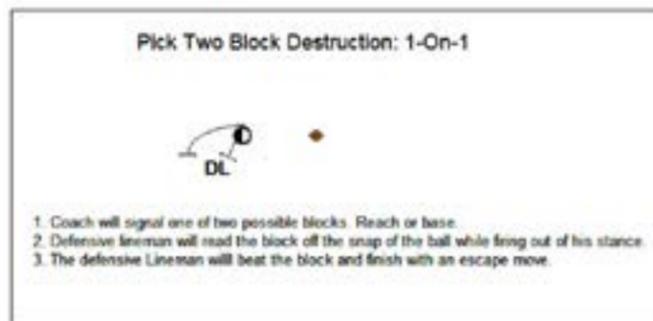
### Drill Progression:

Coach signals the type of block to the scout offensive line. Example: Base or reach block.

On the snap of the ball, the scout offensive lineman will either base or reach block the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will read the block as he fires out of his stance.

The defensive lineman will beat the block and will finish with an escape move.



### Block Destruction Drill: All Together:

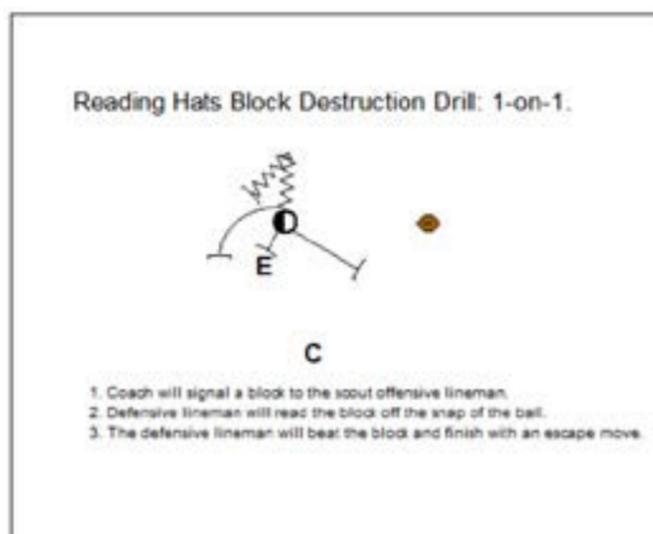
Once your defensive linemen are proficient at reading two different possible blocks, you can gradually add more to their plate. This drill is run just like the pick two, except you will add more possible blocks to it.

### Drill Progression:

Coach signals the type of block to the scout offensive line. On the snap of the ball, the scout offensive lineman will block the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will read the block as he comes out of his stance.

The defensive lineman will beat the block and will finish with an escape move.



Block destruction has to be done every day for defensive linemen. If a defensive lineman can't properly read and react to the blocks given to them, it can be devastating for the rest of the defense. In the next article I will talk about pod work on the defensive line.

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