

HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 3: ISSUE 3

wide receiver DRILLS

DIFFERENT
STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE
YOUR PASS GAME

WHY SPRING PRACTICE IS
IMPORTANT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

USE YOUR PEERS	2
WR DRILLS THAT TRANSLATE TO THE GAME (PART 1)	4
HOW TO CREATE A KILLER COVER LETTER FOR YOUR COACHING RESUME	6
POD WORK OR GROUP O FOR LINEMEN	8
THE FUNDAMENTALS: WHY SPRING PRACTICE IS IMPORTANT	10
CREASE AND PUNCH KICK OFF RETURN DRILLING FOR SUCCESS	12
SCOUTING OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	15
WHAT TO ASK AT A HEAD COACHING INTERVIEW	16
DIFFERENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR PASS GAME	18
PART ONE: APPRENTICE	20
AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE GT(H) PLAY	23



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We are so glad to run Headsets season three! It has been unbelievable to have so many coaches willing to contribute their time and efforts to the coaching community. A special thank you to the writers this season as we have a great line up in store covering:

- 12 Head Coaching 101
- Special Teams
- 15 Defense
- Offense
- 16 Drill Work
- And More...
- 18 As you go through the articles, there are many live links to recommended materials, articles and videos.
- 20 If you would like to contribute to Headsets, email Coach Simpson: FBcoachsimpson@gmail.com and let him know.

Also, please help us spread the word via social media and email about our Magazine as it is our hope to help as many coaches as possible.

Thank you, 

CLICK ON ANY TITLE TO GO STRAIGHT TO ARTICLE



JAMESIMPSONDESIGNS
SPORTS GRAPHIC DESIGN

RURAL FOOTBALL REFLECTIONS

USE YOUR PEERS



Kevin Swift
Retired AD/HC
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[Football Tool Chest](#)

I have not met many coaches who do not just love the off-season. It is a time of renewal and learning where everyone can be cautiously optimistic about the upcoming season. Early in my career I was like most of you, going to Glazier Clinics, Nike Coach of the Year clinic, and several small regional ones. The camaraderie, networking and learning were wonderful experiences in my youth. It was a special time. In 1997 I moved my family from my birthplace, Southern California, to the rural and isolated Oregon Coast, to become head football coach of the Gold Beach Panthers. Moving to the rural Oregon Coast would prove to be a blessing for my family and some hurdles I would have to get over to obtain the success I wanted for my new program. One of the first challenges I faced is that Gold Beach does not pay for its coaches to attend clinics. Truthfully, I do not think this is that unusual for small rural districts. So, going to clinics would be a family out of pocket expense – ouch! On top of that I was 3 hours from an airport to get anywhere. The impact on my family limited me to one Nike Coach of the Year Clinic in Portland and either

an Oregon State or University of Oregon clinic coinciding with spring ball. I was also at this time experiencing a knowledge and teaching dilemma. While I love listening to the college coaches and big urban high school powers I was not getting the nuggets of knowledge I needed for my rural high school players. I had to figure out how to get the knowledge I needed and not break the family bank.

About the same time, I began to look for other means of getting knowledge, our Gold Beach Football Team Camp (Beach Camp) was taking off. I inherited this when I became head coach and we poured a lot of energy into it because it served as our biggest fundraiser for our program. One of the positive side effects to this camp was the incredible amount of great high school coaches who brought their squads and staffs for 5 days to the Oregon Coast. We usually ran 2 sessions – a small school 11-man camp and then a large school 11-man camp. This event brought together 12 to 20 quality staffs every year from a variety of different size programs across the West Coast. This proved to be my knowledge and know how blessings/source. There is nothing like a session with 10 to 12 teams in June to create the true camaraderie around the game. A coach could practice from 8 – 10 a.m. and hang out with another school while they practiced from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. It easily became the best coaching clinic around because we were watching and learning from our peers! In fact, over time, we would just have staffs show up to hang out and clinic with camp teams. It was terrific!

We, as high school coaches, do NOT use our peers enough in developing the programs we want to build. Truthfully, when I discovered that listening and watching the defensive line coach for Bend High School, in Bend, Oregon, was providing me better information that Coach Amato of Florida State, we turned the corner as a staff and program. It is not that Coach Amato is not brilliant because we all know that he is. It is about talent level and resources. Gold Beach will likely never have a 6'5" Defensive End that runs a 4.6, and if through God's blessing we do, it will not ever be surrounded by the talent that surrounds the kid at Florida State. I need to see how a successful high school coach teaches his 6'0", 195 pound Defensive End, who runs a 5.1, to play 6i in a G front defense. I need to see how Coach Simpson teaches his 5'9", 200 pound, Guard how to pull on Buck Sweep. Fortunately, modern technology and social media has begun to allow this peer helping peer to happen more frequently. Starting in 2000 our efforts as a staff was to search out opportunities to learn from other high school coaches and more specifically at similar type schools. When this became our priority, our program began to have the kind of success everyone in our community desired.

Here is a list of 3 suggestions that worked for us:

1. If your state allows padded team camps during the summer, do one of two things – Take your team and during down time hang out with another staff to observe teaching strategies; and if not bringing a team take your staff to camp just to observe.

2. Take a day out of your spring practices to go visit and observe a successful high school program in your area.
3. Invite a successful high school program to come clinic with your staff for a day.

I hope this article makes you reconsider where you search for the material that will help you and your staff get your program where you all dream it could be.

“This event brought together 12 to 20 quality staffs every year from a variety of different size programs across the West Coast....It easily became the best coaching clinic around because we were watching and learning from our peers! In fact, over time, we would just have staffs show up to hang out and clinic with camp teams.”

DRILLS

WR DRILLS THAT TRANSLATE TO THE GAME (PART 1)



Chris Haddad
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Defensive Coordinator
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[@vIQtorySports](#)



Drills at any position should ultimately translate to the game. Wide receiver drills, mainly blocking, are one of the hardest techniques to teach. Defensive back angles, approaching speed, and aggressiveness can change from play to play.

The best way to create drills that translate to the game, is to create game-like situations. Wide receiver groups are often the biggest (in spread offenses), or the smallest in run-dominant offenses.

Regardless the size of your offense should prevent you from practicing impactful drills.

Our favorite blocking drill is what we call our "Group Routes Drill". Here's how to set it up:

Choose your favorite or top route combinations. This could be a 2 or 3 man route combinations. Have the receivers run the routes, but only throw one football.

Once the ball is caught, it's the job of the other receiver to take the proper angle back to the ball

carrier. This allows your receiver to take realistic angles when blocking. It will also help you to prevent block in the back penalties as well as illegal crack back penalties.

Run multiple groups one after another to get multiple reps.

To get a better picture of the drill, [watch here on Twitter](#).

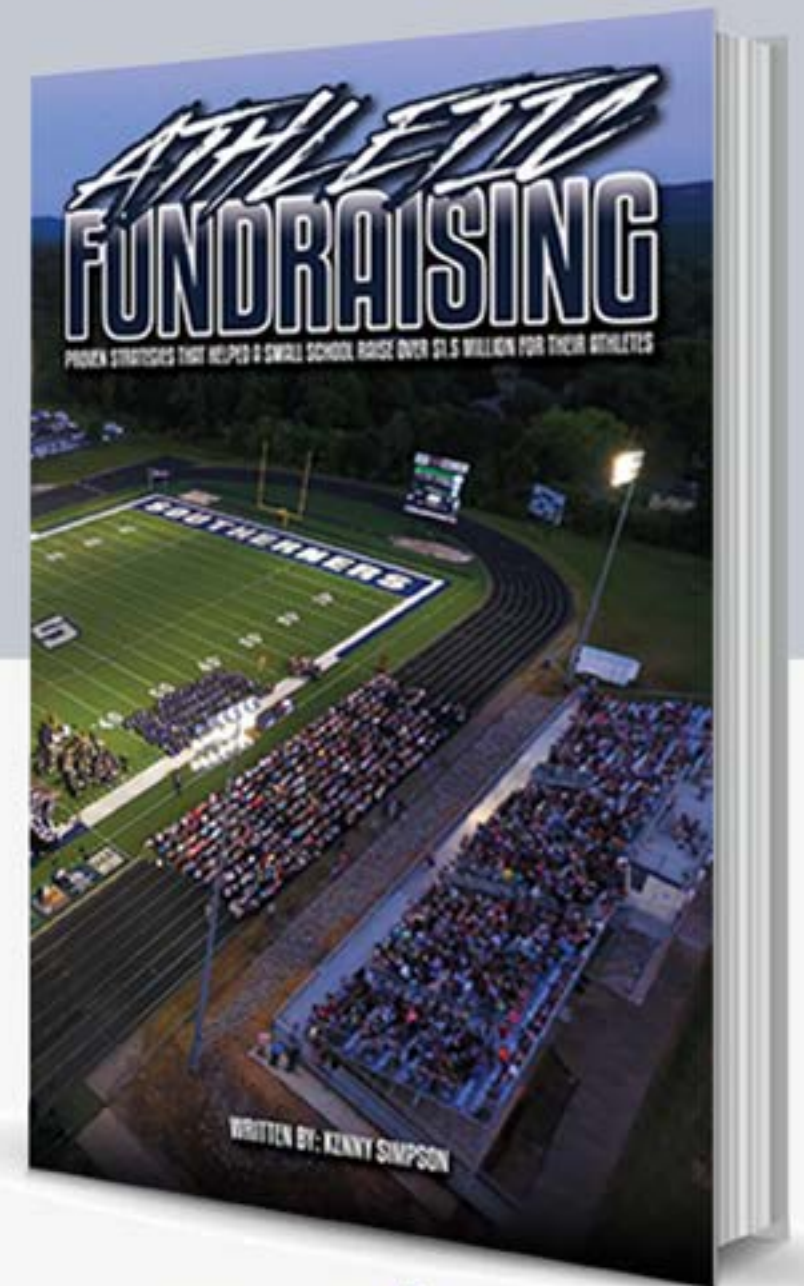
This is a great way to practice your blocking, as well as teaching route concepts. Kill two birds with one stone by practicing this realistic blocking drill.

Next issue, we'll have part 2 of WR drills that translate to the field.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE DRILL](#)

GOALS:

"We want to design all of our fundraising efforts in things that will produce 100% profit, will require as little time as possible, and will not risk losing any money or wear on our athletes or parents. While providing different opportunities to raise money is important, it is imperative to adjust to your community."



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

JOB SEARCH PREP FOR COACHES

HOW TO CREATE A KILLER COVER LETTER FOR YOUR COACHING RESUME



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Football/Baseball Coach
CEO: [The Coaching Portfolio](#)
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A cover letter is a document explaining your interest in a specific job. This letter should also highlight your qualifications for the advertised position. The number one mistake that coaches make when drafting a cover letter is adding too much information. A cover letter should be a brief introduction. To be honest, I look at the resume before the cover letter. And if the cover letter is too long, I only read the first 3 paragraphs just to see if the person has excellent grammatical skills.

Start your cover letter with how you found out about the job opening and why you're interested in the position. Be specific: use the correct names and titles. As you write this letter, use clear and concise language. You want to come across as professional and approachable, but not overly formal or stale.

The goal of the cover letter is to give a teaser of what is going to be in the resume. You want the reader to be intrigued and anticipate reading your resume. Do not go into too much detail

on some of your responsibilities. Focus more on some of the accomplishments that you have in your resume instead of the responsibilities. Provide examples of why you're the right person for the job. Tell the reader what you can do for them!

Finally, provide your contact information and how you prefer to be reached. Offer to meet or speak with the reader at their earliest convenience. Thank them for their time and attention and let them know that you look forward to hearing from them soon.

Before you send your cover letter, read your draft out loud to quickly spot errors or awkward sentence structures.

My general recommendation for cover letters is to use 4 paragraphs and follow the following format:

Paragraph 1

Introduce yourself.

Include what position you are applying for.

Mention your current position and summary of experience.

Paragraph 2

Talk about 2 to 3 of your most important coaching accomplishments on and off the field that you think make you a strong candidate for the position you are applying for. Don't go into too much detail, just briefly discuss them. The goal is to get the interest of the reader with something that really stands out and makes them want to really take a closer look at your

resume (then the goal of the resume is to get them to look at your portfolio and invite you for an interview).

Paragraph 3

Speak to what is most important to you as a coach.

Paragraph 4

Closing remarks. Talk about how interested you are in the position. Be sure to add something along the lines like "I am looking forward to learning more about this position and the football program at Frostburg. Please let me know a day and time that would be convenient for a phone call to learn more."

Most people aren't going to follow up with a response about a day/time to call, but you want to be direct and let them know how serious you are about the position.

The cover letter is the first impression in the application process. Be concise and convey the correct information. Remember, there is a flow to the job application process that looks like this:

Cover Letter

Demonstrates who you are and what you can do for the employer.

Resume

Shows what you've accomplished in the past and how you created value for a program.

Portfolio

Expands on what you've done in the past by

laying out the principles, philosophies, and processes that led to success. Also provides a vision and establishes the foundation for future success.

Interview

Provides you with the opportunity to display your communication and social skills. Allows you to elaborate in detail the items you presented in your portfolio.

For samples of effective cover letters for coaches, sign up to be a member of [The Coaching Portfolio Guide](#) at www.coachingportfolio.com!

“The number one mistake that coaches make when drafting a cover letter is adding too much information. A cover letter should be a brief introduction.”

O-LINE DRILLS

POD WORK OR GROUP O FOR LINEMEN



Michael Fields
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JV Head Coach/OC
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Once we complete your individual position (indies) time or EDDs we go to group O or pod work. In this session

various positions will work together on basics and schematic work. In these sessions QBs and RBs might work mesh, receivers and TEs might run routes and linemen, well they work on blocking. In our gap down backer scheme for the shot gun wing T we usually have our tackles, centers and even tight ends work down blocks and guards work on pulls.

We use a few different setups for these sessions. For the guards we may use the hurdle drill or just agility bags. For those working down blocks we may use the one man sled or a partner or coach with a shield or standing dummy. In our two weeks of camp the group O sessions are about getting the basic fundamentals down, while we do not abandon the fundamentals, we may evolve the sessions for schematic changes as the season goes along.

For the basic pod work in camp the hurdle drill, we start with our guards, QBs and RBs. We run buck sweep as our number one play, so we rep the pull kick and pull wrap with our RBs taking the hand-off and running behind the

guards. This works the pulls, mesh point and RBs following the guards through the hole. We use three hurdles built out of PVC pipe for the hurdles, one at about 4 feet tall and two at 5 feet tall, all of them are 3 feet wide.

We set the first hurdle, the short one, just outside the play side guard at the a depth for him to get about a yard deep. Both guards will actually go through this hurdle, the idea of the hurdle is to keep them low out of their stance into the pulls. The second hurdle is placed at the point of attack for the kickout block. The final hurdle is set inside the hole down field about 3-4 yards for the pull wrap to train the backside guard to keep his eyes inside and seal the linebacker scraping across. We add a player with a blocking shield past the hurdles to work on the block at the point of attack. As the season progresses, we no longer use the hurdles, we will use players and/or coaches with blocking shields in the alignment we see on film for our upcoming opponent. We now use this time more for our schematic adjustments over basic technique.

After the first couple of days of camp we add the centers to the hurdle drill and have them snapping to the QBs to get the timing of everything incorporated into the play. With this we may add a player with a shield for the center to down block so he is firing out as well.

While the hurdle drill is running in one area of the field, the tackles, centers and TEs will be working on down blocks. We may even have the wings work in this pod as they down block on

our buck sweep run on the DE or LB. For this drill we usually start with a one-man sled angled and offset to their inside for them to turn and push. After they get the basic footwork down we move to a player or coach holding a blocking shield.

We like to do this with a moving target as our aiming point is the nearest number on the opponent's chest and the near hip to turn the defensive lineman out of the hole when we down block. For this we work on their feet to get them in position, then the striking points of each hand. The inside hand will strike the chest and the outside hand strikes the hip to turn out the defender. For teaching purposes and player safety once they have the mechanics down we will have them go one-on-one with the defender going at 75% to allow the offensive lineman to work on his technique. Will do get to full speed, but we minimize this for safety purposes keeping the number of reps lower.

Just as we adjust the hurdle drill pod, we adjust the down blocking pod as the season progresses. We work on second level down blocks and schematic adjustments as well. We change the depth and splits of the linemen to adjust on the front we are facing that week. Once we are dialed in a team we will use this as install for the week with our linemen only.

Group O or pod work is also used for the passing game. Obviously the QBs and WRs will work on routes and catching, and the linemen work on pass pro. We use a slide scheme most of the time, se we rep that on passing practice days of the week. In this pod we have our five linemen

together plus TEs and RBs. The TE usually splits their time with the line and the receivers. Our TEs usually release for a route unless we are in max protect situations. Our RBs fill the in the split of the slide protection based on the calls we have the front we face.

We also use this time to work on our screen game blocking. We use a tunnel screen in which the tackle to the play side has to release outside to the OLB or SS depending on the front/coverage we face. The guards, center and backside tackle work on the slide to release to second level used for our screen game.

The use of pods or group O allow us to maximize our fields space, coaching staff and time with players working on specific skills used on our blocking schemes. All linemen use the same basic footwork they do in EDDs, then in group O we can maximize the reps used for each different linemen for our running and passing attack. Then when we get to team O, we are better prepared for installing or running the plays.

OFFENSIVE TALK

THE FUNDAMENTALS: WHY SPRING PRACTICE IS IMPORTANT



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Retired college football coach Bill Curry recently Tweeted, "Many players hate Spring Practice, but it is loved by the great ones. In the NFL I learned that spring is FUNDAMENTALS TIME. I was a 20th-round draft choice of the GB Packers (back then the draft had 20 rounds). When I showed up for my 1st NFL practice with the champion Packers and their great OL with three future Hall of Famers; they were working on 'stance and starts.' I was shocked. Fanatical on details, the Packers won 5 NFL titles in 7 years, including the first two Super Bowls."

Coach Curry played Center and LB at Georgia Tech for the legendary Bobby Dodd. In the NFL he played Center for two of the greatest coaches in the history of football, Vince Lombardi, and Don Shula. He returned to Tech as their Head Coach before moving on to be the HC at Alabama and Kentucky and finishing his career at Georgia State in 2012.

Coaches, winning football games is NOT just about doing extraordinarily spectacular things, it is more about executing the fundamentals and basics repeatedly, play after play, rep after rep, day after day. Teams that rely on spectacular plays rarely find sustained success. The Packers

from the early 1960s, the 1970s Steelers, the Belichick Patriots, and Tom Osborne's mid-90s Nebraska Cornhuskers were all different teams at different levels, but they all share a common characteristic; they executed the fundamentals and basics of the game better than their opponents on a consistent and sustained basis. I am sure that you have heard the now-famous Lombardi quote, "Gentlemen, this is a football!" It is one of the most famous and often-used sports quotes in history. However, most people don't know the story behind the quote.

In July 1961, Vince Lombardi kicked off the first day of training camp for his Green Bay Packers football team. The prior season had ended in a heartbreaking loss to the Philadelphia Eagles after blowing a lead in the 4th quarter of the NFL Championship Game.

When the players came to start training camp in 1961, they expected to immediately begin where they left off and work on ways to advance their game and learn fancy new ways to win the championship in the new season. When they sat down and began, Vince Lombardi held up a football and delivered the now famous, "Gentlemen, this is a football!"

He then had everyone open their playbooks and start on page one, where they began to re-learn the fundamentals – blocking, tackling, throwing, and catching. That was clearly not what they expected as professional players who were at the top of their game.

This fixation on fundamentals allowed the

Packers to win the first of five NFL Championships that season. Lombardi never coached a team with a losing season after that and never lost another playoff game during his time at Green Bay. Many think he was on his way to doing it again at Washington before he was stricken with colon cancer.

This mindset was engrained into the Packers by the time a 20th-round draft pick, Bill Curry, showed up at Packers' training camp in 1965. The concept of mastering the mundane became one of the key reasons the Packers won five titles in seven seasons; the importance of which was not wasted on a young Curry as he carried it with him throughout his playing and coaching careers.

What does mastering the mundane mean? It means we must do simple repetitive drills every day to form good habits. If we do not instill the basics what will the players fall back on when they are having an off game, in a slump, or facing a tough opponent?

I have visited and interviewed several combat soldiers over the years. Some of them fought in Vietnam and some of them fought recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. They all said basically the same thing about being in a firefight, "You fall back on your training." If we are not properly training our players in the fundamentals, what are they going to fall back on when faced with adversity?

I have read countless accounts from world-class athletes about how they got out of a slump or

battled a case of the yips. They all pretty much said the same thing about how they ended their dry spells; they focused on the fundamentals of what they were doing – their process. Golfers and baseball players focus on their swing mechanics; not hitting a hole-in-one or a home run. Basketball players and placekickers focus on their operation and process; not just making the shot or the kick. They all fall back on their training and the basics.

We must approach spring practice, or summer practice for that matter, with this mindset for the players to become the best they can be. Do not stress great outcomes with your players, teach them the process that leads to great outcomes. Do not just preach pad level, teach them how to get pad level. Do not just say, "catch the ball," teach them how to catch the ball. Do not just talk about ball security, teach them every detail of ball security. Then do all of these things repeatedly. Spring is a great time to slow it down and teach them every detail of the most "mundane" aspects of football. It is the time we, as coaches, can give them something to fall back on – a foundation.

Here are two final thoughts from four-time Super Bowl champion Chuck Noll:

"Champions are champions not because they do anything extraordinary but because they do ordinary things better than anyone else."

"If you want to win, do the ordinary things better than anyone else does them day in and day out."

Good luck the rest of the way and holler if you need me. Coach Chip

SPECIAL TEAMS

CREASE AND PUNCH KICK OFF RETURN DRILLING FOR SUCCESS



Stephen Mikell
Offensive Coordinator and
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In the last two issues of "Headsets", I've written about our "Crease and Punch" kickoff return scheme. The first issue focused on the base return, and the last issue was about how we vary the scheme based on our weekly opponent or to adapt to the skill set of our kids.

This issue will focus on a few drills we use for our return teams. I've written about some of these drills in "Headsets" before, but wanted to revisit them as part of this "series" on KO Return. The next issue will discuss our hands team and a concept we call our "Miracle Return".

Basic Concept:

The central idea of our KO Return is to create blocking angles for your blockers, and to use those angles to create a crease in the coverage team. Then, a wall of blockers will penetrate through the crease to "punch" and clean up any remaining members of the coverage team. The drills we use emphasize and reinforce the skills required to execute this scheme.

Drills for Success:

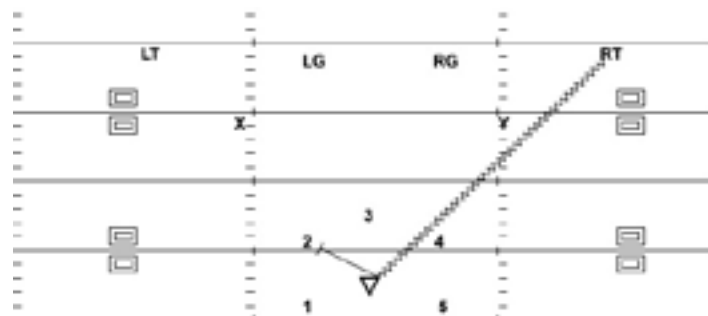
We use a few drills that help us on Kickoff Return. Live Team.

Team v. Air
Individual skills
Drop & Block
Defend the Box

The first two drills are fairly self explanatory, but during the individual drills, we divide the return team into three groups. The first group consists of the front six. They will do the Drop and Block Drill as described below. The up backs and the wedge captain will work on dropping and forming a wedge in front of the returners. The key coaching point is to set the wedge 7-10 yds in front of the ball and lead the returner to the middle of the field. The two returners will work together to field kicks and communicating who will catch the ball. We always put one returner in charge of saying "Me, me, me" or "You, you, you". This call will determine who is catching the ball.

Drop and Block Drill

One drill we like is our Drop and Block Drill. We will also line the front 6 in their positions, and, with a KO team, have them drop into position to block the cover man. The key coaching point for the front 6 is that you DO NOT have to kill your man to make the block. We tell our front guys to "put your hand on his hip" and run him past the play. Use his momentum against him and work him outside.



Equipment Needed:

Cones to mark where both blockers and bag holders stand/start
5 Hand shields or light bags to be blocked.

Description:

Align the front line, X, & Y 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 on the designated spot.

Variations: For a more realistic look, the blocking assignment can be given as the blocker drops. A coach can either use a voice command or hand signal. This will help the blocker learn to keep his head on a swivel to find his assignment. This drill could also be used to work communication on double teams if they are a part of your scheme. If using live personnel, you could also have the coverage man drop with the blocker.

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 center of the arc.
When executing the block on the pad, check

"This issue will focus on a few drills we use for our return teams. I've written about some of these drills in "Headsets" before, but wanted to revisit them as part of this "series" on KO Return. The next issue will discuss our hands team and a concept we call our 'Miracle Return.'"

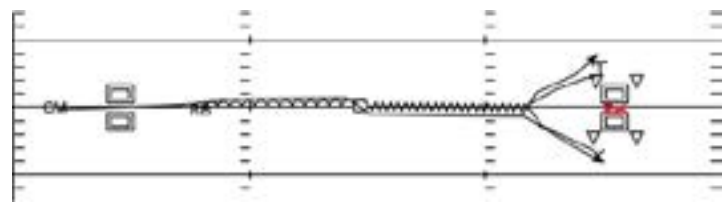
continued on next page

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.

Defend the Box Drill

Another drill we use quite a bit is one we call "Defend the Box. This drill works on both coverage and on blocking someone in space on a return team. 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.

You can see film of the [Crease and Punch Kickoff Return from 2008](#) by following the hyperlink. If you would like to see more of this return or any of our other special teams, please don't hesitate to reach out to Abe Mikell at smikell@augusta.k12.va.us.

DEFENSIVE LINE BASICS

SCOUTING OFFENSIVE LINEMEN



Quint Ashburn
Defensive Line Coach: Searcy High School - AR
[Defensive Line Coaching Group on Facebook](#)
[@CoachAshSearcy](#)
[Defensive Line Manual](#)

Scouting out offensive linemen and discussing their strengths and weaknesses with them is very important. It gives a chance for them to see what they are going up against.

The first step in scouting out the offensive linemen is to start by finding the latest game tape you have of them, preferably against the same front you have for accuracy. You will select the first ten run plays and make a playlist or note which clips they are on. After selecting the run clips, you will select the first ten pass clips and will make a playlist of them as well. These should be the plays that the offensive linemen perform the best because they are fresh and just starting out the game. From there you will grade each offensive lineman based on their performance.

When grading the offensive linemen, I make it as

simple and quick as possible because there are so many different things to be done on the weekends when you scout out your offensive opponent. The following is how I grade the opponents offensive linemen:

1) If the offensive lineman blows the defensive lineman up on the snap of the ball and drives the back or gets a pancake on them, I give the offensive lineman a plus (+).

2) If the offensive lineman just does their job, they get a neutral (=).

3) If the offensive lineman gets beat easily or their assigned man to block makes a play, they get a minus (-).

At times, the offensive lineman can perform somewhere in between a plus and minus so I will give them a neutral plus or neutral negative. If this is too much, just stick to the plus or minus starting out.

This is the method that I use for scouting my offensive linemen to get an initial picture of what my defensive linemen will face in the upcoming week. It has really been great for having an organized and speedy picture of what my defensive linemen can expect to go against each week. I will share an example of what that looks like in the diagrams below.

Clip #	#63 LT	#65 LG	#70 C	#73 RG	#78 RT
			Run:		
16	N	N-	N	N	+
17	+ Puts him uf	- His man tkl	-	N	N
18	N-	N-	N+	N	- His man tkl
19	- His man tkl	N+	- His man tkl	+	N
20	N +	N	- Blown back	-	N
21	N	N	N	N	N
22	N	- blown bk	N +	N	N-
25	N	N-	N	-	+
30	N	N	N	N	N
43	+	N	N	N	N

HEAD COACHING 101

WHAT TO ASK AT A HEAD COACHING INTERVIEW



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An excerpt from [Find A Way: What I Wish I'd Known When I Became A Head Football Coach](#)

One thing you need to do in any interview is to have items that are on your "must" list as a head coach. This may be different for you than it is for me. Find ways to ask these questions or get the answers by listening during the interview. To find a job you will be happy with, you need to have your "musts" as something the school says they will provide or allow you to build. Here is a sample of my list:

1. Opportunity to bring in coaches in the near future that align with my beliefs and the freedom to move any coach on staff to any position I feel necessary.
2. Year-round weight training and conditioning program for all athletes (especially those in spring sports).
3. Support from administration on my decisions for discipline and removing athletes from the team if I feel it necessary.
4. Commitment to upgrade facilities/uniforms/needed items in the near future.

5. Ability to raise my own money through a booster club if needed.

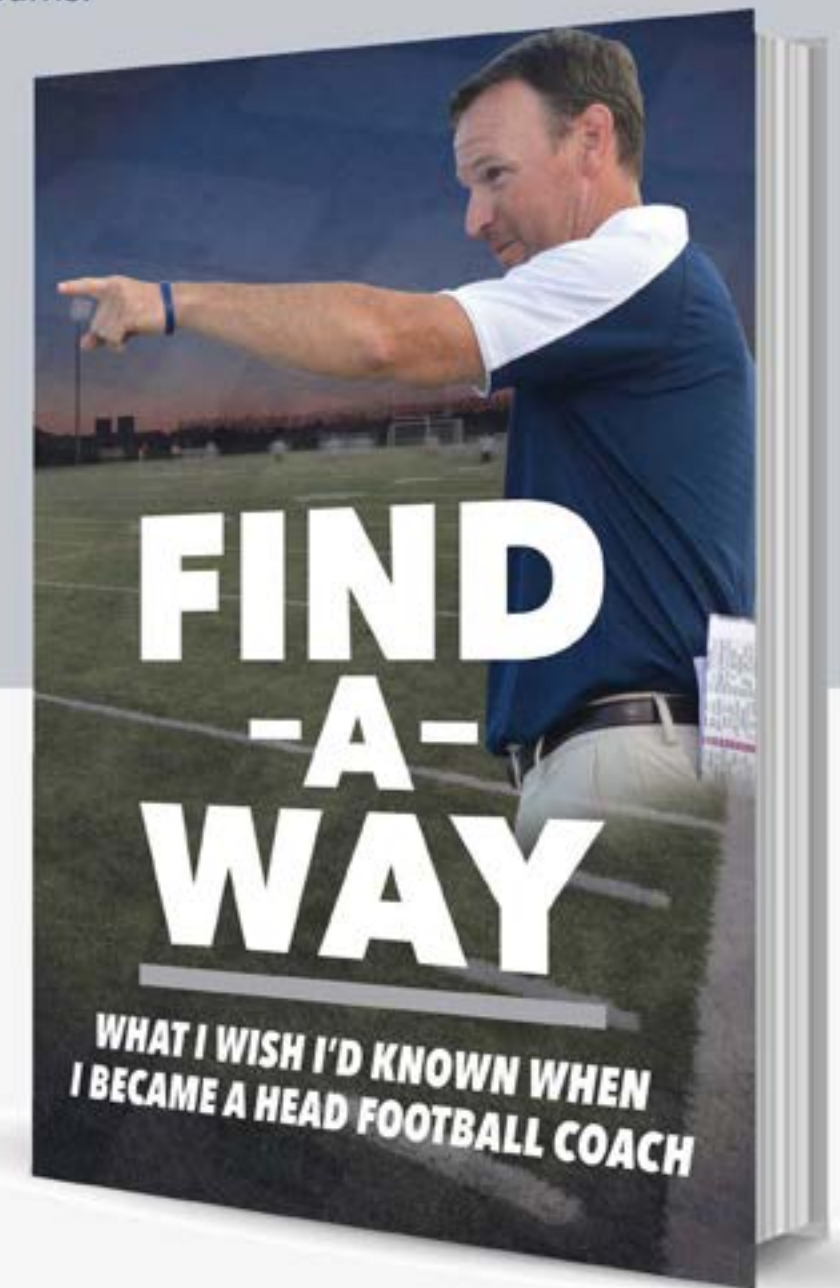
One question I am stealing from another coach: "Coaches can win games, but administration helps win championships. What will the administration do to help our program become the best it can be?"

Your list may include all of these, some of these or none of these. But make sure you feel comfortable with your list and how the school feels about it. This may cost you some jobs or you may have to turn down some jobs that will not work with what you feel is needed, but my recommendation would be to steer clear of those jobs anyway. If you can get what you feel you must have for a successful program, your odds of finding a place you can attain success will go way up. If you settle for a job, be sure you are willing to live with what is promised.

Taking a job at a high school usually involves several reasons, but if you take a job that you have not found out the right information you need, you may be in over your head in a no-win program. Be sure to understand that there were reasons that a school has not been successful and learn about them. If you are comfortable after learning why they have not been a good program and feel you can bring a good change, then take the position. Picking the right job is important as a coach looking to turnaround a program, but knowing what job not to take is even more important.

IN THIS BOOK

"...You will read about the ways I have had success building programs that were not very competitive into competitive teams. I am not a miracle worker and many of the parts to this book will be things many of you already know, but maybe one or two of the ideas I have used can help you on your journey as a coach. Each chapter discusses different elements of becoming a successful head coach with a focus on turning around downtrodden programs."



[CLICK FOR MORE INFO]

SPREAD OFFENSE

DIFFERENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR PASS GAME



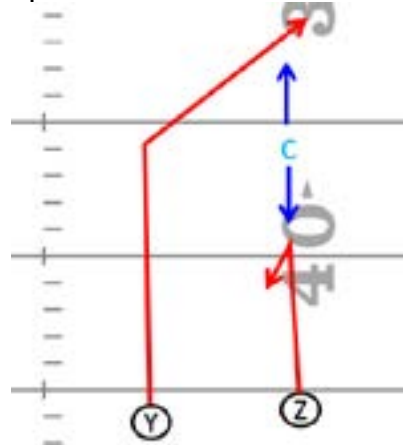
Danny Haddad Jr
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Is your QB having a difficult time knowing where he should be going with the football? If you are having a difficult time

getting completions, here are a couple ways you can simplify your pass game and simplify the thinking for your QB.

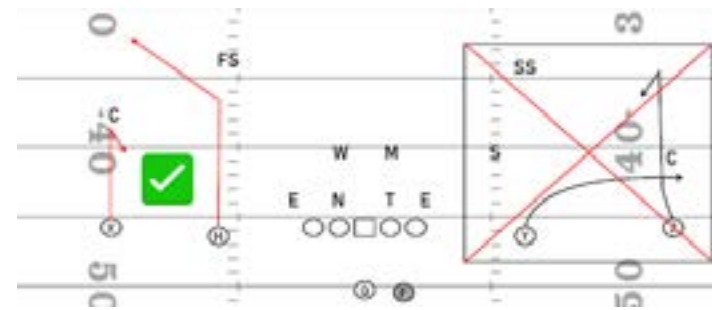
Read Concepts

Read concepts are a good starter for beginners or young QBs to eliminate the other 10 players on the defense and focus in on their read player for the concept. Read concepts are great for having an "If-Then" answer. You are able to read deep defenders on a high-low read based on depth and able to read underneath defenders on a horizontal read based on leverage and spacing. For example, the smash concept- IF the corner deepens- THEN I throw the hitch.



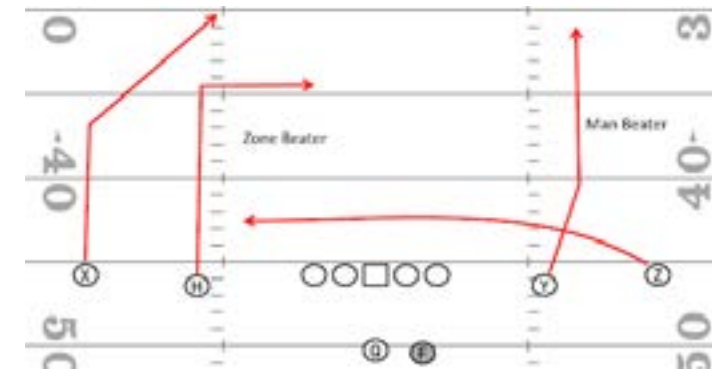
Half Field Concepts

Half field concepts are a great way to split the field in half for the QB based on the coverage the defense is giving you. By splitting the field in half- the QB only has 3 options to throw the ball, WR 1, WR 2 and check down to the RB. This will eliminate the stress of scanning the whole field. It's much easier for your QB to look at the coverage- determine whether it is middle open(MO) or Middle Closed (MC) to determine which side of the field he goes with the ball. Smash (left) would be a middle open beater reading the corner, while curl-flat (right) will have a tough time getting enough horizontal spacing.



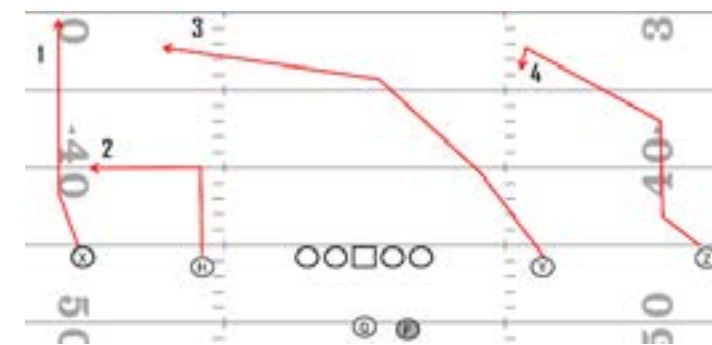
Man Vs Zone Beaters

If you are facing a team that is mixing up different coverages, having concepts with man and zone beaters built in will be a great way to make the reads easy for the QB. The reads will be similar to the half field reads in #3, where 1 side of the field is a man beater and the other side is a zone beater. In this shallow concept- If the QB notices man coverage, he can look to the natural pick on the right side. If it is zone coverage, he will be able to get the normal high-low read on the shallow concept on the left side



Progression Reads

These reads are paired with a series of routes that will naturally take you through a progression of a specific route combination. These types of progression reads can be a high-low progression or an outside-in progression scanning from one side of the field to the other. With this Y-cross concept, the QB is scanning from L to R progressing from 1-2-3-4 within the progression.



“Is your QB having a difficult time knowing where he should be going with the football? If you are having a difficult time getting completions, here are a couple ways you can simplify your pass game and simplify the thinking for your QB.”

“I GOT THE JOB; NOW WHAT?”

PART ONE: APPRENTICE



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“An apprenticeship is a system for training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training.”

In 2010 I became the head football coach at an inner-city school in Nashville. In doing so, I inherited a young assistant coach by the name of Bob Gecewich. After several years of coaching together Bob moved on and has since become a head coach himself. Over the years our friendship and respect for each other has remained. We talk often, usually about attacking opponents or new schemes that we have run across. It seems that more often we talk about common issues that we both encounter as head coaches; dealing with parents, weight room programs, fundraising, etc. On multiple occasions the conversation has turned toward hiring and mentoring young coaches and the

challenges that it presents. As an attempt to improve that mentoring process, Bob and I have created a checklist from which we can start the discussion with our young coaches, but also can be used as an evaluation tool at the end of each season.

I have been very blessed over my 43-year career to have been mentored by some great men. Men that patiently and sometimes not so patiently helped me refine my craft of coaching. I owe a debt of gratitude to each one of them for the wisdom they chose to pass on to me, and in their honor, I pass this on to the next generation of coaches.

We divided the items into 3 levels of expertise: Apprentice, Craftsman and finally Master. We wanted a starting point that would allow the coach a framework from which to start, a growth plan to help him develop and finally, a goal for himself. This article will only deal with the first phase of the apprenticeship plan.

Apprentice: Getting started

- Show Up
- Demonstrate Integrity
- Be an Example
- Take Ownership
- Take Initiative
- Put Family First
- Define your drills
- Efficient use of Time
- Don't Trust your Memory
- Be Coachable

You can't get better if you don't show up. As with

any apprentice relationship it only works if both parties are present and eager to teach and learn. Show up each day with energy and passion to do your job. As a player you might have missed because you were having a bad day. As a coach, you don't get that luxury. You have made a commitment to this team, Show Up and Grow. Integrity is measured over time; it doesn't change day to day. Be reliable, honest and loyal to your players and to your Head Coach every day. Be honest with your players, if you don't know the answer to a question say, “I don't know, but I will find out”. One of my previous bosses would say “Above all else be loyal. If you are loyal then you do all the other things naturally”.

Be an example for your players. If you want them to work hard, be on time, hustle, ask questions, and be accountable then you must model that behavior for them. Be aware that you are a coach now, not a player. Watch your language and actions. I had a young coach who was sitting down one day watching a drill. When I corrected him, his response was “I am really tired, this teaching and coaching is not easy”. The problem was he was still acting like a kid in his day to day routine, staying up late, playing video games, going out with friends. As we grow up our routines must change to reflect our priorities and obligations.

Take ownership of your position. Do the jobs that are assigned to you, without having to be reminded or supervised. If you want responsibility to be assigned to you then you must demonstrate that you can handle it. If you are the DB coach, then be the Head Coach of the

DB's. This doesn't mean that you have all the answers or don't need help, it means that you have the maturity to seek out the answers and ask for help when needed.

Take initiative, look for things to do that add value to your position. Equipment issues, putting up field equipment and taking out the trash are all things that must be done. It is like I tell my OL

“On multiple occasions the conversation has turned toward hiring and mentoring young coaches and the challenges that it presents. As an attempt to improve that mentoring process, Bob and I have created a checklist from which we can start the discussion with our young coaches, but also can be used as an evaluation tool at the end of each season.”

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guys on pass protection, "Look for work"! Don't think because no one comes through my gap I can take a play off, look for someone to help. As a young coach one of your assets is your youthful energy. Use it to your advantage by looking for ways to help and in so doing you will learn how to do more things that in turn make you more valuable to the team.

Most young coaches are either recently married or thinking about it. Whatever your situation may be, those relationships are extremely important. It is impossible to be fully engaged in what you do if there are problems at home. As coaches we spend too much time with other people's kids and not enough with our own. Make family your #1 priority. Make sure your partner feels like a partner, share your life and theirs. Spend quality time with family. When you are at home, "be at home"! Turn off the cell phone. Kids know that you have a job, but they should know that they are your #1 concern.

Drills give the opportunity to teach and execute a skill to perfection in a controlled environment. Game scenarios create imperfect situations, but the difference in a skill executed at 85% of perfection and 85% of imperfection can be the difference in a win/loss or game saving tackle/career ending injury. Here are 3 things to remember:

- 1) Define the purpose of the drill. Be specific and clear
- 2) Define the space for the drill. Use cones, hoses, bags, yard marker. All games are played with boundaries, so should drills.
- 3) Most drills should have a predetermined

winner. Structure success for the player that you are training. Success builds confidence.

Time is your enemy. You only have a limited amount of it, and it can't be reclaimed. Limit your drills so that you are not having to explain new things every day. Limit your vocabulary to the important things by creating a set of short phrases for your position. Less talk and more reps create better results. If you are having to explain and re-explain, the problem may be with you, not them.

Don't Trust your Memory. "We did it this way" is not always accurate. We remember things from our playing days the way we want to remember them, not necessarily the way they were. For example: you probably didn't practice for 6 hours in 120-degree heat with no water breaks or run 127 gassers in one day, or line up 20 yards apart for tackling drills and just run over each other. And you probably weren't as good as you remember. But even if you were, you aren't playing, they are. So, it is not about what you can do, it is about what you can teach them to do.

Just like when you were a player "Be Coachable". You are going to get coached by the HC, OC or DC. Don't be offended by criticism, expect it, ask for it. Take it as an opportunity to get better at your job. Disagreements happen in the office, not on the field. Earn the players respect by your relentless compassion for them and your commitment to the program.

I wish you all good luck in your endeavors and hope this helps you "Along the Way".

FLAVORS OF GT COUNTER

AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE GT(H) PLAY



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In this series of articles, I will discuss how we run the GT(H) Counter Play with the Yonkers

Brave. The Yonkers Brave is a cop-op team, composed of student athletes from Saunders Trade & Technical High School, Lincoln High School, Barack Obama School for Social Justice High School, and Riverside High School, all located in Yonkers, NY, which borders the Hudson River to the West, and New York City to the South. In this third article, we will discuss using an H-Back (Y-off) to further put the defense in conflict and combat various ways defenses will trigger their box players in an effort to negate the effectiveness of the play.

Why use an H (Y-Off)?

With the evolution of defenses utilizing a 4i defensive lineman (inside shade of the offensive tackle), offenses that run GT Counter have had to adjust. If a defense is fundamentally sound, they must be "gap sound" in their run defense. In other words, the defense must be able to defend all the run fit gaps an offense presents. The number of run gaps is determined by the offense, and more specifically by the number of offenders they place at, or near, the line of scrimmage closest to the football. In traditional football "10" personnel (1 RB, 0 TE's) will present six run gaps, 11 personnel will present seven run gaps, 12 personnel will present eight run gaps, etc. Once a defense decides to defend a B gap (space between the offensive guard and tackle) with a defensive lineman (in this case the 4i), there are only two ways to defend the nearest A gap; either with another defensive lineman (DL) or a linebacker (LB). Other than a 6-1 defense (6 DL, 1 LB), there are some exotic defenses that have been created with

a 2i (inside shade of the offensive guard), and a 4i on the same side, but most defenses will pair a 0 nose (DL head up on the center), with a 4i on the same side of the defense. In that scenario, it is possible for the offense to maintain its base GT blocking scheme, with the center blocking the 0, the QB blocking the 4i with the read, and pull the backside guard and tackle. The issue arises when the defense places an "overhang" defender on the line of scrimmage to defend the C gap. In that scenario, the defense can maintain its gap integrity while simultaneously defending both the running back (with the 4i squeezing down), and the quarterback (with the overhang defender), thereby negating the effectiveness of placing a run gap fit defender in conflict. In order to combat this, one solution is to bring a TE into the game, and play with 11 personnel.

Why use an H (Y-off) as opposed to an "inline" TE?

When some teams utilize 11 personnel, they will employ the TE on the line of scrimmage next to the offensive tackle. This creates a "three man surface" to the side of the inline TE, and in turn presents another run fit gap (D gap) to the defense. Although adding an additional run fit gap is problematic for the defense, it also increases the variables the defense can present. It is true there are only two ways to defend the A gap nearest the 4i, but there are many ways to defend the D gap. Solid defenses will not just utilize one way, but mix and match the various ways in an attempt to confuse the offensive line and create schematic breakdowns. In our opinion, the negatives of allowing the defense to implement various strategies to defend the D gap far outweigh the positives of creating a three man surface. Because of that, we choose to utilize an "off the ball" TE, or an H back. We also feel that, due to the ability of the H to attack the defense on both sides of the center, either pre-snap (with motion), or post-snap (by pulling), we in effect present two three man surfaces to the defenses, and eight run fit gaps that must be defended pre-snap. However, we in fact only have two man surfaces and thereby reduce the amount of variables. This also leaves only three defenders "out of the fit" and able to defend pass first. If we line up in H trips, this forces the defense to declare who is the "conflict defender", or the defender with both run and pass responsibility on a given down. Most defenses will assign that dual responsibility to the curl/flat player opposite the H, but that exposes their defense to the same side GT, and

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leaves them outnumbered at the point of attack.

Base GH Scheme

Our base GH scheme is going to alter the assignment for the backside offensive tackle. Our regular rule for the backside tackle is pull and kick/log the second defender that shows past the center (See Headsets Volume 3 Issue 1 for the detailed description of our base GT blocking scheme). When we add an H to the personnel grouping, the H will make a call to the offensive tackle alerting the tackle to the switch in scheme, and the backside offensive tackle's rule will now switch to head up/outside. This means the backside tackle will now block the first defender head up to outside shade. If the defense is playing with a 4i and an overhang, the backside tackle will block the overhang and the center will block back on the 4i. If the defense plays a head up 4, or 5, the tackle will block the 4/5, the center will double the nose, and the quarterback will block the backside curl/flat defender, or overhang. The H will assume the role normally occupied by the backside tackle; pull and kick or log second defender that shows past the center.



Different Ways to Utilize the H

Other than the base GH play, which is essentially the same as the GT play as described in Headsets Volume 3 Issue 1, there are various ways to utilize an H to be problematic for the defense. It is not necessary to just use an H when the defense presents a 4i and overhang. If the defense is aggressively flowing to the point of attack the H is a viable option to slow the backside pursuit. Simply releasing the H in the vertical seam ("pop" pass) from a hipped alignment on the backside offensive tackle will force the backside inside linebacker and backside curl/flat defender to hold their positions or risk vacating an area that can be attacked by the offense. Some might be adverse to asking the quarterback to read both the end man on the line of

scrimmage and the backside inside linebacker/curl flat defender, but all three defenders are in the quarterback's field of vision, and is easily accomplished with proper drill work.



Another way we like to use the H is with Motion. We are able to start the H to the backside of the play, motion to the center, then return to the original starting position and run either the base GH play or run the H on an RPO. However, the way we like to utilize the H is by starting to the frontside of the play, motioning across the formation, and then bringing the H back to pull and block. This accomplishes two things: first, it allows time for the offense to gauge how the defense will adjust to motion, either by starting in a 2x2 set, and motioning to 3x1, or vice versa, starting in 3x1 and motioning to 2x2. Second, it forces the defense to move from their original alignment and communicate. Anytime the offense requires the defense to move and communicate pre-snap, it creates a situation for the possibility of a busted assignment from the defense.



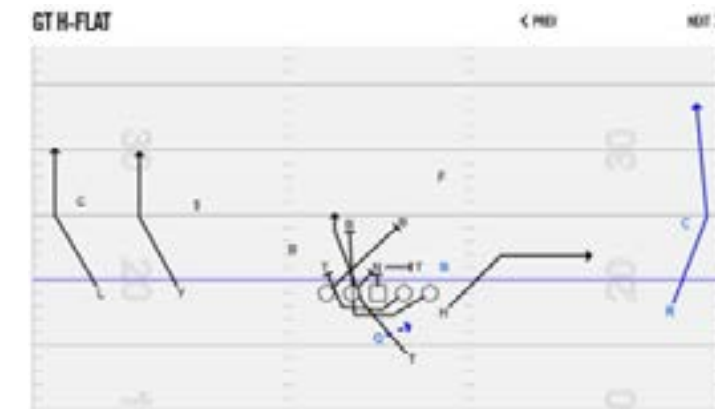
Utilizing the H in the RPO Game

There are several RPOs we utilize when employing the H if available (no 4i plus overhang). We feel these RPOs are

an excellent advantage for the offense when the defense becomes aggressive in their pursuit of the football. We will describe our top three: H bluff, H Flat, and H Glance. We run split-zone bluff with our H's, and GT H bluff is the same concept, just paired with the motion GH scheme we run. We will start the H to the frontside of the play and motion the H the same as when we run Motion GH, but in this instance the H will not return to pull and block the second "bad color jersey that shows". The blocking scheme for H bluff will be the same as our base GT, and the H will bluff blocking the end man on the line of scrimmage and continue to the flat.



With H flat, the H will start on the backside if the play, and run an "arrow" route to the flat.



With H glance, the H will run a 5 step slant-in, paired with a six yard In (SIN route) by the #1 receiver.



In the next article, we will discuss using 2 backs and motion to further put the defense in conflict and combat various ways defenses will trigger their box players in an effort to negate the effectiveness of the play.