

HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 4: ISSUE 2

Training
YOUR QB

**WHAT DOES
IT TAKE TO LAND A
HEAD COACHING JOB**

**OFFENSIVE LINE SPLITS
MATTER-A LOT**

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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 all things football.

As you go through the articles, there are many live links to recommended materials, articles and videos.

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

TIME TO RAISE THE BAR



JAMESIMPSONDESIGNS
SPORTS GRAPHIC DESIGN

DRILLS

QUARTERBACK RUN GAME: GAIN A NUMBERS ADVANTAGE



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Whether you're a defensive coach or an offensive coach, it's good to understand how much of a threat the offensive run game poses.

First thing we're going to explore is the numbers in the box. Ideally, whether you're a 3 down or 4 down defense, all 6 gaps should be covered. This includes slanting, so the ball gets pushed to the outside, or using simple single gap control to build a wall.

However, when the quarterback runs the football with the running back lead blocking, it adds another gap. So now, the defense has to

make sure they fit the lead blocker up properly, so they can leverage the ball properly.

Below is an example of what we mean.

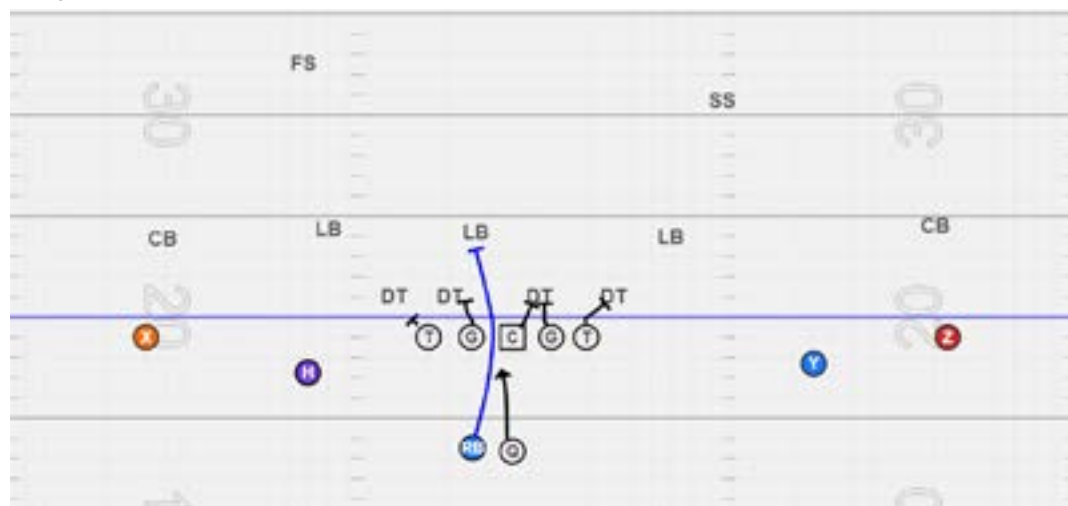
Typically, on simple 10 personnel sets, defenses may decide to stay in a 2 high structure, and keep 5 in the box. Now the defense needs to account of the running back being a lead blocker, so you have to either stunt the front, or go to 1 high structure to get the strong safety into an overhang position.

If they do go single high, this is where glance RPOs and other run schemes can take advantage of the defense.

We created a video in which you can learn 5+ QB run schemes that take advantage of the defense.

[You can watch those here on our YouTube channel.](#)

As always if you have any questions or would like to see more film on this technique, [feel free to reach out contact@viqtorysports.com](#)



OFFENSIVE TALK

OFFENSIVE LINE SPLITS MATTER - A LOT



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Offensive line splits, like offensive linemen, play a pivotal but often overlooked role. The gaps between offensive linemen can enable or limit the successful execution of a play. This article will explore the significance of offensive line splits, their impact on the game, and how they contribute to a team's offensive success or lack thereof.

The Basics of Offensive Line Splits

Offensive line splits refer to the gaps or spaces between offensive linemen. These linemen, comprising five to seven players in the form of ends, tackles, guards, and a center, have varying distances between them. The width and spacing of these splits can greatly affect a team's offensive strategy and its ability to execute plays effectively.

Strategic Implications

Pass Protection: Offensive line splits are strategically designed to protect the quarterback. Wider splits between linemen can create more space for pass protection, allowing the quarterback extra time in the pocket to find open receivers. A narrower split can help offensive linemen maintain a strong, impenetrable

front against an aggressive defensive line. An offensive line should get splits that match their athletic ability. Not all lines are created equal, and they cannot all get the large splits that Mike Leach and other Air Raid coaches have made famous.

Run Blocking: In running plays, the width of offensive line splits can determine the direction and effectiveness of the run. A wider split might facilitate outside runs, while a narrower split can better support inside runs and power plays. Coaches adjust these splits based on their running back's style and the intended point of attack. Some coaches like to widen their splits at the point of attack to help make the hole bigger and cleaner for the running back. Coaches that use double-team blocks may want to tighten their line's split at the point of attack to help their linemen come together as one (hip-to-hip) on the double-team blocks.

Play-Action Passing: Offensive line splits also impact the effectiveness of play-action passing. A balanced alignment allows the offense to disguise runs as passes or vice versa, keeping the defense off balance. A consistent look from the offensive line makes it harder for the defense to predict the play. If a team widens their split at the point of attack on a running play, they should also widen their split when they are faking that running play on a play-action pass.

Zone Blocking vs. Gap Blocking: Offensive line splits are closely tied to the blocking scheme a team employs. In a zone-blocking

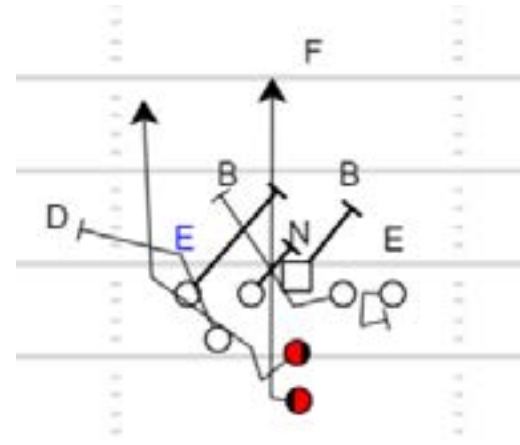
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scheme, linemen often have wider splits to work in unison, moving laterally to block defenders. Conversely, gap blocking often involves tighter splits, giving linemen the ability to block and take away run-throughs by the defense.

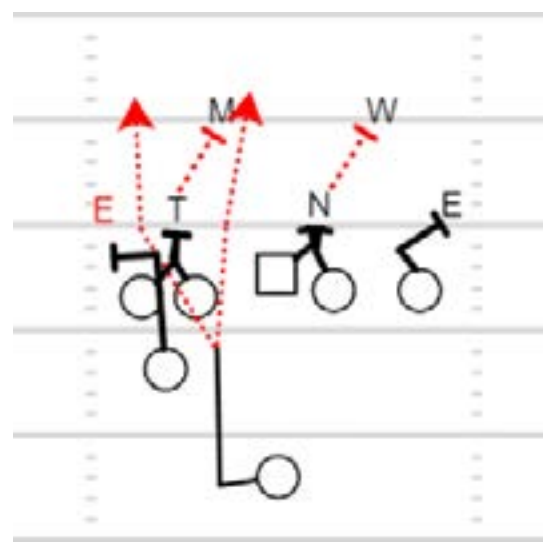
Impact on the Offense

Versatility: Offensive line splits provide the offense with the flexibility to adapt to various game situations. Whether it's a short-yardage situation, a two-minute drill, or a goal-line stand, the offense can adjust the splits to match the strategic demands of the moment. This has often been called "smart splits" by offensive coaches. It was used for many years by Triple Option coaches to widen out the quarterback's read. For instance, if the QB is reading the defensive end, the play side offensive tackle, or Tight End, will widen out to give the QB a cleaner read and more time to read the DE. These wider splits can help maintain the integrity of the running game by opening lanes for running backs to exploit the wider gaps created by the offensive line's wider splits.

Here is an example of a Power Read that we have used with much success over the years. This diagram demonstrates the LT widening his split so that the DE (the QB's read) is further from the ball. It also gives the inside linebacker a bigger gap to fill when he steps up to play the dive by the RB. How far should the OT go? We teach until the DE stops going with him.



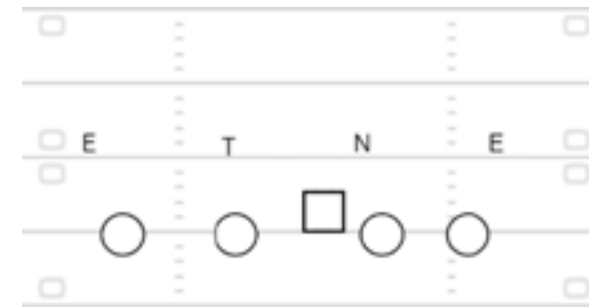
Here is an example of a play that uses double-team blocks. The LT has tightened his split with the LG and RG has tightened split with the Center so they can come together (Hip-to-Hip) on their double-team blocks.



Protection and Efficiency: The proper use of offensive line splits can provide the quarterback with a cleaner pocket, allowing for more efficient passing plays. An offensive tackle may want to widen his split versus a fast edge rusher, or an offensive guard may need to tighten their split versus a strong Nose Guard who wants to dent the middle of the pocket so he can help the

Center with the Nose.

In this diagram, the LT widens his split to increase the distance between the DE and the QB. Also, the RG has tightened his split to help the Center with the Nose.



Psychological Advantage: There is an argument to be made for consistent offensive line splits. They can confuse the defense, making it challenging to discern the type of play being run. This psychological advantage can lead to hesitations and misreads by the opposing

defense, benefiting the offense.

Note: It has been my experience that defenses from the high school level and below do not recognize split adjustments very often.

Proper offensive line splits are an essential, often underappreciated element that impacts the game at its most important point, the line of scrimmage. They influence pass protection, run blocking, play-action passing, and overall offensive efficiency. Coaches and players must carefully consider the width and spacing of these splits to maximize their offensive potential. Without a doubt, the offensive linemen, working in tandem with their line splits, play a crucial role in a team's success, or lack thereof.

JOB SEARCH PREP FOR COACHES

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO LAND A HEAD COACHING JOB?



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Securing a head coaching position is the culmination of a coach's professional journey—a pinnacle achieved through a combination of expertise, leadership, and a strategic career trajectory. As coveted as it is competitive, the path to landing a head coaching job in the world of sports demands a unique blend of skills, experience, and personal attributes. Beyond the sidelines, it involves a meticulous approach to networking, continuous learning, and the ability to navigate the landscape of coaching hires.

What does it take to land a head coaching job? From cultivating a standout coaching philosophy to showcasing effective communication and organizational skills, the pursuit of a head coaching role requires a deliberate and comprehensive strategy. Below we discuss the essential elements and insider insights that pave the way for aspiring coaches to ascend to the helm of a sports program.

Landing a head coaching job in football involves a combination of factors, and the importance of each factor may vary depending on the level of play (youth, high school, college, or professional). Here are some key factors that often play a role:

Experience and Qualifications:

- Coaching experience, especially at higher levels, is typically highly valued.
- Success in previous coaching roles, such as winning records, championships, or notable achievements, can make a candidate more attractive.
- Educational qualifications, including coaching certifications and degrees related to sports science or coaching, may be considered.

Networking:

- Building a strong network within the football community is crucial. Connections with other coaches, administrators, and influential figures can open doors and provide recommendations.

Player Development:

- Demonstrating the ability to develop players, not just in terms of performance on the field but also in character and leadership, can enhance a coach's appeal.

Philosophy and Style of Play:

- Having a clear coaching philosophy and a well-defined style of play can set a candidate apart. Programs often seek coaches whose approach aligns with the organization's values and goals.

Communication Skills:

- Effective communication is vital for a head coach. This includes communication with players, staff, media, and other stakeholders. Coaches need to inspire, motivate, and convey their strategies clearly.

Adaptability and Innovation:

- The ability to adapt to changing circumstances, whether it's adjusting strategies during a game or evolving coaching methods over time, is essential. An openness to new ideas can be attractive to programs.

Leadership and Management Skills:

- Strong leadership qualities, including the ability to make tough decisions, handle pressure, and manage a coaching staff, are critical for a head coaching position.

Understanding of the Game:

- In-depth knowledge of the sport, including tactical awareness and a keen understanding of the game's nuances, is fundamental for a head coach.

Character and Integrity:

- Coaches with high ethical standards, integrity, and a positive reputation are more likely to be considered for leadership positions.

Interview Performance:

- How well a candidate performs in interviews can significantly influence the hiring decision. This includes articulating their coaching philosophy, discussing past experiences, and demonstrating a vision for the team's future.

It's important to note that the specific requirements and emphasis on these factors can vary widely depending on the level and nature of the coaching position. For example, professional teams may prioritize different qualities than high school teams. Success in the coaching profession often involves a combination of these factors, along with timing and opportunities.

Need Additional Help?

If you need help with your coaching resume, your portfolio, or the interview process, be sure to sign up for one of our job prep packages at [The Coaching Portfolio Guide!](#) We provide services that assist with all aspects of the job search process for coaches. Visit www.coachingportfolio.com to get started today!

LEADERSHIP

PART 1: 11 PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP (US ARMY 1948)



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When it comes to leadership development, there are seemingly infinite ways to teach your players and coaches. Not all of those ways are the most effective nor the most efficient, but I'm not here to judge your pedagogy. Leadership itself is such a broad subject, that it's hard to find the beginning of, hard to know how to analyze yourself or your team to determine where they need help, how to determine what your progression should be, and when you should make those progressions. Most schools I've been a part of don't have a leadership class or a curriculum for coaches from which to steal. Some of them also didn't have a person at the helm that would be considered a leader by those in the know. It's not completely their fault (except that Extreme Ownership thing). We're, for the most part, expected to teach a concept that we ourselves have never been taught. We go through our careers emulating whatever version of leadership we saw as a player and young coach. Unfortunately, these often aren't great leaders,

With a little help from the U.S. Army, we do have access to a tried and true method of organizing leadership such that it is a teachable topic to help our team, our program, and our community. Everything I'm about to write in this article, and the ensuing leadership series, will come from my time as a Soldier, an Officer Candidate School Platoon Trainer, and my time in various leadership positions. The core ideas are easily found on the internet, and are no way any creation of my own. You can find the classic army versions or the civilian trumped up versions. All are useful to leaders in the coaching field, whether you're the new guy out of college, or the old guy about to retire.

As things tend to do, leadership and its teaching evolves from time to time. People change, jobs change, everything changes. And yet, we can look back at what the core values of leadership were nearly 100 years ago and see that it did stand the test of time pretty well. As such, we will start with the U.S. Army leadership principles from 1948. Please understand that these principles were developed for a fighting force, but can easily be used in sports, with slight translation.

1. Know yourself and seek self-improvement:

Look, I've only been a football coach for 4ish years. But, I've been a Soldier, leader, mentor, dad, husband, professional, grown up, and human for a combined... a lot more years than 4. Self-improvement isn't some new fancy tool to add to your tool box. It's like the Phillips screwdriver of tools you should have in your tool box. You should have way too many, they should come in all shapes, sizes, and colors... including

the micro set you keep in the junk drawer in the house for the odd-ball job that comes about.

Knowing yourself is hard to do. We live in a world with too many windows into other people's homes and not enough mirrors in our own. (You gym rats with 100 floor to ceiling mirrors don't count). But, it's instrumental in ensuring you are the best coach, and leader, that you can be for the program that employs you. Find out who you are. Find out who you need to be. Find a way to get there and make it happen.

2. Be technically and tactically proficient:

AKA, know your job well enough that you're able to teach it to everyone! In coaching, this is primarily the X's and O's. Don't just know what Cover 3 is, but know everything you can about it. How can we problem solve on the fly if you don't fully know the ins and outs of the coverage as it pertains to your position group? Can you teach your corners to play press, zone turn, and still get to the deep-third? Can you teach an Offensive Lineman how to win a down block when the competition outweighs him by 100 lbs? As you'll see me post on Social Media about 1,000,000 times, "Leadership is problem solving." You have to know enough about your craft to help people solve problems.

3. Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions:

This principle of leadership is more recently summarized in the top selling book "Extreme Ownership" by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. Although the message in their first book may be a bit overwhelming for a new leader, it

also sets the tone of what exactly leadership is. Everything is YOUR FAULT in the end. The earlier you begin to understand this and get involved in your surroundings, the better your leadership stint will be. Seek out responsibility, never seek to lay blame on anyone else.

Take responsibility for your actions and those on your staff and team. They can only perform up to the level that you have coached them. This doesn't stop at the sideline either. We have to take responsibility for the actions on Friday night and Saturday night. We all know boys will be boys, and high schoolers excel at getting in trouble. It's up to you to help build the culture that makes the game, school, family, and the team more important than those "high school memories."

4. Set the example:

As a coach, one of the best ways to teach leadership is by living the life you expect your players to emulate. "Lead by example," is not only a mantra we say in the Army, but something we attempt to live by. Leading by example can be difficult, but not leading by example can be even harder. Choose your hard.

If your expectations, rules, or standards include always being on time, always giving your best effort, always dressing professional, etc, then you need to live that way as well. You can't preach professionalism at practice, then wear shorts and a t-shirt to school M-F. You can't talk about respect being a tenant or pillar of your program, and then constantly berate your staff, or tear down your QB after a bad play. You

continued on next page

have to show those around you what right looks like.

5. Know your people and look out for their welfare:

Leadership goes well beyond Friday nights and football knowledge. The best leaders show their people that they truly care about them every day. This doesn't mean sappy messages, hugs, and kumbaya. It probably does include ample numbers of social, mental, and spiritual checkups. You also should be looking out for your guys throughout school, practice, games, and even while they're at home. Too many times coaches see kids walk off the practice field and think their responsibility ends there. Unfortunately for most of us, this is where your care really needs to begin.

I work in NE Oklahoma, and my last job was in the poorest county in the state. In that town drugs reign supreme, dads are few and far between, and kids have terrible home lives. I never changed my coaching method, because the standard is still the standard, but I did have to increase the love I showed them. "Coach 'em hard, Love 'em harder," is a quote that I've taken to heart because of that year. In a time of the highest suicide and self-harm rates ever recorded, we really have to expand the meaning of "Coach." Simply letting a player know you care by taking the extra 2 minutes to say "hi," or "I noticed more effort today, good job," or "I noticed you seem to be having a hard time focusing/keeping up, you eating/sleeping/feeling ok?"... "I noticed" can be a powerful line to break through with a kid that really needs someone.

6. Keep your people informed:

Communication has shown to be the weakest trait of all coaches in my short tenure in the industry. Most coaches are just bad at talking about what they want, need, expect... you name it. We're stuck in a vicious circle of "don't step on anyone's toes," and "no one is getting anything done," because we simply can't talk honestly with each other.

Tell your people what you want done. Print a "coach to task" chart so they know what all of their taskings are and can begin to execute. Along with this should be an understanding of the "left and right limits." Give them the non-negotiables and a guide to what you expect a product to look like. This could be how you want a DC to call up the defense on Friday night, what you expect social media graphics to include, or what drills/skills you want worked on at practice.

More than anything, please give your coaches some feedback. Let them know how they're doing as compared to your expectations. It is absolutely okay to tell someone they're doing a poor job. In fact, your job might rely on your ability to communicate that to a coach or player. You don't have to be overly harsh about the facts, but you can't beat around the bush too much either. Make sure you're telling them the good things too. Let them know where they're meeting or surpassing the standard so they know what not to change.

7. Ensure the task is understood, supervised, and accomplished

Whether you're speaking to the newest coach on staff, your OC who is rocking 3 championship rings, or a QB stepping into his

first Varsity start, you have to ensure you are clear with your expectations. As developers of those around us, this could be giving your coaches a developmental assignment, it can be telling your QB how to read a defense, or a whole crew of filmers, who know little to nothing about ball, how to set up and record the entire game correctly. You need to make sure you're clear in your instruction, and always "trust but verify" that things are done correctly.

Rehearsals are a game changer when it comes to essentially every aspect of being a leader. If a task must be completed successfully and efficiently, you have to do it more than once. You can't show up on the first game day and expect the film crew to just know what to do. Bring them in on Thursday and have them set up and record your walkthrough practice. Rehearse everything.

8. Develop a sense of responsibility among your people:

"We don't do that here." The single statement that can give you immediate proof that your culture is healthy. It shows that your players have now taken responsibility for driving the program forward.

Most of us are far from this point in our program development, though. Earlier I spoke of the "Extreme Ownership" book by Jocko and Leif. This book should help you to instill the "everything is my fault," mentality to you, or anyone you buy the book for. (it makes an AMAZING coaches book study) Once you complete this book and begin to practice and preach Extreme Ownership, you need to learn "The Dichotomy of Leadership" by the same

authors.

This book better defines the responsibility of leadership, and how to further develop it in your group. You obviously can't be responsible for 100% of everything when you're entrusting things to football players or other coaches. People will people. So, we learn to "hold people accountable, not hold their hand," and where the balance lies in doing so.

9. Train your people as a team:

Coach Simpson first introduced me to the "Practice Pods" concept. Practice with the people you'll play with. It makes no sense for an H-back to consistently run with the QB/RB group if he's mainly going to be down-blocking in your system. He does need reps there, but he needs to sharpen the sword he'll carry most often.

Training your people as a team can mean a lot of things. Pods is just one example. I love to take my O-Linemen and treat them special as a group. These "Beefeaters" (check out the royal bodyguards from 16th century London) get steak on our dinner night, they build a circle of other linemen and make the diva skill guys go do their own thing. "No skill-guys allowed," would be the sign nailed to the tree if we had a treehouse. But, this unit isn't learning to keep others away, they're learning to be a family that operates together at all times. On JV night, they may be running the chains or doing a fundraiser concession stand together. On Friday nights... they're dominating together.

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10. Make sound and timely decisions:

All of you play callers know what this is about. What can be the highest pressure position on the football field is the guy(s) making the play call each and every play. Calling things on time to prevent penalties, and sound enough to score points and prevent inefficient plays is a key part of the coordinator's duties.

Sound and timely decisions aren't limited to playcalling on Friday nights. We need to use this method in every aspect of the program. Name your starters as soon as you know who they are. Identify the up-and-comers in your b-teams to get them the extra developmental reps as soon as possible. Make decisions on coaching hires quickly and soundly so that your program can begin its trek and the coach who doesn't get hired can find another job. Be as fast, accurate, and precise with your decision making as you can be, such that others are never waiting on you. Remember, "A good plan right now is better than a perfect plan afterwhile."

11. Employ your team in accordance with its capabilities:

Being honest with yourself, your staff, and your players about the capabilities of the team is critical. Anytime you attempt to do things outside of your abilities or capabilities as a team, you're asking for trouble. I've seen coaches try to install systems that they didn't have the talent pool to run. Luckily, I've also seen coaches bend and mold their systems to fit their team each year. The latter are generally successful year after year. Learn to evaluate your coaches and players and develop a plan that lets them shine. Just like understanding and improving yourself

is important, you also must do the same with your team. It is absolutely okay to have a "State Championship caliber" playbook. It's great to expect your players to eventually be able to operate within it. You just have to ensure that you're able to give your team what they can use and nothing more.

The more I wrote on this, the more it felt like common sense. With nearly 20 years of indoctrination through beginning learner, application, and instructor I would've had to be ignoring Principal 1 for it to not feel like common sense at this point. To be honest, I wish I was writing the stuff that every coach already knows and practices, but the ugly truth about football is that there are people out there without any true leadership training.

Practicing and developing leadership in your program can get a jump start when you begin focusing on these 11 principles and growing within, and beyond, their surface level meanings. As you read here, I hope you were thinking of scenarios in your career that fit these principals.

If any of this sounds foreign to you, you need more information about any of it, or you simply want to talk leadership, please don't hesitate to email me at chamberlainfootballconsulting@gmail.com. Leadership has become one of my favorite topics in life, and in ball. Some of my training with the military can be difficult to translate to the field, but we can't ever throw a resource out because it doesn't fit perfectly right now.

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ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

WHY ATHLETES SHOULD DELAY STATIC STRETCHING UNTIL THE END OF TRAINING/PRACTICE



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Stretching has long been considered a fundamental component of performance enhancement and injury prevention. Athletes across various disciplines have traditionally incorporated static stretching into their pre-training or pre-practice routines to improve flexibility and reduce the risk of injury. However, recent research has shed new light on the efficacy of this age-old practice, prompting a reevaluation of its role in athletic preparation. The traditional approach to stretching typically involves static stretching, which entails holding a stretch position for an extended period before engaging in physical activity. This practice has been deeply ingrained in the athletic community, with many athletes believing that static stretching helps to loosen muscles and increase range of motion, thus preparing the body for the demands of training or practice sessions.

However, emerging research has challenged the effectiveness of static stretching as a pre-workout routine. Studies have suggested that

static stretching performed before exercise may actually have detrimental effects on muscle performance and athletic readiness. These findings have sparked a paradigm shift in the way athletes approach their warm-up routines and have raised questions about the optimal timing and type of stretching for maximizing performance and minimizing injury risk.

Understanding Static Stretching

Through a comprehensive examination of the benefits and limitations of static stretching, as well as alternative warm-up strategies, this article aims to empower athletes to make informed decisions about their stretching routines. By staying abreast of the latest scientific findings, athletes can optimize their training regimens and enhance their overall athletic performance while mitigating the risk of injury.

Static stretching, a staple in pre-workout routines, involves holding a stretch position for an extended period to increase muscle flexibility. Traditionally, athletes perform static stretching before training or practice sessions to prepare their muscles for activity. However, static stretching differs significantly from dynamic warm-up exercises, which involve active movements that mimic the motions of the upcoming activity. While static stretching aims to lengthen muscles and improve flexibility, dynamic warm-ups focus on increasing heart rate, blood flow to muscles, and neuromuscular activation.

Despite its widespread use, static stretching has been subject to misconceptions regarding its benefits. While athletes believe that static

stretching helps prevent injury and improve performance, recent research suggests otherwise. Studies have shown that static stretching before exercise can temporarily decrease muscle strength, power, and explosive performance. Additionally, prolonged stretching may impair muscle activation and decrease the rate of force development, potentially compromising athletic performance, especially in activities requiring speed and power.

Understanding the distinction between static stretching and dynamic warm-ups is crucial for athletes aiming to optimize their training routines. By recognizing the limitations of static stretching and the benefits of dynamic warm-ups, athletes can better prepare their bodies for physical activity while minimizing the risk of performance decrements associated with static stretching.

Dynamic Warm-Up: An Effective Alternative

Dynamic warm-up exercises are characterized by active movements that mimic the motions of the upcoming physical activity. Unlike static stretching, which involves holding a stretch position for an extended period, dynamic warm-ups involve continuous movement patterns that gradually increase heart rate, blood flow to muscles, and neuromuscular activation.

A. Definition and Characteristics of Dynamic Warm-Up Exercises

Dynamic warm-up exercises encompass a variety of movements such as leg swings, arm circles, lunges, and high knees. These exercises are designed to dynamically stretch and activate muscles, tendons, and joints, preparing them

for the specific demands of the ensuing physical activity. Dynamic warm-ups typically involve a combination of mobility drills, bodyweight exercises, and sport-specific movements tailored to the athlete's needs and sport.

B. Benefits of Dynamic Warm-Ups in Preparing the Body for Physical Activity

Dynamic warm-ups offer several advantages over static stretching in terms of preparing the body for physical activity. By increasing heart rate and blood flow to muscles, dynamic warm-ups enhance oxygen delivery and nutrient supply, optimizing muscle function and performance. Additionally, dynamic warm-up exercises help improve joint mobility, coordination, and proprioception, reducing the risk of injury during training or competition.

C. Comparison of Dynamic Warm-Ups to Static Stretching in Terms of Muscle Activation and Performance

Research has shown that dynamic warm-ups are more effective than static stretching in priming the neuromuscular system for physical activity. Unlike static stretching, which may temporarily decrease muscle strength and power, dynamic warm-ups facilitate muscle activation and potentiation, leading to improved performance outcomes. Furthermore, dynamic warm-ups better simulate the dynamic movements and explosive actions required in most sports, making them a preferred choice for athletes seeking to optimize their readiness and performance.

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Impact on Muscle Performance

Recent research has shed light on the immediate effects of static stretching on muscle performance, especially concerning strength and power. Studies have demonstrated that engaging in static stretching prior to training or practice sessions can have detrimental effects on muscle activation and force development. A study by Behm and Chaouachi (2011) found that static stretching led to a decrease in muscle strength and power, which could compromise athletic performance, particularly in activities requiring speed and power.

The mechanism behind this phenomenon lies in the neuromuscular system. Static stretching has been shown to decrease the excitability of motor neurons, impairing muscle activation and reducing the rate of force development (Simic et al., 2013). As a result, athletes may experience diminished explosiveness and agility during dynamic movements.

For athletes engaged in activities such as sprinting, jumping, and agility drills, the implications of impaired muscle performance are significant. Decreased muscle activation and force production can hinder their ability to generate power and accelerate efficiently, ultimately affecting their overall performance on the field or track.

In light of these findings, it becomes evident that static stretching may not be the optimal choice for athletes preparing for high-intensity activities. Instead, prioritizing dynamic warm-up exercises that mimic the demands of the upcoming activity can better prepare the

neuromuscular system for the challenges ahead, ensuring optimal muscle activation and performance.

Injury Risk Reduction

Injury prevention is a paramount concern for athletes across all levels of competition. While static stretching has long been considered a staple of pre-workout routines, recent research suggests that it may not be as effective in reducing the risk of injury as once believed. A critical analysis of the effectiveness of static stretching alone in injury risk reduction reveals limitations in its application.

Dynamic warm-up routines, on the other hand, have emerged as a more effective alternative for preparing muscles for the dynamic movements and sudden changes in direction common in sports. Unlike static stretching, dynamic warm-ups actively engage muscles through a series of active movements and stretches. By mimicking the motions of the upcoming activity, dynamic warm-ups help improve blood flow to muscles, enhance neuromuscular activation, and optimize muscle elasticity.

Illustrative examples of common sports injuries further underscore the importance of dynamic warm-ups in injury prevention. For instance, dynamic warm-up exercises can help reduce the risk of strains, sprains, and other soft tissue injuries commonly associated with sports participation.

Research studies by McHugh and Cosgrave (2010) and Behm and Chaouachi (2011) have highlighted the superior efficacy of dynamic

warm-ups in injury prevention compared to static stretching alone. By prioritizing dynamic warm-up routines before training or practice sessions, athletes can significantly reduce their risk of injury and optimize their performance on the field, track or court.

Enhanced Flexibility

Enhanced flexibility plays a pivotal role in optimizing athletic performance and preventing injuries among athletes. One effective strategy to enhance flexibility is the combination of dynamic movements with post-workout static stretching. Dynamic movements, such as leg swings, arm circles, and lunges, activate muscles and increase blood flow, preparing the body for exercise. Post-workout static stretching involves holding stretches for an extended period after physical activity when muscles are warm and pliable.

Research consistently supports the efficacy of post-workout static stretching in improving range of motion and enhancing flexibility. Studies have shown that static stretching after exercise can lead to significant improvements in joint flexibility and muscle length. This increased flexibility contributes to improved athletic performance and reduced risk of injury during subsequent training sessions or competitions. Comparatively, the impact of post-workout static stretching on muscle function differs from pre-workout static stretching. Pre-workout static stretching has been shown to temporarily decrease muscle strength and power, potentially compromising athletic performance. In contrast, post-workout static stretching allows muscles to relax and recover after exertion without

compromising immediate performance.

Combining dynamic movements with post-workout static stretching offers athletes an effective strategy to enhance flexibility while minimizing the negative impact on muscle function. By prioritizing post-workout static stretching over pre-workout static stretching, athletes can optimize their flexibility, reduce the risk of injury, and perform at their best during training and competition.

Psychological Benefits

Delaying static stretching until the conclusion of training/practice sessions offers significant psychological advantages for athletes. Dynamic warm-ups serve as a bridge between the pre-workout preparation and the intense activity ahead, facilitating a seamless transition into the heightened demands of athletic performance. Research suggests that dynamic warm-ups not only prime the body physiologically but also prepare the mind for optimal engagement.

Dynamic warm-up routines engage athletes both mentally and physically, fostering a sense of focus, concentration, and readiness. By incorporating dynamic movements that mimic the actions required during training or competition, athletes mentally rehearse and prepare for the challenges ahead. This mental rehearsal enhances neural pathways associated with motor control, coordination, and skill execution, thereby optimizing performance outcomes.

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Furthermore, delaying static stretching allows athletes to maintain a heightened state of alertness and arousal throughout their training/practice sessions. By preserving mental sharpness and readiness until the end of the session, athletes can sustain optimal levels of performance without experiencing the potential relaxation effects associated with static stretching.

The psychological benefits of delaying static stretching underscore the importance of prioritizing dynamic warm-up routines. By engaging both the body and mind, dynamic warm-ups facilitate a smooth transition into intense physical activity, enhance focus and concentration, and optimize overall athletic performance.

Recommendations for Coaches

To maximize athletic performance and minimize the risk of injury, athletes can follow practical recommendations derived from current evidence and research findings. Here's a step-by-step guide for implementing dynamic warm-up routines before engaging in strenuous physical activity, coupled with suggestions for incorporating post-workout static stretching into cool-down routines.

A. Dynamic Warm-Up Routines:

- **Raise the Heart Rate:** Begin with light aerobic exercises like jogging or jumping jacks to gradually elevate heart rate and increase blood flow to muscles.
- **Dynamic Movements:** Perform sport-specific dynamic movements to mimic the motions expected during training or practice.

- **Neuromuscular Activation:** Include drills that engage the nervous system, like agility ladder exercises or cone drills, to enhance neuromuscular activation and coordination.

B. Post-Workout Static Stretching:

- **Target Major Muscle Groups:** Focus on static stretches for major muscle groups used during the training or practice session, holding each stretch for 15-60 seconds.
- **Breathing and Relaxation:** Emphasize controlled breathing and relaxation during static stretches to enhance muscle flexibility without inducing stress.
- **Incorporate Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF):** Include PNF stretching techniques, involving a combination of stretching and contracting muscles, to enhance flexibility.

By adopting these evidence-based recommendations, athletes can optimize their warm-up and cool-down routines, ensuring they are adequately prepared for physical exertion and promoting long-term athletic well-being.

In conclusion, the science behind delaying static stretching until the conclusion of training or practice sessions for athletes offers valuable insights into optimizing performance and minimizing injury risk. Throughout this article, we have delved into the physiological and psychological reasons supporting the efficacy of dynamic warm-ups and post-workout static stretching in athletic preparation.

By prioritizing dynamic warm-up routines before engaging in strenuous physical activity, athletes can effectively prime their bodies for optimal

performance. Dynamic warm-ups help increase heart rate, improve blood flow to muscles, and enhance neuromuscular activation, thereby reducing the risk of injury and enhancing overall readiness for exercise.

Additionally, incorporating post-workout static stretching into cool-down routines offers numerous benefits for athletes. Not only does it promote muscle relaxation and reduce soreness, but it also improves overall flexibility without compromising immediate performance. By engaging in post-workout static stretching, athletes can enhance range of motion and reduce the likelihood of muscle imbalances and injuries.

As athletes, coaches, and sports practitioners, it is imperative that we heed the evidence-based recommendations presented in this article. By embracing dynamic warm-ups and post-workout static stretching as integral components of our training regimens, we can optimize athletic performance, minimize injury risk, and foster long-term physical health and well-being.

Therefore, I urge coaches of all levels to prioritize dynamic warm-up routines and post-workout static stretching in their training and practice sessions. By incorporating these scientifically-supported techniques into our athletic routines, we not only enhance our performance capabilities but also safeguard our bodies against potential injuries.

Let us commit to embracing the science behind delaying static stretching and take proactive steps towards achieving our athletic goals. Together, let us strive for excellence and elevate

our athletic endeavors to new heights.

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DRILLS

TRAINING YOUR QB



Michael Fields
La Grande HS, OR
JV Head Coach/OC
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As an offensive coordinator I have to work with all positions on the offensive side of the ball. Primarily

I work with RBs and QBs during the season as their position coach, although once season begins, we don't get much time with our QBs as they are usually throwing to the receivers when we get indie time in practice. I do work with the Oline with the scheme during group and on Mondays especially, but thankfully we have coaches to work on their technique, I used to be a middle school line coach, but having other guys to work with them is a big advantage for us and our system.

Now, we are a relatively small program with about 50 total guys in the program, so one thing I have worked on over the past few years is developing QBs at the middle school level. To do this we try to identify a couple guys as the leave the youth program. I got that idea from another coach I watched on YouTube, who has lots of wins and championships, so I like to copy other successful people. So, we try to have two QBs per grade level from 7th grade into high school. This gives us options and back ups on the field. Now this can backfire, as our

upper grade levels this next fall do not have two QBs in their grades, the senior class to be one former QB moved out of town, and the junior to be who was the back up no longer plays football. However, we go into the season with a senior and a junior, two sophomores and two freshman all at the QB position. During their sophomore year we recommend they learn a second position as one will eventually win out as the starter, and we want those who are good athletes on the field even if it's another position.

Another advantage we have is an actual QB coach that works with kids all over the country with a national organization comes and trains our guys too. I met this guy just last year at a clinic and it turns out he has a connection with our city and just loves to train QBs so that has accelerated our development. We also recommend our guys go to clinics and camps on their own.

During the season we start all our guys with the basic three step drop for their passing footwork, even though we are in the shotgun about 75%+ of the time, the three step drop is just a great starting point. Then we progress to a pop step, punch one, hitch and quick three to name a few more we use. We do not work much on the five step as we are in the gun mostly and do not need a 5 step. We will teach it in the offseason as guys may want to play beyond high school and may need it at the next level, so we don't want to limit them.

So, our EDDs with the QBS begin with the basic three step drop on a line so they can work on dropping back straight and stay in the middle

of the pocket. In the summer we will work the five step drop as mentioned above. After 3-5 reps we add in a throw on the third step. We are a timing throw in this drill, we want the foot to land and the hands break for the throw at the same time, so we often say one, two, throw instead of three because then they land, then throw. Again, being a shotgun based team, the three step is the most we use and even a deep route the third step should be releasing the ball.

Next, we do a shuffle drill. For this they begin in a ready position, meaning they have set their feet in the throwing position, and then shuffle backwards to the end of and agility bag. We have 4-6 bags then they shuffle forward and backwards through all the bags to the other end. Then they go back in the other direction. This helps them get their front hip to snap each direction as they would need to do to set up for a throw. This is a footwork drill that can also add in a little conditioning for them.

The next drill we do is what we call big L and little L. For this they shuffle back to a set position, then for little L they take a front step as if to escape a rush. Then we repeat this with a backwards step. Then big L is two big steps to escape a rush.

The last EDD is what we call the hot box, I recently heard this name for it from our QB guru. I just called it a rush escape drill. For this we have two guys set up like the defensive ends and one or both rush either high or low, back or front shoulder, and the QB has to escape and throw. We use another QB in a spot for a pass route as the receiver.

We also work on mesh with the RBs and play action and boot pass as that's our number one pass play. We do footwork for our run plays in group and team time.

With QBs it is important for them to work on their game year-round. In addition to our QB guru coming and working with them physically with day long clinics in the offseason, we have started using a phone app for mental reps. We use Playbook with our passing game installed as package. This app helps them with pre-snap read like a corner as hard or soft. Hard meaning they are pressing soft as they are playing off. Then is asked if the middle of the field is open, so they have to read the coverage based on the safety's alignment. After the snap they must hit the correct receiver based on the pre-snap reads and then what the DB's do. The app can be setup to have multiple scenarios of how the defense reacts and changes the reads the QBs have to make.

[For more info you can check out the app here.](#)

The quarterback position is critical in any offense. At the high school level we are limited in the amount of time we can train them. If we can use something they are already interested in, like a game on their phone, why not take advantage and train them all year round!

EXPERIENCES OF AN AMERICAN WING-T COACH IN CANADA

“THAT WON’T WORK HERE”



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Three Wing-T coaches walk into a bar. The bartender looks at them and asks, “What is your go-to on 3rd and medium?” The Traditional Wing-T’er says, “Buck Sweep, maybe Waggle.” The Gun Wing T’er says, “Jet, maybe Smash.” The Canadian Wing T’er looks into his beer and mutters, “Punt.”

That last coach is me. I am an American Wing T coach, who moved up to Canada thirteen years ago and if I had a dollar for every time someone told me “that won’t work up here,” I would be ready to retire. My experience in bringing the offence that originated in my native Delaware to the Great White North has been anything but smooth. Although we have found consistent success in our unique system, the process of getting there was one that caused me to question and really test my ability to coach. Through this experience I learned to have the courage to be

different, but to also have the common sense not to be obstinate.

When my wife (a Canadian) announced that she “wanted to go home” I had to remind her that I was an American history teacher and football coach. I was sure that Canadian schools didn’t teach American history and I wasn’t sure if they played football. They do. Just with one too many players and too much moving around. After summoning the courage to jump without a net, we moved to her hometown of Winnipeg, Canada, population 900,000.



Besides being considered one of the coldest cities in the world, Winnipeg has a vibrant high school football league with over 30 teams. I was hired as a teacher for “at risk youth” and the Head Football Coach at Churchill High School. Now, it would probably be helpful to know a few things about coaching in Canada. First, there is no money in it. We are all volunteers. Let that sink in for a moment. Second, players pay a fee to play. Football is an expensive endeavour, even with free health care. Any deficit from player fees has to be made up in fundraising. Finally, league alignment follows the model of English professional soccer. You get promoted or relegated based on performance. School

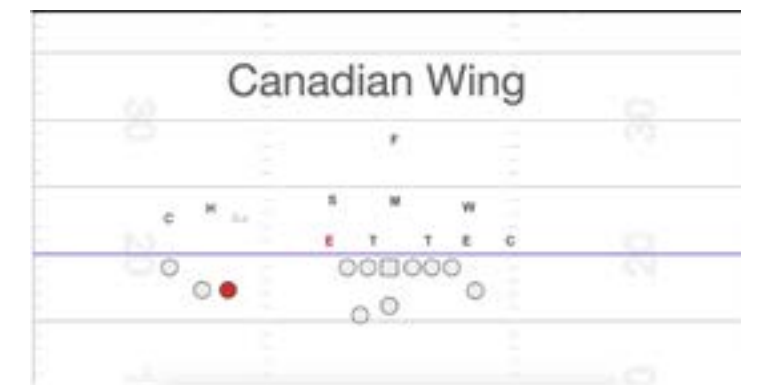
population does not matter. When I came to Churchill they had just finished a semi-final appearance in the premier division and although the cupboard was bare, this school of 500 students was scheduled to play schools of over 2000 the next season.

Things did not go well. I installed a double wing offence and although I was taught it by one of the best (Hugh Wyatt) we failed miserably. Maybe it was the kids, maybe it was the staff, maybe it was me. Regardless, it was a very difficult three years with lots of questioning and soul searching. Finally, after going 0-8 in 2013, I resigned. It wasn’t particularly unexpected or unwelcome. The program was ready to go back to what was familiar and I was ready to stop banging my head against the wall. My wife was also tired of taking my belt and shoelaces away following each game.

Then, as it often does, fate intervened. My wife decided that we were not finished with football. My son had become of age to play and she decided that we were going to start a youth football club in our town. “How hard can it be?” she reasoned. Turns out that it was pretty hard. Besides the herculean logistics in running five teams, I also had to revisit coaching with a team of 35, twelve to thirteen year-olds, most of whom had never put on a helmet. No way was I going to repeat my past mistake. I was going to do what everyone else in Canada was doing: run a one back offence and throw the ball on every other down. It sucked. We won only two games that first year, and one was a forfeit. I was unhappy, the kids were unhappy, and the

parents were unhappy. I began to feel that I was a failure no matter what offense I ran.

Then fate stepped in yet again. I found myself looking through Hugh Wyatt’s website and noticed that he had a new take on the Double Wing: the Open Wing. In this system you move a TE and Wing out as a wideout and slot. It gives you the ability to both run power and a spread game. He calls it a “Mullet Offence” - business up front and party in the back. It was exactly what I had been looking for. After adding the 12th player as a jet back (inspired by Rick Stewart) and incorporating some Canadian adjustments (receivers running forward before the ball is snapped) I had something very different, but not so different that it couldn’t be used in the land of three downs. Hence, the Canadian Wing was born.



It worked. The first year we went 4-4 and in the six years since we have lost only six games. In that time, we started a high school team (Springfield Collegiate Institute), won two championships, and have had countless Canadian linemen learn what G.O.D. stands for. I learned a lot as well. I learned that certain football fundamentals stand up to both the test of time and borders. I

also learned that some concepts will only work if you have superior athletes and no amount of study or great halftime speeches will change that.

Moving to Canada has been very good for me as a coach and person. I initially failed and that failure turned from a setback into a setup. As we move into the 2024 season the lessons from these past years are still echoing. We are not fooling defences as much as we used to with our old fashion offence. It is time for us to recognize what is not working, while still keeping our unique identity.

Now, if I can just remember to stop going for it on 3rd down.

Meet our new writer:

Coach Tom is a teacher in the Winnipeg School Division and coach of the Springfield Collegiate Institute Sabers. He and his wife Shandy have founded two football clubs in Canada. They have two children Aiden and Tommy. Tommy, is a quarterback at Eastern University outside of Philadelphia. They have a dog named Tubby, and his dad played for both Tubby Raymond and David Nelson at the University of Delaware.



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