

# HEADSETS



WRITTEN FOREBACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 6: ISSUE 2

DEVELOPMENT  
*over*  
SCOREBOARD

MULTIPLYING LOOKS  
WITHOUT MULTIPLYING PLAYS

KNOWING  
*WHAT TO CALL*  
AND WHEN TO CALL IT

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We are so glad to run Headsets season six! 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.

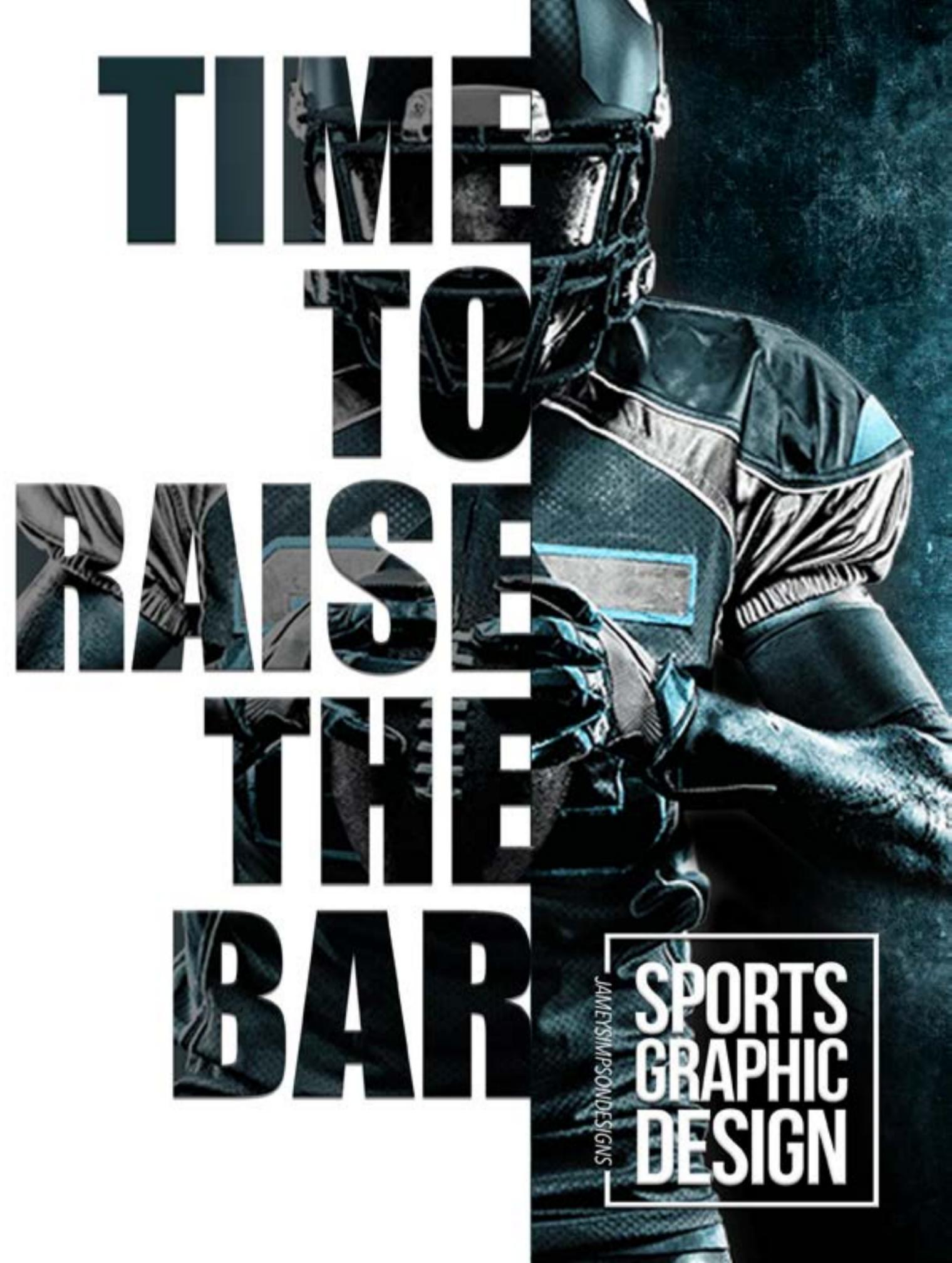
As you go through the articles, there are many live links to recommended materials, articles and videos.

If you would like to contribute to Headsets, email me at [FBcoachsimpson@gmail.com](mailto:FBcoachsimpson@gmail.com).

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

# NETWORKING FOR COACHES

## COACHING PORTFOLIOS: THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE MOST COACHES ARE IGNORING



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There was a time when a one-page resume and a strong reference list were enough.

That time is over.

College athletic departments, search committees, and even high school administrators are no longer just hiring based on experience. They are hiring based on demonstrated value and your plan for success.

A coaching portfolio is no longer a luxury item. It is a strategic advantage.

If you are serious about advancing your career, separating yourself from other candidates, and controlling the narrative of your experience, you need more than a resume. You need a portfolio.

### *What Is a Coaching Portfolio?*

A coaching portfolio is a structured collection of documents that clearly demonstrate:

- Your coaching philosophy
- Your program building plan
- Your player development system
- Your recruiting and retention strategy
- Your leadership style

- Your measurable impact
- Your vision for the future

It is not a scrapbook. It is not a random folder of PDFs. It is a curated presentation of who you are as a professional. The portfolio answers one core question for a search committee:

Why should we trust you to lead our program?

### *Why the Resume Alone Is No Longer Enough*

A resume tells people where you have been.

A portfolio shows what you can build.

Resumes list responsibilities and achievements.

Portfolios demonstrate systems.

Resumes mention "player development."

Portfolios show your actual development plan.

Resumes say "strong leader."

Portfolios outline your yearly calendar, evaluation criteria, communication templates, and recruiting/retention strategy.

The difference is depth.

When you submit only a resume, you blend in.

When you submit a portfolio, you lead the conversation.

### *Who Needs a Coaching Portfolio?*

The short answer is anyone who wants to advance.

- High school coaches applying for college positions
- College assistants applying for head coaching jobs
- Head coaches seeking higher levels

- Athletic administrators moving into leadership roles

If you are in a competitive hiring pool, you need a competitive presentation.

The higher the level, the more valuable the portfolio becomes.

### *What Should Be Included?*

While every portfolio should be customized to the position, strong coaching portfolios often include:

#### **Coaching Philosophy Statement**

A clear articulation of how you teach, lead, and build culture.

#### **Program Vision and 30-60-90 Day Plan**

What you would do immediately upon hire.

#### **Player Development Model**

How you evaluate, track, and grow athletes.

#### **Recruiting Blueprint**

Target profile, evaluation process, communication strategy, and calendar.

#### **Culture and Leadership Framework**

Core standards, accountability systems, and leadership development.

#### **Academic Plan**

How you support student athlete success beyond the field.

#### **Budget and Fundraising Philosophy**

Especially important for head coaching roles.

#### **Data and Analytics Approach**

How you use performance metrics to improve outcomes.

#### **Community and Alumni Engagement Plan**

Demonstrates program sustainability thinking.

#### **Career Impact Summary**

Quantified results, retention numbers, academic achievements, championships, culture transformation.

The key is organization and intentional design. A portfolio should feel strategic, not overwhelming.

#### *The Psychology Behind Why Portfolios Work*

Search committees are busy. They review dozens, sometimes hundreds, of applicants.

Most candidates provide similar resumes. Similar buzzwords. Similar bullet points.

A portfolio changes the dynamic.

It signals preparation.

It signals depth.

It signals professionalism.

It signals leadership readiness.

Most importantly, it reduces risk. Administrators are not just hiring talent. They are minimizing risk. When you show them your systems before you are hired, you lower the perceived risk of hiring you.

That matters.

#### *Common Mistakes Coaches Make*

- Creating a portfolio that is too long and unstructured
- Submitting raw documents without formatting
- Making it overly wordy and unfocused
- Failing to tailor it to the specific job
- Turning it into a biography instead of a strategy document

*continued on next page*

A portfolio is not about telling your life story. It is about solving the employer's problem.

### Digital vs. Print Portfolios

Today's strongest portfolios are digital.

They are:

- Easy to email
- Mobile friendly
- Professionally formatted
- Shareable via link
- Printable if requested

A modern coaching portfolio should feel like an executive presentation, not a Google Drive folder.

### The Competitive Reality

There are coaches with less experience getting jobs over more experienced coaches.

Why?

- Because they present better.
- Because their plan is clear.
- Because they demonstrate readiness.

Experience matters. But clarity wins.

If two candidates have similar resumes, the one who presents a structured, strategic portfolio almost always has the advantage.

### Ready to Build Yours?

If you are reading this and realizing your current job search materials are not separating you from the field, you are not alone.

Most coaches were never taught how to professionally present themselves.

That is exactly why I built [CoachingPortfolio.com](http://CoachingPortfolio.com).

At CoachingPortfolio.com, I help coaches:

- Build professional, search committee ready portfolios
- Clarify and strengthen their coaching philosophy
- Organize their systems into structured documents
- Create executive level presentations that elevate their candidacy
- Turn experience into strategic positioning

Whether you need:

- A fully custom built portfolio
- A guided template to build your own
- A resume and minifolio upgrade
- Interview preparation support

There is a clear path to get you where you want to go. The job market is competitive. Your presentation should not be average. Visit [www.coachingportfolio.com](http://www.coachingportfolio.com) and start building the professional advantage you deserve.

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# FOOTBALL THOUGHTS

## FORGIVENESS: A TEACHER AND COACH REFLECTS ON LETTING GO AT THE END OF A CAREER



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words. For a while, I imagined that moment as an opportunity—not just to say thank you, but to finally say some things I’d kept to myself.

Part of that comes from the fact that I teach at one school and coach football at another. Over the years, that has created a few complicated situations, especially when those schools played each other. Most people handled that professionally. A few didn’t. I thought about the staff member, who is also a coach, who refused to shake my hand after a loss, only to have something to say the next time the result went his way. I also remembered walking into my classroom on a Monday morning to find a copy of the final score from a loss taped to my door.

I also thought about the father of a quarterback who once gave me an ultimatum—that if we didn’t change the offense, his son wouldn’t play. At the time, it felt personal. It felt like a challenge to my integrity and to the work we were doing as a staff. Looking back now, I see it differently. I see a parent trying, clumsily, to protect his child. That doesn’t make it right, but it does make it human.

What surprised me was how much space these moments still occupied in my head. They were isolated incidents in a long career filled with far more positive relationships, yet they took up more mental space than they deserved. It made me wonder why we allow such a small fraction of our experiences to carry so much emotional weight.

That question followed me into a men’s group I’ve been part of for the last two years.

Forgiveness begins when we stop letting the past define the future.

Some endings are quieter than we expect.

I recently handed in my retirement notice. It wasn’t a dramatic moment—it had been coming for a few weeks—but it did give me pause. Telling the coaches and the football team that I’d be leaving was harder than I expected.

After I submitted my paperwork, the principal asked how I wanted my retirement announced. I told her I hadn’t really thought about it, which was partly true. Traditionally, at the end of the school year, there’s a staff luncheon where people who are moving on are recognized and asked to say a few

We meet early on Saturday mornings in the church basement—coffee, breakfast, scripture, and conversation. This week, we talked about Saint Matthew. Before he was called, he was known as Levi, a tax collector—one of the most disliked people in his community. The lesson centered on a painting that shows Christ entering a dim tavern, light spilling in and landing on Matthew as he turns toward it.

What struck me was the idea that Matthew wasn’t chosen because he had everything figured out. He was chosen despite the mess of his past. The lesson wasn’t about excusing what he had done—it was about what becomes possible when you stop letting the past define you.

That’s when it clicked for me.

Forgiveness, I’ve come to realize, isn’t about waiting for someone to apologize or suddenly understanding how they hurt you. It isn’t about pretending something didn’t matter. And it certainly isn’t about proving that you were right. Forgiveness is an internal decision. It’s the choice to stop carrying someone else’s behavior with you.

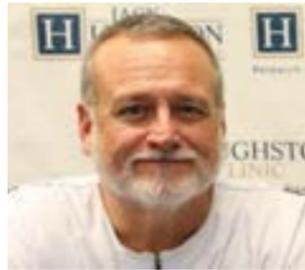
As I come to the end of my career in teaching and coaching, I’m realizing that forgiveness may be one of the most important lessons I’ve learned—not for the people who disappointed me, but for myself. Holding onto resentment doesn’t protect you. It just weighs you down.

At this point in my career, that feels like a better way to finish than keeping score.



# FOOTBALL TALK

WINNING TIPS FROM BOB LADOUCEUR  
AND NICK SABAN



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Coach Lad was the longtime coach at De La Salle HS in Concord, CA. His teams won 11 national titles with a record 151-game winning streak.

## 1: Weekly Goals

Each week, players set their own specific, measurable practice and game goals. They reviewed their goals with the team. Teammates and coaches would challenge them and their goals. Players learned that goal setting was about accountability, execution, and commitment.

More on weekly goals: Weekly football team goals focus on winning (being 1-0 that week), but also break down into specific, psychological (attitude, communication, concentration) targets, often structured with daily intensity to prepare for the game, creating intentional training with clear purposes for every drill. Goals should be specific (e.g., "Catch 25 fades after practice") rather than vague ("Improve catching")

## 2: Player-Led Accountability

Players were expected to coach and hold each other accountable. Starters watched and coached backups during practice. Players gave each other technical feedback before coaches could. This created leadership throughout and a brotherhood of serving.

More on accountability: Players must take ownership of their performance and team standards, holding one another to high standards rather than relying solely on coaches. This fosters commitment by emphasizing

personal responsibility for preparation, execution, and growth, creating a culture in which teammates push one another to be better. This involves defining clear standards, empowering leaders, and implementing consistent consequences for actions, transforming accountability from a coach-driven task to a shared, contagious team value. I do not believe a team will maximize its potential if everything comes from the coaches. Our best teams had player leadership with key members assuming key roles.

## 3: Adaptability and Ownership

Instead of always giving players the answer, Ladouceur empowered them to figure it out on their own. Players broke down film, identified defensive tendencies, and even suggested game plans. They turned into problem solvers, not just executors.

More on adaptability and ownership: Coach Lad once walked into the locker room at halftime of a game where his team had played poorly up to that point. He looked at them and said, "Why do I always have to be the problem solver? Group problem-solving is a skill you will use your whole life. Figure it out." And with that, he walked out of the locker room, leaving the players to come up with their own solution. This example aligns closely with Coach Lad's broader mission to use football as a tool to teach life lessons.

## 4: Consistent Feedback

Every drill included immediate, specific feedback to players on what they did well and what they needed to improve. It means being specific and not just saying, "That wasn't good enough." This makes it easier to build trust, improve, and reinforce high standards.

More on feedback: Nick Saban often used private sessions to show players exactly what they did wrong and how to do it right, linking it to their personal goals. He would remind them of the goals they had set and ask whether what they had done would help them achieve them. Feedback is about improving performance ("how they should have done something"), not personal

attacks. Remember that good coaches critique the performance, not the player.

## 5: Teaching is the Foundation

Teaching is the foundation of coaching. If a coach can't teach a player how to improve, they lose credibility with the player. Players will respect only a coach who is knowledgeable, passionate, and purposeful in their approach to coaching.

More on teaching: Nick Saban said, "Coaching is teaching, teaching is the ability to inspire learning." This means that effective coaching isn't just about strategy; it's about educating athletes at a near-molecular level and motivating them to reach their potential, both on the field and in life, making teaching the fundamental skill of any great coach. Good coaches inspire players to learn fundamentals, build discipline, and become better individuals.

## 6: Power of Preparation

It means prepare with intention and effort, both mentally and physically. Ladouceur credited De La Salle's strength and offseason program as the key to

sustained dominance. The teams that are strongest and best conditioned win in the fourth quarter.

More on preparation: There is an old axiom that I have heard all of my life, but it still rings true today. Proper preparation prevents piss poor performance. We must realize that preparation does not start in August. Many football games are won and lost from January to July. Monday through Wednesday will not be enough to win on Friday if the proper investment was made during the offseason.

*Contributed by Coach Chip Seagle. He added to and edited several articles he has collected over the years. Coach Chip is a 40-year veteran of high school football coaching. He has retired and currently operates "Football Talk with Coach Chip" on YouTube and a podcast, "Football Talk with Coach: The Podcast." He has authored several manuals and other resources, which he makes available to coaches via his YouTube channel. He is available for consultations, installations, and in-person speaking engagements.*

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# DEFENSE

## USING TAMPA AND TRAP COVERAGE vs TRIPS OPEN: BUILDING FAST, PHYSICAL ANSWERS WITHOUT BUSTS



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Modern offenses live in **Trips Open**. Whether it's RPOs, quick game, or vertical stress, Trips forces defenses to declare leverage, stretch the field horizontally, and defend space at speed. The mistake many defenses make is over-adjusting—adding complexity that slows reactions.

The solution isn't more calls. It's **better structure**.

By pairing Tampa principles with Trap (Blue/Indiana) coverage, defenses can play fast, physical, and sound while maintaining answers versus both run and pass.

### Why Tampa + Trap Works vs Trips

Trips formations stress three areas:

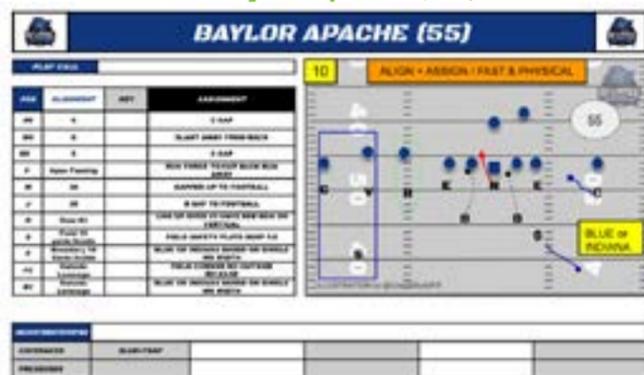
- 1) Run fit integrity
- 2) Vertical seams
- 3) Quick access throws

Tampa and Trap solve these problems differently—but together, they give you flexibility without changing your defensive DNA.

- Tampa protects the middle of the field and vertical seams
- Trap eliminates easy throws and creates turnover opportunities
- Both allow defenders to trigger downhill versus run

The result: controlled aggression.

### Base Structure: Baylor Apache (55)



The foundation is a five-down structure with clear run fits and simple pass rules:

- Ends (5 techniques): C-gap players
- Nose (0): Slants away from the back
- Apex (V): Run force / cutback
- Mike & Jack: Gapped up to the football
- Rover: Man on #3 vertical
- Field Safety: Deep half player
- Boundary Corner: Trap or Blue technique

This allows the defense to align quickly and play with clarity.

### Trips Open: Tampa Answer

When offenses push vertical concepts from Trips, Tampa coverage gives you structure without panic.

### Key Coaching Points

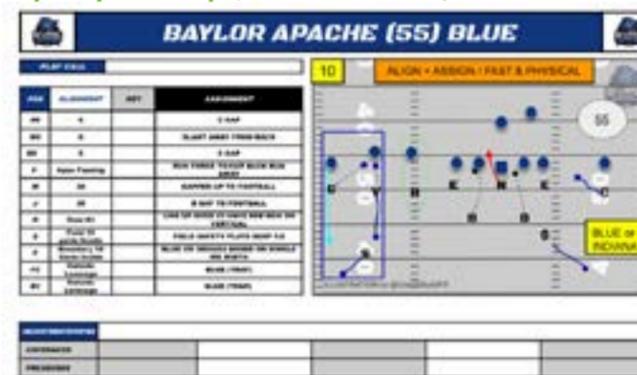
- Rover aligns over #3 and carries him vertically
- Mike opens and runs the pole, protecting the

deep middle

- Corners stay disciplined—no chasing inside threats
- Safeties maintain top-down leverage

The goal isn't to blanket receivers—it's to close windows. Tampa forces quarterbacks to throw perfectly over linebackers and under safeties. Most can't do it consistently.

### Trips Open: Trap (Blue / Indiana) Answer



Trap coverage flips the math on the offense.

Instead of reacting, the defense dictates the throw.

### How Trap Changes the Picture

- Boundary corner shows off coverage, then triggers downhill
- Safety rotates over the top
- Flat and quick access throws disappear
- Run support stays intact

Trap is especially effective versus:

- Quick game
- RPO glance / speed out
- Bubble and now screens

The corner becomes a weapon, not a liability.

### Teaching It Simply

The biggest mistake with Trips coverage is over-teaching.

Here's how we keep it clean:

- "Fast to Fit" in the run game
- "Vertical = Carry" rules for linebackers
- Corners read release, not route concepts
- Safeties own leverage, not grass

If players know who they're responsible for and why, they play faster.

### Why This Matters on Friday Night

Trips isn't going away. Quarterbacks are getting quicker. Offenses are forcing defenses to simplify.

Tampa and Trap allow you to:

- Stay aggressive without busts
- Protect the middle of the field
- Create interceptions instead of just tackles
- Play confident football late in games

Good defenses survive Trips. Great defenses attack it.

### Final Thought

Coverage isn't about having the perfect call—it's about having answers your players trust. When Tampa and Trap are taught from the same alignment, with the same run fits, and the same language, defenses stop thinking and start hitting. That's when you get what every coach wants:

**FAST. PHYSICAL. HAVOC.**

# FOOTBALL THOUGHTS

## THE WING



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Over the years, I have written extensively about the many variations of the Wing-T offense, from the early Delaware

Wing-T to the TexBone, Slot-T, Pistol, and Shotgun variations. I have diagrammed plays, formations, and broken down the strategy and deception that make wing-based systems so effective against modern defenses. While those conversations are valuable and practical, there is a more foundational question that often goes unexamined: What is the Wing?

Is it a position? Is it a formation? Is it a type of player? The honest answer is that it is all of those things, and maybe even more. The wing is a position, commonly referred to as the wingback. It is also used to describe a formation, such as the single or double wing, shotgun or pistol wing. But beyond terminology, the wing is best understood as a talented and versatile football player who serves as one of the most complete athletes in a wing-based offense.

Regardless of which version of the Wing-T a coach uses, the wingback must be able to do nearly everything on the field. He must block defensive

ends and linebackers at the point of attack, run disciplined routes in the passing game, catch the football in traffic, carry the ball in misdirection schemes, and occasionally even throw it on a well-timed trick play. This is not a specialty position. It demands completeness.

In our high school system, where we have utilized both under-center single wing principles and primarily shotgun Wing-T concepts, our wings have come in every shape and size imaginable. Over the years we have lined up wings who stood 6'5" and weighed 170 pounds, and others who were 5'5" and 130 pounds, with every type in between. There is no single physical prototype. However, when evaluating the position, we prioritize blocking above all else. Route running and pass catching follow closely behind, and then we assess running ability.

Blocking is prioritized because the wing frequently operates at the point of attack. He may be responsible for blocking a defensive end, sealing a tackle, or fitting on a play-side linebacker. Often, he is undersized compared to the defender across from him. So how does a 5'7", 150-pound wing successfully block a defensive end who outweighs him by forty or more pounds? The answer lies in technique, leverage, and controlled aggression. We teach a hands-first attack, striking the defender in the chest with the inside hand and targeting the outside shoulder or ribs with the outside hand to pin the defender's arm. The wing then uncoils his hips, redirecting force and disrupting the defender's path. It is not about pancaking the opponent or sustaining a block for five seconds. It is about preventing penetration long enough for the ball carrier to pass. In some ways, the wing is setting a basketball-style screen, short, precise, and decisive.

In the passing game, the wing must be equally dependable. Before he can catch the ball, he must run disciplined routes. In traditional Wing-T systems, his involvement in the passing game may vary depending on protection schemes. In more modern shotgun variations, including our Wing-T Power Spread concepts, the wing often aligns outside or in the slot and becomes a significant receiving threat. This requires speed to separate from defensive backs, agility to make sharp and effective cuts, reliable hands in traffic, and the courage to work across the middle of the field where contact is inevitable.

When his receiving skills are established, his value as a ball carrier naturally expands. The classic crisscross counter is one example where the wing becomes the featured runner in a misdirection scheme. In traditional under-center versions, he may receive a rapid double handoff from quarterback to tailback to wing. In shotgun adaptations, the exchange may occur via a shovel pass. In either case, the athletic demand is high. Timing must be precise, ball handling clean, and once he has possession, he must display vision, burst, speed and power. The wing must possess traits commonly associated with running backs, cutting ability, balance, acceleration, and the awareness to follow blockers into open space. In some systems, he even becomes the option back, further expanding his responsibilities.

While the wing is foundational to wing-based offenses, similar roles appear throughout modern football. The H-back in spread systems shares many blocking and receiving responsibilities. Mobile tight ends in college and professional offenses are often used in similar ways. Yet in a true wing system, this player is not an accessory to the offense, he is central to its identity.

Beyond physical skills, the wing must embody certain intangible qualities. He must be aggressive enough to block defenders who are bigger and stronger. He must be fearless when running routes across the middle or engaging in physical contact near the line of scrimmage. He must be intelligent, as his blocking assignments often change based on defensive alignment, and he may be required to adjust routes on the fly. Above all, he must be unselfish. Much of his work is dirty work, sealing edges, screening defenders, creating space for others.

So what is the Wing? It is a position and a formation, but more importantly, it is a mindset. The wing is often one of the most complete football players on the field, a blend of toughness, intelligence, versatility, and skill. In many ways, he embodies the very spirit of the Wing-T offense itself: disciplined, deceptive, adaptable, and team-first. The wing does not merely line up off the tackle or tight end, he makes the system function.

# PROTECT YOUR BASE: WINNING FOOTBALL THROUGH FORMATIONS, SHIFTS AND MOTION

## PART 2: MULTIPLYING LOOKS WITHOUT MULTIPLYING PLAYS



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Let's get one thing straight: defensive coordinators don't lose sleep over how many plays you run. They lose sleep because you're running the same plays from a dozen different looks.

That's the goal.

The secret sauce in offensive football isn't more plays—it's more pictures. You want the defense to constantly be solving a new puzzle. And the best part is? You don't have to teach your kids anything new to make it happen.

You just need to multiply the looks.

### *Why Multiplicity Matters*

The modern defense is built on pattern recognition. Linebackers are trained to read formations, safety rotations are based on tendencies, and defensive linemen are coached to find tips in alignment.

So your job as an offensive coordinator is to disrupt the picture.

Multiplicity keeps you one step ahead. When you can run your base plays from 2x2, 3x1, Bunch, Empty, Unbalanced, and Tackle Over—you force the defense to communicate, adjust, and eventually crack.

That's not just theory. That's Friday night reality.

### *Horizontal Multiplication: Formation Variation*

Start with what I call horizontal multiplication. This is the art of aligning your eligible receivers in different ways to stress the defense.

Let's say your base is 2x2 11p Y-Off. You can get into:

- 3x1 trips by shifting the Y across
- Bunch by stacking the WRs
- Empty by motioning out the RB (or the QB if you're real fancy)
- Unbalanced by tagging your LT to align on the right
- Overload (unbalanced but with skill not linemen) by bringing the Z across the formation
- Condensed by reducing all splits to a tight set
- Pistol, Dot, or Shotgun backfield

Each of those formations creates a new picture—but they don't require a new play. The same run schemes, the same RPO tags, the same pass protections still work. But the defense? They're scrambling to get aligned.

Now you've got their communication system doing backflips. And if you're running tempo, you've got them lining up wrong with no chance to recover.

### *Vertical Multiplication: Pre-Snap Movement*

Once you've built horizontal variation, layer in vertical multiplication—pre-snap movement. Now you're adding motion, shifts, and trades that take your formation from one picture to another.

Motion helps you:

- Identify man vs. zone
- Create leverage for the run game
- Pull eyes away from the actual point of attack
- Stress the rules of the defense
- Make kids communicate multiple checks and coverages
- Force the Defense to abandon a blitz and play base

For example: motion your H-back across the formation and now you've changed the surface. Or tag Jet to manipulate second-level defenders. You haven't added a play, you've added a headache for the DC.

Add in a simple 2-man shift... say, WR and RB both change sides, and suddenly the entire box has to adjust.

Motion and shifts are cheap. They cost very little teaching time and give you huge returns in defensive stress. All the while your core play is still intact.

### *Modular Play Design*

This is where the magic happens. Think of each play as a module.

You've got:

- A core concept (Power, Outside Zone, Stick, Flood)
- Formation tags (2x2, 3x1, Bunch)
- Motion tags (Jet, Orbit, Bounce, Flair)
- Personnel adjustments (TE in, TE out, 20p vs 11p, Jumbo, Cheetah)

That's all you need. Because once your kids know the core concept, all you're doing is changing the picture.

Let's look at a simple play: Inside Zone.

You can run Inside Zone from:

- 2x2 with a read key

- 3x1 with a bubble tag
- Empty with QB in the run game
- Tackle Over to change numbers
- Motion to widen the edge
- Same side to take advantage of tendencies
- A shift and a motion pre-snap to get the Defense's eyes wrong

Same play. Same rules. New looks every time.

This is how you stay simple for your players and complex for the opponent. And that's the game. That's how you win the chess match.

### *Game Planning with Multiplicity*

Here's the trap some coaches fall into: they install all the formations and motions they can run instead of the ones they need to run.

Multiplicity should be strategic, not random.

Ask yourself:

- Where are they weak?
  - Numbers
  - Leverage
  - Space
  - Matchups
- How do we get our best guy on their worst guy?
- Who do we want to put in conflict?

Then pick the pictures that help answer those questions.

If you're playing a 4-2-5 team that rolls cover 3 every snap, bunch and trips should be your best friends. If the weakside OLB can't run, motion to a 3-man surface and run split-zone his way. Make him hate his own rules. If the Mike doesn't bump on motion, you get numbers on the edge in a heartbeat. If the ILBs are biting hard on Guard pulls, RPO them to death!

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This is where your multiplicity becomes surgical.

### Protecting Practice Time

"But Coach, how do I practice all these looks?"

You don't.

You practice the rules. Your kids should know:

- Where to line up based on the tag
- How their rule applies to that concept
- How to adjust when motion or shift changes the picture

If your teaching is clean, they'll rep it mentally every time they see it. That's why I love walk-throughs. That's why I script looks in Indy time. That's why we quiz the QB in meetings and have our WRs talk through alignment in warm-ups. Concepts are taught to give the broad strokes to every player on the field. Once we start tagging, the fine lines get drawn in.

You don't need to run Power from every formation every day. You need to install Power, then rep variations through teaching windows all week long. Don't change things for your core players, use everyone else to exponentially add looks.

And while we're on practice time, that opposing DC is throwing his overly expensive Hudl remote across the room because he has to break all of this stuff down and try to simplify it for his 11 guys.

### Summary: Complexity Through Simplicity

Multiplicity is not about confusion, it's about clarity.

You're creating multiple pictures without multiple plays.

You're attacking the rules of the defense without changing your rules.

You're making it look like 50% of your playbook is brand new every week, when really you're just remixing what you've already mastered.

If you've protected your base, multiplying it becomes easy. Your players stay confident, your staff stays on the same page, and the defense? They're the ones doing the guessing.

In the next article, we're going to shift gears and talk about shifting structures.

Literally.

We'll dive into pre-snap shifts, why they work, how to keep them simple, and how to weaponize them against teams that struggle to adjust.

See you next month!

# COACHING 101

## KNOWING WHAT TO CALL AND WHEN TO CALL IT



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**vIQtory**

The hardest part of coordinating a defense is knowing what to call and when to call it. When do you stay in your base defense? Blitz? Drop 8?

When game planning, there are a few things you can look at to help increase the success rate of what you should call.

Time To Throw - We chart the average time to throw for the quarterback. If it's under 2 seconds, don't blitz him, drop 8. We've learned that the blitz will never get home, and you're just putting your back end on an island. Disrupting the throw often comes from getting hands up into the throwing lanes of these quick releases.

More than 2 seconds? Blitzes & stunts can get home, and there's a chance to disrupt the throw with contact to the quarterback.

3rd & Long Call - Every offensive coordinator has a go-to third-and-long call. It's their safe blanket. It's usually a screen, comebacks at the first down marker, or a downfield shot. The way to track

this is to see how often the quarterback throws between the hashes. If 90% of these throws are hashes and out, it typically means both the coach and quarterback don't feel comfortable throwing the ball over the middle. We can deepen our defensive backs to sit on these routes and cap comebacks and deep throws.

Don't Sell Out On Short Yardage Downs On Their Side Of The Field - This is one of the best pieces of advice I got from an older DC. You run Cover 0 on 3rd and 1 on their 20-yard line, and they end up chunking you to the 50-yard line. You just gave up 30 yards because you tried to sell out. Instead, sell out with 4 or 5 players, and have everyone else play base defense. Slanting or running short yard stunts are great for these situations. If they get the 1 yard, the chains reset, and you're still at an advantage playing on their side of the field.

Every down is a new situation. Bend but don't break. Force the offense to nickel and dime you down the field and limit explosives. If you give the offense enough chances, they will eventually make a mistake.

If you want to learn more about coordinating a defense, visit [www.viqtorysports.com/defensive-coordinator-university](http://www.viqtorysports.com/defensive-coordinator-university)

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out on X [DM me @chrisvIQtory](#). I'm always open and happy to chat more!

# THE JV PLAYBOOK

## DEVELOPMENT OVER SCOREBOARD: REFRAMING JV AND SUB-VARSITY FOOTBALL



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In every sub-varsity staff room in America, there's a tension that never fully goes away.

You want to win. You line up on Thursday night, the ball gets kicked off, and competitive instinct takes over. Nobody in this profession signs up to lose.

But if we're honest about the purpose of JV and sub-varsity football, wins and losses cannot be the primary metric. They can't. Because the mission at this level isn't to dominate another school's depth chart.

The mission is to build players.

If varsity is the finished product, JV is the development lab. And development requires a different lens.

### **Simplify to Amplify Development**

One of the quickest ways to sabotage sub-varsity growth is to over-scheme.

We've all been tempted. You watch varsity film. You attend clinics. You see the pressure packages, the tags, the checks, the adjustments. And before you know it, your JV call sheet looks like a graduate assistant's.

But complexity at the JV level often shifts the focus

away from what matters most: player skill.

The more time you spend installing, adjusting, and repping checks, the less time you spend drilling footwork, hand placement, block fits, leverage, tackling mechanics, and route discipline.

At this level, simplicity isn't laziness. It's intentional.

If you carry a small menu of core concepts—run, pass, coverage, fronts—you create space to master fundamentals. You give kids a chance to execute fast, play confidently, and stack successful reps.

JV football should not be a watered-down varsity playbook. It should be a concentrated skill-development program delivered through live football.

### **What "Quality Reps" Actually Mean**

We throw around the term "quality reps" a lot. But what does that actually mean for a sub-varsity player?

A quality rep is not just being on the field.

A quality rep is:

- Executing correct technique at full speed
- Against realistic competition
- With coaching feedback attached
- And a chance to correct it on the next rep

In practice, that means drills that translate.

Half-speed, jog-through, no-resistance periods have their place early in installation. But development requires strain. If your offensive linemen never have to drive a body off the ball in practice, they won't suddenly develop that ability on game night.

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Quality reps in practice look like:

- Individual periods focused on footwork and leverage
- Small-group work (pods, inside run, 7-on-7) where players get repeated, position-specific reps
- Controlled competitive periods with defined objectives
- Immediate correction and redo opportunities

In games, quality reps mean meaningful snaps. Not just standing on kickoff return. Not one token series at the end.

A quality game rep is one where the player's role matters, the result matters, and the effort is coached afterward. When players step on the field for us, we want them to know that what they're doing matters! We don't want them to think "I'm only out here because Coach feels bad." We had a game this past season where I flat out told a coach that every year he tries to run the score up on us with his starters in the whole game. He then tried to tell me "well, you had your starters in the whole time, too."

I want coaches to think like that. I want coaches to not notice when certain weaker kids are in. Because to us, they're not weaker kids. THEY ARE VALUED MEMBERS OF THIS PROGRAM.

It's not about participation. It's about engagement.

### **The Game as a Classroom**

Game night at the JV level should be an extension of practice—not a departure from it.

If development is the goal, then game plans should prioritize player growth over scoreboard management.

That doesn't mean you ignore the opponent. It means you don't sacrifice your players' long-term

development for short-term control.

A 50-0 win where your second offensive line never takes a snap might feel good on the bus ride home. But it does little for your program's future.

Conversely, a competitive game where two lines rotate, multiple backs carry the ball, and young defenders experience real adversity—that's program equity.

Because those reps compound, and your varsity coaches will appreciate it. What do you think they'd rather have? 40 kids coming up to them that went 10-0, but only 20 kids ever touched the field? Or 40 kids that went 7-3, and all 40 of them had an impact every week.

### **Structuring Substitutions for Development**

One of the biggest levers a sub-varsity coach controls is substitution structure. If you wait until the game is "out of reach" to rotate players, development becomes conditional. Instead, consider proactive systems.

#### **1. Package Substitutions**

Create specific personnel packages designed to get certain players on the field. This could include:

- A "Heavy" run package with your developing linemen
- A perimeter package with younger skill players
- A defensive front rotation group

These packages are installed and practiced. They're not charity snaps—they're intentional.

#### **2. Line Rotations**

On both sides of the ball, rotating by series can be extremely effective.

For example:

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- Offensive Line A takes Series 1
- Offensive Line B takes Series 2
- Continue alternating unless game context requires adjustment

We also do this with our QB's. I've never liked the notion of a "STARTING QB" at the JV level, because it discourages development in the kid underneath them. Rather, my kids rotate each series, with some years even going to a +1 Model, where if a QB scores on the previous series, they get one more drive. If not, then the next kid is up. This not only builds development with each kid, but it also provides some in-game competition between the two of them.

This ensures players know when their opportunity is coming, which increases practice urgency.

### 3. Play-Count Rotations

Some staffs substitute every 4-6 plays. This maintains rhythm while still distributing snaps.

This works especially well at skill positions and along the defensive front. For us, that means runningbacks rotating every 2 plays, slot receivers every play, and H backs every three. That's D tackles every 2 plays, DE's every 4, and LB's every 3. That's multiple kids, per series, having an impact on the game, and not just sitting on the sideline watching.

### 4. Situational Development

Use specific down-and-distance scenarios as teaching moments.

Let a young quarterback run the two-minute drill.

Let your developing linebacker group handle a short-yardage series.

These are controlled stress environments that accelerate growth.

### *Navigating the Win vs. Develop Dichotomy*

The hardest part of sub-varsity coaching is managing the emotional tension between wanting to win and needing to develop.

Players want to win. Parents want to win. Coaches want to win.

And you should. Competition teaches lessons nothing else can.

But winning at the expense of development is short-sighted.

If your JV team goes undefeated but your varsity roster two years later lacks depth, toughness, or understanding of core concepts, what was the point?

Development is not anti-competition. It's future-focused competition.

When players know they will get real opportunities, engagement increases. Effort increases. Commitment increases. They begin to see a pathway—not just to varsity, but to mastery.

### *Building Commitment Through Opportunity*

One of the fastest ways to lose sub-varsity athletes to other sports or activities is by making them feel invisible.

If a player practices all week and never meaningfully plays, he begins to question his place. But when he knows:

- He will rotate
- He will get coached
- His improvement matters

He invests. That investment builds retention. And retention builds program strength. JV football should be the level where players fall in love with

improvement.

They should leave the season believing:

- "I got better."
- "My reps mattered."
- "I'm part of something."

That belief fuels offseason work. It fuels multi-sport participation with football as a priority. It fuels eventual varsity contribution.

### *The Real Scoreboard*

At the end of the day, the real scoreboard for sub-varsity football isn't the one at the stadium. It's:

- How many players improve technically
- How many players stay in the program
- How many players are prepared for varsity demands
- How strong the culture becomes

If you beat someone by 50 but stunt development, you haven't advanced the program.

If you win by 14 and 40 players log meaningful snaps, grow in confidence, and understand your system—you've built something lasting.

Sub-varsity football is not about polishing trophies. It's about polishing players.

And if we keep that lens clear—simplify schemes, prioritize fundamentals, structure opportunities, and embrace development as the primary goal—wins will come.

But more importantly, varsity-ready athletes will come with them.

Teaching it. Building it. Repping it. That's the real job at the JV level.

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# BUILDING WINNING CULTURE IN UNDERRATED COMMUNITIES

## PART 2: FROM LEARNING TO LEADING



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### Early Coaching Foundations

As a young coach, I didn't have much guidance. Coaching youth football, I relied on the bare minimum of what

I was taught growing up. As a player, you think you understand football but as a coach, you quickly learn there's a whole lot more that goes into it. Eventually, I stepped back and made the choice to learn, really learn, how to coach the right way.

That's when I discovered the value of keeping things simple the K.I.S.S. method (Keep It Stupid Simple). Working alongside successful coaches at Garfield sharpened that lesson. They didn't beat their athletes down; they used knowledge, trust, purpose, and consistency. Coaching youth players helped me develop patience and understand that these were babies in the sport kids taking their first steps. That opened a whole new world in my coaching career, and I'm grateful for it.

### Meeting Coach Medina & Legacy High School

My first chance at high school football came when I met my mentor and friend, Coach Steve Medina. From day one, we clicked. When he took the job at Legacy High School, it felt symbolic the word legacy

meant something then, and even more now. I joined the staff that same year, the 2021-2022 season. Although the year ended 2-6, it became one of my greatest learning experiences.

Coach Medina invested everything into his boys. He talked often about the time football takes away from home from his wife, his son and he encouraged me not to lose myself the same way. (To my wife Amanda... easier said than done, right?)

His dedication didn't go unnoticed. He welcomed my brother Frank into the program and trusted both of us with the JV team. That season we finished 4-7, and even though we lost round one of the playoffs, you could feel the culture shifting. Coach Medina coached every kid like his own. He used to say, 'To change a kid's life, you need to touch their heart first,' and 'We all have a superpower we just need to unlock it.' And he was right.

I also want to thank all the parents who supported me at Legacy High School. Their trust, encouragement, and belief in what we were building meant everything to me. I'm sure all my guys will go on to do great things in life they have the heart, the grit, and the character to succeed far beyond football.

### Unlocking My Own Superpower

My second year as head coach became the most successful in the program. Everything I learned finally clicked. That group of boys changed everything for me. Building relationships with them on and off the field is what truly mattered. Wins matter, but not nearly as much as hearing a kid go from 'Coach, I can't,' to 'Coach, I did it.'

We finished 5-4. And I know some might call that mid. But varsity kept taking our best players, and we had over 30 athletes with different skill levels and only two coaches. In reality, we had an 8-1 season.

And who's counting? (Me and my brother.)

### Creating Stars & Building Culture

I've always believed in creating stars building them in-house instead of recruiting finished products. Being a big wrestling fan, I learned something important: every brand needs a face, a champion. At Legacy, we introduced championship belts for Offensive and Defensive Players of the Game. It became part of our identity.

Captains were chosen through leadership, not favoritism. We used squad leaders, small groups run by players who showed consistency. From there, captains naturally emerged. We also introduced an honorary captain each week, rewarding effort and growth. Parents loved seeing their kids walk out for the coin toss, and players wanted the main title. Incentives became fuel for leadership.

### Our First Time at Torres (2024-2025)

Before returning to Torres now, my brother and I were briefly at Esteban Torres High School during the 2024-2025 season. Leaving Legacy was one of the toughest choices we ever made it stung deeply, but it was a personal decision, and we wanted to continue helping kids grow through football.

When we arrived at Torres, the kids were very receptive, and the staff was welcoming. But it was different from what we were used to. The kids had little to no knowledge of the game. We spent an hour doing things that were not efficient to football during the season, mind you. No way should we be doing cherry pickers for an hour.

Once we got there, we worked alongside the other coaches, showing what we could bring to the table. The kids gravitated to the new ideas, and as the defensive coaches, they started stopping offenses and creating turnovers. It wasn't magic we just unlocked

their superpower by giving them confidence and teaching the game the way it worked for us.

Interceptions came. Forced fumbles came. Sacks, tackles for loss the culture was changing. But sometimes change isn't always received well. The kids wanted to stay on the path we were building, but the man in charge wanted otherwise. We left based on a conflict of interest, and it didn't sit right with me. I wanted to give back to my community the same community where I played baseball as a kid.

When the head spot opened later, I knew I had to go all-in. With all my heart, I wanted it. And now, a new legacy begins at Torres High School.

### Rebuilding Torres Football

Coming to Torres officially this time brought challenges unlike any before. This program hadn't seen success in years. Coaches came and went, and some had taken the joy out of the sport. At first, I came in with a 'save the world' mindset. But I learned the truth: the world isn't my responsibility the kids are.

I found four major issues: lack of trust from players, lack of appeal due to years of losing, academic struggles, and external life pressures work, siblings, streets, gangs. But there was a path forward.

**Step one:** rebuild trust. I'm not the previous coach. I'm here to create a culture, a rebrand, a new Torres Football. I brought in the most like-minded coaches in the city coaches dedicated to winning and changing lives.

**Step two:** make football appealing. Flashy designs, merch, banners, posters, and campus energy can ignite excitement. If kids feel your passion, they'll reflect it.

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**Step three:** attack grades early. Academics matter now, not later. We communicate with teachers, admin, and the athletic director no grades means no football.

**Step four:** create a family. Love, care, discipline, and fun. My own kids attend practices so players can see I treat them the same way. For some kids, practice keeps them out of gangs and dangerous environments. Football becomes their safe place.



### *Final Reflections*

I wish I had my father here to ask for guidance, but I remember how his coach changed his life. And if that coach could change him, then why can't we change ours?

This job is an honor. This sport is my passion. I'm not perfect, but everything I've learned built my philosophy and my purpose as a coach.

To Coach Medina thank you for taking a chance on two brothers and trusting us. Your words lit a fire in me.

To my dad thank you for giving me this sport and shaping me into the man I am. I hope I make you proud.

And like I tell my boys at the end of every practice: 'If no one said I love you today, remember Coach loves you.'

