

HEADSETS



WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 6: ISSUE 3

SMALL THINGS *That* BUILD BUY-IN

BURNOUT AND BELIEF
RE-ENGAGING TODAY'S YOUNG ATHLETE

BREAKING
THE RULES
WITH SHIFTS

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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.

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,

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SPORTS GRAPHIC DESIGN

NETWORKING FOR COACHES

LACKING HEAD COACHING EXPERIENCE? USE THESE TIPS TO CONVINCe THE PANEL YOU'RE READY!



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If you're failing to land a head coaching position and the main feedback you are getting

is about a lack of head coaching experience, your portfolio needs to prove that you are already capable of running a program. Your documents should showcase leadership, program development, and a clear vision for success. Here's what you should include:

1. Program Vision & Philosophy Statement

Since schools want a leader, your Coaching Philosophy Statement should go beyond X's and O's. It should outline:

- Your core values as a coach (team culture, discipline, accountability, work ethic, character development).
- Your leadership style (how you motivate players, communicate with staff, engage the community).
- Your coaching philosophy on player development, offensive/defensive identity, and team building.
- Your long-term vision for the program (winning culture, academic accountability, offseason commitment).
- Team Culture & Leadership Development (how you instill accountability, discipline, and team identity).
- A "Leadership & Coaching Philosophy" section that details:
 - How you have mentored & developed assistant coaches.
 - Examples of leadership in tough situations

(disciplinary issues, staff conflicts, adversity).

- How you make big program-wide decisions (e.g., hiring, discipline policies, game-planning).

Schools want stability, so your philosophy should reflect a vision for sustained success, not just short-term wins.

2. A 3-5 Year Program Development Plan

Since you lack head coaching experience, this document can be a game-changer. It should clearly outline:

- Year 1: Establishing team culture, evaluating personnel, implementing schemes, setting academic & behavioral expectations.
- Years 2-3: Strengthening feeder programs, increasing player development, refining systems.
- Years 4-5: Competing at a high level, consistent playoff appearances, strong community and school support.

Include specific action steps (e.g., "Establish an offseason weight training program with goal benchmarks" or "Host a youth camp to engage future players").

- Milestones for each year (e.g., "By Year 2, I will have implemented a summer strength & conditioning program that has increased team strength numbers by 15%").
- More detail on building community support (how you plan to increase booster club involvement, student fan engagement).

3. Offseason & In-Season Training Plan

A clear plan for how you will develop players physically and mentally throughout the year. This could include:

- Offseason Strength & Conditioning Plan (specific goals for speed, strength, and endurance).
- Summer & Fall Camp Structure (key focus areas, team-building strategies).
- In-Season Weekly Plan (game prep, film study, practice structure).

Show that you have a structured approach to building a disciplined, physically prepared team.

4. Staff Development & Organizational Plan

Since head coaches have to lead a staff, you should show:

- How you will structure your coaching staff (roles & responsibilities).
- Your approach to hiring, mentoring, and developing assistant coaches.
- Your plan for team meetings, delegation, and communication.

Include an example weekly schedule for staff meetings, film review, and game-planning.

5. Community & Parent Engagement Plan

A head coach isn't just coaching football—they are leading a program that involves parents, boosters, and the school community. Your plan should include:

- How you will engage parents (parent meetings, involvement in team culture).
- How you will build relationships with the community (fundraisers, youth camps, social media presence).
- How you will increase school spirit & support (collaborating with the band, cheerleaders, student section).

Show how you will create excitement and buy-in from students, parents, and administrators.

6. Game Management & Strategy

You can create a document that outlines:

- Your offensive, defensive, and specials philosophy.
- Your game-day preparation process (film study, practice priorities, adjustments).
- Your in-game decision-making strategy (clock management, situational awareness).

If you have successful coordinator experience, highlight game-planning responsibilities and big wins to show you're ready for the next step.

7. Feeder Program & Player Development Plan

Schools want a coach who can build for the future. This plan should include:

- How you will develop relationships with middle school coaches.
- How you will engage youth programs (camps, mentorship, skills clinics).
- How you will retain and develop players (position-specific training, leadership development).

A clear pipeline plan shows you are thinking long-term, just like a head coach should.

8. Evidence of Fundraising & Budget Management

- Numbers & Data on past fundraising efforts (e.g., "Led a fundraising campaign that raised \$15,000 for new equipment").
- A clearer fundraising strategy that shows:
 - Corporate sponsorships & partnerships you have developed.
 - Revenue-generating ideas (e.g., youth camps, gear sales, booster club events).
 - Budgeting priorities (where you would allocate funds: equipment, travel, nutrition, etc.).

Bottom Line:

Your portfolio needs to remove all doubt that you are ready to lead. Instead of focusing on what you haven't done, you should showcase how you will build a winning program. A well-organized portfolio with these elements will show you are already thinking and operating like a head coach.

In the next issue, we will show in-depth examples of what your portfolio documents should look like if you are looking to land a head coach position.

Need help in the meantime? Visit www.coachingportfolio.com to view our services to help coaches navigate the job search process.

FOOTBALL THOUGHTS

MICRO-INCLUSIONS: THE SMALL THINGS THAT BUILD BUY-IN



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Most coaches want culture.

But a lot of us go looking for it in the wrong places.

We look for it in:

- the big speech
- the hard practice
- the perfect slogan
- the punishment that finally “gets their attention”

Those things have a place. But in my experience, real buy-in is built somewhere smaller.

A handshake at the end of practice.

A playlist players earn.

A simple team ritual.

A way to correct kids without putting them on blast.

A few minutes of joy built into a hard week.

I call these micro-inclusions: small, intentional actions that take little or no extra preparation but create connection, accountability, and ownership over time.

They're simple. That's why they work.

1. Handshakes Build Relational Equity

One of the best things I ever borrowed from another coach was this:

Have every player shake hands with every coach before and after practice.

At the end of practice, it becomes a receiving line. Players come through and hear one quick comment:

“Nice finish.”

“Good rep in team.”

“Way to compete.”

It takes almost no time, but it gives you a daily opportunity to build connection—and just as importantly, to reset it.

If I got on a player earlier in practice, the handshake lets me quietly make sure we're still good before he leaves.

That's culture work.

2. Music Is a Tool—If You Use It on Purpose

I used to think music at practice was a distraction.

Then I realized—it depends on the coach.

Now we use music intentionally. On our lighter pregame practice, the playlist is earned by the winning team from the previous week's competition.

That one decision creates energy and ownership immediately.

It also reminds me of something important: players are motivated by different things. One kid wants classic rock. Another wants movie soundtracks. Another wants Nickelodeon theme songs.

If you use it right, music isn't background noise.

It's a culture cue.

3. Rituals Make Standards Stick

We use what we call a football clap: three quick claps on command.

We use it to recognize effort, transition between periods, and close practice.

It takes seconds. It costs nothing. But because it's consistent, it becomes part of the team's identity.

The best rituals are like that—short, repeatable, and unmistakably yours.

4. Accountability Works Better With Dignity

When I first started coaching, I thought correction had to be loud to be effective.

I was wrong.

For minor issues, we use card draws. A player can take a standard consequence or pull from a deck with different outcomes—including one “Get Out of Jail Free” card.

The team leans in. There's laughter, anticipation, and buy-in.

But the key is this:
accountability still happens—without humiliation.

That matters.

Especially now.

A lot of coaches are still trying to get results through embarrassment and volume. I think there's a better way.

5. Joy Is a Competitive Advantage

I love hard practice. I love demanding standards.

But I've come to believe that if everything feels like a grind, your culture eventually feels like survival.

That's why we build games into our week on purpose. We laugh. We compete. We let the team breathe.

And the result?

They come back more connected—and more willing to work.

Kids will push harder for something they enjoy belonging to.

The Big Idea

None of these things is complicated.

That's the point.

Culture is not built by one big breakthrough. It's built by small things done consistently enough that the team starts to feel them, expect them, and eventually own them.

That's the power of micro-inclusions.

They tell players:

You are seen

You matter

You belong here

And overtime, that does more than build connection.

It builds buy-in.

FOOTBALL TALK

JET SWEEP



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The Jet Sweep, also known as the Fly or Speed Sweep, is a play that has proven its versatility and adaptability across the sport, from youth leagues to the professional ranks. It involves a Wide Receiver or Running Back running laterally behind the line of scrimmage before the snap, receiving a handoff or a touch pass from the quarterback, and then sprinting around the edge of the line. The Jet leverages speed and misdirection to exploit the defense's alignment, fits, and pursuit angles.

At its core, the Jet is designed to stretch the defense horizontally. By sending a speedy player in motion before the snap, the offense forces the defense to adjust on the fly. This pre-snap motion can create confusion and hesitation among defenders, particularly linebackers and defensive backs, who must quickly decide whether to follow the motion man, bump toward the motion, or stay in their original positions. This split-second indecision can make the difference between a successful play and a defensive stop.

The Jet's advantages are significant. It creates mismatches in space, allowing the ball carrier to reach the outside quickly with a running start. This often leads to one-on-one matchups with defensive backs or linebackers, where a player with good vision and elusiveness has the upper hand. The play

also neutralizes the impact of dominant defensive linemen by targeting the perimeter rather than the interior of the defense.

Running the Jet several times a game can fatigue the defensive interior. The defensive line and linebackers must pursue the Jet, and Vince Lombardi said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Once the interior is tired, it does not matter if the outside defenders do their jobs; there is no pursuit from the inside to help them out. Another advantage is that your inside runs off the Jet (Power, Counter, etc.) will be more effective once the defensive interior has been worn out chasing the Jet. Let us not forget the play-action passes and screens that an offense can run with Jet action.

The Jet Sweep's versatility extends beyond its primary function. It plays a crucial role as a valuable decoy in an offense's playbook. The mere threat of the play forces defenses to respect the motion and adjust accordingly, potentially opening up other areas of the field. For instance, a fake Jet Sweep can be used to set up a variety of other plays. Power and Counter runs, play-action passes, and screens can exploit what the defense is doing to stop the Jet. The constant motion and misdirection keep the defense guessing, making it harder for them to key on specific plays.

In addition to the many advantages I have already mentioned, the Jet Sweep is remarkably simple to install. It does not require significant alterations to an existing offensive scheme, making it accessible to teams at all levels, and it can be easily integrated into almost any offensive system. I have been running the Jet since 1992, and it fits into every system we ran at every stop. We ran it from the I-Formation by offsetting the Fullback to give us an extra blocker. We ran it from the Flexbone attack

to complement our Inside Veer and Midline plays. We majored in Jet when we were an under-center Wing-T team. And, of course, we have all seen what a great addition it is to spread shotgun attacks. The Jet was one of the first plays Mike Leach added to his Air Raid attack that was not part of the original AR menu.

The play's success largely depends on timing and execution rather than complex blocking schemes or advanced pre- and post-snap reads. This simplicity reassures teams that they can incorporate the Jet Sweep without sacrificing valuable practice time on other essential aspects of their offense. The play's success is predicated on getting two or three blocks at the point of attack. Many teams are running Jet with their perimeter players executing stalk blocks, while the interior offensive players block Zone, Power, or Counter. They are influencing the Jet side defensive end with a down block or pulling linemen away from the Jet. The Jet Sweep's proven success should inspire and motivate teams to consider it a valuable addition to their offensive strategies.

The Jet Sweep has become more common in modern offenses, particularly with the rise of spread formations and tempo-based attacks. Teams like the Kansas City Chiefs, under head coach Andy Reid, have utilized the Jet Sweep to great effect, often using it to get the ball into the hands of their playmakers in space. The LA Rams rode their Jet to the Super Bowl a few years ago. Similarly, college teams with athletic quarterbacks and speedy skill players frequently incorporate the Jet Sweep into their game plans.

10 of My Reasons to Run the Jet

1) It is great for teams with undersized Offensive Linemen. You can do some damage with the Jet if you only get a few blocks on the edge.

- 2) It can be beneficial for all teams, but particularly advantageous for fast teams.
- 3) You can use Jet Motion on nearly every play.
- 4) Formation flexibility: You can run it out of most formations. Empty is a beautiful thing.
- 5) It is an easy way to get the football to your fastest players with a running start.
- 6) Makes LBs and DLs run, and DBs tackle.
- 7) Jet motion is a formation change that the defense must address just before the ball is snapped, and it muddies linebacker run fits (the fits they practice fitting daily disintegrate after the snap).
- 8) For every ISLB blitzing, that's one less in pursuit. Many teams stop blitzing Jet teams.
- 9) Once the defense starts selling out, you can gash them inside with Power, Counter, Trap, or Zone.
- 10) If they use safeties to stop the Jet, you throw over the top.

Why Tony Annese Runs the Jet at Ferris State

- 1) Force the defense to defend the entire field.
- 2) Gets playmakers the ball in the open field. It can turn a scrimmage play into a return-type situation.
- 3) Motion manipulates defenses just before the snap.
- 4) Jet Sweep helps create natural packages in the game plan that can counter the defense's reaction to the sweep action. Once you know how they plan to defend the Jet, you can start running your plays off the Jet. Power, Counter, and various Jet play-action passes are great responses to what defenses do to stop the Jet.

I love the Jet because I love giving the ball to our fastest kid with a running start. We went through a period where we had several fast guys who were not very big. We did not want to run them inside because of their lack of size, and giving it to them on Jet is much easier than throwing it to them

continued on next page

on the perimeter. The Jet is also less risky than throwing it to them.

A Few Closing Thoughts on the Jet

- The Jet is much more deceptive from Under Center, but if you have a good quarterback, you can do many more things from the Gun with Jet action.
- The Jet Sweep by itself is just a play. You would not run the Power without a Counter and a play-action pass. Why would the Jet be any different?
- All the other stuff you can do with Jet action is what hurts defenses.
- The Jet allows you to gash defenses inside or throw the ball over their heads with play-action.
- If they are defending the Jet well, then they are leaving something else open.
- The Jet play-action passes are for when the DBs are getting involved with stopping the Jet.
- The Powers and Counters are for the ISLBs that want to chase the Jet.
- To beat a good Jet team, a defense must be better; just schemes will NOT work against a good Jet team; the defensive players must be better.
- When executed correctly, the Jet Sweep is not just a play; it's a gateway to a series of plays that can lead

to success. The Jet Package/Series, I believe, is even more extensive than the Buck Series. The plays you can run by incorporating Jet motion are limited only by your imagination, creativity, and your players' skill set. The Jet Sweep has the potential to unlock a world of offensive opportunities for you and your team.

- Our job as offensive coaches is to determine what the defense is trying to take away from us. We believe they cannot take away everything an offense can do with Jet action.

Coach Chip Seagle has coached high school football for over 40 years. He has retired from full-time coaching and currently volunteers at The Heritage School in Newnan, GA. He also operates "Football Talk with Coach Chip" on YouTube and a podcast, "Football Talk with Coach: The Podcast." He has written several manuals and other resources that he makes available to coaches through his YouTube channel. He is available for consultations, installations, and online and in-person speaking engagements. Contact Coach Chip at seagle.chip@gmail.com and ask him about his newest book, The Complete Jet Sweep Manual.

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DEFENSE

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The 5 Pillars of a Great Defense

Great defenses aren't built on schemes alone—they're built on standards. While fronts, coverages, and pressures evolve, the foundation of elite defensive play remains constant. At the core of every dominant unit are five non-negotiable pillars: Communication, Block Destruction, Effort & Angles, Tackling, and Ball Disruption.

These pillars define not just how you play—but who you are.



1. Communication

Defense starts before the snap. Elite defenses are connected—every player sees the same picture and speaks the same language. Communication eliminates busts, aligns

adjustments, and allows players to play fast and confidently.

- Pre-snap: Identify formation, strength, motion, and alerts
 - Post-snap: Echo calls, adjust to shifts, confirm responsibilities
 - Situational awareness: Down & distance, tempo, and game context
- Standard:** If one player knows it, everyone knows it.

2. Block Destruction

You can't make plays if you can't get off blocks.

Physicality and technique must show up every snap. Great defenses don't just absorb—they attack blockers with violence and precision.

- Hand placement and leverage
 - Strike, separate, shed
 - Defeat reach, down, and pull blocks
 - Maintain gap integrity while disengaging
- Standard:** Control your gap, then dominate your man.

3. Effort & Angles

Effort is the great equalizer.

Speed without discipline leads to missed plays—but disciplined effort creates relentless pursuit. Great defenses run to the football with purpose and leverage.

- Proper pursuit angles (inside-out, leverage the ball)
 - Rally mentality—11 hats to the football
 - No loafs, no exceptions
 - Finish through the whistle
- Standard:** Effort covers mistakes. Relentless pursuit defines identity.

4. Tackling

Defense is built on getting the ball carrier on the

ground-period.

Missed tackles extend drives, kill momentum, and break defenses. Great units tackle with technique, confidence, and physicality.

- Eyes up, near foot/near shoulder
- Leverage and body positioning
- Wrap and drive through contact
- Secure the tackle—no arm tackles

Standard: One shot, one finish.

5. Ball Disruption

Good defenses get stops. Great defenses take the ball.

Turnovers change games. Creating chaos at the point of contact and attacking the football must be intentional and constant.

- Punch, rake, and strip techniques
- Attack the catch point in coverage
- Tip drills and takeaway circuits
- Finish plays with possession mentality

Standard: Every play is an opportunity to take the ball away.



The #3HIGHLIFE Standard

When these five pillars are emphasized daily—in drills, meetings, and culture—you create more than a defense. You build a unit that plays fast, physical, and together.

- Communicate to eliminate confusion
- Destroy blocks to control the line
- Pursue with effort and angles to swarm the ball
- Tackle with precision to end plays
- Disrupt the ball to change the game

This is the blueprint. This is the standard.

This is #3HIGHLIFE Defense.



PROTECT YOUR BASE-WINNING FOOTBALL THROUGH FORMATIONS, SHIFTS AND MOTION

PART 3: BREAKING THE RULES WITH SHIFTS



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If motion creates movement, shifts create tension.

There's something different about a good shift. Motion is fast. It's flashy. It stretches the defense horizontally.

Shifts, on the other hand, mess with structure.

And when you mess with structure, you mess with rules.

That's what this article is about.

What a Shift Really Does

A shift is simply one or more players changing alignment before the ball is snapped and resetting the formation. That's it. But strategically, it's much more than that.

A shift forces the defense to:

- Re-declare strength
- Re-set the front
- Re-align the secondary
- Re-communicate coverage
- Potentially check into a new call

All before the snap.

If you've ever watched a high school defense try to bump from a 2x2 look to an unbalanced surface with 8 seconds on the play clock, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

Communication cracks under stress.

And we're going to create that stress on purpose.

Why Shifts Beat Static Defenses

Defenses are built on structure. A 4-2-5 has strength calls. A 3-4 has front adjustments. Safeties rotate based on formation strength and backfield alignment.

When you shift, you force them to reveal what they are and how they handle structure changes.

Let's say you line up in 2x2 11p Y-Off. The defense declares strength to the field. The Sam is walked out, the front is set, the safety rotation is clear.

Now you shift the Y and the Z into a tight unbalanced look.

What happens?

- Do they bump the front?
- Do they spin the safety?
- Does the backers travel?
- Do they check to an automatic call?

You just got information.

And information is leverage.

Simple Shifts That Create Big Problems

You don't need NFL-level choreography here. In fact, the simpler the shift, the better.

Here are a few that have paid dividends for us:

1. 2x2 to 3x1

Tag the Y across the formation and reset into trips. That alone forces a new strength call. If the defense bumps late or miscommunicates, you get numbers in the box or a leverage advantage on the perimeter.

2. Overload with Receivers

From Trips, bring the solo receiver across the formation to create a quad look.

You'll likely get no movement or an overexaggerated response. Either gives you the advantage.

3. Backfield Flip

Shift the back from strong to weak or vice versa. Now you've altered run strength without changing the concept.

Inside Zone to the back side now becomes a completely different fit for the defense.

4. TE Trade

If you're an 11 personnel team, trading the Y from one side to the other pre-snap forces the defensive line and linebackers to re-define their gaps. If you're a 12p team, and swap both TEs from one side to the other, you've created madness for every level of the defense.

5. Balanced to Unbalanced

Bring the backside tackle across the center and put him anywhere on the line. Now you've created a heavy surface without sacrificing your skill guys in the trenches, and the defense likely won't notice! None of these require a new play install. They

require clarity in alignment rules.

Teaching Shifts Without Chaos

Here's where coaches get nervous: "What about false starts?" "What about illegal formations?"

That's a teaching issue, not a shift issue.

We teach shifts with three simple rules:

- 1) Everyone moves with urgency.
- 2) If you started on the ball, you stay on the ball
- 3) The QB makes everyone right

We rep it in walk-through first. Then in Indy. Then in group. We don't rush the process. Once it's clean, we add tempo.

The key is that your players must understand where they're shifting to and why.

If they know the structure, the shift is just movement between two homes.

Using Shifts to Create Conflict

The best shifts don't just change the picture—they create conflict.

Let's say you're playing a 4-2-5 team that sets the front to the passing strength.

Line up balanced.

Now shift into a 3-man surface with a tight slot.

Watch for how, or if, they answer. Carry plays that week that work if they move to have an answer or if they stay static.

continued on next page

Now the defense is wrong either way.

That's the goal. Not randomness. Conflict.

Game Planning with Shifts

When you're building your weekly plan, don't just ask "What do we run?"

Ask:

- How do they set strength?
- What triggers their pressure checks?
- Do they travel with motion or spin late?
- How well do they communicate on film?

Then design shifts that attack those rules.

If they're slow to bump, shift late. If they over-adjust, shift back to where you started. If they stem their front, hold your shift and change the cadence.

Shifts aren't just structure—they're strategy.

Protecting Your Base While Shifting

Here's the part that matters most: shifting should never change your core rules.

If you have to re-teach the blocking scheme because you shifted, you're doing too much.

Your base concepts—Power, Zone, Counter, your quick game—should function the same way no matter where you shift from or to.

Remember: we're multiplying pictures, not multiplying confusion for our own kids.

Your offensive line should hear the play and know their rule. The shift just changes where the stress hits the defense.

Why This Matters in Big Games

When you get into November football, everybody has film. Everybody knows your tendencies. Everybody thinks they have your base figured out.

Shifts let you stay one step ahead without reinventing your offense.

You can show a look you haven't put on film all season—while still running the same concept you've repped since spring ball.

That's how you protect your base.

Final Thought

Shifts are controlled disruption.

They disrupt defensive structure without disrupting offensive clarity.

They expose communication flaws. They create leverage. They generate information.

And when paired with a strong base formation, they make your offense feel far more complex than it actually is.

In the next article, we'll layer motion into the conversation—how to use it with purpose, how to identify coverage, and how to create true second-level conflict.

Because once you can shift and move with intent, you stop reacting to the defense.

You start dictating to it.

COACHING 101

THE GOLDEN RULE OF PRACTICE: FIRST 10 AND LAST 10



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viQtory

The first 10% and last 10% of your workouts, practices, and meetings are what your players and coaches remember.

I was out to dinner last weekend with some friends (and their friends), one of whom runs a karate dojo, and she was talking about how she went from 25 students to 250! I was shocked by the growth, so naturally I peppered her with questions and wanted to learn more about what her "secret" was.

Among the many things we talked about, she had one quote which I loved:

"First 10, Last 10" (as in the first 10% of practice, and the last 10%).

Also

"What is their experience when they start, and how do they finish?"

For Example:

First 10% sets the tone. It's when you establish expectations, energy, and intensity. If you're flat at the start, you'll fight uphill for all practice. Nobody

is excited to go to a boring practice.

Last 10% is what they remember.

If you're a youth or high school coach reading this, you want your players to get into their parents' cars, and when they're asked, "How was practice?" you want them smiling from ear to ear, talking about how great it was, how competitive it was, and how they accomplished something.

Anything less than that pushes them further and further away from ultimately quitting or coming back.

So, how do you fix your practices?

The opening stretch and the first period of practice should be high-energy and high-intensity. We typically will open up practice with a "Compete" period. It's a simple 1v1 board drill where everyone stands in a circle and gets hyped. This creates a high standard of energy from the start.

The last 10% should be something competitive, fun, or teamwork-oriented. They should feel accomplished and that the 2 hours they just spent with you were worth it.

It should either be fun, engaging, or competitive.

If your practices, weight room, or even meeting rooms are boring to start and leave no sense of accomplishment by the end, that's where attendance goes to die.

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

THE JV PLAYBOOK

BUILDING AN OFFENSIVE SYSTEM: THE JV WAY



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When it comes to offense at the sub-varsity level, you're not just calling plays. You're building players. You're preparing them for what comes next. And if your JV offense isn't aligned with your varsity system, you're not just making your job harder—you're slowing down the development of your entire program.

So the question becomes: how do you build a JV offensive system that both develops your players and serves the varsity vision? You build it the same way the best offenses are built. You start simple. You build with purpose. And you rep the heck out of it.

Step One: Go to the Source

Before you draw up a single play, before you script a single practice, before you even think about formations—you need to have a conversation. Not with your staff. Not with your players. *With your head coach.* Because here's the truth that every JV coach needs to come to terms with: this isn't your offense. It's the program's offense.

And your job isn't to reinvent the wheel—it's to make sure your players are ready to drive it when they get to varsity. So you sit down with your head coach, and you ask the questions that matter:

What are your core run concepts?
What does your pass game revolve around?
What formations do you live in?
What techniques are non-negotiable?
What do you expect a kid to know the day he steps onto the varsity field?

And maybe the most important question of all: "What do your players struggle with when they get to you?"

Because that answer? That's your starting point. If your varsity coach says, "Our kids don't understand blocking rules," then your system needs to emphasize rule-based schemes. If he says, "Our quarterbacks can't process coverage," then your pass game needs to be built around simple reads. If he says, "They don't play fast," then your entire system needs to be designed for clarity and confidence.

This conversation isn't about checking a box. It's about alignment. Because if the varsity program is speaking one language and JV is speaking another, your players are stuck translating instead of playing.

Step Two: Build Around the Rule of 4's

Once you have alignment, it's time to build your system. And this is where most JV coaches make their first mistake: they try to do too much: too many plays, too many formations, too many ideas.

And what you end up with isn't an offense—it's confusion.

So we simplify.

We build around the Rule of 4's: 4 runs, 4 passes, 4 formations

That's it.

Now, could you run more? Sure. But the question isn't "how much can you install?" It's "how much can your players execute?" Because confidence doesn't come from variety. It comes from mastery.

The 4 Runs

Your run game should be built around concepts that translate directly to varsity, but can be taught simply. For example:

1. Power – Your downhill, identity play
2. Counter – Your answer when Power gets overplayed
3. Inside Zone – Your base rule scheme
4. Sweep/Perimeter Run – Your way to stretch the defense

These don't have to match exactly what varsity runs—but they should mirror the philosophy. And more importantly, they should be rule-based. Instead of teaching kids "block this guy," you teach them:

- Gap rules
 - Zone rules
 - Down/backer rules
- Because rules travel. Assignments don't.

The 4 Passes

At the JV level, your pass game should be about clarity. Think:

1. Quick Game (Hitch/Slant)
2. Screen Game
3. Play Action Concept
4. One Dropback Concept (Smash, Flood, etc.)

Each concept should have a clear read progression that can be taught, repped, and understood. You're not trying to out-scheme defenses—you're trying to teach quarterbacks how to think.

The 4 Formations

Formations should create structure, not chaos. Pick formations that align with varsity, are easy to line up in, and allow flexibility for tags and motions later

For example:

1. 2x2 Spread
2. 3x1 Trips
3. Tight/Wing Set
4. Empty or Compressed Set

The goal isn't to be exotic—it's to be consistent. Because when kids can line up quickly and correctly, everything else speeds up.

Step Three: Balance Vision with Reality

Now comes the hardest part; taking what the varsity coach wants and matching it with what your players can actually do. Because let's be honest—JV football is a different world. You've got first-year players, kids who forget plays mid-huddle, linemen who are still figuring out stances, and quarterbacks who panic under pressure. You are not coaching college athletes.

So while alignment with varsity is critical, blind replication is a mistake. You have to filter everything through one question: "Can our kids execute this right now?"

If the answer is no, you don't scrap the concept—you simplify it. Maybe varsity runs a complex RPO system. At JV, that might become pre-determined reads or half-field concepts. Or maybe varsity uses advanced protection schemes. At JV, that becomes big-on-big or slide protection, each with clear, repeatable rules.

You're not lowering the standard—you're building toward it. Because confidence is built through success, and success comes from clarity.

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Step Four: Teach Rules, Not Plays

If there's one thing that separates good JV systems from bad ones, it's this: Good systems teach rules. Bad systems teach plays.

Plays are memorized, but rules are understood. And when things break down—and they will—rules are what save you.

For example:
Instead of teaching five different blocking schemes, you teach:
Gap-Down-Backer
Zone Step and Cover
Kick and Wrap

Now your linemen aren't thinking about plays—they're applying rules.

Same thing with receivers: "If the corner is off, run your hitch." "If the safety rotates, adjust your route."

Same thing with quarterbacks: "Read the apex defender." "Work high to low." When your players understand the why, they can handle the what.

Step Five: Add Without Adding

Once your core system is in place, now you can start to expand. But here's the key: you don't add more concepts. You add layers.

This is where tags, motions, and formations come in. Because the fastest way to confuse a JV player is to install a brand-new play. But the easiest way to make an offense look complex? Run the same play... dressed up differently.

Example 1: Power with Tags. You start with: Power Right

Now you add:
Power Right "Orbit"
Power Right "Jet"
Power Right "Read"
Same blocking. Same rules. Different presentation.

Example 2: Hitch Concept Variations Base play: Hitch

Now add:
Hitch + Bubble Screen
Hitch from Trips
Hitch with Motion
Quarterback still reads the same defender.
Receivers still run the same routes. But to the defense? It looks like a whole new offense.

Example 3: Formation Multipliers

Step Six: Rep Until It's Boring

Here's the part that nobody wants to hear: The secret to a great JV offense isn't creativity, it's repetition. You rep your core plays until your kids can run them in their sleep. Then you rep them some more. Because at this level, execution beats scheme every single time.

You want your kids to:
Line up fast
Know their assignment
Play with confidence
Play with speed
And that only happens when they're not thinking. So you:
Script your practices around your core
Revisit concepts constantly
Quiz your players
Walk through it
Run it full speed

Because every rep is a deposit.

And by the time they get to varsity, those deposits start to pay off.

Final Thoughts: Build the System That Builds Players

At the end of the day, your JV offense isn't judged by how many points you score. It's judged by how prepared your players are when they move up. Did they learn the language of the program? Do they understand the core concepts? Can they play fast, confident, and physical? That's the goal.

So when you build your system, don't chase complexity. Chase clarity.
Start with the varsity vision.
Build around the Rule of 4's.
Teach rules over plays.
Add layers, not concepts.

Rep it until it becomes who you are.

Because the best JV offenses don't just move the ball.

They build the future.

And if you do it right, one day you'll stand on that sideline on a Friday night, watching those same kids run the varsity system like they've been doing it their whole lives. Because in a way, they have.

Teach it, Rep it, Build it. That's the JV Way.

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BURN OUT AND BELIEF: RE-ENGAGING TODAY'S YOUNG ATHLETE



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Across high school football, many of us are seeing a real shift. Attendance is down. Engagement is down.

Burnout among young athletes is becoming more common. Kids today are not involved in football the way they were just a few years ago, and at Torres High School in East Los Angeles, we are seeing it firsthand.

I understand why. Our program has struggled. Players have been let down in the past. Coaches have come and gone. Trust was broken along the way. Football is also a physical and demanding sport, and many young athletes are hesitant to put their bodies through that grind for a program they do not yet believe in.

Our location adds another layer to the challenge. Torres sits between two of the most historic and popular programs in high school sports: Garfield and Roosevelt High Schools. The East LA Classic represents tradition, community pride, and consistent success. Many of our athletes grew up watching those programs and dreaming of wearing

those jerseys. That draw is real.

But here is what matters most: we believe in our kids at Torres. While our numbers are not where we want them to be, we are changing the culture. Re-engaging young athletes is not only about wins and losses. It is about how players feel when they walk into your program every single day.

One of the most effective ways to fight burnout is through character development. Taking time to build confidence in a young athlete goes further than any scheme or drill. When a coach listens, encourages, and helps a player feel valued, that athlete wants to keep showing up. Football should build young people up, not push them away.

Another key is ownership. We empower players by putting kids in charge of kids. Squad leaders oversee smaller groups. Players police themselves. When athletes are given responsibility, pride and accountability grow. It becomes their team, not just the coach's team.

We also believe football must still be fun. Practices should be demanding but enjoyable. Music matters. Team bonding matters. Not every mistake needs to come with yelling. When players experience joy, connection, and purpose, they are far more likely to stay committed.

Burnout, however, does not just affect players. Coaches are burning out too. The constant pressure to win, manage behavior, recruit halls, answer criticism, and carry the emotional weight of young lives can take a toll. Too often, coaches sacrifice their own well-being while trying to save a program.

It is important to remind coaches that family matters. Your spouse matters. Your children matter. Missing

birthdays, dinners, and moments at home catches up fast. A burned-out coach cannot effectively serve kids. Taking care of your family and yourself is not selfish it is necessary.

Young athletes can sense when a coach is exhausted, disconnected, or resentful. When coaches model balance, communication, and purpose, players learn those same values. The culture you build starts with how you treat your own life, not just your locker room.

At Torres, we are rebuilding trust one player and one coach at a time. If we continue to invest in kids, empower leadership, and protect our own families along the way, athletes will keep showing up. That belief shared by players and coaches is where lasting change truly begins.