

# HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 7

**BUILDING  
YOUR SCHEME**

*offensive*  
**DRILLS**

**MEAL PLANNING  
FOR THE  
HIGH SCHOOL  
ATHLETE**

**R**  
RUSSELL

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Thank you for your interest in this coaching material. I have been very blessed to connect with some awesome coaches during the past year, and putting out a collaborative work was always a goal of mine. Be sure to visit our sponsors as they have been great to support all of this work and are truly interested in coaches' education and helping coaches.

Our theme has been "for coaches by coaches" and all of the writers have been gracious to donate their time and knowledge to the coaching community. Many of them also have additional works that are great resources for coaches. Be sure to take the time to check them out.

If you have any subjects you'd like to see us address or questions you'd like to answer or even pictures to submit to make the magazine, please feel free to do so. Simply email [FBcoachsimpson@gmail.com](mailto:FBcoachsimpson@gmail.com) or the one who truly makes all this work at [Jameysimpson@gmail.com](mailto:Jameysimpson@gmail.com).

Thank you,

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# PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

## DEVELOPING AN OFF-SEASON QB ACADEMY IN YOUR PROGRAM



Jeff Steinberg  
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[BOOK](#)

As coaches are finalizing plans for summer preparation, I want to discuss something that has been a big asset to our program in developing our Quarterbacks. For years we have run an off-season QB Academy to ensure the full development of our quarterbacks. Depending on the state you are in you will be able to start at some point between January and when school gets out for the summer.

I began thinking about the importance of running an off-season academy for our QB's a few years back after visiting with Andrew Coverdale. In our Offense the quarterback plays such an integral part and in order for us to be successful he MUST have the mental, emotional and physical skills required.

Prior to beginning our Academy, we identified important qualities/skills that we would need to develop. We will take advantage of both classroom sessions and field sessions to address these. Our program will conduct 40 sessions beginning in January and running through the end of the summer. We will meet with the Quarterbacks 1 day per week to start and during the summer we will be meeting as a group 3 days per week. Sessions will run between 20-40 minutes depending on the lesson for that day.

Jan - 4 Meetings  
Leadership, Cougar QB Qualities, Mechanics, Pre-Snap Procedures  
Feb - 4 Meetings  
Leadership, Mechanics, Identifying Fronts & Coverages  
March - 6 Meetings  
Leadership, Mechanics, Pre-Snap Decision Process, Post Snap Decision Process (Reading Coverages), R4 Reading System, Install  
Apr - 6 Meetings  
Leadership, Blitz Identification, Analyzing Coverages, Install

May - 8 Meetings  
Leadership, Spring Ball Install, Practice Film, Review, Analyzing Coverages  
June - 6 Meetings  
Leadership, Opponent Film Review, Practice Film Review, Understanding Time & Possessions (Time Outs, Mayday, 4 Minute Offense)  
July - 6x  
Leadership, Opponent Film Review, Practice Film Review

This is our yearly plan for Quarterback development. As I mentioned we have a 12-month plan. Obviously, we have a four-year progression to get them to where they need to be. Each year we go back to this plan and re-establish the foundation.

It all starts in January. We meet with the Quarterbacks one day a week, in January. At the same time, the teams in the weight room we're doing speed and agility development, and just getting back to things.

In February, we start incorporating some QB/WR workouts. It's mainly drill work and we aren't concerned with installing any of our system. Wide receivers are getting their hands back in tune. They are assisting the QB's as they get drill work done. The on-field workout lasts about 45 minutes to an hour, one day a week. Additionally, we're also in the classroom, one day a week as well.

During the month of March and April, we start to meet with the Quarterbacks two days per week. For the guys in our program, we meet with them one day during the school week, and the other day will be on the weekend.

Once we get to May, it is now spring football. We generally won't bring them in on their own on the weekends as we figure going four days a week is more than enough. We do QB school two days, out of those four practices during the week. The spring football practices are 90 minutes to two hours.

During the summer we continue to workout/practice as a team 4 days per week. Two days per week we will have the Quarterbacks come in early for our QB Academy. At this point, we're starting to work our offense a lot more. We've progressed from the intangibles and the general things about playing quarterback to the specific things as they relate to our offense.

Towards the end of the summer, we will meet with our Quarterbacks 3 days per week spending time watching 7 on 7 film, team sessions and opponent film.

Once we hit the season the focus is on keeping our skills

## 12 MONTH TEACHING PROGRESSION



sharp, thoroughly understanding our system and attacking our opponents' fronts/coverages. Our Quarterbacks by that point, we believe are game ready thanks in large part to our Off-Season QB Academy.

For more information visit my coachtube courses on Developing an Off-Season QB Academy at <https://coachtube.com/bundles/qb-academy>

*I recently released my book along with Alex Kirby titled **The Plan to Win: Resources for Building an Elite Program**. It is sold along with my **Total Program Manual**. They will help you with **Program Organization**. You will find lots of great content like this included. There is over 250 pages of information. To purchase it go to: <https://gum.co/plantowin>*

# ACE SPORTS

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# COACHING RESOURCES

## BUILDING YOUR SCHEME



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[Coach Tube](#)

General things to consider about creating your best scheme:

What are the most important things that WIN the game in your sport?

What statistics are most important for success in your sport?

How can your scheme maximize your chances on winning those key stats?

How can you be multiple and simple?

What do the players on your team do well?

How can you help enhance them with the scheme?

Building your scheme on offense and defense will share some similar concepts. Just think of the opposite approach for each.

You need to understand the following about whatever scheme you incorporate:

Get a philosophy – many people say things like, “we want to be physical”, or “we want to be aggressive”, but they are not actually doing those things. Make sure you have a philosophy that you believe in and you will stick with, even in the tough times.

Get a system – You must have a system in place. This means your scheme should complement itself. Pieces of the offense should

work with other pieces. There are quite literally thousands of “systems” out there. Find something that matches your philosophy and learn it.

Get personnel descriptions – You need to write out what you need out of each position. Be realistic and list the qualities that the person must possess to play that position.

Be unique – the best you can, find a way to be unique in your approach. You want to present the other team with at least a few things different than what they see every other game.

Get Multiple & Simple – You must guard against having too much in. It is easy to have too much in your scheme. Remember, you are an adult and these students do not love this as much as you do. You cannot just put in everything you understand. It is about how much they understand. You need a system that allows you to only do a few things well but disguise those same things a lot of different ways so you appear to be multiple.

Understand Situations – far too often, situations doom coaches. It is your job to be the best at understanding the situations of your sport. Put in time to study all situations. Make a list of all the situations that can come up in a game. Practice that list with the team but also take time to sit alone and think about how you will attack each situation. It is much easier to

Write out your scheme plan – just having it down on paper can sometimes make it appear more real and make it easier to change if needed. If you cannot properly write it out, then you do not understand it enough and you need to find a way to learn more.

Write out position manuals – if you are forced to write out a position manual, it makes you understand the position better. It makes you learn how to clearly articulate the things that position must do. We found that writing these were more helpful for us than the players! Think about exactly what techniques they will use and list them. Then take those lists and make sure that is what you are practicing.

Come up with some “Golden Rules” – you will need to come up with a few key rules that each position must do. For example, Running Backs in Football may have “Golden Rules” of “Ball Security”, “Take pride in your fakes”, “Stay with blocks until the whistle blows”, and “Make one cut and go”. These would be things we would tell them constantly and then these were the things we were critiquing in film. It is impossible for a high school athlete to be good at everything. Give them a few golden rules and talk about them constantly.

Come up with an Accountability system – You need each position to have a few things that if they do this, we will punish them. It is not as simple as if we lose or if the play did not work. If we stick with Running Backs in Football, you can say if they do any of the following, they will do pushups for each one on Monday at practice: Fumble, Bad Fake, not finishing block. These correlate to their golden rules and if they break one of their golden rules, they get punished. It does not have to be a massive punishment. If the group had 5 total of these things on a game, we may make everyone do 5 push-ups. No one is really getting punished doing 5 push-ups, but we did acknowledge that we needed to do better.

Have a general scouting plan – even in the off-season you can start developing a general plan of how you will attack opponents that do different schemes. Do not wait until it is time to play to start building this. Pull out the generic plan for that opponent’s scheme and start there when scouting.



## GENERAL THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT CREATING YOUR BEST SCHEME:

- 1) What are the most important things that WIN the game in your sport?
- 2) What statistics are most important for success in your sport?
- 3) How can your scheme maximize your chances on winning those key stats?
- 4) How can you be multiple and simple?
- 5) What do the players on your team do well?
- 6) How can you help enhance them with the scheme?



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Ted Neal - Fort Smith Northside HS

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# LIFE LESSONS:

## LESSONS LEARNED WHILE SHOVELING

### SNOW: PART 3



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If you remember the last two issue's articles, you know a while back we were hit with about 18 inches of snow. After we had a ton of fun, we realized that in order to get out of our house we would have to clear off our long, uphill driveway. Eventually, the job was done, but as I spent a few hours doing a job I was uncomfortable with it caused me to reflect on some "lessons for snow shoveling":

#### Quick review -

- Lesson 1 - The job can seem overwhelming
- Lesson 2 - You need the right tools
- Lesson 3 - Don't look back
- Lesson 4 - Don't look too far ahead
- Lesson 5 - Learn to adapt
- Lesson 6 - Use the Help

#### To continue -

#### 7) Don't Major in the Minors

Let me preface this with saying I am a stubborn person and don't like to fail. So after about 10 minutes of not being able to move a solid block of ice off of our driveway, I finally moved on to an area that I could shovel. I was able to get 3-4 times as much work accomplished in other areas of our driveway. When I did come back to that area later and it had melted more and was much easier to finish.

I cannot count how many times as a coach I have invested countless hours in a play or scheme that was not giving me a great return on investment. Spending important time on areas of your program must be done, but don't simply get stuck on one area and not accomplish your objectives for a practice. Now when I organize practices or coaches meetings, I prioritize what must get done first. We

will spend the majority of time on these items, but we will move on and come back to them if needed. Do not let one area that isn't up to your standards ruin the rest of your practice/meeting.

#### 8) Don't quit

Ultimately finishing any job that is deemed difficult comes down to no quitting. It seems like an easy concept, but it is what will separate those who are successful from those who find excuses. And don't think that many times during this shoveling experience I didn't realize it would be much easier to quit.

Burnout is coming at alarming rates in the coaching/teaching field. There are plenty of reasons to quit - from issues with players, administrators, parents to you name it, but those that do not quit and persevere through the difficult times often find that those events made them the coach they are today. I am not telling coaches to take abuse from a bad situation, but I am saying that in all situations, there will come times quitting this profession crosses your mind.

#### 9) Don't neglect your family

By the end of this snow experience my entire family of 5 was out working. A complete family moment filled with arguing, joking, fighting and encouraging. It also made the miserable experience something we went through together. Family bonding can take on many forms and shapes, but each of them require something - Time spent together.

As coaches we often don't want to share our failures with our spouse. Or at least, I don't like to do that. Many times our work life and our family life are separate and tolerate each other at best. In my experience those that attempt to separate coaching and their "life" burnout quickly. So, the balance becomes about involving family in my career. While I hope I was a good coach, I never want to regret being a bad husband/father.



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# FOOTBALL 101

## COVER 4: SPOT DROP & MAN MATCH



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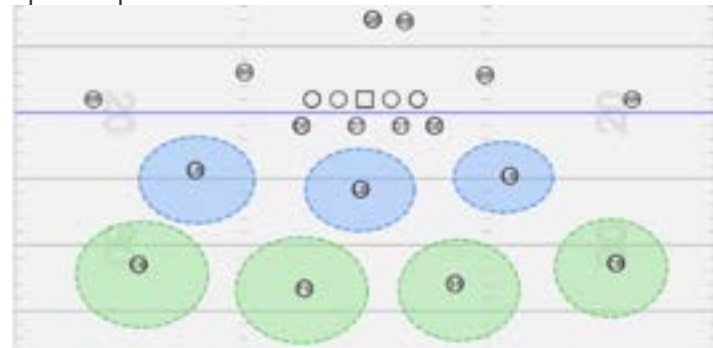


Cover 4 is a popular 2-high safety coverage that defensive coordinators play

in order to combat the offenses' aerial attack.

In this article, we're going to break down 2 different types of cover 4, spot drop and man match.

### Spot Drop



Spot drop is exactly what it sounds like, players will be dropping to a spot. This means that each player has an area to cover. In most traditional spot drop cover 4 scenarios, the 2 cornerbacks and 2 safeties will split the back half of the field into fourths. This means that each player is responsible for their deep 1/4 of the field.

Underneath, the 3 linebackers will be responsible for splitting the field into thirds. The outside linebackers will cover the hook/curl to flat area, The middle linebacker will be responsible for covering the middle hole.

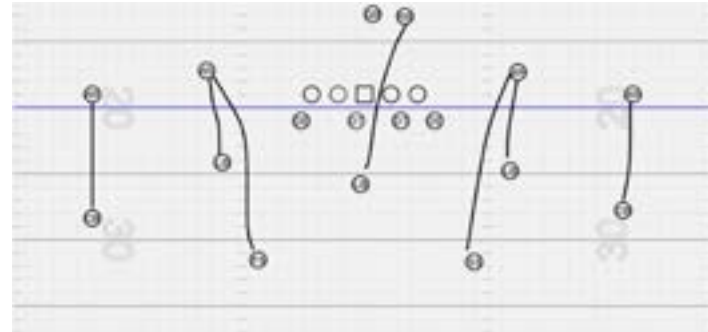
While this coverage is run at a basic level, it can be improved

through man-matching principles.

Let's learn what man-match means!

### Man Match

Instead of just spot dropping to an area and waiting for a receiver to come into your zone, man-matching has ensured that actual players get covered. I had a coach that always used to say "Players catch the football, not grass". This is the main principle behind the man-matching system.



The corners are responsible for the #1 receiver. If he runs deep, the corner will take deep (MOD Technique). If he goes in or short, he will then zone off and look for other receivers.

The safeties are reading the #2 receiver. If he goes deep, the safeties will take him. If he goes in or out, then the safeties will zone off and look for other receivers.

As for the outside linebacker, they are matching on the #2 receiver. If he goes out, the outside linebacker will run with him. If he goes in or vertical, he will zone off looking for work.

The middle linebacker will drop on the #3 receiver, looking for crossing routes and disrupting any dig routes that come into his zone.

This is the basic principle of man-match, as you're matching the patterns and defending against routes, rather than just covering an area of grass.

Watch our complete breakdown of spot dropping and man-matching [here on YouTube](#).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTzW\\_ujZrg4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTzW_ujZrg4)

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Construction	Polycarbonate	Polycarbonate	Polycarbonate
Engineered In	USA	USA	USA
Battery Capacity	2,300mA	2,300mA	2,300mA
Custom Channel Announce	YES	YES	Upgradeable
Max Coaches in One Group	32 All Open No PTT	10 All Open No PTT	8 All Open No PTT
Maximum Channels	6	4 - Upgradeable	2 - Upgradeable
Display Type	Customized	Standard - Upgradeable	Standard - Upgradeable
Supports Coach to Player	YES	Upgradeable	Upgradeable
Supports LoudMouth	YES	Upgradeable	Upgradeable
Group Call	YES	Upgradeable	Upgradeable
Upgradable to the X12	All Features Included	YES	YES

# HIDDEN YARDS: MAKE SPECIAL TEAMS SPECIAL

## THE BAD SNAP DRILL



Chris Fore  
Veteran Coach  
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[eightlaces.org](#)  
[Coach Tube](#)



Have you had that dreaded bad snap yet? You know the one. Things aren't going well already.

One of those nights. And then you have to punt again. And you're on the 14 coming out of your own end zone. And then it happens: bad snap!

Or, it's a tight game. Every possession is so critical. Tied 28-28 with 6:30 to go. fourth and 8 from your own 38. Gotta punt. And the snap hits the ground 2 yards in front of the punter, then skips off his shins.

Years ago, when we faced one of these moments, I was so ticked at my long snapper. I chewed in to him a bit. And I chewed in to my punter a bit for simply falling on it, when he had time to pick it up and get rid of it. He said

something to me that I'll never forget, and was the basis for this drill that I've used ever since.

"Coach, I've never practiced that before, I don't even know if I could do it."

I was making a coaching mistake by asking a kid to do something that he's never done before. And I preached to the kids that we wouldn't ask them to do something in a game that we had not practiced before. See photos below for a little guidance.

Step 1 - Get a football or two.

Step 2 - Get on a line to do this drill. Either a sideline or a yard line. You've got to do this drill on a line so that the punter will focus on getting back on his path. I've run the shield punt since 2002; for us it is critical to stay very straight behind the center. If the snap takes you off center, you must get back on that line as quickly as possible. It is like



this for most punt formations.

Step 3 - The coach lines up about 8 or 9 yards away from the punter. The coach lines up on the same line that the punter is on.

Step 4 - The coach simulates the snap by "underhand snapping" the ball toward the punter. This means that you are throwing the ball from your hip, with a spiral, to simulate the snap. A coach once asked why I don't simply snap the ball poorly toward the punter for this drill. The reason is that I really want to be able to see him clearly, to help direct him, teach him, etc.

Step 5 - Snap the ball about 30 times per day with this drill. This year, my kicker just kicks. He is a soccer player who was recruited by our head coach right from his history class after our head coach watched him do corner kicks in soccer. So, he has no other positional responsibilities during practice. That is a great thing for me as the special teams coordinator. We can work on whatever I deem necessary during practice.

Step 6 - Direct the snaps all over the place. You just never know where that ball might come out. So, I will snap it directly to him, just where we want the snap. I'll snap it high, low, to the left, to the right, into the ground, and on and on. I try to never snap the ball to the same place two times in a row. Sure enough, we had a bad snap on just the third punt of this rookie's football career. And he did a dynamite job. He got the kick off, and was then wiped out by the opponent.

*If this is helpful information to you, or if you are looking for a tremendous Special Teams resource, check out my latest [Special Teams product](#). It's called [HIDDEN YARDS: Make Special Teams Special](#).*

**"I was making a coaching mistake by asking a kid to do something that he's never done before. And I preached to the kids that we wouldn't ask them to do something in a game that we had not practiced before."**

# DEFENSIVE CULTURE & FUNDAMENTALS

## NICKEL PRESSURE PACKAGE



PJ Gibbs  
 East Lee County HS-Florida  
 Head Coach & Recruiting  
 Coordinator  
 Author: [Book Available Here](#)  
[CoachTube Course Here](#)  
[@coachPJGibbs](#)

The Nickel Pressure Package for our defense started to evolve because

of the personnel we have and the lack of depth on the defensive line. We met as a coaching staff and tried to come up with ways that we can get our best 11 players on the field, while being able to bring pressure to confuse the offense. We met with numerous college coaching staffs, and the main theme that we took from talking with them was we need to have similarities with our calls in the package. We are not going to use the Nickel as our base defense, but I will go over how to line up in the 2-4-5 to build the foundation for your defense. While the first diagram (Figure 1) shows how we are going to line up to 10 personnel, you and your program must decide what coverages you want to run, if you are going to use this as your base front.



Figure 1  
 In the diagram above, we would have our two DTs, who are labeled as "DE" because they will be that type of player, line up in 2-techniques, and move depending

on tendencies you get from your film breakdown. The Anchor and Jack will be our more athletic pass rushers, who can also drop into coverage if we need them to do so in situations. Generally, we would want to put our Anchor to the field because he will be a longer, athletic player, and our Jack to the boundary because he is more of an OLB or Strong Safety player. Our Inside Linebackers are in 30-alignments and our Viper will go to the passing strength, or in this case, the side of the back (if the personnel is balanced). We would tend to play Palms to the side of the Viper and some type of trap, invert, or just man coverage away depending on the passing combinations. As stated before, we will not be running this as our base, but if your program wanted to take a look at it, this would be how our team lines up.

The next Diagram (Figure 2) will look at how we would line up to 11 personnel in our Nickel Front. If we were to run it out of a base look, we may use different personnel, as you will see in the diagram.



Figure 2  
 With our pressure packages, we will change personnel depending on what we see in our film study. In this case, we have the Viper up on the TE, our two DL (again in 2-technique), and our Jack to the two-man surface. We brought in our Rover because (in this case) we want some more speed on the field. Our two interior DL will move depending on what stunt is called, or what front that we will stem to against this formation. The same coverage rules apply as before, but we will more than likely play man-to-man to the TE side in this case.

Adding that Safety to run fit to the TE side will help tremendously against any gap/zone scheme that we would see during the course of the game.

In the next progression of the Nickel Pressure Package, we will install our Weather Pressures. One of the main coaching points that we found in meeting with college coaches, is to organize your pressures or line movements into families, to help your players understand the calls that you are making during the game. Now, you could take these and run them out of 2-, 3-, or 4-downs, depending on your personnel. The 1st Diagram (Figure 3) in the package will be our RAIN pressure. We will run this out of our 2-4-5 and it will be a simulated pressure because we are showing six rushers and only bringing four. The Coaching points here are you must show overload pressure to the weak side to make the offense see and adjust to the overload. This pressure is good against the run or the pass with little coverage variations, even if you get motion to trips, or they line up in 3x1 open. The Coaching point for the Will (linebacker), is that he has #3 Vertical/Hole and B Gap on run to the weak side. The Will needs to know (against any 3x1 formation) that if there is speed at #3, he needs to not hold the look over the center for that long, because he needs to carry #3 vertical. We are playing trap coverage away from the overload look and a combination of either Tampa 2 or 2 Read, depending on the tendency of the team that we are facing. In this pressure, the End is going to go 1st with the Jack wrapping to the opposite A gap. The Mike will read run and if #2 is vertical or across he needs to help carry him, if #2 goes out let him go because he is running into the trap corner. The Anchor and the DE will be taking a wide rush to get the QB to step up with pressure. The Viper will have the hook/curl to his side. If he is into the boundary, he doesn't to get width. If he is to the field, he will need to get width and collision #2 as he drops and settles up, a great pressure against run or pass.



Figure 3  
 The Next pressure in our Weather Family is our boundary corner blitz which we call Thunder (Figure 4). The again will be run out of our 2-4-5 and is a great pressure against the run into the boundary or the team that likes to make the easier throw into the boundary.

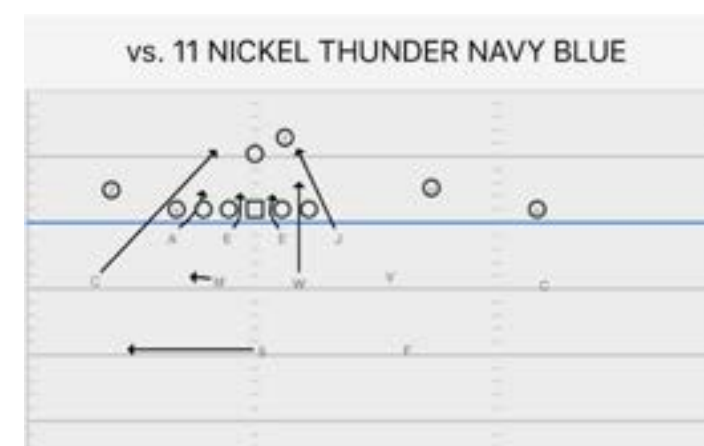


Figure 4  
 In the above diagram, we are in 4-down with our two DEs inside, our Anchor to boundary, and Jack to the field. This is a 6-man pressure, and as aforementioned, is great against boundary run or boundary pass, and could really help if you are seeing sprint out to the field, as well. The secondary will try and hold a Tampa 2 look as much as possible and move on the snap. The DE will pinch the A-gaps, the Anchor will slant into the C-gap, the boundary corner will come with his aiming point being the outside leg of the deepest back. The Mike will check the B-gap, and then get to the hitch/slant area, and the Boundary Safety will get to the boundary 1/2. The Jack will widen and get the tackle to widen with him, because the Will is blitzing in the



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B-gap to the field. We will play Palms or Tampa 2 to the field, to take away any hot throws and the Viper has #3 control if we get motion to trips. Again, this pressure is excellent against run or pass into the boundary.

Shifting families, we know we will get into our specific name families to attack the high/low crossing routes. This pressure we call Nickel Rat (Figure 5) because you are going to have a hole player to help with the crossing route, and you are going to send pressure to the man protection side. Again, this is going to be out of 2-4-5 and a simulated pressure for us showing 5 and only rushing 4. In this pressure, your 1st coaching point is finding out what formation they like to run the crosser out of and determining how can you attack it.

The diagram below is lined up to 10 personnel. In this case, we would find where the back was and attack that side with our pressure. You need to practice both sides, because if you are facing a team where the back will shift, you always want the pressure coming to back. We will align our two DL in a 0-technique and 4-technique, to the Defensive Left. The Right inside LB will line up in a 3 or 4i, depending on what you prefer them to do in this case. Our Viper will be in a wide 5-technique on the left and our Jack will be in a wide 5-technique on the Defensive right side. Our 2nd ILB will be lined up in a 10 and going on the snap.

In this diagram, the Viper will become the Rat defender—you need to coach them up on landmarks and where they need to be in replacing the blitzing inside backer. They need to let the under route go to either side and look for the deeper over route, thus allowing the QB to see the middle appear vacant by the blitzing inside linebacker. To the side of the back, the Jack will step to tackle to make him commit. This allows the opening for the inside backer up on the line and the blitzing back coming from depth. You can also use the Jack as a spy for the QB if you are facing a mobile player, during the season. The Nose will slant away from the back, hoping to occupy the center, and not allow him to help to the pressure side. If the back were to shift from our right

to our left, we need to check the pressure to the side of the back and the RAT defender will change away from the pressure side. These are all coaching points and discussion you should have during your install and your walk-through periods, to make sure that your defense is comprehending what you want them to execute during practice and the game. It is also imperative that you discuss landmarks with all your personnel, as you want to make sure that everyone is on the same page, as to where they need to be in any situation that may arise during the game.

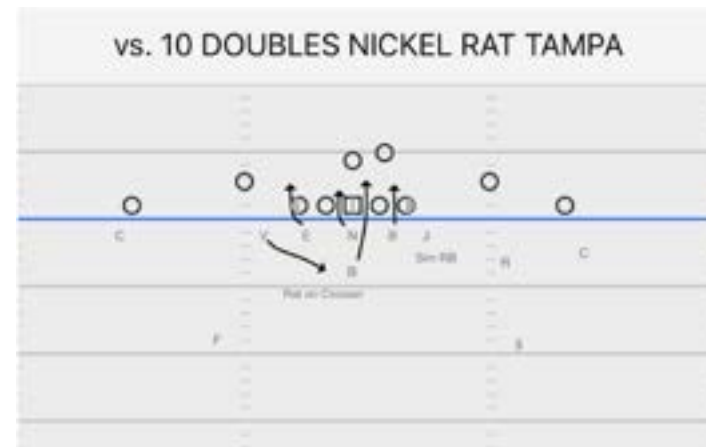


Figure 5  
As a defense, you can easily implement any part of these pressures from a 2-, 3-, or 4-down look, as defense find what will help you be successful and what is right for your players in order to play at a high level.

**“The Nickel Pressure Package for our defense started to evolve because of the personnel we have and the lack of depth on the defensive line.”**

# DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE

## COVER 5 PART II



Kevin Swift  
Gold Beach HS - OR  
Athletic Director  
[@kdawgswift](#)  
[Free Materials Here](#)

This issue I return to our discussion or article on Cover 5 within our Gold Beach defensive system. In part I of Cover 5 I explained the why and how we played this "combo" coverage. For a quick review for any new readers: Cover 5 is a hash defensive call for us. We like it because Oregon is a NFHS state, so our hashes are wide. The tight boundary side, we will play man. The wide side or field side we will play Cover 2.

### Review of Basic Diagrams



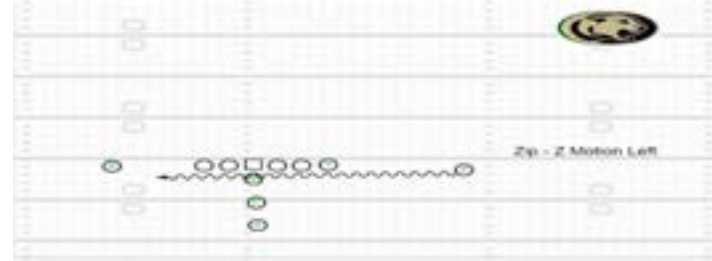
40 Front & Cover 5 vs 2 x 2 No TE - 45



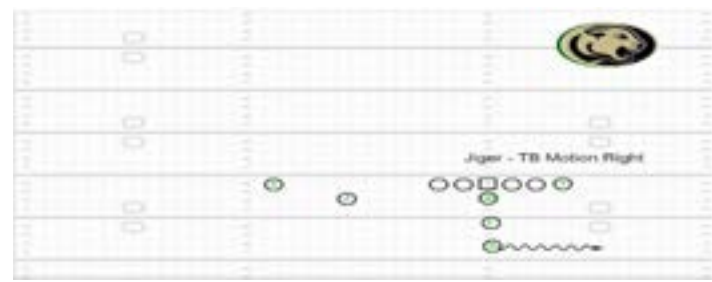
50 Front Cover 5 vs 2 x 1 Twin - 55

### Rules for Motion:

This issue we will look at our motion rules and checks in Cover 5. Like most Defensive Coordinators, we prefer not to checkout of a defensive call we have made. We feel Cover 5 allows this to a large degree. Motion by the offense that creates any 2x1 or 2x2 formation creates absolutely no problem for us and we would stay in our Cover 5 call.

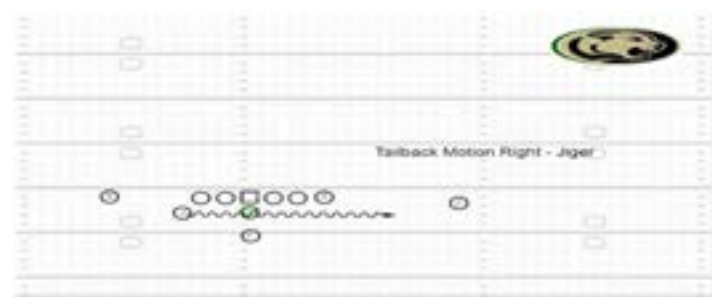


Motion to 2 x 1 into Boundary we are okay



Motion to 2 x 2 with Tailback to Boundary we are okay

Motion to a 3x1 to the field also causes no issues for us, as long as the Trips is to the FIELD.



Motion to Trips to Field we are okay

If they choose to motion or line up with Trips into the Boundary we are checking out of Cover 5 to Cover 3.



### Motion to Trips into the Boundary We MUST checkout of Cover 5

While many would argue we could stay in it because it would be easy playing man in these tight spaces, we check into Cover 3. Our reasoning is that while it's a small space it's also easy for offense to use picks in this tight space and because of this we would check to Cover 3.

### Cover 5 - Variations or Tags:

Cover 5 - Man - This tag allows us to play a very aggressive Cover 2 style man underneath to the field, while playing our loose or conservative man to the Boundary.



I really like this when we have offense in an obvious passing situation. A lot of the time we will combine this with some kind of blitz utilizing our 2 inside backers if we get #3 in the backfield. Here is an example of 45 TeA Blitz Man. I'll share our Blitz + Stunt packages in a future article but want to share this quickly in this article.



### 45 TeA Blitz Man

Cover 5 - Anchor - Our other variation or Tag is 45 Anchor. This moves up our Sam Backer onto the LOS in 7 alignment on TE lined up in traditional alignment. Anchor tells Sam Backer and Stud to deny the TE release into a pass route. This helps coverage behind him by eliminating a possible pass receiver. However, over the years this has proven to be an effective run stopping alignment and front. The

diagrams below are examples of 45 Anchor. 45 Anchor can be tagged with "Man".



45 Anchor with TE to Field



45 Anchor with TE to Boundary

Again, this is nothing new or breakthrough in terms of today's defensive schemes. It is something that has been very successful for us here on the Oregon Coast.

**"Cover 5 is a hash defensive call for us. We like it because Oregon is a NFHS state, so our hashes are wide. The tight boundary side, we will play man. The wide side or field side we will play Cover 2."**

# OFFENSIVE DRILLS

## OFFENSIVE DRILL: SQUARE CUT DRILL



Lee Weber, CSCS  
Rose Hill HS - KS  
Head Football Coach  
[Coaching Resources](#)  
[Children's Book: Coach Dad](#)  
[@coachlaw71](#)

POSITION: Quarterbacks and Receivers

FOCUS: High Tempo  
Repetitions of Square Cut

Routes

### DRILL SET-UP, LANDMARKS, & ROTATION:

This drill is set up using a simple 10 yard square using trash buckets. We use buckets instead of cones to keep our receivers from rounding off the route with too much lean. One line of receivers is located at the right hand corner of the drill for the first iteration and then moves to the left hand side when we want to transition the drill.

Vitaly important to the flow of the drill is to have the first receiver step up to the start cone and all receivers in line stand 5 yards behind that start cone to keep the area clear and to avoid unnecessary collisions. I recommend setting a 5th cone 5 yards behind your start cone as a visual reference.

This drill will require two coaches or quarterbacks who are located as shown on Diagram 1. Their position would then switch when the receivers switch to the other side.

Important notes, the receivers will be catching the ball then tossing it aside as they continue on in the drill so you may seek to have a manager or two located on the periphery of the drill to shag balls and feed them to your quarterbacks.

### COACHING POINTS:

This drill is designed to get you multiple and high tempo reps at square cut routes. We especially like to run a lot of 10 yard digs and 10 yard outs within our offense. The distance of the route can be varied depending on what your route concepts if you wanted to work 5 yard speed outs for example.

We want our receivers to burst out of their stance and sell a go route on their 10 yard stem. As they get to the cone, we want them to lower their hips, buzz their feet into their cut, and push off their outside foot to execute a quick square cut to the left (Diagram 1.)

As they make the cut, the quarterback should throw the ball. We want that ball delivered quickly and on a dime to that spot where they are taking their first 1-2 steps out of that cut. We feel as though that is the point if the route is run correctly that they are most open and also the hardest throw to execute cleanly.

Now, in speaking about a square cut route, I believe that as the route continues in space in a dig or an out, it becomes an easier throw to time up and catch if the receiver is wide open. However, in the timing of the route, the receiver may not be open in that space so that is why we drill down on throwing and catching the ball immediately out of the square cut. That is where we feel like we know that receiver should be open and if he is not, then our receiver can easily continue the route, and our quarterbacks can hitch up and adjust to throw the route later if they read the coverage correctly.

Now, continuing with the drill, after the receiver catches the ball, they soft toss the ball to the 2nd quarterback or coach and continue around the square to turn and execute another 10 yard square cut route. The second quarterback or coach again throws the ball to the receiver out of their cut. After completing the catch, the receiver then tosses the ball aside to a manager or coach to finish the drill and returns to the line.

### VARIATIONS

We have also used this drill to run angle cut routes like posts and corners. It is not as clean as the square cut drill so be sure to allow more time and space.

You could work this drill in a rectangle to work on running the route in more space and completing the ball after the square cut has been executed and the receiver is working to green grass instead of directly out of his cut.

You could incorporate obstacles such as large pop-ups or managers or players waiting to rotate with bags along the horizontal axis of the drill to have your players work on catching the ball with distraction or disruption. However, I would not do this until you have mastered the drill without disruption first.

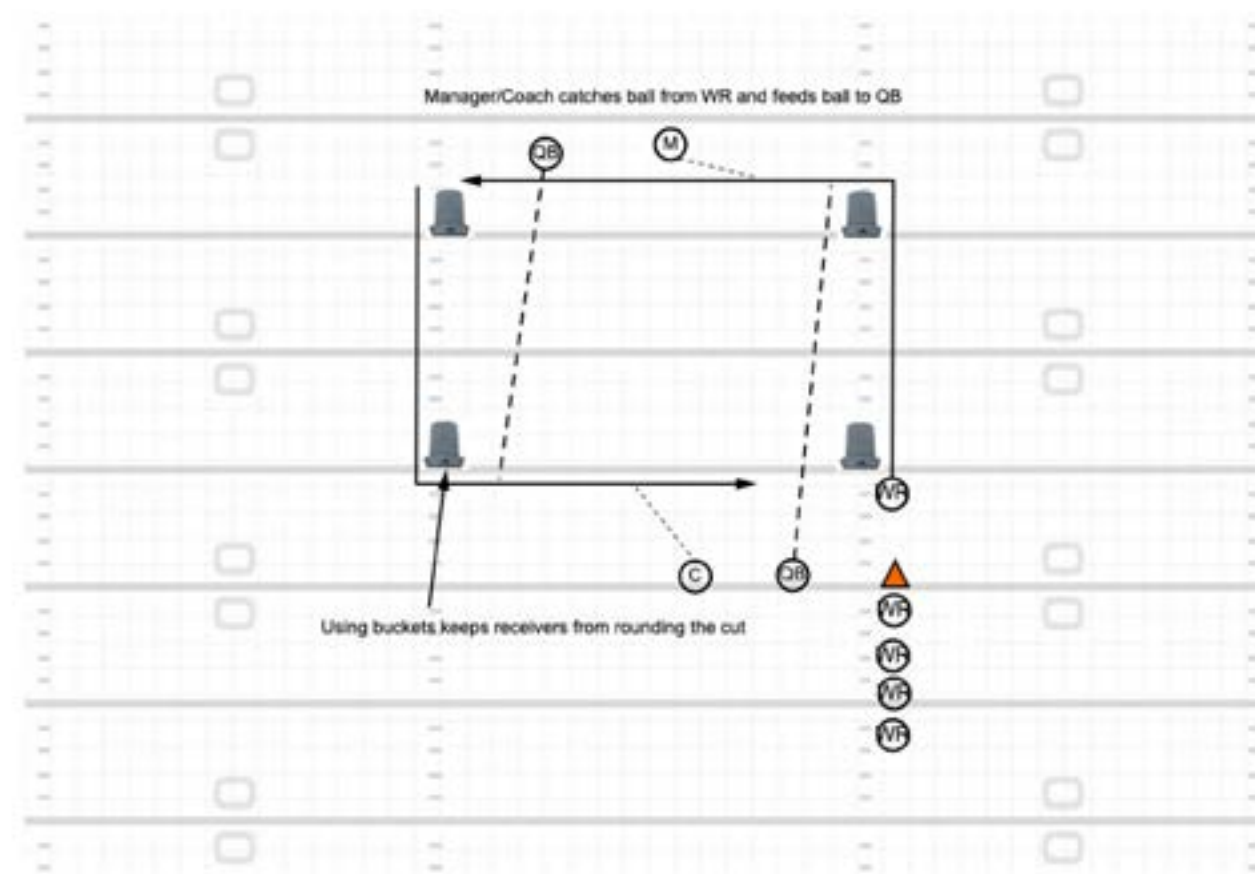


Diagram 1: Square Cut Drill Set Up





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# PRACTICAL ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

## MEAL PLANNING FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE



Deerick Smith, CSCS  
Southside Charter HS, AR  
Strength & Conditioning/  
Assistant Athletic Director  
[Smith Performance](#)  
[@coachdeesmith](#)

While most of this magazine is geared towards coaches, I wanted to share something that can be taken and passed along to players. How many times as coaches have, we heard the words "Coach I'm not feeling great today" at our afternoon training session only to find out said athlete has had a soda and a handful of skittles throughout the ENTIRE day. I complained about this for years myself before I decided to do something to help our athletes. One of the best things we have done (we haven't this year due to covid) was teaching our athletes how to meal prep. I simply would meet the athletes interested at a grocer in our community and we would have menus we would gather ingredients for and then the athletes could prep them at home. Yes I completely understand many athletes do not have the resources to be able to go to the store and then go home

and prep their meals, I've coached in these situations too, however many can they just simply don't. An athlete can easily prep a week's worth of breakfast, snacks and lunch for \$50 or less. Many of our athletes spend this on a weekend meal and other activities out with friends. While covid has put a stop to us actually meeting and shopping together my next plan is to put out a weekly menu titled "what coach is eating this week" with all the different foods listed for them to go and purchase them their selves. Nearly all athletes understand the importance of protein with regards to building muscle but nearly all athletes do not get enough. Athletes who are training hard and playing multiple sports as many of ours do need upwards of 2 grams of protein per kilogram of bodyweight. Just as if not more important than protein for development are carbohydrates. While they are often villainized by the media and modern diet trends nothing can do more to increase an athlete's performance in a training session that utilizing carbohydrates. Athletes should be taking in 4-8 grams of carbohydrate per kilogram of bodyweight, I would recommend higher or being on the upper end for the multi-sport athlete. Below are some sample breakfast/lunch options and a master grocery list you can pass off and share with your athletes. Happy eating friends.

- Quick Breakfast Options for the picky eater  
Kodiak Cake Waffles with Peanut Butter and Honey  
Overnight Oats  
Mighty Muffins  
Kodiak Cake Pancakes in a cup  
Pre Made Breakfast Burritos (Eggs, Sausage, Cheese, Potato)

Master shopping list

Carbohydrate	Protein	Vegetable	Snack
Sweet Potato Fries	Chicken Breast	Asparagus	Greek Yogurt
Jasmine Rice	Chicken Thighs	Peppers	Cottage Cheese
Brown Rice	Tukey Bacon	Broccoli	Sardines
Baked Potato	Ground Beef	Cauliflower	Pecans,Almonds,Pistachio
Mini Potato's	Turkey	Squash	Rice Cakes
Quinoa	Fish-not fried	Carrots	Granola Bars
Elbow Macaroni	Deer		Protein Bars
Spaghetti noodles	Lean Steaks		Dark Chocolate
Oatmeal	Roast		Deer/beef Jerky
Frozen Breakfast Potato's	Eggs		Whole wheat waffles
Assorted Fruits	Milk		Peanut Butter
			Avocado Toast
			PB&J on Whole wheat

Breakfast scrambles (Scrambled eggs, bacon, peppers, cheese, hashbrowns)

#### Pre Training Options

Rice Cakes with Peanut Butter and Honey  
Grits  
Granola bar with fruit juice  
Greek Yogurt with Honey

#### Breakfast

DON'T tell me you can't gain weight if you do not eat breakfast.

DON'T tell me you feel tired, sick etc. if you do not eat breakfast, OUT EAT THE

#### COMPETITION

DON'T say you want to be your best if you do not make breakfast a priority

#### Option 1

Baked Breakfast muffins

Ingredients: Eggs, Spinach, Peppers, Mushrooms, Cheese, Frozen Potatoes Obrien and

Choose one of the following if attempting to lose weight: Turkey bacon, Chicken apple sausage, ground turkey, if attempting to lose weight ½ cup cheese for the week.

Choose one of the following if attempting to gain weight: lean ground beef, fajita steak, Bacon, if attempting to gain weight 1 cup cheese for the week. You will also eat two peanut butter waffles with this.

Directions: Mix 10 eggs and all the ingredients in a bowl and then pour them into a muffin style baking pan, if the pan isn't deep you will eat two per day if it is deep you will eat one per day. COOK meat before placing in bowl or you will get sick I have done this many times.

#### Option 2

Breakfast Burritos

Ingredients: Large wheat tortillas, eggs, spinach, peppers, cheese and Bacon

Directions: place all ingredients into large bowl and mix, cook them all together in a skillet and place into burrito for each day. If attempting to gain weight you will also eat two peanut butter waffles with this.

#### Lunch Options

Taco Box w buffalo cauliflower

Ingredients needed: 1 pack taco seasoning, 1 large pack of ground beef 90/10 above if possible, 1 can jalapeno peppers, Jasmine Rice (can buy the premade), three bags frozen cauliflower, Buffalo seasoning, olive oil, shredded cheese.

Directions: Cook the ground beef in a large skillet with taco seasoning and jalapeno peppers, cook enough jasmine rice for 7.5 cups of jasmine rice once finished, 1.5 cups cooked per lunch, put cauliflower on a large baking sheet, mix with buffalo sauce, olive oil, salt and pepper and sprinkle with cheese, bake in oven on 400 until crispy.

Portions: 1 ½ cups of ground beef, 1 ½ cups of rice, 2 cups buffalo cauliflower per meal.

#### Lunch Roast

Ingredients: Two boxes Beef bone broth, 1 Bag of carrots, 1 bag of mini potatoes, 1 beef roast, onions, peppers, mushrooms.

Directions: Brown the beef roast and place all ingredients in large crock pot, let cook for 4-6 hours on high.

Portions: 3 cups of roast per meal males, two cups roast per meal females.

#### Snack ideas

Two rice cakes with peanut butter and banana

Peanut Butter Sandwich on wheat with honey

Peanut Butter Waffles

Beef Jerky and two rice cakes

Yogurt with Peanut Butter Sandwich

Cottage Cheese flavored

Drinkable yogurt and rice cakes

These are sample options, if you do not like either of these choose from options on the master list to create your own.



# OFFENSIVE RESOURCES

## VIRTUAL WEEKEND COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES



**Brent Morrison**  
Westerville Central HS-Ohio  
Head Football Coach  
[@BrentMo03800724](#)

One of the positives we have seen come out of the pandemic is the ability to use technology to make coaching more efficient. Our staff has been working remotely on the weekends for years, so we were very prepared when things got shut down and

we were allowed limited contact with our players over the last year.

Try to imagine one of those Saturday workouts after your Friday night game. The players are walking around like zombies banged up from the game the night before. Not to mention, they hung out after the game and got some food and socialized and got to bed way too late. Many of the kids are in the training room getting treatment because they are unable to lift. Then you move into the film sessions. Half of your coaching staff has to leave to go coach the JV game. Then you are watching film and you realize that kids are missing for the ACT, SAT, college visits, etc. Next thing you know you are showing film to a room full of players that really didn't play in the game or are so exhausted they can't focus.

This is a familiar scene for most high school programs and many of you are saying, the expectation needs to be set and players will meet it. In our program we decided this is not a battle worth fighting, because we could do it more efficiently and also allow our players some freedom on the weekends. Football coaches are becoming so demanding of player's time that it eliminates some high school student's ability to play the sport. As we see player numbers decline across the country, one of the biggest complaints I have heard is the amount of time that football requires. In our school district the weekend transportation situation is difficult for many students, so eliminating the need for them to be here on Saturday eases a lot of the burden on

them and their families.

Health benefits are another reason for allowing your players to sleep in after competition. According to the Sleep Foundation's study of Stanford Basketball players that received proper sleep and recovery time increased their shooting percentage by 10%. The Sleep Foundations study also found a lack of recovery sleep has been associated with inhibited ability. In a study of male team-sport athletes who were sleep-deprived they experienced:

- Decreased accuracy
- Quicker exhaustion
- Decreased reaction time
- Difficulty learning and decision making
- Risk for injury.
- Risk for illness or immunosuppression

I hear high school coaches talk all the time about "following the science" when they create their practice plans or decide how their program will be run. Above is plenty of science that supports letting your players sleep in after their competition.

In addition to the players, your staff is just as important in this decision. I never want coaching football on my staff to stand in

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the way of your family time. With technology, there is no reason we need to sit down in the same room to gameplan. Also, we all know that a game plan is a fluid thing and has additions and subtractions through the week, so don't force your staff to come up with the entire thing in a Sunday morning staff meeting.

Our Saturday consists of an at-home workout. We provide 2 options, one if you have access to the weight room and one if you don't. Players complete the workout and then the results are recorded into an app. The coaches send every player a grade sheet by 9am and they have 24 hours to watch the film with the grade sheet and then contact their position coach. The coaches normally give them an assignment within the grade sheet to be completed. Most things being corrected in film are based on an individual's performance on a particular play and not requiring whole group film instruction. We do a film session on Monday and Tuesday where we talk about the upcoming opponent or if there is something from the previous game that needs to be addressed. Our training room is open for those players that need treatment on Saturday.

Film work duties are split up among the staff. One of our freshman assistant coaches inputs all the information from our game film. The OC inputs the formations and plays the opposing defense is facing. The WR coach is responsible for identifying coverages. The OL coach inputs fronts and blitzes. All of this needs to be completed by 4pm on Saturday.

For game planning purposes we try to do as much work outside the season as possible to prepare for certain fronts, coverages, and scenarios. We have a menu that we can pull from based on what we see on film. We also use a google doc that we all have access to and begin inputting ideas of what we would like to see in the game plan. 4pm Sunday is the deadline to input suggestions on the sheet. Then the OC starts to trim and build the game plan with the information he has been given.

While all of this is done virtually our coaches and their families understand that there will be a lot of texting and possibly phone calls over the weekend to work through preparation. Sunday night on certain occasions we will have video conferences just to make sure everyone is on the same page. This is typically if we have a new concept we are installing or if we are facing an opponent that does something drastically different.

The best piece of advice I can give in this transition would be to establish clear roles and timelines for everyone. I also find it valuable to leave the door open for those that want to do more. I have two aspiring coordinators on staff and they are very hands-on and ask a lot of questions about the process.

**“Health benefits are another reason for allowing your players to sleep in after competition. According to the Sleep Foundation’s study of Stanford Basketball players that received proper sleep and recovery time increased their shooting percentage by 10%. The Sleep Foundations study also found a lack of recovery sleep has been associated with inhibited ability. In a study of male team-sport athletes who were sleep-deprived they experienced:**

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# NO HUDDLE NO MERCY

## GAMEDAY PLAYCALLING ORGANIZATION



Shawn Liotta, Head Coach  
Burrell High School-PA  
[Coach Tube](#)  
[@ShawnLiotta](#)  
Author: [No Huddle No Mercy](#)

In setting up your game day coaching staff operation it is important to have defined roles and goals that you wish to accomplish. Each individual staff strength and weaknesses are different, therefore you will organize your sideline and pressbox personnel to best suit your individual program. I will provide for you some guidance and suggestions on how to create a very streamlined process that will allow you to push the tempo on game day.

### Where is the Primary Play-Caller Located?

If you really want to “Play Fast” your play caller must be located on the field. I know coaches will argue about the benefits of the play caller being in the box to have a better view of the defense, however if you are really interested in fast tempo he must be on the sideline. Nothing happens quicker than a play call or signal coming directly from the play caller immediately following the play on the sideline. There is no communication that has to occur on a headset being relayed from up top and then relayed onto the field by another coach, and no change of something being “lost in translation”. If you choose to have your play caller in the booth that obviously can be done but it just will not happen as fast in my opinion.

### Staff Responsibility on Game Day

Here is a quick breakdown of how you can organize an average staff at a small to medium sized school on gameday.

Play Caller = On the Field, responsible for coordination and playcalling

OL Coach= On the Field will chart the interior box, relay field zone to play caller, who made tackle

RB Coach= On the Field, Personnel Substitutions, Relay hash to play caller, Responsible for Interior LB Pressure Chart

WR Coach= On the Field, Personnel Substitutions, Responsible for Secondary to our bench

IWR Coach= In the Press Box, Down and Distance to Playcaller, Responsible for Secondary to the side away from our sideline.

### Communication with the Play-Caller

As a play caller trying to go fast I want as little interaction with the staff while I am calling plays as possible. It can be very difficult to think with a million voices in your head making suggestions, and giving you useless information or even useful information. There is information that I like to receive each play and that is the hash, down and distance, and yard line. Other than that unless I ask for something as a play caller I do not want other communication as the play is being called.

### In-Game Adjustments

Each and every game despite your work in creating an extensive well thought out game plan, there will be times that you are forced to make in-game adjustments. It is important that once you have identified an issue you work to “fix” the problem as quickly as possible. You can not rely on waiting until you get to halftime to make these adjustments or you will quickly find out the game is over by halftime. Between series is when as a play caller I will review my play call sheet and confer with our offensive coaches on what the defense is doing against our offense. If you have sideline replay video available to you this is a great opportunity to review this with your players. If your school does not have this tool, or if you are at a small school where most of your offensive players are also playing on defense this will be limited to mostly your staff reviewing the video.

Here are a few very specific things to look for during the first half of the game

1. Are there any defensive alignment adjustments to our base formations= Are they who we thought they were?

2. What has been there plan for pressure/ coverage behind it

3. Are they making “auto-checks” to our formations when faced with extreme tempo or our shift packages

4. Have we slowed their charge down with our “Freeze Tempo” to take advantage of them starting to try and time up the snap count

5. Are we wearing them down in the second quarter. Can we start to see our tempo affecting their ability to get lined up quickly.

6. Who is making the tackle. A good way to track this is to simply have one of your assistants write down the number of who has made the tackle each play. If we are seeing that the same player is consistently making the tackle, we may need to make some sort of adjustment to how or who we have assigned to block this player.

7. What is not good for us today. Every single play design we have into the gameplan will not be a good fit for how the defense has chosen to attack us. Quickly recognize this and eliminate these plays from the game plan. It is as simple as crossing them off of your game plan sheet as a play-caller.

### Halftime Adjustments

Absolutely the most over-rated area of football. Many fans think that teams go into halftime and make all sorts of adjustments and that is simply not the case. There may be a situation where we get to the half and realize that we need to run a particular play more frequently, or that we are mis-reading an adjustable route, or blocking a front in- correctly. What we do not do is create new play concepts at half-time that we will run in the second half. This is no different than drawing plays up in the dirt and will not be successful for your team as you will have not had any time to practice and refine these concepts. Stay with your plan in the second half, tweak as needed to best attack the defense, and more importantly use your “tools” in the toolbox that you have practiced all week long to attack in the second half. Have confidence in your plan of attack and all of the hard work

that your kids have put in all week and you will enjoy great results. The last thing that you want to do as a coaching staff is to get into the half and start scrapping your entire plan or trying to run an “offense of the week”. This will not work and your players will lose all confidence in your coaching staff. If you believe, then they will believe that you will win the football game- you must exude confidence.

**Coach Liotta has recently introduced an intensive 15 hour clinic seminar on his record setting passing game that combines principles of the Air Raid Offense and the Run and Shoot at the high school level. Coach Liotta has designed this course in conjunction with his soon to be released book on the passing game, creating a true interactive experience. To register for this seminar visit <https://nohuddlenomercy.com/487-2/>**



# DEFENSIVE LINE

## BUILDING UP TO STANCE AND START DRILLS



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

In the past, I have begun with putting my defensive linemen into a right or left handed stance and holding the position for me to correct before moving on to the first steps with a punch. What I do now is work the actual hand punch/placement and hip explosion first before moving on to the stance. That way, when they are ready to work getting into a good three point stance, they have the other skills ready to use with their first initial steps and punch out of their stance. I have provided two drills that I use when preparing my defensive linemen to get into proper stances. I use this for both my 7th grade linemen as well as my varsity line when we are in the spring and summer practice sessions or need work on the initial punch and hip explosion that are very important when coming out of their stances.

Drill 1: Punch from a 2-point stance.

Drill Set-Up:

This can be done with pads, in cloth with hitting dummies, or with a sled.

Pair up players in groups of two.

One player will be holding a hitting dummy or will stand with his hands at his sides if he is in pads.

The other player on defense will be in an athletic position with his hands ready to strike.

If you are working this drill with head up techniques (0,2,4,6), players will need to mirror each other.

If you are working this drill with shaded techniques (shade, 3, 5, 9), players will need to shade their partner either to the left or to the right.

Drill Progression:

On the coach's command, the defensive lineman will punch the lineman across from them in either the chest plate if they are working head up positions or on the v of neck and the bicep (the player getting punched can hold their outside forearm up if you are doing the drill without pads as indicated in the diagram below).

They will need to hold the position until the coach tells them to reset for the next rep.

Coaching Points:

Physical punch

Thumbs up

Full extension of the arms

Athletic stance. Not standing straight up.



Head up Techniques

Shaded Techniques

Drill 2: 6-Point Explosion:

Drill Set Up:

This drill can be done in pads, in cloth versus a dummy bag, or against a sled or surface that allows you to punch.

Put players into groups of two.

One will hold a bag while the other is in a six point stance with their hands, knees, and feet on the ground (diagram below) facing the player holding the bag.

You can shade players if you work your defensive linemen from shaded techniques.

Drill Progression:

On the coach's command or whistle the defensive lineman will shoot his hips and hands at the player in front of him. He will need to fully extend his hands and hips.

The player will need to hold the position until the coach calls for a reset.

Coaching Points:

Physical hips and hands.

Full hip extension (players can tend to keep their hips back).

Full arm extension.

Hand placement.



Conclusion:

These two drills will help you set up your defensive linemen to be successful coming out of their three point stances. You can run these drills before or after you teach your defensive linemen how to get into a three point stance. I prefer to do it before because it is much more enjoyable for my players to get to do something active instead of static when we begin practice as well as preparing them to take their first two steps and punch off the snap of the ball with good hips and hand placement.



# PROLINE DESIGNS

PROFESSIONAL LEVEL  
QUALITY DESIGNS DECALS



# GUEST WRITER

## SIMPLISTIC SPEED INCORPORATION FOR ANY OFFENSE: 4 SIMPLE WAYS TO CREATE ONE WORD TEMPO



**Keith Fagan**  
NZone Football System  
Master Coach  
All Hallows High School-  
Bronx, NY

*Keith Fagan graduated in 1989 from Western New England University in Springfield, Ma, and played football at the college.*

*After a successful record-setting career, his jersey number 21 was retired, and Keith was inducted into the inaugural class of the Athletics Hall of Fame in 1999 WNU Downes HOF*

*After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, with a Major in Economics, and a Minor in Government, he went to work on Wall Street, trading NASDAQ Stocks for several firms from 1990 -2002.*

*In 2004 Keith started coaching high school football and began coaching at New Rochelle High School, in New Rochelle NY in 2006. While on staff at New Rochelle from 2006 to 2017, the Huguenots had a record of 112-16, winning 9 Sectional Titles, 1 State finalist, and 1 State Championship (2012).*

*In 2018, Keith went to Mamaroneck HS in Mamaroneck NY to become the Offensive Coordinator from 2018-19. While coordinating the Offense at Mamaroneck, the offense set or tied 10 school records, including yards per game, yards passing per game, yards per rush, touchdown passes in a season, and total yards passing in a season.*

*Keith is currently an NZone Football System Master Coach (@nzonefb) and pursuing his NY State Social Studies Teaching Certification in addition to teaching History at All Hallows High School in Bronx, NY.*

In the offense I coordinated, we had four ways to operate a fast tempo by creating one-word plays, which I'll explain here, and can be incorporated into any offense, in 10 minutes!

Let's start by examining that word: tempo. What is tempo? You

often hear that word thrown around by football coaches these days, but no one seems to have defined what it means. To me, tempo means speed of operation; at what pace is your offensive play calling operation. What is the length of time it takes the play caller to make the decision on what play to call, get that communicated to the players, get lined up, call the cadence, and snap the ball? I've watched teams that huddle up play at an extremely fast tempo, and I've watched teams that are "no-huddle" snap the ball with a second or two left on the play clock. So, to me it doesn't matter how you get there, but the length of time it takes from play call to snap; that to me is what tempo means.

The first way is the simplest of all, and that is to repeat the previous play the offense just ran. Perhaps because it was a big play, maybe you saw the defense react a certain way but felt the player in charge of making the decision could have made a better one, and you want to give that player an immediate opportunity at the play. It could be the defense has a structural flaw while lining up to your formation and you want to capitalize on that flaw before the players on the field, or the coach on their sideline, can adjust. That one-word can be anything, but teams usually go with a "repeat" theme, such as Xerox, Copy, Rerun, Echo, etc. That's a simple way to create speed of operation, and just requires all 11 offensive players on the field to hear the communication to repeat the play and the quarterback to ensure all 11 players are set before signaling to the center to snap the ball (usually on the first sound, there is no "check with me" scenario, as we are trying to get the play communicated, set up, and snap the ball as fast as humanly possible).

There are some limitations in that situation however. Defenses do not always react the same way to every play. To me that is the beauty of offensive football; you can literally run the same play over and over, and get a different reaction by the defense every time! So, if you are running the same play after a big gain, you might not yield the same big gain result by repeating the play. The other limitation is being locked into the play. As we know, some plays are better run to the field, some are better run into the boundary, based on the defensive structure you are facing. If the previous play was run to the field from the right hash (to the offense's left), and now the ball is on or near the left hash, you are running the ball into the boundary and potentially a bad look for the offense. You are also limited to the current personnel on the field by simply repeating the previous play.

A second way we go fast is by running the "mirrored" play. This helps with the situation just mentioned, where you want to run the ball to the field, but find yourself on the opposite hash as the previous play. If the previous play was run to the field from the right hash (to the offense's left), and now the ball is on or near the left hash, just call a one-word play to "flip" both formation and play direction. If the previous play had "trips left" and inside zone left, now the offense will be running trips right, and inside zone to the right. That allows both plays to be run to the field, even though the hash marks are different. This can be done by using words such as Mirror, Flip, Opposite, Reverse, etc.

The third way to go fast is to one-word an entire play. Ever watch TV and see a play called on Saturday, or even nowadays on Sunday and think, "Wow, that's a really cool concept, but we don't run anything close to that in our offense, so it would be too expensive to put it in just for that one play." Why? Just teach the entire play as a concept, and then give it a "one-word" name. For example, you are not a 12 personnel team, but you saw a college team run two tight ends, twin flankers to the field, wide zone to the boundary and some sort of RPO to the field utilizing the field TE and twin receivers to run the pass routes of the RPO. Well, rewind the play, copy the scheme down, introduce that one play to the team the first day of the week, and give the entire concept a one-word ("college"). That way, whenever the players hear "college", they know what to do for that one play, which is unlike anything in your offense, but you are able to execute it. And, don't teach the blocking scheme vs. every front. Based on film study, pick one front, teach the blocking scheme to that front, and then it's on the play caller to make sure the defense is in the front you've practiced. The standard belief is that teams can handle about 6 of these "unique one-word plays" in a given week.

The fourth way we go fast is by utilizing plays that could possibly already exist within our offensive structure, but might take 5 or more words to communicate the formation, any motion, the run/pass concept, along with any tags (our rule is no more than four words to communicate any play call). So, we will "one-word" the play, with the ability to create variations of that concept with other one-word plays. One example would be our 20 personnel, power read into boundary, quick motion to the field by the boundary RB for a potential swing screen plus a RPO tag into the boundary, or (from left hash) "Breaking Fast Alabama Comet Glance." That's a total of 5 words, which means 5 signals, which means it takes forever to signal-in, and thereby slowing us down. And, we don't want to be slow! So, during practice, we will install the play using the various segments of the play, having the players line up in Breaking, instructing the OL to run the Alabama (power read) scheme into the boundary, etc. In

essence, having them "read the book" in order to understand the overall play and the concepts within the play call. After running the play a few times, making any coaching points, etc. we will say, "ok, how about we just call that whole play "Breakfast?", or giving them the "Cliff Notes" version of the play. So now, the entire play is given a one word name. However, based on film study, we see our opponent is particularly susceptible to a certain RPO scheme we already have in the offense, but it's not our "Glance" RPO, maybe it's our "Shallow" RPO. What we will do at that point is ask the players to run "Breakfast", but then we will tell just the two boundary receivers to run the "Shallow" RPO not the Glance, and tell the offense, "let's call that 'Lunch'". That way, eight of the eleven players do the same thing whether it's Breakfast or Lunch, which reduces the "expense" for the entire offense. We will continue with the "Meal" theme if we want to tweak any other individual players or tags. We might have Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Dessert, Snack, etc. all based on the same major concept in our offense. It's how you can take a play call such as this one that actually exists in the New England Patriots playbook; "Sprint Right Cluster 66 Utah Ole H Circle" and simply make it "Sprinkle". Or, if you want "Sprint Right Cluster 66 Utah Ole H Bang 8" instead, using the "Ice Cream" theme call that variation "Cone". From the complex comes the simple, and the opportunity to communicate various different adjustments of the same overall concept. All the while possessing the ability to make subtle changes and at the same time maintaining the ability to play fast!

As far as practicing it, we have a 10-minute period where we practice all our one-word calls/plays, we do it every Wednesday, and call it, "One-Word Wednesday." The kids understand the concept we are trying to accomplish, and have embraced the period, often telling me as we come out to the practice field on a Wednesday, "One-Word Wednesday Coach, let's get it!"

Four simple ways to increase the tempo for any offense, practiced 10 minutes per week, and executed on game-day!

**"To me, tempo means speed of operation; at what pace is your offensive play calling operation. What is the length of time it takes the play caller to make the decision on what play to call, get that communicated to the players, get lined up, call the cadence, and snap the ball?"**

# GUEST WRITER

## WHY CONDITIONING MATTERS



**Nate Albaugh**  
Producer Chief Pigskin  
[YouTube Channel](#)

Why not write my first ever article on the subject that most coaches will disagree with me about. If you keep up with the coaching community on Twitter, you will know

that conditioning has become an almost archaic concept. Say something positive about the benefits of conditioning and you will be laughed off the platform.

This concept of no conditioning is led by the popular "Feed the Cats" system by track coach Tony Holler. In the football world, Brad Dixon of Camp Point Central, IL seems to be leading the charge for leaving behind the "Age of Conditioning". In their opinion, increasing max speed is the only priority. By conditioning, you are actually making your guys slower!

Before I push back, I will say this; I know Brad Dixon personally, and he is an excellent coach as well as person. I like him a lot, and if HE wasn't the one leading the charge, I'm not sure I'd be listening at all. But I know Brad is good and knows his stuff, so please keep that in mind as I make my claim.

So why push back at all? After all, doing something because, "We always have" is not the path to progress right? Just over the 20 year span of my personal coaching career I have watched many things change within our game, practices, and coaching norms. So many of these things have been incredibly positive. But it would be silly to assume that ALL change is good change. That would assume that no coach over the last 150 years of the game has known what they were doing.

First we must acknowledge that football is not the same sport as track. While there is, in fact, a great deal of running, it is not the only physical activity involved. Additionally, in track you are limited to 4 events. In a football game, you may need to perform at a peak ability upward of 120 times!

One of my best buddies in the world, Wade DeVries, is the Head Football Coach at Roxanna HS in southern Illinois. He is 100% bought in on "Feed the Cats". We have great discussions about this. "You never run for more than 6 seconds in a football game," he might say. He is right. No one does. However, you will never squat, bench, or clean in a football game either. Does anyone doubt the benefits of strength training? You will never read a book in a game. Is it ridiculous for a coach to consider a

book study or leadership training?

The reality, which you are aware, is that there are many facets to being a great athlete in any sport. In the world of football, I choose to train my athletes in the following areas:

Strength  
Speed  
Position specific skills  
Schematic Understanding  
Morale  
Gas Tank

You may have a different list that you believe in. That's one of the joys of coaching. You get to focus on whatever you choose. I try to make sure that I'm taking time throughout the year to focus on all 6 of these. Some sections of practice or workouts may focus on only 1 or 2 phases at a time. If you believe it is important to be strong, is it ridiculous to spend time focusing on strength training?

Back to the point... the gas tank. Is this real? Is it relevant to football? Are there any other benefits?

Is It Real?

All of my experience as an athlete for 15 years, a coach for 20 years, and a sports fan for 40 years tells me that the gas tank in sports is not only real, but glaringly obvious. I would like to invite you to hop on YouTube and search the 2nd Wilder vs Fury heavyweight fight. In the first round, both fighters are fresh and the flurries of action are many. Now watch the 7th round. Fury's size has begun to wear on Wilder and the action is much slower. Wilder struggles to create the movement necessary to evade Fury's attacks and resorts to tying him up as much as possible. Eventually, the fight is stopped, making Fury the new heavyweight champ of the world. What was the difference? I know you know the difference. Fatigue! The great Vince Lombardi himself famously said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Have you ever witnessed this yourself? Have you ever felt this yourself?

As a former collegiate wrestler, I know this feeling well. There comes a moment for many combat athletes, where fighting off the next points or attack just doesn't feel as important as it once did. Your only concern becomes breathing. This is known as the moment you have "broken." You will watch grown men, weep. This happens because your muscles run out of energy. Your central nervous system loses the ability to keep moving your muscles, and when your body goes, your mind usually follows.

During exercise your cardiac output increases. The heart increases the number of beats per minute and pushes out more blood with each stroke than it would otherwise. With repeated endurance exercise, over time your heart adapts and finds it easier to pump out more blood with each stroke and it does not need to beat as often to send the blood around the body. As a result, the exercise feels easier than it previously did. (Runbritain.com)

Most every athlete that wishes to increase his or her capacity to perform over a long period of time, should be training the heart. There are obviously many ways to increase heart rate. However, running is one of the simplest and safest to execute.

Is It Relevant to Football?

The first argument I may hear is, "Well we are not training fighters/wrestlers." You are correct. But I would argue that a football player is no less a combat athlete than he is a track athlete. Isn't football some sort of brilliant combination of the two?

With this article, my goal is to shed light on why some coaches still choose to condition their athletes through ways as "archaic" as running.

As a coach, I consider the gas tank one of the 6 main pillars of my team's performance. Wouldn't it be lazy of me, not to spend time focused on any 1 of these pillars?

I see the fatigue in my athletes' eyes every Friday night. Each Friday night is a reminder of it's reality. Through the chaos that is a football game, the longest competition of any of the American high school sports, I want my athletes to be as prepared for this trial as possible in every way.

Quick Thoughts

We are 2 platoon:

I acknowledge that a team whose players play on just one side of the ball do not need to be as concerned with conditioning as a team whose players play both ways.

We believe in conditioning but lining up to run sprints is a waste of time. Get it done during practice:

A waste of time? I disagree.

There are 3 ways that humans build bonds in life. Laugh together, bleed together, or suffer together. 15 minutes of misery running sprints will bring my team closer than 50 minutes of book study. (Though I still believe in a good book study) The kids will begin to take pride in the fact that they have just endured a physical and mental trial. Run sprints and now I'm working on pillar #5 and #6 at the same time.

Let's see your butt get on the line and run the sprints:

Hold up now. We can't pretend that we can only coach things

we can personally do. Otherwise, who could coach Patrick Mahomes?

And to be clear, I will still get on the line with the guys, and though I won't beat everyone like I did in my early 30's, I'll still place in the top 30%. I know the agony of fatigue. It is a familiar and welcomed foe to me.

Albaugh must be an archaic bully:

Before you picture me riding on a horse with a lemonade in my left hand and a whip in my right, let me make my claim. I assure you that if you came to our practice and watched our conditioning period, you would see a coach who is tirelessly encouraging and motivating his athletes to persevere.

You can call me 'old school'. I'll take that. There's some old school in me that I think is pretty special.

Albaugh, you are just wrong:

Yes, I acknowledge I could be wrong. I'm not willing to die on this hill, but it will certainly take more than being called archaic to get me off of it.

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