

HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 11

**PARENT
RULES**

defensive
DRILLS

**BUILDING
AN OFFENSIVE LINE
BROTHERHOOD**

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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 or the one who truly makes all this work at Jameysimpson@gmail.com.

Thank you,

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DEFENSIVE LINE: 101

REACH BLOCK DESTRUCTION



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

In the last article I spoke about how to defeat a base block. After my players have learned how to beat a base block, I go on to teach them how to defeat a reach block. With reach blocks, the offensive lineman will try to get to the outside shoulder of the defensive lineman and "hook" them, cutting them off from the rest of the play. In a head up position, the offensive linemen will sometimes pass up the defensive lineman they are lined up against and go to a linebacker and the next offensive lineman will overtake them.

The way I teach my defensive linemen to beat the block is to reach the offensive lineman back by pushing with the outside hand and pulling with the inside hand and pushing the offensive lineman vertically. You have to get them pushing vertical because if they don't and they just keep running and stringing out the play, it gives the running back a chance to think and make a play up the field. Pushing vertical helps the defensive lineman shut down the play and it forces the back to cut back to the opposite direction, giving your help time to get to the play.

I begin teaching my defensive linemen how to beat the block by having them in a prefit position. I will progress from there to a three-point stance once they understand what I want with their hands and hips. The following drills are some of the drills I use to prepare them for this type of block.

Prefit vs. the reach block (Diagram below):

In this drill you will simulate getting reached from a fitted position. To start the drill, the defensive linemen will pair up. One will be designated as the offensive/defensive lineman. On your command the player that is acting as the offensive lineman will begin to reach the defensive lineman. They will work reaching them back, getting vertical, and performing an escape move. This drill can be done with or without pads. I would advise using dummies of some sort if you are doing this without pads

but you can even do the prefit drill as long as your players have a jersey on.

Drill Progression:

Pair up defensive linemen.

One will be the offensive linemen and one will be the defensive lineman.

On the coach's command the offensive lineman will try to reach the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will reach the offensive lineman back and will perform an escape move.

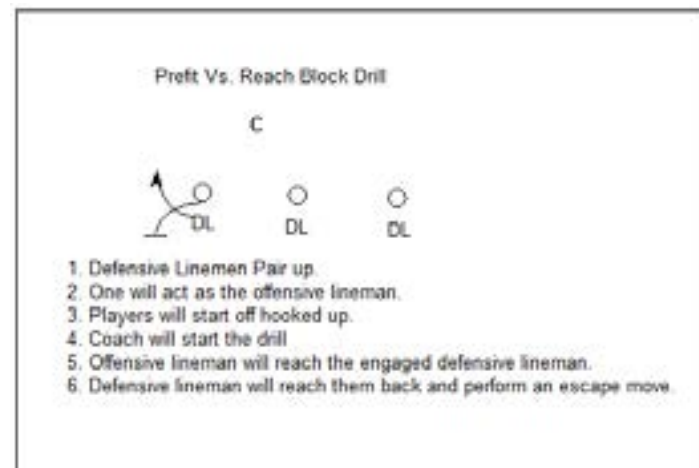
Coaching points:

Be good with your hands (inside hand: pull, outside hand: push)

Press vertical. Don't string things out too much.

Violent escape move

Hot feet.



Prefit vs. the reach block from a defeated position (diagram below):

This drill will work the same except you will start your defensive linemen from an already defeated position. This is a great drill for teams that run a lot of outside zone or for if you run a lot of head up techniques with your defensive linemen. You will start with your players in the prefit position. The offensive linemen will already have reached the defensive lineman on their outside shoulder. On the command by the coach, the offensive lineman will keep reaching the defensive lineman and will try to hook them and cut them off from where the play is going. The Defensive lineman will work vertical and reach the offensive lineman back pushing with the outside hand and pulling with the inside hand. Make Sure that they finish with an escape move. This drill can be performed with or without pads. I'd advise using a hitting dummy or have players wear a jersey when doing this drill without pads so that they can work hand placement.

Drill Progression:

Pair of with another lineman

One will act as the offensive lineman and one will be the defensive lineman.

The offensive lineman will start the drill in a position of advantage where they already have the defensive lineman reached.

The coach will start the drill verbally and the offensive lineman will continue to reach the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will fight back against the reach block; reaching them back and pressing vertically.

Finish with an escape move.

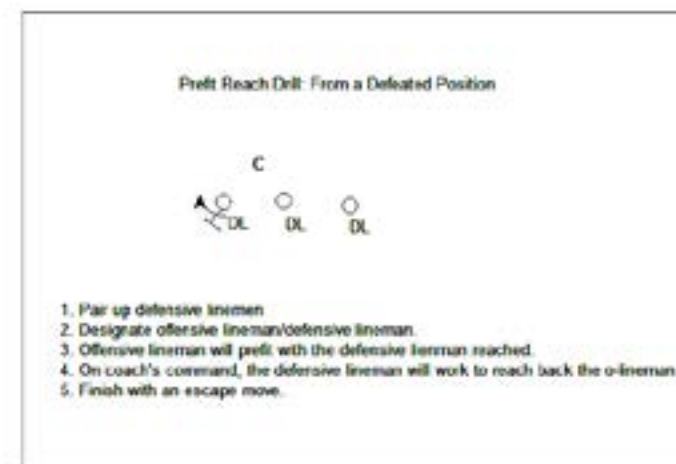
Coaching Points:

Active feet

Work vertical. Don't string out too far.

Push and pull with your hands correctly.

Violent escape move.



Beat the reach from a 3-point stance (Diagram Below):

This drill is the next step in the line of working against the reach block. You will need to move the defensive into their designated positions. The coach will be in the middle to snap or simulate the snap of the ball. On the snap, the offensive lineman will try to reach the defensive lineman. The defensive lineman will take their first steps, read the block, and will reach the offensive lineman back. They will need to remember to press vertically and finish with an escape move.

Drill progression:

Get defensive linemen into their designated position group lines (ends, noses, tackles, etc.).

The first group of defensive linemen will be out against designated offensive linemen.

On the snap of the football, the offensive linemen will reach the defensive lineman.

The defensive lineman will reach the defensive back, pressing

vertical.

They will push with the outside arm and pull with the inside arm.

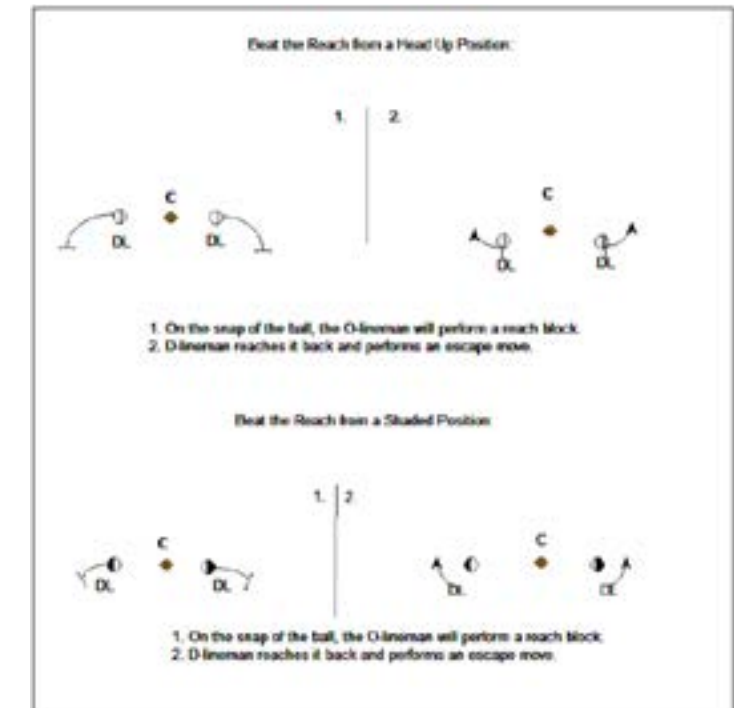
The defensive lineman will finish with an escape move.

Coaching Points:

Trigger the football.

Come out of 3-point stance low.

Violent hands and escape move (rip, swim/club/throw)



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LIFE LESSONS:

TOP TEN "DON'TS": PART 3



Kenny Simpson

Author

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FBCoachSimpson.com

Do not blame everyone else - (learn to accept)

"You are not a failure until you start blaming others for your mistakes."

-John Wooden

When I was a second-year coach, somehow I was already a head junior high coach, our team got blasted one night. I felt we were completely out-matched physically and that I had given our athletes the best opportunity to be successful, but it was not enough. We simply couldn't stop the other team and got beat 20 something to 40 something. I was staying late cleaning and getting laundry going and an older varsity coach was in the fieldhouse that evening. I was complaining about how this kid didn't do this and that kid didn't do that as is often normal around coaches.

The coach looked at me and simply said, "we don't blame kids here." I was shocked and embarrassed, but grateful that he called me out. At 24-years old, I learned a lesson that I still keep with me to this day. When you are the leader of a program, no matter the situation, the blame always comes (and rightfully so) to you.

Were we out matched that night physically? Absolutely! Had I done as good a job as I knew how at that point in my career? Also, yes. However, I was far from perfect and had plenty of points in the preparation for that game and during that game that I could have made better adjustments. When a coach assumes the head coaching role, it comes with a heavy responsibility to accept all blame for any failures in that program.

What I failed to realize then, was that our players will follow our example. While none of them heard me complaining to another coach, they would hear me complaining about the officiating or

other areas that were not favorable to our team. This would lead to them finding places to place blame. In our society today we see this everywhere. Blame is passed from person to person and very few people own up to their own responsibility. If our players or assistant coaches see us passing blame and not holding ourselves accountable, it will start a downhill cycle.

One of my favorite slogans on a T-shirt say four words, "Nobody cares, work harder". This has become a motto I attempt to use in my own life. While I will celebrate accomplishments and do realize people care, I understand that my goal is to simply work as hard as I can to do my job. Not worry about other factors, but find a way to become successful through hard work.

When a coach starts to say excuses will not be tolerated even in their own life, the players and assistants will adapt that same mentality. Accepting blame is what must be the starting point for all great programs and it must start at the top. While each program will face ups-and-downs, blaming others or outside circumstances must never be tolerated.

Do not lose the forest for the trees - (learn to organize)

"The purpose of an organization is to enable common men to do uncommon things." -Peter Drucker

One of the most difficult things in all of life is to simply step back, see the big picture, and make decisions with that larger picture in view. Most of the time first-year head coaches are simply trying to get through each day and often are dealing with issues as they arise instead of having solutions before issues arise. Often, as a coach we never get to issues that need to be addressed because we are working on what we feel is a pressing issue.

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By becoming more organized with your time and having a detailed plan of action and daily to do list. A coach must make sure they are taking control of their time and set up a priority list. Once this list is done, then work on additional issues. This ensures that what you feel is most important is done all the time.

Another area this may be a struggle for younger coaches, is locking into a "system" on offense or defense without considering personnel or the ability of the opposition. Often what looks great on a whiteboard or in a playbook will not look as good if the system is not designed or tweaked to match the personnel of the team. Be sure to always be aware of what your players and assistant coaches can do before deciding on a system. Even the best organizations in the NFL will adjust week-to-week based on their personnel.

8 OF 10 "DO NOTS"

- 1) DO NOT THINK YOU ARE THE SMARTEST PERSON ON EVERY SUBJECT IN THE ROOM
- 2) DO NOT ASSUME EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT YOU WANT
- 3) DO NOT USE PEOPLE (APPRECIATE THEM)
- 4) DO NOT WAIT FOR SOMETHING TO CHANGE
- 5) DO NOT FAIL TO COMMUNICATE
- 6) DO NOT THINK ONLY WINNING A GAME IS WHAT MAKES YOU A GREAT COACH
- 7) DO NOT BLAME EVERYONE ELSE
- 8) DO NOT LOSE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

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ATHLETIC LEADERSHIP

REFLECTIONS FROM 35 YEARS IN THE GAME



Kevin Swift
Gold Beach HS - OR
Athletic Director
[@kdawgswift](#)
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As many of you know who follow me on Twitter, I recently stepped away from my position as Athletic Director and Football Coach at Gold

Beach High School. I felt 35 years as a Football Coach and Athletic Director, the last 24 years in the small coastal sport fishing town of Gold Beach on Oregon coast, was a decent career. I still have one more year of teaching social studies and mentoring my replacement as Athletic Director here before retiring in June of 2022. Am I done with coaching football? Likely no, it is a game that captured my heart as a young boy and a game I still religiously follow, and not being involved in it in some way would not be good for my soul. However, it was time to step away for a year or two to spend some time with my faith and family. So, with that said, this article will be a collection of reflections I have from my 35 years in the game as an assistant, head coach and athletic director. It is my hope that something here will help the next generation of coaches stay inspired.

35 Years of Reflections from an old dog, @kdawgswift:

* Faith, Family, then Football will be tested on a regular basis each season and off season. It is not that being a successful football coach is harder on your family than being a successful engineer or attorney. It is being successful at anything involves a huge commitment and time, that will infringe on your faith and family. We / You must fight to keep Faith & Family ahead of Football! Can this balance or order be kept? Yes, but it will take a conscious effort and communication with your loved ones. Pick some sacred times, two weeks at Christmas or three weeks in June, to be a husband and father. Protect those times!

*If you're a head coach, your wife will be your BEST assistant period! If you're an assistant, your wife will be your BEST manager period!

Get your children involved in your passion. My eldest daughter was one my sidelines as a student-manager or student-trainer from the 4th grade till she graduated from high school. She worked weekends with me doing stats or breaking down film. My youngest always went with her mom to our games home and away. She would scout away games snack bars and worked our summer camps from 4th grade till she graduated as well. Try to make coaching more of family affair not only for your family but for your assistants' families.

*A lot of your success will be tied to being in the right place at the right time, this is not said to take away from anyone's coaching ability, but at end of the day kids / student-athletes win games. I've coached in 5 state title games and been lucky enough to have our kids win two of them, but I know in my heart that there are some far better coaches out there toiling in some far-off school that will never have the opportunity to coach in a state title game. To me these are the real heroes in the coaching world.

*X's and O's are not near as important to your success as the Culture and Relationships you create within your program are!

*Listen, learn, and store everything you learn from all the stops on your coaching journey, all of it the good, the bad, and ugly. Then when you become the leader of the band, you will have a vast amount of knowledge to pull from to help build your program.

*You're only going to be as good as your school's administration is going to let you be period. Administrative understanding and support of your vision are vital to your program's success if it's not there do NOT unpack your bags. You cannot overcome an administration that does not care or share your vision.

*If Strength and Power can be taught and developed, then so can Speed and Quickness. You can coach kids to be faster and quicker because we have and do!

*The fastest way to a kid's heart and brain are through his stomach with good pizza or eats. Having a Captains' table or Players' meal, where players see Coaches cooking and working with their wives to prepare great meals for kids is a great learning experience for young men to witness.

*Be MORE than a Football Coach to your kids, be a mentor that helps young teenage boys become productive and well-mannered adults, our society desperately needs them.

*If you want kids to learn to deal with adversity, then be the example when you're in the middle of it! My best three years coaching were Ofer seasons. Holding a group of kids together while they are getting pounded every week and not having any quit during the season, is a very humbling experience. However, as their head coach, you must be the example on how to respond to adversity.

*If details matter, and they do, make sure you're as detailed in your preparation for practice, off season, home games and away games as you wish the kids to be. Type your practice plans and post, have itineraries for road games etc.

*If you think weightlifting and off-season workouts are important than BE THERE, while Strength and Conditioning Instructors are terrific, they do not determine playing time or lead the program

*Leaders do MORE not LESS! We tell our Captains, that the definition of a leader is the guy up front leading by doing it right, not cheerleading or delegating from the rear. As a Head Coach, you should be doing more than any of your assistants. Leaders Do More

*There is still a place for some old school grit and grinding activities in today's game, for no other reason than it teaches kids on how to deal with adversity in a controlled environment.

*You cannot win a state title if you cannot run the ball between the tackles when you need to and if you cannot stop your opponent from running the ball between the tackles when you need to- yes, it is that simple.

*Speed beats size everyday at high school level, and speed with size is scary good.

*The Untied States Marine Corps is a Division I program for our kids on the rural Oregon coast.

*Football is not always Fun, but neither is Life, the Fun is in how we handle Football and Life.

*When you're playing a state championship game in a college stadium (Autzen) forget your all state kicker and go for 2 after scores, because the uprights are narrower, and he is going to miss TWO. We lost 20 to 19 -yikes!

*The game has always been safe, and it is even safer today is the reality!

*I never won a state title game, I had a couple of groups of kids that followed OUR plan and won two to make me look good and I am forever grateful

*The two greatest traits a great teams will have our LOVE and Humility.

*Never ever give up on a kid, even that sniffly 95-pound freshman is going to be a 140-pound small school terror at Linebacker and Fullback

*It is a great profession filled with great people, and it was a pleasure to be part of it for 35 years as a coach.

Thank You & Stay Humble!

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OFFENSIVE RESOURCES

EASY MOTION AND SHIFTS



Brent Morrison
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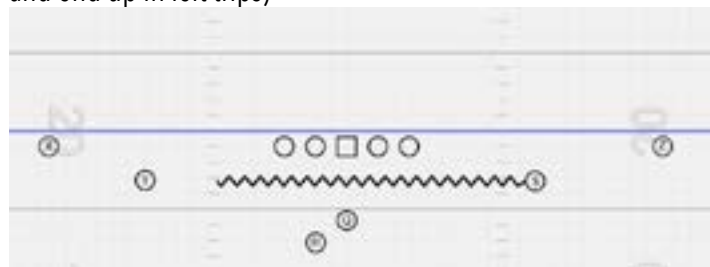
I have experimented with several motion and shift models and each one seemed to slow down our offense, or become too tedious to signal and teach. With that being said, there are definitely benefits to being able to motion, especially in

a spread no huddle offense. The motion can quickly identify coverages for your QB, create distraction for the defense, help gain leverage and create mismatches.

With all these benefits, one of the biggest things is to run them motion frequently in practice. Through 2-a-days we will motion on almost every play so the players can get used to it. As players are forced to motion they also have to learn plays from different positions on the field and it makes them a more valuable player for your offense.

We use many formation based motions. This is very simple and is done by tagging a player and then the formation that we will end up in. The starting point of the players is up to your play design and can be changed from week to week based on what you think is best. We begin with everyone tagged crossing the ball. A play call for this would be PLAYER MOTION FORMATION PLAY

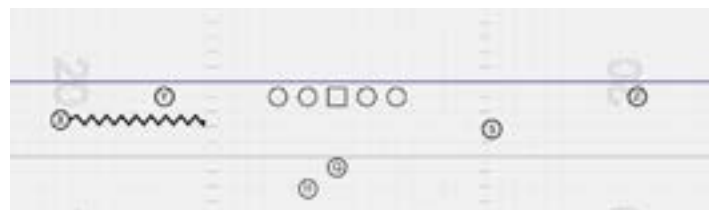
S MOTION LEFT TRIPS (s will start on the others side of the ball and end up in left trips)



Y MOTION RIGHT DOUBLES (Y will start on the left and motion into his normal right doubles alignment)



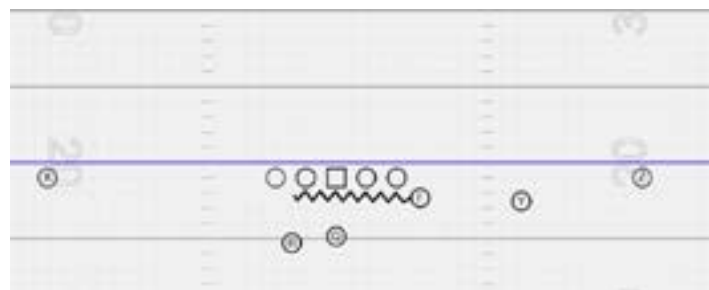
X MOTION LEFT DOUBLES (X automatically lines up off the ball and for this motion we only have them motion to the #2 spot at the snap) This is a great tool to get a better match-up on a receiver or condense a coverage. If you use this method of motion then it forces the receivers to know the inside and outside routes because motion may put them there.



We use 3 non-formation based motions. These formations are called differently because they are either done at a different tempo than other motions or they create a unique formation we don't have a name/signal for.

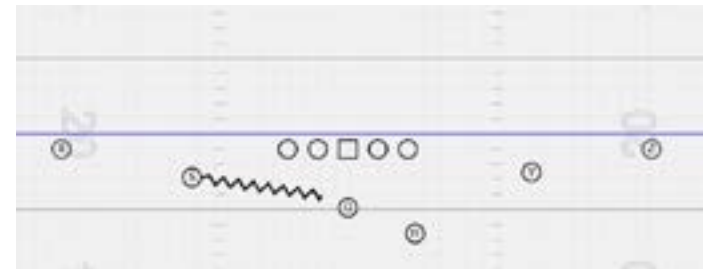
FLOAT - This motion is reserved for a FB/Wing in most situations where we want him to jog and shuffle across the center. The player ends up where he needs to be to perform his responsibility. A play call for this would be FORMATION FLOAT PLAY

Right Wing Float _____



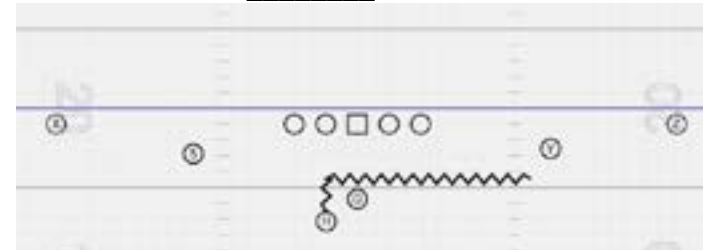
JET - This motion is meant to run a jet sweep or a compliment to it. It is a full speed motion and is done by tagging a player A play call for this would be FORMATION PLAYER JET PLAY

RIGHT DOUBLE S JET _____



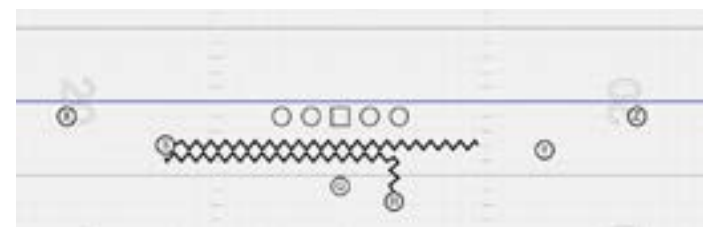
RIP/LIZ - This is a motion for our H to cross the QB's face and full speed sprint in a straight line and then run a swing. A play call for this would be FORMATION RIP PLAY.

RIGHT DOUBLES RIP _____



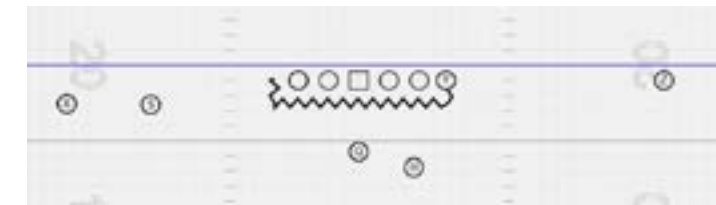
A Shift for us is used to try and create mathematical advantages in the run or screen game or a match-up issue in the pass game. Shifts are when players will fully set in a new location, the QB will then pause and call the cadence. A play call for this would be SHIFT FORMATION PLAY.

SHIFT RIGHT EMPTY _____ In this we aligned in doubles, the s shifted to trips, then the H shifted to empty once the s was set. We did this against a man coverage team because it forced them to break their 1 high structure and bring the Free Safety down to cover the H or walk a LB out of the box and make him cover in space. Either one of these scenarios was beneficial to use and was better than how they aligned when we simply lined up in empty. We have done this same shift but placed our best or fastest receiver in the backfield and now when he ends up in the slot on the left he is likely to be covered by a LB and you have a great match-up to pick on.



SHIFT TIGHT LEFT TRIP _____ In this shift the TE lines up to the right and shifts to the left. This causes defense to adjust their front or their force/contain players because you have created an additional gap to the side that already had two receivers. This

shift can be beneficial against teams that call the front to the field or to the TE. Lots of teams will bump to TE shifts instead of flipping their whole front, so now LB's and DL are playing technique that they normally wouldn't (Example: the 1 and 3 tech in and over or under front are now switched). If teams like to trade their whole front, I also find it beneficial because now DL are getting extra sprints during the game.



I listed these in the order of difficulty for a no huddle fast paced offense. You are adding a single signal to get a lot of benefit. With repetition this can easily be a gamechanger for your offense. Oftentimes at the end of the game when people want to run a little clock, adding motions and shifts is a simple way to do it and still have your players feel like they are moving fast. I prefer this over players staring at the sideline begging for you to call a play.

COACHING RESOURCES

PARENT RULES: PART 2



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[Coach Tube](#)

Once you have established procedures and you set the meeting with the parent, you must be prepared for it to go either way. It is difficult to predict how these meetings go. It is important to do the following to help make this go the best it can:

Listen to them – do not interrupt as they are bringing up their concern and attempt to genuinely listen to what they have to say. Even if you totally disagree, do not give away your hand yet. Let them say what they need to say. Sometimes that is enough for a parent and they move on.

Face them – Talk to them, do not hide behind policy, or throw others under the bus. Understand what their issue is, and attempt to answer their concern with your policies and procedures and not blame for others who are not in the room. If, on the rare occasion, it really is someone else's fault, apologize and let them know you will take care of it and work to fix the problem. Make no mistake, it is usually just about playing time!

Be fair and consistent – as you are listening to them and hearing their concern, try to make sure any answers you give are fair and consistent to how you have handled other situations. This will be the thing they attack the most if you accidentally are not consistent.

See it from their perspective – even if you TOTALLY disagree and the parent is wrong, trying to be empathetic and see if from their perspective. This is the best way to calm them down and get them to see your side.

Promote the pre-emptive – once you have a chance to talk and have given them the explanation, make sure to promote the positive things about their child that you have been doing all along in the “pre-emptive” state. Say things like, “we love working with your child” and add in the things they do well that you have been promoting for months. This reminds many parents that it is not personal.

Stay kind regardless – sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you will not be able to reason with the parent. This is not a reflection on you if you have done the things mentioned above. The biggest hurdle at this point is “agreeing to disagree”. Try not to raise the tension and make things worse. Stay kind and just let them know you will not back down and may have to disagree with them, but you enjoy working with their child and are free to talk about anything else they want to discuss. You must stay the bigger person in these situations. Nothing positive comes out of you losing your temper.

Successful Sports Parent Tips: Remind parents of these often

- * Do not put your child down.
- * Do not offer excuses for your child.
- * Always tell your child how much you love watching them play.
- * Insist on good grades.
- * Have faith in the coaches.
- * Encourage your child to play for the love of the game.
- * Enjoy the time you get to watch your child. It will go fast!

Parents can be an important part of a successful program or they can be one of the key ingredients in making one deteriorate. It is imperative that the coach understands how to work with parents and get the most out of them. The best way to work with parents is to explain to them what they can do to help. Parents need to SUPPORT and COMMUNICATE. They need to publicly support the team and the coach and address issues in private. They need to communicate any concerns, injuries, or issues to the coaches. If you can get parents to do this, you will have a thriving program.

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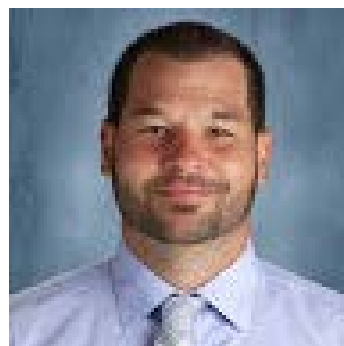
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POUND THE STONE

CREATE AN IDENTITY FOR YOUR POSITION GROUP - PART THREE



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 Author of More Than The Game (available on Amazon)
 Co-Host of the Culture Classroom Podcast

Friday Night Lights are special and should be memorable for decades to come after high school. Game Days provide an excellent opportunity to celebrate your identity. On Game Day, each Stonecutter receives a handwritten letter as they enter the locker room. This ritual is brief and solemn, usually consisting of a simple pat on the back or handshake as I hand them their letter; words are rarely spoken and I don't dwell, leaving the athlete to begin their pregame routine.

Every letter is personalized, but follows a scripted format. I begin by wishing each Stonecutter good luck and specifically name the team we are playing. Secondly, I include a quote that reinforces our head coach's message to the team throughout the week, then go on to outline exactly how they will contribute to the team effort in the game. Finally, there is affirmation. I let each Stonecutter know that I am proud of them and grateful to be their coach. Every letter closes with the three words that bind us together: Pound The Stone!

The team gathers in the high school library promptly two hours before kickoff. The projector hums in the dimly lit room as the coordinators show film and reiterate their game plans one final time. After a brief message from Chad Van Kley, our head coach, the players lie down on the floor and close their eyes. Darkness engulfs the room. The silence is interrupted by the first few staccato tones of the "Pound The Stone" Mixtape, followed by Joshua Medcalf's voice.

Are you willing to Pound The Stone when no one is watching?
 Are you willing to Pound The Stone

when your dreams are so far off they feel like fairy tales? Are you willing to Pound The Stone and move from failure to failure with sustained enthusiasm? Are you willing to Pound The Stone long before everyone else shows up and everyone else has gone home?

Anyone can Pound The Stone when it's new, fresh, and exciting, but very few, very, very few will persist in Pounding The Stone when true grit is required.

Will you Pound The Stone, and Pound The Stone, and Pound The Stone?

Because that's what it's going to take.

Because that's what it always takes.

Pound The Stone.

No shortcuts; no excuses

Pound The Stone.

It takes what it takes.

The music fades and the lights come on. The players collect themselves and silently make their way to the locker room. It's time for the Stonecutter to swing the hammer.

In conclusion, there is power and clarity in a shared identity. It's not what you call yourself, the artifacts you use, or the soundbites you say to drive home your message. It's bigger than that; it is a way of life. The Stonecutter isn't merely a representation of Monarch Running Backs, or our football team, it's a metaphor for Denison and the surrounding area, a community of people built on agriculture and the meat-packing industry. A place where people bring their families from every corner of the globe in search of the American Dream. It is in this way that every Monarch, both past and present, is a Stonecutter, and together we continue to Pound The Stone.



ACE SPORTS SCORES BIG with Trent Dilfer and Lipscomb Academy

Lipscomb Academy in Nashville just purchased the largest high school video board scoreboard in Tennessee. The high res video board will tower 1,500 square feet in size and will also help launch Coach Dilfer's magnetic influence for ACE Sports. Coach Dilfer will work alongside ACE Sports to further their national vision through branding and video board sales.



"I couldn't be more excited to partner with ACE," said Dilfer. "Their people and products are best in class. There is unlimited potential for institutions that understand the value of a video board in their community."

From Super Bowl Champion to a Leader in High School Athletics

Pain, repurposed into passion, has been the fighting force behind Head Coach Trent Dilfer since he was named the head coach of the Lipscomb Academy football program in January 2019. Whether it's a calling or a mission, Dilfer has prided himself into creating a human development program masked as a high school football team.

Coach Dilfer is a Husband and a Father, Super Bowl Champion Quarterback, a 14 year NFL Veteran, former ESPN Analyst and the Head Coach of Elite II. His graduate level football intellect brought him from Fresno State University to the NFL in 1994 when Dilfer was selected by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers as the sixth overall selection in the NFL Draft.

In six seasons with the Buccaneers, Coach Dilfer became the winningest Quarterback in franchise history, and led Tampa to their first play-off win in 15 years. Coach Dilfer joined the Baltimore Ravens in 2000 and in his first season with the team, he led the Ravens to the World Championship in Super Bowl XXXV.



And Another Huge Win for ACE Sports: Welcome Scott Garvis!

Scott Garvis, a leader and innovator in high school athletic administration for more than 20 years, joins the ACE staff to provide solutions to athletic departments looking to install video boards that will generate much-needed revenue for years to come.

Scott has a record of excellence as Athletic Director, Director of Activities and Assistant Principal, having led the athletic departments at six high schools or school districts in three states. He has earned numerous regional and national awards from various athletic associations.



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OFFENSIVE DRILLS

IN PURSUIT OF A SYSTEM



Emory Wilhite
Leon High School-Florida
JV Head Coach
[@EmoryWilhite](#)

In pursuit of a system for my team, I have learned too much.

With the abundance of knowledge on the internet and the abundance of games on the television, I have seen

many different offenses.

When I first started learning about the Xs and Os of football, each football game I watched was over stimulating because I was learning how to keep up with the scheme. No longer did the offense run a run play. They ran power. Or counter. Or maybe it was actually inside zone. I felt like I could see it all.

And while the action on the field became clear, my mind became fuzzy.

For example, when you watch an NFL game, you see the same plays that everyone runs. But there are extravagant shifts and motions. There are extraordinary athletes. There are expert coaches. And when you see a play that you like and you draw it up, you might not realize that when you get out onto the practice field and decide to teach it to your players, you do not understand the purpose behind the extravagant shifts and motions, you do not have extraordinary athletes, and it becomes ever apparent that you aren't an expert coach.

At least this is the reality I ran head first into.

So, I realized that I needed a system.

It was not enough to just understand how a play worked. I needed to know how plays worked together. I needed to know when you call certain plays and why you call those plays. It is as if each play in a football game is a piece in a puzzle, but I am without the picture on the box.

When you think about what goes into a single play call, the factors are overwhelming.

The team offensive coordinator drew up the playbook and installed it with each staff member adding their own flavor in their teaching. The offensive coordinator and his staff came from years of coaching and each coach they coached under influenced how they think about football. The staff game planned for the defense's specific defense. The team faced injuries and had to adjust the scheme to their personnel's strength. The defense made adjustments in the game to combat the game plan. Injuries in the game force the offensive coordinator to pivot. A key player is having a bad day and not executing like he usually does.

He reacts to each factor based upon his knowledge and experience.

But what is the use in thinking of all these factors? Are these factors relevant?

They might not be. A lot of those factors are out of the control of the play caller. It is easy to see how one can ignore all these factors and focus instead on the Xs and the Os.

But I believe that the Xs and Os are placeholders of the system, not the system itself.

And in this pursuit of a system, I have tried to define a system. In a question, what are the puzzle pieces that make something a system?

I have gone through systems online and they give you the pieces in the form of Xs and Os.

And that is vital to my understanding, but they have not helped me focus on the important factors that make up a system.

It is clear that there is this incredible conflict between what I know, what I can teach, and what the players can do. I have decided that these are the three factors I should focus on. In other words, I need to focus on the people running the system. The fruit of this focus will be our system.

By focusing on these three factors, I can ensure that I never get lost in the weeds of scheme. I must do a reality check by asking

myself if I can teach it and if the players can do it.

Last year, we ran what we called "outside zone," but it hardly looked right. However, I really liked the idea of the play and I was excited to see all the creative variations that could come from the play.

In my mind, the outside zone was a sound system within itself. It was a play that provided so many complements. You could run naked and play action with simple routes. You could run jet sweep and toss. You could run reverses. You could add a fullback and a tight end to create great misdirection.

And the beauty is that your offensive line can just block outside zone left or right.

I knew that I could handle this in my mind, and we could teach this to our players. Grounding the system in the outside zone play provided me the ability to understand defensive adjustments to the play and how to anticipate those adjustments.

I now have an "If/Then" framework in my mind. I do not need to call plays at random.

I can now look at the defense and see what they are doing to stop the play because I know why the play should work.

And we are putting in this system right now. It is still largely untested. We have not played in a live game with it yet. Right now, I can hardly call it a system.

So, I must be patient. There is a strong desire to have a system that will give structure to this knowledge in my mind. But the path to a system is messy.

I must play the games. I must call the plays and deal with all the factors to gain a better grasp of reality. I must lose games because of my play calling. Then, when I have experienced all of those uncontrollable variables and the others that I cannot even think of, I will perhaps be able to grasp a system.

But right now, I am still in pursuit.

“And in this pursuit of a system, I have tried to define a system. In a question, what are the puzzle pieces that make something a system?”

QUEST WRITER

BUILDING AN OFFENSIVE LINE BROTHERHOOD



By Mark Brandimarte
Romeo HS-MI
Offensive Coordinator
@CoachB_50

If you are like me, you feel really grateful to coach offensive linemen. In any successful program, offensive linemen are its very heart and soul. These kids are among the most coachable and unselfish players on the

field. They literally pave the way for their team's victories while others get their names in the paper or splashed around social media. Even though these players are eager to learn and hard working, I believe their selfless nature makes it even more important to build relationships with them. They don't seek the spotlight, but they certainly appreciate the little recognition they do get. They thrive on the camaraderie of their position group and praise of their coaches and peers.

As an offensive line coach, we have to do everything in our power to capitalize on their natural willingness to support one another. We have to deliberately cultivate a sense of brotherhood within this group. It isn't hard; they crave those relationships. They want and need to know that their teammates and their coaches care. I found out it can be as easy as using peanut butter and jelly to make the mortar that binds them together. These are just a few examples of things I've had success with over the years that you could use to build a cohesive offensive line, other position group, or the entire team.

Spring Conditioning/ Footwork-

Each Spring we meet before school one day a week for six weeks to condition as a group

and, more importantly, work on fundamentals. These 45 minute sessions are a way to get better footwork without any contact. Stance, Starts, Pulling, and Pass Pro are all developed. Invite the graduating seniors to come in and help you teach the skills and give feedback to the younger players. It is a way for them to give back, and the underclassmen really look up to them. Following the training sessions, we culminate with a big breakfast.

Pancake Breakfast-

Nobody enjoys pancakes better than O-Lineman. Find a local restaurant or cook them on a griddle in class before school. This is a great way to get the guys together and hang out in a non-football setting. Have alumni o-lineman come in and enjoy the food and share with the players what it means to be a lineman. These pancakes will translate directly to the field!

Pregame Routine-

Finally, the most important part of making the wall strong is our pregame routine that cements it all together. The offensive line always arrives 20 minutes earlier than all of the other players. We believe we must do the little things to be champions. Arriving early to get prepared is one of those things. We will meet separately before the general team meeting. In our meeting we do the following:

Vote for our Elvis of the Week-

Elvis was the "King," and the winner of this award gets a special peanut butter and banana sandwich (a favorite of Mr. Presley). This player is voted for by teammates based on performance in



practice. Effort and attitude are always factors in this decision. Have the "Elvis" pass out PB & J's and bottles of water to all the lineman. This is a great act, showing that even the King can be a servant leader.

Breaking Bread-

Next we say a blessing before we eat our pregame snack. It is really great to have a player lead the blessing and hear what is on his heart. While the players eat, I check in with them and find out how things are going in school, with their families, etc.

Plays/Adjustments-

Finally, we go over any final game plan adjustments or questions they have about schemes. I always end the session with telling them how much I love them, regardless of the outcome of the game.

Successful programs aren't built overnight, and neither can a culture of love and brotherhood be established simply through practice. You must nurture the relationships throughout the year. We have to work carefully to mix the mortar that will serve us through the trials of an entire season. Explore ways you can bring your position group together through meaningful activities that build upon servant leadership, work ethic, and fellowship. I feel these relationships are more important than pass protection or pad level.



WAYS TO BUILD A BROTHERHOOD:

1) SPRING CONDITIONING

2) PANCAKE BREAKFAST

3) PREGAME ROUTINES

QUEST WRITER

OUR WIDE ZONE

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In football today, whether in the NFL, college, or high school, wide zone is one of the most popular run plays. Its roots run deep. There is no consensus concerning the origin of the play but it is interesting to note that Vince Lombardi was the first to detail the blocking scheme as an adjustment to his Packer's famous power sweep. This is the way football develops. The defenses adjust to an offensive scheme and the offense must reciprocate. While I do not claim to be a Lombardi, I would like to take you through our journey toward our wide zone concept and explain how we started, why we adjusted, and how we developed our scheme.

WHY FIX IT IF IT'S NOT BROKEN?

Wide Zone is an excellent scheme and has been coached by the likes of Kirk Ferentz (Univ of Iowa) and Alex Gibbs (NFL OL guru). One could easily plug the scheme into the offense. So why would anyone change what such illustrious coaches have perfected? Simply put, necessity is the author of invention. I started running WZ in 2003 and coached it exactly as Alex Gibbs did. I poured over hours of cool clinic videos of Gibbs teaching wide zone. I found and analyzed hours of "teach tape" and actually got to spend a day with him when he was with the Atlanta Falcons. From 2003-11 we ran wide zone just as Alex Gibbs coached. It was our top run play every year. We preached "no negatives" and our player congregation was converted. They became quite good at it. However, I started to notice that other parts of our offense began to suffer. Our gap scheme runs and pass protections did not receive their

required attention. I self-scouted the previous 5 years. I then turned my attention to practice planning over the same period. I was startled by the numbers. Our offensive line was spending 60% of their time working wide zone and inside zone combos in practice but on Friday nights, we were only comboing the defense 27% of the time. Combos appeared to be expensive football capital and we were misallocating our resources. We had to get creative to solve the problem.

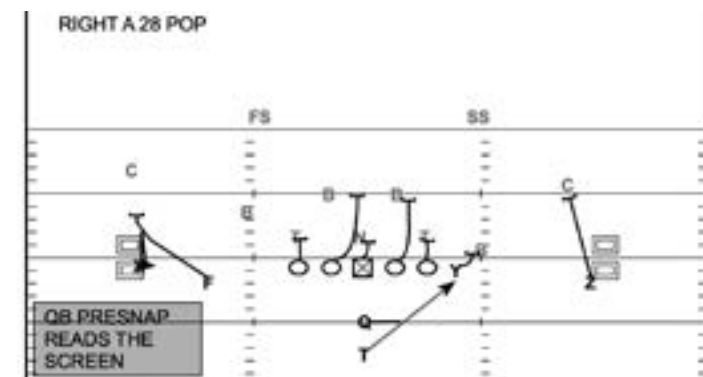
CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLE-MAN

So, in a season, ~520 reps of practice preparing for ~100 plays in all games. Once we dove deeper we realized that a good defensive coordinator is not going to sit still and let you combo block his defensive line or allow your lineman to know who the combos would be. They will stem and move, bluff blitzes and bring pressure that forces your lineman out of your combos. Trying to understand why our lineman were not combo blocking as they had been coached to do, we had an epiphany: they were solo blocking. As many coaches do, we taught our lineman to solo block their assignments whenever blitzers showed or linemen stemmed. We were comboing so little in games because our lineman were calling off their combos and going straight to the solo block. So we decided to "begin with the end in mind." We eliminated the combo block from both our inside zone and wide zone run plays.

COACHING DETAILS

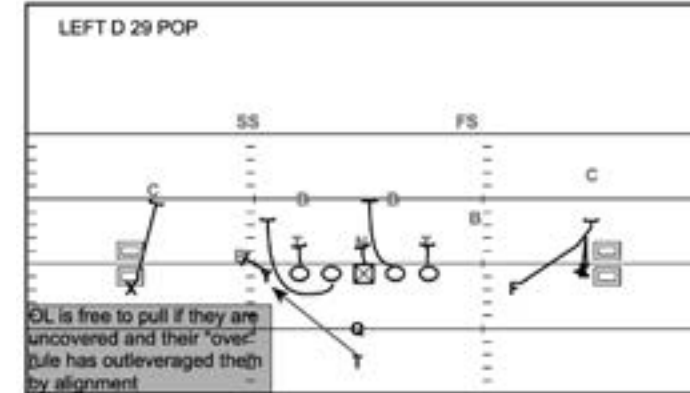
Below are the rules for the play and how we teach it. For context, we are currently a pistol team, so these rules apply from that alignment. Still, in the past we have executed our version of wide zone from under center and shotgun so the rules translate to all three.

Concerning alignment for all 3 levels:
 we ask the OL to have 2 foot splits
 the QB aligns 5 yards from the ball
 TB is 2 yards behind the QB.



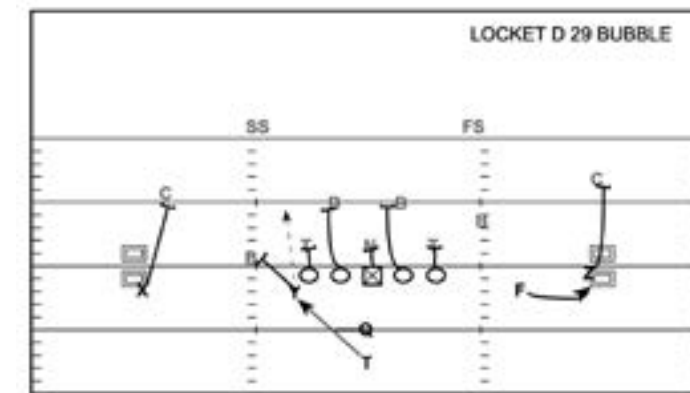
Offensive Line Rules

- OT: On-Over-Pull
- OG: On-Over-Pull
- C: On-Over-Pull
- TE: On-Edge-Alley-Alert Possible Crack Tag



QB Rules

QB: Step playside at 3pm (right) or 9pm (left). First step must be as big as possible. Second step crossover and mesh with RB. Once the handoff is secure boot away and finish past the line of scrimmage



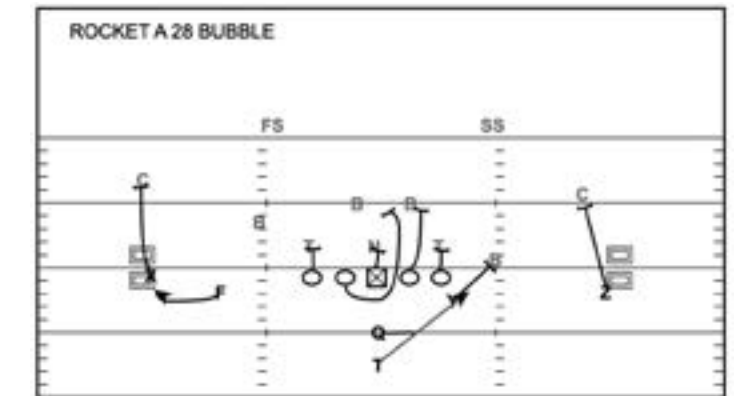
RB Rules

RB: Aim at the butt of the TE or the imaginary TE. First step is a pick & point step. Second and third steps chase your aiming point

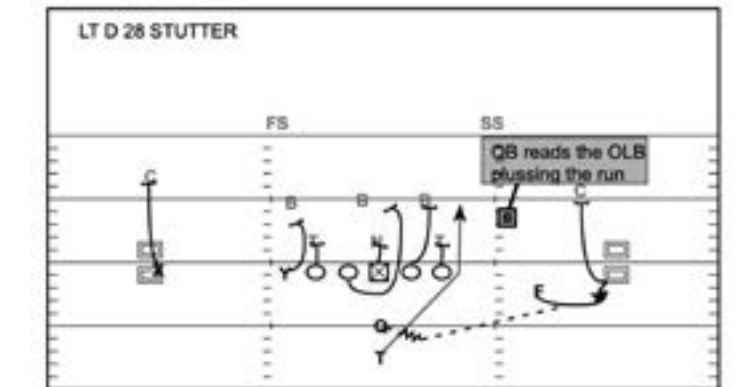
Addressing issues that defenses have presented guided much of what and how we teach our wide zone. For example we teach the QB that his first step must be big. It allows him to get to the mesh point on his second step. We used to teach him to step with his backside foot first and mesh on step three

but that took too long. The RB "pick & point" step developed to perfect the timing. However, as our RBs get more comfortable with the pick & point it serves as a type of "fall step" (as used in training sprinters) and it eliminates false steps.

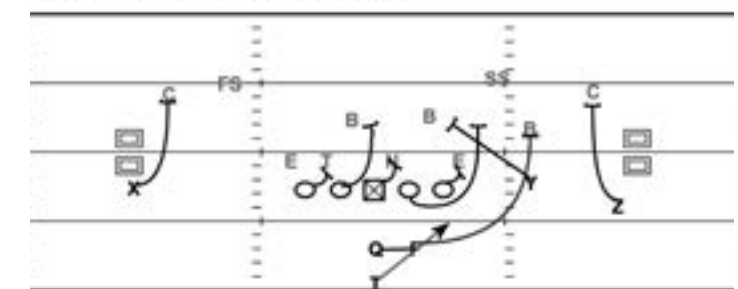
Over time we have given the RBs more freedom regarding his read. When we started we taught "key 1" and "key 2" as did most other coaches. However, what we found was that with more instruction the RB's eyes became more undisciplined. All we teach now is to read the block of the EMLOS (TE or OT depending on the formation) and feel what is inside. He gets one cut and must be vertical once he makes his cut.



FRONT SIDE RPO TAG



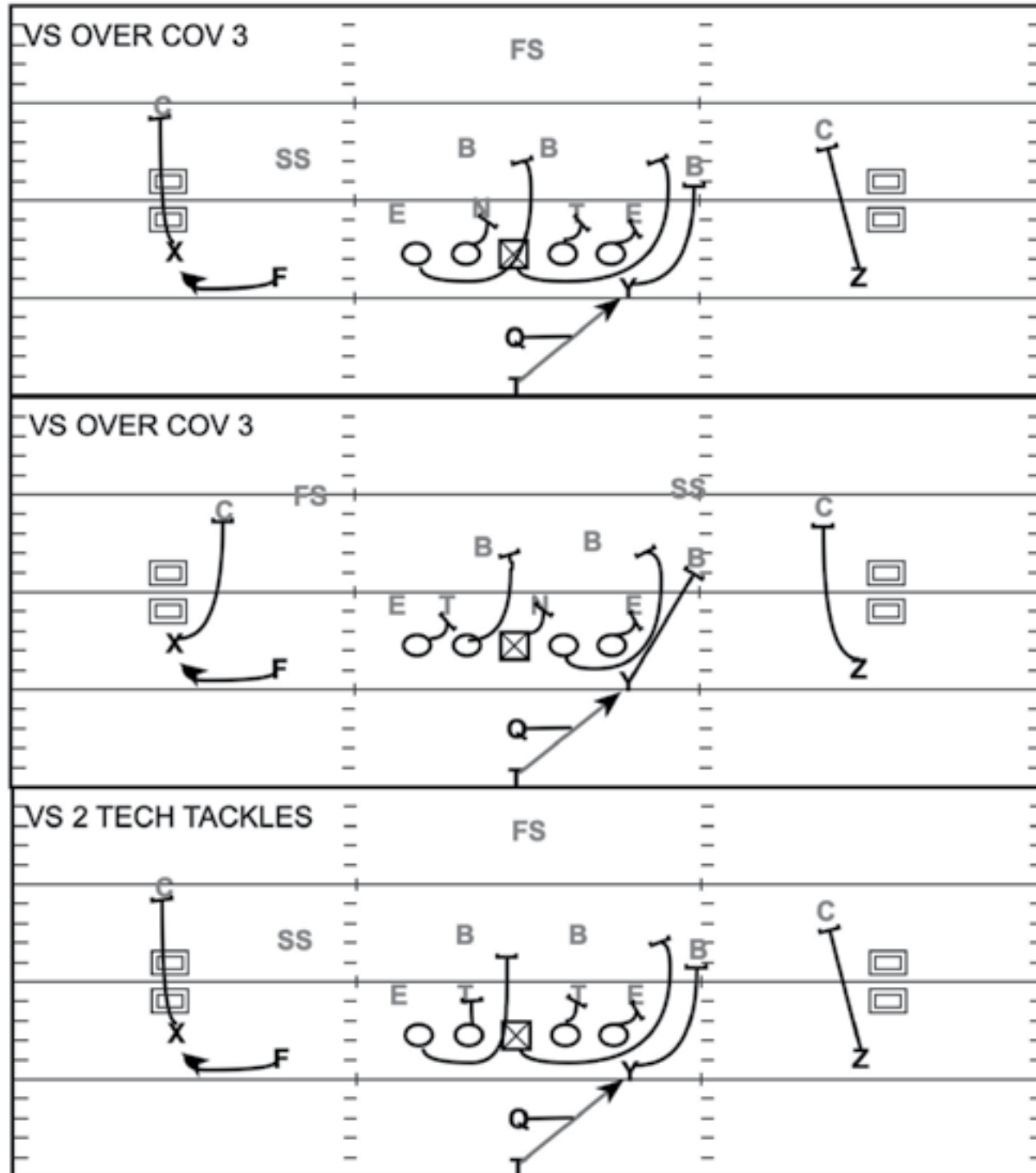
BACK TAG WITH TWO BACK VARIATION



(continued)

OTHER VARIATIONS VS EVEN FRONTS

ROCKET A 28 BUBBLE



This is certainly not the right way or the wrong way, it's simply our way to run the wide zone. I would like to thank our offensive line coach, Chase Fleming and our wide receiver coach Brad Benefield for their help putting this article together. If you would like to study our wide zone please do not hesitate to reach out to us.



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