DEFENSE

Our defense is taught in the following order:

1. Stance
2. Alignment
3. Initial move
4. Reaction

STANCE – three- or four-point:

1. Feet – parallel, staggered no more than heel and toe. Weight on balls of feet.

2. Hands – thumb and fingertips on ground (not knuckles). If three-point stance, the other forearm is resting on knee or thigh.

3. Back is level with tail as high as the head; don't insist on head up to see downfield because this causes the tail to drop. If they can see 3-4 feet in front, it's enough.

4. It is often necessary to make exceptions in stances for unusual body builds, i.e., very tall boys require more stagger and width.

5. Whether a player uses a three-point stance or a four-point stance is left up to the coach and the player. Use what gets the job done.

Two-point stance:

1. Feet parallel and staggered to best carry out initial move and primary responsibility. **Example:** defensive ends should have outside foot back to protect the outside leg from getting hooked. (This is also true if they are in a three-point stance.)

2. Have knees flexed, tail down and upper body in a near vertical position. Arms should rest comfortably at sides (secondary) and up front, ready to strike a blow (linebackers and ends).

ALIGNMENT

1. Alignments differ according to the type of defense you play.

2. Try to use this terminology when describing alignment:
   a. Head up when you want a nose-to-nose alignment.
   b. Outside shoulder: nose on opponent's outside shoulder.
   c. Inside shoulder: nose on opponent's inside shoulder.
   d. Gap: nose in the middle of the gap between offensive linemen.

Alignment (continued)

3. For any alignment, specify exactly where you want his nose (outside eye, inside shoulder, etc.).

4. For the secondary, we may say this: 2 x 6 (2 by 6) to say the defender should line up 6 yards deep and 2 yards wide on the designated opponent.

5. When the defender has taken his proper alignment, he should keep his eye on his key.

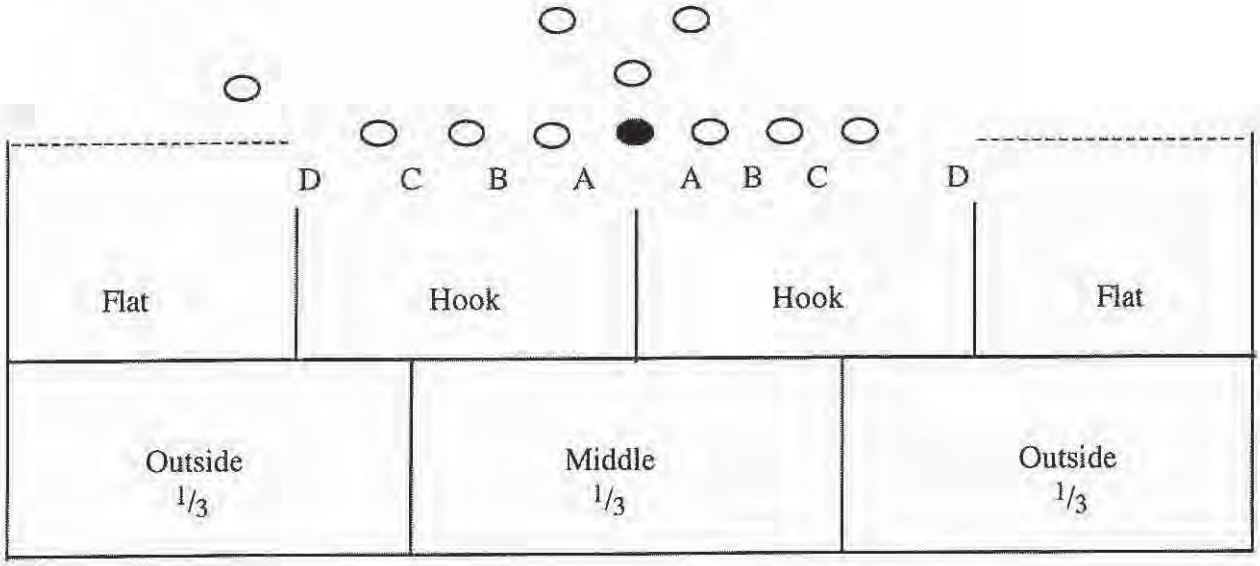
6. Don't let your linemen look down the line of scrimmage and key the ball. This takes their eyes off their key and other adjacent linemen. These are the people they must defend themselves against at the snap. The defensive lineman should key the man in front of him and move on his movement.

INITIAL MOVE

On the snap of the ball, each player should take an initial move. **Example**: a tackle on the 52 defense — step with the inside foot first, bring other foot parallel and strike a blow with the inside forearm. **Another example**: defensive halfback — shuffle two steps toward your zone of responsibility as you read your key.

REACTION

1. Here a defensive player is taught his primary area responsibility. We letter the gaps as shown below. On a 52 defense, we will tell the tackles they have **"C"** gaps; nose has both **"A"** gaps; linebackers have **"B"** gaps.



2. We also divide the field into zones as shown above. We tell our linebackers they are responsible for the hook zones and the safety man has the middle 1/3, etc.

TACKLING

To drill tackling, we use this progressive drill:

1. Line up two lines facing each other. One line tackles and the other simulates a ball carrier.

2. Have the tackler stand close to the ball carrier and on command, he wraps his arms around the ball carrier, thrusts his hips forward and lifts. Then he sets him down and awaits the next command to repeat the procedure.

3. Next, add the approach. Have the tackler stand 3-4 yards away and approach with a wide base, tail low and head up. Aim the face at the football, thrust hips forward, wrap arms and lift. Feet should be underneath ("step on his toes") and hit on "the rise." On contact, thrust hips forward, wrap arms and lift simultaneously. Then drive with continuous foot action. Don't take them to the ground on this. We emphasize the approach, the pop, wrap, lift, and drive.

Angle Drill:

1. Same technique as head on tackling, except we always put the head across the front of the ball carrier, and the tackler and ball carrier approach at an angle.

2. Another drill we use is having the lines run laterally about five yards apart. On command, they step toward each other and the tackler hits, wraps, lifts and sets ball carrier down. Both resume lateral movement until the next command. Have ball carrier jump a little to aid the lift.

SAFETY

1. Tackling drills are dangerous if conducted wrong. Keep tackler and ball carrier close. If you're going full speed, be sure that the ball carrier can take evasive action. We use tackling drills to emphasize form rather than speed or contact.

Shiver Techniques:

1. Forearm lift: purpose is to stalemate the blocker, create a cushion, shed blocker and go to the ball. Bring forearm up in front of your body, under opponent's numbers and lift. Simultaneous shoulder contact should occur. Lowest shoulder pads win. Grab cloth with other hand and shed blocker — go to the ball.

2. Straight arm shiver (press technique): keep elbows close to your body, drive hands up into blocker on upper arms or shoulder pads, stalemate him. Grab cloth, shed blocker and go to the ball.

In conclusion, we believe that to be successful, it is an absolute necessity for you as an individual to make total commitment to these basic principles in our philosophy.

COMPONENTS OF OUR DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

WORK

While we feel that there are many things which can contribute to a successful team defense, by far, the most important is for all defensive players to be fundamentally sound in the techniques of their individual position. No matter what our defensive alignments are or what our philosophy is, our defense will be only as strong as the individuals who comprise it. Each player must constantly strive to improve the individual techniques which he must perform. A careless and indifferent approach to fundamental drills will be evident during a game. In general, a team plays the way it practices. Each practice should be a challenge for self-improvement in some phase of defense technique. We want our defensive personnel to be analytical and recognize the areas in which they need to work. We want them to be willing to spend extra time on their weaknesses. Only a player who cares will pay the price to be a champion.

QUICKNESS

1. After you key and play the technique, your quickness immediately becomes extremely important.

2. You can never be too quick; this will improve as you work hard in practice.

3. It's possible to give up some size and strength for quickness and play, but you can never give up quickness for size and strength.

4. Agility drills.

   ➤ Work hard on these every day. You will become quicker throughout the season if you hustle through these each day. All these drills will improve your feet.

5. Your quickness will give you great team pursuit and gang tackling. It is very frustrating to run against a defensive team with great quickness.

TACKLING

1. Get after people every play and **OUT-HIT** them.

2. Once you see the ball, all 11 defensive players come full-speed. You've got to want to get in on the hit or make it.

3. **GANG TACKLE** — This is what defense is all about. You can't beat a defense that has everyone going full-speed to the ball carrier and as many people that can, hit him until the whistle blows. This is where your defense gains respect. You do this every game and people will let down when they play you. An **assisted** tackle is just as important as a solo tackle. If you're an aggressive football player, you will have a lot of total tackles.

4. Pursuit — we will have 11 men around the football on every play — run out pass, wide or inside.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BLAINE/SPRING LAKE PARK DEFENSE

Get Possession of the Football

There are two ways this can be accomplished:

1. Force a turnover

   Three down and out, or better yet, **force them into a mistake** — this is the winning formula. When the above is accomplished, the result is that our opponent's scoring opportunities are kept to a minimum, and often eliminated. Our offense has more opportunities to score and our field position is usually more advantageous.

   When the above is accomplished it is usually the result of:

   a. Elimination of **MISTAKES**.
   b. Great execution.
   c. Aggressive play.
   d. Maintaining confidence and poise at all times.

2. Opponent's Score

   This is the losing method. Should we not be able to obtain possession of the football, there is no conceivable way we can WIN unless our defense puts a score on the scoreboard.

   When a team matches touchdown for touchdown, they will finish with a 50% season or less. They will accomplish no better. A team must be very lucky to do better than 50%, matching touchdown for touchdown, and **NO TEAM** figures to be that lucky.

   When the above happens, it is the result of the following:

   a. Poor talent.
   b. Lack of pride and desire.
   c. Mistakes.
   d. Soft and non-aggressive defense.

3. Defensive Scoring

The winning margin in many close games has been the result of a team's scoring while on defense. There are five ways to score on defense, and only three ways when on offense.

Ways the defensive team can score:

a. an intercepted pass
b. a kick return
c. a recovered fumble with a runback
d. a safety, or
e. a blocked kick

Even though the defensive team may not score by such defensive maneuvers, the value of such defensive plays cannot be overemphasized.

To take the ball away from an opponent by a recovered fumble or intercepted pass, or for them to kick the ball and end up closer to their own goal line through a blocked punt or a long return can often mean the difference in a close game. To have their offensive maneuvers backfire can be a damaging blow to the morale of a team and sometimes this can lead to total collapse. For the team that can take advantage of such breaks, sparks can be provided, which in turn, often lead to a team's "catching fire" and turning a closely contested game into a rout.

SPECIAL TEAMS

PUNTING

1. **Stance**: kicking foot forward, slight bend in waist and knees; arms in front with slight bend in elbows.

2. **Catch the ball**: on bad snaps, move whole body in front of ball and get feet situated in original position quickly.

3. **Holding the ball**: keep the laces on the outside instead of on top. This will aid in spiraling the ball. The right hand is placed on the side near the top of the ball and controls the ball. The left hand is placed on the front of the ball and is a guide hand.

4. **Steps**: take a short jab step with kicking (forward) foot in the direction of punt. Take a natural step with the other foot. **DO NOT OVERSTRIDE** — this can cause line drive punts.

5. **Placing the ball on the foot**: the ball should lie across the instep with the nose slightly toward the inside of the foot. The left hand comes off first and the right hand releases the ball as close to the foot as possible.

6. **Leg snap and swing**: punting leg is drawn back as left leg hits the ground. The foot is snapped forward and meets ball just above knee height. The toe of the kicking foot is depressed and the leg must be straight and rigid on contact.

7. The punter's steps and leg swing should all be parallel and pointed at the target downfield. Don't let them swing the leg in an arc across the body — this results in shanking the ball.

8. **Follow through**: left foot stays in contact with the ground. Keep head down. Kicking foot should rise above the shoulder.

9. **Practice . . . practice . . . practice!**

PLACE KICKING

1. Place ball on tee with a slight lean. Each kicker is different. Don't let them lean the ball too much.

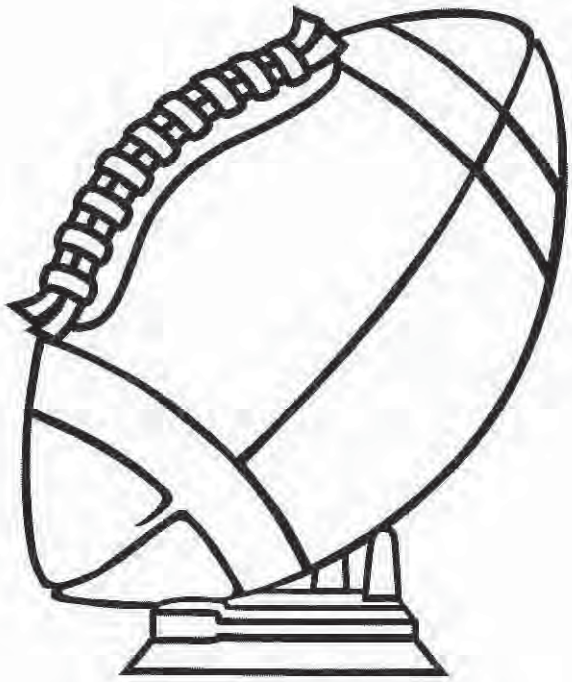
2. For extra points or field goals, the steps are the same as in punting. Start with kicking foot forward, etc. For free kicks, the length of the approach will vary with each kicker. Discourage taking long runs at the ball — they will overstride and mess up their steps.

3. Non-kicking foot should land in a position that will allow the arc of the kicking foot to meet the ball just below the middle of the ball and cause a lazy end-over-end kick. If non-kicking foot is too far away, the foot will meet the ball too high and low line drives are the result. If non-kicking foot is too close, foot meets ball too low and kicks are high and short with rapid end-over-end motion.

4. Kicking foot snaps back as non-kicking foot hits the ground. **American style**: ankle locks at right angle, toes up. The arc is parallel to the direction of travel. **Soccer style**: the leg swings in a natural arc and meets football near ball of the foot.

5. Keep upper body lean and head down at all times. Follow through. Non-kicking foot should stay in contact with the ground or leave the ground only slightly.

6. Feet should return to the ground ahead of the tee. Check this especially on extra points and field goals.



Special Teams Players Philosophy

To be a special forces player means that we must be committed to the value and importance of the kicking game. We must believe that the Special Forces will ensure the team of winning at least two more games each year and keep the team in the close game so we can have the opportunity to win. There is a very thin line between average and great. The way we will become champions is that we must have total commitment; it will not happen any other way. We must set high goals and use every ounce of our potential to reach success, even if it means having no mercy on ourselves!!!!!!

As we all know, the "Kicking Game" has been a deciding factor in many ball games. It may be the part of a football contest that can create the greatest number of momentum changes. Consider these elements of Special Teams:

1. One out of every 5 plays in a football game is a Special Teams play.
2. Each play normally involves a change of possession.
3. Plays that do not involve a change of possession are direct attempts of scoring or defending a scoring attempt.
4. Sizeable amounts of yardage can be gained or lost.
5. Statistically, approximately **40%** of high school football games are won or lost by the Special Teams.

Therefore, we MUST be thoroughly prepared on every Special Teams play to accomplish our goals.

Great teams take "Pride" in making things happen positively. Our kicking game is considered an "OFFENSIVE". We plan to WIN in every phase of our Special Teams. Our Schemes are designed to keep constant pressure on our opponent. The key to success will be CONSISTENCY AND EFFICIENCY executed with your INTENSITY, DESIRE, EFFORT, DISCIPLINE, CONCENTRATION and ENTHUSIASM.

The kicking game is not a place for a guy who will loaf or not give a 100% effort. You will do everything with the intent of causing a fumble, blocking a kick, throwing the key block, making a tackle or scoring points!!!!!!

"Special Teams greatest asset is the ability to give your team better field positions!"

How important is field position???

Offense starts on...	*Chances of scoring...*	*Percentage*
Inside the –20 yard line	1 out of 30 score	3%
-40 yard line	1 out of 8 score	13%
50 yard line	1 out of 5 score	20%
+40 yard line	1 out of 3 score	33%
+30 yard line	1 out of 2 score	50%
Inside the +20	2 out of 3 score	66%

****Special Teams can give our team the best field position...which means our team has the greatest chances of scoring. Likewise, our kicking game can put our opponents in poor field position, giving them a lower percentage chance of scoring.

SPECIAL FORCES GOALS

To be successful, you must have a way to measure results. Results are measured by accomplishing GOALS and OBJECTIVES. We break these GOALS down into two distinct categories: SEASON GOALS AND WEEKLY GOALS.

Our SEASON GOALS are:

1. Win two games as a direct result of the kicking game.
2. Score three Touchdowns from our Special Teams.
3. Block 5 or more punts.
4. Block 4 or more x-pts.
5. Force 5 or more turnovers during the course of the season.
6. Place the opponents inside the 10-yardline on 6 occasions.

Our WEEKLY GOALS are:

1. Penalty free game.
2. No bad snaps or blocked kicks.
3. Make a "Big Play"... (Block a kick, score or set up a score, create a turnover)
4. Hold opponents Punt Return average to under 5 yards.
5. Hold opponents Kick-Off return average to under 18 yards.
6. Our Punt Return to average more than 10 yards.
7. Our Kick-Off Return average more than 25 yards.
8. Field all returnable kicks.
9. Make 100% of X-Pts.
10. Make 100% of FG's under 40 yards.
11. Make 70% of FG's over 40 yards.
12. Not allow the opponent to score, or set up a score, on a kicking play.
13. No mental mistakes (not enough players on the field, losing contain, missed assignments, etc.)
14. WIN THE GAME!!!!

KICK-OFF COVERAGE

BASIC RULES

1. The Kick-Off starts the game, puts the ball into play after a touchdown or successful field goals. The ball will be kicked from the 40-yardline.

2. Once a kick-off travels 10 yards, it is a free ball. A kick-off must go 10 yards before the kicking team can legally touch it.

3. The kicking team cannot advance any recovery. Fall on the ball, and make sure that you come up with the recovery.

4. A member of the kicking team can catch a pooched kick in the air. If a fair catch signal is made you cannot interfere with his opportunity to catch the ball. Break down and be ready for a fumble.

5. Blocking below the waist is illegal. We cannot break a wedge or block out an opponent below the waist.

6. The ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team (touchback), when a free kick (kick-off) is untouched by the receiving team and the ball strikes the ground in the end zone.

7. A kick-off which goes out of bounds between the goallines without being touched by the receiving team, must be re-kicked with a 5 yard penalty or the receiving team may gain possession on the 35-yardline.

8. Any member of the kicking team may use his hands or arms to ward off blocker or to push him out of the way in a legal attempt to recover the ball.

FUNDAMENTALS

1. Covering a kick-off is an ALL OUT SPRINT.

A. Speed is important, but the intent to make a tackle is vital. A player shows his true football character on coverage team.

B. Each player must believe that every kick will be returned and that he will make the tackle.

C. GANG TACKLE!!! A tackle should never be made by one man. Relentless pursuit must be maintained until the ball carrier is down or the whistle blows.

2. Your all out sprint will carry you past most blockers. Up to the 35-yardline, avoid blocks. If you get out of your lane...work back into it as quickly as possible. Inside the 35, run through blocks keeping your outside arm free.

3. If you get knocked down, quickly get back up and close the hole that you opened up.

4. NEVER BE OFFSIDE. Time your approach so that you are within one yard of the 40 when the ball is kicked.

5. Our goal is to keep the ball inside the 30-yardline.

HUDDLE AND PROCEDURES

The Kick-Off Team will huddle on the field. The kicker should be the only one talking, he will give direction and coverage of the kick. (Example: Pooch Kick area 4) He will yell ready, then everyone will break and run to their spots on the field.

1. Left side 1,3,4,5 and Right side 5,4,3,1 on the 35-yardline. Enforcers will align on the 30-yardline.
2. Stance will be a two-point stance looking into the kicker.
3. Kicker will put his hand up after the ball has been put into play by the official.
4. Kickers hand will go down and will give the count: 1001,1002,1003. Kicker will start his approach on the three count. Enforcers will start their approach when the kickers hand goes down. Everyone else will time up their approach so that they will be within 1 yard of the 40 when the ball is kicked.

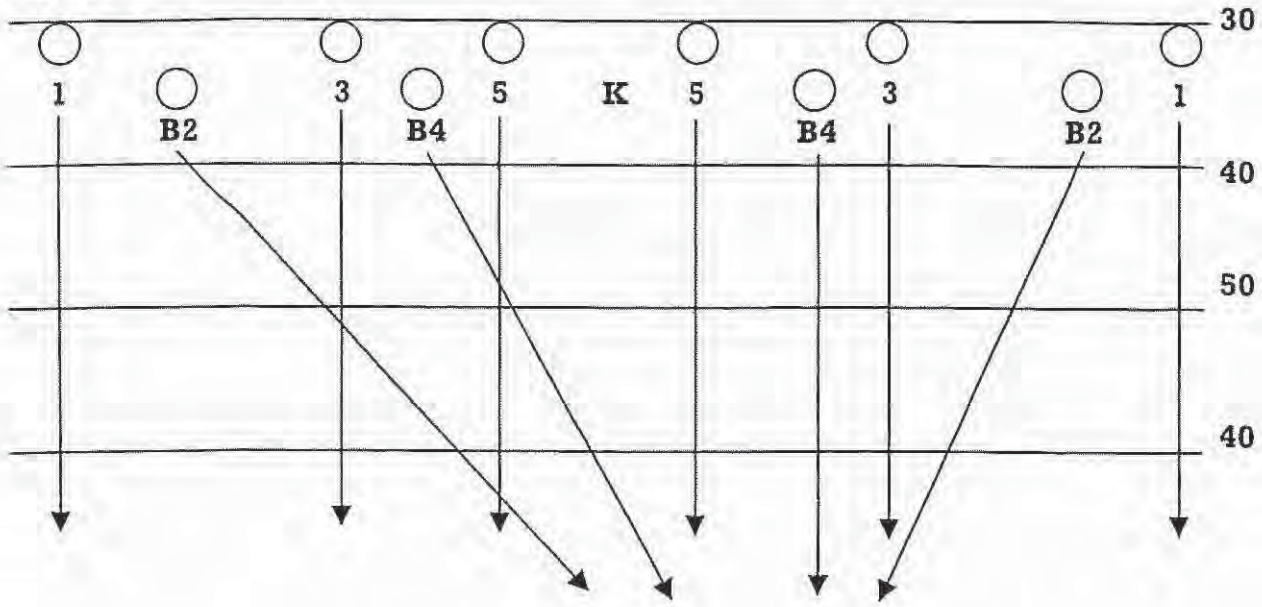
Enforcers:
Run to the ball, each keeping the returner to on their inside shoulder. Do not let the returner get outside of you. You have a running start, therefore, you should be the first people downfield. This is an all out sprint, don't loaf!!!

1,3,4, & 5's:
Run down your lane for 15 yards, then "squeeze" the return man to your inside shoulder. You may avoid blockers up till the +40, from that point you will run through blockers. Remember if you avoid a block, make sure that you get back into your lane. This is an all out sprint, don't loaf!!!

Kicker:
Kick the ball to the designated area and run in the direction of the football. You are a safety, stay about 25 yards in front of the ball. Look for any breakdowns or any running lanes.

****REMEMBER****
Break down 4 yards in front of the ball returner. Make him make the first move, and then react & wrap-up. When he is under control...strip the ball!!!!

KICKOFF



KICKER Kick off left or right & become safety man. Don't cross 50 yd. line.

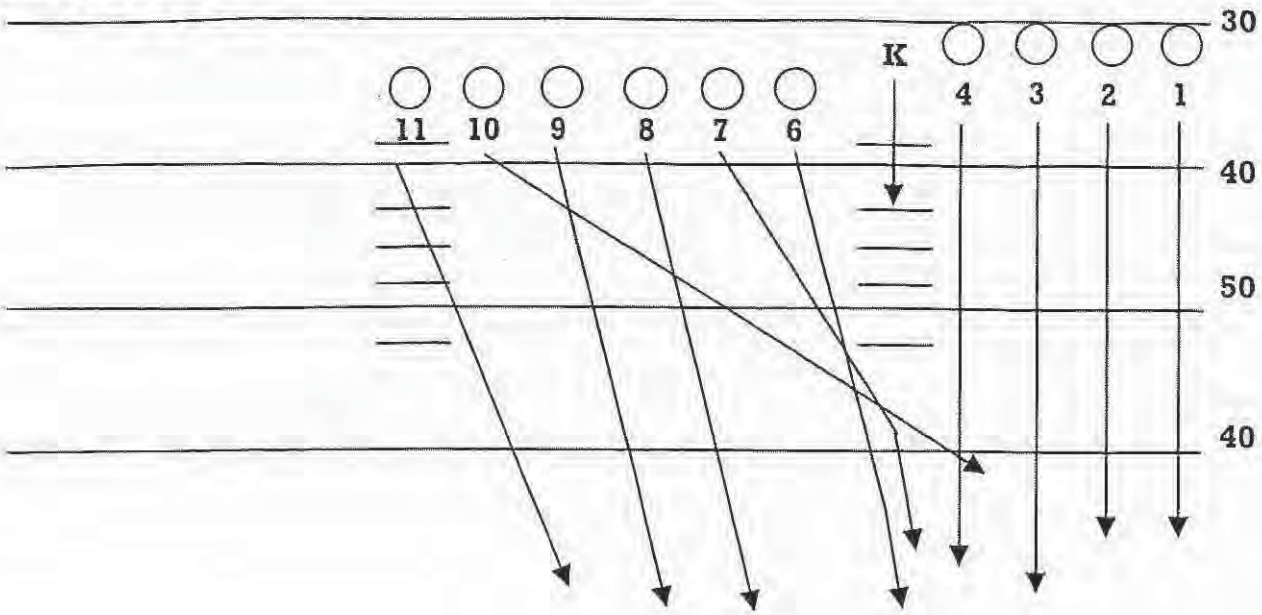
BULLETS Fly to ball

1,3 & 5 Stay in lanes then converge to ball. #1's nothing outside of you unless out of bounds.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. 10 yds. free ball
2. Stay in lanes for 30 yds., never follow a teammate.
3. Never stop until whistle blows.
4. 2 pt. stance facing kicker, bullets 3 pt. stance (40 yd. dash stance)
5. Don't be offside.
6. Make a big hit.

KICKOFF



KICKER Kick from hash. Get bullets started by saying "set", then look them over. **You must kick the ball into the deep corner.** Then follow the ball & play safety. Don't go deeper than the opponents' 45.

BULLETS 1-4: Take off with kicker & have great timing to the line. Fly straight down the field as fast as possible on a mission. Everybody avoid the first line of blockers to the left, getting right back in your lane. Then go through people and deliver a big tackle.

#6: Line up on the 45 yd. line. Make sure 6-10 are in a straight line. 3 pt. stances looking in at kicker. Yell, "go" when 6-10 should take off. Start heading straight down the field, then veer in as you must close in on the kicker's lane. You should be pinching toward the return man.

#7: On take off, peel in behind #6, and appear downfield between 5 & 6. You should be able to make a big hit.

#8 & 9: Time the kick & head down the field at a slight angle. When the return man sees 1-7 coming right at him, he will try to come your way. Make a nice downfield angle tackle. Don't ever let him up the far sideline.

#10: Bullet right across the field & try to aim at about the 25 yd. line. If the return man slips through, deliver a big hit.

#11: Follow off #9 but a little more controlled, as a safety type man.

FOOTBALL DRILLS

FORM RUNNING

Hammer:

The player stands with a slight forward lean, feet shoulder width apart. Player's hands should form a relaxed fist. Arms should be bent 90° at elbows. Coach gives a command to hammer arms at half speed for 15 seconds. Break and hammer at three-quarter speed for 15 seconds. Break and hammer at full speed for 15 seconds.

Purpose: To develop the upper body fundamentals involved in speed running.

High Knees:

The player runs 10 yards with knees high and proper arm techniques. The player should run on the balls of his feet. If he is going too fast, slow him down. Emphasize a quick, high knee and a slight forward body lean.

Purpose: To develop the hip flexor.

Butt Kick:

The player runs 10 yards. Maintain proper upper body technique while snapping heels to the buttocks as quickly as possible. Be quick without moving forward too fast.

Purpose: To develop hamstring strength and quickness.

Bounding:

The player runs 10 yards. The player should drive the knee to the chest while exploding off the back foot. As the player lands on the front foot, he should explode off the back foot. Use good upper body mechanics. Don't skip . . . explode!

Purpose: To develop explosive power.

Long Stride Run:

The player should run 10 yards. As the player runs he should work to lengthen his stride while maintaining good form. Stretch out the stride.

Purpose: To increase stride length.

Carioca:

The player should run 10 yards. Player faces sideways, left foot over right, then left foot behind right while rotating hips. Reverse the foot action coming back.

Purpose: To improve hip flexibility.

AGILITY AND QUICKNESS

Quick Feet:

Players line up facing the coach. Players take quick, choppy steps laterally without crossing over. Coach signals left-right and then forward. Players sprint out past the coach to finish the drill.

Hip Twister:

Players line up facing the coach. On the command, the players take quick, choppy steps and twist their hips in the direction of the coach's signal, then return to the base position.

Down and Go:

Players line up in three rows straddling the yard line and facing the coach. On command, the players turn and run 5 yards, touch the yard line and run 10 yards in the opposite direction, touch that yard line and return to the original position.

Up and Backs:

Players line up in three rows facing the coach. On command, the players backpedal 5 yards, touch the line, plant and drive. Sprint to the original starting line and begin to backpedal. Players should repeat as many reps as they can in 30 seconds.

BAG DRILLS

Lay four bags on the ground. Players line up single file at one end of the bags. On command, the players move through the bags using various techniques.

One Foot in the Hole:

Players run through the bags, emphasizing proper running form. Feet should be quick and clear the bags.

Two Feet in the Hole:

Players run through the bags getting both feet down between the bags. Emphasize quick feet.

Shuffle:

Players shuffle through to bags sideways without crossing their feet. Stay low in the hit position.

Carioca:

Player cariocas through the bags with emphasis on staying low. Keep shoulders low and square while picking feet up.

Weave:

The player should sprint to the top of the bag, backpedal to the other end, sprint out to the next bag and repeat weaving through the bags.

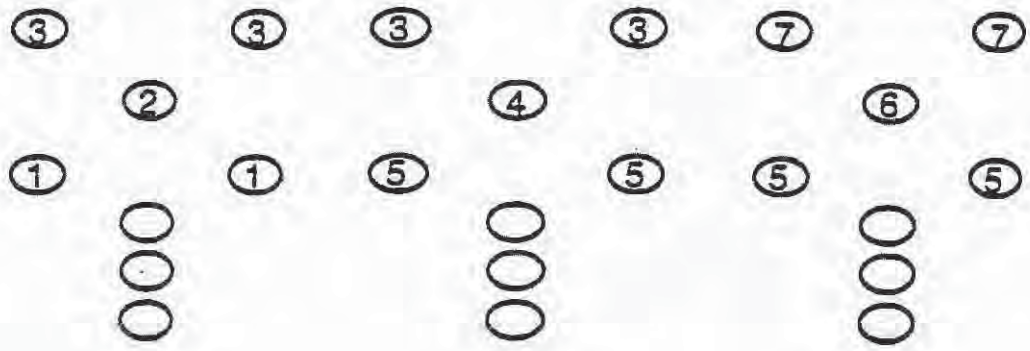
Bounding:

Players keep their feet together and hop over the bags. The emphasis should be on exploding (jumping higher each time) as they go over the bags.

Dot Drill:

The athletes line up in three rows behind three sets of dots. Four of the dots form a square with each dot one yard apart and one dot in the center of the square. On the coach's command, the athletes put their feet on the first two dots, jump with both feet to the center dot, then jump out to put one foot on each of the dots on the opposite side of the square. The athlete will then hop back to the center dot, then to the original starting position (similar to hopscotch). The drill should be conducted for 30 seconds with an emphasis on keeping the feet close to the ground, the weight centered on the balls of the feet, and the body moving as quickly as possible.

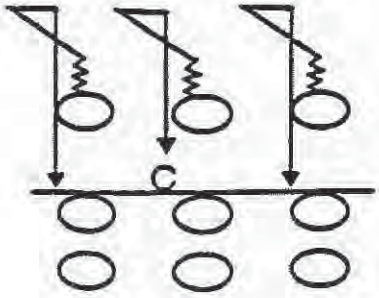
Purpose: To develop quickness of foot.



Wave Drill:

The athletes line up in three lines facing the coach. On the coach's command, the athletes sprint in the direction dictated by the coach (i.e., right, left, backward, forward, or any diagonal direction). The drill should be conducted for 15-20 seconds with four repetitions. The coach should stress the importance of staying low, executing proper change of direction techniques, and keeping the eyes on the coach.

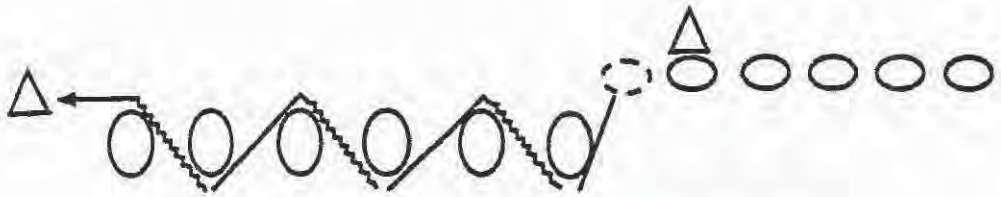
Purpose: To develop skills related to change of direction.



Snake Drill:

The athletes should sprint to the top of the bag, backpedal to the other end, sprint, and repeat, weaving through the bags.

Purpose: To develop foot agility and quickness.



Rope Drill Progressions:

Purpose: To develop quickness of foot and sense of balance.

One in a Hole:

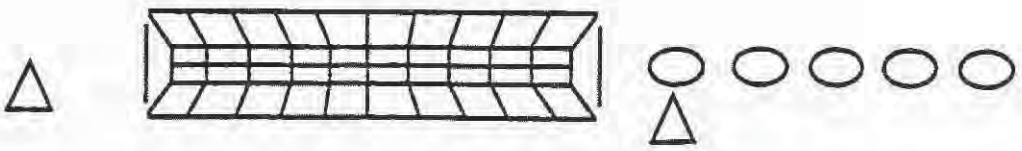
The athlete should step with the right foot in the right row of squares and the left foot in the left row.

Every Other Hole:

The athlete should step in every other square — right foot in the right row of squares and the left foot in the left row.

Criss-Cross Drill:

The athlete should step in every other square, criss-crossing the feet— right foot in the left row and left foot in the right row.



QUARTERBACK DRILLS

Cadence Snap Drill:

Align the centers and the quarterbacks four yards apart on a selected line of scrimmage. The coach designates a signal caller. The quarterback selects a play and a cadence. On the cadence, the centers snap the football and the quarterbacks and centers execute proper techniques.

Purpose: To execute proper techniques and fundamentals with the quarterback-center exchange.

Re-Grip Drill:

The quarterbacks grip the ball with the palm of their hand facing the ground. They move the ball up and down making sure to re-grip the ball every time. After a preset number of repetitions, the quarterbacks will switch hands and execute the drill with the other hand.

Purpose: To improve ball control.

Ball Drop Drill:

The quarterback holds the ball in front of his body with an extended arm. He then drops the ball and re-grips it in the air. After re-gripping, the quarterback brings the ball back up to the original position and carries out the fake. If he disconnects on the fullback, he uses both hands to remove the ball from the fullback's pocket and continues to pitch key.

Ball Drop Drill:

The quarterback holds the ball in front of his body with an extended arm. He then drops the ball and re-grips it in the air. After re-gripping, the quarterback brings the ball back up to the original position and repeats the drill for a preset number of repetitions. Use both hands to execute this drill.

Purpose: To improve ball control.

Drop and Circle Drill:

Follow the same procedure as the "Ball Drop Drill." As the quarterback drops the football, he attempts to circle the football and re-grip it in the air. He then brings the ball back to original position and repeats the drill. Practice this skill with both hands.

Purpose: To improve ball control.

Globetrotter Drill:

On the coach's command, the quarterback begins passing the ball from one hand to the other: between the legs, behind the back, and other varieties, as quickly as possible. The drill should last about 30 seconds, the players should then rest and repeat as many sets as desired.

Purpose: To improve ball control.

Knee Drill:

The quarterbacks face each other kneeling on the right knee (left knee if left-handed passer) approximately five yards apart. When kneeling, the first player lifts the ball as if taking a snap and executes the proper throwing technique. The partner catches the ball and returns it, also using proper throwing technique. After a significant number of repetitions, move quarterbacks further apart — five yards back every ten repetitions.

Purpose: To develop proper throwing action: wrist snap, arm strength, and quick release.

Hip Rotation Drill:

The quarterbacks stand 10 yards apart sideways with the point of their shoulders facing each other. The first quarterback throws the ball, making sure to rotate his hips to get his shoulder around. The second quarterback catches the ball and returns the first player's throw with the proper technique.

Purpose: To develop proper release and follow-through technique.

One Step and Throw Drill:

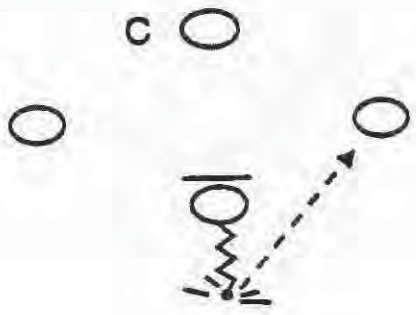
The quarterbacks stand 10 yards apart sideways with the point of their shoulders facing each other. Their feet should be approximately shoulder width apart with most of their weight on the back foot. The first quarterback takes a short jab step in the direction of the pass and executes proper release and follow-through technique. The second quarterback receives the ball and returns it to the first, using proper technique.

Purpose: To develop proper delivery, release, and follow-through technique.

Clock Drill:

The coach tells the quarterbacks to execute a three, five, or seven step drop. On the cadence, the quarterback takes the proper drop. The coach calls out 12 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 3 o'clock, etc., and the quarterback must step in that direction, pump fake, and step to the direction of the next call.

Purpose: To develop proper drop and stance technique.



Circle Drill:

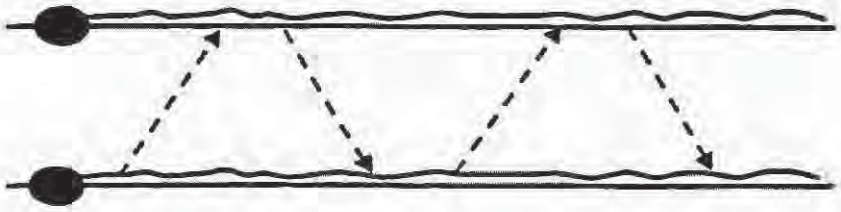
Align two quarterbacks 10 yards apart with one quarterback holding a football. On the coach's command, the two quarterbacks begin running clockwise in a circle, passing the football. After a certain number of repetitions, the coach will give a second command, and the quarterbacks will change direction and begin to run counter-clockwise, passing the ball back and forth. The drill continues until all paired quarterbacks have had a significant number of repetitions.

Purpose: To develop the mechanics of passing a football on the run.

Sprint Out Drill:

Use the yard lines at a 10-15 yard interval beginning on the sideline. The drill consists of two quarterbacks being assigned a yard line. The players run down their respective yard line, throwing the football to each other. When the quarterbacks reach the far sideline, they will turn around and continue the drill in the opposite direction. The tempo of the drill should be dictated by the coach. The drill continues until all paired quarterbacks have executed a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To develop proper mechanics of passing a football on the run.

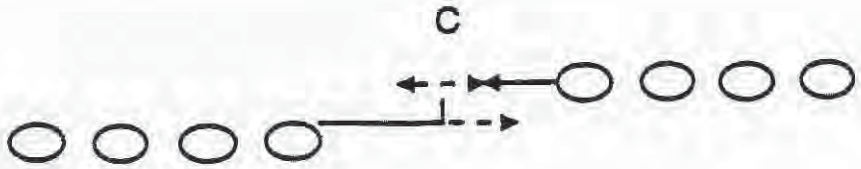


RUNNING BACK DRILLS

Ball Exchange Drill:

Running backs form two lines 10 yards apart, facing each other. On cadence, the first running back takes off at $^1/_2$ speed. The running back with the ball lays the ball out for a handoff. The running back receives the handoff and lays the ball out for the next man in line. The next back in line does not take off until the ball carrier receives the handoff. The drill continues until the running backs get a sufficient number of repetitions.

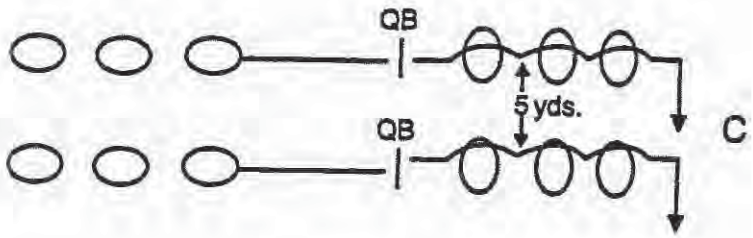
Purpose: To teach the proper technique in receiving a handoff and tucking the ball away.



Handoff Bag Drill:

Align two rows of three blocking dummies (bags) five yards apart. There should be a one-yard separation between each dummy (see diagram). Divide the quarterbacks and running backs into two groups aligned behind bags. The coach designates the cadence. On the snap, both quarterbacks execute handoffs to the first running back in line. The running back secures the football and runs through the dummies. After the running back crosses the last bag, the coach will give a direction for the back to break. The running backs change lines after each repetition. The drill continues until all backs receive a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach and practice the proper fundamentals in the execution of the handoff.



Split the Bag Drill:

Set two bag holders side by side with the ball carrier three yards away. On the cadence, the running back runs a course to split the bags while the coach hands the ball off. The ball carrier receives the handoff and explodes upfield through the dummies. The drill should be conducted so that the running back receives the handoff from both right and left positions. The drill continues until all running backs get a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach running backs to receive the handoff right before contact.

Running Back Pitch Drill:

The drill is set up with two running backs standing on the sideline at a five-yard interval. The running back with the ball jogs in place ready to pitch the ball. The other running back begins running down his respective yard line working to get in a proper pitch phase. The running back with the ball takes off and executes the pitch. As the running back receives the pitch, he begins to jog while the other running back works to get into pitch phase. The drill continues all the way across the field; the players then turn around and come back the same way. The drill should be conducted so both quarterbacks work the right and left-hand pitch. Repeat a predetermined number of times.

Purpose: To teach and develop proper fundamentals in pitching the football.

Bad Pitch Drill:

Same execution as the "Pitch Drill." The quarterback or running back is instructed to pitch the ball either behind the ball carrier or in front of him. This drill makes the ball carrier concentrate more on receiving the ball (ball security) before advancing the football.

Purpose: To teach the running back proper fundamentals when receiving a bad pitch.

Ball Switch Drill:

Align six cones, staggered five yards apart (see diagram). The running backs who are holding footballs are lined up single file behind the first cone. On the coach's command, the first running back weaves through the cones, making 45-degree cuts. As the running back approaches the cones, he must switch the ball to the outside arm to protect himself from a would-be tackler. The drill should be taught at half-speed and gradually increased as the running backs get a feel for the techniques. The drill should be conducted in both directions.

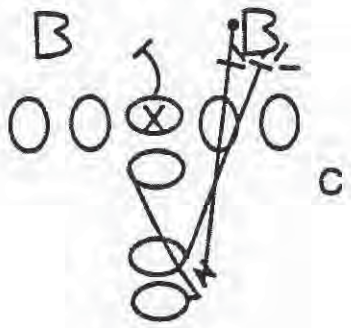
Purpose: To teach ball security in open field running.

BACKFIELD BLOCKING

Isolation Drill:

Position offensive personnel (center, quarterback, fullback and tailback) on a selected line of scrimmage. Align four blocking dummies on the line of scrimmage two yards apart representing the two and three holes (guard, center, gap). Position two linebackers (right and left) four yards off the line of scrimmage holding blocking shields. The coach designates snap count and play direction. On the snap, the offensive personnel execute the isolation play. The fullback attacks the appropriate linebacker and drives him out of the play. The quarterback hands the ball off to the tailback, the running back follows the fullback up through the hole and breaks off the fullback's block. The drill should be conducted so the play is run to both sides.

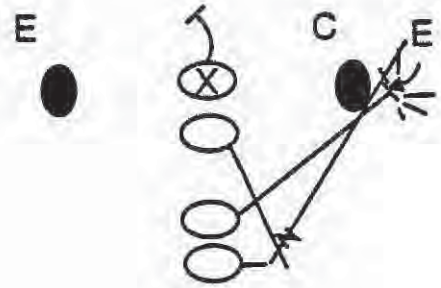
Purpose: To teach the proper techniques and fundamentals in the execution of the isolation play.



Off-Tackle Drill:

Position offensive personnel (center, quarterback, fullback, and tailback) on a selected line of scrimmage. Align two blocking dummies on the line of scrimmage, representing the offensive tackles. Position two defenders representing defensive ends one yard outside the blocking dummy. The coach designates the snap count and play direction. On the snap, the offensive personnel execute the off-tackle play. The fullback attacks the defensive end attempting to kick him out. The tailback executes the proper footwork, receives the handoff and follows the fullback reading off his block. The drill should be conducted to both sides.

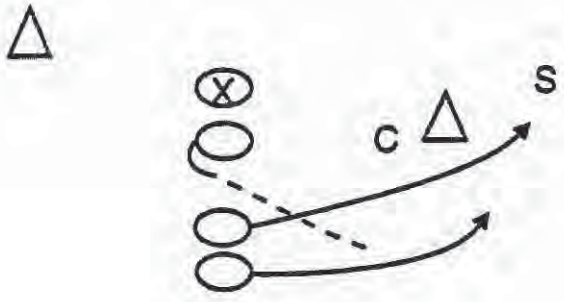
Purpose: To teach the proper techniques and fundamentals in execution of the off-tackle play.



Fullback Sweep Block:

Position offensive personnel (center, quarterback, fullback, and tailback) on a selected line of scrimmage. Align two cones on the line of scrimmage representing the tight end and offensive tackle positions. Position two defenders on either side of the formation aligned anywhere between the corner position and the inside linebacker position. The coach designates snap count and play direction. On the snap, offensive personnel execute the toss sweep play. The fullback must adjust his course according to the alignment of the defender and the angle of support. The drill should be conducted so the fullback receives a sufficient number of repetitions blocking the support players in different alignments. The drill should be executed from both sides.

Purpose: To teach the proper techniques and fundamentals in the execution of the toss sweep play.



RECEIVER DRILLS

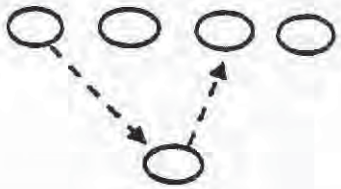
Two-Point Stance:

The fundamental techniques of the two-point stance are the base technique used with the three-point stance. The feet should be shoulder width apart, the outside foot dropped back with a heel-to-toe relationship. The majority of the weight should be on the up foot. The back leg should be staggered naturally to give maximum power for exploding forward. The receiver should have a good body lean forward with the shoulders over the knees. The arms should hang in a relaxed manner. His head should be up with his eyes looking downfield to survey the defense.

Pepper Drill:

Align four wide receivers on a selected line of scrimmage facing one receiver five yards apart. Two footballs are used in this drill. One of the four wide receivers has one ball and the receiver in front has the other. The drill begins with the four wide receivers playing pitch and catch with the man out front. As soon as the man out front receives the pass, he throws it back looking for the next pass. After a sufficient number of receptions, rotate clockwise to give everyone an opportunity to be out front.

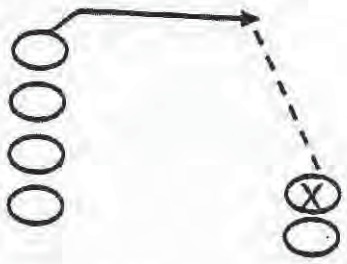
Purpose: To develop proper receiving skills and hand-eye coordination.



Square In Drill:

The receivers align in a single file line on the selected line of scrimmage. On the cadence, the receiver will take two steps upfield, plant, and come across the middle simulating a square in. The quarterback aligns approximately 10 yards from the receivers and throws the ball soon after the receivers break. After the reception, the receiver will tuck the ball away and turn upfield. After the first receiver executes the drill, he should form the next line to the right of the quarterback. The drill is conducted from both the right and the left sides. The drill should be run until all receivers have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

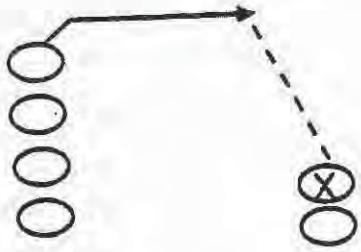
Purpose: To develop proper receiving skills.



One-Hand Catch:

This drill is executed in the same fashion as the "Square In Drill." The quarterback throws the ball so the receiver can catch it with his upfield hand. The receiver should tuck the ball away and turn upfield. The drill should be conducted so the receiver can practice one-handed catches with both the right and left hand. The drill should be conducted until all receivers have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

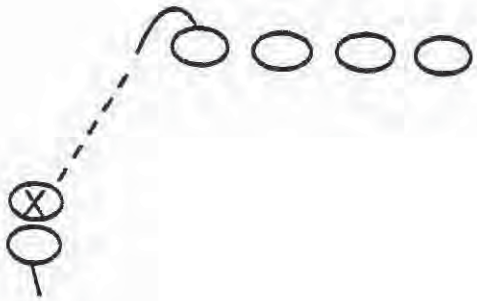
Purpose: To teach the receiver to concentrate on the ball by making a one-handed catch.



Turnaround Drill:

The receivers align in a single file line on a selected line of scrimmage with their backs to the quarterback. The quarterback stands approximately 10-12 yards from the intended receiver. The quarterback throws the ball to the receiver and gives a "ball" call. The receiver then turns completely around, picks up the flight of the ball and makes the reception. The drill should be conducted so that the receivers practice right and left shoulder turns.

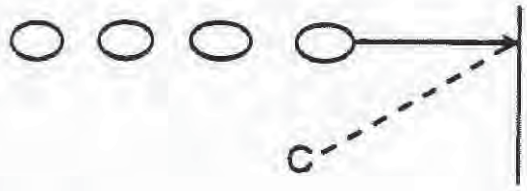
Purpose: To teach receivers to get head and eyes around to the ball.



Sideline Drill:

Wide receivers will align in a single-file line approximately five yards from the sideline. The passer stands 10-12 yards away from receiver. On command, the receiver will run to the sideline simulating the out route while the quarterback throws the ball. The receiver makes the catch with two hands while keeping both feet in-bounds. The drill should be conducted from both the right and left sides. The drill concludes after all receivers have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach receivers proper skills and fundamentals involved in catching a football near the sidelines.



Over the Shoulder Drill:

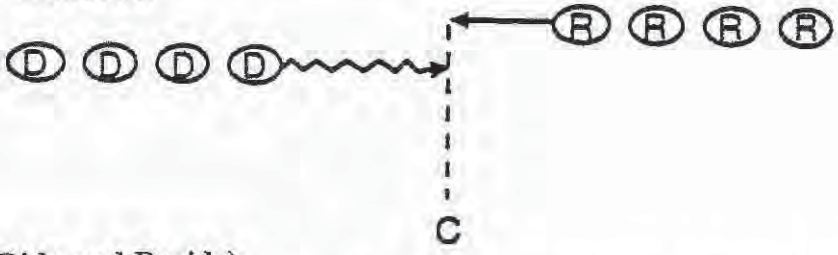
Divide receivers into two groups. Align the first group on the right hash mark. On the quarterback's cadence, the receiver executes the take-off route. The quarterback takes a short drop and throws the ball over the outside shoulder of the receiver. The receiver makes the reception following the ball all the way into his hands. After the receiver executes the drill, he switches lines. The drill should continue until all receivers have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach proper techniques and fundamentals involved in catching the football over the shoulder.

Distraction Crossing Drill:

Divide the receivers into two groups facing each other on a selected line of scrimmage. One receiver will run across the field behind the defensive man crossing from the opposite direction. The quarterback or coach will throw the ball to a point where the two players are about to cross. Instruct the defender to wave his arms and try to distract the receiver. The drill should be conducted in both directions and until all receivers have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach receivers to concentrate on the football while having their vision obstructed.



Mesh Point (Ride and Decide):

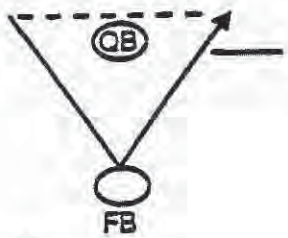
After taking the snap from the center, the quarterback should lock his backside elbow on his hip to get the ball to the fullback's pocket as deep as possible. We refer to this as the swinging gate technique. The quarterback puts his chin on the front right shoulder and his eyes immediately go to the read key.

The quarterback should have a secure grip on the football when he gets to the mesh point. It is helpful to teach the quarterback to use the back of his inside hand as a pressure gauge for the fullback. The quarterback will ride only to the front hip of the fullback and not beyond. The quarterback should not ride past this point because it is after that point that most turnovers occur. If the quarterback gives the ball off, he simply removes the inside hand from the fullback's hips.

V-Drill:

Align personnel in appropriate alignments. The coach designates the direction of the play (for example: six option right). On the snap, the quarterback executes the proper mechanics in the ride and decide. The fullback takes a six inch lead step and sprints to the outside shoulder of guard (down the line). The quarterback gives the ball to the fullback and carries out the option fake. The drill should be run both to the right and the left. The drill continues until all personnel have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

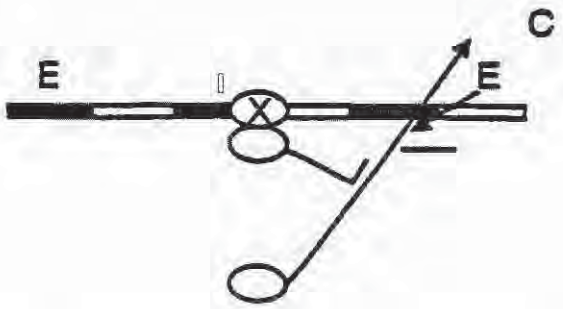
Purpose: To teach and develop proper mechanics in executing the first phase of the triple option mesh point.



Ride and Decide Drill:

Align personnel in appropriate positions. The coach designates the play and the handoff keys responsibility. On the snap, the quarterback and fullback execute proper mechanics in the ride and decide. The quarterback reads the handoff key and reacts accordingly. The drill should be conducted to both the right and left and continues until quarterbacks and fullbacks have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

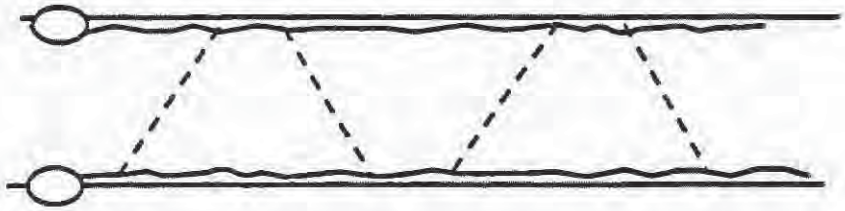
Purpose: To teach and practice proper fundamentals in reading the handoff key.



Pitch Drill:

The drill is set up with two quarterbacks standing on the sideline at a five-yard interval. The quarterback with the ball jogs in place ready to pitch the ball. The other quarterback begins running down his respective yard line working to get in a proper pitch phase. The quarterback with the ball takes off and executes the pitch. As the quarterback receives the pitch, he begins to jog while the other quarterback works to get into pitch phase. The drill continues all the way across the field, the players then turn around and come back the same way. The drill should be conducted so both quarterbacks work the right and left-hand pitch. Repeat a predetermined number of times.

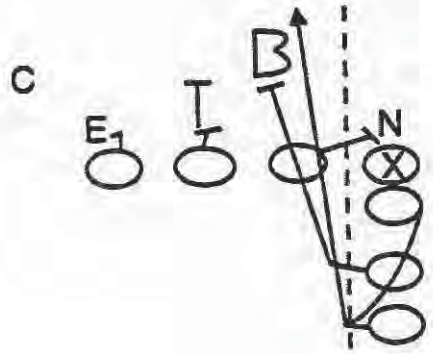
Purpose: To teach and develop proper fundamentals in pitching the football.



Half Line Drill:

Offensive and defensive plays are scripted (20 plays: 10 right hash boundary and field and 10 left hash boundary and field). Divide offense and defense into two groups. Align the football on a selected line of scrimmage on the left hash mark. Boundary personnel (group one) steps up and executes play number one on the script. Field personnel (group two) huddles, calls play number two on the script and executes the play as group one finishes. The drill should be run from both hash marks and until all personnel have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To practice proper fundamentals both offensively and defensively in a half line situation.

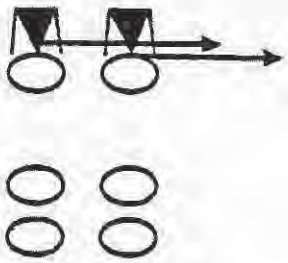


OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Two-Man Hip Roll:

Align linemen in two rows in front of the two-man sled. The first lineman in each row aligns himself an arm's distance away from the sled. On the coach's command, each blocker attempts to move the sled as far as possible with the forward thrust of his hips while not moving his feet. After the lineman has executed the hip roll, he will roll out and sprint five yards, then return to the end of the opposite line. The next two men step up and execute the drill.

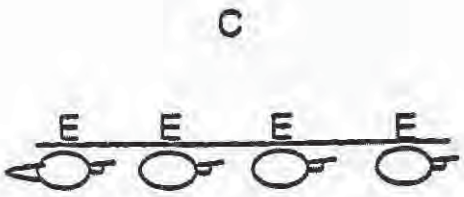
Purpose: To develop hip roll and full extension of the body.



Push-Pull Drill:

Divide the linemen into two groups. Pair them up and position them on a selected line of scrimmage. One group is designated as the blockers and the other group is designated as the defenders. The first group begins the drill in a lockout position with the defender grabbing the shoulders of the blocker. On the coach's command, the defender attempts to turn the lineman's shoulders, pull the lineman forward or push the lineman back. The lineman must keep his arms locked out and shuffle his feet. The drill continues until the coach blows the whistle.

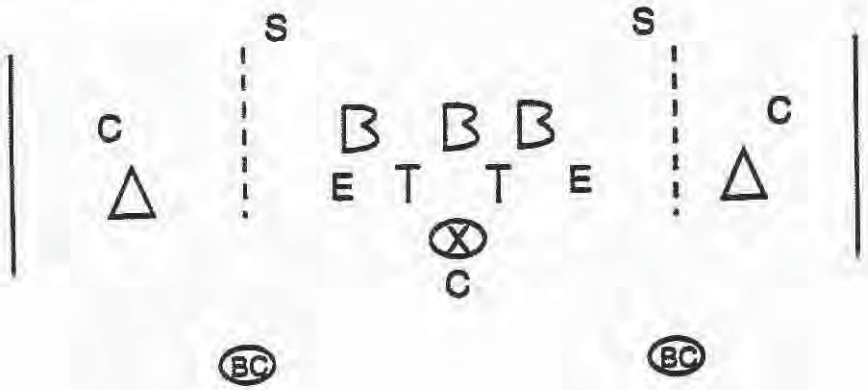
Purpose: To teach the blocker to maintain balance and fight pressure where he feels pressure.



Pursuit Drill:

The defense huddles on a selected line of scrimmage. Align two cones, one on each side of the field on top of the numbers. Position a running back on each hash mark, five yards behind the selected line of scrimmage. The coach calls out the defensive play. The defense lines up accordingly in proper stance and alignments. On the cadence, the coach either drops straight back and throws the ball deep or turns and simulates a toss sweep. If the coach drops straight back, the defensive line rushes and the secondary and linebackers drop to their respective zones. The coach throws the ball deep and the defender intercepts the football at its highest point and returns it up the near sideline. The remaining defenders set up a wall leading the ball carrier into the end zone. If the coach simulates a toss sweep, the ball carrier on the hash mark sprints around the cone and down the sideline. The drill may be run to simulate a drive in a hurry-hurry situation.

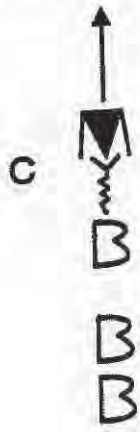
Purpose: To teach defensive personnel proper pursuit angles. To provide an overall conditioning drill.



Popsicle Tackling Drill:

Align the defenders in a single file line five yards apart from the popsicle sled. On the coach's command, the first defender executes a proper form tackle on the sled. After each repetition, each defender goes to the end of the line. The drill continues until all defenders have executed form tackles with both the right and left shoulders.

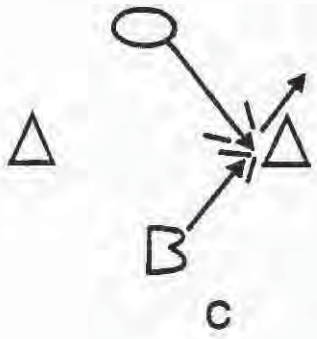
Purpose: To teach proper techniques and fundamentals involved in tackling.



Angle Tackle:

Align two cones five yards apart. Divide defenders into two single-file lines five yards apart facing one another and designate one group as the ball carriers and the other group as the defenders. The coach stands behind the first defender and signals the direction to the ball carrier. On the coach's cadence, the ball carrier takes off to the designated cone. The defender closes the distance and executes a proper angle tackle. The drill should be conducted so that all defenders work angle tackling to both the right and left sides.

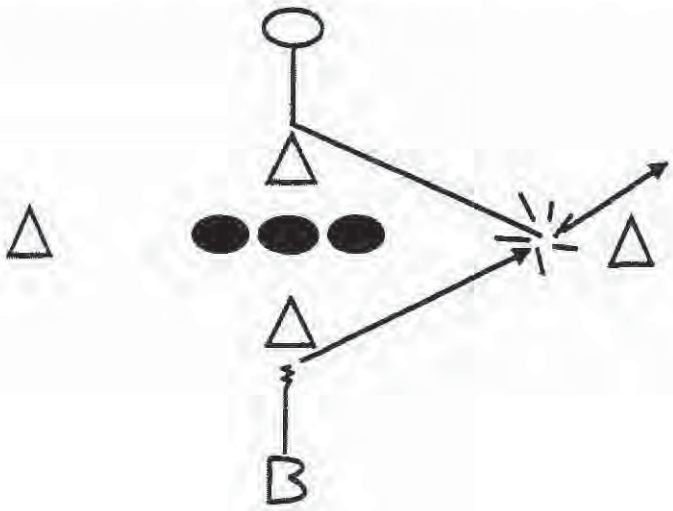
Purpose: To combine tackling skills with proper pursuit leverage and position.



Open Field Tackling:

Lay three bags together with a cone five yards outside either edge. Position two cones three to four yards apart directly in the middle of the bags. Divide the defenders into two groups and designate one group as the ball carriers and the other as the defenders. On the coach's command, the ball carrier should run to the middle cone and break off in either direction between the bag and the cone. The defender should close the distance on the ball carrier and execute an open field tackle. The drill should continue until all defenders have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach the defender to break down in open field and make open field tackle.



Shed Drill:

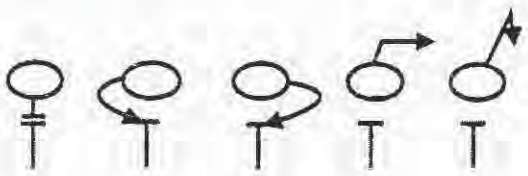
Divide defensive linemen into two groups and align them on a selected line of scrimmage facing each other. Designate one line as offense and the other line as defense. On the coach's cadence, the offensive player attempts to drive his helmet past the defender's left side and knock him off the line of scrimmage. The defender reacts to the block by shuffling to his left and driving his hands into the opponent's numbers. After the defender works to a lockout position, he should work to escape the blocker. The drill should be conducted in both directions and until all defenders have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach defensive linemen proper fundamentals in using the hands to defeat blockers.

One-on-One Blocks:

Divide defensive linemen into two groups on a selected line of scrimmage. Designate one group as offense and the other as the defensive group. The coach dictates the blocking scheme. On the designated take-off key (ball or man), the defender attacks the blocker and executes the proper technique according to a blocking scheme. The drill should be conducted against a variety of blocking schemes and until all defenders have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

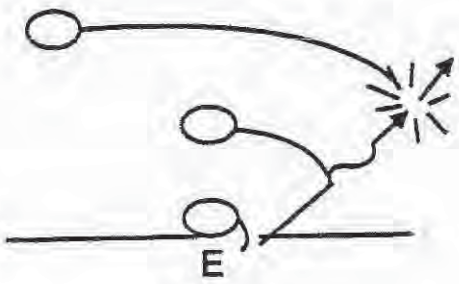
Purpose: To teach defensive linemen proper techniques and fundamentals in defeating blocking schemes.



Contain Drill:

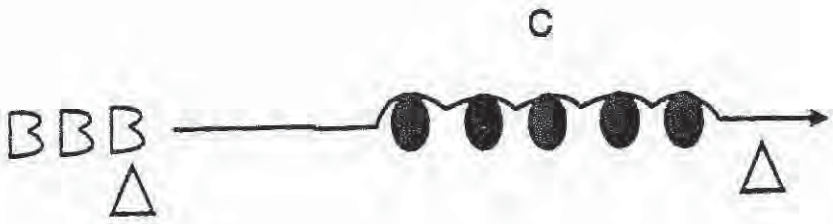
This drill is run with three players: two blockers and a running back. Align the two blockers behind one another facing the defender. The third man is positioned as a running back stacked inside against the two blockers. The defender aligns himself head up over the first blocker. On the coach's command, the first blocker attempts to hook the defender. After the defender defeats the hook block, the next blocker should be instructed to chop block the defender. The running back tries to get the ball outside the defender. The defender defeats both blockers and executes an angle tackle on the ball carrier. The drill should be conducted in both directions and until all defenders have received a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach proper position and technique to keep contain responsibilities.



Shuffle Drill:

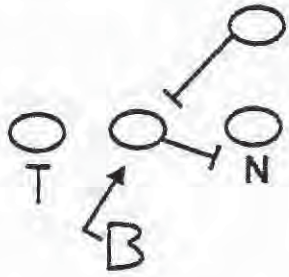
Linebackers stand in a single file line behind the cone. The coach gives a "set" command and the first linebacker steps up to a good football hitting position. On the next command, "hit," the linebacker shuffles over the bags leading with his right foot. As the linebacker crosses the last dummy, he turns and sprints past the cone. The drill is repeated in the opposite direction and should be conducted until all linebackers have had a sufficient number of repetitions.



DEFENSIVE LINE

Tree of Blocks Drill:

Use either the backup offensive linemen or linebackers to play the center, guard, tackle, and fullback positions. Position the backup defensive linemen to represent defensive front alignment. Coach designates blocking scheme and course of fullback. On the cadence, the offensive group carries out its responsibilities and the linebacker reacts accordingly. The drill should be conducted until all linebackers receive a sufficient number of repetitions.

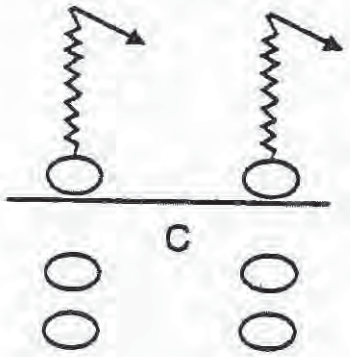


DEFENSIVE BACKS

Backpedal:

Divide the defensive backs into two groups aligned on the sideline. On the coach's command, the defensive backs should backpedal to the hash mark. When the defensive backs reach the hash mark, the coach points a direction for the back to break. After each repetition, the defensive backs must switch lines. The drill continues until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach defensive backs proper backpedaling technique.



Weave Drill:

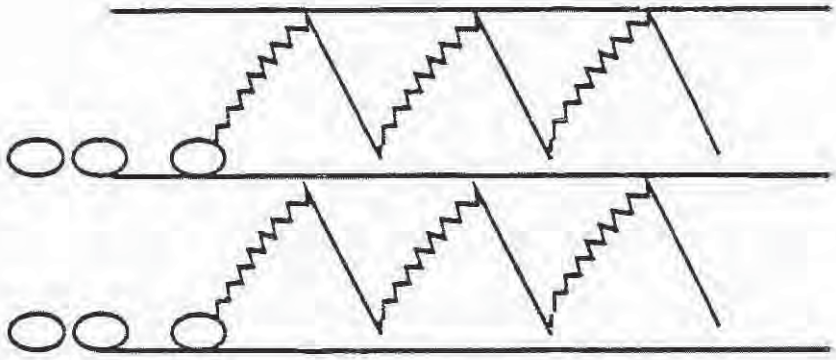
Divide the defensive backs into two groups aligned on the sideline. On the coach's command, the defensive backs begin backpedaling straight back. The coach gives hand signals for the direction of the weave. When the backs reach the hash mark, the coach gives a direction for the defensive backs to break. After each repetition, the defensive backs must switch lines. The drill continues until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach defensive backs to keep proper leverage on the receiver while staying in their backpedal.

W-Drill:

Divide defensive backs into two groups and align them five yards apart, standing on the side line. On the coach's command, the two defensive backs begin backpedaling at a 45° angle. When the defensive backs reach the next yard line, they should execute proper break technique, driving up at a 45° angle. The drill continues from one sideline to the other. When all the defensive backs reach the far sideline, repeat the drill, coming back up the field to work the break technique in the opposite direction.

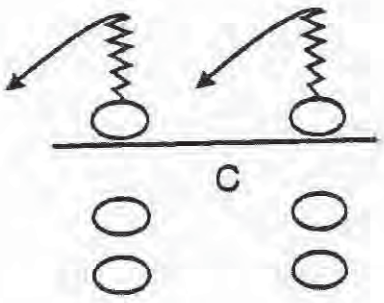
Purpose: To teach the defensive backs proper techniques when breaking on the receiver or on the ball.



Backpedal and Drive:

Divide the defensive backs into two groups aligned on the sideline. On the coach's command, the defensive backs begin backpedaling. The coach then gives a visual hand signal to the left or right to determine the direction to plant and drive 45 degrees. The defensive backs should change lines after each repetition. The drill should continue until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

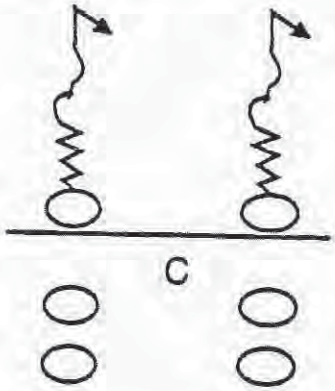
Purpose: To teach defensive backs proper techniques when breaking on the receiver or on the ball.



Quick Hips:

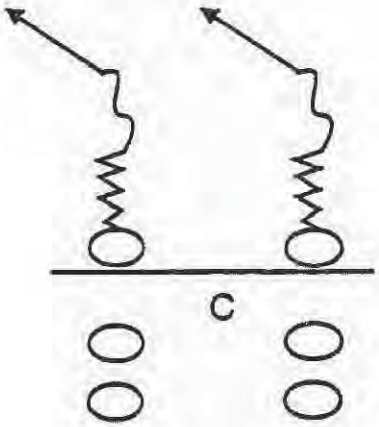
Divide the defensive backs into two groups aligned on the sideline. On the coach's command, the defensive backs begin backpedaling. The coach will point in a direction. The defensive back must open up and run on the signal. The coach then points in the opposite direction, the defensive back pivots, opens up in that direction, and then sprints down the line. The coach then gives a directional signal for the defensive backs to break. The drill should continue until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To increase hip flexibility and balance.



Centerfield Turn:

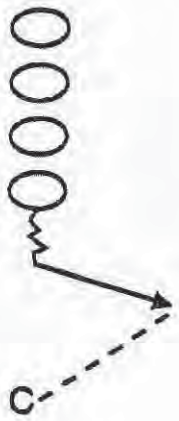
Divide the defensive backs into two groups aligned on the sidelines. On the coach's command, the defensive backs begin to backpedal. The coach then gives a direction signal for the defensive backs to execute a zone turn. On the coach's next signal (opposite direction), the defensive backs execute a centerfield turn at 45°. The drill should be conducted with the centerfield turn executed to both the right and left. The drill is executed until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.



Line Ball Drill Progression – Break at 45° – and 40°:

Coaching Points:

1. The defender will break at 45° upfield as the coach's shoulders open.
2. Make sure that the defender uses proper receiving techniques.
3. First repetition – high ball. Second repetition – low ball. Third repetition – ball thrown behind the defender.



Line Ball Drill Progression – Tip Drill:

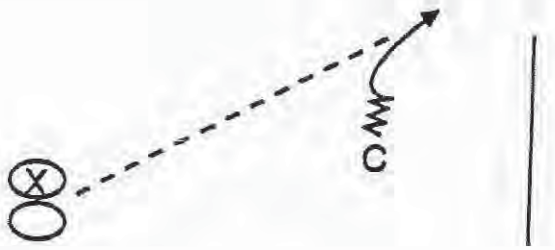
Coaching Points:

1. The first two men in line take off on coach's command.
2. The first man tips ball up in the air, while the second defender intercepts the ball.
3. Drill teaches players to concentrate on the ball.

Defensive Back Fade Drill:

Align the defensive backs at the top of the numbers on a selected line of scrimmage. On command, the first defensive back begins backpedaling. When the coach opens his shoulders, the defensive back should make a zone turn and sprint down the numbers. The coach throws the long ball and the defensive back intercepts it and brings it up the near sideline. The drill should be conducted in both directions and until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach defensive backs to play the long ball.



Break in Front Drill:

Align the defensive backs on a selected line of scrimmage in a single-file line. Position a defensive back approximately 10 yards deep and four yards outside the line representing the receiver. On the coach's command, the first defensive back begins backpedaling straight back. As the coach opens his shoulders to the receiver, the defensive back should break to the interception point. If the coach throws the ball, the defensive back should intercept the football. If the coach pump fakes, the defensive back should begin his backpedal and break on the out-cut when given the appropriate signal. The drill should be conducted in both directions and until all defensive backs have had a sufficient number of repetitions.

Purpose: To teach defensive backs to drive to the interception point and make the interception.