

*Hudson
Boosters Football
Coach Resource Guide*

Help kids realize a passion for the game and enhance knowledge/skills in a fun environment.



The Hudson Boosters Football program exists for the purpose of teaching each child the fundamental skills and concepts of the game of football while having fun.

Strong positive leadership from every coach is required at practices and games.

Coaches must focus on teamwork, fair play and provide a framework for the wholesome participation at each child's playing ability.

Continue to remind players of the "3 Rules":
SHOW RESPECT, PLAY HARD & HAVE FUN!

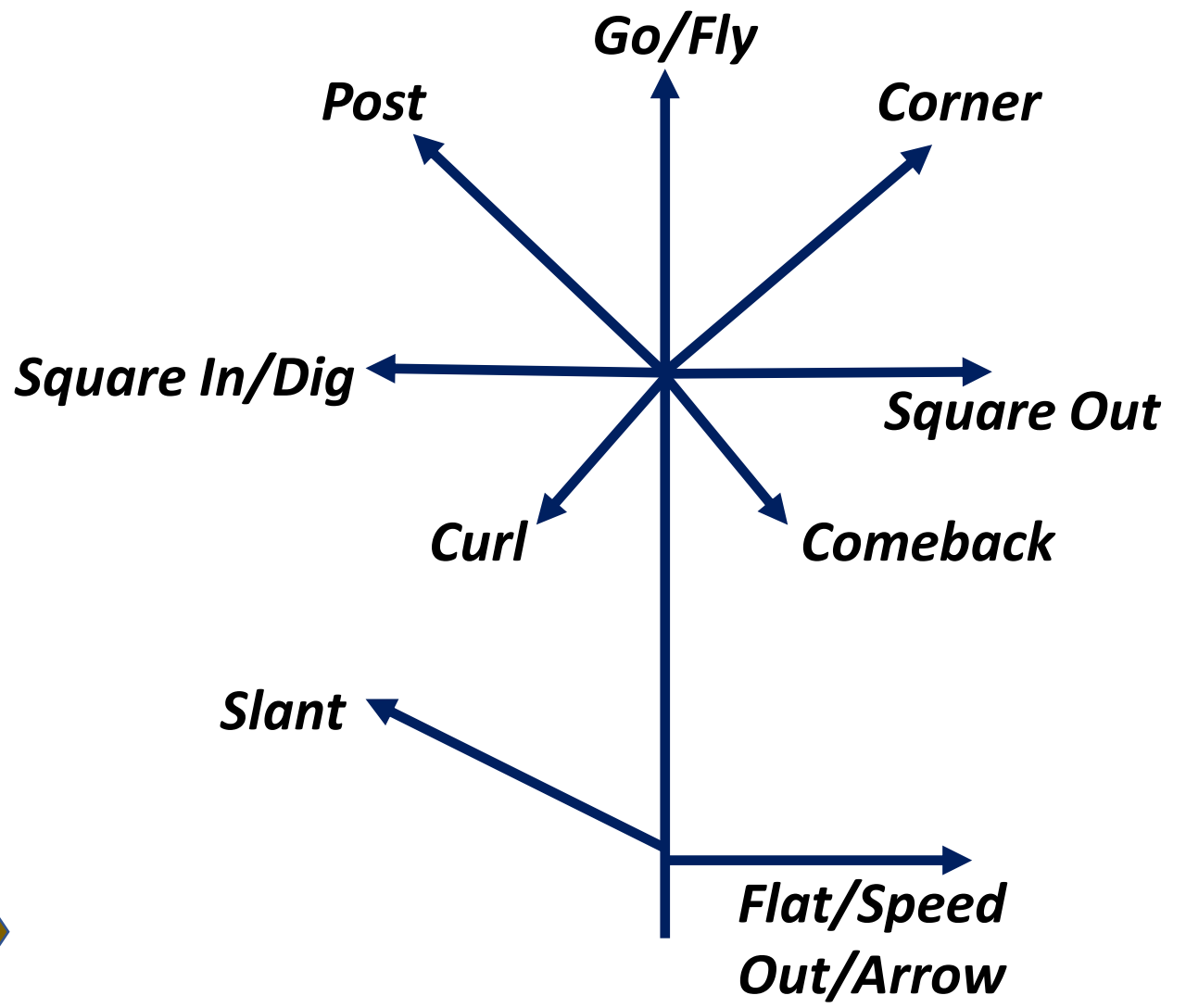
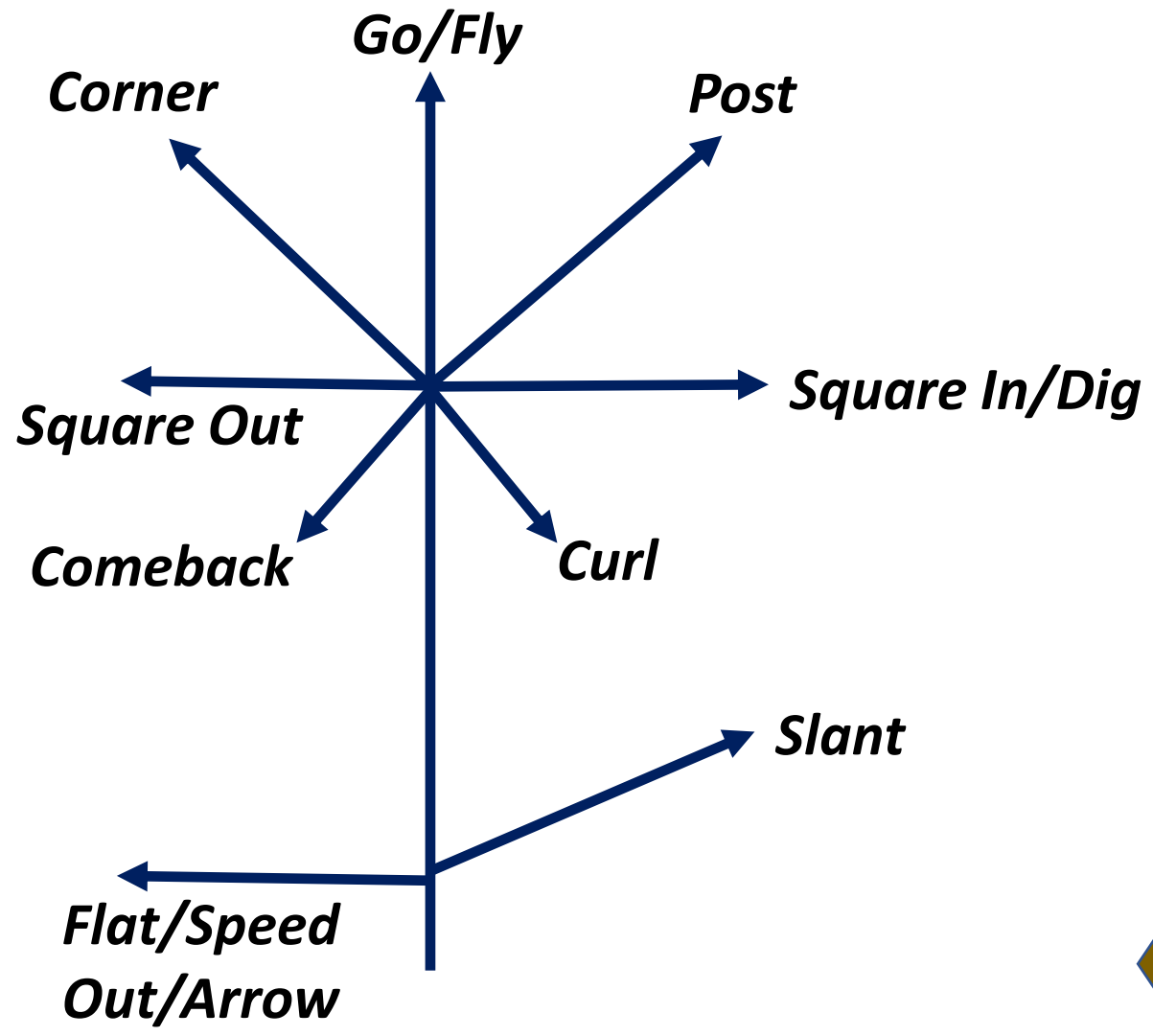
Season Coaching Goals

- Offensive Positions
- Defensive Positions
- Offensive Formation
- Defensive Formation
- Core Running & Passing Plays
- Defense Player Responsibilities
- Position Alignment
- Blocking Technique & Responsibly
- Defense Gap Coverage
- Heads-Up Tackling & Blocking
- Catching with Hands
- Proper Handoffs and Pitches

3 Coaching Keys

- 1) Exemplify Respect – towards players, parents, other coaches, refs, etc.
- 2) Engaged Teaching – come prepared and connect with kids & families
- 3) Focus on FUN – we want kids to have a love for the game

Route Tree



A brown football with a shield logo on a green field. The shield logo features a blue 'H' on a white background. The football is positioned in the center of the frame, resting on a green artificial turf field with white yard lines. The text 'Quarterback Drills' is overlaid in white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and partially overlapping the football. A white horizontal line is drawn below the text.

Quarterback Drills

Coaching Points for Throwing a Football

Focus on GRIP, BODY ALIGNMENT and THROWING MOTION

- Hold the ball towards one end of the football
- Tips of fingers on the laces, with the middle finger and thumb aligned
- Shoulder facing the target (left shoulder if right handed)
- Football is held comfortably chest height prior to throwing, with the non-throwing hand helping secure the ball
- Front foot steps forward (left foot if right handed) and bring throwing arm back so it is parallel with the ground until it makes an “L” shape
- Rotate hip towards target (right hip if right handed) and let the arm follow with the elbow ahead of the ball
- Release the ball above the head and follow through with a flick of the wrist that allows the pointer finger to be the last to let go of the ball

Quarterback – Center Exchange Drill

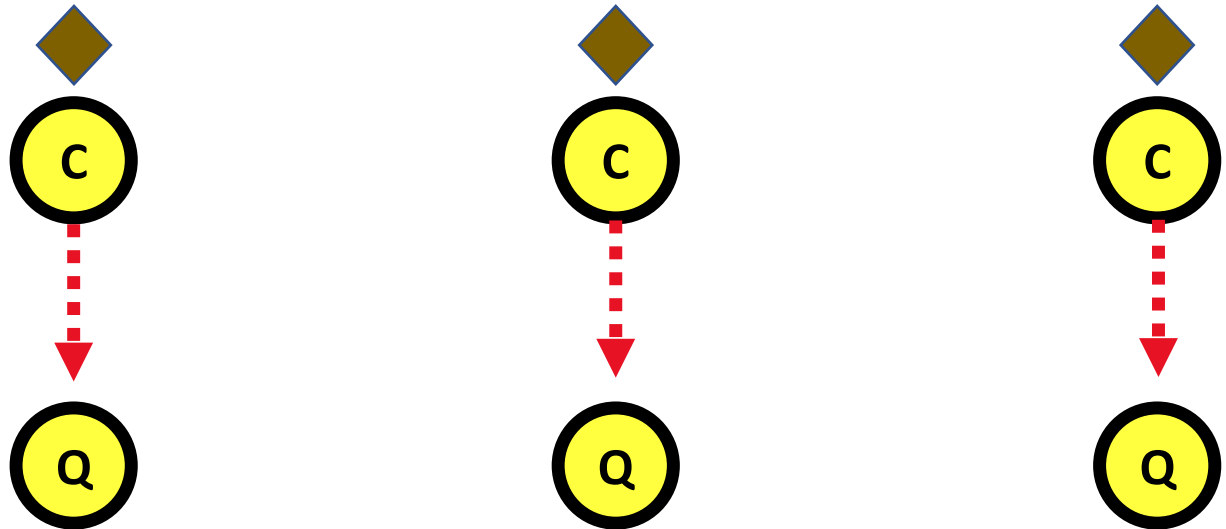
Line up three players at the Center position. They should be 3-4 yards apart from each other.

One Quarterback will line up 2 yards behind each Center in shotgun formation.

The Quarterback's knees should be bent so that they stay low and their hands should be ready to accept the football. They need to make a "U" shape with their hands to give a target for the Center.

Quarterback will give cadence "Ready, GO." The center will snap the ball to the quarterback on "GO."

Centers should focus on a clean snap that is not too slow and not rushed. Center needs to aim for the Quarterback's chest/shoulders. You will want to have all players practice snapping.



Quarterback – Running Back Hand-Off Drill

Practice both Sweep Right and Sweep Left.

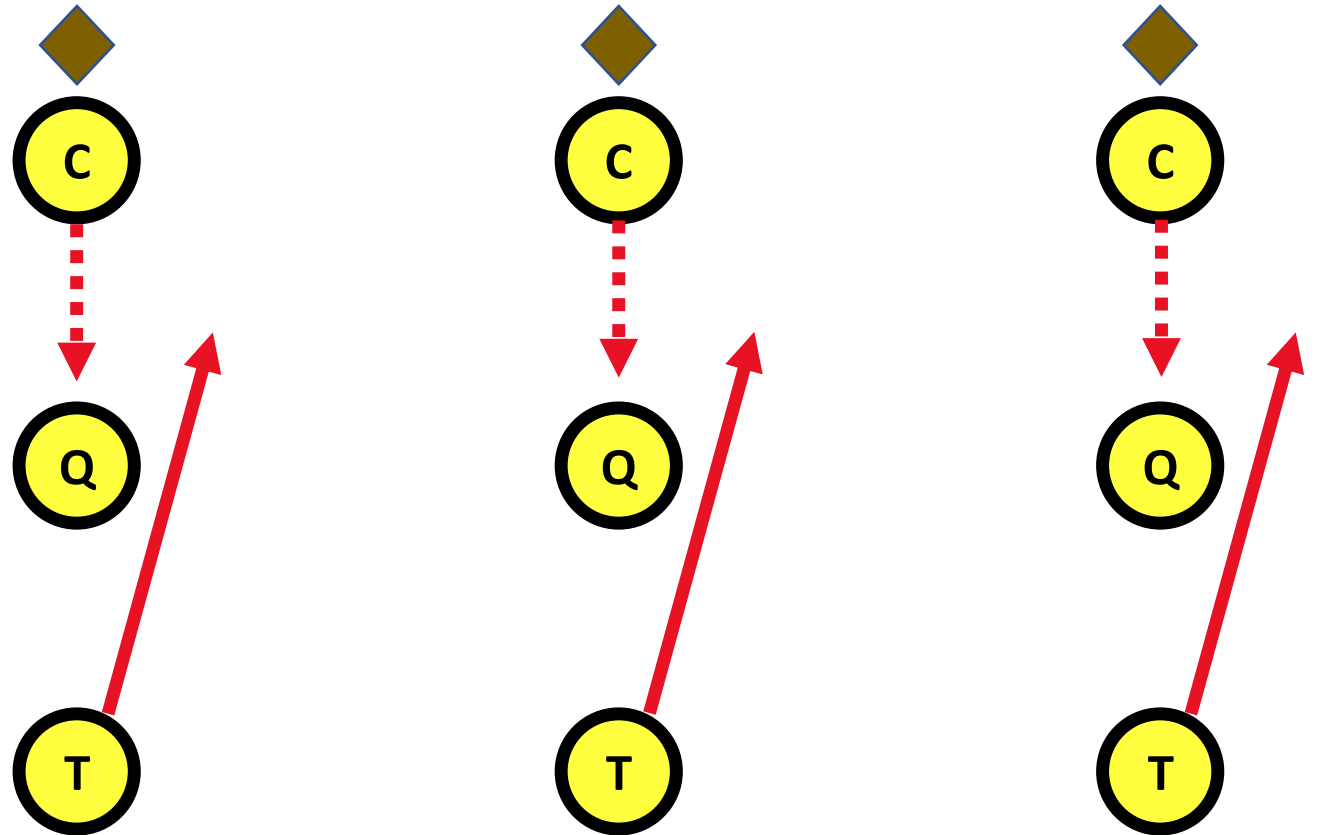
Line up three players at the Center position. They should be 3-4 yards apart from each other.

Quarterback will give cadence “Read, GO.” The center will snap the ball to the quarterback on “GO.” At that moment the Running Back will start their motion to the right (or left) of the Quarterback.

Quarterback will pivot to the right (or left) and keep their eyes on placing the ball in the Running Back’s stomach.

The Running Back’s inside elbow that points toward the Quarterback will be the arm that is above their chin and the other arm will be below waste level.

Quarterback will place the ball between the Running Back’s arms and the Running Back should NOT grab the ball during the exchange. Emphasize RB keeping the eyes forward (not looking down at the ball) when it is being handed off.

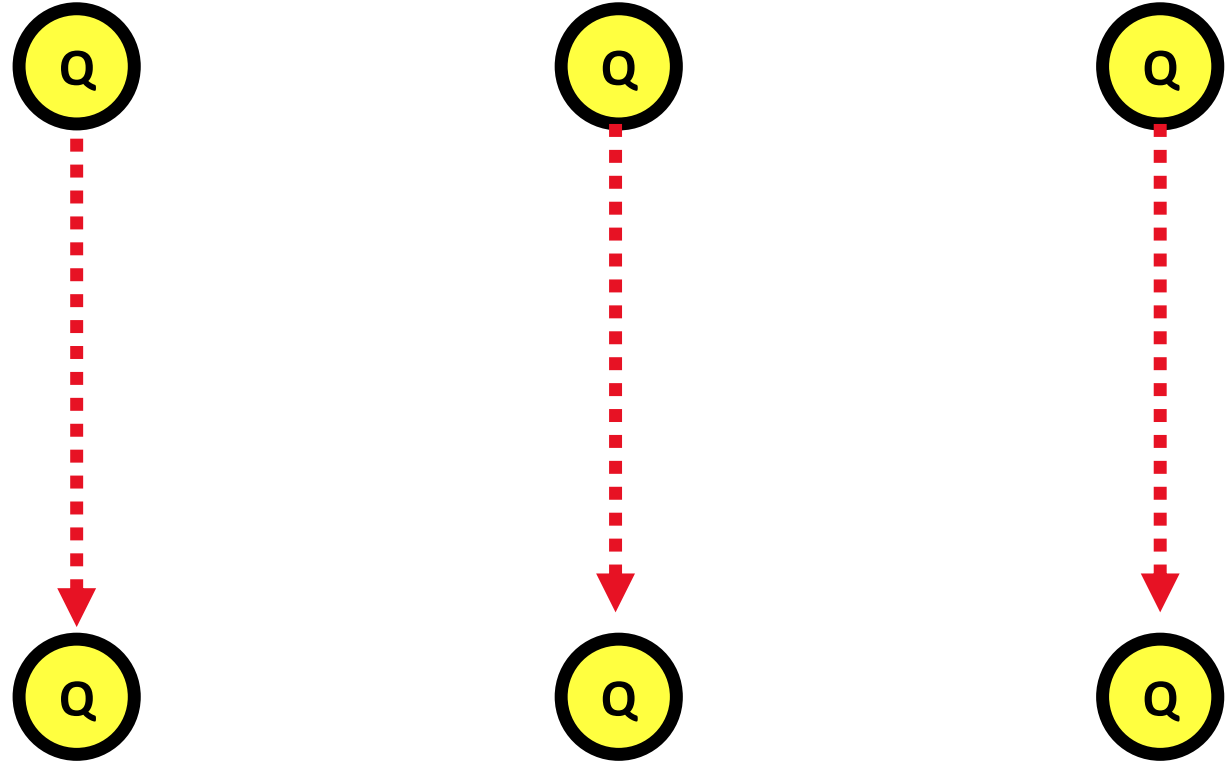


Quarterback Kneeling Throw Drill

Have three players take a stance with 1 knee on the ground (the same knee as their throwing arm, i.e. right handed thrower places right knee on ground). Each player will have a partner that is also kneeling and facing them from 5 yards away.

The players will throw the ball to a each other. Players must stay tall as they throw and should not be hunched over.

Emphasize proper grip, holding the ball high (over shoulder by ear), throwing motion, flicking the wrist and following through (throwing thumb pointing to target after release of ball).



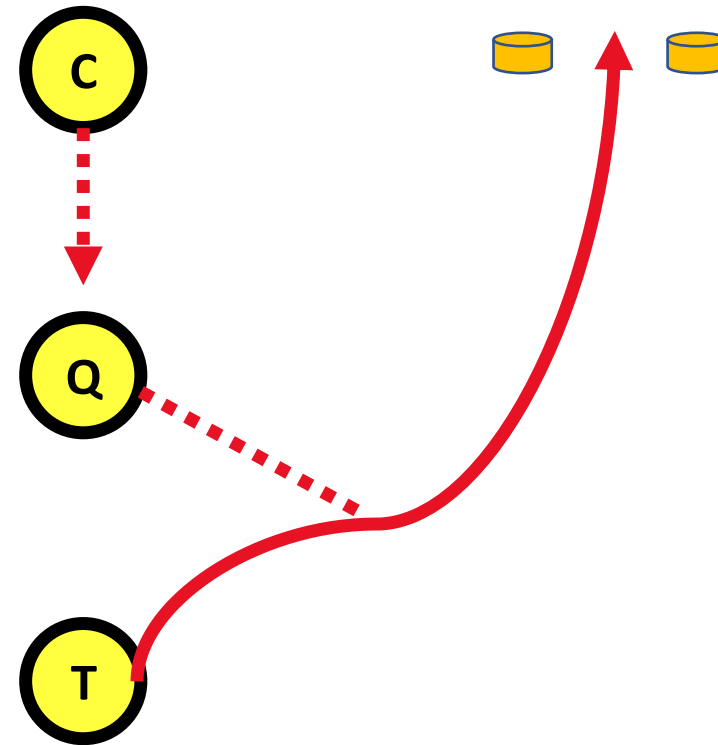
Quarterback - Running Back Pitch Drill

Set up a pair of cones 5-8 yards to the side of the Center. This is the area that the Running Back should run through.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will pitch the ball to the Running Back when they are behind and to the side of them. The Running Back will then cut up field and through the cones.

Quarterback should aim for the Running Back's shoulders and the Running Back should catch the ball with their hands.

You can add complexity by adding cones and a defender. Doing so will make the Running Back decide which area to run through in order to beat the defender.



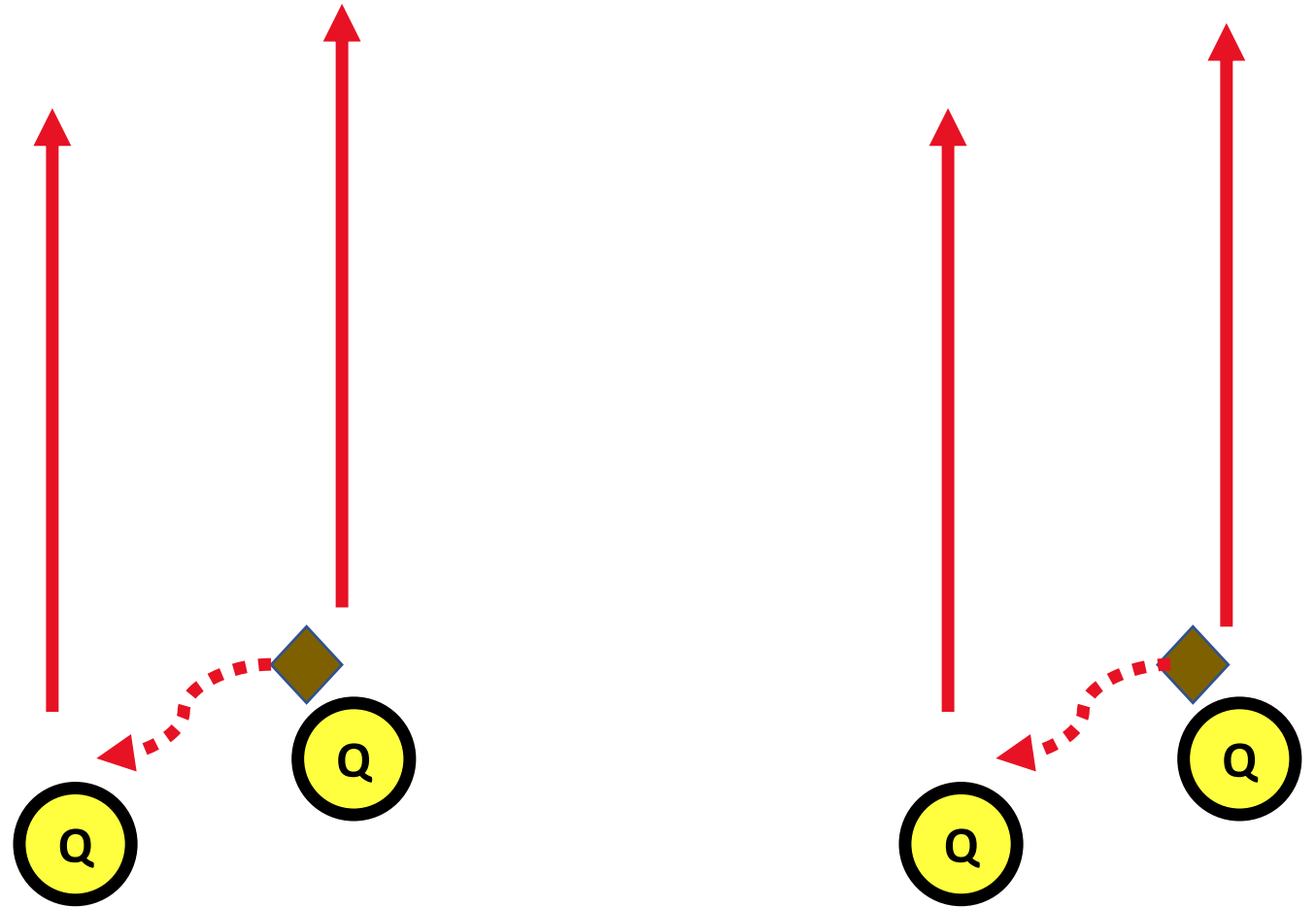
Partner Lateral Relay

This drill is done in pairs and can be done as part of a relay race.

Each pair starts facing each other and approximately 1-2 yards apart.

One player from each pair has the football. At the coach's command, the pairs start to run downfield and lateral the ball back and forth to each other as they move downfield.

Players should concentrate on making good laterals, keeping their eyes on the ball, and properly catching/receiving the lateral, all while running downfield.



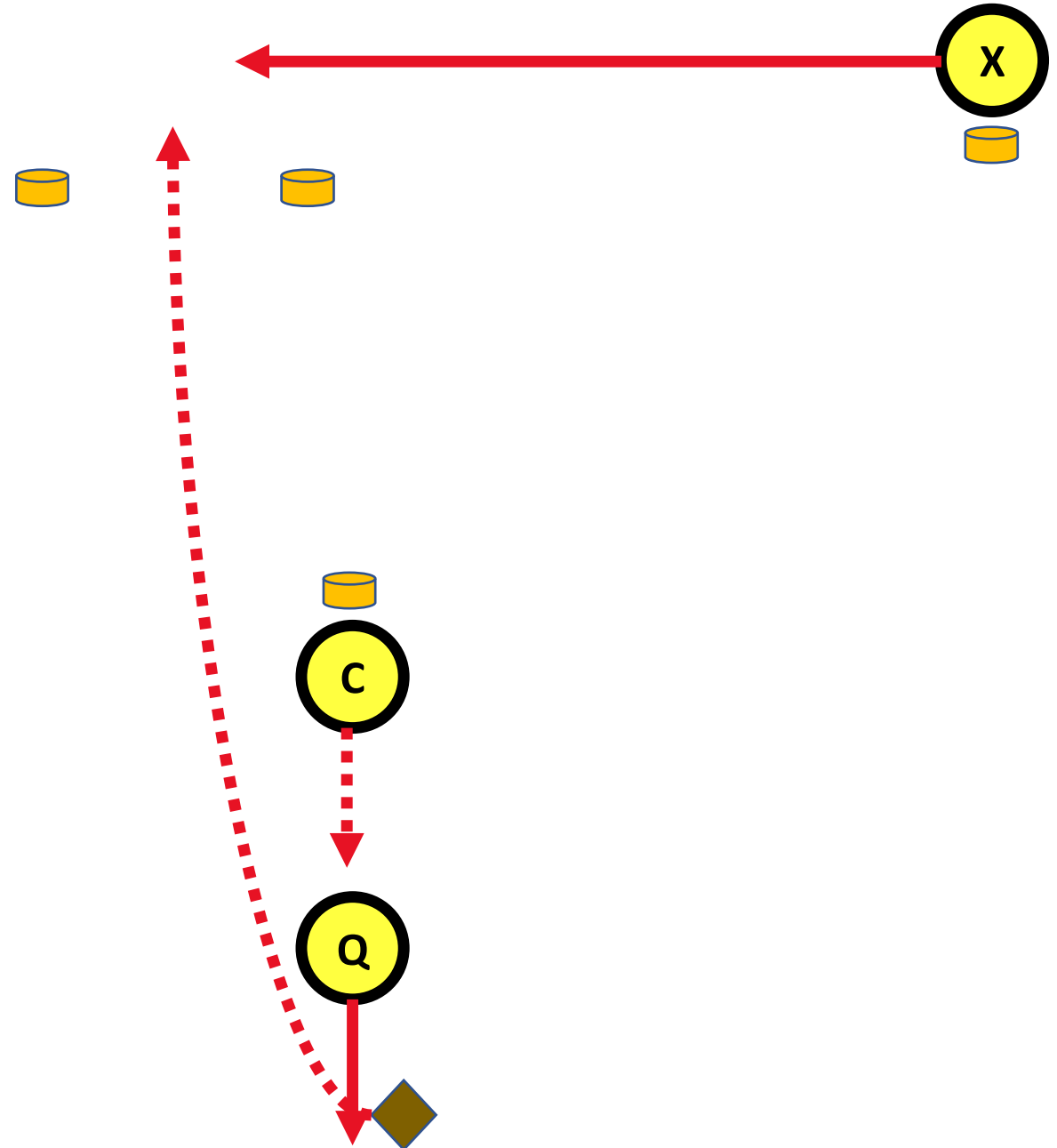
Over The Middle Drill

Set up two cones in the middle of the field that are 2 yards apart. A receiver will be lined up 10 yards away and parallel to the cones.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop. The receiver will run at three quarters speed towards the cones.

The Quarterback needs to lead the receiver so the ball is in the air prior to the receiver getting to the cones. The ball should be caught in the 2 yard cone area in the middle of the field.

You can add complexity by going at full speed and even having a defender blitz the Quarterback.



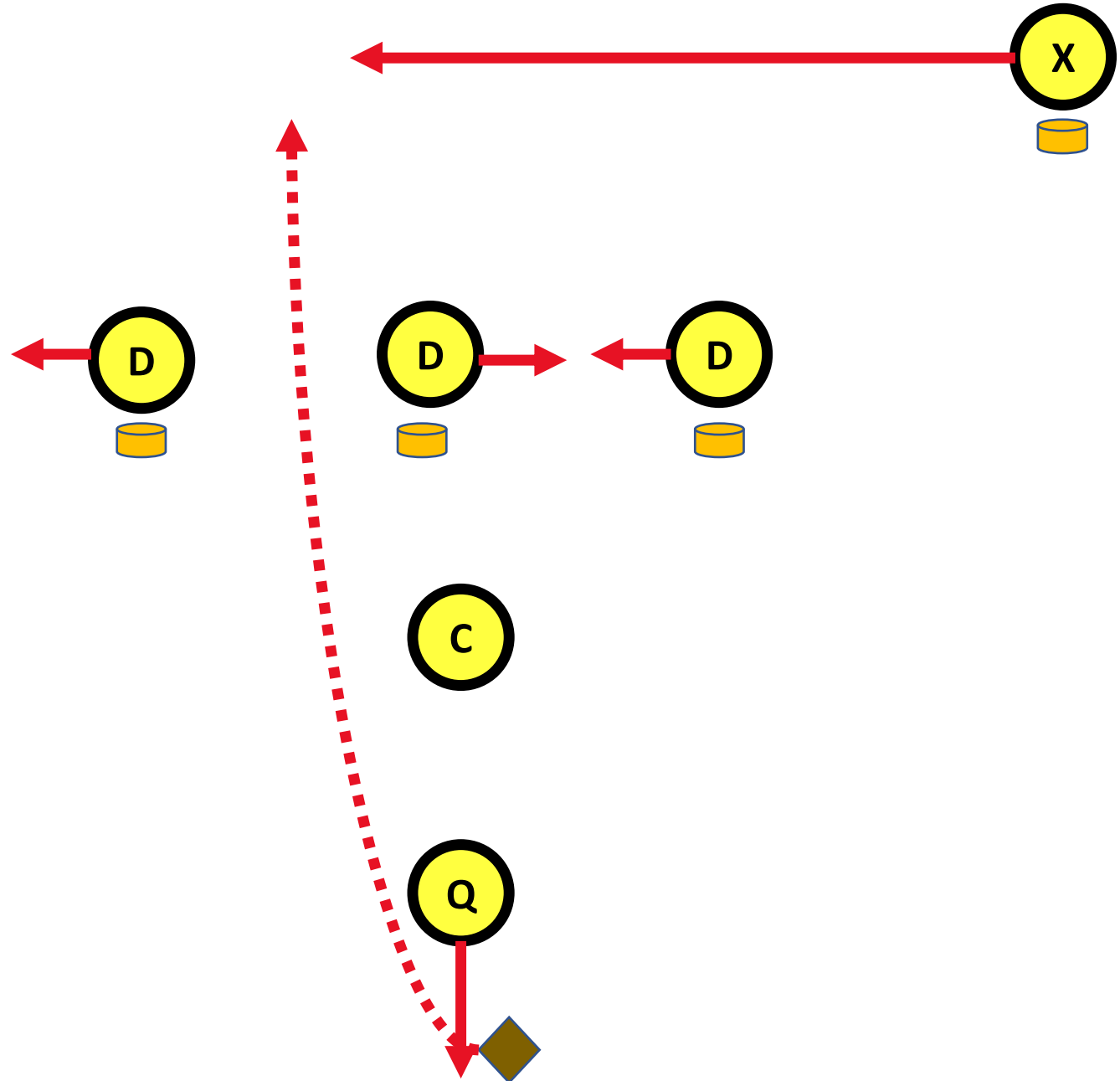
Find the Window Drill

Set up 3 Linebackers 5 yards apart and 1 Receiver lined up to the side and 3-4 yards behind the Defense.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop. The Linebackers will take one large step at random to the right or left. The Receiver will run parallel to the line of scrimmage.

The Quarterback should look for the best throwing window and complete a throw to the Receiver. The Linebackers can move their hands but their feet should remain stationary.

You can add complexity by having a fourth Linebacker blitz the Quarterback.



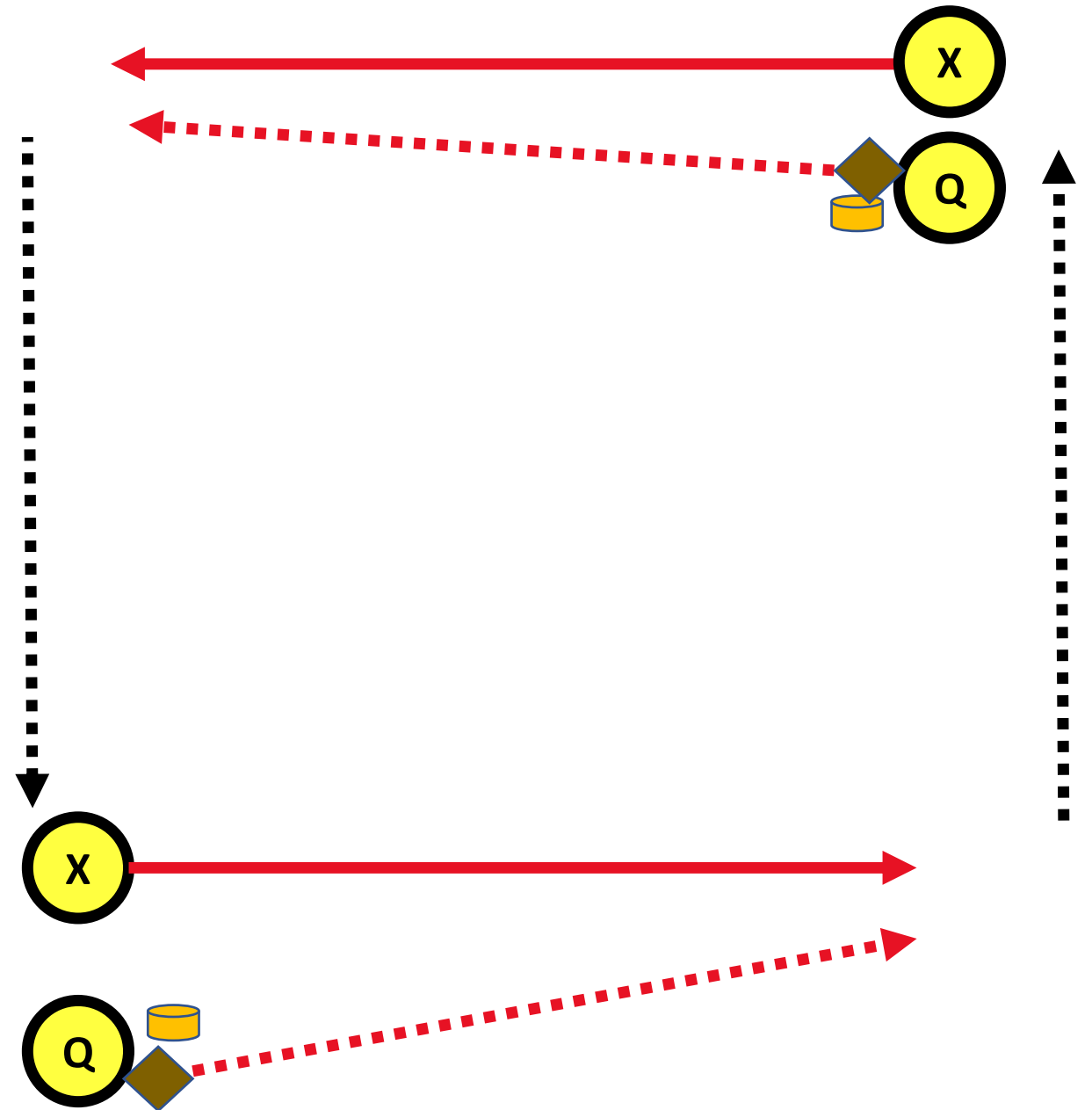
Pat 'n Go Drill

Two Quarterbacks will line up 10-15 yards apart facing each other with a line of receivers to their right.

When the Quarterback pats/moves the ball the receiver will run a fade route. It's important that the QB does not call

As the receiver runs his fade route the QB will throw the ball to him. The exact type of throw can vary but it should be high enough that the receiver can work on running under the ball and adjusting to it in the air.

When the receiver has caught the ball he will hand it to the opposite QB and get in that Quarterback's receiver line.





Running Back Drills

Coaching Points for Catching a Football

Focus on ARM POSITION, RECEIVING HAND-OFF, HIGH & TIGHT

- Prior to taking hand-off the Running Back should be in an athletic position – feet shoulder width apart, bent knees, bent slightly forward at the waist, and hands relaxed on the thighs/knees
- On “GO” the Running Back will run to the right (or left) of the Quarterback
- Quarterback will pivot to the right (or left) and keep their eyes on placing the ball in the Running Back’s stomach
- The Running Back’s inside elbow that points toward the Quarterback will be the arm that is above their chin and the other arm will be waist level
- The Quarterback will place the football between the Running Back’s arms and the Running Back should NOT grab the ball during the exchange
- Running Back must always keep their eyes up and looking straight ahead
- Emphasize holding the ball high and tight under one arm after the handoff

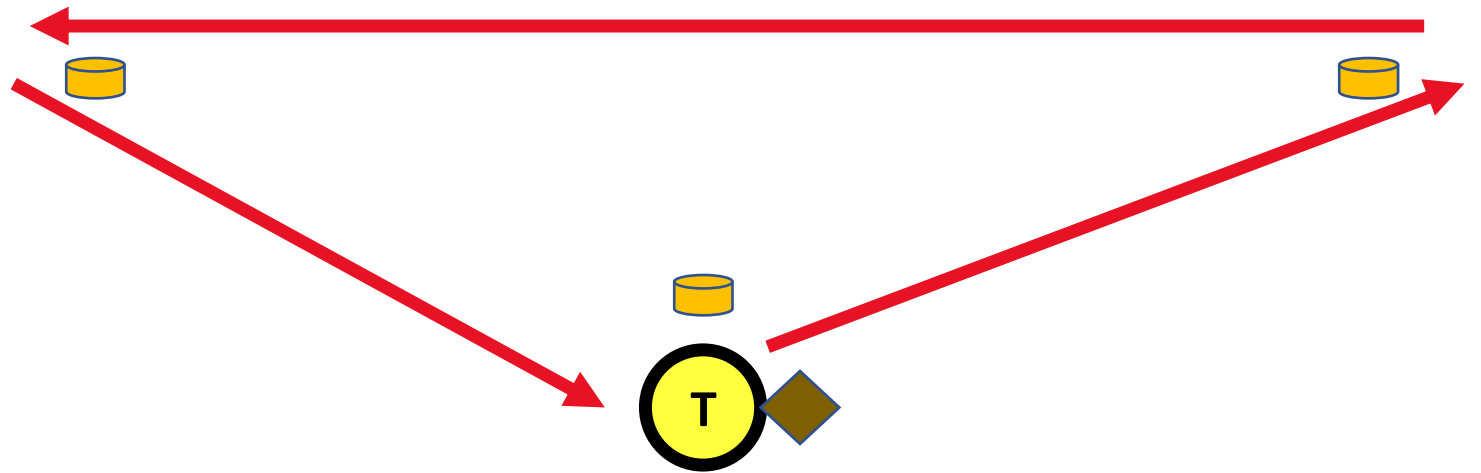
Ball Security Drill

Explain the 5 points of pressure:

- Fingertips placed on tip of call. They must “claw” the ball is placed between the middle and index finger.
- Palm should close on the football so weight is evenly distributed between the left and right side of the hand.
- Forearm & Bicep pressure is one of the most important pressure points.
- Pressure against the chest prevents the ball from leaking out.

Split the players into two groups and run the drill at the same time. Set up three cones (as shown) and have players sprint to the first cone and touch the cone while pivoting to the left. They will spring to the next cone and do the same. Have the kids then go the opposite direction the next time through the line.

Coaches can make it fun by having the players from the two groups race.



Team Hand-off Exchange Drill

Divide players into 2 lines approximately 10 yards away from each other.

A player from one line starts with the ball. On the coach's signal, the player with the ball races downfield (maintaining the proper grip on the football). Once the player reaches the 1st player in the other line, the player with the ball hands the ball off to that 1st player.

That player is now the ball carrier and races downfield towards the other line.

Emphasize holding the ball properly when running, good hand-off exchange (hand-off acceptance target, and good hand-offs into target). Make sure they are keeping their eyes up when receiving the hand-off.



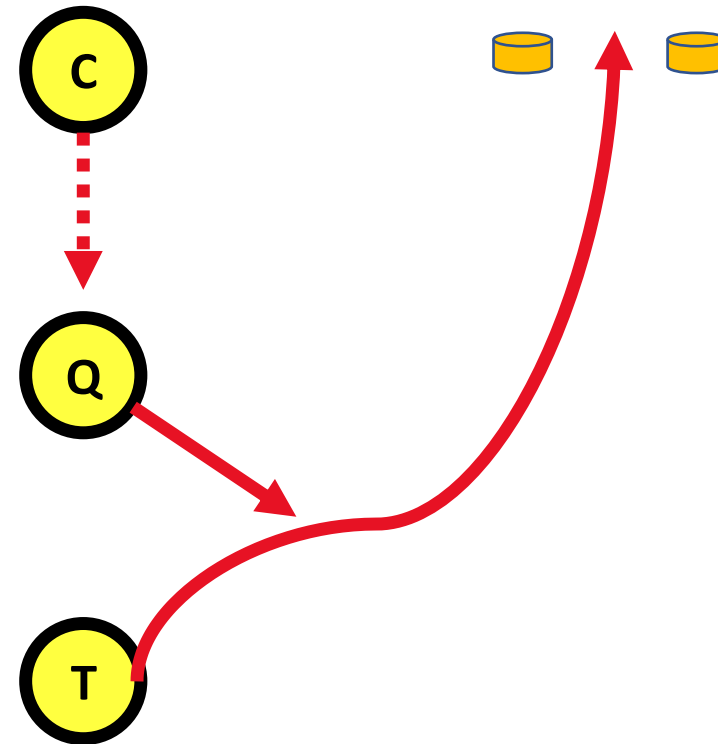
Quarterback – Running Back Sweep Drill

Set up a pair of cones 5-8 yards to the side of the Center. This is the area that the Running Back should run through.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will handoff the ball to the Running Back when they are behind and to the side of them. The Running Back will then cut up field and through the cones.

Quarterback should pivot and take one step to the side they are handing off the ball.

You can add complexity by adding cones and a defender. Doing so will make the Running Back decide which area to run through in order to beat the defender.



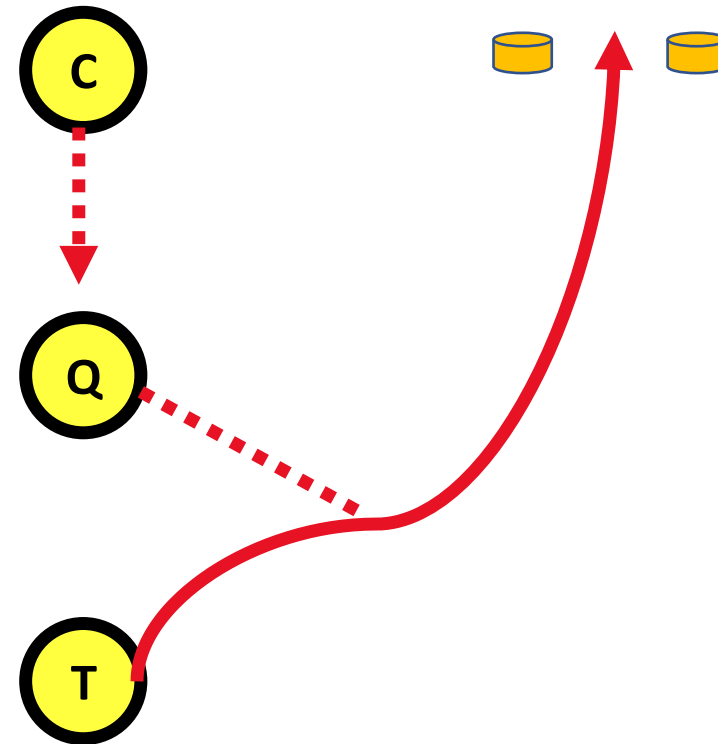
Quarterback - Running Back Pitch Drill

Set up a pair of cones 5-8 yards to the side of the Center. This is the area that the Running Back should run through.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will pitch the ball to the Running Back when they are behind and to the side of them. The Running Back will then cut up field and through the cones.

Quarterback should aim for the Running Back's shoulders and the Running Back should catch the ball with their hands.

You can add complexity by adding cones and a defender. Doing so will make the Running Back decide which area to run through in order to beat the defender.



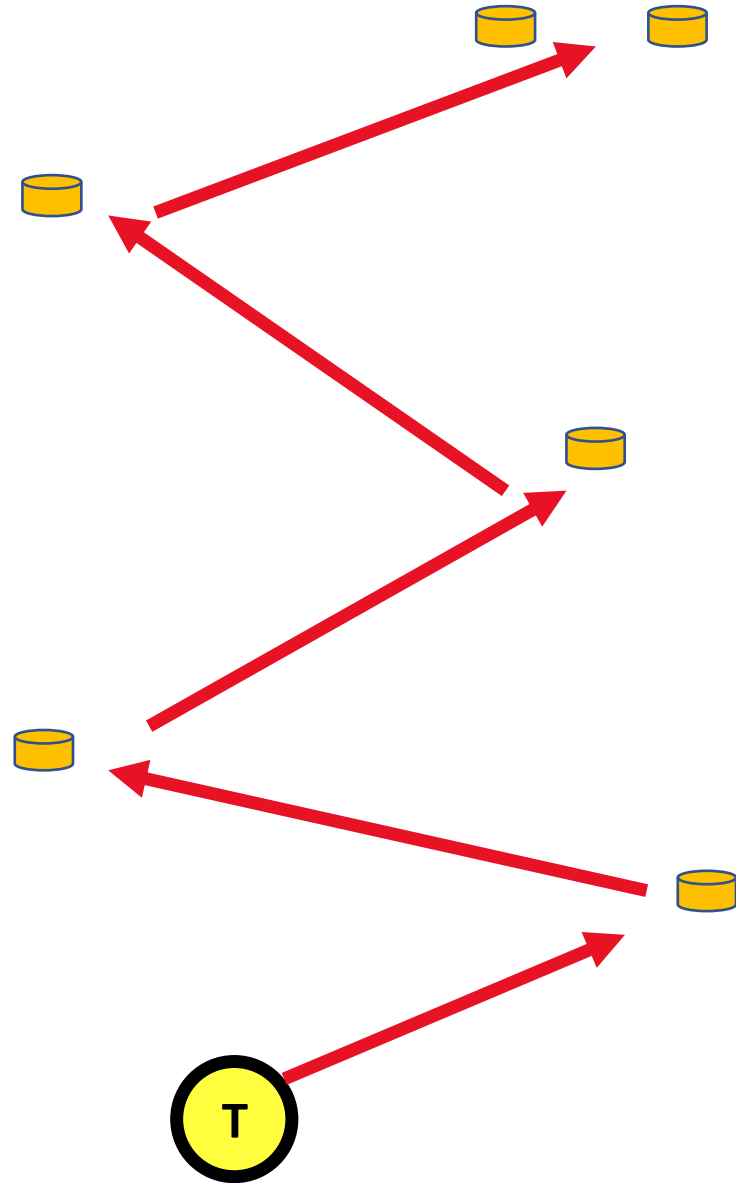
Jump Cut Drill

Set up a pair of cones that are 5 yards apart and zig zagged down the field.

At the snap of the ball the coach will handoff the ball to the Running Back. The player will then cut up field and jump cut at each cone.

Running back should hold football high and tight under their arm. The jump cut should be explosive and the outside plant foot should push them towards the next cone. They must keep shoulders facing forward and maintain good balance. They must sprint through the finish.

You can add complexity by having a stationary defender at each cone.



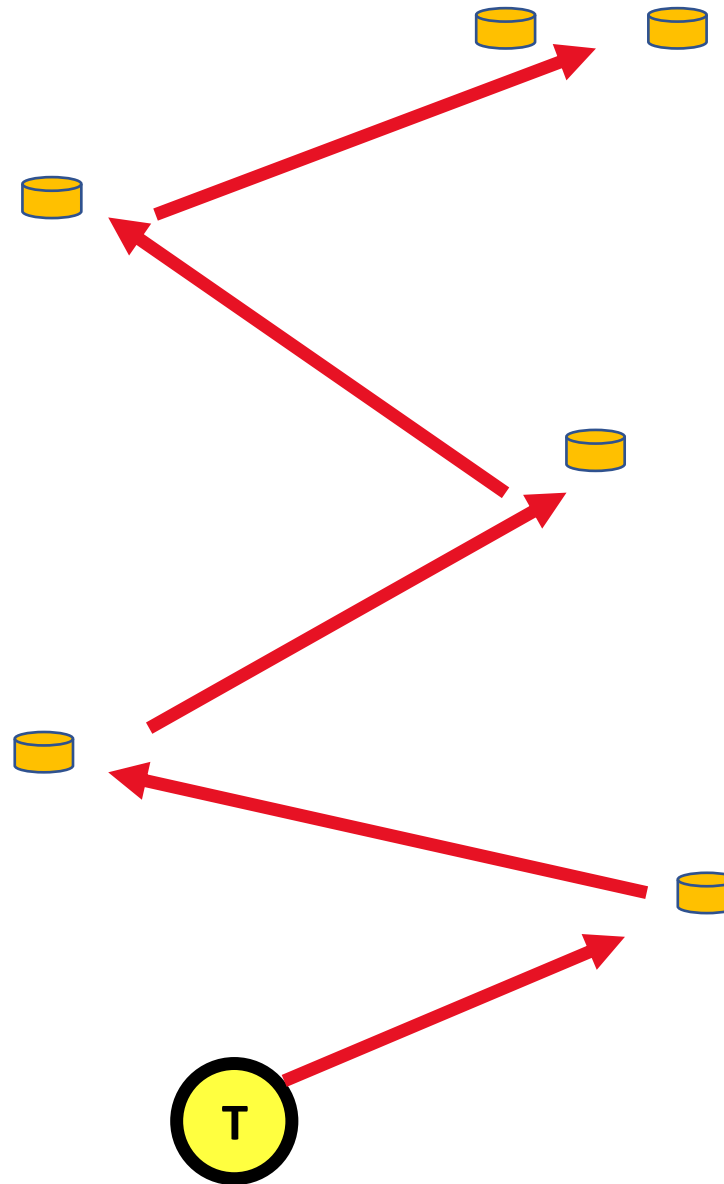
Perfect Spin Drill

Set up a pair of cones that are 5 yards apart and zig zagged down the field.

At the snap of the ball the coach will handoff the ball to the Running Back. The player will then cut up field and “spin” at each cone.

Running back should hold football high and tight under their arm. The “perfect spin” is a jab step toward defender and pivot with opposite foot away from defender. They can also plant their foot, shake, cut toward defender, spin away, and accelerate. They must maintain good balance and sprint through the finish.

You can add complexity by having a stationary defender at each cone.



Out of the Backfield Receiving Drill

A short pass to the Running Back coming out of the backfield can be very effective.

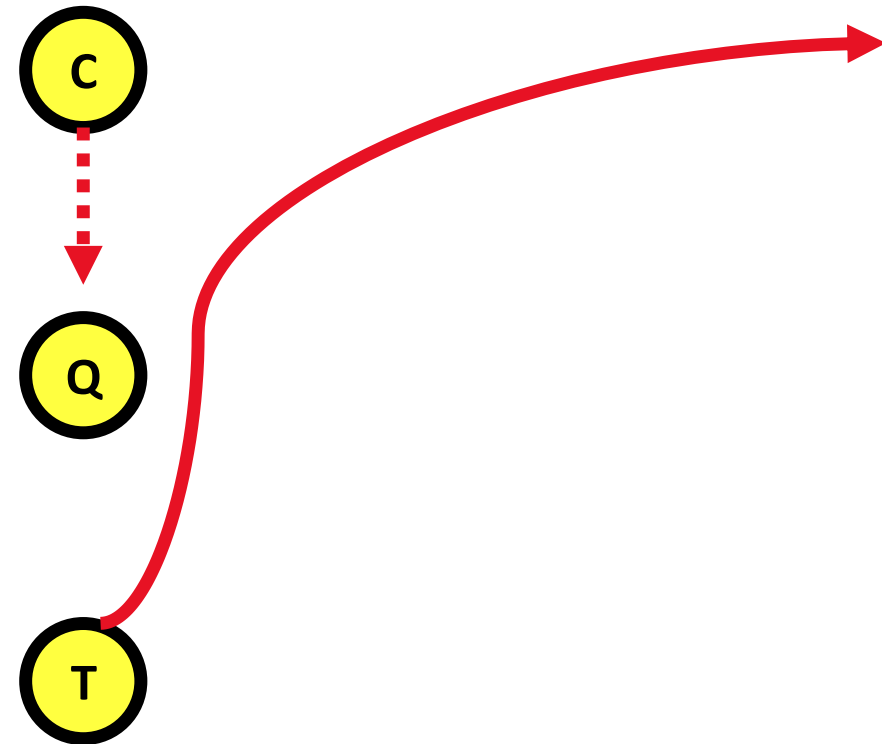
For this you will have 1 or 2 Quarterbacks throwing to 1 or 2 groups of Running Backs.

The QB will go through the signals and fake a hand-off to the Running Back. After the fake, the Quarterback will set up for a pass downfield.

The Running Back will then run an arrow pattern into the “flat” (around the line of scrimmage by the sideline).

The Quarterback will then throw a pass to the Running Back.

Emphasize the importance of the fake hand-off, the Quarterback looking downfield and then a pass to the Running Back.





Receiver Drills

Coaching Points for Catching a Football

Focus on NOT FEARING BALL, DISTANCE, HAND POSITION and USING HANDS

- Initially, younger players may be scared of the ball, so work on them catching gentle throws from a close distance - celebrate the “wins” of catching the ball, and slowly move further away
- Once the player is comfortable work on having them use their hands to catch, which starts with them making a “U” shape with their hands in front of their chest with the palms facing out and thumbs touching
- As the ball hits their hands they should work on having “soft hands” and letting the ball be absorbed and pulled into the player’s body
- Throws below the player’s waist should be caught with the hands using a “V” shape as a result of the pinkies touching
- As the player gets more comfortable catching you can move further away, use a larger/harder ball, and focus on them bringing the ball high and tight into their armpit after the catch

Receiver Stance Drill

Explain proper receiver stance in order to minimize “false steps” (wasted step).

Players should have their feet shoulder width apart and stand in a relaxed athletic position. The front foot should be pointing straight ahead, flat on the ground. The heel of the back foot should hover about an inch off the ground. Players need to have hands in a relaxed position, sink their hips and bend their knees. They should then shift 70% of their weight over their front knee and keep eyes and head looking inside toward the football. A receiver’s first movement is when the football is snapped.

Line up two groups and run the drill at the same time. Have two cones 5 yards apart. Have a line on each side of the ball and the players should run to the cone ahead of them when the ball is snapped.

In this drill focus on the player pushing off on their front foot and NOT stuttering or leaning on the back foot before releasing. **Reinforce this during all pass route drills.**



Receiver Route Drills

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

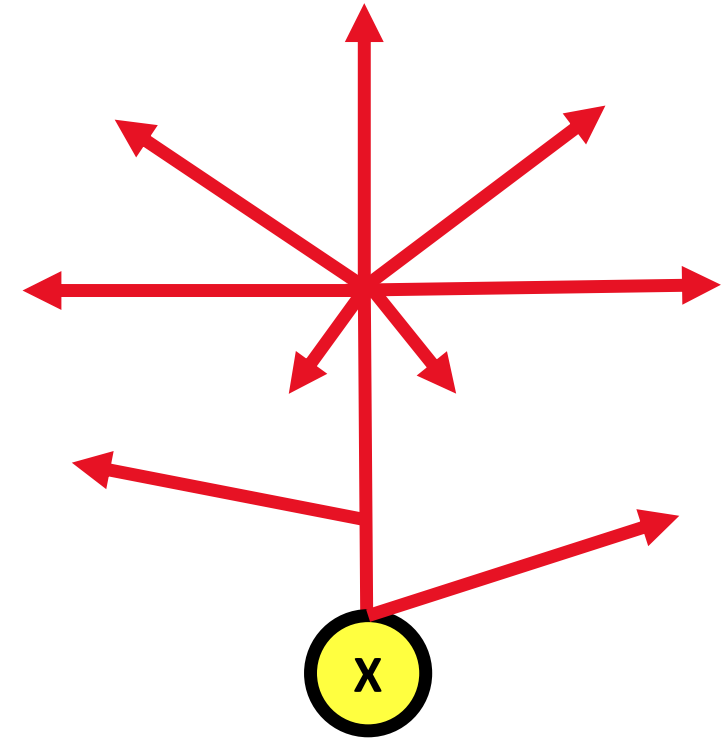
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks. Each line should work on various pass routes (vary the routes so that all are worked on).

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Receiver runs the ball back to the line of scrimmage and hands the ball to the Center.



Out 'n Go Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

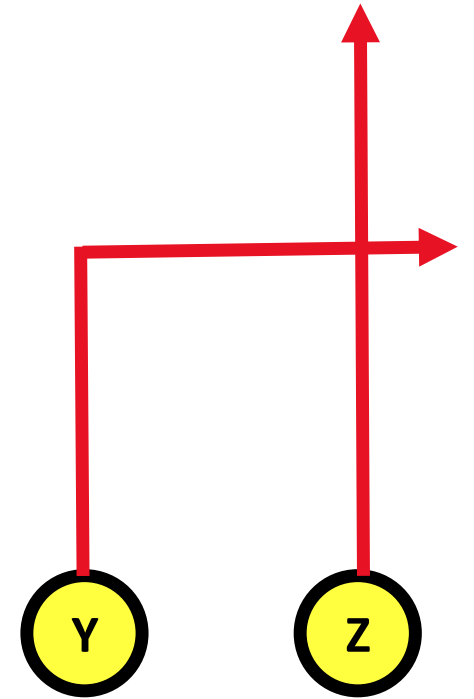
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Out" to the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Post Corner Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

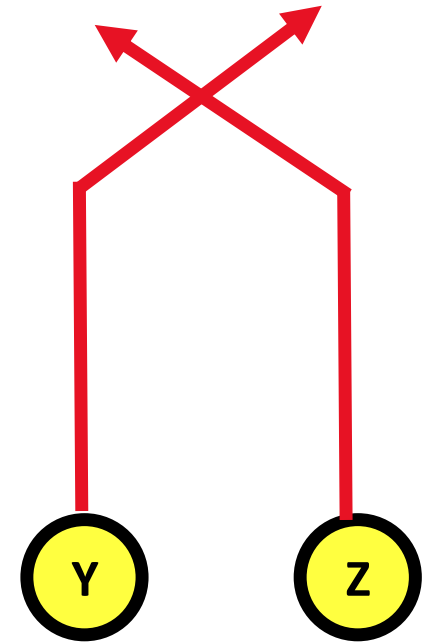
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Corner" route by the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Slant Arrow Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

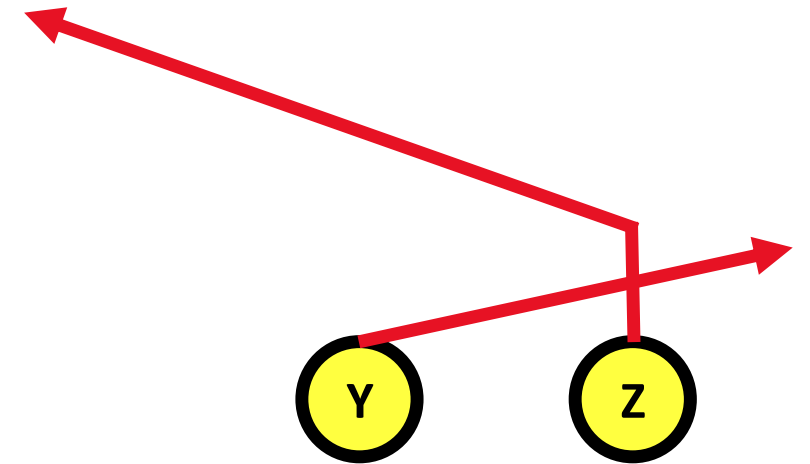
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Arrow" route by the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Corner Arrow Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

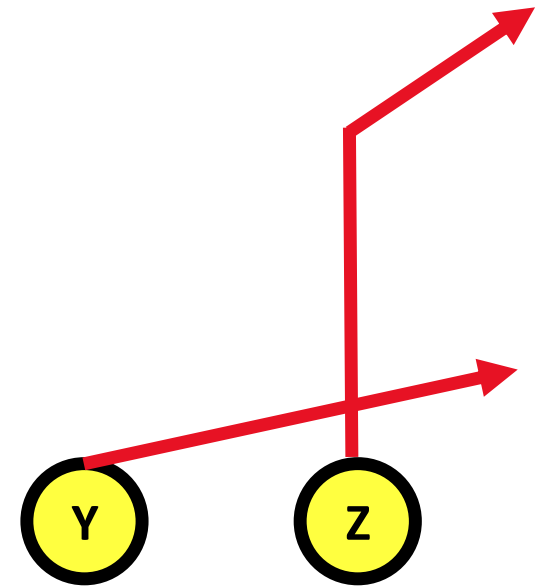
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Corner" route by the Z receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Post Arrow Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

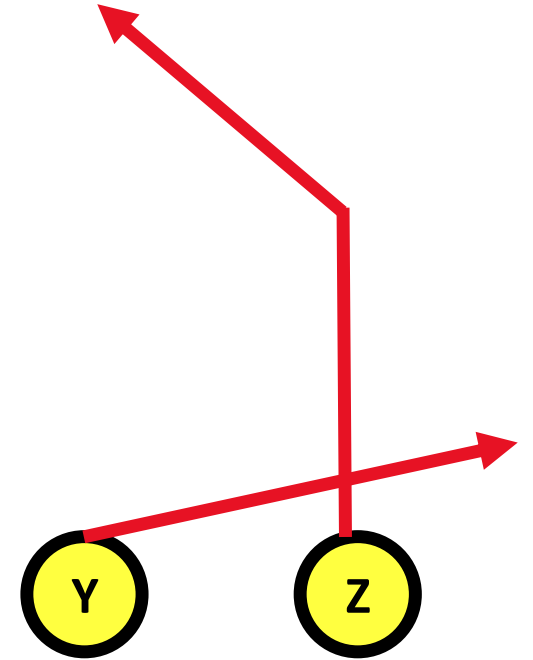
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Post" route by the Z receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Switch Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

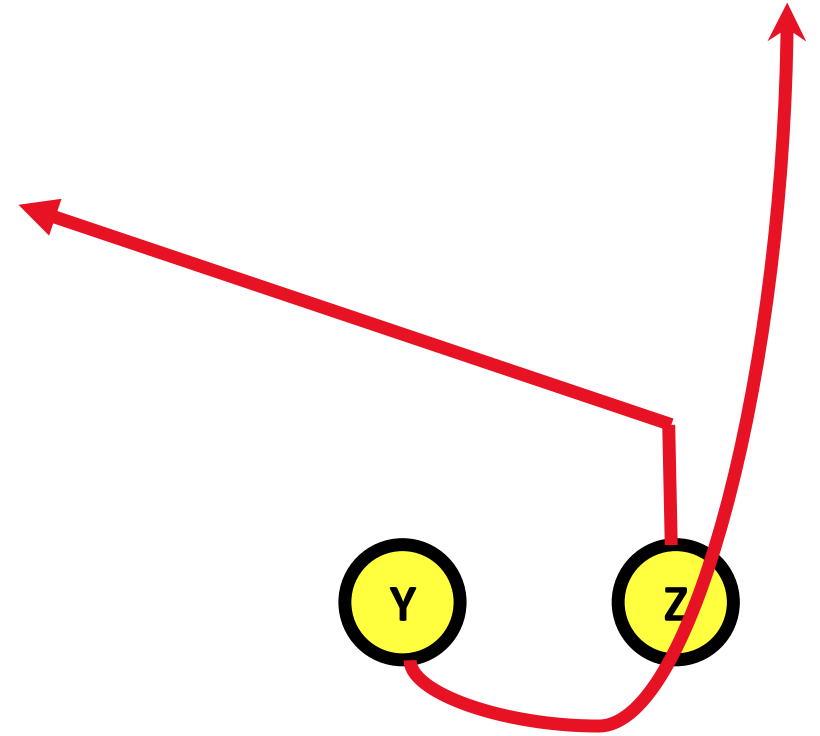
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Wheel" route by the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Dagger Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

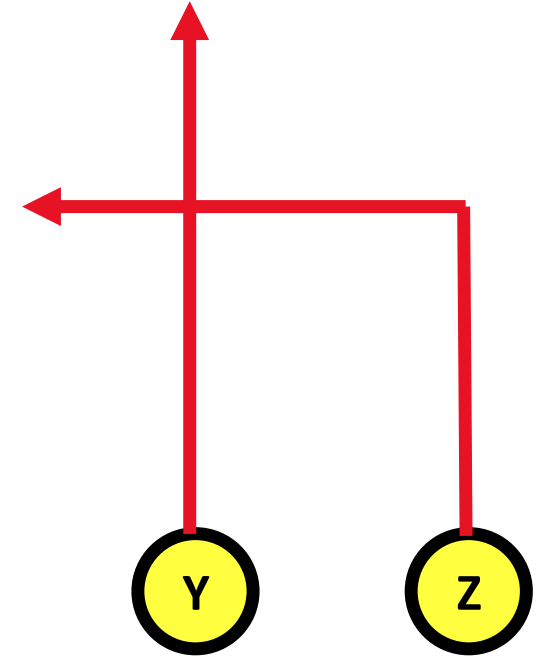
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the “Dig” route by the Z receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Over The Shoulder Drill

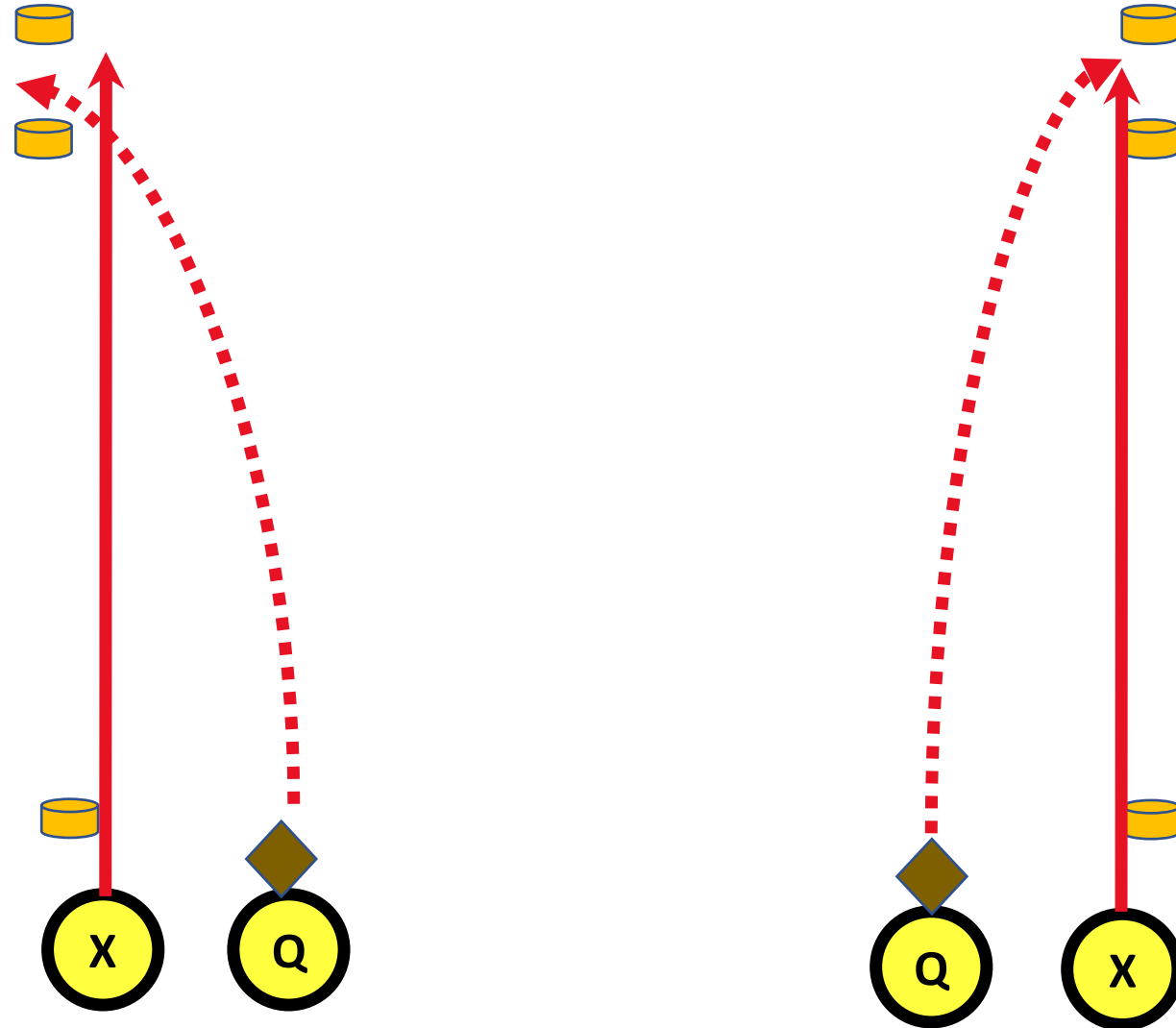
Set up two cones two yards apart along a sideline.

A Receiver will be aligned near that same sideline and the Quarterback will be two yards to their side.

When the Quarterback says "GO" the Receiver will go 50% on a fly route along the sideline.

The Quarterback's goal is to throw the ball over the Receiver's outside shoulder so it is caught over their shoulder in the area marked by the two cones. The coach can also be the Quarterback for this drill.

You can difficulty by having the Receiver run at 100%. You can also add a Linebacker on the Receiver.



Toe Tap Drill

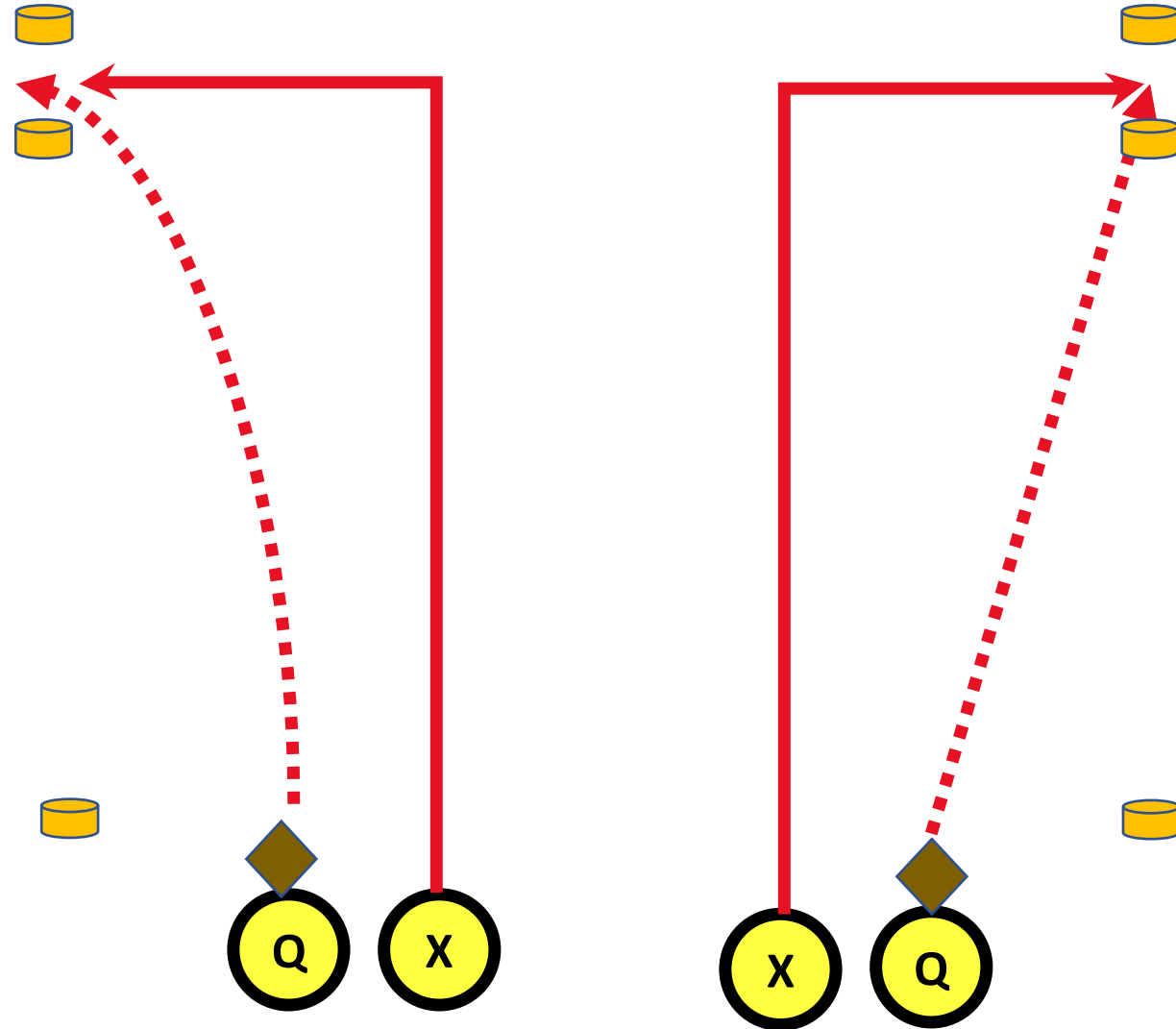
Set up two cones two yards apart along a sideline.

A Receiver will be aligned to the side of the Quarterback away from the sideline. The Receiver will be two yards to the side of the Quarterback.

When the Quarterback says "GO" the Receiver will go 50% on an "out" route towards the sideline.

The Quarterback's goal is to throw the ball so it is caught in the area marked by the two cones. The coach can also be the Quarterback for this drill.

You can difficulty by having the Receiver run at 100%. You can also add a Linebacker on the Receiver.



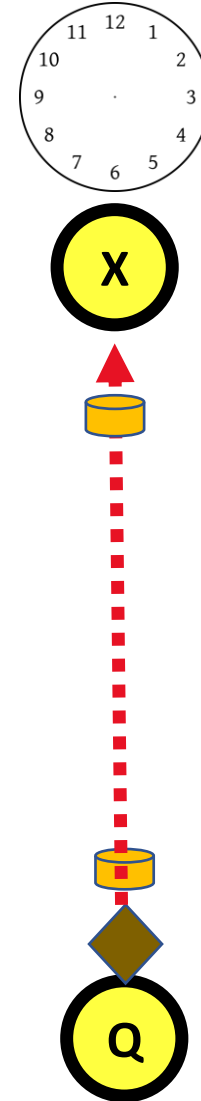
Clockwork Drill

Have two players partner. They should be 5-10 yards apart.

Have one player throw the ball at all hands of the clock in a clockwise direction. They should aim to throw the ball so the receiver's arms are fully extended when they catch it.

Start at 12 o'clock (above head), then 3:00 (side), then 6:00 (knees), and finish with 9:00 (side).

To advance the drill, the receiver can have their back facing the Quarterback, and looking back at them over their shoulder.



Half Turn Drill

Have two players partner. They should be 5-10 yards apart.

Have the receiver turn their back to their partner. The receiver will turn their head and look over their left shoulder.

The Quarterback will throw the ball towards the receiver's left shoulder. The receiver should catch with their hands.

After 5 reps to the left, have the receiver do the same drill looking over their right shoulder.



Advanced Half Turn Drill

Have two players partner. They should be 5-10 yards apart.

Have the receiver turn their back to their partner. The receiver will turn their head and look over their left shoulder.

When the Quarterback releases the ball the receiver will snap their head to look over their right shoulder.

The Quarterback should throw the ball just outside the receiver's right shoulder.

After 5 reps to the left, have the receiver do the same drill by looking over their right shoulder before the throw.



Lying “U” Drill

Receiver lays on back with hands on their thighs.

A coach or another player throws the football to the receiver. Receiver should quickly lift up their arms to catch the ball with their hands using the “U” technique. This means the thumbs are touching and the two hands together make a “U” shape.

The receiver should watch the ball into their hands and have some give as the ball hits their hands.

Count how many are caught in a row.

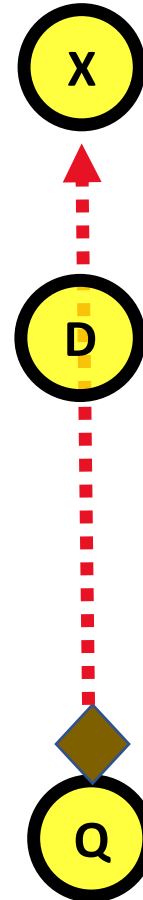


Hands Up Drill

A receiver and defender face each other from two yards away.

When the Quarterback says “go” the receiver jogs backwards while the defender follows with their hands in the air. Defender’s back should be to the quarterback.

The Receiver needs to catch the ball while being distracted by the defenders arms in the air.



Squat Catch Drill

Receiver lines up 5-8 yards away from the Quarterback.

The Receiver faces the passer, starts in a squatting position and springs up to catch each pass.

As the exercise progresses, the passes can be thrown higher and in more difficult locations.

Coaches can find a fun way to track how many can be caught out of ten throws.



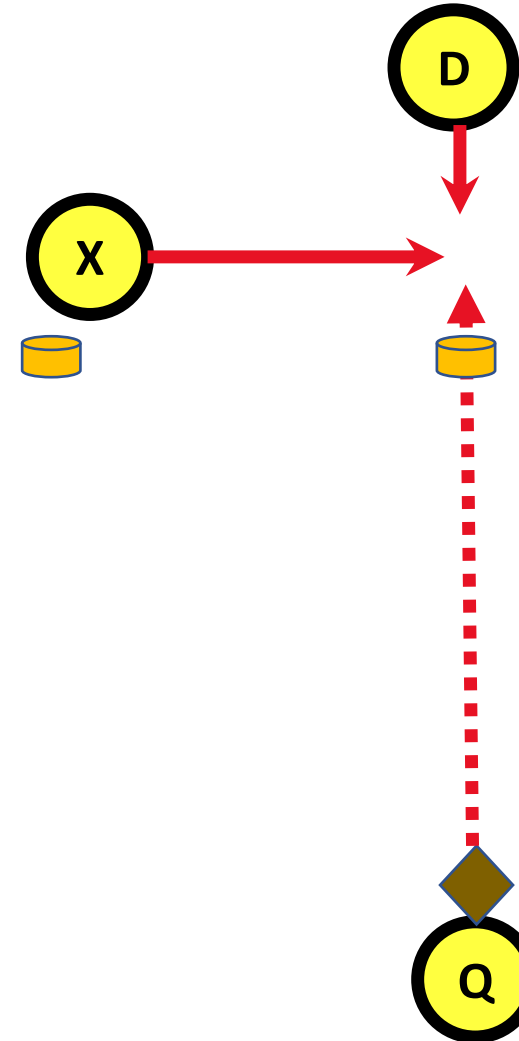
Contact & Catch Drill

Set up two cones three yards apart. A Receiver is lined up at one of the cones and a coach/defender is set up a yard behind the other cone.

When the coach says "GO" the receiver will burst towards the opposite cone, pivot and face the Quarterback with their hands in the air giving a good receiving target.

As the ball is thrown the coach/defender will irritate the receiver by tapping his shoulders/back/arms.

The receiver should maintain concentration and catch with their hands.



Flip 'n Catch Drill

Set up two players 5-10 yards apart. The player with the ball is the Quarterback and the other player is the receiver. The receiver will have their back facing the Quarterback.

When the Quarterback says "GO" the receiver will quickly turn around with their hands in the air ready to catch the ball. As the receiver is turning around the Quarterback will throw the ball.

The receiver should maintain concentration and catch with their hands. Once the receiver has the ball, the players will switch roles.

This drill can be made more challenging by having the Quarterback randomly throw high or low or to the side.

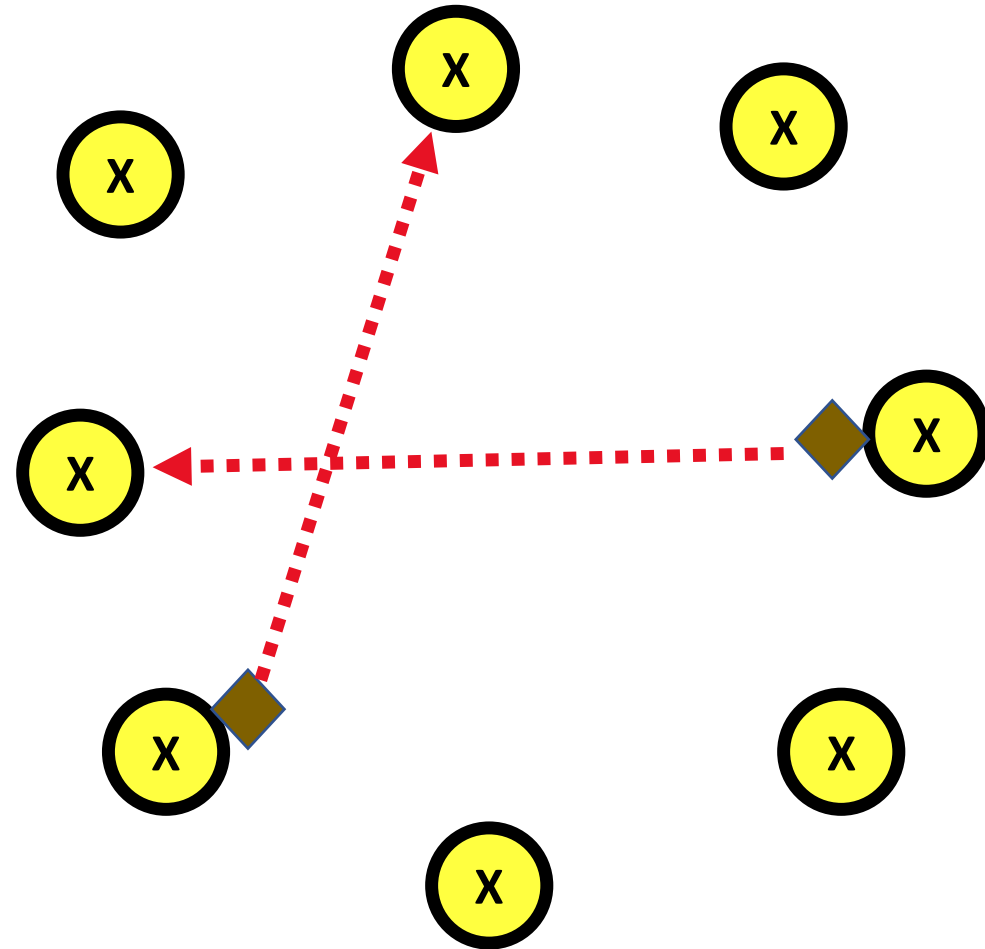


Globetrotter Drill

Have the players huddle up, then all take two steps back to get a nice big circle.

Now give one player a football, and have them throw it back and forth in the circle, throwing to any other player at any time. It's important that these are soft, catchable passes and the players aren't just whipping the ball at each other.

Once they've gotten into a rhythm, throw in a second football and watch things really heat up.

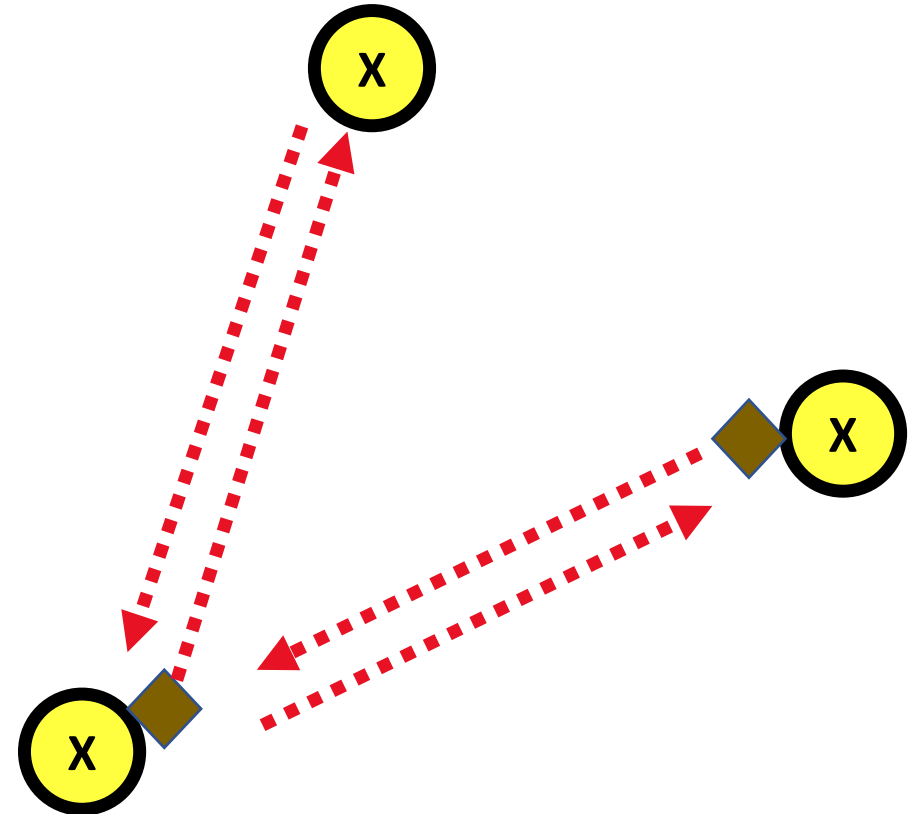


Machine Gun Drill

This drill needs two footballs and three players. Configure the kids in a triangle. The player at the top of the triangle will have a football and will face the two other players. One of these athletes will also have a football.

The player on top of the triangle begins this drill by tossing the football to the kid that does not have a football. Once this football is released, the athlete with the other football will toss it to the athlete that just released his football. He must immediately toss that football to the athlete that is empty handed.

This process continues until the athlete on top drops a football. Your receivers will become machine gun fast with the footballs as they come at them in an alternating fashion.





Blocking Drills

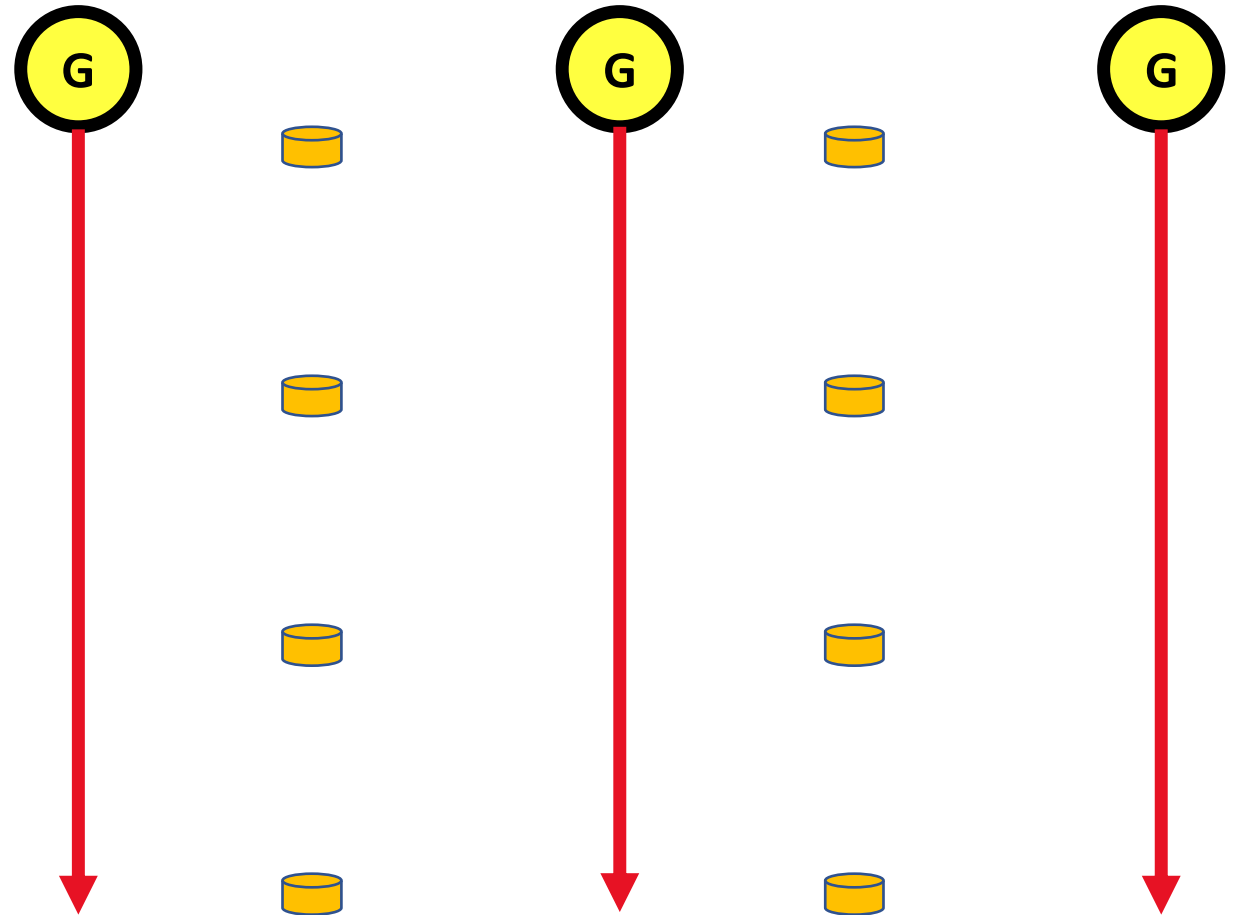
Drive Block Drill

Many young players stand up upon the snap of the ball. This drill teaches the basics of driving low out of the 3-point stance, getting their hands inside the shoulder pads, and drive forward using short/choppy steps to get more power behind the block.

For this drill, have your players in the proper 2-point stance with an eye looking forward.

When the coach says “go” the player should step with their right foot and drive forward bringing their hands inside of the imaginary defender in front of them. Next step is to line up a defender 3 yards away from blocker.

Emphasis should be on driving low, keeping hands inside, and using short steps.



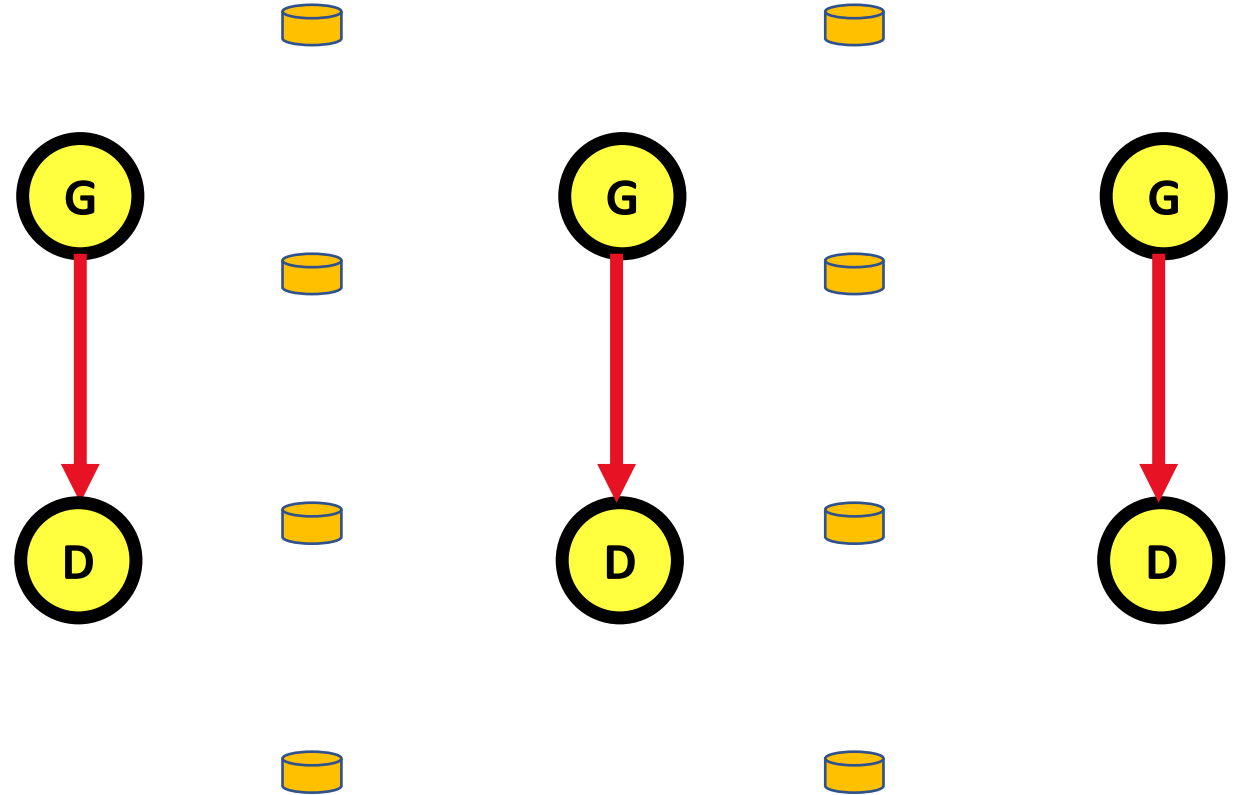
Punch Drill

This drill teaches the importance of blocking by “punching” the hands up and underneath a defender’s shoulder pads.

The player will line up in their knees across from a teammate. Arms will be to their side.

When the coach says “go” the player should quickly bring up his hands and drive the teammate’s blocking pad up.

Emphasis should be on swiftly driving hands upwards with the palms/thumbs facing up.



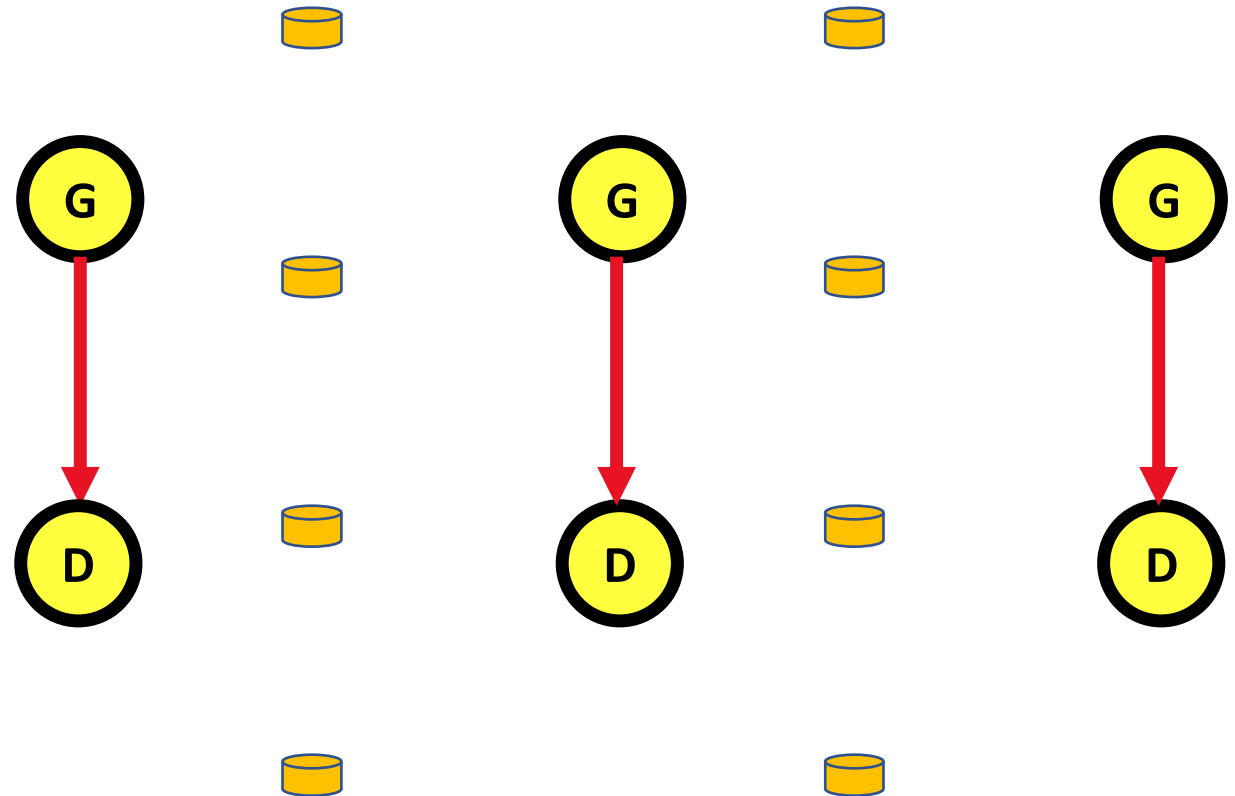
Two Chop Punch Drill

This drill teaches players to drive low, take chop steps and finish the block by “punching” the hands up and underneath a defender’s shoulder pads.

The player will line up in a proper 3-point stance across from a teammate.

When the coach says “go” the player should quickly respond by driving forward horizontally to the ground. The player will step with his right foot first and then his left foot will follow in a choppy motion. As the left foot chops the hands will punch the teammate’s blocking pad up.

Emphasis should be on driving low with two choppy steps and shoving the hands upwards with the palms/thumbs facing up.



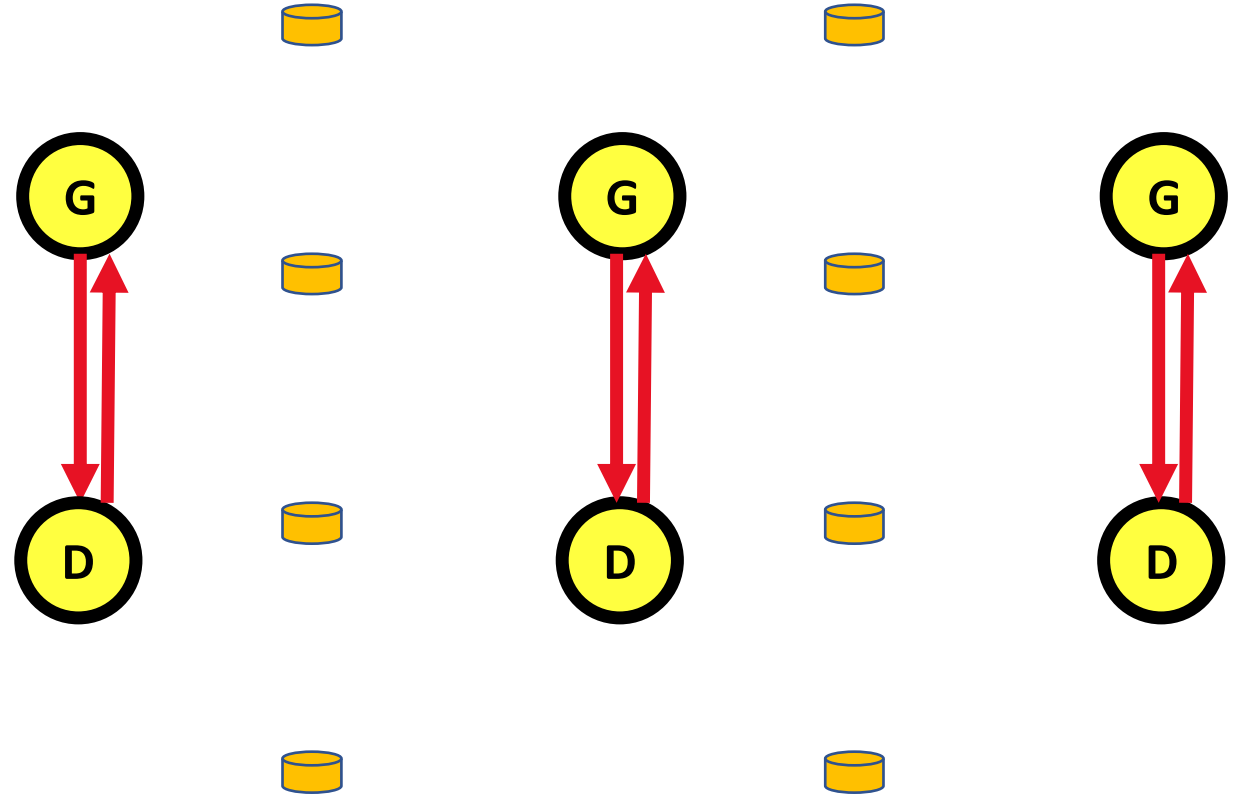
1 v 1 Drill

This drill has players use the run blocking skills they have learned against a live defender.

The player will line up in a proper 3-point stance across from a defender.

When the coach says “go” both players should quickly respond by driving forward horizontally to the ground. The blocker’s goal is to hold back the defender for 3 seconds, while the defender will try to get past the blocker.

Emphasis for blocker is to drive low with two choppy steps and shove hands upwards with the palms/thumbs facing up.

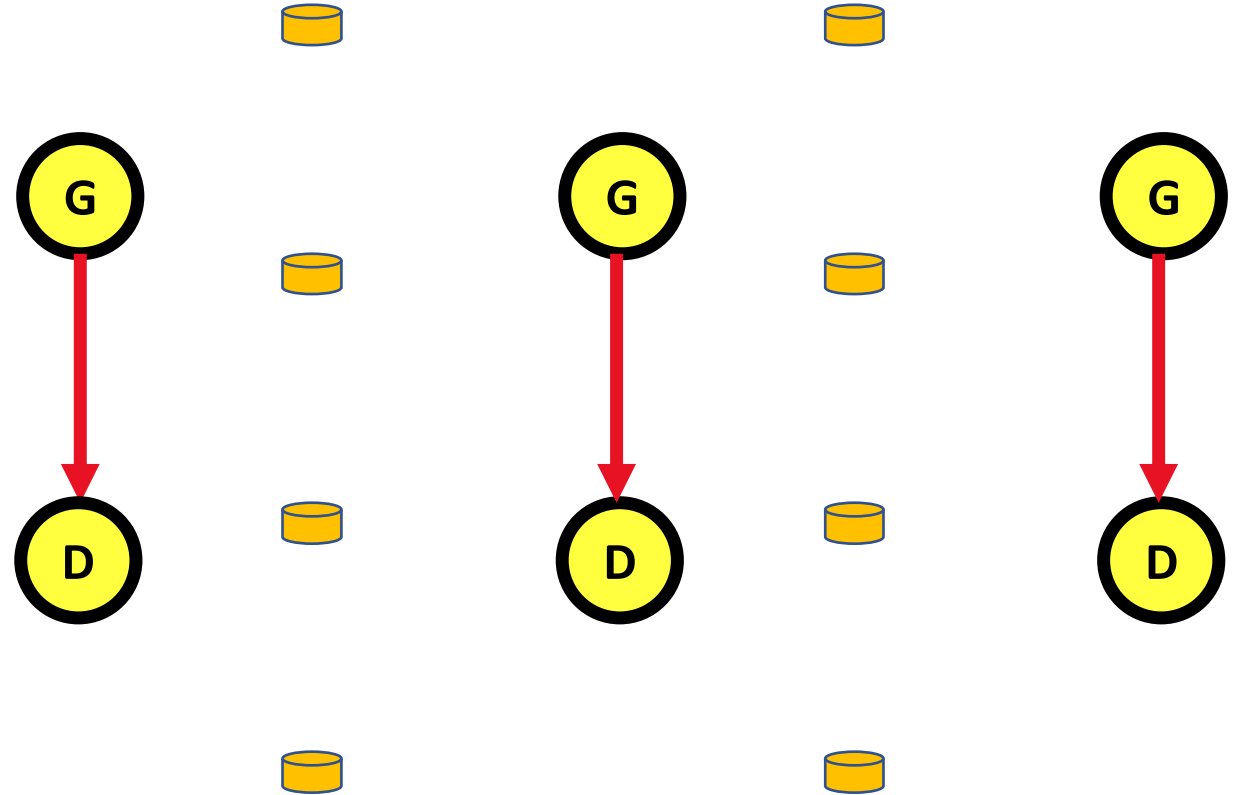


Pass Protection Drill

This drill teaches players to surge out of stance and still stay behind line of scrimmage when pass blocking.

The player will line up in a proper 3-point stance across from a teammate. When the coach says “go” the blocker will explode out of stance and kick slide toward teammate. During footwork, the hands contact the teammate’s blocking pad the upper body snaps perpendicular to ground.

Emphasis for blocker is to drive block with initial step, shove hands upwards with the palms/thumbs facing up, and stay balanced with a wide base.



A brown football with a shield logo on a green field. The shield logo contains the letters 'H' and 'I'. The football is positioned in the center of the frame, resting on a green artificial turf field. A white yard line is visible behind the football.

Defense & Tackling Drills

Key Tackling Coaching Points

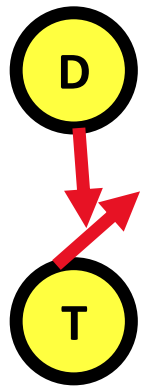
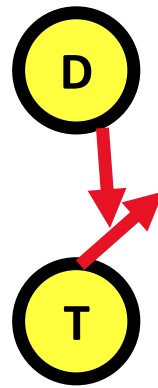
- Breakdown stance begins with FEET shoulder width apart, SQUEEZE shoulders back with chest out, SINK the hips into a near sitting position, and HANDS bent in a relaxed position ready to react.
- From the Breakdown position, players take a short lead step to both get into a strong hitting position and establish leverage. Initiating movement with the front, near foot, the hip opposite the leverage remains open in order to react quickly to a cut back.
- Player's eyes should be on the runner's thighs. Once the tackler's lead foot is set (between runner's legs if possible) power will come from their hips. They should swoop their arms up, sink their hips and shoot into the runner's near thigh with the same shoulder as their lead foot. The tackler then wraps the legs and explodes through the ball carrier. If needed, they can drive the runner back or roll the runner to the ground.

Leverage Drill

This key tackling drill can be done without shoulder pads/helmet. The purpose is to teach players proper stance, breakdown and hit position.

Player should be in “ready position.” The means they keep head up, sink hips, shoulders back, bend knees, and maintain slight arch in back with arms bent to their side.

A teammate will be facing them a yard away. If the teammate steps to the tackler’s right side, the tackler will load their arms back and chop step their right foot forward towards the middle of their teammate’s legs. If teammate steps to the tackler’s left, they will load their arms back and chop step with the near left foot. The tackler’s head should be on the side of their teammate’s near hip – not in front of their teammate.

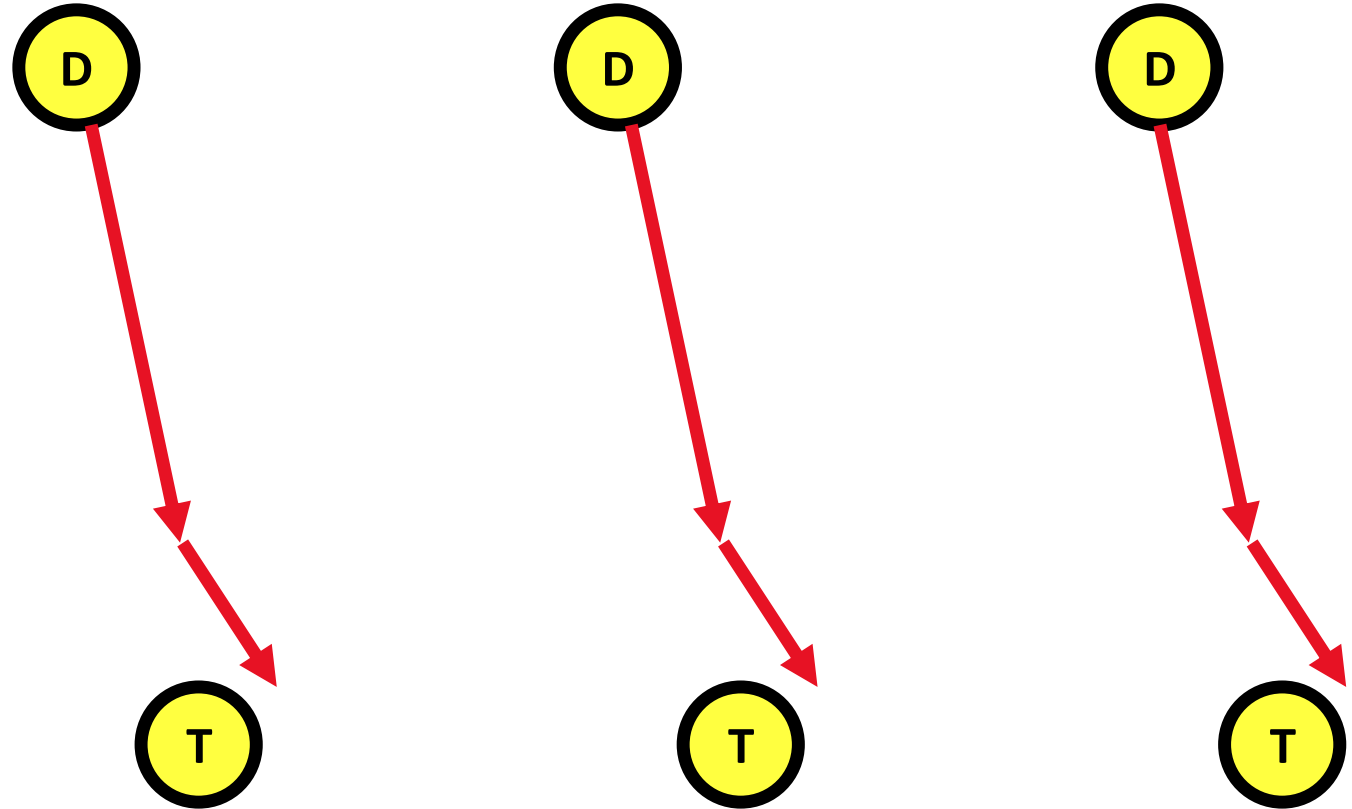


Shimmy Drill

This tackling drill can be done without shoulder pads/helmet. The purpose is to teach players proper way to “shimmy” or breakdown when running up for a tackle.

Player should be in “ready position.” This means they keep head up, sink hips, shoulders back, bend knees, and maintain slight arch in back with arms bent to their side.

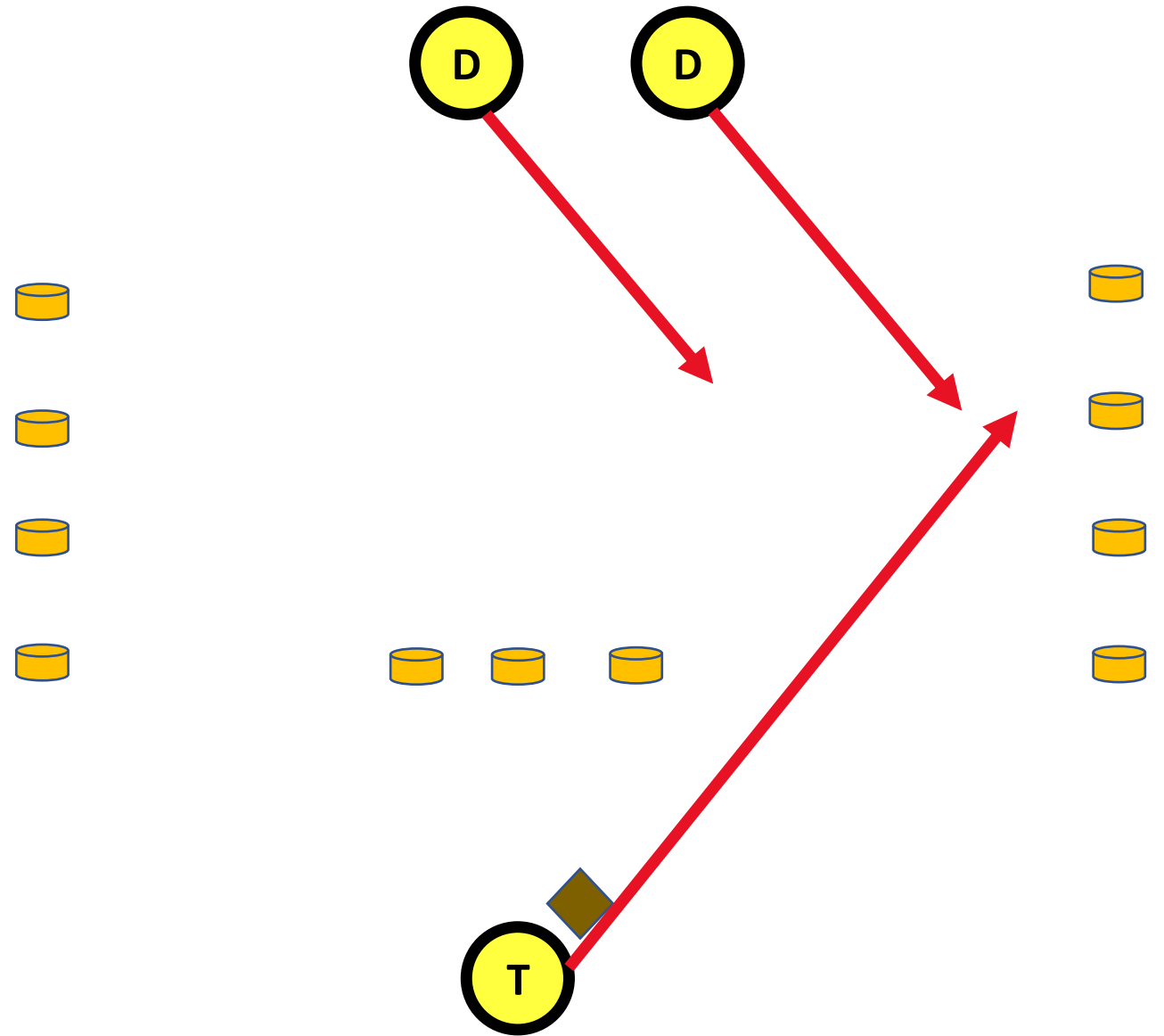
A teammate will be facing them 8-10 yards away. As the defender approaches their teammate, they will breakdown or “shimmy” 1-2 yards from them. Focus will be on taking small choppy steps towards ball carrier and should lead with the foot closest to their teammate’s hip. Drill ends with defender tapping the other player’s knee. Can also have the defender start drill by shedding a blocker prior to attacking the ball carrier.



Team Tackle Drill

The focus is for players to learn how to tackle as a team and prevent cut-backs.

Two defenders will lay on the ground with top of their heads facing a running back, who is 10-15 yards away. When the coach says “go” he will pitch the ball to the running back and the defenders will spring up and face the runner. The ball carrier will run to one of the sides. Near defender must track near hip, shimmy, step with their closest foot, wrap and tackle the runner. The other defender plays an angle to prevent cut-backs by the runner and will tackle if needed.



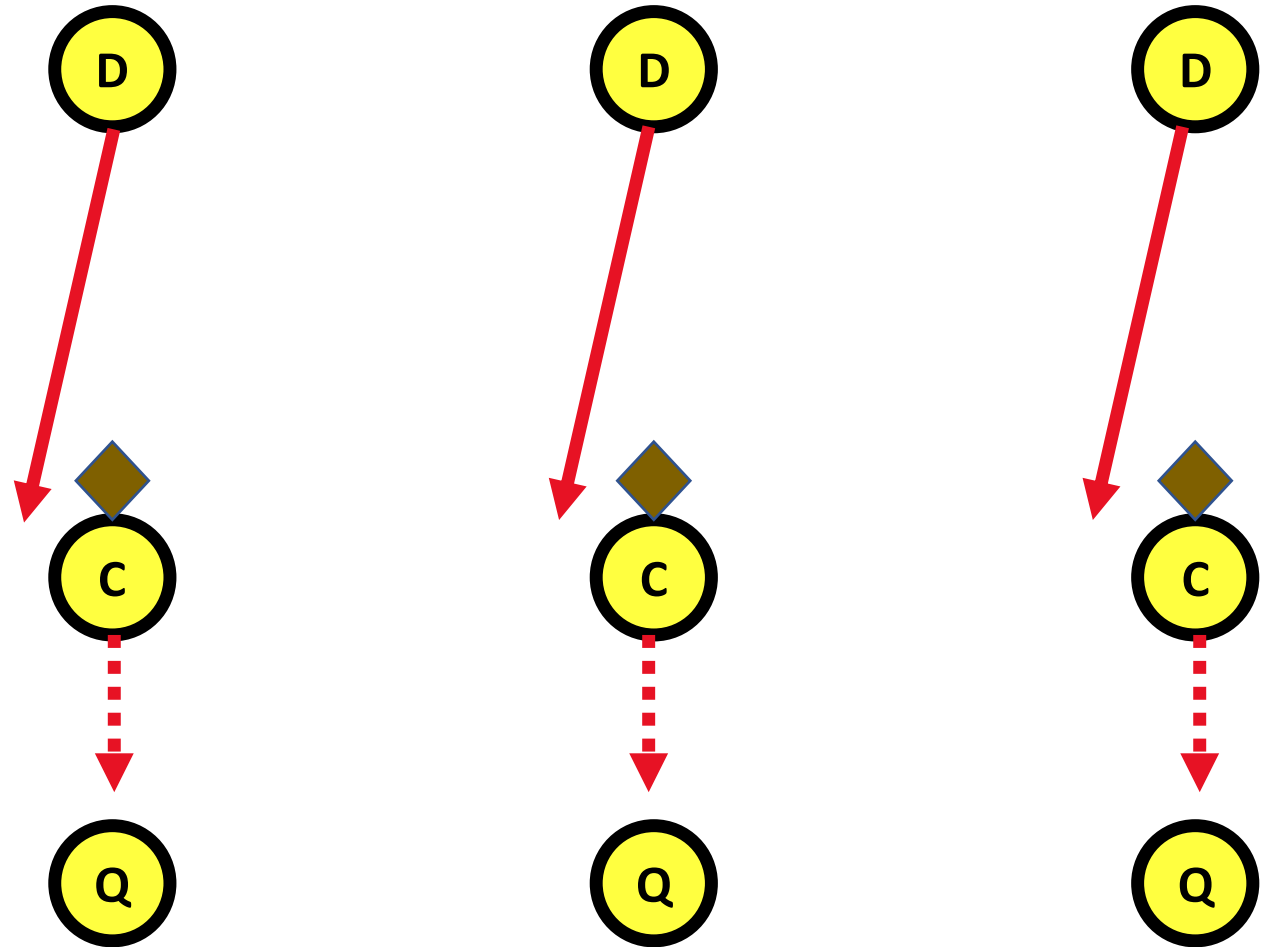
Explode Off the Ball Drill

Many young players react only to the movement of the offensive player in front of them. The Defense should be trained to react to the movement of the ball not the player.

For this drill, have your players in either the proper 2-point or 3-point stance with an eye looking in on the ball.

When the ball is snapped, the Defense should react, crashing in on the ball. In this drill the Coach or Quarterback should vary the snap count and even use a silent snap count.

Emphasis should be on ball movement.



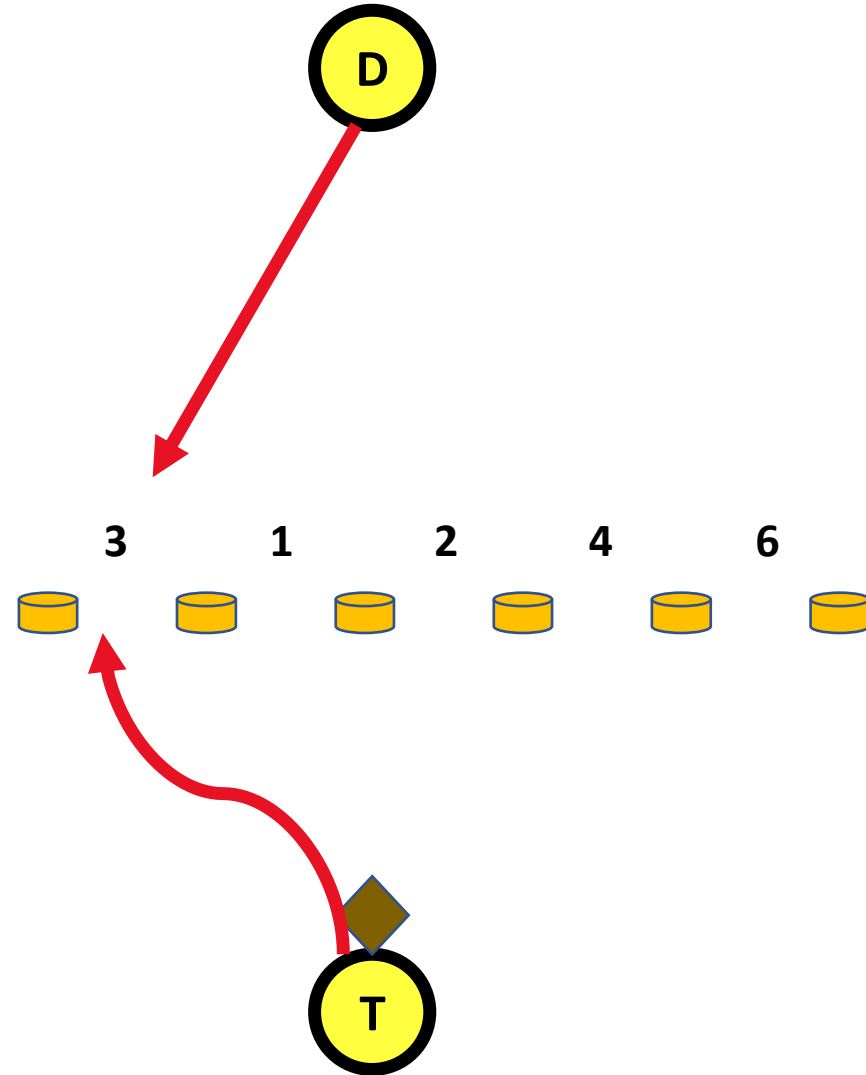
Linebacker Reaction Drill

Linebackers need to quickly read the play, react to the play and move into the proper position (anywhere on the field) to make the tackle.

For this drill set up 5- 6 cones that represent the offensive players. There should be enough space between the cones so that your Running Back can run through them.

Have your Linebacker position themselves 4-7 yards off the line of scrimmage. Before the play starts the coach can tell the Running Back know what hole (between what cones) they are to run. Before they run through the cones, the Running Back should “fake” running thorough a few other sets of cones.

The Linebacker should keep their shoulders parallel to the LOS while following the Running Back and then “fill” the hole where that the Running Back runs through, tackling them to the ground.

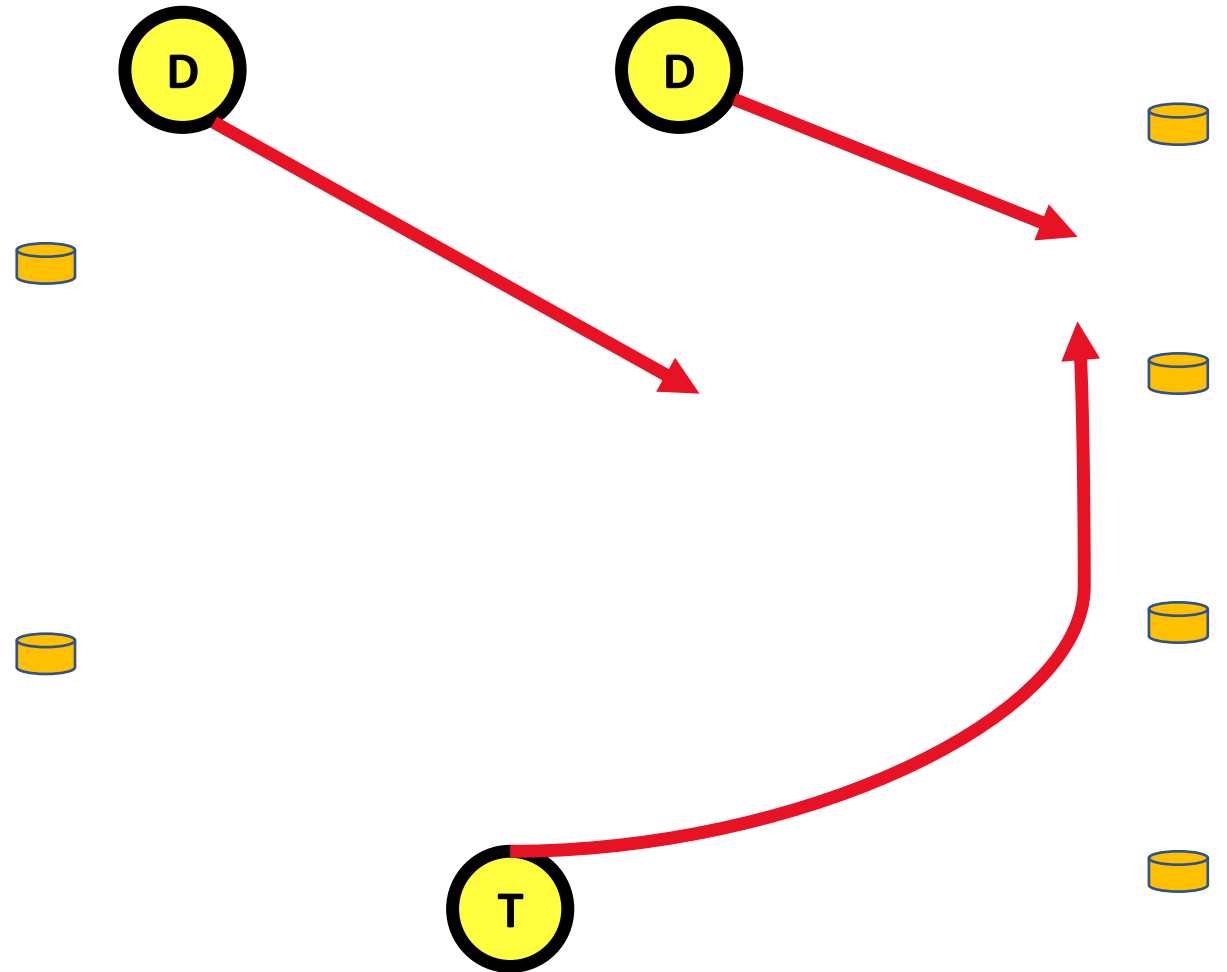


Sideline Funnel Drill

The sideline can be looked upon as an extra defender. If you get the ball carrier close to the sideline, you limit the number of directions the ball carrier can run.

At one side place a couple cones and the sideline (or more cones) should be used as the other boundary. This is the area that the runner is restricted to.

This drill is performed with 1 ball carrier and 2 or more Defenders. On the coach's command, the ball carrier should start downfield. It is the defenders' job to cut off the ball carrier's running lanes, forcing the runner towards the sideline. The Defense is essentially cornering the ball carrier.



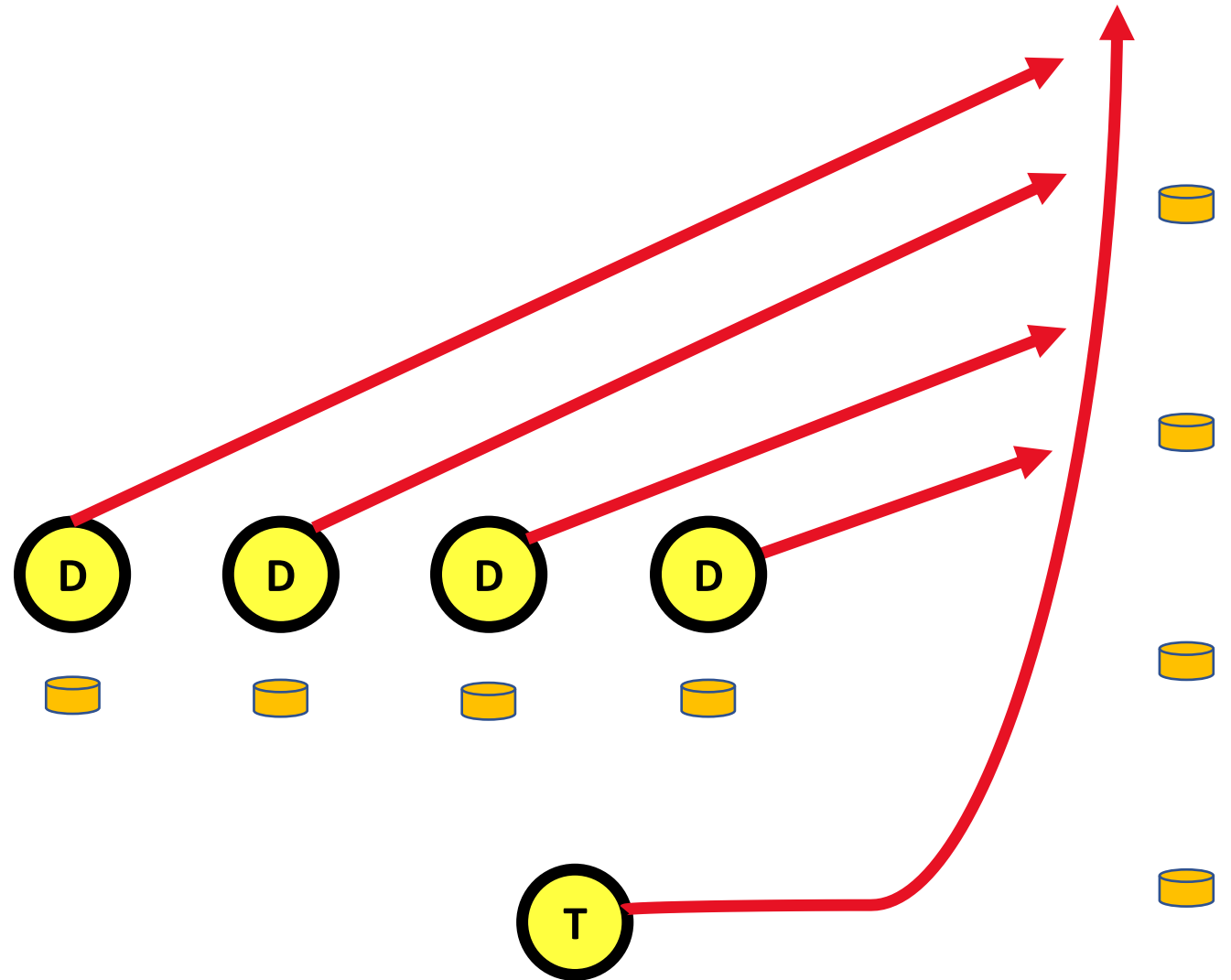
Angle of Pursuit Drill

It's very important to teach your defense the proper angle of pursuit. Many young defenders will simply chase a ball carrier from behind, leaving you with 11 players lined up behind the ball carrier all the way down the field. For this drill explain the importance of the angle of pursuit.

First walk your players through their pursuit. Players furthest from the ball carrier will take the largest angle to the play (see diagram). Emphasize that the players should be running to where the ball carrier will be (not where the ball carrier is now!).

After walking your players through their angles, set up the drill at full speed. This drill can be done with 3-6 defenders. At the coach's command the defenders should begin pursuit of the ball carrier.

For this drill the defenders should simply touch the ball carrier. The ball carrier continues down the sideline until all players have touched him. Defenders should be tracking the backside of the running back's hip.



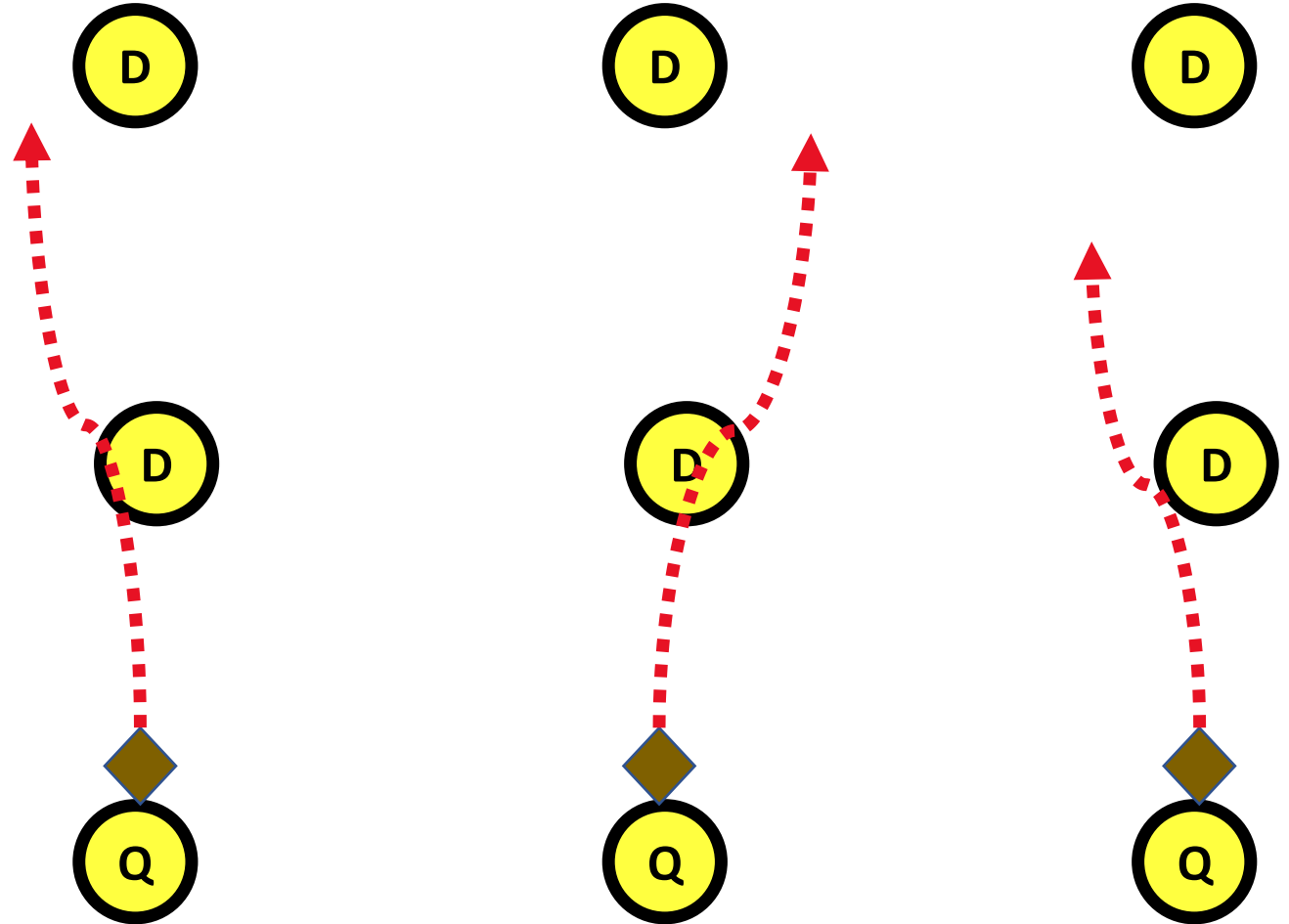
Tip Drill

The purpose of this drill is to get players to react to a tipped ball during games.

For this drill, have groups of 3 players.

They will each be 5 yards apart. The Quarterback should throw the ball just above the middle defenders head. The middle defender should tip the ball into the air. The back defender must try to catch the tipped ball.

Make sure the players are rotated so the same player is not always the middle defender.



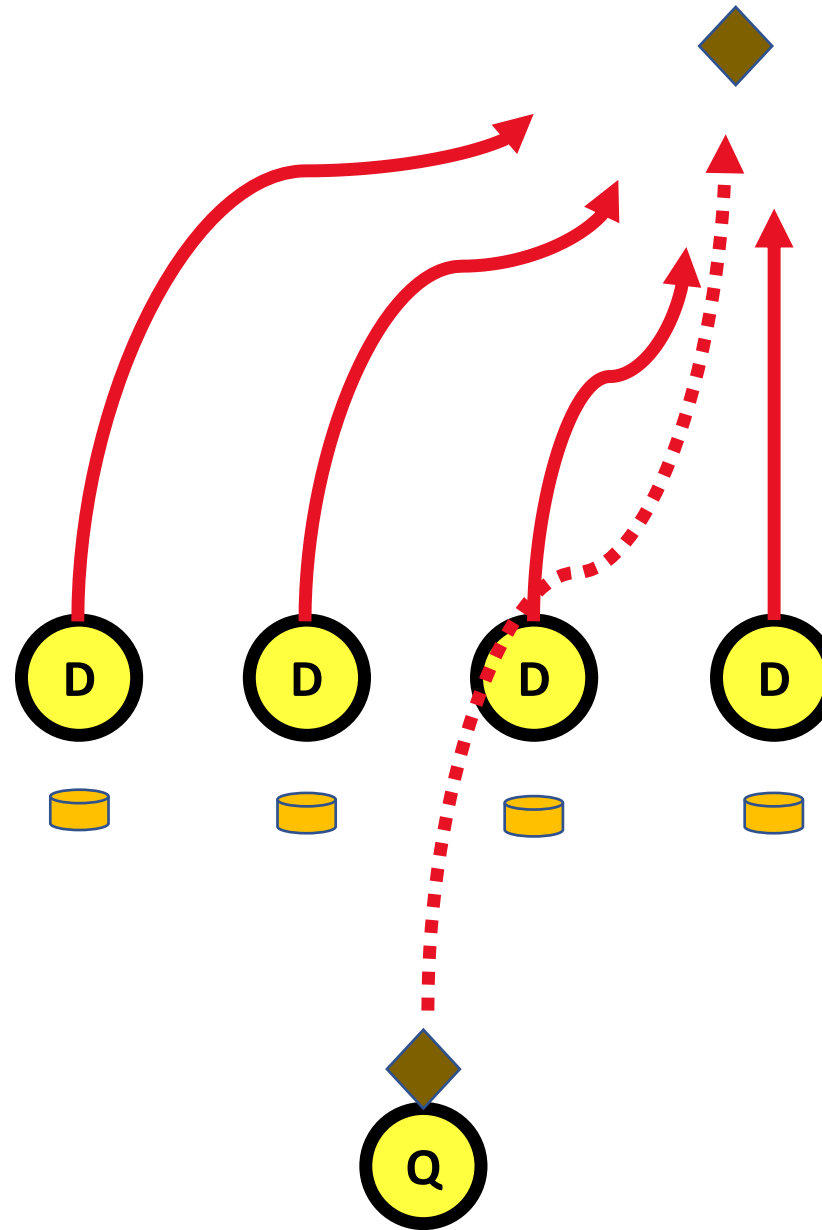
Defensive Back Pass Coverage Drill

This drill works on good pass coverage fundamentals.

The drill start with 3-4 defensive players lined up in the 2-point stance ready position.

As the coach/Quarterback drops back to pass, the defense quickly backpedals into coverage.

As the Q turns and throws, all the Defensive Backs react and run to the area where the ball is thrown, attempting to catch the ball.



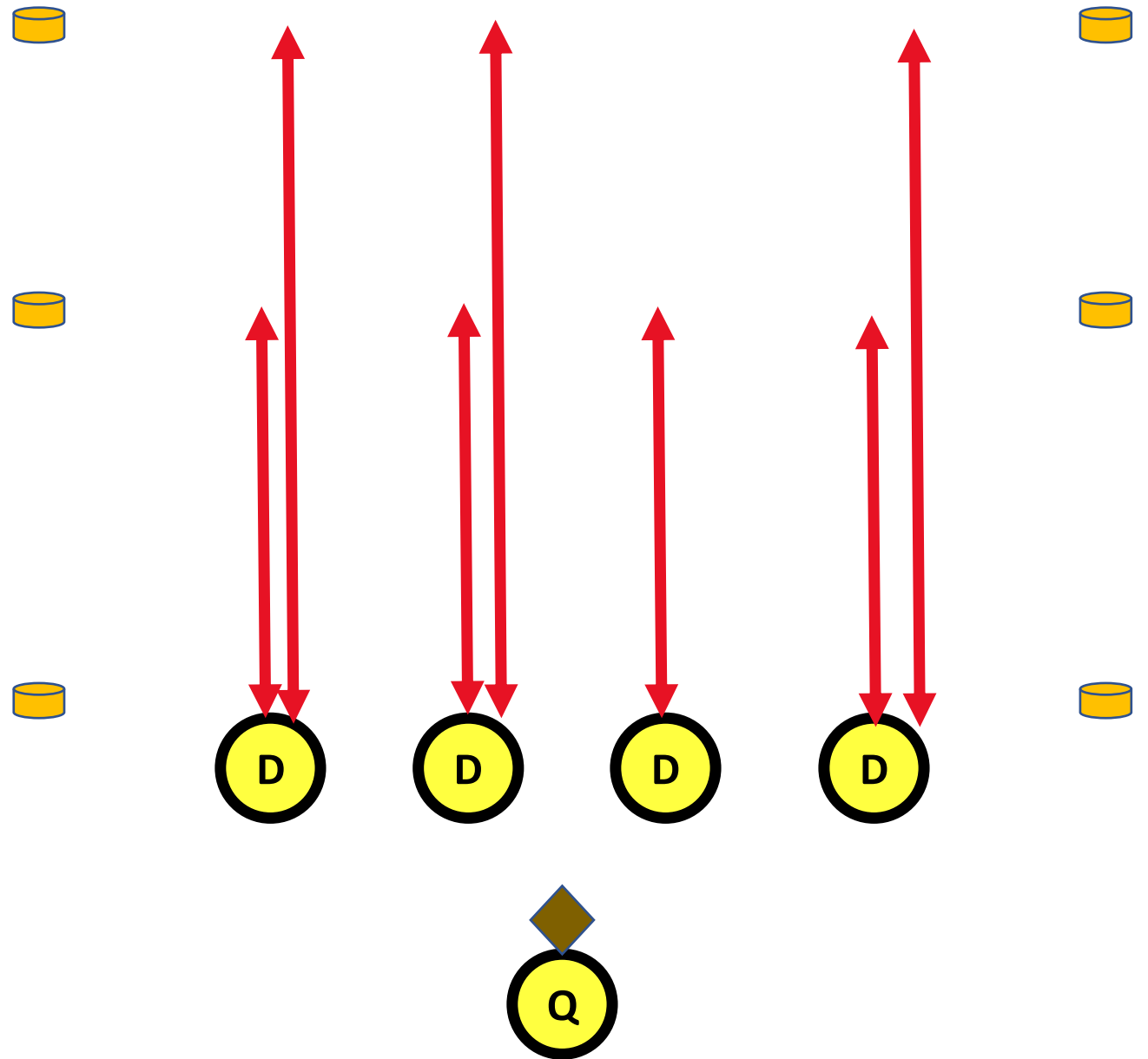
Backpedal Drill

The drill start with 3-4 defensive players lined up in the 2-point stance ready position.

As the coach drops back to pass, the defense quickly backpedals to the middle line of cones. They then sprint to the starting cones.

The players will then backpedal to the back cone line. Lastly, they will sprint forward back to the line of scrimmage.

Coach on keeping balance and effort.

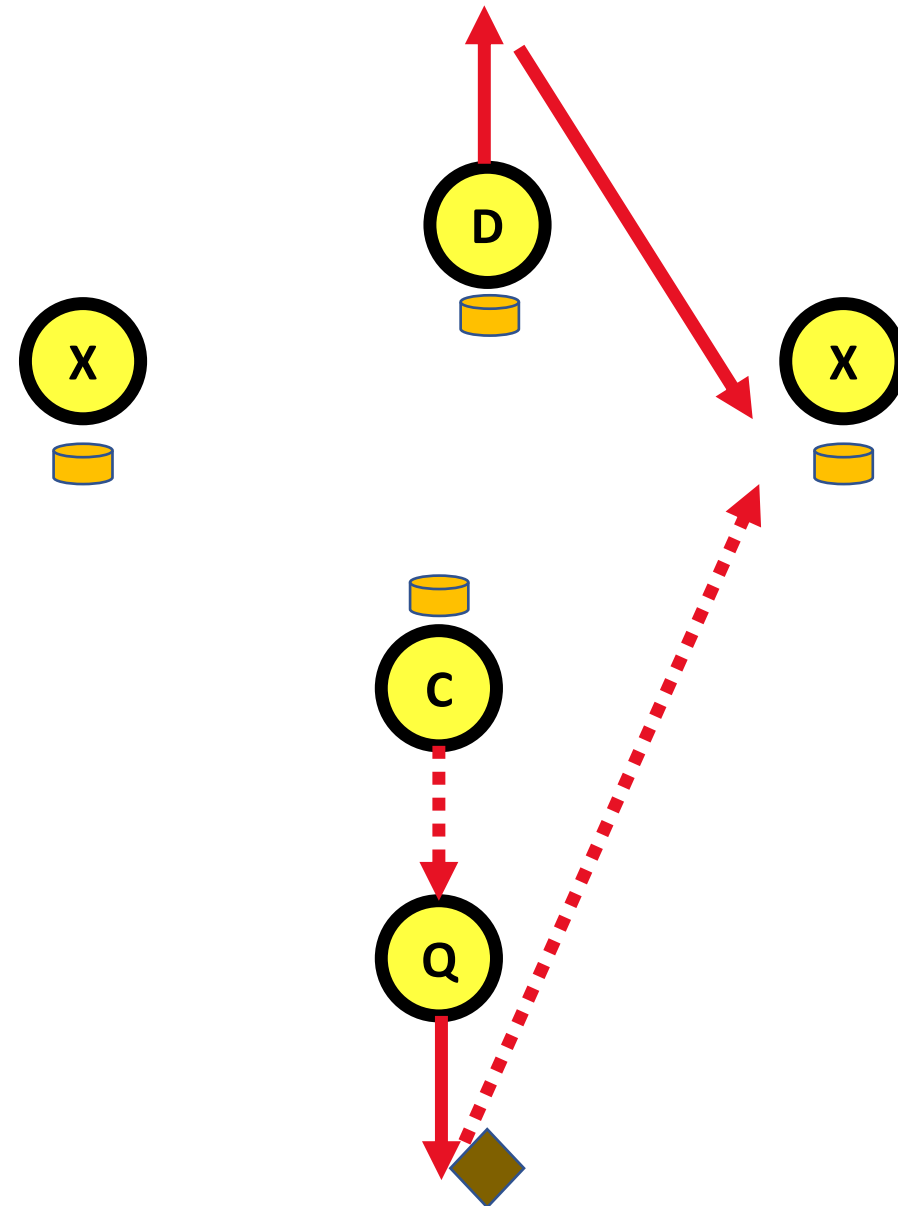


Zone Coverage Drill

This drill allows players to get comfortable covering two receivers in the same zone area. They will work on their backpedal, reading the quarterback and exploding to undercut the ball and getting an interception.

Line up two stationary Receivers that are 5-7 yards apart. A Linebacker will line up between them.

Upon the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop and the Linebacker will backpedal. Within two seconds the Quarterback will throw to one of the stationary receivers. The Linebacker will drive on the ball, intercept it and run it back to the coach standing next to the Quarterback.



Zone Box Drill

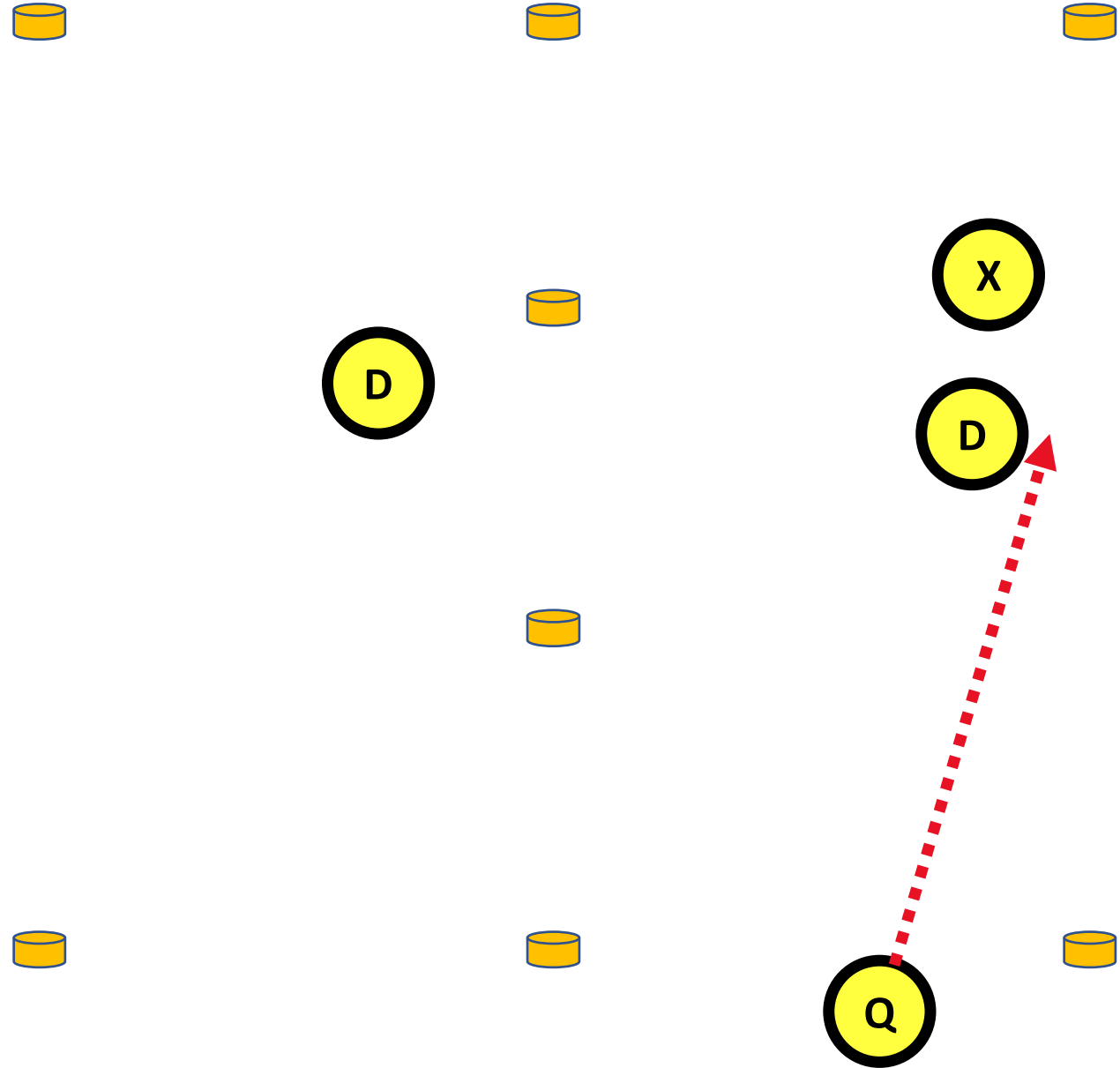
Designate a 10x10 area on the field and mark with cones. Split the area by placing cones down the middle of the square. One Linebacker will be positioned in each of the two “zones.” They cannot leave their zone during the drill.

Start with one receiver that is able to scramble anywhere in the box to get open.

When the coach says “GO” the Linebackers will defend their zone area and prevent a completion. Coach the kids on communicating and keeping a head on a swivel between the receiver and the Quarterback.

The Quarterback or coach has 7 seconds to throw the ball.

You can add a second receiver to this drill.



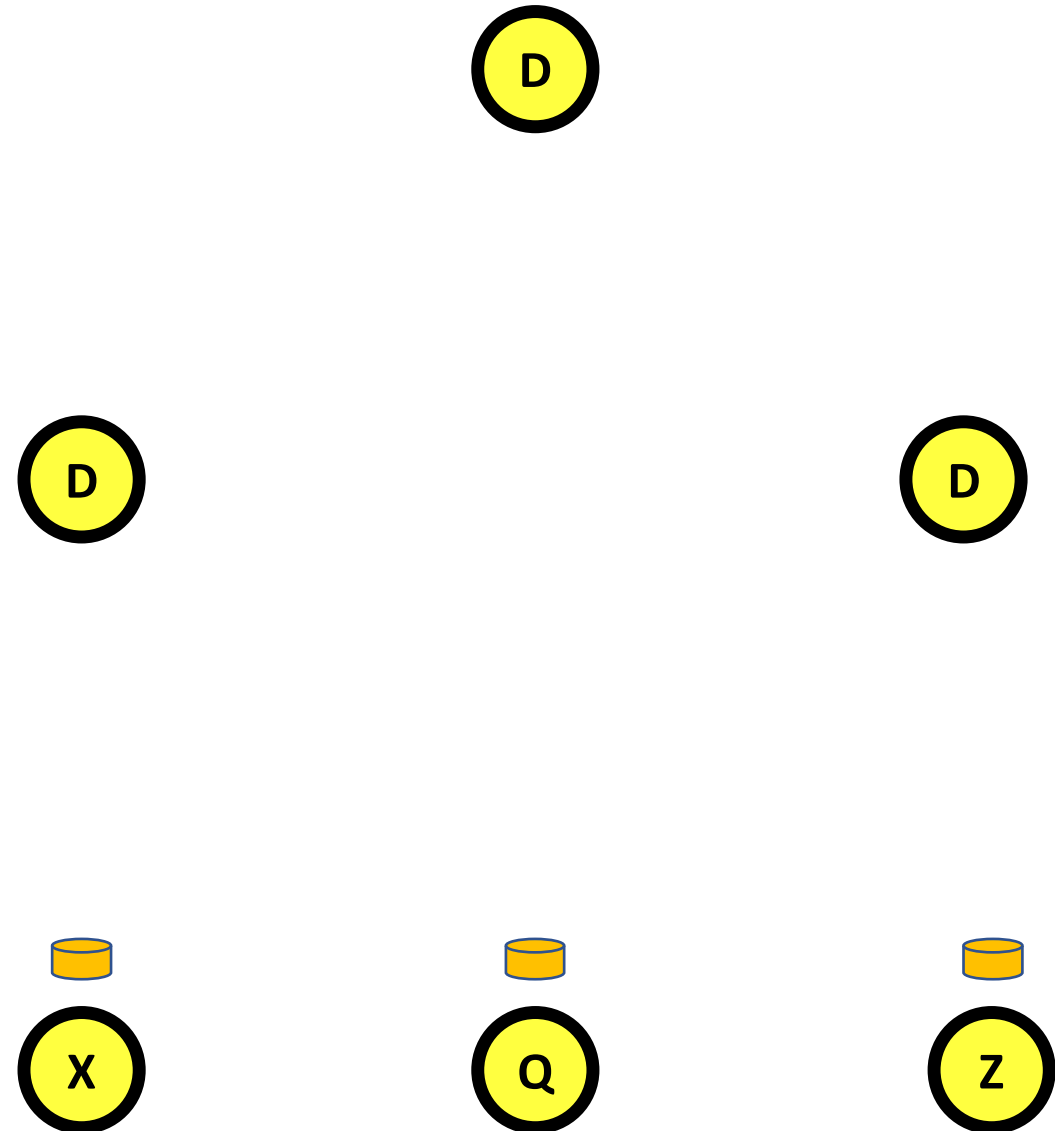
3 on 3 Zone Drill

Once the players understand basic zone concepts you can have them run the 3 on 3 drill. There will be two Defensive backs splitting the field in half. A single high safety will be back them up.

When the coach says “GO” the receivers will run crossing patterns. They will need to scramble to open areas to get open.

Coach the kids to communicate and stay in their zone. The Safety should never allow someone to get behind the defense.

The Quarterback or coach has 7 seconds to throw the ball.



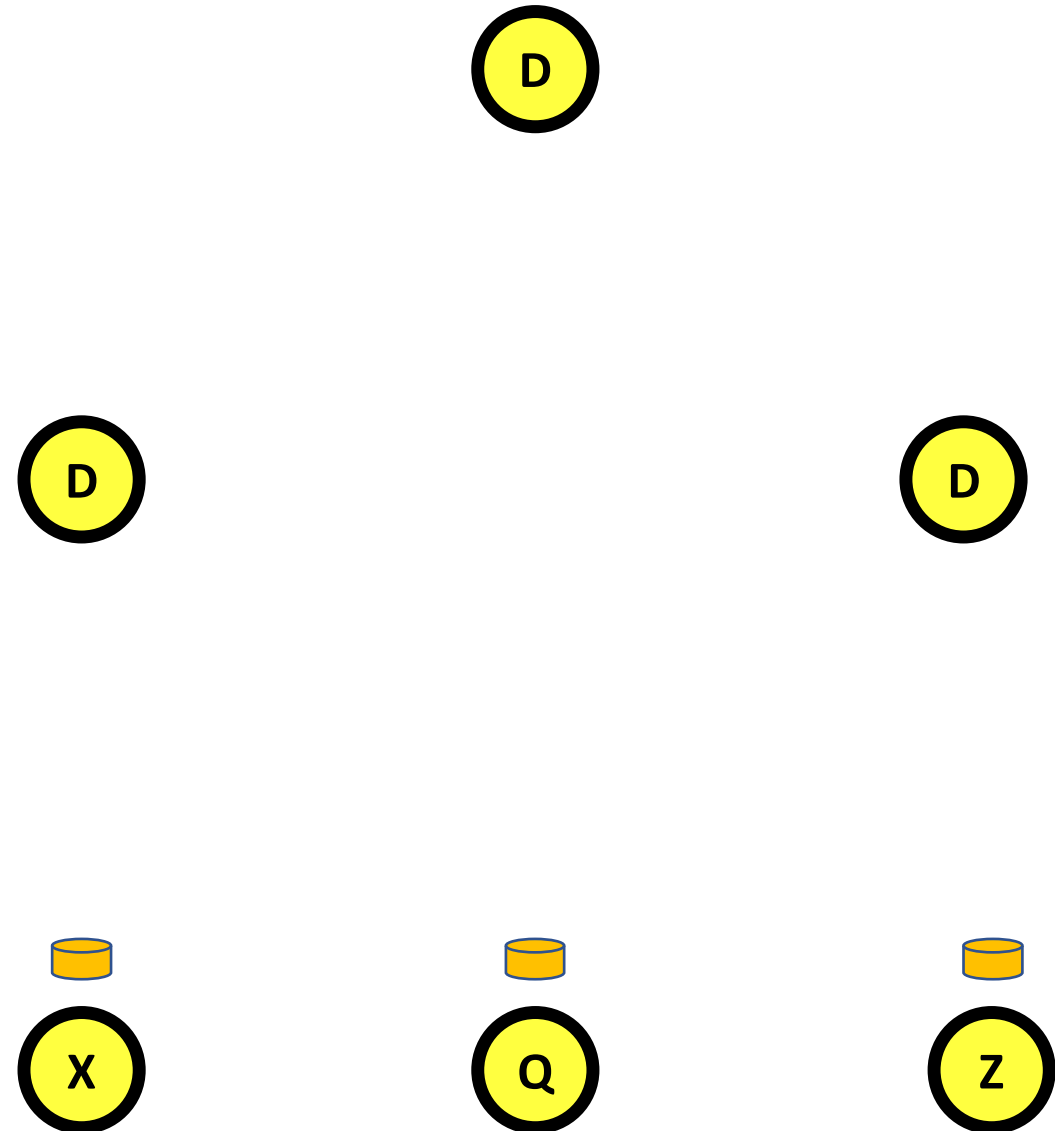
3 on 3 Man to Man Drill

Once the players understand the difference between zone and man concepts you can have them run the 3 on 3 man to man drill. There will be a Defensive Back covering each receiver. A single high safety will be back them up.

When the coach says "GO" the receivers will run crossing patterns. They will need to scramble to open areas to get open.

Coach the kids to communicate and stay in their zone. The Safety should never allow someone to get behind the defense.

The Quarterback or coach has 7 seconds to throw the ball.

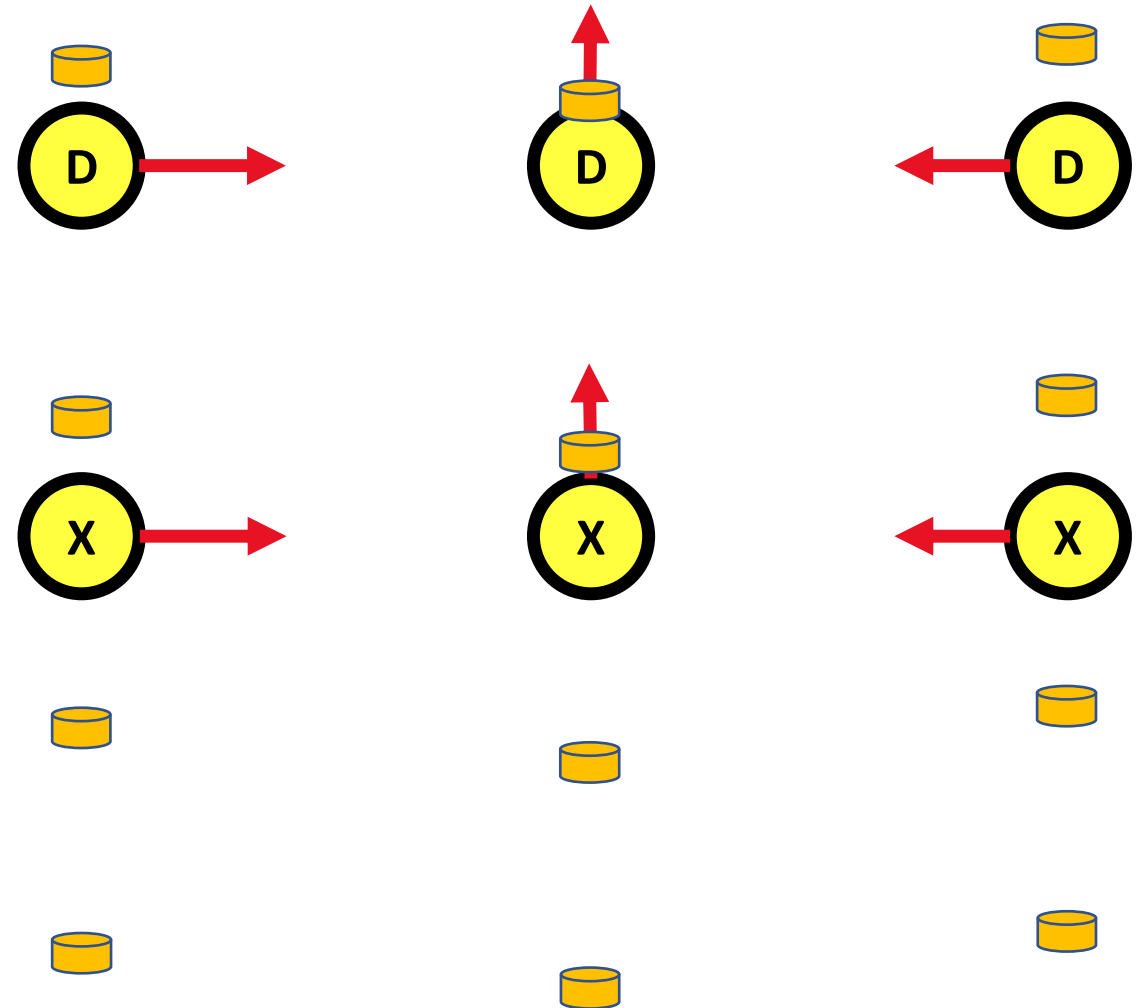


Defense Mirror Drill

This drill teaches defensive players to sink their hips when a receiver does.

Defensive player is 6 yards off the line of scrimmage. Receiver steps towards the defender and the defender back pedals. Coaches can set up more than one line of kids.

Receiver drops hips and chops feet every few yards, and that action should be matched by the defender. Also, the receiver can break in or out of the line as they go down the field. The defender should also mirror this action by the receiver.



Run & Gather Drill

Place 4 cones in a 10 by 10 yard square. The Linebacker should align with the ball carrier on one cone and the Running Back is on the cone next to them.

The Running Back will follow the line towards the cone in front of them at about 50%. While the ball carrier is running at the cone across the square the Linebacker should be closing in.

The defender needs to stay balanced and keep eyes on the backside of the near hip of the ball carrier. When he gets to the ball carrier he needs to tap off with two hands and finish the drill.

To add complexity you can have the ball carrier drop their hip while jogging along the line. If the Running Back drops a hip the Linebacker must come to balance and stop pursuit until there is a change of direction. By tracking the back side of the near hip the tackler is prepared to adjust to any moves from the Running Back.

