

# The Point After II

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION, VOL. 32, No.2, FALL 2024



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
2024 State Tournament and Play-off Teams

*Photo Provided by Visual Image Photography*

Editor: Tom Swittel • [swittelt@gmail.com](mailto:swittelt@gmail.com) • 414-315-1131

WFCa Executive Director: Dan Brunner • [brunnerd@wifca.org](mailto:brunnerd@wifca.org) • 414-429-3139

Assistant Editor/Executive Assistant: Charna Kelsey • PO Box 8, Poynette, WI 53955 • [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org) • 608-635-7318

[www.wifca.org](http://www.wifca.org)

Designer for the Pros for 100 Years

# SAND KNIT

Ripon Athletic

1921 - 2021

# We've Been with You the Entire Way!



## Ripon Athletic

MADE IN  
BERLIN, WI  
USA

*Athletes & Coaches,  
Thank You for All of Your  
Dedication and Hard Work.  
Good Luck in Today's Game!*

Proud to Support **Wisconsin Football Coaches Association** & **Children's Wisconsin**

[WWW.RIPONATHLETIC.COM](http://WWW.RIPONATHLETIC.COM)

1-844-697-4766





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### WFOA BUSINESS

**DAN BRUNNER**, WFOA Executive Director  
From the Executive Director ..... 2

**BRIAN KAMINSKI**, WFOA President, Head Coach, Sun Prairie East HS, From the President ..... 4

**TOM SWITTEL**, Editor, WFOA Director of Communications and Corporate Sponsors, From the Editor ..... 6

**JOHN HOCH**, Hall of Fame Chairman, From the Hall of Fame Chairman ..... 8

### OFFENSE

**JASON BLAWAT**, Offensive Perimeter Coach, New Berlin West  
*Efficient Strong-Side Perimeter Run Prep Using Multi-Colored Cones* ..... 14

**AARON KRAEMER**, Head Football Coach, Rhinelander HS  
*Whose Ball? Our Ball! Creating a Turnover Culture Through Circuits* ..... 16

**TYLER MANEY**, Head Football Coach, Three Lakes HS  
*Transitioning Your Offensive Run Game From 11-Player to 8-Player* ..... 18

**BRIAN MERTZ**, Assistant Tight Ends Coach, Ohio University  
*Create Matchups With Tight Ends in 12-Personnel Passing Game* ..... 18

**JONATHAN POWERS**, Wide Receiver Coach & Co-Special Teams Coordinator, Loras College, *Conversion Routes: Making the Most of our Opportunities* ..... 22

**MARK MADIGAN**, Running Backs Coach, Ripon College  
*Spread Offense – Running Back Development* ..... 24

**TAYLOR MANUEL**, Assistant Football Coach, Omro High School  
*Wide Receiver Coaching Philosophy* ..... 26

**JASON WAGNER**, Former O-Line & Strength & Conditioning Coach  
*Keys to Great Pass Protection* ..... 28

**ERIK FRAZIER**, Wide Receivers Coach, Western Illinois Univ.  
*Wide Receiver Development Position-Specific Wide Receiver Play* ..... 29

### SPECIAL TEAMS

**MATT ELLIS**, D-Backs & Special Teams Coordinator, UW-Oshkosh  
*Read & React: Principles of Coverage Units in Special Teams* ..... 33

**MICHAEL FAMIGLIETTI**, Offensive Coordinator, Kansas Wesleyan University, *Easy Indoor Drills for Specialists* ..... 34

### GENERAL FOOTBALL

**AARON KRAEMER**, Head Football Coach, Rhinelander HS  
*Using a Match Style Coverage to Get the Best of Both Worlds* ..... 36

**GREG ROMAN**, Head Football Coach, Milwaukee Reagan HS  
*Option & Audibles Football, But Maybe Not What You Think* ..... 38

**NICK WALTERS**, Defensive Coordinator, Lourdes Academy  
*Eight Lessons Learned as a Young Defensive Coordinator* ..... 38

**MICHAEL ROEMHILD**, Head Football Coach, Boyceville HS  
*Good Teams Want it; Champions Need it!* ..... 40

**JIM DEIGNAN**, Assistant Football Coach, Eau Claire Regis HS  
*Knowing What the End Should Look Like* ..... 40

**CRAIG AAMOT**, Co-Director, Jeff Trickey QB Technique and Leadership Camps, *Leading With Heart: Cultivating Calm, Confidence & Compassion in Ourselves & in Our Players* ..... 42

**SHANE STRONG**, Head Football Coach, Glenwood City HS  
*Maximizing Your Reps in a Small School* ..... 44

**JOEL NELLIS**, Head Football Coach, Brookfield Central HS  
*The Case for Increasing Coaching Pay in Wisconsin* ..... 46

**BRYAN KAPLAN**, Offensive Line Coach, Badger HS  
*Book Studies – Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches Keeping Offensive Linemen Connected in the Off-Season* ..... 47

**DAN KEEFER**, Head Football Coach, Baldwin-Woodville HS  
*Use Statistics to be More Efficient and Improve* ..... 48

**GARRETT MEYERS**, Assistant Coach, Concordia Univ. WI  
*How to Build Accountability in a Position Group* ..... 49

**TOM WESCOTT**, Assistant Coach, Eau Claire Memorial HS  
*Five Disciplines to Grow as an Assistant Coach* ..... 50

**RYAN HUMPAL**, Head Football Coach, Amery HS  
*Make Brain Training Part of Your Program* ..... 52

**CODY SCHULTZ**, Head Football Coach, Wayland Academy  
*Rebuilding Wayland Academy Football* ..... 54

**MARK LUSIC**, Head Football Coach, Amherst HS  
*A Few Common Practices For Success at Amherst* ..... 56

**CAMERON CAREY**, Head JV & Assistant V Coach, Slinger HS  
*Building a JV/Freshman Program* ..... 58

**DAN BARUTHA**, Head Football Coach, Lakeland Union HS  
*Creating Football IQ With Situational Practice Segments* ..... 59

**ROBERT HARRY**, Head Football Coach, Pardeeville HS  
*My Experience as a First-Year Head Coach* ..... 60

**MATT MCGINNIS**, Head Football Coach, Eau Claire North HS  
*What Does Success Look Like for Your Program? A Message to Coaches Trying to Build Up a Struggling Program* ..... 60

**GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM**  
*A Benefit of WFOA Membership* ..... 62

# Executive Director, Dan Brunner



Dan Brunner

The season is coming to a close. I hope that all of you were able to achieve many of the goals that you set prior to the start of your seasons. I want to remind everyone of a few things to put on your calendar.

### WFCM MEMBERSHIP

With the turnover of Head Coaches that occurs every year, please make sure that your staff are all WFCM members. Membership runs from the 1st day of the annual clinic to the day before the next year's clinic.

EVERY WFCM MEMBER IS COVERED BY A \$2 MILLION LIABILITY INSURANCE POLICY THAT PROTECTS YOU DURING ALL FOOTBALL RELATED ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE YEAR (Coverage starts the day you renew your membership)!

The WFCM membership includes clinic registration! I am confident that no state has a better deal for their members. We are striving for 100% of the football coaches in the state to become WFCM members. We need all of you to help us achieve that goal. The WFCM membership program allows you to combine high school and youth programs for your staff rate.

### The Membership Dues are:

- Small Staff (Maximum of 9 members) \$405 (\$45/member)
- Additional members (10-13) - \$55 each
- Large Staff (Maximum of 14 members) \$630 (\$45/member)
- Additional members - \$55 each
- Unlimited 15+ \$775

**Note:** Admission to the Annual Clinic is included in Membership Fee!

- You may combine Youth staffs and High School staffs for all 3 staff rates!
- In State Individual - \$55
- Out of State Individual - \$60

WFCM membership is required for all Award Programs (All-State, All-Star, COY, etc...). Please see list of membership benefits later in this issue.

### WFCM CLINIC

Please remember to set aside April 3, 4, & 5, 2025 for our Annual Gathering in Madison! Last year's attendance was one of the highest ever. We are already planning for a bigger and better clinic for 2025. Save the Dates!

### WFCM MENTOR MANUAL

WFCM HOF member and Past President, Bill Collar, along with a select group of current and past WFCM coaches have revised and up-

dated the WFCM Mentoring Manual. It is the finest of its kind anywhere. It is a valuable resource for coaches at all levels. It's a must for Coaches, New and Old. Sales of copies have 100% of the proceeds going toward the Bill Collar Lineman Scholarship Fund. They are \$10. Email me or order from the website.

### NHSACA COY & HOF

A special congratulations to recently retired coach, Pat Rice (Waunakee). Pat has been nominated as Wisconsin's candidate for the National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA) 2025 National Coach of the Year. The winner will be announced at the NHSACA annual convention to be held in Rapid City, SD next June. The award is based on career achievements. Good luck, Pat. Congratulations are also in order for Greg Lehman and Chuck Raykovich, who will be inducted into the NHSACA Hall of Fame next June. Congrats Coaches, on a well-deserved honor!

### CONCLUSION

As we wind down the completion of another Football season, I hope that your journey was memorable. It's unfortunate that outsiders too often judge a coach's success by wins and losses. We all know the true measure of success is the impact that you have on developing the young men and women in your program into successful people on & off the field. To see your team "over achieve" in a game or over an entire season can be one of the most rewarding experiences a coach has. Please never forget that. Nothing is more meaningful than having a former player call you "Coach" when your paths cross, long after he played for you.

## THANK YOU TO OUR WFCM CORPORATE SPONSORS WHO SO GENEROUSLY SUPPORT FOOTBALL IN WISCONSIN.

SUPPORT THEM BY USING THEIR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

# Elegance & Class



**The Marriott Madison West delivers only the highest level of hospitality in food, beverage, service and accommodations.**

- Over 50,000 square feet of exceptional meeting space
- Complimentary valet service and free parking
- Convenient location, only minutes from downtown Madison and the Dane County Regional Airport
- 10 story garden atrium and indoor waterfall
- Fitness center, soothing indoor saline pool, business center, concierge plaza and the sought-after rewards program by Marriott
- Surrounded by many unique attractions including all of the shops and restaurants located at Greenway Station, adjacent to the hotel

**Marriott**  
**MADISON WEST**

1313 John Q. Hammons Drive  
Middleton, WI 53562  
608-831-2000  
Marriott.com/msnwe



# President, Brian Kaminski



Brian Kaminski

Where has the season gone? Here we are celebrating a remarkable football season and looking ahead once again. As we close the curtain on another thrilling football season, the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association

(WFCFA) extends its heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this journey so memorable. From the electrifying energy of the state championships to the unwavering support of fans, families, coaches, and players, your passion for the game shines brightly.

A special thank you to all the board members for their dedication and continued service to this beloved sport. Your commitment ensures that football in Wisconsin remains strong and vibrant. We're also grateful to all the volunteers and officials who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make every game day an incredible experience for all participating.

As we reflect on this season, the WFCFA is committed to enhancing our seeding and qualification process for the playoffs. We are actively reviewing how we can work with the WIAA to make this system more transparent and fair, ensuring that every team has a clear path to suc-

cess. Your feedback and support are invaluable as we strive to improve and grow.

Looking ahead, don't forget to mark your calendars for the WFCFA Spring Clinic. Take full advantage of your memberships by attending on April 3-5 2025. Long renowned as the best clinic in the country, this event is a testament to the strength and dedication of our membership. It's an unparalleled opportunity to learn, connect, and gear up to do it all again.

Thank you once again for a fantastic season. We truly have so much to be thankful for going into this Holiday Season. Remember share quality time with those you love and care for. This is our time to rest, renew, regroup and be grateful. Here's to many more years of excellence and camaraderie on and off the field!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!  
Warm regards,  
Brian Kaminski WFCFA President

## JOIN THE WFCFA TODAY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE BENEFITS:

- \$2,000,000.00 LIABILITY INSURANCE POLICY (details on page 63)
- Eligibility to participate in the WFCFA Grant Program
- Complimentary admission to the Spring Football Clinic
- Three issues of The Point After II newsletter
- All-Star games, nomination rights and free attendance
- All-State nomination rights
- Scholarship nomination rights
- Hall of Fame nomination rights
- All-State Championship rings
- Annual awards and recognition including Regional and State Coaches of the Year.
- WFCFA membership enhances professional growth and gives you the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of your profession
- A professional network of new contacts, a line of communication and a forum for the exchange of ideas and information within your profession.
- [www.wifca.org](http://www.wifca.org), our professional website with the latest information about football in Wisconsin which provides unlimited resources to meet the needs of member coaches.
- 2 Badger tickets to home football games



REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BY SEPTEMBER 1st!  
REGISTRATION ON LINE AT [WWW.WIFCA.ORG](http://WWW.WIFCA.ORG)

COACHCOMM  
**COBALT**  
**PLUS**

**COMMUNICATION WITHOUT COMPROMISE**

PROUD SPONSOR



**WINNING TEAMS AT EVERY  
LEVEL TRUST COACHCOMM.**

**ALL-IN-ONE** **NEW!**  
A1 WIRELESS HEADSET

- Lightest, best-fitting All-in-One headset
- No setup required & easy to use
- No cord!
- Superior sound quality with intelligent noise cancellation
- Up to six customizable channels with unlimited users
- No basestation
- Durable weather-resistant construction
- Mix-and-match All-In-One with traditional Cobalt PLUS beltpacks and player receivers
- Revolutionary Drop-In Wireless Headset Charger available



**SMARTBOOM® PRO**  
**ON/OFF OPERATION**  
with ambidextrous design  
(left or right side boom)



**CALL TODAY OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO**

**CoachComm**

800.749.2761  
WWW.COACHCOMM.COM



# Editor, Director of Communications and Corporate Sponsors, Tom Swittel



Tom Swittel

I am writing this article just prior to Level 4 of the WIAA Football Playoffs. So far, the Playoffs have been very exciting with both upsets in all of the rounds played and the highest seeds advancing as expected. I know Level 4 will provide the same. The State Finals will, no doubt, provide must see football action. Congratulations to all who participated in the 2024 Playoffs.

We are entering the off-season where attention turns to banquets, workouts, clinics, and ordering next season's uniforms, materials, and supplies. I just want to remind WFCAs membership of our Corporate Sponsors and encourage you to seriously consider purchasing your needs from them. Our Corporate Sponsors help to support the many awards, events, and programs the WFCAs offers. At the very least, please include them in your ordering process and price their products. Our Corporate Sponsors are as follows: BSN, Healy Awards, United Fundraising, Coach Comm, Ripon Athletic, The United States Marines, Hudl, Ingrid Swittel – First Weber Realtors, Guardian, Dynamic Fitness and

Strength, and Midwest Scholastic. Thank you for your consideration.

There will be a new feature at next Spring's WFCAs Clinic. The WFCAs has entered into an agreement with X and O Notebooks to supply a notebook to all Clinic attendees. The X and O Notebook will include the Clinic schedule, pages for note taking, and pages with X and O formats for coaches to diagram plays. There will also be opportunities for our Corporate Sponsors and Clinic Vendors to advertise their wares. Dan Brunner, Charna Kelsey, and myself worked with the X and O people to have the notebook specifically be a WFCAs product. I am excited to roll this out at the Clinic.

The WFCAs Podcast will be returning soon after the WIAA Football Playoffs end. Paul Nievinski, Tom Yashinsky, and myself will again be hosting the Podcast. We plan on following the same format we have previously used including dissecting important topics with the people involved in those topics. We will also have entertaining and informative guests discussing all things football. Please be on the lookout for the Podcast. Please feel free to contact me with any Podcast suggestions you may have.

Lastly, we are always on the hunt for articles to include in *The Point After II*. Please feel free to write an article and send to either Executive

Administrative Assistant, Charna Kelsey (office@wifca.org) or myself (swittelt@gmail.com). In particular, we welcome Offensive, Defensive, and Special Teams X and O articles. We would love to hear about the good things your program does that contributes to your success.

Recently Charna came across a letter from Dick Rundle. For those young coaches who may not recognize the name, Dick was a long-time Head Football Coach at Monona Grove High School and Executive Director of the WFCAs from 1989-2013. Dick was the first Editor of the WFCAs publication. In his letter Dick wrote, "*The original purpose of the book was to print football articles provided by veteran coaches to assist the rookie coaches with the basics of offense, defense and special teams*"

In this age of information we have more resources than ever to pick up ideas and perfect our game plans. It is our intention to provide a forum for member coaches to exchange current, relevant information about football, as well as WFCAs news and updates. Thank you for considering to write an article.

As always, thank you for your support of the WFCAs. Don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, comments or ideas you may have for *The Point After II*.



**PLAYER  
COMBINE  
PROFILES**

SIGN UP AT  
[EPOCHRECRUITINGWI.COM](http://EPOCHRECRUITINGWI.COM)

 @WIFCA  
 @EPOCHRECRUITING

 **HIGHLY ENDORSED BY D1, D2 & D3 RECRUITERS**

**PREMIER SOURCE FOR HELPING THE RECRUITING  
PROCESS FOR COMBINE PARTICIPANTS.  
PROFILES BUILT AROUND REQUESTED  
INFORMATION DIRECTLY FROM RECRUITERS**

---

**PROFILES INCLUDE**

- **WFCAs OFFICIAL COMBINE RESULTS**
- **VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS**
- **COMBINE RANKINGS**
- **SECURE CONTACT/TRANSCRIPT  
INFORMATION FOR RECRUITERS**
- **AND MORE!**

# Doing more for kids.

Thanks to you.

**For more than 125 years, we've been there for the kids and families of Wisconsin — and you've been there with us.**

Now, we're doing more for kids in more places than you could ever imagine.

- Launching a \$150 million initiative to improve the mental and behavioral health of kids
- Providing foster care and adoption services that help 9,000 kids annually find safe and loving homes
- Identifying the link between vaping and serious lung disease in teenagers — the first health system in the country to do so
- Giving the kids of our community the highest quality care available anywhere in the world — right here in Wisconsin

These are just a few examples of why we've evolved our name to reflect our commitment to giving kids and families what they need to grow and thrive.

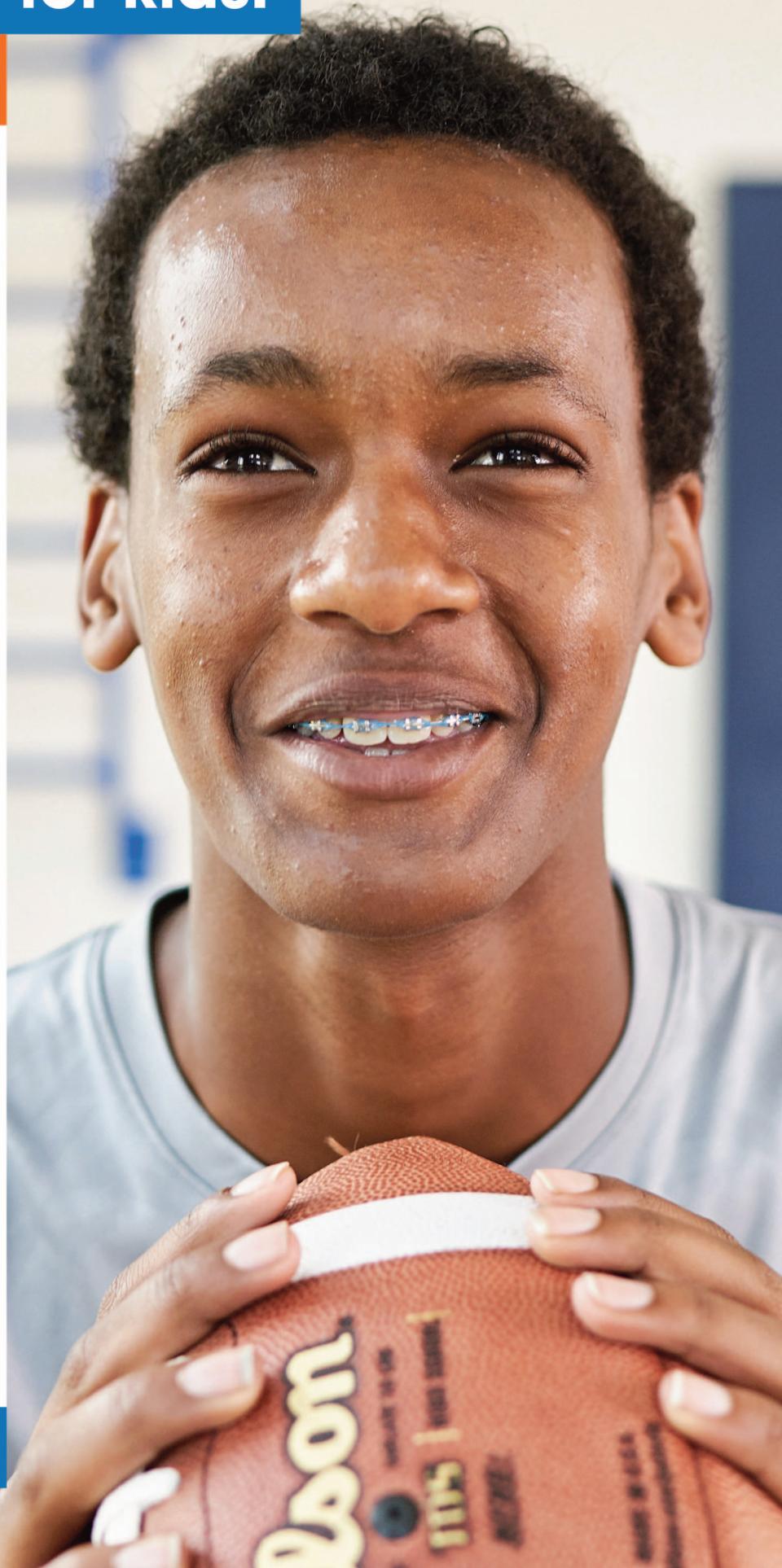
As always, we are grateful for all the generous families, champions and donors who believe, like we do, that kids deserve the best.

**Thank you to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association for your partnership and for helping us help kids.**



Kids deserve the best.

[childrenswi.org](http://childrenswi.org)



# Hall of Fame Chairman, John Hoch



John Hoch

Hello Everyone - hope your Summer and Fall were successful. We recently completed the regular season and are in the WIAA playoffs. A lot of teams have put away their equipment - which to me it was one of the saddest days of the season. Even though there will be only 8 teams that end with a win, coaches have to look back and see all the successes they had during the season with the players and coaches.

I want to thank everyone who has donated \$100 to the HOF Scholarship Fund. I also want to give a special thank you to Jerry Golembiewski for his fundraising efforts, without Jerry we would not be able to reach our goal of providing every one of the scholarship winners a \$1000 scholarship. You can make a donation for next year's scholarship fund by sending your donation into the WFCOA Office, PO Box 8, Poynette, WI 53955 by the December 31, 2024

For those who are early planners or like to

put your spring calendar together the WFCOA Spring Clinic will be April 3rd through the 5th. On Friday we will have an annual HOF Luncheon where past HOF members and spouses can get together to reminisce about the old days while enjoying a great meal. The Hall of Fame banquet is scheduled for Saturday, April 5th, 2025 at the Marriott West in Middleton. The reception begins at 4:30 pm with the banquet beginning at 5:30 pm. We hope you can make it to the clinic, HOF Luncheon and HOF Induction Ceremony at that time.

I am asking the Hall of Fame Members to help by providing articles for *The Point After II*. The knowledge you have to share from those years in the trenches is greatly appreciated by all coaches. The stories you have about coaching are also very interesting – especially making comparisons to show how things have changed or how things have stayed the same. So don't be afraid to sit down and write us an article for *The Point After II*.

As always every year we lose some great individuals that have dedicated themselves to making football great. Please keep them and their families in your prayers. Let us know if we have missed honoring the life of a Hall of Fame coach. We have added Coach Nedelcoff to this issue.

We are looking forward to the High School playoffs at Camp Randall and as a member of the WFCOA you are invited to share refreshment in the WFCOA's Hospitality Area.

Spend some quality time with your family and friends this Holiday Season! Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## ➤ *In Memoriam* ➤

### ROBERT BUCK

August 19, 1937 ~ May 20, 2024

Bob was born on August 19, 1937 in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, to Dr. Robert M. and Mrs. F. Lucille Buck. After graduating from Belle Fourche High School, he received his B.S. in Education from Black Hills State University located in Spearfish, South Dakota. He then went on to take graduate classes at the UW-Madison, Azusa Pacific - California, Southern Illinois University, and UW-La Crosse. He taught for two years in Mobridge, South Dakota before moving to Dodgeville in 1963. While at Dodgeville, where he taught and coached for 36 years, he was the head football coach for 12 years. His 1986 team went 9-0 and lost, in the playoffs in overtime, to the eventual state champion, Westby.

In 1995, Buck was named to the Wisconsin High School Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame. Followed by Black Hills State University Hall of Fame as a coach in 1998, and the Wisconsin Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 1999 as an assistant coach. In 2010 he was a charter member of the Dodgeville High School Athletic Hall of Fame. In 2011, he received the WBCA Eli Crogan Humanitarian Award.

### RON MILLER

May 27, 1938 ~ October 6, 2024

Ronald "Ron" James Miller, 86, Green Bay, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on Sunday, October 6, 2024. He was born May 27, 1938, in Green Bay to Austin and Marie Antoinette (Henkelmann) Miller.

Ron went to Green Bay West High School. He graduated in 1956. During his time in high



### WFCOA HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

**Jack Batten**, West Depere/Green Bay  
East/Green Bay Preble HSs

**Bob Hepp**, Independence/Viroqua  
Manitowoc Lincoln/Campbellsport  
Portage/Pardeeville HSs

**James Knudson**, Cambria-Friesland HS

**Tom Kujawa**, Cudahy/Germantown HSs

**James Matthys**, Brodhead-Juda HS

**Pete McAdams**, (SPASH)/UW-SP

**Cory Milz**, Black Hawk HS

**Mike Olson**, Pepin-Alma HS

**Jim Peterson**, Clayton/Rice Lake HSs

**Dave Puls**, Lodi HS

**James Schara**, Cedarburg/Southern Door  
Homestead HSs

**William Stanley**, Menomonie HS

### NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COACHES ASSOC. HALL OF FAME

**Greg Lehman**, Milwaukee Washington HS

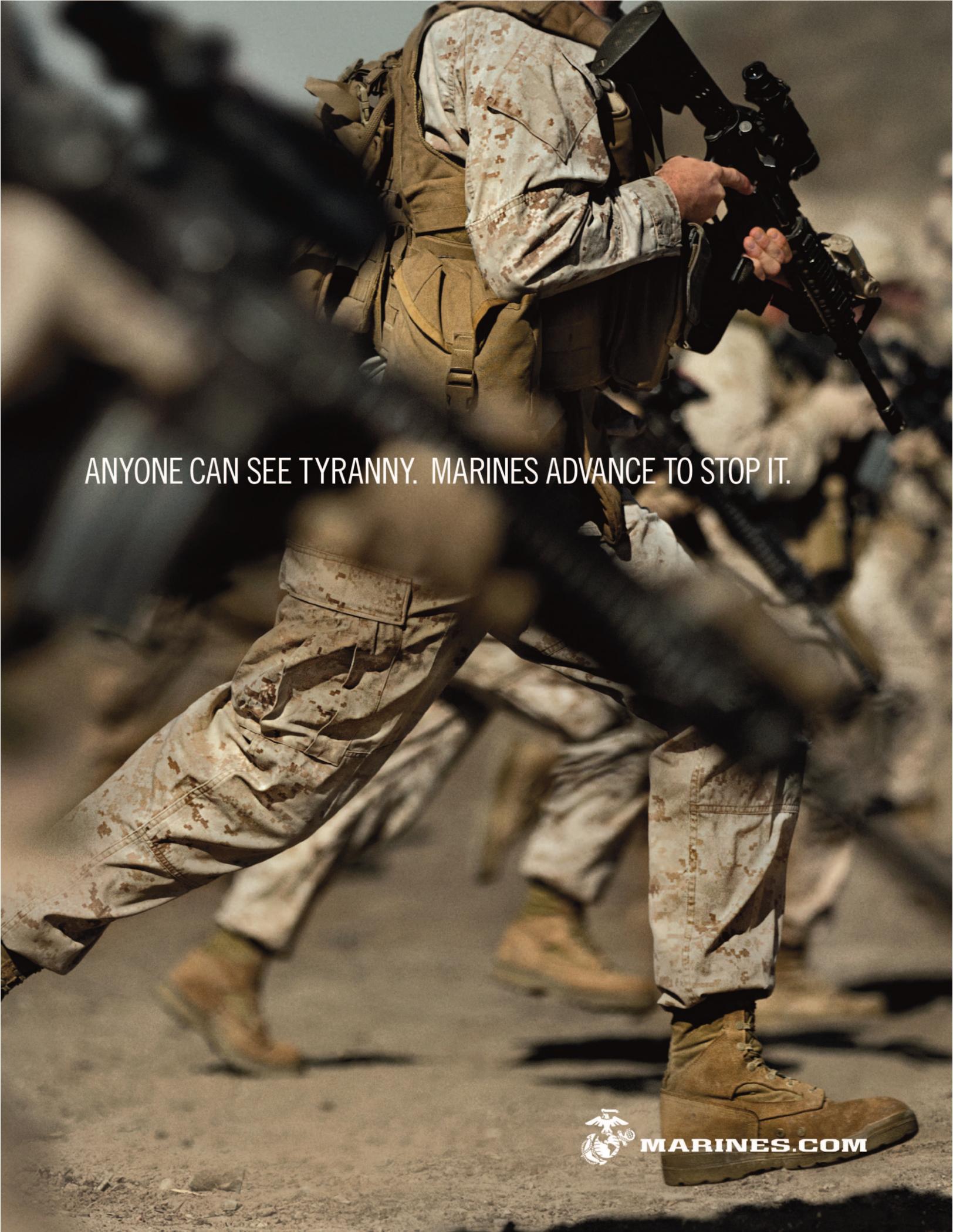
**Chuck Raykovich**, Chippewa Falls HS

### DAVE MCCLAIN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

**Bob Brainerd**, Media Broadcaster

### MARGE AND DICK RUNDLE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF COACHING AWARD

**Anton Graham**, Racine Case HS



ANYONE CAN SEE TYRANNY. MARINES ADVANCE TO STOP IT.



[MARINES.COM](http://MARINES.COM)

school, he was active in football, basketball, and track. He played for Green Bay American Legion Baseball team and in 1955 and 1956 he was selected to the Silver Sluggers All-Star Team as the pitcher.

After college, Ron was drafted to play with the Philadelphia Eagles and then ended up playing with the Hamilton Tiger Cats a team based in Canada. He returned to Indiana University to coach football eventually transitioning to coach at Brebeuf Jesuit High School where he led them to two undefeated championships. Ron moved back to Wisconsin and began coaching at Pre-montre as the head coach of their football team. He was their coach when they won the 1970 State Championship. Later, he would be inducted into the Notre Dame High School Hall of Fame as a Legend Coach for his coaching of the 1970 state championship team. Ron's former

high school football coach hired Ron to be the offensive coordinator at West High. During his time coaching at West, they won four conference titles in a row. He moved on to coach at Bayport High School. In 2008 he was proudly inducted into the Wisconsin Coaches Hall of Fame. Ron officially retired in 2010. He loved football. Most of Ron's life he was playing and if he wasn't playing, he was coaching. For over 50 years he was involved with football and whenever he was playing, he remained #85. Ron was a Director at the Bart Starr Summer Camp and a professional football scout with BLESTO, for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

**JIM NEDELCOFF**

*June 13, 1929 ~ September 12, 2019*

James Nedelcoff of Hazel Green, WI died peacefully on September 12, 2019 at the age of

90 after a long, hard-fought, battle with Parkinson's Disease.

in the summer of 1954 at Benton High School in Benton, WI. Jim taught for 18 years at Benton High School. He was also the head football coach, the head basketball coach, and had many other responsibilities during those years. After 18 great years at Benton, Jim went back home, accepting a position as social studies and history teacher as well as the head basketball coaching position at his alma mater, Hazel Green High School in 1972.

In honor of his years of leadership and professionalism, Jim was inducted into the Wisconsin High School Football Coaches Association Hall Of Fame on March 26, 1994 and the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association Hall Of Fame on June 17, 1994 - one of five Wisconsin High School coaches in both of those Halls of Fame.

**2024 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WFCA HALL OF FAME SCHOLARSHIP FUND.**

Lee Ackley	\$100.00	Bob DeKeyser	\$100.00	Dennis Johnson	\$100.00	Keith O'Donnell	\$100.00
Mike Anderson	\$100.00	Bob Detlaff	\$100.00	Richard Jones	\$100.00	Bill O'Leary	\$100.00
Pete Baganz	\$100.00	Tony DiSalvo	\$100.00	Dave Keel	\$100.00	Dan Pedersen	\$100.00
Jill Bark	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Bruce Larson</i>		Terry Kelly	\$100.00	John Phelps	\$100.00
<i>In Memory of Doug Bark</i>		Mike Dressler	\$100.00	James Kemerling	\$100.00	Bob Prahl	\$100.00
Mike Beck	\$100.00	Gregg Dufek	\$200.00	Don Kendzior	\$100.00	Pat Rice	\$100.00
Bob Berezowitz	\$100.00	Gregg Dufek	\$100.00	Gary Kolpin	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Bill Rice</i>	
Tony Biolo	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Toby Golembiewski</i>		Carlos Kreibich	\$100.00	Dave Richardson	\$100.00
Brian Borland	\$100.00	Phil Dobbs	\$100.00	Joe LaBuda	\$100.00	Duane Rogatzki	\$100.00
Dan Brunner	\$300.00	<i>In Memory of Ron Davies</i>		Terry Laube	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Dick Rundle</i>	
Louis Brown	\$100.00	Paul Engen	\$100.00	Bob Lieberman	\$100.00	Jeff Rosemeyer	\$100.00
Frank Budzisz	\$100.00	Bill Forster	\$100.00	Len Luedtke	\$100.00	Jerry Sinz	\$100.00
Frank Budzisz	\$270.00	Tom Fugate	\$100.00	Rock Mannigel	\$100.00	Fred Spaeth	\$100.00
Jim Bylsma	\$100.00	Jerry Golembiewski	\$300.00	Jim Meckstroth	\$100.00	Scott Statz	\$100.00
Thomas Carroll	\$100.00	Stan Grove	\$100.00	Jim Meckstroth	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Gayle Quinn</i>	
Tom Chase	\$100.00	Ron Grovesteen	\$140.00	Mick Miyamoto	\$100.00	Jim Strommen	\$100.00
<i>In Memory of Tammy Chase</i>		<i>&amp; '18 South Large All-Star Coaches</i>		Danny Mock	\$100.00	Dan St. Arnauld	\$100.00
Doug Chickering	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Toby Golembiewski</i>		Dennis Moon	\$100.00	Dario Talerico	\$100.00
Jim Chossek	\$100.00	Harlan Gruber	\$100.00	Rick Muellenberg	\$100.00	Tom Tenpas	\$100.00
Rick Coles	\$100.00	Keith Hensler	\$100.00	Brad Nemecek	\$100.00	Mark Traun	\$100.00
Bill Collar	\$100.00	Douglas Hjersjo	\$100.00	<i>In Memory of Bruce Larson</i>		Mark Traun	\$100.00
<i>In Memory of Ron Miller</i>		Bill Hoagland	\$100.00	Paul Nievinski	\$100.00	Jeff Trickey	\$100.00
Bill Collar	\$100.00	John Hoch	\$100.00	Tom Noennig	\$100.00	Bill Turnquist	\$100.00
Bill Collar	\$100.00	Wayne Jentz	\$100.00			Carey Venne	\$100.00
<i>In Memory of Toby Golembiewski</i>						Jay Zimmerman	\$100.00

*These gifts have been received since January 1, 2024. If you still wish to give to this year's scholarship fund, it is not too late! Make your contribution online at [www.wifca.org/HONORS/WFCA HOF Scholarships](http://www.wifca.org/HONORS/WFCA_HOF_Scholarships), or by sending a check to the office: PO Box 8, Poynette, WI 53955. Questions can be directed to Charna at [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org) or 608.635.7318. Donations will be accepted until December 31st, 2024.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**



**Contact the WFCA office at:**

**Phone: 608-635-7318**

**Email: [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org)**

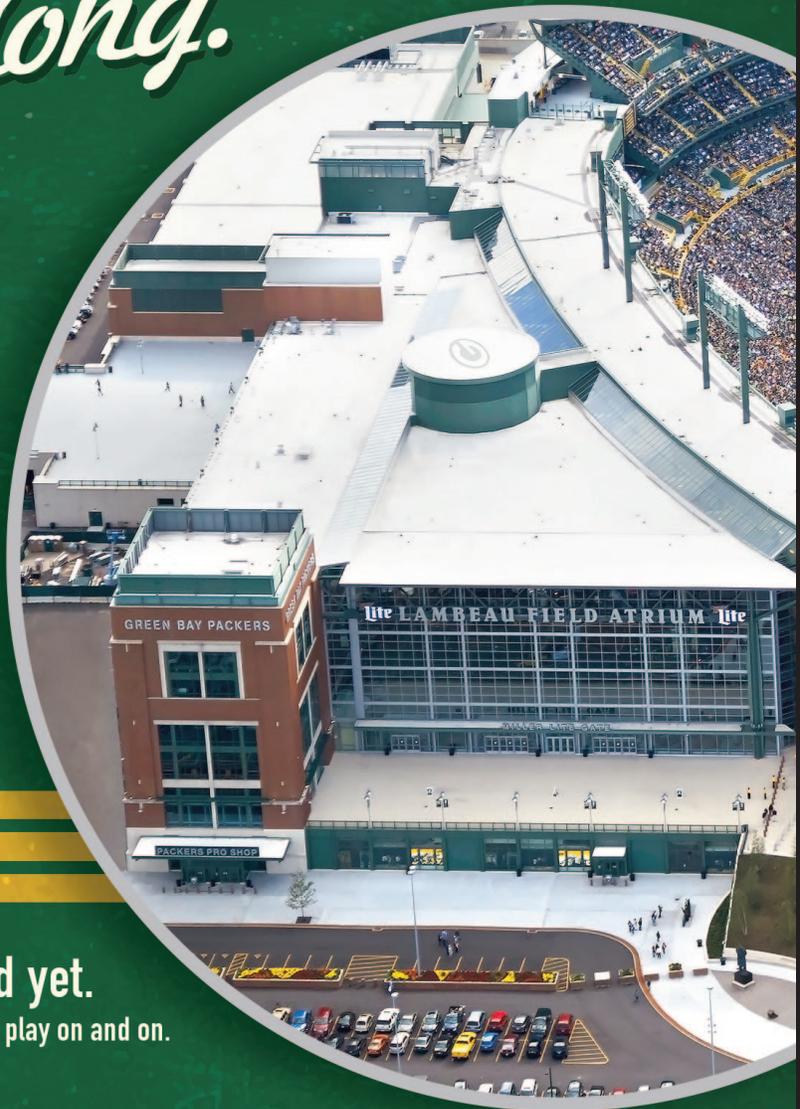
**PO Box 8 • Poynette, WI 53955**

**OFFICE HOURS**

**8:00 - 4:00, Monday - Thursday**

**8:00-12:00 p.m. on Friday**

*Packers strong  
all year long.*



Visit the most legendary Lambeau Field yet.

With ongoing tours, events, shopping and dining, your passion can play on and on.

1919 KITCHEN & TAP • PACKERS PRO SHOP • HALL OF FAME • STADIUM TOURS • BOOK AN EVENT



Remember to visit the Wisconsin Football Hall of Fame located in the Lambeau Field Atrium.

[packers.com](http://packers.com)

Dear Dan, John, Dave and Charna,

Thank you for putting together a fabulous 2024 WFCFA Hall of Fame banquet! Your hard work and dedication to our association is greatly appreciated. I am humbled and honored to be included in this great group. My family and friends were thoroughly impressed with the entire event.

A special thank you to you Charna. You made the process so simple and streamlined from beginning to end. You do an incredible job for our association.

Again, my sincerest thanks to each of you.

Tim A Eastlick

John and Scholarship Committee,

I would like to thank the WFCFA for the Hall of Fame Scholarship. I am very grateful for your generosity.

The money is being used for tuition expenses at UWRF. Again I am very thankful!!

Gracie Taller

Dear John Hoch and WFCFA Hall of Fame,

Thank you for the generous scholarship. It is greatly appreciated and will go toward my continued education.

Sincerely  
Cole Shepherd

Dear Dan,

Thank you so very much for the very beautiful flower arrangement sent to Ed's funeral on behalf of the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association.

Ed was a proud member of the association and always appreciated the support and knowledge he gained going to the WFCFA Clinics. One of the most humbling moments of his life was being named to the Hall of Fame. He was so honored to be among so many wonderful coaches that he deeply respected.

We truly appreciate your beautiful flowers in his memory. May God bless you for all you do to support football coaches throughout the state of Wisconsin.

With appreciation, Joanne Krcmar

To Coach Ackley, Coach Kaminski, Coach Yashinsky, and the rest of the WFCFA board of directors:

Thank you for the flower arrangement and message at Dad's (Garry Crull) visitation and funeral. It was a tough day, but a great celebration of his life. Football was a very important part of Dad's life and it meant a lot to us to have many of his former coaching colleagues and players there as well. It definitely put into perspective how big of an impact he had on so many people's lives through the game of football. His pallbearers were all former players and he was buried in his Iowa-Grant Football coaching wind breaker he always wore. Hearing all the stories and reminiscing about the good ol' days made the day a little easier and I'm sure Dad was there taking it all in and loving every minute of it. Thanks again, good luck to all of you, and thank you for all you do for the game of football and most importantly for the positive affect you have on so many young men's lives through the game Dad and all of us love so much.

Take care, Jeff Crull

To the WFCFA Grant Committee,

On behalf of the St. Croix Falls Football program, we'd like to give our full gratitude for the generous contribution toward purchasing protective Guardian Caps and a tackling dummy.

The Coaches in Wisconsin are fortunate to have such a hard working and impactful Coaches Association. Thanks for all you do and for making Wisconsin high school football better and safer for our kids.

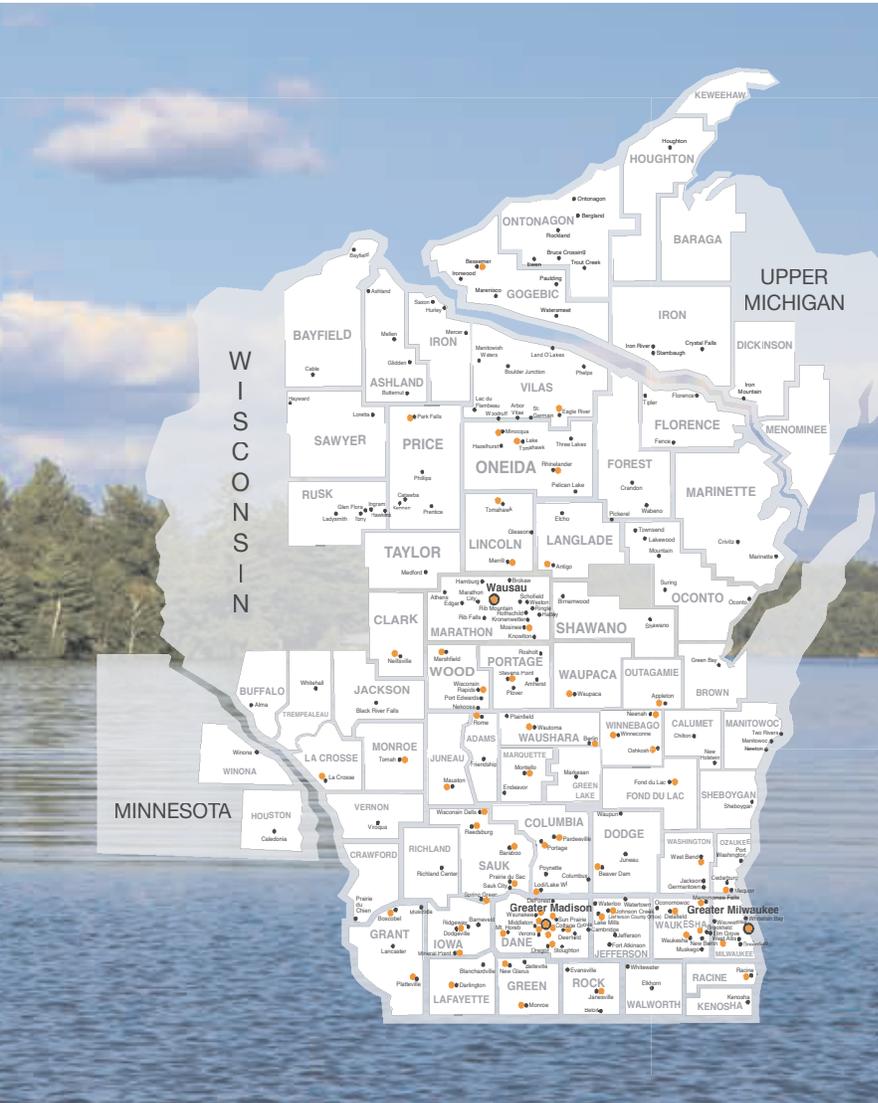
Best Regards  
Grant Belisle and SCF football

During a time like this we realize how much our friends and relations really mean to us...

Your expression of sympathy will always be remembered.

The Family of Ron Miller

# First Weber Is EVERYWHERE



## Southeast & Northeast WI

- 🏠 Brookfield Corporate Commercial Concierge Desk
- 🏠 Appleton
- 🏠 Berlin
- 🏠 Brookfield/Elm Grove
- 🏠 Fond du Lac
- 🏠 Lake Country
- 🏠 Menomonee Falls
- 🏠 Mequon
- 🏠 Metro South
- 🏠 Neenah
- 🏠 North Shore
- 🏠 Oshkosh
- 🏠 Racine
- 🏠 Waukesha
- 🏠 Waupaca
- 🏠 Wautoma
- 🏠 West Bend
- 🏠 Winneconne

## South Central & Southwest WI

- 🏠 Madison Corporate Relocation Commercial Concierge Desk
- 🏠 Baraboo
- 🏠 Beaver Dam
- 🏠 Boscobel
- 🏠 Cambridge
- 🏠 Capitol
- 🏠 Darlington
- 🏠 Dodgeville
- 🏠 East Madison
- 🏠 Fitchburg/West Madison
- 🏠 Janesville
- 🏠 Jefferson County
- 🏠 La Crosse
- 🏠 Lake Mills
- 🏠 Lodi/Lake Wisconsin
- 🏠 Mauston
- 🏠 Middleton
- 🏠 Mineral Point
- 🏠 Monroe
- 🏠 Montello
- 🏠 Mount Horeb
- 🏠 New Glarus
- 🏠 Oregon
- 🏠 Pardeeville
- 🏠 Platteville
- 🏠 Portage
- 🏠 Prairie Du Sac
- 🏠 Reedsburg
- 🏠 Spring Green
- 🏠 Sun Prairie/East Towne
- 🏠 Tomah
- 🏠 Waunakee
- 🏠 West Towne
- 🏠 Wisconsin Dells

## Central, Northwoods, West Central WI & Upper MI

- 🏠 Antigo
- 🏠 Bessemer
- 🏠 Eagle River
- 🏠 Marshfield
- 🏠 Merrill
- 🏠 Minocqua
- 🏠 Mosinee
- 🏠 Neillsville
- 🏠 Park Falls
- 🏠 Rhinelander
- 🏠 Rome Lakes
- 🏠 Stevens Point
- 🏠 Tomahawk
- 🏠 Wausau
- 🏠 Wisconsin Rapids



**Ingrid Swittel**

Relocation Specialist

414.315.3069

iswittel@firstweber.com

ingridswittel.firstweber.com



**FIRSTWEBER**  
— REALTORS® —

*The human side of real estate.™*

firstweber.com

# OFFENSE

## EFFICIENT STRONG-SIDE PERIMETER RUN PREP USING MULTI-COLORED CONES

By: Jason Blawat, Offensive Perimeter Coach, New Berlin West High School



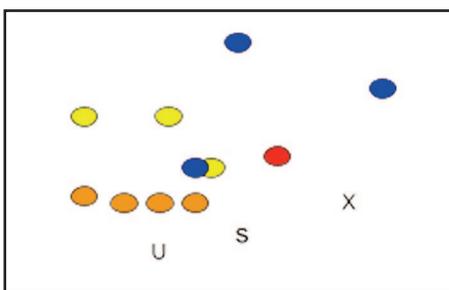
Jason Blawat

Running efficient and effective practices is the goal of every head football coach. For this to occur, it requires a well thought-out plan, clear objectives for the practice, and position coaches to make wise use of the time they have with their group to hit those objectives. When perimeter group to be able to confidently execute a game plan for the week in an efficient manner, I have found it helpful to establish a routine, be consistent in your terminology (buzz) words, and make use of multi-colored cones. This is true of everything we do as a group, but in this article I will focus on how it is specifically applied to our strong-side run prep.

At West, we look at perimeter blocking as a 4-step process - **Identify, Anticipate, React, and Finish**. First, we Identify the alignment of the defense and where our path and landmarks will be for each play based on our rules. Next, we Anticipate the movement of the defense based on the play. Third, we React to that movement, making adjustments if necessary, to get us in the best position to Finish the block. Our starting point is always applying these steps for our strong-side Power and Sweep blocking against the looks we are most likely to see from the opposing defense that week. This is where I have found that using multi-colored cones is helpful for both your ability to teach as well as maximize reps.

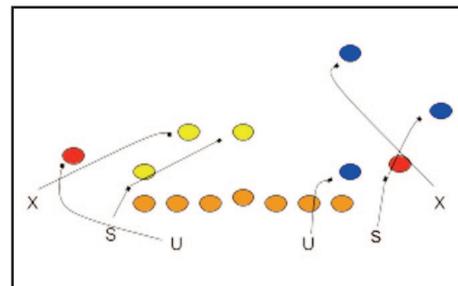
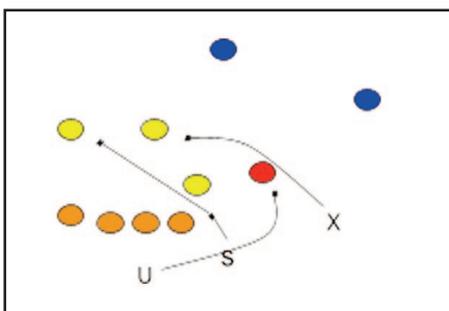
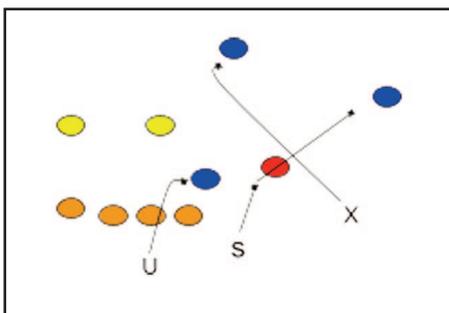
For these perimeter blocking drills, I use four different colors of “saucer” cones. I use Orange cones to set up our OL so we can align correctly. Blue cones represent the defensive players within our Power blocking rules, and Yellow cones within our Sweep blocking rules. Finally the Red cone is for the Force player. This can be applied to any base offensive for-

mation, but the drawings below show the set-up out of our unbalanced single-wing base with our perimeter blockers being our U-back (U), our Super back (S) and our X receiver (X). On any given week, the base set-up will look something like the drawing below. Note that I have this set up on the practice field in advance of my time with the group so that there is no time lost setting



up cones or trying to align from a scout card.

When we go over Power, we put our “scout D” players “on Blue and Red.” When we go over Sweep, we put them “on Yellow and Red.” Then we would take reps on what I call attack **Path and Point**. That is, practice your best **PATH** to your landmark within your rule to attack the correct aiming **POINT** to finish the block (i.e. near pec, far pec, etc.). Offensive players will take the place of the player that they blocked and that player will rotate for the offensive rep. We also add some anticipated movement based on the play and path of the ball, as we wouldn’t anticipate stationary landmarks.



With big numbers, you could set this up as a two-sided drill to maximize reps, working Power on the right side and Sweep on the left.

Once we work this drill from our anticipated base defensive alignment, we would progress to moving the cones to simulate defensive alignment adjustments and situational adjustments (i.e. short yardage, long yardage, etc). The intensity of this drill would also progress throughout the week from identifying path and point on non-padded practices, to controlled blocking with a predetermined winner, to live perimeter blocking with movement.

It is the goal of every offensive coach to call a play and watch 11 guys do their job effectively and with confidence. As coaches, we are always looking for ways to maximize the quality of the time we have with our players in order to achieve this goal. For my perimeter players at West, we do this by establishing a routine with consistent use of terminology that they recognize and understand. We Identify, Anticipate, React, and Finish each block using an aggressive attack Path and Point technique, and we are confident in our approach because we were efficient in our practice reps using multi-colored cones.

“It’s how you  
show up  
at the showdown  
that counts.”  
— Homer Norton

# **DYNAMIC**<sup>®</sup>

**FITNESS & STRENGTH**

**EXPERIENCED, AWARD-WINNING MANUFACTURING  
THAT TAKES YOUR WEIGHT ROOM TO THE NEXT LEVEL**



**W** University of Wisconsin  
Badger Football  
Madison, WI



**BEST QUALITY. BEST SUPPORT. BEST PEOPLE.**

**mydynamicfitness.com**

**844-678-7447**

**MORE STRENGTH  
PER SQUARE FOOT<sup>®</sup>**



# WHOSE BALL? OUR BALL! CREATING A TURNOVER CULTURE THROUGH CIRCUITS

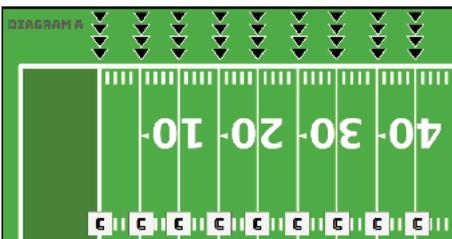
By: Aaron Kraemer, Head Football Coach, Rhinelander High School



Aaron Kraemer

In a time with turnover chains, crowns, hammers, signs, and even a turnover throne, we as coaches all understand the importance that take-aways have on our chances of winning football games. At Rhinelander High School, we believe that taking the ball away is a mentality that needs to be ingrained into our athletes and that the skills needed to do so are akin to that of blocking and tackling. The skills must be demonstrated, practiced, and repeatedly drilled in order for players to use them on a Friday Night. Along with situational work in team segments, the way we drill this is through a circuit style structure every Monday and Wednesday at practice.

We begin our circuit by lining all players up on the sideline using each five yard segment as a new group. Often, our largest players line up nearest the goal line and our smaller players line up nearest the 50-yard line. We have a ball with a coach for every drill group and the coaches will align on the hashes as you see in diagram A. The coach is responsible for the “look fors” in each drill, coaching the players through every rep. Players in line are responsible for indicating and using key turnover words and phrases for each drill, which will be discussed later. Each player should be getting a physical rep or men-



tal rep on each time the drill is run.

We begin our circuit with the Bear Crawl Fetal Fumble. Players on the sidelines will get in a bear crawling position. The drill begins when the coach cues the player with a cadence (“set, hit”). Players will bear crawl to the numbers, simulating being on the ground during the scrum on a run or pass play. Coaches will then roll the ball directly at the grounded player, who

will take the ball into his midsection, and wrap the ball up with two hands, covering the points of the football. When the ball is rolled, players in line will shout “BALL!” which simulates a game time sideline indicator we use for our players. The grounded player must finish the drill by bringing his knees and arms together (fetal position) and then turn his back away from the coach (drilling shielding the ball from opposition). The coach must ensure the player finishes in the fetal position, with his body facing away. The player will return the ball to the coach, then sprint to the sideline to finish the rep. The drill is complete when each player gets two reps.

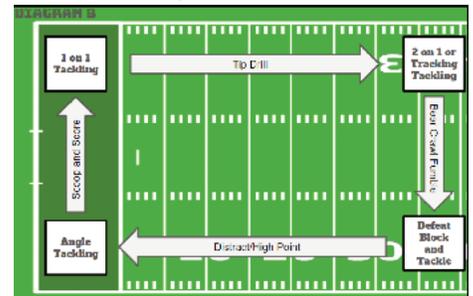
Our second drill in the circuit is our scoop and score drill. Coaches remain on the hash and players remain on the sideline. Now in standing position, when cued by the coach’s cadence, players will sprint to the numbers. When the drilled player reaches the numbers, the coach will roll the ball (have fun with the roll!) to the sprinting athlete. Coaches will cue the player to adjust his feet to the hop, keep the width of his feet outside the width of the football, get his pinkies down and thumbs out, bend using his hips, knees and ankles, scoop the football, and sprint past the coach on the hash. If a player cannot secure the football in his first scoop attempt, he will attack the football on the ground, cover the ball, and assume the fetal scoop position. Players on the sideline have the same responsibility as the last drill (“Ball”). The drill is complete when each player gets four reps.

Our third drill in the circuit is the pin and rip drill. This is the only drill in which the coach will not begin with the football. In this drill, players will team up with another player in line. The first player in line will receive the football from the coach, hold the football in sprint position (one arm) and stand on the numbers in a profile position with the ball toward the coach. Players two and three (grouped) will attack Player one on the coach’s cue. Player two will sprint to the ball carrier and secure the tackle in the low tackle position. Player three, when arriving, will pin the elbow of Player one to his side with the hand nearest the ball carrier, then capture the tip of the football with his outside hand. He will aggressively rip the ball in a downward and backward motion to create a fumble opportunity, then scoop and score the football through the coach on the hash. The player who secures the tackle will become the ball carrier, while the player who pinned, ripped, scooped, and scored will hustle to the back of the line. The drill is complete when both players have pinned and ripped on each side (4 total reps per group).

Our fourth and fifth drill work in conjunction with one another and are our interception drills. These drills are the distraction/highpoint drill and the tip drill. Again, our players will be paired up with someone in line. All players and

groups will return to their sideline starting location. The ball will return to the coach on the hash. For the first four reps of the drill, the first player in line will sprint toward the coach on the hash. As the first player reaches the numbers, our second player in line will begin his sprint toward the coach on the hash. In our distraction/highpoint drill, player one will sprint toward the coach with his hands fully extended. The coach will throw a high ball through the hands of player one. Player two, while sprinting, will gather, leap, and highpoint the football. If caught, both players will sprint through the coach on the hash. If dropped, each player will find the football and sprint to scoop and score the football through the coach. The players on the sideline will be watching for the coach’s passing stature, ball in the air, and the interception itself, calling out our sideline terms (“Pass”, “Ball”, “Yahtzee”). The drill continues for two catching reps for each player, then changes to our tip drill. Essentially the same drill, the tip drill entails a lower trajectory pass by the coach. Player one will tip the ball into the air, while player two will attack the ball mid flight. The drill is exactly the same in every other way.

Our circuit takes about 10 minutes to complete and can be used in conjunction with our Tuesday tackling circuits. If we are tackling together with turnovers, players will complete each of these drills in their transition to their next tackling drill. This can be a great way to ingrain these skills in a state of insufficient rest and after a tackling effort. You can see what that looks like in Diagram B.



We believe that this circuit is filled with things that we can see on game day, and that utilizing this time to work on these skills has paved the way for a takeaway culture at Rhinelander High School. While we don’t do the chains and the thrones to celebrate, we do have the player with the most created turnovers run out of the tunnel carrying our Hodag Skull and Crossbones flag as a badge of honor. We have had great success in this area, and we believe that it is the circuit above that has helped us achieve this. If you’d like to learn more about this, we’d love to have you up in Rhinelander, WI. While you are here, come in and check out our Hodag Dome, the largest High School Dome complex in the Country!

# CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS



# THEY

NEVER SAID IT WOULD BE EASY

THEY ONLY SAID IT WOULD BE

# WORTH IT



Midwest Scholastic has partnered with the WFCFA to provide the State Championship Rings throughout the state of Wisconsin. Simplified, streamline process makes it easy on the coach. Great pricing makes it affordable for the parents. Contact us for more details.

**Mark Fredrickson**

[markf.mws@gmail.com](mailto:markf.mws@gmail.com)

[mwscholastic.com](http://mwscholastic.com)

**J.C. Fish**

[jcf.mws@gmail.com](mailto:jcf.mws@gmail.com)

# TRANSITIONING YOUR OFFENSIVE RUN GAME FROM 11-PLAYER – 8-PLAYER FOOTBALL

By: Tyler Maney, Head Football Coach, Three Lakes High School

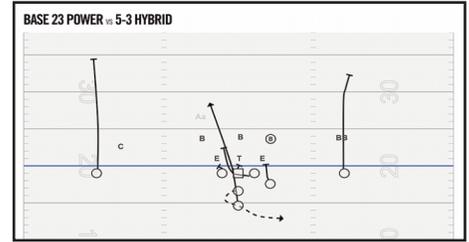
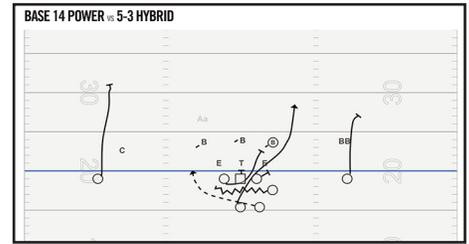


Tyler Maney

Like so many teams these days making the switch from 11-Player to 8-Player, I felt that bringing the power run scheme was a must. The only hiccup was to figure out how we can gain advantages with only three true linemen instead of the conventional five in 11-Player football. One thing we did in Three Lakes was using our

H-Back as an extra blocker along with shifts and motions to gain the advantages to set up our blocks. Although zone blocking, along with big-on-big (man) blocking, has its upside, I felt that the power scheme was an easy and very effective way to get our guys to move the line of scrimmage. Also having some sort of misdirection to help with angles at the second level is key. (Diagram 1A) Here is one of our plays that we use power and deception. We get a motion with H-Back to cover for Guard. The look of option read, along with motion gets the backers a bit out of position. Then the Guard pulls and leads for our QB. A simple yet very effective way of establishing the run game. (Diagram 1B) Here is another example of using our H-Back to gain an advantage in the blocking game to run power out of Pistol. In this case we either motion or we can just have him line up on back-side. We pull Guard through hole and use gap blocking to shore up everything.

These were just a couple examples on how we utilize the power run game in the 8-player



world. It can be and is very effective. We see a lot of defensive fronts that don't have a Safety. If you stick to your principles and execute, these can be home run plays for your run game. Hope some of you that are just starting off coaching or have made the jump to 8-player can find this helpful.

# CREATE MATCHUPS WITH TIGHT ENDS IN 12-PERSONNEL PASSING GAME

By: Brian Mertz, Assistant Tight Ends Coach, Ohio University

Since 2017, the University of Ohio has used 12 Personnel (one running back, two tight ends and two Wide receivers) on 31 percent of total snaps, yielding 6.5 yards per play and 14.3 yards per completion in these two tight end sets.

As the current tight ends coach and former offensive graduate assistant for head coach Frank Solich and offensive coordinator Tim Albin, it's my task to prepare our tight ends to be reliable, disciplined and dominant playmakers. We rely heavily upon our tight ends in both the run and pass flexing, adjusting and motioning our tight ends to create maintain a decided schematic advantage on every play.

Utilizing 12-Personnel can do three main things:

- Dictate mismatches for all pass catchers.
- Create flexibility in formations and motions.
- Shrink the defensive coordinator's call sheet regarding blitz percentage, coverage variation and defensive personnel.

The NFL's conventional wisdom on elite tight end play has helped inform our philosophy as we recruit and feature tight ends that fit a prototype of height, weight, speed and strength.

Specifically, our tight ends must have the length and athleticism to be dominant as either a blocker or receiver – winning matchups in space with quickness, strength and excellent receiving

ability. Additionally our tight ends must create mismatches on the field in our favor as defenses are forced to decide on each play how to best align to or personnel and formation.

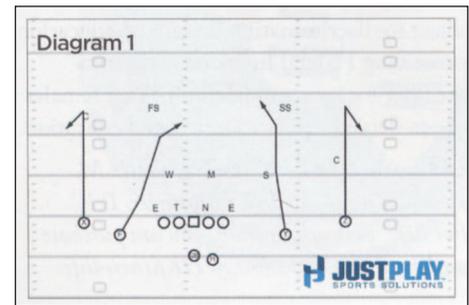
### Aligning In 10 Personnel

The first way that we dictate mismatches is by being in 12-Personnel while aligning in or motioning to a traditionally 10 or 11-Personnel look with three, four or five offensive skill players flexed out from the core.

Prior to the snap, the defensive coordinator must decide if his front, blitz and coverage calls or checks should match the on-field personnel or the formation, all in relation to the down, distance and field position.

In Diagram 1, the offense has two tight ends on the field but is aligned in a traditional 2x2 detached formation. In a league in which many defenses maintain a base Nickel Personnel (4-2-5) against traditional 10 and 11 Personnel, the defensive coordinator seeing 12 Personnel entering the field — may choose to substitute a third linebacker who is likely a weaker pass defender and less comfortable defending the space or man he is assigned against.

This substitution and defensive call could allow our offense to execute a Day 1 install concept such as four verticals against a defense and defensive coordinator expecting run. Of course,

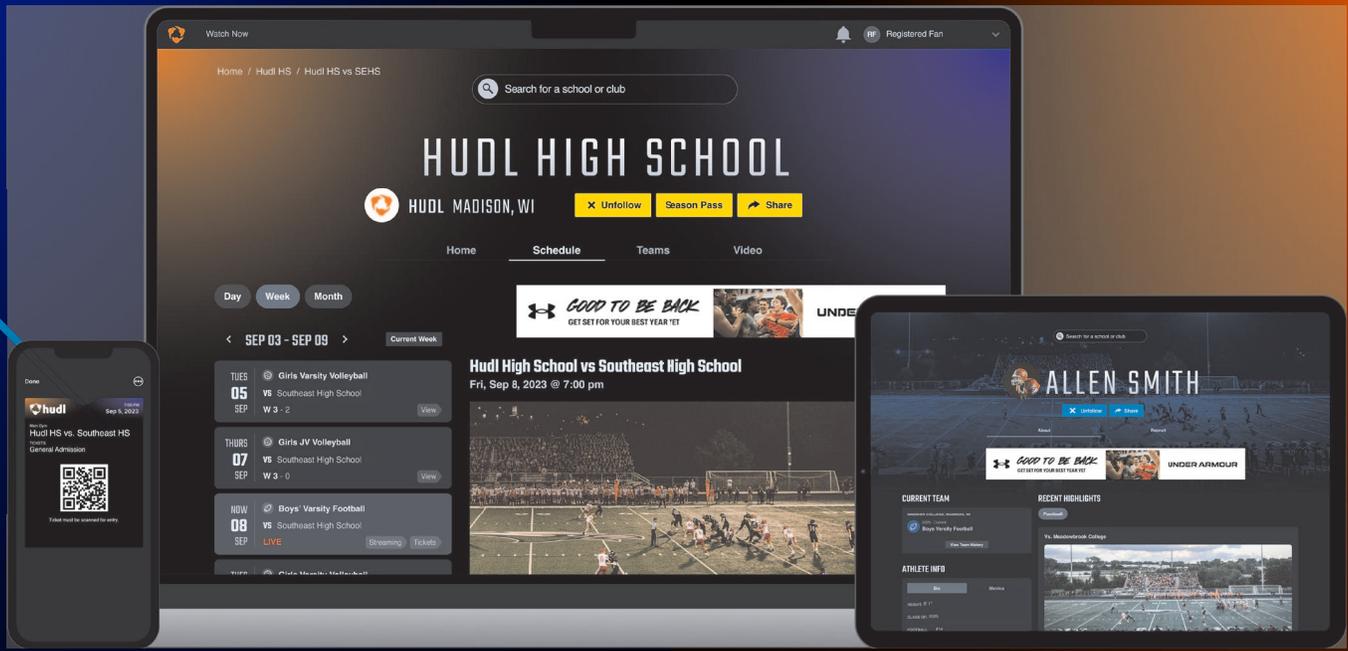


should the defense remain in Nickel while we're in a two tight-end set, our bigger and stronger tight ends will be well-positioned to dig out an overhang or man-to-man defender if our offensive coordinator calls for a run concept.

### Aligning Tight Ends In Non-Traditional Positions

In instances where the tight ends or running backs are aligned in non-traditional positions, such as the single skill player to the boundary or outside of the slot as the widest receiver to either side of the formation — the defense will need to declare man or zone coverage by choosing to cover the tight ends with the cornerback, safety or linebacker.

In Diagram 2, the offense has two tight ends on the field and has flexed its primary tight end as the single receiver to the boundary. The defense, being in man coverage and aligning with



# Teams. Streams. State title dreams.

## It's on Hudl.

The chase for a state championship is on, and Hudl makes it easy to support your teams and athletes.

### Livestreams and schedules.

Watch every game live or discover upcoming games and start times.

### Scores and stats.

See every outcome and key numbers after the game.

### Highlights.

Get caught up with game recaps or relive the special moments.

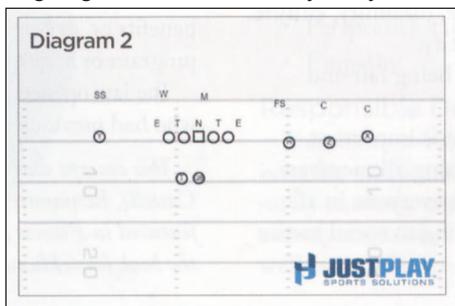


Never miss a moment. Everything you need to cheer for your favorites is on Hudl.

Download the Hudl Fan app or find your favorite schools at [fan.hudl.com](https://fan.hudl.com)



a “corners-over” principle, chooses to cover the single tight end with its boundary safety.

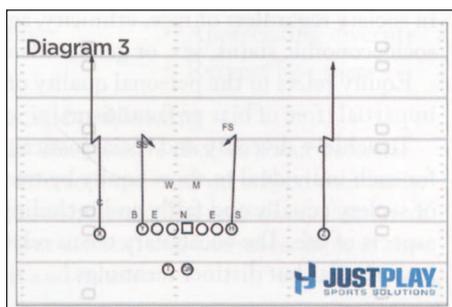


This pre-snap defensive alignment allows the quarterback to gather information to properly distribute the ball or check the play to a more advantageous concept. It’s important to remember that the object of utilizing tight ends as “chess pieces” in this manner is to create opportunities for ball distribution in the passing game and for numbers advantages on the ground. It’s not specifically to target the tight ends through the air. In fact, the tight ends’ versatility and capacity to execute the widest variety of assignments among offensive players often develops breaks for the other four skill players and the quarterback.

**Passing From Traditional 12 Personnel Looks**

Similar to the ideology of using 10 Personnel formations to create mismatches, we also have the capacity to be in Personnel and align in traditional 12 Personnel looks to pass the ball downfield. This allows us to capitalize on a defense’s eagerness to stop a dominant 12 Personnel rushing attack that has gained significant yardage on the ground over the past three seasons. By marrying precise play-action protections to our most frequently executed run types, we can catch a defense by surprise with a vertical attacking passing game.

In Diagram 3, we align in a traditional 12 Personnel set and utilize a simple inside zone six—man play-action protection to take a vertical shot down the field on a double- move. Our outside receivers run stutter-and-go while our tight ends provide check downs for our quarterback at 10 yards depth past the line of scrimmage.



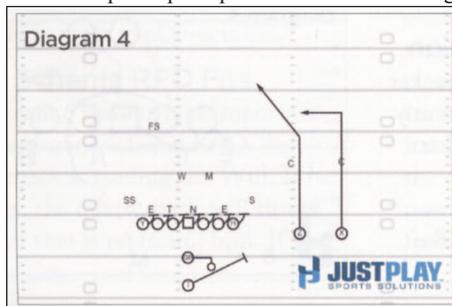
Should the defensive backs sit back and refuse to bite on the play action or double-moves, our big bodied tight ends are finding a hole in the zone coverage underneath for an easy completion for our quarterback.

**Moving The Launch Point In 12 Personnel Looks**

Additionally, as our offense has evolved to include wide zone and other outside run schemes, we’ve looked to include naked, waggle and bootleg opportunities for our quarterback to roll away from the run action or move the pocket, protected by a pulling lineman or a tight end guarding the front-side.

These schemes allow us to get our mobile quarterback to throw on the run, creating opportunities for easy completions both underneath and downfield. We’ve had success with bootlegs away from the run action as well as protected inside zone or speed option play actions. These play-action passes provide challenges to defenses, slowing their aggressive quarterback rush and messing with the undisciplined eyes of the defensive backs, placing doubt in the mind of every defender.

In Diagram 4, we protect a play-action pass with hard speed option protection while releasing



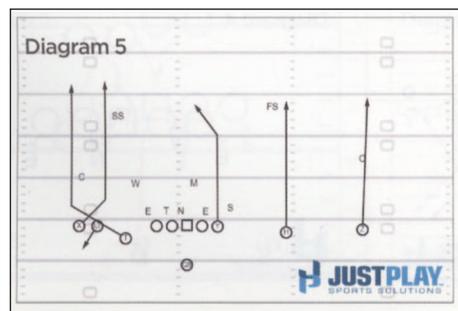
our receivers deep down the field behind run—fitting safeties. This is a play action that mirrors one of our most frequent 12 Personnel run calls, and the passing concept is also one our receivers know well. The hard run action, which includes our tight ends protecting with “low hats,” draws the defenders down to the line of scrimmage for a substantial shot over the top.

**Utilizing Tight Ends In 12-Personnel Trick Plays**

The “chess piece” variability from our tight ends has allowed our staff to successfully deploy them in 12 Personnel trick plays, gadgets and un-balanced alignments for quick strikes against unsuspecting or hyper-aggressive defenses.

These offensive schemes act as the change up in our repertoire and can lead to explosive plays in critical moments. While we have most frequently utilized our tight ends as the end men on the line of scrimmage to block in the 12 Personnel run game, we’ve also developed tight end throwbacks and screens, reverse passes and “fight song” alignments, which flex out an athletic lineman as a covered, ineligible receiver while hiding a big-framed tight end at an uncovered tackle spot.

In Diagram 5, we align in a 12 Personnel empty set. This alone forces defensive checks and communication while increasing the poten-



tial for blown assignments. As the play develops, the defense is caught off-guard as the three-speed side of the offenses formation is not where it previously appeared and our “hidden” tight end snakes behind the second- level defenders for an explosive gain through the air.

*Thank you to the AFCA for expressed permission to republish this article.*

**Mark you calendar for next year Now!**

**WFCA SPRING FOOTBALL CLINIC**

**April 3 - April 5, 2025**

**Marriott Hotel in Middleton, Wisconsin**



# CONVERSION ROUTES: MAKING THE MOST OF OUR OPPORTUNITIES

By: Jonathan Powers, Wide Receivers Coach & Co-Special Teams Coordinator, Loras College



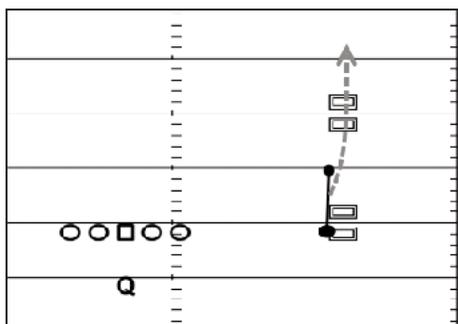
Jonathan Powers

On behalf of the Loras College Football Program, I would like to thank the WFCA for the opportunity to contribute to a highly regarded organization. This is a great opportunity to expand the game of football and continue the growth of the game.

At Loras College, we are an up-tempo, multiple offense that relies on numbers, leverage, and spacing of the whole field to identify the best matchup for our personnel. For our wide receivers, this allows them to have freedom within certain concepts and gives multiple options that will maximize each play. We give our receivers simple rules to follow which allow the quarterback to know where the receiver will be during each play.

### Hitch Conversion

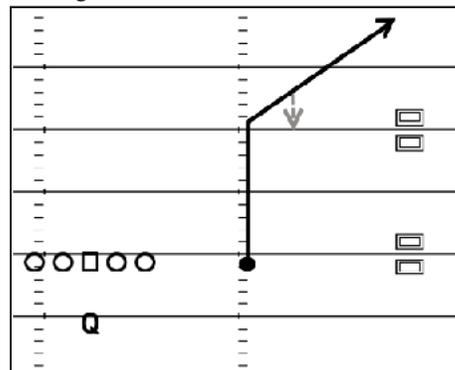
The first conversion route is our hitch-fade conversion. This is used in any free access throw or within a full concept. This is a simple conversion to teach and can maximize the field spacing at the snap of the ball. The receiver needs to identify where the corner is aligned pre-snap, if the corner is pressed, we lean towards a fade. If the corner is off, we lean toward a hitch. Once the ball is snapped, we confirm or adjust our decision to what the corner does post-snap. If the corner is off and squats in the flats, we convert to a fade. If the corner uses any press-bail techniques, we hitch. We are constantly using the phrase “we hitch until we cannot.”



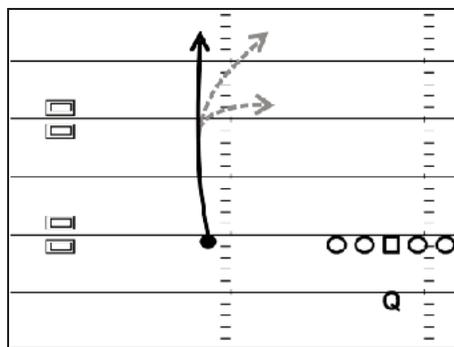
### Seam Read

Another conversion route used in multiple concepts is our Seam Read. This is the centerpiece to our 4-vertical concept but has been useful in additional vertical concepts. Unlike the hitch conversion, the seam read is based off what both safeties are doing at the snap of the ball. We base the seam read off the simple rule of middle of the field open (MOFO) or middle of the field closed (MOFC) which requires the receiver and quarterback to see both safeties. The receiver will always start with the safety on their side and use his alignment to give him an idea of what can happen pre-snap. At the snap of the ball, he needs to vertically attack his safety and react to what he does post-snap. If the safety gets width and depth or vertically back-pedals, we consider that MOFO and he will take the middle of the field. Depending on the safety’s reaction at the snap, we will determine whether we have tight or wide safeties. If the safety is tight, the receiver will be flatter and if he is wide, the receiver will be on a post trajectory. If the safety rotates down or to the middle of the field, we will continue on the seam. When the receiver decides to take it vertical on his seam, he must stay wide off the hash so that we can put stress on the middle of the field safety and can have a common landmark for the quarterback. Receivers are taught that they must make their decision at 5 yards and execute at 10 yards so we can have accurate timing and spacing for the concept.

yards and aim for 22 yards on the sideline. If his near side safety rolls down or rolls to the middle of the field (MOFC), he will break his corner at 10-12 yards and snap down 3 steps into his corner route and work downhill finding the window. When the defense uses MOFC coverage (Cover 3), this will allow you to get to a MOFC coverage beater in a curl-flat.



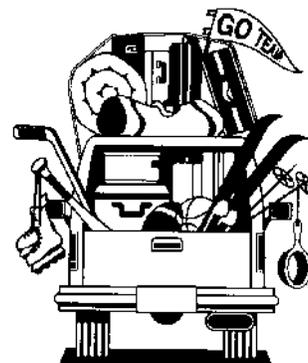
I would again like to thank the WFCA for giving me the opportunity to provide insight into conversion routes. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [jonathan.powers@loras.edu](mailto:jonathan.powers@loras.edu) and I would be happy to talk more.



### Corner-Curl (Cork Route)

The last conversion route to discuss is our Corner-Curl conversion or a Cork Route. We use this in a majority of any smash concept and is great option when moving the pocket. This is another conversion based off MOFO vs MOFC like the seam-read. Using a corner-curl route within any smash concept will allow you to be correct in any scenario that the defense shows. The receiver’s decision is again based off his near side safety and confirm/adjust once the ball is snapped. If the receivers near side safety straight back-pedal or drops with width & depth (MOFO), he will break his corner at 10-12

**HAVE YOU MOVED  
OR CHANGED YOUR  
EMAIL ADDRESS?**



**Let us know!**

Drop us a line at:  
P.O. Box 8  
Poynette, WI 53955  
or by email at: [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org)

**THANK YOU!**



## Suicide and It's Warning Signs

The statistics are almost overwhelming. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth aged 10-24 in the United States, resulting in more than 125 deaths each week. Many people consider suicide an event that only happens “to someone else.” That couldn’t be further from the truth. Though it’s easy to think of suicide as a tragedy that happens to other families, it’s important to understand that suicide crosses all racial, economic, social, and ethnic lines. Suicide is preventable.

For every suicide, roughly 147 people are directly or indirectly affected by that death. That means that every week, over 18,000 people are affected by the suicide of a young person. In a year, almost a million people will be affected by youth suicide. Something must change.

That’s where the work of The Jason Foundation is so vital.

You may be wondering, Who’s Jason? Yes, The Jason Foundation is named after a person.

In the summer of 1997, Jason Flatt was an average 16-year-old. He loved his friends. He loved sports, especially football. A solid B-student, he was active in his youth group and was always up for trying new things. All that changed on July 16 that summer. On that day, Jason transitioned from student to statistic when he took his life.

Jason’s father, Clark Flatt, discovered his son at the family’s home that afternoon when he failed to reach him by phone. In the over 27 years since, Clark and the JFI staff have reached untold numbers of youth, educators, and parents through their work.

The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) is a nationally recognized leader in youth and young adult suicide prevention and awareness. Its mission is to provide programs and resources for students, educators, parents, and communities to help recognize and assist young people who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. JFI teaches the warning signs and risk factors of youth suicide so that everyone from peers to coaches to grandparents can get help for the young people in their lives who need it.

JFI refers to youth suicide as a “silent epidemic,” because so few people talk about it. They don’t discuss it among family members or with friends and colleagues. There’s a belief that if someone talks about suicide, then it plants the idea in a young person’s mind. The opposite is true. Talking about suicide doesn’t give someone the thought that ending their life is something to consider.

A frank, open, and honest discussion with your child about your concerns shows them how supportive you are in helping them cope with their feelings. Though death is an uncomfortable subject for many people, it is important to be able to talk about it openly and honestly. There should be no fear in talking to young people about suicide.

Approximately 80 percent of those considering suicide exhibit some sign of their intentions, either verbally or behaviorally. The following is a list of warning signs that a person contemplating suicide may present. It is, by no means, an exhaustive list.

- Talking about suicide
- Making statements about feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Deepening depression
- Preoccupation with death
- Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self-destructive behavior
- Out-of-character behavior
- Loss of interest in the things one cares about
- Making final arrangements
- Giving away prized possessions

Everyone needs to be aware of the warning signs associated with suicidal thoughts and know how to respond if someone’s behavior causes concern.

JFI offers a variety of online training modules for anyone who wishes to utilize them. Staff will also visit schools, first responders, and several other community groups (live or via online streaming) to present information. The Jason Foundation has never charged any school, family, or community for the use of its programs or materials. This ensures that lack of funding is never a determining factor of who can obtain the information that could possibly save a life. Visit [www.jasonfoundation.com](http://www.jasonfoundation.com) for programs and resources.

The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) is a free resource that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for anyone who is in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. A person may speak confidentially to a trained and caring crisis counselor for emotional support.

If you are experiencing a crisis, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

# SPREAD OFFENSE – RUNNING BACK DEVELOPMENT

By: Mark Madigan, Running Backs Coach, Ripon College



Mark Madigan

I have made the “Big Time” getting asked to create an article for the WFCA publication *The Point After II*. Thank you for the honor. I want to also thank you to the whole coaching staff at Ripon College (Jake Marshall, Ron Ernst, Rick Coles, Mike Schmitt, Dan Fer-kovich, Mike Yoder, Mike Hepp, Jon Petkoff, Dan Lueck and Jamison Davies for making the past four years of coaching a memorable experience. Ripon College transitioned to the Spread Offense in 2021. With that change there was a whole new set of skills that needed to be developed to meet the needs of the offense. In this article I will focus on the basic skills needed to be a well rounded Running Back and various drills used to develop those skills.

## Stance

Two Point Stance with feet shoulder width apart with weight loaded on our heels and not on our toes to ensure our RB’s do not lean or move before the snap. We want balance to give us a four-way go.

## Ball Security

Keep the football high and tight with Four Points of Contact. Lock the football tight to the body. Anytime you are in traffic or make a cut the ball carrier will add a fifth point of contact using the opposite hand to the ball. Every drill we complete in practice emphasizes ball security.

## Footwork

Fast, active feet are a must for a RB. We incorporate footwork drills as part of our Pre-Practice routine and continue during Individual Drills. Always have a bend to the hip and knees with a slight forward lean.

## Pre-Practice Line Drill-

Using any five-yard line, we will create two lines along the sideline. Each Drill we will travel a distance of 7-10 Yards. Focus on Quick Feet and Balance. Discuss Ball Security Emphasis. Have the players use the football to carry out with the left hand, regroup by the numbers, and then carry the ball back with the right hand.

1. Line Step-Overs Sideways L/R
2. Forward Midline Shuffle L/R
3. Two Foot Diagonal Hops L/R
4. One Foot Diagonal Hops L/R

## Individual Big Cone (Garbage Can) Movement Drills

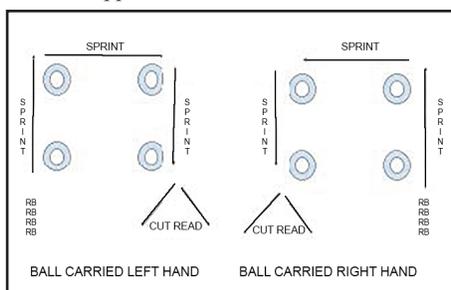
### I. Box Drill

Create a 5 Yard by 5 Yard Box with Cones, Garbage Can, Hand Shields, or whatever you have available.

#### A. SPRINT-SPRINT-SPRINT-CUT READ Focus:

1. Stay Low
2. Stay Balanced
3. Accelerate Out of Breaks
4. Ball Security.

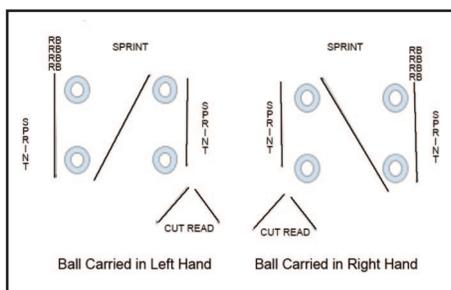
Note: Cut Read Defender Steps L/R and RB will cut Opposite.



#### B. SPRINT-SPRINT 45-SPRINT-CUT READ

Focus: Stay Low, Stay Balanced, Accelerate Out of Breaks, Ball Security.

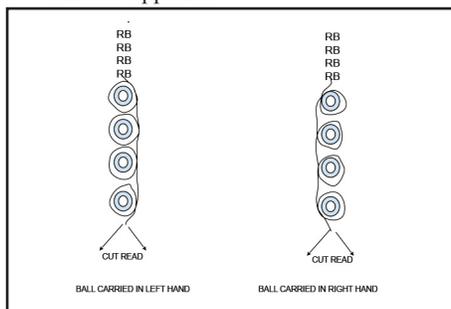
Note: Cut Read Defender Steps L/R and RB will cut Opposite.



## II. CIRCLE THE WAGONS DRILL

Focus: Stay Low, Stay Balanced, Accelerate Out of Breaks, Ball Security.

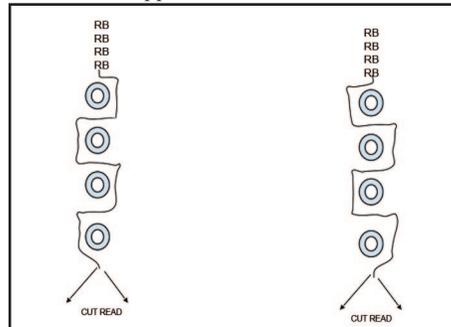
Note: Cut Read Defender Steps L/R and RB will cut Opposite.



## 3. JUMP CUT DRILL

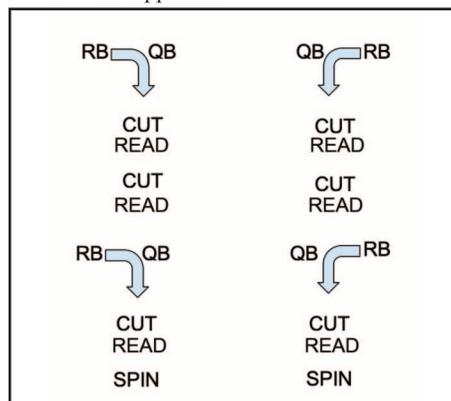
Focus: Stay Low, Stay Balanced, Accelerate Out of Breaks, Ball Security.

Note: Cut Read Defender Steps L/R and RB will cut Opposite.



## INSIDE ZONE CUT READ DRILL

Note: Cut Read Defender Steps L/R and RB will cut Opposite.



## Pass Protection Progression

### Inside Hands/Punch

1. Use Two Hand Shields or Chest Plate with Shells On. Place both defenders two feet away from the RB aligned on each outside shoulder.
2. Low Athletic Stance
3. Inside Hands. Focus on Elbows In/Thumbs Up.
4. Deliver a Powerful Punch on one defender while maintaining a balanced stance and then rotate to deliver a second punch on the other defender.
5. Continue to punch back and forth for 10 total punches. Feet should remain stationary during this drill. Focus on powerful punches with balanced rotation.

### Inside Hands/Punch w/Shuffle

1. Use Two Hand Shields or Chest Plate with Shells On. Place both defenders two feet away from the RB and separated by two yards.
2. Low Athletic Stance
3. Inside Hands. Focus on Elbows In/Thumbs Up.
4. RB will begin directly in between both bags. RB will shuffle with low pad level to one

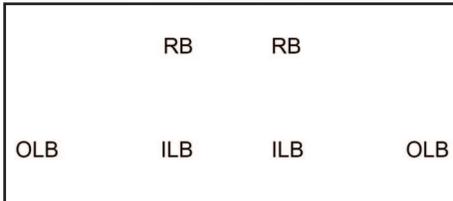
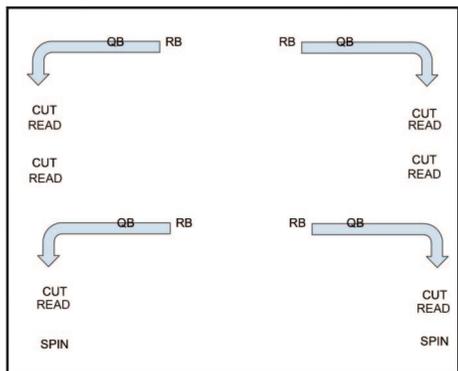
bag, deliver a powerful punch on one defender keeping the feet moving while maintaining a balanced stance and then shuffle to deliver a second punch on the other defender.

- e. Continue to shuffle with a punch back and forth for 10 total punches. Keep the feet alive and keep the feet moving throughout the drill. Remember if the feet stop, the defender will easily shed the RB. Focus on powerful punches in a low balanced stance with active feet.

**OUTSIDE ZONE CUT READ DRILL**

*RB Footwork:* Take Three Steps Wide and Make Cut Read Off Wide Force Defender

*Note:* Cut Read Defender Steps L/R and RB will cut Opposite.

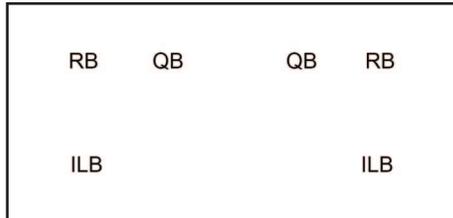


**INSIDE-OUTSIDE DRILL**

*Directions:*

- a. RB is focused on pass protection RB must keep eyes on inside LB (ILB) to Outside LB (OLB) or most dangerous threat
- b. ILB will begin the drill by yelling “inside” and blitzing through A-Gap. RB will meet the ILB in the A-Gap and use proper stance/punch/feet to block the ILB for 2-3 seconds.
- c. OLB will then yell “Outside” as they blitz from the outside through the C-Gap. RB will then flow to the OLB and use proper stance/punch/feet to block the OLB for 2-3 seconds
- d. Focus on maintaining a good pocket for the QB to either step up in and keep the OLB out of the tackle box.
- e. Rotate RB to ILB, ILB to OLB, OLB to RB

**INSIDE-OUTSIDE DRILL W/CHECKDOWN**



*Directions:*

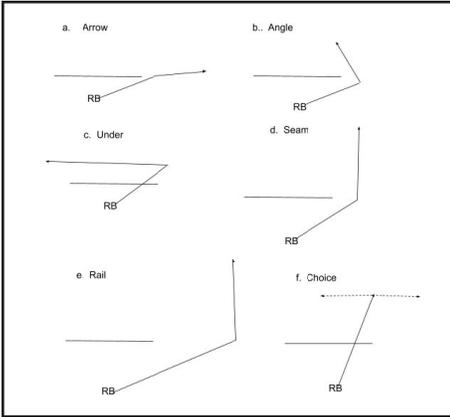
- a. RB is focused on Pass Protection, but if there is no Pass rush Threat, RB will quickly move to the proper checkdown (Middle Check, Wide Check, or Arrow Check)
- b. ILB has the option to blitz A-Gap, B-Gap, C-Gap or Drop into coverage
- c. RB progression is inside, outside, checkdown.
- d. Rotate QB to RB, RB to ILV, ILB to QB

**RB HANDS DRILLS**

- 1. Clock Drill
- 2. Stationary Route Drills – Run, Hands, Secure.
  - a. Straight On
  - b. Sideways L/R
  - c. Over The Shoulder L/R
- 3. SWINGS/ARROWS – Rapid Fire RB receiving drill. RB-Coach-RB. Coach will alternate throwing L/R Swing/Arrow Routes to RB.
- 4. Can Drill – 5-yard Speed Cuts for Inside/Outside Routes with rapid fire throws from QBs.

The image shows a football game in progress. A player in a white jersey with the number 19 is running with the ball, being pursued by several players in black jerseys. The background shows a crowd of spectators. The text overlay at the bottom of the image reads: "Ten Saints Earn All-Conference Honors, Peck named Defensive Player of the Year". Below this, it says "Head Coach, Troy Purcell tpurcell@carroll.edu 406-447-4485".

5. Pat and Go – 50-75% Speed Vertical Routes. Work on High Point, Over the Shoulder, and Back Shoulder Fades. Be an athlete.
6. One on Ones vs. LBs/DBs
  - a. ARROW
  - b. ANGLE
  - c. UNDER
  - d. SEAM
  - e. RAIL
  - f. CHOICE - In/Out based on LB leverage.

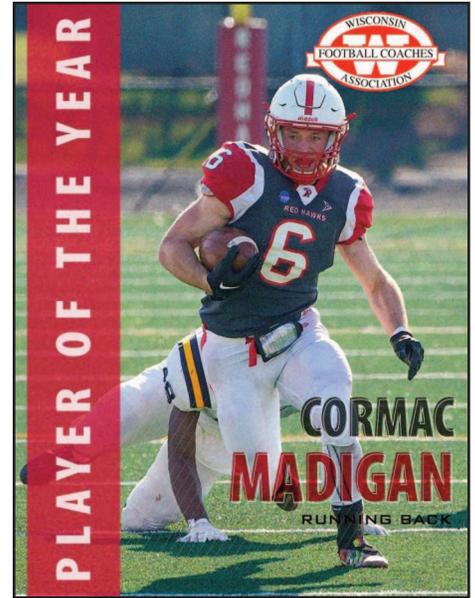


### CONCLUSION

Training the RB in a Spread Offense requires the development of a wide variety of skills. On any given play our RB has an opportunity to help the team make big plays with explosive runs, timely blocks, or big catches out of the backfield. Many skills are reinforced during various offensive installations during Pass Game, Run Game, and Team Install. Because we have more time in Pre-Season, I will take more time to teach the drills and the techniques needed. Once we get to In-Season, we will transition more rapidly from drill to drill to maximize time and reps. Most days during the regular season we only have 5-15 minutes of true RB Indy time, so picking and choosing the key skills and drills for the day are important. As a coach, you should constantly monitor and adjust drills based on lagging player skills and schematic needs. Focus on drills that have a purpose to make the player better at their role and responsibility.

*Mark Madigan served as the Running Backs' Coach at Ripon College for four years.*

*His greatest honor has been coaching his son Cormac Madigan. Congratulations Mark and Cormac.*



## WIDE RECEIVER COACHING PHILOSOPHY

By: Taylor Manuel, Assistant Football Coach, Omro High School



*Taylor Manuel*

Friday nights across the state of Wisconsin have had a special place in the hearts of many athletes. Growing up being around the gridiron, it'd be hard not to fall in love with football at a very young age. Receivers like Donald Driver, Jordy Nelson, Nick Toon, Jared Abbrederis, and many others made their mark on the Wisconsin football landscape giving a lot of high school athletes the itch to play the receiver position when the opportunity presented itself. Athletes who don't get the opportunity to continue their playing career at the collegiate level oftentimes will stay involved in the game by coaching.

The wide receiver position has evolved exponentially since the start of the game in the early 1900s. A few philosophies have really made the position grow, from Pop Warner to the NFL, we teach eliminating false steps at the line of scrimmage, proper stalk blocking on the perimeter, and route running. At the high school level, these three focused techniques have

proven to help receivers gain separation from defenses giving them an advantage to pick up positive yards after the catch and open rushing lanes for ball carriers. Ultimately this can turn a simple three-yard slant route into a 50+ touchdown reception. In this article I will dive into each of these coaching strategies to give a better understanding about why they have made a significant impact on the game at the high school level.

In an article published by *Football Tutorials* entitled 'Eliminating False Steps with The Read Step Drill' the writer states, "Many youth football players are slow to the point of attack because they make a simple mistake – they false step." False stepping is taking a wasted step away from the direction you are wanting to move in." In the Omro high school football program we consistently work on a simplistic approach using rubberized boards to work on eliminating the false step with a read step drill. Although this drill is oftentimes used for the linebacker position we carry it over for our receivers as well. We explained to our athletes that the best way to execute a proper read step is to keep a sturdy base with your most plant foot forward depending on the route you are running. This stable base ensures they stay well-balanced and prevents false stepping. With the stance we also coach the importance of the 80-20 rule, meaning that 80% of our receivers weight is over their front foot with the remaining 20% on their back foot so they are set up to move immediately forward to gain ground right away and avoid false steps.

Secondly, in a small town high school football program you oftentimes have to play to our

strengths. This typically means setting up the run game early and using the passing game sporadically throughout the contest. When it comes to "Pound The Rock," a philosophy Head Coach, Dave Wellhoefer, established throughout his twenty five year plus tenure as the varsity football coach at Omro, receivers play a significant role in opening up those wide rushing lanes when running backs are trying to get the perimeter run game going. Blocking on the outside is established from the very first snap of the football game. We as coaches tell our receivers that every single play should look the same off the line of scrimmage. It is very noticeable on film when receivers jog off the line for run plays and sprint on passing plays. From here comes the steps we take to effectively execute a stalk block. Once our receivers come off the ball with a sprint we begin the process of break down, not lunging towards the defensive back, keeping our butt down and chest up ensures a low base. We then coach the importance of mirroring the defender which gives them a chance to get position on the defender before engaging and driving them. In order to drive the defender our receivers need to sink their hips and then roll through and up as they push into their defender and drive. When engaged with the defender we coach hand placement and locking out the arms. Hands should be placed inside of the defenders chest plate. Ideally they can get their hands on that part of the pads and use it for leverage. Once inside the defender we coach lock out the arms with the thumbs pointing upwards. Lastly, to finish the block we stress taking the defender wherever he wants to go. When the defender sees the play coming they usually

get wide eyed and pick a side to make a play. This gives the defender a great opportunity to drive the defender and lets the back cut off of that block.

Lastly, when coaching the art of route running there are a number of different approaches that I take when going through the process, depending on the specific route. Very rarely do I see a lot of press, man-to-man coverage at the high school level, but like I mentioned previously, it is important that receivers are getting off the line of scrimmage at the same speed each play so defensive backs are not able to pick on whether the play is a pass or a run. When pass plays are called and receivers reach the top of

their route I can't stress breakpoint enough. The biggest technique I have coached throughout my years as a high school football coach is the importance of "Keep your feet in the bucket." When receivers get to the top of their route, whether it's a inward or outward breaking route, they tend to get wider than they need to, causing them to slip. Ultimately this slows them down and gives the defender a chance to close in on the route. A drill I have used in the past is a four corner cone, 5-yard out drill for receivers to work on keeping their feet underneath them and breaking down regardless of an in or out cut at the top of their route.

In conclusion, eliminating false steps at the line of scrimmage, properly executing a stalk block in space, and running crisp routes are three areas of the game that have proven to be extremely beneficial for high school wide receivers in the Omro football program. Each of these aspects of the position are stressed daily during practice whether we are in the film room or on the practice field. Incorporating these drills into practice consistently, translates into successful repetitions. When these skills are executed correctly and confidently wide receivers will have a multitude of opportunities to positively impact the outcome of a game on any given Friday night.



**Contact the WFCFA office at:**

Phone: 608-635-7318

Email: [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org)

PO Box 8 • Poynette, WI 53955

**OFFICE HOURS**

8:00 - 4:00, Monday - Thursday

8:00-12:00 p.m. on Friday



**CARTHAGE FIREBIRDS FOOTBALL**



COMPETE IN A **PREMIER** NCAA DIVISION III ATHLETIC CONFERENCE.

MORE THAN **50** MAJORS AND MINORS

**91%** MEDICAL SCHOOL ACCEPTANCE RATE

LOCATED WITHIN AN HOUR'S DRIVE OF BOTH **MILWAUKEE** AND **CHICAGO**



**GOOD LUCK  
IN THE PLAYOFFS**

**KENOSHA, WI  
FOOTBALL BY THE LAKE**

# KEYS TO GREAT PASS PROTECTION

By: Jason Wagner, Former O-Line & Strength and Conditioning Coach, UW-Platteville



Jason Wagner

I would like to start out by thanking the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association for allowing me the opportunity to contribute this article. I am grateful to be able to share ideas on a game that means so much to me. Also thank you to Head Football Coach Mike Emendorfer and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville football staff for all their support. It truly is a GREAT DAY to be a PIONEER!

The job of the offensive line on a pass play is quite obvious—protect the quarterback. Sounds simple, really, but it's much more than just ramming heads with the defense while trying to stall the pass rush from getting to your quarterback.

Offensive-line play is a strategized war, with each player having a job that, if not fulfilled, will bring down the entire unit. In order for each player to complete their job we focus on the following points.

## Feet:

- The feet must be flat with your weight on your insteps. Toes will point forward to maintain the power angles. Our feet will be no narrower than our armpits and no wider than slightly outside our shoulders. This will give us the best combination of balance, strength and the ability to move quickly. Your feet should be even or a slight toe to instep stagger, only the outside foot can be staggered. The inside foot must be up at all times.

## Knees:

- It is necessary to keep your knees bent. Our knee bend will enable us to move quickly and react to the movement of the defender. Knee bend is the way we lower our center of gravity, which is essential in all of our blocking.

## Waist:

- We can never bend at the waist. When linemen get tired, they begin to straighten their knees causing a bend at the waist to stay low. However, this does not lower their center of gravity. It does not matter how low your helmet is, it is your center of grav-

ity which is important. Bend in the waist also makes you more susceptible to being pulled forward and beaten. Keeping your chest up, forming a slight arch in your back, and no forward bend at your waist is the ideal position to get in.

## Hands:

- Hold your hands high and out away from your chest. Our thumbs will overlap and serve to form a sight for our target. The outside hand should not be even with the inside hand because this would make it easier to be beaten to our outside shoulder. Keep your hands moving like a boxer.

## Shoulders:

- A lineman's shoulders must remain parallel to the LOS for as long as possible. If they are not parallel you will not be able to keep the defender from getting up field. Think of the wall as the LOS and the door as a lineman. When the door is parallel with the wall the door is closed and no one can get in. When the door is not parallel it is open and people can get in. Turning your shoulders will also shorten the path to the QB. So often a tackle has a fast speed rusher to the outside. He is afraid he will get beat around the edge so he turns his shoulders thinking this will help, when actually it aids the speed rusher. If the defender makes a move back to the inside when you have turned your shoulders you must drop your inside foot back which opens the door to the QB. Keep your shoulders parallel.

## Chin:

- Pull your chin in against your chest when you punch. This will help prevent you from overextending.

## Movement:

- You must be able to move and change direction quickly and at the same time to maintain your demeanor. For example, if you are moving to your outside to cover up your target and you take a step with your right foot and then your target moves back inside your next step cannot be with your left foot. If it is, you will have to drop your left foot back opening the door to the QB. Your footwork must be right, right, left and right. If you move to your outside to cover up your target by taking a right step then a left and your target moves back to the left your next steps would be left, right or you will narrow your base too much. Remember we must always step parallel to the LOS when we move to the inside. We can give ground to the outside particularly at the tackle position. Whenever giving ground to the outside, we must widen the defender.

## Target:

- We must have a target on our pass protection. Most of the time our target will be a

small area slightly inside or slightly outside the midline of the defender. This will enable us to cover up the defender keeping him from getting up the field. If we took a target directly down the midline we would be susceptible to a quick inside move or a quick outside move. By moving our target slightly off the midline, we eliminate the potential to be beat with a quick move to that side.

## Punch:

- The power from our punch must come from our lats. The punch itself will only travel six inches, making contact with the heel of the hand instead of a flat palm. The heel will serve as a more penetrating punch. When making contact though make sure that your post leg is in the ground on contact. This will give you more power. If you pull your chin against your chest it will keep you from lunging. The punch should travel slightly upward in direction. Tackles must not punch with both hands even or they will make their outside shoulder susceptible. The tackles should use a one-handed punch versus a speed rusher. A good punch becomes more critical as the defender becomes bigger and more powerful. A good punch is penetrating and slows the pass rush.

Let's never forget that pass protection fundamentals can carry you far on the grid iron. When things get tough and chaos occurs, we always must go back to the fundamentals. I truly enjoyed taking the time to write down my thoughts on the greatest game in the world. If there is anything that our staff or myself can do for you please do not hesitate to contact us.

“Only one thing is worse than going into a game thinking you can't win. That's going in convinced you cannot lose.”

—Bernie Bierman

# WIDE RECEIVER DEVELOPMENT POSITION-SPECIFIC WIDE RECEIVER PLAY

By: Erik Frazier, Wide Receivers Coach, Western Illinois University

Within the game of football, every position on the field is just as skillful and important as the next. Every position requires great attention to detail and tons of repetition just to be good and even more to be considered one of the greats, at any level.

To me, and I may be a little biased because I played and coach the position – wide receiver is hand-down one of the hardest positions to be great at. The wide receiver position can be the most graceful position on the field when it is played the right way. To me, the position is an art as well as a lifestyle. It requires precision, tedious attention to detail, specific physical attributes demanded by the position, and the relentless work all players must put in.

I tell my wide receivers they must be technicians and surgeons; they must be tactical with everything they do. Knowing how to study film of defensive backs, studying overall defenses, knowing how to efficiently set up defenders and run routes, and knowing how to effectively get releases are all important facets of wide receiver play.

Little nuances make a huge difference. Receivers must have a plan for everything and transition at the blink of an eye if initial strategies do not work. They must know that the only thing the defense dictates is the leverage they give and the coverage they play. It's the receiver's world and they control the outcome; they must win every match-up.

If it's man coverage, the receiver must dominate the defender every chance he gets. They must impose their will within the run game as well as the pass game; they can't just be one-dimensional and only show up when the ball is in the air.

The same thing goes for zone-coverage. Receivers are still responsible for getting to a spot on the field in the pass game. With the run game, receivers still have a defender to block. Get it done and always stay locked in.

## Fundamental Development

What is most important to me in the development of receivers are the fundamentals that should be drilled and never deviated from. At the end of the day, football is football. There's

no reinventing the wheel when it comes to fundamentals or football in general. Of course, there are tweaks, unique approaches and different philosophies, but it's imperative to stick to the basics.

A coach can put his twist on any drill, but the most important aspects that must be taken into consideration are:

1. What does the entire group need to work on?
2. What does the group need to work on to be successful that particular week?
3. Does the drill translate to on-field success?
4. Is the drill realistic?

With time constraints and periods such as Team, Inside run, 7-on-7 and Special Teams, Individual periods are usually sacrificed and scaled back. As a result, it is important that when time is given to have position-group work, every minute should be accounted for practice so goals can be met.

So how does the coach get the most out of those individual period minutes? I believe the most efficient approach is to run two separate drills per 5-minute period and switch them half

**TO ALL HIGH SCHOOL COACHES,**  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECRUITING YOUR PLAYERS!



**2ND LARGEST**  
PRIVATE SCHOOL IN WI  
TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF 5,204



**HOME FIELD  
ADVANTAGE**  
16-3 IN PAST 4 SEASONS



**3 TO 4 MILES**  
OF UNDERGROUND TUNNELS

LOCATED RIGHT ON  
**LAKE MICHIGAN**



**LONGEST TENURED**  
HEAD COACH IN NACC



**MINI HELMETS**



**OAK CREEK FOOTBALL**

**OFFENSE**

	OG		C		SG		ST	
RB		QB		RB		TE		Z

**DEFENSE**

	T		N		T			
		WILL		MIKE		S		C
					M			

**FOOTBALL**

**CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

1927 1936 1940 1941 1942  
 1943 1956 1957 1959 1960  
 1967 1981

**WIAA STATE CHAMPION**

**LEADERS**

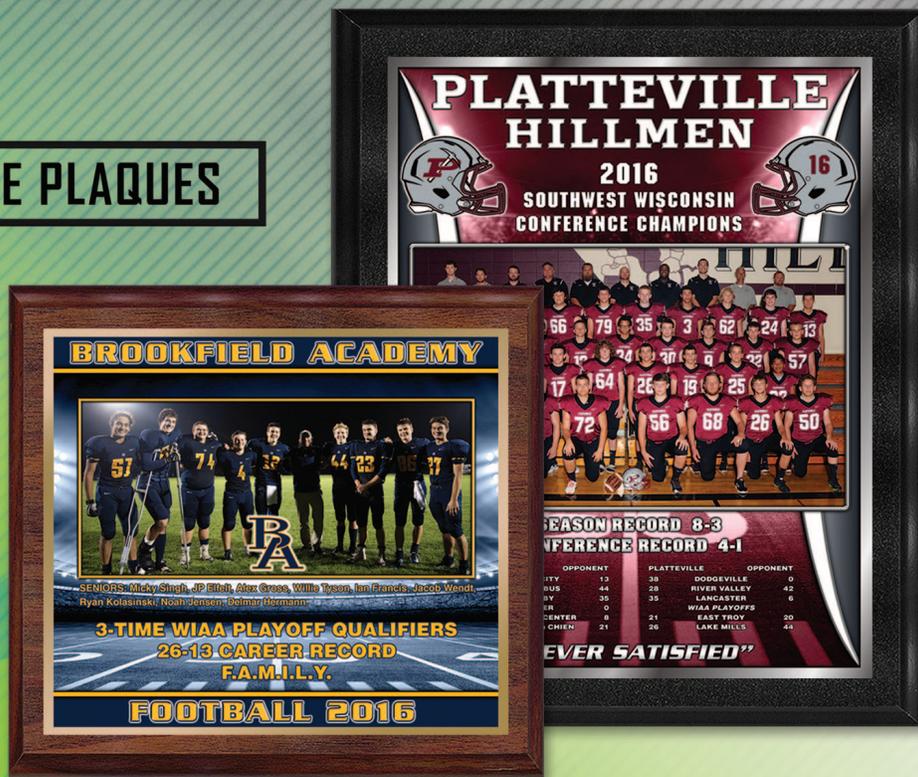
**TEACH ENCOURAGE CHALLENGE**

**SIGNS & RECORD BOARDS**

**PHONE** (800) 558-1696

**EMAIL** sales@healyawards.com

## TEAM PICTURE PLAQUES



## HELMET DECALS & ACCESSORIES

**25% OFF**  
ALL YEAR LONG



**ONLINE** [healyawards.com](http://healyawards.com)

**CONNECT**

@HealyAwards



way through which would be around the 2:15 mark. It's an easy and smooth transition.

Drills vary from coach to coach. There's no wrong approach to take, but as I mentioned before, try to keep the drill work relevant. Don't waste time.

I'm a firm believer that releases, footwork, change of direction and blocking should be drilled every day. Ball drills are always a major component; receivers can never get enough catches per day. I try to get in most of my ball drills during pre-practice while still incorporating them into other drills, along with the touches they will see during RVA, 7-on-7, 1-on-1, and so forth.

When I pair my drills for practice, I usually designate one drill out of the split to be effectively run by the players and make it something that doesn't involve a ball unless an assistant can help run the drill. Athletes should already know the keywords and cadences because they have heard them repeatedly through coaching. They should also know what feels right and what looks right.

Most of the time, the player-run drill will be Stance & Start, Blocking & Releases. They can still be coached up by a nearby position coach assigned to running the other drill. Meanwhile the group that is with the coach will be doing drills that include top of the route, footwork and change of direction. Those drills usually have a ball incorporated within the rep at some point, but can also be done without one.

### Wide Receiver Drills

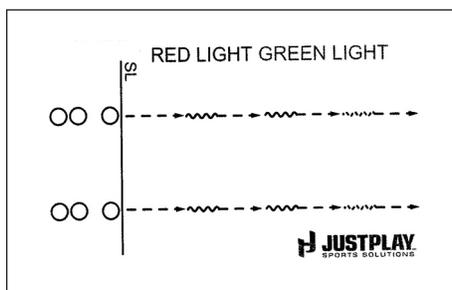
The drills outlined in this article can be done any time during practice. They all serve a purpose. Red/Green Light (See Diagram 1) is one of my favorites because it's a great measuring tool on posture (chin, knee, toe), body control, and the ability to decelerate and accelerate. Coaches can tell right away who has good bend and how efficient a player is at

the top of intermediate routes (Dig, Out, Comeback, Curl). Ideally, receivers should get out of breaks in three steps or less; any more than that is inefficient.

Colored Tennis Balls (See Diagram 2) force players to lock in on the incoming ball. They must track the ball after having their backs turned, give the color and make the catch within seconds. It's great for hand/eye coordination and concentration. It also forces receivers to develop soft hands catching a smaller object and not fighting the ball.

Capture The Flag (See Diagram 3) is one of the best blocking drills I have come across and the best way to become a better blocker. It gives coaches an indication of who wants to compete and fight. It puts all of the key fundamentals of blocking into one drill instead of using stationary pop-up bags. Most of all, it provides the most realistic look for both sides of the ball.

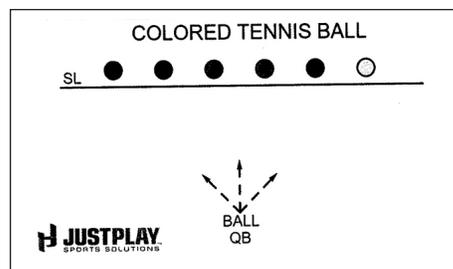
**Diagram 1**



Start in a Rocket stance. Line up on the sideline facing the field. Go on the whistle. When the next whistle blows, hit the brakes. Go on the next whistle. Players must move only on a whistle. This drill is done at full-speed; players must not hesitate.

Coaching Points: Violent hips and arms help. Players should slam on their brakes and avoid anticipating the whistle. This builds muscle memory from the chin through the knee and toe.

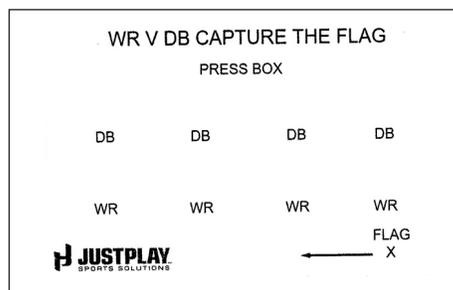
**Diagram 2**



Align on the sideline. Players are assigned numbers, such as 1 through 6. They start with their backs turned. When a player's number is called, he makes a quick turn and yells the color of the ball thrown to him before he makes the catch. The ball is thrown back to the coach in the order it was caught.

Coaching Points: This teaches soft hands, focus and looking the ball into the tuck.

**Diagram 3**



The wide receiver and defensive backs start by laying on their backs, heads facing each other. On the whistle, they pop up. A flag is thrown where a wide receiver can't see it. The defensive back will react. The wide receiver must use blocking fundamentals to keep the defensive back away from the flag. Players line up 3-4 yards apart. Pairs compete one at a time, down the line.

Coaching Points: Helps teach a great base, live feet, strike and stone, hand placement and shuffle. Do not extend or reach.

THANK YOU to all who so generously submitted articles for  
***“The Point After II.”***

If your article did not appear in this issue, please look in the next one!

Articles may be emailed to the WFCFA office at [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org), or send paper copy to:  
 WFCFA, PO Box 8, Poynette, WI 53955. Please include the title of the article, and the name, school and title of the author, along with the author's photograph. Again, our thanks!

# SPECIAL TEAMS

## READ & REACT: PRINCIPLES OF COVERAGE UNITS IN SPECIAL TEAMS

By: Matt Ellis, Defensive Backs Coach and Special Teams Coordinator, UW-Oshkosh



Matt Ellis

Given how much the rules are changing within football, our ability to find new ways to be innovative about how we operate on punt and kickoff is always a challenge. Continuously, we try to find new schemes, new adaptations, and new ways to tweak techniques and assignments

in order to greater benefit our team and to excel at the best of our abilities. Likewise, and on the other hand, return units within special teams are constantly looking for ways to expose and take advantage of deficiencies within coverage units. There are a few concepts, ideals, and constant principles we continue to utilize in our every day techniques and operations that can help us achieve becoming a consistent unit. On punt and kickoff units, we look to instill principles on day one in order to try to perform at a high level and become the most consistent version of ourselves as possible.

The first principle, horizontal spacing, can be applied to both kickoff and punt. On both Kickoff and punt, any time you wind up with too many members in the same or general area, you start to expose other spaces on the field. On kickoff, obviously this is easier to initially control by where you align your kickoff team members. In order to continue to evolve and adapt on kickoff however, we will utilize huddles, clusters, stacks, and twists so that we can ma-

nipulate what the return team is seeing so that we might be able to confuse blocking schemes, hoping to free up players to make plays and pin return teams deep. It is imperative to work these various scheme changes which threaten our spacing on kickoff so that we do not allow them to disrupt our spacing as we run down the field. If we are not spaced properly on kickoff, we risk running into others, not giving our coverage team members a chance to make plays, and opening other spaces on the field that can allow bigger returns. Some of the biggest returns that we have allowed are because of how bunched up we get in our coverage downfield, allowing more space for the returner to operate. In working this in practice, we constantly will work as a full coverage unit or just one side at a time to be able to teach through film afterwards. Our coverage team needs to understand how close is too close, and what that looks like. In working kickoff drills, we often focus when reviewing film on the proper spacing that coverage team members have when nearing the point of attack,

**THERES NOWHERE LIKE EAU CLAIRE**

**UPCOMING CAMP DATES**

**FUTURES CAMP**  
FEBRUARY 16TH

**MEGA DL/DL CAMP**  
JUNE 5TH

**YOUTH CAMP**  
JUNE 9TH-11TH

**ALL POSITIONS DEVELOPMENT CAMP**  
JUNE 26TH

**BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS**

**ELITE FACILITIES**

**VIBRANT DOWNTOWN**

**BLUGOLD FOOTBALL**

the returner. On punt, this horizontal spacing is much more difficult to achieve, especially if you are a pro style punt, much like you see in the NFL. While shield punt teams are more spaced to start, it can allow for holes in protection. Since we have utilized more of a ‘pro’ style punt, we work constantly on how to go from a bunched up protection unit to a well spaced coverage unit. We will work drills, starting out two, three, four, or even five athletes in a cluster or on the same line shoulder to shoulder before triggering them to cover a returner. In these drills, we preach and focus on the importance of them finding their own space, and allowing us to fan out effectively, while not opening too much space in between. Now, through these first points, I have been talking about horizontal spacing, but vertical spacing is just as important.

The second principle I will touch on has just as much importance is vertical spacing, or in other words, making sure we are not stacking up too much. Now if you run a lane centric kickoff team, this surely is not as big of an issue until your coverage team begins bending on the ball. On punt and kickoff, when you have members running on different levels however, it’s a must to focus on making sure we have leverage on returners while also not stacking up or ‘tailgating’ with other members of our coverage team. On punt, we do not assign coverage assignments. It is all based on who gets out first and who has better positioning for different aiming points in the post blocking portion of the punt operation. We work this by doing a drill starting our coverage members in a diamond, close together with four ‘returners’ about 15 yards back from each member of the return team in the middle. Coverage team members must work together quickly in order to execute good horizontal spacing, while the man furthest away from the ball

must execute good vertical spacing by not following directly behind the coverage member in front of him. This is for two reasons: First, being so he can see the returner and his actions so we can react sooner. Secondly, if we miss tackles or become blocked, that second layer of coverage members can make a play on anything that escapes through. Layers and levels to coverage units can often prove more effective, ensuring that even if a returner escapes through a lane or gap, there is a second line of defenders to make a play and prevent a return going from a decent one to a lengthy one.

The final principle I will touch on we teach on day one of coverage unit installations is block avoidance and stacking. I feel these two are one in the same, as they help us avoid blocks on both punt and kickoff. Obviously on kickoff, we will see multiple layers of blockers, including double teams. On punt, we are starting to see more and more teams utilize multiple layers of blockers in order to set up a return as well. When we talk about block avoidance, the first thing we teach is to avoid blockers on their back or butt side. Avoiding butt side can allow for much more difficult blocks for the return team members to execute. Also, if a return team member is looking to block one of our coverage members to one sideline, we teach our guys to avoid butt side in order to avoid where the return is going. Some of the biggest returns we have allowed resulted because we avoided face side on blockers. Since they are not square, this created more space for where the return is aiming at going. Avoiding face side allows for the return team to block coverage members easier, and it allows them to use our momentum against us. We work this, particularly with kickoff, by having multiple individuals stack up in a line each about 10 yards apart.

We have the coverage member run, avoiding butt side based on how each guy downfield is positioned and which sideline he is facing. What is important to teach, whether you are a lane coverage team or have different ‘layer and level’ assignments, is that coverage members need to avoid butt side, avoiding the blocker getting both hands on you, while not straying too far. If coverage members run ‘around’ blockers and manipulate their spacing too much, we risk having poor horizontal spacing. After avoiding butt side in the most straight away approach, we then teach coverage members to ‘stack’ blockers back up, much like a receiver on a defensive back. Stacking blockers back up after avoiding allows us as a coverage member to avoid giving blockers leverage to block us again once nearing the returner or point of attack. Secondly, it ensures that if that same return blocker tries to block a coverage member after avoiding and stacking, they will block us in the back. Returns are killed by block in the back and cutting calls, so the more we can draw, the better field position we can give to our defense when they take the field.

Given how much space there is to consider in special teams, it is imperative to design coverage drills revolving around horizontal spacing, vertical spacing, and block avoiding and stacking. Being able to ‘read and react’ in these drills can directly correlate to our abilities to do so in game. Changing even the smallest of factors in drills can allow us to put our coverage members in different situations. Due to the space that is covered in special teams, often times, there will be some things that are unaccountable. Teaching our coverage units to read and react, and ultimately adapt and overcome, allows coverage units to thrive and perform at a consistent and high level.

## EASY INDOOR DRILLS FOR SPECIALISTS

By: Michael Famiglietti, Offensive Coordinator, Kansas Wesleyan University

Playing and coaching football in the northern United States has taught me that our weather is absolutely unpredictable. Any day in February or March can be 60 degrees and sunny followed by a blizzard the next day. For football, we practice and play in all types of weather, but when there is a foot of snow, how can a specialist (the position that arguably requires the most room to practice) improve without risking hypothermia, using a dome, or fighting the basketball team for the gym.

While rules won’t let coaches monitor every workout, we work as a team to develop a plan at the end of each season for what we need to improve and reinforce each offseason. Here are some of the drills our kickers, punters and long snappers do both in and out of season. These drills take up as little space as a living room and can be done without a ball.

### Indoor Drills For Kickers

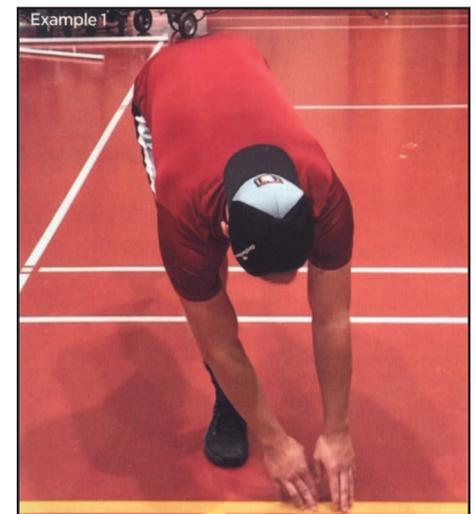
Most of our critical place—kicking fundamental drills focus on balance, weight transition and swing plane/acceleration. Mastering these

enable us to stabilize our kicks and get accurate power into every kick.

To work balance, we do single-leg stability drills with both our plant leg and kicking leg. One of our favorite balance drills is to place three cones 1 foot in front of where we stand. While on one leg, we bend at the waist to touch each cone. This develops body control and awareness, trust in our plant leg for stability, and mobility in our joints. (See Example 1)

We will also perform slow—motion kicks. We balance on our plant leg while working the full range of the upper— and lower—body segments of our kicking technique. We also focus on our off-arm opening, backswing, eye transition and swing follow-through. Players must not force a final skip-through as this can offset his balance and create a hitch or crunch in his technique.

If our kickers want to work on ball contact and we have enough room, we perform partner pass kicks. These require either a partner or a net to catch the ball at 10 yards and are done using a jab one—step approach starting with our



kicking foot and finishing on our plant foot. The kicking leg does a full-range backswing and come through the ball at roughly half speed with the eyes and foot finishing through our target

before transitioning into a walk. There is a small skip—through and the goal is to have smooth contact on the sweet spot of the ball with the sweet spot of our foot. Kickers are looking for strong ankle—lock causing end-over-end rotation and a straight flight path. If the ball is kicked too lard to be caught, lower power on the swing.

**Indoor Drills For Punters**

Most punting fundamental drills work hand speed, footwork and swing plane/acceleration. Mastering these makes punters comfortable catching snaps and sets a consistent drop early in our punting motion. It also generates as much power as possible in our desired punting direction.

For hand speed, we will play catch as often as possible. This helps our hand eye coordination and ensures that we are as quick as possible at matching our drop to the proper height and angle of our swing. When working with a football, we mix up the location of the catch to practice hand transitions on the drop. We also hard—toss a tennis ball, soccer ball, or even send poor tosses to simulate off—aim snaps.

Punters must master the location of their feet and their direction. The feet control the hips and strides, which affect power, leg swing and direction. The punter’s footwork is a simple, quick jab—one—two—swing (jabbing with the plant foot) to keep our feet powerful under our body. The first step is a powerful 6-12 inches to keep the hips back and drive from the balls of the feet

rather than the heels. This helps punters generate power up and through the swing while landing balanced into a walk. After the swing, the eyes and head should follow the foot and the ball, allowing our core and hips to follow through even farther. We work each step one at a time and progress into a full dry swing without the ball. We emphasize back-swing and follow-through

To combine drops and swings, we work punter drops. The punter completes his full steps and swing while his partner pulls the ball and steps away on the drop. We also work on dropping the ball on specific targets such as a hat or a towel at the end of our footwork to work directional angles and accommodate the momentum we generate.

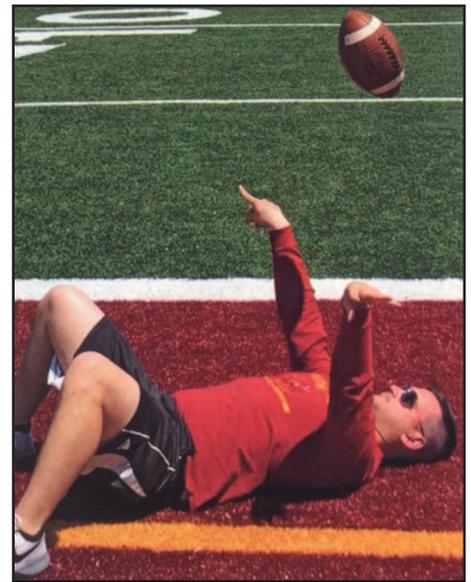
As a part of the progression it is important to emphasize the backswing even without a full swing through to ensure the quad is as loaded as possible.

**Indoor Drills For Long Snappers**

Long snappers are fortunate that they don’t ever need the full height of a gym to complete positive work. For long snappers, the main fundamental drills focus on hand follow—through, power generation and upper—body timing. They must start and finish balanced and have their eyes and hands finish through the target.

To work hand follow-through, we perform snaps while lying down. The snapper starts the ball from his forehead and works on his arms, generating an even spiral by extending both

arms up and finishing with his palms facing away from each other, roughly shoulder width apart. (See Example 2)



The snapper isn’t working to spin the ball, but rather throw the ball with his dominant arm, while his non-throwing arm stabilizes the ball. Both arms should follow through evenly for the smoothest spiral, the straightest snap and the most acceleration.

We also work bent-over upper body snaps where a partner or net is 6-8 yards behind the



long snapper, who has his legs and hips straightened and feet firmly planted. This position forces the snapper to use his vision, upper body and arms to whip through — without the aid of his legs — and finish toward the hip of the person or net catching the ball.

On setup, we want the snapper’s grip balanced and the ball pointing straight down his midline, without being over-extended in front of his body. At the finish of his follow-through, his body should look like the number four from the side view, with our palms facing out and away from the body.

To work on power generation and to speed the upper body follow-through, we work on hip drive. The faster a snapper can drive the hips up and back toward his target, the smoother and more quickly his upper body can finish toward the target. The snapper can do quick hip-pops in succession, simulating the hip drive by setting himself up in the bottom of his snapping position. Without bringing his arms through, he rapidly fires his hips up and back through the target.

To work on matching the upper and lower body timing of the entire long-snap, we work a slow-motion, full snap with and without a ball. At the slowest tempo (4 seconds for the Whole

movement), the snapper’s feet will stay planted and balanced while his hips and upper body extend together. At the finish of his snap, he pauses.

Without a ball, the tempo can be increased all the way to a full snap where the hips drive the upper body through and the feet may slide a few inches.

When using a ball for slow-motion snaps, work on perfecting a clean spiral that gently lands on a partner’s hip 5-6 yards away. There is no power in this snap, but it ensures the ball is pointed straight at the target with a balanced, even release. This prepares the snapper to “let it rip” when he finally gets outside.

## GENERAL FOOTBALL

### USING A MATCH STYLE COVERAGE TO GET THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

By: Aaron Kraemer, Head Football Coach, Rhinelander High School



Aaron Kraemer

I’d like to thank the WFCAs for the opportunity to play a role in many different areas in the past few years. In my experience as the Head Coach and Assistant for the North Large All-Stars, the North Region one Rep, and now being able to share with the coaching community in the state, it is clear to me that we have one of the best coaching associations in the nation. I’d like to thank the School District of Rhinelander for allowing me to influence the youth in our city by being their Head Football Coach, my staff for being committed to bringing an excellent experience to our players, and my family

for being the best support system that one could ever ask for.

Coverage is a complicated piece of your defensive strategy. Oftentimes overlooked and under-coached, we believe that your coverage should be the first piece of the defense that is installed. We utilize our first contact day in the summer to install our base coverage along with run responsibilities, and expect our athletes to practice our coverages during their 7-on-7 sessions during the summer. As our coverage dictates not only the passing assignments, but also the force, alley, and fold players in the run game, we spend a lot of time coaching our umbrella players to communicate and play their roles.

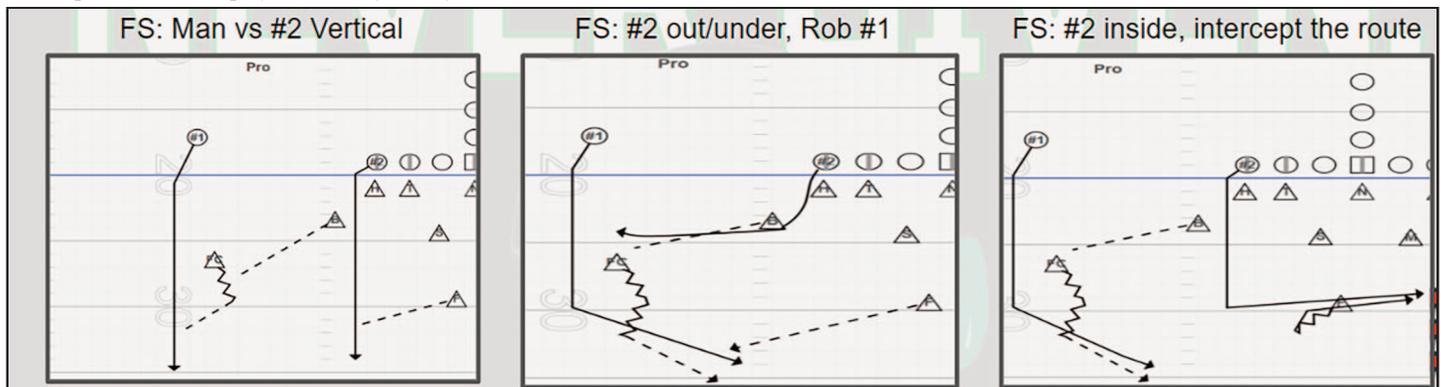
Years ago, we were searching for a way to defend the run heavy teams that the Great Northern Conference had to offer. We spent a blustery winter day in Oshkosh, Wisconsin learning from the staff at UW-Oshkosh (Thank you Coach Cerroni, and Coach Stenbrotten). We wanted to build a defense that allowed us to have extra hats to the ball carrier in the run game, but that was versatile enough to handle teams that could come out and spread the ball. Ultimately, we settled on a split-field coverage that could have elements of man and of our favored zone coverages (Cover 2, 3, 4, and Man).

We call our coverage technique “Robber” as our safeties (depending on the alignment of

their vertical threats) will be responsible for robbing routes to his half of the field. All of this starts with the communication of our “Gots”. Coming out of the huddle our safeties will communicate with their corners about how many vertical threats are on their side (“Got-1” “Got-2” “Got-3, etc.). This, along with TE alignment, will determine both our run strength and our passing strength. Our Free Safety and Will Linebacker (OLB/S/Hybrid) will align to the field or weak side, while our Bandit Safety and Hodag (OLB/DE/Hybrid) will align to the boundary or TE side.

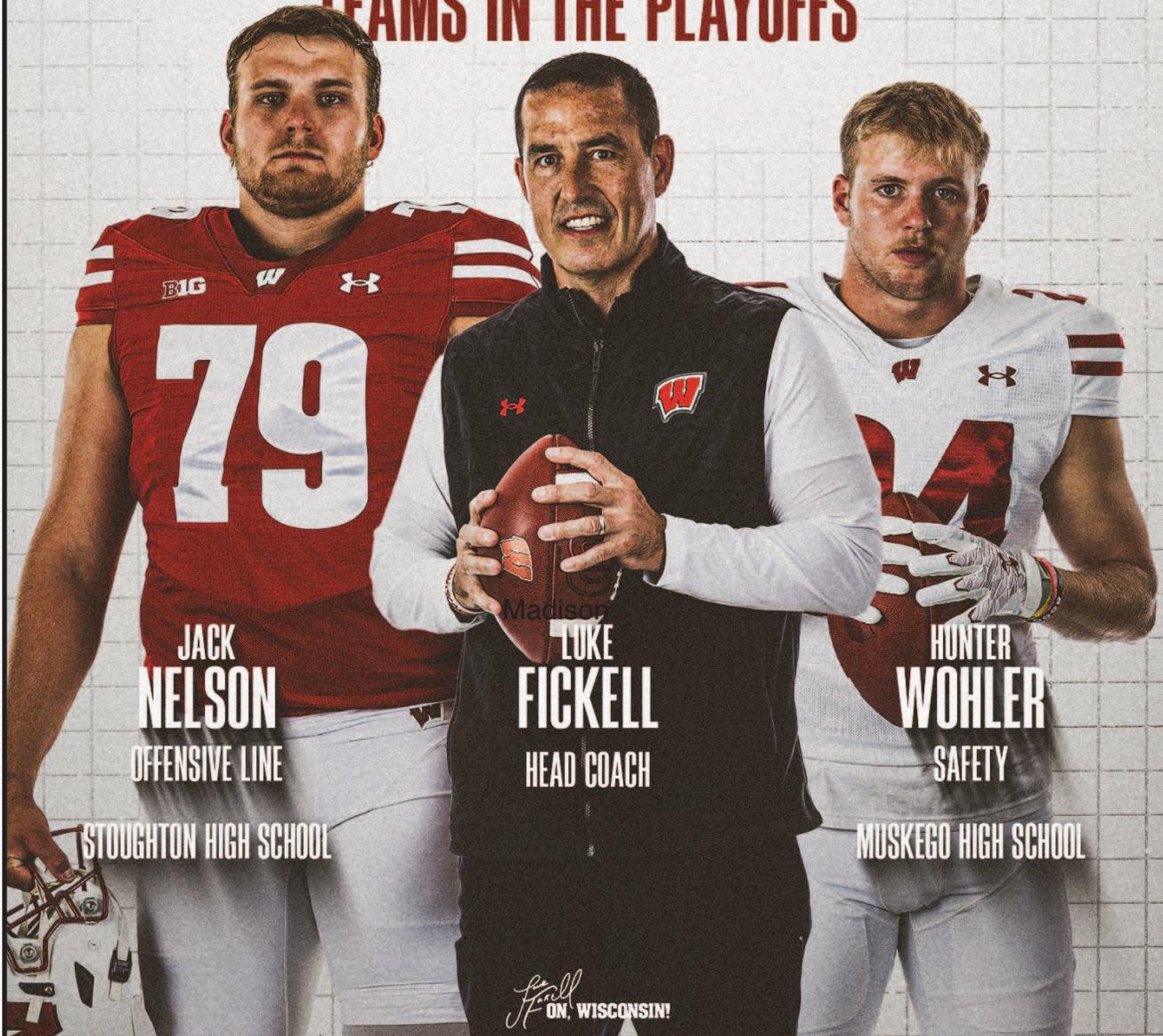
Once aligned the coverage call (“Gots”) determines how we will play in the secondary. As our safeties will rob their half, and our corners will be responsible for the deep half on their side of the field (“get beat deep, take a seat”). Our hybrid players are responsible to force a change of direction in the run game and play the flat in the passing game. We have rules for our hybrids in the pass, but for the sake of this article, we will say they play the flat/wheel of #3.

If our safeties determine that there is only one vertical passing threat on their side the “Got-1” call is made. Our mnemonic device reminds our deep players of their rule (“Got-1, we run”). This means that because there is only one vertical passing threat, our corner will



# GOOD LUCK

## WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAMS IN THE PLAYOFFS



JACK  
**NELSON**  
OFFENSIVE LINE

STOUGHTON HIGH SCHOOL

Madison  
LUKE  
**FICKELL**  
HEAD COACH

HUNTER  
**WOHLER**  
SAFETY

MUSKEGO HIGH SCHOOL

*Small*  
ON WISCONSIN!

“run” with number one vertical (man-to-man). On in-breaking routes, our safety will rob the number 1 receiver playing aggressively to his downfield shoulder, looking for the break-up or the INT.

In a situation where we have two vertical threats (twins, doubles, tight twins, etc.), our “Got-2” mnemonic will come into play (“Got-2, it’s who?”). In this situation, our coverage turns into a style of match quarters or palms coverage (depending on scouting). The corner and safety to the two receiver side will have

eyes on the #2 receiver, and make a post-snap decision on “who” is responsible for him while switching off the responsibility of the #1 receiver (we count vertical threats from the sideline-in). If #2 goes vertical or does an in-breaking route, he becomes the safety’s responsibility (man-to-man) and the corner knows that he has all of the #1 receiver. If #2 breaks out (under the hard deck at 7 yards), we switch the coverage responsibility and the corner will sit on #2’s route, while the safety will run (to the upfield shoulder) to take all of the #2 receiver.

While offenses can sometimes present more (3 or 4) eligible vertical threats to a specific flank, we adjust to these offensive sets weekly, and dependant on the alignment of the receivers. The rules above allow us to play versions of cover 2, cover 3, and true cover 4, all the while playing these coverages with a man to man style instead of covering grass. If you’d like to learn more about this, we’d love to have you up in Rhinelander, WI. While you are here, come in and check out our Hodag Dome, the largest High School Dome complex in the Country!

## OPTION & AUDIBLES FOOTBALL, BUT, MAYBE NOT WHAT YOU THINK

By: Greg Roman, Head Football Coach, Milwaukee Reagan High School



Greg Roman

Have you had a season where you had either (or both!) of the following on kickoffs: a kicker that couldn’t produce touchbacks and/or trouble tackling in space? Our program has had both of those bugaboos. We run a power-T offensive scheme that places a paramount on ball control and draining the clock. Our goal is to put together multiple play drives that can eat up almost an entire quarter of the game clock and end up with touchdowns. We joke that our quarterback’s pre-snap read is the back judge. When he starts the final countdown is when we want to

think about snapping the ball. We have had consistent results utilizing this formula, but after a score we have also had issues with the aforementioned kickoff deficiencies. I can tell you from experience, it can be very demoralizing to put together a twelve play scoring drive and then experience the opponent respond with a return score that takes less than twelve seconds.

Our answer to this has been to borrow from the old baseball adage to “hit ‘em where they ain’t!” We try to kick it where the return team isn’t by using audibles that give us the option to find open green spaces on the field. We divide the field into zones and apply code words for each zone. When we line up to kick, our special teams coach analyzes the best place to put the ball and audibles to the kickoff team the code word for the chosen zone. Preparation for this starts with film study of the line up tendencies our opponent shows. Additionally, we place cones on the field during practice for our kicker to hit so that we can be as precise as possible with kick placement. Over the years the majority of our kicks haven’t been very deep as we have lacked kicker leg strength. Our hope is to get the ball somewhere around the 35 yard line, which gives our players a chance to recover the kick at best, and at worst for the opponent to have to fall on an oddly bounding ground ball.

We football coaches all know the goofy hops an oblong pigskin can take.

Of course this can make for a shorter field to defend if our opponent is able to recover the kick. Our defensive philosophy is to bend and not break. The kickoff is the first defensive play of a series. We would rather take our chances lining up closer to their offense on the first snap from scrimmage than providing a skill player with large swaths of room to find seams with a head of steam on a kickoff return. Many an offensive coordinator’s dream is to get the ball in the hands of their best playmakers in space. Kickoff return is an excellent opportunity to do just that. If your team struggles to tackle in space then kickoffs expose that exponentially.

We still have zones further down the field to kick the ball as deep as we can. If you have consistently kicked short in a game and on film, the tendency is for the opponent to move their players up closer to the kick. If they move up far enough, you may have an opportunity to now kick it over their heads. It’s a cat and mouse game, coaches. Now, some of you have cats that can boom it consistently into the end zone. But for those of you who are at a disadvantage, like us, this is an approach that has fit well. Take from this what you will, and thank you to the WFCA for letting me share with you.

## EIGHT LESSONS LEARNED AS A YOUNG DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

By: Nick Walters, Defensive Coordinator, Lourdes Academy, Oshkosh



Nick Walters

The opportunity to be a Defensive Coordinator is not something any coach should take lightly if given the opportunity. If the aspirations of being a Head Coach are in the mind of any coach taking a coordinator position seriously can lead to a lot of success as a Head Coach. We know that wins and losses are not everything but being willing to lead and learn from mistakes make a coordinator the most successful in their position. The lumps that come with having a coordinator role and knowing when to take blame for a call or scheme will provide the most growth for any coach. I have chosen eight lessons I have learned as a Coor-

dinator that hopefully other coaches can take and use to grow as a coordinator and a coach.

1. The bad will happen! Gameplans may turn out to be a bust on a Friday night where everything that could go wrong, does go wrong. Mistakes will happen and the best coaches are able to tell the other coaches and players they made a mistake.

For example, I decided to go man coverage on a Friday night against a team we could have beaten, but the execution was lacking. Our team wasn’t prepared as well as I thought they were to run that coverage.

2. Use your network of coaches as much as possible especially in-season. The more coaches you know outside of your staff, the more resources you have during the season. This is especially true if you are seeing a team whose offense you have never encountered before. I am always reaching out to other coaches and coordinators on the weekend as I am putting in a game plan and asking for opinions and thoughts on different aspects of the game plan and team you will be playing against the following Friday.
3. Don't overthink game plans, keep them simple! These are High School kids who don't understand the game of football like we do. Trust the system in place and have some counters off that system for a given team and what they run. What I mean is have a couple new blitzes for teams that they haven't seen before.
4. Trust the coaches under you on game weeks. Install the game plan, then let your coaches advance the plan within their position groups. Don't feel you have to control every decision just because you are the coordinator. Give them control of their position group so they buy-in at their position coaches meetings and then on field drills.
5. Play calls don't have to be given to your middle linebackers. Most coaches give the play call to their middle linebackers on game days. This past season, we didn't have a middle linebacker who we felt comfortable with making the call and two didn't have football

knowledge to make the calls. I had to decide who would make the calls for my defense. I decided on one of my outside linebacker/defensive end. The reason was, this young man had the most football smarts in the program and was a leader in the locker room.

6. We practice pursuit drills weekly. I prided my defense on energy and effort. This is why I did pursuit once a week as a symbol of our defensive culture of energy and effort. Pursuit is all about effort and what we as coaches expect to see on Friday Nights on every play. The key to pursuit once a week is that I never use the same pursuit drill on back-to-back weeks. I get creative in how I implement pursuit to best fit the culture of our defense. This could be old fashioned pursuit drills, tackling drills in pursuit, turnover drills in pursuit. My goal is to keep this segment fresh every week, so the focus is on the culture of the defense, so it translates to game day.
7. Provide written Game plans for Players If you have been around High School football players long enough, you know that they forget pieces of the game plan from day to day. This is why on Monday I give them a written game plan along with diagrams of how we will line up against different formations, so they can study from it and prepare themselves for what is expected of them come Friday night.
8. Ask for input on game plans. Don't be afraid to give coaches responsibilities on the week-

ends and ask for input on the game plan. This could be alignments, blitzes, or coverages to certain plays or formations. Trust the guys under you to make decisions especially about their own position groups. Game planning is not a one size fits all and it's not a one man show. Be able and willing to delegate.

**“Winning is not a  
sometime thing; it’s an  
all-the-time thing.  
You don’t do things right  
once in a while.  
You do them right  
all the time.”**  
—Vince Lombardi

**CONGRATS TO ALL WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYOFF TEAMS! FROM TITAN FOOTBALL**

**WR TRAE TETZLAFF**

**2018 WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVING YARDS LEADER**

**UW-OSHKOSH ALL-TIME LEADER IN CAREER RECEIVING TDS & RECEPTIONS**

**UW-OSHKOSH 13 WINNING SEASONS IN A ROW BE THE ONE**

**UW-OSHKOSH TITAN FOOTBALL**

## GOOD TEAMS WANT IT; CHAMPIONS NEED IT!

By: Michael Roemhild, Head Football Coach, Boyceville High School



*Michael Roemhild*

First of all, thank you to the WFC and Mike Olson, head football coach at Pepin-Alma, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the *The Point After II* publication. Hearing others' perspectives about football, picking the minds of some of the best in the state, and learning something new each year are all things that I find rejuvenating and challenging.

Competition - a concept I have embraced and even hungered for from day one. In fact, I have felt the need to be the best in any competition since I was very young. Whether it was little league baseball, timed multiplication tables, or a game of 500 Rummy; I needed to be the best. That inner drive to succeed came naturally, but I also learned it from my older siblings, my parents, and believe it or not, my grandma. If I was going to compete, then I needed to win. And if I didn't win, there was no

time to feel sorry for myself or make excuses. Instead, I needed to fix what didn't work, put in more effort, and prove to those who doubted me that they were wrong. Dead wrong. Over time, I realized that the very mindset and strategies I used as an athlete, I would then need to implement as a coach.

As coaches, we know the lessons taught on the field directly connect with what life will throw at our players in the future. Many coaches also believe that besides teaching the skill-set of our sport, it is the coach's job to teach our athletes to become productive citizens. They need it. After all, it is in our arena that young, impressionable boys truly learn to become men. It is here that we teach them how to work as a team, how to achieve and celebrate goals, and most importantly, how to be role models for the youth in our community. Teaching young people to be a part of something bigger than themselves provides them genuine direction and purpose in life. And they definitely need that.

While teaching these lessons was rewarding, I also felt that something was still missing for our football team. The Boyceville Bulldogs needed a conference championship title. It had been 61 long years since our Bulldogs had won the last conference championship outright and 24 years since we shared one. I would like to tell you that it was a former coach, an inspirational quote, or even a family member who pushed me to promote and stick with the idea of needing this championship, but it was none of that. It was the players themselves who

wanted it. For a while, I thought it was good enough to just "want it." Time, circumstances, and community support convinced me that if we wanted to be considered great and take that next step, then we had to need it - all of us. We took that approach as a team, and I have never seen a hungrier group than what we had this year. They needed to win, and they knew that they needed their teammates to feel the same way.

Some of you may have been hoping that this article would provide for your current needs: new formations, drills, or strategies for success. You don't really need that from me. All of you are great coaches in your own way. We may tout different coaching philosophies and style, but I am certain that each of us supports ones that fit the needs of our coaching staff and athletes. Instead, I will leave you with a set of questions that may simply challenge your current mindset. Do you need it? Do your players need it? Do your assistant coaches need it? Do the parents on your team need it? Does your community need it? If everyone buys into needing it instead of wanting it, you will be amazed at how coaches, players, and community members can come together as a whole. Our Bulldog season is a solid example of just that. It was void of the stressful, counter-productive late-night emails, text messages, or awkward "bump-ins" around town. Everyone had one goal, and we accomplished it. Our need was met. That is why this 2023 Boyceville Bulldog team was so successful. Period. Good luck to all of you!

## KNOWING WHAT THE END SHOULD LOOK LIKE

By: Jim Deignan, Assistant Football Coach, Eau Claire Regis High School



*Jim Deignan*

If you were asked what makes a successful high school football coach, what would your answer be? Could you answer it in a sentence or two? In 1969, thirty-two-year-old John Madden asked a similar question.

Recently promoted from coaching linebackers to Head Coach of the Oakland Raiders, Madden, while attending a meeting of NFL head coaches, met Vince Lombardi, then in his first year as Head Coach of the Washington Redskins following nine amazing seasons leading the legendary Green Bay Packers. Madden, a self-professed football junkie, thought he knew a lot about football's Xs and Os and admired Coach Lombardi's coaching style and knowledge of the game. But rather than ask Coach Lombardi a question about his famous sweep play or some other "football" question, he instead asked Lombardi what separated good coaches from average and even bad coaches. "The difference," Lombardi said, "is knowing what you want, knowing what the end is supposed to look like. If a coach doesn't know what the end is supposed to look like, he won't know it when he sees it."

Madden held close to Lombardi's visionary words as he went on to lead the Raiders for ten

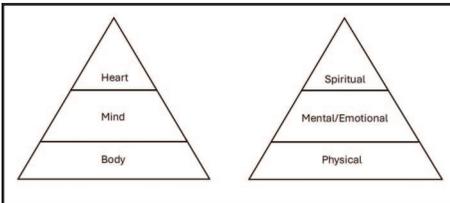
successful seasons, including a Super Bowl title in 1977. Whether it's the Lombardi Trophy or a gold ball, visionary coaches know that to win such a coveted trophy requires hard work and a whole lot more. So back to the question. What does make a successful high school football coach?

Perhaps you would reference past success tips gleaned from other coaches you look up to or have coached with. Or maybe your answer would include what has worked for you over the years. If it did, would you point to what worked during your winning seasons only? If so, what about the losing seasons? Are traits of successful high school football coaches only produced during winning seasons? Though Lombardi and Madden never had losing seasons as a head coaches, there are plenty of testimonies that reference their impact went far beyond the football field.

While only one team in every division of high school football ends their season with a

win, every team has an opportunity to see the “end” as more than winning football games and championships. No doubt, most coaches reading this article can think back to one or more disappointing seasons they’ve coached. Memories of seasons gone by undoubtedly produce different emotions for different coaches. But, that said, when coaches look past the scoreboard each week and the win-loss record each season to the results gained over time from their investment in the “whole” team, they’ll probably define success in ways beyond football.

Throughout my years of coaching and working in leadership roles, I’ve repeatedly learned the best results come when those we are entrusted to lead know we care about them as people vs just football players (or employees). To show players we care about them “wholeheartedly” as we may find ourselves saying, coaching at all levels of a person’s self is crucial. Consider the two triangles below.



Dimensionally, both triangles allocate more “space” to the bottom sections. From a physical

training perspective, an intense amount of time is certainly needed for improvement in any sport. Data suggests that this is often the low hanging fruit for coaches and athletes where time and effort is primarily spent on weightlifting, agility, cardio and skills training throughout the season. As a result of this focus, athletes typically become bigger, faster and stronger while improving their ability to play football. But do the bigger, faster, stronger and most skilled players always become the best contributors to the team’s overall success?

In the somewhat smaller, middle section of the triangle, most coaches and athletes would likely agree that while still very important to one’s personal development, less time is typically spent training a player’s mind. Yet, we repeatedly search for mentally tough players who can control their emotions, understand the playbook and know how to play their positions while having an awareness of their teammates’ positional responsibilities. But without effort and intentionality put towards coaching an individual player’s mental and emotional skillset, we tend to focus on teamwork and trust each player will figure out how to manage their emotions and know their responsibilities.

Similarly, the top area of the triangle has even less space allocated to it. Yet, when effort is put forth to help others (and ourselves) grow

spiritually, data shows the results are seen not only on the football field but also in the lives of those we’re coaching. We’ve all coached the young man who may not be the strongest or most talented but often contributes a significant amount to the team’s success through a sheer will and desire to be the most positive and impactful player and person he can be. That usually isn’t done without a lot of “heart” as we often say.

When coaches invest their efforts into all three areas of a player’s self, the results can become more meaningful than a win-loss record. Athletes in any sport will often reference a particular coach who made the most positive difference in their life as the one who invested in their whole self. Outside of sports, this same truth surfaces in the work setting, in families and in friendships. Simply put, an investment of time, with intentionality and commitment, typically generates the best chance at helping others succeed.

That commitment requires an understanding of the overall impact coaches can have on a young man’s life both on and off the football field by coaching in all sections of the triangle. Unfortunately, according to the 3D Institute’s 3-Dimensional Coaching framework, six out of ten coaches on average don’t coach beyond the “physical” section. Why is this? First, many

coaches prefer to focus on skills as that is what they know. Second, coaches often have a lack of awareness of how to coach the mind and the heart, and they believe that others, like parents for example, are the ones responsible for helping young men develop mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

At Regis High School, Coach Brenner leads with a mindset that the whole triangle is vital to our success. He follows the lead of coaches he has looked up to in the past as he leads our team through a leadership book study each season. As the season progresses, principles from the book and personal applications are discussed each day as practice begins. All players on the team (grades 9-12) are in the room at the same time, giving the younger, typically quieter guys exposure to what the older, more vocal guys are saying. In addition, all coaches are encouraged to get to know their positional group players beyond how they perform on the field. This intentionality allows for a greater understanding of personal and family dynamics and opens the door to the players' hearts.

Spiritually, Coach Brenner allocates time each week to a team message connected to scripture. Given mid-week, each message is intended to help players and coaches connect our mindsets to a greater purpose with the understanding that football is the means by which we are given the opportunity to make a difference both on and off the field. Then, after school on gameday, coaches meet separately with their position groups to discuss the assigned questions based on the scriptural message that week (as well as what to focus on for that night's game).

Each season, our goal at Regis High School is to build a tough football team of young men willing to participate in something beyond themselves for the sake of each other, and in doing so, win a state title at Camp Randall using their God-given gifts. As our coaches work together toward this goal, we learn about more ourselves and how we handle both adversity and success so that we can help our players learn and handle the same throughout their lives. In the end, our hope is we've learned God is more interested in how well we live purposeful and fulfilling lives than how well we coach and play football.

I believe both Coach Lombardi and Coach Madden also understood this as they too sought to unify their teams to perform at the highest level. They learned how to motivate and build confidence in each player. They understood who each player was and helped them become their very best by believing in them. They coached hard, but players say they knew their coaches cared about them. To go back to Coach Lombardi's quote again, they knew what they wanted and what the "end" was supposed to look like. And that "end" equated to a tremendous amount of success both on and off the field as their records stand for themselves as so do their reputations for positively impacting the lives of their players.

Note: Some of the information contained in this article comes from a 3-Dimensional Coaching certification program I completed as well as from [www.3dinstitute.com](http://www.3dinstitute.com). I highly encourage all coaches to check out the website for more information.

## LEADING WITH HEART: CULTIVATING CALM, CONFIDENCE AND COMPASSION IN OURSELVES AND IN OUR PLAYERS

By: Craig Aamot, Co-Director Jeff Trickey Quarterback Technique and Leadership Camps



*Craig Aamot*

A quarterback lies on the ground after taking his second sack in a row bringing up a crucial third down in a big game. In that moment he has a choice to push himself up off the turf or stay down for a few more seconds. In that moment he has a choice to turn away from his teammates or turn toward them with a few claps and words of trust and support. In that moment he has a choice to allow thoughts to turn to how the last sack happened, or how big the next play is, or how the game might finish, or what they might say about him tomorrow, or the mistakes he made last week...and he has the choice to get up - receive the next play, clear his mind, step with confidence into the huddle, look his friends in the eyes and communicate with authority - This play is gonna go.

In those few moments the QB calls on resilience, selflessness, courage, empathy, calm, a clear present-moment clarity to receive, process and execute the next job, and a fearlessness to lead his teammates with confidence. How do we develop this? How do we help cultivate or uncover these seemingly innate qualities of a great leader? While our guys come to us already equipped to different degrees with these qualities, it is our responsibility to lead them into growth and support them. In essence, our job is to hold a space for them, in the months or years they are entrusted to us, and to keep the ground fertile - trusting, accountable, rigorous, supportive, loving - so that when they are ready they can reach down, take root and grow, for their own good and for the good of the team, toward a better version of themselves, athletically and personally. Football, and especially this unique QB position, can be a laboratory for learning about self - physically, mentally and emotionally, if we are open. Today's young men, with challenges we didn't have ten or twenty years ago, need this support as much as ever, and so do we as coaches.

Two weeks after the University of Michigan won the national championship I spoke at the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Clinic in Lansing. As I introduced concepts of mindfulness training related to developing presence and poise in the quarterback, I pulled up a picture of J.J. McCarthy meditating under the goalpost pregame. McCarthy has been open about his journey with mindfulness - how it has helped him with some

mental health issues, and how it translates to attributes of calm, clarity and connection to teammates on the field. I hoped the image of J.J. helped soften the notion that mindfulness practice was only for spiritual seekers and yogis, but that it could have quite practical and powerful implications for performance.

Mindfulness, or present moment awareness, is a concept that has gained attention and application across disciplines - athletics, arts, leadership, business, education, healthcare, and on and on. Simply put, it's the skill of being fully where you are, of stepping out of the continuous and often disrupting/distracting/discouraging stream of thought and dropping into this moment. We notice the nature of the mind to take us to past or future worries or regrets, and we practice returning to simply what we can control - which is now. We become aware of where our attention is, and how to focus it - attention, the most powerful tool we have, and the most precious gift we can give to another.

The research on mindfulness and its role in increasing performance, focus, resilience, stress-levels, self-esteem, well-being, and relationships is impressive and growing. From a coach, QB and leader perspective, we can consider it as another tool to help cultivate three key traits, on the field and off: Calm, Confident, and Compassionate.

"The only step that is real is the one you are taking right now"

### CALM

The ability to keep your center when surrounded by chaos. The ability to breathe deeply,

think clearly, and respond responsibly when eyes and outcome are on you. A powerful tool to cultivate poise is the simple realization that the only thing you control is your choice and action in this moment – that the only step that is real is the one you are taking right now. We take back our “response-ability” or ability to respond - to choose, rather than to react with less control and clarity. When we can observe the mind, we notice its tendency to take us out of the work at hand, into some past or future moment, and too often with an accompanying fear, doubt, regret or self-criticism – none of which helps us respond to what is in front of us with courage and trust. The sack last down, the interception last quarter, the loss last week, the injury last year, the unknown of the next play or game or year...whatever the memory or anticipation, it doesn't serve us now, as we seek clarity and calm. Drop it. We can all bring to mind images of great athletes in the most critical game moments that appear completely at peace and at rest in the work – this is a skill that can be developed. It is helpful at first to simply notice when we are rattled, unfocused or distracted and practice bringing the attention back to just what it is needed now – a deep breath, a shift of inner dialogue to positive and clear intention, and trust in this step of the process. Our attention is best when treated as an on/off switch, and not a dimmer – we are not 50% listening or responding, we are all in or all out. Whether engaged with a drill, a lesson, or a person, they get

all of us, listening deeply, fully present, and responding authentically. Performance improves, as do relationships, and there is little room for anxiousness or nerves.

*“If you can meet Triumph and Disaster, and treat both those imposters just the same... you'll be a man, my son.” — Rudyard Kipling*

**CONFIDENT**

The ability to “Accept The Risk of Leadership”, knowing you'll get too much credit when things go well, too much heat when they don't, and none of it defines the real you. It's common as athletes and coaches to measure ourselves by results. We play to win, we keep score, we remember stats and records. Our careers and legacies are measured largely by outcomes. At the same time, we know that the deeper reasons we do what we do are not found in fading numbers. The ability to strike a balance between the striving for results and the gratitude for this moment, this conversation, this relationship, this process, and every imperfect part of it is important to model and talk about with our guys.

But there is another more immediate and subtle benefit of gaining this “detach from outcome” perspective in the day to day work. When we do not seek a sense of self in external outcomes, we free up space and permission, for ourselves and those following us, to try – bravely, with no guarantees, trusting that you'll be ok, come what may. We are not rocked by external events, we have a strong internal sense of self beyond the jersey, stats and records. We

are grateful for success and praise and pass it on, we are able to take the heat when it comes and stand strong in a secure sense of self. We meet struggle and “failure” as another chance to grow. We take coaching as a compliment, trusting the process and the people.

The most common limiting language on the field and off is “I'm not good enough” and “what if I fail?” We see it in our kids, leading to a lack of resiliency. We seek affirmation as a thumbs up, that can just as easily turn to thumbs down. The truth is, both are imposters posing as the real self – and with attention and inner work, we can know ourselves to be deeper, unshakable and rooted in core values and self-worth.

Detaching from outcome does not mean we care any less. We can throw ourselves into the work, physically, mentally and emotionally all in...but we don't lose our sense of self in it. We are free to “fail forward” – all is process and all is learning. Our self-worth is not on the line on Friday night. We are pulling our self-worth from within instead of looking outward. Who we really are runs deeper, is permanent, is connected to our core values and our best intentions, and is worthy always. In an age of “likes” and “follows”, quick judgments and continuous comparing, our kids need to hear this, often. And so do we.

*“The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom.” — Thich Nhat Hanh*



**COMPASSIONATE**

The ability to relate to, care about, and inspire others. The final attribute – a connectedness to others and a capacity for caring, is in part a by-product of the first two attributes. When we come from a place of calm and confidence, anchored in a healthy sense of self, we are coming from a strong and secure center. When insecure, we flail about seeking affirmation and attention; when secure, we are more able to embrace the notion that “It’s not about me,” a powerful and necessary mantra for any true leader. We are able to remove ourselves from center stage and place someone else, or something else, there. We shift from self-interested to “other-interested” – what do these guys need, what does the team need, what does Life need in this moment? So we are more likely to notice the moments of humor, of gratitude, of joy, when a word, or smile, or a few minutes given when you “don’t have time” are the things that are needed. We relate to our guys as people first and players second, an essential ingredient of “relational coaching,” fostering trust, respect and intrinsic motivation. Our players feel this and relate to each other with similar care. And so, when we deliver a perfect game-changing pass into the hands of our receiver and he drops it, we are over ourselves in an instant – because

we know that HE is hurting – we respond in the moment with confidence and compassion, and pick our teammates up.

We are sure we have the inner resources to deal with the ups and downs of a practice, a game and of life. We are less frenetically caught moving between hope and fear, and we create a bit of inner freedom and inner peace – less concerned about self and more able to open to and see others – in our huddles, yes, but also in our hallways and in our communities, as our ability and motivation to serve and lead expands.

We know presence when we experience it – in a conversation with a loved one or stranger when we feel they are completely there with you in an emanating confidence, not put-on or ego-driven but with an accompanying humility and authenticity...in a moment when we are completely immersed in what we are doing, with joy and ease – “flow state.” Cultivating Calm, Confidence and Compassion in our players starts with practicing it ourselves. We notice moments of distraction, anxiousness, doubt and separation, and call ourselves back to this work and this moment. What is life asking of me now? Sometimes it’s easy and sometimes it’s not, but I choose my response and inner state. We notice the return of some inner freedom, a little more courage, a little more joy, a little more gratitude

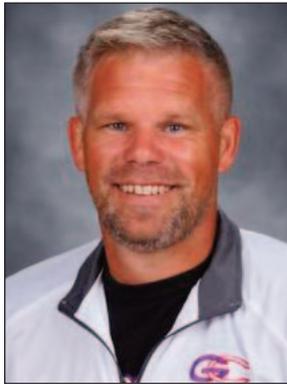
– things that easily get buried and drowned out in the business of it all. With all of the pressures and distractions our young men are confronted with, they need us, this game, and these lessons now more than ever.

For 35 years Coach Trickey has been inviting athletes to “Accept The Risk Of Leadership” – to open to the all the possibilities of personal growth that this game and position can offer. Alumni of the camp now range in age from 18 - 53. Many have gone on to play a few more games or a few more years, and hold dear memories of the moments – the guys, the triumphs the failures, the ride. But all have gone on as sons, as brothers, fathers, friends, professionals, servant leaders in their own ways – drawing upon lessons learned. What a beautiful challenge it is to do this work, and how lucky are we.

*Craig Aamot played quarterback for Jeff Trickey at Waukesha South High School, went on to play basketball at Marquette University and football and basketball at North Dakota State University. He coached and taught in Menomonie (Menomonie HS) and Appleton (Appleton North HS), as well as coaching football in both the WIAC and Midwest Conferences. In addition to his work since 1989 with the Jeff Trickey Quarterback Camps, he is currently Associate Professor of Music and choral director at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas.*

## MAXIMIZING YOUR REPS IN A SMALL SCHOOL

By: Shane Strong, Head Football Coach Glenwood City High School



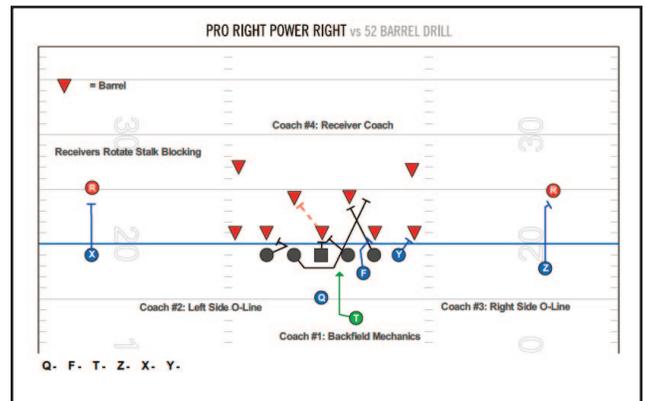
Shane Strong

I would like to thank the WFCAs for the strong commitment demonstrated to making Wisconsin High School Football the best it can be. As a veteran coach of 25 years, I have felt fortunate to have learned from so many great coaches in our state over the years. The WFCAs do a great job providing opportunities to learn from great coaches in our state. Glenwood City is a small rural community passionate about football, but also limited in numbers due to lower enrollment. We typically have 35-40 kids out for football each season in grades 9-12, which makes it crucially important to maximize our reps in practice to prepare our kids for Friday nights. A majority of our freshman boys are not ready to play varsity football and we have a

good number of sophomores not ready for the varsity level. Our juniors and seniors are required to play both ways, oftentimes learning 2-3 positions on each side of the ball to create depth in our program. I learned early on that we needed to make a great effort when planning our practices to make sure we are maximizing our reps, developing our fundamentals and preparing our kids to reach their full potential. In this article I would like to share with you a daily practice plan in our offensive preparation for a Friday night game.

We start each day with a meeting before we head out to the practice field. The amount of time spent in this meeting varies from day to day. We spend time talking about life lessons, the practice plan, drill explanation, practice focus, game planning, etc... We believe this part of our practice is very important before we hit the ground running. Once our kids hit the field, it is all football and fast-break, with very little wasted time. We start our practice each day as a team with CBT (Calisthenics, Blocking & Tackling), this is a non-negotiable every single day. Our calisthenic period is focused on active warm-up, running mechanics and speed development. The second piece to this period is our blocking period. We run two

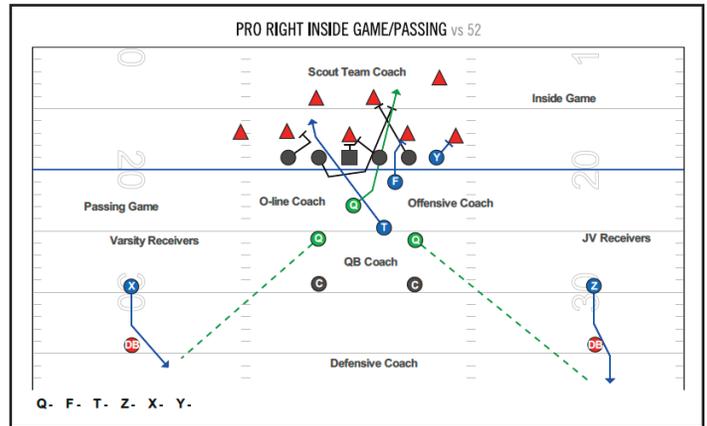
groups (Skill/-O-line) through our chute station and our sled station. During the chute station we focus on our gap blocking or double teams, which is a big part of our offensive philosophy. Our sled station focuses on our drive block steps all from cadence to a whistle. Each group will hit their reps for seven minutes, we then flip our stations, so in total we spend 15 minutes with a high number of reps. We never stop the team to correct one player, we will pull players out of the drill to work on stance, steps and mechanics, making sure we maximize our reps for the entire group. It is important that we have two coaches at each station to keep things efficient and to provide great feedback to our kids. When we finish our blocking stations, we go straight into our team tackling progression, which is structured similar to our blocking drills.



When we finish our CBT, we jump right into the assignment drill. This drill runs two full offensive groups and is very fast paced, with very little wasted time. Each coach on the staff is assigned a location in the drill, focused on one area to critique. We set up two defensive stations with barrels, oftentimes an even front and an odd front about twenty yards apart. If we are game planning a specific defense, we will spray paint dots on the grass to quickly relocate the barrels after each rep. Our kids will not huddle during this period of practice reps, they line up and run the play we are working on. We try to focus on 3-4 running plays per day to make sure we get a high number of reps against the defensive front we are preparing for. Keep in mind that we are a gap scheme, so our kids block rules, not diagrams. Our coaching assignments require coaches to move a 4 tech tackle into a 3 technique in between reps, so our kids will make sure they block their gaps or stay on their tracks. If a coach can see a player misses an assignment or is struggling with a technique, they pull that kid out for instruction, while another player enters that spot, we do not stop the team. In a 15 minute period of time we will run 25-30 full speed reps, while also building our conditioning. This period in practice is so important to us to make sure our kids understand their rules and assignments.

After our assignment period we jump into our inside game and passing game. We run two groups with our Quarterbacks rotating between the two groups to maximize our reps. Each group is running back to back with our inside game running in from the 40, while the passing group is running plays from the other 40. We use blocking shields for our inside running game where we set-up the same defense we prepared for during the barrel drill. During this period we add stunts and we move our defensive players to make sure our offensive line is preparing for changes in the game against moving bodies. Oftentimes we will line-up varsity players against varsity players on one side of the line to make sure we get quality reps, while we will have JV kids on the backside working their backside rules. We do the best we can to develop both the varsity and JV at the same time, to make sure our kids are getting better regardless of their age group. This can be very challenging and we stray from this philosophy from time to time in an effort to get our starters more reps. We believe

the fast paced practice plan keeps our kids engaged, while also getting us the reps we need to improve our skill development.



Our last phase of the offensive practice periods is our full team versus scout. This is our shortest period of the practice plan and one we are willing to scratch if we need to work on more fundamentals. There is such a large gap in talent between our starters and JV, that we do not spend a great deal of time scrimmaging in practice. We just feel we need to do this for a short period to make sure we are getting our timing down in a game-like situation. Our kids are assigned their scout positions in advance in the team meeting or posted on the bulletin board



# St. Norbert College Green Knights Football

**193-61**  
SINCE THE YEAR 2000

**17**

titles in 36 years of conference play

**19**

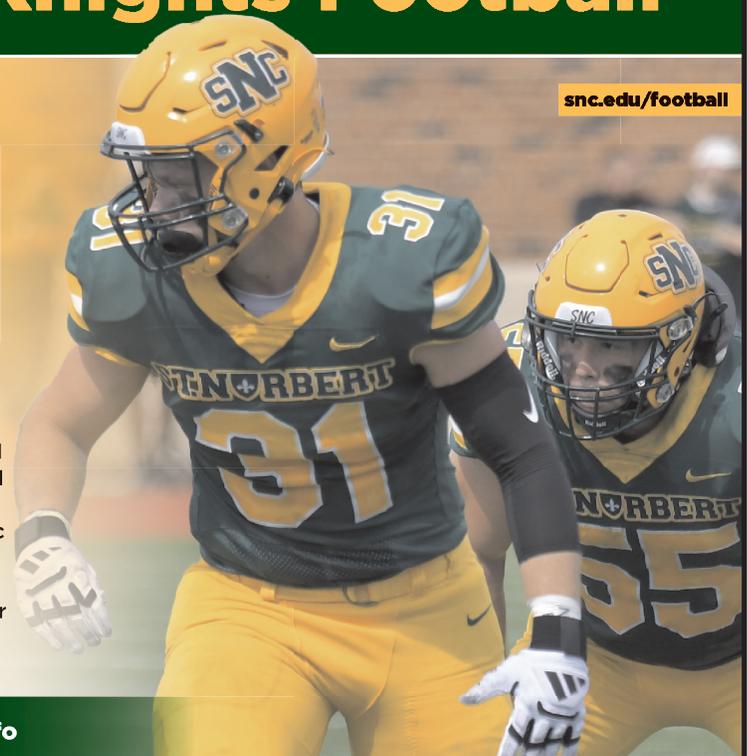
total conference championships

**13**

NCAA Division III playoff appearances

### Recognition ...

Our football players have earned 13 All-American awards in the last seven years. And our athletes excel in the classroom, as well. Across all sports, St. Norbert has been home to more than 80 CoSIDA Academic All-Americans. We have one of the best four-year graduation rates in the Midwest, backed by a four-year graduation guarantee.



[snc.edu/football](http://snc.edu/football)

Want to know more? Just ask! [snc.edu/go/footballinfo](http://snc.edu/go/footballinfo)

in the locker room. This speeds up the practice plan and helps us avoid wasted time moving kids around.

Our offensive practice periods take 55-65 minutes a day leaving us with 50 minutes of defense/special teams each day. Keep in mind that our tackling progression is included in our offensive period during CBT, so we are working on defense as well. We also believe our kids are working on their pass defense during our offensive passing period. If we feel we need more de-

fensive time or more special teams, we will shorten one of these periods, but we never skip CBT in our schedule. If we cannot block or tackle, the scheme really doesn't matter.

As you know each school faces different challenges and adversities in their program. For us, it is numbers and skill level gaps. It is important for us to do the best we can to prepare our kids to play at their full potential regardless of talent level. We try not to waste any time in our practice plan and we really believe in prac-

ting in a high energy environment. Organized practice plans, detailed drill work, routine, music playing on the field and coaches on the same page make for a productive practice. We are always trying to learn from other programs, while making adjustments that fit our small school program. I appreciate the opportunity to share a couple of our ideas with you and I'm always willing to learn from others. Please feel free to reach out anytime you want to talk about our great game.

## THE CASE FOR INCREASING COACHING PAY IN WISCONSIN

By: Joel Nellis, Head Football Coach, Brookfield Central High School



Joel Nellis

It's time for Wisconsin school districts to re-evaluate their current coaching compensation models for both head coaches and assistants. For the purpose of this magazine, the arguments are pointed toward football. But that should not neglect the other sports in our state and the need for sweeping change.

Speaking only from the knowledge I have of my own district, the coaching pay scale has not changed to reflect a variety of factors (the cost of living, year-round commitment, or inflation) at any point in the last 20+ years.

The coaching salary contracts, whenever they were set in place, were a percentage of a teacher's base salary at the time. Since then, the coaching salaries have not been subject to whatever raises have been approved for teaching contracts associated with annual cost of living increases (2%+). At one point there was a bonus for taking a team to the state tournament, but that has since been removed, so regardless of how far your team goes into the playoffs (requiring additional time, preparation, hours, transportation, etc.), there is no additional compensation.

Since I began my career as an assistant in 2006 at Brookfield Central, the off-season demands of coaches have risen significantly. To have a chance to compete at a high level on the field, coaching staff have to be committed to year round improvement. The idea that a staff can only go to the WFCB clinic, adapt a few new ideas and then be ready to roll again during

contact days is outdated. Coaching staffs are meeting either virtually or in-person during the winter months, attending multiple clinics, meeting with high school or college staffs to improve their scheme and culture, or working other jobs and winter coaching positions just to make ends meet. In addition to being in the weight room with their athletes, most coaches are making countless tweaks to practice plans and personnel. For the head coach specifically, they're also the director of recruiting, head equipment manager (purchasing), on the board for their junior football program and the lead for fundraising. All of these hours that are logged in the off-season are not taken into consideration under current contract standards.

In 2022, I made an attempt to quantify the in-season coaching hours as best I could. I calculated staff meeting times, film/player meeting times, in-season weight room supervision, practice times, game day schedules and then tracked our staff Hudl time each week (wednesday to wednesday). This did not include our summer contact days, but just the time from the start of the season until our last game in level 4 playoffs. The commitment equaled close to 300 hours without including film study on Hudl. After doing the math, if we're just talking about the time that we could specifically quantify, it would be less than \$10.00/hr for assistant coaches and less than \$15.00/hr for the head coach. We as coaches all know that at least 100 more hours would need to be added for all of the details, planning, execution of the practices, meetings, and relationship building/repair that needs to be done for a team to have a chance to be successful.

It is evident that many coaches believe increasing coaching pay is an undefeatable opponent. I hear things like, 'They're never going to change' or 'What's the point in even having the conversation?' I can say that I've engaged in some very meaningful conversations with different stakeholders, including speaking publicly at a board meeting, and collecting data from surrounding programs and districts. Here are some considerations that I think will help if you want to begin the conversation:

1. The community, in some cases your school boards, may not even know how much you actually make. In some interesting conversations with parents or community members, they've suggested that I make a salary that's 3-5x what I actually make. When they hear the actual number, they're shocked. They are in agreement that things should change.
2. Have an open and honest conversation with your administrators about the possibility of increasing your salary and see who are the people that need to be met with to have those conversations. From my standpoint, it was great to hear that my building administrators believe that we should be compensated more and were willing to give me some ideas about who to have the next conversation with.

All of you reading this article are not in football coaching for the money. In fact, it is certain that most of us are in it for all the intangibles and everything **BUT** compensation. We know the sacrifices we make to do this job. However, we do need to begin to raise our voices about the value we add to our schools. Football has steadily become the last true high school sport. Every other sport can be played privately at an equal or higher level of competition than what the school can provide. But tackle football is something uniquely sacred, that only exists at our schools, and should be compensated and respected as such. We typically influence, at minimum, close to 10% of our school population in a positive and meaningful way, not just for 4 months, but for the entire school year. The ability to have a positive impact on the school culture and provide a service that cannot be offered anywhere else has to be something we are passionate about. Let's channel our energy and love for the game into being passionate about being compensated appropriately in the marketplace, and growing the awareness of our impact, value, and influence as high school football coaches.

# BOOK STUDIES - PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY SANDWICHES KEEPING OFFENSIVE LINEMEN CONNECTED IN THE OFF-SEASON

By: Bryan Kaplan, Offensive Line Coach, Badger High School - Lake Geneva



Bryan Kaplan

Thank you to the WFCAs for *The Point After II* and continually providing a great resource for football coaches. I have learned much in the past from other coaches, and am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this edition. I have been the offensive line coach at Badger High School for the past decade where I have been fortunate enough to work with our Head Coach, Matt Hensler, who has always been

supportive of my recommendations to improve our football program.

The football season is grueling for players and coaches alike, and when November rolls around, everyone tends to go their separate ways. At Badger, we recognize the importance of maintaining strong bonds among our team members, especially during the winter months when athletes are busy with other sports and activities.

Over the years I have implemented a variety of initiatives to ensure that my position group, the offensive line, stays connected and continues to build upon our tradition of success. These include book studies and PB & J Weeks, which have proven to be both fun and effective in promoting team cohesion. Like most of you, we've found that those with the closest bonds among team members tend to perform the best.

The first way we foster these connections is through our preseason book study meetings which typically begin in January or February. We meet every two weeks before school and choose a book to read and discuss as a group. Recent selections have included *Chop Wood Carry Water* and *The Twin Thieves*. During these meetings, we follow a structured agenda, beginning with

“Good Things” where each player shares something positive that's happened since the last meeting, whether it be an academic achievement or a personal milestone. We then discuss the assigned chapter and how it applies to our position group and goals for the upcoming season. Finally, we close each meeting with a “launch”, which is a motivational video related to the lesson learned in the chapter.

Another initiative we've implemented is PB & J Week, which occurs at the end of the winter sports season. As many of our coaches are also teachers, we purchase an abundance of bread, peanut butter, and jelly. Throughout the week, players can stop by their position coaches during passing periods to make sandwiches, providing a fun and inexpensive opportunity for players and coaches to connect before the spring season.

At Badger, we firmly believe that strong team connections lead to a better experience for everyone and ultimately help players develop their skills. By implementing initiatives such as book study meetings and PB & J Week, we're able to maintain a sense of camaraderie among our offensive line during the off-season.



# USE STATISTICS TO BE MORE EFFICIENT AND IMPROVE

By: Dan Keefer, Head Football Coach, Baldwin-Woodville High School



Dan Keefer

At Baldwin-Woodville High School we have worked hard to become more efficient with our time. We all know time with players and coaches is limited so it makes a lot of sense to use your time as wisely as possible. Improving our efficiency has been very beneficial for us and I hope there is an idea or two in this article that can help your program. If you have any questions don't hesitate to reach out.

**1) PRACTICE FORMAT:** We are a varying tempo team so we really try to push our tempo so we are comfortable snapping the ball as fast as seven seconds after the end of each play. To better utilize our time we started to create an offensive script on Sunday's which we will use during team the entire week. This ensures we are practicing exactly what we will be doing in the game. We give one coach the script and then our players will signal in our plays so our coaches can spend their time coaching tempo and quick techniques during team. Each day we start at a different spot on the script so each kid experiences all the plays we will run since we keep our rotation pattern the same daily. Utilizing this format we routinely get 40 offensive snaps off in a 20 minute team or 30 offensive snaps in a 15 minute team. Our kids will tell you that team flies by very quickly. Another significant advantage is our JV team will typically get a dozen plays during our varsity team segment. This has really helped us to field a better prepared JV unit for Monday nights. Another key benefit is zero time spent conditioning since our team sessions are so intense its not needed and we are doing exactly what we do at game speed or faster. It goes without saying that we always strive to maximize reps so we are always striving for short lines in drills with kids getting a ton of reps vs hearing a ton of coaching, make the most important point and get to the next rep.

**2) TECHNOLOGY:** In 2021 we started using GoRout and we love it because it

makes our scout team offense so much more efficient. Our ILB Coaches and DB coaches will also use them for the scouts within indy. This eliminates the need to laminate play cards and it is fairly easy to import from hudl. We never huddle and we are able to get about 35 plays run in 20 minutes time. We also will repeat a called play from the other hash or middle of the field to save even more time. We have learned that we need to take time early in the season to show the players how to change bands/belts quickly and set rules for substitutions. You lose time when kids are subbing each other out so we try to dictate those switches. Another huge time saver is filming using a drone. The set up is very fast (2 minutes) and you can teach a manager to do it well very quickly. It's much easier to find a drone filmer because a lot of kids think its kind of fun. The days of rolling out the endzone camera and taking 10 minutes to set that up every Tuesday and Wednesday are gone!

**3) LIFTING:** Our in-season lifting is done on Monday & Wednesday mornings at 6:30 am. We now use the Quickstart App interval timer I downloaded on my phone to speed up and streamline our time in the weight room. I can easily adjust the set number work time and rest time between groups. This allows us to get in and out of the weight room faster and eliminates the group or two that always finishes a little bit late.

**4) GAME ANALYSIS** We also have looked to study ourselves in terms of efficiency in-season so we actually know which plays have been our most successful statistically.

This seems like it would be fairly obvious and unnecessary but I can guarantee you that game perceptions are not always what we see in the success study. The first table below is a summary of our 2021 offensive play success rates for the season excluding "garbage time". The second table shows a success breakdown from a single game. The data from week to week within a season is very helpful because it guides what we need to work on and what are we best at.

Play	Number of	Total Yards	Average Gain	Success Rate	Success Rate %
Belly	62	249	4.02	29	46.77%
Trap	16	66	4.13	6	37.50%
Jet	46	253	5.50	21	45.65%
Toss	19	97	5.13	13	68.42%
Counter	39	263	6.74	14	35.90%
SOP	25	142	5.68	7	28.00%
PAP	38	83	2.18	8	21.05%
3 Step	70	532	7.60	30	42.86%
Dive	21	126	6.00	8	38.10%
Screens/Bubbles	2	5	2.60	1	50.00%
Other	20	234	11.70	11	55.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>2051</b>	<b>5.73</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>41.34%</b>

Down	Number of	Total Yards	Average Gain	Success Rate	Success Rate %
1st	147	865	5.88	59	40.14%
2nd	115	738	6.42	57	49.57%
3rd	71	355	5.00	19	26.76%
4th	25	76	3.04	10	40.00%
Run/Pass	Number of	Total Yards	Average Gain	Success Rate	Success Rate %
Run	226	1252	5.54	98	43.36%
Pass	132	782	5.92	47	35.61%
Formation	Number of	Total Yards	Average Gain	Success Rate	Success Rate %
DW	116	469	4.04	49	42.24%
Jokers	171	1253	7.33	69	40.35%
Cub	71	312	4.39	27	38.03%
Trips	0	▲	▲	0	▲

Success Rate Color Code	Success Rate Down Explained
25% or worse	1st Down 50%+ yds. needed for 1st/TD
25-30%	2nd Down 70%+ yds. needed for 1st/TD
30-35%	3rd Down 100%+yds. needed for 1st/TD
35-40%	4th Down 100%+yds. needed for 1st/TD
40-45%	
45% or better	
Garbage time is determined by score differential in a certain quarter	
1st Quarter:	29+ Point Differential is Considered Garbage Time
2nd Quarter:	24+ Point Differential
3rd Quarter:	21+ Point Differential
4th Quarter:	16+ Point Differential

**“Winning is a habit,  
Unfortunately  
so is losing.”  
—Vince Lombardi**

# HOW TO BUILD ACCOUNTABILITY IN A POSITION GROUP

By: Garrett Myers, Assistant Football Coach, Concordia University Wisconsin



Garrett Myers

There are many things I try to instill in my position group from the first day we meet, such as physicality, aggressiveness, respect, etc. While these are all important, there is one intangible that I believe is the most important to teach the young men I work with on a daily basis, accountability. There are two main reasons I believe being accountable is so important. First, being accountable for one's self and one's actions is a major part of being a responsible,

productive member of society. Secondly, working with players who are accountable for themselves makes my job as a coach much easier, and I am able to focus on scheme, drills, etc. In this article, I will outline the most important things I focus on when creating a sense of accountability within my position group.

The most important thing to do when trying to build accountability within a position group (or when attempting to do anything as a leader) is to set the standard and be consistent. That last sentence may be the most important one I write in this entire article. No matter what you are trying to do in a leadership position, make sure you are being as transparent and consistent with those you are leading as possible. Not doing so is the fastest way to lose credibility. Further, make sure you are always accountable for yourself as the position coach. If you say you are going to do something, do it. Remember that you set the tone of your position group. If you fail to hold yourself accountable, your players will do the same.

With the position coach holding himself accountable, and therefore setting the standard of accountability within the room, it is important to explain why being accountable for one's self

and one's actions are so important. I always explain that our actions as human beings always have a positive or negative consequence on others in the world, and because of this, we need to put real thought into what actions we choose to engage in. As mentioned, the most important part of teaching your players to be accountable for themselves is the impact it will have on their adult lives. If all 14 – 22-year-olds learned to think about their choices/actions, and the potential effects those actions will have on others, the world would be a much better place. Odds are each young adult would start making more responsible decisions. These responsible decisions would prepare each player for adult life and what the world expects of him.

Inevitably, some players will immediately gravitate toward your efforts, and some will fight against you. This is where you can force the leaders within the group to step up (no matter their age/class). Anytime the position group gets in trouble, whether it is for a lack of effort, off the field issues, being late to practice/meetings, etc., make sure the group is punished as a whole. The position group needs to know that a negative stimulus will be placed into their lives until they start making responsible choices.

# UW-STOUT FOOTBALL

## FAITH, FAMILY, EDUCATION, FOOTBALL

### FOOTBALL'S TOP 5 MAJORS

1. ENGINEERING
2. CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
3. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
4. HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND FITNESS
5. CRIMINAL JUSTICE



99% JOB PLACEMENT RATE

1 OF 125 POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Everyone in the position group will be doing the same punishment each time one individual in the group acts out. At first, this will not seem like a major issue, but over time, players will start to become frustrated. The players within the position group that usually make responsible choices and rarely get punished will start to grow tired of doing punishments because someone else cannot hold himself accountable. When this happens, players begin to step up and take control of their own position group. Leaders will emerge and start to act in hopes of forcing the weak link(s) to hold themselves accountable. Once one player stands up, he will gain a

following. Soon, the players within the position group that are accountable will unite against the weak link(s), and there will be a tremendous amount of pressure for those not holding themselves accountable to change their habits. Over time, this social pressure has the power to change the bad habits of the few. By punishing the group as a whole for everything, the players are forced to take ownership of their own position group and become accountable for themselves. Because of this, a tight-knit, responsible unit will develop. It is important that the position coach always emphasizes that the position group suffers together because the position group succeeds and

fails together. Nothing can be accomplished when the group is not unified.

When building a cohesive, accountable position group, the focus must not stray from the success of the group. No one individual is more important than the group, and because of this, no individual can be placed before the group. No one player can receive any kind of favoritism or preferential treatment due to the risk of losing the ability to hold the position group accountable. There is no hope of establishing a sense of accountability within a position group if the position coach cannot hold the players accountable.

## FIVE DISCIPLINES TO GROW AS AN ASSISTANT COACH

By: Tom Wescott, Assistant Coach, Eau Claire Memorial High School



Tom Wescott

I had the opportunity to play under two different head coaches during my high school career, one of which was instrumental in the development of my passion for the game of football. This particular coach embodied what it meant to be a relational and transformational leader. He didn't try to be a player's best friend, rather he sought to be a mentor to every player and student he coached and taught. I have distinct memories of him helping me in study hall with my math homework before we could draw up a play on the whiteboard, caring for the student not the athlete. He also was open to have some sensitive conversations with me when I experienced death in my family, caring for the person not the player. I owe a lot to this coach.

Such coaching, such leadership, is more than showing up and putting on the whistle, that's the easy part. This head coach cared about me as a person more than me as a player and went out of his way to do so. This man was and continues to be a mentor leader. Tony Dungy defines the core principle of the mentor leader, "...to shape the lives of the people right in front of them, as they lead, guide, inspire, and encourage those people" (The Mentor Leader, XVI). I was able to be on the receiving end of this sort of coaching and it has inspired me to be a coach who strives to be just as transformational for all youth I am able to impact as a coach and in my profession.

This approach to coaching was not what I experienced in every level of playing and coaching. Transactional coaching, where coaches get what they want and need out of a player before discarding them, still runs rampant in our sport. It is up to those who seek to make a real difference to lead the way.

This is where we come in, assistant coaches everywhere are needed to make real life differences in the lives of our players and it starts by holding a mirror to ourselves and evaluating how we are coaching and living. As I have developed and discerned who I am as a coach, I have learned some things along the way that are beneficial to share with other assistants as we seek to support our head coaches and lead our programs.

**Sweep the Shed.** During my high school, collegiate, and masters years of education, I had the opportunity to work at a popular barbeque chain. I had plenty of roles within the business over the years, but a trend became very clear to me - people did not want to go above and beyond, they did not have pride in their work, they just wanted a paycheck. I believe I gave my best effort and put a lot of pride into each shift so that not only were the customers happy, but so we could work as a team.

I firmly believe that no matter your position title or level of football you are coaching. There is no job too little for you to do because everything matters. Every moment of every day you have the opportunity to lead your team, your family, your workplace in the best way possible. Seek out ways in which you can do this.

In his seminal work on the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team, James Kerr begins his book by describing the personal discipline of the team. "While the country is still watching replays and schoolkids lie in bed dreaming of All Blacks' glory, the All Blacks themselves are tidying up after themselves. Sweeping the sheds. Doing it properly. So no one else has to. Because no one looks after the All Blacks. The All Blacks look after themselves" (Legacy, 7).

As an assistant coach do we sweep the sheds day in and day out? Do we tend to the

little things that may seem inconsequential when in reality they influence the culture of the team? Are we willing to set up our drills early, to lead fundraisers, to sketch out new ways of scouting opponents, to attend other sports to show support to our players, to write letters of affirmation to every player? No matter your future aspirations for coaching, to be a great assistant we have to sweep the sheds every single day.

**Cultivate a network of peers and mentors.** There is an African proverb that goes something like this, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." As an individual you can learn a lot from YouTube and clinics, but in order to take your coaching to the next level you need to have a network of peers and mentors. In this self-curated community you can bounce ideas off of others, seek wisdom and council, vent your frustrations, and of course collaborate.

Your network, your community is absolutely vital as you grow into your coaching identity. Did you know that sequoia trees in California are some of the biggest trees in the world? In fact there is a tree named General Sherman that is 275 feet tall and 25 feet in diameter! These trees can endure strong winds, earthquakes, fires, storms and prolonged flooding. You would think their roots must go deep in order for trees that tall to stay standing in such conditions. Not so.

Interestingly, their roots are relatively shallow. They often only go down about five or six feet but can extend as far as one hundred feet from the trunk. What's fascinating is that the redwood tree's root system is intertwined with the other redwood trees, so they literally are holding each other up. The trees grow very close together and are also dependent on each other for nutrients. Only redwoods have the strength and ability to support other redwoods. Beneath the surface of these amazing trees is a picture of interconnectedness that creates incredible strength that would not be present if they were standing alone. So too as coaches, assistant and head coaches alike, we must cultivate a network of peers and mentors to support and challenge each other.

**Change your mindset.** My daughter is currently into all of the books by Amy Krouse-Rosenthal, including *Rosie Revere, Engineer*. This children’s book is about young Rosie who has big dreams of becoming an engineer, spending most of her time creating some rather extravagant machines. One day her favorite uncle laughs at one of these inventions made from a fan and cheddar cheese spray. After that, Rosie begins to keep her dreams to herself for fear of judgment and failure. However, her great aunt comes over and helps Rosie see how failures can be turned into opportunities. While this might seem like a simple book of platitudes about trying hard, it runs much deeper than that. Rosie needed to shift her response to events in her life, she needed a new mindset.

One of the most important factors in being a successful assistant coach is having a growth mindset. In her book, *Mindset*, Carol Dweck defines this, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” What does this look like? When you see challenges, you embrace them. When you see obstacles, you seek to overcome them. You see effort as a pathway to mastery. You take criticism and find a way to learn from it. When you see others succeed, you use it as inspiration and learn from your gains. When you fail, as all people do, you use it as an opportunity to learn.

This juxtaposes those with a fixed mindset. When this mindset sees obstacles, they give up easily. When they have to give lots of effort, they see it as pointless. When they get criticized, they view it as all negative critique. When they look at the success of others, they are threatened. When they think about their results, they tend to plateau early and then rarely meet their full potential.

As assistant coaches it is our responsibility to maintain a growth mindset so that we can not only grow in our acumen for the Xs and Os of the game, but also in all of the intangible aspects of running a football team. That looks like taking on challenges that put you outside of your comfort zone in order to grow. Some of these are best discerned with some self-reflection, but also having a conversation with your head coach about your growth areas as you seek to continue growing into your role within the program.

**Lead differently.** In Steve Jones’ leadership fable, *The Twin Thieves*, a fictional high school football team’s leadership council meets with one of the coaches to discuss what leaders look like in their lives - they aren’t the famous people with all of the accolades and wealth, they are family members and coaches. Jones writes, “Don’t confuse servant leadership with being subservient. I don’t think any of the people you mentioned are pushovers. They give you what you need - which isn’t always what you want. They have hard conversations. They hold you accountable. They push you outside of your comfort zone.” He con-

tinues as he fleshes out what that looks like between players, “Collectively we need to look for opportunities to serve each other.”

While Jones could teach a whole course on servant leadership, his fable only scratches the surface of what servant leadership looks like. Servant leadership is always others focused, it extends beyond ourselves to others for the sake of others. This means that we must put aside our desires and aspirations to lift up the collective good of the team. This is not easy work. In fact it runs directly against the current of our world that seeks to glorify one’s own ego at the expense of everyone and everything. But we don’t have to live and lead like that.

It seems to me that servant leadership is the hallmark attribute of an assistant coach. We are called not to serve and lead when it is convenient for our schedules, but rather we are called to serve and lead our programs because of the love and devotion we have for our players and our culture. It’s not about us, it’s about the team.

**Family first.** Whether you have a spouse and kids, dating, or single, you need to take care of your family. As discussed earlier, you are a leader in all facets of your life, perhaps most importantly in your family. I had the honor of coaching under my best friend at a mid-sized school in North Dakota. We had made the state playoffs every year, our families were tight, we were growing our leadership program, but appearances are not everything. One of the first sentences that his son could put together was,

# WARHAWK FOOTBALL TRAINING CAMPS

Elite coaching, skill development, and position-specific training for ages 10-18. Elevate your game with us!

- Mega Camp** - June 12th
- Youth Camp** - June 15th-17th
- Perimeter Camp** - June 18th-20th
- Lineman Camp** - June 22nd-24th



## FOLLOW US:

-  @WARHAWKFB
-  @WARHAWKFOOTBALL
-  UW-WHITEWATER WARHAWK FOOTBALL
-  [UWWSports.com/sports/football](http://UWWSports.com/sports/football)



“Is Dad going to practice again?” That was the final straw. He knew at that moment that his family needed to take precedence and so he resigned after the season. I think all too often coaches sacrifice their family for the sake of the team.

We can't do that. It is harmful to you and your family. Burnout, arguments, and a lack of presence do not lead to a happy home. Admittedly I do not have this balance figured out by any stretch of the imagination, but I have learned a few things: that communication with my wife is key, give and take with scheduling our family is important, putting the phone down and turning Hudl off to play with my kids is crucial, and so is creating flexibility so that kids can join you for football activities. I am lucky to coach for a head coach who allows my kids to come to team meals and join me at practice when needed (I have rocked a Baby Bjorn with a one-month-old inside while coaching inside linebackers!).

In recent memory two well-known coaches have advocated for a more balanced approach to family and sports. Mark Few, head men's basketball coach at Gonzaga said in an inter-

view with Bleacher Report, "People think they should get a badge of courage for getting to the office at 7 a.m. each morning and leaving at midnight... People that do that are missing the boat. They're sacrificing their relationships with their families. It doesn't have to be that way." Bruce Arians, former NFL head coach, added further fuel to the fire by stating in an interview with Peter King, "I told my coaches in our first meeting, 'If you miss a ballgame, a recital, anything to do with your children, I'll fire you.' Because I missed a lot of mine. And those years don't come back." Be the best coach you can be, but more importantly be the best father and husband you can be.

By no means am I a guru on the development of assistant coaches, I am always in the process of learning and growing in my calling as a coach. I hope this handful of items I have picked up along the way in my coaching career might be able to inspire and help some of those assistant coaches out there who are seeking to mature and grow in the coaching field. Should anyone wish to continue the conversation about assistant coach development, please reach out to me.

## Sources

**Dungy, T., Whitaker, N., & Caldwell, J. (2010).** *The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams that Win Consistently*. Tynedale House Publishers, Inc.

**Dweck, C. (2007).** *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Ballantine Books.

**Kerr, J. (2020).** *Legacy: What the All Blacks Can Teach Us About the Game of Life*. Constable.

**King, J. (2015, February 24).** *Why Well-Balanced Mark Few and Gonzaga Are the Perfect Marriage*. *Bleacher Report*. <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2373686-why-well-balanced-mark-few-and-gonzaga-are-the-perfect-marriage>

**King, P. (2019).** *Full interview: Arians on coming back to coaching*. NBC Sports. <https://www.nbcsports.com/video/bucs-bruce-arians-ending-his-retirement-jameis-winston-expectations>

**Rosenthal, A. (2013).** *Rosie Revere, Engineer*. Abrams Books for Young Readers.

# MAKE BRAIN TRAINING PART OF YOUR PROGRAM

By: Ryan Humpal, Head Football Coach, Amery High School



Ryan Humpal

I would like to thank the WFCA for publishing a great coaching resource and for asking me to write this article for *The Point After II*. This is a subject I have addressed before, but have made changes to some of the resources as brain training has evolved in recent years. As mental health becomes a larger concern nationwide, brain training needs to be a vital component of all athletic programs.

We have all heard the famous quote from Yogi Berra, “Baseball is 90% mental and the other half is physical.” But, how many of us have actually thought about this quote and put this into action in our football programs. Yes, the quote is mathematically incorrect; but the idea of paying attention to the mental game is 100% accurate.

As coaches, we always talk about how a kid is mentally tough or weak; well, have you ever thought about how you can make all your players

mentally stronger through some brain training? The full implementation process for brain training has taken us years within the Luck Football program and this last fall we were finally able to use brain training as an invaluable tool to lead us to a state championship.

As I changed districts two years ago, I went back to my alma mater, Amery High School. I knew I needed to start from scratch with training the athletes brain. The summer of 2021 the Amery athletic department and football program brought in sports psychologist, Hans Skulstad, of Center for Sports and the Mind out of Golden Valley, MN. Hans came to Amery High School and presented brain training to all of our male athletes. This is not the only program that I have been a part of that Hans has had an impact on; Hans also worked with the Luck program while I was not Head Coach and helped us win the 2019 State Championship.

One message that stuck with me from Hans through the many conversations and presentations, “coaches and athletes need to move away from viewing brain training as something they should do; but view it instead as something they need to do to win.” Through my years with the Luck and Amery football programs brain training has become a staple over the weekly regiment. This is not a tool that will show up overnight for the athletes; this last fall was my second year as head coach in Amery and the buy-in with brain training is slowly happening within the players.

Now having implemented brain training in two programs, the buy-in from the players is hard to get. Many athletes feel like they are wasting time or how this can help me perform

better on Friday nights. My suggestion is to stick to the process and athletes will realize at various points of their careers the importance of training the brain; not only for athletics but also for better mental health overall.

Over the last 9 seasons at Luck and Amery High schools, the brain training tools that I have implemented have greatly evolved along with my understanding of how to address the topic of brain training with the athletes. Below are a few examples of various ways to implement brain training into your program.

## Breathing Cards

This is a new technique that Hans Skulstad has provided to the program in Amery. Skulstad has developed 30 various breathing cards that take athletes through a real life scenario and alter giving them the scenario the athletes work on controlled breathing techniques. In through the nose for a five count and out through the mouth for a seven count. This trains the athletes in controlled breathing and gets them to understand how controlled breathing can help calm the brain and let them perform at a higher level. I have really enjoyed implementing this over the last two seasons; as this can be a life-long technique used in everyday life in stressful events. I know I have gotten more in tune to using controlled breathing as a coach and parent over the last two seasons. As a program we have fit this 5-7 minute exercise into our Tuesday team meetings, this is a team meeting where we have varsity and JV as part of the meeting.

## Brain Exercises

Breathing techniques can unlock what the brain can do and get rid of any tension that the

body has, but this is not the only way we train the brain within the Amery Football Program. We also use brain exercises to give our players tools to perform at a high level. First, I will answer the question of what brain exercises do for your performance. According to Skulstad “The brain needs to be comfortable with the uncomfortable.” This means, if a player misses a tackle or misses a block; the brain needs to be ok with that and realize it needs to be focused for the next play. Putting stress on the brain in a non-football situation will allow athletes to perform at a higher level under stress.

Now to get into the brain exercises we have implemented within our program with the help of Skulstad. The first being setting mouse traps; the kicker is athletes have one minute to set the trap as many times as they can with their eyes closed. Ok I get it, you just thought about that and your heart rate increased, thinking how the heck am I going to do that. This is the point of the exercise, it is stressful to think about setting a mouse trap with your eyes closed; but then you have to figure out a way to disarm the trap to set it again. Let the players go through the first time without any explanation besides how to set the trap. Yes, some of your players will have no idea how to do that.

After the first round, explain to them how to disarm a trap by simply moving the arm from the cheese and using your palm to let the trap back easily. (You might want to practice this so

you do not slam your finger in it in front of your players). This not only allows players to start to feel comfortable with an uncomfortable situation, but it is also a situation where you can gain trust from your players. Use it as a lesson to let them know you will always do your best to put them in a situation to succeed.

The other brain exercise we have done with our players is timed number grids. Print off a 100 square number grid and give the players 2 minutes to count up from 1 to as many as they can find within those 2 minutes. It sounds very simple, but the stress that begins to build when you cannot find a number is a real mental block. With this exercise we talk about; focus on the controllables. The only thing a player can control is finding the next number on the grid. Just like in a game the only thing he can control is his performance on the next play. There are other variations of brain exercises we have done as a program, but these two are the ones we use the most.

**Brain Resets**

The brain exercises done before, during and after practice directly correlate to the next topic of brain resets. A brain reset is something to help an athlete work out of a mental block and try to reach their optimal performance zone (OPZ). The OPZ is also known as “being in the zone”, we have all heard of this before; athletes without brain training spend a lot less time in the OPZ than an athlete who has the tools to

reach OPZ. Some examples of brain resets are breathing techniques, rapid eye movement, reading a sign forward and spelling it backwards, and reset words.

The one we use the most is reset words or trigger words; there are two ways this can be done. The first way is at the beginning of the season we had each player partner up with someone of their position group and come up with three words or phrases that help bring the stress level down. The reason why you have them partner up is they are responsible for each other; if a player sees his partner in a bad mental state, they use the trigger word to help them regain focus. It is really fun to watch teammates help each other out in stressful situations during a game or practice; and who knew it was as easy as a word or a phrase to help out.

The technique that many of our players prefer is reset words written on the tape of their wrists; players write their trigger words on their wrist and read it forward and spell it backward when things are not going their way. This technique is really discrete and easy for the players to feel confident in doing; because no one in the whole place knows that they are resetting their brain.

**Visualization**

Now onto the most powerful tool of brain training and one every athlete needs to reach the OPZ with ease, visualization. This is also the one that is the hardest to get all players to buy into. Many athletes are going to treat this as a time to disconnect and think it is a joke; this tool

✕ @WLC\_FOOTBALL 📷 @WLCFOOTBALL  
 JOHN 15:13 SHOW LOVE | WORK HARD | SHINE  
**THERE'S NO GREATER LOVE**  
 2024 WIAA FOOTBALL:  
**WAY TO SHOW LOVE AND WORK FOR YOUR BROTHERS!**  
**WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE | MILWAUKEE'S HOME TEAM**

was tough for me to implement in Amery as this was a staple in success at Luck High School. Getting the players to buy into visualization takes time, the first season at Amery it was a struggle and many players would not partake. This past season it began to take off for some athletes and it showed on the game field on Fridays.

Visualization can be done as a team or individually; Skulstad put together about a 10 minute visualization audio file specifically fit to the Amery Football Program. In this audio it has the values of the program. Visualization is done right after our pre-game practices on the game field.

By the end of the year it was interesting listening to some of the players repeat phrases during the week from the visualization audio; it was about week 5 or 6 when I first heard any of it. This is the point as a coaches, when you realize that this tool is working for many of the athletes.

As you can see within the Amery Football program we have become very passionate about the power of brain training. Just like anything new into a program you are going to have some athletes take time to buy in; but brain training is worth the battle to get them to buy in. Let's refer back to Skulstad's quote, "Coaches and athletes

need to move away from viewing brain training as something they should do; but view it instead as something they must do to win. "If you want to take your program to the next level and give your athletes some lifelong tools to help cope with stress you need to implement brain training into your weekly regiment.

If you have any questions feel free to email me at [humpalr@amerysd.k12.wi.us](mailto:humpalr@amerysd.k12.wi.us) and I will be happy to give you more information on any of the topics or get you going in the direction of implementing brain training as a staple in your program.

## REBUILDING WAYLAND ACADEMY FOOTBALL

By: Cody Schultz, Head Football Coach, Wayland Academy



*Cody Schultz*

I would like to thank the WFCAs and Kevin Wopat, Head Coach at Lourdes Academy, for asking me to contribute an article on starting a program from scratch to *The Point After II*. Most importantly, I would like to thank long time football coach, former Wisconsin Badger, and my mentor, Bob Landsee, for all he has done representing the game of football, impacting so many lives through coaching this great game, and being like a father to me. Unfortunately, Coach Landsee passed away this spring, and while I know he is watching every practice from Heaven, trying not to cuss, he will be missed greatly by many within the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association ranks and membership.

As I write this article, I am in my second year as Athletic Director at Wayland Academy. We just finished our first year of reintroduction of eight-player football to our school after a brief hiatus (pre-covid was our last full season). Wayland Academy is an international boarding school, with about 50 percent of the student body hailing from outside the United States. As the head football coach, I knew there would be great challenges bringing football back to Wayland and I was ready to adapt to and overcome those challenges. I have been around the game most of my life, and I know how rewarding coaching and playing the game can be.

Nonetheless, I was still surprised by how overwhelmingly rewarding our season was. I knew we were transitioning from 11-player to 8-player and from a varsity program to a JV program, and I knew that few of my players had been around the game, much less played it. So, I didn't really know what lay ahead. As Mark Matlack, the former head coach of the Allegheny College Gators when I was on staff there, used to say all the time, "The Big Time is where you are at." Man, was he right!

I began year one at Wayland in the Fall of 2022 and tried to see if there was any interest in starting a team. However, I had several hurdles right away. Very few students had played before, I didn't officially start as athletic director until July of that year, and the participation numbers did not materialize. We quickly determined that it was not the right time to start a new program. Then, in the spring of 2023 we began the conversation again, and thanks to the relationships my fellow coaches and I cultivated during the school year, we were lucky enough to get 16 student-athletes committed to playing and coming back to campus one week earlier than the rest of the student population for a pre-season camp. As excited as we were to get these students to agree to come back, that is when the reality set in: we had to prepare.

In bringing football back to Wayland, we had to decide what kind and what level of football was right for us. With only 16 players, we decided that 8-player was the best path forward. Additionally, as only two of those players had ever played any sort of organized football, we decided we were going to be an independent JV program, and we anticipate staying at the JV level for the foreseeable future due to the makeup of our school and WIAA policies. A unique challenge we face as an international boarding school, we are unsure of what athletic experiences our new athletes will have, which of our veteran athletes will return to Wayland each year, and whether or not these veteran ath-

letes will stick with football year over year; I have found many students from other countries like to rotate through the many sports we offer at Wayland so they can experience new things each year.

Furthermore, the aforementioned WIAA policies are a challenge for us, as well as other sports at Wayland, because many of our students from other countries do not matriculate to Wayland until their junior or senior year. So even though our students are often traveling thousands of miles to attend our school, and even though our school is legally their "new residence," and even though we are acting "in loco parentis," or "in place of parents," our students are still restricted to JV competition because the WIAA transfer rules state that students transferring schools as juniors and seniors are restricted to non-varsity for one calendar. In light of all of these circumstances, especially the rules limiting participation, we concluded that JV was the best level for our program.

Preparing for our season was exhilarating and nerve wrecking at the same time. Now that we had committed to playing football in the fall, the first two things we had to do was figure out our schedule and our inventory. Scheduling would be difficult because many 8-player teams have small rosters and are unable to field a JV team. Luckily, working with local schools, many of whom agreed to play us twice, we were able to schedule a scrimmage and eight official JV games. Next, we had to figure out our inventory, and what we had to buy on a shoestring budget. Fortunately, we did have a good amount of equipment as Wayland had fielded a program in the recent past. Our main need was to buy some new-used helmets, then get all our helmets reconditioned.

With the equipment and scheduling piece figured out, we had to begin to figure out what we were going to do for our game plan: offensive/defensive/special team schemes, practice layout, coaching assignments, and install sched-

ule. It was a challenge, to say the least, to decide what offense, defense, and special teams plays we would implement, especially when we had no idea how well our players would pick them up. But, after multiple coaches' meetings leading up to team camp, I thought to myself: "We're ready!"

Man, were we wrong. Pre-season camp started, and we were worse off than we anticipated in just about every area. While we were dealing with high school age students who were wonderful and intelligent humans, we were also dealing with first-time football players. This was not back-to-basics of high school football, this was back-to-basics of the youth level. We had meetings teaching kids how to put gear on, how to take gear off, how to wash and disinfect the gear; everything that comes second nature to most players and their families was brand new to our kids. From day one, we had to take the first half of all practices during the whole camp to explain positions, their role within the game of football, and the rules each player must follow. After we explained those things, we would try to get those individual parts to come together as a whole offense, defense, or special teams unit. Eventually, after many meetings and

practices that were slow and tedious, our athletes began to progress, and we started to look like a team.

On-campus recruiting is a vital component of starting a new football program. When our student body moved onto campus, our pre-season camp players had a practice in the morning and then helped their classmates move in during the afternoon. Through this small act of service, our players represented our team to their classmates; they were "on-campus" recruiters, and the following day, we had 34 players show up to practice! We had more than doubled in size, so we could rework how we ran practices. We were able to separate the players as either offensive or defensive players, so that they could learn one position and one system in more detail rather than swim in information from trying to learn positions on both sides of the ball and a complete offensive and defensive scheme. This allowed us to speed up our learning progression, install schedule, and most importantly, it allowed us to compete against one another; iron sharpens iron, and we were a week away from our first game, so we had to get ready to rock n' roll!

Before the season, I met with former ALCS Challenger head coach, Mark Martinez, and he

told me that, "8-player football is all about points. Kick the ball as little as possible. You need the ball to score and then you need to score again." As a defensive-minded coach, this approach went against all of my instincts. However, "when in Rome," so we adapted our approach to fit the mold of the 8-man game. Offensively, we ran a spread style read system that was about 50/50 run/pass, and with so many new football players, we really stuck to the tried-and-true method of KISS (keep it simple stupid) and our guys responded well to that. In the end we had roughly 20 plays, however, we only had 3 blocking schemes and we flipped our guys (strong side and weak side) on every play, so they only had to learn one side of a play call, thus our offensive line was able to play fast and hard. I think "It All Starts in the Trenches" and our offensive line led us to have a successful season. This year we averaged 376 yards per game and 33 points per game. We had many huge contributors on offense, but I feel obligated to talk about Nicolas Arguello; a first-year football player from Costa Rica that we labeled the "Costa Rican Gronk." Since we were a JV only program, I could not nominate him for any awards or special recognition, but

# Is your picture day a hassle? Empire Photography can help.

Your team and individual photos taken in  
30 minutes or less.

No envelopes/order forms to hand out.

No print packages to distribute.

All athletes are photographed.

We bring our own bleachers.



WE HAVE BEEN PHOTOGRAPHING HIGH SCHOOL AND  
COLLEGE ATHLETES FOR OVER 30 YEARS!  
JUST SCHEDULE A DATE AND TIME - WE'LL DO THE REST.

QUALITY YOU CAN SEE!



www.EMPIREPHOTOS.com  
608-257-2941  
Madison, WI 53711

as of the end of the regular season for both 8-player and 11-player football, he was the leading receiver in the state. His final stats were 46 catches, 1290 yards receiving, 13 touchdowns, and 9 2-point conversions.

Defensively, we started with 3-2-3 and quickly changed to a 4-2-2 once we realized we couldn't cover anyone for a long duration of time. Defense was the hardest scheme to install in the reintroduction of football to Wayland. Teaching kids who have spent their whole life not playing traditional contact sports to tackle someone was quite the challenge. Another issue with defense was teaching people to stay with their man rather than looking at the QB on pass plays. Defensively, we improved greatly throughout the year, and we played our best game of the year, giving up only 186 yards and 2 defensive touchdowns, in the last week of the season in a close win over a tough Montello team.

Special team units were where we dedicated the people that were not starters on either offense or defense. Traditionally, I am a fan of always having your best athletes on the field. However, when rebuilding Wayland Football, we chose to try to get everyone on the field to increase the buy in from our team members. The special teams units were the quickest to catch on and really improved throughout the season.

Before I finish, I want to talk about the importance of a call to action, or a mantra that you can preach to your players to focus on throughout the season. These are sayings that reflect core beliefs, and that no matter what, good times or bad, triumph or turmoil, your team can call upon to guide their internal compass. This year our mantra was: Hard Work, Mental Toughness, and Sacrifice. I am sure everyone reading this will have their own mantras, and that is great; just remember it must be authentic to your pro-

gram and something that you can consistently do day-in and day-out. This authenticity and consistency builds confidence, and a confident team is a fast team on the field, and intentional team off the field. As coaches, we are not just striving to build good teams; we are purposely developing young adults into future leaders.

I am also a firm believer of always giving your "best effort," for it is the most you can give and the least you should give. For this group, 34 student-athletes from 14 countries, "best effort" became their expectation on and off the field. Before football, I don't know if that would have been the way they live their lives - this game has a beautiful way of transforming us all for the better! I am so proud of all we accomplished in our rebuilding of Wayland Academy Big Red football. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions (cschultz@wayland.org). Thank you!

## A FEW COMMON PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS AT AMHERST

By: Mark Lusic, Head Football Coach, Amherst High School



Mark Lusic

My name is Mark Lusic. I am currently the head coach of Amherst High School. The article I chose to write consists of a few common practices that we have implemented throughout the past years which I feel makes us a successful program in many aspects.

### WIAA Contact Days

We run the five day, WIAA allowed contact days, in the summer. The first 10 years, we only invited incoming freshmen through seniors. Our contact days during those first ten years were intense and often felt like we were trying to win a conference title by Friday. I have since changed the structure and purpose of our contact days. The last three years, we have opened up the camp to all incoming 7th graders through seniors. Adding the junior high classes has meant more kids and more responsibility, but I feel that it has been beneficial for all players. It forces the coaches to slow down and coach everyone from top to bottom to make sure every kid has the opportunity to get better. My staff also has the chance to make sure the younger

kids have a positive experience, and I believe we have a better chance of retaining kids in the program. A lot of young kids think football is like the "Junction Boys" with no water breaks and cracking skulls every play. This camp allows the junior high kids to experience first hand that the hard core nature is just a myth. By Friday, we may not be prepared to win the conference title, but I feel opening up the camp has NOT slowed the program down one bit. In all honesty, it has made us a better overall program.

### Two-a Days

The WIAA allows us to have 4 short practices the first two weeks of August. I know some teams do not use those four practices or struggle with knowing what to do with them since we are in helmets only. During those four practices, we bring in only the varsity players and some sophomores. The practices are always in the morning. I promise the kids there is no conditioning, and they will be off the field, no matter what, in ninety minutes. During those morning practices we put in all of our special teams. Each day is given to a different special team. We spend about sixty minutes on each special team. Whatever time is left, we spend teaching something else either on offense or defense. Implementing special teams takes time. The morning practice allows us to use that time more efficiently. I do not feel guilty having a bunch of kids standing around because every kid there has a chance to be on a special team. Each kid is taught some aspect of each special team. This allows us to hit the ground running as the week(s) go on because a big part of the game is already implemented.

### Team Tackling Drill

Tackling is a crucial part of the game. Every year we are trying to become a better tackling

team while keeping our players healthy. We are always finding ways to become better tacklers without having to crack skulls for the entire practice. Our solution this year was a team tackling session 2-3 times a week at the beginning of practice. I feel the best part of the drill is that we are going against the base offense for that week. We have our defense and a scout offense on the field. For example, if we are going to see a lot of off-tackle that week and inside ISO, we will practice against those plays as a whole team. A lot of the time it ends up being half line, but it allows the coaches to focus on a certain area. Sometimes, I will even tell our D-line to be "soft", because I want to put pressure on the inside linebackers and safety. If we are going to see a spread team that uses a lot of outside runs, we use this drill to put pressure on the defense to run to the ball using good angles. This tackling drill is meant to focus on what type of offense we will see that week. I felt by using this drill it made us a better tackling team this year.

### Swimming and Bowling:

Football is a grind. It's a grind not just for the players, but for the coaches too. I am always looking for ways to break up the monotony of practice. Two things I have added the last few years is a swimming and bowling day for the kids. On the last day of summer camp, we cut out of practice early and head to the local lake for pizza, belly flops, and chicken fights. For a lot of the kids, this is their favorite memory of the season.

On the first Saturday of the season in August, I surprise the team by leaving practice early and take them all bowling. It's a simple thing, but the kids love it and it gives them a chance to just have fun as a team. (I do tell them that this is the last time we leave practice early, so don't get used to it.)

# THE POWER OF DELEGATION AND OWNERSHIP

By: Rob Heller, Head Football Coach, Ellsworth High School



Rob Heller

I would like to start by thanking the WFCAs for the opportunity to provide an article for *The Point After II*. Much of what I have learned over the years has come directly from articles by coaches of our great coaches association and presentations at our clinic. I would also like to thank our many dedicated assistant coaches who are second to none when it comes to preparing our players for football and life.

When I first became a head coach 14 years ago, it was quite an experience. All of the pressure, meetings, scheduling, fundraising, communication, weight room, and all of the many intricacies that I never considered as a young assistant coach were now sitting on my lap like a silverback gorilla. I took pride in trying to do it all myself, all while trying to be a great head coach, defensive coordinator and special teams coordinator. I convinced myself that no coach was going to out work me, watch more film than me, or be more prepared than me. There are a lot of “me’s” in that previous sentence. Too many for a successful head coach in my opinion. I was trying to do far too much with not enough “coach”. It became clear this was not sustainable overtime if I ever wanted to work with a staff of a contending program. We finished the season with a 2-7 record and were winless in our conference. So much for my pride. Coaching in this fashion resulted in a lack of ownership and buy-in from our assistant coaches, and frankly cheating our players out of a better high school football experience.

I was fortunate enough to get a second chance as a head coach in Ellsworth only a couple years after my first attempt. The first three seasons at Ellsworth were a co-head coaching experience with my good friend and current Offensive Coordinator Jason Janke. It was those first few years where I could clearly see the importance of delegation among a football staff. As a co-head coach I ran the defense and Jason ran the offense. I was quick to see that the head coach didn’t have to do it all, and it was a relief to have a partner with all of the responsibilities previously mentioned. I also used this time to learn from a more experi-

enced coach, who had been a part of winning programs in the past and a trip to Madison. Jason was a great mentor as a co-head coach. When we made the transition to one head coach, Jason continued to coach the offense, and we made the decision to allow another great assistant, Drew Pechacek, to run our defense. I could see the importance of delegating, but letting go of the defense was difficult. It felt like I was quitting in a sense, but when we decided to go this route the program really started to turn a corner. What I quickly realized was that this was huge in creating ownership among our assistant coaches and morale quickly improved. Finding coaches you can trust, and communicate with effectively, even when things are difficult, is paramount in my opinion, when it comes to coaching high school football.

The next step in our coaching philosophy was creating the same amount of buy-in from all of our assistants, as we had with our head coach and coordinators. How did we do this? Create a sense of ownership. Delegate! Allow your position coaches to coach. This gives coaches an opportunity to grow, and also creates an opportunity for creativity in scheme. Instead of listening to just the head coach or a coordinator, we come together each week with different ideas and suggestions, and collaborate with each other and develop a game plan for the best

way to attack our next opponent. Make sure to value everyone’s opinion in this process. You never know when you may need to look back and try something when things aren’t going as planned. Have an equipment coach and give them the freedom to make decisions on purchases that will improve the program, from uniform designs, to big ticket equipment items, even helmet reconditioning can be a task to own for an assistant coach. If you are fortunate enough, find a coach to run your weight room at some point so you can spend time with your friends and family. Allow your assistants to take ownership over something in the program. This has been a huge factor in our program’s more recent success over the past three seasons.

In closing I would just like to remind all of the coaches out there that we have the best job in the world. Whether you are a young assistant coach or a veteran head coach for decades, we have the ability to have a profound impact on young people through coaching a game we all love. I would also encourage coaches to take some of your own advice and treat your coaches like your players, it’s about we not me. Nurture your assistants and younger coaches so they can make the most of their opportunity when they get their shot to run a program of their own. It takes a village to run a program. Ellsworth football would not be where it is currently without the power of delegation, ownership and some pretty amazing assistant coaches.



From the entire JTQB family, a sincere hope that you, your families and your teams are well and looking ahead to 2025 with great expectation. Thank you for all of your hard work and the tremendous impact you have on kids. We’re looking forward to seeing you this summer and helping your QBs and WRs take the next steps.

## 2025

- 14 QB only Developmental two day camps (Athletes grades 7-12)
- 6 Advanced QB – Receiver three day camps (Athletes grades 10-12)
- 3 Youth Camps, QB – Receiver camps (Athletes grades 4-6)
- Intense, high-energy, focused instruction with attention to detail.
- Leadership & team-building training, teaching character through the game we love!

**2025 DATES, TIMES and REGISTRATION SOON !**

[www.jefftrickeyqbcamps.com](http://www.jefftrickeyqbcamps.com)



“Accept the Risk of Leadership”



# BUILDING A JV/FRESHMAN PROGRAM

By: Cameron Carey, Head JV and Assistant Varsity Football Coach, Slinger HS



Cameron Carey

First off, I want to thank Jim Hagen and WFC A for providing me the chance to write this article. Additionally, I want to thank head coaches Tom Lee, Dan Keefer, and Bill Jacklin for the opportunity to coach our younger levels and for trusting me to develop our players. This is my 8th season coaching football at three different schools; La Crosse Aquinas, Baldwin-Woodville, and Slinger. Each year I have been a coach for the JV or Freshmen teams while assisting with the Varsity. First, I will admit to have made many mistakes through trial and error, but have done my best to learn from them and grow as a coach. Through that time, I feel I have found a good balance of developing the players to help them in their future Varsity careers while still winning games in the current JV/Freshman season. Here are the 3 tenants that I follow as they have been successful for me.

### Play Everyone All Game Long:

As a lower level coach, I sum up my main responsibility in this way: **“Create a great experience where the players develop as football players and young men, and they play football next year.”** That is why we play everyone all game long. When kids know they will play in the game, they tend to take ownership of their role, because they want to play well which helps with development. Additionally, because they get to play, they have more fun and they come out next year. Winning is secondary to this goal, but know that we are doing everything to help the players win games because football is a competitive sport; we just do not sacrifice development for winning. As a coach, this helps us on multiple fronts. First, we get more buy in during practice from the start. That does not mean that we do not have to challenge or motivate them at times, but players learn that they are important to the success of the team through practice. They are not simply sitting on the sidelines during practice or getting 2-3 lazy reps knowing they won't go in unless we are winning or losing by a lot. They will play when the score is close, so they must be ready to play. Second, there is a lot of growth built into the individuals who are not our best players. Every team has role players (special teamers, scout

players, starters who are not all-conference), so by building up the kids who are not the best, we are increasing the number of players who can help the Varsity team in the future. Third, our best players are challenged the most. When the best players are not always with the other best players, they truly learn what it takes to be a great teammate. They are forced to learn to trust in their teammates who maybe are not as good, while understanding that they need to play at their very best for us to have success. We are putting the onus on them to be leaders, because we will struggle if they are not on their game. Lastly, and maybe the most important, we build confidence in kids and foster stronger team camaraderie. Not many things are more fun for a team than a kid getting their first touchdown, a kid who was hesitant to tackle getting their first sack, or a player getting a big interception after struggling in coverage early on. The coaches and the players truly celebrate that, and it is because we gave them a chance and believed in them.

Personally, playing everyone has made me a better coach. First, it's an opportunity to build a relationship with every player and find a way to help each of them succeed. In the end, we are there for the kids, so playing everyone puts the onus on us to foster that team environment. Also, by coaching every player, we learn new and better ways to coach different positions, concepts, technique and motivational tools. It's important to take advantage of the fact we can learn a lot about coaching in an environment where the focus is on development rather than winning. Maybe the most fun and challenging part for me is during the games. By playing everyone, I have to adjust to what all of your players are capable of during the game. Every coach adjusts to their players, but currently I have 30 players on the JV team, so I need to have ideas to get as many of them involved as possible. I'm always looking for ways to help our players find success, and I'm adjusting based on what they can do. Through that, I have found new levels of creativity and have improved my in-game adjustments. Play everyone all game long; it's what is best for your program, your kids, and makes you a better coach.

I believe it's important for our lower levels to run the same base offense, defense, and special teams as the Varsity. Usually the younger levels only have 2, maybe 3, coaches assigned to them on gameday, and it is very difficult to coach multiple positions on the same side of the ball. By running the same base concepts, we are benefiting the program in player development and ourselves in the logistics. The players learn the same drills, techniques, and concepts that they are likely to run in the future, and the other assistant coaches are working on the same individual, skelly, half-line, 7-on-7, and team drills during practice. With that being said, do not be afraid to come up with wrinkles, tags, adjustments, or any other slight change that will benefit your team in the present. One of the most

fun parts of football is the coaches are an important part of the game for the play calls and adjustments we get to make. By coming up with unique ideas off of the base playbook, we are finding ways to make the experience more fun for us, as coaches, and we are showing the players that although we are running the same basics, we are still trying to come up with ways to be successful now. Maybe you have more full backs so you can do a heavier package, maybe you have good team speed so you can blitz a little more, or you have a kicker without a strong leg but can place the ball wherever you want so you squib or onside more. It's important for us not to just accept where we are, but keep digging for ideas and solutions to help our teams. Your team is also a testing ground, and some of your ideas may come up to the Varsity level. As coaches, we are always telling our players that they have to be open to coaching and constantly trying to get better. We need to take that advice too when it comes to helping our kids find success.

### Take Pride in Leading a Team

As the head coach of a Freshman or JV team, we are not the program's head coach, but we are a head coach running a team. The players are looking at us to lead them, and they can tell if we are bought in and prepared or just going through the motions. It's important to recognize that we have quite a few decisions and logistics that need to be attended to. Here are a few things I do just for the JV team. This list is not comprehensive but provides insight into all the things that help your team be successful in a year:

1. Spend time planning out the fall camp installs (offense, defense, and special teams) ahead of time with other JV coaches
2. Communicate with JV parents
3. Create playlists and drills so practice runs smoothly
4. Gameplan for our opponent on the JV and Varsity levels (Sometimes JV has a different opponent so I prep for two games)
5. Put together game day checklist for JV team
6. Run the JV workout schedule
7. Find ways to film both practice and games that doesn't interrupt the Varsity film
8. Teach JV players to watch film for improvement, and running effective film sessions

It is important we take these responsibilities seriously, and do everything we can to make sure things run smoothly and effectively. Lower levels are not less important because winning isn't the main focus. They are very important because they are a precursor for what Varsity football is like. Our players need to understand the level of preparation, discipline, and work ethic it takes to find success at the higher level, so we do our best to instill that. Additionally, it helps us appreciate all the planning and time our Varsity head coaches put into being a well-coached team. Also, we get the chance to learn how to manage a game through clock management, personnel, injuries, and all the other decisions a varsity head coach must make.

# CREATING FOOTBALL IQ WITH SITUATIONAL PRACTICE SEGMENTS

By: Dan Barutha, Head Football Coach, Lakeland Union High School



Dan Barutha

Situational football intelligence & application are two key factors that we at Lakeland Union High School teach, preach, & practice to put our players in the best positions possible on Friday night. Football IQ is one characteristic that we take great pride in to help us maximize our potential to win games. For teams looking for an edge, understanding and applying Football IQ situations could be that edge. We have been utilizing these situations since 2016 when I became the head coach. By teaching the situations, practicing them, & reviewing them throughout the season, we help give our guys the most confidence when those moments arrive during the game. Beyond running our schemes and using proper technique, teaching Football IQ is critical to helping our players understand how to play the game within the game and what needs to occur to maximize the potential for success.

## PRACTICE SITUATIONS

1. Regular Down & Distance
2. 1st/3rd Down (Short, Medium, Long, Extra Long) - After 1st down, consider it 3rd down with whatever yardage to gain for a first down
3. 1st/2nd Down (Short, Medium, Long, Extra Long) - After 1st down, it's 2nd down & after 2nd down, offense must be 3rd and 3 or less to win and defense must be 3rd and 4 or more to win.
4. Sudden Change
5. 2-Minute
6. 4-Minute
7. Scramble Drill
8. Red Zone/Goal Line/2-Point Conversion
9. Misdirection - Boot/Counter/Reverse/Flea Flicker
10. End of Half or Game – Hail Mary, Multiple Hook & Ladder, Mayday or Field Goal
11. End of Half or Game – Game Kick off or Kick Return
12. Safety Kick or Punt Return
13. Swing 8-Both sides of Half
14. Key Injury(s)
15. Coming Out, Backed Up
16. Screens

17. 4th Down - Punt return or defense? Work Punt Return v. Offense & Defense v. Punt
18. Motions, Trades, Shifts
19. Take a Safety, Opposing Offense Taking a Safety
20. Late 4th Quarter Give Up a Touchdown To Get Ball Back
21. Fake Spike & Shot
22. Fair Catch, Free Kick
23. Weather
24. Bandit Drill - Combo of Game Situations, Medical Emergency Action Plan and Weather Delay

We run our summer contact days the same way we run our first two weeks of the season regarding how we structure installing, teaching, & practicing these situations. First, we share presentations to all of our players detailing each situation as a whole. The presentation also includes how to best handle the circumstances from both an offensive & defensive perspective (ex. Two-minute offense is facing two opponents: the opposing team & clock, how & when the clock stops, & the only time we motion is coming off of a dead ball; Two-minute defense requires a base call if playcall is not communicated in time, how & when we would substitute, & how we tackle near the sideline to keep the offense inbound). Our presentations are very thorough & go through the mentality necessary to handle those moments. Prior to practice during our team meeting, I'll go through the situations again and ask questions to check for understanding. During practice, we then build in time with our unit and/or team sessions to work our scheme in addition to the situation(s) we are focusing on for the day. Prior to camp and the first two weeks in August, we map out how our install will work with our situations to maximize our practice efficiency. During camp we often work the following situations for offense and defense: 1st/2nd Down, 1st/3rd Down, Scramble Drill, Red Zone/Goal Line/2-Point Conversion, and Weather. Regarding weather, we focus on not wearing gloves, how to properly throw, catch, and handle the ball too for maximum security. Some segments utilize 15 minutes for the scenario while others may need only five minutes or pop up naturally during sessions, like scramble drill. We do not get through all of these every year and we certainly do not get to the level that we would like after a week but these are integral in our minds with our schemes.

During the first week of August practice, we will hit those situations above again because of their importance. If we did not hit a situation(s), we will absolutely practice it during the season's first week. We will also hit Regular Down & Distance, Back Up/Coming Out along with Sudden Change. Bandit Drill is another focus area the first week & that is a game situation

practice segment I script which encompasses the situations that we have previously covered in an unknown & random order. For instance, the offense would start with the ball on the -5 on the left hash and it will be 1st & 10. That allows the players & play callers on both sides of the ball to recognize the Backed Up/Coming Out situation & make the necessary adjustments to handle it properly. Regardless of the play's outcome, the next situation moves the ball to the -10 left middle and it is 2nd & 4. After that, it moves to the -15 where it is 3rd & 1. We continually move the location and change the down and distance based upon what work we need on a specific side of the ball. When I did not call the offense, I could keep track immediately after each play whether it was a victory for the offense or defense predicated upon the play call & execution of the situation. Since I currently call the offense, I go back and watch practice film afterwards to keep track of victories between sides of the ball. We use that feedback to help our coaches and players with those situations and determine our mastery and what still needs improvement going into our first game. Our first Saturday practice in August we dedicate a large portion of situational practice during our intra-squad Black-White Game.

The second week of the season means we are preparing for a scrimmage. This week we work our two-Minute and four-Minute situations, review all the previously worked situations, and get special teams focus areas hit. Safety Kick or Punt Return, Mayday Field Goal, and 4th Down Punt Return or Defense we make sure to practice so they are not brand new going into the first game the following week. This week, we will work Bandit Drill again but with a larger swath of situations to pick from. This is the week we should be able to transition to a 3rd & long rush defensive front, work play calling and down & distance with selected players injured where we are trying to target plays at a backup defender or hide a backup player on the field with specific play calls. We also review important matters like weather delay procedures and emergency medical action plans.

From the third week of the season on when we are playing games, we make sure to hit any segments that we have not previously focused on yet, situations that still need some fine tuning, and situations that mirror what we will see from a specific week's opponent based upon strengths, identity, and tendencies. Every weekend, I go through situations that occur during high school, college, and NFL games and then show video to our players as teachable content. This method has really ingrained the importance of Football IQ to our players, especially when they handle a situation correctly but collegiate and professional players do not. In 2022, when the Buffalo Bills lost a game against the Miami

Dolphins because their receiver stayed in bounds after the catch during a two-minute drill and time ran out rather than having a Hail Mary attempt, our players felt a strong sense of pride because they know how to operate during that scenario. We had won a game the previous week because of our two-minute execution. The same was true when Clemson nearly lost a game that same season against Georgia Tech because they did not go under center and wedge the ball off the goal line to take a knee to run the clock out. Instead, they ran a couple plays and fumbled in

the end zone. After the game, Clemson Head Coach Dabo Swinney said they do not work under center snaps in their program. The same was true for Troy University's defense using too many jumpmen and not keeping enough guys on the ground during Appalachian State's hail mary in 2023, which cost them a victory in the final seconds. These examples, along with many others, set a foundation for what we expect our players to perform during crucial moments and they wear it as a badge of honor to increase our odds at victory.

I would like to thank all of our players and coaches at Lakeland who buy into this vision of creating strong Football IQ. We want our players to walk onto the field having the most situational knowledge every Friday night and without the work that our players and coaching staff does to prepare for these circumstances, it would not be possible. I would also like to thank the WFCA for allowing me to contribute to this incredible state association. If you have any questions or would like more information, feel free to reach out at [barutha@lakelandunion.org](mailto:barutha@lakelandunion.org).

## MY EXPERIENCE AS A FIRST-YEAR HEAD COACH

By: Robert Harry, Head Football Coach, Pardeeville High School



Robert Harry

My first year as head coach was a typical mixture of ups and downs. The first challenge was being a first-year head coach with experience in losing programs. Understandably, skepticism came with that, but those experiences helped me become a better coach. The next challenge was being a first-year play-caller with a talented roster. Getting everyone to buy into the new offensive scheme was challenging, especially given that I made a mistake on the initial player wristbands given for the first two days of practice. Also, everyone didn't show up at the scrimmage. A big boost was Pardeeville scoring

42 points in the first two games, which was the most in a while, and was against two teams we lost to the previous year.

The next challenge was responding to coaches adapting to our offense and facing that challenge. Deerfield and Saint Mary's played a huge role in shifting our offense to handle how defenses adjusted. As a result, the offense went through an impressive stretch once again throughout the season.

While being 4-0 was excellent, I could've handled the team more efficiently to prepare them for a tough stretch of games. I needed to do a better job of getting the team to focus on the little things that would cost us games later in the season. This lapse in my coaching led to missing the playoffs, which I learned a lot from.

The support from the parents, community, coaches, and my family immensely helped in my first year as head coach. Parents took it upon themselves to handle team dinners on Thursday nights. This was critical in building a family culture. Other parents helped open the weight room in the mornings and summer. The coaching staff helped start practices on time, which was helpful given my classroom isn't close to the field. They also came prepared and ready for each practice, meetings, and games. Coaching on the fly was another area they

helped in. I don't like stopping practice for long periods and keeping things running smoothly. Having a coaching staff do this all the time made my life easier. During the games, the coaches did a great job of letting me know what they were thinking and providing helpful information. This might sound simple and overlooked, but not having coaches provide valuable information during games is a headache.

No matter the outcome of the games, I could always count on my family to be there to support me. My mom and dad always gave me an ear to vent and air out ideas.

I appreciated the guidance I received from former head coaches such as Bob Hepp, Dustin Johnson, Joey Martin, and Mike Haynes. Every time I had a question, they responded in a timely manner with information that I greatly needed. I don't always have the answers to every situation, and it was nice to know I had experienced head coaches I could talk with to guide me.

I have a lot to work on to prepare for next season, but I look back on my first year as head coach as a success because it is setting up the roots for future successes here in Pardeeville. It's a great place to teach, coach, and live. I aim to bring this storied program back to its status as a powerhouse football program.

## WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR PROGRAM? A MESSAGE TO COACHES TRYING TO BUILD UP A STRUGGLING PROGRAM

By: Matt McGinnis, Head Football Coach, Eau Claire North High School



Matt McGinnis

First of all, I would like to thank the WFCA for allowing me to write an article for The Point After II. You get to see issue after issue with unbelievably talented coaches leading or apart of programs that I dream of getting to some day, so this opportunity is very humbling and exciting.

When I was asked to write an article, my initial reaction was excitement but also, "What in the world am I going to write about?" I sometimes struggle thinking that I can have something meaningful to say as a head coach with one year under my belt, two wins to my name, and taking over a program that has gone 3-60 in the past 7 years. I had to stop myself there, like I have many times before this year, and remind myself a few things about taking over this pro-

gram. I feel this "imposter syndrome" often by thinking I don't belong as the head of a program so if this resonates with you, you are not alone. My hope in writing this giving coaches taking over or in struggling programs potential ideas for their program and tips on how to define success that fits you.

I would imagine every single football team in the country starts the season with the same goal. Win conference, make the playoffs, make a run in the playoffs or win a state championship. I am not in the minority here. I absolutely want to achieve all of these things. I dream about it, obsess about it, annoy my wife talking about it, etc. I catch myself often getting caught up in the mindset of defining our success

by what the win/loss column tells us at the end of the day. I also tell myself that I wouldn't be a good coach if I did not have that mindset. You couldn't find too many coaches out there who aren't, one, Competitive people and, two, Don't care about winning games. I usually have to remind myself, as a head coach, there are so many things we have to worry about before the previous goals mentioned are even a thought, especially for a program that is in a rebuilding phase. It is my thinking that when you worry about the things that you can control as a coach and work your tail off with building a program the right way, only then can you give yourself a chance to compete and redefine what is successful for you as a program. The first step I took and would encourage you to do is defining what success looks like for you and continuing to build from that.

Coming into getting a job or if you aren't already, turn to the weight room. This was the one foolproof thing that I knew I was going to encourage no matter what. I know this sounds like the most obvious thing to push but I think talking about the weight room and really pushing it are two different things. I wouldn't say I drew a line in the sand about requiring the weight room but, it was about as close as you could get. Luckily, I knew I had a senior class that understood the importance of the weight room, and they emphasized that to the underclassmen. I spent enough time at North to know that if we did not get bigger, faster, and stronger we would not stand a chance in competing in the Big Rivers Conference. I am still working on ways to push the weight room and continually trying to improve the culture in the weight room, not only for the football program but the school as well. I believe the more you talk about it, the more it is engrained in kids heads. It is a battle we will constantly be fighting but to me, it is the most important hill that I will die on.

Next, I knew that we had to obviously really work on our culture at North. I was not sure where to start and its still a work in progress, but this is where my next suggestion comes in. First, reach out to as many coaches as you possibly can. I was extremely lucky to get my start

coaching at Chippewa Falls High school under the man, the myth, the legend, Chuck Raykovich. He welcomed me into his program as an inexperienced 22 year old with open arms. I was an assistant freshmen coach my first year and the second year he allowed me to be Freshmen Head Coach. At the time I had no idea what a big deal this was, but now as a head coach and knowing how important your freshmen program is, does this actually set in. Coach Rayko let me cut my teeth and make mistakes which was huge for me as a coach.

When I got the head coaching job I was lucky enough to get put in contact with another Hall of Fame coach in Tony DiSalvo. I picked his brain as much as I possibly could and stole as much as he would let me steal. I talked to Nick Bohl at Oconto Falls who has done incredible things with his program building his culture about how to even become head coach and what to expect. My point is talk to, and lean on as many coaches that will let you. The advice that they can give you is invaluable. Whatever they tell you, do it. Obviously put a tweak on it so it will fit you and your program, but these people have not gotten to where they are by accident. Most of the advice you are going to be getting is usually going to be holding your program to a higher standard than it has been held to before. This is the hard part. If you let anything slide you are allowing the culture that you are working so hard for to die. Whatever you decide to do with your culture you must preach it every day and see it through. You can always reassess but the saying "If you aren't working on your culture it is dying" has always stuck with me. It is a never ending process.

My next suggestion, is a little more specific to coaches looking for a head job or already in a head job. If you are looking for a head job, start assembling your staff before you even start the interview process. Hire coaches and keep coaches that you can trust and learn from. Before I submitted my application I began to assemble a staff that I knew I could be successful with by surrounding myself with great people and luckily for me, guys that know a ton of football. I was lucky enough to ask a mentor of mine and some-

one who has forgotten more football than I hope to even know, Dave Decker, to be on my staff. Having a guy with state titles under his belt is very much a luxury that I was incredibly lucky to have but most importantly I trust him. You have to get and keep people that love working with kids and that love being a part of the program. They have to be there for the right reason. if you don't feel a coach is there for the right reason you have to go with your gut and do what you need to do to protect your program. I am not very far in this thing but I truly think keeping a staff together is just as important as anything else you will do as a coach. You have to have guys that you can trust.

Finally I think one of the most important things to do as a staff is define "What will success look like for us this year?" For us, as a staff, we knew that a successful season would be following all of the expectations we set, getting kids in the weight room, and competing in football games. In the past North has not been competitive in any games we have played. Looking at the year ahead it was extremely important, as a staff, to be in the game by the start of the 4th quarter. We succeeded in this all but one game this season. Looking at this from outside of our program it would be easy to say "There is no success in just being competitive in all of your games." But for us this couldn't be further from the truth. The truth is in the past three years we won one game and our JV played in every game except the game we won. Being competitive, especially in the Big Rivers, was a huge deal for us and our program. We obviously had our nay sayers, but I'm sure teams that won a state title had those. I have found that people with the least amount of involvement in your program will be the loudest in disapproval but they don't matter. You have a group of coaches and athletes who are all there for the same reason and it is up to you to determine what your success will look like. As a program we still have so much work to do and so many more firsts we have to achieve. But I believe in the work we are doing and sticking to that belief is half the battle to evolving a program that is struggling.

**Mark you calendar for next year Now!**

**WFCA SPRING FOOTBALL CLINIC**

**April 3 - April 5, 2025**

**Marriott Hotel in Middleton, Wisconsin**

*One of many benefits included with your WFCA membership!*

*Registration begins January 1, 2025*



## GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

As a membership benefit, coverage is provided by the Commercial General Liability Policy issued to the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors. This policy will provide general liability coverage to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association and its members.

### CARRIER

HDI Global Specialty (A Rated)

### POLICY PERIOD

August 1, 2024 – August 1, 2025

### LIMITS OF INSURANCE

\$1,000,000	Each Occurrence
\$2,000,000	General Aggregate (per Member)
\$1,000,000	Products/Completed Operations
\$1,000,000	Personal & Advertising Injury
\$ 300,000	Fire Damage
\$ 50,000	Sexual Abuse (per Member)
Excluded	Medical Payments

### COVERAGES

- ❖ Educator Professional Liability
- ❖ Participant Legal Liability for insured members
- ❖ Liability assumed under insured written contract
- ❖ Defense Cost outside limits

### EXCLUSIONS

- ❖ The use of automobiles, buses, watercraft and aircraft
- ❖ Property of others in the care, custody, and control of the insured.
- ❖ This insurance does not apply to members that coach at an All-Star game that is not approved by your state coaches association.
- ❖ This insurance does not apply to any loss, cost or expense arising out of infectious or communicable disease.

## CAMP INSURANCE

Today, most Coaches are involved in some type of sports camp. Please note that our General Liability Program follows insured members while working at camps and/or conducting their own personal camp.

In addition, Participant/Accident Coverage is required for coaches and/or participants. Should an accident occur during a camp, clinic or event, this secondary coverage helps offset the loss suffered by families affected by such accidents.

### PROCEDURE FOR CAMP INSURANCE

As a member benefit of your state coaches association, all members in good standing have a \$1,000,000 per occurrence General Liability policy limit that provides coverage for their coaching activities. In order to protect the General Liability policy from potential claims, the insurance company has mandated that all coaches must obtain signed waivers and provide Participant/Accident insurance for their participants.

In order to obtain a certificate of insurance showing proof of insurance or naming an additional insured, the following must be in place:

- ❖ **Waivers:** Signed waivers showing indemnification language
- ❖ **Participant/Accident Insurance:** You must have Participant/Accident coverage in place for all participants attending sports camps.

### PURCHASE INSURANCE

- ❖ Camp Insurance Request form is available on our website: <https://www.loomislapann.com/page/camp-insurance-2.html>

### INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

**LOOMIS & LAPANN, INC.**  
INSURANCE SINCE 1852

[www.loomislapann.com](http://www.loomislapann.com)  
(P) 800-566-6479 | (F) 518-792-3426

Greg Joly  
Lori George

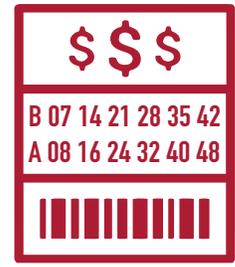
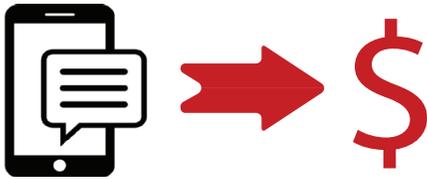
[gjoly@loomislapann.com](mailto:gjoly@loomislapann.com)  
[lgeorge@loomislapann.com](mailto:lgeorge@loomislapann.com)

*Disclaimer: This is an insurance overview for summary purposes only; for complete policy terms and conditions please refer to the NOCAD Master Policy.*

# WFCA SUPPORTER FOR OVER 25 YEARS!



## Your #1 Discount Card and Product Fundraiser



### 50 Minute Donation Fundraiser

Average online support is **\$62** per transaction.

### Online Store

Increases sales by **28%** outside school district; **40%** outside of state.

### Sweepstakes

NFL, NCAA, MLB and more unique sweepstakes programs!



Proud Sponsor of the WFCA

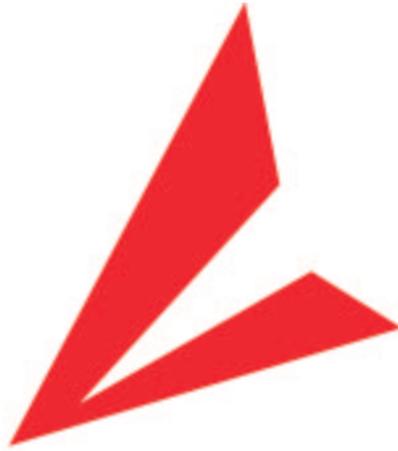
**UNITED FUNDRAISING** has contributed over **250,000 meals, 1000's of socks/apparel, and \$10,000's in scholarships for students through your teams fundraising efforts!**  
**Thank you!**

**ASK ABOUT:** COOKIE DOUGH • PIZZA • JERKY  
• FESTIVAL FOODS CARDS CUSTOM DRINKWARE  
• POPCORN • SOCKS • MORE!



**CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**www.unitedfundraisingandpromotions.com • 800-313-8050**



**BSN SPORTS**

 **FOOTBALL IS EVERYTHING**



**251 Progress Way  
Waunakee, WI 53597**

**1-800-856-3488  
[www.indy.bsnsports.com](http://www.indy.bsnsports.com)**