

# HEADSETS

WRITTEN FOR COACHES BY COACHES

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 3

GOAL SETTING FOR  
OFFENSE

*kick-off*  
RULES

ALWAYS RULES

FOR  
DEFENSE



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Issue #3 has come up quickly for us. I am very grateful for these coaches that are continuing to put out awesome content to the coaching community. This issue is filled with 12 more great articles covering everything a football coach needs to study.

I also want to thank all the great sponsors that have supported this effort from the beginning. We are adopting the motto "for coaches by coaches" in this magazine, and these companies live that motto.

Our hope is to continue to grow this platform and help as many coaches as possible, so be sure to download and share to all those in your network. Learning about the game is crucial to improving as a coach, and we hope to help in those efforts.

If you have a desire to write as a guest, we are taking some articles and will do our best to get them in a future issue. Simply email [FBCoachSimpson@gmail.com](mailto:FBCoachSimpson@gmail.com) and we can discuss details.

Thank you again for your support,

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Loganville High School, GA*

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# PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

## A PROGRAM WITHOUT RULES



Jeff Steinberg  
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I have always loved how extra-curricular athletics has the ability to develop great character qualities in the youth that take part in them. Early on in my coaching career I believed in the importance of developing a player contract to hold our young men accountable to the team, its core values and our goals. In that contract I began to develop a list of “non negotiables” or rules to hold the players to. The challenge was developing what I believed to be a short list of very important rules to ensure the players stayed within the boundaries. Rules such as what players were expected to wear, how to behave in class, consequences for being late are a few examples. That first year we had 8 rules, by the third year the list grew to 15. My experience was that I had to create or modify a rule each time a player broke one. I also started to see how players would try to circumvent the rules in order to not receive a consequence. This created a huge task for our staff. That off-season we decided to look at our program and our overall philosophy. One of our staff read us a short paragraph that summed up what most coaches are all about. I am sure you are familiar with the story about a boy picking up starfish on the beach and throwing them back in. Here is how it goes:

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, “What are you doing?” The youth replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up, and the tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.” The man then remarked, “Son, don’t you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can’t make a difference!” After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, “I made a difference for that one.”

Our objective is to make our football program a life changing program. We want to greatly impact the lives of all those involved in our Football Program. Will this happen to everyone? Probably not. But we will always provide opportunities for it to

happen and do our part. This was the impetus that led us to change our Football Rules Contract into a Player Contract with Expectations rather than a bunch of rules. My experience is when you have a set of rules it will limit the people involved in that they will focus on behaviors they should not do. On the other hand, when you list expectations the individuals will focus on what is expected. My belief is that kids will strive to meet your expectations whether high or low. In our contract we look at behaviors we expect on the field, in the classroom and around the community. The goal is for each player to do their best on a daily basis in those areas and represent their family, the school, our community and the football program with class. The only goal we have is to “Protect the Program”, that is doing those things that will bring honor and respect to our football program. Players understand that they must ensure they are not doing things that will present themselves, our program, school or community in a negative light.

It’s important that when players do make a mistake you provide an opportunity for them to learn from their error. These opportunities are what I have commonly called OTI’s (Opportunity to Improve). They will range from a verbal reprimand, a physical consequence, a meeting with family or ultimately, removal from the program. Our coaches will work with players and parents to correct behaviors and there have been times we have put a player on a behavior contract to ensure they are making the positive changes. Unfortunately, there have been sometimes we have had to remove a player from the program as well.

We refer to our Expectations contract as our “Outline to Success” contract. We have also used a “Declaration of Commitment” sheet some years where all the players signed a poster with the expectations listed. If you expect your players to do great things they will. You will find that this will present a much more positive experience for everyone than creating a laundry list of rules. Feel free to email me or reach out on Twitter if you would like a copy of what we have used.

***“Our objective is to make our football program a life changing program .... This led us to change our Football Rules Contract into a Player Contract with Expecations rather than a bunch of rules...”***



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# COACHING RESOURCES

## THREE UNIVERSAL ANSWERS (TO MOST OF YOUR COACHING QUESTIONS)



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*\*Note - this is the second part of a two part series.*

There are 3 universal answers to all these questions:

- **Build Relationships**
- **Communication**
- **Presentation & Delivery**

So....based on our understanding of the importance of relationships, communication, and presentation here are my answers to those same questions posed at the beginning:

### HOW DO WE HANDLE DEALING WITH PARENTS BETTER?

#### Relationships:

Build relationships with parents when there are not heated subjects to discuss. Support their children in everything they do. (Example: Speak to them when you attend other games and see them in stands, ask parents how their children are doing when you see them. Show a genuine interest.)

#### Communication:

When you have events, always communicate with parents in every way possible. Never assume they should find out about things. Always ask if there are other methods they would prefer. If they get the message, that is all you need to worry about. Cater to them on methods of communication.

#### Present/Delivery:

When you get the parents in front of you, you MUST be on your "A" game. Parent meetings, booster club, etc – always come out with a big presentation, an organized plan and an attitude that you are willing to answer questions and listen. This will go a long way with parents.

### HOW DO WE HANDLE ASSISTANT COACHES BETTER?

#### Relationships:

Talk to them constantly. Make sure they know you care about them. Then when you must disagree, they will know it wasn't personal. (Example: Be there for them when they need to leave early for their kids; Show respect to their time.)

#### Communication:

Send the coaches exactly what you need them to do. If you are unclear how to set this up, go to [ParkerResources.org](http://ParkerResources.org). Send your coaches daily, or at least weekly, emails with what you all are working on and how you can stay on the same page.

#### Present/Delivery:

When you do meet with coaches individually or as a group, always have a plan. Make sure they feel like you are organized but also flexible enough to talk about what they want to talk about.

### HOW DO WE GET KIDS TO BUY INTO THE TEAM FIRST MENTALITY?

#### Relationships:

Have a relationship with the player so you can talk to them candidly when they make selfish decisions and make them realize they can do better. (Example: Always brag on a "team first" decision that is made to the entire team.)

#### Communication:

You must have a reward/award system, and you must communicate that system to the players. That system must have high incentives for team-first behavior. It is not enough to have a plan – it must be a well communicated plan that is clear to all members of the organization on what is the priority.

#### Present/Delivery:

So you have a good plan to reward team first behavior and you tell the team about it...how did you present it? How did you deliver it to them? You must make this seem like the greatest reward on earth and you have to make it a big deal – remember, it's all in the presentation!!

### HOW DO YOU TAKE OVER A WINNING PROGRAM AND GROW IT?

#### Relationships:

You must build relationships with everyone in the program so they trust that you can take their success and build on. Move forward and not backwards. (Example: Focus on the present and future as much as possible in team meetings and parent meetings. Only praise the past.)

#### Communication:

This is one where you MUST communicate your vision and not just assume people understand you want the team to do better and respect the old regime. You must say it over and over. Put positive things about the past and even better thoughts about the future in your emails, speeches, etc.

#### Present/Delivery:

You must sell these people on why they are lucky to have you. You must show them they had a good team but they could be even better doing it our way. This is all in the sales pitch!

### HOW CAN YOUR AD AND PRINCIPAL HELP YOU MORE?

#### Relationships:

Make sure they trust you and know you want what is best for students. Don't just talk to them when you "need" something. Show genuine care for all aspects of the school. (Example: Ask the admin what you can do to help with school functions: graduation, etc)

#### Communication:

I always sent all things we were doing in football or athletics to the principal. Send them your team policies, coaching responsibilities, etc before they ask for them. Let them know you have a plan and are here to make the place better.

#### Present/Delivery:

When you get your chances to sit down with the administration, make sure you have thought about what you are going to say and you have a clear, concise plan for the meeting. Don't waste their time talking about things neither of you can control.

### HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR TEAM CULTURE BETTER?

#### Relationships:

Talk to players about their personal lives. Don't make it all about the game. Put the team members in situations where they

must talk to each other. Make sure they know you care about them. (Example: Have team discussions and make sure many players contribute)

#### Communication:

Speak it into existence. Talk about your team culture all the time. Communicate that it is something you are building and you want our team culture emphasized. Make sure your vision for the culture improvement is spoken over and over.

#### Present/Delivery:

You can't just say it...you have to come up with some things that present your vision for making our team culture something special. There are plenty of programs out there you can read and analyze and take ideas that fit your school size and demographics.

### HOW DO WE CONVINCE PLAYERS/PARENTS WE'RE HELPING WITH RECRUITING?

#### Relationships:

Build a positive relationship with the player and parents over the course of their time in your program. Show a genuine interest in their success after they leave your team. (Example: Have system in place to check on their recruiting and ask what you can do to help constantly.)

#### Communication:

Set up meetings with them. Make sure you have a structured plan in place to talk to prospective student-athletes and their parents about the ACT/SAT, grades, requirements, sliding scale, etc. No stone unturned in showing that you are willing to help however is necessary.



### **Present/Delivery:**

When you do have these meetings, come in with a presentation that shows you know what you are talking about. If you have info from college coaches directly or connections there, use them. Present yourself as someone familiar with recruiting and the recruiting process.

### **HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH PLAYER DISCIPLINE?**

#### **Relationships:**

You must have the players respect so they will understand the behavior is unacceptable and attempt to do better. This is easier said than done but you have no chance if you don't have their respect. (Example: Show empathy but don't let them "off the hook".)

#### **Communication:**

Discipline must be clear and consistent. If you communicate your expectations, it should not be a big issue to implement those expectations when the time comes. There needs to be consistency in how these procedures are communicated to parents, players, and administration.

### **Present/Delivery:**

It's all in the presentation! Let the player know that you are not punishing them out of anger but out of discipline. Let them know the punishment is designed to help them and not hurt them. You have to show them you care about them but will not accept this behavior.

### **HOW CAN WE INCREASE PARENT PARTICIPATION?**

#### **Relationships:**

You must build relationships with parents in the program and get them to "want" to help you more than "have" to help you. Also make sure their child is promoting your program at home. (Example: Make the program fun so players go home talking about your team positively.)

#### **Communication:**

This is another time where you have to try to "speak it into existence" – you have to let parents know of your expectation and ways they can participate. You may not be able to control if they participate but you can make sure no one doesn't participate because they didn't know what you wanted. Believe it or not, that happens a lot in high school sports. As an AD, I heard a lot of "I will do whatever they want, I just need them to tell me."

### **Present/Delivery:**

You must make the parents feel like we have to have them. When you get in front of them, have a dynamic presentation

that looks at it from their point of view and gives them a feeling of ownership on making this season a success. You can't make them do it "because you said so"...you have to make them "want" to do it!

### **HOW DO WE HANDLE OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON THE PLAYERS?**

#### **Relationships:**

You must have such a good relationship that they don't want to play anywhere else, and they don't believe that anyone has their best interest at heart more than you. Again, easier said than done but without building a relationship you have no chance.

#### **Communication:**

Make your expectations clear on things like trainers, 7 on 7 teams, transferring schools, etc. There are a lot of different opinions on each. I am not offering my opinion here, but I am saying you should offer yours. Be clear. Make sure they know what your expectations are when dealing with these things.

### **Present/Delivery:**

Try hard to make what you are doing the greatest thing going so they want your influence as much, if not more, than many of these other influences. Transferring is a real problem in Georgia. You can't control it all. You can work to make your school the best it can be. I would make sure I presented my school that way.

### **CONCLUSION:**

There is WAY more to being a better relationship builder, communicator, and presenter than what is in this article. However, if you don't understand these three universal answers, all the small details will not help you. Everything comes back to relationships, communication, and delivery.

We have resources that can help you with all of this. Go to our folders and look at all of the items. Download any of the items and you should be able to edit them after the download. Change it to fit your team and make sure you communicate and present the best you can! Let us know if we can help!



# FOOTBALL 101

## HOW TO CAUSE MORE FUMBLES ON DEFENSE



Chris Haddad  
Bellingham HS - MA  
Defensive Coordinator  
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[@chrisvIQtory](#)  
[@vIQtorySports](#)



Fumbling is a science. Offensive players must apply 5 points of pressure at all times, in order to secure the football.

When an offensive player loses one of the 5 points of contact, we can take advantage of it as a defense. When studying film, it's important to understand where the running back lacks, in regards to ball security pressure. This way you can practice attacking that weak point throughout the practice week.

Before we explain how to causes more fumbles, you first have to understand the 5 points of pressure:

Fingers  
Palms  
Forearm  
Bicep  
Chest

When studying running backs on film, it's important to look at where they lack in securing the football.

To start, most high school and college running backs will lose chest and bicep pressure. This is because they are used to running without the football, moving their arms back and forth.



If we notice on film that the player rarely has chest and bicep pressure, our main practice point throughout the week will be to punch over or underneath the arm of the running back. The aiming point for our punch will be the back half of the football, where there is no pressure (see the red X's in the previous picture).

Second, if the player's index finger is on top of the football, rather than splitting his index and middle finger, we will work the rip technique.

The player above has the chest and bicep pressure secured, however, just his index finger is on top of the football. That means he has 80 of the pressure on one side of his hand and only 20% on the other. Our goal is to rip the top of the wrist toward the 20% pressure, where he is weak.



This requires precise film study and sometimes can go unnoticed with poor film quality. However, it can help motivate your players to take the necessary action to strip the football and attack the running back where they are weak.

If you want to learn more, see our [Tik Tok video on this entire process here](#).

If you want to learn more about ball security - [watch this video here](#).

***Have other tendencies  
that you like to teach your  
players? Let us know!  
@viktorysports  
@chrisvIQtory  
We'd love to hear them!***



# OFFENSIVE LINE DRILLS

## OFFENSIVE DRILL: BEND, BANG, BOUNCE



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

**POSITION:** Running Backs and Quarterbacks

**FOCUS:** Teaching outside zone path and bend-bang-bounce technique to running backs & quarterbacks.

**DRILL SET-UP, LANDMARKS, & ROTATION:**  
We utilize trash buckets to simulate our offensive line. We have a bucket for the center, guard, and tackle. We leave a space open at the ghost tight end spot as that is our aiming point for outside zone. The 4th bucket is used to designate where our running back or quarterback needs to bounce outside zone. In the drill diagram, I have used cones to designate where your running backs and quarterback align. We only use cones with our sub-varsity players in the teaching of this drill to help them correctly line up. As your players progress in knowing their landmarks, the cones are not necessary.

We set up a player or coach with a hand shield to simulate the playside linebacker who our running backs and quarterbacks read on outside zone to know if they should bend, bang, or bounce the run.

Not pictured in the diagram, if we have the personnel and numbers to do so we will have a coach or player snap the ball to the quarterback to start the drill. If we do

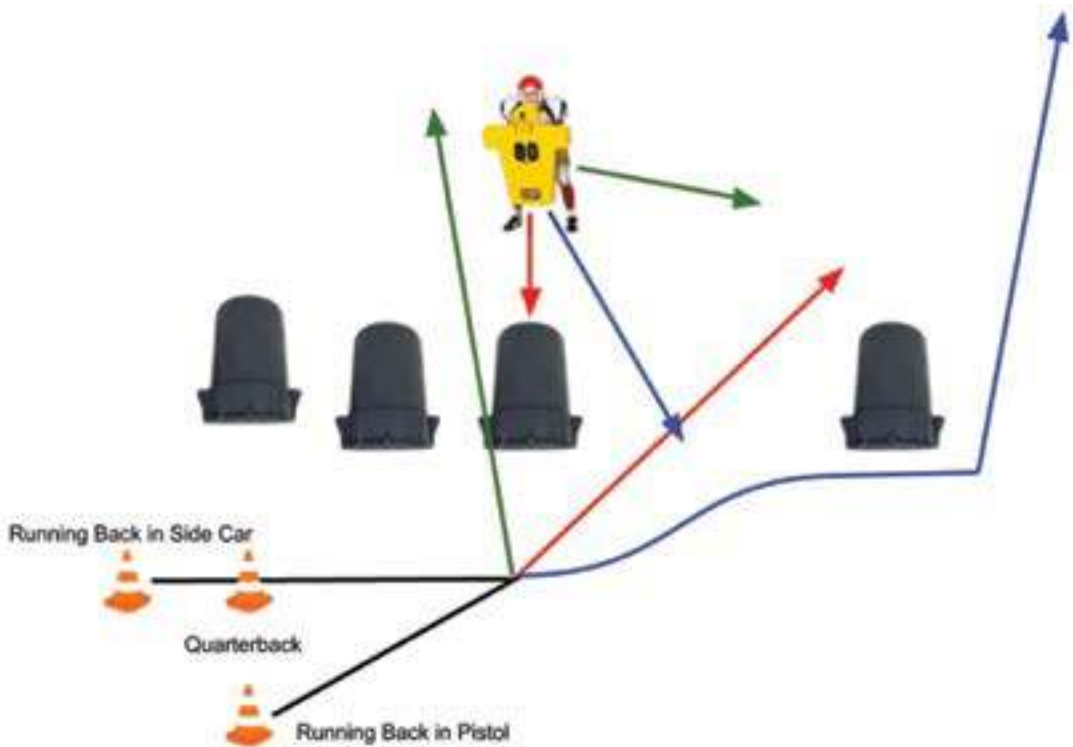
not have the numbers, then our quarterback spins the ball to himself in the air to start the drill.

**COACHING POINTS:**  
As with any good drill that coaches utilize, we stole this drill and adapted it for our own use. I want to give credit where it is due to Coach Malcolm Agnew of North Dakota University who calls this drill Outside Zone Square Drill. You can find a [video on CoachingInsider.com with Coach Agnew explaining his version of the drill here:](#)

We are a pistol based team that reverses out with our quarterback on outside zone so I will be discussing this drill from that perspective. Feel free to adapt the drill to fit your technique.

Our tailback's steps on outside zone from the pistol start with a false step or drop step like Coach Agnew discusses in the video. He then opens and bites the football from the quarterback's reverse hand-off. It is his responsibility to get to the quarterback to get the ball on any mesh that we have. His aiming point is at the tight end or ghost tight end's butt. He takes that path working downhill. We coach our backs to envision they are a train on train tracks headed toward the tight end's butt.

Our tailback should be looking for the playside linebacker designated by the person holding the bag in this drill. How the playside inside linebacker attacks the play is critical to how our running back responds. If the playside inside linebacker fills the C Gap (blue arrows in Diagram 1) then our running back is to press the C gap and then BOUNCE out around the bucket.



We teach the bounce as a jump cut out and around the outside bucket to get clear of the defenders and get outside. We teach our backs to work to the expressway (where people go fast) which for us is outside the numbers.

If the linebacker overruns the outside zone play or doesn't fill then we want our back to BEND the play and find a vertical seam. This is illustrated by the green arrows in Diagram 1. We have found that being in the pistol allows our back to bend the play back to the backside A gap if necessary. It is not as easy when you are in the sidecar alignment. Your back has to almost make a 90 degree turn hence why we have run outside zone from the pistol to be able to access that bend or cutback. Finally, if the linebacker either stays home or fills an inside gap, then we also want our backs to recognize when they should just BANG the outside zone play and hit that open gap. This is illustrated with the red arrows on Diagram 1.

When we begin utilizing this drill, we focus on one skill at a time. We will work Bends for multiple reps before moving on to Bangs and then finally move on to Bounces. As our skill level, technique, and perception improves then we make the drill reactionary and the running back must react to the defender. We do run the drill at less than full speed several times to slow down the thinking process for our backs and allow them to scaffold into doing it correctly. Obviously, we also run the drill both left and right although right is the only direction illustrated in Diagram 1.

Another key coaching point for our backs in outside zone is green grass. As much as we want them to read the linebacker, we do want them to be like a train on train tracks that run right to their aiming point at the butt of the tight end. As the play develops, we coach them to look for green grass and a seam to burst through. That may help as a coaching point if your backs struggle with reading the linebacker. My simplest cues for years for my skill players has been "run away from the bad people" and "Find green grass."

Lastly, we do the same drill to work our quarterbacks in running outside zone with them as the ball carrier. Aiming points and steps are the same as our back, but obviously at a different angle. We will try to incorporate our running back as a lead blocker on our quarterback outside zone so in this drill we have him lead on that playside linebacker. The quarterback reads the linebacker for bend, bang, or bounce and works off of his running backs block.



### SPEAKERS & TOPICS

**TOMMY SHOEMAKER:** WIDESPLITS IN A SPREAD OFFENSE  
**MAX WASHAUSEN:** PROGRAM BUILDING  
**TOMMY GILLERAN:** 49 ROLL PASS  
**JAKE MONDEN:** SINK 2 PASS COVERAGE  
**HARRY WRIGHT:** UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN FBALL & COMM  
**DEERICK SMITH:** UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN WEIGHTROOM  
**B.J. PASCHAL:** COACHING UNDERSIZED ATHLETES

**FREE**



HIDDEN YARDS:  
MAKE SPECIAL  
TEAMS SPECIAL

KICKOFF RULES: 10 COMMANDMENTS OF  
AN EFFECTIVE KICKOFF TEAM



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

1. Take advantage of what the return team is giving you. Do a critical analysis of the kick return team. Find the weakness of their formation, and try hard to exploit that. For instance, if they are simply a middle return team, or have just one returner deep, get the ball to the corners.

2. The kickoff team must have great tacklers on the kickoff team, not just fast guys! The greatest myth of the kickoff team is speed. I disagree. I will take sure tacklers over speed every day of the week.

3. Be careful not to overrun the kickoff. Stay focused on how deep the ball has been kicked, and stay in front of the returner. You never want to chase the ball carrier from behind. This is how you give up touchdowns. If too many kids are chasing the ball, it's going for six.

4. Come to balance upon tackling the ball carrier. This might be the hardest job of the kickoff team member. It takes significant practice to do a great job of slowing down at just the right time. Just like a car going downhill, kickoff team

members must gear down as they get closer to the ball carrier, but don't stop your feet.

5. Gang tackle that returner, every man on the kickoff team needs to be in on the tackle until the whistle blows. Never, ever assume that the tackle is being made just because there are two guys there. GET there yourself!

6. Stay "lane consistent" down the field. Lane consistency is going to vary from team to team depending on their formation, and philosophy. Having said that, the general principle here is not to ever follow the same colored jersey down the field. Doing so will open up lanes for the returner. Lane consistency must be practiced over and over during the week. The coach responsible for coaching the kickoff team will best serve the team by standing downfield, where the returners are, to watch the kickoff team approach the ball. I argue that coaches really miss the boat by standing behind the kickoff team while trying to coach it. Another coach can fill this purpose of making sure that nobody crosses the line too early.

7. Make sure your contain men are "football smart."

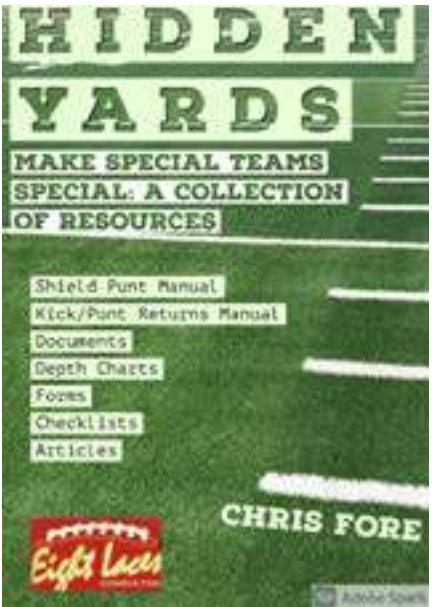
The most important thing about your contain men is that they understand football. If they have never played before, find another place on another unit. These contain men, in my opinion, are the most important players on your kickoff team.

8. If you're blocked and knocked down, get up! You never know what is going to happen on the play. Perhaps there is going to be a reverse, or a throwback. Perhaps a fumble. Don't ever quit on the play. I have seen kids get knocked over on the 42 yard line, and get up, and end up being on the tackle.

9. Do not be offsides! Practice this a lot. You should do "get offs" about 10-12 times per day that you practice with your kickoff team. Get offs consist of just the first 10 yards. Make sure the whole unit takes off at the same time, and that their timing with the kicker is impeccable. If the kicker is kicking the ball, and the kickoff team is three yards behind him, this will affect the coverage of the kick in a negative way.

10. Be organized, and fresh. Try hard to arrange your kickoff team so that nobody from your PAT/FG unit is on it. It just take a little organization. I started doing this a few years ago, and players were very appreciative of it. The only kid on both my PAT/FG unit and kickoff is my kicker.

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



KICKOFF TEAM CHECKLIST:

- 1 Are we on turf or grass this week?
- 2 Which formation should we use?
  - a How does our formation match up?
- 3 What formations do they have?
  - a Strengths of their formations?
  - b Weaknesses of their formations?
  - c Do they favor return one way or another?
  - d How do they block? Man, zone?
- 4 Their returners – Best guy?
  - a What is his speed like?
  - b Does he favor one direction over another?
  - c What type of runner is he?
  - d What position does he play?
  - e Anyone we want to avoid kicking it to?
- 5 Deep kick
  - a Left, Middle or Right?
- 6 Squib Kick
  - a Best target area?
  - b Their personnel – who do we target?
- 7 Onside Kick
  - a Best target area?
  - b Their personnel – who do we target?
  - c Their formation lend way to onside kick?

GAME DAY CONSIDERATIONS

- 1 Field Conditions? Dry? Wet? Mud?
- 2 Wind? Behind us, coming at us, cross?
- 3 Moisture in air?
- 4 Injuries to their returners?
- 5 Field condition in specific place to kick from?



# DEFENSIVE CULTURE & FUNDAMENTALS

## DEFENDING THE RPO WITH THREE SAFETIES



**PJ Gibbs**  
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Head Coach & Recruiting  
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[CoachTube Course Here](#)  
[@coachPJGibbs](#)

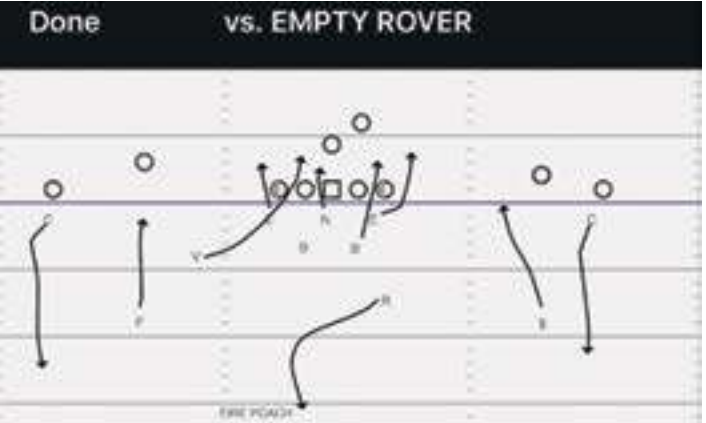
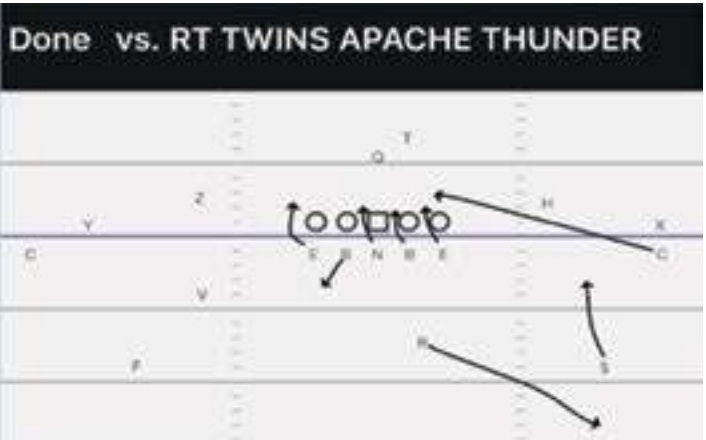
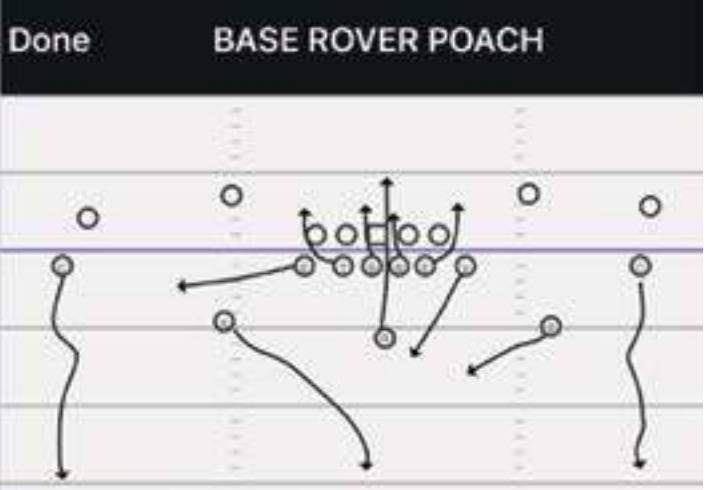
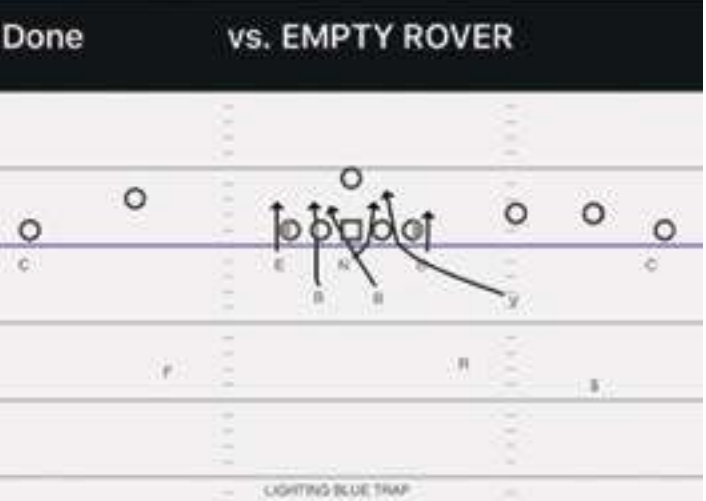
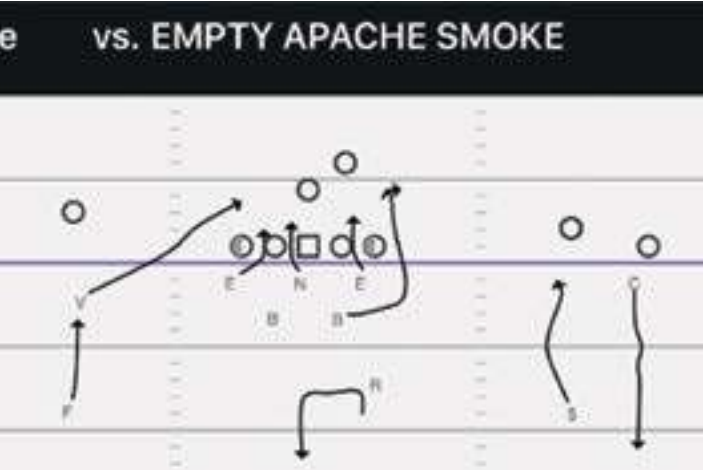
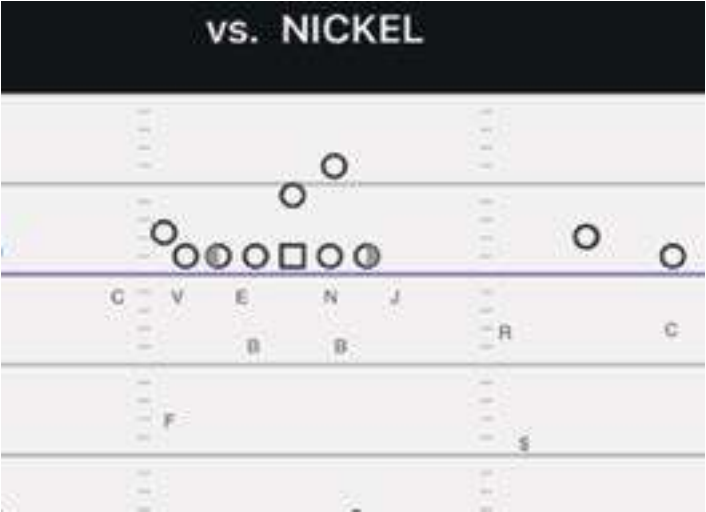
**WHAT IT IS**  
The 3 Safety defense is a great way to combat the ever evolving RPO offense in today's game of

football. It gives an appearance of a light box against the run but also allows your defense to be multiple with your looks and assignments. One of the many reasons this defense can be successful is you will always have a force defender, whether it's the Viper, Trap Corner, LB or Rover. As far as Personnel you can really approach your defensive line from two perspectives. If you have an above average defensive line that is strong, athletic and can hold their ground you can take this approach that Iowa State and Northern Iowa use to a certain extent. Against 10 personnel you will play a Zero technique and two 4 Techniques at the Ends. Once a Y is involved, whether in or out of the core, the ends will shift to 5 Techniques. If it is 10 personnel pistol, the ends will jump into 4i's to help with the Inside Zone. You best players in this defense need to be your Boundary Safety, Viper and your Rover. Your ILB's need to be pluggers because they will always have some from of run support outside of them. Your Viper always goes to the Formation regardless if it's field or boundary. The Rover always lines up of #3 and needs to be able to play the middle of field on certain pressures. If your D-line is undersized, you can line them up in a Zero Technique and two 4 Techniques and move them accordingly.

**HOW ITS HELPED US**  
The 3 Safety Defense was successful during the 2020 International Bowl for the U17 Japanese Team that I was fortunate enough to be asked to be the Head Coach this past January. The Success of the defense against the RPO offense is the appearance of a light box against the run and you are forcing an offense that wants to get the ball in space to either hand it off or hold the ball. Another plus is that you are always adding a bonus defender against the run with the Rover, Viper

or Trap Corner. Coverages we used were Tampa 2 to the Viper Side, Trap away from the Viper and 3 or 2 under with three deep. We also trapped the boundary with our Corner blitz from the boundary. The Corner blitz from the boundary was effective and the Boundary safety would trap the boundary and the Rover would become the 1/2 safety. If you are running it against 3x1 the LB that is not blitzing has to run with #3 Vertical.

**COACHING IT**  
Defensive Line Rules as follows: If is it 10 personnel there are a Zero and two 4 Techniques, if there is a Y in the Core the Ends shift to 5 Techniques. Against 10 Personnel Pistol the ends shift to 4i's. If you have an undersized DL, move them either away from the back or to the back based on your breakdown. The ILB are aligned in 30's but will move base on the formation and where the ball is on the field. If they need to displace they will make a pull call and the direction the are moving. The Viper always goes to the formation regardless if it's in the boundary or to the field. The only time the Viper goes to the field regardless of the formation is if they hear a Thunder Call, meaning we are blitzing the Corner from the Boundary. Coverage wise we are Tampa 2 to the Viper's side and Trap Coverage Away. If we are pressuring we will make a Poach Call, so we are Press/Bail Cover 3 with the Rover becoming the Free Safety. The other safety's are moving on the snap coming down to be the Force/Flat Defenders.



**THE CUES**  
Defensive Line rules depending on what type of DL that you have at your school. If it's 10 personnel, you will play a Zero and two 4 techniques. If there is a Y in the core, whether it's as a TE or an H the ends will shift to 5 techniques. If it is 10 personnel pistol the ends will shift to 4i's to help with the inside zone. The ILB's will be aligned in 30's but will move based on the formation and where the ball is on the field. If they need to displace from the box they will make a pull call to communicate. The Viper always goes to the formation regardless if it's to the field or boundary. The only time the Viper will automatically go to the field is if there is a Thunder call. The Thunder call means that we are running our Corner Blitz from the boundary and are playing Trap Coverage. Coverages that we will play are Tampa 2 to the Viper side and Trap Coverage away from the Viper. If we are running any other pressures, it will be a Poach Call, which is press-bail Cover 3. The Boundary and Field Safety will become the Force/Flat Defenders, Rover becomes the Middle 1/3 and Corners Press-Bail into their 1/3's. We ran everything out of a Tampa 2 look and moved on the snap.

It is imperative that everyone of the defense understands their specific run fit. As a coach you need to put your players in the best position to succeed, and that starts with understanding what type of DL you have to run this defense. If you don't have guys that can hold up in their gaps then you need to use your speed and quickness. Line up to all the formations you are seeing and keep it simple for your kids. If you keep it simple they will play fast and execute at a high level. Always have a plan if you see 12 personnel, it will really give you an issue because of the extra gaps. Make sure to go through a blitz period and discuss the landmarks you want your players to get to against the run and pass. Especially the trap players and force/flat defenders because you are trying to hold the Tampa 2 look as much as possible pre-snap. The is a great defense against Spread RPO, it forces them to make decisions that they would not normally make, in the end make the game plan simple and your kids will play fast and execute.





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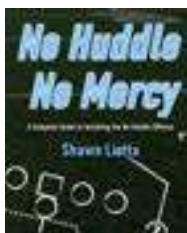
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# NO HUDDLE NO MERCY

## TURBO CHARGE YOUR OFFENSIVE PRACTICES



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

It is imperative when implementing an uptempo no-huddle system that you are very organized in how you practice and install

the offense. As I have expanded upon several times in previous articles, at this point we have worked to create a "play fast" culture throughout our program. This will never be as apparent as when we hit the practice field for training camp. Every single period of our practice is geared towards getting our athletes ready to play fast and win big on Friday nights.

### How We Practice to Play Fast

When initially utilizing this mindset to your practice structure it may be a shock to the system for some. Both players and coaches may be used to the traditional sense of practice where often times players will stand around while a coach calls a play off a long script, then call the play in the huddle and then execute the play. This process during a team period of a traditional practice is often repeated time and time again as the coach shouts out "run that one again", or worse yet the entire practice is stopped while an offensive line coach goes on a 10 minute dissertation with one of his players about a missed block. If you stand back and evaluate how you are using your practice time you will probably realize that you are wasting a lot of your time out on the practice field, standing around, talking, and not getting your team better at

football which is the ultimate goal of practice. Efficiency, organization, and setting a pace for your practices will allow you to be able to get an increased amount of reps for your players in a shorter amount of time.

### Practice at Such a Pace the Game Feels Slow

We will practice at such a breakneck pace that often our players will feel that the game feels slow on Friday nights. We will constantly be ready to go with the next play-call and the ball spotted ready to attack. This allows players to get conditioned to operating at an extreme uptempo pace. Remember it is always easier to "slow down" the pace then it is to "play fast". Set an extreme pace and if you need to "pump the brakes" a bit during a period to slow the pace of practice down you will be able to easily accomplish that.

### Shorter Practices

If you are able to enhance the tempo of your practices and make them more efficient, you will in-turn be able to shorten the overall length of your practices. This allows your players to have fun and practice and makes them feel less like work. Our players enjoy coming out to practice everyday because we are providing a fun learning environment for them. By incorporating our conditioning into the pace of our practice, there is no more lining up to run sprints or gassers at the conclusion of practice. Music blasts from speakers at our practice field, players smile, laugh and learn. Simply put, we try to foster a fun environment that kids want to be a part of every day. The shorter practices

allow your players to enjoy a life outside of football, have more time at home for homework, get home to have dinner with their families, and not feel like attending practice is a chore or a punishment despite the hard work that is taking place.

### Coach on the Move

We never want our coaches standing around at practice. To maximize how you need to practice this system your coaches will have to coach up on the move. This means potentially jogging back to the line of scrimmage with a player in between plays and utilizing film and meetings as a teaching tool. When we are in any kind of a group or a team period we do not want to stop the entire period and slow things down to make corrections. Our practices are structured so that our coaches will take notes of any mistakes and will "clean-up" those mistakes during their next individual or group period at practice. If a period is a 5 minute blitz period running 3 (4) play racks of plays (12 plays). That is the number of plays we want to have executed in that period good or bad. We will use time later in the practice session to correct mistakes made during this period. We do not want the period extended or delayed for any reason. The practice schedule needs to continue to flow with our tempo.

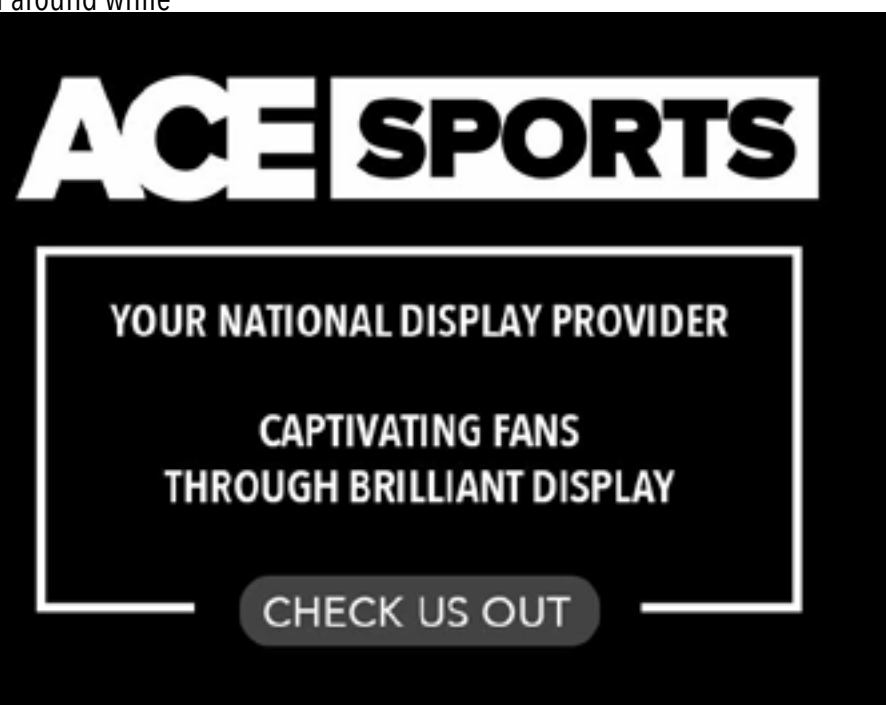
### No Playbooks

We have no actual physical playbook in our offense, and these often find their way to a desk drawer or scattered on the floor of your locker room. Simply put I have found that players do not study them as much as we think that they are. An extensive manual for our quarterbacks exists that I revealed to you in an earlier chapter, but that book is more of an examination of defensive alignments. We will give our players handouts and ask them to complete pre-game tests at times. We do provide our players will receive blank sheets of mechanical graph design paper that they can take notes during meetings to compile their own notebooks on the offense. These mechanical graph sheets will allow players to be very detailed and specific in their alignments and responsibility as each of the blocks on the mechanical graph paper are 1 square yard. The entire field dimensions and landmarks are mapped out on this paper so that players will have a complete understanding of their alignments and the landmarks of the field.

Our players also have access to a video playbook that consists of the entire offense in a video format that they can access and view cut ups of all of the plays that are being run. I believe that this is important for players that are visual learners to be able to have this resource to study. As coaches we have to understand the importance of teaching to our players who have grown up in a video game era. They are used to consuming and digesting media in this type of format rather than on a static piece of paper and we need to utilize this as a teaching tool to our advantage.

The teaching process for our offensive installation will include meeting time with potential handouts and note taking. This includes a complete review of the video playbook installs for that day including cut-up teaching video. We follow this up with on-field run through of the play concepts being installed while we are physically out there on the practice field. This allows us to reach players who have varied learning styles through written, visual, and physically running through all of the play designs.

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





DEFENSIVE  
STRUCTURE  
STEMMING IN THE PANTHER DEFENSE



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

"Stemming" is one of the hot trends going on defensively in today's game. I've been a proponent of it since visiting with the University of Washington staff in the early 90's while at Santa Margarita Catholic High School in So Cal. As a DC, I have been having defenses stem since 1994. I still believe it gives more problems to the offense and its coaches than blitzing does. Anytime I can make those offensive linemen pause to think or recalculate their assignment we gain an advantage. Stemming is one of the sophisticated aspects of our defense. I shared with all of you in my last article our two Base Fronts - 40/Even and 50/Odd. I'm sure many of you giggled and said "That's it?". They are basic defensive Fronts that coaches have been running my entire 35-year career. I agree with that assessment! However, our defense becomes much more difficult when out of our 43 Base or 53 Base we stem to something else once the Quarterback starts his cadence. I believe our ability to stem from a Front to another variation of that Front or to a completely different Front creates a real advantage for us on the Line of Scrimmage.

As I stated in a previous article we are a multiple gap control defense that uses two primary base Fronts - 40/Even and 50/Odd. Each of these two bases are tied to at least two to three different variations for each base defense. The top diagram is the base we went over in the last article. The two variations are the Fronts underneath the base.



Here is another way to look at it, or how we list them in our playbook:

<b>40 Base</b>	
Variations	40 Husky - Stud in 7 tech 40 Weak - DL is shaded away from strength call 40 Anchor - Sam in C Gap and Stud 9 tech deny TE a release* *Not shown
<b>50 Base</b>	
Variations	50 Hawkeye - Double Eagle/3 techs 50 Okie - T & E in 5 tech 50 Eagle - End is in 3 tech to weak side* *Not shown

**How are the defensive stemming calls made?**  
Terminology and simplicity are important for us here. We want short calls so they can be echoed accurately

on field. So here is how we do it, going from simple to complex:  
\*To go from a Base to a variation we simply call variation - 43 Husky. This tells everyone up front they are starting in base 40 and stemming/moving to 40 Husky look.

\*To go from a variation to Base we simply use tag "Riverside" - 43 Husky Riverside. This tells everyone we are lining up in Husky and stemming/moving to 40 Base look.

- Examples:
- 53 Hawkeye - Line up in Base 50 - DT and DE on move call will stem to 3 tech.
  - 43 Weak - Line up in Base 40 - DL moves to shade away from strength call on move call.
  - 53 Okie Riverside - Line up in variation 50 Okie - DT and DE on move call will stem/move to 4:techs

\*To go from Base 40 to Base 50 or vice versa we simply add a number to the call. 5-43 tells everyone they are lining up in Base 50 and stemming /moving to Base 43.

\*To go from one Base to another Base variation is done the same way. 4-53 Hawkeye tells everyone they are lining up in Base 40 and stemming/moving to 53 Hawkeye.

- Examples:
- 4-53 - Line up in Base 40 and on move call stem to Base 53.
  - 5-43 Husky - Line up in Base 50 and on move call stem to variation 43 Husky.
- If we do not want to stem we simply call one of our two Bases.

\*To line up directly in variation, without stemming or moving to it, we simply tag "Now" on the end of the call.

- Examples:
- 43 - Line up and play Base 43.
  - 53 Eagle Now - Line up and play variation 53 Eagle.

**When do we stem/move?**  
Our Mike Backer who sets the Front 7 strengths calls also tells our defensive line when to "move". We start our young or inexperience Mikes to make the "move" call when Quarterback slides his hands underneath the center or if in Gun, when he starts his cadence. As they get older and more experienced this move call will come a little later based on scouting reports, or us sneaking a peek before the game. We tell our linemen if they get caught it's a "slow" slant. Slow meaning hunker down to short, choppy steps and do NOT get washed. If they feel they are losing gap or position go to a knee and cause a wreck. Our kids who play against our veer blocking schemes get plenty of practice at getting double teamed or washed by the offensive line. We also say "slow" because if he goes too hard and out of control he will get washed for sure.

**How do we install or get it all in?**  
This is where the structure of our little program comes in. WE have a year round morning weight-lifting and training class. Starting in April two to three times a week for 10 minutes we do "Wooden Chair Drills" except we call it our "Can Drill". We set up 6 cans or 5 cans in the gym and have our Front 7 learn, review, re-learn and re-review until the 2 Bases are in each with two to three variations and the ability to stem to them. This is usually by our first game.

**How much of our defense is stemming?**  
We had our very best team in my career here in Gold Beach in 2007. We won the State Title over a perennial power the Vale Vikings - 42-0. During this season stemming was almost 40% of the defensive calls and maybe 50% in the State title game. But on the average year we stem between 30 and 40% with our defense. Combine this with us blitzing or other stunts that we use between 15 to 20%, and we are in something other than Base 35 to 60% of the time defensively.



DEFENSIVE  
RESOURCES  
TEACHING PURSUIT



Adam Gaylor  
Jenks HS - Oklahoma  
2020 State Champions  
Defensive Coordinator  
[Coach Tube](#)  
[@CoachAdamGaylor](#)

A difficult aspect in coaching defense is properly training your players to pursue the football. In doing so, we stress the importance of effort and pursuit by defining what is and what is not 100% max effort. Along with teaching a variety of pursuit drills, we will emphasize effort and pursuit during every group and team drill. Effort is a part of our culture and we must coach and emphasize it daily.

**PURSUIT: GETTING TO THE BALL ON ANY AND EVERY PLAY!!**  
PURSUIT IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF DEFENSIVE FOOTBALL  
Pursuit is an all-out effort of running to the football with proper leverage and angles. Swarm the Football!!!

**WHAT PURSUIT DOES:**  
Eliminates long touchdowns and big plays.  
Discourages your opponents – especially the ball carrier.  
Helps to cover any possible mistakes in our defense (help your teammate).  
Makes you the best team defense in the country.

**WHAT IT TAKES TO PURSUE:**  
Pursuit is first a mental process (If you want to, you can).  
Visualize pursuing and making great plays (be a big play guy).  
Physical conditioning is necessary so you can have great pursuit on each play (must get to every play, no matter where you are).  
Speed (think fast and think quickly). We can all improve our speed and quickness.

**HOW TO PURSUE:**  
Play your responsibility first.  
Take correct course to the ball (proper angles and leverage).  
Want to get there (mental).

YOU WILL BE GRADED ON EFFORT:

Slow or speed up is a loaf (change of speed).  
Anything less than 100% effort up to the whistle is a loaf.  
Lying on the ground is a loaf.  
Not turning and running to the football is a loaf.  
Getting passed up by another player is a loaf.

### THE 3 ELEMENTS OF A LOAF

**BURST:** NOTICEABLY CHANGING SPEED AT THE MOMENT OF RECOGNITION. A GOOD BURST COMES WITH GOOD BODY LEAN.

**SPEED:** MOVING AT THE TOP SPEED THAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE.

**FINISH:** COMPLETING EVERY PLAY WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY.

➤ IF ANY OF THESE ELEMENTS IS MISSING THEN YOU ARE NOT MEETING THE EXPECTATIONS OF OUR DEFENSE.

➤ IF ALL THREE OF THESE ELEMENTS ARE MISSING

### IT IS A LOAF.

CONE PURSUIT

**“FASTBALL STARTS”**  
(UGA Pursuit)  
The defense aligns to a formation

The ball is snapped and QB (Coach) throws bubble or now screen or quick game.

The defense runs around a cone 15 yards downfield, get the call from the signaler, and get lined back up for the next snap.

Repeat with a different formation 4 times.

Can card up the plays for scouts to run for more of a realistic, faster look.

### FASTBALL STARTS (UGA PURSUIT)

1ST REGULAR: 4 PLAY SEQUENCE  
2ND REGULAR: 4 PLAY SEQUENCE  
3RD NICKEL/DIME/SPEED: 4 PLAY SEQUENCE

1ST REGULAR: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

2ND REGULAR: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

3RD NICKEL/DIME/SPEED: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

1ST REGULAR: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

2ND REGULAR: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

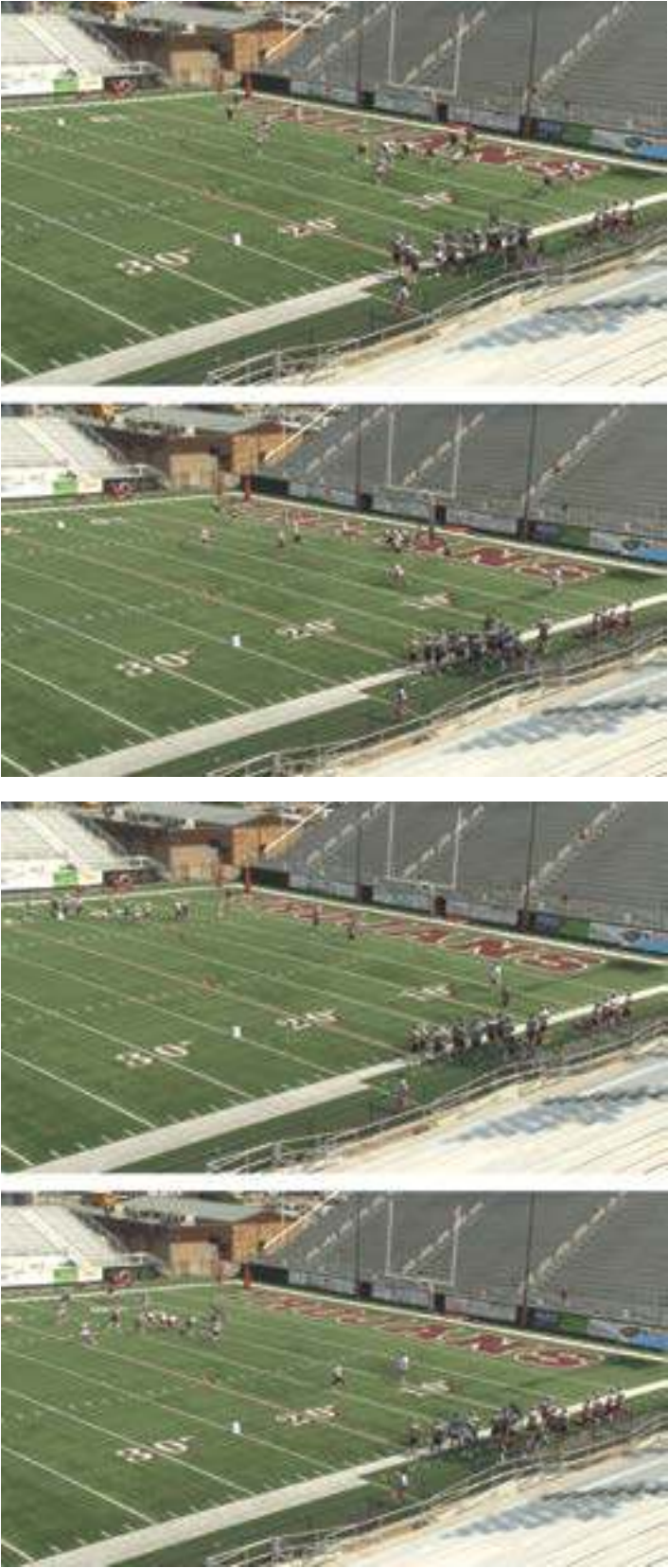
3RD NICKEL/DIME/SPEED: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

1ST REGULAR: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

2ND REGULAR: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

3RD NICKEL/DIME/SPEED: ALL DEFENSIVE PLAYERS BETWEEN BACKSET LINE PURSUIT

**“PURSUIT IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF DEFENSIVE FOOTBALL**  
**Pursuit is an all-out effort of running to the football with proper leverage and angles.**  
**Swarm the Football!!!”**





OFFENSIVE  
RESOURCES  
GOAL SETTING FOR OFFENSE



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

As a coach I frequently visit high school and college facilities and I am always looking for something to bring back to my program. One of the constants I saw around most programs were goal boards for Offense, Defense and Special Teams. I

had always been a huge fan of personal goal setting so it made sense to begin goal setting for the three phases of our program. Here is an image of our goal board:



It is a pretty simple design with the opponents listed on top and goals on the left. The middle portion is to indicate if the goal is met.

Most everyone thinks goal setting is a good idea, but what should your offensive goals be? As I traveled to all these other programs, I noticed every team's goals were different. The #1 goal on all of our program's boards is WIN. This is a show of unity with all phases of the games and no matter what each side of the ball accomplishes, you must win the game. I have been a part of 50-56 losses and 6-7 loses. It is very easy for the offense or the defense to claim the loss wasn't their fault based on score, but the truth is everyone lost. The #1 goal has to be winning for all phases of the game.

The rest of the offensive goals should be unique to your situation but ultimately lead to the #1 goal, winning. When I first decided to build my goal board, I was fortunate enough to have access to all the game film and statistics of our entire program. We have only been in existence since 2003. So I began to dive into our history and really look at what determined winning and losing. We used 75% as our standard. So if this happened, then we won 75% of those games. Here are the goals that our staff developed:

- #1 WIN
- #2 Score 28 Points
- #3 Score on first drive of the half
- #4 Win First Down (3+ yards average)
- #5 Win Third Down (40%)
- #6 Win Fourth Down (75%)
- #7 6 Big Play(15+ yards on a run, 25+ yards on a pass)
- #8 Protect the Ball
- #9 No preventable penalties

Some of your goals may be drivers of your system. For instance, we were a fast paced no huddle offense, so we set a goal of running 100 plays a game at one point. I had little statistical analysis to support that this would help us win, but it helped us drive home to our players the importance of moving fast. I have seen some teams that really focus on ball control offense and want to include it in their goal setting.

As you study and develop your goals, you will find some universal truths: Scoring, Explosive Plays and Field Position all lead to winning. For us an explosive play is a run over 15 and a pass over 25. Your goals will likely be directly tied to these 3 items. One specific example is we focus on MONEY DOWNS (3rd and 4th downs) in our goal setting, because as we convert them it helps us move down the field and score or help us win the field position battle.

These goals should be direct indicators of winning and in your offensive meetings your players should be able to see the correlation between winning and meeting goals. The more you give attention to the goals, then the more likely your players are to buy into them. It can be a simplified visual representation of what you have done in a game or season.

The other huge benefit of goal boards is that coaches can use them to develop game and practice plans. If your goal board indicates that you are not doing well with money downs, then you may need to add practice segments where those are emphasized. Perhaps you need to evolve your money down play calling. There are many ways to look at goals and allow them to influence your offense. If you are willing to do the work and develop the goals that are relevant to your program, then it can directly lead to more wins.

*“The more you give attention to the goals, then the more likely your players are to buy into them. It can be a simplified visual representation of what you have done in a game or season.”*

*“If you are willing to do the work and develop the goals that are relevant to your program, then it can directly lead to more wins.”*

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# PRACTICAL ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

## STAYING MOTIVATED AS A STRENGTH COACH



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

As strength and conditioning professionals we spend the majority of our day trying to get the most out of our athletes and pushing them to grow physically as well as mentally. While doing all of this we can often times lose ourselves and lose our own motivation for our training or life goals. The best way that I have found to stay motivated as a professional is to block out time for yourself to enjoy interest outside of strength and conditioning, purchase programs from other coaches in terms of your own training, and to set and share attainable goals with your athletes and peers.

Having interest outside of strength and conditioning is one of the best things I would recommend to a young strength coach. It is great to be locked in and motivated to learn more within the strength and conditioning realm however it is also just as important in my mind to be able to disassociate from the strength and conditioning world and establish other interest and hobbies. This will keep you from burning out and allow you to escape on days where things don't go according to plan. Rather it be fishing, hunting, hiking, working on cars or whatever else it may be its important to have an outlet away from the weight room. I often find when I'm on the water fishing and not thinking about strength and conditioning that I have some of my best thoughts and innovative ideas with regards to our program and our athlete's development. I keep a notes tab on my phone for these exact moments to reflect on them and put them to use later on.

After programming for various sport teams and individual clients the last thing we often want to do is program for ourselves with regards to our own training. I have found that purchasing programs from other coaches not only helps me spend less time in front of a computer programming but also

allows me to learn new accessory movements and rep schemes that I wouldn't normally program for myself. This leads to growth as a professional as you now get outside your comfort zone and acquire new knowledge in which you can begin to implement with your program. While I was aware of unilateral training and its importance I had hardly done any unilateral movements within my training for myself which meant I lacked a variety of unilateral training within my teams training for the teams that I work with. Once I began to explore these variations myself and see their benefits I began to program them for our team sports more. It's also important from an accountability perspective, I'm much less likely to skip or something someone else programmed for me than something I programmed for myself.

It is also important in terms of staying motivated to share your goals with your athletes that you coach. When my athletes set goals I set goals alongside them and share my goals openly with them. They will hold you accountable in the same matter that you hold them accountable. I recently shared with my athletes that it is my goal to clean 405lb and there isn't a day that goes by that they are not asking me about it. This provides motivation for me not only intrinsically within myself but also from the aspect of not wanting to let my athletes down.

These current times are extremely stressful within the strength and conditioning world however if we look at what we can control during these times and maximize the benefits that these times provide we can begin to develop a plan to push forward for ourselves, our companies/schools and our athletes. Use these times to learn more about your craft, develop a hobby outside of strength and conditioning, learn and try new training methodologies and set and share goals with your peers and athletes.

### ***WAYS TO STAY MOTIVATED:***

***1) BLOCK OUT TIME FOR YOUR INTERESTS  
OUTSIDE OF STRENGTH & CONDITIONING***

***2) SEEK PROGRAMS FROM OTHER COACHES  
IN TERMS OF YOUR OWN TRAINING***

***3) SET AND SHARE ATTAINABLE GOALS WITH  
YOUR ATHLETES AND PEERS***

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**GUEST WRITER**  
ALWAYS RULES FOR DEFENSES



Mike Wilson  
Head Coach  
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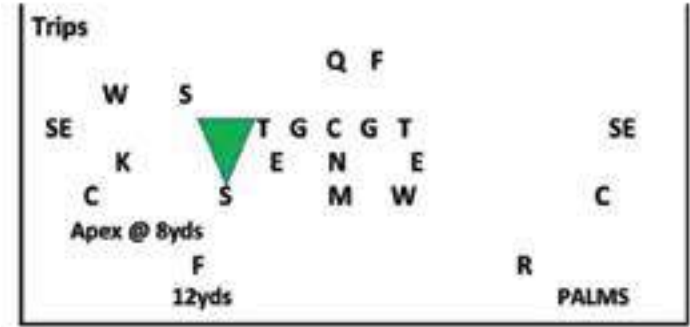
Coaching high school football over the last 17 years, I have learned many things the hard way. I have tried to adjust too much, tried to stop everything, go to clinics and tried to copy what the leading college coaches have done. Everything looks good on a whiteboard but it comes down what can your kids understand and execute? You must be able to teach the scheme, technique, and fundamentals to your kids effectively. Again, it's not what we know – it's what the players know and understand. I have coached at small and large schools and that is a different world as well. Coaching larger schools could have players that were able to concentrate on one side of the ball and handle a lot more scheming. Small school football involved players that played both sides and needed them to execute on both offense and defense.

Through my many mistakes – defense comes down to tackling and pursuit. Our philosophy on defense regardless of scheme has been to line up properly, know your assignment, and attack. This has been known as our three A's – Alignment, Assignment, and Attack. These are non-negotiables and it does not matter what defense that you chose to run. Do what your personnel does best.

Built on these non-negotiables, I have come to learn that high school aged players must have ALWAYS RULES that are taught from day one. There are some formations, plays, and situations that dictate that rules must be applied. It is better to be lined up properly and make an offense beat you instead of trying to be the smartest person in the room and trick the opposing offense.

These rules come down in our how will you treat Trips, Empty, and Unbalanced. I have varied the alignments and assignments year to year but I have always had rules for these formations. Over the last few years, we have simplified our defense by divorcing our front from the secondary. Our secondary does the adjusting and our front gets to keep its aggressiveness.

**Defending Trips**  
Diagram 1 – TRIPS ADJUSTMENT



STRESS ADJUSTMENT (CV 3 to the Trips/2 Read Away)

Our Trips adjustment is an automatic always rule – this will allow us to be in the proper call. If possible, we try to install two adjustments to Trips and use the best one based on film breakdown.

As we become efficient with our rules within the defense, we will build in a no check call, especially when we are looking to be aggressive. There are usually one words calls and we are bringing 7 with cover zero behind it.

The following are rules that are taught from day one:

- With no TE, the strength is set to trips.
- The SAM because he has a wide #3 receiver, makes an "OUTLAW CALL" and APEXS between #3 and the EMOL & Reads # 3.  
\*Outlaw= OUT
- The Corner to the Trips is Apex between 1 & 2 @ 8yds, reads 3-2-1, Force the Most Deepest Outside (MOD) throw.
- The FS is 12 yds inside # 3, Keys 3-2-1, 3 Runs Vertical = Man
- The Hawk lines up inside # 2 and Reads # 2
- Meanwhile the front runs the blitz that was called unless a "NO CHECK TAG" was added to the call.
- If the formation is into the boundary – our Sam would not have to Apex and we would not over rotate to the boundary.

**Defending Empty**

How do you handle empty?

We have always debated this on any staff that I have been a

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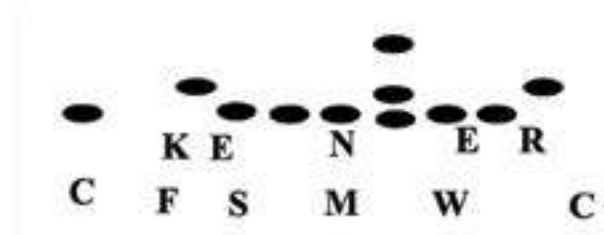
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part of over the years. We have decided that in our game plan meeting to decide if a team minors or majors in Empty. We are going to teach two checks (if possible) to our kids and pick them week to week based on is our opponent a minor or a major in empty. Our Empty adjustment could be as simple as playing cover zero with pressure if they minor in it and the QB isn't a running threat. We could play our 2-Read (Palms) coverage across the board and like our interior 6 handle the pressure. There are many ways to handle empty but you need to decide what they are going to be and teach them. You have to avoid becoming a defense of the week that doesn't rely on any rules for your kids.

### Defending Unbalanced

#### NOC CALL

NOC, or "New Offensive Center" is a strategy we use vs. an Unbalanced formation. The LB's and the Secondary need to see the formation and shout out, "unbalanced, unbalanced, NOC Left, NOC Left" while the secondary adjusts the coverage, as needed. As per our plan, we adjust, but we run the stunts and the coverage called, UNLESS THE GAME PLAN DICTATES otherwise.



What is unbalanced? This is probably one of the toughest questions that you will get from your players. We always consider it - when four offensive players are on the LOS past the center. With the Wing-T quite prevalent in Southern New Jersey - the formation above is quite common. If teams do not fix the numbers issue - teams will attack you all day. There are many ways of combatting an unbalanced set and out of the 3-4, we have also walked up our SS in a 12 Technique and slanted to the unbalanced instead of the NOC call. The key is to have an answer to unbalanced and teach it.

### Other Rules for defense

A defense needs to have rules that can take care of situations as they arise throughout the season. You want to avoid having a defense of the week - teach techniques and fundamentals all season.

For instance, our ILB's are taught on ANY QB sprint/roll out that the play side inside linebacker will always force the QB.

Are you going to squeeze or spill kick out blocks? This is important - your players must know what you are trying to do. In our defense, we want to stop the North/South run and spilling all pullers and blockers allow us to keep things going east/west and use our run fits and speed to secure tackles.

What are your secondary alignment rules? What do you want your corners to do if a receiver tries and takes them beyond the numbers? How do you want your corners to align in tight or nasty splits by the receivers? How does your Cover 3 Free Safety align if the ball is on a hash? How about goal line situations? Our Secondary will never line up inside the End Zone - we pride ourselves in playing aggressive man coverage or match- up zone in the Red Zone.

How do you handle a trading Tight End? Do you move the entire defense? Do you trade one for one?

How do you handle an offense that changes their strength after your ILB's made their call? Our rule has always been stick with the call - we rather have all 11 executing the same call.

Do not ever try to fix one mistake by making another! For instance, what happens, if the Free Safety makes the wrong the coverage call? Your corner should not try and fix it. Again, we would rather have all 4 executing the same call and not 4 defenders executing different schemes. In our defense the FS oversaw the secondary and the Mike oversaw the Front - nobody could override them right, wrong, or indifferent.

Do not ever hesitate! - if you made the wrong call, wrong alignment, blitz when you shouldn't have - go full speed! Effort might make a play - going half speed can get you hurt or someone else hurt.

Blitz-Peel - our players are taught if anyone crosses your face on a blitz - peel with him!

Turnovers - On an interception - we do NOT block offensive linemen. Our skill kids including LB's better can make a OL miss.

### Conclusion

Once the lights turn you do NOT want your defenders thinking - you want them playing fast. Always rules allow them to play fast and aggressive. You need an identity on defense and having rules will allow you to develop a philosophy. These are just suggestions and not every solution is for everyone - these are just rules that have worked well for us in the past.

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Defense is all about Alignment, Assignment, and Attacking the offense. By building always rules in your defense - you will be able to achieve that.

Drill the fundamentals and the rest will take care of itself. Defense is still about good tackling and good pursuit. Tackling must be taught - what are you teaching? Do NOT take it for granted. Pursuit must be taught by the players understanding their run fits -they must understand where they fit according to the run play. Do not have them simply run to a cone on the side-line, teach them football.

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