

# CHAPTER 19: RUNNING BACK, QUARTERBACK, RECEIVER DRILLS

## TRIPLE OPTION DRILL PROGRESSION

### Introducing the Dive Phase (Figure 222)

Splitting the triple option into smaller component parts is important when first installing the Tex-Bone offense. The first element to teach is quarterback and fullback coordination. We begin this chapter with teaching the dive path without any reads. This allows the quarterback and the fullback to learn how to step without any external distractions.

The dashed line players in the illustrations are excluded from the drill and all the solid line players are included in the drill. We like to use a commercially bought offensive line spacers for our placeholders.

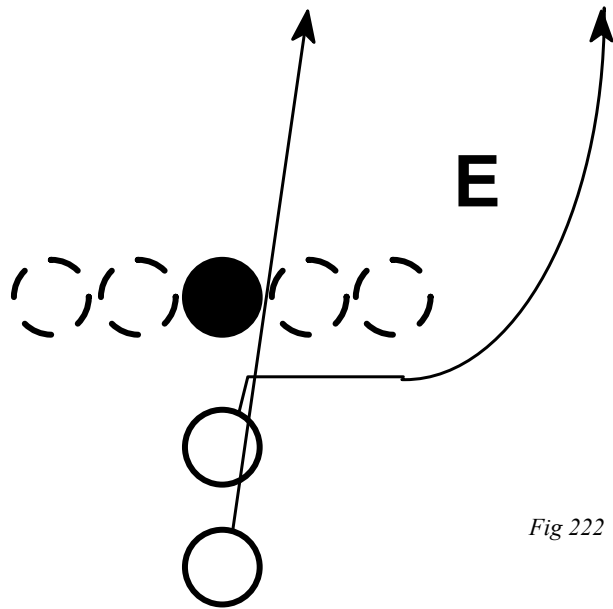


Fig 222

### Adding the Dive Key (Figure 223)

Once the quarterback and fullback are comfortable with the mesh we add in the dive key. Coaching point: additional parts of the play are not added at this time. We practice the dive key from both pistol and offset running back alignments.

The quarterback is learning to make the decision to keep the ball or give to the fullback at this stage of progression. Coaching point: remember, the fullback gets the football unless he is going to get tackled by the dive key.

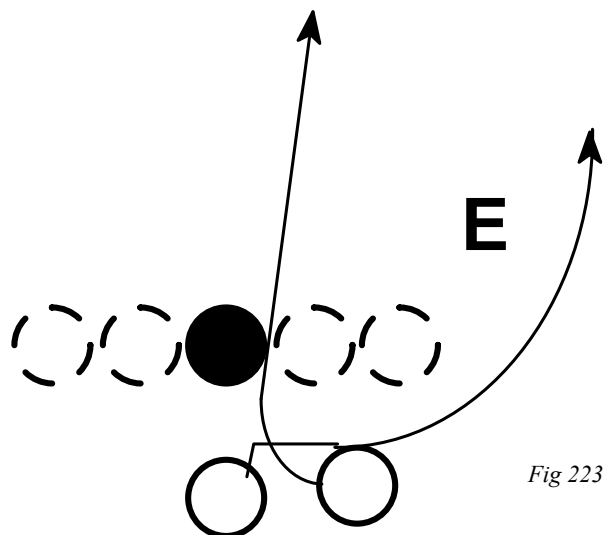


Fig 223

### Introducing the Pitch Key (Figure 224)

The pitch key is introduced once the dive phase is performed well by the quarterback and the fullback. This drill does not use a pitch back—the quarterback runs through the alley each time because the pitch key is told to always cover the pitch. Coaching point: this phase of learning is an important piece of quarterback development. We are teaching the quarterback to attack the alley after he pulls the ball from the dive. The quarterback must understand that in the pitch phase the ball is his unless threatened by the pitch key.

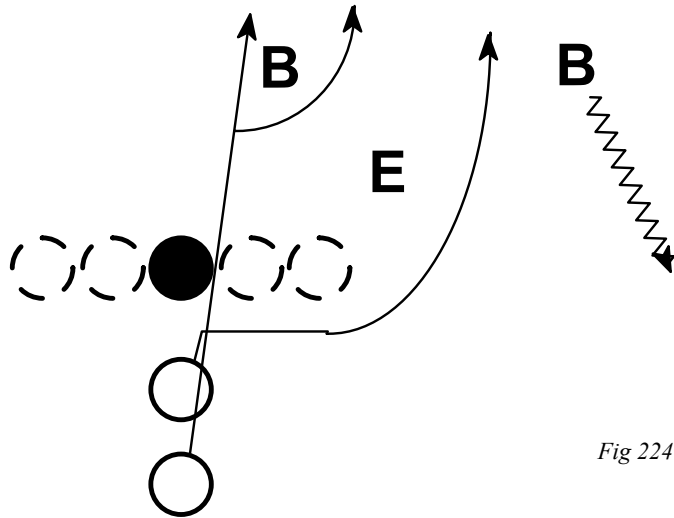


Fig 224

The fullback learns to cut off of the block after he receives the ball on the dive. Coaching note: instruct the dive key to mix up the read keys. He cannot always give a pull key to the quarterback. The quarterback must learn to transition his eyes from the dive key to the pitch key. Adding a secondary read for the fullback is also an option. This secondary read is the block on the play side linebacker.

### Introducing the Pitch Back - The Full Triple Option Drill (Figure 225)

Introducing the pitch back is the next step after the quarterback understands how to read the dive key and gets his eyes on the pitch key. Adding the pitch back allows you to run a full triple option play with both a dive phase and the pitch phase.

The illustration shows the pitch player as a wing a on the backside of the play. Coaching point: there are many more options in terms of pitch player alignment for the Pitch Back drill. (These looks are discussed later in the chapter.)

The drill begins with the fullback and quarterback dive mesh. The quarterback reads the dive key for a give or pull read. The fullback then reads his secondary key in terms of cutting off the play side linebacker at the second level. The quarterback attacks the alley if he keeps the ball after the dive phase.

Coaching point: in this drill the pitch key either widens to take the pitch back or runs to the alley and forces the quarterback to make the pitch.

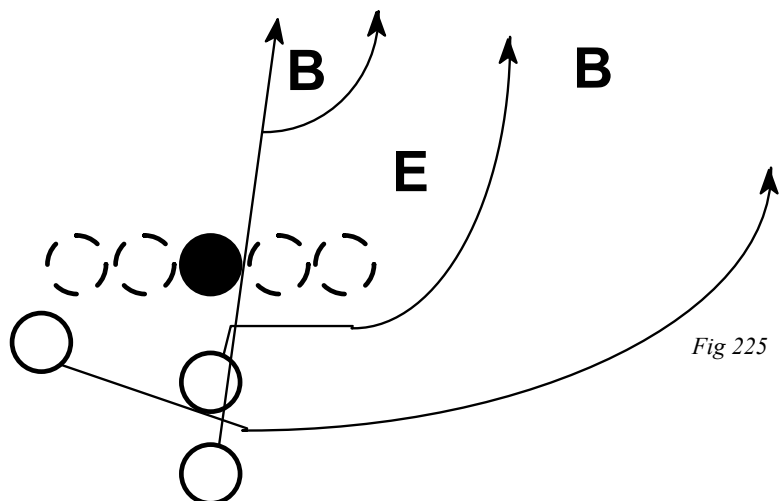
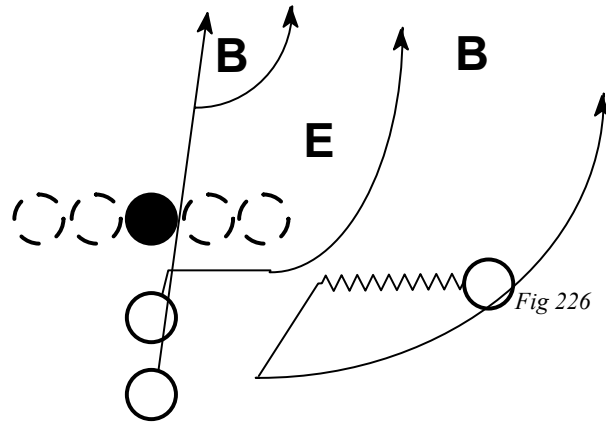


Fig 225

### Introducing Backfield Actions & Motions (Figure 226)

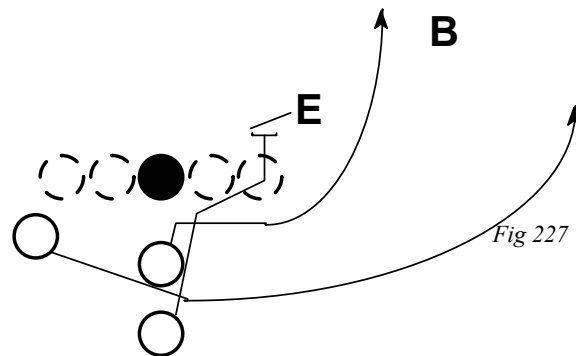
Adding various backfield actions and motions are possible once your players are proficient at the full triple option drill detailed previously. The preseason is a great opportunity to put in some of the actions you anticipate running throughout the season. This gives you practice time for backfield actions and motions during game week as opposed to losing time teaching individual skills.



Coaching point: the coaches or players that serve as the dive key and pitch key in all of our triple option drills receive explicit instructions as to what they do. Allowing dive and pitch keys to randomly develop is also an option. Coaches are best served to instruct players to execute specific keys when practicing for a specific opponent overall.

### Fullback Load Drill (Figure 227 and 228)

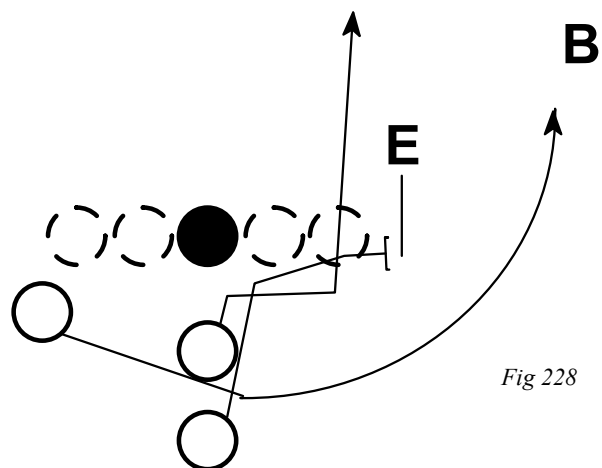
The next practice progression is to run the Full Triple Option drill with a fullback load. Our fullback load assigns the fullback to block the dive key. We enter the pitch phase of triple option once this happens.



The quarterback takes the ball around the edge into the pitch phase if the fullback is able to log or cut block the dive key. If the fullback is forced to kick out, the quarterback reacts and comes underneath the dive key to the second level. Coaching point: the quarterback coming underneath does not mean the pitch phase is eliminated. Quarterbacks must learn to keep sight of the pitch even after the play is forced up field and underneath the kick out block.

### Fullback Lead (Figure 229 and 230)

In fullback lead we assign the fullback to block the play side linebacker. The fullback pulls around to the linebacker if the pulling guard is able to log block the defensive end. When the pulling guard is forced to kick out, the fullback reacts and comes underneath to reach the play side linebacker.



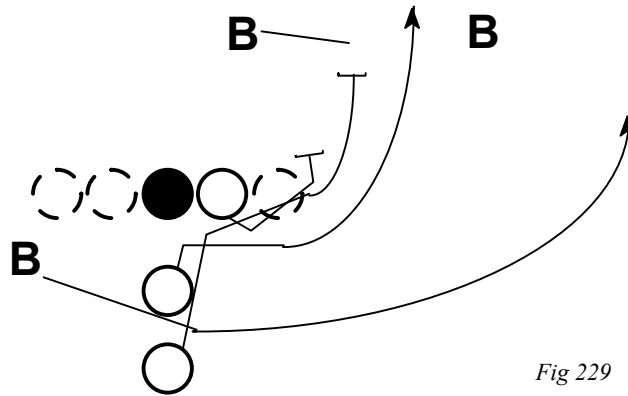


Fig 229

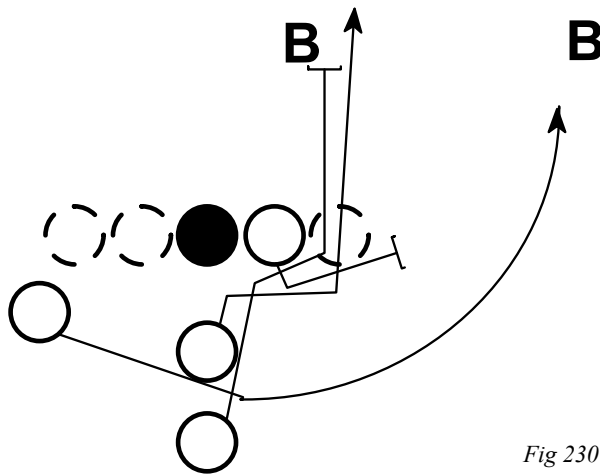


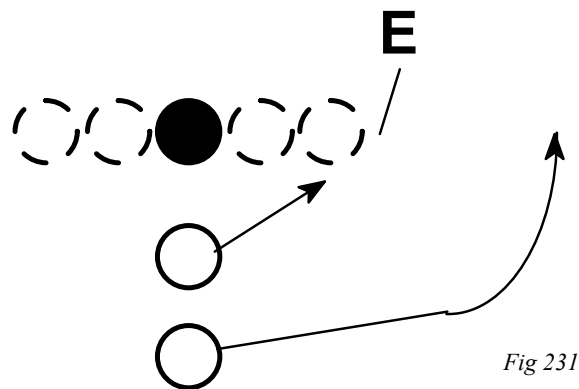
Fig 230

## **SPEED OPTION**

We utilize a variety of pitch players aligning in a variety of positions in the Speed Option game. In Speed Option the quarterback attacks the outside number of the pitch key—in this case the defensive end.

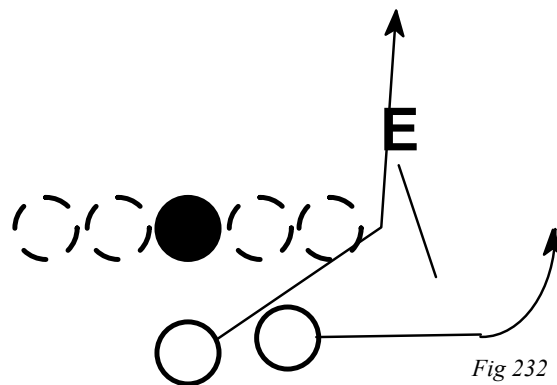
The quarterback's first job is to get the ball pitched. The running back gains width as fast as possible to work downhill towards the end zone when accepting the ball from the quarterback. Coaching point: we want the pitch executed on a flat trajectory.

Figure 231 demonstrates Speed Option from an offset alignment. It shows the quarterback keeping the ball after attacking the outside number of the pitch key.



The quarterback is endeavoring to get the ball pitched. The running back will gain width as fast as possible so that he can work downhill towards the end zone while accepting the ball from the quarterback. We want to pitch to be executed very on a flat trajectory.

Figure 232 shows the training of speed option from an offset alignment. It also shows the quarterback keeping the ball after attacking the outside number of the pitch key.



## POWER READ DRILL

Our Power Read drill features a defensive end that serves as the dive key (see Figure 233). Because this is a double option play there is no pitch key. The running back starts by taking his sweep path across the face of the quarterback. The quarterback then gives the ball to the running back if the dive key does not work up field quickly to take the sweep away.

Coaching point: it is the sweep player's ball on Power Read unless the dive key takes the give away. The quarterback pulls the ball and runs the dive path when the dive key gets enough depth and width to take the sweep away.

A quick mesh makes it difficult for the defensive end to take away the sweep. Quick movement makes it difficult for the end to cover the sweep even when it's his assignment on the play.

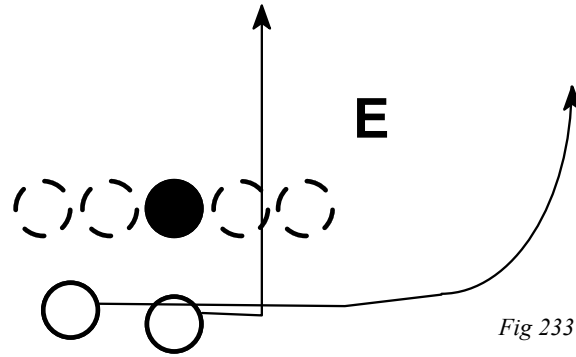


Fig 233

## JET MOTION DRILL

The Jet Motion drill is nearly identical to the Power Read drill (see Figure 234). We bring a slot receiver in motion to mesh with the quarterback and put a running back in an offset position for the Jet Motion drill. The offset back practices his arc release to the play side outside linebacker. Coaching point: on all versions of Power Read (including Jet Motion) the contain player remains the dive key we read.

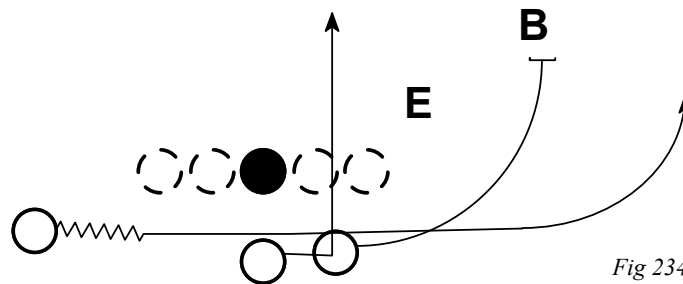


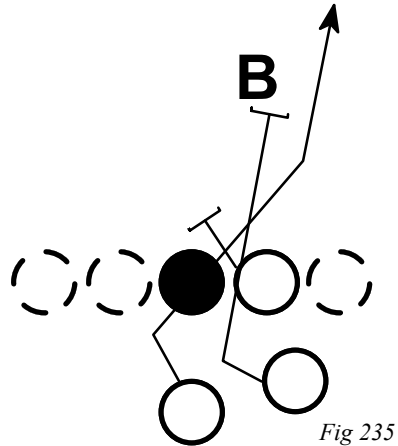
Fig 234

## QUARTERBACK ISO DRILL

The Quarterback Iso drill (Figure 235) features an offset running back and a quarterback working against a play side linebacker. We use this drill to teach the footwork and blocking techniques required to isolate properly.

Coaching point: We don't put a guard in front of the running back when first teaching this drill. If there is a guard in front of the running back he must learn to identify where the guard is blocking. The running back must also learn to identify which gap is open for him to reach the play side linebacker.

We progress to gap identification only after the running back learns how to take a good blocking path.



It is extremely important for the lead back to learn how to get the ball behind him. The offset running back works to the inside first to successfully do this. After getting the ball behind him, the back works inside-out to the outside number of the linebacker.

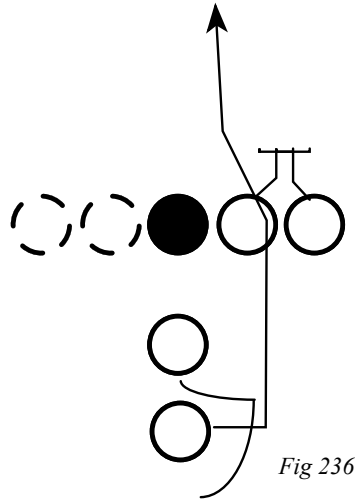
Coaching point: when adding a guard to that drill the running back must learn to read the guard's block. The running back needs work through the A-gap to the play side linebacker if the guard works to the B-gap to block the 3-technique.

Quarterbacks learning Iso know to take two counter steps to the opposite A-gap. Stepping too flat makes him arrive late at the point of attack. The quarterback cannot entice linebackers to shift away from the play if he does not get far enough towards the A-gap.

## **DOUBLE PULL POWER DRILL**

**B**all carriers learn how to react to the double team in the Double Pull Power drill (Figure 236). We run this as Quarterback Double Pull Power or Fullback Double Pull Power. The drill starts with a guard and tackle simulating the double team. The ball carrier learns to stay tight to the inside if the double team pushes vertical. If the double team works across his face or horizontally, the ball carrier learns to bounce the ball slightly to the outside.

Coaching point: it is important that the ball carrier gets behind the double team to create options in terms of blocking based on the movement created by the double team.



## PASS ROUTES WITH READ SIMULATIONS

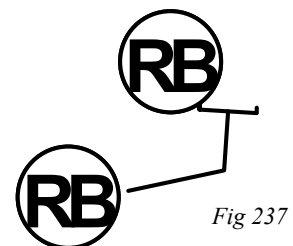
Any pass play in the Tex-Bone is teachable by setting up a drill that simulates the reads the quarterback makes. In pass route drills with read simulations the quarterback will work with all the wide receivers involved in the read progression. If possible, it's useful to get the running backs with the quarterback so they learn to make play action passes look identical to run plays.

Coaching note: we generally use coaches or other players to simulate the defenders that are read. In Quick Flood we assign a coach to play the role of the cornerback for example. If the corner sits near line of scrimmage to cover the out route, the quarterback learns to throw the ball to the vertical hole down the sideline between the corner and the safety. To teach this hole-throw we put another coach at the safety position. When the cornerback drops and runs with the vertical route down the sideline, the quarterback learns to throw the ball quickly to the out route.

## POINT OF ATTACK DRILL

The Point of Attack Drill teaches offensive players how to engage a defender. The fundamental coaching points are: (1) strike the defender with the elbows in and thumbs up, (2) keep your head to the outside of the defender as to reach or "hook" the defender, and (3) keep your shoulders square to the line of scrimmage and push the defender toward the goal line.

The drill is set-up by placing a defensive player and an offensive player in close proximity, but offset slightly. As this drill is intended to teach only the engagement portion of blocking it is important that the distance between the players be close.





The first version of the drill (Figure 237) will position the offensive player two lateral steps away from the defender. On command, the offensive player will engage the defensive player being certain to accomplish the three goals stated above.

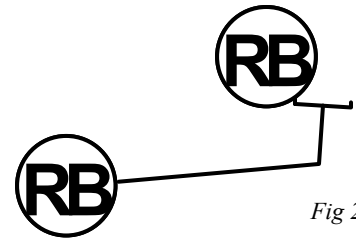


Fig 238

The second version of the drill (Figure 238) will place the offensive player two yards from the defender. On command, the offensive player will work laterally and engage the defender. Again, the blocker must be diligent to accomplish the stated goals.

## BLOCKING LEVERAGE DRILL

The Blocking Leverage Drill is an everyday drill for our outside wide receivers. It is also a weekly drill for our inside wide receivers and running backs. The goal of this drill is to train level two and level three blocking angles. The goal of every perimeter blocker is to get the ball behind them right away.

Players can correlate this skill to basketball defense where the idea is to stay between their man and the basket. For our purpose, the basket is the football and their man is the defender that they will block. The basket doesn't move, but the football does, and therefore this skill requires a lot of repetitions. If an offensive player is not positioned between the ball and the defensive player he is at a disadvantage because the defender can attack the ball from any direction. Conversely, when an offensive player positions themselves between the ball and the defensive player they are now in an advantageous position because the defender must run around the offensive player to try to get to the football. The offensive player can use his advantageous positioning to funnel the defender where he wants him to go.

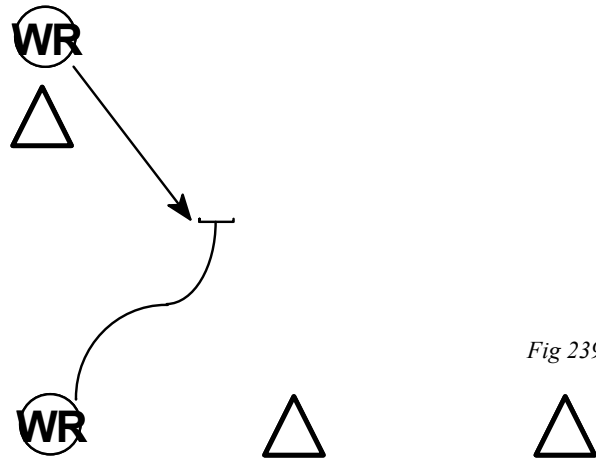


Fig 239

Our philosophy is that we always want to funnel players to the outside, and then beat them to the intersection point where the defender will get to the ball carrier. This drill teaches this skill.

Figure 239 shows the set-up for the blocking leverage drill. Two players will participate; one as the offensive player and one as the defensive player. In the illustrations the offensive player is on the bottom and the defensive player is on the top. At the beginning of the drill the defensive player will run to the nearest cone that is aligned adjacent to the offensive player. This cone signifies the intersection

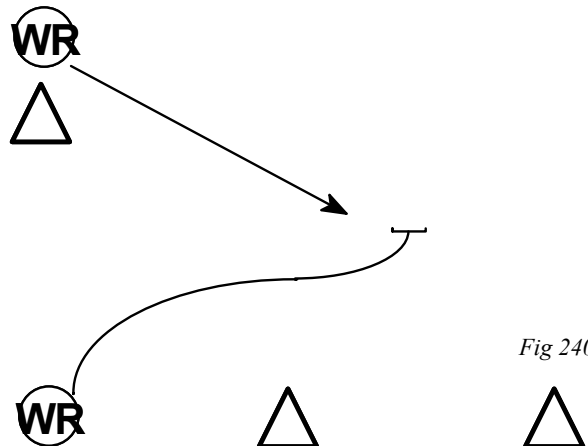


Fig 240

point where the defender would intersect the ball carrier if not impeded.

The offensive players will take an inside-out patch to intercept and block the defender. The inside-out path is significant because this path forces, or funnels, the defender to the outside by cutting of the inside path to the ball. By taking the appropriate inside-out angle the blocker has positioned the ball behind him and forced the defender to his outside. The offensive player will then take the appropriate angle to intercept the defensive player before he gets to the cone.

When the block is joined, the offensive player will strike with his elbows in and thumbs up. Most importantly, he will engage the outside number of the defender so he can “hook” the defender, thus allowing the ball carrier to continue on his path. The worst case scenario is that the offensive player will have to “wash” the defensive player past the intersection point. The ball carrier can adjust his path accordingly.

This drill will then be repeated with the defender aiming for the wider cone (Figure 240) signifying a wide intersection point. The offensive player must now adjust his angle and path accordingly.

## TAG DRILL

The Tag Drill is the advanced progression of the Blocking Leverage Drill and appears in Figure 241. In the Tag Drill, the defensive player is free to choose and point of attack any path they choose. The ability of the offensive player to get the ball behind them, force the defender to the outside, then “hook” them at the point of attack is tested.

To be successful at this drill, the offensive blocker must learn to be patient to the point of attack as to not be faked by the defender. Once the offensive player has successfully funneled the defender to the outside, he must accelerate as contact is engaged.

Accelerating at the point of attack gives the offensive player the speed and force necessary to win the physical match-up with the defensive player.

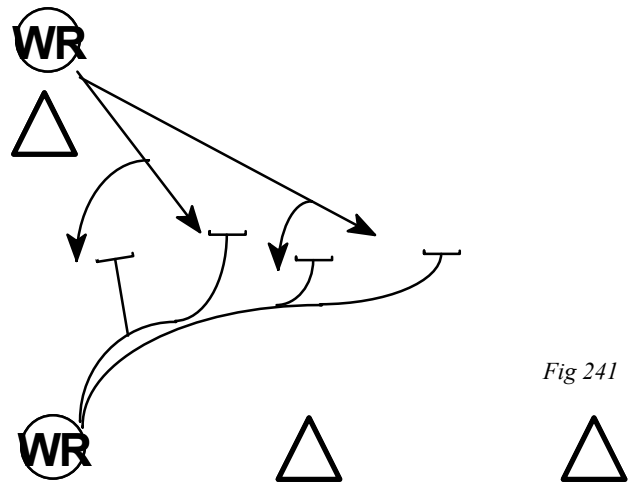


Fig 241

## STANCE & START CHASE DRILL

The Stance and Start Chase Drill is a competitive drill that teaches players to move efficiently at the beginning of the play. Inefficient movement, as in taking extra steps or misplaced steps, wastes valuable time and this drill is a great way to teach players to eliminate waste. We use this drill with all perimeter position groups – quarterback, running back and wide receiver.

As Figure 242 shows, two players will line up behind each other with one yard between them. On command (or when the ball moves) the two players will race to a finish line. The finish line can be any distance and we typically set the finish ten yards away. If the player in front takes extra steps or moves inefficiently at the beginning of the chase he will likely be caught by the player chasing him. The opposite is also true. If the chasing player moves inefficiently they will not be able to catch the player in front of them.

Coaches should be looking for all of the following components of the player's release from their starting position: body lean, arm position, ankle and knee bend, width of stance and directional pointing of feet.

This drill is an excellent opportunity to add competition to practice. A reward for winning or a penalty for losing can be added. Making the drill competitive will ensure that players give their best effort in the chase.

