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# CHAPTER 17



## Running Back & Receiver Drills

### RUNNING BACKS

One of the great things about the Wing-T is that it spreads the ball around and gives many players the opportunity to contribute. This not only develops a strong TEAM FIRST mentality, but also raises morale because the offense is not depending on only 2-3 players to make plays while the rest of the team becomes cheerleaders. This makes the backfield position very interesting in that the running backs must not only master the skill of carrying the ball, but must also become adept at catching the ball, blocking, and faking.

The following character traits must be instilled in all of our backs:

#### UNSELFISH

As with all positions in the Wing-T, the running backs must be unselfish. They have to understand that the ball will be spread to all of the skilled positions. This offense has 4 backs and 4 receivers who will touch the ball. They need to understand that this is to their benefit since the defense cannot key on just one back. If the halfbacks are having a big day, it might be because the defense is keying on the fullback, or vice versa.

#### FAKING

The Wing-T is a misdirection offense that asks the backs to take out a defender with a fake instead of a block. Fakes help misdirection, create deception, and force the defense to be frozen in place, unable to read the ball and unable to pursue



as quickly as they would like. The backs have to understand that faking for their teammate will open up running lanes for them later in the game and that the same teammate will be faking for them when they are carrying the ball.

The way we teach fakes is to “SWIM” with the arm nearest the QB. As we pass the QB, we hunch over for 1 step, both arms covering the belly. This is called “ROCK THE BABY”. We do not cover the belly with both arms for more than one step because it does not look like a natural running motion. The arm that is away from the LOS grabs the hip, the player rises up while running full speed, and “PUMPS THE INSIDE ARM”, which is the arm closest to the LOS.

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## SWIM – ROCK THE BABY – PUMP INSIDE ARM

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### BALL HANDLING

We start with every player with a ball. Backs stand in a circle around coach so he can quickly instruct everyone. They just stand still and practice transferring the ball to each arm, remembering 4 points of contact.

1. FOREARM (bottom half)
  - Point of ball gets closer to chin as more tacklers get around you.
2. RIBS (top half)
3. HAND (far point)
  - Point of ball between index finger and middle finger.
4. BICEP (near point)
  - Elbow points down towards ground



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## COVER THE POINT – PRESS AGAINST THE NIPPLE – SQUEEZE THE ELBOW

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When we take the handoff our backs will “SWIM” over the ball with the hand nearest the QB, bringing the far hand UNDER the ball and grabbing the far cone. We want to keep the ball away from the defense so the ball must be in the arm nearest the sideline. We teach **Arm Over, Never Arm Under**

The swim hand goes over the ball and secures the other cone. Each palm covers each cone as ball is transferred to opposite side. If a back has the ball in his right arm, he would bring his left arm over the top of the ball to transfer. Never switch in traffic.

The THREE MAJOR NO-NO'S are:

1. No Fly Aways
  - Ball comes off the ribs. 10 up downs.
2. No Sprinter Strides
  - Hand holding the ball never points down towards ground.
3. No Loafs of Bread
  - Holding with hands

Once our backs know how to take a handoff and hold the ball, we move in a Zig-Zag fashion to practice cutting and ball transfer at same time.



## STRAIGHT ARM

In slow zig zag pattern jog, ball moves into arm that is opposite the plant foot.

As soon as ball is secured in opposite armpit, the arm that was holding the ball, stiffens, with palm aimed for facemask. Punch with violence but let tackler's momentum "bounce" RB into the opposite direction.

## RIP MOVE

Great move on sideline. As tackler approaches, dip and get shoulder pads lower than his.

Rip up through his arms as you rise, gaining an extra stride, a violent stride as contact is made. The goal is to break the tackle and not go out of bounds, but if RB is knocked out of bounds, gain an extra yard.

## SPIN MOVE

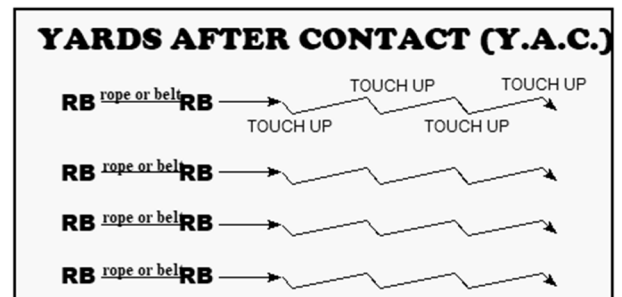
**COVER BOTH POINTS:** Just before contact with tackler while lowering shoulder.

**HALF A MAN:** Only let tackler hit one shoulder, spinning the way he pushes you.

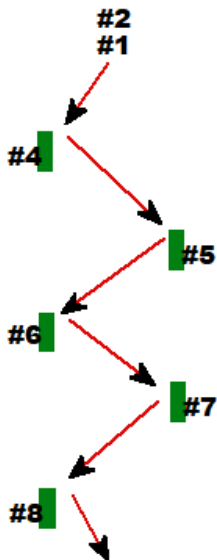
**OPPOSITE HAND:** During spin, back to the tackler, transfer ball into arm that did NOT take the hit, so that other arm is free to slap tacklers arms away.

## YARDS AFTER CONTACT

Back's loop extra practice belt around their waist with metal hook to his backside. Then hook a 2<sup>nd</sup> belt to those hooks so partner standing behind him has something to hold onto. As the RB runs forward, his partner holds the belt trying to prevent movement. We will start with a 30yd run holding belt entire time. Then we will let go of the belt after 20yds, then after 10yds so the RB can feel the acceleration. When the belt is released, the RB touches the ground with 1 hand, "pushing" up and switching the ball into opposite hand.



## ZIG ZAG



#1 RB runs at each shield in a "zig=zag" pattern.  
He puts a straight arm or spin move off each shield  
Ball should be in right hand as he approaches #4...  
Switch ball to left hand just before he straight arms #4 with right arm.

Run at #5 with ball in left hand..switch ball just before straight arm #5

At end of circuit, #1 replaces #8...  
#8 replaces #7...who replaces #6...who replaces #5...who replaces #4  
#4 gets in back of line behind #2.

### SPIN MOVE

*Very important that the 1st step after contact is past the defender so that the RB is gaining yards after contact. Common mistake is to move laterally after spin move, then gain yards.*

### STRAIGHT ARM

*Must punch the chest, not the facemask*



## THIRD LEG POP UP

- Players stand in place on one-foot, non-ball hand touching ground. Jump and switch ball to other hand while in the air. Land on the opposite foot
- Players just run down the field alternating the off-ball hand touching the ground. Switch ball into opposite hand as quickly as possible.
- Players run down the field, bent over, with the same hand touching the hand. Do not switch hands. Will kind of "bob"
- See picture at bottom of this page. Player bear crawls laterally over 3 bags with off hand on the ground. Coach is hitting player with bag.



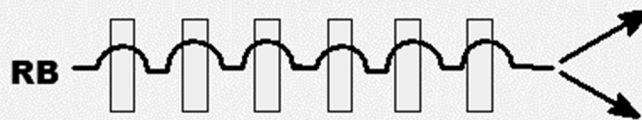


## BAG DRILLS

**HIGH KNEES** over the agility bags.

Always holding a ball and exchanging hands as many times as possible.

- (1) Run thru forward one foot in each hole between each bag; Repeat laterally.
  - (2) Run thru forward both feet in each hole between each bag; Repeat laterally.
- Make a Spin move after last bag.

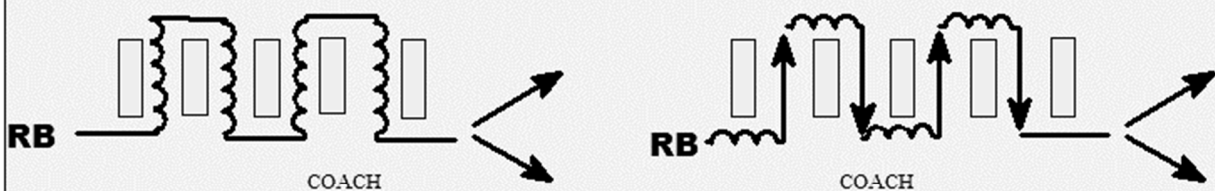


**LATERAL SHUFFLE** through the agility bags.

Always holding a ball and exchanging hands on each change of direction (COD).

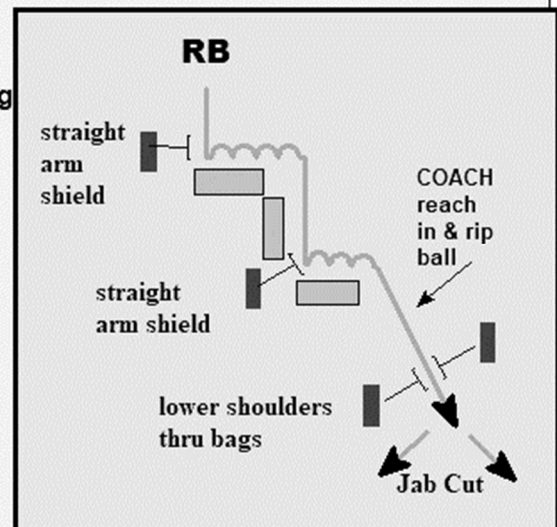
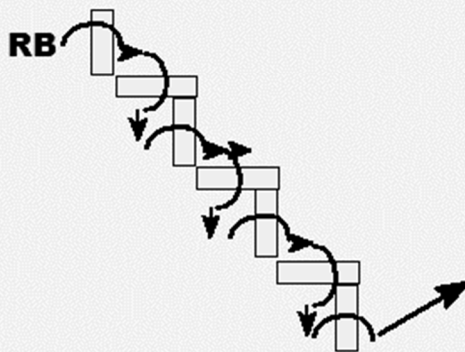
- (1) Facing forward entire time, run forward and lateral shuffle between bags.
  - (2) Facing coach, backpedal between one set & sprint forward thru next set.
- Lateral shuffle after backpedal or forward run.

Make a jump cut and then a touch up after the last bag.



**ANGLE STEPOVER** through the agility bags.

Forward hop, lateral hop, forward hop, lateral hop...  
change ball hand, stiff arm, and COD after last bag




## AGILITIES

- To promote backs running with high knees and stumbling over defenders on the ground, we use lots of combinations of bag drills. Can also use trash cans in place of bags.

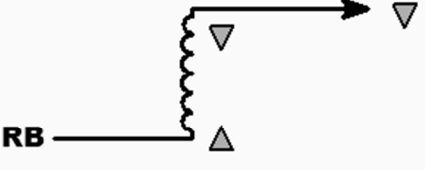
Since we firmly believe in variety and breaking up the monotony of practice, we will alternate between BAGS, CONES, and ROPES every day during spring and summer. We will re-visit these 3 sets of agilities first week of August, but we don't have time for them during the season.

### CONES

**SNAKE:**  
Cones are very tight, so no running.  
Feet "shuffle" very fast to get around them.



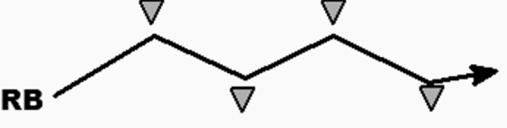
**SPRINT SHUFFLE GO:**



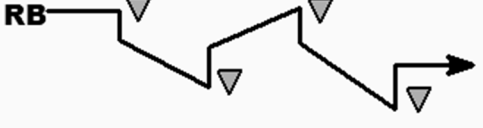
**BALANCE EXCHANGE:**  
Ball in right hand, standing on right foot, left hand touching ground for balance.  
Jump in air, switch ball into left hand, land on left foot, right hand touches ground for balance.  
Continue for 5 yards.

### CUTS


**SPEED CUTS:**  
COD while running straight ahead



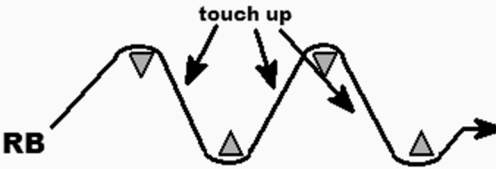
**JUMP CUTS:**  
Lateral COD then burst forward



**SLALOM CUTS:**  
COD while going outside the cones



**TOUCH UPS:**  
Palm on ground as go around cone





### ROPES OR TIRES

2	4	6	8	10	12
1	3	5	7	9	11

**RUN THRU:** R1, L4, R5, L8, R9, L12

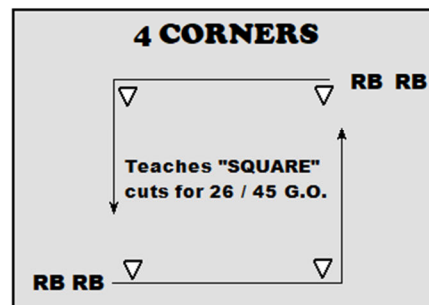
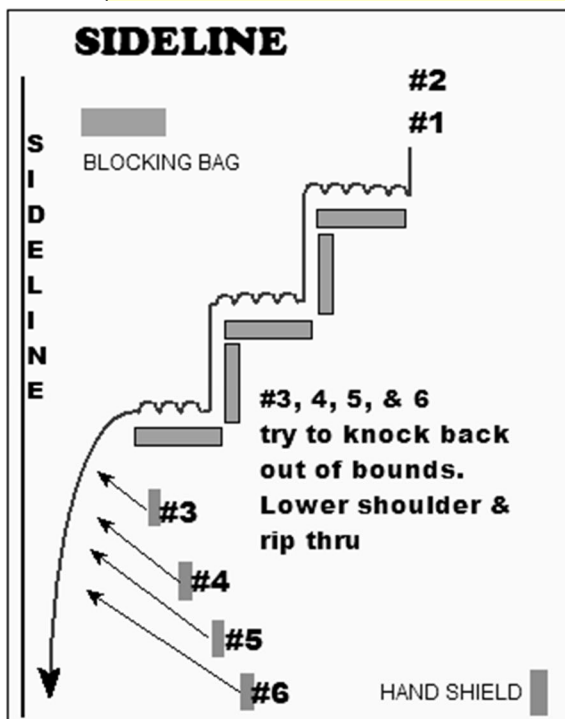
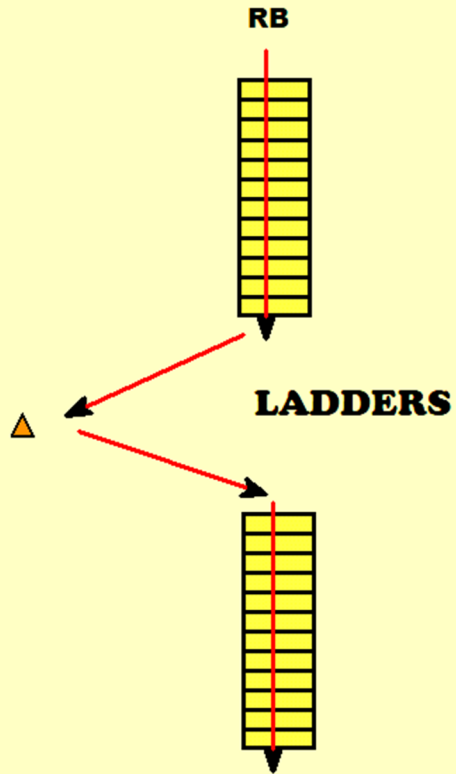
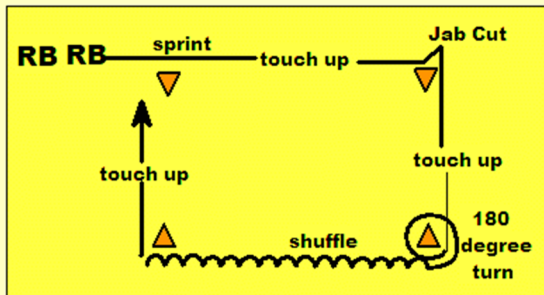
R1,L2,R3,L4,R5,L6,R7,L8,R9,L10,R11,L12

**DIAGONAL:** L1,R4,Lout,L5,Rout,R8,Lout,L9,Rout,R12

Both feet chop in 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 Then both hop in same pattern

**BUNNY HOPS:** Both feet in 1,3,4,2,4,6,5,3,5,7,8,6,8,10,9,7,9,11

"2 forward, over, 1 back, 2 forward, over, 1 back, etc"



## **BREAKING TACKLES**

Keep shoulders square whenever possible with good balance. Keep shoulders, hips, and knees in line to be powerful versus contact. Do not let the hips twist while getting tackles

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### **Chin, Nipples, Belly Button, and Pecker Point Same Direction**

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Exaggerate legs on contact. It is natural to let your legs give out when 2-3 guys are on your back. The moment you feel or anticipate contact, exaggerate the legs, don't let legs give out. Drive/Pump the knees. Knees thru facemask. Shoulders lower than the tackler. Put tackler on his back

Low man will win, so beat tackler to the punch by getting lower than him and hitting him harder than he hits you. Even if you go down, send a message to tacklers that they are going to pay a price to bring you down. Dive for first downs as getting tackled and if you are inside the 5yd line, YOU HAVE TO SCORE.

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### **“HARD, HIGH, VIOLENT”**

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STIFF ARM: Vicious palm to the helmet, shoulder pad or chest of the defender.

Most under used RB technique

Most tacklers don't know how to tackle a forearm.

RIP: Violent forearm and bicep across the defenders body or outstretched arms.

Great technique on sideline.

Actually adds another stride, a violent stride.

LIFT: Throw your shoulder and forearm into the defender and lift him

## **HITTING THE HOLE**

Your hole is a “trap door” that only opens for a split second then slams shut. When you see the hole open up (Daylight) you must hit it with everything you have. Get vertical in direction of goal line and only go Sideline-to-Sideline when absolutely necessary.

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### **Sideline Best Tackler On the Field**

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When you do hit the hole: Expect contact, congestion, blockers getting pushed back, defenders diving, bad grass, and mudd. DON'T COME UP WITH AN EXCUSE





## RECEIVERS

This chapter covers backs, tight ends and wide receivers. All receivers are going to learn the same techniques because we cross-train our players.

### UNSELFISH

It is most important to have players on your football team who are unselfish. You cannot have people who want statistics for themselves only. Athletes have to be happy with winning the football game and also with accumulating statistics as a team. The worst thing to mess those guys up is usually the attention given to them by the people in your town—patting them on the back, grumbling about the coach, telling the kid he is not getting the ball enough. Your players have to buy into a team philosophy. They have to be hungry and have to be unselfish. Those attributes are the principal qualities to look for in your receivers.

### LIKES TO BLOCK

The tight end and receivers must be willing to block. While the TE has to be a really good blocker, the receiver does not have to be big or strong. He simply has to be willing to block. With the new crack blocking rules, all he has to do is get his hands on the breast plate and move his feet like crazy. It is more desire than anything. Although we love to throw the ball out of the pistol formation, if you have a wide receiver coming from a program where they throw the ball 45 to 50 times a game, we are still going to be a physical, ball-control type of offense based on running and play-action passing. Therefore, you will need to recruit a spread end who is unselfish.

### SIZE, SPEED, & STRENGTH

Ideally, we would like a Tight End who is strong enough to block down on Ends and Inside Linebackers, but skilled enough to flex out as a receiver. He is the number one receiver on many of the patterns. However, in the Wing T, the Tight End has to be able to block. There have been years that our Tight End has been our 3<sup>rd</sup> string tackle who we gave an 80 number to and lied to him by telling him that we were going to throw him the ball. Those years we were forced to sub him out for another split end, wide-receiver type when we

needed two wide outs for passing plays. We call this personnel group “X-MEN” because we have two X’s on the field. We do not like doing that because it tips our hand to the defense.

Ideally, a versatile high school tight end weighs between 190 and 210 pounds, is 5’11” to 6’1” and can run a 4.8 forty time. He has to be big enough and strong enough to block down on defensive ends and be able to stop any penetration from a man playing inside him in a 7 technique. He also has to reach block on Ends and block the Inside Linebacker, who is probably the best player on their defense.



**GOOD HANDS**

Another key quality for receivers, of course, is good hands. Receivers can get open all they want and can run great routes, but, if they can't catch the ball, all that running talent is not doing much good. Now, if a receiver has not-so-great hands, but is really fast and quick, then we can develop decent hands.

**PASS ROUTES**

Finally, the ability for a receiver to run pass routes is essential. The receiver must have either great speed or great quickness. Some guys can get open underneath, can run great routes, and can shake loose from the defender covering them, because they are quick and have good moves. Some can burst off the line of scrimmage, give a head fake and find themselves wide open. Receivers who have great moves can make it. They can be good receivers, especially in this offense, which contains so many intermediate routes.

The flip side to great moves is a receiver who has tremendous speed. But, they are rare at the high school level and even rarer to have a fast receiver who also has good hands and loves to block. We can throw fades, posts, and corner routes to a guy with speed, which forces the secondary to back off.

**WR DRILLS**

**HANDS**

<p><b>DRILL #2:</b> Fingertips</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold ball out, drop it, catch with palm</li> <li>2. Slap ball back &amp; forth with fingertips.</li> <li>3. Around, knees, hips, &amp; head.</li> <li>4. Figure 8 between legs</li> </ol>	<p><b>DRILL #3:</b> Pole</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stand behind a pole or hug agility bag</li> <li>2. Pole / bag is between body &amp; hands</li> <li>3. Catch ball with hands extended.</li> </ol>
<p><b>DRILL #4:</b> Clock</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner up with one ball, 5yds apart.</li> <li>2. Throw ball to each other.</li> <li>3. Above head is 12 O' Clock.</li> <li>4. Below waist is 6 O' clock.</li> <li>5. Catch ball at all hours of the clock.</li> <li>6. Always tuck the ball.</li> </ol>	<p><b>DRILL #5:</b> Right At You</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Get in groups of 4.</li> <li>2. Run straight at partner..</li> <li>3. Catch ball thrown straight at you.</li> <li>4. Yell number, tuck ball.</li> <li>5. Turn to throw to next player in line.</li> </ol>



**WR DRILLS****CATCHING**

There are only three parts to running a route: the release, the pattern, and the actual catching of the football. They have to be able to get around a press corner or re-routing linebacker. Then they have to run precise routes and of course catch the ball when it is thrown to them.

**ALWAYS TUCK AND COVER**

A very, very important thing to make every receiver do in every drill is to tuck and cover the ball after the catch.

The only catch made with thumbs together is the ball coming at the upper body, straight down the middle. For all the other catches, put the pinkies together and turn their thumbs out. If the ball is away from the body, up high, you try to catch that ball with the pinkies together and the thumbs spread out. What happens is, if the ball is away from your body and you put your thumbs together, when the ball hits your hands, it tends to bounce off your hands and away from your body. Whereas, if you turn the thumbs out, then the ball hits your palms and tends to bounce back toward your body.

**TURNAROUND DRILL**

Players partner up and one player throws the ball to his partner, who has his back turned. When the ball leaves the hand, the player yells “ball” and his partner turns around. He has to focus, catch the ball, and get it tucked away, all within a relatively short period of time. The ball can then be thrown to their right or left, so when the turn around they break laterally as if running an out or dig route. The last phase is to throw the ball over the right or left shoulder to simulate a fade, post, or corner route.

**SIDELINE DRILL**

In high school, a receiver only needs to have one foot in bounds to catch the football. However, this drill teaches them to do a little tap dance on the sideline. If they are trying to get both feet in bounds, then surely one foot will probably stay in.

You set a receiver who is going to catch the ball about five yards away from the sideline and have the extra receivers lined up right behind him. You take the final step of the route, one step forward, and then break back toward the line of scrimmage toward the sideline. The coach is going to throw the ball, simulating a quarterback throwing the ball on a comeback or an out. The receiver will catch the football and try to tap dance right on the sideline, keeping both feet in and catching the ball. Sometimes, they even drag their feet and fall down as they are catching the ball and trying to keep both feet in bounds.

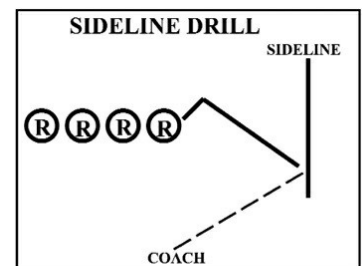


Diagram 4.45



## GAUNTLET DRILL

This drill really makes the receivers concentrate on catching the football. You do that by trying to strip the ball, trying to knock those receivers down, anything to cause problems for the receiver. This drill makes sure each receiver has caught the ball and tucked it away. As he turns up through the gauntlet, two lines of receivers forming a gauntlet, or a tunnel. The players in the gauntlet are going to strip him, bang him with hand shields, and bump him. They are going to do anything they can to try to make him lose the football.

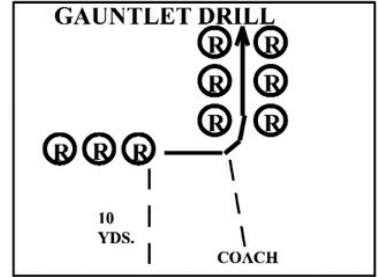


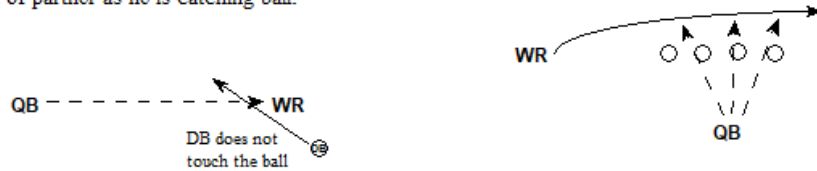
Diagram 4.47

### WR DRILLS

### CONCENTRATION

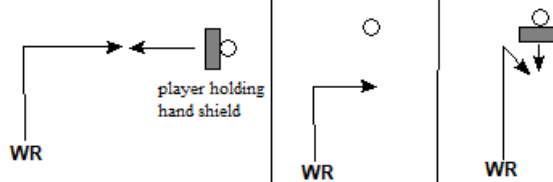
#### DISTRACTION DRILLS

**BEHIND THE TREES:** Line up all the players in straight line with hands in the air facing the coach. They wave at the ball that is thrown through their arms. WR runs behind them and tries to catch the ball.  
 2) Step in front of partner as he is catching ball.



#### TAKE A HIT DRILLS

1) Run pattern & get hit with hand shield as WR is catching the ball.

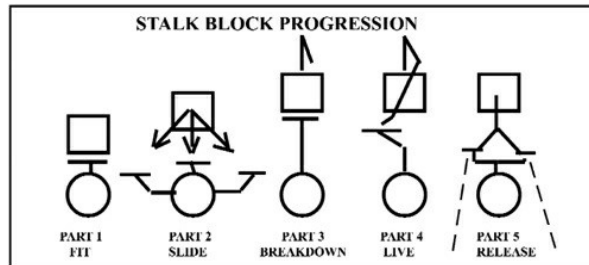




## BLOCKING

### STALK BLOCK

This block is used more than anything else in the offense. The first phase is similar to the shoulder skills, in that you simply focus on the fit. The receivers and DB simply lock up with each other. Start with hand shields, then start with WR hands inside.



Next is to teach how to slide feet right and left. The WR and DB three yards apart and the DB has a three-way go with no head fake. The WR squats into a good hit position and slides his feet right or left in order to square up on him.

In the third part of the stalk block progression, you have to learn when to break down. The DB takes the hand shield and backpedals while the WR jogs straight ahead. When the DB plants to come forward, the WR breaks down. The WR learns to run the DB all the way to the goal line if the DB never plants to come forward in run support. This would happen in man coverage.

The fourth phase of this progression, which is the live part, is the total combination of the other three and is called go live. The defensive back will backpedal as the spread end comes off the line. When he starts to drive forward, the spread end breaks down, slides his feet and makes the stalk block.

The last thing you can do is have two spread ends facing each other. One receiver is simulating the defensive player and uses a release technique when the other receiver tries to block him. You should be able to turn this into a competition and have an especially successful drill.

### BLOCK PROGRESSION

Start with the fit. Wide feet. Sti back (no lunge). Hands inside shoulder arm pits.

**A = APPROACH:** Give pass look. Try to run DB off, force DB to backpedal.

Use a weave to get his eyes away from the play

**B = BREAKDOWN:** Read the defender, when he reads run and breaks down WR must be ready to quickly breakdown. WR should be 2-3 yards in front of DB.

Do not let DB by you, take him where he wants to go.

**C = CONTACT:** is made in the chest between the DB armpits.

**D = DRIVE:** Only drive when contact is made, but do not lunge

### 3 WHISTLE

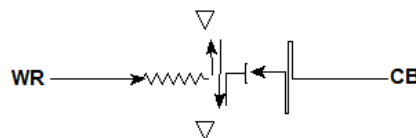
FIRST: punch both hands into chest of DB on the whistle; SECOND: Punch again on the whistle; THIRD: Punch & Drive the feet on the last whistle.

### MIRROR STALK (5&6 holes)

Sprint at DB. Break down at 5yds.

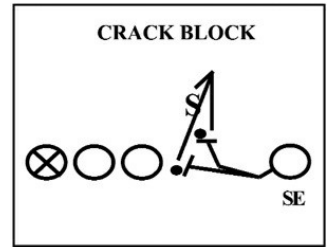
Shuffle feet so that you "mirror" the DB, then the DB attacks a side.

Wait and then punch the DB.



## CRACK BLOCK

When you crack block, you want to take a good pull step to the inside. You want to come flat down the line of scrimmage as far as you can go until you have to start turning up. It depends on how aggressive the strong safety is. If he sees option and comes flying, you might have to go flat all the way down the line of scrimmage to crack him. If he backs off a little first and then starts coming, read steps, freezes, or pauses, by the time you get to a position to block him, you can usually start working up the field on that man. The receiver should always start with a pull step down the line of scrimmage and then adjust to the strong safety from there. When you crack block, you want the head above the waist and the head in front so it is legal.

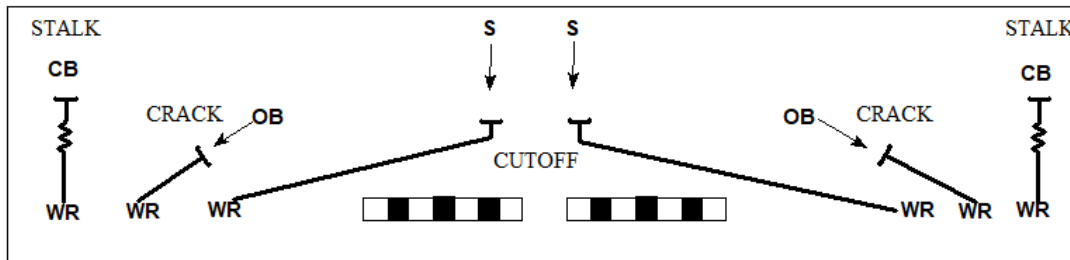


**CRACK BLOCK (7&8 holes)**

If DB has his back to WR or is on the LOS, then WR has to chop his feet and wait for OLB to turn slightly so that WR can keep his head in front during the crack block. If WR can see the DB's profile, then block him without breaking down, helmet in front of the DB.

## CUTOFF BLOCK (1,2,3,4 holes)

Sprint across field at approx 5yards depth, attempting to get in front of the Safety. As safety comes downhill to fill the alley, break down into a shuffle position, setting an illegal basketball screen between the safety and the ball. DO NOT LUNGE FWD with hands.



*Replace the bag you hit. Stalk blocker is next CB; CB that got stalked gets in middle (crack block) line; Crack blocker is the next OLB; OLB that got cracked gets in inside line (cutoff block); Cutoff blocker becomes next safety. Once you play safety you get in stalk block line on the opposite side.*

