

TACKLE & PURSUIT



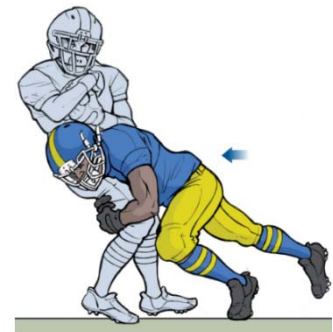
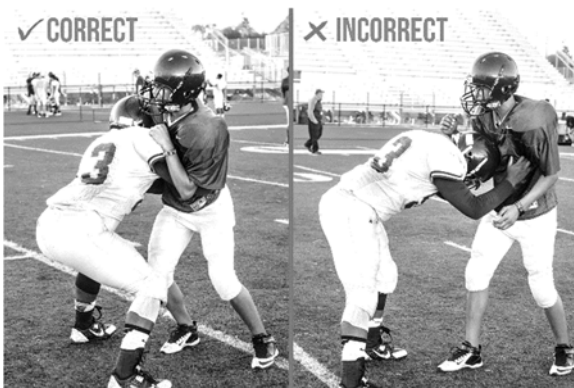
11 HELMETS, ONE POOR SOUL

We do not subscribe to the Rugby Style of tackling made famous by Pete Carroll and Rocky Seto. Now let me be perfectly clear, I am a huge, huge fan of Pete Carroll and it bothers me that I do not believe in something that he believes in. However, call me old school, but I still believe the helmet has to be in front of the ball carrier to avoid arm tackling. High school coaches do not have the athletes that Pete Carroll has and I strongly believe that putting the helmet behind the ball carrier will lead to arm tackles.

There are a couple of coaching points when we teach tackling:



- EYES: Keep them open and through the ball carriers numbers. **Eyes Up**
- HEAD: “**Bite the Ball**”. Aim the facemask towards the ball. Do not hit or tackle with the head.
- BODY: Bent knees, arched back, stay square.
- ARMS: Club up and thru with your arms on contact. Squeeze tight and **grab cloth**.
- FEET: Wide base. Accelerate feet through the ball carrier. Do not lunge. **Chin over toes**.



TEACHING PROGRESSION

I. RIP & CLAMP

We start in spring and summer teaching the technique backwards. So we start with the “**RIP & CLAMP**”.

- Players partner up, the tackler is on his knees. He rips upward motion to “clamp” the hand shield.
- This progresses to one knee. Nose is almost touching his partner’s belly.
- Partner standing up simulates holding a ball in one arm.
- Player on knee rips both hands up & under the armpits, **grabbing the cloth** in his back.
- The head moves to the side of the body that simulated ball is being held. “**Bite the Ball**”

We then repeat the drill, but player rises up off the knee and takes a step with that foot on the side of the ball. The hips should fire forward. “**Pop the Pecker**”



The drill repeats on the sled.



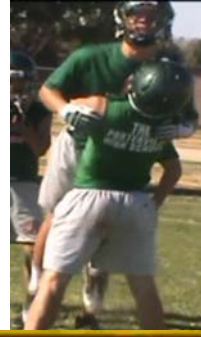
The advanced version is to let two players aggressively compete against each other. Both are trying to lift the other one up and drive him back.



Teach the Clamp



Up on the Feet & Roll the Hips



Bite the Ball

II. ROLL THE HIPS

The next progression is the tackler is in a 2-point stance.

- Steps with the foot that is on the side of the ball.
- Head slides to that same side. **“Bite the Ball”** **“Eyes to the Sky”**
- Hands **“Rip & Clamp”** up & through the armpits. **“Grab Cloth”**
- Player pauses in this position, as low, thighs semi-parallel.
- Coach gives the command **“Lift”** and the player then lifts the ball carrier for two more steps.
 - This pause forces the tackler to **“Pop the Pecker”** in order to lift.



The proper hitting position right before impact is:



- Knees Bent, feet shoulder-width apart
- Upper body in a 45-degree forward lean,
- chin up and over the toes.
- Weight on balls of the feet.

III. BREAKDOWN

The tackler then backs up 10yds, sprints at their partner, and **“breakdown”**. This means coming to balance, and taking quick, choppy steps to bring the body under control while continuing to move forward towards the ball carrier. Each step is the **“HEEL REPLACING THE TOE”**, so each step is less than 12inches, **“MOWING THE GRASS WITH YOUR CLEATS”**. It is a good idea to make them straddle an agility bag to widen their base.

As a player breaks down, we would like their **“HANDS IN THE HOLSTER”**. This means bringing the hands back to their hips, ready to explode up and through the ball carrier.

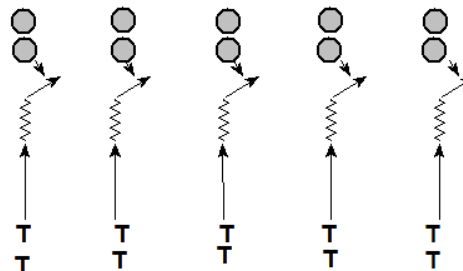


IV. MIRROR STEP

As the tackler approaches his stationary partner and shuffles his feet in the BREAK DOWN POSITION, his partner takes 1 or 2 steps in the direction given by the coach. If the ball carrier takes 2 steps to HIS left, then the tackler mirrors this by stepping at a 45-degree angle with his right feet so that the helmet will be in front.

The tackler does not put his helmet in front yet and does not RIP & CLAMP until after the next progression is taught.

After a couple of reps both ways, the partner acting like the running back steps in either direction and the Tackler does not know which direction. He truly has to react to it.



V. RIPPING THROUGH



An upper-body motion that generates a rising blow up into the ball carrier. Players get in proper hitting position with hands in the holster and a blocking bag held horizontally in front of them, waist high. Players rip both arms in an upward motion, grabbing and hugging the bag between their forearms and facemask.



VI. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The tackler is back 10 yards and sprints to his partner, who is simulating the running back. The tackler BREAKS DOWN, then MIRROR STEPS, and RIPS & CLAMPS through his partner with helmet across the chest. He makes sure to POP THE PECKER and drive his hips forwards as he lifts the ball carrier.

THREE TYPES OF TACKLES

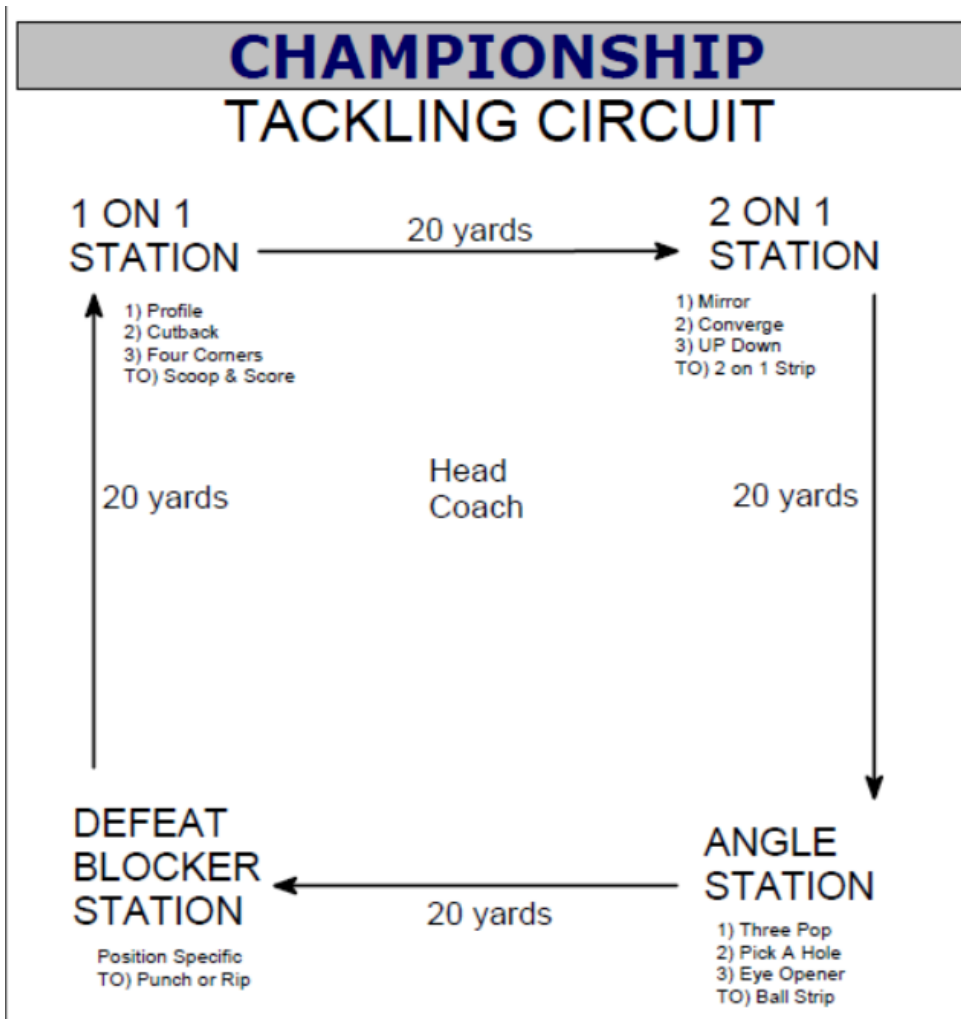
There are three main tackles that our players need to master:

1. OPEN FIELD:
 - a) Stay square when you can see both numbers of the ball carrier.
 - b) Have to buzz feet until ball carrier makes his move and then react to it.
 - c) Eliminate cutback, get proper pursuit position, and use sideline if possible.
 - d) Once this all happens, it then becomes an angle tackle.
2. ANGLE TACKLE:
 - a) Do not need to buzz the feet when you cannot see both numbers and his direction is obvious.
 - b) Head across the chest.
3. LAST MAN
 - Give ground if you must.
 - Buy time for help
 - Do not pick a side. Two gap a blocker
 - Grab cloth until teammates can arrive

TACKLING DRILLS

We will spend all of our Spring and Summer teaching the techniques on pages _____. We will introduce the Tackling Circuit at end of summer while still in shorts so that the players understand the drills and how to rotate. This needs to be done BEFORE pads are put on because when we do this drill in pads during the 1st week of August, the coach cannot waste his 2 minutes talking and demonstrating.

Assign an assistant coach at each station and keep him there all season because that coach will make the decision when to progress with each group to the more physical, tougher drills. Only one station does a turnover drill while the other 3 stations are tackling.



Can make stations 50yds apart for conditioning

Make Four Groups by position and size.

Group 1) small DBs; Group 2) physical DBs and small LB; Group 4) Tough LB with quick DL; Group 4) larger, slower moving DL.

- 2 ½ Minutes at each station will take 15 minutes of your practice schedule
- 2 minutes per station will take 10 minutes
- Players have to sprint to next station so it doubles as conditioning
- Coaches at each station cannot do a bunch of talking or demos
 - Correct quickly with a couple of words so players get tired.
 - Maybe have a 2nd coach at ea station or a 5th coach to teach players who have poor technique

Take some time in summer or 1st week of August to teach players the drills and proper technique.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 ON 1 STATION

Start with 1on 1 Profile and let tackler know which direction Back is going to go. Progress to the tackler having to read & react. Once mastered, progress to the 1on1 Cutback. The 3rd drill, “4 CORNERS” is very physical, so don’t run this until you are confident that the players have proper technique. When it is this stations turn to do turnovers, they do the SCOOP & SCORE.

1 ON 1 PROFILE (1st)

1st Time: Tell the tackler which way the RB is going.
 2nd Time: RB gets to choose, but NO moves.
 3rd Time: RB gets to put one move, but once he decides he has to go straight.

Really emphasize the Shuffling of the feet by tackler until he knows which way RB is going

1 ON 1 CUTBACK (2nd)

RB runs around cone, down sideline.
 Tries to cutback on tackler before reaching 2nd cone

4 CORNERS (3rd)

RB can put moves after rounding 2nd cone

SCOOP & SCORE

Coach rolls ball out on ground in various manners
 Defender scoops ball up & scores

CHAMPIONSHIP

2 ON 1 STATION

The goal of this station is to teach players how to make a tackle with another teammate. Often times, a defender will arrive and actually knock his teammate off the ball carrier! Or they don't **"squeeze their hips"** together and the ball carrier splits them and keeps going. The first drill is "2-on-1 Mirror" and they arrive together, learning to **"squeeze their hips"** and have all four hands grab cloth. The next drill is "2-on-1 Converge", which one tackler will arrive before the other one since the RB runs at an angle towards a cone. This teaches the late arriving 2nd tackler how to fit without knocking his teammate off the tackle, possibly even looking for the strip. The Turnover Part of this drill teaches precisely that.

2 on 1 MIRROR (#1)
COACH

- 1) Start by shuffling feet
- 2) On the whistle, sprint to the cones in front
- 3) A coach points direction for RB to shuffle sideways.
- 4) Both tacklers "mirror" the RB direction
- 5) Coach gives signal for RB to attack straight ahead
- 6) Both tacklers make tackle, heads on outside, squeezing shoulders & hips together

2 on 1 Down Up (#2)
COACH

- 1) Start by shuffling feet
- 2) On the whistle, RB runs to a cone full speed
- 3) Both tacklers attack the RB
- 4) Both tacklers make tackle, heads on outside,
- 5) "SHOW ME"

2 on 1 Converge (#3)

- 1) Start by shuffling feet
- 2) On the whistle, all tacklers do an up/down
- 3) RB attacks one of the two holes
- 4) Both tacklers attack the RB
- 5) Both tacklers make tackle, heads on outside, squeezing shoulders & hips together
- 6) "SHOW ME"

2 on 1 Strip

- 1) Start by shuffling feet
- 2) On the whistle, RB runs to cone full speed
- 3) First tackler wraps up RB
- 4) Second tackler strips ball

CHAMPIONSHIP

ANGLE STATION

Our favorite drill is the “3-Pop Drill”, which you will need to see on the DVD because it is hard to describe. But as tackler & ball carrier meet in the hole, the tackler gets in good fit position and has to pop his hips in order to lift the ball carrier. The turnover drill teaches players what to do when the RB has the ball in the wrong arm and the ball is between the ball carrier and tackler. That is an automatic strip !!!

3 POP DRILL (#1)

- 1) On Whistle, move the feet
- 2) Tackler shuffle glide until RB attacks the first hole. Tackler meets RB, Punch, Lift, and Release RB. Don't grab cloth the first two times.
- 3) RB backpedals and attacks the 2nd hole Tackler repeats.
- 4) On the 3rd time, the Tackler Pump knees and grab cloth.
- 5) "SHOW ME"

This drill is not done at full speed.

PICK A HOLE (#2)

- 1) On Whistle, move the feet
- 2) Tackler shuffle glide until RB picks his hole Tackler meets RB, Punch, Lift, and "SHOW ME".
- 3) RB does not lower shoulder or cutback

This drill is not done at full speed.

EYE OPENER (#3)

- 1) On Whistle, move the feet
- 2) Tackler shuffle glide until RB picks his hole Tackler meets RB, Punch, Lift, and "SHOW ME".
- 3) RB can lower shoulder & cutback

This drill is at full speed.

BALL STRIP

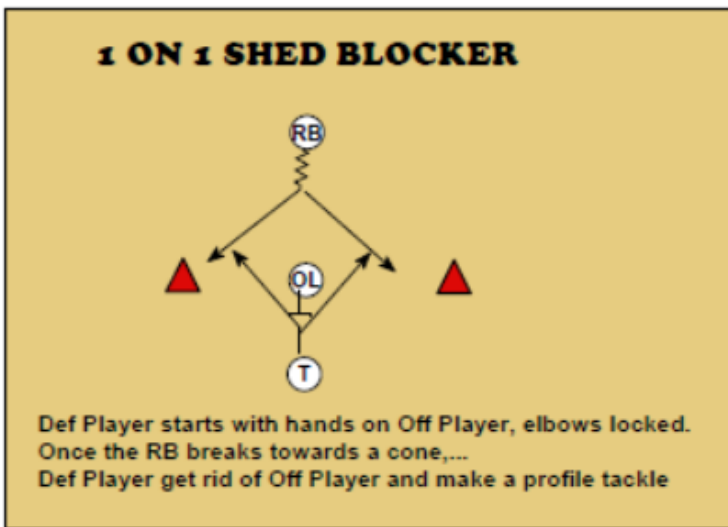
- 1) On Whistle, move the feet
- 2) RB runs to cone
- 3) Tackler meets RB, wrap with one arm 3) Try to strip with other arm

This drill is not done at full speed.

CHAMPIONSHIP

DEFEAT BLOCKER STATION

This station is tailored to the position group that rotates to that coach. When the D-Linemen come down, put them in a stance vs an O-Lineman who is also in a stance. Attack-Lockout-Pull-Rip to shed the block before making the tackle. When the DBs come down, they defeat a stalk block. The LB's are back 5 yards and have to come up to defeat a FB or G coming at them. The Turnover drill teaches them that if they cannot see the ball because the RB is holding the ball PROPERLY tight against his chest, then reach over the shoulder and rip it out. If the RB is holding the ball WRONG and the tackler can see the ball below his armpit, then punch it out.

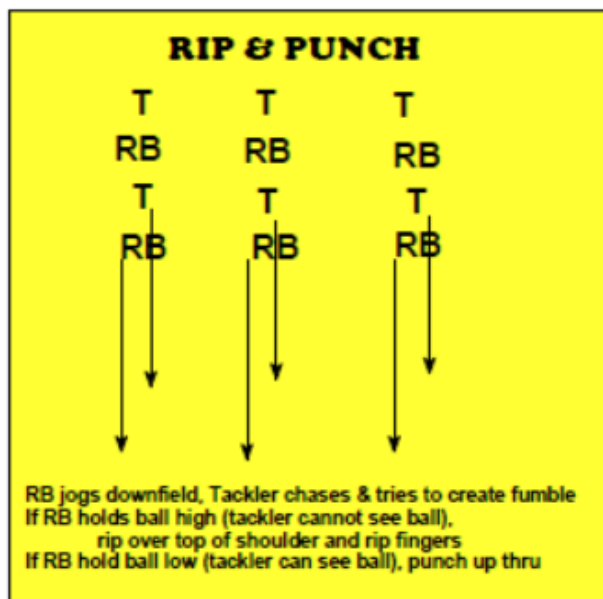


SHED BLOCKER (#2)

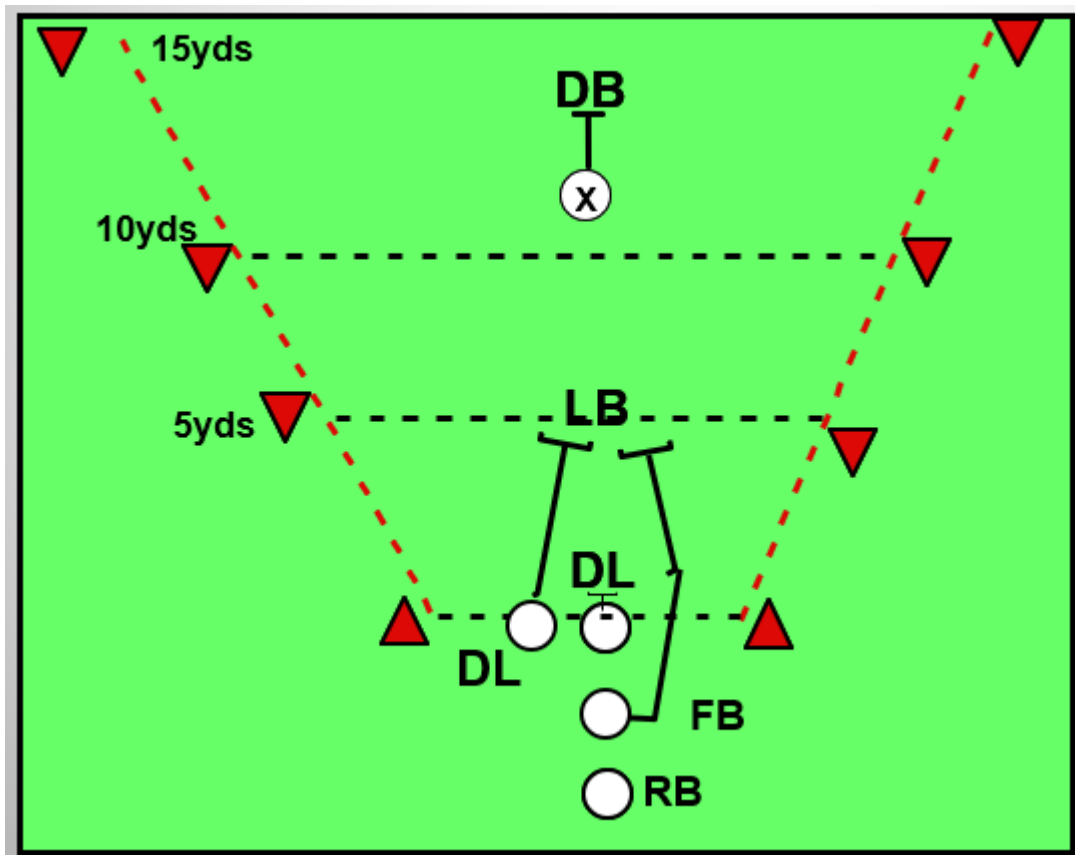
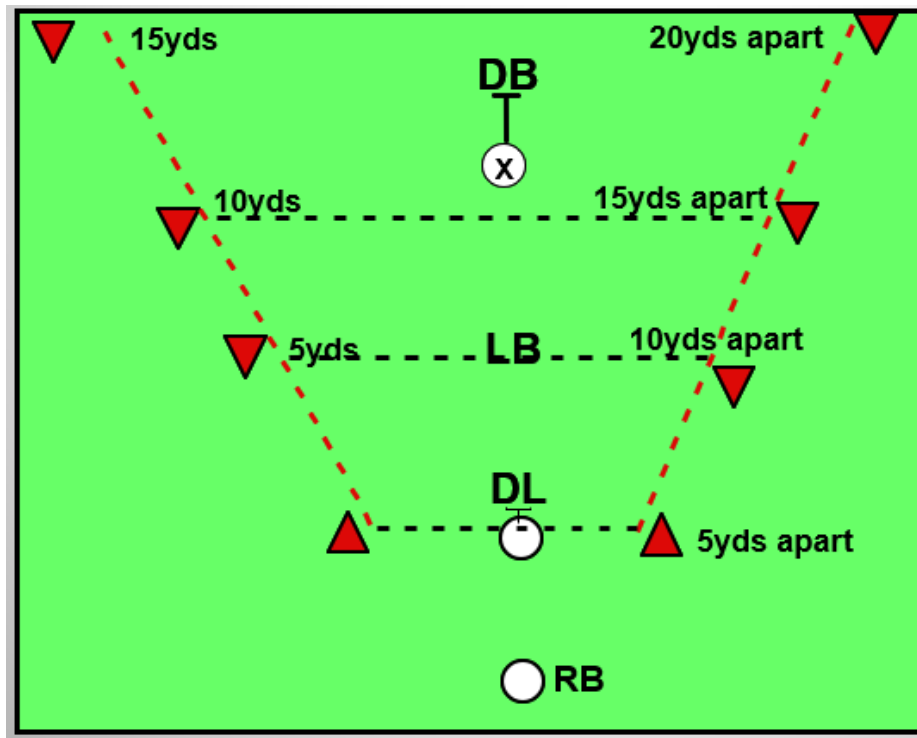
repeat same drill
but Tackler & OL are in 3-point stance

SHED BLOCKER (#3)

repeat same drill
but Tackler is 5 yards away from Blocker....
sprint to Blocker, "BENCH, THROW, & GO"
RB picks a cone but cannot cutback



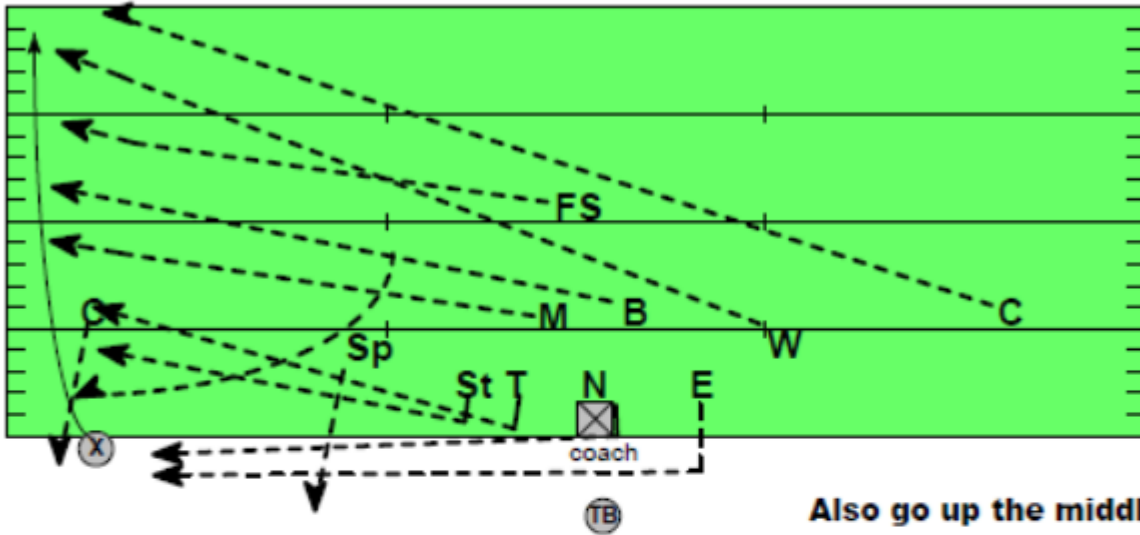
FUNNEL DRILL



PURSUIT

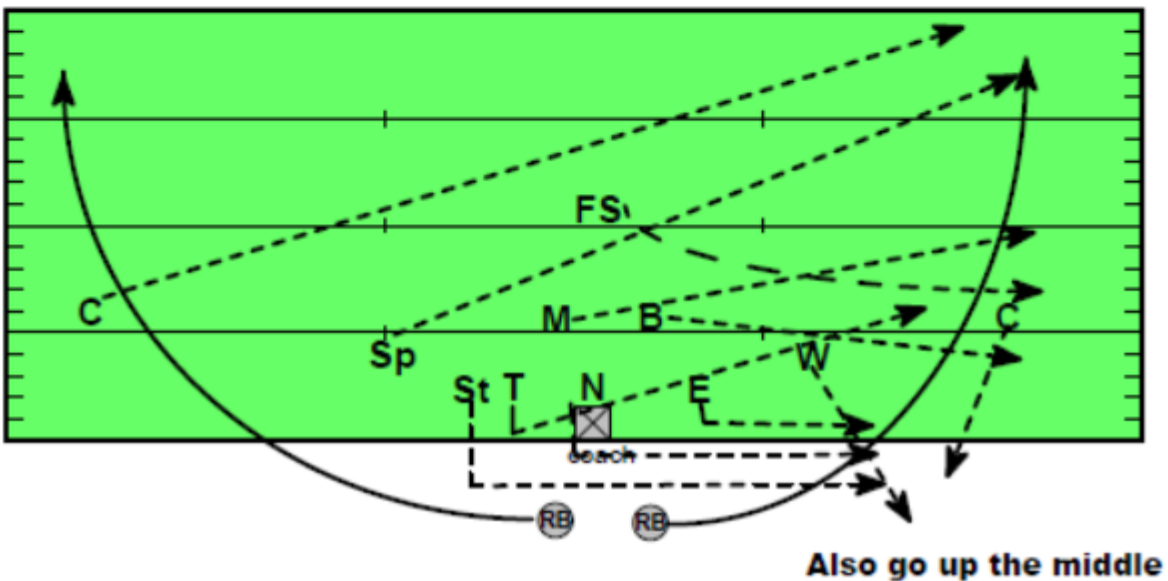
CHASE THE RABBIT

CHASE THE RABBIT - Wide Receiver (every Mon)



Each player does 5 pushups as soon as ball carrier is touched so Coaches can see angles. Far LB and CB do not do pushups.

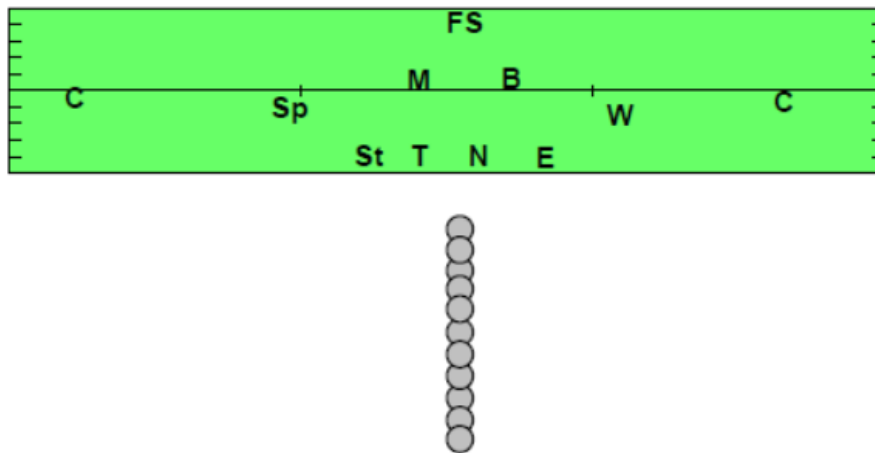
CHASE THE RABBIT - Running Back (every Mon)



PURSUIT

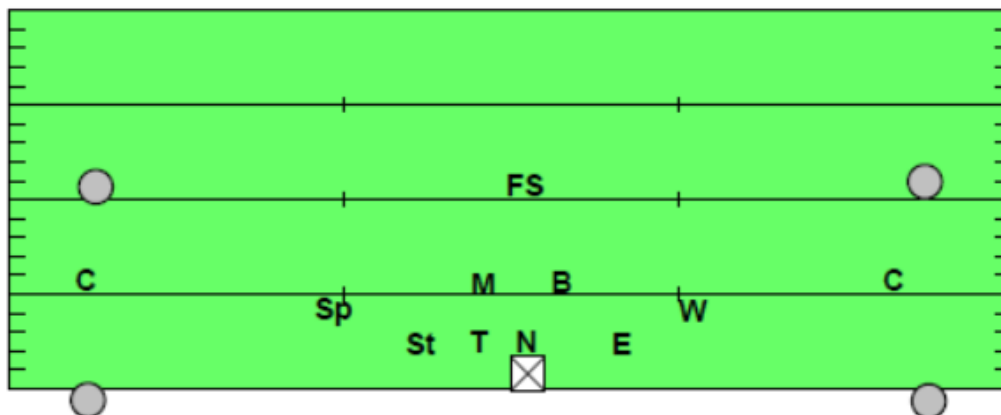
UP DOWNS

The coach points to each of the D-Linemen, one by one, and each does an up-down as the coach points either right or left, telling the next player in line which way to run. The player has to come up from the up-down, find his runner, and sprint to cross his face. The coach continues very rapidly pointing at the Linebackers, the Free Safety, and lastly, the two Corners.



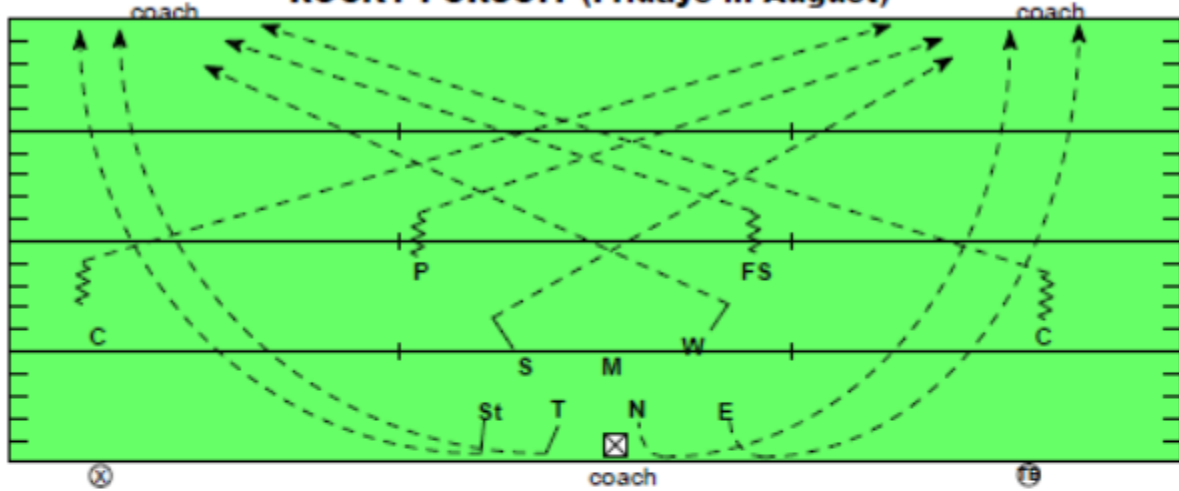
TEAM PURSUIT

I LOVE this drill. Team Pursuit and Pass Pursuit are the two drills we do most often. The players face the coach in a 2-point stance and Coach yells “Up Down”. All 11 players do an up-down while the coach or QB throws to one of the four gray circles. All 11 players sprint to the player who caught the ball and lines up behind him. Mike Backer says, “11 Helmets” and the other 10 players say “One Poor Soul”. They sprint back to their positions and lay on their back with helmets pointing to coach, who says “Ready Hit” as the QB throws to a different gray circle. The players rise up, find the ball, and sprint behind that player. Repeat “11 Helmets, One Poor Soul” and sprint back on their backs again. The Coach says “Ready Hit” one last time as QB throws to one of the remaining gray circles. Players sprint behind him, do their chant, and sprint back to their position on a knee. This is a timed drill and the 1st & 2nd string defense compete.



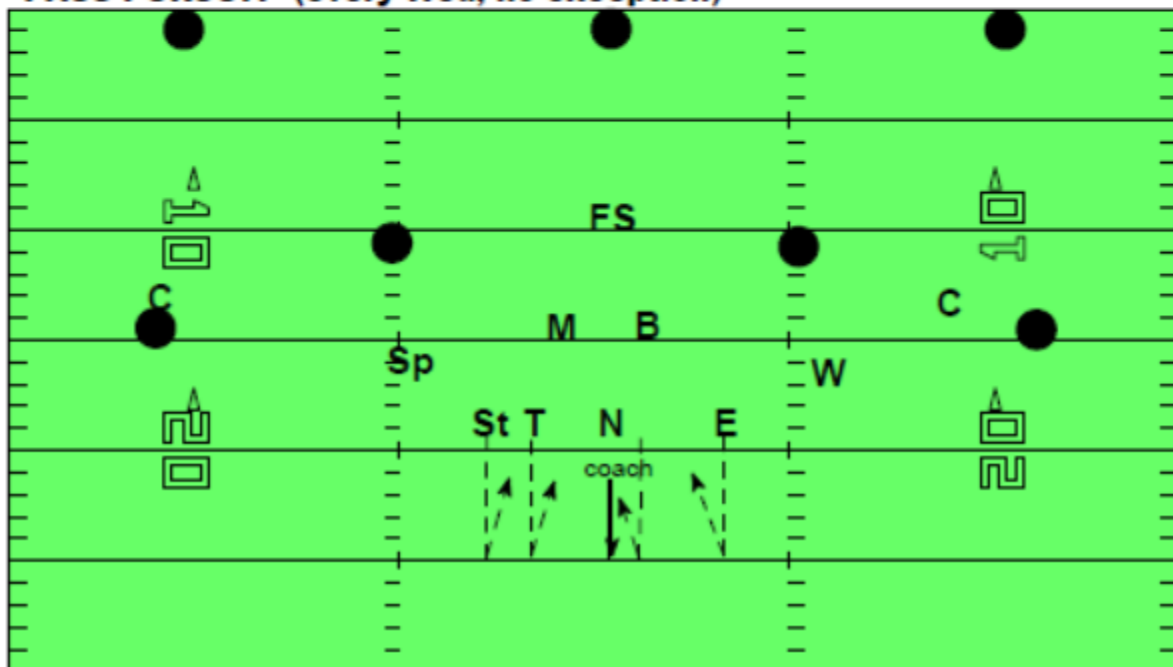
PURSUIT

ROCKY PURSUIT (Fridays in August)



Cross Full Speed. Simulate traffic during game.

PASS PURSUIT (every Wed, no exception)



Coach does a 3-step drop and throws a pass to any of the players standing still in the pass zones (dark circles). D-Line & blitzing Linebackers sprint past coach to 5 yard marker, turn and pursue towards where the ball is thrown. If the ball is batted down, they can stop and return to their positions. All other defenders drop to correct zone based on defensive call & try to intercept the ball. If they do not bat it down or intercept it, all 11 players run to the offensive player who caught the ball. They chop their feet, MIKE yells: "11 helmets" and other 10 players answer: "One Poor Soul". If the ball is intercepted, all players get in front of interceptor to form a convoy. Drill continues until there are 3 knockdowns AND 3 interceptions.

*IF WE SCORE, WE MAY WIN
IF THEY SCORE, WE MAY LOSE
IF THEY NEVER SCORE, WE WILL NEVER LOSE*

DEFENSE WINS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Great Pursuit

1. Pursuit is probably the most important part of defensive football.
2. What pursuit does
 - a. Eliminates long TD's (The Big Play)
 - b. Discourages your opponents (especially the ball carrier)
 - c. Helps to cover mistakes in our defense (help your teammate)
3. What it takes to pursue
 - a. Mental Desire (if you want to, you can)
 - b. Visualize making great plays (Be a Big Play Guy)
 - c. Physical conditioning (must get to every play, no matter where you are at)
 - d. Speed (think fast and quickly) we can all improve our speed and quickness.
 - e. Get off blocks -- get to the ball
4. How to pursue
 - Do Your Job
 - Take Correct Angle
 - Have Great Desire

**Our Goal Is To Be The Best Pursuit Team In Our Section
We will do a pursuit drill every day & double whistle every play**

Great Tacklers

Definition: *A collision between the defensive man and the ball carrier in which you must win*
Objective: *To stop the ball carrier for no gain.*

In a high school game there will be 50-70 chances to make a tackle. So if the defense fails to make the tackle on 5 plays, a 94% success rate, they will give up 35 points.

Types of Tackles

1. Straight on
2. Side way (profile)
3. Boundary
4. Open Field
5. Desperation

Tackling Situations

- 1 on 1
- First man after defeating blocker
- Second or Third man (pursuit)
- RB running high, tackler low
- RB running low, tackler high
- Receiver catching the ball in the air
- Catching man from behind
- Stripping the ball

**Every Player On Our Team Has to Be Great Tacklers
We will do a tackling drill every day**