

CHAPTER 15: PERIMETER DRILLS

#129 SCRAMBLE DRILL

PURPOSE: The Scramble Drill involves all offensive players, except the offensive linemen. It teaches the perimeter group how to execute and complete passes when the quarterback is forced out of the pocket due to pressure from the pass rush.

SET-UP: With no defenders present, the offensive group will snap the ball and run a pass play. After taking the normal drop for the play the quarterback will escape the pocket, either to the right or the left. When the receivers (as well as any running back that are in the pass pattern) realize that the quarterback has been forced to leave the pocket they will adjust their routes to be able to match the quarterback's scramble.

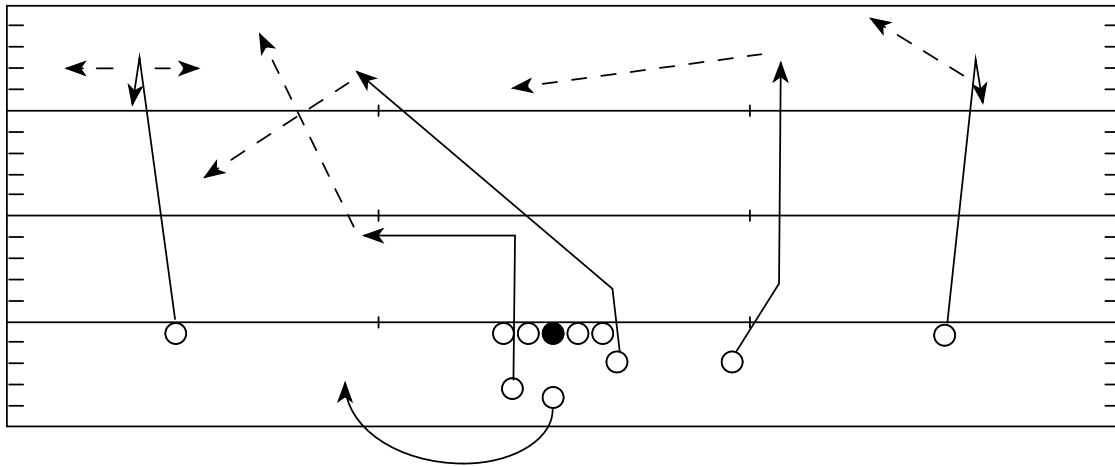
Scramble rules are:

1. Deep route: stop and run back toward the quarterback.
2. Short route: turn up field and run deep toward the endzone.
3. Intermediate route: stop and mirror the quarterback as he runs sideways from the pocket.

The quarterback's progression will depend on the amount of time and space they feel that they have. If the quarterback escapes the pocket, is working to the wide side of the field, and feels like they have a lot of time to throw, they will scan for an open receiver from deep to short. If the quarterback is forced to the short side of the field, or if they feel they have very limited time to throw, they will scan for an open receiver from short to deep. Throwing the ball away is always a good option. The purpose of escaping the pocket is to escape a sack and the subsequent loss of yardage. After escaping the pocket, and avoiding being sacked, the quarterback's first job is to ensure that no yardage is lost on the play. This makes legally throwing the ball out of bounds a highly preferable option to being tackled from behind. The final option, which is also a good choice, is for the quarterback to gain yards by running. Coaching point: When practicing scrambles, the quarterback must learn that Rule #1 is to never take a sack. To ensure this, teach them that once you start running you cannot stop running. To do so would likely lead to being tackled from behind. Being tackled from behind defeats the purpose of escaping from the pocket in the first place.

VARIATIONS: Rather than having the quarterback choose which way they will escape, or having the coach tell them which way to escape before the play starts, simulated pass rush pressure can be applied (see drill #21 Pass Rush Avoidance Drill for set-up instructions). Once the offensive group has practiced their scramble rules without a defense this drill can be executed in a 7 on 7 situation. Scramble calls can either be mixed into a normal 7 on 7 session, or a specific scramble session can be built into the practice plan. If running a specified offense versus defense Scramble Drill, the coach that is scripting the offense should mix in some plays in which the offense throws the ball with the normal timing of the pass pattern. This

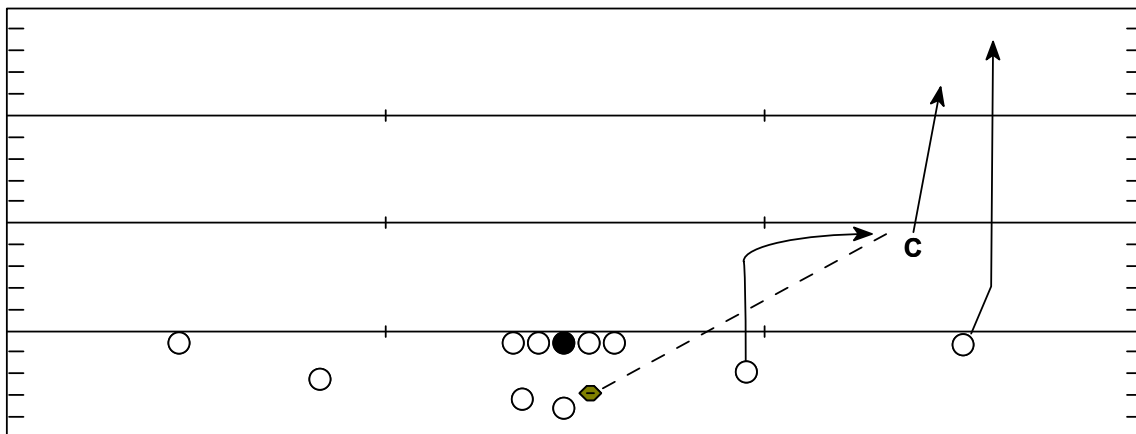
ensures that the receivers do not adapt their routes early or that the defense cheats their depth in anticipation of a scramble.



#130 PASS ROUTES WITH READ SIMULATIONS

PURPOSE: 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.

SET-UP: We generally use coaches or other players to simulate the defenders that are read. When drilling our Quick Flood play, for example, we assign a coach to play the role of the cornerback. 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.

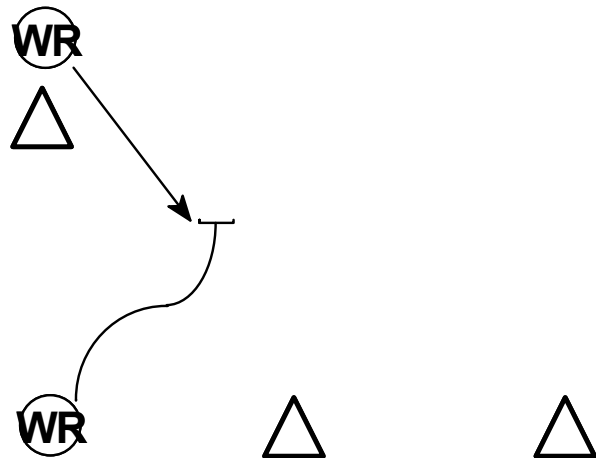


#131 BLOCKING LEVERAGE DRILL

PURPOSE: 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.

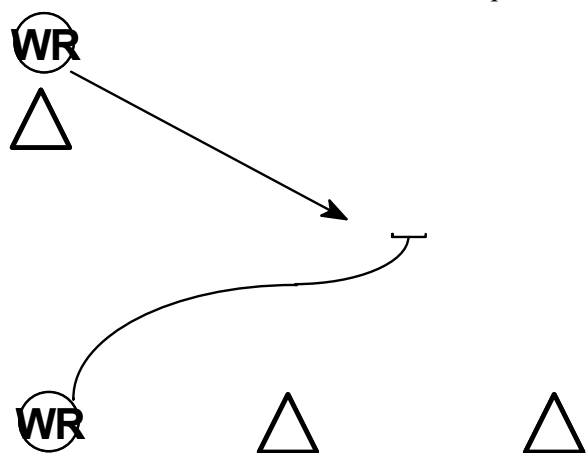
Our philosophy is that we always want to funnel players to the outside, and then beat them to the intersection point where the defender will get to the ball carrier. This drill teaches this skill.

SET-UP: These diagrams show 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 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 off 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, they will engage the outside number of the defender so they can “hook” the defender, thus allowing the ball carrier to continue on their 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 their path accordingly.

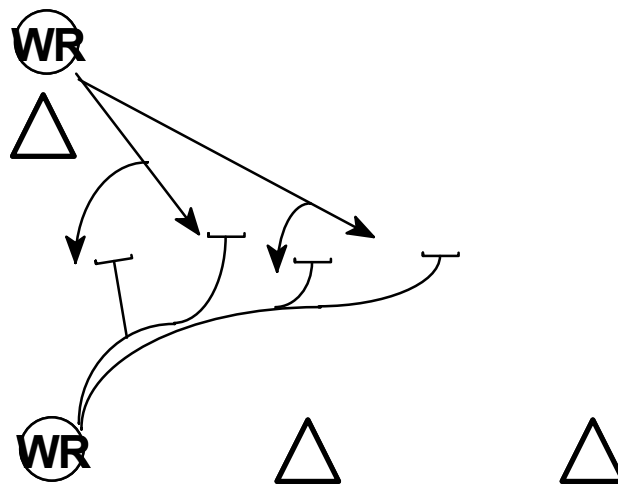


This drill will then be repeated with the defender aiming for the wider cone signifying a wide intersection point. The offensive player must now adjust his angle and path accordingly.

#132 TAG DRILL

PURPOSE: The Tag Drill is the advanced progression of the Blocking Leverage Drill. 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.

SET-UP: 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, they 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.



#133 STANCE & START CHASE DRILL

PURPOSE: 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.

SET-UP: 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 they will likely be caught by the player chasing them. 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.

