
SECTION ONE

PHILOSOPHY



- Chapter 1 : Overview of the Wing T**
- Chapter 2 : Good Coaching**
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Practice Philosophy



“Coaching” is putting each player in his own game situation as many times as possible, as many different ways as possible. – Bud Wilkinson

Your practice organization should reflect the major thing you ask of your athletes – a drive for perfection. Developing an organization for success is your way of showing the importance of practice and your interest in assisting them.

There seems to be several misconceptions about football practice that you should clarify with your team from the beginning. First, contrary to the old adage, “practice makes perfect,” we believe that only “perfect practice makes perfect”. We believe that we can only play in a game as good as we practiced. We do not believe it is possible to play better than you practiced.

Second, I have noticed there is a feeling among many players that they will suddenly have the intensity necessary to win when they play in the game. It is our opinion a team develops speed and intensity levels during practice that will determine their game hardness and the quality of their play. Practicing at half speed would be analogous to baseball players taking batting practice against a pitcher throwing underhand. It won’t help prepare for a game. We insist that our practice is game speed.

Makes Practice Valuable – Makes Game Attractive. Middle school and youth athletes rarely practice. They come to you with no clue about practicing since chances are that their Dad coached them and just ran plays for 2 hours.

Your players must believe in the necessity of practice. Many of the old drills and ways are worthless! Don’t be afraid to change the paradigm.

Practice Organization Is The Number One Yardstick by Which Coaches Are Evaluated

- Organized – All coaches coaching, players playing
- Intense – Must practice at “game speed,” must practice TEAM situations at “game speed.”
- Applicable – Does what you are doing in practice get done in the game? Run-pass percent in practice should equal the run-pass percentage in the game.
- Valuable – You only have time for the most important things.
- Provide for Repetition – Someone doesn’t improve a skill by doing it once. They must take “batting practice”. Skills vary tremendously by position.

Keep It Simple

KISS is "Keep It Simple, Stupid". "Keep It Simple" for the players and "Stupid" for me. Players just want to play football not learn biomechanics. Don't use a bunch of fancy words that you heard at a clinic because your players have never been to a clinic or watched a DVD.

“But Coach, Our Football IQ is Really Low”



BULLSHIT! Really? I hate this excuse. Ask your coaches to think back to their very first practice as a coach, usually as a young 20-something coaching a position. Even with four years of high school under your belt, think about how much you didn't know. Think back to how much your head was going to explode after your first clinic. Now count how many DVDs and books that you have looked at.

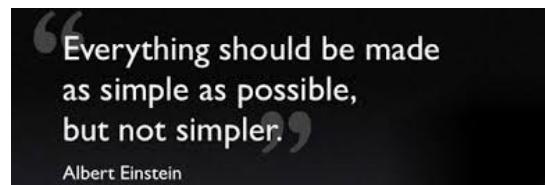
If YOUR football IQ was so high as a senior in high school, then why did you need the clinics, books, and DVDs? And as a player you were the exception. You were part of the top 10% that is on every roster. These top ten percent end up coaching. Did all of your teammates have a high football IQ?

Teaching Progression

Every good coach has a progression—an organized way of teaching. In the PISTOL WING-T offense, there is a lot of skills to teach, we are running 15-20 Wing-T running plays with a sprinkle of Midline and Veer. And there are screens, quick pass, drop back, and sprint out pass schemes. To be really good at all of these will give opposing defenses nightmares, however, to be really good at all of these the teaching has to be organized, efficient, and fast.

This is the same as when we learned how to speak through total immersion and then went back to learn the grammar rules. We will try to get the players introduced to the ENTIRE offense, so they understand how all the terminology fits together.

Give the players an overall view, then break it down into easy to learn parts, then come back to bringing all the parts together. For example, we will teach the Belly family with only one motion and out of loose and tight formations. Flat motion, twirl motion, blitz pickup, and other variations will be saved for August.



By having one version of every play installed out of 3 or 4 formations allow us to practice all of our different tempos, snap counts, and signals during the summer. Having a basic understanding of the ENTIRE offense also helps our players understand WHY certain drills and techniques are being taught during the summer.

Teach easy plays (jet) first and progress to harder plays (Buck sweep). There are so many other things that need to be established, such as work ethic, going fast, timing of motions, understanding different tempos / snap counts. We don't want to add to our players frustrations by teaching a complicated play that has lots of moving parts and variables such as Buck Sweep or Counters.

LINEAR TEACHING PROGRESSION

- Makes our system of blocking easy to learn and execute.
- Set the drills up in an easy to learn sequence, working from simple to complex.
- Be sticklers for perfection and detail, take great pride in perfection.

Once we have installed every core run play and major pass concept out of only our base formation, then we will go back and re-install, but add more formations, twirl & stop motions, audibles, etc.

Pour the concrete and frame the house, then go back and re-paint a room or change the curtains.

RACEHORSE MENTALITY

The Wing-T offense has a lot to install, especially the Pistol Wing T. It is imperative to move through practice quickly and efficiently in order to cover it all. Every coach should want maximum reps. Many coaches make that claim, but the racehorse philosophy really does get maximum reps. Everything within this philosophy is designed to facilitate getting maximum reps for teaching.

Coach on the Fly

When coaches make corrections, you do not want them to earn their doctorate by giving a dissertation on the field. Our coaches must get in the habit of using the **BUZZWORDS** that we created in the spring. The drill or play should never stop to correct one player. The correction must happen while the drill is happening. If the correction takes explanation, sub the player out.

Stopping a play should not happen very often. The only coaches who can make the team get back on the ball is the head coach and offensive coordinator. This should only be done if several players need to be corrected. NEVER put 22 players on the ball to fix 1 or 2 players. Sub those players out so practice keeps moving, have them stand by their position coach so corrections can be made, and then get them back in.



Use Meeting Times to Talk

Make sure to use practice time to improve on individual techniques. Times will arise during practice when an assignment period is necessary, but for the most part, assignment review can and should be left to meeting time. Practice time is very valuable and should not be wasted. Your coaches can make longer explanations or demonstrations once they see the film.

Simulate Snap Count on EVERYTHING

There are two important points to keep in mind. First, always simulate the same cadence in drills as you do in a game (“Ready” – “Set” – “Hit”). It makes no sense to use some generic command such as “Go” or “Hit”. You want that cadence ingrained in the players’ minds.

When doing drill work, you save time by not using long cadences. By the time practice ends, you may have wasted a lot of time by calling cadences throughout practice. On sound means the quarterback or the coach running the drill will say, “Ready.” On the “R” in ready, the ball will be snapped, and the players will take off.

We assign the same snap count to each play. We don’t change the count in the huddle. That helps eliminate those aggravating off-sides penalties. It also makes 2-min offense easier and coaches don’t have to remember to change the snap counts.

Practice shifting and motion in team tempo period

This offense has a lot of shifting and motions. However, every time you shift or go in motion during 11-on-11, you waste time. You do not want to take those extra minutes out of team period, when you could be getting more reps. We still do a little bit of shifting and motion during team so that we can see the timing, however, most of our shifts and motions are done during team tempo period.

Remember, our QB do not put Wings in motion. The QB never changes his routine, regardless of the snap count or whether a wing is in motion. He scans the field, lifts his foot, and barks “Ready”. It is up to the Wings to know if and when they go in motion.

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail

Coaches can borrow a phrase from high school English teachers as a guiding principle in the use of alliteration: “Prior Preparation and Planning Prevents Poor Performance Pain.”

Our practice plans appear to be much like many other programs that have incorporated practicing at a fast tempo and on the clock. The difference is not so much in what we are doing but rather in the How it is being done. I believe the edge in itself is created from being organized and attempting to outwork your opponent given the same amount of time.

When the staff gets together for practice planning, the first thing to consider is how to get maximum reps, how to stay within the racehorse philosophy. This starts in the spring and continues all the way through each practice. DO NOT start by writing out practice plans! Start with drills and buzzwords.

Designing the Individual Practice Session

To run the Wing-T offense like a machine, practice routines should match blocking and technique assignments in games. Develop your practice plan around the insertion for the day.

Each position coach must design and implement drills that emphasize the techniques used to execute the plays slated for the practice session. Don’t practice something you most likely won’t do. For instance, it makes absolutely no sense to practice speed (or jet) sweep pulls if there is no chance that the play will be run during that practice.

USE THE 80/20 RULE. This theory states that 80 percent of your practice time needs to be spent on the 20 percent of total drills that you have that are the most useful. Ultimately, 20 percent of the drills that you do will be used 80 percent of the time in a game situation.

Take a look at the 20 percent most highly productive plays and list the blocks/routes/techniques that your players are executing. Spend most of the practice time on these drills.

KNOW YOUR RUN/PASS RATIO. Be aware of the length of practice time being spent on each aspect of offense. If 100 minutes of individual time is schedule in your practice and the offense is 20 percent pass, then make sure that you spend a proportionate amount of time on pass protection. In this example, 20 minutes on pass protection and 80 minutes on the run game would be recommended.

Start with Tempo and DTF. End with Odd-Even

We believe that to go fast, you have to start fast. We start every practice with very fast paced team drills. Either we do “Perfect Plays” or “DTFs”. Perfect plays are running 4 plays that we learned yesterday as fast as possible perfectly. We set out cones for defense and the goal is to huddle up-sprint to line-run play-huddle up again etc to see if we can run 4 plays in under a minute. DTF are D-own T-he F-ield. We go goal line to goal line as fast as possible running screens, 2-min offense, our script, or our NASCAR.

Film Everything

Use Video and Coach off the Tape. You do not have time during practice to slow everything down and spend too much time in any one area. Use video, and then evaluate and teach off of the tape. Film every drill and post on HUDL. These drills can be viewed by players, new coaching hires, and youth coaches.

Every practice should be videotaped. We have a coach or injured player assigned to leave practice as soon as ODD-EVEN drill is done and start uploading the practice film to HUDL. This video needs to be online before the players get home so that they can watch it. Position coaches need to put notes on the film before doing anything else after practice. Furthermore, our O-Line coach will come on campus the next day to watch film with the linemen during lunch on Tue & Thur.

Mass Repetition.

The ultimate goal is to get as many reps in as possible. This is called MASS TEACHING. My rule of thumb is to get every player 4-5 reps of a drill every minute and to be able to run 3 plays every minute. Coaching this fast also teaches players to process information and make corrections at game speed. To move this fast and efficiently requires the following:

- No lines. Players cannot learn if they are standing in a line. The exception here is the sled.
- In the summer teach the players how to setup and run the drill. Don't waste time in Aug demonstrating a drill.

Your players will learn by doing and going through the drills, not by listening to a coach for five minutes and then doing limited reps. Make sure to use meeting time for discussion, and practice time for work. Anytime you have drills being run on the practice field, every player in each group should take part in that drill at the same time, if possible. Make sure you one bag/cone/ball for every two players.

- This means at least half of the lineman will perform the drill at a time.
- This allows a lot of quality repetitions in a shorter amount of time.
- Lots of quality repetitions = Technique mastery

Three Reps Per Minute

Goal is to run 3 plays per minute...but 2 plays per minute is great. This include reps during drills. We've all been there: players snaking back into their line, waiting for their turn at a drill. Repetition means that players get enough practice performing the skills and techniques required. But even more importantly, players learn how to react at split-second speed. Having to think and then do requires a split-second longer than automatically doing. We call this "**BENCH PRESS FOR THE BRAIN**"

How do you increase the number or reps? By setting up multiple stations, having enough equipment, and using buzzwords. For example, if we need to practice double teams, we should have enough linemen to set up two stations about five yards apart. A coach should position himself in between the stations and in front so that he can easily switch his attention from one group to the other. He'll give a cadence and the group on the left will go.

While one group goes, the other group is getting ready to go. All of this eliminates the time wasted retrieving the fallen bag, putting it in position, and having players fussing over getting into their stance. We can get a rep going every couple of seconds, thus adding a conditioning element, increasing reps, and finding the time to work on other skills.

The other important point is that if there is a major problem with the execution of a technique or if a player has a question, don't be afraid to stop and explain or "coach things up." We always would rather do one rep right than a dozen reps wrong. But this is all ironed out in spring and summer, not August.

If new drills or a new organization of pods is being set up for practice, make sure to cover these changes prior to the beginning of practice. Do not waste time in practice setting up drills. All of this preparation needs to be done before practice starts. A lack of repetitions in practice is often due to lack of organization and forward thinking on the part of the coach, not the players. We try to teach setup & rotations of every drill during summer so that we don't waste time in August.

Use Half Line Drills

Seriously evaluate why you need 11 vs 11 to practice Guard Trap (31/32 G) and Midline (Army). Practice these plays in a 4 vs 4 while the tackles, TE, Wings practice Toss and Jet (Liz/Rip). We do INSIDE RUN at same time as OUTSIDE RUN.

Our left side line will practice all plays without a Tight End (Belly & Baylor) at same time our right-side line practices Down and Cal...plays that use a Tight End. If your roster is very small, then varsity do left half line while JVs do right half line.

This gives us “Best on Best”. For example, our starting Left Tackle will down block vs our starting Right Tackle. Our starting Left Guard is kicking out our starting right guard. If we are on the left side, the starters will get two reps, and then switch, so the other player gets one rep. It is always good to cross train.

The concept of mass teaching, inside run, perimeter run, and half line is covered in Section Four.



COACHES

Have drills set up prior to beginning of practice. Coach on the hop, never slow down a drill – Keep drills moving so players can get reps. If you must pull a player up to get extra coaching keep the drill moving. Transition as fast as possible – Practice is consistent, and periods are short. When we transition to another period get the players moving.

Coach from Central Locations

Your coaches should stay in a centralized location and make the players run past them for correction. In many programs, you will see a coach chase a player into the huddle to make a correction while the player is still in the huddle. What happens is the next play gets run with another group, and the coach does not see anything in that next play because he is still correcting the player from the previous group.

On the field, in order to get maximum reps, you have the players run past the coach, who then gives a short correction on the way into the huddle.

Sergeant Prick. Running Back fakes for

Coach every rep of every drill.

Players need feedback. Poor technique that goes uncorrected becomes poor habit and will lead to poor performance in the game. As a coach, it is imperative to always move around, always be active, always be encouraging, and to coach every rep of every drill.

While our focus may tend to be on our starters, we have to keep in mind that our younger players will be the starters of the future. No player should go through a practice uncoached.

The coach should also have consistency of instruction. That means that every repetition gets coached the same way every time. It requires the coach to teach something the same way, utilizing the same verbiage and coaching points with his athletes.

Reps, Reps, Reps, - Have great tempo during practice so that players can get quality reps. Learn by doing.

Drill Organization

Explain the drill and why it is important. Drills develop and reinforce proper execution of specific techniques. Excellent technique is the foundation of the Wing-T. Faulty technique equals failed play. It is imperative that coaches explain what is trying to be accomplished. Coaches are also teachers and must always explain in detail what the drill entails, how to perform the drill, and why the drill is important.

Meaningless drills will now become meaningful to the players. Linemen will see the connection between their performance during the individual session and their execution of play in a team setting.

Drills Come From Your Playbook

As a head coach or coordinator, I had several 1on1 meetings with my position coaches. We ask this simple question: **What are we asking Johnny to do on Friday Night?**

Once we have a list of every block and route that Johnny has to run in order to execute every play, we then make two more columns. The drill to teach that technique and a buzzword to describe it.

TECHNIQUE	DRILL	BUZZWORD
First Step of every Block	FunHouse/Get Offs	“Heel replaces Toe”
Down Block	Homer Dairy	“Right Shoulder Down Block” “Ear replaces belly button”
Short Pulls (32 G, 22 Trap, 36 O)	Homer Dairy. G Drill. Trap Drill. Half Line Down Drill	“Pull Right Hit Right”
Wing Block on ILB	BIB & BOB Drill	“BIB to FBI” “BOB to FBI”

After these are all drawn up and written down, we go very slow in spring/summer to teach our kids not only the technique, but the actual drill. We don't want to waste any time during August on transition or setting up a drill. When our O-Line coach yells out “G Drill”, all the Guards and Centers know exactly what bags/cones/boards to grab and where to stand. They know what bag to grab after they make the block and know what line to go to after they hold a bag.

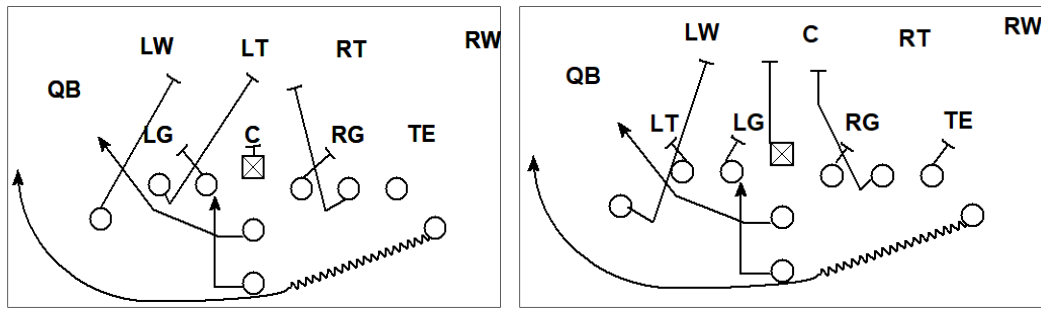
The first step that goes with a certain technique is called the same name as that technique. That technique & step name is also used in the play call

- A Reach step is the 1st step for the Reach block
- The drill that teaches Reach block is called the “Reach Drill”
- The Reach block is used in the play "Liz 28 Reach"

- The Left Guard pulls left on the play 32-G.
- This pull uses the “G” technique and the first step is the “G” step.
- The drill that teaches all of this is the “G Drill”

Replace the Bag You Hit

Coaches can waste a lot of time setting up drills and getting players to rotate properly. The next page shows how the scout defender a player blocks is playing the same position as who is blocking him.



Notice how the scout players/bag holders move around on scout defense so that they are being blocked by the position they play. This forces them to pay attention and learn the playbook through “vicarious” reps. Also, coaches don’t waste time rotating players, they just do it automatically. If you want the starters to get more reps, you just say, don’t rotate until the first team runs it twice.

We also set up every drill like this. You will see more of this in Section Four.

Cross Training

Mass teaching allows you more time to CROSS TRAIN. Everybody learns everything. Our starting center will just focus on that position, but our backup center is usually one of our tackles. Now we may not have time to teach them all the assignments, but everyone learns all the techniques. In regards to learning blocking assignments on each play, our guards learn both left and right, same with the tackles.

Do not get stuck in the mindset that you need 2 at every position. I go into every season with 3 tackles, 3 guards, and 1 center. One of my 3 tackles are usually my backup center. Even when I was at a school of 2,000 students, I was barely able to find 7 good linemen.

Time

Having a timer will be one of the best pieces of equipment you use on a daily basis. It keeps everyone on task and practice has a great flow. One of the great things about running a practice on the clock is our attempt to get as many reps as possible at practice and transition throughout practice as fast as possible. As a result we will naturally be in top physical condition.

We use 5-minute periods on a standard day. The short periods allow everyone to be engaged and don’t allow for any boredom. Our practices will usually have approximately 10 minutes that are provided for individual drills. This time involves everyday drills and working on techniques that are fundamental to the position. During this time we want rapid fire repetitions and players getting a rep every 24-28 seconds. Coaches are responsible for setting the drill up so that a player can get a minimum of 10 reps in a 5-minute period.

Competition

Our program thrives on competition. Our staff tries to create as many competitive situations as possible. This is done by competing Offense vs Defense and our “1’s vs 1’s”. Our players will get these opportunities both in group situations like 7 on 7, Perimeter or Inside Run as well as PUP (Pass Under Pressure). While we do provide some time for our units to go against service (scout) teams I believe that at the high school level there is a greater need for your starter to go against starters.

Practice

Coaches need to anticipate what EQUIPMENT they need and either go out early to setup or delegate to players. Countless minutes of practice time is wasted each season with the retrieval and set up of equipment. As head coach, we established a set rotation way in advance that went as follows:

- Jr/Sr linemen put bags on both sleds; Fr/Soph put bags away
- Fr/Soph got out round blocking bags; Jr/Sr put round bags away
- Jr/Sr backs got out hand shields Fr/Soph got out agility bags & spacing boards
- Fr/Soph put away hand shields Jr/Sr backs put away agility & boards
- WR got out and put away all cones and scrimmage vests
- QB in charge of balls

Several years ago we stopped lining up as a team before practice to do high knees, butt kickers, carioca stretches. Our players go through fast 5-minute, position-specific agilities that get blood flow to the muscles. We alternate offense and defense.

- OL do get-offs in the chutes
- DL do ball-on-a-stick get offs in chutes
- RB do agility/cones
- DB do back pedal drills
- WR go full-speed thru pass tree
- LB do pass drops
- QB do full sprint progression

Water

We buy water bottles for every position group. Water girls and injured players are in charge of filling them up and bringing them to the stations. This saves the time wasted jogging to the water tank. The only traditional team water breaks we take are when switching from offense to defense and after our tackling stations.

- OL station has 12 bottles
- DL station has 12 bottles
- RB station has 6 bottles
- DB station has 6 bottles
- WR station has 6 bottles
- LB station has 6 bottles

I recruit six water girls from my biology classes every year. I leave the rotation up to them, but two come out on Mon, two on Tue, and two on Wed. They also are assigned jobs Friday night. I reward them with a polo, a shirt, sweats, and a visor.

Championship Reminders

The things that are important to us have to be embedded during practice. If any of the following occurs at any time during practice, that player, or players, immediately drop and do 16 pushups. We do 16 because that is how many games you play if you reach the state finals. The “reminder” is if you keep doing whatever you just did, then we will never play 16 games.

- RB not faking 5 yards
- DL jumping offsides.
- OL jumping off sides
- DB getting beat deep
- If the football touches the ground for any reason during offense, the player that caused it to hit the ground does 16. WR drops it, he does pushups. QB overthrows WR, then he does pushups. RB fumbles, Center bad snaps.

Pistol Snap

Our Centers have a ball with them at all times. No matter what the drill is, they always snap it 3 yards to someone and they always get hit by a bag. If you allow your center to snap against air, they will have bad snaps when you go live. Our QB never is allowed to do a drill without the ball snapped to him from 3 yards. The center, an injured player on a knee, or a coach. Somebody is snapping.

After Practice:

Just because practice is over doesn't mean the coaching stops. As you walk into the locker room, make contact with as many of your players as possible. As a head coach, I never allowed our coaches to congregate on the field and talk after practice. We rotated so that one coach stayed on the field to supervise equipment lock up and players who owed extra conditioning.

Maybe someone had a tough practice. Pick them up. Maybe someone is feeling discouraged and wants to know what they have to do to get better. Tell them what they need to work on. Maybe you chewed someone out. Discuss what happened in a calm tone, tell them something that they did well during practice and give them a pat on the back.

It's your job to keep them up, to make them feel good, to leave practice wanting to come back the next day. What you are doing, in short, is setting yourself up to have a good practice the next day.

Conditioning

I hear so many coaches talk about "conditioning with a football" at coaching clinics, but when I press them further, many say that they had to go back to traditional, old school conditioning because their kids were not in shape or they were cramping. Well, for starters, cramping is caused by dehydration.

You can't pick moments in practice to condition while other times in practice players stand around listening to the defensive coordinator for 30 minutes telling you everything their offense does.

Our spring and summer weight program is ran at a very high intensity, almost circuit like training so our kids are already in pretty good shape both metabolically and cardio-wise before they ever step on the field. We also do traditional running, such as gassers, ladders, lines, etc every Tuesday and Thursday during the summer and during every practice in August.

Here are some ways that we ensure that conditioning is happening during our practices:

- Start every practice with our 5-min position specific agility drills
- Immediately, no water break, go to "perfect plays" or DTFs
- During offensive practice, our running backs have to fake 5 yards, in every drill.
- We end offense with our Odd-Even Drill, which is 30 plays in 10 minutes.

- Every defensive practice starts with intense tackling. No standing around.
- We do "double whistle" in every drill. All 11 sprint to the ball, all the time.
- We end every defensive practice with a pursuit drill

- We end every Monday practice with "sled races" for 500yd. Skinnies/Backs vs Line.
- Wednesday is our Kickoff Coverage drill. An absolute butt kicker

The ultimate goal in running the Wing-T offense is to develop a quick, rhythmic, machine-like tempo. By maintaining a fast pace and quickly switching drills, the coach adds a conditioning element and gives the players little opportunity to be bored.

Coaches must cover a lot of stuff for offense, defense, and special team. Our approach to practice fits in with our style and overall philosophy of being very tough physically and mentally. Not only do we get a lot of reps, our kids are conditioned, but practice goes by so fast and is fun. And our kids learn how to think on the fly, process information quickly. They only know how to react.