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## **CHAPTER 22**



### **Practice Schedules & Input Plans**

Every coach has a progression—an organized way of teaching the basic techniques their system. In the WING-T offense, there are a lot of skills to teach: Faking, Shoulder Skills, Pulling; etc. We are running 15-20 Wing-T running plays with a sprinkle of Midline and Veer. And there are pass protection 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.

We believe in using the whole-part-whole philosophy in teaching our system. We believe that each learner is different and the best way for them to learn is to expose them to different modes of learning. With that understanding we want to make sure that our players get three methods of learning on everything we do. The first is auditory meaning we want to explain everything by talking them through the expectations. Then we want to make sure for the visual learner that we are able to show them examples either with drawings on the white board or with video film of what we want them to learn. Last, we want to put them on the field and through physical repetitions they will grasp the concepts.

It is my belief that you must have a system that is progressive and taught in a manner that allows for you to expand as you move forward. And with that I find the first thing that is needed is a Glossary of terms you will use in your system and each player and coach should know what each term means. Example that we have covered already in this book the term “Down” as a blocking rule. Down means the first defender lined up all the way inside of you. Everyone must know what this term means in our offense.

Next as a position coach you must know based on our offensive system the skills needed by the players in your group to carryout all the expected assignments. You as the position Coach will then develop the set of drills you will need during your individual time both in season and out of season to help your players develop the needed skills. We do not have time to being doing drills that have little to no importance in our young men being successful in our system.

The next thing that we must do is determine the things that our players must be able to do with the aid of another player such as double team blocks or running a route with the QB and determine the drills we want to do to develop the



consistency needed when more than one player needs to be successful. We will need to come up with the specific drill work we want to use.

We must determine how we want to approach our Group periods. We believe you should focus on specific things and not be jumping back and forth. What I mean is we will work group work focused on run plays only and then work in group on pass game only as we are working through practice.

Last, we want to go to our team period. We will focus on a specific front for 2 days and then we will go to another front for 2 days. We will normally do this the first week. After that we like to change up the fronts during team period to force our players to follow all the rules for each play. When we are first installing new plays or schemes, we want our players going against bags. We are not wanting them to have to worry about movement or penetration. We simply are concerned with the assignment and execution of first steps and head and shoulder placement. Another advantage by beginning with blocking bags if it helps with our timing of our backs and their ability to hit the hole smoothly to develop confidence with our OL.

After we have developed the timing and execution with assignments, we will then progress to the defense stunting, blitzing, and changing up fronts. We also will begin to add our blocking variations at this point as we would want to use certain variations obviously versus different fronts. We want this to be full speed contact and best vs best.

## THINGS NECESSARY TO PRACTICE EFFICIENTLY

**Buzz Words.** Teach all of your players, making sure each lineman can hear the instructions, and give them short, concise, understandable coaching points or "catch phrases" along the way.

**Mass Repetition.** 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. As the linemen begin to understand the coaching points offered, they quickly will be able to coach themselves.

Use Video and Coach off the Tape. The backside view is a tremendous teaching tool for offensive linemen. 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. Your players will appreciate the individual attention and will learn a lot from watching themselves.

**Mass teach** whenever possible. 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. All drills are done on *sound cadence*. 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, "Set." On the "s" in set, the ball will be snapped, and the players will take off. Sound cadence will be used in as many drills as possible. If you have a 10-minute period and want to get a lot of reps during that drill, start each rep with one command rather than a long cadence. You go on the first sound and do all your drills to get maximum reps.



**Do First Things First.** Develop individual position practice plans around the insertion for the day. For example, if the plays being inserted are in the Belly family, then make sure the line work cross blocks, Wings practice blocking Inside Linebackers, and Receivers learn routes on Belly Pass.

**Use the 80/20 Rule.** This theory should be used in preparing the daily practice plan. 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 close look at the plays the offense runs and you will find that 80 percent of the offense is earned from 20 percent of your total plays; identify which plays are the most important for you. Each position coach must take a look at the 20 percent most highly productive plays and list the skills needed by each position.. Spend most of the practice time on these drills.

**Know Your Run/Pass Ratio.** Coaches must be aware of the length of practice time being spent on each technique. 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.

**Prepare Players for New Drills.** 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. This will make practice go faster.

**Always Focus on Footwork.** Whether in the prepractice period or during stretch time, the coach must always focus on footwork. The first three steps are the most important in football, so make sure players are getting a lot of agility drills and speed ladder as a daily warm-up routine. Players must be able to move and have coordination in the lower body, so find time to work basic footwork drills into the transition periods in practice.

**Limit Assignment Time.** 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 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. If you tell coaches to stay in a centralized location and have the players run past them for corrections, the coaches cannot only make the corrections, but they can watch the next play. When coaches make corrections, you do not want them to earn their doctorate by giving a dissertation on the field. The coaches should make *quick, meaningful corrections* to the players on their way by. The players can thus hear the correction and know what they did wrong; the rest of the help comes from the film analysis.



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.

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.

## **Practice Schedules & Input Plans**

The first thing I want you to understand is that all of my years of Coaching my players have always been two-way players. They may only start on one side of the ball but they all practice on both sides. I believe if you have at least 18 players that can really play the game you have the ability to have a great year unless you have several injuries. We want our best players on the field and if they need to rest a series then we get them some rest. We are a Wing T offense that has every series it contains in our system with the Mid Line and Veer included. We run the 4-3 on Defense and we have found the same type player we want at Guard is the same type of player we want at LB etc.

The issue with players going both ways is the amount of time you can work on each side of the ball during a game week equally and still give the time required to be great in Special Teams. So the 1:30 minute practice is not an option for us. We normally will be on the field for two hours and forty five minutes to three hours. I also once the season begins will only go full pads on Tuesday as long as we won our game the previous Friday. We will go half pads on Monday and Wednesday. Thursday practice is about two hours and in helmets only. I am fortunate at my school to have a large Coaching Staff that I will go into detail shortly about. Our school plays Varsity (Fridays) and JV games (Thursday), we do not here have a Freshman schedule, but we did at my previous school Beech High School in Tennessee and they played on Mondays.

We will divide our players by Varsity or JV players. Now when determining if a player goes with the Varsity we look to see if they are a starter or backup on either Offense or Defense and also if they are a Senior then they go with the Varsity. All other players will practice with the JV.

Our staff is divided as Offensive Coaches or Defensive Coaches. All Coaches will work with our Special Teams. We want to have our players in small groups to maximize our repetitions in Individual/Group Periods. When the Varsity is practicing on Offense the JV is practicing on Defense. This helps because many of you know you have a hard time hiring quality coaches and telling them they will be JV coaches. Our JV players (our future) are getting coached by the same staff that our varsity is getting coached by. We are teaching them the same things with the same drills, words, plays, etc.

