

## CHAPTER 2: FOOTWORK DRILLS

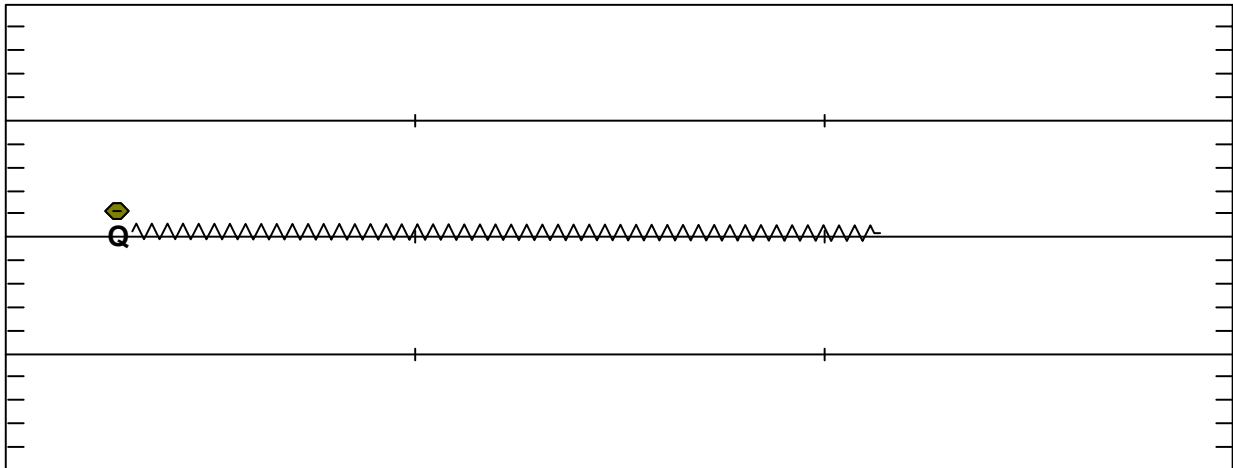
### #14 DOWN THE LINE PASS DROP DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Down the Line Pass Drop Drill teaches quarterbacks to take vertical pass drops with rhythm, balance and without leaving the center of the pocket.

**SET-UP:** Utilizing a field yard stripe as a reference, the quarterback will commence a vertical drop and continue for an extended distance. This drill teaches quarterbacks not to overstep or understep when taking a vertical drop so that they stay in the center of the pocket.

For advanced quarterbacks, this drill can teach speed and rhythm in vertical drops. For beginners it should be done at a controlled pace. The required step back and crossover in front footwork of a pass drop is not always second nature to players and this movement pattern requires training.

**VARIATIONS:** Coaches can challenge advanced quarterbacks by having them finish the drill with a throw. This will challenge players to control their balance, rhythm and eyes.



## #15 1-STEP DIRECTIONAL DROP DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The 1-step Directional Drop Drill trains delivery of quick passes. A directional drop is one that allows the quarterback to step in the direction of the throw rather than straight back into the pocket. The benefit of a directional drop is improved weight transfer into the throw and better accuracy as a result of the weight transfer.

**SET-UP:** As the name implies, when utilizing a 1-step Directional Drop the quarterback will only take one step in the direction of the throw before delivering the pass. The step will be directly to the target with the back foot. For a right-handed quarterback that is throwing to the right, the quarterback will step at the target with his right foot (bottom middle photo). The left foot will come down in front of the right foot as the ball is delivered. For a right-handed quarterback that is throwing left, the quarterback will wrap the right foot around the left to the target (top middle photo). The left foot will come down in front of the right foot as the ball is delivered.

**VARIATIONS:** For advanced quarterbacks the coach can set-up multiple targets that the quarterback must choose from. The goal is for the quarterback to read a defensive key that will then tell him where to throw the ball.



## #16 3-STEP DIRECTIONAL DROP DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The 3-step Directional Drop Drill trains delivery of intermediate passes. A directional drop is one that allows the quarterback to step in the direction of the throw rather than straight back into the pocket. The benefit of a directional drop is improved weight transfer into the throw and better accuracy as a result of the weight transfer.

**SET-UP:** The first two steps of a 3-step Directional Drop is the same as a traditional drop. The third step is in the direction of the throw. The third step will be directly to the target with the backfoot. For a right-handed quarterback that is throwing to the right, the quarterback will step at the target with his right foot. The left foot will come down in front of the right foot as the ball is delivered. For a right-handed quarterback that is throwing left, the quarterback will wrap the right foot around the left to the target. The left foot will come down in front of the right foot as the ball is delivered.

**VARIATIONS:** For advanced quarterbacks the coach can set-up multiple targets that the quarterback must choose from. The goal is for the quarterback to read a defensive key that will then tell him where to throw the ball.

*See photos from Drill #15.*

## #17 5-STEP DIRECTIONAL DROP DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The 5-step Directional Drop Drill trains delivery of intermediate and deep passes. A directional drop is one that allows the quarterback to step in the direction of the throw rather than straight back into the pocket. The benefit of a directional drop is improved weight transfer into the throw and better accuracy as a result of the weight transfer.

**SET-UP:** The footwork for the 5-step Directional Drop is the same as a 3-step directional drop with an additional open and crossover step at the beginning of the drop. The fifth step is in the direction of the throw. The fifth step will be directly to the target with the back foot. For a right-handed quarterback that is throwing to the right, the quarterback will step at the target with his right foot. The left foot will come down in front of the right foot as the ball is delivered. For a right-handed quarterback that is throwing left, the quarterback will wrap the right foot around the left to the target. The left foot will come down in front of the right foot as the ball is delivered.

**VARIATIONS:** For advanced quarterbacks the coach can set-up multiple targets that the quarterback must choose from. The goal is for the quarterback to read a defensive key that will then tell him where to throw the ball.

*See figures from Drill #15.*

## #18 RUN-ACTION PASS DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Run-Action Pass Drill trains delivery of run-action passes. A run-action pass is a pass play that begins with a run fake. The key to an effective run-action pass is that it looks identical to the run play that is being simulated.

**SET-UP:** The footwork involved in a run-action pass will be specific to each run and each type of offense. While most coaches will instruct the quarterback to step back after faking the run play I believe that accuracy, balance and velocity can be increased by stepping forward upon completion of the run fake. For a right-handed quarterback faking to the left, this can be achieved stepping through with the left foot at the end of the fake rather than stepping back with the right foot to set and throw. For a right-handed quarterback throwing to the right the quarterback must simply collect his feet underneath his body to be ready to deliver the football.

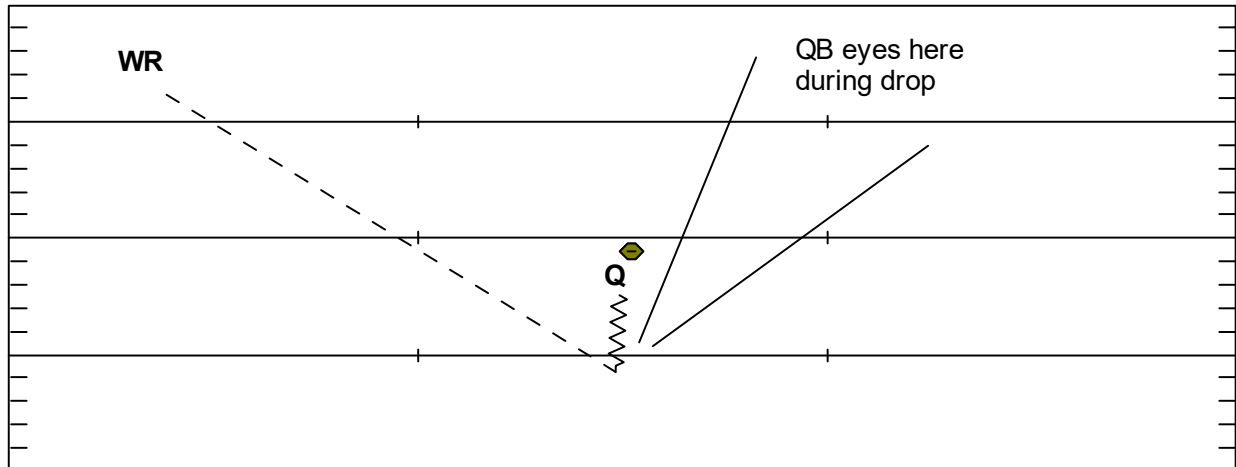
**VARIATIONS:** For advanced quarterbacks the coach can set-up multiple targets that the quarterback must choose from. The goal is for the quarterback to read a defensive key that will tell them where to throw the ball. For a right-handed quarterback throwing to the left, the quarterback's step through will be directed toward the selected target. When throwing to the right, the quarterback's gather steps will square him to the selected target.

## #19 LOOK-OFF TIMING THROW DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Look-Off Timing Throw Drill teaches quarterbacks to use their eyes to control and manipulate defenders. This is a basic drill in which quarterbacks will drop while looking one direction and then set and throw to a target that is set in a different part of the field.

**SET-UP:** The coach will assign the type of drop that the quarterback will execute while looking off the defense. The main coaching points are for the quarterback to, 1) keep their eyes away from the target for as long as possible, and 2) deliver the ball to the target on time without wasted motion at the top of the drop.

**VARIATIONS:** For advanced quarterbacks the coach can set-up multiple targets that the quarterback must choose from after looking-off. The goal is for the quarterback, after looking off the defense, to transfer his eyes to a defensive key that will then tell him where to throw the ball.

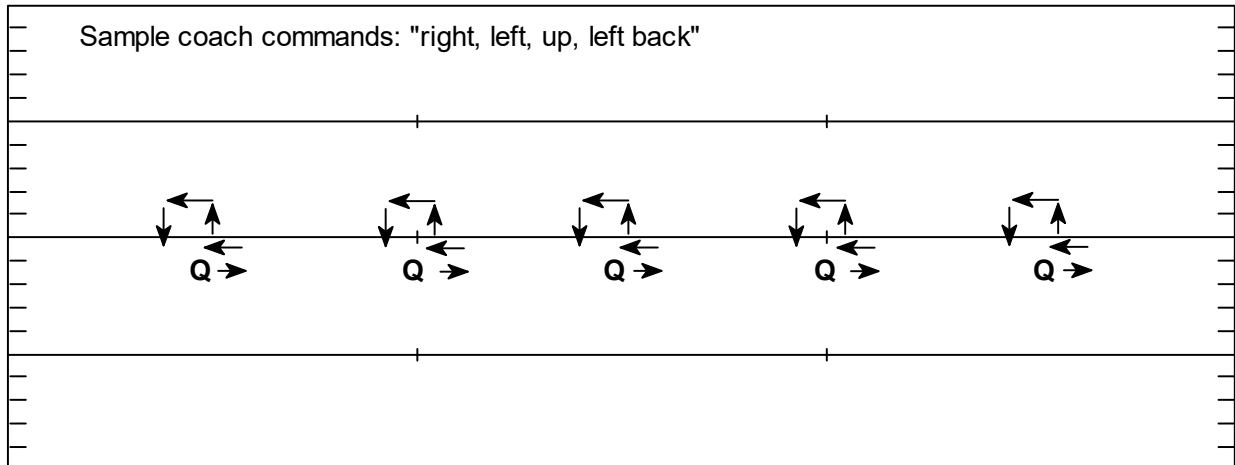


## #20 POCKET FOOTWORK DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Pocket Footwork Drill teaches the quarterback to move within the pocket in order to avoid rushing defenders. The quarterback must be ready to move in multiple directions and this drill teaches each required movement.

**SET-UP:** The drill will begin with the quarterback in their set position and facing the coach. The coach will point in one of the directions that the quarterback would need to move in order to allude the pass rush and the quarterback will move his feet accordingly. All four directions (right, left, up and back) can be trained in succession with this drill. When moving right or left the quarterback should move with the front foot first. In doing so, it allows him to stay on rhythm when moving into the throwing motion (left, right, then left foot stride to throw for a righthanded quarterback). When moving back, the quarterback should mimic the crossover footwork of a pass drop. When moving forward, the quarterback should reach forward with his front foot and slide the back foot into position. Regardless of the direction the quarterback is moving, he should be stepping with his front foot first.

**VARIATIONS:** The advanced quarterback can start the drill with a pass drop and end the drill with a throw. In addition, pocket escape moves (see drill #30) can also be incorporated. Multiple quarterbacks can work at the same time by spacing out about five yards apart. They should never be in each other's way because they should always be moving the same direction at the same time.

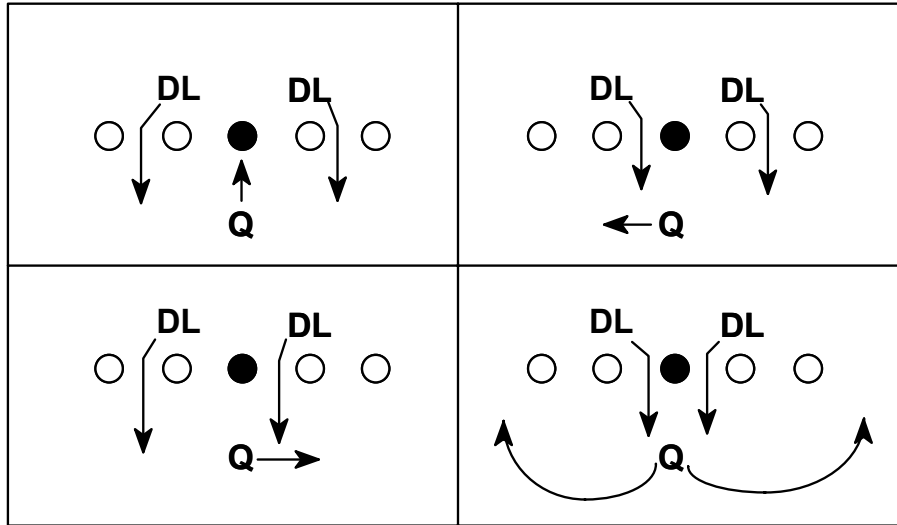


## #21 PASS RUSH AVOIDANCE DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Pass Rush Avoidance Drill trains the instincts of the quarterbacks when facing a pass rush. Quarterbacks must learn to “feel the rush” and use only their peripheral vision to avoid the defense while keeping their attention on the downfield defenders and receivers.

**SET-UP:** Two or four pass rushers can be used in this drill. The pass rushers will initially align over where the offensive guards and tackles would be with the quarterback behind the center (under center or shotgun is fine). At the snap, the rushers will advance by choosing to attack either their inside or outside gap (for example, a rusher aligned over the guard would rush through the A-gap or B-gap). With their eyes downfield on a throwing target, the quarterback will use only their peripheral vision to “feel” the rush and move accordingly within the pocket to find a passing lane. With repetition, the quarterback will learn the required necessary movements. When facing two pass rushers, if both rushers attack their outside gaps the quarterback will learn to step-up within the pocket. If both rushers attack the gap to the quarterback’s right, the quarterback will reset to the left. If both rushers attack their inside gaps the pocket collapses and the quarterback must escape the pocket.

**VARIATIONS:** To ensure that the quarterback is keeping their eyes and focus downfield, the target receiver can raise any number of fingers on one hand. Before releasing the ball, the quarterback must call out the number of fingers that the target is holding up. An even more elaborate variation is to have the quarterback read a defender to choose between receivers while avoiding the pass rush. Essentially, this is a combination of the Pass Rush Avoidance Drill and the Read Simulation Drill (#23). The Pass Rush Avoidance Drill can also be added during 7 on 7.

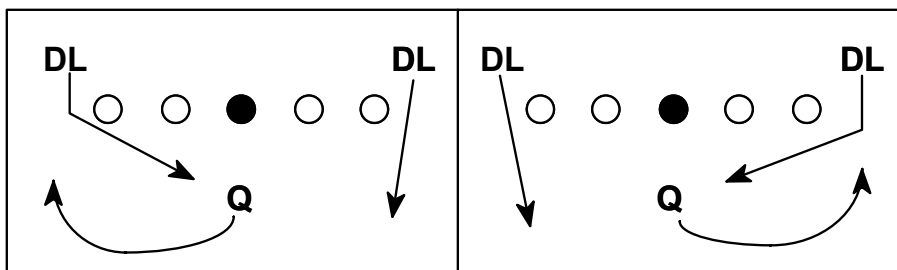


## #22 POCKET ESCAPE DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Pocket Escape Drill teaches the quarterback how to get out of the pocket when the pocket collapses.

**SET-UP:** The quarterback will begin the drill by taking a prescribed pass drop. At the same time, a pass rusher from either the right or left will rush to the quarterback's upfield shoulder, forcing them to escape the pocket to avoid being sacked. For a righthanded quarterback, when being rushed from the left, they must perform a head-whip technique in order to escape. A head-whip involves spinning around in a circle while giving ground. Key to the maneuver is that the quarterback whips their head around quickly so they can keep their eyes downfield. When escaping to the right, the quarterback will give ground before sprinting out of the pocket. Coaching point: if the quarterback must run to escape the pocket they must stay on the run because if they stop running they are likely to be sacked and possibly fumble the football.

**VARIATIONS:** The drill can end with a throw to a target. Like the Pass Rush Avoidance Drill, the target player can hold up a number of fingers that the quarterback must keep their eyes on in order to be able to call out the number of fingers shown prior to delivering the pass.

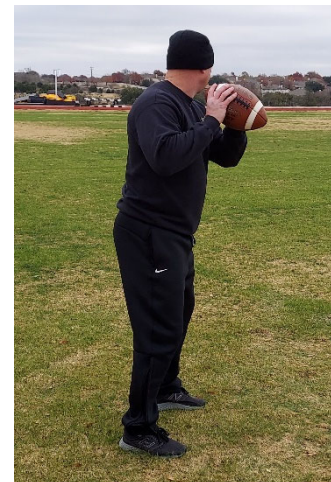
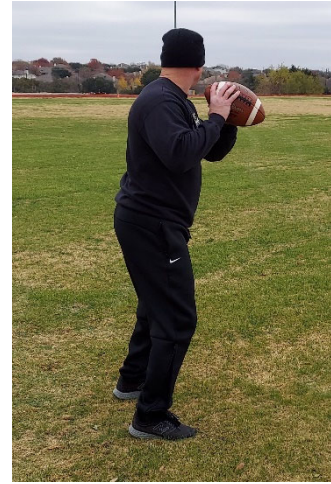


## #23 DROP & RESET DRILL

**PURPOSE:** The Drop & Reset Drill teaches the quarterback to reset within the pocket in order to find a passing lane to deliver a down-field throw. Studies have shown that on the majority of drop-back passes in college and professional football the quarterback must move within the pocket prior to throwing. This reality makes the Drop & Reset Drill essential.

**SET-UP:** The drill will begin with the quarterback taking a pass drop and setting in the pocket. When the quarterback sets in the pocket the downfield target will point either right or left, indicating the direction that the quarterback must reset toward before throwing. When moving right or left the quarterback should move with the front foot first. In doing so, it allows them to stay on rhythm when moving into the throwing motion (left, right, then left foot stride to throw for a righthanded quarterback). When moving back, the quarterback should mimic the crossover footwork of a pass drop. When moving forward, the quarterback should reach forward with their front foot and slide the back foot into position. Regardless of the direction the quarterback is moving, they should be stepping with their front foot first.

**VARIATIONS:** The quarterback can read a defender in order to choose between receivers while resetting within the pocket. The Drop & Reset Drill can also be added during 7 on 7.





## #24 9-CONE POCKET MOVEMENT PATTERNS

**PURPOSE:** 9-Cone Pocket Movement Patterns provide opportunities for quarterbacks to work on the agility and footwork necessary for skillfully moving within the pocket.

**SET-UP:** Nine cones will be set up the three rows of three cones each. There should be about 18 inches between each cone in a row and about one yard between each row. Once the cones are set a variety of movement patterns can be executed to train all the required movements within the pocket.

### VARIATIONS:

1. Starting at the front left corner of the cones: drop back, reset right, step-up, reset right, drop back, reset right, slide up and throw. Repeat the pattern while starting at the front right of the cones.
2. Starting at the front left corner of the cones: reset right across the entire length of the grid, reset back, reset left across the entire length of the grid, reset back, reset right across the entire length of the grid, set and throw. Repeat the pattern while starting at the front left of the cones.

