

CHAPTER 20: SYSTEM & PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

PRE-SEASON PREPARATION

One of the most important pre-season duties for an offensive coordinator is preparing the training camp installation schedule. Figure 243 shows the training camp installation schedule my team used in 2018. It is an eight-day offensive installation schedule. There is nothing significant or symbolic about the choice of an eight-day install. Length often varies based on individual team needs and rules designating the amount of practice time allowed in the pre-season.

The illustration also demonstrates how we set a specific theme for each practice. We taught Power Option on our first day. We partnered it with Power Option Pass Protection from 2x1 or Flexbone formations only. We added in a few simple motions only because most of our players were returners familiar with these concepts.

We like to add details to our install schedule such as when defensive line games are added. This helps us train more effectively against defensive pressure. We also add in the dress specifications for practice (pads, no-pads, helmets, etc.) once other specifics are finalized. Based on the specific plays we are installing the decision is made whether to include any 7-on-7 time or inside run practice time.

Coaching point: play action heavy offenses don't necessarily need a 7-on-7 period specifically devoted to practicing it every day. Training play-action is generally more effective in 11-on-11 situations. Practicing play action passes in 7-on-7 with no run keys is sometimes detrimental to the progression of your quarterbacks. Remember, practice the way you play as often as possible.

Fall 2018 Offensive Install

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>RUN</u>	Power Option	Double Pull Power	Power Read	Iso	G Load	Speed Option	Veer	Counter
<u>PASS</u>	Power Option	Double Pull Power	Power Read	Iso Passes	G Load Passes			
<u>PRO</u>	Power	Double Pull Power	5-Man Power	Dive Iso QB Iso	G Load			
<u>FORMATION</u>	Flexbone 2x1s	Em. Flexbone	3x1s 2x2s	3x2s				
<u>MOTION</u>	Flip Jump		F, Z, H					
<u>DEFENSE</u>		DL Games				Blitz		
<u>DRESS</u>								
<u>7 on 7</u>	No	No	Yes	Yes (short)	No	No	Yes	No
<u>INSIDE</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Fig 243

Creating Installation Schedules

Creating an effective installation schedule requires careful consideration before proceeding. Three factors detailed below are worth studying in particular.

Consideration one: adjusting and extending the installation schedule. The length of the installation schedule is adjustable and extendable to as much as 11-13 days. Separating the run install from the pass install allows for an area of expansion. Instead of installing both Power Option runs and Power Option passes on the first day of practice a team might install Power Option runs on the first day and Power Option passes on the second. The separation then continues throughout the entire installation schedule. Extending your installation schedule to 11-13 days is a good idea when installing a new offensive system. A separate extended schedule is also advisable for new or younger players in an existing offense.

Consideration two: compressing or accelerating the installation schedule. Compressing or accelerating the schedule to as few as five days is also an option for veteran teams. This scenario calls for installing everything Power related in one day—including Power Option runs, Power Option passes, Double Pull Power runs, Double Pull Power passes, and Power Read runs and passes. This compression is also good idea for spring practice with existing personnel.

Consideration three: creating a double installation schedule. Creating a double installation schedule refers to the idea of running the entire installation schedule twice. Setting an appropriate pace is important. The process of working through the entire installation phase twice is meaningful for some teams.

A double installation schedule does not mean running the same plays two days in the row. Double installation means running the entire schedule from start to finish twice. If a team is running a five-day installation schedule the first day and the sixth day of practice are identical. Running a double installation schedule increases overall player comprehension and learning absorption—especially for new players. The process also gives players two opportunities for supporting meetings, film study, walk throughs, and chances to run the plays. Increased exposure to these teaching tools generally leads to better understanding and execution.

Individual Period Plans

The offensive coordinator must also develop a plan for teaching skills during individual practice periods. This plan is ideally made with the input of each position coach respectively. Each position coach lists skills and the amount of time needed to teach the skills. This information goes into the practice plan. Player learning styles is an important consideration when developing individual period plans. Creating a plan that matches the teaching expertise of the coaching staff is also an important factor to consider.

Installation schedules are heavily influenced by the amount of time required to teach position-specific skills. Teams with fewer veterans and large groups of new players need more time to learn position group skills and the offense overall. These scenarios require longer and often more detailed installation schedules. Teams with large numbers of experienced returning players are often able to shorten the installation schedule because the teaching time demands are less. Dividing new players and veteran players during practice to focus on different skills based on various levels of progression and experience is also a possibility.

SECTION FOUR: Coaching the Tex-Bone Chapter 20

Figure 244 shows our basic offensive practice plan template. All our coaches put their individual drills in the proper boxes on the plan. In some cases this is as simple as writing “EDD” for everyday drills. Our offensive line coach (Tom Ross) frequently writes EDD for his individual period plan as our offensive coaches know what his every day drills are.

PIRATE FOOTBALL					
Offensive Practice Plan					
4:55 PM 6:33 PM					
Opponent:	TLU	Practice:	Wednesday	Dress:	Helmet
Meetings:	4:10 PM	End:	4:40 PM		
PERIOD	OL	TE	WR	QB	RB
Warm/Walk 4:55 PM 8					
Indy 5:03 PM 12					
WATER					
Inside 5:15 PM 15					
D 7 on 7 5:30 PM 10					
WATER					
O 7 on 7 5:40 PM 9					
Unit 5:49 PM 28					
Specials 6:17 PM 10					
Stretch 6:27 PM 6					
6:33 PM					
			Meeting- 7:00		
Announcements:					

Fig 244

The practice plan for each position group allows the entire staff to know what individual skills are taught and for how long. Plans for group work are also made as well. We note on the practice plan if the running backs, fullbacks, and wings are getting together to run triple option drills for example.

The tight end position group is unique because they often split their individual time between the offensive line and wide receivers. This time division is planned out ahead of time and documented on the daily practice plan.

Scripting Training Camp Practices

I always prefer to script as much of training camp as possible in advance. Naturally, there are times when I go back and make adaptations to the original practice script. When I do it's always easier to make revisions to an existing plan than it is to write a new script throughout fall camp.

Training camp is a busy time with tons of activities beyond practice. Finding time to prepare a detailed script alongside these other demands is extremely difficult, albeit impossible—especially for head coaches. Scripting beforehand provides the advantage of making sure all the formations, plays, and situations needed for the upcoming season are included in both the installation practice schedule and the daily practice plan.

What scripting “on-the-fly” seemingly gains in flexibility it loses in consistency and effectiveness. Scripting as you go runs the risk of omitting important details critical for offensive success. This is especially true in the pre-season when time is at a premium. Leaving out important details due to a planning error leads to lost time and inefficient/ineffective player development. Predesigned installation schedules with corresponding practice plans provide structure, consistency, and smooth transitions.

Figure 245 shows one of our practice script templates. We use a variety of practice script templates for different points of the season. The template in the illustration contains four scripted periods: (1) inside run, (2) walk through, (3) 7-on-7, and (4) team. We leave some room for other notes or reminders on the bottom. We also leave space for personnel group information or anything else we need to include in the bottom right hand corner of the script.

SECTION FOUR: Coaching the Tex-Bone Chapter 20

INSIDE					TEAM				
1 R	D&D				1 L				
2 R	Personnel & Play				2 L				
3 R	QB				3 L				
4 L		Front	Blitz/Game	Coverage	4 L				
5 L					5 L				
6 L					6 R				
7 L					7 R				
8 R					8 R				
9 R					9 R				
10 R					10 R				
11 L					11 L				
12 L					12 L				
13 L					13 R				
14 L					14 R				
15 L					15 R				
16 L					16 L				
17 L					17 L				
18 R					18 L				
19 R					19 L				
20 R					20 L				
21 R					21 R				
22 R					22 R				
23 R					23 R				
Walk Thru					24 R				
1 R					25 R				
2 R					26 R				
3 R					27 R				
4 R					28 R				
5 L					29 R				
6 L					30 R				
7 L					31 R				
8 L					32 R				
9 L					33 L				
10 L					34 L				
11 R					35 L				
7 on 7					36 L				
1 L					37 R				
2 L					38 R				
3 L					39 R				
4 L					40 L				
5 L					41 L				
6 L									
7 L									
8 R									
9 R									
10 R									
11 R									
12 R									
13 R									
14 R									

Notes/Reminders

Fig 245

The vertical columns on the script from left-to-right include:

1. The play number in the period
2. The hash mark we snap the ball from
3. Specific situations (goal line, 3rd and 10, etc.) (D & D means down and distance) or quarterback rotations. Quarterback rotations are important for coaches who run specific plays or packages with specific players. For example, if our wide receiver coach wants to work timing between our top receivers and quarterback the script lets him know exactly when to bring the groups together.
4. Personnel, formation and play
5. Scout team front
6. Scout team blitz or line game

7. Scout team coverage

Playbook, Video Cut-ups & Other Teaching Tools

Offensive coordinators are responsible for creating the playbook, preparing video cut-ups, and readying any other teaching tools before training camp begins. Large amounts of time are required when preparing new teaching or organizational tools. The goal is to first train the coaches properly before they pass on the learning. The next illustration (Figure 246) is a page from one of our playbooks.

2018 SU Football Playbook - 8

SU Football – Power Family

Play: Double Pull Power

vs 4-4 Defense (31-55)

vs 4-3 Defense (13-55)

vs 4-4 Defense (31-55)

vs 4-3 Defense (13-55)

vs. Tennessee

Play: Power Protection

vs 4-2 Defense (31-55)

vs 4-2 Defense (31-55)

vs 4-1 Bar (22-65)

vs BBAR

vs 4-2 Defense (13-55)

vs 4-2 Defense (31-55)

vs. Tennessee

Fig 246

There are many different ways to design and layout an offensive playbook. We use both printed and digital playbooks. There are lots of different ways to use a playbook based on personal preferences and learning styles of your players. I feel that playbooks work best as overviews. Our playbook in particular is a cursory look at our offense. The players take notes to supplement the overview and learn through repetition in practice.

The playbook sample on the previous page shows both our Double Pull Power play and our Power Pass Protection. This info is all the players receive for these two schemes in terms of playbook content. It is up to the players to fill in all the blanks.

We do not provide charts and specific illustrations detailing the assignment for each player. We prefer for our players to come to this knowledge individually. This makes the learning more relevant and meaningful. It is one thing to see a play drawn up in a playbook—that type of learning is memorization. It's something totally different when a player visualizes and internalizes how the play works on the field—that's practical application. We want our players thinking in terms of all 11 men as part of a cohesive offensive scheme instead of memorizing what they do individually in isolation of the entire play and schematic concept. Learning entire play concepts is meaningful learning. Simply memorizing responsibilities for one position is inadequate.

Imagine for a moment a new offensive lineman on your team. He learns just before the start of fall camp that he's playing center. We do not want him to thumb through the playbook, trying to memorize just what the center does. Instead, we want him to look at each play as an integrated, coherent scheme and learn how all of the offensive players work together to execute the play. It is important that our players learn schematic concepts in their entirety. This is why we keep our playbooks at the “fly-over” level.

We want the players to make their own meaningful connections. These meaningful connections promote ownership of performance and better execution.

Staff Installation Meetings

An offensive coordinator must also make sure his coaches are ready to teach. A series of meetings are required where the offensive staff gets together to review each scheme and how it's being taught. Methods of teaching, how concepts are labeled/communicated, and how players train are decided ahead of time. From there the offensive staff plans out specific drills and teaching strategies.

Coaching point: offensive coordinators/head coaches need to allot adequate time to teach and drill everything the players must know. Part of this process involves creating a plan for how practice is monitored by the coaching staff. It is critical that coaches know where to focus their attention and what their specific role is during practice before starting of fall camp.

Personnel Analysis

Personnel analysis and assessment is an essential component of effective coaching. Teams need a plan in the pre-season for player rotations and the number of repetitions each player receives. A separate plan is also needed for where players are training/conditioning in terms of position groups.

Coaches must consider how many reps each player needs to reach adequate game shape. For a returning senior you probably know their training needs by position and previous experience. Based on this information you decide how many reps this player needs to be game ready and in game shape. Sometimes there are players you do not want taking many reps in training camp because your goal is making sure they are healthy and ready for the first game. The concern in this case is making sure they get just enough reps to execute at their highest level come game day.

All teams must create a football-specific plan to get their players into game shape. Hopefully your strength and conditioning coach is involved in designing this plan (in the NCAA this is required). This plan includes your pre-season conditioning specifications for each player and position group. It also includes your pre-season condition test designed to give a baseline of overall team and individual conditioning.

It's unrealistic to expect that players are ready to play a full game on the first day of pre-season practice. This is why a conditioning plan needs to work as a progression targeted at the first game. A good conditioning plan is tailored for each individual position group as well as the players inside the cohort.

When teams use running backs in four-play rotations they need specific training to reach full speed for four plays in a row. Similarly, offensive linemen who are not part of a rotation require a specialized training progression preparing them for 11 to 12 play drives.

We generally start players off with just a few reps at a time in the preseason. During training camp we slowly increase the number of plays until they reach the number we expect them to execute consecutively in a game. This is especially important with larger athletes such as offensive lineman. Linemen conditioning programs require deliberate training methods often different from other position groups. They should start with 2 to 4 play sets in fall camp before building to 8 to 12 sets on game week.

Position changes are possible for players at all levels of football. To do so effectively requires coaches to begin the season with a well-articulated plan for which players potentially play what positions. Sometimes position changes are happy accidents stumbled upon during practice and games. Other times a position change is necessitated by injuries or other factors. A specific, strategic plan is needed at the beginning of the season that prepares players in a manner best suited for the team's needs regardless of whether you are training a new starter or building depth for the future.

Unit & Position Meeting Plans

An offensive coordinator must also plan for what schemes are installed as a unit and which ones are installed as a position group. We install all formations as a unit for example. Anything related to eleven players working together is installed as a unit.

By operating this way we assure continuity in the message delivered to players. To supplement the message we do film review as an entire team. Bringing the entire offense together with the head coach and offensive coordinator to deliver instruction and provide feedback is enormously valuable. Top down messaging about what we are doing and how we are going to do it is an important aspect of continuity.

In the pre-season we also decide what groups are meeting separately and what groups are meeting together. There are lots of choices in regards to dividing players for meetings. Staffing and facilities allowing every position group to meet separately is an option for some teams. You may not find this an advantageous way to meet even if the space and staff is available however. Ultimately it's contingent on player and teaching needs.

There are times where I want to meet with the quarterbacks alone for example. This allows me to get into nuanced details about what our quarterbacks need to do. There are also times when I want to meet with the quarterbacks and wide receivers together. This makes sense because there is a great deal of information that pertains to both position groups. Meeting together saves time and emphasizes common themes. Details like route and player spacing, read progressions, attacking coverage, identifying coverage, etc. pertain to both position groups.

Meeting together is a much more efficient method of relaying information pertaining to multiple position groups. It also assures that everyone is coached the same way and is given the same message. Our running backs and offensive linemen often meet together for the same reasons quarterbacks and receivers do.

Subdividing position groups is also an option. We split our inside wide receivers and wings into a smaller group separate from split ends for example. We do this because both groups require different skills and different instruction. We constantly look for the best hybrid strategy of delivering information to full groups when it makes sense and delivering detailed specific information to small groups when it makes sense.

The offensive coordinator must also decide who is leading each meeting. It is important that communication is as smooth and consistent as possible. This includes creating an agenda for each meeting. The coach selected to lead the meeting must possess the technical knowledge requisite for directing instruction. A plan is also needed for any audiovisual and print materials needed. This potentially includes cut-up lists, printed playbooks, printed handouts, etc.

Walk-Through Plans

Walk through plans are extremely important—especially in college football where two-a-day practices are prohibited. We do a variety of activities during our walk-throughs including individual and multiple position group reviews respectively. Our quarterbacks/receivers and running back/linemen groups often work together during walk throughs. At the end we gather all position groups together and walk through plays with all eleven players.

We find there are other advantages in (1) splitting the offense into two groups or (2) rotating the offense through different groups. Some days we split our older and younger players for example. This allows us to work at a faster pace with the veteran players and a slower pace with newer ones. Learning through observation is also important to us. There are days where freshman and sophomores watch our juniors and seniors model skills or plays. It's critical for younger players to see what our offense looks like when executed the right way.

Practice Assignments for Each Coach

The importance of setting up a plan for each coach's area of emphasis in practice was previously mentioned. Concentrating on what each coach is supposed to do is made easier by outlining the players they are responsible for before practice begins.

Young coaches in particular are easily distracted. They get caught looking at the ball, a different position group, or any number of things they don't need to focus on. It is critical that players receive the attention they deserve. To do this we create a clear plan of who is monitoring what aspect and what group in practice.

Position Group Divisions

Position groups are dividable in the Tex-Bone offense. When coaching by position we teach based on the following groups: offensive line, tight ends, quarterbacks, inside wide receiver/wings, outside wide receivers, and fullback/running backs.

We subdivide our wide receivers because their job descriptions vary depending on situation, scheme, or scenario. There are times when we train entire position groups together given the general overlap of their responsibilities. Running backs are one group we do not always subdivide. We do sometimes subdivide our running backs into spread running backs and fullbacks however.

Scout Team Operation & Coordination

Scout team operation and coordination is an aspect often overlooked by many teams. We want our scout team operation to run smoothly for two reasons:

1. We want a positive experience for our developmental players. We want them to feel important and that what they do is valuable. We want them to see that coaches put time into planning what they do during practice. They need to see how important their roles are in team success.
2. We want efficiency. We want to move from play-to-play and drill-to-drill in a deliberate manner that does not waste time. To do so the scout team plan (including play wristbands, scout cards, etc.) must contain opponent-specific details so we perform at a high level on game day.

IN-SEASON DUTIES FOR THE OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Video Cut-Ups & Other Teaching Tools

Offensive coordinators must develop a plan for video cut-ups and other teaching tools. This does not necessarily mean that he is the person producing all of this content. The person responsible for the production and duplication of teaching tools depends on the staff and the resources available. The offensive coordinator needs a plan to make sure that various tasks get done, taking into account any limitations. Trade tapes need analyzing, opponent video play lists need sharing, practice film needs sharing, handouts for players need producing, scouting reports need creating and producing, etc. This large flow of information needs coordination in a systematic manner.

Planning Opponent Analysis

Video analysis is a big deal in modern football. This is potentially one of the most important processes for a football team. There are many ways to analyze the tendencies of opponents. Modern video editing programs are excellent at producing numbers (statistics) and video cut ups that help analyze the tendencies of opponents. There are also outside companies that provide quality data as well.

Game planning begins with the compilation of data and a discussion among the staff. This is something we like to do as an entire staff—not just coordinators and the head coach. In these meetings we look at opponent personnel and situational tendencies that factor into how we play. Through video analysis and tendency analysis we compile short lists of plays we want to use. We also devise ways to use our player personnel in certain situations. In the final phase we plan for game specific situations (such as third down, red zone, backed up, or goal line for example).

Delegation is important. The offensive coordinator must learn to use the talents of all his coaches to make the offense operate efficiently. Assignments delegating exact responsibilities for each position coach are required. Who is compiling the scouting report? Who is producing cut-ups? Who is scripting practice segments? These questions are answered by properly assigning duties among the coaching staff.

Personnel Analysis

Personnel analysis needs a specific plan because it's ongoing and every-changing. Doing so properly requires a personnel plan for both games and practices. These plans must include skill advancement and player health considerations.

Coaching staffs generally do not overlook in game personnel groupings and substitution packages. Plans for practice rotations and substitutions are often the details that do not get as much attention however.

We carry as many as ten personnel groups into games. Preparing for this takes a tremendous amount of personnel analysis. The upside is that we only ask players to fill roles they are good at. This planning is worth the time investment.

Daily Practice Emphasis for Team Period

The Tex-Bone gives coaches multiple schemes, formations, and personnel groupings to choose from. The choices are not so many that a team cannot practice them all in one week if a daily theme is selected.

We work on 1st and 10 against a base defense during team period (11-vs-11) on Monday. This is done because we generally face an opponent's base defense on 1st and 10. Forty percent or more of plays during a game are 1st and 10 situations where you see an opponent's base defense a majority of the time.

On Tuesday we place an emphasis on rehearsing 3rd down situations. This gives us a chance to see blitzes and line games that we stand to face in short yardage situations versus an upcoming opponent. Third down is a make or break game situation. Practicing these situations on Tuesday leaves time for us to change the initial game plan if we don't like it.

On Wednesday we work on red zone and goal line. Even though red zone plays do not occur with great frequency during a game we still want to maximize our chances to score. We finished previous seasons as high as second in nation in red zone efficiency.

Thursday is our off day. Friday we work on our opening script and review game plan situations. Sometimes we revisit red zone or goal line (practiced earlier in the week) on Friday. This last practice before game day gives us the opportunity to practice every situation twice if necessary.

An important component of our Friday is we practice exactly 24 hours before kickoff (whenever possible). We find it beneficial to get our players focused on execution exactly one day before the game. If we are playing a 6:00 PM game on Saturday evening, we want practice at 6:00 PM on Friday. This plan is routed in Kinesiology.

Sub-Plans for Other Practice Periods

We use micro-plans for various practice periods throughout the season. During individual and inside run drills on Tuesday we work the triple option. On Wednesday we practice our spread elements, Jet Motion, and shifts/other motions. During 7-on-7 we work on passes against zone defenses on Tuesday and passes versus man coverages on Wednesday.

Practice Script

Practice scripting takes on additional importance during the season. There are a limited amount of reps in practice to get everything covered. Creating themes for each day allows the play caller and the scripter to keep pace with demands. It's difficult to run all of the plays, from all of formations, with all the desired personnel groups in practice without a script.

Individual Period Planning

Individual period plans are equally important during the season. Generally position coaches create these micro-plans. Similar to practice scripts it is important to analyze the amount of time needed for individual skill and group work. These plans are tailored to our daily practice emphases. The offensive coordinator must make sure he is including the amount of time his players need each day for individual skills into the practice plan if the head coach is not part of offensive planning sessions.

Unit & Position Meeting Planning

Knowing what is reviewed, what is taught, and who is leading the unit and position group meetings is vitally important. It needs planning out ahead of time. All of the considerations regarding unit and position group planning during the season are the same as what was discussed for pre-season planning.

Walk-Through Planning

We like our pre-practice walk-through to serve as a preview for the daily emphasis selected. Inside the walk-through we also want to address anything new. When asking players to execute a new play we want to give them the chance to run it at half speed first.

Preparing the Scouting Report & Game Menu

The practice plan template presented earlier in the chapter does not change much from pre-season to in-season. We fill it out with as much detail as possible day in and day out. We talk about and list our walk-through emphasis. We list a theme for team period and 7-on-7 as well. We plan everything our players do during each period.

