

## **Agility Training**

Agility, like any other skill, is something that can be learned and practiced. I think coaches place their athletes in a bad situation when they sit in a weight room all off season and then expect them to move like a cat on the field. Agility is something that needs to be trained all season. And like everything else, we have a progression to develop this. Some of it goes in conjunction with other movement skills we are developing. For example, foot rigidity and ankle movement will greatly enhance a player's ability to move. Players will only get better "feet" when the foot becomes more rigid. When an athlete's foot hits the ground, it may deform. Their foot will misshape to the position it can push from. That takes time. If the foot becomes more rigid, it takes less time to get to a pushing position and can get off the ground faster. The beginning of the agility development will be in conjunction with warm-up/conditioning and ankle work.

### **Cross over section**

As the team progresses into from Block 1 to Block 2, we want to start to teach proper mechanics for lateral movement. If a player is in a square stance and is preparing to move to the right, they will cross step or step across his body with his left leg. To practice this, place a band around the player's hips. His partner will hold the band. As the player goes to push, they will push from the outside of his left foot and then the outside of his right foot, just like a start out of the blocks. The left foot will get the center of mass moving and his right foot will finish the push. The band teaches the player how to drive instead of step. This is the key to lateral explosion.

Block 2 will put together the three agility builders from Block 1, agility warm-up, ankle rocker/foot development and line hops. Our sections will revolve around 5 yard blocks or distances.

The first week will be just learning the square. 4 cones will be placed in a 5 yd square with a cone in the middle. It should look like a dice showing 5. Players will line up behind the first cone. They will follow the following patterns below. In this drill, players will chop their feet at each cone. Try to get 5 steps in before the cut at the cone. When approaching the cone, players should be in a high body position. When approaching the cone, they should change body positions and drop their body down. Coaches should see a change of levels. A good coaching tip is to have player "hide his numbers".

False steps can be a limiting factor and they cost time. A player will reposition their feet so they are comfortable to push in a certain direction. Sometimes that direction is backwards or to the side or even a pump. We need to drill smooth first steps. And like any other skill, our first couple of weeks will be a slow acceleration to get use to steps without a misstep.

In any acceleration/agility drill, coaches can change a player's body/foot position. Starting at the beginning of the line, a player can have his feet positioned square or staggered. They need to learn to start from both positions without a false step. Or, have them face side-ways and have them and start with a cross step to a sprint. To really challenge their false step, have them drop off a 12 inch box and have them accelerate as soon as they hit the ground.

This is the key drills - - 2 reps of each drill