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# CHAPTER 15



## Teaching Philosophy

Every good line coach has a progression—an organized way of teaching the basic techniques involved in line play. In the PISTOL WING-T offense, there is a lot of skills to teach: Base Run Blocks; Pulling; and Pass Protection. We are running 15-20 Wing-T running plays with a sprinkle of Midline and Veer. And there are 7 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.

## Race Horse Practice Philosophy

Move through practice quickly, enthusiastically, and efficiently. A multiple offense has a lot to cover during each practice and it is our belief that a high school practice should be kept to 120 - 150 minutes. Therefore, during practice, we move along at a fast pace, while still getting quality repetitions. Each coach is expected to be enthusiastic, positive, and extremely efficient in his usage of time.

- Maximum repetitions and maximum learning.
- Perform maximum repetitions
- Mass teach when possible
- Run all drills on sound
- Shift in team takeoff only
- Shotgun two huddles
- Have coaches stay in centralized locations
- Have coaches make quick corrections



These concepts are referred to when talking about racehorse philosophy. Racehorse indicates you are going to go fast. And, fast is exactly what you want to do.

You want to accomplish maximum reps with this philosophy. Many coaches make that claim. Coaches are always trying to structure their practices for maximum repetitions. The racehorse philosophy really does get maximum reps. Everything done in the structure of the practice is based on getting maximum reps. Everything within this philosophy is designed to facilitate getting maximum reps for teaching. The very style with which this philosophy is coached accomplishes this goal.

### LINEAR TEACHING PROGRESSION

Easy to learn progression of drills which means you don't start teaching drill B until they have mastered the techniques taught in Drill A. This book is organized in that fashion which 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.

The basic ingredients of the Wing-T Race Horse Philosophy are

#### I. ONE BAG 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

#### II. EASY TO REMEMBER TERMINOLOGY

- 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 Reach block is used in the play "Liz 28 Reach"

#### IV. COACH ON THE FLY

- Create buzzwords to correct mistakes. The drill or play never stops to correct one player. The correction has to happen while the drill is happening.
- If the correction takes explanation, sub the player out.

#### VI. THREE PLAYS PER MINUTE.

- Goal is to run 3 plays per minute...but 2 plays per minute is great.



**Utilize Prepractice Time.** Be aware of the fact that some time will naturally be wasted during practice. Get the linemen together prior to the beginning of practice. Five to 10 minutes can usually be used while the rest of the team is mingling around waiting for the beginning of practice.

**Create Independent Stretch Time.** If your staff permits, ask to do position-specific stretches. Very few offense linemen pull hamstrings, meaning that an opportunity exists during this stretching time to work on some line-specific agility and flexibility exercises that could save time later in practice.

## 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. The linemen 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 your offensive line practice plan around the insertion for the day. For example, if the plays being inserted during the team period include the gut combination block, make sure to work on the gut block during the individual part of practice.

**Use the 80/20 Rule.** This theory should be used by the line coach 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. The line coach must take a look at the 20 percent most highly productive plays and list the blocks that your linemen are executing. Spend most of the practice time on these drills.



**Know Your Run/Pass Ratio.** As the line coach, you must be aware of the length of practice time being spent on each aspect of offensive line 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 Your Linemen 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. Offensive linemen can get a lot of development from agility drills, and the speed ladder can be used as a daily warm-up routine. The wing-t offensive lineman 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 hom 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.



## Equipment

The line coach needs to use different types of equipment (bags, shields, live bodies, sleds, chutes), not only to change the type of resistance but to also eliminate a feeling of monotony, give the players some variety.

- **Bags:** *Do not try to save money buying lighter, cheaper bags. This offense uses the round, cylindrical bags a lot and you need the 70 to 80-pound bags. The Rogers bag you want are: “Big Block Pro”, “Delaware”, or “Delaware Pro” These large bags allow linemen to develop explosion and violent impacts, however, bags do not move.*

*We need 1 bag for every two linemen. 16 linemen on roster = 8 large round bags. Need a minimum of 7 for ODD-EVEN drill*

- **Hand Shields:** *Hand shields give a realistic feeling of fitting on a defensive reaction. But hand shields slide to the side of the defender leading to poor technique.*

*Need 1 hand shield for every two linemen and two backs. 16 linemen + 6 RB = 11 shields.*

- **Trash Cans:** *Large rubber 55-gallon trash cans to substitute for D-Linemen*
- **Boards:** *Wood or rubber. 1 foot wide by 8 foot long. 2 inches thick.*
- **Sled:** *Great teaching tool but do not use the sled before mastering footwork and technique on the bags. Valuable teaching time can be lost keeping the sled straight and setting it up. Also, do not use the sled for conditioning.*
- **Chutes:** *Great for teaching linemen to stay low but you can only get 3 or 4 lineman going at once so there is a lot of standing around. I prefer the large trap chutes (Fig 42), but at McFarland we made our chutes using 1-inch schedule 40 PVC pipe (Fig 49). Another low budget solution is to have the linemen fire out under an outstretched hose or rope. I have also seen homemade trap chutes using 8 foot sections of chain link fence.*

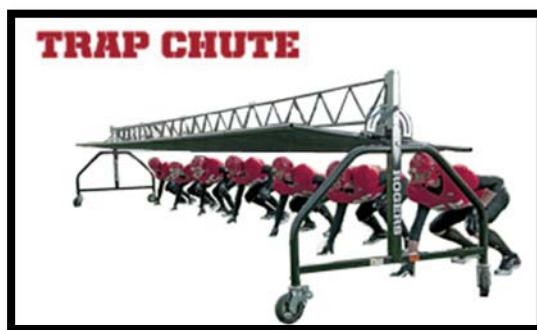


Fig 47: Trap Chute or “FUNHOUSE”

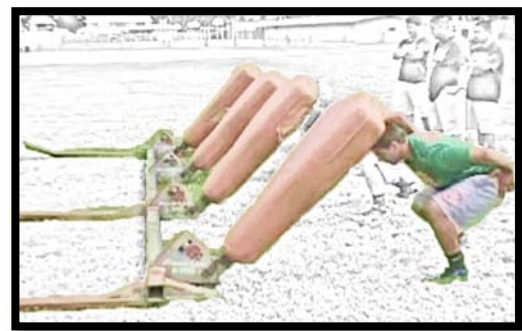


Fig 48: Rogers PowerLine Sled



Fig 49: Home made PVC chutes



## PRE PRACTICE

Establishing a routine also allows your practices to go fast. Not only do all of our players have the setup of every drill memorized, but they also know the sequence of our practice schedule.

**Table 11: Overall Sequence of Drills Ran in Practice**

	<b>INDIVIDUAL Every Day Drills (EDDs)</b>	<b>SMALL GROUP</b>	<b>LARGE GROUP</b>
GO-Purple-Silver Day:	<u>Bags</u> : Surface, Step & Hit, On, Down, Cuts, Pulls	G, GO, GO Pass Drills	Purple / Silver
Belly-Down-Play Action Day:	<u>Sled</u> : Surface, Step & Hit, On, Pulls	Tug, Gut, Cog, Tee	½ Line Drill
Jet-Red-Blue Day:	<u>Shields</u> : Reach, Backer, Escapes.	Blitz Pickup	Perimeter Run Red/Blue Live Pass
Option-Gray-Yellow Day:	<u>Live Body</u> : Pass Pro Techniques	Double Teams	½ Line Drill Gray/Yellow Live Pass

“GO” is our Buck Sweep; “Option” is Midline/Veer. “Purple” is short pass; “Silver” is screens; “Red/Blue” is sprint out pass; “Gray/Yellow” is drop back cup protection

### WARMUP

We do not do dynamic warmups as a team before practice. Players warmup by doing position-specific drills. Linemen start with Get-Offs in the fun house followed by board runs & bear crawls.

We title practice plan days by the Play Family rather than saying “on Monday we do this.”

- SPRING *Jet (1 practice); Option Day (2 practices); Belly-Down Day (3 practices); GO Day (3 practices);*
- SUMMER *Jet (2 practice); Option Day (2 practices); Belly-Down Day (2 practices); GO Day (2 practices);*
- AUGUST *Jet (2 days); Option Day (3 practices); Belly-Down Day (week 2); GO Day (week 3);*
- SEASON *GO Day (Mon); Belly-Down Day (Tue); Jet (Wed); Option Day (Wed);*

Spring, Summer, August the linemen get 30-45 minutes of indo. Bag & Shield indo periods can be combined. So even though our offense will install Jet first because it is the easiest play to learn, linemen will start with Bag Work.

Because the Wing-T offense has been around for so long, there are many great ways to teach it. Remember, the godfathers of the Wing-T all coached at the collegiate level: Greg Perry (Delaware), Dennis Creehan (South Dakota), Herschell Moore (Cumberland), and Phil Willenbrock (Puget Sound). They had the type of athlete that could handle the more technical aspects of blocking and at those levels the offensive line play has to be more technical. I have taken the many “traditional” Wing-T blocks and simplified them for the high school level:

High Knees, Backward Run, Side Shuffles

Board Run

Bear Crawls: *all 7 cleats in ground. Use inside foot. Don't push off toes.*

- Bear Crawls with Resistance 50% build up to 100%

Get Offs.



## Get Offs – Part of Warmup

This a review of the first three steps associated with every block. The linemen line up in 5 or 6 lines according to position. On command of “READY” the plays in front of the line take first step, freeze. On command of “TWO” they take second step & freeze. On command “AND GO” they then sprint 5 yards and form new lines there while the next kids in line step up and repeat. When you are happy with the bird dogging of the footwork you just do the drill at full speed. When the coach says “READY” the linemen explodes out of the stance at game speed using the correct footwork, and sprint 5 yards.

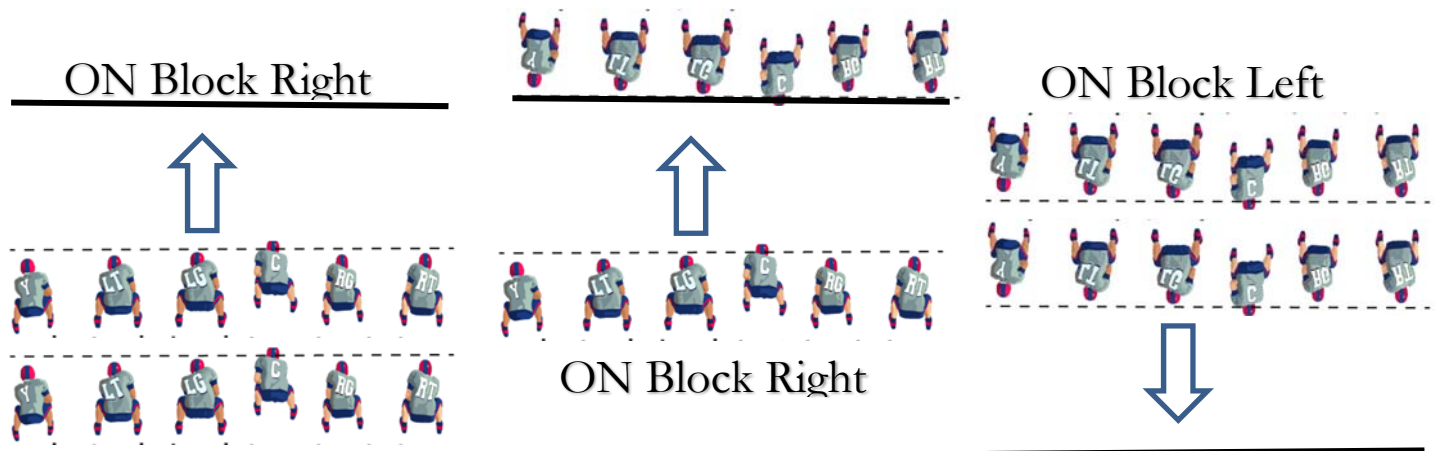
To make sure they have flat backs you can do this drill in the Trap Chute (aka Funhouse) or pull an old rope/garden hose across the line 3-4 feet off the ground. You could also have the next kid in line in front with his arm extended. When we first do this warmup drill in spring and summer it takes 10 minutes but during the season this is a 2-3 minute drill.

### 5 YARDS DOWN

ON Block, Right Shoulder, Left Foot  
 DOWN Block, Right Shoulder, Left Foot  
 REACH Block Right, Left Shoulder, Right Foot  
 ESCAPE Right  
 PULL Right

### 5 YARDS BACK

ON Block, Left Shoulder, Right Foot  
 DOWN Block, Left Shoulder, Right Foot  
 REACH Block Left, Right Shoulder, Left Foot  
 ESCAPE Left  
 PULL Left



### TEAM TAKEOFF PERIOD OR “PERFECT PLAYS”

After warming up by position, the entire team comes together to run plays on air (we might have cones or trash cans setup as defenders). The plays we run are the ones we installed the previous day so this is also a review period. The goal is to practice our tempos, sprinting to the line, timing of motions, check with me’s in the snap count, etc.

PERFECT PLAYS: *Run 4 plays out of HUDDLE tempo perfectly in under 1 minute.*

2 MIN OFFENSE: *Up & down field with hand signals.*

NASCAR/MUSTANG: *Up & down the field running a play every 10 yards.*



Another way to guarantee maximum reps is to practice **shifting in team takeoff only**. In the wing-T offense, you run many shifts throughout the course of a game. You want to be good at shifting. However, you rarely work on shifting in team periods when practicing 11- on-11. You do not want to take those extra minutes out of team period, when you could be getting more reps. You will mix up the cadences in team period and shift if you need to see the timing of a shift along with the 11 players running a play. For the most part, 99 percent of the time, shifting will be done during team takeoff period.

## ACTUAL PRACTICE

The next phase of practice is the individual part of practice. It is necessary to divide the practice plan into three INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, and TEAM. The amount of time used for individual periods is up to the coaches, depending on how much time each coach needs for each of these drills.

### INDIVIDUAL – SHOULDER SKILLS

The first thing you do on the first day of every practice and training camp, spring ball, whatever, is teach shoulder skills. Shoulder skills are the basic techniques involved in striking with the shoulder from a standing, nonstrike position through a run-and-hit progression. This is a spring, summer, 1<sup>st</sup> week of August thing. Once training camp really gets going or the season gets going and you do not have to wear shorts and T-shirts anymore, then you won't block the bags anymore.

Using sleds or coming out from chutes and boards and doing those kinds of skills instead of shoulder skills is fine. Middle of August and during September, you will bring the defensive people down and will actually block bodies that move. Blocking bodies is actually a much more realistic drill to do than blocking bags all the time. But, the bags are a great place to start because they allow you to emphasize the technique, and, if a blocker uses that same technique when he blocks a live body, then he is going to be a great blocker.

Remember these important points:

- Simulate the snap count by shouting instruction, count to three, then say “READY”
- Stand in a central location where you can coach everyone.

In the shoulder skills period, you start with surface, then strike & fit, and then rapid fire. All three of these are while on all fours. Then players get in 2-point stance to do step and hit. Bird Dog the steps. The next set of drills are the Hit & Run drills. The last drill are run and hit.

It is very important that in spring, summer, and beginning of August to make the players “bird dog” their steps for every block before resetting to hit the bag at game speed.

**BIRD DOG: Player takes one step freeze. Takes 2<sup>nd</sup> step when coach yells “2”.**

**Takes 3<sup>rd</sup> step when coach yells “3”.**

**Then coach says “And Go” and all players jog out the rest of their assignment.**





## INDIVIDUAL – FOOTWORK

The next period after shoulder skills drill is footwork. The linemen are lined up on Homer's Dairy (Fig 34 in Chapter 4). We teach stance first followed by bird dog of all the individual blocks. This is really done in spring & summer because eventually it is combined with shoulder skills. However, late in the year when we stop doing shoulder skills getting all the palyers on the Homer's Dairy to do a quick review of all their steps is a good thing. We will do this before every game. Footwork is also incorporated into Get Offs every other day during pre-practice warmup.

The actual wing-T part of practice will always start with team takeoff. In spring & summer this is followed by shoulder skills and footwork. Eventually shoulder skills & footwork is combined. And then once games begin shoulder skills disappear and footwork is part of Get Offs. At the beginning of the year, these drills are longer. The shoulder skill period might be 15 minutes long, so you have plenty of time to explain and teach it. The second and third days, you may cut it down to 10 minutes; and, once the season begins, the shoulder skill period will be a five-minute period. Footwork starts out being a 10-minute period and, by the end of the year, will dwindle to two or three minutes long. By that time, the players will know what to do, be able to do it well, and know how to do it quickly.

## RUN BLOCKS

### I. Stance & First Two Steps

Stance and alignment

On • Down • Reach • Escapes • Flat Pulls • Deep Pulls

### II. Shoulder Skills

Surface (Fit, strike-a-blow, rapid fire)

Step and hit (fit & drive, SFSS, strike & freeze, rapid fire)

Run & Hit (flat pull, log pull, deep pull, hook, backer blocks)

### III. Sled Progression (B.E.E.F.)

### IV. Individual Blocks

1. On (Straight Ahead)

3. Down vs Reader

5. Reach (covered 45-degree)

5. Cut & Fill for Puller

8. Wrong shoulder Log

10. Hook Blocks

2. Down vs Penetrator;

4. Reach (uncovered 90-degree)

6. Escape to Backer

7. Flat Pulls

9. Deep Pulls

### IV. Combo Blocks

Double Teams

TUG & TEE (cross block)

G.O. Drill (sweep)

Scoops

GUT, COG, TED (fold blocks)

GO Pass Drill (waggle)

G Drill (Guard Trap)



Blocking technique is the number one drill any offensive line has to work on. The linemen must be good blockers. Players must excel at combination blocks as well as single blocks. Each player must understand every block, understand the techniques required, and understand how each type of block makes a contribution to winning.

## PASS TECHNIQUE

The last drills for the linemen during individual period are pass protection (pass pro) drills. In the beginning of the season, while learning their skills, the linemen do pass protection drills against themselves, and, as the linemen become more proficient, they progress to blocking more active defensive players.

Pass pro drills should take no more than 10 minutes, and, as the season progresses, you will be able to finish those in five minutes.

### I. HANDS & PUNCH

Knee Punch • Knee Clap • Lean Punch • 3-Punch Drill • Line Slide Punch

### II. FOOTWORK

Mirror Line • Mirror Jam • Mirror Spin • Ninja • Machine Gun

### III. STANCE

STANCE TO START: Soft Kick • Long Kick • Soft Post • Hard Post

Line Post • Line Kick Mirror • Line Kick Step • Combo Drill • Sand Bags

### IV. ONE ON ONE

Post Sets • Kick Sets • Kick Slide 3-man Punch

### IV. BALANCE

Sumo Pass • Push Pull • Quarter Eagle • A-B Drill

## Offensive Line Drill Sheet

The most important organizational tool for the offensive line coach is the development of the practice drill sheet. This sheet includes a list of each possible drill that will be done at some point during the season.

In the space corresponding to the correct date, fill in the amount of time allocated to each drill, as well as the mode used. Examples of different modes would be bags, shields, live defenders, chutes, sleds, and so forth. Create your own code and fill in as necessary.

Drill	9-Sep	10-Sep	11-Sep	12-Sep	Total Time
<i>Insert time and mode</i>					
<b>General Movement</b>					
ladder					
agilities					
bag drills					
<b>Run Game</b>					
<b>Shoulder Skills</b>					
form surface					
surface					
strike a blow					
step and hit					
run and hit					
run and hit trap (var)					
<b>Routine</b>					
stance					
first step					
on					
fire					
reach					
pull					
two step					
on					
fire					
reach					
get-offs					
on					
fire					
reach					
pull					

