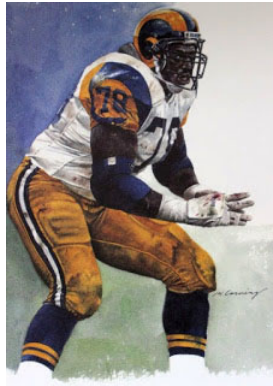

CHAPTER 21



Pass Protections Drills

The WING-T is very tough to defend because there is so much in the arsenal, however, this also creates great time constraints to fit everything in. Even if your offense does include a dropback game, limited time will be available to teach the skills necessary to be effective pass protectors. Therefore, before the offensive staff decides what the package of plays will be for a certain season, it must consider the effect the package will have on the line coach above all others, because he has the most to teach.

While many drills can be done, and many pass protections can be drawn up, the high school lineman only needs a few necessary skills to become a good pass protector in a high school setting.

The coaching staff actually works backwards when deciding how to teach pass blocking. First, they need to decide which pass plays will be ran that season. Once the type of pass plays has been determined, then protection schemes can be drawn up, which then tells the line coach what skills will need to be mastered. The major factor that decides what the pass attack will be is practice time.

The protections for the sprint-out game and play-action attacks use the run-blocking techniques already discussed in Chapters 16 through 18.

The teaching progression outlined in this chapter will be as follows:

- (1) Hands and punch**
- (2) Footwork**
- (3) Stance**
- (4) One on One**
- (5) Balance**



We start by teaching the use of the hands, called the “PUNCH”. Although pass blocking begins with the footwork, the footwork drills require something being done with the hands, so we feel like hands should be taught first. With that said, the ability to move the feet is the most important aspect of pass blocking. After we have taught footwork, we then teach how to use the hands and shoulders in unison with the feet. Tying together the hands and the footwork is the concept of balance in order to fight the pressure of a pass rush. Once the techniques are learned, we then teach specific blocks that are used within each scheme.

It is important to know the four types of individual pass sets. The types of blocks are briefly described here so that you can understand why we are doing certain drills:

TYPES OF PASS SETS TO USE BASED ON ALIGNMENT

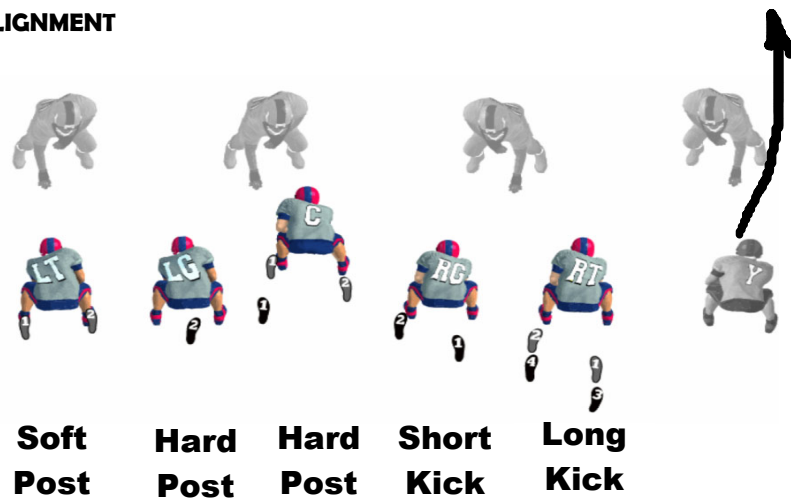


Fig 10-1: Types of Pass Sets

Hard Post - vs *inside shade defender*

- Uncovered Guard vs offset/shaded DL use these steps but keep outside arm free. Shoulders square.
- 90° lateral step inside, pushing off outside foot and leading with inside foot. 2nd foot also follows laterally.
- Feet stay in close contact with turf. Set inside. Steps are quick, hard, jab steps

Soft Post - vs *headup defender*

- The head up defender is a threat to both gaps, so blocker is cognitive that he cannot get beat inside.
- Pickup both feet and put them down in same place as quickly as possible to allow time to rise out of stance.

Soft Kick - vs *outside shade defender*

- Kick outside foot back and out at a 45° angle, getting even with defender's crotch.
- Don't lunge. Keep weight on inside foot. Cover up the inside of the defender.
- Shoulders square until moment of impact.

Long Kick - vs *very wide outside defender. Tackles only.*

- Kick straight back with outside foot, keeping shoulders square until just before the moment of impact.
- If shoulders and hips open to early, vulnerable to inside move.



FOOTWORK

MIRROR DRILLS

We do a series of drills that teach the footwork. The blocker faces the defender, and both are standing up, but the blocker is in a proper pass protection stance as describe on the previous pages. Two cones are set up five yards apart, the defender moves between the cones, and the blocker “mirrors” or follows him while maintaining a good stance. The drill duration is five to seven seconds. Footwork is the most important part of being a good pass blocker, and these mirror progressions are the best way to teach this skill.

Coaching Points:

- Keep the defender between the legs at all times.
- Keep at least one foot between the feet and stay off the toes
 - He must not "click" the heels together.
- Maintain foot contact with the ground and brush the top of the grass with the cleats of the shoe.
- Teach the blocker to "sit" on a stool with the chest proud and chin up.
- The lead step is with the foot in the direction of defender flow.

Mirror Line Drill

Blockers have their hands behind their back. You do not want the linemen using their hands in this drill yet, because you want them to learn to move their feet. The defenders go back and forth, right and left, and make their partners move his feet and mirror him. You do the mirror drill with all the offensive linemen facing a partner. You do it with all the linemen at the same time.



The offensive player must keep the defender between the legs with the chest proud. As they mirror, they lateral step with the KICK FOOT first. This is the foot that is slightly back in the staggered stance. This step allows them to always have space between their feet. The trail foot “slides” and follows. So the buzzword is: “**Kick-Slide**”

Mirror Jam Drill

The second part of the pass-protection progression is jam drill (Fig 10-7). In this drill, the offensive pass blocker is going to assume a good pass-blocking position, with knees bent, shoulders back, neck pulled, and target with his hands. He is going to block through the picture window created by his hands at his target. The defensive partner will come forward. The blocker will jam one good shot, then recoil, and separate. The defensive man will keep coming. Then, the pass blocker will jam again, lock him out, and ride the defender upfield past the quarterback.

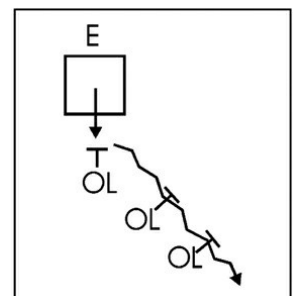


Fig 10-7: Mirror Jam Drill



You emphasize keeping a good body position, pass rusher between the legs, good knee bend, neck pulled back, all the proper fundamentals you have taught in the other drills.

STANCE

The philosophy of the WING-T is to use formations to our advantage and gain leverage over the defense. We don't believe in getting in a 2-point stance for passing situations and declaring to the defense that we are passing the ball. So while traditional pass blocking teaching is done from a 2-point stance, the Wing-T lineman has to adapt from the 3-point stance, which is really not that difficult to do.

We start with footwork and the important thing to remember is that both feet work together. When one moves, the other foot has to react. While doing all of these drills, make sure that linemen are in the following:

Feet

Staggered stance, weight on inside foot, feet wider than shoulders.

- POST FOOT is closest to QB and slightly forward.
- KICK FOOT is away from QB and slightly back.
- Outside foot in crotch of defender, belt buckle on inside leg of d

Back & Shoulders

Back is straight, creating 45-degree angles with your legs.

Shoulders Square

Weight

Butt low

Balanced, distributed on instep of feet,

Knees buckled inward to shrink expansion of your hips and control weight distribution.

Head & Eyes

Chin tucked, head back, Eyes on breast plate of defender.

Arms

Raised, relaxed, tight to body, within the framework of the chest.

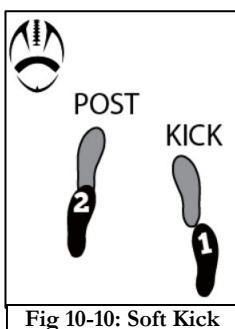
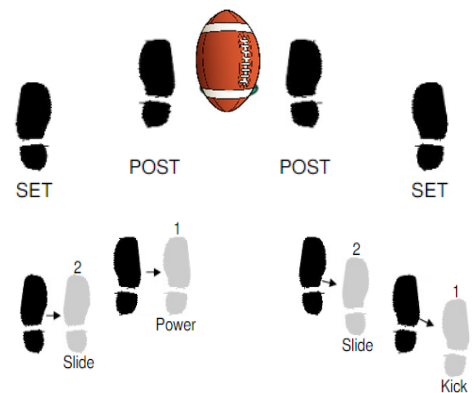


Fig 10-10: Soft Kick

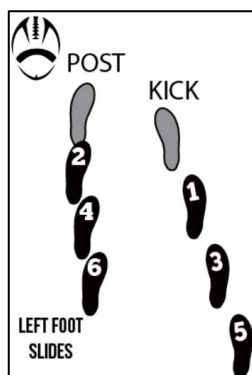


Fig 10-11: Long Kick

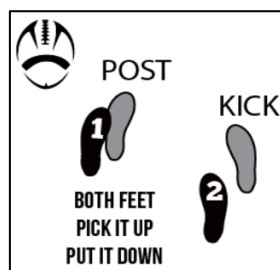


Fig 10-12: Soft Post

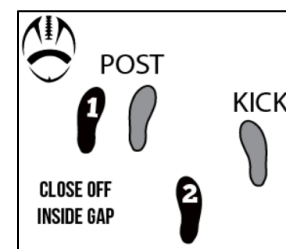


Fig 10-13: Hard Post



PASS BLOCKING TEACHING PROGRESSION

- Setting up quickly in your pass set is very important. The blocker needs to get in position very quickly.
 - The depth of the set is determined by the technique in which you are executing.
 - Set to an inside-out relationship on the defender.
 - outside foot to crotch of defender, belt buckle on inside leg of defender.
- Maintain leverage between QB and rushing defender.
 - Develop a cushion between yourself and the defender.
- Know where the QB is and the depth of his set.
- Understand alignments and movement of rushers.
- Maintain your “square” balance and angles (Keep the door closed, feet lead hands)
- Always know where your help is.

Inside Leg Heavy. Never let your man beat you inside. The inside lane is taken away by keeping the inside leg heavy, inviting the outside rush rather than the inside lane to the quarterback.

Outside Shoulder Pull. This works in conjunction with inside leg heavy concept. Blocker invite rushers to outside by slightly opening the outside shoulder. The main concept again is to take away the inside and force the defender wide, away from the quarterback.

Nose Separation. Instead of mentioning the negative by stating "do not overextend," use the coaching point of "keep the nose separated" as a more positive and visual way to get the same point across. A good pass-protection posture includes keeping the chest proud and the shoulders back. Keeping the nose back helps maintain this and discourages overextending into the block. Facemask contact occurs during initial contact, but separation needs to immediately follow the punch to force the defender back and gain space between the players.

Wide Base. The concept of maintaining a wide base is not only important in executing the run block, but also in being an effective pass protector. An offensive lineman with a wide base on contact with the defender in a pass protection has great balance and is able to react to the movement of the defender. Basketball shares this concept, in that to be a good defender, the base needs to be wide and the feet slightly outward to allow for quick reactions.

Capt Obvious. Get between the defender and the QB. Don't get beat inside.



Coaching Tips

- This should be a high repetition drill. The more it is practiced the faster a player will create muscle memory.
- Do not overstep. If the first step is too wide, the DL will knock the blocker off balance. Always have both feet on the ground when contacting a DL.

LINE KICK MIRROR

Description: Teach proper kick-step technique, as well as the relationship between the blocker and the defender. Linemen are organized in two lines facing the coach, with a defender lateral and to the outside of the lineman executing the drill (Figure 10-14). On the coach's command, the linemen kick step back away as the defender walks or slow jogs in a straight line. The offensive lineman places the hand on the inside number of the defensive player in a postpunch position. The offensive player must maintain a tempo that keeps the defender in front and never pass the hips of the offensive player.

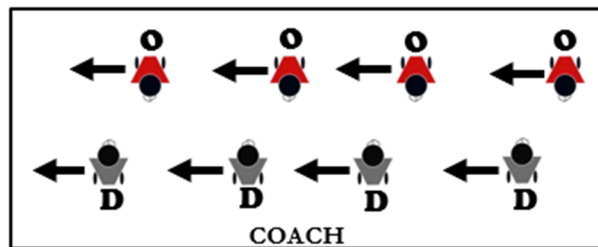


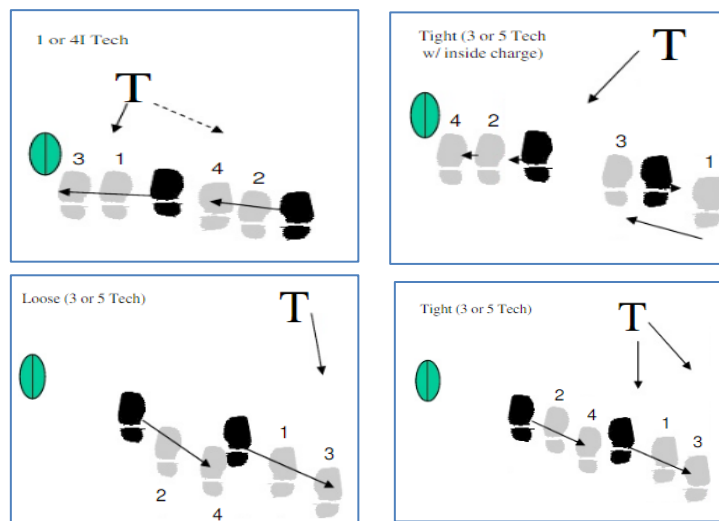
Fig 10-14: Line Kick Mirror Drill

Coaching Points:

- The outstretched arm should always maintain contact, which assures that proper spacing is being secured.
- The blockers must use great kick-slide technique.
 - Kick step and slide with quickness and not allow the defender on the outside to gain a parallel hip position.

• 1 ON 1 DRILLS

POST SETS



KICK SETS

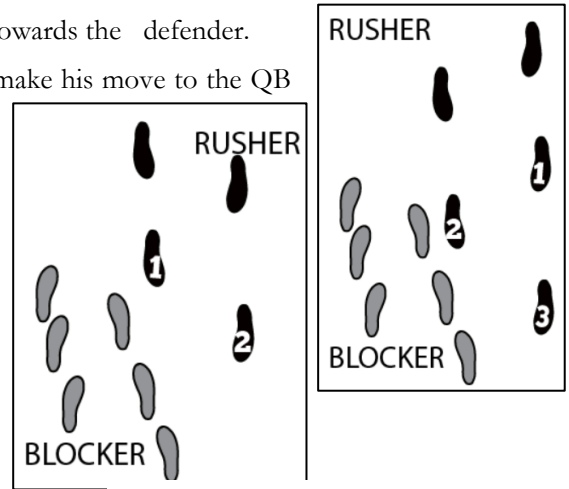
TECHNIQUE VS WIDE RUSH END

The most difficult skill to master in pass protection is the Tackle’s block on a wide aligned rusher.

1. Narrow the stance with the toe pointing outward slightly. Narrow stances allows blocker to cover more ground. Increase the stagger of the stance.
2. Determine the junction point, which is the point that the defender will turn his shoulders towards the QB.

When this happens the blocker wants his shoulders turned towards the defender.

- a. If the rusher’s outside foot is back, he will usually make his move to the QB on the 3rd step.
- b. If the rusher’s inside foot is back, he will usually make his move to the QB on the 2nd step.



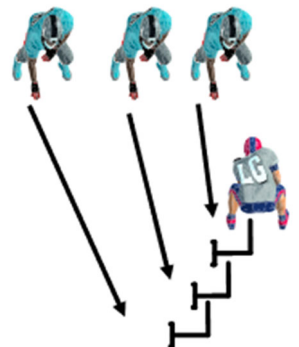
NOTE: If the rusher’s backbone is pointed in rather than upfield, the above does not apply. Now block him like a normal rusher.

KICK SLIDE THREE-MAN PUNCH

This drill is used to help the guards, tackles, and centers work on the kick slide set. A lineman lines up on a yard line. (Two linemen can do this drill at the same time.) Three defenders stand to one side, spaced out 2 to 3 yards and staggered in alignment.

On the coaches command, the lineman does one kick slide and punches the closest defender who rushes from a tight, outside shade alignment. Once contact is made that defender continues running upfield out of the drill. The blocker takes his 2nd kick slide and punches the 2nd defender who started his rush as soon as contact was made with the first defender.

The 2nd defender runs upfield out of the drill and the blocker takes his 3rd kick slide to punch the 3rd defender, who started his runs as soon as contact was made with the 2nd defender. The blocker continues to aggressively block the 3rd defender as long as possible.



BALANCE

The body demeanor in a pass-protection set is a key aspect of pass protection. A blocker must have great balance to maintain a wide base in the lower body while moving side to side in reaction to the movement of a defender. Adequate core strength (between thighs and chest) is needed in pass protection. A defender will attempt to push, pull, and manipulate the balance of an offensive lineman to try to gain the advantage. A solid conditioning program with a lot of core work is essential, in addition to the following two functional drills for football.



GROUP WORK

No substitute exists for live work in the area of pass protection. The defensive line may want to get a full-speed rush look, and practicing that live tempo against the offensive line allows both parties a chance to get better. No one drill can be done in a live situation that will create on-the-job training. It is important that this session be filmed so that the line coach can accurately evaluate talent and not have to slow down the drill to teach too many of the fine details.

2 ON 2 – OL vs DL

You use four players to do this drill and starts with basic slants, followed by twisting, and finally basic blitzing. When pass blocking a twisting defensive line you can man or zone block it. The first way is to **man the stunt**, which implies the blockers are going to block their man, regardless of where he goes. In order to do that, one of the pass blockers has to get a little deeper than the other. They have to be able to switch men and not run into each other.

The way that we prefer to block is to zone protect. When you zone, you are going to pass the stunt off. In order for two linemen to zone off a stunt, two things have to happen.

1. Blockers must communicate when they see their man loop somewhere else.
2. Pass blockers must block until they hear the call and until they are knocked off their man.

What happens is, as the penetrator comes down inside, the outside man keeps pass blocking him. As the inside man sees the loop, he yells, “Outside, outside!” and steps right through the hip of his adjacent blocker. He will knock him off and will take the block over, forcing the outside blocker to pick up the loop.

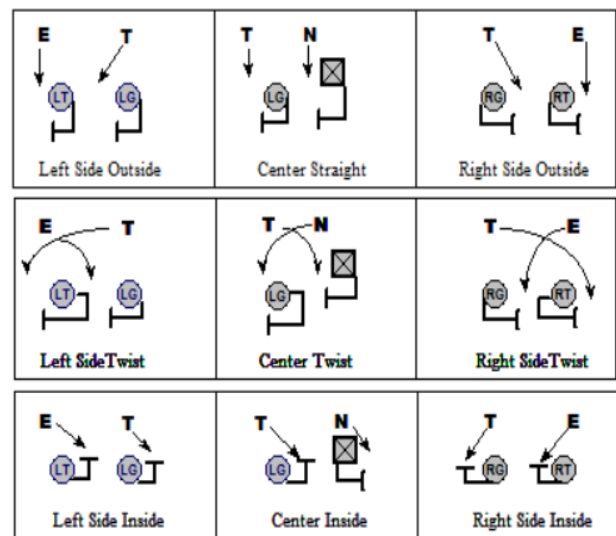


Fig 10-16: Types of 2 vs 2

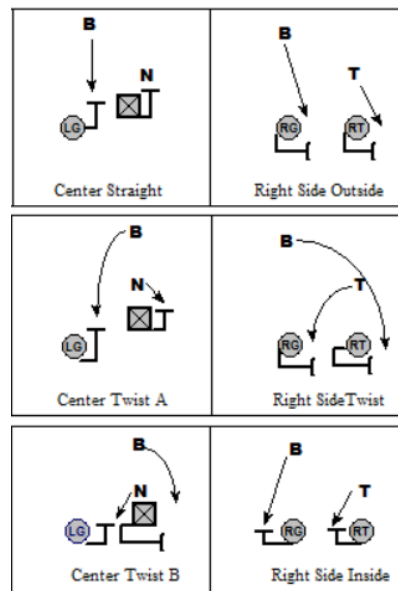
Two things are important. One man must recognize and call the loop. Then, he must turn and knock the other blocker off the penetrator so that blocker will know he is to pick up the looper. You must be careful to stop the penetrator first, because you have plenty of time to come off on the loop. The middle row twists are examples of this.

The defense does not have to run a stunt. They can pass-rush straight up the field. The pass blockers must always be prepared to block the man on them. They have to block the man on them and be honest about that block until they hear the call and feel the bump. The blockers must not anticipate and leave early.



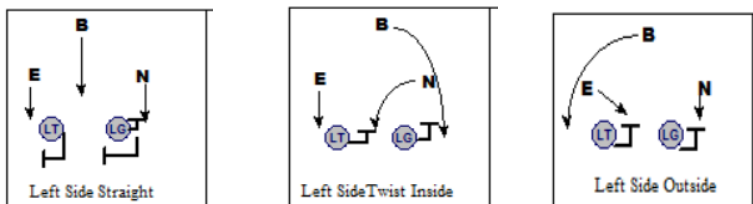
2 ON 2 – OL vs DL+LB

This drill is a little more challenging than the previous 2 on 2 drill. In some cases, then blocker has to know if he is getting help before picking up the Linebacker. In the “LEFT SIDE STRAIGHT” example, the LG cannot leave without Center help. In “LEFT SIDE TWIST” the LG already is post stepping since the NG is inside shade. He shouldn’t chase the NG slanting away because his head is up and he will see the blitz coming. In the “RIGHT SIDE TWIST” example, the RT cannot leave the slanting DT to pickup the blitz until he is sure that the LG is ready to take over.



15-3: Two on Two DL + LB

3 ON 2 – VERTICAL SETS



CALL OUTS

Description: The objective of this drill is to teach the proper pass set during each repetition and to teach proper dropback pass protection to the one lineman who is "live." The linemen are organized in their basic offensive formation, covered by a defensive front. All five offensive linemen assume their stances and the coach calls a desired pass-protection scheme. The line coach then points to one of the defensive players, who will execute a full-speed pass rush to the blocking dummy set up at the release point of the quarterback. On the cadence, and without the offensive linemen knowing which of the defenders will rush, each of the linemen take the proper footwork in preparation for a live rush. After the first two steps, only the assigned defender will follow through with the pass rush and attempt to get to the blocking dummy.



HALF LINE

This is the next step from the drills we just did. In Figure 15-4, the left side of the line is simulating a 4-3 look and the right side simulating a 4-4 look. You also need to expose your line to odd front blitzes, especially the 3-3 stack. The key is that a blocker cannot leave a D-Lineman to pick up a blitzzer until he feels his teammate “bumping” him off the block.

The tough scenarios are the Outside blitz vs the 4-3 and the Twist Blitz A vs the 4-4. In the 4-3 scenario, the Guard has to see the LB blitz and “pull” to help. Of course he needs to know the protection behind him because there might be a RB that can pick that up. In the 4-4 Twist Blitz A example, the RT is short kick sliding towards the edge, but he also needs to be eyeballing the LB out of the corner of his eye.

