

# Farmington Football Coaching 101

Farmington Youth Football Association

2025

Key Concept:

# **Teach & Coach Fundamentals**

**This may sound like a very simple concept, but as you get through the season, the teaching and coaching of the fundamentals tend to get ignored as coaches focus more on design and game plan.**

**KEY CONCEPT**

## WHAT MATTERS

**As you get further and further into a year – usually around the sixth or seventh game – you’ll start to see a drop off in sound fundamentals. After working on and focusing on one game planning and adding plays for so long, coaches often neglect to put the necessary time into practice to ensure we are working on the fundamentals.**

**This will cause a huge drop off in offensive production, in everything from the crispness of execution to the number of penalties per game.**



**The best way to make sure that fundamentals don't drop off is to make sure you have enough time each practice for the players to spend some time individually working on and perfecting their fundamentals.**

**Of course, this does not mean they shouldn't be working on their fundamentals in team practice as well- you need to make sure it's a point of emphasis no matter what you're doing in practice.**

**There is an especially good opportunity to do just that whenever you're in a light practice, walking through plays, or working with no pads. The players aren't going to be pushing themselves physically, but they should be drilling themselves and exaggerating their techniques the whole time.**



**AT PRACTICE**

Key Concept:

# **Refuse to Tolerate Mistakes**

**The first way to win a football game is to not lose it for yourself by making mistakes. There are layers and layers of football strategy, but often what it comes down to when it's all said and done is who had less mistakes.**

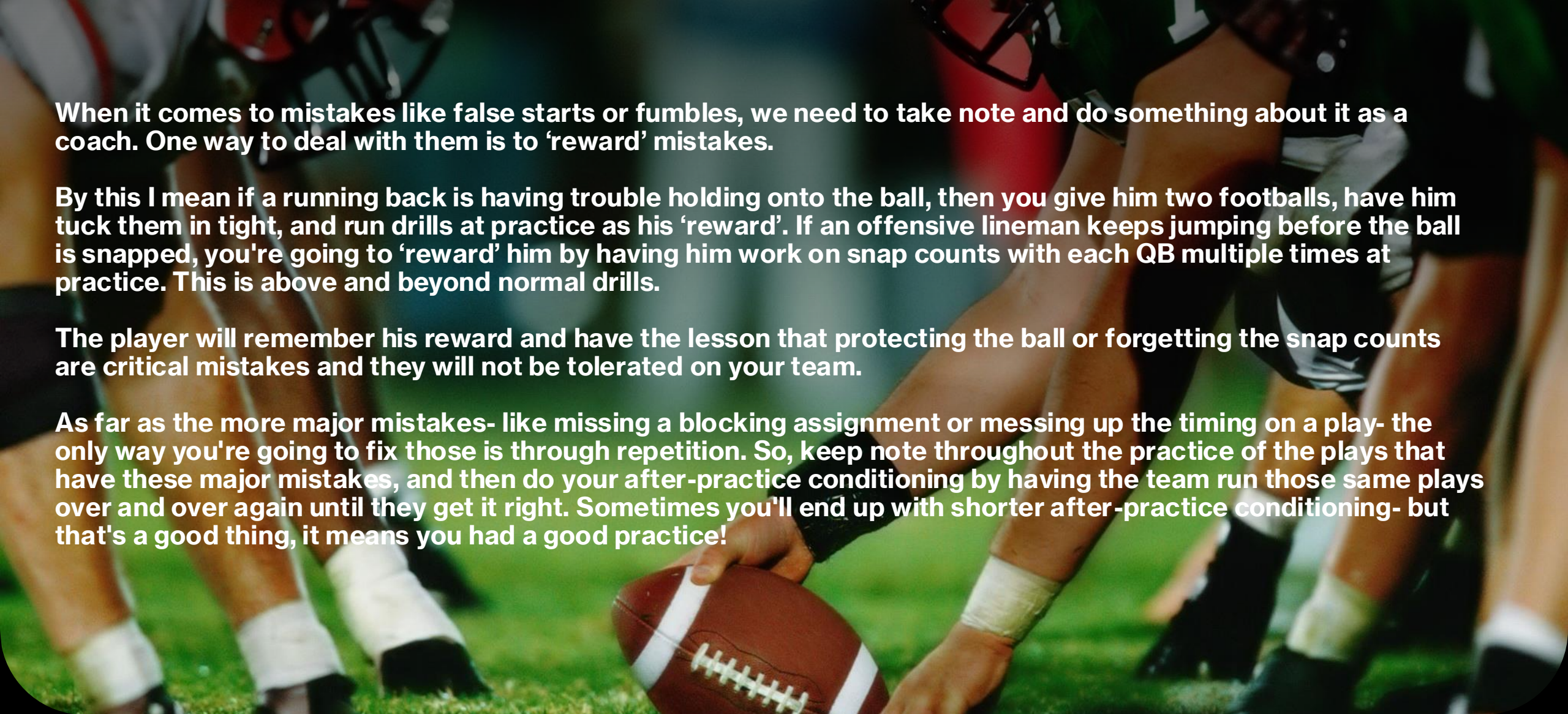
**KEY CONCEPT**

# WHAT MATTERS

**Mistakes lead to penalties and turnovers, and it's no secret that avoiding these two things is key to putting together a win. As a coach, it's your job to drive home the fact that you will not tolerate these kinds of mistakes.**

**One of the things we do when looking at the game film is grading players, looking for critical errors throughout the game period when a player has a critical error, we mark it down and let him know. The difference between an offense that has three critical errors in a game and an offense that has 13 is the difference between a win and a loss- and we need to drive this home for our players.**





**When it comes to mistakes like false starts or fumbles, we need to take note and do something about it as a coach. One way to deal with them is to 'reward' mistakes.**

**By this I mean if a running back is having trouble holding onto the ball, then you give him two footballs, have him tuck them in tight, and run drills at practice as his 'reward'. If an offensive lineman keeps jumping before the ball is snapped, you're going to 'reward' him by having him work on snap counts with each QB multiple times at practice. This is above and beyond normal drills.**

**The player will remember his reward and have the lesson that protecting the ball or forgetting the snap counts are critical mistakes and they will not be tolerated on your team.**

**As far as the more major mistakes- like missing a blocking assignment or messing up the timing on a play- the only way you're going to fix those is through repetition. So, keep note throughout the practice of the plays that have these major mistakes, and then do your after-practice conditioning by having the team run those same plays over and over again until they get it right. Sometimes you'll end up with shorter after-practice conditioning- but that's a good thing, it means you had a good practice!**

**AT PRACTICE**

Key Concept:

# Teach the Rules

**It's important to take the time to make sure your players understand the rules of the game period most coaches don't take enough time to do so, but making sure to make the time is a great way to find another small edge that you can give your team.**

**KEY CONCEPT**

# WHAT MATTERS

It may seem trivial, but it can make a huge difference, especially in terms of avoiding penalties; How many players are allowed on the line of scrimmage? What exactly is clipping? And so on.

Knowing exactly what the rules are is the only way your players are going to figure out what they need to execute and what they can and can't do.



**A good way to work this into your time with the team is to just highlight a couple of rules in the rule book, and then when you're having your team meetings before the game, read out a rule as a question, let the players think about it, and then pick one to answer. It's a good idea to do this in a light-hearted way- we're not going to have players running sprints or anything like that if they get a question wrong.**

**You'll want to pick up about 6 to 8 rules and make sure there are rules from all aspects of the game- offense and defense as well as all aspects of special teams.**



**AT PRACTICE**

Key Concept:

**Coach**

**Ball Security**

**Every once in a while, you might hear a coach speculate that ball security is an innate ability and that it can't be taught. Well, that statement is just as wrong as  $2 + 2 = 5$ . It can be taught, as there are clear fundamentals that when taught and drilled correctly will have a huge impact on the team's ability to hold on to the ball and prevent unnecessary fumbles.**

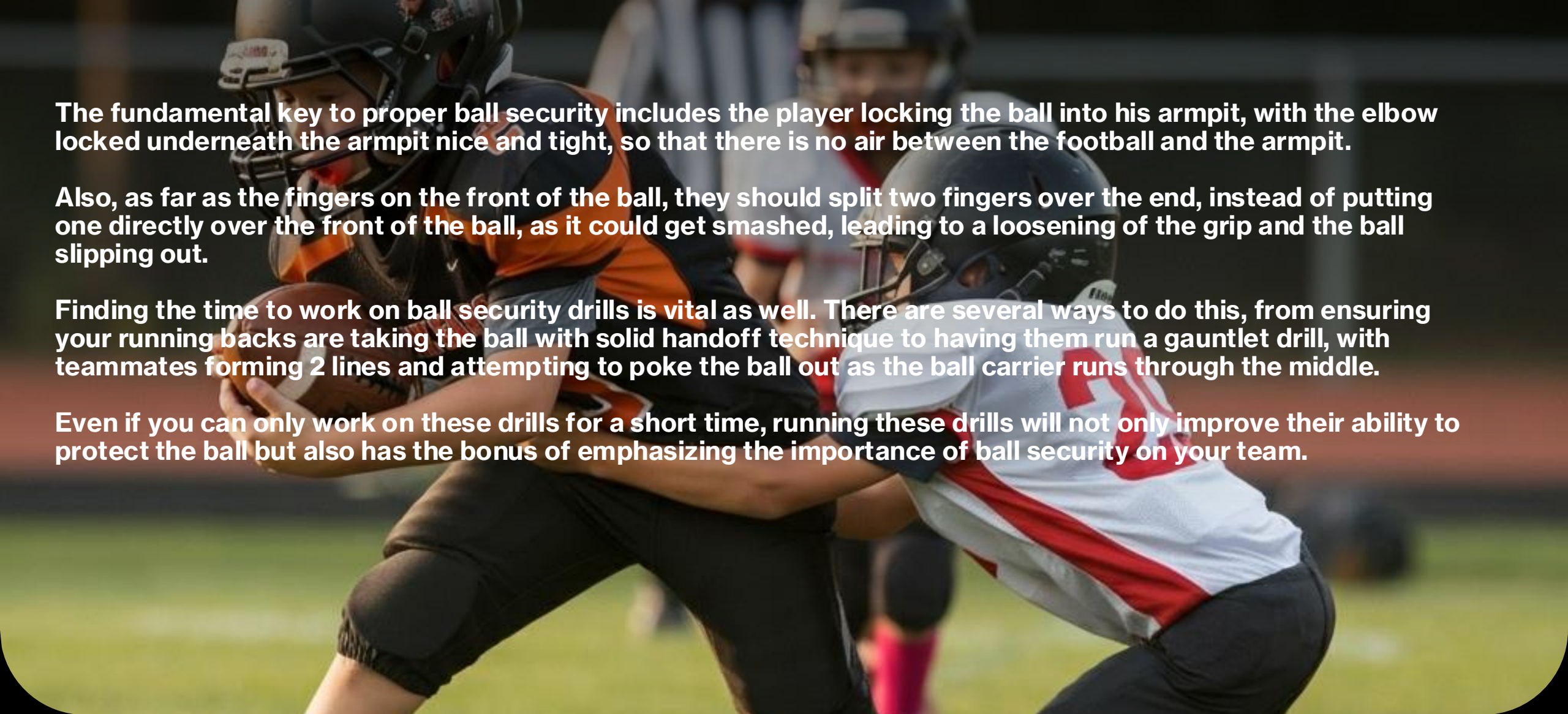
**KEY CONCEPT**

# WHAT MATTERS

**There is one statistic that has stood the test of time as having a monstrous effect on wins and losses. Its turnovers. Regardless of whether it's via interception or fumble, a team that is on the negative end of the turnover differential is going to be on the losing end of the game more often than not.**

**By taking the time to teach the fundamentals and then making sure to take the time to practice those fundamentals throughout the year, you can ensure a drop off in fumbles, which will lead to a drop off in turnovers and in the end, an increase in wins.**



A photograph of a football game in progress. A player in a black and orange uniform is running with the ball, being tackled from behind by a player in a white and red uniform. The background is a blurred green field with other players.

**The fundamental key to proper ball security includes the player locking the ball into his armpit, with the elbow locked underneath the armpit nice and tight, so that there is no air between the football and the armpit.**

**Also, as far as the fingers on the front of the ball, they should split two fingers over the end, instead of putting one directly over the front of the ball, as it could get smashed, leading to a loosening of the grip and the ball slipping out.**

**Finding the time to work on ball security drills is vital as well. There are several ways to do this, from ensuring your running backs are taking the ball with solid handoff technique to having them run a gauntlet drill, with teammates forming 2 lines and attempting to poke the ball out as the ball carrier runs through the middle.**

**Even if you can only work on these drills for a short time, running these drills will not only improve their ability to protect the ball but also has the bonus of emphasizing the importance of ball security on your team.**

**AT PRACTICE**

Key Concept:

**Keep It  
Simple Stupid  
(KISS)**

**It can be tempting to make things more and more complex but as you expand your playbook you're going to see a drop off in execution, and your offense is going to suffer.**

**As a coach, you need to keep in mind that what you do doesn't matter anywhere near as much as how you do it, as that is what is going to ultimately decide your success.**

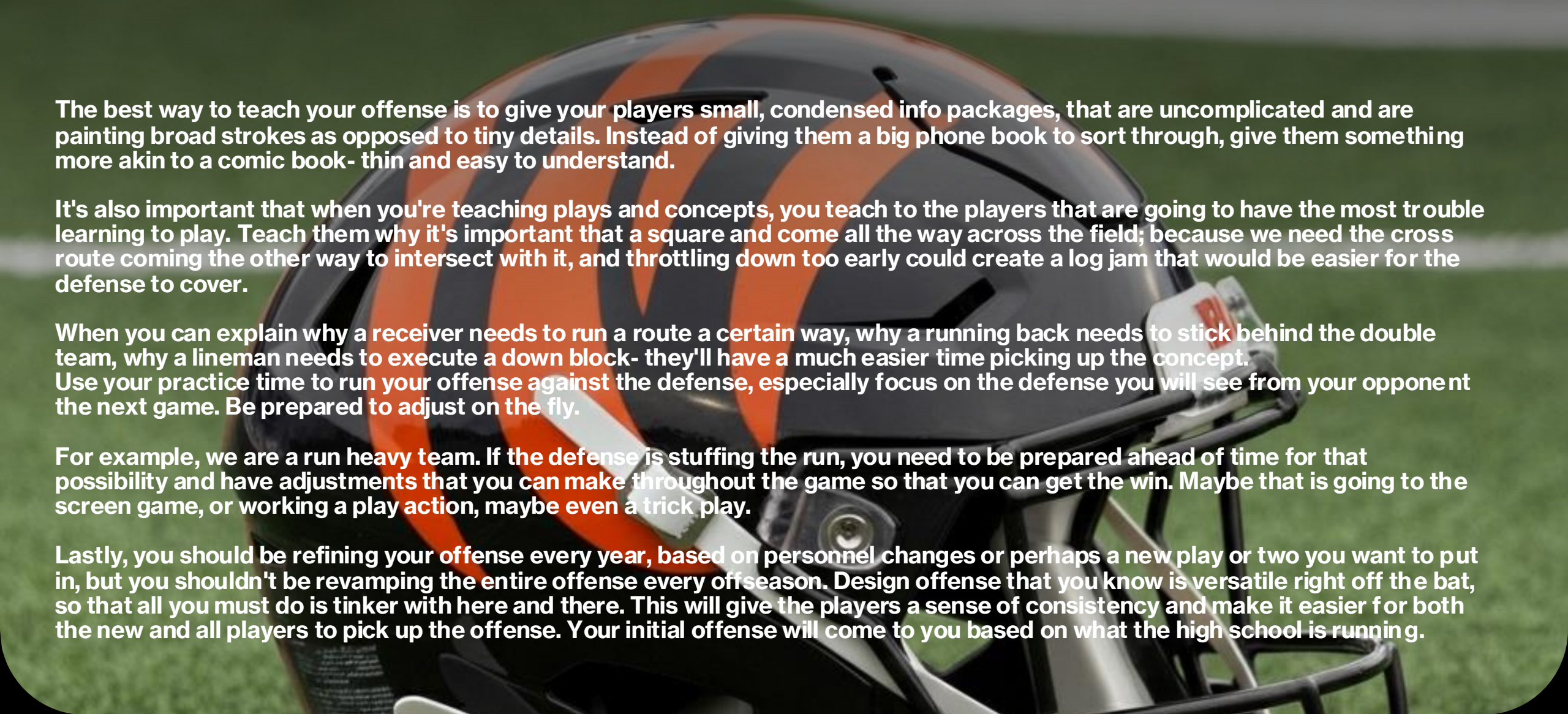
**KEY CONCEPT**

# WHAT MATTERS

**As the playbook expands and you get further and further away from keeping it simple, you're making things much more difficult for yourself. Not only is it going to be harder to teach your entire offense, but even if they have learned it all, they aren't going to be able to execute it at a high level since they don't get the time to practice each play to perfection.**

**The quarterback is the most important player on your offense and needs to know what every player is doing on any given play. So, therefore, you should dictate the number of plays in your playbook largely on the amount that your quarterback can handle.**





The best way to teach your offense is to give your players small, condensed info packages, that are uncomplicated and are painting broad strokes as opposed to tiny details. Instead of giving them a big phone book to sort through, give them something more akin to a comic book- thin and easy to understand.

It's also important that when you're teaching plays and concepts, you teach to the players that are going to have the most trouble learning to play. Teach them why it's important that a square and come all the way across the field; because we need the cross route coming the other way to intersect with it, and throttling down too early could create a log jam that would be easier for the defense to cover.

When you can explain why a receiver needs to run a route a certain way, why a running back needs to stick behind the double team, why a lineman needs to execute a down block- they'll have a much easier time picking up the concept. Use your practice time to run your offense against the defense, especially focus on the defense you will see from your opponent the next game. Be prepared to adjust on the fly.

For example, we are a run heavy team. If the defense is stuffing the run, you need to be prepared ahead of time for that possibility and have adjustments that you can make throughout the game so that you can get the win. Maybe that is going to the screen game, or working a play action, maybe even a trick play.

Lastly, you should be refining your offense every year, based on personnel changes or perhaps a new play or two you want to put in, but you shouldn't be revamping the entire offense every offseason. Design offense that you know is versatile right off the bat, so that all you must do is tinker with here and there. This will give the players a sense of consistency and make it easier for both the new and all players to pick up the offense. Your initial offense will come to you based on what the high school is running.

## AT PRACTICE

Key Concept:

**Critical**

**Situation Offense**

**Keeping your base offense tight and simple is always a good idea, but that doesn't mean those should be the only plays in your playbook. There are certain situations where you need specific play packages to be successful and developing the rest of your playbook to be ready to handle any of the situations if and when they come up is the most efficient way to expand your playbook.**

**KEY CONCEPT**

# WHAT MATTERS

All too often coaches will work on their base offense by simply lining the ball up between the hashes, running through their offense for two hours, then call it a day and go home. This is a huge disservice to their team, as they are not even preparing their team for their most basic of situations. The ball is only going to be in the middle of the field about 20% of the time, spending the other 80% of the time between the two hashes- but they're also completely ignoring critical situation offense.

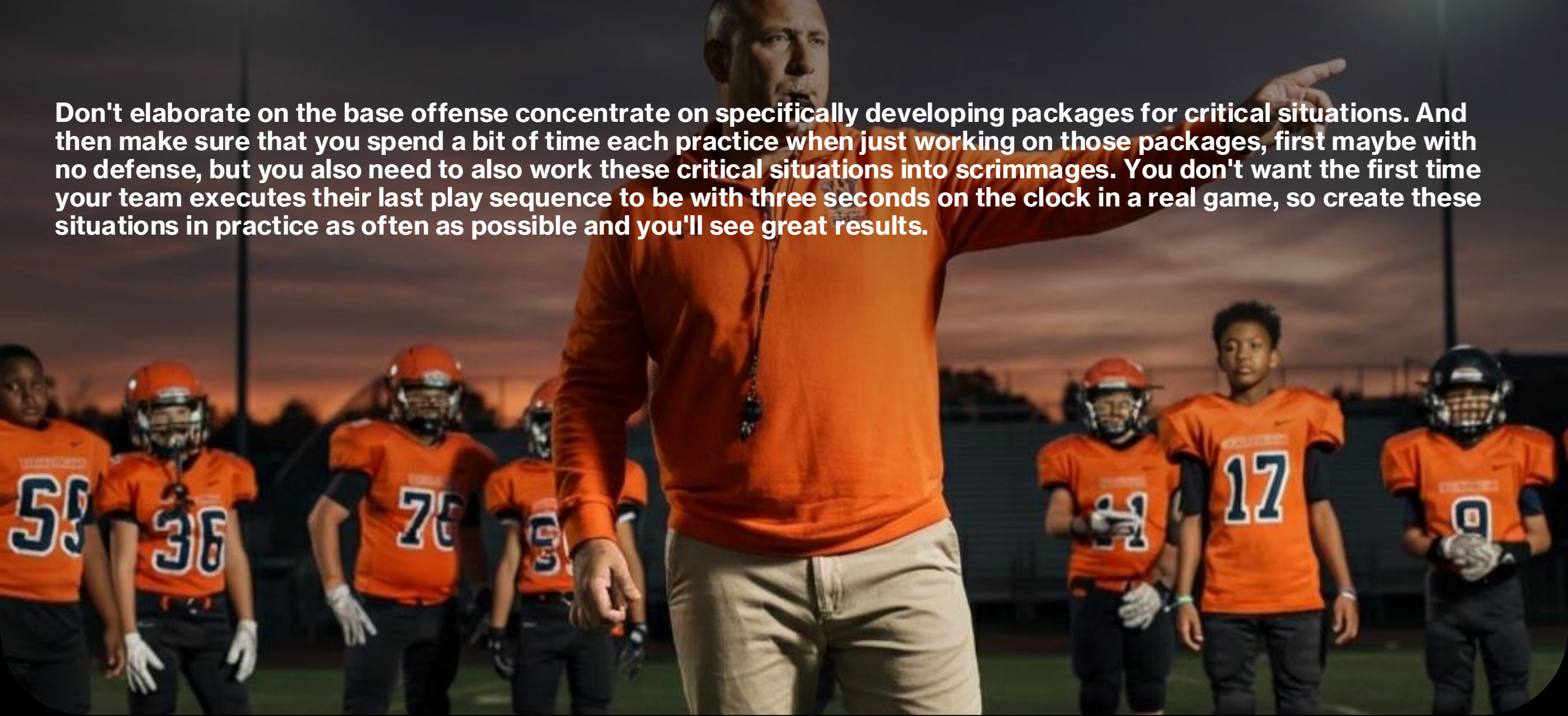
While you want to keep your base offense package small, with a limited number of run and pass plays, that doesn't mean it should be the only part of your playbook. Throughout every game, there are some critical situations where an offense's regular base offense wouldn't be maximizing its potential output.

These situations include but are not limited to: goal line, red zone, third down, short yardage, killing the clock, 2-minute offense, desperation plays, 2-point conversions, and even a last play sequence. Designing specific packages so that you can best attack in specific situations is the only way you're going to be consistently successful.

Like when you're on the goal line both the offense and defense will likely be going to big heavy personnel with very limited passing room due to the congestion of the defense, or in the red zone, where you're likely going to be seeing a lot of blitz and pressures to limit the quarterback's time in the pocket.



**Don't elaborate on the base offense concentrate on specifically developing packages for critical situations. And then make sure that you spend a bit of time each practice when just working on those packages, first maybe with no defense, but you also need to also work these critical situations into scrimmages. You don't want the first time your team executes their last play sequence to be with three seconds on the clock in a real game, so create these situations in practice as often as possible and you'll see great results.**



**AT PRACTICE**

Thank You