



# DEFENSIVE LINE DRILLS

Farmington Youth Football Association  
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# INTRODUCTION

The following slides provide an overview of the **Defensive Line Drills** that will be used across the Farmington Youth Football program. These drills will enhance various aspects of your defensive linemen's play, from **hand techniques** and **pass rush** to **gap control** and **pursuit**.

As we work to develop our players and prepare them for a successful transition to the High School level—while keeping the experience fun and engaging—program-wide alignment and consistency are key. Staying on the same page helps ensure every player gets the foundation they need to grow and succeed.

If you have any questions or suggestions about the drills, please reach out to your designated grade leader.

# DRILLS

1. Bull Rush
2. Swim Move
3. Rip Move
4. Stance and Start
5. 2-on-1 Block Destruction
6. Quick Hands
7. Backpedal to Burst
8. 1-on-1 Block Shedding
9. Angle Pursuit
10. Gap Control
11. Pass Rush Explosion

# BULL RUSH

- **PURPOSE:**

The **Bull Rush** drill focuses on teaching defensive linemen to use their power and leverage to push the offensive lineman back into the pocket. It helps develop strength and hand placement for a dominant pass rush.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Focus on **keeping hips low** and driving with the legs to generate power.
- Use the **hands** to strike the offensive player's chest or shoulder pads, keeping arms extended.
- The player should maintain a **strong base** to avoid being off-balance during the bull rush.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- Line up a **defensive lineman** against an offensive lineman (in-stance) or a **bag** (representing the offensive lineman).
- The coach should be nearby to call commands.

1. The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**.
2. The coach calls “**Down**” to initiate the drill, and the player moves into their **stance** position.
3. The coach says “**Go**”, and the defensive lineman fires out, using a **bull rush** technique.
4. The **defensive lineman** should aim to engage the offensive lineman or the bag with their **hands** to the chest or shoulder pads, driving with their legs and keeping **hips low**.
5. The **defensive lineman** should continue pushing the offensive lineman straight back until the whistle is blown.
6. If a bag is used, the player should continue pushing it until the coach blows the whistle.

# SWIM MOVE

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill focuses on the **swim move**, a pass-rushing technique that allows defensive linemen to slip past blockers by using an arm-over motion to evade them.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- The **swim move** should be fluid, with the arm moving over the offensive lineman's hands.
- Focus on **quick feet** to get the edge and avoid the offensive lineman's block.
- Maintain **body control** and **balance** when executing the move.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- A **defensive lineman** faces an **offensive lineman** or **dummy bag**.
- The coach should be nearby to call commands.

1. The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**, facing the offensive lineman or bag.
2. The coach says “**Down**”, and the defensive lineman moves into a **stance**.
3. On “**Go**”, the defensive lineman should drive forward with a **quick first step**.
4. As they approach the offensive player, the defensive lineman will execute the **swim move**, using one arm to **swim** over the offensive lineman's hands or shoulder pads while maintaining forward momentum.
5. The defensive lineman should focus on using the **swim motion** quickly and efficiently to avoid getting trapped.
6. After completing the swim move, the defensive lineman continues to drive toward the quarterback or through the bag until the whistle is blown.

# RIP MOVE

- **PURPOSE:**

The **rip move** drill is used to teach defensive linemen to disengage from blockers and get around them quickly by using their upper body strength.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Use **quick hands** and a **powerful rip** to separate from the blocker.
- Focus on maintaining **leverage** and **balance** while executing the rip.
- The defensive lineman should aim to **keep the shoulder low** and the hand high during the rip.



# Execution

## SETUP:

- Pair up a **defensive lineman** with an **offensive lineman** or a **bag**.
- The coach should be nearby to call commands.

1. The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**.
2. The coach calls “**Down**” and the player moves into stance.
3. The coach calls “**Go**”, and the defensive lineman takes a step to engage the offensive lineman.
4. As the defender engages, he will use a **rip move** to disengage, pulling his arm through and driving his body toward the **quarterback** or around the offensive lineman.
5. The **rip motion** should come from the inside, with the defensive lineman using the **arm to rip** under the offensive lineman’s hand and disengage.
6. Continue driving through the offensive lineman and work toward getting to the quarterback or the bag.

## STANCE & START

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill is designed to improve the **initial burst** off the line of scrimmage for defensive linemen. It focuses on getting low and explosive out of the stance.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Focus on **quick feet** and **strong leg drive**.
- The player's **hips should stay low** to the ground, not popping up out of the stance.
- **Hand placement** is important to immediately engage the offensive lineman when the play starts.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- Defensive linemen are lined up in a **3-point stance**.
- There should be a **coach** or assistant to call the commands.

1. The **defensive linemen** are in a **3-point stance**, focusing on **low hips** and a **wide base**.
2. The coach says “**Down**”, and the players move into their **stance**.
3. On “**Go**”, the players should **explode** off the line of scrimmage with a **quick, explosive first step**.
4. The players should focus on getting out of their stance quickly, driving with their legs and keeping their body low to maintain speed and power.
5. The coach will call out the start and stop commands, making sure each player starts explosively and stays **low**.

## 2-ON-1 BLOCK DESTRUCTION

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill teaches defensive linemen to defeat double teams and maintain their gap responsibility. It focuses on hand placement and disengagement from multiple blockers.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- **Use strong hands** to disengage from blockers and keep them from controlling your body.
- Keep your **shoulders square** and work to control the blockers' movement.
- **Stay low** and maintain **leverage** when fighting through the double team.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- Set up two **offensive linemen** against one **defensive lineman**.
- A **linebacker** can be used to simulate the run through the gap.

1. The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**.
2. The coach says “**Down**”, and the player moves into their stance.
3. The **two offensive linemen** engage the **defensive lineman** in a double team.
4. The **defensive lineman** must use **hands and footwork** to fight through the double team, keeping their **shoulders square** and disengaging from one blocker to attack the other.
5. The defensive lineman should aim to **split** the double team or work to keep the blockers from getting inside the gap.
6. Once the defensive lineman disengages, they should focus on getting to the ball carrier or making the tackle.

# QUICK HANDS

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill is designed to improve the **hand placement** and **hand fighting techniques** for defensive linemen to disengage from blockers quickly and effectively.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Focus on **fast, violent hand strikes** to the offensive lineman's pads.
- Work on using the **swim, rip, and club** techniques after initial contact.
- Players should aim to keep their **hands active** throughout the drill to prevent being tied up by the offensive lineman.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- A **defensive lineman** faces an **offensive lineman** or a **dummy bag**.
- The coach should be nearby to call commands.

1. The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**.
2. The coach says “**Down**”, and the player moves into their **stance**.
3. On “**Go**”, the defensive lineman should explode off the ball and engage the **offensive lineman**.
4. The player then focuses on using their **hands** to strike the offensive lineman’s chest, pads, or arms to gain leverage.
5. After the initial strike, the player should work on using quick **hand movements** to either **swim**, **rip**, or **club** their way past the offensive lineman.
6. Repeat this drill by giving the defensive lineman a chance to work on both hands individually.

## BACKPEDAL TO BURST

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill teaches defensive linemen to **backpedal quickly** and **explode forward** in a straight line, simulating a pass rush or pursuit of the quarterback.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Focus on keeping the **hips low** while backpedaling.
- **Explode forward** as quickly as possible, focusing on the **drive phase** to simulate chasing down the quarterback or ball carrier.
- **Hands** should be active and used to fend off blockers or react to the offensive lineman.



# Execution

## SETUP:

- The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**.
- The coach will be positioned a few yards away and will call commands.

1. The **defensive lineman** starts in a **3-point stance** and the coach says “**Down**” to initiate the drill.
2. The coach says “**Go**”, and the player **backpedals** quickly for a short distance (about 5-7 yards).
3. Once the coach calls “**Burst**”, the player should **explode forward**, driving through with their legs and hands, as if rushing the quarterback or pursuing the ball carrier.
4. Repeat the drill several times to work on both forward and backward explosion.

# 1-ON-1 BLOCK SHEDDING

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill is designed to improve a defensive lineman's ability to **shed a blocker** in a one-on-one situation, either in a run or pass rush scenario.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- **Rip, swim, and club** are essential techniques for disengaging from blockers.
- Keep the **hands active** to avoid getting stuck in the blocker's grasp.
- The **defensive lineman** should aim to keep their **leverage** low and maintain **balance** while shedding the block.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- Line up a **defensive lineman** against an **offensive lineman**.
- The coach should be near to call commands and stop the play.

1. The **defensive lineman** starts in a **3-point stance**, and the coach calls “**Down**” to initiate the drill.
2. On “**Go**”, the **offensive lineman** comes off the ball, and the **defensive lineman** engages them with their hands.
3. The defensive lineman works to **shed** the offensive lineman using **rip**, **swim**, or **club** techniques.
4. The coach stops the play if the defensive lineman sheds the block and is heading towards the ball carrier or quarterback.
5. Repeat the drill, focusing on the different techniques to shed the blocker.

# ANGLE PURSUIT

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill focuses on improving a defensive lineman's ability to **pursue the ball carrier** at the correct angle and maintain speed while working down the line.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Emphasize keeping the **hips low** and using the **arms** to pump for extra speed.
- Players should keep a **balanced posture** to adjust if the ball carrier changes direction.
- Focus on **proper angles**—always trying to cut off the ball carrier's path.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- Place **cones** or markers 5-10 yards apart, simulating the ball carrier's movement.
- The **defensive lineman** starts at one cone, and the coach calls the start.

1. The **defensive lineman** starts in a **3-point stance** at the first cone.
2. The coach calls "**Go**", and the player must **burst** to the second cone, working at the **correct angle** to simulate pursuit of the ball carrier.
3. Focus on maintaining **good body control** while running at a correct angle, and **accelerate** through the cones.
4. The player should focus on the **hip angle**, ensuring they don't overrun the ball carrier or drift too wide.
5. The drill is run at full speed several times, and the player practices a **fast, low drive**.

# GAP CONTROL

- **PURPOSE:**

The **Gap Control Drill** teaches defensive linemen to maintain their assigned gaps and stop any offensive lineman from crossing their face.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Focus on keeping the **hands active** and working to prevent the offensive lineman from crossing over the gap.
- Emphasize the importance of **low hips** and **strong leverage** to stop the offensive line from gaining ground.
- Defensive linemen should maintain **good balance** to keep their bodies aligned and prevent being driven out of position.

# Execution

## SETUP:

- Set up two **offensive linemen** in a **two-point stance** across from two **defensive linemen**.
- The defensive linemen should focus on **gap responsibility**.

1. The **defensive linemen** begin in a **3-point stance**, and the coach calls “**Down**” to initiate the drill.
2. The coach then calls “**Go**”, and the defensive linemen engage the offensive linemen while focusing on maintaining their assigned gap.
3. If the offensive linemen try to push into the gap, the defensive linemen must use their **hands and leverage** to fight across and control the gap.
4. The coach blows the whistle once the drill has been completed and the defensive linemen have **controlled their gap**.

# PASS RUSH EXPLOSION

- **PURPOSE:**

This drill helps defensive linemen develop their **initial pass rush explosion** by simulating the start of a pass rush and working on quick foot movement.

- **COACHING TIPS:**

- Focus on the **explosive first step** to simulate the start of a pass rush.
- The **hand strike** should come immediately after the first step to gain separation from the blocker.
- Emphasize **good footwork** to maintain balance and positioning during the rush.



# Execution

## SETUP:

- The **defensive lineman** begins in a **3-point stance**, facing a **pass-blocking dummy** or offensive lineman.
- The coach should be positioned near the offensive lineman to call the drill.

1. The **defensive lineman** starts in their **3-point stance**.
2. The coach calls “**Down**”, and the player takes a **quick, explosive first step** off the line.
3. The player uses a **pass rush move** (bull rush, swim, rip) to get around the blocker or engage with the dummy.
4. The coach calls “**Stop**”, and the player resets for the next repetition.
5. Repeat the drill several times to work on **quick burst** and **pass rush technique**.