



2020 SPECIAL CLINIC ISSUE OF THE POINT AFTER II

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Executive Director, Dan Brunner

In response to the cancellation of our “Annual Gathering in Madison,” the WFCa has put together this Special Clinic Edition Manual. Many thanks go to *The Point After II* Editor, Tom Swittel, and WFCa Executive Assistant, Charna Kelsey for putting this manual together.

The latest WFCa event to fall victim to the Covid pandemic is the All-Star Games and banquet. These events are a massive undertaking, headed by chairman, Doug Sarver. The closing of college campuses made it logistically impossible to hold the games. The games will resume in July of 2021. As we go forward in these unprecedented times, the WFCa is committed to working with the WIAA to establish guidelines for the safe return of football this Fall. President, John Hoch, has formed a committee, including Region Reps from around the State, along with WIAA Deputy Director, Wade Labecki to work on guidelines for safe practices for the return of football. We will provide those guidelines as soon as they are established. The WFCa has always been proactive in establishing best practices for football coaches and their players. I trust how we handle this challenge will be no different. Personally, I can't wait for the return of football!



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Editor, Director of Communications and Corporate Sponsors, Tom Swittel

Welcome to this very special edition of *The Point After II*. The purpose of The Special Clinic Issue is to highlight speakers and college coaching staffs that did not have the opportunity to present at April's cancelled WFCAs Clinic. We are also taking this opportunity to highlight our Corporate Sponsors and Vendors. Our Corporate Sponsors and Vendors are very important to the WFCAs. Their support helps us put on the many events and programs that mark the WFCAs calendar. We want our speakers, Corporate Sponsors, and Vendors to know how much we missed seeing them in April. Please remember our Corporate Sponsors and Vendors as you plan and purchase items for the upcoming season. We also want our membership to get a dose of football during this most difficult time.

Along that same theme, I'd like to take this opportunity to announce a new WFCAs venture, WFCAs Zoom Clinics. The WFCAs will be running four Zoom Football Clinics beginning June 4. The other dates of the WFCAs Zoom Clinics are June 18, July 9 and July 23. The WFCAs Zoom Football Clinics will be hosted by Drew Ambrose, Offensive Coordinator at Franklin High School.

After the Clinic was cancelled, the WFCAs Executive Board discussed how we could give our members a "clinic like" experience to replace what was missed. The ideas of a podcast and virtual clinics were discussed. Well, Drew Ambrose beat us to the punch. Drew has held his own weekly Zoom Clinics since the beginning of April. Using the Franklin School District Zoom account, Drew has accommodated up to 100 coaches every Clinic. He has had an outstanding lineup of coaches present, both high school and college coaches. Up to 10 coaches talk per Clinic in 15 - minute sessions. So, instead of re-inventing the wheel, we asked Drew if he would simply continue doing what he has been doing and put his Clinics under the WFCAs banner.

The WFCAs Zoom Clinics are being sponsored by WFCAs Corporate Sponsor, BSN. Drew will be using BSN's Zoom account, which will increase participation for coaches from 100 to 300. There will also be a presenting Vendor every Clinic. The Vendor's for this summer's WFCAs Zoom Clinics will be: Hadar Athletic, Summit Commercial Fitness, Pro Com Headsets, and the Army National Guard. All WFCAs Zoom Clinics will be available on the WFCAs website after completion of the live Clinic event. Please mark your calendars now and participate in the WFCAs Zoom Clinics. Information on how to access the WFCAs Zoom Clinics will be listed on the WFCAs website.

Finally, I would like to mention that the WFCAs has tentatively rescheduled the WFCAs Combine for July 16. Running of the Combine depends, of course, on what will be currently happening with the Coronavirus pandemic. If we are able, the WFCAs Combine will be held at Hartland Arrowhead High School on July 16, from 4:00 – 8:00 pm. The Combine will be limited to 200 participants. All Combine participants must also purchase a WFCAs Player Profile along with the Combine. The WFCAs Player Profile is a key tool that can help and enhance a player's college recruitment. The cost to attend the Combine and get a WFCAs Player Profile is \$170. We are pleased to announce



Brad Arnett and NX Level will once again be running the Combine events. Combine sign up will begin in late June. Notice of Combine sign up will be sent via email and listed on the WFCAs website.

Please enjoy The Special Clinic Issue. Also, please be sure to connect with your players. Studies are showing these uncertain times are really having a negative effect on young people. Your encouragement and leadership will go a long way in helping your players get through this very difficult time.

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-- Dan Reeves

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Wisconsin Football Foundation Update 2019 – 2020

Secretary-Treasurer, Wisconsin Chapter of the National Football Foundation, Patty Chryst

For 26 years, the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Football Foundation (NFF) has honored their WFF State Scholar-Athlete “TEAM” each spring. Due to the pandemic, the Chapter could not host a recognition event this year, so a revised plan was created for how resources might be best allocated. The decision was made to award \$500.00 this year to each of the 11 members on the “TEAM.” The tradition was continued to award 3 “named” scholarships which have been made available to the Chapter by the following benefactors: The All-Pro Lineman Camp, The National Football Foundation, and the George H. Chryst Memorial Fund. The Chapter will fund the other 8 scholarships.

Organizationally, our Chapter is indebted to Todd Kuckkahn for his willingness to serve as President for many years. We are very fortunate to be able to report that Al Minnaert, an educator and former high school football coach, has agreed to transition into serving as Chapter President. Todd will continue to be involved as much as possible. Al is currently on faculty at Edgewood High School in Madison, and has been active in the WFCAs and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Since his retirement from football coaching in Nov. of 2018, he has been part of a team that broadcasts area high school games. Al was “Master of Ceremonies” for last year’s annual gathering, which was highlighted by the heartfelt remarks made by our guest speaker, Scott Tolzien, a NFF National Scholar Athlete in 2010.

WFF SCHOLAR – ATHLETE PROGRAM FOR THE 2019 FOOTBALL SEASON

- 66 nomination packets were submitted and 4 schools participated in the program for the 1st time, which results in a total of 419 Wisconsin high schools that have submitted honorees over the years.
- Of the 66 students, 2 of the nominees played 8 man football; 5 played on co-op teams, and 1 nominee played on an 8 man co-op team.
- The combined GPA for the 66 nominees is an impressive 3.8 GPA.
- With the addition of this year’s scholarship nominees, the Chapter has now honored 2,097 Wisconsin high school seniors over the course of the 27 seasons from 1993–2019. Including this year’s scholarships, the Chapter has awarded \$80,000 through its Scholar-Athlete program. Every nominated student receives a personalized plaque, and the Chapter also provides a nameplate for each school’s institutional plaque to honor each year’s nominee.

Our website provides additional info: wisconsinfootballfoundation.org

THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER’S CONNECTIONS TO THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION.....

There are currently 120 NFF Chapters in 47 states. Our Chapter is the only one in the State of Wisconsin. Nationwide over 5,000 high schools, representing 500,000 high school players, have the opportunity to participate in more than 1,000 annual events sponsored by the NFF for high school students. It is estimated that NFF Chapters award \$1 million each year to high school scholar-athletes.

NFF NATIONAL SCHOLAR-ATHLETE PROGRAM

Since 1959, through the NFF National Scholar-Athlete program, eligible seniors in college have been selected to be honored at the Annual Awards Dinner, which is held each December in New York City. These NFF National Scholar-Athletes each receive a post-graduate scholarship, currently in the amount of \$18,000, and the Campbell Trophy award winner receives a \$25,000 grant for post-graduate studies. The Campbell Trophy is considered to be the “Heisman Trophy” of academic awards. The WFF website lists Badger players selected for this high honor.

CAMPBELL TROPHY NOMINEES

Each year, colleges and universities, at all levels of play, are invited to submit one student athlete to the NFF as their Campbell Trophy honoree. In 2007, the NFF decided to launch the Hampshire Honor Society because it created a platform to recognize the large pool of exceptional nominees that were submitted each year for Campbell Trophy consideration.

Since 2017, each Campbell Trophy nominee is eligible to attend the Campbell Trophy Summit, which is held at Stanford University. This annual event has become a powerful force for connecting the attendees with

some of the nation’s top CEOs and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, who were mentored by the late Bill Campbell, for whom the award is named.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION HAMPSHIRE HONOR SOCIETY

Colleges and Universities nationwide, at all levels, have the opportunity to nominate seniors who meet the following criteria:

- have a cumulative 3.2 GPA for their collegiate career;
- have been a starter or significant contributor to their team throughout their final season of play.. (Note: Grad players who have remaining eligibility but will not return to collegiate play (NFL draft or retired from FB, may also be nominated)
- On April 15, 2020, 1,471 players from 370 colleges & universities were named to the Hampshire Honor Society. This number includes schools from the Football Bowl Subdivision, Division II, Division III and the NAIA. 21 names were submitted by Wisconsin institutions. It is interesting to note that 17 of those named are graduates of Wisconsin high schools, and the remaining 7 are from out of state. Our website has the complete list of these honorees.

BARRY ALVAREZ NAMED TO THE NFF BOARD OF DIRECTORS & THE NFF TEAM OF EXCELLENCE

Barry Alvarez was named to the Board of Directors for the NFF in 2019. The Board includes corporate CEOs, current & former Athletic Directors, Conference Commissioners, national broadcasters, members of the College Football Hall of Fame, and other influential figures in football today.

The NFF named a “Team of Excellence” as part of their observance in 2019 of the 150th anniversary of college football. This team highlights all current NFF Board members who played football and have gone on to success in life. NFF Chair Archie Manning was named on 10/8/2019 as the Honorary Captain. A total of 37 were named to the team. Barry Alvarez was selected as a linebacker from Nebraska and also named as 1 of 4 “Honorary Coaches.”

JOE THOMAS INDUCTED INTO THE NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

The Wisconsin Chapter sponsored a half-page ad in the 62nd NFF Annual Awards Dinner Program to congratulate JOE THOMAS on his selection into the College Football Hall of Fame (CFHOF). The dinner was held Dec. 10, 2019 at the New York Hilton Midtown. He is the 10th Badger player to be inducted into the CFHOF.

There was also an “on campus” salute honoring Joe Thomas at the half-time of the October 12, 2019 Homecoming game, when the Badgers hosted Michigan State. Steve Hatchell, the President & CEO of the National Football Foundation stated: “As an Outland Trophy winner and NFF Scholar-Athlete, his strong collegiate record places him among the best the game has ever seen. We are thrilled to honor him at Camp Randall.” Kudos to our hardworking Scholarship Committee! Their dedicated efforts have resulted in a high level of respect for their selections each year. Some notable collegiate achievements by WFF honorees include:

- **Max Scharping Green Bay Southwest’s WFF honoree in 2013**, played collegiately at Northern Illinois University, was named to the NFF’s Hampshire Honor Society, and was then one of 16 chosen as a NFF National Scholar-Athlete in 2018. He was honored in New York City...along with UW-Madison’s D’Cota Dixon, who had also been selected to receive this notable honor that same year.
- **Nate Stanley, Menomonie’s honoree in 2015**, played at the University of Iowa, where he was Team Capt. for 3 years, earned the Hayden Frey Award for leadership & dedication and was 3X Academic All Big Ten.
- **Tyler Johnson, Menasha’s WFF honoree in 2014**, was one of two Hampshire Honor Society nominees from UW-Madison in 2020. Tyler earned All Big 10 recognition 2X majoring in Microbiology & Biology.



Wisconsin Football Foundation Football Season of 2019 SCHOLAR ATHLETE "TEAM"

Dominic Backes – Sun Prairie H.S.	Wisconsin Chapter Award
Davis Barthen – Menomonie H.S.	George H. Chryst Memorial Award
Henry Basala – Pacelli Catholic H.S.	All-Pro Lineman Camp Award
Will Brazgel Lake – Country Lutheran H.S.	WI Chapter Award
Jebediah Frey – Waunakee H.S.	National FB Foundation Award
Cayden Milz – Black Hawk-Warren IL HS Co-op	WI Chapter Award
Riley Nowakowski – Marquette University H.S.	WI Chapter Award
<i>(Wisconsin's Representative on the National Football Foundation Team of Distinction)</i>	
Isaiah Place – Lancaster H.S.	WI Chapter Award
Carson Richardson – Fall River- Rio H.S. Co-op	WI Chapter Award
Dylan Schuster – Greendale H.S.	WI Chapter Award
Brandon Wilde – Palmyra-Eagle H.S.	WI Chapter Award

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WIAA to Implement Computer Formula to Seed Football Playoffs

WIAA Executive Staff Communications, Todd Clark

STEVENS POINT, Wis. – The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association will be rolling out an innovative formula that will automate the seeding process for teams within the groupings for the 2020 Football Playoffs.

The formula—and the computer application to process the data to determine the seeds—was developed with collaboration and review of the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association throughout the conceptualization process.

The intent of the seeding component is not to match how the coaches seeded, but instead, to assign the most accurate depiction of a team's strength within groupings using a unique enhanced derivative of the commonly used RPI formula. In addition, based on insights from the membership of WFCOA, other subjective factors typically shared at the coaches' seed meetings were attempted to be given value within the formula.

With the greatest accuracy of actual tournament game outcomes as the metric targeted, numerous test runs of various versions of the formula were applied to the data collected in the 2018 and 2019 football database. The data was then compared to the actual results of the playoff games for both those seasons.

The results for each of the test runs were also compared to the seeds coaches issued for both seasons. Understandably, a comparison between the coaches' and the computer formula is somewhat challenging, because in numerous cases the computer assigned a different seed than the coaches; therefore, the game match-ups never occurred.

However, where applicable, the computer accurately seeded the teams at an 80 percent rate throughout the 2019 tournament. The actual match-ups based on the coaches' seeding yielded a result five percentage points lower (80.1% vs. 75.0%). The accuracy rate of the formula was greater than the actual seeds by a smaller percentage with the 2018 test data (78.6% vs. 78.1%, respectively).

In the existing Rating Percentage Index (RPI) and other data-based evaluations, formulas are comprised of a team's winning percentage, opponents' winning percentage and winning percentage of opponents' opponents. The winning percentage of a team's opponent and opponents' opponents are used to determine a team's strength of schedule to assess a team's complete body of work throughout an entire season.

The factors included in the WIAA seeding formula include:

- Team win percentage
- Opponents' win percentage
- Opponents' opponents win percentage
- Defeated opponents win percentage
- Defeated opponents' opponents win percentage
- Historical conference playoff win percentage (three-year conference teams' playoff win percentage)
- Historical team playoff win percentage (three years)
- Strength of loss game value (determined by value assigned to each game multiplied by all playoff teams' win percentage)
- Computer-generated tiebreaker

Consideration was afforded to head-to-head results versus teams within the groupings, but was dismissed with the understanding partial credit for a victory against a head-to-head opponent is already included in the various other criteria within the formula. It was determined, as with other indexes and evaluation formulas, that the evaluation of a team's entire season's results and strength of schedule is a better indicator of a team's strength than one singular outcome.

The Board of Control voted unanimously to implement automated seeding in 2020 and eliminate the process to appeal for a higher seed at its meeting in January.



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Craig Oehrlein and Rick Nelson

When we look back, we will be able to point to 2020 as the year that changed school and sports forever. The entire learning environment will be modified and with sports, how we interact with athletes will be significantly different and monitored more tightly than ever before. Football provides such important life lessons that we have the responsibility to create and provide the most positive experience to help prepare our youth for their futures.

Up until recently, the conversation for player safety has centered around concussions, and rightfully so. However, with the introduction of the COVID-19 virus, a shift to control the spread of dangerous virus and bacteria has become an absolute must for every team sport. With the sport of football, the transmission rate is already high due to frequent skin-to-skin contact along with cramped locker room conditions. When you combine these elements with what we all know today to be questionable hygiene habits, you get a recipe for heightened potential of infections and disease.

With the start of the season in limbo and parents, coaches, and administrators alike trying to navigate this new world, it is absolutely critical to establish an equipment sanitation process and procedure. For the past 5 football seasons **Pro3 Solutions** has been essential in the protection of our athletes by ensuring that their equipment remains free from virus and bacteria during the season. The CDC currently lists protocols in an attempt to maintain healthy environments including washing hands or using hand sanitizer, showering after the event, and washing uniforms, clothing, and towels daily. Yet the most important thing listed by the CDC is developing a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection and this is where the **Pro3 Solutions** game plan comes in!

As if preparing for practices and winning games is not enough pressure, now comes the anxiety of COVID-19. Understanding how to maneuver through the constant information of what is the right way to protect our athletes from these hidden dangers can be overwhelming. For the transmission of infectious agents to occur, 3 basic elements are required: a source, a susceptible host, and a mode of transmission from the source to the host. The CDC already finds that annually 70% of all football players contract some form of infectious skin condition. With the football environment already ripe to cultivate these types of disease, it is imperative that new methods and precautions are taken.

The **Pro3 Solutions** DISINFECT & PROTECT treatment process will help keep your team healthy and in the game. The recommended strategy is for 2 treatments and requires minimal coordination with coaches. The first step of the process is to DISINFECT using a hospital-grade, EPA registered disinfectant to eliminate any virus (including COVID-19), bacteria, mold or mildew that may be living on the equipment. The way the disinfection process works by penetrating into the fibers and padding of the equipment to eliminate these microorganisms from the inside out. The second step is then to PROTECT the equipment by applying an antimicrobial coating. Disinfection alone will not safeguard your athletes against future transmission. The antimicrobial coating will continue to inhibit the growth of these microorganisms to provide lasting protection.

Check out our ad on page 19 to inquire about more information. Sign up today to get on the schedule as spots are filling up fast. This season more than any before, do not take any chances with your team's health and wellness.

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FACILITIES CLEANING

Guidance for opening up High School Athletics and Activities from the NFHS

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered.
- Students must be encouraged to shower and wash workout clothing immediately upon returning home.

We're With you... WFCA Message to Coaches

The WFCA is in constant contact with the WIAA concerning the Summer contact period, as well as, the Fall football season in light of the Covid-19 pandemic situation. The 3 phase return to normal process requires that we be in phase 3 in order to resume HS football without restrictions on group size gatherings.

The WFCA and the WIAA are in the process of formulating guidelines, in consultation with the WIAA Medical staff. Those guidelines will be distributed to HCs in the State. The WFCA strongly urges coaches to follow the guidelines when things improve to the point that they can conduct their Summer contact days. The way coaches follow the guidelines during their contact days **will demonstrate our priority to protect players and coaches** thereby encouraging our government representatives to allow the resumption of HS football in the Fall, when school resumes.

At the present time, you are not allowed to conduct any football instruction sessions with your team. You are encouraged to keep in contact and conduct team building exercises with them. They need your leadership during this crisis more than ever.

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On Task, On Time, On a Mission!

**By Todd Hoffner, Head Football Coach
Minnesota State University, Mankato**

What an honor to write an article for *The Point After II*. I have fond memories of my 15 years in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. Spending 8 years under the guidance of John Meich at UW-Stevens Point and 7 years as the Head Football Coach at UW-Eau Claire. I have met many of my close friends while coaching in the WIAC (Best DIII Conference in the Nation) and I hold the league in high regard.

Through the years, I have learned that program values are vital to a teams' success. Making decisions that are in the best interest of our program mission, team goals and chemistry are of the utmost importance in building champions. Having a backbone in today's society is all you need in establishing a winning culture.

Success and Failure are a direct by-product of leadership, vision and standards of excellence. Our players' interactions with our coaches creates a mind-set that fulfills our purpose. Football is not about the Xs and Os, it's about the Jimmys and the Joes creating a unified purpose.

We utilize the acronym I. C.A.R.E. to formulate our values and establish the framework for our players. Our team functions with a chain of reasoning and beliefs that articulate our purpose. Establishing expectations that are challenging, yet achievable. Building our program around our student-athletes mentality. Involving them in the journey that ultimately captures their hearts.

IMAGE: Athletic development is the foundation of enhancing each student-athletes' gift. Establish a reputation of being a strong, physical, fast, quick, powerful and classy program by being devoted to a strength and conditioning regime. Win or Lose others are going to form an opinion of who you are. Perception is reality and providing proof of your image can be controlled by you and your team. Win or Lose shake hands and take it like a man. Leave it better than you found it!

COMMITMENT: See things through! From the beginning to the end, each team has a life cycle that begins the day after you lose your last game or win a state title. From that day forward, set goals with the next team, establish the leaders and push propaganda to feed the purpose of

your next life cycle. You can have the same ultimate goal (win a state title) but break it down to a step by step process (getting better every day) by going 1-0 daily (win the day). Be committed to excellence and fulfill your obligations.

ACCOUNTABLE: Can you be counted on to deliver on what you are saying. Actions speak louder than words. Lead by example, be on time, on task and on a mission by holding others to the same standard. Walk the Talk! Convey to your team that every member is held to a higher standard than the average student or coach. Every program is a direct reflection of the choices made by all parts within the organization. "All In" is not a slogan, it's a standard of operation that can't be jeopardized. 100%! 100% of the time! Expect nothing less than the best from your program members.

RESPECT: Give everyone 100% of your unconditional faith, trust and belief. If it is not reciprocated, it is not your problem. Respect All, Fear None! Show respect for the game, football, officials and those who are trying to help you through the journey. Every team you play deserves your best. Don't ever allow your team to play down to the competition, hold them to your own standards and expectations. Provide examples to your team on respect by cleaning up your sideline, locker room, meeting room and inspire them to help. Extend a hand when you put someone on their back, find your teammates when you have success on the field and encourage others who have failed. Be A First-Class Program!

EXCELLENCE: When establishing standards of excellence, provide some facts about your philosophy as to why running the ball, stopping the run, focusing on points and turnovers are so vital to a team's success and failure. Set performance goals that are difficult and aspire motivation for achievement. Shoot for the moon and if you miss you are still among the stars.

Having been around college football for over 30 years I have come to the realization that football is a game of momentum. The more ways you can assess, develop and strive for momentum through your values, the more likely you are to win. Going 1-0 is our mission!

"Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing!" -- Vince Lombardi



2020 CLINIC VENDOR LINEUP		
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Program Development Ideas to Improve Your Team's Culture

**Tim Racki, Head Football Coach
Nazareth Academy HS, La Grange Park, IL**

The 2020 football season will be my 22nd year as a head high school football coach. I've been blessed my entire head coaching career to be surrounded by great players and coaches who share the same passion as I do for the game of football. This has resulted in many victories on the field. At

two different schools we have made a total of nine state title game appearances..... 7 state titles and 2 runner up finishes. My coaching philosophy towards time spent with Xs and Os vs. program development has evolved dramatically.

As coaches we devote a tremendous amount of time into developing and improving our schemes when it comes to the three phases of offense, defense and special teams. Searching for that perfect play action pass, crucial 3rd down blitz or unstoppable fake punt never ends. We attend clinics, visit colleges, watch hours of tape and scour the internet in order to put our players in the best position to succeed playing the game of football. We are fiercely competitive and want to be the last coach standing at the white board. This passion is normal. This passion is a huge reason why we chose to coach football.... and that's ok. However, devoting just as much time into your program's culture and leadership development is the key to long term success. "Culture Trumps Scheme" is not just a cool cliché..... It's very much true.

I will share with you program development ideas that I have implemented with great success within my program over the past twenty-two years.

1. **JERSEY CEREMONY:** One of the many events of the Nazareth Academy football leadership program is the "Jersey Presentation". It is an opportunity for a significant guardian i.e. father, mother, grandparent, coach... to present the game jersey to the player along with words of love and admiration. During the presentation we are asking the guardian to do three things: tell the player that you are proud of him, share a unique quality that you admire in him, and lastly that you love him. This ceremony takes place the weekend prior to the first game of the season.
2. **MOTHER/GUARDIAN APPRECIATION CEREMONY:** The varsity mother appreciation ceremony calls for our players to present their mothers' or special guardian with a heartfelt letter of love and appreciation along with a sticker that the player will wear on his helmet. At Nazareth, since we are a private school, our helmet sticker is a small cross that is placed above the front helmet bumper. The cross symbolizes that special bond of love between player and mother/guardian.
3. **CAPTAIN'S CHAIR AWARD:** This award is given annually at our end of the season awards ceremony. The outgoing senior class votes for the top junior(s) who they feel will best lead the team for the following football season. It is very important to note that this is strictly an award voted on by the senior players. No coaches or parents should have any influence on this award whatsoever. Traditionally only one

player has been the recipient of this award. However, after the 2018 season the seniors asked me if it was ok to give this award to two very worthy candidates. I replied, "This is your award to hand down. You can choose to do whatever you want." They decided to give it to the two players. It was a great decision as the two recipients flourished as leaders that following off-season and season. The chair we use has panels with each leader's name, number and year inscribed upon it. You can choose any type of symbol or object that reflects your program's identity.

4. **HAMMER AWARD:** This award goes to the best LEGAL hit in a winning game. We purchase the hammers from a hardware store and our local sporting goods store/trophy-awards shop paints the handle in our school colors and puts a plate on it engraved with the players name, number, score and date of the contest. Important to note that the hit does not have to be an ESPN/NFL Network type highlight hit. With safety concerns and rules that have evolved those days are over. Our Hammer Award has gone to many types of great plays such as.... great stalk block by a WR, pancake block by an offensive lineman, punishing run by a ball carrier, great special teams block, punt/field goal block, ect...
5. **PRACTICE PLAYER OF THE WEEK AWARD:** This is a great opportunity for you to recognize and commend the bottom 1/3 of your roster. Those players that do not see much if any game time reps. These players are of critical importance as they serve as "scout" team or "look squad" players during the week prepping your offense defense and special teams units for Friday night. We award these players after each victory with a t-shirt and a commemorative speech. Though it may seem small this award goes a long way in creating a competitive practice environment. More importantly, it builds self esteem and confidence into those players that do not see much game action.
6. **JUNIOR/UNDERCLASSMEN TRIBUTE SPEECHES TO THE SENIORS:** We conduct these either on the final week of the season or first week of the playoffs (Thursday if Friday night game, Friday if Saturday game). Each underclassman is given the following and asked to speak on one of them.
 - THANK THE SENIORS AS A GROUP WITH GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THIS PAST SEASON.
 - SHARE A MEMORY OF SOMETHING A SENIOR DID OR SAID THAT HAS HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR FOOTBALL LIFE, SOCIAL LIFE, FAMILY LIFE OR SCHOOL LIFE.
 - SHARE WITH THE TEAM AN EXAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM A SENIOR OR THE SENIORS AS A WHOLE FROM THIS PAST SEASON
 - WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER MOST ABOUT A PARTICULAR SENIOR OR THE SENIORS AS A WHOLE
 - SHARE A FUNNY MOMENT OR MEMORY ABOUT A SENIOR OR THE SENIOR GROUP THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER WITH A SMILE.
7. **OVERNIGHT TEAM RETREAT CAMP:** No cell phones. Leadership meetings, guest speaker, team building activities, softball, tug of war, motivational videos. I have found this to be a huge component in order to develop that team chemistry we are all seeking in order to



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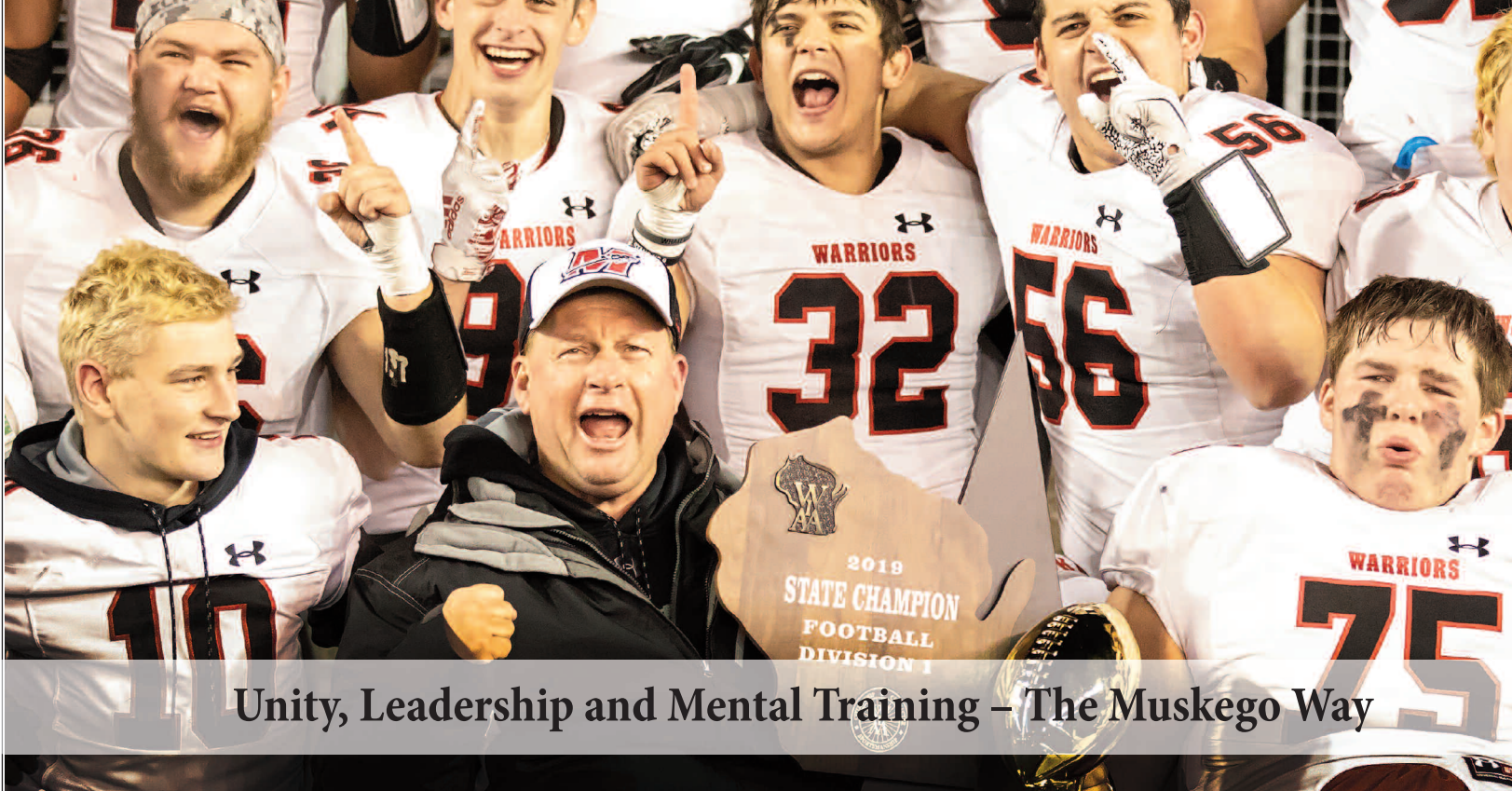


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Unity, Leadership and Mental Training – The Muskego Way

**By Ken Krause, Head Coach
Tyler Kunick, & Ryan Lucchesi, Assistant Coaches
Muskego High School**

First and foremost, it is a great honor to represent Muskego High School by contributing to *The Point After II*. As coaches, we have benefited from this program's existence for a number of years. The WFCA deserves a great deal of credit for their conscious effort to develop the game within the state of Wisconsin. This is a great opportunity to represent Muskego High School. We have a great coaching staff at Muskego all around. Our staff camaraderie and consistency has been a huge pillar of our success. The alignment between our coaching staff at every level, school administration, youth program and a community have been essential to our success. We are ecstatic about the opportunity and hope you find some information of value.

When I took over the Muskego High School Football Program 12 years ago I wanted to start a leadership council. The year before I took over Muskego finished the season with 10 juniors. I decided to have a leadership council my first year with the 10 returning juniors. We met 8 times and focused on how to become a better leader. When I finished the 8 week course I had the players fill out a survey about what they learned, liked, etc. What really shocked me was the number one comment the players wrote about how this was the first time they really got to know their teammates. It hit me that besides teaching leadership I had to come up with ways to build unity among the players. One way to build unity the players decided, was to get together and attend each others' sporting events. It was the players' job to lead this. Players would pick one game, match, etc., of each sport their fellow football players were involved in and they would attend as a team. To make it fun, each player would bring 2 bucks and they would order pizza and meet for 30 minutes as a team ahead of the sporting event and then head out together to cheer on their teammates in other sports.

In the first two years I was head coach only seniors were on the leadership council. In those two years each senior group had a hard time accepting underclassmen starting over seniors. The third year I coached the junior class had significantly more talent so we needed to break down this barrier. So we made a change to the leadership council. It was open to all juniors and seniors. Besides working on leadership skills we made the juniors and seniors sit in groups together during the meetings and force them to develop relationships with each other. We had the tough conversations of, "What is the goal on Friday night...win or just play the

seniors?" Fortunately, through our leadership discussions they grew to realize that the best players on the field needed to play.

In year 5 we had some very talented sophomores. Again, we realized we needed to develop relationships among all three grades. This year we invited sophomores on the leadership council. Not only did we work on our leadership curriculum, but worked on developing unity among all three grades. We also pushed for the players to hang out with players from different grades. Our players started to organize team activities and seniors got to know who the sophomores were well before football season started.

In year 8 we felt we needed all our players (9-12) to have an opportunity to become better leaders and better people (character). We did some research and developed a Leadership class at our high school. Besides our football players taking this class we felt the entire school could benefit from a class like this. We saw a huge bump in our school culture, behavior in our building, and state championships starting to happen at our school in sports.

The current state of our leadership council is outstanding. It is open to any 10-12 grader. Last year 40 of our 100 tenth through twelfth graders were on it. Our meetings last 45 minutes. The first 20 minutes we have the players sit in a big circle. We then put them in groups of 3. Usually it is one senior, one junior and one sophomore. The players tell each other their first and last name and something about themselves. Then the group of 3 will tell the rest of the players who their group members are. We make it into a fun competition to see which player can learn everyone's first and last name in the group 1st. The past few years the second 20 minutes we will read an article written by Jeff Jannsen called *Your Captains Need To Do These 12 Things Today*. Each leadership meeting we read 2/3 of the 12 points and discuss them in our mini groups of 3 and then report back to the group. We mix up the groups again when we do this segment (establishing relationships with other players on the team). The last 5 minutes is a wrap up of what we learned, etc.



A full-page photograph of a Marine in combat. The Marine is wearing desert camouflage uniforms and a tactical vest, holding an M4-style rifle. They are in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose, suggesting movement or an advance. The background is blurred, showing other soldiers and a dusty environment. The text "ANYONE CAN SEE TYRANNY. MARINES ADVANCE TO STOP IT." is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

ANYONE CAN SEE TYRANNY. MARINES ADVANCE TO STOP IT.



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In addition to the work of the leadership council, two years ago, starting in the fall of 2018, we began running a training session that we call “mental training”. Some may call this leadership training, but we purposefully call it mental training because that is what we look at it as. Just as we go to the weight room to train our bodies, we show up once a week for mental training, to purposefully train our brains to think and react the way we want them to. If you have listened to the “Moment with Milt” videos with Milt Lowder, PhD, from Clemson University, he shares a statistic that on average each of us has 50,000-70,000 thoughts a day, and 70% of those thoughts are negative. This statistic is particularly striking because it shows the battle we are up against when we as coaches ask our players to stay positive and play with confidence. Hence, again, why we believe so strongly in our mental training process.

Mental training is something that we do year round. What each session looks like depends on the season but there are some staples in place regardless of the time of year. For one, it is always voluntary. There is absolutely more encouragement placed on player attendance during the season, but it is a choice, players have to want to be there. Secondly, whatever time we say the session starts at is the time it starts at. The door locks at that exact time and there are no exceptions for who gets let in after the door has closed. This creates an accountability system and sets the standard. It is important to note though, that we will never yell at a player if he is late or does not show up. The locked door already sends a clear message. Yelling and belittling a player after the fact only destroys the relationship, it does not make him more accountable. If there is a player, for example a captain, who is not present, there is absolutely a follow-up conversation but it is a check-in. Is he okay? Did something come up? Does he need something from us? Again, the purpose of mental training is to empower players to be in control of their own mind, but in order to do that they have to want to be there. If we make it something they feel like they “have to” be at then we have already defeated the purpose of the training.

The third staple of every mental training session is breathing. Every session we have starts with an intentional mindful breathing moment. Sometimes this is ten minutes, sometimes it is one, it depends on the amount of time that session allows. You can use any number of apps or on-line videos for this time but we have experienced success with the Calm app. Our players have bought into this time because we also teach them the brain science behind how our bodies respond to stress so they understand the “why” behind learning how to control our breathing. There are many things we could point to as proof that these moments have paid off for us on the field, but nothing rings more true than when our All-State tackle puts a quote in the paper after a tough 17-10 win in a level 3 game that says, “Mental training is a big part of the game...We always say, ‘Breathe, be in the moment.’ That really helps during times like these.”

The fourth and final staple that we believe makes our mental training successful is allowing the conversation to be player dominated. Yes, there are times we as coaches will interject some of our thoughts, but for the most part we actively work to resist that temptation in order to allow our players to control the majority of the speaking time. The reason is because, again, mental training is about the players learning how to control their own thoughts. They can only do that if they are allowed to talk through those thoughts. If we as coaches dominate the conversation and talk at them, there is no ownership. So instead, we will give them a short article or a short video, followed by some guiding questions, and then allow them to talk among themselves in the room to make sense of it.

Leadership Council, the onset of a Mental Training program, and the continuation of a Leadership class have brought us to where we are today. The last three years at Muskego we have seen a dramatic shift in our culture. The primary reason for this shift is player-led leadership and accountability. The two aspects to be discussed as we summarize where we are today are the process to “Build Your House” and the “Power of Positive Language.”

The “Build Your House” mind-set is something that is near and dear for us. The motivation for this idea came from a book by Joshua Medcalf titled *Chop Wood, Carry Water*. This was the first book that we read as a full group when we installed our Mental Training program. One of the first chapters is titled “Building Your House” and this is a concept that we have adopted for our program. This philosophy is essentially laying out

core principles that are going to be the pillars of your house. House = program. These conversations are all player lead. They have a large group discussion about what traits they want our team to be defined by. In 2018, our team came up with the following pillars: 100% of 100% (means giving 100% effort 100% of the time in all the controllable phases), Passion, Pick each other up, Take ownership, and Communicate. This past year in 2019 our group came up with the following pillars of our house: Love, Communicate, Adversity = Opportunity, Consistency, and Trust. The pillars are then set in stone and reinforced throughout the year by coaches and players alike. These pillars are the foundation of who we are. You will see them mentioned on film notes and hear them reiterated consistently on a daily basis at practice.



The second component that has drastically changed our program over the last few seasons is the Power of Positive language. This is a deliberate intention on telling the young men in our program what TO DO instead of what NOT TO DO. Many of us as student-athletes have memories of coaches berating us with rhetorical questions such as, “Why are you doing that?,” “Where are you going?,” “How could you do that?,” and “What are we doing” among many others. At the end of the day, was that type of communication ever effective? Did you ever learn what you have to do? Or were you simply reinforced on what not to do. We have placed a maximum intent on clearly and relentlessly relaying what we will do. Some of the most common language in our program involves “we will”. When addressing a defensive end who has a slow get off and thus does not strike their target we will correct with a, “We will execute a championship get off & strike what is in front of us.” It’s not a message of, “We can’t be this slow off the ball.” It is subtle, but it is powerful. This practice has been supremely effective in winning the minds of our young men. We have created and built confidence through our language. This takes deliberate practice. It will not happen overnight. There are times when, myself as a coach, and other coaches who make notes on our Hudl film, will have to retype notes to make sure that the message is written in a language that we desire. There is absurd research data in the world on the amount of negative thoughts we humans have on a daily basis. This is a strategic and structured practice to help offset these thoughts to fill the minds of our young people with confidence building thoughts. We believe this has created a fundamental difference in our ability to play at a high level in high pressure situations.

The growth over the last three seasons has been special to be a part of. We have become more intentional about building relationships across grade levels as was previously mentioned. However, what is the biggest difference is the impact our students continue to make on the school as a whole and community. We have created a deliberate intent on being mission driven instead of goal driven. Spreading a wave of positive energy throughout the hallways of our school building, showing love to other athletic and club programs, and making the community a better place is the larger part of living our mission. We fully intend to attack this mission every day with relentless effort and fanatical enthusiasm.

Again, thank you to the WFCA for this great opportunity to write for *The Point After II* magazine. We have an incredible coaches association that has helped add value to all of us coaches throughout the state. If you are ever willing to connect, our doors are always open at Muskego.

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Practical Ideas for Building a Championship Level Program From the Freshmen Level and Up

By Tom Yashinsky, Head Coach
and Josh Lichty, Head Freshmen Coach
Onalaska High School

It was an honor to be asked to speak at the WFCA clinic this year. Unfortunately the clinic didn't happen with everything that has gone on recently, but we look hope-

fully forward, to presenting live in 2021. We will be giving you the short version of our clinic presentation via this article. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Tom Yashinsky, Head Coach:

Here at Onalaska, we are lucky to have the best freshmen coach in the state. Josh Lichty is the foundation of any success we have had over the past eight seasons. He does an amazing job getting kids out for football, giving them a positive experience, and keeping them in the program. Anytime he steps foot in the high school, kids light up to see him. Also, Coach Lichty is the person who holds me accountable to the little things in our program. He is constantly reminding me about the things I sometimes overlook when I'm looking at the big picture. He is completely grounded in doing what's best for our kids and has one of the biggest hearts for coaching of anyone I have been around. Our program would not be where it is without him. In this article I will share the things we do at the varsity level to build up our program and coach Lichty will share the things he does at the freshmen level to get kids out, and retain them for the long haul. Obviously, in written format, it will be missing some of the details we could go into deeper in an hour-long presentation, but hopefully it will give you enough to have you come see us next year at the clinic.

As a head coach, I think one of the most important parts of building a successful program is getting buy-in from everyone involved. That includes getting buy-in from the parents. I believe in doing this by getting them involved in the process. If you give parents a role in your program that is defined, they are less likely to try to create their own role in the program in a way that you don't want them to be involved. Here are a few ways that we involve the families in our program.

- 1. Mom's Breakfast** – The Saturday after our scrimmage, we invite all moms or female figures in our players' lives in for a breakfast. The players make pancakes and parfaits, and serve them for the women. We then give them a mini clinic in the form of a power point that helps explain the game of football and what they are seeing on game days on the field. We finish with a Q & A session that allows them to ask any questions they may have. I feel that by having them in, they get more comfortable with the game and feel better about allowing their son to play. In this day and age where football is attacked on the topic of safety, we can show them the ways we are making the game safer to ease their fears (This idea was modified from a similar idea Jed Kennedy used at his stops along the way).
- 2. Dad's night in the locker room** – We invite the dads or positive male figures into the locker room for pregame and onto the field for warm ups for the last home game of the season. They get to hear the pregame speech. Also the senior father or father figures then get to send their son through the tunnel for senior night. It is a special night and the men really appreciate it (I also stole this idea from Jed Kennedy).
- 3. Tailgate party for community members with special needs** – Each year on the Sunday the week before the Super Bowl, we hold a tailgate party for community members with special needs. We invite any age to come out and celebrate football with our football family including players, coaches, and their families. Local businesses have loved sup-

porting the event through food donations or door prizes, but we put a lot of it on our parents. We ask them to bring a dish to pass. We have our kids then do all of the leg work in terms of making our guests feel at home and have a great time. One of the great parts of this event is being able to see the families watch their sons serve others. I think it drives home the intention of our program to create young men who are successful long after the Friday night lights dim (This idea was adapted from a similar event at Menomonie High School).

Another aspect of our program I think is important is our desire to create servant leaders and men of character.

- 1. Leadership Class** – I have developed a leadership curriculum that I do with our players. I have an 8 class curriculum for both the freshmen, and then the upper classmen. I do this class during our resource period starting second semester for 8 weeks. (We alternate which group I meet with over a 16 week period so I see each group every other week) I created the curriculum by identifying eight characteristics or skills that I wanted our kids to develop in terms of character or leadership. I then developed 25 minute lessons that encompass what I thought it was important for them to learn about that topic. They have a packet that they fill out as we go to help them develop answers and remember the main points. The class, in my opinion, has been a game changer in getting our kids to think about how everything we are trying to teach them relates to life outside of football, and how everything outside of football can impact football. I want to deliver this class to every single player in our program. I don't pick specific kids because at the end of this journey, I want every kid to have developed as a man, not just my 12-15 best leaders.
- 2. Hold doors on game day** – This is a simple one, but every Friday our varsity players hold the doors open for our student body as they get off the bus. We started this 3 years ago and at first, I had to pull teeth to get kids to do it. At this point, they do it on their own, and the amazing thing is the kids you think would never do it, are the first ones there to do it. The kid that is normally getting kicked out of class for being a clown is the first one there and smiling while doing it. It doesn't take an ounce of talent to hold a door open and say good morning to a classmate.
- 3. Reading at the elementary schools** – Every year during homecoming we send our varsity guys to the elementary schools to read to the students. The teachers love it because they get to see their former students (and don't have to plan a lesson that hour.) Some players are just out on the playground playing with the kids, others read or do art projects. We get tons of pictures sent to us or posted on the district facebook page. Our players' parents then get to see their son being a role model for the younger kids.

TEAM BUILDING:

We also do a few things to try and build up our cohesiveness as a team.

- 1. Team camping trip** – We take the kids to a large group campsite at Perrot State Park in Trempealeau, WI. They bring their own tents, food, and everything they need for a night in the woods. The underclassmen can hang with the upperclassmen whenever they want, but they get to pick their own groups for campsites and tents. We sit around the campfire, eat a bunch of food and have a good time. Towards the end of the night though, we get serious with them and ask them some questions that make them think a little bit. We ask them what they see in the season in front of them. We ask them how they are going to be a good teammate. We challenge them to think deeper than just surface level things. It's a great experience where kids don't have to look cool in front of anyone else, it's just them, their teammates, and the great outdoors. It provides a fun opportunity for some of them to get away from their comfort zone, phones, and the business of life, and just be high school kids.

2. **Senior Bonfire** – I have the seniors over to my house the night before our scrimmage. We have a bonfire and talk about what will make or break the season. We have some fun and they see how many linemen can fit on my trampoline or my kids swing set before it will break, but then we also get serious with them. It's a way to get guys on the same page and help them to understand how much you care about them on a level deeper than just football.

ACKNOWLEDGING THEM AS INDIVIDUALS:

1. **Write them individual letters** – At the end of each season I write a form letter to our team. I tell them what I was proud of the team for that season. It usually is about a page long. On the backside, I write a note to every player in 10th-12th grade. I tell them how much I appreciated having them out. I ask our freshmen coaches to do the same for their players. Obviously the seniors often will get a little longer note as I tell them how much it meant to be able to coach them the past four years.
2. **Senior Coins** – All players leaving our program get a coin (military style challenge coin.) This coin has their name on it. If they present that coin at the gate, they get in free to any game as long as I am head coach, and they can come watch the game from the sideline. I did this instead of all of the awards we used to give out at the end of the year. I got frustrated with how many awards we were giving out and how stressful it was to pick awards that created tension by parents and players on a night that should be celebrated. We still give out three awards, but they are voted on and presented by the team. Offensive Player of the year, Defensive player of the year, and Mr. Football (Senior that exemplifies what Onalaska Football is all about.)
3. **College players' pictures on the weight room wall** - Any player that leaves our program and plays college football will get a photo poster up on our wall in the weight room. It includes their headshot along with their high school and college jersey numbers, positions, and size. This happens right after signing with a school and stays up as long as they remain on the team for two or more years. We feel if you can play at least two years, you are worthy of recognition. Often times we will see our younger players admiring our gallery of college players during a workout. We hope this motivates them to follow in their footsteps and put the work in to get there as well.

These are only some of the things we do in our program. I can't wait to share our whole list of ideas next year at the clinic with you. I hope you have pulled something from this article and if you ever have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out.

Josh Lichty – Head Freshman Coach:



Coaching freshman football is a fun experience by the nature of the players that go out for football. You have to find the happy medium of pushing them to be dominant and take on the mindset of high school football, all while nurturing an awkward transition from middle school/junior high academics and athletics. The following are approaches to coaching at

this level that have been successful for our freshman program and seemed to have had an influence on the successes of our varsity as well. A lot of credit for the activities or approach goes to Joe Ehrmann and his book, *In-Side-Out Coaching*, as well as the 3-Dimensional Coaching Framework created by Dr. Jeff Duke.

The major goals of our freshman program are to get players out for football and keep them out, learn the aspects of the game that will be important in coming years, create a physical mentality in the players, and to have fun. There are other aspects we develop, but most fall into these categories.

We need to have big numbers at the freshman level. It helps with depth, practice, scout team, and eventually, increased numbers at the varsity level. The head coach and I bring pizza to the middle school in the spring and talk to potential freshman players. We let them know the expectations and answer any questions to ease their apprehensions of going out. I also coach middle school track in the spring, and along with our strength and conditioning coach who runs a middle school program, we connect with a lot of guys before their freshman year. In fact, our team skips out on one of our freshman practices in the fall to go cheer on the 8th grade team from the stands. This gets them to feel connected to the team before they are even in high school.

When the fall hits, it's all about supporting the athletes and the families in the transition. The first part with any team is to build relationships, and the first part in our approach is to learn their names. Gone are the days of tape on the helmet. Instead, we take videos and screenshots of the guys during summer contact days and camp. I create a spreadsheet that has their names and possible positions to give to my assistant coaches to start to put a name to a face. We might get some new faces out at the start of fall ball, and I also make phone calls to families that I hear might have a kid that can play. By the end of the first week and usually by day three, the staff should know the players in their positional groups and the others as well. That is the first thing coaches need to study, their names. Then they feel valued and a part of the program.

Communication to the families is crucial. They might be new to having high school students and athletes. Our freshman staff divides the roster and makes phone calls home at the halfway point of the season. We talk to their parents/guardians about what is going well, what we are proud of, if there is anything they should be working on, but most importantly, ask the families if they have any questions or concerns for us. I meet most family members before the season at the fall sports meeting and another football parent/family meeting, but this gives an important update check-point and makes a personal connection that families value. It isn't easy for all coaches to do this, but after a few rounds, they get more comfortable and enjoy the feedback from families.

We also pick every kid to be a captain for a game. Coaches choose each week, we say a few words the day before the game, and they get to lead stretching and be out there for the coin toss. The captains for the last game are chosen by the team as part of an EOY survey that shares how they've improved and their thoughts on going out next year. At the EOY football banquet, freshman players are given handwritten thank you cards from our freshman staff along with a letter sharing the highlights of the season. They read these, share them at home, and hopefully reinforce the love they feel from our football program. You never know what a kid is going through and what a simple card from a coach, one of the most critical and influential people in their lives, can truly mean to them.

What I would say is the MOST IMPORTANT thing we do at the freshman level is to make sure every athlete plays in every quarter, not including special teams, regardless of the score. Our coaches carry clipboards with rosters of their position group and we communicate to each other each quarter who needs to get in. It doesn't matter if it is a close game or a blowout, guys need to play, unless they lost playing time because of missed practices or grades/behavior. It is difficult for beginning coaches to abide by this concept I learned from Joe Ehrmann, but it is beneficial because guys take practice more seriously and we develop better players and depth that can be game ready. I know many coaches truly believe in this concept and apply it. Many others find it hard to play athletes that are liabilities because they are more concerned with wins and losses at the freshman level. With a close game in the first half or a game on the line in the last minutes of the 4th quarter, it really challenges your beliefs. Just do it. Forget the freshman score and think how it might improve the varsity score in a couple years. Our freshman program has only lost a couple games in the past five years and many people like to highlight that fact. I

acknowledge it and thank them, but strive to coach in a way that promotes a positive experience and future success for our guys more than the wins.

Another goal of the program is to get freshmen to be physical. Some already have it ingrained in them, where others don't have that natural fire to seek contact. We integrate games and challenges into practice each week that push them to be more physical, aggressive, and learn to grapple and get ticked off in the heat of the moment. Our coaches know to make sure we are grouping by size/ability during these contests as well and making sure that when it is all done, we come together as a team and respect our competition. They love and hate our days of the Octagon of Fun, Full Contact Ring Around the Rosie Races up the hill, and Nose to Nose Anything Goes. We hit the lev sled the first practice and it knocks some of our smaller guys down. By the end of the season, they love the challenge of going 3-for-3 or 5-for-5 on it. It builds toughness, grit, and increases the likelihood of being more physical on the field.

We have also implemented the "Hit Stick" this past season. It is a 5 ft. 2x4 painted black with jagged, white lettering spelling "Hit Stick". We bring it to practice, games, and film. If we see a player lay someone out, pancake a defensive lineman, make a solid, fundamental tackle, and do all of this legally, we stop practice or bring them off the field to sign their name to the stick. Players look to make plays; other guys are excited to bring the stick to them when they come off the field. We even allow them to do this on film if we missed a hit. I will keep the hit stick for their high school career as a reminder of establishing this mentality for their four years of playing.

Our players need to also be involved and develop the fundamental and foundational aspects of high school football from early on. We have put lifting and the weightroom mentality ahead of practice in recent years by including days of lifting instead of one. Our players also break down film and critique their own play along with that of the team. We watch film every day after the game, first they do it on their own and take notes, then we do it together. We intentionally teach them what to look for, how to be constructive and give praise, and how to look for tendencies and notes for future opponents. The freshman need to have strong, solid weeks of intentional, purposeful practices that are efficient and applicable to the upcoming opponent, just like at the varsity level. Lastly, we communicate with the JV and varsity coaches to find out which base plays to run, techniques to teach, and skills to learn. We know that although some drills might be boring, they are still critical and important for them and BORING BUILDS CHAMPIONS.

The final goal of the freshman season is to have fun and find joy. Enjoyment of an activity with the creative freedom in play is one of the biggest motivators in season and reason to come out again the next year. We try to build in fun activities and games into practice to keep things fresh and to alleviate the grind of the season. We also make Fridays after games structured with lifting, film, character/leadership lessons, and then games. These games are inside/outside, involve some sort of physical element, but allow the guys to relive their elementary playground days, build team cohesion, and have fun. The Friday of Homecoming Week, we divide players and have a team dance battle. One practice, we get out the hoses and water bottles and simulate a rainy day practice by blasting them with water during drills and team (we warn their families this is happening to be prepared). The practice after the last game, we still lift, watch film, do a character lesson, and then go out to the field to compete in the Produce Bowl. The Produce Bowl is a game of ultimate football played with a variety of fruits and vegetables I bought earlier in the day. They are chucking bananas, pineapples, tomatoes, grapefruit, and many other random foods, having fun, laughing, and enjoying the last organized football activity of their freshman year. Then they get one last shot at the lev sled after a team breakdown. Some guys don't want to leave the field because it feels bad leaving what they've grown to love and enjoy during the year. It's a pretty good sight for us coaches.

Getting numbers out, creating a physical mindset, establishing fundamentals and routines of football, and having fun and enjoyment are our foundational goals. We have been very successful in the W-L column, but we really down play that statistic. The outcomes we care about are that they had fun, worked hard, increased numbers and success at the varsity level, and to promote character traits and values to help them succeed beyond football. With everything that I care about for our freshman players, I couldn't be more confident and thankful to hand them off to Coach Yashinsky and the staff at the JV and varsity levels who continue to care for and support the players and families in the right way.



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Being Comfortable - Being Uncomfortable

By Matt Dunlap
Luck High School Co-Head Coach

I would like to thank the WFCA and *The Point After II* for taking the time to put together a great resource for all Wisconsin football coaches. I would also like to thank all of the staff at Chippewa Falls High School for the tremendous hospitality that they showed us and Wausau Newman Catholic at the 8-player Championship in the fall; they went above and beyond.

After reflecting on our 2019 championship season, I found myself wondering what put us over the top this year. The easy answer was the fact that we had a great Senior class that were great football players and even better leaders. All of the off-season work that they put in was a huge part of them being able to raise the gold ball and bring to Luck its first ever team state title. We all know that it takes more than just great football players; great players need a system where they can find success. In Luck we pride ourselves in running the spin and playing great defense. Our players have bought into it and our coaches take the time to make sure that we prepare our players to find success. This year we took a lot of time talking about the mental side of the game and our goal as a team was to become comfortable in uncomfortable situations. All portions of our practices had this mantra in mind, and our coaching staff coached the kids up in a way to make sure that they would never feel uncomfortable on a Friday night.

Although we know that what we are doing in practice is in no way reinventing the wheel, what we have been doing to tweak our practices to fit our needs has worked for us.

Football coaches everywhere realize that each year brings unique challenges. Small school coaches can add cobbling together a usable scout team to those challenges. Over the years, our coaching staff has implemented ways to even up the scout team vs. "the ones." A small school varsity starter is going to be comfortable playing against the scout team, so, we have put together some drills to combat this inevitability.

When we run offense, there are times that we will run half lines. This allows us to use fewer players on offense and get the same look at the point of attack. This drill works well when running spread offenses and power running where you aren't pulling the backside guard. It allows your backside offensive players to play on the defensive side of the ball and give the offense a great look from the scout team. This drill has helped us in the past because it allows us to put pressure on the offensive players. They aren't practicing vs a scout athlete, they are practicing against a varsity starter.

Another offensive drill that we do every week is cans. This is where we line up garbage cans or lids in all of the defensive formations we believe we will see 15 yards apart from each other. We will then run every play that is in our game plan Friday night vs every possible front that we can see to ensure that our guys up front know where the defense can be and the backs understand that the location of the hole they are supposed to hit North and South is going to vary depending upon the defensive front. We believe if we show them what they are going to see on Friday night during the practice week, they will be comfortable, and that is the goal of the coaching staff.

When we are on defense we love our "2 unit drill" This allows our scout offense to run a full offense versus two of the three defensive groups. It will group the DL/LB, DL/Sec, and LB/Sec in separated play packages that are chosen to stress the units in very specific ways. This really allows us to ensure that our defense is being sound in their assignments and not just chasing the ball. When our defense is playing off their correct reads during this drill there will be plays run by the offense that will gain a good amount of yards. When these plays are run successfully it gives the scout team the chance to celebrate and have some fun during practice. It also allows the unit that is not in the play to see exactly where they fit in, and what happens when they do not.

Our Thursday night pregame practice starts off with the biggest stress test of the week. While coaching at the All-Star game with Ron Hanestad

from Prairie Farm we picked up a great drill that in Luck we call "The Ronnie". The main purpose of this drill is to dry run offensive, defensive, and special teams plays while constantly subbing different players in and out simulating all types of crazy possibilities. It makes the kids uncomfortable, but they sure do remember some of the crazy things that happen during "The Ronnie."

When I stepped in as Hall of Fame coach, Don Kendzior retired, he told me to surround yourself with great coaches and only worry about the things that you can control. One of the things that I know I can control is making sure when the Luck Cardinals step out on the field on Friday nights, they will be prepared, be comfortable being uncomfortable, and they will play hard-nosed football until the final whistle. The program expects it from its players, and the players have delivered. If anyone has any questions about what the football program in Luck does, please do not hesitate to contact us. We have very few secrets. My email address is matt@lucksd.k12.wi.us



GENERATION

3

GET GAME DAY
PROGRAMS

A collage of various football programs and flyers. Visible titles include "WILDCATS", "WITTENBERG BROWNWOOD", "TIGERS", "MEDFORD", "LAONA WABENO", "REBELS", "Appleton West", "KALAMAZOO", "CALLOPING GHOSTS", "VS HORTONVILLE", and "TERRORS".

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Organization + Communication = SUCCESS in All Endeavors

**By Michael Harris, Head Football Coach
James Madison Memorial High School**

Many thanks to the WFCA for allowing me the opportunity to share my insight and experiences making the transition as a new head coach into an athletic program. I am always impressed with the professionalism and demeanor of our organization and its members. I am truly honored to hold the title of coach with so many of you who value and care for our student-athletes and our great sport.

The transformation of our football program took several steps to implement and is still on a continual path of revision. Here are a few of the steps that we instituted in order to allow us an opportunity to become competitive within our conference.

First, a philosophy needed to be established. Coaches should take a hard look inward to discover why one wants to coach. Undoubtedly, mentors in my life showed compassion and concern for my growth and development. I believe it is our obligation to pass on the core values that were learned from the adults in our lives that were critical to our formative years. When developing my coaching philosophy, I realized that I hold the values of courage, integrity, possessing a positive work ethic, and displaying unconditional love as critical to my successes. I openly share these core values with every person who comes in contact with our program and I explain how they have impacted my life.

Next, there was the need to assess the state of the program. Every program has areas they can improve on. It was vital to assess our weaknesses honestly and accurately. This process involved open dialogue with everyone who was engaged in our program. I began by asking the “leaders” in the program and within the building what they valued about football and what they envisioned for our football program. I spoke with key parents of the program, our youth program director, the gridiron club president, the administrative secretaries, our athletic trainer, staff in the building, custodians, librarians, secretaries, and administration regarding my core values. I asked the players to indicate who the student leaders in the building were, and then I reached out to them. The goal was to allow everyone to hear my philosophy and to share my vision with them. The first thirty days after being hired are a critical time to plant one’s vision and it should not be spared by communicating (and listening) to just a select few.

This process helped me discover that many people agreed with my assessment of our strengths and weaknesses at the time. We are a diverse student body and our diversity is a great thing, setting us apart from many other schools. We value the large number of multi-sport athletes in our

building, and to some, football may not be their first love. We were lacking in the cultural belief that the number one sport for our athletes is the weight room, and our football program did not have a strong vision for the future, or at least there wasn’t sufficient communication of a vision. Our program was lacking in player-family engagement, and our football player academics routinely dropped once the football season had ended. I felt certain that focussing on these specific core values, would help to rectify these areas of concern and help to reinforce the positive traits already present.

The next major step for transformation was hiring a staff. The assessment of the program led to me hiring the BEST staff imaginable. In order to have my core values truly influence the team, I needed the BEST people to pass those core values on to my players. Head coaches need a staff that truly believes in one’s philosophy and are willing to take responsibility to help make the program run. During the hiring process, one should use the interviews to gain an understanding of not just a coach’s football knowledge, but measuring if the candidate would

be able to adhere to your philosophy.

Coaches should adopt the mantra: “It’s never about the outcome; It’s about the performance.” There are just too many variables aside from winning to let winning be the one true measurement of a program’s culture and success. We met as a staff frequently in the off-season, where the outline for the direction of our program was shared and critiqued. I believe in being transparent, so I allowed coaches to speak freely, but we emphasized the ideal of staying forward focussed. Negative talk about the past, whether it be about former coaches, former players, past schemes, etc. needed to be quickly abolished. If any conversations shifted on a tangent towards speaking negatively about the past, we would revert back to the adage that we need to stay forward focussed. I also stressed that we were to “check our egos at the door”. To model this, I shared with my staff how I may not have answers to a certain scheme or problem, but that I am always open to learn.

Furthermore, I believe in allowing staff to provide suggestions for schemes, but ultimately schemes should become a system that I believe in and that I have had experience with. It is tempting to adopt someone else’s offensive system in its entirety and add your own “spin” to it. I feel it is best to avoid this path of adopting “flavor of the year” offenses. Instead, we wanted to settle on a few plays and learn to make the adjustments to those plays when faced with varying defenses. I am also a firm believer in making our defense the stronghold on the team - giving the defensive coaches the players to make them balanced and exceptional. We try to be as fundamentally sound as possible with the basics of assignment, alignments, and tackling - again, avoiding “flavor of the year” systems. Coaches should go with what they know.

The next phase of transformation began by communicating to our players and their families, that we strive to attain the highest level of performance in everything we do. Our core values were communicated and shared with these individuals. My hope was to have them realize that my coaches and I are centered on being persons of high moral standards and integrity, that we possess strong academic values, and that we were the ambassadors to best represent the school-community. I wanted all to understand that our evaluations throughout the program would become “performance-based” rather than “outcome-based”. We removed the idea that winning would be the only indicator of our program’s success. This is the basis of our culture shift.

I shared with the players the assessment of the current state of our program and how we needed to address our team’s weaknesses and strengths before concentrating on our opponent’s. We wanted to find value in competitiveness, so we created a platoon system. Needs for accounta-

bility are always issues in programs, so we created squad divisions within the platoons based on physical size. Squads were assigned “camp chores” and would have consequences when their chores were not done. We are still revising our point system toward recognizing our committed squads. The goal was for the squads to maintain integrity within the classroom and the weight room.

I met with all parents from all levels of our program in the spring. I had developed an administrative policy that was clear and concise, eliminating the exceptions. I wanted to hold people accountable (including the administration) by emphasizing a chain of command for communication. I clearly laid out the consequences regarding what happens with missed workouts, tardiness to team meetings, how to handle complaints about playing time, etc. It was important for me to have most obstacles thought-out and to have a predetermined answer for them.

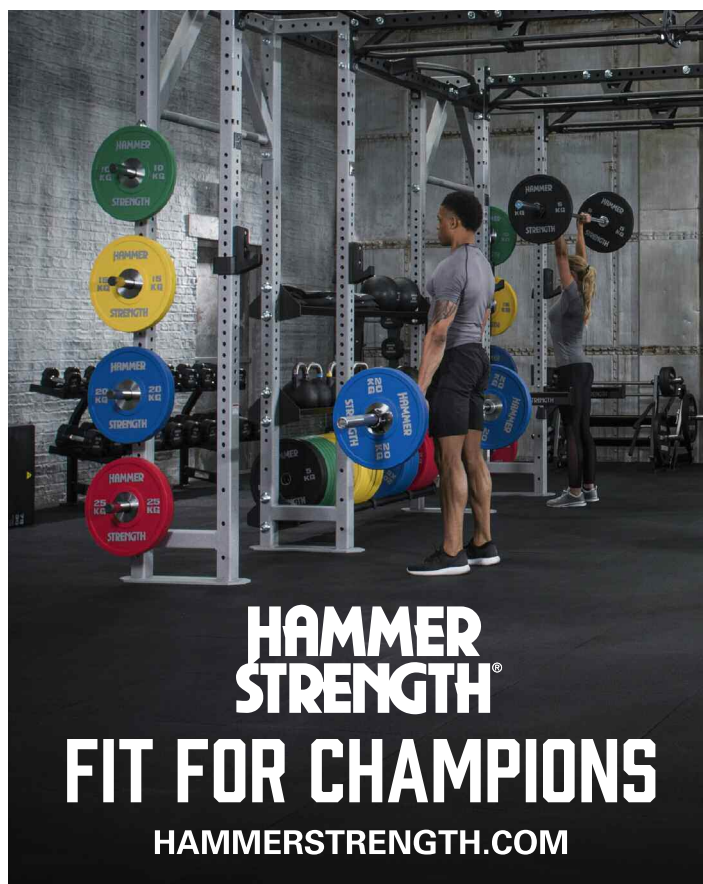
We meet with parents often. Our program is still revising during this second year, but we encouraged ALL grade level families to become involved. We held monthly gridiron meetings to share the state of the program. We are routinely scratching the surface of fundraising efforts involving our families. Without their support and understanding, they will not believe you are in this for the right reason. I ask the families to celebrate “victories” together, whether it be celebrating the total number of players at a lifting session, or having all players report to summer camp with paperwork completed, or even the ability of our players to endure through a freezing cold and wet practice. Whatever is worth celebrating, we wanted to celebrate it together.

The next step towards transformation required more of my personal and family time. To communicate my philosophy and core values in a program that values multi-sport athletics, I needed to engage with the school more during the off-season. I made an earlier mistake by not sharing my strength training philosophy with the Phy Ed. department. Coaches should share their nomenclature with lifts and their philosophy towards training to the PE staff. It was equally important for me to share this philosophy with our winter and spring sport coaches. I offered my assistance and willingness to

help in any fashion to the seasonal coaches. This could be in the form of assistance with in-season weight training, to making a rally call for the football players to join en-masse and cheer on the winter or spring sport teams. I also feel it is important to attend their functions and share in the successes of all athletes. I engaged my family with these functions and began to introduce my family to the players, parents, and staff that are involved in our football program.

While participating as a spectator in out of season sports, I wanted to model to the student body how to best support teams as a fan. Coaches are the ambassadors of athletics, and therefore must remember that others are watching us to see how they should behave. A new coach must focus on sportsmanship and classiness, always. I tell my team and parents that my job is to coach, that the player’s job is to play, the parent’s/guardian’s job is to cheer, and that the official’s job is to officiate. It is impossible for us to do our best performance AND do someone else’s job all while expecting to have the greatest outcome. I model this in front of my players by recognizing displays of sportsmanship and good effort by players and adults. It is important to find value in the hard work that all athletes put in with their respective sports. That is why we recognize and cheer on our fans when we are in-season. To show that we appreciate our fans’ willingness to come and cheer on our efforts, we have our players go to the sidelines and applaud those fans who endured the weather to come cheer us on, win or lose. It is critical at this time in athletics that we stress there is no other reason to get involved with our great sport, other than the love of working with kids and recognizing the value and love of the game.

Lastly, our program’s transformation involves a true culture shift centered around love. I believe it is important to find value in every player - it is ok to tell a player that you love them. If you are thinking about them and wish the best in all of their endeavors, then you love that player. This may be the only time in their life that they hear these words from a positive role model, and we cannot under estimate the value it may produce. In turn, hopefully, they will grow to understand and appreciate why we commit so much toward making football the great sport it is.



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Practice Organization for a Platoon System

**By Mike Minick, Head Football Coach
DeForest High School**

Thank you to the WFCA for allowing me to share our weekly practice plans. Everybody's practice plans vary to fit the needs of their program. We have tweaked ours over the years always trying to get the most out of the time we have with the student-athletes and coaches. With our platoon system, we found this practice format fits the needs of our players and coaches. We feel it maximizes the time we have together and allows us to meet our priority of teaching fundamentals and techniques. As the season progresses, we shorten practice by taking time out of our group and team sessions. We do not change our Indy time as we feel this is one of our practice priorities. Our practices include sophomores, juniors and seniors. Below is the weekly practice format we use during the season. If you would like more specific details, please feel free to contact me.

MONDAY PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

3:45	Varsity Strength Training/JV Film
4:30	Varsity Film/JV Strength Training
5:15	Transition to Field
5:20	Indy
5:30	Walk Through
5:50	Condition
6:00	End of Practice

TUESDAY PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

3:30	Classroom/Special Teams Cut-Ups
3:55	Dynamic Warm-Up/Take Away Tuesday
4:10	Varsity Punt/JV Punt Return/Position Coaches
4:25	Indy
4:40	Group D/Group O – Run Game
5:00	Varsity Kick-Off/JV Kick Return/Position Coaches
5:15	Indy
5:30	Group D/Group O – Pass Game
5:50	Team Defense vs Scout Offense
6:05	Team Offense vs Scout Defense
6:20	Extra Point/Field Goal
6:25	End of Practice

WEDNESDAY PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

6-7:30am	Varsity/JV Strength Training
3:55	Dynamic Warm-Up/Competition Wednesday
4:10	Varsity Punt Return/JV Punt/Position Coaches
4:25	Indy
4:40	Group O/Group D – Run Game
5:00	Varsity Kick Return/JV Kick-Off/Position Coaches
5:15	Indy
5:30	Group O/Group D – Pass Game
5:50	Team Offense vs Scout Defense
6:05	Team Defense vs Scout Offense
6:20	Extra Point/Field Goal
6:25	End of Practice

THURSDAY PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

6am	Lineman's Breakfast
3:45	Dynamic Warm-Up/Coin Toss
3:55	KO (onside)/KR (hands)/Punt (fakes)/Punt Return (blocks)
4:25	Indy
4:35	Offense & Defense Walk-Thru
4:50	Offensive Script
5:00	Extra Point/Field Goal
5:10	Team Meeting
5:15	Practice Ends/Team Dinner

FRIDAY GAME ORGANIZATION

5:00	Arrive at School
5:00	Lower Half/Tape
5:25	Special Team Review
5:35	Offensive Review
5:45	Full Dress
5:59	Phase 1 Punters/Kickers/Long Snappers/Holders/Returners & QBs
6:08	Phase 2 WR, Pass Skelly
6:15	Phase 3 Lineman
6:25	Warm-Up
6:30	Indy
6:37	Team Offense
6:47	Locker Room (Final Words)
6:55	Return to Field
6:59	National Anthem
7:00	Game Time
After Game	Post-Game Meeting in Locker Room

SATURDAY/SUNDAY PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

	Saturday
8:00	Friday Night Game Review/Turn the Page to Next Week
8:15	O & D Film
9:15	Bounce Back Stretch/Injury Check
9:30	End of Practice
9:30	O & D Coaches Meetings
10:30	Players & Coaches Attend Youth Games
	Sunday – Coaches Meetings
	O & D Meetings – Upcoming Opponent
	Scout Report



Reflections of a Head Coach After Nearly a Decade

By Mike Gnewuch, Head Football Coach
Mukwonago High School

Thank you to the WFCa for allowing me the opportunity to write this article on behalf of the Mukwonago Football Program.

When I first started coaching in the year 2000, I knew fairly quickly that one day I wanted to lead a program. Consequently, I dove head first into learning as much as I could about football and running a program. I learned and listened for the next twelve years, serving in different roles and capacities. Along the way, I

was blessed to have worked for unbelievable coaches and men who taught and mentored me. I served two years as an assistant working with Hall of Fame (HOF) coaches Ken Taylor and Ron Hahn at Luther Prep in Watertown. I was then hired as a full-time teacher at Arrowhead Union High School where I worked for the legendary HOF Head Coach, Tom Taraska for the next nine years. Coach Taraska not only taught me defense, but detailed scouting methods and many other intricacies of running a blue ribbon program. My final year at Arrowhead, I served as an assistant under Greg Malling and learned certain other unique aspects of running a program.

In 2012, I was hired as the head coach at Fond du Lac High School. Fortunately, Steve Jorgensen was also hired as my offensive coordinator. This brings me to my first point:

1. Surround yourself with good people. The coaches I have been associated with throughout my career have been nothing short of phenomenal. Every step of the way, I have worked for and worked with great men and great coaches. Anywhere I've been, I have never known more football or been as smart as the men I've been surrounded by. I've tried to be a sponge and absorb as much knowledge about football and life as I possibly could. As a rookie head coach, I can't imagine having a better mentor and friend as Steve Jorgensen. No person has had a bigger influence on my coaching career than Jorgy.
2. Create an identity and don't waiver. As coaches, we are exposed to a variety of schemes and plays both offensively and defensively. However, I've realized that technique beats scheme ten times out of ten. Find a scheme that fits your personality and stick to it. I've been known to say: "Practice is everything." If a coach maximizes practice time and continually reps his schemes, he will find success on Friday nights. It's hard for you as a coach, or your players to find success when you run a million different plays and a different defense each week. Find a defense that is schematically sound and an offense that fits your personality and repeat, repeat, repeat.
3. Find a college program that is similar to yours and forge a relationship. While I was at Fond du Lac, I was fortunate to be in close proximity to UW-Oshkosh. Coaches Cerroni, Venne, Archer, Stenbrotten, and Angeletti have been irreplaceable resources for me and my staffs throughout the years. My staff still makes multiple trips each year to UW-O to learn and grow from men whose football knowledge is exceptional. After every meeting, I walk out realizing that I don't really know anything. We are fortunate to be living in a state blessed with unbelievable coaches and resources at the collegiate level. Most are more than willing to give up their time to help and grow the game in Wisconsin. Find a college that runs your schemes and schedule meetings to learn and grow.
4. Administration plays a larger role in your success than you might think. I have heard horror stories from fellow coaches about the lack of support they receive from their administrations. However, I can't imagine having better administrators than I have at Mukwonago.

From District Administrator Shawn McNulty, to Principal Jim Darin, to Activities Director Andy Trudell, I know we are blessed. All of my bosses support our mission as coaches and find a way to help our kids in any capacity they can. It is so encouraging when you know that you can call any of your bosses at any time for help and assistance. A supportive administration cannot be replaced and should not be overlooked.

5. Not all of your coaches love football as much as you! When I was younger, I wrongfully assumed that all coaches loved the game as much as I did. Well, I was wrong and it's OK if not all coaches have as much love and passion for the game as you do. As the head coach, you better have love and passion for the game, but it's not necessary for all of your coaches to have that same amount as you do. You will have some coaches that are just great for kids in general. They will be positive and encouraging, but may lack some knowledge...teach 'em and be grateful they are part of your staff. You will have some young coaches with young families that require them to be dads and husbands first...it's ok, they should put their family first. You will have some older coaches who just don't have the energy they once did...use them to lean on and draw from their many experiences.
6. Be where your feet are. As a head coach, there is a ton on your plate. The responsibilities also seem to grow a bit each year. Most of us have to juggle being a teacher, a coach, a husband, a father, a son, and a friend. We have to communicate with administrators, parents, athletes, boosters, youth coaches, community members, recruiters, reporters, etc. There's not enough time in a day to be able to accommodate all these things. I have found that being present works best. During the fall when I get home, I shut my phone off until my kids go to bed. Usually I only see my two children about 2 hours each day during the season (excluding Saturdays). It's important that when I'm home, I'm home. Give your spouse and children the little time that you have. We still try eating meals together and reflecting on the day with one another. I once read that your children will never resent you for the time you spend with other kids if you spend quality time with your own kids. You're never going to be perfect, but your family will appreciate your honest efforts.
7. Open yourself to evaluation and criticism. If you want to continually evolve and improve, you have to be open to criticism. I still have trusted colleagues in the profession break down our film and critique my performance as a coach. I've sat down with college coaches and high school coaches from other programs and watched our game film. I tell them I want their honest feedback and opinion. This process has helped me to grow exponentially within my profession. I've realized that I'll never call the perfect game because I'm imperfect. Avoid complacency and allow yourself to be vulnerable and open to criticism.
8. Use the word "love." I tell my players that the toughest 4 letter word is love and we use it in our program frequently. These kids become your own and you love them as your own. I believe that the title "coach" is one of the highest callings in life. We are so blessed and fortunate to play such a pivotal role in the lives of the adolescents we mentor. Our players have to know we love them. To some of our players, we are the only male role models in their lives. We cannot neglect our responsibilities to lead in a positive way. Tell them that love means accountability, discipline, and sacrifice. Help them to understand that our methods are equipping them with the necessary tools for success later in life.

In closing, I'd like to thank the WFCa again, for the opportunity to share my reflections over the last nine years. I hope that all of you might gain something from this article. Please feel free to reach out at any time. My email is gnewumi@masd.k12.wi.us.

Building a Successful High School Strength and Conditioning Program

David Esswein, WR/DB/Strength Coach
Kiel High School

Thank you to the WFCAs for putting together *The Clinic Manual*, and continually providing an amazing resource to coaches. Having learned so much from this publication in my short coaching career, it is an honor to be able to contribute.

In our sport, strength training is perhaps the most essential aspect of developing athletes. Without a solid strength and conditioning program, a team will have limited success, and will suffer against bigger, stronger, and faster opponents no matter how good their offensive and defensive scheme is. Improper programming caps the potential of an athlete, limits their growth, and most importantly, puts them at a risk of injury. I am here to share with you the main points and phases of our strength and speed program at Kiel that has helped us transform athletes over the years and improve our program.

Before getting into the details of our program it is important to know the philosophy behind training our athletes. Our mission is to create better football players and overall athletes, NOT better weightlifters. Players might deadlift 500lbs, squat 400, and bench press 300, but if they can't move well or translate that strength to the field, then they are not going to reach their potential as a football player. This might sound a little counter-intuitive; we all want our athletes to be big and strong, but they will be much better football players if they can move and utilize their strength as athletes. Developing this functional strength means taking the time for mobility, flexibility, correction of imbalances, and the development of core strength. When I first began coaching three years ago at Kiel, players were not accustomed to doing much else besides heavy weight-training. It was difficult at first to get them to take the other types of exercise seriously, and they couldn't be blamed because up to that point this was all they knew. Once players realized the benefits of the other aspects of training, and saw how much our staff focused on it in the weight room, they bought into it and their improvements as athletes followed.

One thing that is preached to our players every single day in the weight room is correct form. It cannot be stressed enough how vital correct form is for young developing athletes. Lifting incorrectly limits proper movement patterns, and puts athletes at risk of being injured. Our kids know simply picking the weight up and setting it down doesn't cut it, it has to be done the right way. During workouts, coaches are always walking around cueing, coaching, and instructing, ensuring things are done correctly. You can have an amazing, top-notch program laid out for your athletes, but if you just simply put it up on the board and don't monitor and coach your players throughout the lifting sessions, the benefits won't be realized. Our former Hall-of-Fame head coach, Mike Dressler, always said "You have to put in as much time as you require your players to put in." It's easy for us to get caught up in the numbers regarding how much weight our guys are lifting; but you must also ask yourself...."Are they lifting it correctly? Is their range of motion adequate? Is that freshman at a risk of injury with that much weight in his hands?" We are doing our athletes a disservice if the answer is "yes" to those questions. **MAKE SURE** that an athlete has perfect technique before allowing them to increase the weight, or advance to the next progression of an exercise.

No matter the position, we train all football players **THE SAME**. Let's face it, football positions are extremely diverse, with various different body types unlike any other sport. **BUT**, when you take a look at the movements, and what we want them to accomplish on the field, it's all very similar. Does a lineman need a quick and powerful first step off the ball? Yes. Does a wide receiver need to be strong enough to make and sustain a block? Yes. Does a defensive end need to have speed to rush the passer? Yes. All football players, no matter their position, need to be

fast, strong, explosive, quick and have good endurance, so why train them differently? University of Wisconsin Strength and Conditioning Coach, Ross Kolodziej, presented at the WFCAs clinic in 2018 and he stressed that he trains his linemen just as he would his WRs and DBs. He stated that they need to move, and be effective in space just as much as those skill positions do.

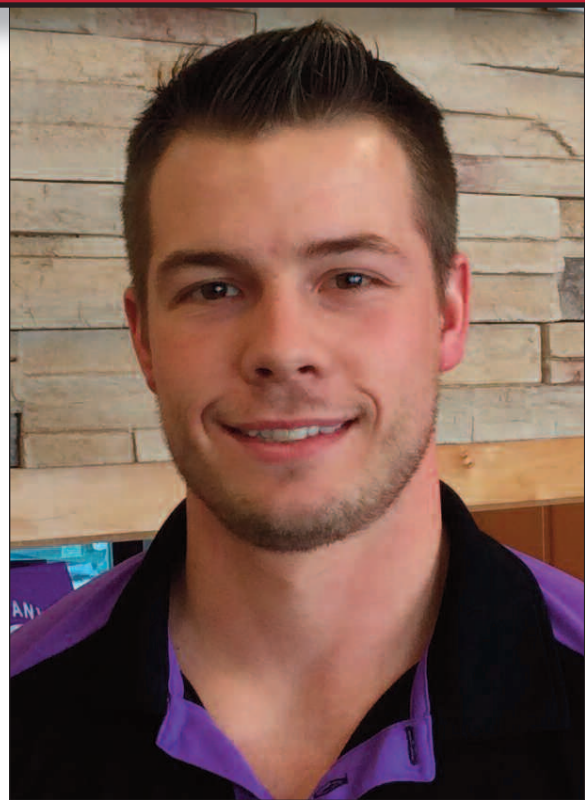
At Kiel High School, we generally use a standard linear periodization with our program. For the sake of this article, I will be mostly focusing on off-season programming. Two weeks after our final game we begin our "base" phase, then we later progress to hypertrophy, strength, and finish with power in the summer. For our weekly off-season structure, we train three times a week after school. We require participation for all players that aren't participating in another sport at the time. We lift on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and have optional Saturday morning workouts. Mondays and Thursdays are lower body and core workout days, Tuesday is an upper body day, and on Saturdays we typically work on speed and change of direction, with some fun upper body finishers. We use this general format to address the most important muscle groups (legs and core) two out of the three required days. We do this because virtually all high school athletes have a weak posterior chain (back, glutes, hamstrings) and have a weak core. Our program fixes those imbalances right away to give them a foundation to build on the rest of their career.

Base Phase

Two weeks after our final game of the season we start things off with our Base phase. During this 4-6 week phase we re-teach all movements, and ease our kids back into consistent weight training again. We start all movements with body weight, and progress the load from there as the athletes master the form. Things start simple, non-ballistic movements, and hypertrophy type exercises are key here. We like to do lots of isometric core exercises to strengthen all of their stabilizer muscle groups. Below is a sample of what a Monday workout looks like during our base phase.

Note: All workouts start with a dynamic warm-up and core activation circuit, and various foot speed drills

These movements are simple, and easy for kids to pick up quickly. This phase is most beneficial to our under-



Set	Exercise	Sets x Reps
1	Back Squat	3x12
2	Barbell Hip Ext.	3x12
3	Split Squat	3x10each
4	Lateral Lunge	2x8each
5	Hamstring Curls on Ball	3x12
6A	Paloff Iso Hold	3x20sec each
6B	V-Ups	3x10
7	Plank on Ball	3x30sec each

classmen who will learn how to lift properly, and will create a base to build off of. During this phase, the load is light, and our kids are not often pushed to fatigue. Many times, both players and coaches want to progress beyond this phase too quickly and start building in more rigorous workouts sooner. Their thought is correct, but we all need to realize that most of our young athletes are not ready for that yet. For example: If their lateral hip and glute medius aren't strong enough, knees can cave in during squat-type movements. If low-back and core aren't strong enough, it will be impossible for a player to maintain proper technique for deadlift, RDLs, and other movements. If we don't fix their already imbalanced muscular structure, we are limiting their ultimate potential as an athlete. We want to build players up to reach their highest athletic potential as a Senior, not as a Sophomore or Junior! Even though this means taking things slower to start, it pays off in the end.

Hypertrophy Phase

The Hypertrophy phase is perhaps the most essential part of our program. Let's face it, all of our athletes could use some more muscle mass. This is where the biggest progress is made, and the most muscle mass and weight are gained by the athletes. In this 12 to 16 week period we progressively increase the workload, and keep our rep ranges between 8-12 for almost all exercises. During this time, the load is increased, but players are NOT lifting as much as possible for each set. Maximum muscle gains occur when there is more time-under-tension, and NOT through constant substantial overload. It is crucial as coaches to ensure that the athletes are completing all reps as prescribed, and are using correct tempo as well. On most exercises, we want the athletes to really focus on the eccentric part of the movement, or, "the down phase". We ask them to count three seconds on the "way down" of every movement to achieve the most muscle fiber growth. Below is a sample Tuesday workout during this phase:

Set	Exercise	Sets x Reps
1	Bent-Over Barbell Row	4x10
2	Bench Press	4x10
3	Reverse Grip Pull-Ups	3x10
4	DB Incline Bench Press	3x10
5A	Lateral Raises	3x12
5B	DB Rear Delt Flys	3x12
6	Band Pull-Aparts	3x12
7	Med-Ball Push-Ups	3x10each

Note: Each upper body lift begins with a shoulder activation warm-up and push-up series.

The progress made during this part of the program is paramount for the upcoming strength and power phases. Without a sufficient amount of muscle

mass an athlete's potential strength and explosiveness is limited. Doing constant plyometrics and other explosive-type exercises aren't as beneficial either during this time. Plyometrics have their place, but they aren't as effective without building adequate muscle mass first. Lastly, I can't stress enough how important nutrition is for building lean muscle mass. It's important to realize that our athletes need to fuel their bodies correctly to make progress. Unfortunately, many of them are either not eating enough, or they aren't eating enough of the correct things, so it's crucial for us as coaches to educate them on proper nutrition. The last thing we want is for an athlete to work all off-season and only see minimal progress in their performance because of poor nutrition.

Strength Phase

Finally, the moment the kids have been waiting for since December! The time when we let them lift heavy! In this phase we increase the weight, and decrease the reps. Strength gains in this phase are most optimal between 3-6 reps. Also, with the increased load, it's important to ensure proper rest time in between sets so they get the most from each set. Three minutes of rest time between sets is standard, but everyone's cardio endurance is different, so we make sure they are almost fully recovered before they can begin the next set. Previously, we weren't overly concerned about how much weight our athletes lifted as long as form was on point. But in this phase, it's important to track how much weight is being lifted while still ensuring proper technique and form. Because we ease them into these high loads with our linear periodization, we don't see injuries popping up, or many form failures under the increased weights. Core strength has been developed so players can properly handle higher loads. Our tempo cues during this phase are simple; control the weight on the way down, and explode on the way up! Breathing is also paramount while lifting

heavy. We instruct them to inhale right before they start, hold their breath through the bottom of the movement, and begin to exhale as they finish the rep. Below is a sample Thursday workout during our strength phase.

It is also important to know that this time of the year is when we begin to incorporate ballistic movements (Cleans and Jerks) and more single leg/arm exercises as well. They are progressively taught these movements

Set	Exercise	Sets x Reps
1	Power Clean	4x4
2	Deadlift	4x5
3	Bulgarian Split Squat	4x6each
4	Single-Leg Offset DB RDL	3x6 each
5	Cross-Over Step-Up	3x5 each
6A	Cable Core Rotations	3x8each
6B	Supermans	3x10
7	Shoulder Taps (push-up plank pos.)	3x20

throughout the winter, but spring is typically when they are ready to be loaded with substantial weight for those lifts. At the end of our Strength phase we have a "Max Week" followed by a one-week break from lifting. We rarely do a true 1RM test, rather we have them pick a weight they can do for a 3-5 rep max at and find their 1RM from that. It's much safer, and we are still training football players not powerlifters. By doing this we avoid injury risks, and still get good energy, passion, and accurate numbers during testing week. Make max week a fun and celebratory time for all the progress your athletes have made!

Power Phase

We want our athletes to be faster and more explosive, so we strive to have them train that way in the weight room. This is the part that is often neglected, or incorrectly implemented in many high school strength programs. During our Power Phase, which happens in the summer, we lighten the weight, and perform everything FAST. We use between 40-60% of each player's max to select their weight for our main core lifts (Deadlift, Squat, Bench, Power Clean). Our sets and rep ranges are very similar to the Strength Phase (typically 4-5 sets of 3-6 reps) with AT LEAST three minutes of rest in between. Correct tempo is a must during this phase, otherwise they won't get much out of it. We cue a three second count on the way down, and coach them to move the weight as fast as possible on the way up (while under control). Movements such as Cleans, Jerks, Push Press, Med Ball throws and Plyometrics are a staple during this phase. Below is an example workout:

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Set	Exercise	Sets x Reps
1	Back Squat (@60% of Max)	5x4
2	Split Jerk	4x4
3	Explosive Reverse Lunge	3x4 each
4	Barbell Hip Extension	3x5
5	Hex Bar Jumps	3x5
6	Med-Ball Rotation Throws	3x5 each
7	SL Lateral Jumps (Skaters)	3x5 each
7	Prowler Push	3x15 yards

During the summer, we try to replicate movements similar to what they need to perform on the field during our workouts to prepare them for August. For example, we utilize the Barbell Hip Extension to work on explosive hip drive, Split Squat or an Explosive Reverse Lunge to help create a faster first step off the ball, and Hex Bar Jumps to help our vertical power to name a few. Getting athletes doing a variety of movements in all planes of motion helps their coordination and gets them ready for anything they may need to do on the field. Also, it's important to understand their workload capacity during the summer. During the summer some of our players also work physically strenuous jobs, participate in summer basketball/baseball, go to camps, and compete in passing league as well. Overtraining them in the summer can be difficult to avoid because we want to work them hard, but we must keep in mind the other things they are doing outside of the weight room. The last thing we want is a muscle strain to pop up during contact day workouts or during our first week of practice. Training "power" and explosive type movements in the summer helps avoid muscle soreness and gets their fast twitch muscle fibers ready for the season.

Conclusion

There are many different theories and successful ways to train high school athletes, but a few things remain constant. Ensuring proper form and technique is a MUST. You cannot undervalue flexibility, isometric core strength, and stabilizer muscle groups. Work towards developing a proper progression with movements and sets/reps. Motivating players and having lots of participants consistently working hard together as a team will always give you needed motivation heading into the fall season. Seeing the incredible progress in our athlete's performance is extremely rewarding to me as a coach, especially when it directly translates to wins on Friday nights! Thank you for reading this article, and thank you to the WFCA for giving me an opportunity to share my thoughts with all of you. If anyone has questions or would like to discuss things in greater detail, feel free to email me at: desswein@kiel.k12.wi.us



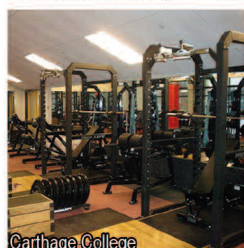
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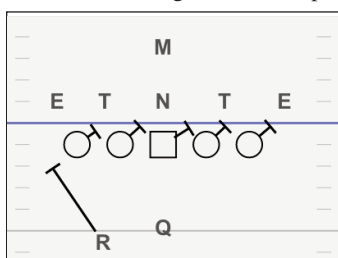


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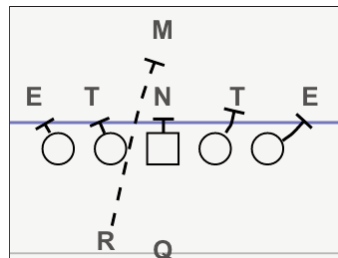
**Dan Bauder, Defensive Coordinator
UW-Platteville**

Why use “Flex?”

In the game of football almost every play comes down to a 1-on-1 match-up in some way, shape, or form. Whether you are talking about open field tackles, block destruction, or covering a vertical, at some point it will be 1-v-1. If you can control where and when those 1-v-1 battles happen, you can “stack the deck” in your favor and give your guys a better chance of being successful. The thought process behind using the “Flex” or “Bear” front is to create favorable match-ups. The biggest reason we use the “Flex” or “Bear” front is to get a predictable protection scheme from the offensive line. Most of the time you will get a either full slide or straight man protection. This puts us in a unique position to dictate who we want to attack in our 1 on 1 match-up, which doesn’t happen a lot on the defensive side. With this knowledge we now have the ability to move our best guys around to exploit individual offensive linemen and/or the running backs in the protection scheme.



Full Slide



Man

Personnel

The types of personnel you use in this package are absolutely dependent upon your roster. Of course you can mix and match as much as you want too. If you have a bunch of defensive linemen that you think are your best pass rushers then you may play this front with five DL and one LB. If you have a number of LBs you like, you may end up playing it as five LBs and one DL. You could have three LBs and three DLs. We have used many different combinations here at UW-Platteville. It all depends on what situations we are in and what we are trying to accomplish with that particular call, and who we think are our best eleven guys.

Basic Concepts

We have a number of different concepts that we run from our “Flex” or “Bear” front. I will go through three of our most used concepts here and the terminology that we use with our guys. We use three words when we talk about who is rushing and what their responsibilities are:

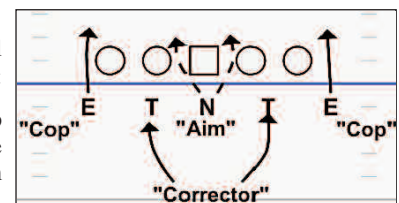
Cop: Contain outside pass rush

Aim: Two way rush; Can go inside or outside

Correct: Must make “Aim” player right

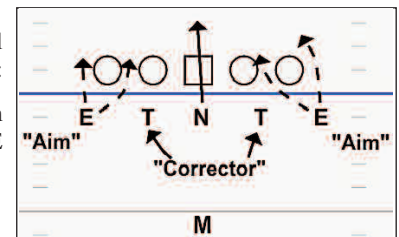
The first and most basic call we install is **Razor**:

E = Cop
T = Correct the
N = Aim



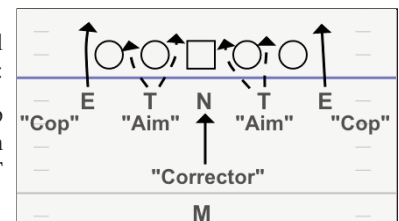
The second call we install is **Edge**:

E = Aim
T = Correct the E
N = Bull



Finally, the third call we install is **Knife**:

E = Cop
T = Aim
N = Correct the T



When we tell our kids they are the “Aim” we are basically telling them to win at all costs. They have no restrictions or responsibilities other than to win. Typically we try to put our “Aim” players in the best 1v1 match-ups. You can always move guys around to make any one of these three calls your base.

The last piece of this front we like is the versatility aspect. Earlier we talked about how to get all of the 1v1 match-ups you want. You can also use the “Flex” or “Bear” front to scheme things up to get guys completely free because of the predictable offensive protection. If you use LBs or athletic DL you can also get 1v1s in the pass rush game, and drop guys out to help in the coverage aspect of things. We like using this front in all different types of situations because of the versatility/disguise defensively and the predictable nature from the offensive perspective.

Go ‘Neers! Email Coach Baudry at: bauderd@uwplatt.edu

Back to the Basics (Four-Down Defensive Line Technics)

**By. Drake Voris, Defensive Line Coach
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**

The role of the Defensive Line is critical to any team's success. Games are won on the line of scrimmage. By using these technics discussed in this article, you will get better results from your four down front giving you the upper hand to control the line of scrimmage. In this article I will be discussing basic technics and key coaching points.

First, let's discuss the 3-point stance your defensive linemen should be using in a four-down front. Let's start with a right hand down 3-point stance, they should have their feet shoulder width apart for a strong base, then take the right foot and move it back so it is in a toe to instep-heel stagger. This stance seems to be the most natural. Then with the hand closest to the man or gap they are responsible for, in this case the right hand, needs to be out in front of their eyes but not breaking the plane of the ball in relation to the line of scrimmage. Once in their three-point stance they will need to shift and distribute their weight to 60%, leaning forward on their hand that is down. Player should focus on spreading their hand so they are up on their fingers to create solid balance. The other 40% of their weight needs to be on the balls of their feet. This will give your player a slight lean forward to help propel across the line of scrimmage. Once their weight is distributed 60%-40% the player needs to have a slight bend in their knee, forcing their butt up in the air, with a flat back (making a 45-degree angle with their body). With the opposite arm relaxed and dangling straight down, this will enhance the speed of your player's get off. All they must do is lift their arm and aim to contact, this will create more leverage and separation by already having extension while staying square to the line of scrimmage in the 3-point stance. When dealing with a left dominant player, everything is the same, just flip it with the left hand out front and left foot back in toe to instep-heel relationship.

For defensive line alignment in a four-down front, your nose tackle should use the principles you taught with the 3-point stance and be responsible for the A gap. Your nose tackle should align either in a heavy shade of the center, 1 technique, inside shade of the offensive guard, or 2i technique depending on what fits your defense best. Defensive tackles in a four-down front, should align on the outside shade of the offensive guard or 3 technique. They are responsible for the B gap on the opposite side of your nose tackle. Defensive ends in a four-down front should align on the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle or 5 technique and assume their responsibility to the C gap. If there is a tight end the defensive end can align in either a 6i or a head up 6 technique, while still being responsible for the C gap. The defensive end can also align in a 7 technique and be responsible for the D gap depending on what best fits your defense.

Next let's talk about the defensive line's base techniques, key-reads, and reactions in a four-down front. For base techniques, let's discuss the get offs of your defensive lineman when in his stance. This player should have his butt up in the air with a flat back, head and eyes up to see his keys, and opposite arm relaxed and hanging straight down. One important point to emphasize is your defensive lineman should be able to see his keys and the ball by using his peripheral vision. When that ball snaps his hips and hands should move first in unison, creating an aggressive explosion across the line of scrimmage. While belting across the line of scrimmage, your player will keep his body at an angle striking above his eyes and staying low. Always remember the low man wins. defensive lineman should quickly take his first 6-inch power read step. His foot needs to be in his 3-point stance. He can do this by picking his foot up and forcefully putting it back down to create stability and power from the ground. This step will help him establish his gap across the line of scrimmage. Next, after taking his first step and making contact with the opposing offensive lineman, your defensive lineman needs to take his second vertical adjustment step with the back foot. This step will help him adjust and react to the block his keys are giving him. If done correctly, this step should help him vertically penetrate up field.

After emphasizing the get off and first two steps you are ready to introduce what each player's key-reads are. You want to take a look at how

you have your defensive line aligned and tell them whatever hand is down should be to the man they are key reading in their gap. Example, defensive tackles are in an outside shade of the offensive guard or three techniques responsible for the B gap. Keeping in mind, the keys his eyes should be looking at on that offensive guard are his near hip. This will indicate what direction that offensive guard is moving. His knee will also indicate if it is a pass step or run step. While using peripheral vision to see the ball snapped, which will help him react quicker with his get off. By knowing these keys, it will help your defensive lineman react to his opposing offensive lineman. Your defensive linemen will have the upper hand when taking the correct steps, having good leverage and good body positioning, all to work half the man, staying gap sound and square to the line of scrimmage. If you see a little, you see a lot.

When working half the man of the offensive lineman your defensive lineman must focus on having a great get off and reacting quickly with his first two steps toward what his keys are giving him. The defensive lineman must have good hand poisoning to help him stay half the man. The technique that should be emphasized is having their thumbs up to the sky, elbows tight together with a slight bend (like they have on hand cuffs), while fully extending their arms and striking above their eyes. The inside hand should violently strike and grab the V of the neck or sternum area of the opposing offensive lineman. The outside hand should violently strike and grab the outside shoulder area more specifically their triceps. Using this technique will create extension and separation while working half the man and fighting pressure with pressure. This hand placement will allow you to turn the shoulder or (steer the wheel) of the opposing offensive lineman, giving you the optimal leverage to penetrate to heel depth of the offensive lineman and play behind the line of scrimmage.

As a defensive line coach, I go back and break down film, only to notice the missed opportunities during plays are due to lapses in these basic techniques. Hopefully after reading this article you will have a better understanding of these techniques and how critical they are to a four-down defensive front. Not only for the sake of winner, but also for the sake of developing proper habits for Defensive Line play.



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- Jake Gilbert
Head Football Coach, Westfield HS Football



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Small School Defensive Preparation and Weekly Game Planing

By Jason Tubbs, Head Football Coach and Marshall Lehman, WFCB Assistant Coach of the Year Stratford High School

On behalf of the Stratford coaching staff we would like to thank the WFCB and *The Point After II* for their amazing devotion to high school football in the state of Wisconsin. Getting ready defensively for an upcoming opponent on a weekly basis is time consuming and a different challenge every week. All of our players are two way players, so their time is split during the week to improve their own skills as well as prepare for the new opponent. The first thing we do is film analysis. Each player is expected to take notes during film time on their own personal improvement notes from Hudl, and any other position notes the coaches have made during Friday's game. We provide a two sided worksheet for the players to take their active notes. Once Friday's game has been noted, the players will move onto next week's opponent. On the other side of their worksheet, players need to identify the opponent's five best players, opposing team strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, they also are expected to identify base run plays, defenses used, and pass routes the opponent used during scout film. The worksheet is due on Wednesday before practice starts.

When it comes to practice planning for defense, we begin on **MONDAY** by watching film of our previous game for about 15-20 minutes. We don't spend much time on it, but hit on the key takeaways from that game, since we expect our players to have watched the film and see our notes. We then spend the last 30-40 minutes of our classroom session going over our next opponent by going through their offensive roster, tendencies and formations. Hudl does a great job with helping us tag games, and generate some of the opponents tendencies. We also dive in deeper with specific formation tendencies. We create a spreadsheet with most of the opponents plays based off of their formations. It can be very time consuming, however the players use the tool when they watch scout films. It is also at this time that we put in our defensive game plan that we will then walk through on the field after our

classroom session is over. Again, we try to evaluate the new opponent's most used plays and formations. It's impossible to get through all of the possibilities, but most teams stick with their base plays and formations.

On **TUESDAY**, we spend 20 minutes on defensive INDY time by position. We follow that up with 20 minutes of Skelly (pass defense) while the defensive line works on pass rush, stunts and screen recognition.

On **WEDNESDAY**, we do another 15 minutes of INDY and then 20 minutes of our 1s and 2s rotating from inside rush and Skelly. We finish our defensive time with 20 minutes of team defense.

On **THURSDAY**, we do 20 minutes of team defense and review our defensive game plan. During this time, we also go through situations. We end our defensive session with a 10 minute script put together by an offensive coach. The defensive coordinator doesn't know the script, so it becomes a great simulation for the coaches and players. The script will usually have formations and trick plays that we have never seen before. The players really like it and it helps them learn to communicate and adjust on the fly.

During our week, we will also implement tackling progressions, pursuit drills, and turnover drills.

Finally, there are a lot of different ways being used to prepare defensively throughout the football world. Being a smaller school that needs our athletes on both sides of the football (and special teams) this weekly schedule has been very effective for our program.

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Pattern Match Coverage - 3-3 Stack

**By Ryan Lucchesi, Defensive Coordinator
Muskego High School**

First and foremost, it is a great honor to represent Muskego High School by contributing to *The Point After II*. As coaches, we have benefited from this program's existence for a number of years. The WFCAs deserve a great deal of credit for their conscious effort to develop the game within the state of Wisconsin. This is the second time we have been fortunate enough to contribute to *The Point After II* about our defense at Muskego High School. We have a great coaching staff at Muskego all around. Our defensive staff is as good as it gets, led by the following coaches: OLB - Ty Kunick, DB - Dan Mlachnik, ILB - Rob Domenosky, FS - Jeff Wagner, and QC - Nick Schmidtkofer. We are ecstatic about the opportunity and hope you find some information of value.

At Muskego, we are a 3-3 Stack defense. That is who we are and what we hang our hat on. A few years ago we wrote about what our basic structure looks like along with our consistent, simple read keys and how we attack from there. In this article, we are going to focus on the coverage aspect of our defense. This will specifically focus on how we teach our underneath defenders, our OLBs and ILBs, and our CBs. We are a pattern match team. We do not spot-drop. We do not speak classical football terms such as "flat", "hook-cud", "low hole", and so on. Everything we do is taught from an understanding of matching the opposing offense's numbers. It's about "finding work" and matching actual receiving threats. This core teaching philosophy has been integral to eliminating the dreaded "guarding of grass" and elevated our ability to collision receivers. One of the last existing advantages a defense has is to get hands on receivers before the ball is in the air. We are unapologetic in our belief that it is our duty to capitalize on this opportunity. Beyond the schematic benefits, there are psychological benefits to consistently striking and hopefully knocking routes off or to the ground.

In 2018 and 2019, we played 90% Cover 3 over 28 games. That is who we are. We feel that this is possible because of the way we teach our pattern match style of "zone" defense. It should also be noted that over the last 2 seasons we have played 7-8 different variants of Cover-3 that include very subtle adjustments for 1-2 players maximum. As stated above, the spot drop terminology does not exist in our program. Instead, we teach our young men to match numbers, i.e. Stack LB will work #2 to #1 on a pass read, our OLB may work a re-route of #2 to cut of #1. There are two glaring advantages we see to this teaching style: the first being a surgical focus to get hands on opposing receivers, the second is an increase in player IQ of the offensive formation. This is done as part of their pre-snap process to identify who their "work" will be based on their keys. No matter the coverage we are playing, this is our identity and what we will hang our hat on from day one. This is a mind-set and a fundamental that needs to be stressed from day one. It starts with 7v7 in the summer and continues into the season. With the technology available in 2020, we all must film our Team sessions of practice at the least. This creates an opportunity every practice to assess your team's execution at rerouting receivers.

After this core philosophy is taught, there are a few key techniques we feel must be taught to be successful (Z tech & read-to-speed). With

playing so much Cover 3, it is vital that we protect our seams. That is the perceived weakness of our coverage structure. We do this by a basic philosophy for our OLBs (our overhangs) known as a "Z tech" anytime they have a detached #2 receiver to their side. They automatically know that when they are given a pass key, they pop their feet and get eyes on #2 to pattern read his route. If he is pushing vertical, we are going to hopefully end the route or collide it inside to our Stack LB who is working out. If #2 is early in or out, we will immediately sprint width to match the route of #1. This is a day one fundamental for this position group and it is the foundation for our success in coverage underneath. The second is a read-to-speed teaching philosophy for our CBs. One of my mentors in this game is UW-Oshkosh Head Coach Pat Cerroni, who once cynically told us, "You aren't playing Cover 3, you're playing Cover 1." "We do not like to align our CBs at a depth of 8 yards or greater as we feel that allows for "access" throws or pre-snap gifts to the offense. We like to be somewhere in that 5-7 yard range and simply work a read-to-speed pedal. This technique is simple but effective as the CBs simply take 3 slow read steps to decipher the WR route before either breaking fon/vard or getting depth in a true speed pedal as a cover 3 CB. This teaching method has allowed our CB's to stay disciplined over vertical routes but also aggressive and relevant on any quick game passes.

The game of Football is rare compared to other sports where practice is everything. The techniques we have detailed above need to be structured into your daily drills. For example, our CBs will spend some time practicing working their read-to-speed pedal. Our OLBs will work their "Z tech" to read & re-route #2 WRs pushing vertical. Other drills of value are mini-group drills that take OLBs and ILBs to work attacking their drops based on the formation and routes given. This is a great opportunity to present a variety of offensive structures and route combinations to fit for your underneath defenders. It is vital to us that we "protect the cage" in our underneath coverage. This philosophy connects to our overall defensive mentality of making the ball go east & west. This is something we believe passionately in both the run and pass game. We did mention above that our Stack LB's base pass read goes from #2 to #1, this could mean an inline TE to the #1 WR, an H-Back to a #1 WR, or a detached #2 receiver to #1 and so on. If we get a three receiver surface, our Stack LBs will work #3 to #2 and so on. We also detailed the scenario where our OLB has a detached #2 receiver his way. If he does not, his alignment will tighten and he will key his base read key and work to sprint width to the #1 receiver's route. A vital coaching key is that width > depth. This is where small group time is vital for us. In addition to the physical benefits, this again reiterates the pre-snap identification process for our players. Again, the value in this type of teaching model helps foster a greater understanding of offensive structures and how to appropriately attack them.

It is a great privilege to write this article for *The Point After II* magazine. I have been an avid reader for a number of years. I truly appreciate the contributions the WFCAs and member coaches make to add value to the greatest game in the world. If you ever want to visit, collaborate, or just talk ball, please reach out any time. Cell: 414-861-5800 or Email: ryan.lucchesi@muskegonorway.org,



Cutter Dive in Black Hawk's Split Back Veer

By Cory Milz, Retired Head Football Coach
Black Hawk High School

On behalf of the Black Hawk football community, I would like to thank the WFCa and Dan Brunner for the invitation to write this article for *The Point After II*. I have been a member of the WFCa for over twenty years, and it has been invaluable as a professional development tool for me and my staff.

Black Hawk High School is a small, rural school that has enjoyed a sustained level of success. Since 1997, Black Hawk has made the playoffs 20 out of the last 23 seasons. We have played for a state championship in four of the past seven seasons. Looking at all the programs across the state which have been able to build some consistency, successfully marketing their programs to their communities and their youth, seems to be one thing they have in common. Marketing strategies are important, and we believe we have been able to keep our participation numbers up because our community has helped us build a sense of honor and prestige in our youth. They look forward to becoming a member of the Warrior football program. Secondly, it is important to build an identity in your program. Our propaganda machine is geared around a message of aggressiveness and physicality. We build around defensive football. We emphasize defense to our youth, jr. high athletes, and in our high school program. Our offense is designed with the main purpose of building players who relish in playing fast, and being physical. On offense, we start with a simple concept: run as fast and as hard as you can, in as straight a line as you can. We want to get on defenders as fast as possible, and force them into natural reactions because they don't have time to "read" what is happening in front of them. Spread offenses and no-huddle tempo's are sexy, but we feel that high school programs can't sustain consistency running those offenses because of the skill demands on players to execute those offenses efficiently. Unless you are recruiting players to match your skill demands, you will eventually run into a down year because of a lack of a skilled quarterback and/or receivers.

Our offense is a point mesh split back veer offense. We have been running this offense since 2004. We pattern our offense from Carson Newman College in Tennessee. Our divebacks are very close to the line of scrimmage, and we try to get the divebacks to hit outside veer, inside veer, and midline as fast as possible. We preach 3 'A yards to our kids all the time. We want those 3 plays to get at least 3 1/2 yards every time we run them. We tell our kids that if we are getting 3 yards on those plays, we have a great chance of winning every game we play in. We are committed to "pound the ground", and ball possession is one of our key factors to winning.

Our base play is a combination of 3 plays checked at the line of scrimmage. When we call base - our QB has the option to run midline, inside veer, or outside veer to either side of the offensive front. We may have a sideline coach make the call from the sideline. We know full well that the main method of disrupting all three plays is to utilize a gap exchange concept in your defensive front. Figure 1 shows us running outside veer to the 3-man surface side with a 4-3 under front utilizing a gap exchange concept to stop the play. We will zone the 5 technique, read the 9 tech., block the quarters safety and option the corner. However, the defense is utilizing a fast inside scrape by the Mike LB hoping to force the QB to pitch, with the unblocked corner hammering the pitch.

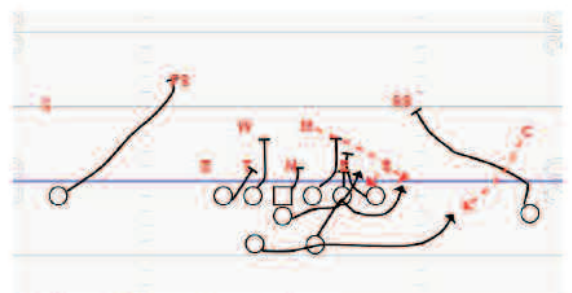


Figure 1. Outside Veer vs. Under front gap exchange

Sam takes the dive, Mike has the QB, and the unblocked DB takes the pitch. Our offense creates these fast reactions by the defense. Defensive coordinators spend all week preaching to their athletes about stopping the dive, and hitting the QB on every play to get "in his head". Because of the speed with which our inside and outside veers dive hit, as soon as our QB opens and faces playside, linebackers are flying to the edge of the box. One of the plays we like to run when we get the expected fast reaction by the inside linebackers, is our cutter dive. In baseball, a pitcher with a good two seam fastball, gets batters anticipating the speed of the baseball. A cut fastball looks almost identical to the motion of a fastball, until it breaks laterally at the last instant. We use this play in the same exact way. We can get some big runs on our cutter dive back underneath the fast defensive reaction to stop the veer.

Figures 2 and 3 show how we would run the cutter dive against the gap exchange under front illustrated previously.

Figure 2 shows the outside cutter run versus a 5 tech. We will base the 9, zone the 5 tech. and inside linebacker, and cut the nose tackle to the backside. The QB has to open a little deeper and get the ball to the diveback further behind the line of scrimmage, as compared to our outside

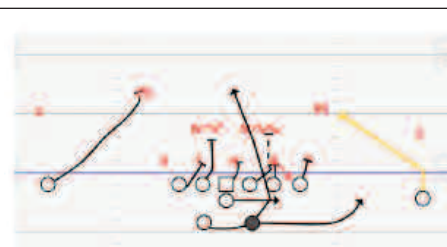


Figure 2. Cutter dive vs. 5 tech.

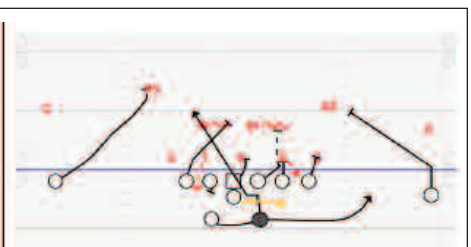


Figure 3. Cutter dive vs. Nose tackle

veer. This subtle difference isn't noticeable to the opposition, because of the speed of the play. The diveback will try to bang the ball into the C gap, and if he sees color in the C gap, squares his shoulders and bends it back into the B gap, looking to jump cut back behind the backside inside linebacker (the Will) at the second level. We don't care about the playside ILB (Mike) because he is flying out of there to get to the QB in the alley. If we can't cut the NG and he is stretching down the line to tackle the dive as it comes back inside to the B gap, we move the cutter one gap inside, as in Figure 3. Here the diveback is tracking inside veer, looking to bang it into the B-gap. If he feels color from the inside, he jump cuts on the 1st level behind the center's block on the NG. We will

influence the 3 tech. on the backside with a pass set, and bring the tackle down on the backside inside linebacker (Will), attempting to push him past the ball carrier's cutback. We work hard to make sure the cutter looks as close to outside veer and inside veer as we can, so that defenses can't tell the difference on the field. Versus an even front, we will run the cutter against the 3 tech., usually with a fold scheme between the center and backside guard. Again, because of the speed in which our veers hit, these cutback plays take advantage of the fast reactions defenders need to play with in order to be effective against our base triple options. If you are interested in learning more about our split back veer, feel free to email me at milcor@blackhawk.k12.wi.us. Thank you.



Protect Your Quarterback ~Hartford Pass Protection

By Paul Shelsta, Offensive Coordinator
Hartford Union High School

Thank you to the WFCA for the opportunity to contribute to this magazine and for all they do to promote football in the state of Wisconsin.

I have coached high school football in the state of Wisconsin for the past 18 years as an assistant coach. I have been able to learn and develop my skills as a coach under some great leadership. I coached for Matt Hensler for 4 years at West Bend West High School. I coached at Hartford Union High School for 3 years under Dan Brunner, 7 years under Tom Noennig, and the past 4 years under John Redders. As you can see, I have been blessed to work with such great coaches.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF CHANGE – We had a big decision to make as an offensive staff this year. The past 3 seasons, we had been an under center, double tight, fullback, power football team. We would pass, but typically only when we needed to. It has been drilled in my head since I was in youth league to run first and pass when necessary. We lost 4 starters from the offensive line last year, and 3 of those starters were 6'4" - 260 lbs or bigger. Coming into this season we were not sure who our starting O-Line was going to be, but we knew they would be inexperienced and much smaller than we were used to. We also lost the leading rusher in our conference at running back. What we did know is that we had a very good quarterback and 6 good receivers coming back. We took a chance and decided to change from a power football rushing attack to an all shotgun spread offense passing attack. It worked, our quarterback was the 5th leading passer in the state (2,613 yards passing) and was 8th in passing touchdowns (28). Our leading receiver was 2nd in the state with 1221 receiving yards and was tied for 3rd in the state in receiving touchdowns with 14. None of this would have been possible had we not been able to understand our personnel and be willing to change. One of the biggest reasons for our success was that we were able to protect the quarterback.

Offensive Line Pass Protection – We knew early on that we would not be able to play "run the ball down your throat" football like we had been used to. We did realize that our Offensive Line was very athletic and they all moved their feet pretty well. We worked on pass protection every day. We drilled pass blocking just as much as we drilled run blocking.

5-STEP DROP

Rules – Tackles have "C" Gap - Guards have "B" Gap

- Center and RB has "A" Gap Center and Guard will always double team the 2i if there is no "B" Gap threat.
- RB is checking Gaps "A" to "B" to "C" - RB helps with biggest threat if no blitz.
- QB must account for extra defender if defense brings more players than we can block.

Blocking Technique – We call our 5-step drop passing block technique POST/KICK/PUCH

Post – The "Post Step" is our 1st step with the inside foot. 6 inch step inside staying square with the line of scrimmage. This takes away the inside slant.

Kick – The "Kick Step" is our 2nd step (backward) with the outside foot. Shoulders need to stay square with the line of scrimmage. Players tend to turn their shoulders on this step. If a Tackle gets a speed rushing DE, the Kick Step can be their 1st step.

Punch – The "Punch" should be a violent 2 handed punch (with the heels of our hands) to the middle of the defenders chest. "Elbows in, thumbs up" is a phrase I am always saying.

1 OR 3-STEP DROP

Rules – Man-to-Man – head up, Inside Gap, Outside Gap

- Center and Guard will always double team the 2i if there is no opposite "A" or "B" gap threat.
- RB is picking up any blitz- checking Gaps "A" to "B" to "C"
- QB must account for extra defender if defense brings more players than we can block.

Technique – Drive Block! We are firing low and hard off the ball making the appearance of a run.

SPRINT PASS

Rules-Sprint Rt. – OL is responsible for their gap to the right. Sprint Lt.- OL is responsible for their gap to the left.

- Backside Tackle will step to "B" gap and turn back to "C" gap if no "B" gap pressure.
- RB will seal the right edge on Sprint Rt. and seal the left edge on Sprint Lt.
- QB must account for extra defender if defense brings more players than we can block.

Technique – OL is taking a reach step (6 inch step) to their gap side. We are punching the chest of the defenders, but we are getting our eyes to the defenders outside armpit. RB is looking for the outside shoulder of the closest threat.

PLAY ACTION PASS

Rules – Man-to-Man, Head up, Inside Gap, Outside Gap

Technique - Drive Block! We are firing low and hard off the ball making the appearance of a run.

- RB carries out fake
- QB must account for extra defender if defense brings more players than we can block.

5-STEP DROP PASS BLOCKING DRILLS

1-on-1 Drills

Post/Kick/Punch/Freeze – Linemen will post, kick, and punch – defense will stop on contact. I will assess each player on footwork, punch (hand placement), and make sure that the defender is in their midline.

Mirror Drill – Offensive player has hands behind the back. Rt. foot- Post Lt. foot-Kick- defensive player shuffles left and right. Offensive player must “mirror” the defensive player shuffles left and right. Offensive player must “mirror” the defensive player while maintaining their feet in the proper position. Run again switching feet.

Bull Rush – Linemen will post, kick, and punch. We teach linemen to Power Hop (widen base and get your butt down).

Inside Slant – Linemen will post, kick, and punch. On an inside slant linemen’s post foot should stay high and power step defender down the line of scrimmage.

Speed Rush – Tackles will go right to a “kick” step on an outside speed rush. We teach tackles to punch and run defender up the field.

Spin Move – Linemen will post, kick, and punch. We teach linemen to get their hands back and let defenders spin while keeping feet and hands in position.

Push Pull – Linemen will post, kick, and punch- Linemen need to “Power Hop” (Power Hop is a short quick hop that widens their base and gets their butt down) on a push pull move, linemen typically step forward getting their feet out of position. A “Power Hop” keeps their feet and body in proper position.

5-ON-4 DRILLS

OL vs DL – 5 step pass pro vs a base defense.

Slant/Twist/Loop – DL will slant/twist/loop. Focus is maintaining our gaps. Tackles have “C” Gap - Guards have “B” Gap - Center and RB has “A” Gaps.

Blitz Pick Up – We will run blitzes that we expect to see each week. Focus is maintaining our gaps. Tackles have “C” Gap, Guards have “B” Gap, Center and RBS have “A” Gaps.

This is just a part of what we do with our Offensive Linemen and Running Backs for pass protection. We are always looking for different ways to improve our pass protection. I would like to thank John Redders, Dan Brunner, and the WFCA for giving me this opportunity.



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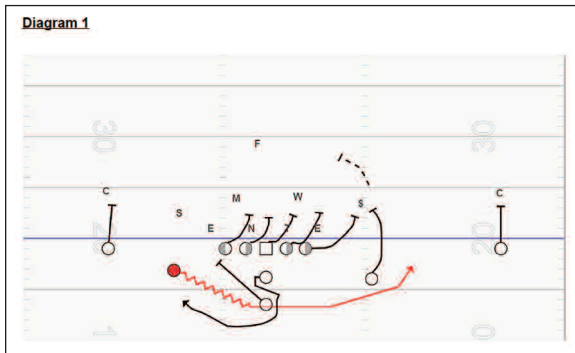
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Rocket Toss Tag & Play Action

**By Dennis Cooper, Offensive Coordinator
St. Norbert College, Green Bay**

I appreciate the opportunity to be a contributor to the WFCA and share my thoughts with coaches from around Wisconsin. I am fortunate to work with a tremendous staff at St. Norbert College and be surrounded by coaches who are second to none in our state. At St. Norbert College, our offensive philosophy is centered on option principles while using a variety of formations, motions, shifts, and personnel groupings. The underlying concepts of our offense are derived from the flexbone, but over time our offense has continually evolved resulting in a more expansive package that includes air raid concepts and tempo variations. We finished the 2019 season at the top of several offensive categories in the Midwest Conference, which include the top scoring offense (33.6 ppg), top passing offense (226.9 avg/g), and in the top 3 in rushing offense (185.2 yds/g). A large part of our offensive package the last two seasons was our rocket toss series. As the title of the series implies, our base play within the series was our rocket toss, but the series also includes a dive play, play action pass, as well as several tags off of the rocket.

Our rocket has been a productive play in all situations, but it has been particularly good when we see heavy interior stunts or blitz, short yardage situations, and from condensed formations. The following are our base rules for the rocket play (see diagram 1 for drawing).



ROCKET RULES

PST: Run reach to the alley; work to #2 (overhang) in the option count

PSG: Run reach the playside 'B' gap, work around #1 (DE) if possible

C: Run reach the playside 'A' gap, work to the second level

BSG: Run reach the backside 'A' gap, work to the second level

BST: Run reach the backside 'B' gap, work to the second level

PSWR: Block the corner (Alec Scheme)

PSSL: Secure #2 to the safety (Alec Scheme)

BSWR: Block near Safety or corner

BSSL: Orbit motion, catch and stretch.

QB: Reverse out, knuckle ball toss, boot away

RB: Collision backside pursuit

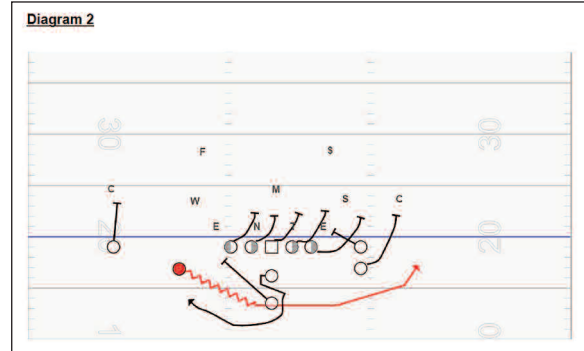
Keys to running the Rocket:

1. Orbit motion, must leave sooner than triple (roughly 6 to 8 steps when the ball is snapped)
2. RB must be moved up to clear the orbit motion
3. The ball must be caught on the heel line of the RB and just outside the PST initial alignment
4. #2 and the Corner must be the priority defenders blocked on the perimeter
5. Slot must stretch the field and get width fast

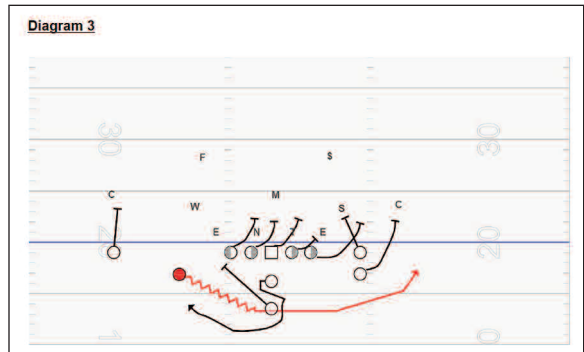
There are a number of beneficial tags that can be added to the rocket play based on how you are being defended or what particular defender is giving you trouble. In my opinion, you must have alternative ways to

handle both #1 and #2 in the option count if you want to sustain success with this series.

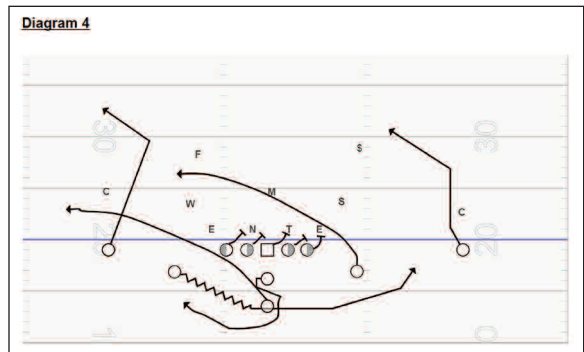
The first thing to consider is how to handle #1 in the option count. If the #1 defender reads the block of the PST and stretches the edge, it can cause issues with getting the ball to the perimeter. With that in mind, the first tag involves changing the formation to a "stacked" or "flex" look and blocking #1 with the WR. This means that the slot will arc to block the corner and the PST must wrap around the downblock of the slot to block #2 or the alley defender as seen in diagram 2.



The next consideration is an alternative way to handle the #2 defender in the option count. Again, this involves a change of formation into a "stacked" or "flex" look as well alignment of the #2 defender inside the wide receiver. The WR will crack the #2 defender, the slot must arc to block the corner, and the PST must run reach to block the first defender that shows outside of #2 (see diagram 3.)



The next play in the series is our play action boot play, which has been our number one play action concept within the series. We typically like to run this play when backside defenders are chasing motion or otherwise vacating coverage on toss action. The rules and diagrams (diagram 4) for our boot play are as follows.



BOOT RULES

PST: Boot protection, run playside 'B' gap and block defender who shows

PSG: Boot protection, run playside 'A' gap and block defender who shows

C: Boot protection, run backside 'A' gap and block defender who shows

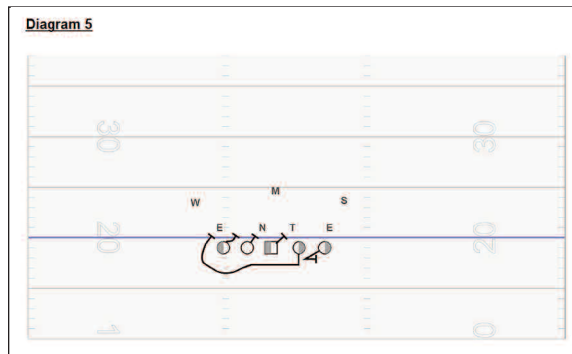
BSG: Boot protection, run backside 'B' gap and block defender who shows
 BST: Boot protection, run backside 'C' gap and block defender who shows
 PSWR: Crack corner route at 14 to 16 yards
 PSSL: Orbit motion, fake toss
 BSWR: Post route, occupy backside safety
 BSSL: Over route at 10 to 12 yards
 QB: Reverse out, fake toss, boot to call and look high to low.
 RB: Arrow route to sideline at 3 to 5 yards

It is important to note the protection variations that can be used with this play action concept within the rocket series. As illustrated in the diagrams and rules, the "elephants on parade" protection has been a viable option when running this play. However, we have also pulled the backside guard to log the defensive end and secure the edge (rules and diagram 5). There are pros and cons to each protection, but what you choose to do is largely dictated by what you feel comfortable with, what your athletes can execute, and how a defense defends you.

ALTERNATIVE BOOT PROTECTION RULES

PST: Block down on the playside 'B' gap
 PSG: Block down on the playside 'A' gap
 C: Block back on the backside 'A' gap

BSG: Pull and log the DE
 BST: Hinge 'B' to 'C' gap



In closing, I think it is important to reiterate the utility of this series and bring to light the fact that these plays provide ways to attack the perimeter with a non option play within an option oriented offense. If you have questions or want to discuss what we have done offensively over the last two years at St. Norbert College, please never hesitate to contact us.



**By Brent Allen, Offensive Line Coach
 UW-Whitewater**

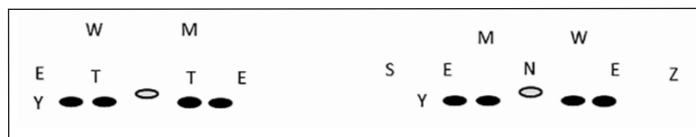
There are a lot of different Offensive Line (OL) techniques out there, but I am going to share a little about the inside zone we run at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. All of these techniques have been adopted from other offensive line coaches throughout my career. Some of the areas I want to focus on briefly are scheme, pre-snap, stance, starts and aiming point, strike, combos, movements and reads.

SCHEME

At UW-Whitewater, we are a Middle Linebacker ("Mike") identification (ID) team and base our combinations off who is called the "Mike." For our base inside zone we ID the player "middle front" as our "Mike." This means the first second level player (head up to play side of the center) is the "Mike." Rules for the OL are very simple: Covered = assume man, Uncovered = make combo call which I will cover in more detail later. Whether it is a basic front or a "unique" front, these rules still hold true. Our inside zone can hit front side B-gap to back side C-gap depending on how the defense reacts.

PRE-SNAP

First thing that needs to happen is the center IDs the front. I've identified two fronts, Okie (3-4) and Even (4-2):

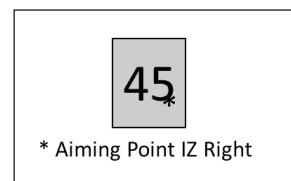


STANCE/SPLITS

On inside zone we want to maximize our vertical splits to be as far off the ball as possible. This allows us to have more time to get our second step in the ground before contact and see what the defense is doing post snap. Our left guard (LG) and left tackle (LT) are in left hand stances and the right guard (RG) and right tackle (RT) are in right hand stances. Most of the linemen stagger their outside foot backward and have a toe-to-arch or toe-to-heel relationship. There is some freedom in the relationship depending on the athlete's size, flexibility, and comfort. The athlete needs to be able to achieve all desired starts from a consistent OL stance. Toes point slightly out in the stance while gently resting our inside wrist above the knee with our eyes up. Our down hand should be lightly placed on the ground supporting about 30% of our weight.

STARTS/AIMING POINT

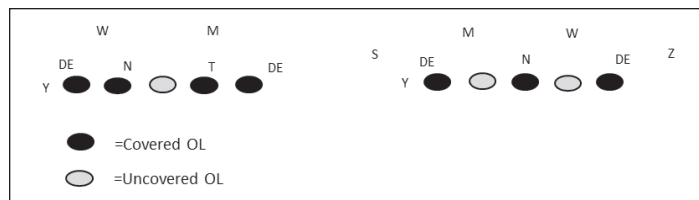
We have two different 1st steps: drop step and bucket step. On a drop step, if you are covered with a defensive lineman (DL) on your frame, you take a drop step to your aiming point which is the bottom of the play side number. The drop step is a two to four inch step gaining width and depth. The variance in the step is determined by the aiming point of the defender and what each athlete needs to do to be successful in getting to his aiming point. In 2019 we started to narrow down our aiming points to very specific spots. We chose the bottom of the play-side number as compared to just the play-side number because of how we want to strike low to high (aim small miss small).



We ask our players to gain depth from the line of scrimmage for a couple of reasons. One, it allows us to see post-snap movement along with our vertical splits above. Two, it allows us to improve our leverage on the defender. Three, we want to make contact with the defender on our second step so the additional space gives us additional time. Common

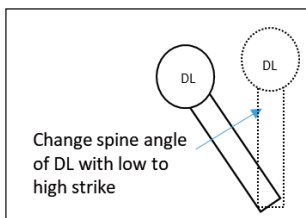
misconceptions of the drop step are that we are going backward or not being aggressive. We practice our shoulders surging forward on our first step every day. So, even though we are losing ground with our feet our pads are moving forward.

The bucket step is used when an OL is uncovered. This allows him to fit into a double team with the covered OL or “build” to the second level. Our bucket steps are four to six inch steps gaining width and depth. Our uncovered offensive lineman’s aiming point is the midline of the next play side DL.



STRIKE

We have incorporated pieces of Scott Peters’ Tip of Spear for our strikes. When we strike on a base block we want our thumbs pointing out. Strike with palm, preferably the lateral side below the pinky. Our thumbs should be rotated out (over emphasize out and not just up). This allows for our elbows to be tucked in to the chest and pointing downward. Striking like this allows our hands to carry the power of our hips, keep our head out of contact, and change the defenders spine angle. Once we change the spine angle of the defender we are able to then grab ground with our feet.

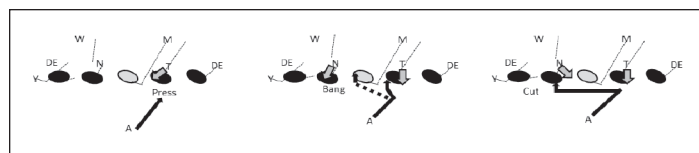


COMBOS

We work a variation of combination drills every day to prepare for defenses that can show up in a ton of different looks. Our front side combo fits are hip to hip with our eyes to the linebacker (LB). Generally speaking we want to have one hand each on the DL with a free hand to be used when taking over the DL or coming off to the LB. We say two hands on, four eyes up. We should not come off to a LB until they are within an arm’s reach. The ball carrier will eventually bring the LB to us so we should stay patient. The free hand can be triggered if the DL spikes into one of the OLs. The free hand allows us to get our hips on the appropriate angle to pick up the LB. This more than anything affects our angle of departure on double teams. Our backside double teams are much more aggressive as we are trying to cover up or chase the front side OL’s armpit. Being aggressive on the backside makes the DL choose if he wants to stay in his gap (and get washed) or “opt out” and play against the flow of the play. We don’t care what the DL picks as long as we are able to define it for our ball carrier.

MOVEMENT/READ

This play is most efficient when paired with wide zone. Creating a fear for the DL of getting reached is what causes the most movement. In a perfect world the OL would be able to drive the DL vertically off the ball. However, horizontal movement is more attainable because the fear of being reached along with our angle of departure allows the OL to laterally displace the DL. Here are the 3 possible options where the ball can hit depending on what the DL does:



Inside zone has been a staple of UW-Whitewater football for decades and these are just some of the basic principles. Every play for an offensive lineman has a front ID, stance, start and a strike. If you have any questions on how UW-Whitewater blocks inside zone please feel free to reach out and don’t forget to #PoundTheRock. Allenbt29@uww.edu.

AN UPDATE FROM ROGERS ATHLETIC

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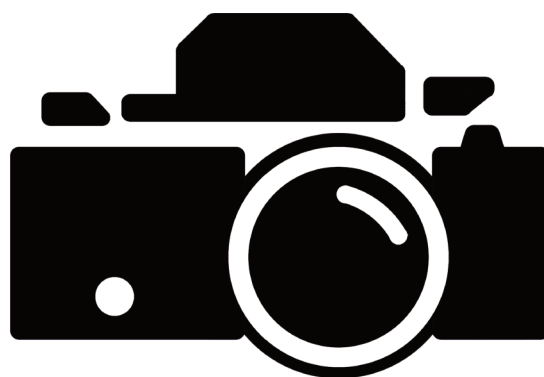
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Blocking on the Line of Scrimmage with “Force Deflection”

Presented by Mike Pollak, Tip of the Spear

When it comes to blocking and moving another player on the line of scrimmage, there are generally two methodologies most coaches teach from. The first we call the “Horizontal Press” methodology and the second is “Force Deflection”.

The “Horizontal Press” has been around since the early days of football and is what the majority of us were taught back when we played. The basic philosophy was to run off the ball with low pad level and to be more physical than the other guy to create movement backwards. Mechanics focused on driving or pressing the opponent on a horizontal plane.

Attacking on a linear (horizontal) plane is extremely inefficient, as it requires the offensive player to generate a force greater than the oncoming force from the opponent.



“Running off the ball” or taking driving steps with the feet disables the hips from generating any power to be used upon contact. Think of the “Hang Clean” movement in the weight room. You could never lift the bar overhead by starting in a split stance or with feet staggered, as the hips are locked when in this position. Instead, the hips must be square in order to properly uncoil and generate the power needed to move the bar overhead. Player safety is also compromised because the helmet is either instructed to be involved during initial contact (“hat and hands”) or the helmet is indirectly impacted due to poor alignment of the arms during contact.

Most Coaches either taught this old methodology or still teach this way because they did not know there was a more effective and efficient way to teach contact in 1 on 1 situations, i.e. base blocks. When I was first introduced to “Force Deflection” I had the same question everyone we teach this to asks, “Why wasn’t I taught this earlier?”. “Force Deflection” changes the spine angle of the opponent by deflecting oncoming force vertically, by creating lift, generated by the hips driving the hands. In other words, as the defender’s force approaches, the offensive player generates opposing force from below the linear plane through the uncoiling of the hips. This creates lift as the contact point of the “Bridge Fit” strikes the base of the breastplate of the opponent. The defender’s original force is diminished as the spine angle becomes more vertical, allowing the blocker to accomplish their objective in a more effective and efficient manner.

KEY COACHING POINTS OF BLOCKING WITH “FORCE DEFLECTION”

- SQUARE BASE WITH FEET BEHIND
- KNEES MOVE DOWN AND OUT
- HIPS EXTENDED WITH POSTERIOR PELVIC TILT TO PROTECT LUMBAR SPINE

- HANDS STRIKE BOTTOM CORNERS OF BREAST PLATE WITH “TIP OF THE SPEAR”
- THUMBS ROTATE OUR 45° TO FORCE ELBOWS DOWN INSIDE FRAME OF BODY
- THE HEAD IS DRAWN OUT AND AWAY FROM CONTACT AS THE HIPS FULLY UNCOIL



“Force Deflection” is not only superior mechanically, it also is superior when applied to scheme. One of the biggest challenges of a 1-on-1 base block, on the line of scrimmage or out in space, is adjusting to an opponent slanting across-face. Taking a lead step, or running off the ball, makes it nearly impossible to adjust to lateral movement without having to turn their shoulders. By using “Force Deflection”, players can stay square to the point of contact and deliver DOMINANT force, on the angle of the slant, through their opponent. We are not pushing trucks, we are moving people and therefore should be learning and teaching techniques that attack opponent’s weaknesses.

Tip of the Spear offers a variety of off-season and in-season drills to develop the skills needed to master “Force Deflection” and its various applications on both sides of the ball. To learn more about this topic and other ways Tip of the Spear can optimize ALL forms of contact please visit our website. TIP OF THE SPEAR “BRIDGE FIT” BRANDON SCHERFF #75 USING “FORCE DEFLECTION”

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Building a Top-Tier Wide Receiver Group

By David Ullsperger
Offensive Coordinator, West Bend West HS

In our spread offense, the wide receivers can arguably be the most important position on the field. We want our top athletes to play the wide receiver position for us. They obviously can create plays with the ball in their hands, they take the focus off our quarterback at times, and they create multiple mismatches for the defense all over the field. I want all my receivers to be what we call Triple Threat WRs, and we will get into that a little bit later.

At the beginning of each season, I will take a couple of the senior receivers, if there are any, or other leaders of the group and go over season goals. I will share my vision and goals for them but also ask them a series of questions that give me an idea about how they expect the season to go. I will ask them for their personal goals, goals as a receiver group, team goals, where they want to get better as a player, and how I can help them be better as a coach. What I want to do going into the year is create a plan to best coach this group of kids. I will work them harder in areas they want to be better at and try my best to create an identity regarding how we want to play. Obviously, a lot of that identity is really created out on the field in practices and games, but I take it on myself to prepare them as best as I can.

Last year for example, I had two senior receivers who I know worked hard all off-season to best prepare themselves going into the year. They put on a ton of muscle and became faster and much quicker in and out of their breaks, so we knew that we had the potential to be one of the most aggressive groups in the state. We did not want to back down to any opponent we played and that mentality spread among the rest of the team. We would not be pushed around at the line of scrimmage from corners or linebackers. We would break multiple tackles, never be tackled by just one person, and we would finish our runs through the defender and never be driven backwards. If you look at our schedule last season and how we played those tougher teams, teams like Menomonie, Onalaska, and Catholic Memorial, you could tell that we never backed down from the fight.

The first few days of two a days and camp I want to go over the basics and make sure they build healthy habits that last the rest of the season and beyond that too. I like to work on their stances and really drill into them the importance of it. I want to make sure that the foot that they have forward is the foot closest to the ball. So if the receiver is in the right slot, then their left foot is the one that is on the line of scrimmage or a yard behind. To me, it is crucial to get 70% of your body weight over that top foot and the rest of their weight on the back foot, which is used to help with balance. As soon as the ball is snapped you dig that front foot in the ground and push off that foot. Your first three steps, no matter the route

or play, should always look the exact same starting with the first step from the back foot. Too many times I see young guys lift that front foot and put it back down before they step with the back foot and that is what I call a "false step". The one exception to this rule is if you are being jammed at the line and need to work one of your releases to get free of the press.

Once they have the stance down, I like to really focus on the routes and make sure they are run properly. I usually start with our quick "number" routes, which means a "rocker step" for our quarterback, and I will have them walk through each route focusing on their steps and where they are when they break out of their cuts. Then I have them jog through it before they go full speed. I will do this almost every day until they get it down to a science. We have a lot of rules on the routes we run so we will go over that and also establish our scramble rules for when the quarterback gets out of the pocket.

For example, one of those rules is when we are running a Go and the defender is playing off coverage and you know you will never be able to get on top of the DB and beat him, we turn it into a Stop route. A Stop is essentially whenever you realize that you won't beat them you stop and turn towards the quarterback and continue to work to get open.

My primary goal for each receiver is to turn them into a triple threat receiver. The three threats that I am looking for are blocking, getting open, and catching the ball. Blocking is very important at times in our offense, whether it is a called run play and they need to block close to the line of scrimmage or if our QB is scrambling and gets to the second level of the defense and we can do our part to create space for him. As stated before, the first three steps off the line of scrimmage should always be the same, attack the DB before engaging and blocking him from making a play. Next is getting open and getting open at the top of each route. The routes designed on each play correlate with the steps the quarterback is taking, so we need to be open when he is ready to get rid of the ball. This is all about our timing and steps of the route, spacing at the line of scrimmage, and breaking down and getting in and out of our cuts. Lastly, plain and simple, catching the ball. As receivers, we know this is one of the most important aspects to our job and we would not be wrong. You will not be on the field if you do not fight for and catch every ball that comes your way. We do catching drills almost daily to work on our soft hand and looking the ball in before we look up to make a play. Obviously a drop will happen every now and then, but it is about how you respond and catch the next one that shows the headspace of every receiver. Once we do catch the ball and look to make a play, I use the word "Puncture" to illustrate what I want them to do. Everyone wants to make "the big play" and run around until they find a crease and take it to the house, but in our offense, and to create our aggressive identity, I want them to catch the ball and immediately turn North/South and puncture through any weak tacklers and fall forward. If you can grow as a player and become a Triple Threat Receiver you have the potential to be one of the best in the state any given year.

It takes time to be part of the best groups in the state and it takes repetition and understanding our goals as an offense to do so. To me, you have to start small and work your way up before you can rush into this and be great. Start at the basics - stance, route running, catching the ball, and once you can do those things consistently to your expectations, your group will take off and start to really have success. It can start in the middle school programs if you can teach those coaches how to coach the kids so that by the time they come to the high school level they have the basic principles down. Everyone wants to be great, but does your group have the want to and the work ethic to get there?

UW-Stout Pass Game Mesh

By Nick Pesik, Offensive Coordinator
University of Wisconsin-Stout

I would first like to thank the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association for allowing me to talk about how we run our offense and more specifically how we breakdown our Mesh concept at the University of Wisconsin – Stout. Mesh was a good concept for us last season in just about every situation as well as an all-purpose beater. It has a bunch of built in answers depending on how you want to teach and develop it. I thought that it was important to share because it can fit in any type of offense you are running. There are a ton of different ways to run or teach it here is just how we do it.

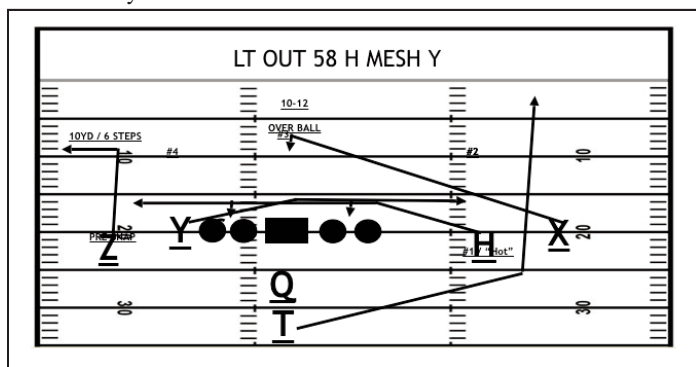
We tried to build this concept to make it as easy for our guys as we possibly could. We built in concrete rules to all of our wide receivers and tight ends so that they could play fast and not over think this concept at all.

- We label our Tight Ends/Wide Receivers like most do as: X/Z/Y/H
- Our X/Zs - Outside guys and are true receivers in our system.
- Our H/Ys - Slots or inline/split out TEs. The body type can change based on the personnel that we are in.

BASE RULES:

Z – Will always have a 10-12-yard or 6-step locked speed out.

X/H/Y – Can all be tagged as “Meshers” if you are one of these three and you are not tagged then you have a 10-12-yard Ball Curl. We will always go left over right with our Meshers and they are required to slap hands as they mesh.



EXAMPLE:

Diving more deeply into this example:

Tailback (T) – Protection is 58 – 5 tells us it's a 5 man protection and 8 tells us his route (Even – releasing to the right or Odd – releasing to the left) and the 8 or 9 puts him on a wheel. The back is told to take his release path his aiming point to the boundary is holding the bottom of the numbers. To the field the back will take a bit wide path out of the backfield and split the hash and the numbers. He is required to peek back to the QB before he exits the backfield because he is the QB's “Hot”.

Z – Like we mentioned before, the Z in this concept will always have a Locked 6 Step speed out.

Y/H – Both are tagged in the Mesh, again the player on the left will always set the mesh. We want to get no deeper than 3 yards. They are required to slap hands so we can assure that they are truly getting a mesh or a rub which is obviously important vs. man-to-man or if you're getting a chaser. We give them a couple of rules after they slap hands. First, they cannot make their decision to sit or run based on the look they are getting until after they get to the opposite B Gap. Secondly, if they decide to sit they must clearly define it by turning and squaring their chest to the QB. The guidelines we give them for sitting or staying on the run are quite simple. If you feel a chaser in man keep it on the run and if you feel zone or have grass to sit down in then sit and don't run thru the open window.

The feel is so important here, you can add motion to give more pre-snap indicators. If they sit, secure the catch drop step, get vertical and get yards. If they continue and do not settle the same rules apply after we secure the catch, we want to drop the upfield foot get vertical and get yards.

X – Ball Curl – 10 to 12 yards directly over the ball. We tell him to cut his split down 2 yards and to take his cleanest release to his aiming point. A little thing we talk about is giving a vertical stem at the top of the route to get a few more yds of space vs. man coverage. At the top of the route it's crucial to sit, get square and get big anticipate a contested catch. Same rules apply after securing the catch as our meshers. Drop step, get vertical and get yards.

QB – We are predominantly in the gun so we will take a 5-step from gun drop, this will be a full scan progression for us. Our Pre-snap read will be the Z, if we like his 1-v-1 or get off coverage we can take him. If we don't like it we are off him. We know that it is a 5-man protection for us so anytime we get a 6th player coming we are going to be “Hot” to the Tailback on the Swing/Wheel. We will start there in our progression, then work to the first mesher, the ball curl and back to the 2nd mesher. This to us keeps it very simple in terms of progression and clean with our feet to get all of the way through.

Again, this is just how we do it and how we found it easiest to build in our offense. I think it is something that can be run in any offense and be very successful. It can also be a comfortable call no matter the down and distance or area of the field that you may be in. Whether it's to get you back on track on second down if you are behind the sticks or on a critical third and medium, we like calling it in a variety of situations.

Thank you again for allowing me to share some of what we do in our offense here at Uw-Stout. If you have any questions or would like to talk more about anything we do please feel free to contact me.



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