

# ***The Point After II***

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION, VOL. 30, No.1, SUMMER 2022

## **2022 WFCAs All-Star Charity Football Games Benefiting Children's Wisconsin**

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*Photos by Jerry Golembiewski*

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# Executive Director, Dan Brunner



Dan Brunner

Hopefully, this issue of the Point After II finds you off to a good start to another journey with your team. There is no other journey, outside of life's journey with your family, that is as rewarding as a coach's annual journey with his or her team throughout their football season. Enjoy every minute of it.

## WFCA MEMBERSHIP

The WFCA membership, now includes clinic registration! I am confident that no state has a better deal for their members. We are striving for 100% of the football coaches in the state

to become WFCA members. We need all of you to help us achieve that goal. The WFCA membership program allows you to combine high school and youth programs for your staff rate.

Membership Dues are:

Small Staff (Maximum of 9 members) \$405 ( \$45/member )

- Additional members (10-13) - \$55 each
- Large Staff (Maximum of 14 members) \$630 ( \$45/member )
- Additional members - \$55 each
- Unlimited 15+ \$775
- Note: Admission to the Annual Clinic is included in Membership Fee
- You may combine Youth staffs and High School staffs for all 3 staff rates!
- In State Individual - \$55 Out of State Individual - \$60
- Note\* WFCA membership is required for all Award Programs (All-State, All-Star, COY, etc...). Please see the list of membership benefits below.

## WFCA CLINIC

Please remember to set aside March 30 & 31, and April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 for our Annual Gathering in Madison! Last year's clinic was awesome. I can't wait till next year's!

## WFCA MENTOR MANUAL

WFCA HOF member and Past President, Bill Collar, along with a select group of current and past WFCA coaches have revised and updated the WFCA Mentoring Manual. It is the finest of its kind anywhere. It is a valuable resource for coaches at all levels. Sales of copies have 100% of the proceeds going toward the Bill Collar Lineman Scholarship Fund. Ordering information is found later in this issue.

## NHSACA HOF

A special congratulations to Len Luedtke and Jerry Schliem, who were inducted into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame this past June. Congrats Coaches, on a well-deserved honor!

## CONCLUSION

The past 2 years have been tough to navigate personally and professionally for all of us. One of the things that I have always known has been magnified. That is the vital role that coaches play in the development of the young men and women in their programs. Keep up the good work and enjoy this year's journey with them!

## JOIN THE WFCA TODAY

TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE BENEFITS:

- \$2,000.000.00 LIABILITY INSURANCE POLICY (*details on page 63*)
- Eligibility to participate in the WFCA Grant Program
- Three issues of *The Point After II* newsletter
- All-Star games, nomination rights and free attendance
- All-State nomination rights
- Scholarship nomination rights
- Hall of Fame nomination rights
- All-State Championship rings
- Annual awards and recognition including Regional and State Coaches of the Year.
- WFCA membership enhances professional growth and gives you the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of your profession
- A professional network of new contacts, a line of communication and a forum for the exchange of ideas and information within your profession.
- [www.wifca.org](http://www.wifca.org), our professional website with the latest information about football in Wisconsin which provides unlimited resources to meet the needs of member coaches.



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# President, Tony Biolo



*Tony Biolo*

**W**elcome to another year of football! The fall football season of 2022 is upon us and is feeling normal for the first time in a few years!

This past summer we had great success in the WFCA/Children's Hospital All-Star Game with 3 great football games and the weather co-operated for the entire weekend!

Doug Sarver has led this game/operation for many years to be the success that it is. It takes many, many people to make this a success and Doug has a great group of Coaches that are willing to help out every year to make this the excellent game and week for the athletes and Children's Hospital. Last year we added a 3rd site for teams to practice due to COVID, and this year we kept it due to the convenience for teams and players. The 3 games remained at Titan Stadium with 8-Player on Friday Night and then Small & Large School games on Saturday. It was again a huge success for our athletes, but especially by their fundraising efforts for the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. The WFCA is so proud to partner with Children's Hospital of Wisconsin for this and know that, not only do we care for our athletes on the field, but all of our kids and families off the field.

Starting off this year WIAA/WFCA agreed that the first day of practice would include the equipment hand-out and testing. This was done so that we will not have to say that football will

start in July (typically July 31st) on our 'early-start' years, which is coming up. Most teams have summer contact days and have helmets issued and/or sized already, so it should not be the problem that teams have run into in the past. Football starts early enough, and this is a way to gain a day of summer. With our first couple of weeks up and running I have heard from many teams that things are going well and this season even "feels" like it is back to normal. Last year, some teams were still affected by their "spring season" and really felt like some kids never had a break or other season. Now we are headed into a season where all the teams and athletes have had chances to improve, in a true off-season, to get out for other sports and train to get better.

We are looking forward to a great fall season and some exciting things happening with our post-season. The WIAA is planning on a reveal show to let the brackets and rankings out. No more staying up till 2 or 3 AM to find out who plays who and where teams are ranked. Teams and coaches will have to wait a bit longer to find out who they play and where they got ranked, but it will be a state-wide release and many teams will have a chance to gather and learn together as a group, with the excitement of the playoffs, we feel this will add to the playoffs. With our state-wide use of HUDL, we should not have much of a problem with quick film trade and direct exchanges as soon as teams find out who they are playing.

This is the year for any proposals to the WIAA Football Conference realignment committee. If your school is looking for a change in conferences or needs to make a change to 8-Player football, the proposal needs to be in by October 1st of this year for that change to be looked at and discussed.

Early-start and post-season play continue to be discussed among some coaches and schools. We will be conducting a survey about season start and post-season play very soon to see what the coaches think and have in mind. WIAA conducted a similar survey about football with AD's this past spring, and we would like to see where the coaches align on this issue. If we push the season start time back by a week, we lose a reg-

ular season game, there is no way around that. Everything works backward from our State Championship game, as that game is played about as late as we could (the weekend before Thanksgiving) in a state without a dome. Football is allowed only one game per week so the season needs to be worked backward, with a field of 32 teams (per division) qualifying for state, that is a 5-game tournament series. Now add 9 regular season games and with the required number of days before our first game, you end up with our current format. So if we back our start time up by a week, then we would have to go to an 8-game regular season. Weighing the cost of a game vs. one more week of summer is what we need to look at. There are solutions, if this is the best course of action. Supplemental tournament (think NIT) for all teams that do not make the WIAA Tournament series. Additional games in post season, currently teams can play a 10th game, but very few do that on their own. Maybe having the WFCA help set this up could be beneficial. Again, all things to be discussed and considered. What we have currently is not terrible, but can it be improved?

We have an outstanding organization in our state and that is because of ALL the coaches within the organization that are willing to offer insight, suggestions and communicate to our Region Reps who bring the issues to the forefront.

Our job is to make the football experience as enjoyable and memorable for those athletes that choose to participate in our programs! What we do and how we approach these issues is vital to maintaining and continuing to grow our sport. Working as a group and getting the best possible solutions to these problems is our first priority. It is not about any ONE program, but it is about ALL our programs... It is about football and Wisconsin!

Please feel free to e-mail or call with your ideas and concerns. There are always improvements we can make to our great game. In closing, good luck to everyone this fall season. It is my hope we continue to encourage not only strong athletes in the game of football, but strong young men who use the lessons of football to have successful lives beyond the field of football.



**Contact the WFCA office at:**

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# Editor, Director of Communications and Corporate Sponsors, Tom Swittel



Tom Swittel

I write this article after the first weekend of games have been played. Examining scores on Friday night is a ritual and you look at all of them plotting how the various areas of the state looks. What traditionally strong teams remain potential state champions? What schools are ready to make a move into that category? How will the conference championship races play out? There are so many possibilities and so many schools ready to prove this year is their year to do it. There is nothing quite like the start of a football season. The excitement of it engulfs us all.

Of course, the excitement of it tends to mask all of the work that has led up to this. It's hard to believe your long off season is over and all of the effort that went into it now comes into play. Everything from your strength and conditioning, 7 on 7, and what equipment you ordered is right before your eyes. Or perhaps you are like me and are still waiting for the 50 helmets and 90 pair of knee pads you ordered. And even that is a blessing as you find out your friends in the football coaching fraternity are willing to help you out in a time of need. A big thank you to Marquette High, New Berlin West, New Berlin Eisenhower, Whitefish Bay, Arrowhead, Wauwatosa East, and Milwaukee Riverside for stepping up and helping me and my team at Milwaukee Vincent have what we need to begin the season. Your kindness will never be forgotten. Thank you.

My off season also included me coaching in my third All-Star Game. The All-Star Game experience remains very special and is something all coaches should consider doing. All Star Game Chair, Doug Sarver, runs a well-oiled machine that is classy in every meaning of the term. I was a part of an incredible staff headed by Whitefish Bay coach Jake Wolter. I learned a lot of football from the very knowledgeable coaches I was worked with and made lifelong friends in the process. I also got to work with very dedi-

cated and talented young men who were playing their last high school game before going to college. Oh yeah, and I was able to help raise money for our All-Star Game partner, Children's of Wisconsin. The look on the faces of the players when our Children's patient visited White-water and she and her mom told her story was incredible. I know that experience changed some of their lives. I also know it brought into focus what the Game is really about. The Team Building and Leadership session with the United States Marine Corp, who are an All-Star Game sponsor, was also well received. I encourage all coaches to consider coaching in the All-Star Game. I also encourage all coaches to nominate deserving players to play in the game and then follow up to make sure the players they nominate participate in the game. The All-Star Game will be the highlight of your coaching career and the highlight of your player's playing career. That I can guarantee.

With that, I wish all of you the best of luck this season. I hope you avoid injuries and are able to beat your most hated rival. I look forward to seeing all of you at the State Finals at Camp Randall. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any ideas you may have for The Point After II. I can be reached by phone: (414) 315-1131 or by email: .

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These are just a few examples of why we've evolved our name to reflect our commitment to giving kids and families what they need to grow and thrive.

As always, we are grateful for all the generous families, champions and donors who believe, like we do, that kids deserve the best.

**Thank you to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association for your partnership and for helping us help kids.**



Kids deserve the best.

[childrenswi.org](http://childrenswi.org)





# Hall of Fame Chairman, John Hoch



*John Hoch*

I hope everyone had a good summer. Shelly and I have been very busy – we had our first granddaughter named Hadley. That in itself is one of the greatest things that has ever happened to Shelly and I. We went to Alaska – I really believe everyone should experience this trip. Shelly followed that up with a trip to Hawaii. Last year was the first year I did not coach football. That was short lived as this year I am back helping the Pepin-Alma football program. It is great to see Wisconsin football off to a great start with some exciting games already played.

We had our WFCA Clinic which I am happy to say, was back to more like the “normal” for a Hall of Fame Banquet. It was great to see everyone at the annual HOF luncheon with Duane Rogatzki hosting the event. We were able to produce a video for all those attending with a picture of Hall of Fame members at the beginning of their career and a picture of them presently or at the end of the career. I would like to give recognition and special thank you to Rob Callahan from Lan-

caster for producing the video. The plan is to add pictures and update the video every year.

We want to continue with our efforts to raise money for scholarships. Every year we are amazed at the great individual student athletes who apply for our scholarships. With your donations and the funds raised through raffles and other efforts, coordinated by Jerry Golembiewski and his group, we can continue to provide these student athletes with financial support. Jerry does an amazing job every year. Donating is a great way for coaches to give back to this great game of football. REMINDER - This year's donations end at the 31st of December 2022. Below is a list of donations received at this time. We want to make sure everyone is listed so if we missed you please let us know and we will get it corrected. This serves as a friendly reminder to help with the scholarship fund. For all of you who have already contributed – **THANK YOU!**

The 2023 class selected for the induction to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Hall of Fame is another great group of coaches. If you have time please drop them an email or a short note congratulating them. A full list of the WFCA Hall of Fame Class of 2023 and our annual award receiptment is published in this article. Inflation has hit us all these days and like all things the price of our Hall of Fame banquet tickets had to increase accordingly. The banquet ticket price is now \$50, reflecting an increase of \$5.00.

As always, every year we lose some great individuals who have dedicated themselves to making football great. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

Wishing you all a really great football season... good competition, success under the Friday night lights and perhaps most of all, real positive influence in the lives of the young men of Wisconsin. You are The Boys of Fall – What an Honor!

## ➤ In Memoriam ➤

### James “Jim” K. Harris

*June 27, 1949 – May 12, 2022*

“Jim” Harris, age 72 of Bear Valley, Wisconsin died peacefully on Thursday, May 12, 2022, while turkey hunting. Jim was born on June 27, 1949, to Russell and Ruth (Dunaway) Harris. He graduated from Colby High School in 1967 and enlisted in the Marine Corps. He served from 1968-1972, including a tour in Vietnam. After his discharge he attended college, graduating from UW La Crosse in 1976. He then started his teaching career at the Richland Middle School

as a Health & Phy Ed. teacher where he taught for over 30 years. Jim loved sports, his favorite being football. He coached 25 years for the Richland Center Hornets & 17 years for the Ithaca Bulldogs, retiring in 2021. He was inducted into the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2019.

When he wasn't busy coaching, Jim could be found hunting or fishing. He was known for his turkey calling skills, finding walleye, and knowing the perfect spot for a deer stand.



### WFCA HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2023

**Mike Beck**, Racine Park/Franklin HS

**Louis Brown**, Franklin HS

**Bob DeKeyser**, Niagara/Lena HS  
& St. Norbert College

**Scott Erickson**, Hurley HS

**Kevin Grundy**, Marshfield Columbus  
Wausau Newman/Antigo/Wausau West  
Wausau East & Northland Pines HS

**Ken Krause**, Muskego HS

**Bruce Larson**, Somerset HS

**Brian Leair**, Cedarburg HS

**Rick Muellenberg**, Bangor HS

**Bill O'Leary**, Milton/Janesville Craig HS

**Jon Steffenhagen**, Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau

### DAVE MCCLAIN

**Distinguished Service Award**

**Jerry Hannack**, Elmwood HS

### MARGE & DICK RUNDLE

**Positive Influence of Coaching Award**

**Andrew Troxel**, Richland Center HS

### NHSACA HALL OF FAME

**Dan Juedes**, Sheboygan HS

**Jerry Golembiewski**, Racine St. Catherine's  
Milwaukee West/Arrowhead  
Milwaukee Marshall High Schools & UW-M

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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, urban 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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**Raymond Joseph Heim***April 11, 1928 - July 8, 2022*

OCONOMOWOC - Raymond Joseph Heim passed away peacefully on July 8, 2022, in the company of his loving family.

He was born in Milwaukee on April 11, 1928, to his parents, John M. Heim and Loretta (Dobner) Heim. Ray was a graduate of St. John's Cathedral High School in Milwaukee, UW-Milwaukee Extension, and UW-Madison (MS Degree). He honorably served his country as an Operating Room Technician in the Army Medical Corps (in a MASH Unit) in Korea.

Ray was an accomplished athlete. He was a four-sport star for UW-Milwaukee Extension in the 1950s. He captained the football and baseball teams for two years, lettered in basketball and competed in Track. He won the Wisconsin Alumni Club award as the Extension Athlete of the Year in 1954 and was later inducted into the UW-Milwaukee Hall of Fame. His love of sports and gift for mentoring young men and women led to a successful career as a high school teacher and coach.

He coached football at Jefferson High School 1957-63, Dodgeville High School 1963-66, and Platteville High School 1966-79. Coaching highlights included Dodgeville's conference championship in 1963 with the only perfect year in the school's history (8-0 record), four conference championships and five second place finishes at Platteville, and selection as the head coach for the South All-Star Team for the Third Annual Wisconsin High School Shrine Bowl Game. In 1985, Ray was inducted into the Wisconsin High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame with a life-time record of 103-55-6.

While his statistical accomplishments are noteworthy, it was the lifelong friendships that he developed and maintained throughout the years with his former students and players which he cherished and of which he was most proud.

**Bruce Jerry Larson***September 29-1963 – February 27, 2022*

Bruce J. Larson, age 58, passed away unexpectedly in his home on Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022.

Bruce was born on September 29, 1963, the

second of three children of Jerry & Joyce Larson. He was raised on the family farm, growing up doing daily chores- milking cows and baling hay. As a Spring Valley High School Cardinal, he lettered, won all-conference honors and was part of the Div. 5 1978 State Champion football team. He was also an outstanding heavyweight wrestler and competed in the state tournament twice. Being coached by the legendary Bob Thomas, Bruce's love for sports and coaching took root. He graduated from Spring Valley H.S. in 1982 and moved on to UW- River Falls. He continued his football and wrestling career there and earned his degree in Physical Education. It was there that he met his sister's college roommate, Kelly Christopherson. After they both graduated, they married on July 25, 1987. They moved to Somerset and began to raise their children and their football centered family.

Bruce was hired in 1987 by Somerset (WI) High School. His Spartan coaching career included Girls Basketball (87-88), Wrestling (88-99) and Football as an assistant to his longtime friend, Brad Nemec from 87-1998 and took over as head coach in 1999 after Brad retired. He remained in this position through the 2021 season. As head football coach, his teams claimed nine Middle Border conference championships, and went on to win state titles in 2002, 2012 & 2014, as well as state runner-ups in 2004, 2005 & 2011. In 2013 he was inducted into the UWRF Sports Hall of Fame. He was awarded the Wisconsin High School Coach of the Year in 2014 and the Don Shula National High School Coach of the Year in 2015. Most recently, he was honored with the inaugural Wisconsin Bell Cow Leadership award in 2021. Under Bruce's guidance, Somerset H.S. has had several players reach the NFL. Bruce's greatest accomplishment was all of the students he impacted daily at Somerset High school for the past 36 years. He affirmed this in a quote he shared: "I think we have made many good fathers [and mothers], some great employees, people that will look you in the eye and will do what is right and honest."

Bruce also founded and owned the Bumper to Bumper School of Driving and has trained thousands of drivers over the past 10+ years. He loved to cook- especially grilling meat to every-

one's delight. Bruce's wardrobe color selection was small, black and red, and green and yellow, but growing. In recent years he added in blue and orange, but he would have never ever added in purple. Bruce was a dedicated Packer fan and could be found every Sunday cheering them on. After a 40 year wait, this Bruce finally got his Packer season tickets.

**Dean W. Wilson***July 11, 1942 - May 10, 2022*

Elkhorn, WI - Dean W. Wilson, 79, of Elkhorn, WI, joined his daughter Kate in heaven on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at Aurora Lakeland Medical Center. He was born July 11, 1942 in Freeport, IL to the late Willard "Hack" and Hazel (Miller) Wilson. He graduated from Freeport Senior High School in 1960 where he played football, basketball, and baseball. Dean was united in marriage to Kathleen "Kathi" Gorski on June 17, 1961 in Freeport, IL. Dean attended Northern Illinois University where he graduated with a major in mathematics education. He first taught at Lockport West High School, followed by four years at York Community High School in Elmhurst, IL. Dean wanted to find a smaller town and school where he could get to know the students and athletes better. In August 1970 he moved his family to Elkhorn, WI, a community he would care for the rest of his life. Dean taught math and coached baseball, wrestling and football. In 1998 Dean became Athletic Director until retirement in 2015. He became head football coach in 1994 and in 2012 was inducted into the WI Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Dean was summer recreation director for the City of Elkhorn for 23 years. He managed the pool and ran summer rec where he encouraged kids to have fun while learning new sports. He was also instrumental in developing and running St. Patrick's confirmation program for 26 years with Kathi and many others. Dean enjoyed playing sheephead, reading, working in the garden, and was always busy working on a house project for himself or for his family. He loved teaching and coaching and touched many lives throughout his years in Elkhorn. Dean lived a great life.

**2022 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WFCA HALL OF FAME SCHOLARSHIP FUND.**

Tony Biolo	\$100
Larry Brick	\$100
Dan Brunner	\$300
Kolpin	\$100
Frank Budzisz	\$100
Matt Campbell	\$1,500
<i>Speaker Donation</i>	
Doug Chickering	\$100
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Bill Collar	\$100

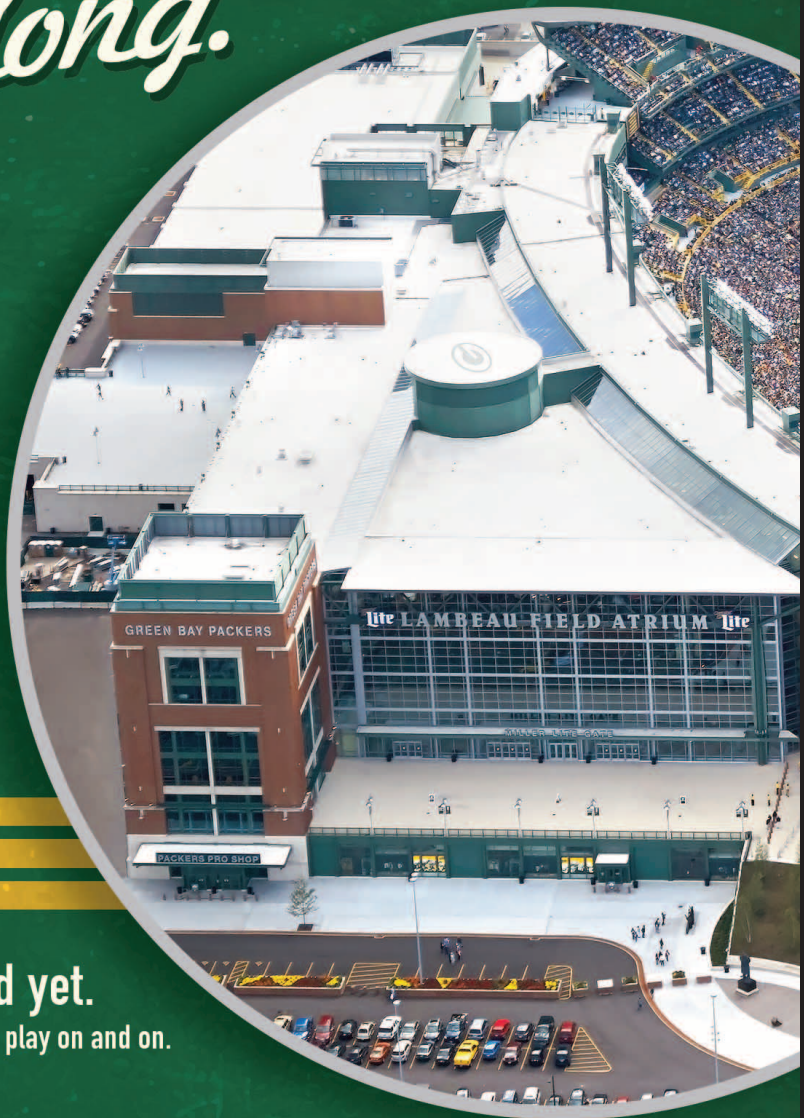
Bobby Diaz	\$100
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Dan,

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers sent for Dean's memorial. Dean was so honored to be part of the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

The family of Dean Wilson

April 11, 2022

Dear WFCB Leadership:

On behalf of my family, friends and myself I would like to thank you for the amazing experience you provide to those selected to our WFCB Hall of Fame.

The entire process and evening are incredibly well planned. John Hoch has this process down to where it operates like a well-oiled machine. Charna, as usual, is tops when it comes to communication and answering questions. The amount of time and energy that goes into organizing that event is simply astounding. Thanks also to our Executive Director, Dan Brunner, for his leadership and organization of the entire Association. A special thanks to Dave Keel for taking the time to come back from Georgia to share his talent as the emcee for the evening. Everything was first class!

I am echoing the comments of those who attended on my behalf as well as my own expressions of gratitude for all you do to make the event so special

Sincerely  
Jason Piittmann  
Kewaskum High School

Mr. Hoch,

I sincerely appreciate being a recipient of the WFCB Hall of Fame Scholarship. Thank you for awarding me this scholarship. This will help me out a lot at UW-Stout this fall.

Thank you  
Bailey Matthys

June 6, 2022

Dear WI High School Football Coaches Assoc. Inc.,

On behalf of the staff and students of Wausau East High School, I wish to extend our sincere gratitude for your generous donation of \$2,000, to our football program for a hydration cart/water filtering system. Your support of our student-athletes is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely  
Cale Bushman  
Principal

June 14, 2022

Dear Dan,

On behalf of the Sauk Prairie School Board, I would like to thank your organization for the generous \$3,000 donation which was gratefully at the regular meeting of the School Board. It is my understanding these funds will support football equipment upgrades.

We are most grateful for your generosity

Sincerely,  
Jeff Wright  
Superintendent. Sauk Prairie School District

Dear Dan & Fellow Coaches,

Thank you for the beautiful plant arrangement sent for Jim's funeral. He was so honored to be inducted into the WFCB Hall of Fame. It was comforting to see so many former players, as well as last fall's Ithaca team at his visitation. He was a great guy and will be missed.

Take Care & God Bless,  
Kathy and Harris Family

The WFCB office receives many thank you notes throughout the year. These are just a few.

Dear John Hoch and members of the Scholarship committee,

I am honored to have been selected as a recipient of the WFCB Hall of Fame scholarship. This funding will go toward offsetting the cost of tuition. This fall I will be attending the UW-Oshkosh to major in biology on the pre-medicine track. My professional goal is to become a physician. Currently, I am interested in genetics or regenerative medicine as a specialty.

Thank you so much for selecting me for this award.

Sincerely, Taylor Johnson



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# Assistant Director WIAA, Tom Shafranski



Tom Shafranski

Welcome to the 2022 WIAA Football season! This year has much promise and hope for all of us and I hope you are as excited about the year ahead as I am.

First, once again this year, there are no COVID restrictions from the WIAA office for you to be concerned over. We go into the season with an excellent outlook here in Wisconsin regarding the COVID outbreak truly hoping that all games can be played and that new variants do

not hinder play throughout the football season.

One of the really outstanding new features will be a “PLAYOFF REVEAL SHOW” to be featured on Saturday, October 15, 2022. This program will be the official release of the teams and brackets for the 2022 WIAA Football Tournament series. Bally Sports or their Alternate Bally Sports channel will be the site for viewing this very special release of the tournament teams and their assignments. The REVEAL SHOW will be a great way to hype the WIAA tournament, the schools and football programs who are fortunate to advance into the tournament. Please bear with us as work through all the logistics and understand that this will mean that all interested parties will have to patiently wait a few additional hours for release of the teams in the tournament and the brackets.

This year, we will also begin discussions regarding the expansion of the WIAA Football tournament series--without changing the outstanding WIAA Football tournament for 224 teams that has been developed. Additions to the tournament that will be discussed pertain to allowing WIAA school football teams that wish to play in a tournament, but have not made the 224-team tournament. This option looks to be made available following the nine-game regular sea-

son for those football programs who have not advanced into the WIAA's 224 tournament. In addition, we'll look at teams that are defeated in the first round of the 224-team tournament being moved to the new tournament so that all football teams have an opportunity to play at least 11 games in their season. Please watch for a Coaches Survey coming from the leadership of the WFCa during the weeks ahead and feel free to provide your input to the leadership of the WFCa. The “hope” is to have a recommendation to the WIAA Board of Control for their meeting in January, 2023.

There is so much for all of us to take great pride in--like the endurance we've all demonstrated through the past two years of COVID. The inspiration we've provided to high school student-athletes during such demanding times. Along with the sacrifices and dedication to the sport of football so many coaches have shown with “lives on the line” these past couple of years. Help us here at the WIAA office take high school football to the next level and provide additional tournament opportunities to more high school football players than ever before. Thanks so much for all you, as coaches, do for the student-athletes of the high school football programs in Wisconsin!!

## WFCa 2022 All-Star Games Update

The WFCa All-Star Charity football games were played at the UW-Oshkosh Titan Stadium again this year with Camps at UW-Whitewater, UW-River Falls and UW-Oshkosh.

The 8-Player league game was played on Friday evening, July 15 and the Large and Small school games were played on Saturday, July 16. The weather was perfect and spirits ran high, in the end the North teams cleaned up winning all three games.

There is more to these football games than just scoring touchdowns however; players, coaches and volunteers work tirelessly alongside staff from Children's Wisconsin to make a significant financial contribution to this Wisconsin Children's Charity.

Coaches involved through the years will tell you that this is a life-changing experience, one they will never forget. Tyler Maney, South 8-Player Head Coach this year was no exception, he shared the following: “I wasn't really sure what to expect when I agreed to be head coach for the All-Star game! I can honestly say it was one of the greatest weeks of my coaching career and even my life! From the friendships I made

*with other coaches and also the players! In fact some of them came up to our little town of Three Lakes a couple weeks after the game and hung out. I also will cherish the time spent with our WFCa reps, Coach Jerry and Coach Duane! Also the get together with families who have benefited from Childrens Hospital and heard their stories and hardships and how Childrens Hospital has made such a positive impact in their lives! Then the football game was the topping on the cake to a great week! Thanks for all that Childrens Wisconsin does and thanks for a fantastic week!”* — Tyler Maney, Three Lakes-Phelps

Children's Wisconsin has a new Director of Senior Events and Engagement Coordinator this year, Whitney Lien. She and her teammate, Jenna McReynolds, were professional partners all the way helping us to accomplish a successful year of fundraising. Whitney said, “I am blown away! From the radio interview, to camp week, to the teaming of players and coaches, to the volunteers, and everything else in between it was literally a perfect “play” all for Children's Wisconsin. It was truly an honor working alongside all of you.”

The WFCa has many leaders, all with integrity and unrelenting work ethic. But, these games take hours and hours of detailed planning to be successful. Selecting the coaches and the teams, coordinating the volunteers, communication with the Colleges, our Corporate Sponsors, and Children's Wisconsin, along with fundraising and promotions. Doug Sarver has it down to a science! His dedication and professionalism year after year absolutely astounds!

Camp week cannot be accomplished in three locations without the close assistance provided by Jerry Hannack and Duane Rogatzki. These guys really take it to the next level. Dan Brunner, Tom Swittel, and John Hoch, along with the entire Board of officers and reps rise to the occasion and it is like a dance on game day! THEN, the pot is sweetened by the raffle crew, led by Jerry Golembiewski! A big thank you to Ripon Athletics, The US Marine Corp. and all the Corporate Sponsors who donate goods or monies to help make this a significant fundraiser.

If you have never attended the All-Star football games in Oshkosh you are really missing something **SPECIAL!** Plan to attend in 2023.



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# LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

## ASSOCIATED RISKS FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN SINGLE-SPORT SPECIALIZATION

By: Nate Young, Varsity Tight Ends, JV Head Coach and Offensive Coordinator, Arrowhead HS

Every athlete is unique in their approach to their chosen sport. As different approaches to athletics have been updated and modified throughout sport history, a recent trend toward single sport specialization has emerged. Sport competition has seemingly become fiercer through the decades and student-athletes are specializing in single-sport athletics at an increasingly younger age. An increasing number of youth athletes are choosing to specialize in a singular sport in hopes of achieving greater future success in that sport (*Buckley et al., 2017*). Single-sport specialization may encompass three components; year-round training for greater than 8 months, focusing on a singular “main” sport, and quitting all other athletics to pursue that singular sport (*Jayanthi & Dugas, 2017*). Studying the impact single-sport specialization has on the mental and physical well-being of youth athletes will allow increased efficiency and effectiveness in athletic training in the future.

An estimated 27 million US citizens between ages 6 and 18 participate in team athletics, while 60 million participate in other forms of organized athletics (*Feeley et al., 2015*). As noted, this issue involves a vast number of individuals and knowledge of the risks and benefits of single-sport specialization is of ample importance. By studying this growing trend, one can hope to find a suitable solution to increase athletic fulfillment among its participants.

### Overuse and Overload Injury

The increased practice of single-sport specialization in youth athletics has led to an emerging risk of overuse injury and burnout among student-athletes (*Jayanthi & Dugas, 2017*). *Caruso (2013)* notes that constant changes within the musculoskeletal frame of a younger athlete increases additional stress to various joints in the body. It is critical to consider some factors that can lead to overuse injuries in younger athletes. Table 1 (*Caruso, 2013*) below details both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors responsible for increased risk of overload injuries.

The muscle and ligament infrastructure are typically not fully developed among the adolescent athletes referenced in these studies on single-sport specialization. This underdeveloped body can produce complications relative to compensating due to lack of strength for certain athletic feats (*Feeley et al., 2015*). *Jayanthi and Dugas (2017)* recounts a study of 1,191 young athletes where overuse injuries were studied. Nearly two-thirds of the 837 injuries reported comprised of overuse diagnoses. Acute injuries accounted for the remaining one-third. Among the overuse injuries, nearly 25% were serious where physicians recommended a month or longer for recovery. These injuries consisted of ligament injuries, osteochondral injuries, and other high-risk physical injuries.

*Bell et al. (2018)* found that a significant association between single-sport specialization and overuse injury was observed. High school athletes were at an increased risk of being diagnosed of overuse knee injuries. *Bell et al. (2018)* also indicates that a meta-analysis of 4 studies supports the idea of increased physical risk due to single-sport specialization. Athletes with high single-sport specialization were 81% more likely to acquire an overuse injury than their low specialization counterparts (*Bell et al., 2018*). This further contributes to the notion that single-sport specialization leads to an increased risk of physical injury among young athletes.

Further research dedicated to studying youth baseball players indicated an increased rate of injury among those who specialize in baseball only (*Arnold et al., 2019, p. 1115*). Each participant in the study had to meet 2 of 3 of the following requirements: played on 2 or more organized baseball teams per year, played organized baseball 8 months or more out of the year, or pursued additional baseball specific training throughout the year. Competitive youth baseball players suffered 21 arm injuries during 9453, athlete exposures and of those 21 injuries, all of them occurred in athletes who were clas-

sified as specialized. This is an incredible 100% finding which should be studied further.

If the research stands correct, then the physical health risks of single-sport specialization are detrimental and potentially hinder the overall athletic progress of the athlete. Once this is recognized, sport leaders should search and understand treatment options for when overuse injuries occur. Most injuries relating to single-sport specialization manifest themselves as overuse fatigue (*Feeley et al., 2015*). The best treatment programs understand that prevention is the most effective and efficient route to travel. Initial treatment programs focus on physical therapy, constant evaluation of mechanics, and a reduction in participation (*Feeley et al., 2015*). Physical therapy may improve the strength of impacted muscle groups that are a concern of youth athletes who practice single-sport specialization. Mechanic evaluation could allow coaches and leaders to manage and change any technique issues that could cause serious injury, especially in those who use one major muscle group more than others. Finally, a reduction in participation potentially provides the safest treatment alternatives. Adequate rest and recovery are crucial for athletes' bodies to recuperate from heavy physical activity and other physical stresses that are associated with performance training.

### Mental Health – Burnout

There are numerous reasons attributed to the increase of specialization within the sport world. First, cultural identification within Eastern Europe and its' systemic athletic training measures has increased the perception that single-sport specialization offers increased athletic achievement (*Malina, 2010*). It could be argued that the success of Eastern European athletics in sports such as gymnastics and wrestling aided this perception. Next, parents, guardians, and coaches may have focused increased efforts into getting young athletes active in sports. The “Tiger Woods” scenario where a prodigy is molded through deliberate practice and dedication has been a mainstay in the argument for single-sport specialization (*Malina, 2010*). There is potentially some truth to this aspect, but it should be recognized that the percentage of athletes who achieve this amount of athletic achievement is significantly disproportionate to the number of individuals who participate in sport.

Burnout, otherwise known as overtraining syndrome, is a response to chronic stress which makes a previously enjoyable activity no longer

TABLE 1. PREDISPOSING FACTORS AND OVERUSE INJURIES (7)

INTRINSIC FACTORS	EXTRINSIC FACTORS
Anatomic malalignment	Improper training methods
Prior injury	Poor technique
Poor conditioning	Improper surface for practice and competition
Growth	Excessive pressure from peers, coaches, and parents
Menstrual dysfunction	Inappropriate equipment



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so (Smucny & Parikh, & Pandya, 2015). What practices predispose athletes to an increased risk of burnout? According to Smucny, et al. (2015) increased training load without proper rest and recovery, training monotony, and an excess of competitions all play a role in burnout in younger athletes. Youth athletes involved in single-sport specialization may develop overtraining syndrome and drop out of athletics entirely (Hecimovich, 2004). Hecimovich (2004) also notes that in some instances, athletes who are too embarrassed to quit may incur a sport related self-injury in order to leave gracefully. Emotional or physical exhaustion can negatively impact a young athlete's mental health. Burnout can cause young athletes to miss out on social and educational opportunities and disrupt family life.

The overall quality of life is an important observation to study while discussing the impact burnout has on youth athletes. Does single-sport specialization at an early age contribute to a lesser health related quality of life within athletes? According to a study performed by Simon & Docherty (2016), highly specialized sports potentially have negative health effects on athletes as they become older. Simon & Docherty (2016) also found that former Division 1 athletes scored worse on the depression, fatigue, sleep disturbance, and pain interference scales than their non-athlete counterparts, concluding that the pressure to compete while facing increased physical and mental adversity contributed to these results. Potentially, the younger an athlete begins their athletic career, the more likely they become to experience some of these negative consequences related to sport specialization and burnout. The United States has a long history of demanding success within the sport world. This ideology begins in youth athletics and traverses through the entire life of an avid sport partaker (Simon & Docherty, 2016). This immense pressure can lead to the desire to increase training programs in hopes to heighten overall performance capabilities. This practice potentially leads to burnout within youth athletes as their musculoskeletal frame is typically undeveloped and can not support the added specialized practices. This could lead to an increase of physical ailments that could then aid in the negative mental impact an athlete experiences in athletics.

The mental impact that single-sport specialization has on its athletes is significant. The added pressure to perform from coaches and parents typically increase the likelihood of burnout. Emotional or physical exhaustion can negatively impact a young athletes' mental health. A widely held belief in the sport world is that participating in year-round training that is centered around a single sport leads to future athletic success (Brenner et al., 2019). The probability of a varsity high school athlete making it to the collegiate level is unlikely. Only 3.4% of all high school basketball players advance to play collegiately. Approximately 1 out of 100 high school basketball players will re-

ceive a scholarship to play Division 1 basketball. Of those individuals, only 1.2% of male basketball players and 0.9% of women basketball players reached the professional ranks (Brenner et al., 2019). Many athletes begin specialized sport training at young ages with the goal of obtaining a college scholarship (Malina, 2010). The notion that single-sport specialization increases the likelihood of being offered a collegiate athletic scholarship is unrealistic. Malina (2010) notes that only 22/1000 (2.2%) girls and 20/1000 (2%) boys participating in high school athletics received partial or full athletic scholarships. A scouting service in 2018 surveyed the participants in Super Bowl LII and found that 102 of the 106 players played multiple sports while in high school (Coach & A.D., 2018). 58% of the NFL players participated in Track and Field, 43% in basketball, 13% in baseball, 7% in lacrosse, 5% in wrestling, and 4% in soccer while still in high school (Coach & A.D., 2018).

Single-sport specialization has been relevant in the sport world for some time. As athletics has progressed through time, the theology within single-sport specialization has stayed the same. Using single-sport specialization as a tool to hone one's craft potentially offers some benefits, albeit minimum. The determination of this research has concluded that the potential negative effects of single-sport specialization outweigh the miniscule potential of positive benefits. Young athletes should be able to have fun during their athletic careers and maturation processes. Let kids be kids. Guide them but do not manipulate them. Allow them to enjoy their youth and grow beyond what we could have ever imagined.

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## RELATIONSHIPS AND RELATABILITY, NOT RECRUITING

By: Brody Dell, Wide Receivers Coach and Director of Football Operations, UW-Platteville



Brody Dell

In football, sometimes we get caught up breaking down practice and game film for hours and hours on end. Drawing up game plans, finding new drills, and focusing on improving the team are all crucial aspects of being a coach. However, at the end of the day what truly wins football games are great players. Winning in recruiting leads to prominent programs and championships. Recruiting isn't about bringing in eighty new freshmen every year. I mean yes it might be a win for your program if you have forty guys on your roster and are fighting to stay a program, but for most of us it is about bringing in around fifty with an emphasis on team needs and quality. When I say quality, I don't mean just really talented and athletic either. It is about bringing in high quality men that will not only add to your program on the field, but represent it well in the community and classroom. More than not we get lost in trying to find the next super star for our programs. Talent is not always the biggest priority when recruiting, it's about finding the guys who fit your system, program, and school/community.

The first step in the recruiting process is to decide where you will be recruiting and then finding talent in that area. Like I said before, talent isn't the biggest priority, however, you must start with finding talent and then you can look for other qualities that your program values. Recruiting can seem like a huge and daunting task at times especially if you are watching hours of

highlight tapes and texting hundreds of kids. It can be easy to get caught up treating recruiting like a business and lose sight of what's important. Take the extra time to individualize messages to the kids you are recruiting. Do not send cookie cutter mass texts or calls, but personalize them and be relatable so they can build trust with you. Do not always steer the narrative towards your school or everything in the recruiting process. When the athlete visits your school the focus does not always need to be on when they will be deciding. Talk about everyday subjects, because at the end of the day you have to become their friend before they will trust in you as their possible coach. As a young coach it is probably less challenging to be relatable for it has not been long since I was a player myself. Do not worry if you have not played in five, ten, twenty years, because it doesn't really matter. Being relatable isn't about your proximity in age, it is about communicating shared experiences and interests.

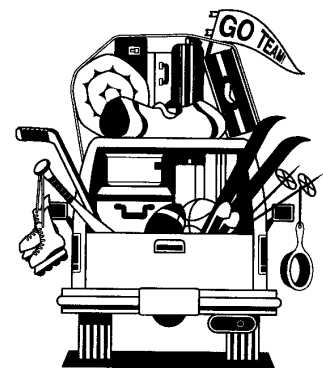
Often, young kids can be intimidated or nervous when a college coach communicates with them for the first time. This is a great opportunity for you to establish relatability and trust to develop a relationship with the student-athlete.

Ice breaker: start with a joke or something simple that does not take a long thoughtful response. You have to be different than all the other coaches...for good reasons. With your best kids, call once a week and go see one of their games if they play a winter sport. That's where you will win in recruiting. It's about building relationships and being relatable. One of the most important things when recruiting is finding two or three topics that the athlete is really interested in. This will give you a good base to always refer back to or bring up when having a conversation with the athlete. It's also important to let the athlete talk and give them a chance to speak on the topics, because asking too many questions can be overwhelming and feel like an interview rather a conversation. Give the athletes the truth and not just what they want to hear. If the truth is everything they want to hear that's great, because you will probably get them. Not being honest in the process will just leave that student athlete disappointed or uninterested

when they arrive to your program. This will also increase the chances of that athlete to quit or transfer when they show up to camp and experience the opposite of what you told them. At the end of the day, telling the truth during the recruiting process will not only save yourself time, but the athletes time as well. When all is said and done, it comes down to genuinely caring, telling the truth, and giving more effort than your competitors. That is how you will develop good relationships and win in recruiting.

For specifics about what UW-Platteville and myself do in recruiting, feel free to email or call me. Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope you got at least one thing out of it. Big thanks to the WFCA for providing a platform for coaches to share and learn about the game.

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# ALL COURAGE AND GRIT – CASHTON PRIDE!

By: Jered Hemmersbach, Assistant Football Coach, Cashton High School

I want to thank the WFCa and all that makes our football programs the best in the country. I'm also humbled at the opportunity to write about our program and the thrill of being able to share a little something about us.

I will be writing this article about a 4-year span that takes us back to our current senior's freshman year of football and the ride that ends one game short of Camp Randall. It is the journey which begins with not winning a football game and ends at playing in a level 4 playoff game for our team and our staff here at Cashton High School.

**2018 - Parent/Athlete meeting** - Standing in the room I looked over and saw the uncertainty of doubt and despair. We had 18 kids signed up for football with only 2 of them seniors. Concern from the parents of the underclassmen and the uncertainty of the season. I talked with the administration about what to do. Do we forfeit the varsity season? Do we just play a JV season? Are we better off playing 8 man football? All these questions and the future in dire need.

One thing I've learned in the past few years of coaching is the respect I have for all the coaches in the State of Wisconsin but especially the Scenic Bluffs. I talked with several of them and they said they would game plan around our team's small size and being mostly underclassmen.. We decided to play out our varsity season. We took our losses week by week. Each week our coaching staff would come up with ways for the kids to come back and compete. We found little victories within ourselves and as teammates. We introduced food to the program and funny how food can heal and bring a smile to any athlete. We finished the season **0-9**.

**2019 - Change** - One thing we told the kids at the end of last season was to get out and recruit. Their words and actions speak volumes. If we wanted something better we needed to change the culture. We challenged the kids to be that team the one that turns the program around. On the first day of practice we had 45 kids in the same room that had 18 just the season prior. What is going on? Not all made it through the season but they were noted for at least trying. We had enough kids for 2 teams.

JV and Varsity. There was a small buzz within the locker room. Many started to see what was happening. We didn't necessarily dominate each week but we started to understand what it took to string drives together. The sacrifice they each had to make for the team. JV kids were now playing the level of competition that fit their skill set. They were starting to win some games and brought that energy to practice. The varsity put together a few wins. They finished the season at **5-4** overall and made the PLAYOFFS. We didn't win that playoff game

but it is amazing how confidence and the right mindset can change culture.

**2020 - "COVID"** Coming off that season we all were so excited to start the next season. Our world would be changed forever as Covid swept the world. With a lot of uncertainty of the virus and health of the kids we decided as a conference to forego the fall season and wait to play in the spring. Disappointment was evident as we all wanted to continue to improve and see where the season would take us. Was this really how it's going to be? Finally some energy within the school and program and we are canceling the season. Spring football ???!! Crazy!! But that's what happened. I think the whole time during the school year, with all the virtual learning and kids being away from each other, when they did get to be together in practice and games they really appreciated just hanging and being around each other. We entered the spring season with just the appreciation of being able to play football. We reeled off a few victories and had continued to get better each week. We are entering an era that has only been done a few times in the past 20 years. 4-0 then 5-0. Undefeated?? There was finally talk about our program, our school and our athletes. Their excitement each week motivated the kids to try harder, get better and enjoy the spotlight.

We finished **6-1** that season with no spring playoffs. And maybe that was ok, the season was cut short and left our kids wanting more.

**2021** - Unlike any time before, summer weight room and contact days were filled with energy, enthusiasm and HOPE. The kids knew we would be ok and if things fell into place, a chance to make the playoffs and maybe even win a playoff game. As the season unfolded from week to week and win after win the excitement continued to build. Not ever being in this position before the team knew of no expectations but to go out and have fun and try to win. Not all the games were pretty and most took 4 quarters to be victorious. We found ourselves in a position that no team has been before in many years at Cashton and that was Conference champs. We finished the regular season **7-2** and a share of the Scenic Bluffs Conference. It was sort of bittersweet for most of us as we wanted it all to ourselves. Yet, we accomplished probably more than what we ever expected as a team and a program. We finished the season **7-2**

We entered the **2021** playoffs eager to show everyone that we had more to give. We won level one against a team that back in the '80s and '90s was a staple of high school football in western Wisconsin. We played really well that night and we moved on to level 2.

Not often do you get to play a team three times in a calendar year but that's what happened with us. The first two games were really good and competitive games but we fell short each time. Not only as players being this deep in the playoffs but also for us coaches. It was what you hoped someday it would look and feel like. With the final kneel down and the clock reading zero we had done something that only a few teams have done within the Cashton program and that was make it to level 3. The excitement of the athletes could almost be doubled by the excitement of our community. Only 8 teams level in the playoffs and we are one of them.

Level 3 was a game where you never know what drive or play will be the difference. We scored on the first drive and never did score an offensive touchdown that night. It was our defense that stole the show as we recorded a pick six and a safety. We only gave up 6 points and we would be headed to the semi-state finals.

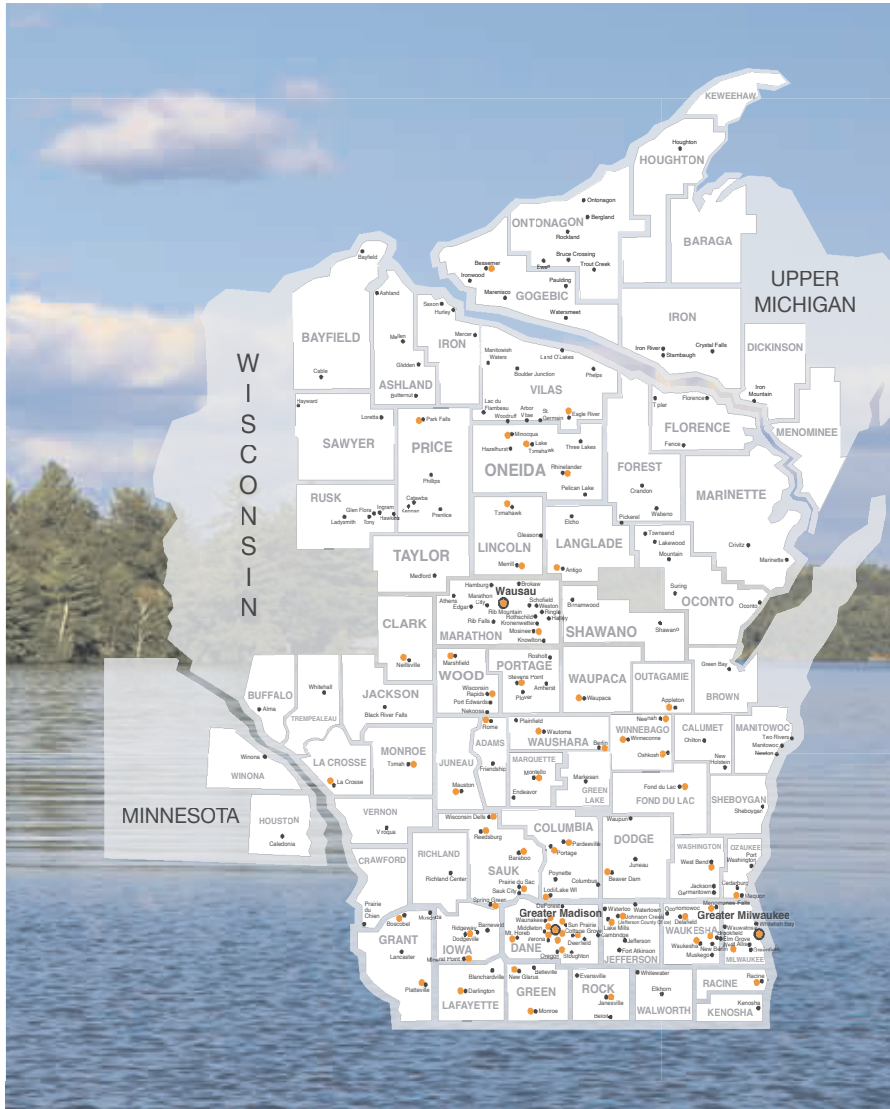
Level 4 was an experience I hope we can take and build on for the future. The hype during the week and the pep assembly and the bus ride are all deserving for those senior kids who easily could've hung it up after their freshman year. It says a lot to who they are as people, their character and the grit to get up and go again. They helped change a culture in our program, in our school and in our community. They have set a standard of competing. It was an amazing ride for myself and the coaching staff and for the entire school community. We finished our 2021 season **10-3**.

"If you are bored with life – if you don't get up every morning with a burning desire to do things – you don't have enough goals.."

-- Lou Holtz



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# BUILDING TRUST THROUGH UNIT IDENTITY AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

By: Travis Whitt, Offensive Line Coach, Racine Park High School

When it comes to running a positional unit, we all know that unit identity is important. From the name you call yourselves to the mentality that you embody, a unit identity can help build trust and unify the learning process of position specific movements and schemes. Often used more at the Collegiate level, unit identity is a valuable tool to increase buy-in in an era with the lowest participation rates to date.

When I took over the offensive line at Park High School in Racine, the unit was lacking an identity. No one wanted to play on the offensive line and our declining numbers were not helping the depth of the position. My first day as the OL coach I implemented an identity that has been borrowed and evolved from men that I have had the honor of being coached by through my own playing career. A special thanks to Brian Sheehan at Hamline University for an introduction to “The Herd Mentality”. After 5 seasons as the OL coach I am comfortable with the identity we have built for the unit and its ability to instill the mentality we want our O-Line to have both on and off the field.

The Washington Park High School Offensive line has a storied history in our community. Throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s the unit was named the Junkyard Dogs after the toughness and ferocity needed for the trenches. Eventually that name was dropped for the popular “Hogs” to embody size and strength. Now, we call our OL “The Herd”. Named after a grouping of American Bison, the only animal smart enough to run through the storm and not away from it.

Bison are strong, fast, explosive, and resilient. They run through obstacles not around them. They are always moving forward, together.

When we took on this identity as an Offensive Line, it was meant to install a mental toughness that our unit was lacking. We did not have size or experience and we were looking for a unit identity that would inspire the way that we wanted to play. Fast, mentally tough, and always moving forward. Our unit mottos and mantras were all inspired by a herd of bison. Moving through the storm as one to trample anything in our path.

Building identity goes deeper than a silly name. Our values, our actions, and the thing we call ourselves all must align if we want our players to buy in. It starts with our coaching staff, moves down to our senior leaders and captains, and then trickles down to the entire team.

In our program, from our head coach to our freshmen, everyone refers to the O-Line as “The Herd.” Our individual position practices include drill work that echoes the values of the unit identity. We are always moving forward, we always practice fast, we always stick together.

To extend the identity of our group past a name and values we also name our blocking schemes with Herd-Specific language. Throughout our entire program we ensure that those players who take on the difficult glory-less job of being an offensive lineman feel like they are in an elite group.

After five years of hard work and relentless effort from our coaching staff and players, we have built a unit of players who are proud to play

offensive line the way we want it played. The identity helps us establish a clear set of expectations and values that our returning players can instill in our younger players. We have higher buy in and trust among members of our unit. Now, without provocation, our players in The Herd rally around our motto “Always Forward” and use the imagery and story to bring their teammates through adversity.

In addition to building trust in the program, our unit identity helps kids buy in to our offense. With a lot of line movement, pulls, and open field blocking our offense relies on Linemen who move and play like Bison. They need to drive together, play fast, and trample anything that stands in their way in the open field. Over the last few years as The Herd, we have seen a much more aggressive style of play from our Offensive Lines.

A unit identity is often misconstrued as a name to rally around. While this is somewhat true, the more aspects of your program or your unit that you can tie into your identity the more you can shift player mentality, build culture, and establish trust between your players, coaches, and scheme. Your unit identity binds your players to something deeper than themselves. They feel like they are part of something that is meant to serve and be served by them. As we stare into a future of declining numbers and fewer players spending all four years in our program, strong unit identity works as another tool for player retention and dedication. Leaving a team can be easy, leaving The Herd is impossible.

THANK YOU to all who so generously submitted articles for

***“The Point After II.”***

If your article did not appear in this issue, please look in the next one!

*Articles may be emailed to the WFCB office at [office@wifca.org](mailto:office@wifca.org), or send paper copy to:*

*WFCB, PO Box 8, Poynette, WI 53955. Please include the title of the article, and the name, school and title of the author, along with the author's photograph. Again, our thanks!*



# THE PANDEMIC AND TWO SCHOLAR ATHLETES

By: Sylvester Walker, Jr. and Joshua Wines, Riverside University High School

*These are the stories of two scholar athletes who had missed their junior year of football because our season got cancelled and their journey to the end of their high school career.*

My name is Sylvester Walker, Jr. I am a senior at Riverside University High School. I am a three-sport varsity scholar athlete and I served as captain on each team. I play football, track and wrestling. My heart and passion is with football. When I first started playing football I was a kid and I just wanted to have fun and enjoy playing with friends. When I got to high school things completely changed, life got harder. My father is not really in my life and my mother worked long hours so I had to do things on my own. Riverside football is the best program I've ever been in. It starts with the coaches and how the players are treated and taught. My freshmen year I learned so much from the older players who were leading while I was observing and taking in every little lesson or word they gave me so I could apply it to what we were doing. My Sophomore year I was trying to work up the depth chart so I could play varsity football, I tried to be the first one on the field and the last one off the field and I applied that to the weight room also. Eventually I started practicing with varsity and working out with them, but I wasn't satisfied. After my Sophomore season

I was starving for greatness, I wanted to be the best football player I could be, but then Covid-19 happened.

When Covid hit everything was shutting down and things were getting canceled. We went virtual for school. When I found out they canceled the upcoming football season it hurt me emotionally. I told myself either get up and work as hard as you can or feel sorry for yourself. So every single day I woke up with a purpose, and I would watch film and work out at home since we couldn't go places to workout. Every time I needed a little motivation I asked myself "what's your why" and I remind myself that I don't just do this for me, but I do this for my mom, so she can live a better life. Riverside coaches taught me that you can do anything if you put your mind to it, have a plan, and be disciplined. It starts with hard work. I worked very hard my junior year in the classroom. Once we were let back into school at the end of March, I would get my class work done then went straight to the weight room or the field and pushed myself and kept telling myself that I can overcome not having a Junior year of football. When June came around the hard work and dedication started to show dividends as I went to a couple of camps, I started getting recruited because of my camp performance. My senior year came and I was battling

a groin injury from track. After the season I was awarded All-Conference defensive back (DB). I became conference champion at my weight class and made it to sectional finals. I am currently in track and field.

In February I committed to a D2 4-year college for football in Clinton, Mississippi called Mississippi College. Even though I missed a year of football, my hard work paid off. The lesson I hope to teach the younger guys at Riverside is that you can overcome obstacles if you believe, plan, execute that plan and stay disciplined.

My name is Joshua Wines, I'm a Senior at Milwaukee Riverside University High School. Football was the very first sport I ever played. I was in 6th grade and I wasn't good at it in the slightest. I was one of the smallest kids on my middle school team, definitely one of the skinniest. I wasn't fast, I couldn't catch and I was very scared to make tackles. The coaches struggled to find a place for me on the team. My very first season I only played in about two or three games for about 2 minutes each game.

I know it sounds bad but something about the sport pulled me back. Whether it was the brotherhood between the people I practiced and bled with on the field or just seeing the progression in myself from the beginning of the season

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OCT 22-1 PM AWAY VS. WHEATON  
OCT 29-1 PM HOME VS. CARTHAGE  
NOV 5-1 PM AWAY VS. MILLIKIN  
NOV 12-12 PM HOME VS. WASH U-ST. LOUIS



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until the end. I wanted to get better. So I did what the coach told me to do. I wrestled in the off-season. When next season came around I was determined to be better. I pushed myself in everything from the warmups to forcing myself to get in the front of the line when it was time for the hitting drills. I started every game that season. I was beyond happy to just actually play with the people I was practicing with.

I took my 8th grade year off just to enjoy my summer before high school. When high school came around I went to Pulaski high school and I was scared out of my mind to play against high school kids. But I wanted to be just like them. So I worked hard on our freshman team. I made a lot of tackles and because of low numbers on the team I got moved up to varsity. I was happy just getting tackles.

I was proud of myself this season, and I couldn't wait to build on that for the next season. But then I transferred to Riverside not because of the football team but because I didn't like the school that I was at. Football wise, I am very grateful for the opportunity to play at Riverside. The first day of football at Riverside I really remember just how cool and official everything looked. I was nervous and excited at the same

time. I saw 100+ kids practicing and all of them were huge. It was clear I wasn't going to be on varsity. Those guys seemed to be leagues ahead of me in everything. From their size to just the way they played the game. They had an intense competitive nature and they just couldn't stand to be beaten, so they gave everything 100%, but they had fun too.

One thing I'll never forget; it was time to go and the coach ended practice, the varsity guys begged him for just one more play. Right then and there I knew I had to change the way I played the game. My sophomore year would be a learning experience for me. I hit the off-season hard. I was practically in the weight room every day. I ended up putting on around 40 pounds.

I was ready for track. I came out my first week with the same mindset I had in football to just get better. The first week of practice I pushed myself very hard. Then BOOM. School is closed and we are quarantined.

When quarantine started at first I just enjoyed the rest that I was getting. But some time, like 2 or 3 weeks into quarantine, I realized that I could use this time to get better. I remember what coaches always told us "no one cares about your excuses," "you either get better or

worse at something everyday." I immediately signed up for 7-on-7. I bought weights and signed up for the gym. My thought process changed to how much better can I get during this quarantine. I went to 7-on-7 and I saw a lot of good talent. I had to practice at the park alone just to keep up with the other kids because I wasn't used to playing linebacker. I worked out whenever I could lifting weights in my basement or going to planet fitness with my teammates or friends.

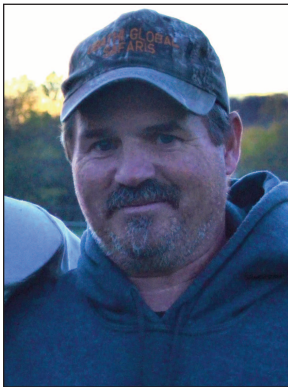
Then my senior season finally came around. I earned 2nd team All-Conference honors at defensive end. I did well enough to get a lot of D3 offers and eventually commit to UW-Lacrosse to play football.

If you would have told me that going into high school that I would play college football, I would have told you that was not going to happen. As I write this and think about the journey and the transition from not being very good at the sport and having no motivation to even being able to attend college and play football, it's just crazy to me.

I never imagined I would be having college coaches praising my film or even looking at it. I just thank the process and all my coaches for teaching it to me.

## MAKING YOUR TEAM A MORE COHESIVE GROUP

By: Dave Cronauer, Head Football Coach, Wabeno-Laona Football



*Dave Cronauer*

Teamwork is the key to making a good team great. We have all seen teams with great talent but they just cannot put it together to be a consistent team or the team that has a star player but can't make a deep run in the playoffs. The old saying goes "there is no I in team" and I believe that to be true. The question is how do you get your players to the point of being a team?

I am a first year head coach with no coaching experience. I did not know the Xs and Os, but I knew that if this team could be a cohesive group they would be good. I was gifted a very talented team that were very fundamentally sound but something was missing. We are a co-op team playing 8-player football, so the team dynamic is a bit different than most teams.

The first step was to get the men to fill a questioner about their goals (individual, team and life),

expectations, positional preferences, and song list. This was done so we could figure out what they thought they were capable of. I got a lot of them that skipped questions or answered IDK. They soon found out when they were asked a question we expected an answer and the converse was true for us. I then gave them my expectations and goals. The players respond well as they do not want to let you down. These goals and expectations must be reasonable and obtainable.

The next step was to make them part of something. That something is the brotherhood of football. They all became brothers to each other and sons to the coaching staff. We began by doing some team building activities like a bon fire after the scrimmage and meals together before every game. Part of the meals was a prayer lead by an upperclassman. This helped with public speaking as well as motivation coming from within the team.

Practices became fun because they all wanted to be with their team. We used the playlist from the questionnaire to play while we practiced. We wanted them to know that we cared what they thought. Simple pleasures like music seemed to make practice a better atmosphere. One of my favorite things to do during the conditioning phase of practice was to do relay races. We did this every week and the players loved it. Each week a class would get to pick teams. Coaches can learn a lot about how the players see each other from this simple exercise. We have a lineman that is the fastest

player on the team, but was always picked 4<sup>th</sup>, due to perception. He was the biggest kid on the team so they perceived him as slow, even though he won every race. The receivers and QB were always picked first. I think that this also helps the coaches, because if your own team perceives it this way, the opposing team will also perceive it that way. The other benefit of the relay races is competition. They will work harder to be first and not let their team down than they will if you are just running wind sprints. They also have to think of strategy, who matches up against whom.

The last thing is the players believing in the coaching staff. We have to earn their trust for them to mesh. When a coach says they are going to do something but never does they will begin to fall apart. We believe in next play mentality. Nothing frustrates me more than players yelling at other players or playing the blame game. We own up to our mistakes and move on. When a ball is dropped or fumbled, I expect the players to move to the next play and keep their head up. Everyone has seen the team when things start to go bad, just implode and the wheels come off the bus. Don't let that be your team.

Hopefully some of these ideas will help get your team to be a cohesive group and play the best football that they can. I feel that these things helped our team immensely last season and will continue to in the future. Good luck this season.



# GAME EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

By: Peter Lawton, Assistant Football Coach, Northwestern High School



Peter Lawton

Thank you WFCA for putting this publication together. As football coaches, we are always learning and picking up little things to make our programs better and more efficient. I hope you can pick something up from this article that you can take back and use with your own program.

Before each game we have a checklist that our managers and 9th grade coaches go over to make sure we do not forget anything. The list is also given to all coaches, posted on equipment room door, locker room door, peg board, in hall-

way and just about everywhere. Our shortest road trip is one hour and the longest is two hours, so for us to forget something could ultimately have a trickle-down effect for the game and the team. This is our list that changes weekly if we feel we need to add additional items. The list has changed throughout the years as new equipment is needed. We use a similar list for our JV and freshman games, but the list is modified to fit the needs of those games. The one piece of equipment that we feel is one of our most used is the extra man bag. This is a bag that is packed for a "ghost" player. It has extra of all sizes and equipment our athletes would use. Just when you think a high school kid will forget shoulder pads or a helmet, it happens. It has happened to us on more than one occasion, but we were prepared with the extra man bag. I understand that it seems like common sense, but I have seen programs who come to our home field missing equipment and no extra man bag. This is our list that is posted everywhere. I hope this gives you an idea or a way to improve how your program travels.

## Game Equipment Checklist

Coordinators, Managers, 9th Grade Coaches -

- 12 Footballs - Check air pressure
- 2 Black Block Tees (Extra Pt.) and KO tees
- Ball Towels/Regular Towels (Weather)

- Headsets (Varsity ONLY) and Chargers
- Medical Kit (Check Supplies Inside)
- Equipment Repair Kit (Check Inside)
- Emergency Contact Information
- Replacement Spikes/Wrench
- Extra Mouth Guards
- Water Cooler (Filled?)
- Water Bottles and Carriers
- Ice Cooler – (Filled?)
- Ice Bags
- Sideline Jackets (Weather Possibility)
- Cleat Cleaner Boards
- Dry Erase Boards and Markers
- 2 Sets of Rule Books
- Ipads (HUDL Sideline)
- Endzone Camera and Tripod

## 12th Man

**\*\*Long trips dressing away from Northwestern - pack a travel bag with 1 full set of gear: (NEEDS TO BE CHECKED)**

Helmet, shoulder pads, game pants and pads, girdle and pads, belt, socks, large cleats, small cleats, eligible along with ineligible jersey number.

I instruct all players to go down the checklist before we leave for each game. Also if you have other player or coaches helping to haul and load equipment, have them check off everything on the list at the time equipment is physically loaded.

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# STICK TO THE FUNDAMENTALS

By: Matt Eastlick, Assistant Football Coach, Potosi-Cassville High School



Matt Eastlick

I have been a part of organized football since 1998, where I was able to compete for the first time against other schools as an 8th grader. No pads, no helmet; just cleats, a football, and flags. Before that, football was my life three times a day at recess, at birthday parties, and on Friday nights somewhere near the football field, just kids enjoying the game. Fast forward through four years of high school football at Belmont High School (WI) playing linebacker, fullback, guard, punter, and kicker, and then five years of college football playing inside linebacker, I found myself with my first teaching job in Geneseo, IL, where I was assigned to coaching freshman football. As a freshman coach, I was fortunate enough to get the oppor-

tunity to coach all phases of the game. After four years as a freshman coach, I was promoted to a varsity linebacker coach. I only coached varsity football for one year in Geneseo before my wife and I moved to Monroe, WI. I volunteered as a freshman coach for one season while I was there, and finally, I have been coaching for Potosi-Cassville as an assistant for the past four years.

I tell you all of this, so you know where I'm coming from when I share my coaching perspective. Oftentimes, as coaches, we get caught up in the new schemes, running the perfect offense, or making the "right" calls. To me, all of this is secondary. You can have the perfect scheme, run the perfect offense for your personnel, or make the perfect call at the right time, but if your athletes don't know the fundamentals of their technique, all of that other stuff doesn't matter, or at the very least, negates the player's effectiveness. We can't tell a kid he needs to "block better", or to "find the ball" on defense, and expect them to understand what we mean. If you're saying those kinds of things to your players, do you even understand what you want from them? In order to "find the ball" as a linebacker, I first need to know how to read my key, take the proper footwork steps, properly engage and disengage with any blockers, and then tackle the ball carrier with proper hips, contact, arms, and finish. All of that technique takes time, and if you expect them to play well,

you better give them more than 10 minutes of individual time each week. I know this requires more effort on your part to know how to teach those techniques, more patience to help each player improve, and less time to run through all of your plays, but you owe it to them as their coach, to help them become skilled football players who win their one-on-ones more often than not. Most importantly, when we coach this way, our young men learn the importance of mastering a skill. They learn that mastery takes time and tremendous amounts of effort. It requires you to fail before you succeed, and courage to put all of your practice efforts to the test in a high-stress environment. And, lastly, they learn they are responsible for executing what we've put the time into teach them. Who knows, maybe this will help these young men own their outcomes instead of blaming others?

In short, high school football ought to teach young men about the game of life, which requires mastering the minutiae of day to day tasks. Fine-tuning the little details of life and focusing on the things you can control, both of which lead to living life well. We won't teach them about that if we spend too much time focusing on the plays, schemes, and calls; those things that are truly secondary. Let's get primary things done first. Let's make sure our practice time reflects those things that are primary. Let's help these young men become better football players and better men.

## PRACTICE STARTERS & FINISHERS

By: Adam Hale, Head Football Coach, Grantsburg High School



Adam Hale

As many of you know and experience, it's tougher to get kids to come out for football. For a small school like Grantsburg, it's a battle every year to keep numbers up for an 11-man program. Once we get kids out as freshmen, I feel we've done a good job of keeping them out, and part of that reason, I believe, is how we practice. Practice format & positivity are espe-

cially critical these days in my opinion as we put a big stress on tempo rotating from one drill to another quickly. We'll keep all periods short, 12 minutes or often less, and on the clock while using a positive approach as much as possible. Our manager will sound an air horn for every practice period/drill change to keep things on schedule and we'll focus on consistently bringing energy to everything we do. We try to get as much of our conditioning done during practice but when we do add conditioners at the end, we'll try to make it unique and somewhat fun. Every day we start with pre-practice position specific drills, followed by a dynamic stretch, and then go right to one of the following drills to get the energy and tempo set for practice:

- **PRACTICE STARTERS** (We always do at least one drill on Tuesdays and Wednesdays)
  1. "Pirate Circle" – A 1-on-1 board drill with the team circled around the 2 players trying to stay square and drive each other out of the circle. We'll do "call outs" where players can challenge each

other or "Coaches Choice" where each position coach will choose.

2. "Big Circle" – In the "Big Circle", we'll cone off a circle equivalent to approximately a 10x10 yard box. We'll select 3 players (1 ball carrier – ALWAYS a Lineman, 1 blocker – RB, WR, LB type, and 1 defender – any position). On the whistle, the defender will try and defeat the live block and break down with a two hand tag on the ball carrier. This is a good drill for live 1-on-1 block destruction but also gives our big guys a chance to carry the ball and show off their moves trying to juke the defender while staying inside the circle.
3. "NASCAR" – A 2-minute drill with the first team offense working tempo on a scout defense. Play is live to the ball carrier. This has been a good drill to wake guys up and create a tempo for the rest of practice. This is also a good drill to work in different game situations.
4. "3-on-3 Red Zone" – O-line & D-line playing 1/3 of the field trying to score.



Linemen will play skill positions in this drill choosing a QB and two WRs or RBs. We'll cone off from the hash to the boundary with the offense trying to score on one play from the 10-yard line. We'll play this live and the rest of the team pick who they think will win. Losers will do conditioning.

• **PRACTICE FINISHERS** (Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays) In place of ordinary conditioning routines

1. **"County Fair"** – This drill was started by former Head Coach, Keith Lehne, back in the day as August practices always aligned with our county fair. He'd hype the fair up the previous week saying it was coming to town and to make sure players bought their tickets for "rides". The younger kids are always confused by this talk while the veteran players know what they are in for. Each "ride" is a conditioning station with the team rotating through to close out practice. Bear crawls, crab walks, burpees, shuttle runs & sit up stations are a few of the traditional "rides" we'll use. Even though this drill comes down to just being conditioning stations, associating it with something else brings a little fun

& tradition to the ordinary.

2. **"O-Lineman Challenge"** – One of our favorites is our "O-Lineman Challenge". This is where we'll pick an offensive lineman and have team conditioning on the line if they successfully catch a punt, catch a long fade route, kick a successful extra point, etc. Again, a simple way to get linemen some "skill" time and it also brings a little comradery as the team cheers on that player.
3. **"Rain Day"** – This is a player favorite and is done on a muddy or snowy field. We'll line up the team in 6 lines on the goal line with 5 tackling dummies being held up by another player spread out down the sideline every 10 yards with a 6<sup>th</sup> and final dummy another 20 yards down from the last one placed in the middle of the field. On the whistle, players will perform an up-down then sprint to tackle the nearest dummy. It becomes a first come-first served race for the closest tackling dummy, with the last player having to redirect and tackle the furthest out. Players that tackle then take their turn holding that dummy up for the next man up. This is a fun conditioner as guys will push and edge each other out for the

closer dummies, especially as they become more tired. With the long run and sloppy field, guys have a blast and end up sliding quite a ways on contact.

Thanks to WFCA for allowing our program to contribute to *The Point After II*. Feel free to reach out with any questions you may have on these drills.

**"Everyone has some fear. A man who has no fear belongs in a mental institution. Or on special teams."**

**—Walt Michaels**



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# THE LITTLE THINGS MATTER

By: Derek Boldt, Head Football Coach, Augusta High School



Derek Boldt

First of all, a big thanks to the WFCa for publishing *The Point After II*. There are a variety of different ideas and strategies to take away from every production! I appreciate Mike Olson reaching out and asking me to write about things happening in Augusta. I'd love to share how we have gotten things going here, but the first thing to understand is it isn't just me. As everyone knows, it takes a lot more than one person to run a successful football program. I asked my assistant coaches to give me some of their thoughts about what has helped us be successful; as well as my wife, who is an integral part of what we are doing here. As with everything we do, this article is produced through the effort of more than one person. I've also had some great coaches and role models in the past who have played a huge role in how I decided to run this program. A big thanks to all who have influenced me into coaching and continue to give me advice!

This fall, I will be heading into my 5th year as head coach in Augusta. I started out by coaching youth flag football, accepting a job as a middle school teacher, coaching the middle school program for one year, and then moving into the Head Coach role at the varsity level in 2018. In the four years of my tenure as head coach, our record is as follows: 2018 - 2-7, 2019 - 6-3 (0-1), 2020 - 0-6, 2021 - 9-0 (0-1). In these four years, we have made the playoffs twice, won a conference championship, and dealt with the trials of COVID. None of this has been easy work and it took every single person on our staff, all of our student-athletes, our parents, and my wife to make the machine run. Reflecting on the past four years, and specifically this past season, all of our values and core beliefs with which we chose to steer this team seemed to have culminated. Much of what I have pushed and tried to incorporate are from conversations with many different coaches and people in leadership positions when I took the role.

As I am sure many of you preach and practice, we feel we have turned things around here

and are heading in the right direction by focusing on the little things. We have no secrets and don't hide much on the field. We are a very basic Xs and Os team. Not flashy. We run a version of a Wing-T offense and a standard 52 or 44 defense. There isn't anything special we have done on the field. Much of our success has been bred off the game field. The little things are what matter. Our games are either won or lost Monday-Thursday and in the off-season. I assume all of us as coaches believe this. We spend a lot more time practicing the game than we do playing it! We are coaching high school kids. We get what we get. We have other jobs besides coaching, but we coach because we want to make a difference. That is what it is ultimately about. So, I believe our time is better spent working with these kids to be better human beings and helping to guide them toward being successful adults with strong futures. This is what we focus on, and I believe this is how we have reshaped the program in Augusta. This is our perspective on what it takes to make a football program more than just a football program. The following are what we believe to be the 3 key building blocks of our program in no particular order.

1. Discipline - This does not mean that kids are punished for failures or are forced into respect. It is much more than that. Discipline is being so in tune with things going on around you that when it comes to performance time, you just do what needs to be done. No questions asked. We spend so much time working on this without the kids knowing. Much of this comes with conditioning. Our conditioning coach uses a lot of variety when it comes to conditioning. The environment must be positive but demanding, with a strong focus on doing the little things right. Conditioning flat out sucks, but it is a necessity. We coach our players to embrace the suck, to take pride in that no other team will out work us. It's hard to get kids to buy into that philosophy when they first get in the program until they see it translate to the field. Strong leadership within the team becomes key to hold kids accountable and to push themselves. In drills we focus on minor techniques. Every day we do simple technique drills. I coach linebackers, and every day we focus on our first steps at the snap of the ball, knowing our gap assignment, and playing with leverage. Every day. We are rarely introducing crazy stunts or deceptive tactics. Instead, we choose to focus on just being very technically sound. Let the kids play ball. If they are technically sound we have seen more times than not they will get done what needs

to be done. Do the little things right. Our tagline is "Build The Dam" and we try to show them that being disciplined and doing the little things right will help build a dam that is hard to break.

2. Commitment - As I mentioned earlier, we produce our product Monday-Thursday and in the off-season. We've tried several different ways to get this from kids in the off-season. After the first of the year we try to have monthly meetings during school. This is usually no more than a 20 minute chat, reminder of grades, encouragement in their other sports, and a nice reminder that everything is an interview. We need to be able to trust kids to do the right thing from December to July. It's difficult to give kids the ball when the game is on the line if we can't trust them in February to do the little things right. We reward kids with helmet stickers for weight room attendance, honor rolls, lettering in other sports, volunteer opportunities, anything to celebrate them. They thrive on this. There is constant competition on who will get the most weight room stickers on our first team meal night. We've created a record board for the weight room which has really motivated the younger kids to get their name up there. We've made a 700 pound club board and also a 1,000 pound club board. This is super motivating, especially for the older kids who are experienced in the weight room and may feel like they are plateauing. We hand out T-shirts for kids who beat their PR that say "I rang the bell." We put stars on the back of the T-shirt every time they get a new one. The best motivator I've found so far is a T-shirt that says "I can lift more than Coach Boldt." We put the lifts on the back of the shirt. This has really motivated those upperclassmen as well. I spend nearly every day after school in the weight room with the kids which again allows me to interact with them and establish strong relationships as well as some friendly competition! During the season, tardiness is unacceptable. If you can't be to practice on time, how can you perform on Friday? Behavior issues throughout the school year are notified to me and oftentimes will result in a conversation with the student in addition to the actions taken by our front office. I have built some strong relationships this way. Of course, it helps that my wife works in the same building as I and she is able to talk with kids as well. Honestly, they may respect her more than me. We are constantly letting the kids know they are always showing their commitment to themselves and that has a direct relationship with their commitment to football.



3. Family - As if the other two pillars weren't a secret, this one definitely isn't. All of us know that there is just something different about football when it comes to the idea of family. It is a brotherhood and I have yet to find a bond quite like it anywhere. 11 people trying to do one thing. If you don't have a strong relationship with each other it is very difficult. If you don't have trust, things fall apart. If you aren't willing to take a risk and push yourself past being uncomfortable, no one else will. This is where we feel we "make our money." We have Thursday night meals. If you aren't doing this, try to find a way! It is unreal how much this helped. During Covid we stopped them and our team was completely different. It is an incredible 45 minutes. We have our senior parents run it (we usually have around 35 kids, so numbers aren't crazy) and they do an incredible job. It is just basic spaghetti or BBQ sandwiches, but it's not about the food. Upperclassmen and underclassmen. Everyone laughing and really forming the family. At the end of camp, my wife and I also host a cookout where we make brats and hot dogs for all the kids, and our coaches bring their families and dishes to pass. We let the kids play with our dog and

kids, they bring yard games, and we have a fire. It's probably my favorite night of the season. This really brings us together and shows our commitment to the boys and how all of us as coaches are people they can always count on. We also have a movie night in my classroom where we show a football movie the night before the scrimmage. We buy them some pizzas and they bring popcorn, air mattresses, blankets. It's a great way to end the grind of two a days. At team meals, the cookout, at school, and at other school sporting events we don't talk to them about ball. We talk to them like humans. We can joke about how a coach went off or about something dumb they did the other day after practice. We treat them like we would our own kids or relatives. My wife and I live in Augusta and both work at the school. They get to see us as humans as well. We make it a point to attend as many community events as possible, go to as many extracurricular events as we can, and try to really engrain ourselves within the community. We love where we live.

Again, I know I am not sharing anything that you all don't know already, but this is my perspective and explanations of what we have

done here that has really worked. We keep things really simple, but we have a lot of fun doing it. Things can get really serious in a hurry, but we are always able to laugh about it and move on. We have never had insane talent or giant kids in the past four years. What we have had is kids who have found their perceived boundaries and physical limits and moved well past them. They've gotten there by continuous discipline, an incredible commitment to themselves and their team, and most importantly of all, they feel like they are a part of a family. Someone always has their back and will always encourage them. We have gotten kids to understand what hard work is and that anything less than hard work and effort is unacceptable. When they choose to not work hard or lack effort, they lose games. They have been able to reflect on that. That's where the constant mini lessons and encouragement have helped them understand they must live up to the 3 core values to be successful. Not just on Fridays, but in life.

If you want to talk more about my thoughts and ideas please feel free to email me at: [dboldt@augusta.k12.wi.us](mailto:dboldt@augusta.k12.wi.us). I am more than willing to talk about our philosophies and of course ball!



A graphic for the Roll Golds football schedule. It features a large, stylized number '2' in the background. On the left, a list of games is presented with team logos and dates. On the right, a close-up of a football player's helmet with a 'G' logo is shown. At the bottom left, there are social media handles and a list of coaches. The 'Roll Golds' logo is at the bottom center.

	Loras	9/3
	@Central	9/10
	Albion	9/24
	@Stout	10/1
	Whitewater	10/8
	Lacrosse	10/15
	@River Falls	10/22
	Stevens Point	10/29
	@Platteville	11/5
	Oshkosh	11/12



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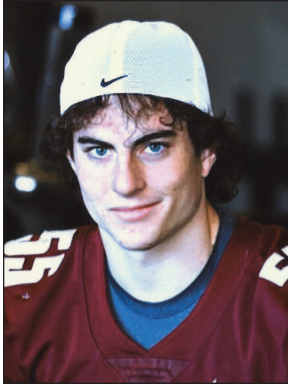
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# THAT OLD WEIGHT ROOM

By: Cyrus Siegert, Graduate and Son of Mark Siegert, Potosi-Cassville Football



*Cyrus Siegert*

Those who know me best know that I don't quit. When I have a goal in mind more often than not it turns into an internal obligation, and it is only a matter of time until that task is carried out and completed. I would be lying if I said this has always been the way I've been wired, as laziness would often present itself in my adolescence. Although, what is acquiring true strength and skill without once pulling oneself out of the trenches of self-pity and weakness? That's where the principles and virtues of what it means to be a football player come into play.

For those who don't know me, I grew up a coach's son. I didn't just grow-up around the program, I grew through it. It's no secret that much of my upbringing was influenced heavily by the program. Watching games from the stands in early elementary, being the team waterboy from 5th grade all the way up to my

freshman year, playing for the program myself until graduation, and even having the privilege of participating in the 2019 WFLA All-Star game. (being coached one last time by my dad and playing alongside a former teammate/best friend). The reality was my childhood and teenage years was drenched with the underlying narrative that success is inevitable, with the proper work done ahead of time.

One of the earliest representations of these ethics being displayed right before my eyes were the times spent after-school in the weight room where my dad's office used to be. To my disappointment at the time, these were the days before I was old enough to enter the school weight-training program. I would find ways to kill time by exploring the upstairs storage room, sometimes joined by one of my siblings as we would play, pretend and wait for Dad to close up the gym.

When pretend got old, I would venture down the steps into what is now my dad's old office and out to the main weight training area. Nowadays, the school has a new and improved weight room that makes this old training space seem like a storage closet, which these days it literally is. But back then this room was beaming with energy and as a young kid aspiring to be a hard-working student athlete, I could see it all. Day after day, middle and high school student-athletes would come in, hit the weights, then mark down their completed lift session on the wall. The entire environment was almost like a factory that churned out leaders and hard-working young people, and I couldn't wait until I was of age to follow suit.

One of the first things anyone would notice during these lift sessions was the booming echo of hyperactive music playing at almost all times. This "subtle ambience" would always set the tone of high-energy and execution for every individual who stepped foot in the weight room. Along with the music, sounds of heavy old-school plates rattling would echo throughout the small room coincided with shouts and banter of motivational excitement. In this room, everyday students would turn into comrades training and pushing each other to their limits. The old weight room was littered with posters and quotes serving as visual reminders encompassing what the program is all about.

Years later, here I am visualizing these memories as if they took place yesterday. The influence of 'that old weight room' and what it embodied was instilled within me from a very young age. Almost everyday throughout my high school student-athletic journey I would rely on these virtues and principles. These virtues and principles again being the ones which were on active display almost daily in that old weight room. Albeit my playing days are over, the everyday battles life presents have kept me honest. Being a college student in today's climate can bring to life many predicaments that forcibly mold and create the person we are to be, for better or for worse. Regardless, the resilience that I pride myself in having is something that has taken years to cultivate with its origins dating back to that room. That dusty, old weight room in the corner of the gymnasium.

## NOT JUST Xs AND Os

By: Chuck Raykovich, Head Football Coach, St. Croix Falls High School



*Chuck Raykovich*

One of my assistants questioned me one time "Coach Rayko, I have heard you speak at many coaching clinics in the past, but you never talk about Xs and Os, why is that?" The answer is, in my opinion, Xs and Os are a big part of football but not the most elusive thing nor the most important thing to learn.

Every form of offense and defense has won championships. In fact, I'll bet that if you look at programs that have won conference and state championships you will probably find that they could have won those championships with a multiple of different offenses and defenses. Don't get me wrong, matching schemes to talent is important, however, I still believe that my above statement still holds true. Heck, if you want to learn about offensive or defensive "plays" just ask a student in your high school, even those who do not play football, their expertise at "Madden" should give you everything you need! Better yet, ask your team parents, I guarantee they will have the answers!

The truth of the matter is this, if you truly want to learn about a specific offensive or defensive scheme, set up a time to visit a coach/coaching staff that has been successful running what you want to learn. You will then have the opportunity to ask about the "little things" regarding their schemes, things that you will rarely pick up listening to a coach talk at a clinic.

When you get to the "whys and how's" of successful programs you will soon discover that they all do something much more important than Xs & Os. I don't want to say "little things" because those little things build up to big success! It is the way they conduct their business, it's how they run their program, the buzz word today is "their culture". These are the things I love to learn about and talk about

In this article I will touch on 10 things I have learned during my football life that I call "cut in stone items". Things I have experienced, lived or stolen from other coaches. Things I truly believe in. These things will be important to young coaches who are searching for successes as they begin their career and "old guys" looking for an edge.

1. Tony Robbins in his book *Life Force* states, - I've got a passion for hanging out with geniuses, in my experience something rubs off when you're around people this brilliant." So, what does that have to do with coaching you ask? Well, go to clinics and seek out



successful coaches. Hang around them and you will be surprised at what you learn. Spend little time with coaches who continually have excuses for their lack of success. Now, (this is super important!) when you spend time with successful coaches and ask questions... LISTEN!!! There is nothing more puzzling than someone asking how to do something and then they dominate the discussion with how they do things!

2. Don't give yourself an "end date." Such as "I am only going to coach for 2 more years." When you do that you have already started the quitting process. Your thoughts become cluttered with things you are going to do when you are no longer coaching. Your kids and football deserve better.
3. Be careful! The good thing about football is all you can do with it. The bad thing about football is all you can do with it. Don't overload yourself and your kids with things that you will rarely use or that might cause confusion.
4. Train for and demand discipline. A lack of discipline by your players will cost you! Sports, especially football, outside of the military, is the last hold out for discipline in our society. We start every practice with a "TEAM IN" command. Players arrange themselves on their right knee with their hel-

met on the ground next to their left knee in a perfect straight line both sideways and front to back. Coaches check the lines for proper alignment and give seconds to correct them if not straight. The command "eyes up, back straight, chest out, mouths closed" is given. This gives coaches the opportunity to address the team for whatever needs to be addressed. Attendance is also taken by our managers as coaches talk. This procedure has drastically helped practice discipline which translates to game discipline.

5. Discipline on the field translates to the classroom. You can ask any of our players "what is coach Rayko's most favorite saying?" They will (or should) say "sit up front, be respectful and thank your teachers." This is now including "Thank our resource officer." With what our police face daily a thank you to them is greatly appreciated. Give your players this message the entire school year, not just during the football season.
6. Add a community service project to your team. Be open minded, there are many projects out there that need to be done and completing them gives your players and team positive exposure. This has become one of the biggest things our program does, and it is an important element of our captain's selection process.

7. Find a way to make your practices fun. Demanding discipline does not take away from fun, in fact I believe kids love that element. Find something at the end of practice that enables kids to go home excited about tomorrow's practice.
8. If you are "hard" on a kid at practice DO NOT LET THAT KID LEAVE THE LOCKER ROOM WITHOUT TALKING TO HIM! Let him know that you care about him and just want him to improve.
9. Parents. They can make you or break you. When you have a group of parents who truly support you and what you are doing, your season will be good no matter what. If you have a group of parents who have little or no support for you, your job becomes almost impossible. I address this at our team/parent meeting at the start of the season with this: "if you are sitting around the table bashing coaches to your kids, we, the team, and your kid will undoubtedly have a hard time finding any success".
10. I will leave you with this: "Kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." This is powerful, base your coaching philosophy on this and you will have a successful coaching career no matter what the record says! And keep this thought in mind - football coaches have the best job in the world, cherish it and protect it!



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# SPECIAL TEAMS

## THE “ZONE” KICK RETURN

By: Chris Graverson, Assistant Football Coach, Waunakee High School



Chris Graverson

After receiving *The Point After II* each year throughout my 12-year coaching career, I want to thank the WFCB and its area reps for continuing to prioritize this valuable tool for coaches to share ideas. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the coaches who have helped me learn not only football schematic knowledge but more importantly, true coaching knowledge. In my time coaching, it has become abundantly clear that having very sound and simple special teams schemes is incredibly important.

### Philosophy

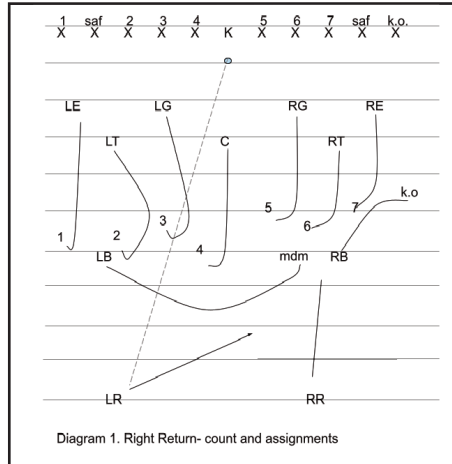
First, I would like to explain the advantages of the “Zone” kickoff return. With limited practice time, the count system of this scheme is easy to grasp for high school athletes and consequently efficient to teach. It also utilizes a lot of “same as” skills that many of the players on your return unit already practice and rep during indy times in practice; LBs/DBs in coverage, matching pace and flipping their hips and RBs reading blocks in your Zone schemes. The Zone return, lacking a wedge component, reduces high speed collisions as well as the chances of a surprise onside kick. Lastly, the groups that have used this return have consistently returned the ball to a starting field position between the 30 and 40 yard lines.

### Scheme

**Prep Work:** There are three scouting questions you need to find the answers to: 1. Who are their safety valves, not rushing hard downfield? (Most teams have one on each side.) 2. What is the average depth of the kicker? 3. Do they have any ‘problem’ players difficult for you to block?

**The Count:** Start with the first player opposite the direction of your return, they are #1. Continue counting towards the return, while

skipping the safety players and the kicker. In diagram 1, the count is drawn for a right return.

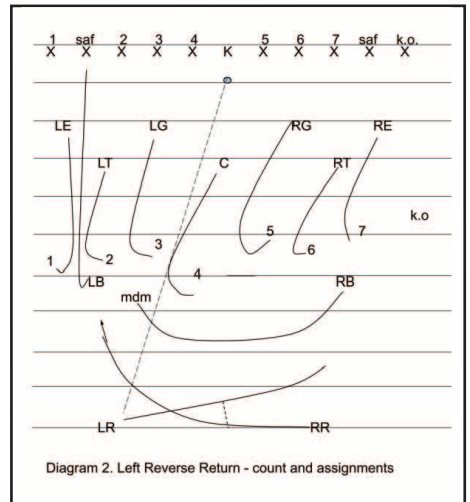


**Blocking Technique:** Blockers will open their stance on the kick and take a drop to gain leverage between their assignment and the return side. They are looking to make contact and wall their assignment off away from the return side at a depth determined by the depth of the kick. The starting point for the depth of the kick is the goal line. With a kick to the 0, the players want to cross five major yard lines before locking on (kick to the goal line=blocking zone ~ 25-yard line). Each five yards the kick is shorter than the goal line, reduces the number of major lines to cross by one (i.e. kick to the five = cross four lines or a 20-yard drop to the 30-yard line). If your assignment cuts behind you, flip your hips, find your player and lock on. The blocker’s body will be on the “wrong side” of the block, which is fine so long as the blocker locks on. This technique is very similar to a DB or LB working in coverage on a vertical route. I typically use players from these position groups for the front seven players. Added bonus, these players usually have good ball skills in the event a surprise onside kick is attempted.

**Returner Reads:** The returner catches the ball and begins a return on a 45 degree angle towards the call side. He begins scanning each block from the first block towards the return side from where he catches the ball. He looks for a “wrong side” block. As soon as he sees one, he turns upfield and hits that seam. If he only sees “correct side” blocks he follows the other returner leading to the safety. The return can hit anywhere on the field between where he catches the ball and the kick out block on the return side, thus the Zone Kick Return.

### Issues and Extras

**Issues:** The alignment of your left and right back need to be adjusted by feel to prevent the 25 yard line “hole shot”. If the kicker’s alignment allows you to predict the hole shot, adjust the drop depth of your front lines to zero line drop (i.e. lock your block immediately after the kick) and your backs need to know that a fair catch is always an option. Lastly, If a team has a stud running downfield that is a difficult matchup for you, the away side back can double the stud rather than find the most dangerous man.



**Extras:** Although this return was more of a consistent hidden yardage “plus” than it was a home run hitter, there is a reverse option that has great potential and would hit for us in practice. Start the count to the return side and your player’s drops gain leverage to the other side, with an exception of the front side end who is now the kick out block (Diagram 2). We just felt that the regular return was safe and consistent and that we could start every drive with pretty good field position.

“There is no correlation between working less and getting better.”

-- Dick Vermeil



# DEVELOPING A SPECIAL TEAMS CULTURE

By: Chris Lidwin, Special Teams Coordinator, New Berlin Eisenhower



Chris Lidwin

When (Head Coach) Matt Kern approached me roughly seven seasons ago to coordinate the special team duties, I was very hesitant. This new position was something foreign to me. I mean, we all grew up understanding the importance Special Teams play, but how do you truly accept the old cliché that it is “one-third of the game”? How do you motivate your players to

give just a bit more on the field when they have already emptied their tanks? Everyone wants to be the hero, yet who do you trust when the game is on the line? Do you kick it, or go for 2? Is it the right time to fake punt, and if it is, what fake will work? These are all questions we had to answer confidently and prove to our players that Special Teams aren’t just for the “back ups”. At New Berlin Eisenhower, we have created a culture where Special Teams means something important and our athletes earn the right to represent a particular unit.

After reviewing last season’s goals, we decide which unit needs the most attention. Starting on the very first practice day of the season, a unit will be broken down into position groups and almost all players will compete through a “tryout” to earn the spot. For instance, if we break down Kickoff Return, there are 3 Levels: Front line (4), Middle line (2), and Return group (5). Each level has a particular direction and distance to drop. Our coaching staff is divided into 3 groups, each with a specific drill for that position. The team is also divided into 3 groups

and rotate to each drill every 5 minutes; this allows ample time for maximum reps. We feel this is a great use of time because the drills can double up as a 15 minute conditioning period. As one coach demonstrates the drill, the other coach assesses each player’s ability to perform the drill and attaches a grade on the assessment form. After the first week of practice, all Special Team units and drills have been assessed. As a staff, we all decide on the initial 2-deep depth chart and give feedback about any other potential role players.

The following week, the anticipation ends as we introduce both the back up and starting roles for each unit. Again, these athletes “earned” their position and rightfully are excited! The remaining players usually serve as a scout group in a position that they, too, scored high on the evaluation, but didn’t quite crack the top 2. This process is managed by the assistant Special Teams coach. He will create scout groups for each unit and those athletes selected are expected to understand their scout responsibilities for that week. By the end of week-2,

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**VS. ILLINOIS STATE**  
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**VS. NEW MEXICO STATE**  
CAMP RANDALL  
9.17.22



**@ OHIO STATE**  
COLUMBUS, OH  
9.24.22



**VS. ILLINOIS**  
CAMP RANDALL  
10.1.22



**@ NORTHWESTERN**  
EVANSTON, IL  
10.8.22



**@ MICHIGAN STATE**  
EAST LANSING, MI  
10.15.22



**VS. PURDUE**  
CAMP RANDALL  
10.22.22



**VS. MARYLAND**  
CAMP RANDALL  
11.5.22



**@ IOWA**  
IOWA CITY, IA  
11.12.22



**@ NEBRASKA**  
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**VS. MINNESOTA**  
CAMP RANDALL  
11.26.22

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we have solidified our Cover and Return units, as well as the Extra Point/Field Goal groups. Schemes can change week to week depending on our opponent and their alignments. For the first couple weeks of the season, we rotate the units each day and practice their positional drills for roughly 6 minutes. This helps remind the athletes of the importance of consistency and continue to compete for a starting role. Many players in our program have actually stolen a position during this 6-minute time slot the past few years.

Every Thursday, we run through each Special Team unit to perfect our drops, movements, landmarks, and assignments. The hand selected scout team will mimic our opponent's scheme, as they were told earlier in the week what their scout position will be. This cuts down on instructional time on the field and allows for smoother transitions and focus. If done properly, we may only have to rep each unit a few times... this includes our secondary and possible tertiary units. Again, these kids earned their positions and are proud to represent each unit.

For some athletes, this may be the only time they can get on the field, so they will give everything they can.

At New Berlin Eisenhower, we feel very proud of creating this Special Teams buy-in. It takes hard work and a consistent effort from the entire coaching staff and our players for this to occur. I want to thank our head coach, Matt Kern, for trusting this continuing process, as well as the WFCa to discuss this topic for *The Point After II* magazine. Good luck next season!

## MAKE YOUR KICKOFF TEAM A WEAPON NOT A LIABILITY

By: Jon Kleinschmidt, Assistant Football Coach, Colby High School



Jon Kleinschmidt

I would like to thank the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association for the opportunity to write an article for *The Point After II*. I believe the most important piece in having a good kickoff team is the kicker. It is important to have a kicker who does not make it easy for the return team to set up a good return. Everyone would like to have a kicker who can put it in the end zone every time, but those kids are really hard to develop consistently. I am always trying though to develop the kicker who can put it in the end zone consistently, but the main thing I am trying to develop in my kicker is the ability to kick the ball directionally where I want it. I also want to develop a kicker who can hit different types of kickoffs.

There are four kickoffs I want my kicker to learn. One is the deep kickoff where he works to get as much distance and height as possible by hitting the ball just below the center of the ball and getting a nice slow end over end rota-

tion along with getting his hips up to get as much hang time as possible on the kick.

The next kick I want my kicker to develop is the hard knuckle ball kickoff. This kickoff is hit in the middle of the football or just slightly above the middle of the football. This kickoff I really like to use if I have a kicker that can't kick the ball very high or deep. The next kickoff I like to use is the high pop up or sky kickoff, this kickoff I like to use into a strong wind where we kickoff deep but have the kicker really get his hips up and get a lot of hang time so the wind pushes the kick up and we can get under it to eliminate the return. I also like to use the sky kickoff with the kicker using his field goal steps to kick the ball high and short across field down around the 20-yard line. The last kickoff I like to use is the crazy ball where the kick spins like a boomerang sideways. This kick I have had good luck with when I have had a straight on kicker that doesn't kick the ball very far. This kickoff is really hard to field and is kicked to an open area.

As the special teams coach I am always working at trying to make it as hard as possible for the opposing team to get a good return against us. When scouting the opposing team, I always try to identify the team's best kick returner and try to kick away from him. I also want to see what return or returns the other team uses and how we can negate them. I also want to identify the other team's return formation and where the holes are in the formation to place the ball. I also look to see if the return team has members that start dropping early to see if we can recover an onside kick. I feel it is extremely important to be unpredictable in where and how you are going to kick the ball. This makes the

other team hesitant on setting up certain returns if they are not sure where the ball is going to be kicked

The coverage scheme, as well as picking the right personnel on the coverage team is also extremely important in limiting returns and making big plays. It's so important to get as much speed on the field as possible as well as aggressive players that like to hit. The players on our coverage team are told to run around the first contact player if they are far enough away from the return man (at least 20 yards) and get back into the player's lane assignment as soon as possible. If the return man is close it is important to run through contact picking the shoulder of the blocking player closest to the return man and then lowering the hips, turning the shoulders (DIP AND RIP) and exploding through contact. We try to form a cup around the returner and the outside players will set an edge and not let the returner get to the sideline. It is very important that the coverage players work together to contain the returner. We have three players that are then safeties that are containing if the return man breaks the initial coverage of the cup, they have right outside contain, middle contain (kicker) and left outside contain. It is important that these players do not lag to far back so that they can tackle the returner if he breaks through the initial coverage. The safeties should be extremely fast and sure tacklers in the open field. The kicker should not lag too far back because they usually are not extremely fast so they should be close enough to be there as soon as the returner breaks through the initial coverage.

I hope this helps in making your kickoff team more successful.

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIAL TEAMS

By: Jared Franz, Head Football Coach, Westosha Central High School



Jared Franz

I would like to start by thanking some of the people who have helped me in my journey to becoming a head coach. First, thank you to my high school head coach and IHSA Hall of Fame coach, Tim Jobst (Ottawa, IL). I had no idea being a head coach took so much time and energy. I am so grateful that I was able to tell him thank you and that I had become a head coach

before he passed in May of 2020. Thank you to Mike Greinke (Wauwatosa East, WI) for taking a chance on a young coach and promoting me to be his varsity defensive coordinator in 2013. Finally, to Coach Mo Moriarity (Bloomington South, IN) for giving so much of his time to help me and my staff learn his offensive system in the midst of the COVID crisis. Also, thank you to the WFCA for everything it does for young coaches who are eager to learn and grow.

The vast majority of my coaching career I have been solely focused on building a dominant defense. I can sit in clinics for hours on end and listen to coaches talk about defensive schemes and techniques. Special teams was never a topic I was especially interested in, nor a role I was ever asked to take on. In fact, as a defensive coordinator I generally disliked special teams because I dreaded being put in bad field position or even worse, giving up a touchdown without getting a chance to defend against it.

That perspective first started to change when I heard Dave Aranda (then the Wisconsin Badgers defensive coordinator) speak at a

WFCA clinic. In his presentation he emphasized a statistic that I have never forgotten, teams that score on a punt return win 80% of the time. It opened my eyes to how that phase of the game could tilt odds in my team's favor and I began to give that part of special teams more time and attention. Still, the other 3 phases of special teams were largely ignored.

When I was hired by Westosha Central as a first time head coach in January of 2020, I had no idea that COVID-19 was about to turn my whole world upside down. I imagine it's tough enough being a first-year head coach, kind of like being a first-year teacher, but the difficulty of that off-season was unimaginable. We had no contact days to practice our new offensive, defensive and special teams schemes. We did not get a scrimmage against an opponent to truly test our mental and physical readiness. We had two weeks of practice (no long days either) and then we were kicking off in week one against one of our better conference opponents. The limited time we did have to get ready was largely spent on offense and defense. We did

## SCHEDULE

### SEPTEMBER

3- VS EAST TEXAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY | 1 PM

10- AT NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY | 12 PM

17- AT MILLSAPS COLLEGE (MISS.) | 1 PM

### OCTOBER

1- VS UW-PLATTEVILLE | 1 PM \*

8- AT UW-RIVER FALLS | 1 PM \*

14- AT UW-WHITEWATER | 7 PM \*

22- VS UW-STOUT | 1:30 PM \*

29- VS UW-LA CROSSE | 1 PM \*

### NOVEMBER

5- AT UW-STEVENS POINT | 1 PM \*

12- AT UW-EAU CLAIRE | 1 PM \*

WIAC CONFERENCE \* | HOME GAME

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have special teams practice segments but it was not nearly the amount of time offense and defense received. In the first few weeks of my first season as head coach, I learned just how important special teams are.

As week 1 opening kickoff approached, I was full of optimism and excitement. Then on the opening kickoff, our opponent returned the kick for an 85-yard touchdown. No one even came close to touching him, talk about a gut punch! Then with less than a minute left in the game, we had to punt for the first time in the game and it was blocked (luckily we held strong defensively to win by 2). In week 2, we were up 21-7 and had all the momentum when our kickoff team gave up another touchdown and it turned the game around in an instant (we did not hold on defense this time and lost by a touchdown). Then in week 3, while trailing against our conference rivals, we were able to block a punt for a safety late in the game to swing the momentum and get the win. Only three games in and I quickly realized how critical special teams are.

Coach Mo Moriarity had warned me that if I wanted to win games I must do three things; 1. Invest in special teams, 2. Play great defense 3. Protect the football on offense. And this was from a coach who is a legendary offensive mind. In my second (and somewhat more normal) off-season, I prioritized special teams, especially our kickoff unit and it paid off.

In 2021....

- We did not give up a kick return for a touchdown
- We only gave up 2 kick returns all season that went past our 50 yard line
- We were able to get multiple takeaways
- We were able to pin our opponents deep in critical moments of games.

### The Scheme

This was adopted from coach Tom Levin when he was with the University of Houston. The following is a description of that scheme and the methods we used to install and practice it. For kickoff we use a “Kick” side and a “Field” side. If we are directionally kicking to the left then the K1-K5 align to the left and the field side F1-F5 to the right. If we are directionally kicking to the right then the K1-K5 align to the right and the field side F1-F5 align to the left. I like this kick/field concept because it allows for specialization. We let our kicker select the direction they are most comfortable with and kick that way most of the time. Whether we are kicking right or left the ball should fall directly in front of our K3, so his angle to the ball is always the same. The F1 is always the fur-

#### Kick Right

F1 F2 F3 F4 F5 K5 K4 K3 K2 K1  
K

thest person from the ball, so he is used to taking the same angle. The same thing is true for all players. The second reason I like this kickoff scheme is because on defense we play with field-boundary alignments, so our athletes are used to flipping sides of the field.

#### Personnel

- K1 Should be your best open field tackler, as he will look to fold inside off the K2s
- K2 Typically an OLB/DE who is used to holding an edge/containing
- K3 Physicality over speed
- K4 and K5 Physicality first, speed second, both if you're so lucky

On the field side put your fastest, disciplined, willing tackler at the F1 and then your next fastest at the F2 and so on. Their job is to squeeze to the ball and fold in behind the Ks as needed. They act as a net.

#### Terminology

*Fly Zone* – First 20-30 yards where contact is avoided, but always to the ball side

*Rip* – Block destruction technique used to get through the fly zone with minimal contact and maximum speed

*Stack* – After avoiding or ripping through contact in the fly zone, the technique of recovering to the original lane/path to the ball.

*Twist* – If a teammate next to me overtakes my path, I should twist and replace his path to prevent large lanes from opening up.

*Contact Area* – The area within 10-15 yards of the returner where we must take and defeat blocks with physicality. We teach our athletes to use rip or shock block destruction techniques in this area of the field.

*Butt Side* – If the ball is to my left and the blocker is also to my left trying to block me to my right I want to beat him across his face to the left. I want to beat him butt side

*Whip* – The technique of beating a blocker across his face to the butt side

*Shoot* – If the blocker is overplaying to his butt side and is not giving a realistic path across his face, then I may need to shoot, meaning I go under his block to the ball.

#### Kickoff Rules

- Be within one yard of the ball when it is kicked
- Use rip technique or a deke step to avoid contact in the fly zone
- Be physical and use rip or shock technique to defeat blocks in the contact zone
- If a teammate takes your lane, then twist and take his
- The first man to the returner must make the ball carrier stop his feet. This is critical in
- stopping his momentum and giving our kick unit time to close in on the tackle.

- The F2 is watching for reverses, throwbacks or other trick plays away from the Kick side

#### Keys to Installing and practicing

The first thing I recommend is performing a special teams circuit for ALL players to take part in. Stations can teach the goals for each portion of the field and/or general block destruction and open field tackling techniques. This allows the athlete to focus on one thing at a time and get multiple reps with feedback. If you have athletes running 40-50 yards on every kickoff rep they're simply not going to get enough reps in before they get tired and it's difficult to see and coach all eleven at once. As a defensive coach at heart, I've learned that special teams time is also a great way to practice more of our defensive fundamentals but technically the practice plan says special teams, so the offensive coaches can't get as mad!

- Timing up the kickoff 10 yard sprint: 5 pushups if they're more than 1 yard off the ball or more than 1 step over. Make it competitive!
- Correct fly zone direction avoidance and stack with a landmark for the ball. 10-15 yards.
- K2-K1/F2-F1 coordination: the K2/F2 sets the edge and if it's set properly the K1/F1 fills inside the K2/F2. If the K2/F2 loses contain then the K1/F1 must force the ball carrier inside. K2 may use a shock or shiver technique to box in the returner.
- K3-F3 contact zone block destruction: start as if the athlete has gone through the fly zone and is now closing within 15 yards to the ball carrier. Coach the athlete to whip to the blockers butt-side or shoot underneath if the blocker is over leavened (like I tell my defensive lineman, if you shoot under the block you better make the play!)
- Kickoff is a tremendous way to start practice after warm ups. A quick 5-10 minute segment can really get the energy going at the beginning of practice.
- We assign our players “Hudl Homework” over the weekend in season which requires them to pick their own or their positions best and worst five plays from Friday night. In 2021 we made special teams a part of this but reduced the number to two (simply because there are fewer special team plays in a game compared to offense and defense.)

#### Keep Stats and Celebrate Special Teams

We keep our Special Teams game stats using a simple spreadsheet.

Column Headings are as follows:

- Kickoff Play #
- Players withing 1 yard of the ball
- Yardline Fielded
- Yardline Returned to

#### Kick Left

K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 F5 F4 F3 F2 F1  
K



- Return Yards
- Yards after Contact
- Tackle
- Touchback
- Takeaways Touchdown
- Penalties

These stats give us the ability to grade our kicker and the coverage unit. The bottom line of numbers is set up with a formula to calculate the average starting field position of our opponents, the average number of yards allowed per

return and the total number of yards after contact is given up on the returns. A sheet is used for each game.

Our freshman head coach, Adam Kimpler, had T-shirts made for his kickoff team with the slogan “Best Job I’ve Ever Had” to show them they’re appreciated and matter. If money is an issue then a simple picture and social media post for a special teams player of the week can do the trick too. Coaches would be wise to give their special teams schemes, scouting and players the attention and recognition they deserve.

Get your players to buy into their role and be excited about it.

If you’d have asked me a few years ago what the subject of my first WFCA article would be about I would have said defensive line technique or the 4-2-5 defense or the importance of coaching effort and takeaways. However, I am glad to have learned the importance of special teams early on as a head coach because the margin between victory and defeat is just too thin to ignore.


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# DEFENSE

## FITTING THE RUN OUT OF MULTIPLE FRONTS

By: Joseph Ray, Defensive Coordinator, Hamilton High School



Joseph Ray

### Introduction:

“Admission of ignorance is often the first step in our education” - Stephen Covey. I chose to start this article with this quote because I think it describes my personal growth with regard to how we teach our players to fit the run defensively. Starting my coaching career, I mainly focused on the back end first and having a diversity of coverages. Fitting the run to me was as simple as telling a guy that he has the “A” gap or that he was the force defender. I was very ignorant of the different issues and complications that can arise from teaching a single-gap mentality like that. I had to learn through many failures that it is not that simple and that defenders need to understand how their gaps can move and change, and how the flow of the offensive play changes how we fit.

My second mistake as a defensive coach was that I thought it was best to keep it simple by sitting in base every play and get really good at it. That strategy works great until an offense exploits the weakness (which every defense has) and you don’t have any kind of answer. I’m not bashing defenses that take this approach, but to me, it’s not a world I want to live in. Any good coach will tell you that the only limit to what you can do schematically is what you can teach, and what your players can rep and execute. With this attitude in mind, we aimed to develop our defense so that we could carry multiple fronts, pre and post-snap movements, and pressures while keeping it likable and learnable for our kids (Ty Gower’s K.I.L.L. principle). So our goal was to develop a system of techniques and assignments that applied to every single one of our calls so that there was carryover between every call in our playbook, and no matter what we did defensively, our kids would understand how that applies to fitting the run. It is not perfect by any means, but we feel

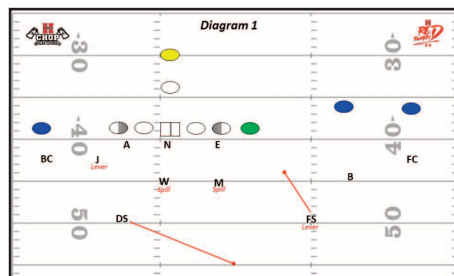
it has helped our kids tremendously to understand how the pieces of our defense fit together.

### Overview of Defense

We are a 3-3-5 personnel team that primarily plays middle-of-the-field closed coverage. One of our DBs is usually a kid that could be a really athletic linebacker, and one of our linebackers is usually a kid that could be a really athletic defensive lineman. This personnel grouping allows us to play a broken 3-3 stack like NC State, a 4-2-5 look, or a 3 High Safety look similar to Iowa State. We start by teaching coverage assignments because that is what determines alignment and assignment for every call. We will never ask a kid to cover and fit. They are either covering until their coverage takes them in the fit, or they are in the fit until their coverage takes them out of the fit.

### Lever-Spill-Lever

We got the idea from 2 back Lever-Spill-Lever run fits, which are fairly common around the coaching community. We took the idea and applied it to 1 back runs as well. How it works is each off-the-ball defender that is in the fit is assigned either a Lever or Spill. Our Levers are our outside most defenders, and anyone else in between are spill players. You can see this in diagram 1. If there are only 2 off the ball defenders in the fit, they both become lever players.

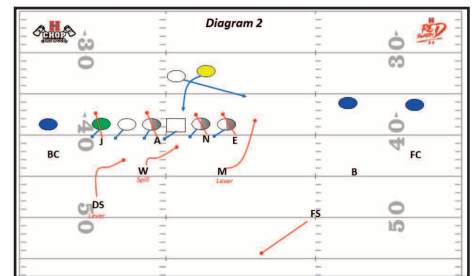


This one word tells them how to fit regardless of the call.

### 1 Back Rules

Once they are assigned a lever or spill, their fits and reads depend on the number of backs in the backfield. Our 1 back rules are simple. Lever players fit on the ball in the first open window with their outside arm free on run to them, and cutback/fold on run away. Any pull or trap block they will also keep their outside arm free. Spill players fit on the ball with their inside arm free in the first open window on run to them and play the first open window on run away. Any pull or trap block they will also keep their inside arm free. We play pretty lateral with our linebackers/safeties, and we tell them to scrape closed doors and fill open windows.

I like to keep those rules simple, and then rep through various situations in practice so they can see how it works against different run schemes. One of the most important things to rep is the different types of read plays. The rules don’t change, but they must be aware of how the play can develop. A good example of this can be seen in a simple zone read play shown in diagram 2. If the QB keeps the ball, the lever player must fit off the ball with their outside arm free in the first open window, so they take the QB. The spill player to that side is fitting off the ball in the first open window with their inside



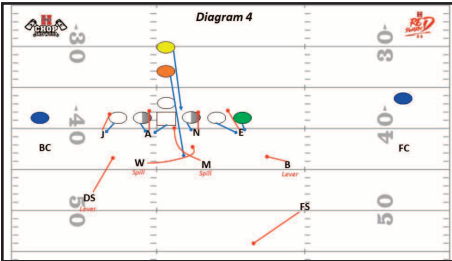
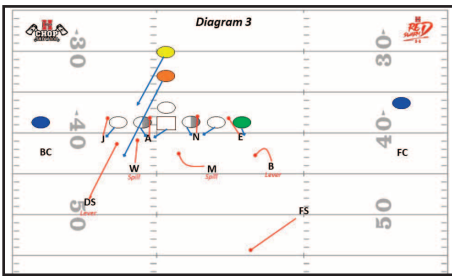
arm free, so he naturally will fall back to take the wind back from the running back. The fits wouldn’t change if it was an inverted look by the offense, because they are fitting off the ball, not the “QB” or “Dive”

### 2 Back Rules

The second set of rules apply when the offense has 2 backs in the backfield. We explain to our kids that the second back is used to create an extra gap somewhere, and so we have to base our fit on that. We start by teaching it as a traditional “I” formation with a fullback and running back. The rules don’t change, but now we fit off of the fullback. If the fullback is to them, the lever player will fit off of them in the first open window with their outside arm free, and the spill player will fit off of them in the first open window with their inside arm free. If the fullback is away from them the lever player will play cutback/fold, and the spill player will play the first open window. The same rules apply to any pull or trap block.

We start by teaching it with a simple “Iso” play. This can be seen in diagram 3. The offense is running weak side Iso, the lever player fits outside arm free, spill player fits with their inside arm free. Backside players play first open the window and cutback/fold. The next example can be seen in diagram 4, where the offense runs strong side Iso. This fit looks a little different, but the rules don’t change. The spill player to



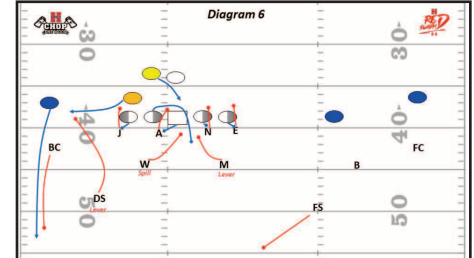
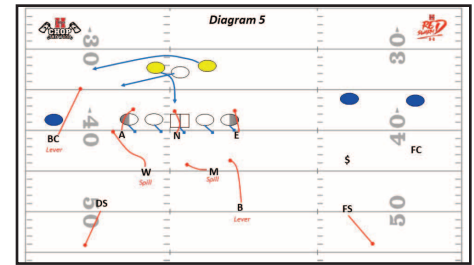


the right gets fullback to him, so he fits off the fullback with his inside arm free. The spill player to the left gets fullback away, so he falls to the next open window. This creates a natural spill and overlap with our two inside backers. From there we show them how a modern “H Back” or “Y Off” is similar to a fullback. If we get two traditional running backs, like in a split-back look, we will usually game plan it, but our base camp rule is to read the near back.

The other challenge that comes with 2 backs is when the offense runs the option. We define the option as a 3 option play, vs the read play where the offense only has 2 options. On option to us, the Lever player becomes the pitch player. The spill player to that side fits the first open window to that side, which most of the time leads him to take the QB, but not always. The opposite spill player plays the first open window to that side, so he will usually end up on the dive. The backside lever player plays cut-back/fold. This can be seen in diagram 5. This is also helpful when teaching our defense to defend RPOs because the route just becomes the pitch. In diagram 6 you can see that the offense is running an RPO by having the Y run an arrow. Because the DS coverage takes him out of the fit, he becomes the “pitch” player on the arrow route.

### Flexibility

The above rules are not that different from what most teams probably do, however, what I think helps our kids out a lot is that we take the base rules and apply them to every call in our playbook. We can run any front and our off-ball defenders' rules don't change. They just have to understand 1 back or 2 back, and how to scrape closed doors, fill open windows. It doesn't al-



ways work out perfectly, but it allows us to be sound against the run with whatever we have called, even if we are bringing pressure. In diagram 7, you can see that we are running a basic double edge pressure. Because our two overhangs are blitzing, they are not assigned a lever or spill. They essentially turn into D-Linemen, who always spills pull or trap blocks. Because of this, we tell our two inside backers that are not blitzing, that they are now lever players. If

# 19 CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

*Ripon College wishes  
success to all Wisconsin  
high school football  
programs this season.*

## RIPON

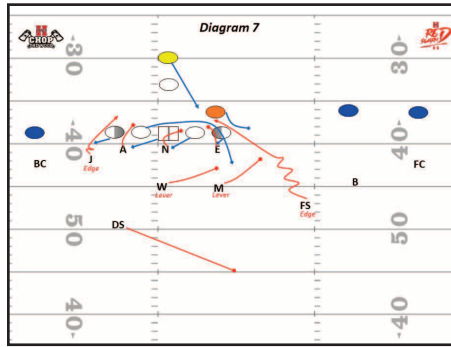
### 2022 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Sat, Sep 3	VS	St. Norbert College	12:00 PM
Sat, Sep 10	VS	Knox College	6:00 PM
Sat, Sep 17	AT	Cornell College (IA)	1:00 PM
Sat, Oct 1	AT	Illinois College	1:00 PM
Sat, Oct 8	VS	Grinnell College	1:00 PM
Sat, Oct 15	AT	Lake Forest College	1:00 PM
Sat, Oct 22	VS	University of Chicago	1:00 PM
Sat, Oct 29	VS	Beloit College	1:00 PM
Sat, Nov 5	AT	Monmouth College	1:00 PM
Sat, Nov 12	VS	Lawrence University	1:00 PM

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or contact Head Coach Ron Ernst at 920.748.8708/ernstr@ripon.edu

the offense were to run power read, we may not have the best angles, but at least we will have our gaps and responsibilities covered without having to go over 100 scenarios for that one specific call. To me, it's my job to put them in good spots based on the call, but the rules allow them to react fast because they aren't doing something completely different from our base.

This also allows us to teach kids on the fly very easily. We have had scenarios where we tell our defensive ends or walked-up backers that they become a Lever player so that they box trap blocks or take QB on read plays. We also have told players blitzing to remain a lever or spill player to tell them how to fit. It allows us to be flexible based on what we need that specific week.



### Conclusion

This system is not perfect by any means, but it has allowed us to effectively run multiple looks defensively while still keeping it learn-

able for our kids. It is expensive to install, and it takes a lot of practice and reps, but once the kids understand it they are able to play confidently and fast no matter the situation on the field. It also helps them problem solve when things go wrong, and fix their mistakes easily by going back to the rules. Like anything else, you can do anything you want defensively as long as you can teach it, but none of it matters if you don't love your kids and build confidence in them every day. That is more important than any schematics you can talk about. I hope this article helped you in some way. I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have, you can email me at coach.joseph.ray@gmail.com.

## DAY TO DAY DEFENSE, SOMETHING TO BUILD ON

By: Ryan Karsten, Head Football Coach, Siren High School



Ryan Karsten

First of all I would like to thank the WFCAs for all the wonderful things it does to positively impact high school football in Wisconsin and for giving me the opportunity to share a little coaching knowledge with coaches all over the Badger State.

Coaching at small high schools has its benefits and its struggles. I am the head coach at Siren High school for the last 9 years and we have played 8-player football for the last 10 years. One of the biggest struggles we faced as a staff a few years ago is figuring out how to build depth on both sides of the ball. I found that building depth on the offensive side of the ball was much easier than the defensive side. We lost games we shouldn't have because we had guys get injured during games and the replacement players we moved around didn't know the game plan, blitz calls and coverage calls for the week at the new positions. I knew something had to change if we were going to get better as a program moving forward. I looked at our team and any given year we have around 24 players out for football and out of those 24, roughly 12-13 can contribute on the field Friday nights on either side of the ball. Some years it's more and some years it's less.

Starting in the fall of 2020, when I installed our defensive game plan for the week, I selected our starting defense and a back up player at each position if possible or at least at each level of the defense, meaning I may not have a backup left and right Defensive end, just 1 backup defensive end.

We found that there were a few benefits to doing this:

- 1) It allowed us to be more creative with our defensive game plans each week knowing our backups understood what we were trying to do each week.
- 2) We could run a more complicated defensive scheme if we lost 1 or 2 guys on defense during a game rather than going very simplistic because some guys were playing new or different positions.
- 3) We got more kids excited about the possibility of playing on Friday nights.
- 4) It built football knowledge in our younger players that will help in years to come.
- 5) It gave us the ability to give players breaks during the game who may have never come off the field during the game.

This is what our week looks like on defense for team time:

**Mondays -**

- 1) We go over who the opponents personnel are and which player(s) can hurt us the most.
- 2) What their formations are, what we are going to call them, and how we are going to line up against them.

**Tuesdays -**

- 1) Review Mondays information
- 2) Go over shifts and motions the offense has shown in scouting
- 3) Cover top 3 plays run out of each formations

- 4) Line up against each formation with our #1 Defensive players and #2 Defensive players getting equal amounts of plays.

**Wednesday -**

- 1) Review Tuesdays information
- 2) Review alignments vs. base formations
- 3) Lineup against the scout offense and watch them run scout plays. The defensive players are calling out what to watch for based on the alignment of offensive players or the formation. The defense watches the offensive players run the plays and do not move.
- 4) Lineup against the scout offense and cover all passes, letting the linebackers and defensive backs play full speed, but the defensive line takes 2 steps and stops to allow the scout offense to run the play to the best of their ability. We only wrap, NO tackling to the ground.

**Thursday -**

- 1) Review Tuesdays information
- 2) Play full speed thud against the scout offense, #1 defense and #2 defense gets 20 plays each.
- 3) Review any trick plays we have seen or heard about

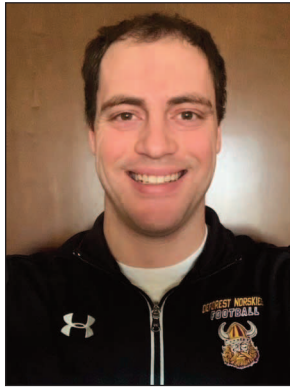
We have seen a dramatic improvement in our defense over the last two years. It has made us more competitive on the field week in and week out, as a staff, it allows us to build on concepts each week. This helps our defensive installment take less time as the season goes on and our players also play faster and with more confidence as the season goes on.

Good luck on the upcoming season and if I can ever be of help, feel free to reach out via email at karsten@siren.k12.wi.us.



# IDENTIFYING ROUTE CONCEPTS & USE IN GAME PLANNING

By: Mark Hinner, Assistant Football Coach, DeForest High School



Mark Hinner

First off, I want to say thank you to the WFCA, as well as Coach, Aaron Mack, for allowing me to write this article and talk about what we do on the DeForest defense. I would also like to thank Coach, Mike Minick for giving me my first coaching opportunity fresh out of college at DeForest. I also want to thank my Defensive Coordinator, Matt Koslowski, for allowing me to grow and for giving me the freedom to help build the defense. Finally, the rest of the defensive staff who makes it a joy to

come to practice every day, Mark Olson, Mark Pankow, and Joe Schneider. I am going to talk about how we game plan and prep for different route combinations we see from teams.

## Overview

With the 2-high pattern match scheme we employ at DeForest, we use different Hudl columns to help determine what teams like to do from a tendency standpoint. We have a Read side column, which we tag the offensive strength concept, an Away side column that we tag the weak side concept of the offensive formation, and then we have an RB tag column for any routes we may see from an RB.

## Single Receiver Concepts

On a single receiver side which almost always falls under the Away column, I use actual route tree numbers instead of specifically naming the route we see, if it is a double move route that is noted as well. The numbers I use for the routes are 1-Arrow/Flat/Whip, 2-Shallow/Slant, 3-Comeback, 4-Curl, 5-Deep Out, 6-Dig, 7-Corner, 8-Post, 9-Fade. These numbers are also nice when finding tendencies that teams run from the single receiver whether out of a 2x1 or 3x1 set. It also helps me to set up individual drills for the

week based on what routes we are going to see the most of from a single receiver and what can be drilled, to avoid spending time on routes we probably won't see.

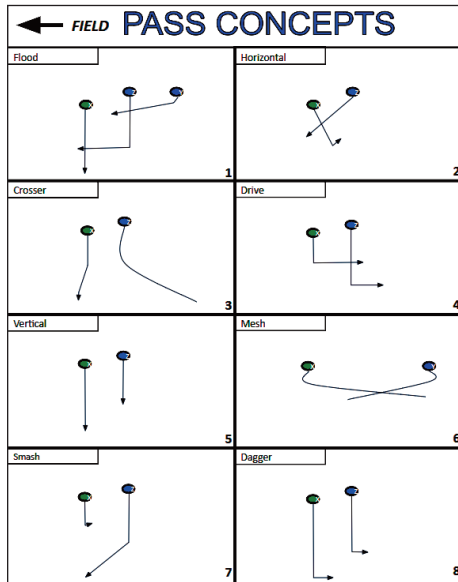
## Multiple Receiver Concepts

For 2-receiver sets we break these combinations down into; Horizontal, Crosser, Drive, Vertical, Mesh, Smash, and Dagger, the diagram gives some examples of each concept. A Horizontal concept is any underneath routes designed to high-low the underneath defenders. A Crosser concept is any route combination with at least 1 deep over route. A Drive concept is any route concept involving 2 crossers that start from the same side of the ball where the #1 receiver runs a shallow route under a deeper In route from the #2 receiver. A Vertical concept is any route designed to attack deep vertical areas on the field. A Mesh concept is a route combination involving 2 shallow crossers that start from opposite sides of the ball. A Smash concept is any route combination where the routes by the #1 and #2 receiver end up stacked outside the numbers. A Dagger concept is any route combination where the #1 receiver has a deeper route stacked over the #2 receiver between the numbers. For any 3-receiver surface what I usually look for are Flood concepts whether it's a

### UWRF FOOTBALL 2022 SCHEDULE

@		SEPT. 3
@		SEPT. 10
VS		SEPT. 17
VS		OCT. 1
VS		OCT. 8
@		OCT. 15
VS		OCT. 22
@		OCT. 29
@		NOV. 5
VS		NOV. 12

same side Flood or backside Flood, I still count those as just Flood when tagging routes. Otherwise what I have found for 3-receiver sets that work the best is seeing what 2-receiver concept best fits the 3-receiver route combination. After the games we are tagging for the week are all



tagged with this information, I will take them and sort them by the different concepts on both the Read and Away side so I can see if there are any tendencies exposed, making clear how many different concepts are being run from certain sets and formations.

#### Why We Use Concepts

I haven't always used concepts when tagging games, but I feel like it has been the best way for me to work. Some other ways that I have tried, if you're looking for different ideas, are route tree numbers, for instance a 2-receiver set where #1 runs a slant and #2 runs an arrow. I would've marked that as 21 always working outside in. Another example would be a Flood concept out of a 3-receiver set, that would have been marked 951 if #1 ran a vertical, #2 ran a deep out, and #3 ran an arrow. The issue I found with this was it may have worked for me, but it was more confusing to the kids than helpful. So, the next tag that was tried was typing out the routes fully, which was easy for the kids to see but a lot more time consuming and not a great way to pick up tendencies. We have found using this concept is both easy for the kids to grasp and understand what is going on as well as uses the analytics to find possible tendencies.

#### Implementing Concepts into Practice

These concepts play a big part in me creating the 7-on-7 script for the week, first I will look at the highest concept from the Read side and see what Away side concepts match up and then work my way down the list creating the script I want to run during the week. I also look at the different offensive sets to determine the percentage of plays they run 2x1, 2x2, or 3x1 concepts. If a team throws 70% of the time out of 2x2 and 30% out of 3x1, I set my 7-on-7 script to be 70% 2x2 and 30% 3x1, mirroring the opponent as closely as possible. That holds the same for concepts if a team runs a certain concept 50% of the time, that concept is going to be repped a lot more during the week of practice. I also try to keep the 7-on-7 script to 10-15, any more than that and we really don't get through everything throughout the week.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by either email, mark.hinner43@gmail.com or via twitter @HinnerIsland43. Again, thank you to the WFC and *The Point After II* for allowing me to share with you today.

## D-LINE DRILLS – KEEP IT SIMPLE

By: Tom Witt, Defensive Coordinator, Monroe High School



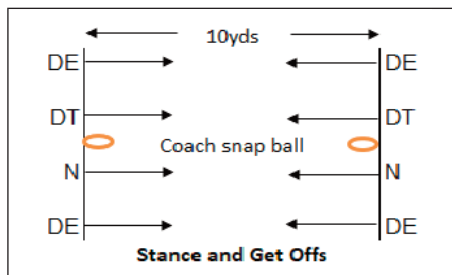
Tom Witt

Thank you to Football, the GREATEST TEAM SPORT there is. Football has given me and my family so much throughout my 27+ years of coaching this great sport. Also thank you to all the great coaches I have had the honor and privilege of coaching with during these 27+ years of coaching. Thank you to Coach Pat Martin, who I not only had the privilege of playing for, but also coaching with at Monroe High School. Thank you to the late George Chryst, who I had the honor of playing under for three seasons at UW-Platteville. Thank you to Jim Kinder, Defensive Coordinator and Head Coach at UW-Platteville. Thank you to Paul Chryst for coaching the Pioneers for one season after his father passed. Thank you to Mark Berg for getting me started in High School coaching at Platteville High School. Thank you to Joe Dye at Janesville Parker High School for putting me on his coach-

ing staff for two years and finally thank you to Toby Golembiewski for allowing me to work with him at Monroe High School.

Thank you WFC for all that you do for high school football in Wisconsin, the best high school football organization in the country. Thank you WFC for giving me the opportunity to share some football knowledge with fellow coaches at the Spring Clinic. At the Clinic I spent time talking about Defensive End play at Monroe. This article will be about some of the D-Line drills that we do every week all season long. D-Line coaching philosophy, keep things simple, get really good at your technique and play fast.

#### Stance and Get-Offs:

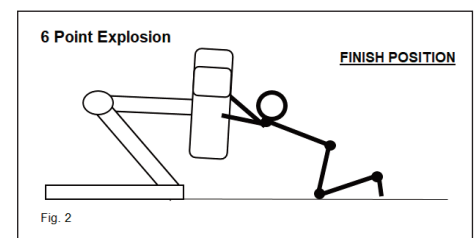
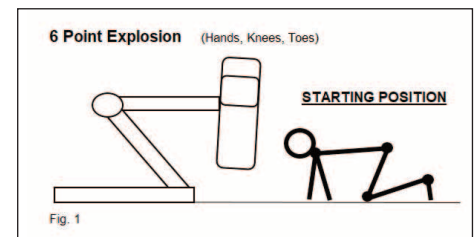


We are a 43 Base Defense, so when we do our Stance and Take-off drill we have 4 lines. The two outside lines are for the DEs and the two inside lines are for the inside DTs. We also teach a right and left hand stance to all of our D-line. Our stance is similar to a sprinter type stance, especially for our DEs. Our get off must be quick and low. The first thing I want to see is their hands firing out and up along with a short

6" to 12" step by the back foot. An elongated step will cause the loss of power and leverage on contact with the offensive player. After the first 2 to 3 steps they will sprint a distance of 10 yards and turn around forming a new line ready to come back in the opposite stance. As I said we use a left and right hand stance. My philosophy is to have the gap hand be free, the shade hand is down and the shade side foot is back. With the gap hand free we can better prevent a reach block, therefore maintaining our gap responsibility. Also with the stance and get offs, we will work on our "Slide Technique" or gap exchange technique. With this our first step is a lateral step with our shade foot and on the second step we execute a club and rip.

#### Lev-Sled Drills

#### Six-Point Explosion:



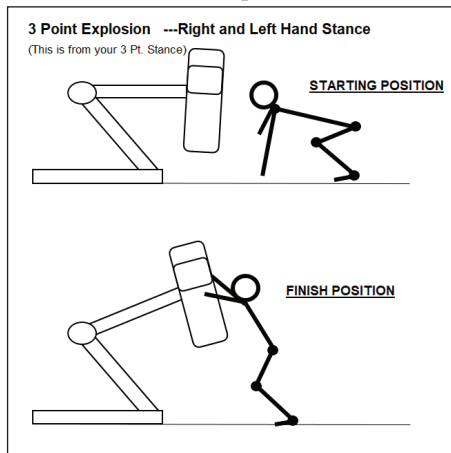


We use our 5-man Lev-Sled a lot with our D-Line. During the Preseason we work a 6 point explosion drill to teach arm extension and rolling of the hips to gain leverage. 6-point means 6 points of contact on the ground, hands, knees and toes. Players should with their face mask about 1 foot away from the pad while sitting their butts back on their heels. On command players will shoot their hands at eye level or slightly higher onto the pad with thumbs up and finger tips out and then finish the drill by rolling their hips forward. We usually do 3 in a row and then the next group of players is up.

#### Four-Point Explosion:

The next drill from the 6-point explosion is to do the 4-point Explosion drill. For this drill each player will align head up on the pad starting with their knees and toes on the ground and sitting back with their butt on their heels, hands/arms should be resting loose at their sides. With this drill we want to be quick with the hands (like we are pulling our guns out from the holster). We make contact with the pad at eye level or higher again with our hands. We want to get to full extension with our arms with finger tips out and thumbs up once again. We will finish this by rolling the hips forward and leveraging the pad up into the air. We do 3 in a row and the next player is up.

#### Three-Point Stance Explosion:



Finally we will work on leveraging the sled from our 3-Point Stance, both right and left handed. With this drill we keep the middle pad open so that a coach can stand there and either move their foot or snap a football. With this drill we initially make 3 points of contact onto the pad; both hands with fingertips out and thumbs up and also with our facemask. With the facemask, not the top of the helmet, this would be very poor technique and dangerous. Always emphasize to see the target and keep your face up. We do this 3 in a row and the next player is

up. By using the lev-sled and also our 1-man sled, we are not beating our players up in practice and keeping them healthy.

Thank you to the WFCFA for all that you do for Wisconsin High School Football players and for all the coaches. I hope that some coaches can utilize this with their players. Coaches want some more information, you can reach me via email at [thomaswitt@moroe.k12.wi.us](mailto:thomaswitt@moroe.k12.wi.us)

**“Football is more mental than physical, no matter how it looks from the stands.”**

**— Ray Nitschke**



## St. Norbert College Green Knights Football



# 19

CONFERENCE  
CHAMPIONSHIPS

# 13

NCAA DIV III  
PLAYOFF  
APPEARANCES

**2022 schedule**

- Sat., Sept. 3 **at Ripon College**
- Sat., Sept. 10 **UW-Stevens Point**
- Sat., Sep. 24 **Lakeland Univ.**
- Sat., Oct. 1 **at Benedictine Univ.**
- Sat., Oct. 8 **at Wisconsin Lutheran College**
- Sat., Oct. 15 **Concordia Univ. Wisconsin**
- Sat., Oct. 22 **at Aurora Univ.**
- Sat., Oct. 29 **at Rockford Univ.**
- Sat., Nov. 5 **Eureka College**
- Sat., Nov. 12 **Concordia Univ. Chicago**

[snc.edu/football](http://snc.edu/football)

# THREE-PHASE DEFENSIVE PURSUIT DRILL

By: Scott Cramer, Retired Defensive Coordinator, Verona High School



Scott Cramer

It's an honor for me to contribute to *The Point After II*, I appreciate being asked by Tom Yashinsky, Head Coach at Onalaska High School. WFCA has played a part of my family's football life for three generations, and we are grateful for it.

## OVERVIEW

Over several seasons, we evolved the concept of a Defensive Pursuit Drill at Verona Area HS; it started with the often-used 11-player sideline pursuit drill to a three-phase drill which I will describe here. The intent of the drill is to stress the importance of team pursuit as all pursuit drills do, but also to:

- Teach tackling angles and technique while minimizing contact
- Emphasize proper leverage and position of force, fill, fold, and contain players
- Introduce Defensive players to Offensive blocking schemes and assignments

The overall concept of the drill is to have our Linebackers and Defensive Backs defend Option, while our Defensive Line defends a scrambling quarterback. We found that these two playtypes are difficult to simulate in a scout team setting; the quick repetition of the drill provides a method for the Defense to defend these play concepts in an economical manner, where technique and assignment are the focus.

The drill illustrated provides an overview along with the important instructional points of the drill. All players start behind the QB cage drill so that they are clear of the drills themselves. One coach (Co) is in charge of and active

in each phase of the drill, acting as the Quarterback. Players fill in the Offensive positions that correspond to their Defensive positions, as follows:

- Defensive Line – Offensive Line
- Inside Linebacker – Offensive Guard
- Outside Linebacker – Tight End / H-back
- Safety – Running Back
- Corner – Receiver

Players rotate from Offensive position to Defensive position, to out/resting. One drill is run while the other two drills are resetting, and players are rotating. Once the drill is taught in the preseason, we can get 15 to 20 phases repeated during a 5-minute practice segment.

## OPTION PHASES

Our basic philosophy of Option Defense is to overlap option phases with Defensive players. This pursuit drill does not simulate the "Dive" portion of a Veer/Midline option, as we typically assign that phase to our Defensive Line and backside Inside Linebacker. Our Option responsibilities are generally as such:

- Play side ILB is responsible for outside half of Dive to inside half of QB
- OLB is responsible for outside half of QB to inside half of Pitch
- Corner is responsible for outside half of Pitch
- Safety is responsible to run the alley, cancelling phases on an arc route.

The drill starts on the Coach's command; Offensive players proceed on their assigned path while Defensive players proceed on their assigned pursuit angle. We do not use a ball in this drill; we want to defend each option phase with equal intensity and commitment.

## QB CAGE

The intent of this phase of the drill is relatively straightforward but is important in that it emphasizes the concept of pass rushers containing, or caging, the Quarterback. Contain (outside) rushers are taught to aim for the QB's deepest shoulder tip, while inside rushers are taught to aim for the QB's front shoulder tip. The Quarterback uses a snap stick to simulate the snap, then moves to allude the pass rushers. The drill starts with Defensive and Offensive Linemen engaged to limit collisions. Offensive Linemen provide resistance but eventually allow the Defensive Linemen to continue on to pursue the QB.

## CONCLUSION

We have found ways to optimize the drill based on upcoming opponent's scheme and play concepts, which allows us to maximize time and repetitions while teaching these play concepts, and our ideas for defending them, to our Defense. Thanks again to WFCA for providing the opportunity to contribute this article. Please feel free to contact me at or @CoachCramer67 with any questions or comments.

## THREE-PHASE DEFENSE PURSUIT DRILL

Drill will have **1 action occurring at a time**: Left Option, QB Cage, or Right Option.

As one action is occurring, other two actions are preparing.

Perimeter ballcarriers (BC) can hold handshields for **drive tackle -OR- dummies for roll tackle**.

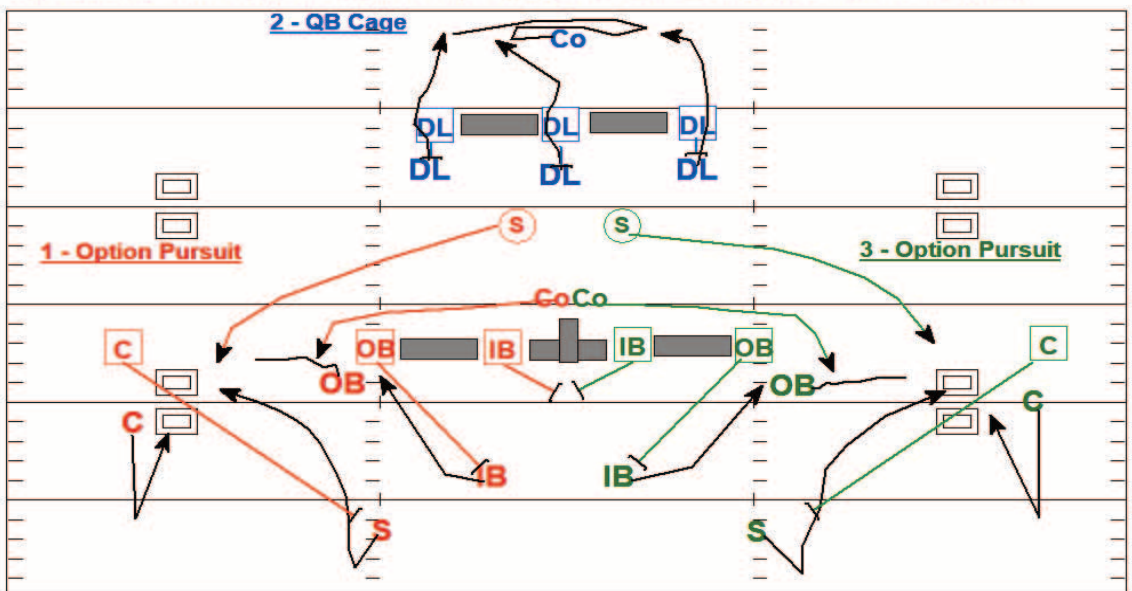
All blockers hold handshields.

**QB Cage drill will start on ball movement** from a coach with hockey stick ball.

**Perimeter drills will start with on Coach's command.**

**Players begin in Offensive positions, then rotate to Defensive positions.**

**Objective of Drill:** Teach leverage and "building a fence," or "caging" the ball carrier/QB using proper angles and aiming points.





# ADAPTING TACKLING DRILLS TO TODAY'S GAME

By: Andrew Kolstad, Head Football Coach, Wauwatosa West High School



Andrew Kolstad

I am writing this article about a month out from the 2022 WFCAs coaches clinic held at the Middleton Marriott in Middleton, WI. The COVID-19 pandemic has really forced us to adapt in so many ways, but as our old feel for how life is supposed to be returns, I cannot tell you how excited I am to see friends and fellow coaches at the clinic. We truly do belong to a tight fraternity in this profession.

When I think of “tackling” drills when I was a young player, the words that come to mind are “bell ringer”, “high intensity”, and a lot of screaming. I played high school football in the year 2000, so it’s

only been a couple decades, but as a young coach, I cannot believe how much tackling has evolved in just my 15 years of coaching high school football.

Many of the things we do at Wauwatosa West stem from three inner circles of wisdom: (1) our experiences as players and how we perceive them now as adults; (2) the every day adaptation of the game as we know it here in America; and (3) what our kids need to benefit in our system. When it comes to playing great defense, I’ve always believed the mental aspect is by far the most important. That being said, when the psyche of both teams is even, physical tools then come into play. And as the years have gone on, I have come to realize that the idea of “tackling” has changed for so many of us. Tackling cannot be a “we have to”; it has to be a “we get to.”

In this article, I will be briefly discussing our philosophy on tackling at Wauwatosa West High School. Like with any presentation, article, or informal conversation, I am hoping there are a few coaches out there who can relate and apply to their own programs and systems. First of all, I want to give a shout out to Atavus Tackling. For a small membership fee, anyone can access a vast array of tackling lessons and videos created by a company whose methods derived from Rugby. I am not going to get into the details of the “rugby style” tackle in this article, but the idea of leveraging with support and confidently wrapping up a ball carrier is much more applicable to the way we play the game of football. I would recommend all football coaches to check into *Atavus Edge*.

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HOME	AWAY
CROWN COLLEGE SAT SEPTEMBER 24 1:00 PM	WARBURG SAT SEPTEMBER 10 6:00 PM
UW EAU CLAIRE SAT OCTOBER 1 6:00 PM	GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS SAT SEPTEMBER 17 1:00 PM
UW LA CROSSE SAT OCTOBER 8 1:00 PM	UW STEVENS POINT OCTOBER 15 1:00 PM
UW PLATTEVILLE SAT OCTOBER 29 1:00 PM	UW OSHKOSH SAT OCTOBER 22 1:30 PM
UW WHITEWATER SAT NOVEMBER 5 1:00 PM	UW RIVER FALLS SAT NOVEMBER 12 1:00 PM

**UW-STOUT FOOTBALL**

Day	Gear	Tackle/Turnover Implementation
Monday	Helmets	Full Team Tackling Fundamentals
Tuesday	Uppers	Tackle Circuit
Wednesday	Full Pads	Position Specific Tackling / RRF
Thursday	Helmets	Turnover Circuit

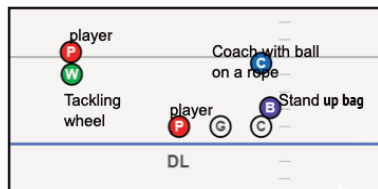
In a typical game week, our program gets 1 track day, 2 traditional practices and 1 what we would call a “check boxes” day. So when it comes to preparing our defense to be good tacklers, the goal is building a team-wide tackling drill into as many of those 4 days as possible while keeping in mind the goal of the day. Again, many ways to skin a cat, but here’s our schedule (this is midseason):

Below I am sharing what we deem “Position specific tackling”. If you combine the average offense we are defending in the state of Wisconsin with common reactionary skills needed by each position on our defense, we are able to come up with tackling drills that replicate a portion of how our Friday nights are played. We call these drills “Read-React-Finish” or “RRF” for us educators that really love acronyms. All diagrams below are drawn from the left defensive side.

#### Defensive Line/Outside Linebackers:

- Drill: Coach signals to both “Players” what scenario we are running.

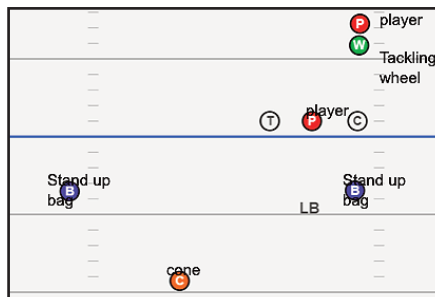
Coach is holding a ball with a rope attached so they can mimic handoffs and throws without having to chase the ball after the rep. The (B) is a stand up bag only used for scenario 1 for this group.



<p><b>DL Scenario 1</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive Player blocks inside gap. The DL/OLB should grind the player and sift any separation to the inside gaps staying square with eyes on QB and ball. When the QB brings the ball forward like a ride, he gives it and the defender tackles the stand up bag.</i></p>	<p><b>DL Scenario 2</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive Player blocks inside gap. The DL/OLB should grind the player and sift any separation to the inside gaps staying square with eyes on QB and ball. When the QB brings the ball forward like a ride, he then keeps it and throws it in the slot. The defender will have to redirect inside out and finish on the near edge of the tackling wheel in whichever direction it is rolled.</i></p>
<p><b>DL Scenario 3</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive Player reaches the defender. The defender must fight and win the outside control and get his eyes to the QB. The QB will run sideways until he sees the defender's eyes, then tuck the ball. The tackling wheel will be rolled into that area and the defender will shed the reach and finish on the wheel.</i></p>	<p><b>DL Scenario 4</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive Player reaches the defender. The defender must fight and win the outside control and get his eyes to the QB. The QB will run sideways until he sees the defender's eyes, then throw the ball wide. The tackling wheel will be rolled to the outside and the defender will shed the reach and finish on the wheel.</i></p>

#### Inside Linebackers:

- Drill: Coach signals to both “Players” what scenario we are running. Player holding tackling wheel call the cadence and the drill begins.



<p><b>LB Scenario 1</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive guard pulls inside. The LB should fast flow behind the bag and near surface tackle the wheel.</i></p>	<p><b>LB Scenario 2</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive guard zones inside. The LB should fast flow behind the bag and near surface tackle the wheel.</i></p>
<p><b>LB Scenario 3</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive guard zones outside or pulls outside. The LB should fast flow to the wheel and near surface tackle it.</i></p>	<p><b>LB Scenario 4</b></p> <p><i>*Offensive guard kicks pass. The Player with wheel should “put the ball up” and drop back. The LB must turn and peek at the cone. When he arrives at the cone, he squares up with eyes on QB. The QB will throw the ball to either bag. The LB should finish with a tackle on the bag.</i></p>

#### Defensive Backs:

- Drill: Coach signals to both “Players” what scenario we are running. Player holding tackling wheel call the cadence and the drill begins.



<p><b>DB Scenario 1</b></p> <p><i>*H back pulls inside. The DB should step and trigger and tackle the near surface of the wheel.</i></p>	<p><b>DB Scenario 2</b></p> <p><i>*H back fold blocks. The DB should step and trigger and finish thru the stand up bag square.</i></p>
<p><b>DB Scenario 3</b></p> <p><i>*H back blocks on. The DB should step and track near surface of the wheel.</i></p>	<p><b>DB Scenario 4</b></p> <p><i>*H back releases vertical. DB should backpedal with eyes on H to QB. At 7 yards, the H back makes a cut for a route. When the cut is made, the DB must break and make a secured PBU on the receiver. Could also use a football.</i></p>

These drills are not the only RRF drills we have utilized. What you do is really determined by what you run, what you are facing, and what you need. Keep in mind that our guys are doing a “Tackling Circuit” on Tuesdays so the positions are getting other aspects of specific type tackling. DL, LB, and DB all get 3 different drills on Tuesdays.

In closing, I would remind everyone that the only thing that is going to maximize your team on any given year is their psyche. If your kids hate your tackling drills, this ultimately impacts their confidence in what you are doing and their only chance to genuinely get better is on Friday nights.

I appreciate the WFC A for allowing me to contribute to this issue. If you have any questions or follow up to anything I have written above, please reach out or my phone (920) 562-6036.



# ADAPTING TO TODAY'S OFFENSES: A HYBRID APPROACH

By: James Becker, Defensive Coordinator, Marquette High School



James Becker

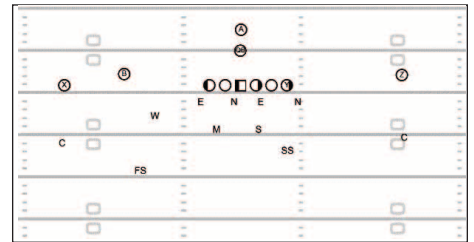
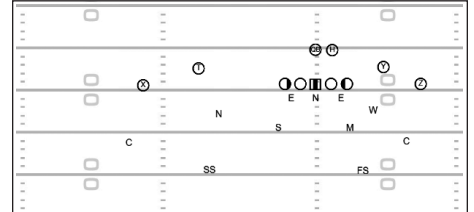
I would like to thank the WFCA and our representative, Coach Drake Zortman, for the honor to write an article for *The Point After II*. It's a privilege to do so and it couldn't be done without the support of a tremendous staff at Marquette including head coach, Keith Klestinski, and our defensive staff, Brian Belardi, Jeff Bolle, and Jon Horter. We believe in being mul-

tiples on defense to combat the variety of offenses we see in the Greater Metro. To do so we need to come up with a way to seamlessly move from our base odd structure to an even spaced front without significantly changing rules...in other words, we need to become a true hybrid defense.

This transformation is ongoing and at its core does not stray from our foundational beliefs in a 3-4 split field coverage system. What we have done is simply involve our overhangs in traditional even spacing giving us the ability to transition from a multiple 3 - 4 look to an over or under front by moving one player. We can keep our coverage integrity as well, allowing us to dictate to the offense. In today's game modern offenses (or even more traditional ones such as the Wing - T) have rule advantages and are looking to exploit defenses through RPO's, vertical route combos, mesh concepts, and playing with tempo (either fast or slow) among others. They are dictating to us. We feel as though using our hybrid approach and aligning in different fronts allows us to dictate to them, to take back some of the control offenses have over defenses, while hav-

ing a plus one defender in coverage as well as in the run fit.

A common theme we have seen during the season, and continue to see in our off-season studies, is that giving different looks from one series, or on one play to another, creates a sense of confusion for the offensive line and has an impact on run blocking schemes and



## WARHAWK FOOTBALL

## 2023 CAMPS

### YOUTH CAMP

- JUNE 18TH - 20TH

### LINEMAN CAMP

- JUNE 25TH - 26TH

### PASSING JAMBOREES

- JUNE 17TH & 24TH  
- JULY 15TH & 22ND

### PERIMETER CAMP

- JUNE 21ST - 22ND

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protections, allowing us to find favorable matchups from our pressure packages. That is not to say that being diverse is throwing darts at a board. We are data driven like everyone else and examine which front we like best versus a given opponent, formation, or scheme, while finding ways to attack what we perceive as deficiencies within the offensive structure. We're always going to try and find favorable matchups and ways to manipulate protection to get our best pass rushers home in passing situations. Among the things we consider in the run game are whether to box or spill our overhangs. If we feel as though we're in a position where we'll be successful spilling to a secondary defender, we'll do that. If we feel we need to keep a tight box, our force players will work to keep their outside shoulder free and condense space, all while keeping our interior rules of spilling the same.

One of the reasons why we can manipulate how we are playing our edge is because we are not only a primarily split safety defense, but because we teach our force players a "dent" technique. This technique is widely used and

can be found in a variety of places, so it's nothing groundbreaking but something we have found incredibly useful. The technique allows us to win inside while snapping square to the line of scrimmage. This enables us to change the numbers, taking at least one puller, if not two, while keeping our inside backers free to flow and giving our safety the ability to make a play in the alley.

A final point when considering a hybrid approach, and this is big for our secondary coaches, is that we can play virtually any coverage we want because we aren't changing the read for the outside backers regardless of if they are on the line of scrimmage or in a more traditional alignment. They read the last man on the line of scrimmage and act accordingly. If we get a tackle pass setting, we can go back to our camp rules and buzz, hinge, and retrace (buzz to the flat, hinge to carry a wheel, and retrace for crossover if there is no threat), OR we can simply add on as a pass rusher depending on game plan, situation, or the player. A simple "hold" call between him and the safety will say if he's dropping or going to add on. The same can be said

for our communication on spilling or boxing. If the safety communicates to the outside backer, "I'm here," he knows he can spill the play to the unblocked safety, if he gets an "away" call he knows he needs to box or force the play back inside. Like in any aspect of the game, or life, we emphasize the importance of communication and how the lack thereof can cause a breakdown in our structure.

Being and continuing to evolve into a more hybrid defense has allowed us to begin scratching the surface of how good we can become. As with everything, we all need to be diligent in recognizing when we're going too far or when we may need to adapt to fit our athletes' strengths, but this evolution is allowing us to dictate back to the offense.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this article, if you have anything to add or questions feel free to reach out, we always love to talk ball and I would love to learn more from any one of you. Have a tremendous summer and good luck to all of you this fall, stay healthy, compete, and have fun!

## DESIGNING PRESSURES FROM MULTIPLE LOCATIONS & FRONTS

By: Matt McDonnell, Head Coach, Kettle Moraine High School



Matt McDonnell

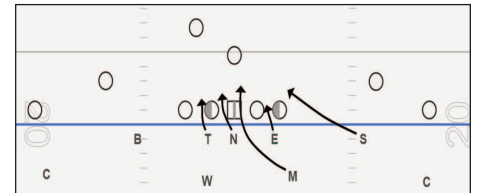
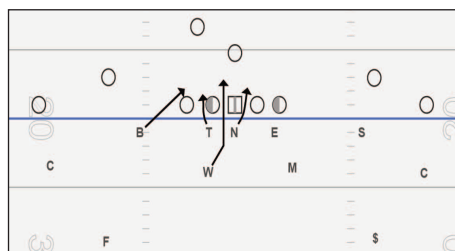
Every defense needs to have a great blitz package to be as effective as possible. Finding ways to create as many different pressure paths, from as many different angles, and as many different fronts as possible, is always a goal for defenses. I am going to explain how at Kettle Moraine we use as much "same as" teaching as we can to accomplish this.

There are many different ways to name pressures and all have their strengths and weaknesses. We utilize pressure categories and pressure tags to give our kids less random verbiage to memorize, but be able to access tons of different pressures. One of the top reasons we like it, is that it is front heavy on the install. So although it takes a lot of time to install up front, once we do, we can run just about any pressure you can imagine and it is built into our terminology. Therefore if we want to add a pressure on any given week we can, and our kids will understand what to do and we can quickly install it.

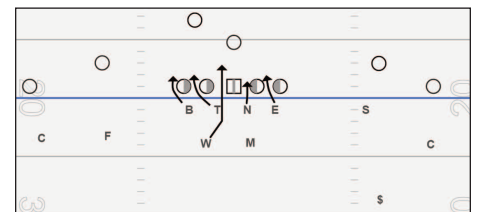
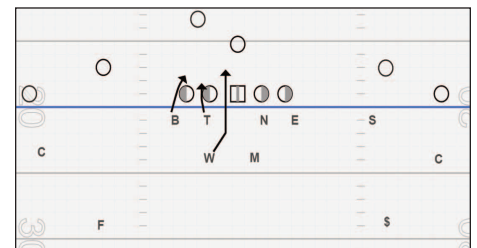
Before we get into it, we all know that pressures look great on paper, but in order for them to be effective a ton of preparation must go into them, from teaching proper technique, to studying film to call it at the perfect time, to teaching the proper paths and angles to the kids. Feel free to reach out with how we do that, but this article will focus on how we name and call pressures.

To start, each possible pressure is broken into a category. We base out of the 3-4 so our categories are: OLB opposite sides, ILBs Same Side, ILB's opposite Side, OLB and ILB same side and OLB and ILB opposite sides. Each category is given a name. For the sake of this article, we will just focus on OLB and ILB from the same side. This category is severe weather. Our kids know that any pressure with severe weather means we are bringing the OLB and the ILB from the same side.

From there, we have many different ways we can call the pressure. We can call bomb or atom, meaning to the back or away from the back, Field or Boundary, strong or weak (to or away the strength of the formation) and several others. Below is an illustration of how this works. On the left is Bomb Torando, on the right is atom Torando. You can see how we can teach two different pressures using the same naming system.



From here is where we can start to get more creative including getting to multiple fronts and different players involved. For fronts, the kids just need to understand that Bomb Torando will always look like this. So here are two examples out of two other fronts.



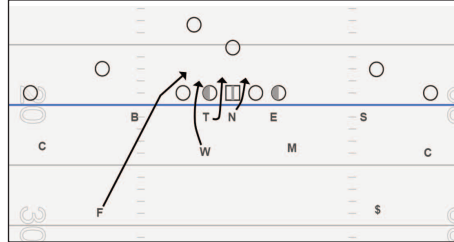
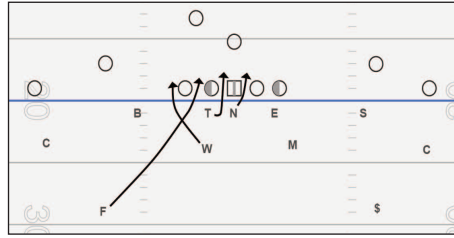
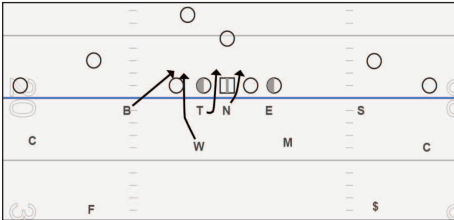
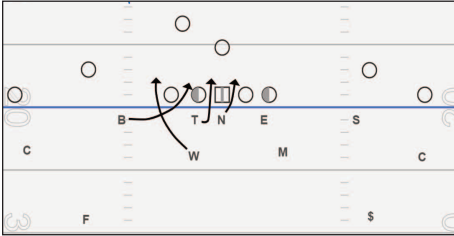
To further add different pressures and combinations, we have pressure tags. These are specific tags that can be stacked on top of each other for even more combinations. A few of our tags are:

**Switch** – Tells the DE and edge rusher to switch gaps.



**Swap** – Tells the safety to switch with the near backer on the pressure to switch roles. (Meaning the safety is now on the pressure path)  
**X** – Tells the 2 added rushers to exchange gaps.  
**Stick** – Tells the DE to the pressure side to long stick into the A gap. It also tells the backer or other rusher he must replace him.

Here are a few examples of how you can come up with a ton of different pressure paths using these tags. (From Left to Right top to bottom) Pictured are Bomb Stick Torando Bomb Stick Torando X, Bomb Stick Torando Swap, Bomb Stick Torando Swap X.



These are a few examples of how you can create several pressures using the same category and tags. This system allows for many different pressure combinations without the kids needing to know new verbiage. It is also important to note that each of these can be flipped to the other side using Atom. So in this example, there are 8 different pressure combinations. Using these categories and tags we can get to any combination of pressures. If you have any questions or want more details, please feel free to reach out to me via twitter, @coach\_mcdonnell.

## Mark Your Calendar!

**WFOA  
Football Clinic  
March 30-April 1**

**MEMBERSHIP FEES  
INCLUDE ADMISSION TO  
THE 2023 CLINIC.**

**MARRIOTT HOTEL  
1313 John Q. Hammons Dr.  
Middleton, WI**



# ROLL DAWGS

 **UWSPFB**  
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# OFFENSE

## FLOODING THE FLATS

By: Brock Pahlow, Assistant Football Coach, Shiocton High School

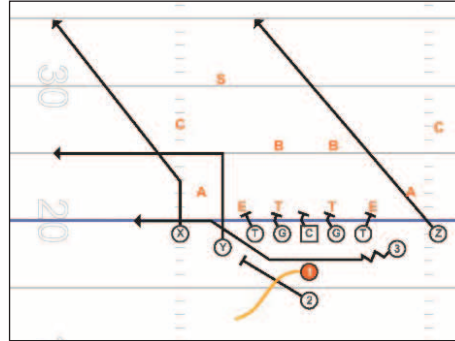


Brock Pahlow

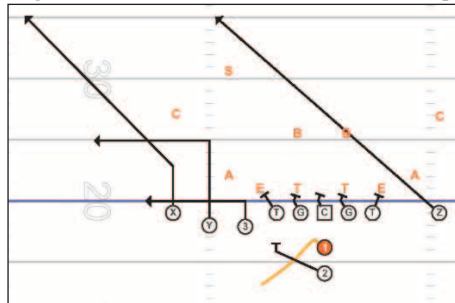
This season we implemented the “Flat Flood” concept as a part of our new spread offense. We installed the spread offense for our athletes to force defenders to make plays against them in the open field. One method we used to open the outside areas of the field was bringing our receivers inside the box. With most defenses only covering the outside flat area with one player, we saw an opportunity to isolate them by flooding the flat area with two shallow routes.

**Figure 1** shows how we executed this out of our tight spread formation, where we would motion our back (3) into a flat route while our play side slot (Y) would run an out route. This forces the flat defender to choose either route to

cover. We also would pull the deep cover defenders away from the out route by running deep routes with our split (X) and wide (Z) receivers.

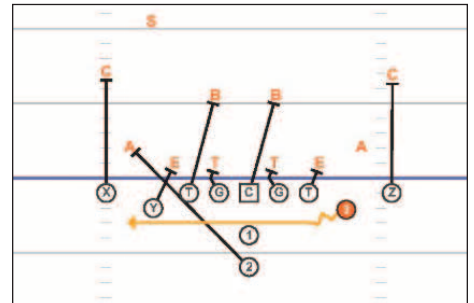


Our quarterback also had great speed and threw well on the run, so we utilized a rollout with fullback pass protect to give him more time and an easier throw at the deep routes if needed. **Figure 2** shows how we ran the flood concept



out of our tight trips formation, where all receivers run the same routes as before. However, with the motion removed it is easier to run this concept as a quick hitting play.

We implemented a motion sweep play as well to bolster our run game. **Figure 3** shows how using the tight slot to set an edge by pinning the end while our fullback kickout blocks the outside backer would create a seam for our running back sweep to cut inside of. We would also run a quarterback bootleg out of trips with a similar blocking scheme and kickout block concept. Both of which work well against teams cheating towards motion or trips.



The Shiocton Football program was fortunate this season to have a talented group of players eager to jump into our new spread offense and execute the flood concept. “Flooding the Flats” was the main contributor to one of the best passing seasons in our school’s history.

## OFFENSIVE LINE PLAY

By: Paul Engen, WFLA Hall of Fame and Assistant Offensive Line Coach, Appleton North



Paul Engen

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thank you to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association, Rob Salm, Appleton North Head Coach and Chris Sievert, Appleton North, Lead Offensive Line Coach, for allowing

me to write this article. Appleton North has a strong history of producing good offensive line play. Coach Salm is a strong advocate of having strong and physical offensive linemen. Chris’s history as a line coach goes back to his high school days where he was coached by Bill Collier. Chris’s basic philosophy is, “If we are going to do something, do it right the first time so we don’t have to continually repeat it”!

I have coached football for over 50 years. I have coached every position on a football team. I have served as a head coach and as an assistant coach at the varsity and junior varsity levels. Coaching offensive linemen has been extremely rewarding.

“The greatest reward for a person’s toil is not what they get from it, but what they become by it.” — John Ruskin

### General Information:

The offensive line positions are what “Drives the Bus” on the offensive side of the ball.

Offensive Line play will determine the kind of offensive team we will be. Playing as an offensive lineman means every man can be a difference maker in every practice and game. Offensive linemen set the “tempo” in practice and in a game. A great offensive line unit is able to run block and pass block efficiently. A great offensive lineman takes pride in doing the little things the right way all of the time. Offensive linemen also understand they will not be in the “spot light” unless they make a mistake during practice and in a game. They come to realize the brotherhood they establish in the weight room, film sessions, at practice and games will help them make it through the tough times. The greatest satisfaction the offensive line receives comes when they know “they just get it done”.

### Coaching Expectations:

1. Be the best that you can be as a person. (family, academics, code of conduct, teammate)
2. Be the best teammate you can be. (Treat your



- teammates as you would want to be treated)
3. Be a team leader by being a 100% player. (No Excuses Just Do It!)
  4. Be at practice everyday and get better. (Leaders don't miss opportunities to get better)
  5. Be on time for practice and meetings.
  6. Be at practice 5 minutes early to work on areas that need to be improved. (Bucket Step, Punch, Set Step for the Pass)
  7. Be ready to "Rock and Roll". (Equipment Checked, Helmet Buckled)

#### My Role as an Offensive Line Coach:

1. To always expect the best from you every day, and to never allow you to place self imposed limitations on your abilities.
2. To always be honest with you. These conversations may be uncomfortable, but it is considered to be part of the growing process.
3. To provide you with daily opportunities to be best that you can be.
4. To help you understand we are in this journey together. To stand with you during the tough times, to appreciate and respect your individual accomplishments.

#### Attributes of an Offensive Lineman:

- Someone who has the inner confidence to work through the tough times and appreciates just getting the job done.
- Someone who has the intellect to adjust to the environment he is playing in. (Weather

- conditions, blitzing, change of play, etc)
- Someone who is poised and plays with emotion yet doesn't let emotions get in the way of just getting the job done. Regardless of the situation, a great offense lineman focuses on the task at hand.
  - Someone who is a physical and aggressive player. He gives 100% in every drill in practice and every play in a game.
  - Someone who has the following attitude: *"I am only one, but I am one, I can't do everything, but I can do something and that which I can do, I will do!"*

#### What will make us a great offensive line?

- Playing as one heart beat.
- Trusting our own abilities;
- Trusting our teammates to do the right thing on and off the field.
- Working to get better every day. (On the field, weight room, film sessions)

#### Who will play on Thursday/Friday Night? (Show Time!)

- All athletes are not created equal. Some are bigger, faster and stronger. But that doesn't mean this offensive lineman will be in the starting line-up for **Show Time**. Shown below are factors in determining who will play.
  1. Being a good listener is the number one requirement when deciding who plays.
  2. Being at practice everyday. (Offensive

Linemen do not miss practice)

3. Being an athlete who goes 100% in drills, group work and team play.
4. An athlete who responds to coaching and improves everyday.

#### Terminology:

- Follow your path!
- Step and Punch!
- Walk them off!
- Stick your feet into the ground)
- Finish!
- Base/Lead/Gap
- BOB (Big on Big)
- Ram Block (OL blocks Right)
- Lion Block (OL blocks Left)
- Harpoon Block

#### Drills:

- Get Off from the stance (Base Step, Lead Step, Gap Step)
- 3-Drill (Happy Feet, shuffle, Kick Step, Get Off)
- Punch Drill (Chest Exposed, Punch with the Heel of the Hand, Finish)
- 6-Second Drill (Base/Lead/Gap Step vs Pad, 2-Man Sled, 5-Man Sled, Drive)
- Rip and Dip (Backside Cutoff Block)
- Harpoon Block (Double Team to Level 2 Linebacker)

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# DRILLING THE COUNTER PULL

By: Jeff Duffrin, Offensive Line Coach, Pulaski HS

In the coaching world, drills are a topic that has a wide array of opinions and perspectives. For those of you that grew up in the '80s and are active observers of football coaching Twitter, the drills you see can sometimes resemble the obstacle course from the old Battle of the Network Stars show. In my opinion, as coaches we have to make sure the focus is teaching versus entertaining. Make no mistake, our kids have fun in our Indy periods. However, at the core, our kids want that time to be used effectively to develop the tools to be successful on Friday nights.

At our OL position group at Pulaski, we approach drills with specific intent for application on the field. When we design a drill we want it to accomplish the following:

1. Be safe. There's no worse outcome than losing a player to a badly designed drill. Keep your guys off the ground. Give your kids shields and teach them how to use them. We hold them at the corners, pressed against the body. Allow the bag holder a vector of space so the block can be finished without tangling up with others.
2. Build tools for the field. If a drill doesn't show up on film – get rid of it. For example, I've never seen an offensive lineman make moves on the field that resemble side-stepping over agility bags. Don't waste a second of indy time on "feel good" or "look good" drills. We also want our drills to have a decision-making element to it. Put some variability in the drill so the player has to read and react like in a game.
3. Scalable/efficient. We've all seen that coach with 2 guys in a drill and 15 guys watching and waiting. If you have a lot of guys, put multiple pods together and go back and forth between the pods to start and observe each rep. Add an "on-deck" set of bag holders that can jump into the next rep while the

prior rep group is exchanging bags. We want to be able to hear their breathing as they enter the next rep to make sure we are building endurance. Too much time waiting in line deteriorates focus.

A drill we rely on consistently during the season is Counter Drill. Our offense in Pulaski is the unbalanced single wing. All of our offensive linemen need to be able to down block, power pull, and trap pull. The Counter Drill provides for reps in all three of those skills in an efficient way.



The set up of the drill is relatively straight forward. You'll need three offensive players and three bag holders. The positioning mirrors a basic counter play (see diagram). The down block player represents the edge to the play side of counter. Position the bag holder at an inside technique or shade. The other two linemen are set up to be the kick and wrap of counter. You can position these two in whatever way is most applicable to your offense, whether that's a G/T counter or some other scheme, like involving an H back. The bag holders for the pullers represent the force player for the kick out and a linebacker to fill the hole.

The key for the drill to be most effective is the bag holders giving a realistic look with post-snap movement. Instruct the kick out bag to spill or box. Tell the down block bag to slant or read. Make the linebacker bag fill hard or feather.

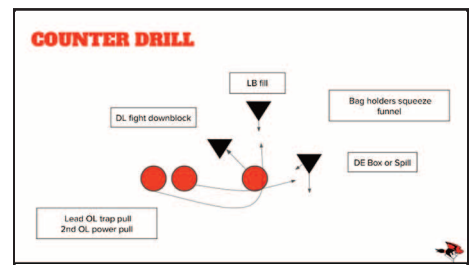
Your lineman should get reps at all the different offensive positions in the drill. Every one of our positions on the line needs to develop the down block, trap pull, and power pull. Besides our play schemes calling for it, we want to develop the ability to move kids to different positions during the season as availability dictates.

This drill is especially useful when you have larger numbers, including days when JV linemen are with us. If numbers allow, as mentioned above, have an "on-deck" set of bag holders ready to jump into the next rep. Over

the course of the season, this strategy has a huge multiplier effect to boost your number of reps. Usually we will run the drill for 10-15 minutes, depending on time available and numbers. We'll flip the drill to go the other way half-way through.

The last part of why we like this drill is that it provides easy integration with the running back position group. We simply add a bag holder on the defensive side in an outside linebacker position for the Blocking Back (for the folks unacquainted with the single wing, think fullback or H back). We also add the tailback

and wingback in their base scheme positions. The running back coach pitch-snaps the ball from one knee from the center position. This allows the backs to practice the counter play hand off and wingback his running path in a realistic environment. When integrated, this drill is a great opportunity to get your offensive group working with energy and tempo while developing multiple skill sets.



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# SIMPLE PRE-SNAP TIPS TO DIAGNOSE COVERAGES

By: Dan Trussoni, Offensive Coordinator DeSoto High School



Dan Trussoni

## Motion

Pre-snap motion is the most commonly used indicator of a man vs zone look. If the defender shadows the receiver in motion you know this is a man coverage look. If the defender passes off the motioning receiver you can anticipate a zone coverage look. More complex defensive schemes do have counters for this but most of the time a motion whether it be in, out, or across the ball will force the defenses hand.

## Cornerback Alignment

Outside corners alignment can give clues towards the coverage on each particular play. Look closely at the outside corner's, back or

hips. If their back or hips are facing the sideline and they are in an outside shade of the receiver, attempting to funnel everything inside of them you can expect a zone look. Now if the corner is "head up" or a slight inside shade this is a tip towards man coverage. It is very difficult for outside corners to disguise their coverage and still get to their assignment if not in the proper position pre-snap. Knowing this gives the offense important information as to the coverage intent.

## Eyes

The number one rule for a corner in man coverage is to never lose your man. Taking your eyes off your man, even pre-snap is a risky endeavor for a defender in man coverage. That said, if a defender's eyes are locked in on the offensive player across from them, odds are that you will see man coverage. To the contrary, a defender in zone coverage is going to make their own pre-snap reads. If you see a defender that is lined up over an eligible receiver and their zealous eyes are wandering into the backfield pre-snap this can be an indicator of zone coverage.

## Shadowing a Specific Offensive Player

Often times you will see a defense commit a specific defender to a specific offensive player regardless of where that player lines up

on a given play. This defensive "tell" can be picked up fairly early in a game. Typically administered against a strong receiving threat, this is typically going to result in a man under coverage look with safety help over the top. You can use this information to then eliminate coverage possibilities with the rest of the defense as well.

## Dummy Cadence

Often a dummy cadence is used in a can't lose situation where the offense is willing to accept a play clock penalty, used to gain a free 5 yards, or hoping to diagnose a blitz. An under utilized use of a dummy cadence is to also identify coverage intent. At the anticipation of the snap you will sometimes get defensive players to take a cheat step towards their coverage zone. Example if you notice a safety in a 2 high look, take that first step backwards or at a 45 degree angle towards the sideline you can anticipate a cover 2 look. If a corner begins to bail backwards anticipating the snap, this shows zone intent. If a linebacker takes a cheat step towards the flat that can also show a zone look. In summary, there are countless reads you can make once the defense makes one pre-snap misstep.



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# RUN & SHOOT PASSING ATTACK: “GO”

By: Chris Zablocki, Head Football Coach, Sheboygan Falls High School



Chris Zablocki

I would like to start off by thanking the WFCA for continuing to provide opportunities for Wisconsin high school football coaches to grow and the high school players of this great state to be showcased. A deep appreciation goes to my good friend, Aaron Mack, for inviting me to write an article of *The Point After II*.

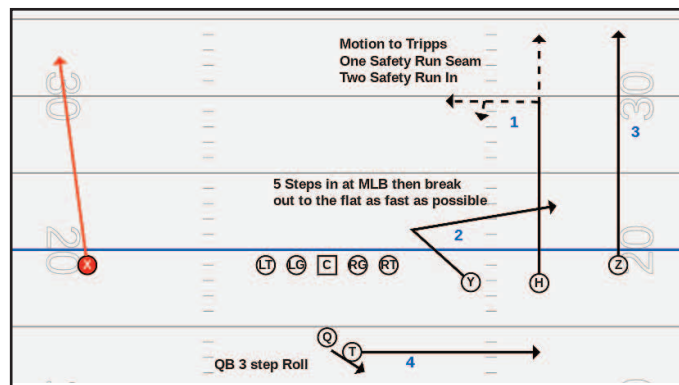
The age of the internet has brought a very interesting time in the football coaching world of schemes and systems. With so many different systems readily available at a click of a button and the willingness to spend a few dollars a coach can easily find themselves being engulfed in on-line clinics throughout the off-season. The once valuable traveling to a location, intently listening, filling up yellow legal pads, and having the privilege of being instructed by some of the games very best in person, is slowly fading away with the uptick of availability and multitude of different sites providing the very best instruction on any valued football system. I fell victim to the opportunity to rekindle my college playing days in the “Run and Shoot Offense” by engulfing myself in a deep dive of all the resources available on the internet instructing this explosive offense. As I have a deep appreciation for the creators of all systems, I was intrigued to learn from the inventors of the modern day Run and Shoot. Coach Tiger Ellison was the Godfather of the Run and Shoot Offense but learning from his pupils Coach Davis, Coach Jones, and Coach Jenkins provided a great opportunity to familiarize myself with the concepts, knowledge, and deep understanding of the “why” of this innovative system.

One of the most popular pass plays from the Run and Shoot Offense is known as “GO”. If you go to YouTube and type in “Run and Shoot Go” you will be brought to what seems like an endless list of videos on this beloved Run and Shoot play. I can truthfully state that I have not watched all of these but I have viewed and learned from a good many of them. I wanted to

fully disclaim that I am not by any means a guru on running the play. I am planning on sharing the things that worked well for us, what I learned along the way, and what adjustments I made throughout the season to help our young players succeed.

The biggest understanding that must be acknowledged of Go is that the play is designed to be executed at a high level in a 3x1 set. Every team has their terminology for their formations, so I am going to try and use the most basic references and universal football terminology as possible. As a program we felt that running a 3x1 set, referred to as Tripps, gave our players and their ability the best opportunity to succeed. I have studied many teams that choose to motion one of their slot wide receivers to a 3x1 set, but as a staff, we felt this year that did not provide the best opportunity for our players to succeed, but I am confident that in many programs that certainly does give the young men a great opportunity to be successful. Below is a diagram of “Go” in a 3x1 set known as Tripps.

The concept of our “Go” play is to read the coverage and react accordingly. The above diagram shows the five different base route combi-



nations for the play known as “Go”. The X receiver in this case will have a fixed fade route and is designated as the HOT receiver, and the QB will throw to him right away if he identifies or feels blitz. When a system releases five players into routes and only five for protection, HOT routes become an option that must be practiced and executed at a consistent rate. I have been asked how many steps does your QB take when he throws the HOT route, and I prefer the QB to take one step and throw the HOT. I understand that this is not always the case so if a QB starts their half roll, identifies/feels pressure, then we instruct them to throw the fade to the Z as the new HOT route. All philosophies are a bit different and we instruct our QBs to avoid sacks and make decisions to give the playmakers an opportunity to be successful, and although this is a low percentage throw it meets the standards we are incorporating.

The progression of the “Go” concept requires the QB to keep their eyes on and identify

the number of safeties on the field. The universal rule is if there is one safety then the H receiver will continue on the seam route and if there are two safeties on the field the H receiver will break off their route at 10 yards and dig across to the open window. The QB should be able to make their decision on whether or not option 1 should be executed by their third step.

The next option is the Y receiver who is running at the MLB for 5 steps and then breaking the route out as fast as they can at a depth of 4-5 yards and then looking for the ball. If there is a flat defender sitting in coverage to take away the route the Y receiver can either sit the route down in an open window or break across the face of the defender towards the sideline in anticipation of being thrown to by the QB to the sidelines.

The last throwing option for the QB if both top two reads are covered, is to peak at the Z receiver on the fade route. In our experience if the first two options are covered usually the Z receiver will be open down the sidelines for an opportunity for a big play. Lastly, if options 1-3 are smothered by the defense the swing by the running back will more than likely open and if the ball is delivered by the QB towards the sidelines it will give the running back an opportunity to make a play in the open field.

Like any play the more and more you run the play the more tweaks or adjustments you can make to expose the defense. An example of an adjustment we make is depending on the coverage and alignment of a safety and outside linebackers we will give the H receiver a tag to break the route outside to the open area instead of breaking it to the inside. Also a nice adjustment if the defense is sitting in an alignment or coverage to gobble up the H receivers route and the weak side safety is cheating towards the X receiver we will have the Y receiver bluff that they are running the flat route and take it up the middle of the field for hopefully a big play.

The Run and Shoot system is another system of offense that can be very successful but oftentimes very difficult to execute at first, but with the mindset of continuous growth and improvement it can be very successful at any level. Hopefully this explanation of the “Go” play can help. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or like to discuss the Run and Shoot in further detail. Thank you for taking time to read this article and please keep up all the great work influencing and building the young men through the game of football. Email: Coach.zablocki@gmail.com, Twitter: @CoachZablocki



# 8-PLAYER – OFFENSIVE LINE (BALL GET OFF)

By: Don Kendzior, Hall of Fame & WFCB 8-Player Representative



Don Kendzior

I would like to thank the WFCB for adopting 8-player football back in 2012 and continuing support through the past 10 years.

In reduced man football (8 Player) you lose two tackles and one skilled position compared to 11 player. Normally in reduced man football you don't see a lot of larger linemen. The game is quicker and faster and dominated by smaller skilled athletes even on the offensive line.

At Luck High School we adopted a philosophy, back when we played 11-player football from (Northwestern High School), to get off the ball as quickly as possible. We never practiced going on two. We wanted to create a mind set of double teaming defensive linemen into linebackers by getting off the ball as quickly as possible. Every year, we probably lead the state in illegal procedure calls but, if you look at the state 8-player rushing records it is dominated by Luck High School.

With this mindset, our linemen have 75 percent of their weight going forward unless they are pulling. What would you rather have, 8 players going full speed every play or 8 players back on their heels going full speed on some plays. Disciplined to go on two versus discipline getting off the ball.

We have created this mind set through various parts of our football program. From the out of season and in season training, daily practices, and disciplined requirements.

Out of season and in season weight training consists of speed, agility, quickness, core body, and basic weight training. This lasts no longer than 60 minutes. It is divided into 3 areas for 20 minutes each, and is a high tempo workout.

Daily practices are based on a high tempo atmosphere with short 5-10 minute segments. Everything is quick and organized due to coaches being prepped and disciplined. We start practice in the chutes with formations off of pre-snap (no huddle) no assigned play with 15-yard sprints. Normally 10 right and 10 left formations. We then go to our 6pt/3pt/rips left and right all out of the chutes with 15-yard sprints. Reps consist of three hip explosions then a sprint. Hip explosions versus air and hand shields. Next are double teams based on where you line up, this also is out

of the chutes. Example, quick guard and split end work together, strong guard and center work together, and 2-back and tight end work together. Then you change it to where the 3-back and split end, quick guard and center, strong guard and tight end all work together. This is a quick double team 3 times with a 15-yard sprint. We have already completed 40/50 quick ball get off drills with 30 plus sprints in less than 20 minutes.

Additional work in the chutes are pulls, play-side, next level, hit and seal blocking with an emphasis on "ball get off". This is done by all players except the 1-back. We then go into our offensive breakdown with the linemen walking through blocking assignments with a heavy verbal communication emphasized. Each hole being attacked is finished when all players have their butts in the hole and head up field. We paint a line for each hole so we can visually see if players are in proper position and backs are hitting the hole north and south. Coaches normally walk the line of the hole being attacked to check proper form. We then proceed to lids (which simulates a defense) at a pre snap full speed blocking assignment drill. Each linemen must reach down and pick up a lid that they are responsible for and pound the ground with their feet with the lid above their head. Lids make players get into a better blocking position than

using a can by staying lower at the start of the block. The same emphasis is preached: butt in the hole with head up field. After the offensive breakdown, we go full team, using lids, at a high tempo full speed drill. Same emphasizes: butt in the hole head up field.

We then progress to hand shields with blocking lasting 6-8 minutes. This is verbally counted out. Normally a play lasts 4 seconds. Emphasis on: quick pre-snap, double teams, butt in hole and head up field, and blocking until the whistle (8 seconds).

Our final part of practice that emphasizes "ball get off" is our 40 and in drill. We start at the 40-yard line and move it up 5 yards for a perfect play. A perfect play consists of a quick pre snap, everyone sprints to the end zone, no fumble, proper pull etc. High tempo core body exercises are given by a coach in the end zone. You then bring the play back from the end line opposite the formation. This is repeated until the 5-yard line.

Finally, discipline requirements that help with the mindset of "ball get off" deals with having a high tempo practice from no walking on grass to having all coaches on the same page and having drills set up in advance so players aren't given the opportunity to stand around. We want to create an environment like it's a game atmosphere.



From the entire JTQB family, a sincere hope that you, your families and your teams are well and looking ahead to 2021 with great expectation. Thank you for all of your hard work and the tremendous impact you have on kids. We're looking forward to seeing you summer 2021, and helping your QBs and WRs take the next steps.

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# MILWAUKEE EAST JET SWEEP RPO PACKAGE

By: Patrick Wagner, Head Coach, Milwaukee Riverside University High School



Patrick Wagner

We have a full package off of our Jet Sweep.

We still use a lot of traditional wing t rules with our plays where we are pinning down and kicking out and leading through the hole.

The play works in this order:

1. We are reading the outside LB on the wide side. If he follows the Z we throw the slant or choice route called. If he stays we run the running package to the front of the play.
2. We have a few run plays off of this but we will stay with the jet sweep/QB read.

Here are the rules for our jet sweep (I will use the wing-T terminology)

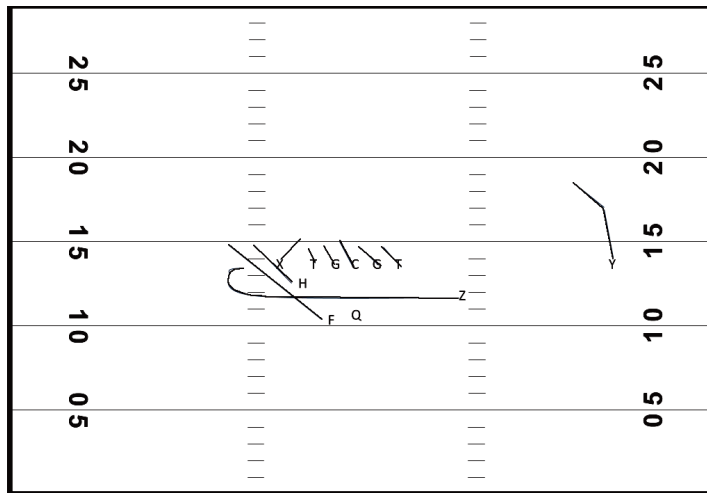
- X - Gap, down, on, backer.
- H - Lead block, first bad guy kick out
- T - reach, on, backer
- G - Reach, on, backer
- C - Reach, on, backer
- Off guard - Reach, on, backer
- Off tackler - Reach, on, backer.
- F - Lead through hole
- Y - Slant, in, choice

QB - Read wide side OLB, eyes to inside backers, snap ball when Z gets to inside foot of tackle and 2-step shuffle and either hand off or run inside.

Rules for alignments and how to run depend on our personal. We are a spread wing-T team and we like a lot of RPOs with IF/THEN statements for the QB. Because we will see so much pre snap movement by defenses especially up front.

Things we have tweaked over the years.

1. QB toes: Depending on your preference, your center's snap and your QB we have had some guys go toes at 3 yards and some guys go to 4 yards. Once we get this figured out we start to tweak the other plays in the package.
2. Hand off or shovel pass.



3. Full back line up. We have done a lot of things with him over the years. For instance, over the guard, or over the guard tackle gap, how offset from the quarterback is he.
4. Where do you want the X to line up? We have done tight to as wide as a 5-yard split.

We like the split because it allows for X a little better angle. Also we want him standing up and inside foot back so in case he needs to make a down block he can.

5. H back line up is depending on how you want to put in the rest of the package. We don't want to tip plays off by lining up differently.
6. We do like this out of different unbalanced lines and formations that we have run over the years.

Problems we have come up with answers for:

1. If we get a stunt on the play side. We will tell our guys not to chase the guy leaving you but to stay on your train tracks and look inside.
2. If we read the blitz on the front side of our play the X, H, and play side tackle, will switch to straight on blocks. We let the players develop the terminology for this. This is a main reason we want our X and H in a more upright stance so they can see the field better. The F needs to be listening for that also in case there is an assignment switch.

3. We don't have to worry about A gap blitzers because if we run the ball correctly the running back will be gone.

4. We have snapped it after the Z has passed us if we have a team that is trying to jump our snap. Our QB has an option of than following the Z or going straight or throwing

the Y. If the Z does not get the ball he knows he becomes a lead blocker.

As I said earlier we do like this out of a few of our unbalanced formations that we have. This is a good answer for some creative defenses you may see.

## COACHING A MULTIPLE PASSING GAME

By: Drew Ambrose, Assistant Football Coach, Franklin High School



Drew Ambrose

There is no secret that at Franklin we are primarily a pass-first offense. I am often asked by coaches why and how we are able to carry such a high volume of concepts in our passing game. One of the biggest reasons we focus so much on the Pass is that we feel it makes us different from most teams and therefore a difficult match-up. Our state, especially in the larger divisions, is currently very heavily driven by the "Power-Spread" philosophy, utilizing Gap Scheme runs along with RPOs and a fairly primitive and limited passing game. The goal of most teams is to impose their will with the run to set up the pass. We are the opposite. We view

the passing game as a means to force defenses to spread out and into 1-on-1 matchups. This allows us to exploit the match-ups that are advantageous to us in the passing game but also create a light box to run the ball where we can focus on a very small core of base run concepts.

To give some context prior to diving into the weeds of our passing game, during our base install we teach 15 drop back pass concepts - this does not include any of our naked boot, sprint out, much of our play-action package nor any of our red zone & goal line specific concepts. Many coaches hear that number and immediately laugh, saying that they could never do this



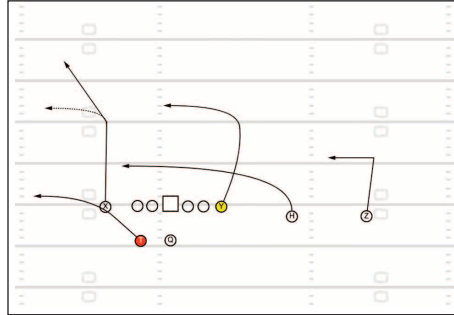
with their team. The reality is that 15 is a lot, and I do acknowledge that sentiment. We also typically gameplan between 2-5 new concepts for each opponent based on the coverages that they run, although there is often carryover within these against similar defenses. So when looking at the entirety of a season, we typically utilize approximately 35 different concepts at some point. Our 15 base concepts are “all-purpose” in nature, meaning we do not view any of them as being coverage specific beaters but rather good against any look a defense can give us. Some require tags and different variations against certain coverages but we never look at our base package as something we cannot carry into any game.

In 2021 we led the state in passing with 3813 yards (273 ypg) and 41 touchdowns (we also rushed for over 2000 yards and 40 touchdowns). So how are we able to do this? The answer is, we put all of our pass concepts into families which are taught and read in the exact same way. All 15 of our base concepts fit into three such families that we call **Halo, Scan and Numbers**. There are two other families which we call *Object* and *Half-Field* reads, but we rarely utilize these anymore mostly due to the proliferation of pattern match coverages as well as my personal distaste for wasting 2-3 receivers on a play. My plan with this article is to give you an overview of the three main families and an example of one concept from each. If you tuned into the WFLA Zoom Clinics that I lead, I made a presentation on this same topic and the video can be found on my YouTube page.

The first family and the simplest one of the three is our Scan read family. This family includes our Mesh, Drive, Shallow and Y-Cross variations. The concepts are designed to be read Horizontally by the Quarterback, starting with the outside most route to the call side and progressing 1-2-3-4-5 right/left directly across the field. One of the reasons we like Scan reads so much is that they are very effective at avoiding interceptions since routes are always moving into the Quarterbacks vision rather than him having to catch up to a route from behind. One other aspect of this family that we utilize as often as possible is to release all 5 eligible receivers. Doing this allows us to create advantageous match-ups with our Running Back or Slot Receiver on a bigger slower Linebacker.

One of our favorite variations from this family is our Bench-Drive concept. This is a concept designed to attack the Boundary with multiple high-low conflicts built in. It is a great all-weather concept that we carry into every game and is one of our most used Tempo calls. The 1-2 in the progression is a Flat-7 high-low stretch to the front side with the X and Tailback. The X must adjust his route break as needed based on the dominant position of the Corner and the ball should go here if he is able to win outside lever-

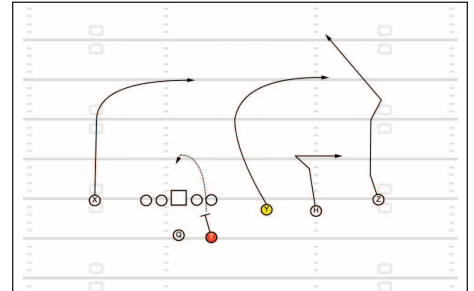
age on his release. The 3-4 in the progression is the Shallow-Dig combination and we finish at 5 with the Fin (Five & In) which is the outlet should the defense drain out all the underneath coverage. We are not so much concerned about reading any particular defenders on this play aside from the Corner in our initial high-low. The expectation of the other receivers is that they look for windows against zone and stay on the move against man, the QB will find them as he scans across the field.



The second family are our Halo or High-Low reads, also known as 3-Level reads. This family includes all of our Flood variations as well as Post-Dig concepts. Rather than being read horizontally like Scan reads, these are read Vertically top to bottom. We teach our quarterbacks to read “High defender to Flat defender” on all of these concepts. An oversimplified way of thinking about this would be to say that when we are presented a 2-High/Middle Open coverage, the high defender would be the playside safety and the flat defender would be either the Corner (Cover 2) or Nickel/Sam (Quarters). If we are presented cover 3 the high defender would be the 1/3 Corner and the flat defender would be the Nickel/Sam. If we are getting straight Man Coverage we will pure progression read high to low.

An example of a Halo concept for us would be our field-flood or often known as Sail. In

this concept we have a Pressure Post that breaks between 10-14 yards (converts to a Fade vs 1-High), a 10-yard Sail route that rounds to 15 and some variation of a Flat control route. On the QB's initial drop he will be reading the dominant position and hip angle of the high defender: is he putting himself in position to take away the Post or is he sitting on or matching the Sail route. If he is matching the Sail route and not in a dominant position to take away the Post the QB will throw the Post. Our expectation is that the receiver will beat the Corner so we do not account for him in any part of the read. If the high defender is putting himself in position to take away the post, the QB will move his eyes to the flat defender. With the flat defender we are looking at whether he is jumping the Flat control route or is maintaining his position to take away the Sail route, and we simply throw opposite him. There is obviously variation in how teams cover the flat and how disciplined the particular athlete is who performs that job, so we do have many variations and tags with the flat route in order to help facilitate the desired effect. Lastly we always have a Dig route breaking into the QBs scan path as an outlet when running the base variations of this concept.



The third family are our Numbers reads. This family is the largest and has the most variation in it and is also the most intensive to teach of the three. The initial read is very simple, but

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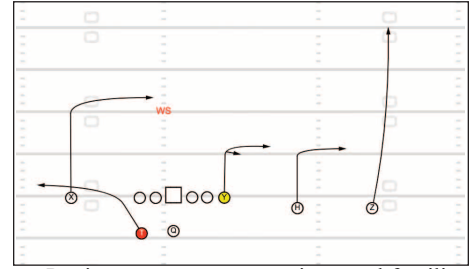
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the follow on reads vary and do require repetition. The big idea with numbers reads is that we have 2 separate concepts built into each play, and are working the side of the field that we have at least equal numbers to based on the movement of a particular defender, in most cases the weak/boundary safety. This is not the old 2-high beater on one side and 1-high beater on the other. These concepts are primarily run from 3x1 formations since we see nearly exclusively 2-high/middle-open coverages, 3x1 forces the defense to make a decision on what to do with their weak safety. The QB will check the WS position relative to the centerline pre-snap, and may very well be able to make the decision prior to the snap, but most of the time has to read his initial drop and whether he kicks towards the 3-man

side or stays to the single WR side. Whichever way the WS goes, we work opposite. Each side then has either an Inside-Out, Outside-In or High-Low read.

One of our most used plays in this family is a simple Stick concept. We structure this concept with Stick to the 3-man side and a Dig-Flat with the X and Tailback to the single receiver side. The quarterback will get his numbers key off the boundary safety at the snap and work away from him. If we are working the Stick side the Go route is a man-alert (throw it if we get the look we want) and then we read outside-in, Speed-Out to Stick. If we are working the single receiver side we are reading high to low, dig to flat off the flat defender.



Putting our pass concepts into read families has been a total game changer and eased both the teaching and learning burden for our quarterbacks. This is really the 'secret sauce' of how we are able to carry such a large and diverse package of pass concepts. If you have questions about anything, please feel free to get in touch: email or Twitter @DrewAmbroseQB.

## LAYERING YOUR OFFENSE, MARRIAGE OF THE RUN AND THE PASS

By: Luke Menzel, Offensive Coordinator, Grafton High School



Luke Menzel

Here at Grafton High School, we pride ourselves on building an offense that has an identity, built with simplicity, and one that has answers off its base concepts. This approach can be summarized into the idea of "layering your offense." More specifically, we achieve this by marrying the run game with our pass game.

### 1. Layering Your Offense - What is it?

Simply put, "layering your offense" is defined as adding dimension(s) to an idea, play, formation, shift/motion that BUILDS on top of the BASE construct. We use the philosophical approach of creating "SAME AS" plays within our offense.

### 2. Layering Your Offense - Why?

Why create layers within your offensive scheme? As coaches we often complicate what can be a simple game. By layering our offense we are able to present to the defense the **ILLUSION OF COMPLEXITY**, yet we keep things SIMPLE for our offensive personnel. In other words, we run our **CORE CONCEPTS** from multiple formations, personnel groupings, as well as with the addition of shifts and motions.

Additionally, by layering your offense you have **ANSWERS** off your base concepts,

which is ultimately what teams will defend **FIRST** [base concepts]. This gives an offense the ability to stay on schedule, be efficient, and ultimately score points. Traditionally, the saying goes "You are who you are." At GHS we certainly believe in that, however, our offensive staff tends to think one step further. We use the following as our approach, "You are who you are, **UNTIL YOU'RE NOT.**" In other words, we stay true to our identity, but also use it as deception to attack the space that defenses are giving us. Furthermore, it's OK to have tendencies. We consistently preach the mentality of "**CREATE ONE TO BREAK ONE.**" For us, this means we create tendencies to eventually break them, which ultimately results in an opportunity for explosive plays to occur.

Lastly, you want to layer your offense to create **CONFUSION** for the defense and **CLARITY** for the offense. Our objective is to make the majority of our base offense **LOOK THE SAME** for the first 3-5 steps post snap. This does two things for our offense:

- Forces a defense to play with hesitation. By using a defense's aggressiveness, keys, and/or coaching against them we offensively have the opportunity to gain an advantage and allow our players to attack space that is vacated by the defense.
- For our coaches, it creates an if/then sequencing when calling a game and/or game planning for one. Again, all of this is accomplished by layering your offense.

### 3. Layering Your Offense - How?

When layering your offense you want to think of building a system rather than a set of plays. To do this you **NEED TO CREATE AN IDENTITY!** Ask yourself the following question: What is your BASE Of-

fense/Scheme? This CANNOT be multiple things. For example, every offense has their categories of concepts/plays - quick game, drop back, run, play action, screen..etc Most offenses have these types of plays in them but not all of these can be considered your **IDENTITY**. We define our **IDENTITY** at Grafton High School as "What defenses are going to defend **FIRST**."

Once your offensive identity has been identified you need to do the following: **ESTABLISH IT, MASTER IT, BE MULTIPLE WITH IT.** As stated before, this goes back to the idea of presenting the **ILLUSION OF COMPLEXITY** to the defense. Once you have established your identity and have become multiple with it you are able to continue "layering" your offensive system. For us, this comes in the form of creating "**SAME AS**" plays. In my opinion, when layering your offense you must create and/or use the "**SAME AS**" philosophy. One way we accomplish this at Grafton High School is by "**marrying the run game with the pass game**".

In the next part of the article I will describe a few examples of how we layer our offense, specifically by marrying the run with the pass.

#### Layer #1 - Wide Zone

I will not go over the intricate details of this play as that is a whole separate conversation/article, but I will go over our overarching philosophy of why we believe in the play as a foundational piece to our offensive system.

First, objectives of this play are as follows:

- Stretch the front side and
- Wall the backside. We want to force the defense to play East/West while also giving our RBs the ability to cut off backside pursuit IF the frontside of the play is taken away. It is our belief as an offensive staff that "Frontside Wins **GAMES**, Backside Wins **CHAMPIONSHIPS**."



The foundation of our offense is rooted in the Wide Zone scheme. We believe it's a "System Play" for us. It creates an identity for our offense and is easily packaged with other schemes/concepts to create greater conflict on a defense. In addition, we believe the play is QB friendly as it allows our QB the ability to create easy completions and reads within our pass game.

Additionally, it gives our offense the opportunity to be efficient and explosive as the play presents itself to the defense in a way that limits negative runs but also maximizes big play potential. Furthermore, it allows our playmakers to **CREATE!** This play is designed for the RB's to read, react, and attack space that's given.

The Wide Zone scheme also allows for multiplicity within an offense. It can be easily tagged to add versatility to maximize its effectiveness versus a variety of defensive looks. Also, it allows our offensive system to be adapted to our players each year as it can be run out of any personnel grouping.

To conclude, we also believe it does a great job of forcing a defense to play gap sound. A defense has to defend multiple gaps as we give the illusion that this play can hit the frontside D gap all the way to the backside D gap. In addition, we are forcing a defense to fit gaps that are moving and being displaced on every play.

### Layer #2 - Keepers

Our second layer within our offense is what we term as our "Keepers." When referring to our keeper game our offense is carrying out a heavy run fake followed by a boot action out the back door from our QB. As for the routes, we will always have 3 levels (Hi, Med, Lo) for our QB to read. This can vary depending on the specific play called and/or coverages we see.

Our objective within this layer of our offense is to develop a constraint play off of our base run scheme (Wide Zone). We pride ourselves on being able to run the football, however our "Keeper" game is another layer within our offense that uses deception to attack vacated space by the defense. We believe in the keeper game because of its ability to be QB friendly. We describe our keeper game as EASY, EFFICIENT, and EXPLOSIVE. In other words, it provides our QB's with an easy read, an efficient/high percentage throw, while also having the ability to be an explosive play [YAC].

### Layer #3 - Play Pass

Our third layer within our offense and our attempt to marry the run game with the pass is

our Play Pass or Play Action. These are a set of plays where we are schematically trying to accomplish the following:

- 1) A hard run action fake, just as seen in our keeper game.
- 2) A half boot action from our QB where it initially looks like our keeper game but our QB sets up in the pocket.

The main objective behind our Play Pass is to create explosive plays down the field. We are attempting to stretch the field vertically to offer the opportunity for big plays to occur. Again, we are accomplishing that by making the defense determine within the first 3-5 steps post-snap if we are running the ball, executing a keeper, or setting up in the pocket to throw vertically down the field. Additionally, our Play Pass takes pressure off of our OL as most of the time we are max protecting the play (7 Man Protection).

To conclude, layering your offense gives your players and coaching staff the ability to further simplify the game, maintain offensive efficiency, and ultimately score points. Ways you can achieve this are using the "**SAME AS**" philosophy by marrying the run game with the pass.

## BALL SECURITY: MAKE IT PART OF YOUR CULTURE

By: Garrett Myers, Assistant Football Coach, Concordia University Wisconsin



Garrett Myers

Ball security is something that frequently comes up when talking about football and where practice time should be spent, but the majority of conversations focus on the particular drills one should do to emphasize ball security. While ball security drills are very important, and there will always be a place for them in the game of football, more needs to be done in order to emphasize the importance of ball security. On top of doing drills every day, one can increase the amount of focus placed on ball security by making it part of the program/position group culture. This article will go beyond the everyday ball security drills and provide a skeleton framework for how to incorporate ball security into a position group or team identity.

Goals are the first big step in making ball security part of the program/position group culture. Once a tangible, concrete goal has been created, the players are forced to think about ball security. It is an issue that is at the forefront of their attention, and they are forced to think about it in every practice and meeting. Creating a ball security goal makes ball security equally as important as the flashier goals, such as explosives, touchdowns, yards per carry, etc. Making a ball security goal is the crucial first step in getting your players to think about and recognize the importance of ball security on a daily basis.

One of these weekly goals that carries throughout the season is making sure a skill player never lets the ball touch the ground. Whether it be in pre-practice, a drill, or a team period, it is imperative that a skill player never lets a ball touch the ground. For instance, after a running back or receiver is tackled, he immediately hands the ball to an official. He does not leave the ball lying on the turf or toss it to the official. The ball needs to be taken care of between the whistles when no one is watching. This goal is implemented and enforced from day one, and it helps illustrate how important ball security is to the success of the team.

Anytime a skill player lets a ball touch the ground, it needs to be noted, and the whole team needs to be held responsible for it. This is the second step in making ball security part of the pro-

gram/position group culture and creates a sense of accountability amongst the players. This reiterates how important ball security is to the success of the program. The players begin to think of turning the football over as letting the team down, similarly to how they would feel if they were late to practice or missed a position meeting. This makes each player carrying the football have a responsibility to the team. Much like the decisions a player makes off the field, the decisions made when carrying the ball will affect the entire program. Because of this, great focus is put into ensuring the ball is properly secured every time a player touches it. Touching the football in any aspect should always be viewed as a privilege instead of a right.

Making ball security part of your program/position group culture is done in an attempt to make it part of your players' and team's identity. Taking care of the football becomes something that a football player in your program/position group does, like volunteering, being respectful, and going to class. The players buy into it, and you as the coach continue that level of belief and buy in by continuing to hold the players and team accountable. Be consistent, and your players will start to hold each other accountable for taking care of the ball. Once this happens, the kids will focus more on ball security and make sure it continues to be a pillar within the program/position group.



## GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

As a membership benefit, coverage is provided by the Commercial General Liability Policy issued to the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors. This policy will provide general liability coverage to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association and its members.

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## CAMP INSURANCE

Today, most Coaches are involved in some type of sports camp. Please note that our General Liability Program follows insured members while working at camps and/or conducting their own personal camp.

In addition, Participant/Accident Coverage is required for coaches and/or participants. Should an accident occur during a camp, clinic or event, this secondary coverage helps offset the loss suffered by families affected by such accidents.

### NEW PROCEDURE FOR CAMP INSURANCE

As a member benefit of your state coaches association, all members in good standing have a \$1,000,000 per occurrence General Liability policy limit that provides coverage for their coaching activities. In order to protect the General Liability policy from potential claims, the insurance company has mandated that all coaches must obtain signed waivers and provide Participant/Accident insurance for their participants.

In order to obtain a certificate of insurance showing proof of insurance or naming an additional insured, the following must be in place:

- ❖ **Waivers:** Signed waivers showing indemnification language
- ❖ **Participant/Accident Insurance:** You must have Participant/Accident coverage in place for all participants attending sports camps.

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