

The Point After II

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION, VOL. 29, No.1, SPRING 2021



2021 – RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC
Wisconsin High School Teams
Kick Off Historic Spring Football Season

Photo by Jim Garvey



Editor: Tom Swittel • swittelt@gmail.com • 414-315-1131

WFCA Executive Director: Dan Brunner • brunnerd@wifca.org • 414-429-3139

Assistant Editor/Executive Assistant: Charna Kelsey • PO Box 8, Poynette, WI 53955 • office@wifca.org • 608-635-7318

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By: Dan Brunner



Dan Brunner

This has been a year that none of us will ever forget. After an entire year that was severely impacted by COVID, we have learned to take NOTHING for granted! There have been some silver linings. Our coaches, athletes and parents are among them. The way they worked together to have a successful Fall season was outstanding. I trust that the teams playing in the Spring will do the same. Thanks to all. Our players needed that. With the vaccine rollout, I am optimistic that things will be back to normal soon.

WFCa MEMBERSHIP

I am happy to announce our new membership program for high school and youth programs, will now include 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 new membership program allows you to combine high school and youth programs for your staff rate.

The Membership Dues are as follows:

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

Additional members (10-13) - \$55 each

Large Staff \$630 – (Maximum of 14 members)
(\$45/member)

Additional members - \$55 each

Unlimited 15+ \$775

Notes:

- Admission to the Annual Clinic is included in Membership Fee. You will be asked to indicate those members attending so badges can be generated ahead of your arrival.
- You may combine youth staffs and high school staffs for all 3 staff rate levels!
- In State Individual - \$55
- Out of State Individual - \$60

WFCa CLINIC

Please remember to set aside June 3rd, 4th and 5th, 2021 for our Annual Gathering in Madison! This year's Clinic will feature the Badger Coaching Staff, led by Paul Chryst on Thursday. Other headliners will be announced soon. I realize that the date conflicts with the end of the school year for many of you. Unfortunately, these were the ONLY dates that were available

when we decided to move due to COVID. Please do what you can to attend. If there was ever a need to get together, it's this year!

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. We will be giving one to each clinic attendee for free! Future sales of copies will have 100% of the proceeds go toward the Bill Collar Lineman Scholarship Fund.

COY FINALIST

A special congratulations to Bill Young. Bill is one of 8 finalists for the 2021 National High School Athletic Coaches Association, Football Coach of the Year. The award is given annually based on the career accomplishments of the coach. The finalist will be announced in June. Due to COVID, the NHSACA COY finalists are carried forward to 2021. We wish Bill the best of luck.

CONCLUSION

A sincere thank you for all that you did this past year. You may never know how many futures you saved, but rest assured, save some, you did! I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones in Madison on June 3rd, 4th & 5th. I can't wait to see you at the Marriott!

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, 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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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By: John Hoch, Head Football Coach, Lancaster High School



John Hoch

We have missed many things with COVID-19 Pandemic. It has been a disease that has affected not only our family, but also many of the things we do, such as the annual WFCa Clinic of 2020, the WFCa All Star Game, the WFCa All Star Banquet to mention a few. These are things that we cannot get back. For the first time my wife missed three games of the 2020 football season of the Lancaster football (she has attended 432 of 435 games during my career) due to her being identified and tested positive with COVID. My entire family had a bout of the Corona Virus this winter. Recently we have received our first round of vaccine, which for me was harder to handle than having the virus. The football only conferences were also delayed for one year, but we still feel it is a positive move for football in Wisconsin.

We recently held our elections for At-Large Positions and President Elect. We had a lot of interest and some new candidates. The At-Large Positions were filled by the following: R-1 At-Large - Mark Krommenacker (Appleton East), R-2 At-Large - Jim Hagen (Colby), R-3 At-Large - Mike Gnewuch (Mukwonago), R-4 At-Large - Jim Matthys (Brodhead) and President Elect - Brian Kaminski (Sun Prairie). Congratulations to all those running and those that won. Also the WFCa would like to thank Tony Biolo for all his efforts with the election. I would also like to congratulate Chris Berghammer (Cumberland) for becoming the northern vice president.

A lot of effort has been put forward trying to make up on the activities the WFCa usually host. We have solidified most of these activities. Dan Brunner and Bob Berezowitz have worked hard on finding speakers along with working with the Marriott Madison West in Middleton to secure a location for the WFCa Clinic. Registration for the WFCa Clinic is done online by going to the WFCa website. Some of the things you will need to do to register is complete your school information and have contact information (mailing address, email, phone number) for each coach you are registering. NEW in 2021 is that the WFCa Spring Clinic is now included with all WFCa membership. This has caused us to adjust our membership dues. You must realize that with your membership you also are able to attend the clinic. Staff rates are the following: Small Staff (maximum of nine members) = \$405.00, Large Staff (maximum of 14 members) = \$630.00

and Unlimited Staff (plus 15 members) \$775.00. If you are having any technical issues you can contact travis@wiscsports.net or call Travis Wilson - 608-604-4928. If you have any membership questions you can contact Charna Kelsey - office@wifca.org or 608-635-7318

Doug Sarver and his staff are also busy organizing the Annual All-Star Game held the third Saturday in July. We are very excited to have this WFCa and Children's Hospital Event back on the calendar. Doug is working hard to make sure we are following any rules put forth by the universities and the state of Wisconsin so we can hold this event. The teams will not be complete until the spring football season is completed.

Tony Biolo is also busy organizing the 2021 WFCa Combine. This spring's combine will be held Saturday, April 24th at NX Level in Waukesha. If you are interested in registering for the combine you can go to the WFCa webpage – Events – WFCa Combine and click on Registering for the 2021 WFCa Combine.

Putting together the WFCa All-State Team is incomplete at this time. We are waiting until the spring football season is completed. We will then work on compiling the WFCa All-State Team. Once that is completed we will move forward on the WFCa All-State Banquet.

As always take time to be with your family, enjoy their company as they will be there supporting you during and after every game whether you win or lose.

2021-2022 WFCa BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Brunner, Executive Director
John Hoch, Past-President
Chris Berghammer, N. Vice President
John Hoch, Hall of Fame Chairman and WIAA Liaison
Don Kendzior, 8-Player Chairman
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Dave Hinkens, Private School Liaison

REGION REPRESENTATIVES

REGION 1 LARGE

At-Large ~ Mark Krommenacker
Adam Kowles
Tom Yashinsky

REGION 3 LARGE

At-Large ~ Mike Gnewuch
Ben Chossek
Justin Friske

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At-Large ~ Mark Krommenacker
Mike Olson
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REGION 3 SMALL

At-Large ~ Mike Gnewuch
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REGION 2 LARGE

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REGION 4 LARGE

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FROM THE EDITOR

By: Tom Swittel, Director of Communications and Corporate Sponsors



Tom Swittel

I am writing this article on the eve of a historic football season, the Alternative Spring Season. In the last issue of *The Point After II*, I said I didn't think I had ever seen a season like the one experienced in fall of 2020. I can now say, without a doubt, I have never seen anything like the Alternative Spring Season. I am confident playing football this spring will be successful. I say this based on the number of spring coaches I have talked to. It is obvious the spring coaches have picked the brains of fall coaches and learned from their experiences. In some respects, there is now a blueprint on how to coach during Covid. Spring coaches, don't hesitate to reach out to your fall coaching friends when questions or situations arise. I'm sure you will get the advice you are looking for.

I'd like to point out three things happening this spring that you might want to take advantage of: WFC Zoom Clinics, The Fall Guys Podcast, and The WFC Radio Show.

The WFC Zoom Clinics are offering, once again, monthly Zoom Clinics. The WFC Zoom Clinic is scheduled for the last Thursday night of every month at 7:30 pm. Drew Ambrose, Offensive Coordinator and QB Coach at Franklin High School, does an excellent job of hosting the Zoom Clinics. Drew lines up prominent college and high school coaches to present in a very relaxed, laid back atmosphere. A lot of ground is covered in these presentations and you have the ability to ask questions of the presenters. Every month a different WFC Corporate Sponsor sponsors the clinic. This is a great opportunity to connect with our Corporate Sponsors and see what new products and programs they are offering. I have participated in all of the Zoom Clinics and have found them worthwhile.

The Fall Guys Podcast is the brainchild of Tom Yashinsky (Onalaska), Matt Kimmes (DeForest), Pete Williquette (McFarland), and Scott Swanson (La Follette). Tom Yashinsky described where the idea for the podcast came from:

"The podcast was an idea born out of the fear of not having a football season. We thought it would be fun to get some coaches we've known in a fishing boat or tree stand and just talk about their journey and how they've gotten to where they are now. We don't talk Xs and Os. Instead, we want to hear stories that you would hear at the bar at the Clinic. We have so many great coaches in this state who are great people that we wanted to put them out there for people to hear. It has been an amazing experience so far to hear of all of the different influences, successes, and sometimes failures that people have gone through and how it has shaped them in their journey. It has been really awesome to hear how

many people relate their success back to a core of coaches in the state – John O'Grady, Stan Zweifel, and Bob Berezowitz. I think our show has been able to show people some of the true reasons why people coach, and why all high school and college sports, at all levels, are so important, and that reason is so much deeper than the sport, but because of the people it produces." Well said.

You can find the Fall Guys Podcast on Apple Podcasts. A new one is released weekly. All of The Fall Guys Podcasts are sponsored by Epoch Recruiting and the WFC Player Profiles, the official player profile for participants of the WFC Combine. Please check out the Fall Guys Podcast. You will not be disappointed.

Lastly, the 8th season of the WFC Radio Show begins on March 27th. The show is hosted by Mike McGivern and myself. It is aired live on every other Saturday morning, 10 am – noon, on WSSP 105.7 The Fan in Milwaukee. At the writing of this article, there is a chance the show will be on a state wide radio network. Even if it isn't, you can hear a podcast of every show on either the WSSP or WFC website. All things football, WFC or otherwise, are talked about on the WFC Radio Show. Like the Fall Guys Podcast, check out the WFC Radio Show. Again, you will not be disappointed.

Good luck to all of the Alternative Spring Football coaches. I hope you get all of your games in without incident. And, as always, please contact me with any questions or comments you may have regarding *The Point After II*. My cell is (414) 315-1131. My new email is: swittelt@gmail.com

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



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FROM THE HALL OF FAME CHAIRMAN

By: John Hoch, Athletic Director and Head Football Coach, Lancaster HS, WFCOA Hall of Fame Chairman



John Hoch

Hello everyone – it has been quite a year that is not over. The fall football season was unique and I am interested in seeing how the spring season progresses. Not only is the season different, but so is the WFCOA Clinic. We had to cancel last year's clinic and had to move this year's clinic back to June. As they say absence makes the heart grow fonder – so I cannot wait to see everyone in June.

I want to make a push for members to help with the WFCOA scholarship. The scholarship committee is amazed with the outstanding candidates applying for scholarships. We want to continue to provide those scholarships and this cannot be done without the effort and donations of the HOF members. We missed out on a year of fund raising by Jerry Golembiewski and without his help scholarships depend more on the donations of the HOF members. A reminder to HOF members that the starting date for donating for the WFCOA Scholarship is the first of January. If you already have donated – THANK YOU!

At the WFCOA Clinic in June we will continue to have our annual HOF luncheon organized by

Duane Rogatski and Bill Collar. If you are interested in attending the luncheon contact Duane, Bill or Charna – we do not want to miss anyone. I am sure after a year off this luncheon will be loaded with thoughts from Bill and Duane that will keep us laughing and smiling.

The Point After II is a great resource that our coaches provide to all the coaches that are members of the WFCOA. *The Point After II* is available by going on the WFCOA Website. If you would rather get a paper copy you can by contacting Charna at WFCOA Office. We get a variety of articles from retired coaches, college coaches, high school coaches and youth coaches. I want to ask all of you to help in providing articles for *The Point After II*. The information you have is very valuable for all coaches, young and old.

We have had many inquiries about the WFCOA Hall of Fame Banquet. We plan on moving forward as normal with the WFCOA HOF activities on the WFCOA Clinic dates. We plan on concluding our WFCOA Clinic the WFCOA HOF Induction on Saturday. We hope you can plan on attending any or all of the WFCOA Clinic, the WFCOA HOF Luncheon and the WFCOA HOF Induction on Saturday, June 5th. Tom Fugate and Paul Martin, both members of the Class of 2020, have made the difficult decision to delay their honor to the 2022 banquet. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Charna at the WFCOA Office or myself.

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. Stay safe and hope to see you at the clinic.



WFCOA HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2021

Tony Biolo, *WI Rapids Lincoln HS*
Pat Bundy, *Menomonie HS*
Pat Cerroni, *UW-Oshkosh*
Tony DiSalvo, *St. Croix Central HS*
Steve King, *Holmen HS*

WFCOA HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2020 HONORED IN 2021

Kirk DeNoyer, *WI Lutheran HS*
Joe LaBuda, *Menomonie HS*
Steve Lyga, *Cochrane-Fountain City HS*
Steve Rux, *Waukesha West HS*
Dan St. Arnould, *Niagara/Brillion HS*
Bernie Schmidt, *Cudahy HS*
Scott Statz, *Platteville HS*
Mark Traun, *Elk Mound HS*

DAVE MCCLAIN DSA Brad Arnett, *Nx Level*

NHSACA HALL OF FAME Dave Keel, *Homestead HS* Bill Turnquist, *West De Pere HS*

➤ In Memoriam ➤

DONALD W. BARNABO

September 16, 1933 – January 26, 2021

Donald W. Barnabo passed into eternal life on January 26, 2021. Donald, son of Dante and Leocadia (Cybulski) Barnabo, was born on September 16, 1933 in Ironwood, MI. Don graduated from Hurley High School in 1951. He attended Marquette University in 1952, and graduated from UW Superior in 1958. While playing college football, he was captain of his team and received All-American Honors. Don received a Masters degree in Physical Education in 1961, from Colorado State College in Greeley, CO.

Don was united in marriage to the love of his life, Arloa Lillstrom on August 10, 1957 at Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Hurley. The high school sweethearts' love story was one for the

ages. Don and Arloa raised four Barnabo children; Dana Lee, Dante James, Thomas Maurice and Lana Jeanne.

Don Barnabo taught and coached for 32 years. He started his career at Oconto Falls High School in 1958. From 1959-1967, he served as teacher, coach and eventually as Athletic Director at Beloit Catholic High School. In 1967, Don Barnabo left Beloit Catholic to become a teacher and coach at the new Janesville Parker High School. Coach Barnabo's infectious smile and uncanny ability to inspire not only athletes, but fellow teachers and staff, paved the way for Janesville's newest high school. Barney was responsible for coining the Parker slogan, "You Gotta Wanna."

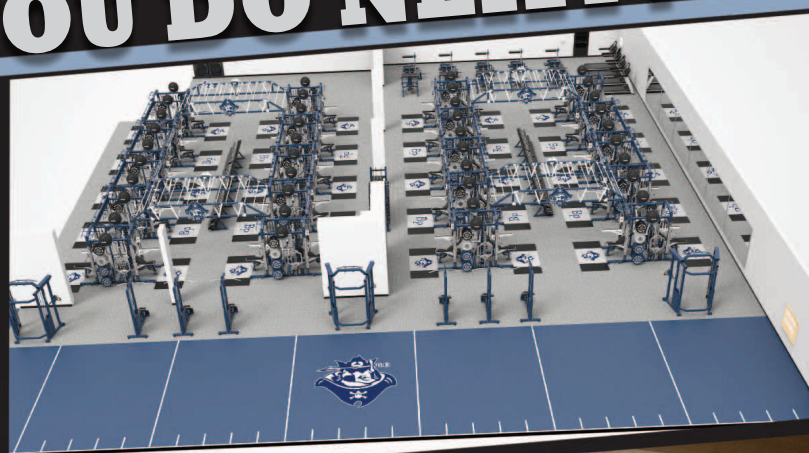
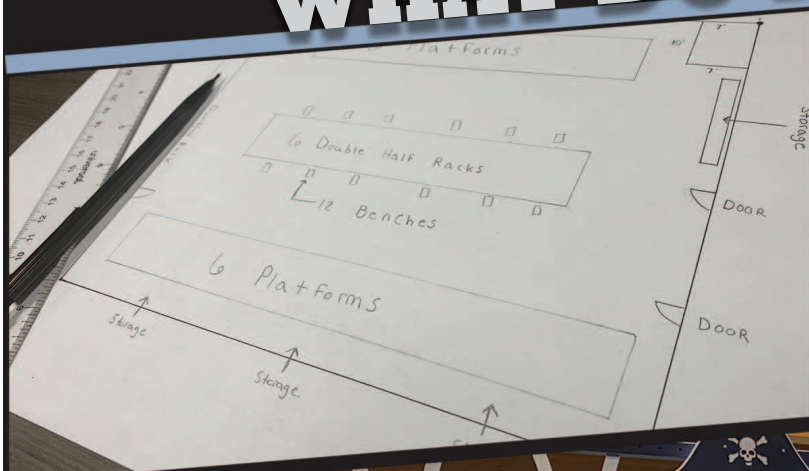
In 1967 Coach Barnabo received the Big 8

coach of the year award. He was a member of WEA-NEA and JEA, Wisconsin Retired Education Association, Wisconsin High School Coaches Association and served on the WHSCA clinic staff. He spoke at a number of coaching clinics and had articles published in the Athletic Journal, Scholastic Coach, Coaching Clinic and WIAA publications. He was a member of the WFCOA Committee, which was responsible for a supporting role in developing the WIAA playoffs program. Barnabo was inducted into Wisconsin High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame in March of 1987.

In eternal life, Don joins parents Dante John & Leocadia, brothers Jack and Bob Barnabo all of Hurley, WI, wife of 61 years Arloa (Lillstrom) Barnabo, children Dana Sweeney of Madison,

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Dynamic Team at the
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WI, Tom Barnabo of Des Moines, IA, Dante James Barnabo of Manitowish Waters, WI, and an infant son.

He is survived by youngest daughter Lana Barnabo-Knaack of Madison, WI, son-in-law Daniel Sweeney of Madison, WI, daughter-in-law Susan Barnabo of Des Moines, IA, grandchildren; Willow & Brian Flaherty, Tyler & Melissa Sweeney, Shane & Anna Sweeney, Dalton & Karissa Barnabo, Cole & Linda Barnabo, Sophia Knaack, Madeline Knaack, great grandchildren; Haley, Cooper, Barrett, Dane and Emma Rose, nieces and nephews, and special friends Mike and Pat Hahn.

DOUGLAS C. BARK

June 5, 1939 – December 3, 2020

LANCASTER - Douglas C. Bark, age 81, of Lancaster, WI, went to his eternal home on Wednesday, December 3, 2020 at Lancaster Health Services. He was born on June 5, 1939 in Lancaster, the son of Reuben and Grace (Leist) Bark. He graduated from Lancaster High School in 1957 and went on to study Agriculture and Biology at UW-Platteville and UW-Whitewater. Doug married Jill Myers on February 21, 1959 at the United Methodist Church in Lancaster. He was awarded a National Science Stipend to further his education with a master's degree in science, specializing in Biology. In addition to operating the Bark family farm near Lancaster, Doug spent his life as an educator, coach, mentor, leader, and father figure to many. He was a tireless educator and coach who had a knack for seeing hidden talents within kids and encouraging them to reach their full potential.

Doug's dedication earned him a place in the Wisconsin Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2012. During his induction ceremony, Doug summarized his journey saying, "I have lived every coach's dream during my years of coaching football.

Doug is survived by his wife of over 61 years, Jill; daughter, Kim (Al) White; grandchildren: J.J. (Jodi) White, and their son, Easton; Brianna White, and her children, Dakota, Bentley, and Maverick; Lucas (Haley Schultz) White; Bradley (Candice) Bark, and their children, Cora, David, and Reuben; Brian (Caitlin) Bark, and their children, Henry, Russell, and Eliza; and Brittany Bark; a daughter-in-law, Pam Bark; brother, Dick Bark; and nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Doug was preceded in death by his sons, Duane and David Bark; brother, Stan Bark; sisters-in-law; and nephews.

RON E. MURPHY

July 19, 1941– November 28, 2020

MINERAL POINT - Ronald E. Murphy, age 79, passed away peacefully after a short illness on Nov. 28, 2020, surrounded by his loving Family at St. Mary's Hospital.

Ron is survived by his loving wife, Linda; sons, Pat (Brenda Seagreaves), Mike, and Brian (Angie) Murphy; grandchildren, Austin (Mia), Paige, Gabi, Megan, Andrew, Chloe and Cade;

and one great-grandchild arriving in May. He is also survived by his brother, Dennis (Millie) Murphy; and sisters, Jean (Bruce) Thomas, Betty (Den) Phillips, and Mary Esch. His surviving in-laws are Tom (Terri) Lieder, Steven (Diane) Lieder, Jim (Mary) Lieder, and Mary (Scott) Harper; mother-in-law, Joyce Flum; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ernest and Ruth Murphy; in-laws, Bud Lieder and Robert Flum; and brother-in-law, John Esch.

WILLIAM JOHN "BILL" RICE

September 19, 1940– November 9, 2020

MCFARLAND - William John "Bill" Rice, age 80, of McFarland, passed away peacefully on Monday, Nov. 9, 2020, at Fountainhead Homes. Bill was born on Sept. 19, 1940, in Madison, the son of Gerald and Rachel (Joyce) Rice.

Bill grew up in Sextonville, attending Ithaca High School as a multi-sport athlete. After graduating in 1958, he attended UW-Platteville, receiving a bachelor's degree in social science in 1962. He married his college sweetheart, Elizabeth "Becky" McDermott, on Oct. 13, 1962, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. The two of them raised an incredible family and enjoyed their strong marriage of 58 years through the time of his passing.

Bill was a life-long educator, beginning his successful teaching career at Royal High School from 1962-1965 and Mineral Point High School from 1965-1967, before moving to McFarland where he was an integral member of the teaching staff for 31 years and a valued member of the community. A key to Bill's success was his belief in building strong relationships with all students, faculty, and administration. In addition to teaching, Bill served as the Head Football Coach at McFarland from 1967-1998 and has coached other sports including wrestling and track. He also served as McFarland's Athletic Director from 1969 to 1974. Bill's involvement in coaching and advocating for student athletes went beyond the field, as he served as the President of the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association (WFCA) from 1989 to 1994. As a Head Football Coach at McFarland, Bill was the architect of a program that won six conference championships and earned multiple state playoff berths while maintaining a culture of developing student-athletes to be great people and not just great athletes. Although not important to him, Bill achieved many individual accolades, including coaching in the All-Star Shrine game as an assistant in 1982 and then as the Head Coach in 1998. Bill was also enshrined in the WFCA Hall of Fame in 1998. Bill was respected by his players and the community. In 2016, he was honored by the McFarland community when they named the field at the stadium after him. A humble man, Bill was especially thankful to all of the McFarland students, athletes, coaches, and colleagues that made those years so rewarding.

Bill is survived by his loving wife, Becky; four sons, Patrick (Deanna) Rice and their children, Molly, Mandy, and Morgan; Todd Rice;

Scott (Sandy) Rice and their children, Jacob and Joey; and Jeffrey Rice; nine brothers and sisters, Diane Anderson, Donna Holz, Thomas (Beverly) Rice, Michael Rice, Patrick (Carole) Rice, Jerome (Jan) Rice, Mary (Steve) Dana, Daniel (Sandy) Rice, and John (Rita) Rice; brothers-in-law, Tom Mooney and Robert (fiancée, Judy Ryan) McDermott; sister-in-law, Helen Rice; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Richard Rice; sisters, Maureen Mooney and Theresa Rice; brothers-in-law, Alfred Anderson and Howard Holz; and sisters-in-law, Sharlene Rice and Judy McDermott.

WAYNE STEFFENHAGEN

April 30, 1941– February 18, 2021

WESTON - Wayne "Coach" Steffenhagen, 79, of Weston passed away on Thursday, February 18, 2021, at Aspirus Wausau Hospital.

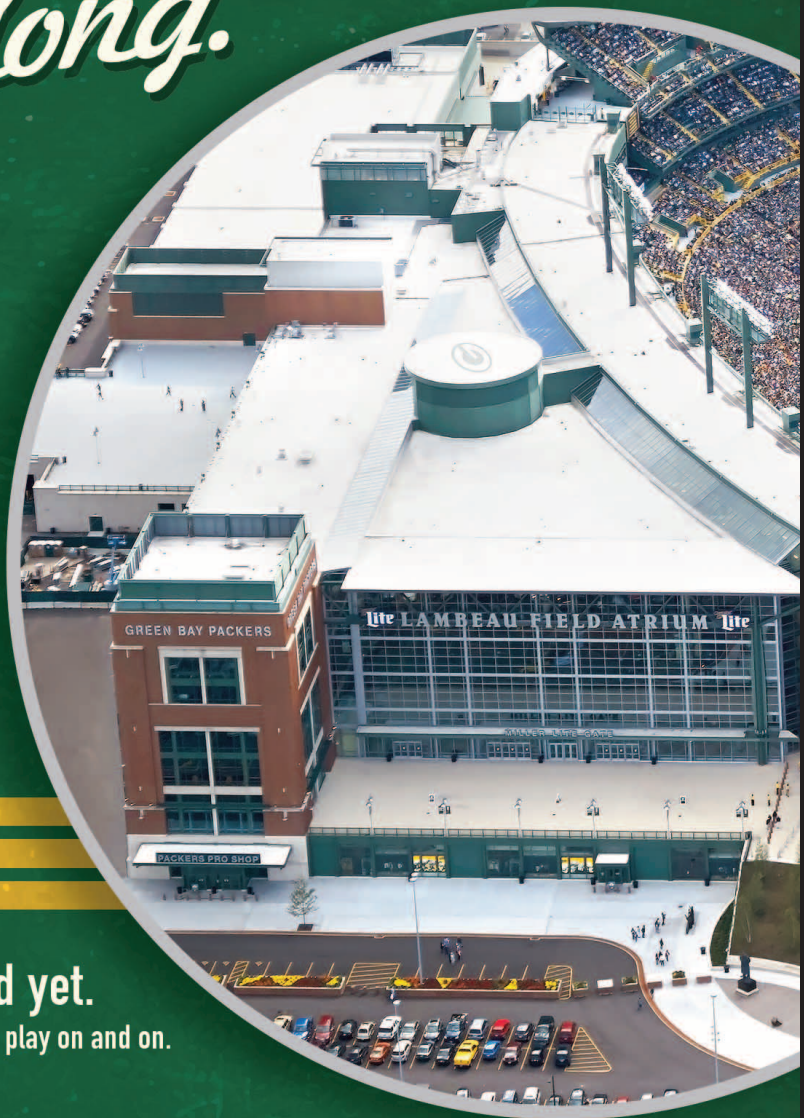
Wayne was born on April 30, 1941, in Lake City, MN to the late Dorance and Julia (Tiedeman) Steffenhagen. After completing high school, Wayne went on to study at the University of Minnesota. It was there that he met the love of his life and wife, Sondra Spencer. Together they raised three wonderful children, Kelly, Jay, and Todd.

To many, Wayne was known as Coach, the legendary D.C. Everest football coach who led his team out onto the field for 33 years winning many Conference and State Championships. He was inducted into the Wisconsin Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2002 and the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2013.

To his family, he was a humble man from humble beginnings. He grew up on the family farm in Lake City, Minnesota. It was there that he learned about hard work and tenacity. After completing his studies at the UMN, Coach began his journey in teaching physical education. He had a gift for helping his students recognize their strengths, even when they couldn't see it themselves. Wayne was a great partner to Sondra for 56 years. Together they enjoyed going to Door County and Arizona, spending time with their family and friends - always helping each other to be the very best versions of themselves. Wayne Steffenhagen was an important part of our community and while his physical presence will be missed, his legacy will live on in the hearts and memories of the lives he has touched.

Wayne is survived by his loving wife, Sondra; his children Kelly (Jim) Essman, Jay, and Todd (Vicki) Steffenhagen; grandchildren, Nathan (Imane Benchekroun) Essman, Marina Essman, Matthew Essman, and Andrew (Kellen Baker) Steffenhagen and Hannah (Sophie Love) Steffenhagen; grand-pups, Lexie, Bodhi, Winny, and Rainy; his brother-in-law, Todd (Debbi) Spencer; his uncle Ray Tiedeman; nephews, Mike and Blake (Stephanie) Tiedeman and Matt (Brooke) Spencer; nieces, Stephanie Spencer and Jacki Coates; as well as many cousins and relatives in MN, WI, CO, and CA.

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CONGRATULATIONS

2020-2021 WFCI Hall of Fame Scholarship Recipients



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Burlington HS



Emily Brick
Wrightstown HS



Abigail Chossek
Wauwatosa West HS



Kaci Marie Enz
Manitowoc HS



Chase Fisher
Prairie du Chien HS



Max Golembiewski
Monroe HS



Audrey Hatfield
Hudson HS



Hayden Knapp
Lancaster HS



Nate Lew
Elk Mound HS



Katly Lindner
Loyal HS



Jace Martens
Cumberland HS



Bailey Matthys
Brodhead HS



Carson Molle
Seymour HS



Kyle Quick
Prairie du Chien HS



Coleton Rogeberg
Middleton HS



Dawson Rondorf
West Bend East HS



Westen Schmitz
Greenwood HS



Leo Taylor
Suring HS



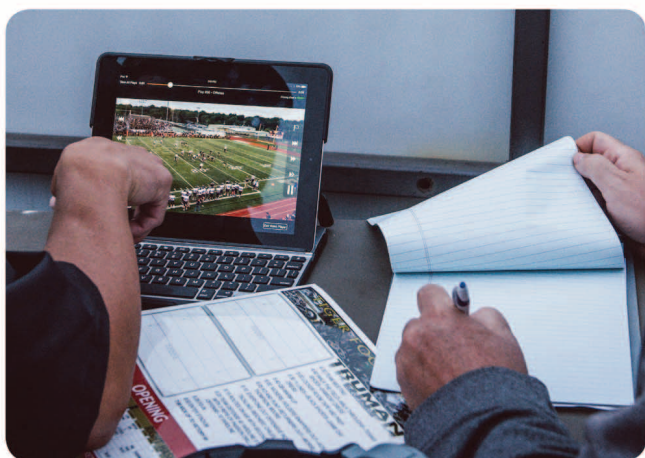
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Benjamin Wellhoefer
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Most coaches reading this are clueless as to what Chicago in the 1920s has to do with football. You've no doubt been watching football all your life, and yet have no idea about the origins of some of the biggest trends and innovations in the on-field product you see each and every weekend in high definition. It was in Chicago, long before the first television set ever aired a game, where a man by the name of John A. Sand II started down a path that would forever shape the way that the gridiron looks and feels.

Sand was a Knitter by trade following his service in World War I, and in 1921, he had the vision, daring and business savvy to shift the focus of his company to producing athletic uniforms. What followed was a decades-long run making uniforms known across the country as the absolute best threads money could buy – not only surviving, but thriving through all the challenges of the 20s, 30s and 40s!

"During the period of time following World War II and into the 1950s, Sand Knit was the name in football and basketball uniforms." Sand II's son, John A. Sand III recalls. "Many NFL teams and many of the top college teams all wore Sand uniforms."

Over the years, the company changed hands and moved locations a few times, but the appreciation for what it meant to wear Sand Knit re-

mained constant. Today, a century after Sand II started the Sand Knit line, Ripon Athletic carries this tremendous legacy forward.

Hank Derleth joined Sand Knit in 1963, and by 1972, he was promoted to president and general manager of the company. Much like his predecessor, Hank's vision and passion set him apart, and eventually bridged the gap between the company's roots in Sand Knit and this modern era.

Hank's family-run-business approach and genuine care for his staff, suppliers and customers alike took what started as a premium-quality brand made by highly skilled, salt-of-the-earth people, and transformed it into an extended-Ripon-Athletic-family business.

"In my mind, it gets back to the golden rule," Hank explains about the sincere care for people they have built their reputation on. "Treat people the way you want to be treated." "If you do that, you're doing the right things."

Words like these might seem like lip service, but for the Derleth family, it comes from the heart. "If we can accomplish anything, it's to try and carry that forward." Hank's son Peter and CEO of Ripon Athletic says. "It is essential that we communicate well so people know where we are going and how they are an important part of those efforts."

"Whether we are riding high as a company or facing challenges, we have kept trying to do that next right thing for our Ripon family and our customers. That's what has helped us weather every storm that has come our way."

The relationships, trust and confidence Ripon has built within the school sports market evidences their long history of continually keeping people at the heart of everything they do. Carrying on a century-long legacy simply cannot be done without working with experienced, knowledgeable people and treating them right.

Everything Sand Knit and Ripon represent, all the product innovation, tenacity in the face of adversity, commitment to being American made, staying on the cutting edge of trends and technology – all of it boils down to those individuals who make, purchase and wear Ripon Athletic uniforms. As a salute to all of these truly incredible people. Ripon Athletic Uniforms in 2021 will bear the Sand Knit name/label.

As 2021 dawns, and coaches are filled with hope for what the future may bring, we invite you to join Ripon Athletic in celebrating 100 years of Sand Knit influence and innovation. And the next time you turn on the big game, maybe you'll find a new appreciation for just how much passion and pride goes into each and every uniform you see!

Mark Your Calendar Now!

WFCA SPRING FOOTBALL CLINIC

JUNE 3, 4 & 5, 2021

Marriott Hotel in Middleton, Wisconsin

A full-page photograph of a Marine in combat. The Marine is wearing desert camouflage fatigues and a tactical vest, running forward while holding an M4-style rifle. The background is a blurred, rocky terrain. 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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HOW IS THE WISCONSIN FOOTBALL FOUNDATION RESPONDING TO COVID-19?

By: Al Minneart, Hall of Fame Coach and Chapter President, Wisconsin Football Foundation



Al Minneart

Q Will the WFF be honoring Scholar-Athletes for the Fall 2020 season and the Alternate Fall/Spring 2021 season?

A: Yes. Every high school head football coach in Wisconsin is invited to nominate a graduating senior, who has played football and meets the criteria for selection as a National Football Foundation High School Scholar-Athlete. Detailed information can be found on our website: wisconsinfootballfoundation.org.

**All nominations, including schools playing in Spring, 2021, will be due May 15, 2021. Plaques will be available at the WFF table at the WFCAClinic June 3-5, 2021. (Plaques not picked up will be shipped.)*

Q: What will each Scholar Athlete receive?

A: Every honoree will receive a personalized plaque to commemorate their selection. Also, every school will receive a personalized nameplate, recognizing the honoree on their school's institutional plaque.

Q: What revisions has WFF made because of the pandemic?

A: **All the uncertain circumstances do not enable us to schedule an event to gather and recognize the Scholar-Athletes nominated in the Fall 2020 & Alternate Fall/Spring 2021 "seasons." We will not be selecting an 11 member WFF State Scholar-Athlete "TEAM" this year, and scholarships will not be awarded. *The nomination process for 2020-2021 has been simplified & consists of 2 items:*

- 1) *A brief nomination form, available on our website;*
- 2) *A one page reflection, prepared by the nominee, on what the experience of participating in football has meant to him.*

Q: What is some background information about this program?

A: The Wisconsin Football Foundation is the only National Football Foundation (NFF)

Chapter in the State of Wisconsin. Founded in 1993, Wisconsin's Chapter is one of 120 Chapters in 47 states. NFF currently has 12,000 members. Each year over \$1 million in scholarships are awarded by Chapters to high school scholar-athletes.

- The primary focus of the Chapter is to recognize outstanding personal, academic, and athletic achievement among graduating football players in WI. In addition to honoring qualified nominees, a permanent Endowment Fund has been established to provide college scholarship assistance.
- The initial funding for the scholarships was provided from memorial contributions made in the name of George H. Chryst, former high school & college coach, and the father of current Badgers' Head Football Coach, Paul Chryst. The Chryst family has remained involved with the Chapter over the years.

- To date, **\$80,000** has been awarded by this Chapter to WFF honorees.
- WFF has honored **2,098** nominees. (Our website has a complete data base of nominees.)
- **419** high schools in WI have submitted nominees in the 27 football seasons from 1993 through 2019. **THE PARTICIPATION OF HIGH SCHOOL COACHES AND WFCAC'S SUPPORT HAVE BEEN CRITICAL FACTORS IN HONORING SO MANY DESERVING STUDENTS.**

FOR MORE INFO: CONTACT CHAPTER PRESIDENT, AL MINNAERT: 608-770-3433, E-MAIL: wisconsinfootballfoundation@gmail.com or visit our website: wisconsinfootballfoundation.org

DON'T BE A STATISTIC Player Safety – Pro3 Solutions Disinfect & Protect

Each year the CDC finds that 70% of all football players contract some form of infectious skin condition. As a coach, you have all had players with issues but most certainly have seen serious issues within every conference. Now with COVID being our new world, literally determining whether football can even be played, extra precautions are a must.

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High School, "Working with Pro3 has been a game changer! Since we have gone to Pro3, we have not had a single case of MRSA or any other health issues. Their customer service has been outstanding, and you can notice a big difference in the smell of the locker room." Working with **Pro3 Solutions**, gives you the opportunity to take the same precautions being utilized by **EVERY** NFL team and major college program in the country.

When we look back, we will be able to point to 2020 as the year that changed school and sports forever. The entire learning environment will be modified and with sports, how we interact with athletes will be significantly different and monitored more tightly than ever before. Football provides such important life lessons that we have the responsibility to create and provide the most positive experience to help prepare our youth for their future. **Pro3 Solutions** has the best answer to keep your players healthy so they can receive all the benefits this great game has to offer.

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BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST IN FREE-BLOCKING ZONE

For immediate Release from the National Federation of State High School Associations



INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 5, 2021) – The rule regarding blocking below the waist in the free-blocking zone in high school football has been revised for the upcoming 2021 season.

This rule change was recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Football Rules Committee at its January 10-12 meeting, which was held virtually this year. This change to the 2021 NFHS Football Rules Book was subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

As a result of numerous interpretations of current language regarding blocking below the waist in the free-blocking zone, the committee approved another condition in Rule 2-17-2 that must be met for a legal block below the waist in the free-blocking zone, which is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage.

The new requirement (2-17-2c) is that the block must be an immediate, initial action following the snap. Under the current rule, an offensive lineman can delay and then block below the waist if the ball is still in the zone. In the committee's ongoing quest to minimize risk in high school football, the change was approved to require the block to be immediate.

"This change makes it easier for game officials to judge the legality of blocks below the waist and minimizes risk of injury for participants," said Bob Colgate, NFHS director of sports and sports medicine and liaison to the Football Rules Committee. "This change lets

game officials observe the block and make a call without having to determine where the ball is and what formation the offense lined up in."

Blocking in the back continues to be legal in the free-blocking zone by offensive linemen who are on the line of scrimmage and in the zone at the snap, against defensive players who are in the zone at the snap and the contact is in the zone.

The committee noted there has been no criticism of the current rules governing blocks in the back as they are delayed blocks by nature, above the waist and considered to be a safe and necessary legal block.

"I believe this rule change will help make the interpretation of blocking below the waist consistent across the country starting next football season," said Richard McWhirter, chair of the NFHS Football Rules Committee and assistant executive director of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association.

The Football Rules Committee is composed of one representative from each of the NFHS member state associations that use NFHS playing rules, along with representatives from the NFHS Coaches Association, NFHS Officials Association and NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

A complete listing of the football rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Football."

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, 11-player football is the most popular high school sport for boys with 1,006,013 participants in 14,247 schools nationwide. In addition, there were 31,221 boys who participated in 6-, 8- and 9-player football, along with 2,604 girls in all four versions of the game for a grand total of 1,039,828.

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at: www.nfhs.org

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900

Director of Publications and Communications – NFHS

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900

Assistant Director of Publications and Communications – NFHS

Cody Porter, 317-972-6900

THANK YOU to all of you who so generously submitted articles for

— ***"The Point After II."*** —

If you do not see your article in this issue, please look for it in a future issue!

Articles may be emailed to the WFCFA office at office@wifca.org, or send paper copy to:

WFCFA, 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!



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CONDITIONING

FACILITY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

By: Joe Kenn MA, CSCS, RSCC*E, SCCC, MCCC, Vice President Performance Education, Dynamic Fitness & Strength



Joe Kenn

Good news! Administration has received funding for a new performance facility. You are tasked with taking the lead in facility design and development. Architects have given you facility dimensions and design discussions begin. Are you ready? Are you prepared to intelligently discuss design needs and desires that will successfully prepare athletes for achieving defined goals?

I have been fortunate to design two facilities in my career. The first was a new build for Arizona State University as the head football strength and conditioning coach in 2001. The facility design was a new build and highlighted in Sports Illustrated (August 12, 2002). It was deemed state-of-the-art and a “gleaming new temple of strength.” The second was for a renovation of an existing space at the NFL Carolina Panthers as strength and conditioning coach in 2011. Design elements were limited by stadium/architectural dimensions. Both designs required a thorough consideration of budget, dimensions/size, equipment wish lists, internal politics, team access, and consideration of new build or renovation.

New builds require early involvement to “politic” for the largest amount of space. Whether new build or renovation, dimensions have usually been finalized by administration, coaches, and—to some degree—boosters prior to your involvement. New builds are a strength coach’s dream. Renovations require more finesse and may include use of spaces that were previously designated as multipurpose/recreation rooms, previous team courts, or other reimagined spaces. There will be administrative decisions over which you have little control, but here are specific elements of facility design that need to be considered.

When I designed my first weight room, I thought it was all about the equipment and aesthetics. Boy, was I wrong. After thirty-one years in sports performance, I have learned many

things. Much comes from personal experience, but an equal amount comes from dialoguing with colleagues and professionals. Seek out experts and coaches who have expertise in the process. Below are *general* touch points that can be used regardless of your budget.

PRACTICAL DECISION MAKING

Structural Room Decisions and Layout

Space is premium and usually discussed as total square feet. Factors to consider include location. Is it on the ground floor or an elevated floor? If elevated, what is the load-bearing capacity? Will it need reinforcement? Are there limitations?

Structure of the space is another factor. Is it a rectangular space (my preference), or is it square, oval, triangular, or oddly-shaped? What elements in the space may reduce active usable work spaces such as pillars, archways, windows, doors and other features? You’ll also want to consider insulation properties regarding sound and motion.

What is the current division of space? Is there a main performance floor? Are there offices? Restrooms? Nutrition stations? Storage?

There are a seemingly endless number of options for how to configure your room. Some basic areas to consider would be your cardio area, multi-purpose stations with platform, dumbbell area, auxiliary area and prep/warm up area. Then there is the traditional room section featuring platform, squat area and bench press area.

Electrical, Lighting, Audio/Visual, Monitors

These go hand-in-hand with your room layout, but are decided after you have a finalized plan. You’ll need to think about outlet placement and be aware of where you will need special voltage outlets based on equipment.

Lighting is an often-underappreciated aspect of facility planning but is a key element to a tremendous facility. The right lighting can enhance mood and be put to specialized use. Extremely bright room/mood lighting will enhance energy levels. Another critical point to consider, however, is your floor layout. Make sure platforms and benches do not line up directly above a light. Lights directly in the eyes of someone who is benching could hinder their activity.

Installing TVs or video monitors in your facility offers ways to support and enhance your program or the lifters’ routines. Use video monitors to post programs, teach techniques, play specialized content, or just play motivational content. Visual enhancements like these aren’t only functional, but add a cool factor to your location.

As much or more influential to a weight room is the audio system. This is a key focal and

motivational point of emphasis for your athletes. A good sound system will bring the “JUICE!!!” Based on the room, acoustics and what your source for media will be, you will want to consider surround sound, wireless speakers and Wi-Fi capabilities. You’ll want to be sure to stay abreast of new developing technologies.

PRACTICAL COACHING DECISIONS

(The Fun Stuff...in order of importance)

Flooring

Everything starts from the ground up. Flooring is your first important decision. A strong, durable, and resilient floor is an important investment in facility design. Major touch points to decide on are type of Flooring Material, the thickness of floor (single versus multi-layered), tile or rolled, a field/artificial turf area, and either inlaid platform areas or above-ground traditional platforms.

When determining platforms, there are three important things to consider. First, how much useable floor space will be needed for movement activity? Second, will there be a time when you will renovate and redesign the room? Inlaid platforms will lock you in to a specific floor layout in the long term. Third, if choosing inlaid platforms, make sure to allow proper spacing between drop zone areas for safety.

Barbells

Barbells and specialty bars are the first tools to discuss. These are the backbone of your equipment list. Considerations should be based on your exercise pool and teaching capabilities. With power bars, knurling is a consideration. If using Olympic bars, you’ll want to consider needle bearing versus ball bearing. Will you need light training bars for youth and female athletes? There are also many specialty bars to consider: fat bars, trap bars and safety squat bars, to name a few. And, finally, when talking bars, collars are the obvious endpoint of discussion and offer a variety of styles.

Plates

Bumper plates are the most popular choice for training efficiency in high school, college and university settings. They come in a variety of styles that will range in cost. Materials include solid rubber and urethane. You will also want to ask if calibrated plates are important for your facility or program.

If including steel plates in your inventory, considerations include deep dish or machine-milled plates. Again, these can be calibrated or uncalibrated.

Dumbbells

Keep in mind, when adding dumbbell sets to your area, they will require both storage areas

FLEXIBILITY, HEALTH AND FORCE TRANSFER – BLUGOLD OFFENSIVE LINE DAILY DRILLS

By: Mike McHugh, Assistant Football Coach, UW-Eau Claire



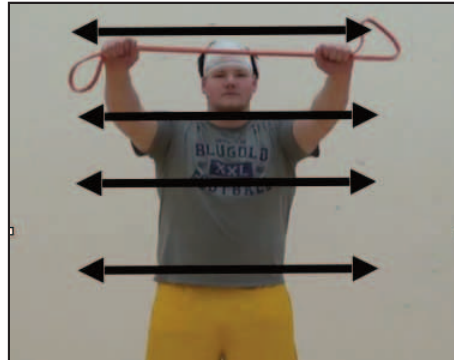
Mike McHugh

Coaching an offensive line athlete is different than coaching any other position. I believe the combination of force transfer, technique, and movement efficiency matter more with this group than any other. Performance requires a different physical skillset than other positions, therefore the offensive line cannot be lumped in with cookie-cutter drills and agility work. Warm-ups can (should) be handled differently because of the different anatomical stresses put on the big skill as opposed to other positions. Drills should focus more on building muscle memory and proper technique *first* as opposed to jumping right out on the field and running through plays.

What I am going to share with you are a few 'daily' warm-up and technical drills I do with my offensive line. The warm-up drills help to build flexibility and promote health of the stress areas unique to offensive line play while the technical drills aim to build said muscle memory involved with maximum force generation and transfer from stance into the block. Overall, these are a few easy things you can incorporate to help in the development (physical and technical) of your offensive line regardless of scheme.

Shoulder Box (Warm-Up) – the shoulder box drill is a controlled movement that focuses on your shoulder stabilizers and upper back while also working your lats. The band selected by the athlete should be a resistance that they can complete 12 reps at each of the following levels (Fig. 1 and 2) with control. When in the starting position (Fig. 1), hands should be at or slightly inside of shoulder width and the band should have no slack. The athlete should explosively pull the band apart (Fig. 2) and, with deliberate control, allow the tension to pull you back to the starting position for one rep.

Medicine Ball Squeeze (Warm-Up) – The medicine ball squeeze is meant to help warm-up the muscle associated with hip adduction or movement of the femur in towards the midline. These muscles are essential to offensive line play



and are usually not thoroughly focused on during a dynamic warm-up. In the drill, I look for the OL to have a 45 degree knee bend with a shoulder-width base and their weight on the insteps (Fig. 4). With a rigid core, they will "walk" for ten yards before letting the ball drop (Fig. 3). We will repeat this twice. Steps will obviously be small so that constant force can be put on the ball while activating stabilizers. If the athlete is not strong enough to perform the drill or the medicine balls being used do not have give, I will have the athlete squeeze his knees as tightly to the ball for 3 seconds x 10 reps.



Banded Walk & Shuffle (Warm-Up) – this drill is meant to actively work the muscles involved with hip abduction, or movement of the femur away from the midline, while passively working those used for adduction.

The athlete will 'figure 8' the band around the outside of his feet and hands (Fig. 5) while

maintaining a rigid core, tight elbows in relation to the torso, and a big chest (Fig. 6). We will do 2 sets of 12 reps in each lateral direction. The athlete will take an explosive, lateral, 12-inch step with his lead foot. With deliberate control, he will then allow the tension of the band to bring his foot away from the direction of travel back into his starting base. Maintenance of posture, bend in the knee, and foot-strike through the instep are encouraged. These aspects of posture and foot-strike will carry over into later technical drills.



Six Point Extension (Technique) – efficiency in force transfer is key to offensive line play. This drill focuses on the proper posture needed to transfer explosive lower body power through your torso and into the defender to obtain movement through the neutral zone.

The athlete will begin on the ground with knee slightly wider than shoulder-width, toes in the ground with hands under his chin. Glutes should not be resting on the calves and there should be a tension through the coiled lower body (Fig. 7). On the cue, the lineman will violently thrust his hips forward and throw his 'punch' at the defender (Fig. 8). There should be no hitch in the punch. On hand contact, I am looking for thumbs pointed to at least noon if not further out. This is because the further you supinate your hand forcing thumbs away from your body, the stronger and more stable you become. The lats should be flexed to force elbows down and into the body. I coach the lineman to have his chin up and into the defender to 'bull' the neck. Another point of emphasis is a rigid, flexed core throughout the movement so that lower body force does not dissipate when transferred through the torso. In short, the athlete wants to form an arrow with his body pointing from where the force is being generated through the contact point on the defender. The straighter the arrow, the more efficient the force transfer. This is a base-level technique drill that will serve as a muscle-memory foundation for our progression into the fit position and movement from a stance.



Fit and Drive (Technique) – there are two variations of this drill, both of which reiterate the coaching points from the Six-Point Extension and build from that foundation. The coaching points of ‘rigid core’, ‘thumbs to noon’, and ‘chin into the block’ carry over in each variation. In the first variation (use of medicine ball), the athlete will fit his hands on the side-wall of the ball and keep everything else out of contact. In the lower body, we are looking for ‘Power

Angles” or angles of at least 45 degree at our hip, knee, and ankle. My primary coaching point here is to maintain “positive shin angle” by keeping the kneecap out over your toe to avoid a neutral knee (Fig. 9).

From the back profile, I want to see an inverted triangle from the waist down with the knee



inside the insteps and hips inside the knee. All weight should be going through the insteps or inside half of your foot. On the cue, the athlete will drive off

using short, powerful steps to fight against the defender’s resistance. As a coach, I evaluate to see if there is a ‘break in the chain’ such as a narrowing of the base, elbows flaring out, hunch in the back due to loose core, etc. I focus to make sure that the face and chest stay out of the block in order to over-emphasize rigidity and stabilization throughout the body, tools essential for force transfer.

In the second variation of the drill, I eliminate the medicine ball and have the athlete latch

on to the defender’s ‘steering wheel’ while the defender gets the back of his hand on the inside of the offensive player’s forearm. The drill goes the same, but as the drive occurs the defender will push out with the top of his hands in order to make the offensive lineman’s elbows to flare



out (Fig. 10). This reinforces the muscle-memory of tension in the pectorals and lats while driving a defender to make sure the elbows

stay inside the framework and line with the direction of force being applied.

Kneeling First Step (Technique) – In this drill, the “Power Angles” in the lower body and overall posture will be reinforced as we try to efficiently transfer force while getting out of our stance and into our first step. The aspect of driving with the leg away from movement (backside) and catching with the leg in the direction of movement (frontside) will be introduced.

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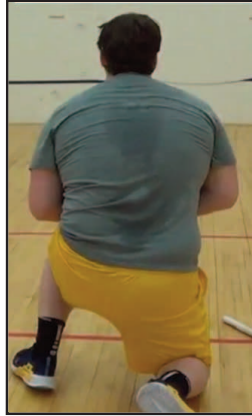
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The athlete will start kneeling on his frontside knee with his backside foot in the ground (Fig. 11). We are again looking for 'Power Angles', a positive shin angle, completion of the lower body triangle, and weight on the instep of the backside foot (Fig. 11 & 12).

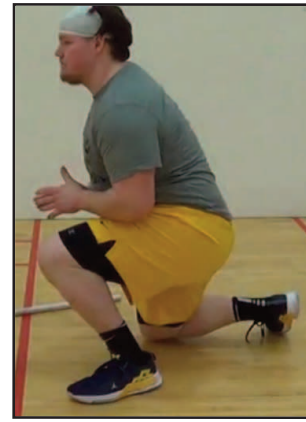
On the cue, the lineman will drive off his backside foot and look to step over a marker (PVC pipe in this case) 8 to 10 inches in front of their frontside knee. The location of this marker can change as you emphasize different angles of attack. A rigid core needs to be maintained and direction of force into the ground from the backside foot should be such so that the lineman explodes out of the starting position low and flat. As is talked about by plenty of OL instructors, the force (magnitude and direction) put into the ground will be equal and opposite to the force with which the athlete moves. In other words, if the force off the backside foot is straight into the ground, the athlete will explode straight up. Here, I coach the athlete on transferring force into the ground at an angle that allows him to gain ground (vertical, lateral, whichever) off the football while maintaining a low profile. Completing this exercise from a kneeling position exaggerates the magnitude of the force needed and

strains core stability as well as tri-joint explosion more than coming from a stance would. If your athlete is not strong enough to complete this movement from the kneeling position without the aid of a large upper body hitch, you can emphasize the same points coming from a stance and taking a single step.

I will also coach how the frontside foot strikes the ground, or the catch. When foot-strike occurs, the profile of the frontside leg should



look similar to how the backside foot was in the ground as the start of the drill; knee inside the instep with a positive shin angle and weight on the instep of the foot. The lineman will be driving off his frontside foot as he gets into his second step, so the same coaching points emphasized in the positioning of the backside leg carry over as the frontside leg becomes with driver for the



second step after catching itself on the completion of the first step sequence.

While none of these drills are exceptionally unique, I have found huge benefits in incorporating them into our

daily schedule. Since implementation, I have seen a large decrease in soft tissue injuries from wear and tear while also seeing an increase in the efficiency of force transfer. When my men see the weight room strength show up on the field (a direct product of the technical drills), it does wonders for their confidence and speed of play. All schemes are different and may require a different toolbox from the offensive lineman, but I believe these six drills can be used to benefit your offensive line flexibility, healthy, and force transfer regardless of scheme.

SPECIAL TEAMS

SPECIAL TEAMS – 1/3 OF TODAY'S GAME GETS OVERLOOKED

By: Chris Clerkin, Special Teams Coordinator, Richland Center High School



Chris Clerkin

I want to start by thanking the WFCa for the opportunity to share my thoughts on special teams play. All too often, coaches feel the pressure of installing entire offensive and defensive systems leading up to the first game of the season and struggle to dedicate time towards special teams play. Unfortunately, this typically doesn't improve during the regular season either. Any focus on special teams is often relegated to the end of practice or in the final days before a game. Furthermore, for some coaches special teams present an opportunity to get non-starters or those players who are new to the sport on the field in some capacity. To be honest, I was one of those coaches

at one time too. As I have progressed in my coaching career I have changed my thoughts on that. To be competitive throughout all four quarters, special teams needs to be prioritized as an essential component of a team's game plan. Special teams need to be part of the daily schedule and, in my opinion, should be populated by some of the team's best athletes. The momentum of a game can suddenly shift with a dynamic special teams play.

When I think back to my high school career, I had a great coach who approached special teams with more importance than other programs may have. He would put many of our best athletes in positions to best utilize their talents to create opportunities to better our offense and defense. My coach at Dodgeville High School, Mike Beranek, often said that special teams is just as important as offense and defense. "If you take a kickoff or punt return for a touchdown, you have just changed the tempo of the game." That's the mentality that I get my players to understand. His impact really inspired the level of commitment I want our young men to have when it comes to special teams. When I became the special teams coordinator at Richland Center High School in the fall of 2019, I immediately knew I needed to change the mentality of our players and coaches when it came to this part of our game. Prior to this season, special teams segments were primarily a time for rest or to men-

tally check out for players and members of the coaching staff. With the arrival of our new head coach, Andrew Troxel, we shuffled positions around and made special teams a larger priority than it had been. He brought in a new sense of energy to this program and greater empowerment to our coaching staff. I used this opportunity to create a system that utilized the entire staff to help coach special teams.

With all of the formations and schemes I install every week, it is rather difficult to coach all of my players by myself. Don't be afraid to ask for help. With any great coaching staff, they will be eager to help to make the TEAM better. Before the beginning of the season I will delegate positional responsibilities to each coach on the staff but will still be overseeing every aspect of how things are run. Make it somewhat relatable to the individual positions they coach. I use our RB and WRs coaches for my returners and gunners. They are teaching vision, finding running lanes and getting leverage on defenders. Our O-line coach takes responsibilities on blocking for field goals and punts. Our offensive coordinator and QB coach will take responsibilities on 2-point plays. Use the strengths you have in your fellow coaches to build your special teams.

As a staff we discussed all aspects of our program, we came to the conclusion that our special teams needed quickness and toughness.

With the different formations and assignments I wanted to implement, we needed the best athletes on the field. We also made sure special teams segments in practice would no longer be used as a break. Whether it is in group work or individual work, every player will have something to do. Kickers and long snappers can work on quick sets with little time to kick the ball. If it's a Wednesday specials period (punt/return) I will have the edge rushers work on blocking the kick. Using tackle rings or some large pad, they will sacrifice their bodies to replicate a block. The pads will ultimately soften the land to keep our players healthier. Another drill I would absolutely incorporate into your specials periods is "compression tackling." This would be run on Tuesdays specials period and this will work two to three players in tandem to force the runner into a funnel to make a tackle. There are a lot of great drills that you can run to improve all aspects of special teams. Always keep your players interested and wanting to learn.

We structure our week to ensure that special teams are a priority each day. Furthermore, they are often the first thing we do after warming up. Monday is generally film day and we set up our plan for the week with the players. After dissecting film on the opponent, I will have my main points of interest presented to the players. What does their kick return look like? How do they set up punt returns or what special formations they

presented on field goals? I try to find any specific detail on how they run their specials to help our players get in the best position possible. On Tuesday we work on Kickoff/return. We typically use Wednesday to focus on punt/return. Lastly, Thursday is dedicated to field goal/field goal block. Since I generally don't use linemen in my kickoff/return, our O-line coach will take the linemen and work on individual drills during that period. If JV is not needed for scouting that day, they will be having their own time running plays or drills together. We want to be as efficient as possible with our schedule and allocate more time to position and JV coaches to improve elements of their play.

When I set up my special teams depth chart, I'm looking for those players who are smart, quick and have a little chip on their shoulder. I really try to create a sub-culture when it comes to special teams play. These young men know exactly the type of player I'm looking for when it comes to this part of the game. I understand some schools do not have a large number of players in their program and it can be difficult to find those players. However, this culture can be built regardless of a program's numbers with a greater priority placed on daily structure and a clear division of labor among the coaching staff.

My final thought for you is this, create an environment where your players are willing to give you 100%. Impress upon your athletes that

they can make **THE** play that can immediately change the tempo of the game. Create a philosophy that they can feed off of. Our philosophy last year was "One Chance." You only have one play to impact the game. Create that impact. Players will buy-in once you believe that special teams are a key element to your team's success on the field. Once you find importance in all aspects of this game and can transfer that down to your players, great things can happen. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at my email, chrisclerkin@gmail.com.

**"The spirit, the will to win
and the will
to excel –these are
the things that endure."**

— Vince Lombardi

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mbudzisz@carrollu.edu
(262) 650-4880



KICKING OPTIONS WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE THE ENDZONE

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



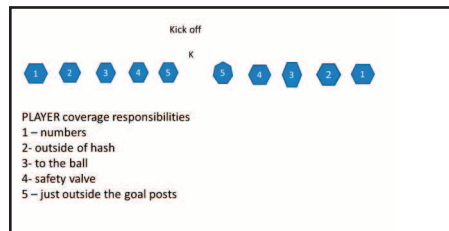
Patrick Wagner

What are your options when you don't have a kicker who can put the ball into the endzone. Patrick Wagner, Head Football Coach, Milwaukee Riverside University High School

We haven't had a kicker who can consistently put the ball into the endzone in 20 years. About 18 years ago we decided to squib kick it every time. We do have a set of rules we follow for this. We have recovered 7 kickoffs a year on average over the last 10 years. Opposing coaches do get upset at me because they think I'm onside kicking but I'm really not. I view kick off as an opportunity for us to get the ball. So I would rather give us an opportunity to pick up a loose fumble than just kick the ball down the field.

We do have a kicking coach who is awesome. However, we have never had the talent at kicker to put the ball deep so we don't.

We start with this line up.



Implementation

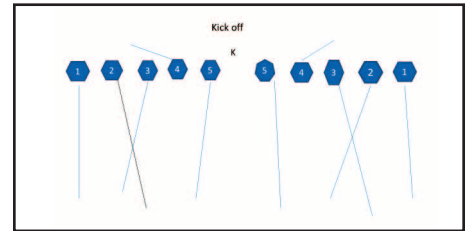
1. We do have our kicker work on kicking to spots in an end over end kick. We are trying to not put the ball into the air. We set up garbage cans on spots on the field that the kicker is aiming at.
2. The kicker will spend 10-20 minutes a day on this skill. We will spend 2 days a week as a full team for about 10 minutes each time.
3. We do work on picking up ground balls every day in our fundamental circuit. Everyone on our team participates in this. We teach fall on the ball and scoop and score. However on kick off we teach fall on the ball.

Game Time

1. During kick off, we signal in where we want the ball. The whole teams passes down the call.
2. The execution will look like this:
If we do this correctly it will be two waves of players. A wave of ei and a wave of 3

Keys

1. The coverage team needs to be area responsible and stay in their area. Football's do not bounce in a way that is a true straight line



so guys need to be ready for the ball to bounce into their area. Especially with high school kickers who are not always the most consistent. We will squeeze the ball with the closest shoulder to the ball.

2. The back side of the call will slide to the play side call. We still cover the back side in case of a bad kick.
3. We are aiming for the 20 yard line. If we do this correctly most teams will just fall on the ball.

Honesty

1. We will have a kicker who will make a mistake and pop it up and we have given up an occasional big return on it. Sometimes the kicker misses and the ball will go to the 40. This is a risk you have to be ok with.
2. It has resulted in some big plays for us. Right after a score and we squib it correctly and get the ball back is a huge moment.
3. I do it all the time, so if you play me it's coming.
4. If I do have a kid who can put the ball in the endzone I will tell him to kick the ball as hard as he can. If he can get the ball down in the area inside the 10 and make the return guys chase a ball on the ground the better.

DEFENSE

TRAINING THE EDGE RUSH

By: Jake Schiff, Defensive Line Coach, UW-Stout



Jake Schiff

This is a simple drill to train edge rushers on how to attack an Offensive Lineman. The

Offensive Lineman will give the Defensive player three different looks. The Coach can give the Offensive Lineman any of the three options or he can allow the Offensive Lineman his choice on which look to give.

Drill setup:

- Start on the sideline with the Defensive player set on one of the 5 or 10-yard line markers. The Defensive player should start out of bounds and can use the sideline as the line of scrimmage
- Place an Offensive Lineman one yard inside of the Defensive player. Set the Offensive players outside foot at the top of the sideline hash mark.
- Set a cone at four yards depth behind the Offensive Lineman's outside foot. This will be the set point that the Offensive Lineman is

working back to.

- If desired, add a towel or something to pick up when training the speed option of this drill.

On movement key, the Offensive Lineman has one of three options:

- 1) Kick slide back to the cone
- 2) Turn and retreat to the cone
- 3) Jump set out to Defensive player

Based on which option the Offensive Lineman chooses will determine how the Defensive player reacts:

Option one - Kick Slide: If the Offensive Lineman chooses to kick slide back to the cone, the Defensive player must win with speed. This option forces the Defensive player to focus on speed and a great get off. The goal of the Defensive player is to beat the Offensive Lineman

to the cone and then bend and win with speed to the Quarterback. Threatening the Offensive Lineman with speed and getting beat around the edge, sets up all the other moves and counters that come into play when rushing the passer. Do Not allow the Defensive player to continue a vertical path once they get to the cone. Make them bend the corner and stay on a path that will take them to the Quarterback.

Option two – Turn and Retreat: If the Offensive Lineman turns and retreats to the cone, the Defensive player must win with power. For this option, the Offensive Lineman should turn and drop to the cone while turning his shoulders to

the Defensive player. The weight of the Offensive Lineman will be back and thus allowing the Defensive player to win with power on his path to the Quarterback. Both players should intersect at the cone. This is where a speed bull rush or stab are two great moves to take the Offensive player back into the Quarterback. One thing you can tell the Defensive player is “If his shoulders are to the side, take him for a ride!”

Option three – Jump Set: If the Offensive Lineman chooses the Jump Set, the Defensive player needs to counter and win inside. This is where starting on the 5 or 10-yd line markers comes into play. We want to give the Defensive

player a visual key of when to win inside. For this drill, we want the Offensive Lineman to cross the 5 or 10-yard line marker. When the Defensive player sees the Offensive Lineman cross that line marker, he needs to stick his outside foot and win inside on a path to the Quarterback. A rip or a wipe are two great moves to keep the Offensive Lineman’s hands off when winning with an inside move.

Here at UW-Stout, we use this Edge Rush drill every week as well as in our pre-game warmups. In closing, I would like to thank the WFCA for allowing me to share some insight and wish you all best of luck in your upcoming season.



Contact the WFCA office at:

Phone: 608-635-7318

Email: office@wifca.org

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3-HIGH SAFETY DEFENSE

By: Jon Petkoff, Safeties Coach, Ripon College



Jon Petkoff

I would like to thank the WFCAs for the opportunity to share an article on the topic of our 3-High Safety Defense, specifically what we do at Ripon College. I would also like to thank Head Coach, Ron Ernst for the opportunity to help coach with his 3-3-5 defense. 3-High Defense

Our defense at Ripon College is an odd front defense that utilizes multiple fronts and coverages that are basic, flexible and capable of attacking any offense that we encounter. One new type of defense we have added to our V repertoire is the 3-High Safety look. With our base coverage being Cover 3, most teams believe that with the 3-high look, this is the only coverage we can run. What we have found is that this defense gives a significant amount of flexibility in running multiple coverages. It allows us to disguise what we are doing, while giving the offense the idea that we are playing a blanket coverage.

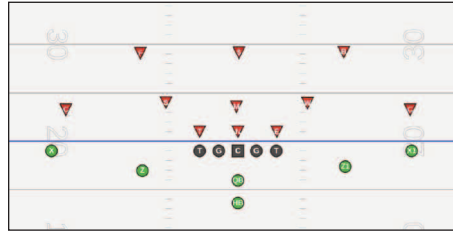
Alignment

In the 3-High defense, all of the fronts remain the same as our traditional defense. Our base is when the tackle and end are in a 5-technique and the nose in a 0-technique. We run this in the 3-High and the traditional. Nothing really changes. We will still stunt and blitz, but again the overall defense remains the same.

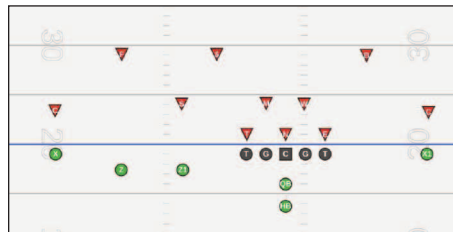
Depending on the formation, the linebackers alignment will sometimes change. If the offense comes out in a 2x2 formation with both #2 receivers displaced, the Sam and Will linebacker will apex the WR to the tackle. If the offense has a TE, the LB to that side, will come down 1x1 off of him. The Mike linebacker will remain the same throughout, aligning over the nose at a depth of five yards. In the secondary, the corners align at a depth of 5-7 yards, head up on the #1 receiver. Regardless of the coverage or the front, in the 3-High defense, the corners remain the same. Our defense changes the most with the safeties. In our base defense, our Spur (\$) is 3x1 off of the #2 receiver and our FS and Bandit (B) are in a 2-High Shell at a depth of 10 yards, starting on the hash. In the 3-High Defense, we put our \$ in the middle of the defense

at a depth of 10 yards. When I say the \$ lines up in the middle, typically he will align directly over the ball. Our FS aligns to the field, at a depth of 10 yards and directly over the #2 receiver. The B aligns to boundary, at a depth of 10 yards and directly over the #2 receiver. If the offense comes out in a trips formation, the safety to the trips side will cut his depth to seven yards lining up over the #2 receiver. The \$ will then move over to apex the tackle to the #3 receiver. The LB to that side will also align head up on the #3 receiver.

3-High Alignment: 2x2



3-High Alignment: 3x1



Assignment

Our defense is predicated on being assignment sound in order to ensure their success. Our fronts typically remain the same throughout our 3-High defense. Many of our assignments are interchangeable assuming that the players communicate with each other.

We typically face 2x2 offensive formations. Therefore, our Sam and Will will have the B gap as their main responsibility, while the tackle and end have the C gap. In the 3-high, and the 2x2 offensive formation, the Sam and Will are pulled out of their typical alignment. They will then give a call to both the tackle and defensive end, switching responsibilities. The tackle and end then become responsible for the B gap and the LB is responsible for the C gap. The corners/outside safeties are responsible for the D gap depending on the coverage call. The one player who doesn't have a typical responsibility is the \$ who becomes a bonus player for us. He will fill inside/out with the flow of the ball.

Coverages

The 3-High defense allows us to disguise many different coverages that we have found very successful. We base our coverages like everyone else, on down and distance. Some of the coverages we use are Cover 1, Cover 2, and Cover 3.

Cover 1: The corners remain locked up on the #1 receiver. The outside safeties will lock up

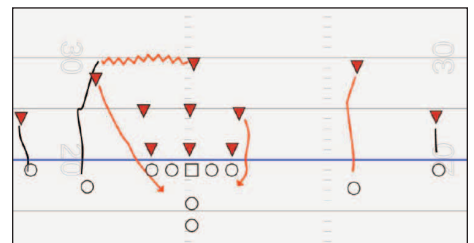
the #2 receiver. The \$ will take the middle zone helping on any middle or post routes. The Sam and Will will take the back out to their side. If no back releases, they will become hook/curl/flat defenders. The Mike will be in the low hole.

Cover 2: The corners will be the flat defenders, carrying #1 until threatened. The outside safeties are the deep half defenders. They remain on the hash if we are in our traditional Cover 2. If we are in a Tampa Cover 2, they will widen to the top of the numbers. The \$ will drop down to the low hole to the field. The Mike will push to the low hole to the boundary side. The Sam and Will will be the hook/curl defenders. If we are in Tampa 2, the \$ will flat foot read becoming level two to three defender.

Cover 3: Depending on the Cover 3 we are in, the corners will have either the flat or the deep third. This also applies to the outside safeties. We allow the corner and the safety to their side, to communicate as to who has what responsibility. The Sam and Will remain hook/curl defenders, while the Mike is the low hole defender. The \$ is the middle third defender.

Blitzes

Since we are a blitzing team, all of our blitzes remain the same in the 3-High defense. In years past, we have had great blitzing safeties so this type of defense allows our safeties to really time up their blitzes from depth. One of our more successful blitzes is bringing our B and Sam linebacker at the same time. Again, our safety will time his blitz from depth and our Sam linebacker will have a good angle coming off the edge. With this blitz, we will be in man coverage. Corners will lock up the #1 receivers. The FS will take #2 to field. Depending on the type of Will backer we have, we typically have the \$ take the #2 receiver to the boundary. This will allow the Mike and Will to take the back out while still having someone take the QB. Like I said, we have a significant amount of blitzes that we run out of the 3-High Defense.



I hope this article provides an accurate representation of how we as coaches at Ripon College coach our 3-High Safety scheme. I greatly appreciate the opportunity, and would be more than happy to further discuss any questions or comments in regards to our defense. Reach me via email at petkoffj@ripon.edu.

LINEBACKER DRILLS

By: Dean Smerchek, Assistant Football Coach, Luxemburg-Casco High School

In developing Linebacker drills at Luxemburg-Casco, we focused on the fact that a linebacker is asked to do a variety of tasks depending on the offensive play. The LB needs to be moving immediately at the snap to be in the best position to take on the blocker, drop into pass coverage, or make a tackle. So training the body to react to what the eyes see puts them in a better position to be successful on that play.

Read and Recognition Drill

Start basic, have the LB follow the footsteps of the offensive read person

A LB has run first responsibility so first steps need to be forward or lateral and focusing on staying in a proper LB stance at all times keeping the hips parallel to the line of scrimmage as long as possible. Our LB's movements are fast flow laterally or forward, lateral shuffle step and fill, or drop into pass coverage. So these need to be repeated constantly. We may change our read person weekly and it is important that the offensive read person in the drill gives us a good look (example) to mirror what the LB will see in the game. As your LB gets more advanced they can

rep zone reading where they are reading 2 or more players in a zone, focusing on a spot in the center of that zone

Shock and Shed Drill

Taking on a larger offensive lineman is an often occurrence for a LB.

Use a 1-man padded sled at first. Approach the sled hips low, shock with both hands bringing power from the hips, then rip thru with opposite arm. (if shedding off to your right rip thru with the left arm and left foot first).

Points to remember in this drill:

- Hips low for power
- Take on only ½ of the blocker. 1 hand shock to the chest (or center of the pad) and the other hand shock the outside shoulder pad.
- Feet work needs to be smaller/ quicker steps to maintain balance and power.
- Advance the drill to take on a live blocker to get lateral movement in the drill.

Eventually can be joined to the read and recognition drill. We refer to this as ISO drill, read the 2 guards get over the top of you approaching guard, shock and shed the outside half of the man

Pass Drops

It is difficult to simulate pass coverage for a LB in a drill so for this skill we use a wave drill. The LB starts in a good stance, first step is always forward then by voice and /or visual commands they move and change direction thru out the duration of the drill. Focusing on lateral shuffle, crossover run, back peddle, and driving forward.

Tackling

There are a variety of tackling drills and all of them should be drilled by the LB since they will be used in many situations during a game. My focus is on angle tackling:

- Place the RB at 3 yards and the LB at 5 yards from the line of scrimmage
- The RB runs straight thru the cones (about 2 yards apart) and then makes 1 cut.
- The LB rapidly closes the gap then breaks down (shimmies the feet) within a yard of the RB, focusing on the hips and below of the RB so he can react to the cut.
- Then explode thru the hips of the RB, face-mask up and using the shoulder to make contact, wrapping the arms around and grabbing cloth incase they slip off.

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INSIDE LINEBACKER READ PROGRESSION

By: Craig Stenbroten, Defensive Coordinator, UW-Oshkosh,



Craig Stenbroten

I want to start off by thanking the WFCOA for allowing me to write this article. *The Point After II* has been a huge resource for me in my coaching career. Hopefully you can take something away from this article and find useful for your own program.

For my entire coaching career, I have worked with both the inside and outside linebackers. The biggest question I am asked is what do your guys read. I always answer trying not to paint myself in a corner. Coach Cerroni always tells our LBs in meetings “We will read the QB’s mom in the stands if it takes us to the ball.” Easy to say harder to do and to teach. Over the years we have come up with a system that allows our younger player to focus on simple reads. We have worked hard to make sure this system doesn’t limit our older players from reaching their full potential.

I remember as a young coach during a game we had an ILB making play after play. In the 3rd quarter I finally asked, “What are you reading.” He gave me a puzzled look and said, “Coach I honestly can’t tell you I’m just feeling it right now.” It hit me like a ton of bricks for that player it didn’t really matter what he read, he was a natural LB and he was reading whatever took him to the ball not necessarily what I told him to read. That’s great but what happens if your LB isn’t a natural what do you do then? Over the next couple of seasons, we began to take major steps in teaching all your LBs to start reading with confidence.

Stance and Start Drill

In 2012 we stopped coaching the traditional stance drill. We no longer had LBs line up on the goal line and a coach say stance and walk around looking at the stance. We found it was more important to get out of the stance then it was for the stance to look good. We wanted a visual key so that the LBs’ vision had to communicate to their body how to get out of their stance and where to go. Our LBs take a 3-inch lateral trigger step out of their stance to let their mind process where to go. All our stance and start drills include reads for the LB.



This picture is a screen shot of your stance and start drill. #50 is a guard #51 is a tackle #47 has his trigger step in the air and as soon the OL split and give the LB a window he will “Plug the gap.” In this drill we

are not trying to confuse the LBs we are trying to create muscle memory and get them out of stance and into a start properly. So, we will only focus on one block reaction at a time and they know what is coming. You can give the LB different looks like pulls and veer blocks, but they always know what blocks they will get a head of time. We never just get into a stance and then stand up; we need something to get us out of that stance.

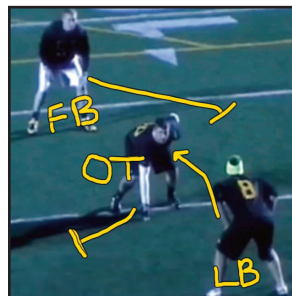
1-Man Reads



We start by just reading the OL man across from the LB. We have also done this

to teach TB reads as well, but in this example, we are using an O-lineman. A down block triggers a reaction we call a “Fit” and we stay tight to the OL down block. An out block triggers a “Plug.” A Pull triggers a “Flow”. So now we will work on those different reactions only reading the OL man across from us. The agile back beyond the LB helps eliminate false steps.

2-Man Reads

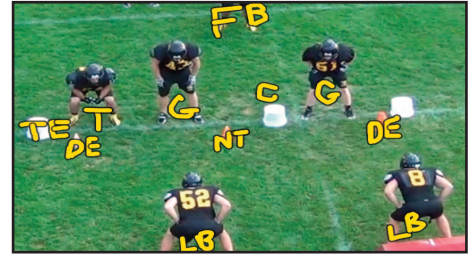


Now we add a FB into the look and add what a full back will do to the blocking scheme. We use the same reactions as one man reads, but just add the fullback. All

the words we use stay the same reactions (Plug, Fit, Flow.) We are trying to expand the vision of the backer. LB coaches always say we read Guard to FB this is how we teach it.

Read Starts

We do this drill every day. It is basically a miniature fit drill for the LBs the buckets are the OL men we are not reading for the week. The cones are DL men the bags help with false steps.



A coach stands behind the LBs and holds up a number we run the teams top 3 run plays for example power, outside zone, counter. We try to run three plays in 12 seconds and make this as high impact as we can. We want them to make mistakes on reads in this drill and not when we go to the inside with the rest of the defense, or during games. Over the years running this drill we added in the entire look. What we have found is sometimes guys turn into true TB read players while others will utilize the OL. We don’t care what they read we just want to put them in position to make plays.

We have found over the years that this progression of read drills can help LBs see what we need them to read. We have slowly gone to what we are calling “sight line reads.” We focus on putting the LB in the proper alignment like a 50 or a 30 and having them read the picture they see across from them. This has helped our guys adjust week-to-week based on the style of offense we are seeing.

Once again, I want to thank the WFCOA and UW-Oshkosh for allowing me to write this article. LB play is a true passion of mine and if you want to talk more just email me at stenbc32@uwosh.edu.

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THANK YOU!

2-2-4 DEFENSE – MULTIPLICITY THROUGH SIMPLICITY

By: Cory Quail, Defensive Coordinator, Northern Iowa High School

I've definitely spent my time in this same place as you. We've all been through countless articles, books, and DVD's to help improve our knowledge as coaches. Some really blow us away and some just don't fit what we're looking for. As I go through each resource, I apply the rule that I have to learn at least one piece of new information to make our program better. My goal is not to persuade you to switch to my defense or change what the philosophies are in your program. My goal is to provide at least one bit of information you can take away from this article and use to help improve your program. Especially for those making the switch to 8-man football.

Going into the 2012 season our school chose to make the change from 11-player to the 8-player game. This transition was the best possible outcome for our program. There was a bit of concern at the beginning of the process though. The 8-player game presents many new challenges. On defense, the numbers game doesn't always swing in your favor, there are many open spots on the field to cover, and not much distance to go for a touchdown. Thus, came three questions to be answered: what front to run, what players to run it with, and how not to confuse our players in this transition?

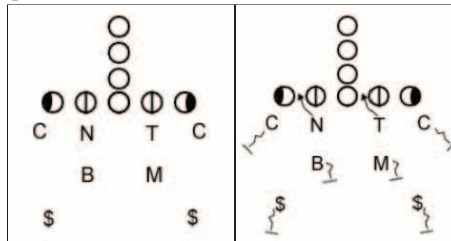
We studied many options. We liked the aggressive 3-4, but felt the techniques didn't fit

our skill sets. The 4-4 was a topic of discussion, but didn't like the edge philosophies of the defensive ends. The ever popular 3-3 was a close runner up, but didn't help us personnel wise when trading with the offense. Each front was a considered option, but didn't leave us feeling fully confident in our transition.

We finally stumbled on the 2-2-4 defense...

The 2-2-4 Defense

The 2-2-4 is a compressed version of the 4-2-5, 11-man defense we had success with in years past. We removed 2 linemen and 1 defensive



back from the scheme to fit the 8-man game. This allowed us to keep the same alignments and assignments with few new teaching points. Its biggest plus is the ability to blitz into any of the previous mentioned formations with ease giving us multiplicity. Here are the major pros and cons we found in the 2-2-4 defense:

Pros –

- We can stunt into any set while relying on fewer techniques to teach. (*Multiplicity thru Simplicity*).
- Position players use the same coaching points with front and backside keys.
- The alignment to all formations stays simple and keeps terminology low

Cons –

- Over pursuit can be a problem if not drilled efficiently.
- Must have a specific type of athlete at the defensive line position.

In my opinion, the pros far outweighed the cons. Next, we incorporated our four core philosophies to mold the system around:

1. Key –

We must know our key on every play. Alignment, Assignment, ATTACK!

2. Pursuit –

Most important term. 8 to the ball with harnessed aggression!

3. Tackle –

Drill, Drill, Drill! Pursuit is tackling's best friend.

4. Turnover –

Wrap, Rip, and Recover! In coverage, become the receiver!





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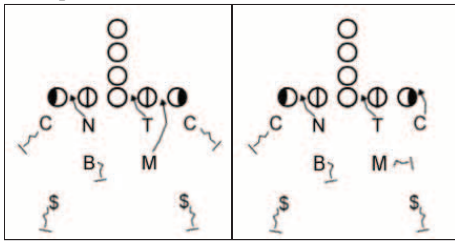
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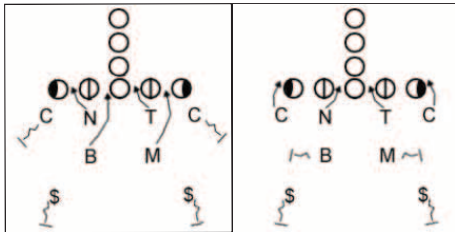


Stunt Package – Next, we built our stunt package incorporating the four philosophies and multiple package options. Here are a few examples:



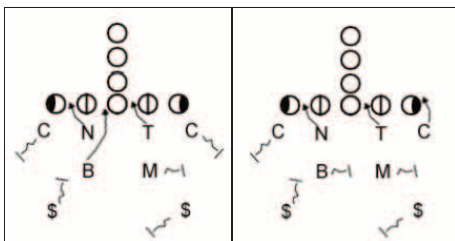
Blitz 1 into the 3-3

Blitz 2 into 3-3



Blitz 1 into the 4-4

Blitz 2 into 4-4



Blitz 1 into the 3-4

Blitz 2 into 3-4

Then we checked if we answered our questions...

1. *What front to run?*

We definitely felt the 2-2-4 ended up being the correct choice for our program. It is a fun system that kept us from being predictable. Our adjustments are simple and the terminology is minimal. The place I most enjoyed this front was on the goal line. Teams had a tough time finding open spots with the numbers balance and short field. We finished #2 in the state in scoring defense and #1 in shut outs for class 8-player.

2. *What players to use?*

There's no trick to it. Defenses are successful because of players. We succeed when we train student athletes year round in the weight room. I had some terrific players to run this defense with. Never were we the fastest team, but we were smart and played fundamentally well. I am wholeheartedly proud of our players and their willingness to "put in the time!"

This defense requires specific skills to be developed with those players. You will perform better with quick, tough athletes at the N/T heads up positions. Size is not a factor at this spot, aggressiveness is! You must drill the heck out of front and backside flow with your M/B. Your C/S need to handle the edge uniquely to succeed versus run, pass,

and in blitz. These are not easy assignments and it takes very specific techniques drilled over and over.

3. *How not to confuse the players?*

We started with something we already knew and molded it to fit the new game. We didn't have to change any vocabulary or teach new techniques. The players could play aggressive without having to over think assignments. We tend to see the new, cool thing in football and think how great it would be to run with our players. This can be a big mistake. Always go with what you know!

I know this is a small amount of information for an entire defense. There is a lot to know about drills, stunts, blitzes, and formation shifts. I could go on for pages about the dynamics of our coverage scheme alone. Hopefully, I was still able to accomplish my goal of giving you one good bit of information to use with your program.

If you have any questions about the 2-2-4 defense, please do not hesitate to contact me with the information below. I truly am thankful to be a part of this profession. Coaching is a great position that positively impacts so many lives. I love sharing information with other coaches and am willing to elaborate on any aspect of our defense. Email: cquail88@gmail.com, Phone: 641-430-6604

A BIG Thank You to the Iowa Football Coaches Association!

BLUE DEVIL DEFENSIVE BACK DAILY MUSTS

By: Jed Schlegel, Defensive Backs Coach, UW-Stout



Jed Schlegel

There are four daily musts that our defensive backs do every day at practice. These four drills are extremely important for maintaining flexibility, speed, agility, and teaching proper technique. They are as follows:

- perfect pedal
- back pedal breaks
- zone and man flips
- W-drill.

The perfect pedal is just a simple back pedal to get warmed up. The players should start on a line with both feet straddling the line with their chest up and nose over their toes. They should

start with their read steps which are nice and slow simulating reading through the three-step and then progress to a faster back pedal. Be sure to maintain flexion in the ankles, knees and hips. Players should look to "comb the turf" or simply get the feet up and off the turf quickly when working on their perfect pedal.

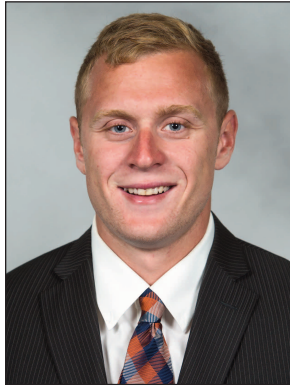
The second daily must for defensive backs would be back pedal breaks. The players should start with read pedal breaks to simulate breaking on a three-step route. They should start with their read steps and then have them break either direction at a 45 and break down getting ready to make the tackle. Again, be sure to maintain proper flexion in the areas listed above. The next step in this drill is to progress to back pedal breaks. The players should start with their read steps and then progress to a regular back pedal. Once in the back pedal, the coach should open or direct the player out at a 45° angle in either direction opposite of the coach. After they have opened the next step is to have them then break back down to simulate driving on a route. The third portion of this drill is to have them open at a full 180° away from the coach. Flipping their hips and being able to keep their eyes back on the coach is key. Finish this drill again by having the player stick their foot and drive back down towards the coach to simulate breaking on a route.

The third daily must is zone and man flips. For zone flips have the player start with their back pedal and then open them out at a 45° in either direction and then have them plant off of their outside foot and open up at a 45° in the opposite direction. For man turns start the drill off the same way with having them back pedal and open up at a 45° but this time when they go to change direction they should be planting and turning their back towards you and opening up at a 45° in the opposite direction. This drill is used to simulate trying to cover a double move such as a post corner and having a runner will help them see what they are doing.

The W-drill incorporates all these drills into one. Start with three cones placed along the sideline and have the players start on one of them. Have them back pedal about 5-7 yards and then break sprinting up to the second cone breaking down their feet once they get to it. Then immediately start to back pedal again and break sprinting up to the third cone and breaking down their feet when they get to it. This can be the end of the drill or if you want to incorporate a zone or man flip into it you can. Once they have reached the third cone simply have them open out at a 45° and then open them in the opposite direction doing either their zone flip or their man flip.

PIONEER DEFENSE

By: Patrick Sheehan, Linebackers, Specialists and Recruiting Coordinator, UW-Platteville



Patrick Sheehan

As the LB/specialists/recruiting coordinator at UW-Platteville, I am also a proud alum of UW-Platteville where I played college ball and am now entering my third season as an assistant football coach for the Pioneers.

On defense, I coach the OLBs under defensive coordinator Dan Bauder. Dan brings a unique style of defense schematically. We play with 5 DBs a lot of the time. Coach Bauder preaches play as a unit, rally to the ball and love what you do as a unit. I owe a ton of what I know today to Dan as this is my first year on the

defensive side of the ball. I previously played and coached WRs.

Our LBs' main focus is to play with passion, know your assignment and play fast. We are predominantly responsible for setting the edge in our defense. We coach be "late and fast" to the football. This is important because as overhangs we typically are being read by the QB in 10/11 personnel stuff. We want to cloud all reads.

Our LB play is simply a reflection of our defense. We play with passion and grit. Tackling is a main point of emphasis along with playing with our hands. We want to keep big bodies off our chest and play with speed. Our main tackling emphasis is not to break down but to run through the tackles forcing ball carriers to stop their feet. We emphasize taking the ball away and being difference makers in that aspect of the game.

Our LBs and every position on our team demonstrate our main philosophy as a team. Play with heart and passion leaving nothing behind.

I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this issue of *The Point After II*. We look forward to speaking again at the Spring Football Clinic in Middleton and to the coming season. - Go Pioneer!



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OFFENSE

IDENTIFYING GAME PLAN STRESSORS IN YOUR OFFENSE

By: Ryan Munz, Offensive Coordinator, UW-Platteville



Ryan Munz

We are all looking for the edge – the difference maker – the game changer. This is the reason that we spend countless hours on Sundays and Mondays during the season breaking down every snap of an opponent. We are looking for that one adjustment that will give us a competitive advantage on game day. The golden nugget that will allow us to have an ace up our sleeve in the fourth quarter to put the game away. I wish it were that easy!

I am a believer in the 7 P's. Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance. This is the essence of game planning. I would like to share with you the process that we use to help us see the picture clearly. I don't think its earth-shattering, but I hope it gives you a baseline to start whether this is your first year calling plays or may be your last.

Our number one objective on the offensive side is to score points. You can do this a myriad of different ways. That is the fun part about being on this side of the ball. You can develop your way of attacking defenses with your philosophy. The one thing that every offense has in common is that its main goal is to create STRESS for the defense. Spread, Power I, Wing T, Wishbone, Single Wing, Full House, Pistol, Air Raid.....all are built under the premise to create as much stress as possible on the defense to get them into a vulnerable position and allow your team to take advantage. It's that simple.

There are seven stressors that should be looked at every week when you are breaking down your next opponent: Tempos, Pistol, Adjusters, Shifts, Empty, Formation Into the Boundary, Stacks and Unbalanced.

Tempos

Tempos might be the easiest and most effective way to catch a defense on its heels. There is no new teaching in this install. Most people immediately think that tempo is going fast. Albeit that one way, I feel you have to have at

these three different tempos that you use throughout each game. I don't think the answer is always living in NASCAR mode. The game is about execution. When you are clicking, this tempo is fun to use. No matter what you call it it's going to work and you are going to score points fast. On the flip side, when your execution is lacking, you go three and out in 13 seconds and give the ball back to another highly powered offense. I also don't believe that slowing the game down is always a great option either. There is a time and place for all tempos. Used correctly, this is an easy and inexpensive way to create stress.

Pistol

If you know anything about our program, you know we are ten personnel offset spread. You don't run pistol so why are you talking about it. It's another easy adjustment. You only have to change the alignment of one player and you just created some major problems for the defense. We have a conversation about what it might do to help us out. It balances teams up and gives you great play action. Power is excellent out of it. We don't run power much, we run inside zone. Your philosophies dictate your formations. If it fits into what you are doing, then this can create stress. We might run pistol if we see a defense that is making heavy keys off the back or if our personnel dictates the ability to do so. Its does take a little more teaching with mesh points and pass routes. Protection can suffer as well against heavy blitz teams. That is your decision to make.

Adjusters

RB, TE, Motions

You must have the ability to use your adjusters to put stress on the defense. As an offense, you have rules to follow that limit your movements. The key is to find out how you only have to move one player, but the defense has to move multiple. Unless you run the quarterback, defense has a plus one advantage. Adjusters allow you to get even or a plus one if used correctly. Have a reason behind using your adjusters. If you don't have a tight end that can block or a running back that can catch they are not adjusters. They are one-dimensional. The defense's entire game plan is to force you to become one-dimensional. Why would you give them a jump-start?

Shifts

We continually ask: What is easy for us and hard for them? Shifts are easy to install and it can create a lot of stress. We have all watched film and seen the whole defense flip with a shift. We have also watched other offenses shift and nothing happens with the defense. You have to

understand how that shift is going to help you and use a shift that either flips the strength or creates a personnel match-up that you like. Don't be afraid to shift from your best 12 personnel set to your best 10 personnel set. This makes sense if you have tight ends that can catch. It doesn't make sense if you go the other way. Don't just shift to shift. Have a plan.

Empty

You usually get two things when you line up in an empty set. Drop eight or max pressure. You force the defense to declare what they want to do. From my experience, teams only have one or two checks to empty and most of them are simple defenses. It's a numbers game and they can only do so much. However for the offense, you create matchups with interior linebackers that are usually favorable for you especially when you use the right personnel. If you see drop eight, you hope you have a quarterback that can move with his feet. If not, you become one-dimensional again. Not good. If they pressure six and cover you down, you hope that your wide receivers can beat man-to-man. If not, you shouldn't run empty. The two major things you worry about is protection and hots. If you have a plan for both, you can stress some teams out.

F.I.B.

If you have followed us at all, we love putting formation into the boundary. We use trips into the boundary exclusively and it works. Why, because every defensive coordinator that I have talked to hates it. That simple. It creates a ton of rule changes for them that they have to adjust to. Simple for us; hard for them. I would highly encourage you to take your best formation and put the strength into the boundary, take a picture, and send it to your defensive coordinator. When he gives you a few choice words, you know you have something.

Stack and Bunches

There used to be a time when 10 personnel teams could line up in 3x1 and it created a ton of stress on the defense. This is one reason that the spread has grown to what it is. This formation is now common-place in all defensive playbooks. It has lost its luster a little bit. To add some more stress, take that same formation and bunch them up. What does that do to the defense? You can be almost certain you won't get a press corner anymore. Simple and effective. This will allow your #1 receiver more free releases. In my experience, a press corner is in press for a reason. He is good at it. He is put there at times, because he can't play in space, not good at off man, etc. Put him in a situation that he doesn't want to be in. Your offense doesn't change; it actually gets better because you created more space.

Unbalanced

This is pretty obvious as this is usually the first place an offense will go to create stress. We look at unbalanced formations as a curveball. We do not run a ton, but when we do, it works. The scary part behind using an unbalanced formation is that you do not know what the defense is going to do against it. You are flying blind at times. If this is the case, make sure you are using it in a favorable situation for you and running a scheme that doesn't need a ton of teaching for your guys. Let the unbalanced take over in this area, not the scheme. It is an easy way to get a freebie.

Layer Them

We have now identified the stressors, now how do you use them? This is the fun and frustrating part. You can't use them all at once and it doesn't make sense to have them and not use them. These stressors allow you to run the same plays week 10 that you do in week 1. By layering them, it adds different dimensions that allow you continued success. If you are a "Remember the Titans" fan and run six plays, that's awesome. This will allow those six plays to look like the sixty you need to have success that week. Pick out the best ones you see fit for that week and use them. It is as simple as using a silent count on quarterback sneak. Start there and see where it takes you. Keep Swinging The Axe.

Thank you to the WFCA for publishing this article. This is an excellent institution to be a part of.



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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MAKING AN ATHLETE INTO AN ALL-CONFERENCE QB

By: Chris Greisen, Quarterback Academy



Chris Greisen

At Freedom, like many other small schools, the QB position is one for which a coach might have to do a little searching. It is certainly nice if you have a system that allows you to just plug in the next kid in line; however, as we found out going from our 2016 to our 2017 season, we didn't have any guys that clearly fit our current mold. In 2016, we had a second team All-Conference QB who was athletic, had a strong arm, and could really throw well in the pocket and on the run. Looking ahead to 2017, the next potential player for the QB role had just one of those traits: athleticism.

The first thing my head coach and I decided to do was to open up the job to see who would step up. Would it be the athletic senior or an underclassman? Secondly, we did something I

would recommend to any coach; we decided to split up our contact days so that we had one practice at the beginning of the summer and the other four at the end. The advantage in splitting our contact days this way was that I could instruct and coach up my quarterbacks on the specific footwork and mechanics that I expected from them and then charge them to work to improve those skills all summer. Another advantage to using this summer split format was that we discovered I could install our main passing game concepts which the players could then execute during 7-on-7 league and tournament games.

This early day of practice proved to be invaluable. Not only did all our QBs get better due to their understanding about what I expected from them over the summer, but the senior athlete, who initially struggled to make many basic throws, began to look more like the man who was going to take the spot. After only the second contact day, it was apparent that our senior was the guy. Once we determined that, the next big job for us coaches was to tailor our passing attack to what he could do and the throwing abilities he did possess. I don't mean that we overhauled our offense, but we tweaked it to fit the skill set of our new guy. Through watching 7-on-7, I quickly noticed that there were certain routes he was comfortable with and threw well and many that he didn't. He could throw a Go, a Post, and a Dig route but struggled to drive anything like a curl, a slant, or a hitch. So the majority of our pass plays that sea-

son involved those routes that he threw best. No need to plug a round peg into a square hole.

The next thing we did was take advantage of his athleticism by utilizing more of a QB run game. These run plays quickly became our staples. The bread and butter of our newly adjusted offense was a play called "Pride" (Power + Ride), and our new QB quickly grew to love this play. We also eventually incorporated a QB counter play, misdirection, and of course, run action passes, all derived off of Pride while, of course, emphasizing the routes that he was most comfortable with. This really made defenses work to prepare for us in our conference.

This athlete, who also doubled as our starting middle LB, went on to lead us to the state semi-finals that year and was named first team All-Conference QB. Without the benefits of a strong arm and flawless mechanics, he averaged 10.2 yards per pass attempt. He threw 26 touchdowns versus only 4 interceptions. He also rushed for 14 touchdowns while averaging 5.9 yards per attempt.

Therefore, if you don't quite have the next great strong-armed QB coming up through the ranks, rest assured that with a scheme adjusted to his talents, an athletic leader can take your offense a long way. Don't be afraid to put one of your best athletes in that quarterback position. Find him in the summer, adjust to him throughout the fall, and enjoy the fruits of your labor in the playoffs.

DOWN BLOCK AIMING POINTS

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

The down block can be found in virtually every offense in the game of football. Because of how common the down block is, many feel as if it is a plug and play blocking scheme that is easy to teach and matches up well against virtually every front. While this is true for the most part, the down block is most commonly defeated by bad angles taken by the offensive line when engaging the defensive front. To confront this, the offensive line's aiming point needs to change depending on the technique the defensive front plays. This article defines the three aiming points we teach when down blocking, and the reasons why each aiming point is used.

When teaching a down block, I always start with the aiming point each offensive lineman is aiming for because this will affect his entire body throughout the block. As with all blocks, the offensive lineman should be facing straight ahead in his stance, but his eyes should be focused on his aiming point. This is critical because the aiming point must be correct in order for the offensive line to take the correct steps for each block. The first aiming point I start with when teaching a down block is the base

aiming point. This is the aiming point each offensive lineman will take when he is playing a balanced defensive lineman that plays a base technique in his gap. The base aiming point for the offensive line when down blocking is the playside earhole of the defender's helmet. This is where the offensive lineman will focus his eyes in his stance and step to. Taking this aiming point puts the offensive lineman in a position to get his head to the front side of the defender, cutting off penetration, while also closing the door on any over the top movement. If an offensive lineman is too far to the front side of a defender during a down block, then the defender will easily be able to throw him by and play over the top. Similarly, if an offensive lineman does not get his head across the defender enough, then the defender will be able to penetrate the backfield and disrupt the play. Because of this, the offensive lineman needs to step to the front of the earhole of the defender's helmet, getting his facemask in front of the defender with his first step. The second step should be more vertical and close the door on the defender's playside hip, making it difficult for the

defender to play over the top of the block and down the line of scrimmage. This base aiming point is the aiming point offensive linemen will use the vast majority of the time they are executing a down block. When facing a front, or player, that consistently plays a penetrating or over the top technique, the aiming points of the offensive line need to change in order to put them in the best possible position to execute a successful down block.

Certain fronts or individual players will play a more aggressive penetrating technique when facing a down block. When this happens, the offensive line needs to change their aiming point to ensure all penetration is cut off. The aiming point changes from the playside ear hole of the defender's helmet to where the facemask meets the front of the defender's helmet (on the playside). This is done to ensure that a larger percentage of the offensive lineman's mass is put in front of the defender that is trying to penetrate the backfield and cause disruption. The only thing that changes here is the aiming point. The footwork and technique the offensive line uses will remain the same. As always, the aiming

point will slightly adjust the footwork the offensive line takes. When a defender is playing a penetrating technique, it is very difficult for him to play over the top of the down block. Because of this, the offensive lineman does not have to be as worried about the over the top movement. Instead, he needs to put mass and force into stopping the defender's penetration and flatten him out. This change in aiming point gives the offensive lineman a better chance of doing this because more of the offensive lineman's mass and force is across the front of the defender, cutting off his ability to penetrate the line of scrimmage. It is critical that the offensive lineman does not lunge at a defender that is playing a penetrating technique; the offensive lineman still needs to stay under control.

The over the top technique is the third type of technique we classify for our offensive linemen when executing a down block. This is when a defender tries to spin out or throw the offensive lineman by and play over the top of the down block. When a defender or defensive front is consistently playing over the top of a down block, the offensive line's aiming point needs to change again. Instead of aiming at the playside earhole of the defender's helmet, the offensive line needs to change the aiming point to the back of the defender's helmet. Like earlier, this change is made to put the highest percentage of mass and force in the path the defender is trying to follow. Because the defender is trying to play over the top of the down block, the offensive lineman needs to put more force/effort into shutting the door on

the defender and not allowing over the top movement. If the offensive lineman's head ends up behind the defender, then he knows he should not be using the over the top aiming point. Instead, he should use the base aiming point and do a better job of fighting pressure with pressure and closing the door on the defender.

These aiming points are the only true adjustments taught to the offensive line when it comes to down blocks. As mentioned previously, the reason for these different aiming

points is to put the offensive line in the best position to be successful. It is important to note that the vast majority of the time the offensive line will use the base aiming point on down blocks. The aiming point should only be changed if a front or defender is consistently playing a penetrating or over the top technique. The occasional change in technique by the front/defender does not constitute changing the aiming point of the offensive linemen when they are down blocking.

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MAXIMIZING RESOURCES THROUGH THE HURRY-UP NO-HUDDLE OFFENSE

By: Joe Matheson, Offensive Coordinator and Wide Receivers Coach, UW–River Falls



Joe Matheson

A successful offensive philosophy can and should maximize the resources available to a given program. Each program has its innate challenges on the competitive landscape and is continually looking for ways to innovate and improve in each component of the program. I have been blessed to learn from, practice, and study coaches that have developed and pioneered a particular style of play that can build momentum for a program at any level or scale. By implementing and committing to an aggressive hurry-up, no-huddle system, a program can create a strong identity, build confidence, enhance practice efficiency, streamline installation and game planning, simplify play calling, and maximize the skill-set of the current generation of players. In addition to these benefits, improved efficiency allows for more time and resources to be allocated to other aspects of the program, including recruiting, academic support, and building relationships.

Identity through Operation

Implementing an aggressive tempo offense can foster an identity for a football team. When teams are willing to dictate the tempo and adopt a “play the next play” mentality, players gain confidence. Rather than dwelling on the past, focus is committed to attacking the next play or situation. The unit must be hardwired to immediately look to the next opportunity. Every team, no matter how talented, will face adversity within each game. Successful units have the ability to operate in chaos. Tempo offense can physically retool players to move on from both the good plays and bad plays so that they can focus on what is important: the next play. Playing with speed should become the norm, however this does not mean that plays need to be called sporadically or in a panic. Normal play operation should be fast and simple. There are a myriad of ways to signal in plays, but inherently, simplicity equals speed. The implied tempo should always be as fast as possible, and

the tempo can be controlled through the signaling of the formation and/or play if need be. Momentum can be built or adjusted this way, as you take the temperature of the unit in a particular scenario. After an explosive play or first down, one-word tempo calls, three-play tempo series, or shot plays can attack a defense while they are at their most vulnerable. After a normal gain, we can maintain our normal, fast tempo to stay in rhythm. After a no-gain or loss, we can scan or slow down our tempo to get in sync and find a play to get back on track. It is nearly impossible for opponents to replicate specific execution at speed on look teams during a game week. When an offensive unit becomes confident in the system, plays to win, and show fearlessness in their body language, defenses inevitably wear down.

By playing fast and staying aggressive, players who formerly processed too much and lacked confidence can unlock another level of performance within their games. Put differently, players stop “playing defense” on offense. By virtue of the fast-paced operation, players will no longer have time to overthink or over-process calls, and muscle memory will take over. Too often, offensive units can become stagnant, lacking identity, by trying to get in the perfect play in any given situation. While scheme is certainly important, it is the culture you build on offense that becomes the differentiator for the most important part of effective production: execution. When players have an inner belief in the identity of the offense, it will be manifested in the efficiency and production of the unit. Players who can become instinctual when they hit the field are the ones who will reach their greatest potential.

Practical Implementation

In an offense that predicates itself on the belief in creating an advantage through muscle memory formed through repetition, how we install becomes critical. Installing a tempo system is like launching a rocket; once the trajectory is set, there is only so much you can do to alter your course. Tweaks can be made here and there, but the vast majority of the success you will have is founded through repetition, starting on day-one of practice. A great way to organize install is to divide approximately 95% of what you plan on installing in your offense over a three or four-day period. Organize your offense by compartmentalizing concepts into key-play families and divide each family by however many days set for install. Each day then acts as a miniature game plan. After reaching the final day of initial install, each day is repeated once

again. The cycle should be repeated at least three times in order to truly commit and manifest the repetition needed for mastery and depth to be developed. The three/four day install naturally helps reduce the volume of plays to keep the offense simple, and aligns with the core philosophy of playing fast and instinctual. The limited play bank also allows you to master each concept versus a variety of fronts, movements, blitzes, coverages, and personnel.

Because we are so deliberate in what we plan on running in games, planning practice becomes simple, with an emphasis on being tactical and efficient in scripting. Your scripting should reflect, down to the repetition, the percentage of plays you wish to run, pass, move the pocket, use play action, incorporate different personnel, etc. Instead of spending time and energy trying to get players lined up and caught up on their new assignments, teams can focus on positional fundamentals, competition, making plays, and mastering their crafts. Tempo offense in practice sets a tone of focused intensity for the practice. Players stay more engaged and benefit from an opportunity for more reps.

With a smaller game plan we can be more specific and deliberate about what we want to accomplish during the game. The emphasis becomes about what we do; we are on the attack, forcing defenses to adjust to our scheme, not the other way around. Avoid being a “what if” coach and understand that the defense will win some plays through scheme. Accept it and play the next play. We do not have to worry about out scheming the opponent, but rather about outplaying them through the strength and conviction of our culture and execution. It’s about players, not plays. Understand the strengths of your offensive personnel and attack the field in the best way you can, from day one. We can then focus on the fundamentals of each position group and the execution of their assignments. Players will appreciate how all of the work that goes into the installed plays pays off during games. When you keep the package simple, you continually practice what you will actually run in games, and coaches can call the game quickly and confidently. One specific tactic for game planning involves scripting out short “drive-starters” to help jump-start your offense to that first 1st down of the drive. Once that first 1st down is reached within a tempo offense, the chances to score go up exponentially. Creative packages that keep a defense off-balance (screens, naked, etc.) paired with tempo plays run consecutively can be an effective way to get what is often the most difficult part of playing fast: getting a drive started.

Residual Program Benefits

Aggressive tempo offense requires a program-wide buy-in to be effective. The more plays you play on offense, the more you will play on special teams and defense as well. The entire team needs to believe in style of play, and this starts at the top. Many teams look to dabble in tempo offense as an attempt to score more points, with varying degrees of success. Some teams want all the wrinkles of the system without committing to tempo as a culture. Common pitfalls include running different plays fast without thinking deeply about what concepts fit into the system, ignoring key fundamentals for execution, trying to do too much, and focusing on out scheming other teams each week as opposed to mastering your own system.

When programs embrace the culture of speed and simplicity within their offensive schemes, they can allocate additional time and resources to other aspects of the program. Resource-deprived programs may not have as much staff or money at their disposal as their competition. One example of how teams can use the found time gained through this philosophy is tactically marketing the program for both recruits and community stakeholders through social media. As much as we in the coaching profession may scoff at the idea of posting on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, there is no questioning the disproportionate amount of attention that our target audience gives to these platforms. Coaches can communicate the progress, culture, and the essence of their program to those who matter by simply documenting day-to-day operations through social

media. The more content provided, the larger number of stakeholders that will be reached. In the profession the cliché is often heard: “it is about the Jimmys and Joes not the Xs and Os,” but how often do we actually behave that way? Not only can more time be allocated to recruiting by simplifying your philosophy, but also, more time can be spent coaching the human element. By letting go of the need to outscheme and outsmart other coaches, time can be devoted to supporting players in academics, helping them through issues of mental health, and creating meaningful relationships with the players we serve. Tempo offense is more than a wrinkle or package for an offense, it’s binary. By making an aggressive tempo system a religion for your program, you can finally work to maximize the most important asset you have: your people.

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TEMPO – USING IT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

By: Rob Luther, Head Football Coach, Baxter High School, Baxter, Iowa



Rob Luther

As I enter my 31st year coaching high school football, I think of all the fads, trends, and changes that have taken place in our great game. I have tried to incorporate a lot of things in my time coaching. I love going to clinics to listen and learn. I try to pick the brains, whenever I get the chance, of coaches in our area and state who have had success. I am not smart enough to invent anything new. I just try and steal whatever I can from whomever I can. This was especially crucial in 2017 when our school dropped a CO-OP agreement and went from a 2A 11-player program to 8-player football.

One of the first things I learned was you do not have to do it the way someone else is. **MAKE IT WORK FOR YOUR SYSTEM AND PLAYERS.** Too many times I just tried to insert a new idea or change without worrying about the “WHY?”

But of all the things I have stolen and bought into it is the no-huddle/tempo concept. I understand there are many ways to coach successful football. But I believe I let our teams down from years ago before we implemented our up tempo style. Being able to change tempos and control the speed of the game has been the most positive change I have made with our team in 11-player or 8-player.

The opportunity to go as slow or as fast as we want has made a huge difference in our success and our ability to score points. I firmly believe it does not matter what offense you run, you can still go no-huddle and change tempos. We happen to be a spread team. There are a lot of different types of spread teams, but that is a whole other discussion or article. Our philosophy in the spread is to be multi-formation, find mis-matches, attack both vertically and horizontally. We work hard to get our best players against our opponents weaker players. But you can be an I team, wing-T team, or run anything you want and still can work tempos in your favor.

The first thing we wanted to do was simplify our play calling. The more the kids have to hear, the better chance for a mental error. We

have gone to a system that has no numbers. (We do call some passing routes by numbers.)

Every play in our system has a word name. Our trap play is called Tiger. Our jet play is called Jag. Even our passing concepts have one word. Our flood route is Noah. Our bubble is Blow etc. Our kids helped name these and every summer we teach these names in a classroom setting.

Once we know the play, we just need to know what direction we are going. We have the ability to switch this up as well. We have used NFL teams to the left and mascots to the right. We have used states that are west of the Mississippi to the left and states to the east go right. We also can use words that go together to signify left and right like salt and pepper, Batman and Robin, ketchup and mustard etc.

So essentially you have 2 words to communicate to be able to run a play. We do have dummy calls and fake calls when we need to use them. So to run our Jet play to the left we would just call Jag Kansas City. Its that easy!

We do have multiple formations. I assign one coach to signal formation immediately as the play ends.

So the bigger trial and error has been how to communicate the play to the offense. We have tried a lot of different strategies to get plays in as quickly as possible. Some have worked better for us than others. I will share with you the different ways we have tried to communicate.

1. Wristbands –

- We did wristbands for 3 years. We would signal in a number and every player would look to the band and run that play. We got to the point that we did not need to even look at the bands.
- **Example :** All of our Zone plays were 70-79. Odds to the left and evens to the right. Our kids learned in a hurry when we called 73 we were running inside zone left.
- My biggest issue with this was it seemed we were always waiting on someone to snap the ball. It took too long for each player to find the play on the band then get it snapped. Our kids were communicating naturally to each other about the play. We needed to find a way to go faster.

2. Hand Signals –

- I think this works great. It has also helped how we practice. One of the early frustrations was during skelly, inside run, or team, when we were competing. It would give the defense an advantage to hear the play at the line. Now with hand signals, we can stand be-

hind the defense and call plays if we want tempo without the defense knowing the play. We do not always do it this way, but we do utilize it quite often. Another mistake I made early on was to make the quarterback responsible to communicate the play. We only had to signal to one player, but it was a big responsibility for him to verbally communicate with all the offense. We then went to having all the skill players get the signal from the sideline and have the quarterback verbally give it to the OL. For the past five years we have expected all players to see the signal from the sidelines..

3. Numbers –

- We still use this method from time to time. We like to use it when we think defenses may be picking up some signals. Our players memorize 10 run plays and 10 pass plays. We use a body clock to signal the number in. Between the 30s we even just yell it in.
- 0-9 Power
- 10-19 Sweep
- 20-29 Trap etc. And again using odds and evens for direction.
- I would suggest looking at this for two reasons.
 - 1.) If teams are picking up words or signals. (I don't think this happens very often. I argue about this with some of my assistants.)
 - 2.) You can really go fast because it is one number and snap.

4. Boards –

- We tried this for the first time this year. We had the large boards that would be held up on the sideline. Each picture depicted represented a play. Our kids loved this. They helped choose pictures for certain plays. We would go to the boards when we wanted a top speed. This usually happened off a dynamic play or a big turnover. After doing it for a couple of weeks it just didn't seem any faster than our hand signals. It was just one more person who needed to be near the coaching box and ready to hold it up. The other issue is by the time we practiced a set board for the week, our kids had those 4-6 plays memorized anyway.

5. We run 4 tempos –

- Green – As fast as we can go. Or as quick as the referee will set the ball.
- Black – Our players will go fast, but our coaching staff will truly determine the speed by how quick we signal in the play. This will be formation immediate

and then look at player alignment and coverage.

- Gold – This is our freeze tempo. We will run a dummy call and then look to the sideline.
- Red – This is our huddle tempo. It is good to have, but we have learned that we are more smooth and fluid just running no-huddle and delaying the play call or have the QB just wait for the snap signal.

I would tell you the only true negative I have found with running tempo is when we didn't switch up the snap count. I have seen teams get a good rhythm off our count and have too good of a get-off up front. We have found a couple of ways to combat this:

1. We have a jump call. We will tag our play with a call that tells us we are going on 2.
2. Our gold tempo slows it down as well with the dummy call, but it also slows down the tempo.
3. We have quit saying any other words in our cadence other than "GO".

Our goal this year was to get to 60 snaps a game. Many things play into this number. I still remember a meeting I had with Tom Herman, the former HC at Texas, when he was at Iowa State. He told me if you like your offense why would you not want to extend the game and run more plays? He also showed me how important it is to be able to call a play once the defense

and coverage is set. At the high school level we rarely see a shift or mask in front or guys on the roof. Especially in the 8-player game.

If you still need to sell it to your staff or head coach or even convince yourself more look at these main points:

- Lessens the time a defense has to call a stunt or blitz or even get lined up.
- Defensive linemen are the first to get tired out.
- Lets you dictate the pace and speed of the game.
- The ability to call plays once the defense is set.
- The motto of Win the 5th quarter!!

I am including our offensive averages since switching to the spread. 2012 was our first year with no-huddle/tempo:

11-Player

2007 – 32.1 pts/game – 9/64 in state 2A
 2008 – 33.6 pts/game – 10/64 in state
 2009 – 35.1 pts/game – 8/64 in state
 2010 – 27.2 pts/game – 16/64 in state
 2011 – 31.5 pts/game – 13/63 in state
 2012 – 31.0 pts/game – 13/55 in state
 2013 – 35.9 pts/game – 9/56 in state
 2014 – 33.1 pts/game – 9/56 in state

8-Player

2017 – 65.33 pts/Game 1st in State
 2019 – 47.8 pts/game – 14/62
 2020 – 43.7 pts/game – 24/69

I have been blessed to have some very talented players and especially QBs. But I firmly believe that our spread switch and even more our no-huddle/tempo philosophy has helped our team and program be more successful.

This summer I have been blessed enough to be asked to be the head coach of one of the Iowa Shrine Bowl Teams. This will be my first 11-player game in 5 years. I can promise you we will run spread with tempo in July.

I love to talk football. I would welcome any comments or questions you may have about the article. Like I said to start, I am always looking to steal anything that may help give us an edge.

Rob Luther, Baxter Head Football Coach
 641-328-4076, Twitter - @rluther8

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 for victory, but
 to do my best."**

— Amos Alonzo Stagg

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PREPPING PLAYERS FOR AIR ATTACK EACH WEEK

By: Donnie Kuehn, Offensive Coordinator, Osseo-Fairchild Football

A special thanks to the WFCB for the opportunity to once again share some coaching ideas with the great coaches in the state of Wisconsin. This article is not so much about the Xs and Os of our passing attack at Osseo Fairchild but more about how we prep our players on our air attack each week.

In this article we will discuss how we prep and game plan with our QBs, WRs and RBs each week to all be effective within our passing game plan, regardless of the type of defense we face.

Our number one goal is to put players into positions and situations where they can be successful. We initially look at matchups in play scheme that we feel will work to our advantage during our weekly scouting process. Once this is determined by the offensive staff our OC meets with our QB first. This gives our QB some input in the offense for the week and lets him communicate his thoughts/strengths with the game plan. We have found that these meeting sessions really become a confidence builder for our QB before we even hit the practice field for the week. Our QB's buy in to the game plan is crucial in setting the tone for the week's practices and enables him to lead the offense as he should.

Our QB is taught to make a Pre-Snap read (PSR) on every pass play called. His read is not so much the coverage of the secondary but the positioning of the defenders, inside/outside leverage, coverage depth given to WR and foot

placement of the defender, narrow stance/wide stance. These all become indicators to where he is going to look to complete the pass pre-snap. If we read a blitz we have a hot call incorporated into every pass play to both a WR and our RB. We have been successful with these read concepts and it has really helped our kids not guess where to throw but to know who they are going to throw to every time. Our young man at QB this year earned 1st team All-Conference honors and became one of the top QBs in our division and set a school career passing record in total yards.

Let's now talk about our WRs and RBs. Our WRs and RBs also are asked to make PSRs. Our WRs are taught to stay as much as possible on their route paths. Their PSR of the defenders stance, inside/outside alignment and body posture are all keys to running a successful timed route. In our passing offense we stress to have the ball out in 2-3 seconds. Our WR's have what we call choice routes built into their designated route assignment. For example: if they have a defender that gives them a 5-7-yard cushion on their drop once they leave the LOS. Our WRs can run their choice route that has been designated and worked on throughout the week in practice. Our scout team plays a big role in this as they are aligned and coached to give our WRs different looks all week so that they are ready on game night. This approach proved to be successful for us this past season, as we had

three of our WR's in the top five in receiving yards in our conference and two of our kids were both first team All-Conference.

Our RB is also a crucial part of our passing game. Play action to pass protection, Play action to a hot pass option and play action to screens are all part of what our RB will do for our offense. Our RB will likewise make his own PSR and is always a pass protector first. Our RB and QB always communicate pre-snap on his side of alignment and choice of hot route. This communication is crucial and is worked on in situations throughout the week in practice.

Lastly I'd like to share how motion and play action really can be an advantage within an offense. We motion someone on every play. Manipulating a defense to think one thing or guess on another is what we've strived to work on in our offense. Motioning a WR across the formation or shifting a WR pre-snap to the other side along with motioning a RB all mess with the defense. Doing these little things has helped us create matchups that help exploit a weakness in a defense.

This past season we incorporated all of the little things mentioned in this article, all simple but effective. Execution in any offense is critical and by working daily on these little things, we were able to create big things on the football field.

My hope is that in reading this article, you can use one little thing mentioned, to make your offense better. Best of luck next season and have fun coaching. ☺

OFFENSIVE EXECUTION

By: Matt Tomsho, Wide Receivers Coach, UW-Eau Claire



Matt Tomsho

A plethora of components affect offensive play in football. From scouting, to game planning, to practicing, the weekly preparation it takes to see success on Fridays and Saturdays is intensive. However, the most pivotal component of offensive success is execution. Without all eleven players fulfilling their individual assignments on a play, the probability that the play results in inefficiency skyrockets.

It is important to give our players the best chance to execute their assignments on the field, so that collectively the team can be successful. There are a variety of ways to approach this, whether they be pre-snap, live, or post-snap. We aim to be offensive – aggressively attacking the defense with personnel, tempo, and scheme – in order to slow defenses down. By slowing a defense down, we believe we give our players the best opportunity to “gain an extra step” on our opponent.

One method that facilitates offensive success is pre-snap movement. The goal is to slow a defense down by getting it to move and adjust. On offense, we know what play we are running, and our players know their individual assignments. On the other hand, defenses (hopefully) do not know what specific play is coming on a given down. Therefore, defensive players react to different keys they are coached to identify. However, if we can manipulate the defense's keys by starting in a 2x2 formation and ending in a 3x1 formation, for example, then why not do it? If offensive players understand what their alignments and assignments are at the snap of the ball, there is no limit to

the amount of pre-snap movement that is legal (barring the play clock). Occasionally, these movements may cause defenses to check in and out of calls, causing defenders' eyes to move and responsibilities to change. As an offensive coach, if at the snap of the ball a defensive player hesitates for even a split second while he confirms his responsibility, we have given our offensive player that “extra step” to effectively execute his assignment.

Like the sequence of a specific play call, a systematic approach to labeling pre-snap movement is critical to ease installation and understanding. Having an idea about what types of pre-snap movements are desired will aid in the creation of that system. For example, a tight end shift; if we want a tight end to start on one side of the formation and shift to the other side of the formation, we have to generate a term/signal that corresponds to the shift. Once an original term/signal is concocted, a family of terms/signals can be created, each one somehow relating back to the original. These terms/signals, all similar in relation or meaning, can then be assigned to different offensive

positions across the board, indicating an “across formation” shift for the specified position. These terms/signals can then be incorporated into a play call in a variety of ways, all dependent on an offense’s specific play-calling sequence.

Upon the development of a labeling system, offenses can then expand on their system by adding new families of terms/signals that correspond to different types of pre-snap movements. This allows the installation of many different types of pre-snap movements, while maintaining a consistent mechanism for implementing terms or signals into the play call sequence. If success-

fully installed and executed, this pre-snap movement system can contribute to keeping a defense on its heels and slowing opposing players down.

There are so many creative offensive schemes in today’s game. Some coaches may find the above information intriguing; others may find it useless and/or gimmicky. Ultimately, the most important characteristic of any offense is its identity. Once the foundation of that identity is constructed, it is then possible to build upon that foundation. I do believe there is a place for pre-snap systems in offenses ranging from Air Raid to Wing T, and that the extensive-

ness of such a system will vary based on the specific needs of a team. I also believe that this approach is one of many that facilitate offensive football. We must decide as coaches if the time-on-task involved with the implementation of such a system ultimately allows our players to be successful. Without our players, we would not be coaches. Therefore, whatever offensive approach we take, we must aim to cater to our players skills and needs, while maintaining an offensive identity. Thank you for reading, I hope this article has helped or at least kept you occupied during these times...stay safe!

ZONE BLOCKING – A 37-YEAR PERSPECTIVE

By: Glenn Derby, Head Football Coach, Saint John’s Northwest Military Academy



Glenn Derby

In 1983 I was blessed with the opportunity to play football at the University of Wisconsin. At that time the game was transitioning from Wing-T and Wishbone to a pro-style offense and with that change came zone blocking. (this does not include 1987 when we ran a veer offense) There are numerous definitions of what exactly zone blocking is but I am going to use my experience to explain as I understand it first as a player and now as a coach.

When I played at the UW the technique was (Post is the playside OL and Finish player is the backside OL) the post OL would rip their backside arm through the playside arm pit of the DL and try to turn the shoulders so the finish OL

would take over the down side and the post would move up to the backer. The good part of this is the OL could really explode out on the DL, but the down side was the Post would leave an impossible block many times for the finish player if there was a stunt by the defense. At UW we were well known for our run game and I believe it was due to our explosiveness off on the DL, and our ability to be aggressive and get movement. We were a very aggressive style line.

When I went to the NFL in 1988 the zone blocking had evolved to using hand placement as opposed to forearm rip and the technique that was taught was the Post player’s offside hand would aim at the playside number of the DL and

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the finish players playside hand would aim for the backside number of the DL. Basically the two players would emulate one super strong player, if both were staying hip-to-hip, shoulder-to-shoulder, staying under the DL pad and stepping in unison.

As a coach, I have been able to teach the NFL technique to high school and even middle school players and have had a lot of success with it. I will explain in more detail how the block works for inside and outside zone in this article.

My definition is this; you take two offensive players to block two defensive players that are on different levels. The key to success is getting movement on the first level down player and put yourself in position to get the second level player. Good Defensive front lines are able to disrupt the two O-linemen so they cannot get to the second level player.

With that said there are two basic types of zone blocking. First is an inside zone and second is an outside zone block. Both concepts are very similar but the focus on technique is different.

INSIDE ZONE

Focus is on moving down D-line off the ball. The key to success is for both O-Linemen to come off the ball with precise aiming points, not worrying about what the defender's path is. The block will work itself out regardless of the stunt if both players stick to their technique. So, both players will strike with their hand in the

placement described above and they will stay shoulder-to-shoulder and hip-to-hip as if they were tied together so that the DL cannot split the two. Both players will strike then use their hips to raise the defender and work toward the hole placement. If the DL stays in the same gap, they will both work the DL to the backer where the Post player will work through the shoulder of the DL to strike the LB. The Post does not need to get a ton of movement on the linebacker, but needs to at least stalemate and occupy the LB. By this time the back will be there by him.

OUTSIDE ZONE

The main difference between inside zone and outside zone is the focus on movement off the ball on the inside zone, while the focus for outside zone is to get out and RUN to meet the defenders where they are. The Post player has the same aiming point as the DL, however, he will be much wider, much faster. The finish player will basically be pulling to the playside to overtake the DL. The key to this block is that the post player gives enough help to slow the DL so that it is possible for his buddy to get to the DL and use speed to get him far enough outside to be able to gain contact with the scrapping LB.

KEY POINTS

- OL need to always look for and prevent any "run through" and NEVER allow penetration, which if done correctly, should never happen because you have two on one.

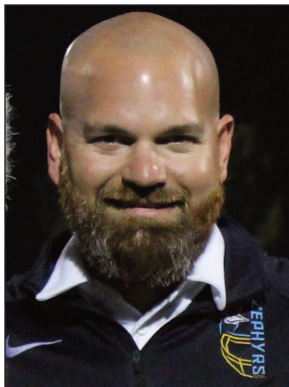
- The advantage of zone, in my opinion, is you should not ever have negative plays, because the focus is on moving that line of scrimmage.
- With inside zone teach slow flow. The block should look the part. Inside is strong, more precise and focuses on exploding hips together at the same time to get ultimate movement.
- With outside zone focus is on fast flow and does not look as precise but is more like a whirlwind of movement with lots of beef heading outside and down field.

These are the basics I use to teach the zone blocking. We have coaches, found online at Trenchtraining.com, who teach some variations of this and all are correct. As a player and as a coach nothing is more fun to watch than a correctly run zone scheme. If executed correctly the defensive coordinators are pulling their hair out because there is no way to defend it other than selling out other players leaving them susceptible to cutbacks and counters. Also the play action is set up beautifully when the zone is working.

My partner Steve Stark, many of our staff and I love to teach the techniques that are needed to young lineman at Trenchtraining.com. Please check us out and if you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

ADAPTING THE MODERN AIR-RAID OFFENSE FOR 8-PLAYER FOOTBALL

By: Dr. Jeremy J. Clifton, Head Coach & Offensive Coordinator, Saint Mary Catholic High School



Dr. Jeremy J. Clifton

I'd like to first start by thanking the WFCA for the opportunity to compose this article, which I hope is informative, insightful, and inspirational. I have been blessed to have been mentored by numerous coaches and am happy to be able to be an extension of them and pay that generosity forward. I was asked to write about our offensive scheme, how we adapted it from 11-player, and how we use motion and shifting to uncapped the defense, which I think is universally applicable to all of football.

When I accepted my position at SMC, I had no prior experience in 8-player football

and admittedly was only vaguely aware of its existence. Since this position required I relocate from Oklahoma where I had been coaching, I had a lot of time driving back-and-forth from Wisconsin to Oklahoma to talk through how I could merge or adapt our system and philosophy we typically ran in Oklahoma on our 11-player teams for the 8-player team I would be leading and for which I would be calling plays. I decided that we would install a formation-driven, no-huddle, up-tempo hybrid of the Air Raid offense, which included a tagging system for routes, RPOs, and multi-level PROs as well as an option-based run scheme. My vision was that this offensive system would allow us to play fast, create complexity out of simplicity, and lending itself well to the strengths of our personnel. Two of the major challenges of adapting this 11-player system to 8-Man were protection due to the loss of two tackles and the loss of a skill player, who in many cases would've either served as part of the protection, created the conflict with our read key, or served as the check down. We moved into camp with this philosophy but did have to make some tweaks as we went along due to the nature in which 8-player is played.

My first solution to the protection issue came out of our *Spin it to Win It* philosophy as well as the nuances available in 8-player. While

attempting to stay true to the original intention of the spread and air raid offenses, much of our run game is actually born out of our quick game, which gets all of our players moving and out into space. This is also where our PRO and RPO tagging system evolved to where we were not only tagging numerous routes and reads, but also introduced a more robust RPO/PRO if-then package that included multiple levels of reads as well as "poem" routes over the if-then concept for our receivers. Our receivers have a poem tagged, or built into the play, and will construct their routes in real time. The poem we use is: *if he's even, I'm leaving -- if he's dropping, I'm stopping -- if he crosses me, I cross him -- if LB drops back run a comeback*. This is not my poem so I cannot take credit, but it is a great way to expand upon an if-then in your playbook.

With our PRO/RPO there are two reads that are made by the QB to which the WR and RB react. The first read is part of an RPO, where we're reading capped/uncapped grass as well as a key on the concept side of our call; the second read is a result of the first. Again, we are a pass-first offense so we will first look to pass, then run as part of the PRO so if the read is pass, that's the end of the progression and the RPO will not occur. If the read is run, there is an RPO tag that is executable by both the RB or QB

where if a defensive player fits either of our ball carriers, there is a route available for them to throw should they not be able to evade, or in many cases, a pitch or check-down that can be completed. This idea gives us a triple-option set up of sorts, but in a less traditional manner and sequence. Since 8-Man allows for the G to be made pass-eligible, we will also tag them as part of this scheme. All of our run plays have this built into them and we have a signal that activates this PRO/RPO if-then for us.

As I mentioned before, one of the limiting factors of 8-player football is not only the loss of two linemen, but a hybrid skill player as well. While much of our offense is designed to overwhelm the second and third levels of a defense and find uncapped grass, the utilization of all available skill players in our intermediate and deep play concepts meant sacrificing protection making us susceptible to pressure, which presented a significant challenge to which we are still adapting. To address this additional potential protection challenge initially, we installed multiple tags that disguise our protection and include motion as well as shifting on both the concept side and backside of the play. While this not necessarily new and are in many examples similar to this that you would encounter in 11-player football, the caveat here is that the methodology or necessity is very much due to the fluid, less traditional nature of 8-player defenses that make identifying coverage concepts,

uncapping grass, and so on a little more difficult. These motions and shifts allow us to dictate grass to the defense as well as an opportunity to expose their protection.

While our C and QB have the freedom to communicate presnap protection adjustments, every player in our offense counts and has a presnap read in their area that will determine what they do using an if-then rule. We also use three motion tags, which we call whip, jet, and orbit to help create confusion, uncap grass or create a window, and augment our protection. Any player off the line can be tagged with any motion and have an additional route or responsibility added – examples would be whip + arrow, orbit + wheel, or jet + shield. An example of how we could apply our if-then rule with a motion tag is if motion player reads man, they will execute their poem and could become part of the protection by taking the defender out of the box, away from the backside, create a conflict for a defender on the concept side, or just run their route; if the read is zone, the motion player is inserted into our box protection allowing us to pick up additional pressure. Shifting also allows us to do this, but in a more direct way.

In addition to motion and shifting, we use multiple formations that are both orthodox and unorthodox. 8-player in many ways allows coordinators to get creative on both sides of the ball and while we use multiple formations, our entire offensive system is available to us in

every formation. Some of our formations exploit one of the most interesting, but in my opinion exciting aspects of 8-player football on the offensive side of the ball: the pass-eligible guard. This sort of hybrid ideology is ubiquitous throughout our entire offensive and defensive schemes and have found it to be a lot of fun both to install and for the student-athletes to run. Shifting and motioning not only help in the aforementioned ways, it also helps us disguise when we make the guard eligible as a run or pass option. Another aspect of our formation-driven philosophy is that we have had a base play associated with every formation, which constitutes our base offense. This philosophy allows us to call plays very quickly and quickly tag or make other modifications. Additionally, each base play from the native formation can be run in other formations as well, making it difficult to predict what we will do and continue allowing us to run our complete playbook from any formation. We then join this system with the Air Raid philosophy and our unique version of that playbook with that of a spread/option team to complete our offense.

My philosophy as a coach is like many others in our sport in that I believe success on Fridays is determined by your process and how you practice during the week. We try and create a practice intensity and speed that exceeds that of the game with EDDs and periods that directly translate to Fridays. This year we will be a two-platoon team,



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which is new for SMC, and somewhat a challenge with a smaller coaching staff.

Like many teams, our practice script is broken into 5-minute increments that include a mixture of INDY, platoon, cross-over, and team periods. Given that we will be a two-platoon team, we will be able to expand our EDDs to include all those associated with the air raid offense, such as settle and noose, pat and go, and routes on air all working towards the magic rep as well as cross-over periods with our defense for 1-on-1s, 7-on-7s, half-line, blitz/blitz pick up, and team periods. We have two hybrid po-

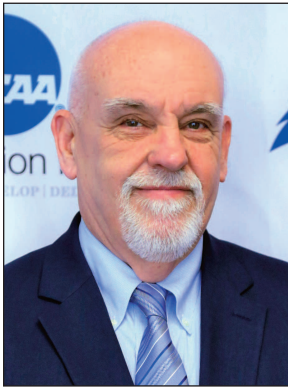
sitions in our offense – RB/TE and G/TE – so that adds a wrinkle that we solved by creating a second INDY period that has each position focus on the secondary skill: OL to WR Coach to work receiving EDDs, WR to OL Coach to work blocking EDDs, and TE to RB Coach to work RB EDDs. Other than our *flex* or *show me* period, we do not deviate from our practice script, because again we're looking to perfect what we do constantly chasing that magic rep.

I appreciate your time reading this article and hope you found it informative and grabbed onto something you can apply to your offense

whether it's 8-player or 11-player. Our offensive system and process continues to be a work in progress and evolves as the game demands. If any of you would like additional information – especially new 8-player coaches and coordinators – please always feel free to reach out. My goals more than anything else is, to the best of my ability, empower the coaches and student-athletes of our great sport and to equip them with the skills they need to be successful on and off the field. I have learned so much from so many and appreciate the platform to pay that forward. Best of luck to you all on your upcoming seasons!

FEET, FIT, FIGHT, FINISH

By: Mark J. Hahn, Assistant Offensive Line Coach, Concordia University Wisconsin



Mark Hahn

As a player and now a coach, fluency in the language of football is a necessity that can never be underestimated. Simple, illustrative, declarative terms and phrases coined to simultaneously instruct and mentor rule the day whether on the field or sideline. Crucial considerations must be given when it comes to coaching the offensive line. Whether coaching youth, high school or college, I have found that effective blocking technique boils down to this simple phrase and progression: feet, fit, fight and finish.

Success in any venture begins on solid footing. And to be an accomplished offensive lineman isn't any different.

At the onset, the position of the **feet** determines who will rule the day. They reveal balance, movement, quickness and power. Attributes those in the box must employ executing all manner of blocks. A balanced, shoulder width stance helps the hips maintain a low square base, bringing with it the chest and head into an ideal alignment. Toes kept even or down hand toes just above the ball of the front foot affords great lateral movement. **Feet** aligned as such affords quick steps in either direction. Adjustments made on the fly can then become second nature. With the weight centered in the arch, a lineman can run, trap and pass block from either direction. The ideal scenario for

today's RPO schemes.

With footing established, the player is positioned to step, align, frame and drive; **fitting** themselves directly into the opponent's body. At this juncture, it is crucial that **feet**, hips, chest and head remain stacked one atop the other. The fail-safe to maintain that alignment relies solely on the continuous movement of the **feet**. But once they stop, all is lost. This orientation insures balance, enhances leverage and maintains lateral fluidity. Elements essential for a proper **fit**.

When blocking one-on-one, a player's alignment must be both low and centered on the target. If executing a double team or combination block, a player must halve the opponent. This positioning acts to frame the opponent, armpit to armpit, chest to thighs. The sweet spot when it comes to the fit. It keeps one away from the edges, spinning, grabbing, dragging and such. When a lineman aims to **fit** squarely and securely into that target on the man across the line of scrimmage, he can lock on, exert his influence and drive them off the ball.

I liken what comes next to that of a **fight**.

Essentially, that is the mind-set one needs to adopt and embrace when you make your living in the box. For that opponent is not going to willingly allow any of this to happen. Evasive maneuvers will abound. Conduct within - and slightly beyond - the spirit of the game can and will be employed to either secure or dispatch the **fit**. Imbalance, overextension, poor alignment of the **feet** and foot movement can and will be exploited by all defenders. Good ones can and will defeat the block before it even begins. But with footing secure, hips, chest and head oriented and on task, then steps, alignment, **fit** and drive can surely follow.

All hands, shoulders, hips, feet and head must be on deck during this phase of the block. All must be fully engaged in preserving the fit despite the other's incessant efforts to fight against it and repel it. All must be employed in gaining the advantage over the opponent

through effort, perseverance and a healthy portion of "want to".

Like any fight, there will be ebbs and flows. Advantage gained, lost and then regained. Stalemates may be plenty. Over and over it goes. On and on. Play by play. Series by series. Quarter by quarter. But regardless of the tactics, the momentum or the perceived advantage of the moment, the player must keep one final objective front and center.

To Finish

An aspect of the progression that is more attitude and feel than technique and execution, it takes no talent to finish. Adjust the mindset to remain totally present in the moment so that one can adapt, respond and renew the attack when necessary. With the feet set, fit established and the fight well in hand, a player should fully immerse themselves in the finish.

The opponent will declare their intentions by stunt, through pressure or read. Via stunt, he seeks to draw attention away from execution. Pulling one out of their thoughts and assignment. Take the bait and follow, the vacuum will most certainly be filled by another. Stay present, fully in the moment and remain on task to completion. Through pressure, it boils down to physics. They track the play and ball, with each action exerted on you foretelling the path they wish to take towards it. Staying present in the moment provides the opportunity to respond with equal and opposite force. Forcing them to contend with you and the ball. When reading, they seek to **flee** and intersect. So run you must. Quicker **feet**, tighter fit and fiercer fight will help to contain, with either you, the sidelines or the stands acting as the boundary. **Finish** to make the defender contend with you, the ball and the clock.

Whether player or coach, fluency in the language of football is a necessity that can never be underestimated. **Feet, fit, fight and finish**. A phrase and progression aimed at effective blocking. And winning all four quarters.

CHOICE OUT OF STACK

By: Jason Wagner, Associate Head & O-Line Coach, Strength & Conditioning Coordinator, UW-Platteville



Jason Wagner

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville football staff would like to thank the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association for the opportunity to share this article with the WFCAs coaches. We are honored to talk about our inside zone package in combination with the bubble screen concept.

In this article we will discuss our stack formation and cover the basic principles of our inside zone play. We will then explain the quarterback's and running back's reads and meshing techniques. In the end we will focus on the bubble screen concept.

We decided to go to the stack formation to improve our running game. In addition, we were looking for a run/pass option on choice downs without the necessity to audible. We are looking for a four to seven yard gain on choice downs leading to manageable medium to short yardage situations on 2nd and 3rd down.

The zone/bubble combination is a very easy pre-snap read for the quarterback. The quarterback determines whether the defensive alignment is in our advantage for the bubble screen, i.e. overload in the box (Diagram 1), or is in favor of the inside zone, i.e. overload of the stack formation (Diagram 2). After he determines whether he will throw the bubble or run the inside zone he will go through the same mechanics no matter what his decision is. The beauty of this play is that the offensive line and the running back will always run inside zone and the receivers will go through their bubble action. Therefore the defense will always see run and screen action no matter where the ball goes.

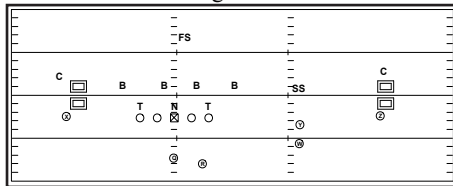


Diagram 1 – Overload of the Box

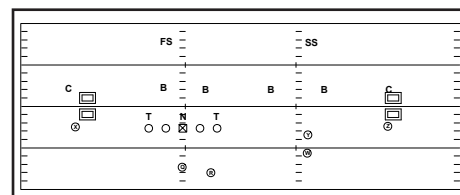


Diagram 2 – Overload of the Stack Formation

Stack Formation

In order to successfully combine the inside zone with the bubble screen we use the stack formation. We can stack our slot receiver either behind an inside receiver or an outside receiver (Diagram 3 and 4). We also use a double stack formation where the slot receivers on both sides are stacked behind the outside receiver (Diagram 5). We feel that these formations have various benefits for both the inside zone and the bubble screen.

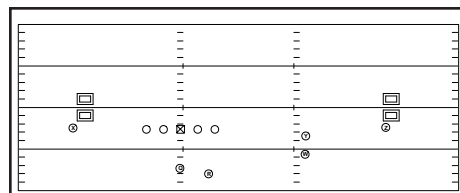


Diagram 3 – Stack Formation (W stacked behind slot)



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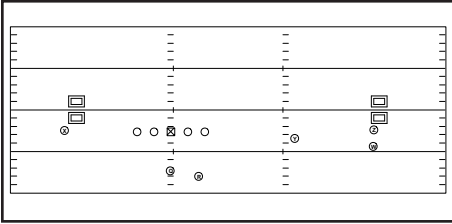


Diagram 4 – Stack Formation (W stacked behind split end)

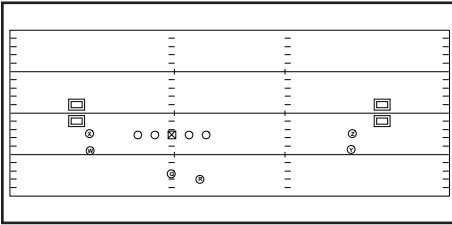


Diagram 5 – Double Stack

The benefit of the stack formation for the inside zone is the necessary adjustment of the outside linebackers to the stacked receivers. Versus conventional doubles and trips formations, most defenses apex their outside linebackers and make them double edge players defending the run and the pass. This presents a problem for the slot receivers because it is very hard to legally block the outside backers on inside zone plays. Versus the stack formation the outside linebackers have to split out further from the nucleus of the formation in order to cover up the receivers. Therefore they are less of a threat to stop the run or to blitz.

Another benefit of the stack formation is that the throw and catch of the bubble screen is a lot easier out of the stack alignment. On a regular bubble screen the quarterback has to throw a perfect ball to the up-field shoulder of the receiver who is moving away from him. The bubble pass out of the stack is thrown at an almost stationary receiver who faces the quarterback. This leads to a higher completion rate and a higher comfort level for quarterback and receiver.

Inside Zone Principles

We run our inside zone play out of the shotgun formation. We are a strict 10 & 20 personnel offensive football team. Our inside zone play is a downhill attacking run play. Our aiming point for the play is playside A-gap, to backside A-gap, to cut back. We believe the front side B & C-gaps are non factors in the play. We will block playside B & C-gap and let anything come wider than the C-gap without making adjustments. We will concentrate on blocking the playside A-gap, backside A-gap and cut back lane to ensure success of the play. We do not discourage the play from hitting front side; it will happen if pressure comes from the backside of the play.

We will briefly explain how we attack both 3-Down (Diagram 6) and 4-Down (Diagram 7) fronts. Our zone philosophy does not change, but our technique will vary between fronts. Ver-

sus a 3-Down front, we are thinking pressure at all times. We make a call up front indicating 1st - that we have a 3-Down front and 2nd - that we will stay on track and zone it off. The 3-down front leaves multiple bubbles and lanes for attacking linebackers; therefore we will never double down on any down lineman. We will be conscious of them as an uncovered lineman and punch or flipper through them to the next level. Our backside tackle will climb the backside B-gap, being conscious of the defensive end crossing his face. That is the only situation where we will block the BS defensive end.

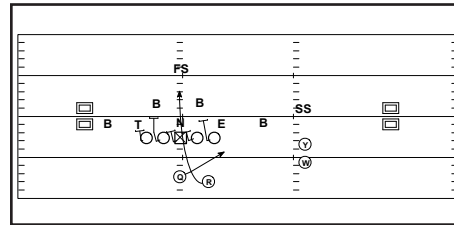


Diagram 6 Inside Zone vs. 3-Down

Versus a 4-Down front, we are thinking movement on the two interior defensive linemen. We will still zone off the play, but with one or two linebackers in the box we can spend some time and get hip-to-hip movement on down linemen as second level permits. We are still running a zone scheme; our uncovered principle stays the same. Only our uncovered technique changes; the uncovered lineman still takes a drop into his gap with eyes to the playside, but will quickly get vertical and combo the backside defender if nothing comes to the playside. With both fronts our backside tackle would determine whether there is a down B-gap threat. If not, he would climb at the B-gap defender and adjust to D-gap defender if B disappears; leaving the C-gap defender for the QB read.

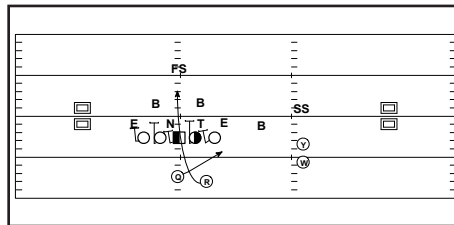


Diagram 7 Inside Zone vs. 4-Down

QB & RB Reads and Mesh

The quarterback's ability to successfully slow the game down and read defensive alignments as the play progresses is vital to the play having successful outcomes. As described previously, the quarterback has to determine with his pre-snap read if he decides for the inside zone or the bubble screen. If the quarterback decides for the inside zone, his post-snap read determines whether he hands the ball off or runs the ball himself.

The running backs action is always the same. He cannot leave his stance and begin downhill movement until the quarterback has secured the football. The reason for this is so the timing is always the same, even if the snap is

off. It is the running back's responsibility to get over the ball because the quarterbacks' eyes are on his post-snap read, i.e. the defensive end or C-gap defender.

Upon completion of the snap, the quarterback will open his hips and place the ball in the running back's stomach with both hands, starting the mesh on his own back hip. This continues until the ball is in line with the quarterback's belt buckle. At this point, as the mesh has reached its completion, the quarterback needs to determine if he will hand the ball off or run it. If the defensive end (or C-gap defender), who is left unblocked on the backside, crashes down the line, the quarterback pulls the ball and runs outside off tackle. If the defensive end buzzes his feet or comes up field, the quarterback will hand the ball off and fake the bubble screen pass or carry out his run fake.

The situation leading to the bubble screen is the same at the start. This includes the snap and mesh. As the quarterback determines the bubble screen numbers are in his favor, he will mesh until he reaches his own belt buckle at which time he will then pull the ball, square his body and throw the screen to the stack receiver.

If the defense plays games, the quarterback must be able to think on his feet. This includes determining bubble numbers, pulling the ball and then realizing an outside linebacker ran to the stack. In this instance we no longer give the bubble screen a high possibility for success, therefore the quarterback would have to pull the ball and run outside off tackle.

Bubble Screen Concept

The concepts of the bubble screen stay the same no matter where the receiver who is catching the ball is lined up. We are trying to get the ball to the receiver just outside the hash and tell him to aim for the numbers. He cannot cut the ball back before he reaches the numbers because of the pursuit by the defense. The pre-snap read by the quarterback determined a three-on-three situation over the stack formation with one defender likely being a deep defender. Therefore, we will be able to block the two low defenders, leaving the bubble receiver one-on-one with the deep defender in open space.

On the snap the stacked receiver opens his hips and shoulders to the quarterback and feathers two to three steps to the outside. He cannot lose ground because the pass should be a forward pass caught behind the line of scrimmage. After he catches the ball he turns and runs to the numbers aiming up-field as quick as possible (Diagram 8).

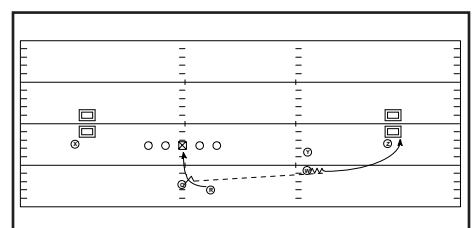


Diagram 8 Bubble Action and Landmarks

The blocking by the other two receivers is determined by the defensive alignment. If the slot receiver has a good angle to pin the outside backer in, we will block straight ahead. If the outside backer is aligned to far outside of the slot receiver, the split end cracks and the slot arcs to lead outside (Diagram 9 and 10).

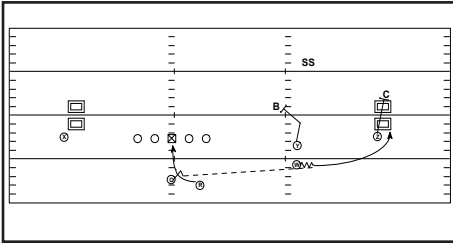


Diagram 9 Blocking vs. OLB inside

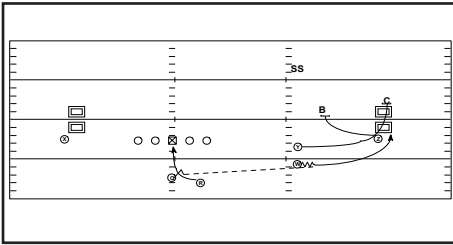


Diagram 10 Crack & Arc

Versus a soft cover 2 or a cover 4 team the split end has to read and block the force defender.

He will push up-field while seeing the safeties reaction. If the safety comes downhill, the split end will change his path to block the safety. In this case the stacked receiver is one-on-one with the corner in open field (Diagram 11).

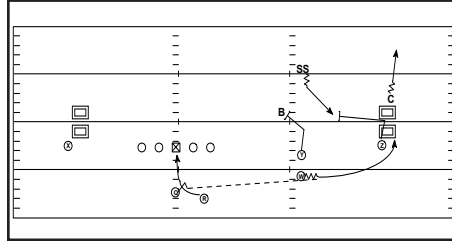


Diagram 11 Adjustment vs. Cover 4 Conclusion

At UW-Platteville, we feel that packaging the inside zone with the bubble screen out of the stack formation has tremendously improved our running game and our production on choice downs. This package can also be combined with a play action package, the quick passing game and trick plays. We can run our base offense out of the stack formation and therefore force the defense to adjust to our attack without being predictable.

Please feel free to contact us at UW-Platteville if you have any questions about any parts of our program.

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GENERAL FOOTBALL

KEYS TO SUCCESS FROM TWO OF THE BEST

By: Bill Collar, Hall of Fame and Former Head Football Coach, Seymour High School



Bill Collar

As a young coach I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be an assistant to two of the all time great football coaches in the state. My first two years I served as an assistant to **Gordy Schofield in Antigo** and then for three years I was on the staff of **Roger Harring at UW-La Crosse**. Both are members of the WFCa Hall of Fame and have received numerous other honors. Recently I decided to interview them and ask the same questions about what made their teams so successful. Both men are approaching 90 years old and clearly recalled their days on the sideline.



Gordy retired at Antigo after 25 years as head coach compiling a 199-41-2 record, a winning percentage of .829. Prior to the onset of the playoffs his teams were consistently ranked among the top in the state. His teams won 15 conference championships in the tough Wisconsin Valley Conference and were undefeated 7 times. They were Division I State Champions in 1976, 1978 and 1982. Gordy was selected Wisconsin High School Football Coach of the Year in 1972, 1976 and 1982. He retired after the 1987 season and currently lives in Antigo.

Roger rebuilt programs at Ladysmith High School and Wisconsin Rapids. At Ladysmith he won three conference championships and his

football teams were undefeated in 1961 and 1962. He compiled a 31 win, 9 loss record during his 5 years there. From 1963 to 1969 Roger led the Raiders to two conference championships in the Wisconsin Valley Conference. In his 31-year career at UW-La Crosse, the Eagles compiled an overall record of 261-75-7 for a winning percentage of .771. Named National Coach of the Year in 1995, **Roger** guided UW-L to three national championship seasons. Twenty-five times in 31 years his teams finished first or second in their conference, including 15 conference titles and 14 national playoff appearances. He was also named conference Coach of the Year seven times. In 2019 Roger was ranked 92nd in ESPN's list of greatest college football coaches of all time. He retired after the 1999 season and resides in La Crosse.

1. How did you establish your coaching philosophy?

Gordy - Ade Olsen, my coach at UW-Eau Claire influenced me and I was an assistant to Link Walker at Antigo for six years. Both of them believed in stressing the fundamentals and were good motivators. I also picked up things from other successful coaches. I didn't copy them but assimilated key concepts into my program. My coaching friend, Ted Thompson had a great football mind. We had many conversations about football.

Roger - My football foundation goes back to grade school and several coaches who made football fun. I came to believe that you didn't motivate players by berating or punishing them. Be positive and make an athlete feel good about being part of the team. I started both ways at St. Norbert when the highly successful Tom Hearnden was the coach. We were undefeated and he certainly influenced me.

2. Explain two or three keys to your success.

Gordy - Over the years we had many outstanding players at Antigo. I also had the same assistants for many years. We trusted each other, believed in the program and communicated effectively. I spent a great amount of time studying game films and preparing for each opponent. Back then, after the game we would send the film on the bus to Green Bay for development and with any luck the bus would bring it back the next day. If it wasn't there I could get pretty ugly. Merrill and Everest didn't have lights and played on Saturdays so if we weren't playing on Friday or Saturday we were scouting.

Roger - When I started at Ladysmith the program was not respected and not many students came out for football. I believed in talking with the kids, calling them by name

and letting them know that I cared about them. We had some tough kids, but they didn't understand what being on a team was all about. When a player made a mistake, instead of yelling at them I learned it was more productive to ask, "Why did you do that?" During my years at La Crosse I had outstanding assistant coaches like Roland Christianson who believed in the same fundamentals as I did.

3. What year did you retire and what have been the major changes in the game since your retirement?

Gordy - I retired after the 1987 season. The biggest change I've seen is allowing the offensive players to use their hands. I used to emphasize to the defense that they had the advantage because they could use their hands. The spread formation is a big change, usually the quarterback was under center. I'd hate to try to defend some of the present formations with a talented quarterback who can throw. We never called many audibles and kept things quite simple. Most players played two or three sports. Of course, the WIAA has now allowed summer contact and limits the amount of contact in practice.

Roger - I retired in 1999. The approach to coaching has changed. Instead of criticizing and beating kids down more coaches are positive and helping players develop more confidence in themselves and the team. With the popularity of clinics and camps the game has become more complicated. There is greater emphasis on the passing game and spread offenses. Advances in technology have made it much easier to scout and prepare for the opponent.

4. What advice do you have for coaches today?

Gordy - Work hard. Football must be your life during the season. Learn from other coaches and the teams you play. Ball control and field position are extremely important. Teach getting off the ball and controlling the line of scrimmage. Eliminate penalties. It is difficult to recover from a 15 yarder. We got together socially after games with the wives to help build staff unity. Our families usually attended all the games.

Roger - Encourage participation in the program. Some students don't have much of a home life and football gives them a sense of identity. Talk to kids in the school hallway, let them know you are interested in them. Teach and drill fundamental skills. Make sure you have the right players carrying the ball. Kids make mistakes, talk with them about how to improve. It is important to in-

clude the wives in postgame activities so they feel part of the program.

5. As you look back would you change anything?

Gordy - Not much. We never had a lot of players, some years we had seven or eight players playing both ways so we really worked on conditioning. We kept things pretty simple. I would rather do a few things really well than many things not very well. If we had something going we would stick with it. Some games one running back might carry the ball thirty times. Once the defense committed to the run we had success with the play action pass.

Roger - During my early years we didn't have very good equipment. Make sure administrators understand how important it is and fight for your team. It took me a while to realize the importance of the kicking game and strength building. Before I came to Rapids players were told not to catch punts. It is a matter of teaching them and building their confidence. I started a strength building program as part of football practice.

6. What did you miss most when you retired? What didn't you miss?

Gordy - Of course I missed the excitement of Friday nights. I was 57 years old and ready to retire. I was an "old school coach" in charge of offense, defense and special teams. My assistants were position coaches, and they contributed a great deal, but most of the game planning was up to me. It was a lot of work. Now teams have coordinators and that makes it easier on the head coach.

Roger - I was 67 years old and it was time. Successful coaching requires working long hours. I missed the relationship with the assistant coaches and the energy of the players. A certain camaraderie exists on a successful football team. To this day I still get calls from former players

7. What did you find most rewarding about coaching?

Gordy - Taking kids who really didn't believe in themselves and changing their attitudes to become confident young men was a great experience. The most rewarding thing for me was to see an athlete who didn't play much as a junior become a starter as a senior. Football is a great character builder. Kids who stuck it out as seniors realized it was their time to play.

Roger - I think I developed a good relationship with the players.. Many former players make it a point to call or look me up at games. I enjoy the reunions and catching up with the success players have had since they left school. During the pandemic we had a Zoom conference set up with the players from the national championship teams of 1985 and 1995. It was great to reconnect with many of the former players.

Collar - I also had the opportunity to speak with long time assistant coaches Dale Peterson of Antigo and Barry Schockmel of La Crosse. Both Coaches are members of the WFC Hall of Fame. Peterson assisted Schofield for the duration of his career and Schockmel assisted Harring for the 31 years he coached at La Crosse. I asked them one question.

Why was Gordy/Roger so successful as a head coach?

Peterson - Gordy was smart. He understood the game of football. He worked hard, kept it simple and ran the same system from seventh grade up. By the time the players got to the varsity they understood the offense. We had a close staff and supportive administration. The coaches were like a family. Everyone worked together and the coaches wives and families were our biggest supporters.

Schockmel - Roger always gave credit to his assistants and the players even when they didn't deserve it. He was very humble. He allowed the assistants to be themselves and as a result we stayed with the program for many years. Roger believed in treating everyone associated with the program as family. The players wanted to win for him and the team in addition to themselves. They believed in him. Coach Harring had the uncanny ability to come up with the big play at the right time. This amazed me.

Collar - After interviewing the coaches it struck me how similar their responses were. Even though their personalities and coaching styles were different they emphasized the same concepts. Stressing sound fundamentals, building relationships, effective communication, hard work and treating people like family were the prevailing themes. I was fortunate as a young coach to interact with these coaching legends and have them as mentors.



ASSISTANT COACH PROGRESSION

By: Alan Tomlinson, Assistant Football Coach, Luck Football



Alan Tomlinson

I would like to Thank Co Head Coaches Matt Dunlap and Ryan Humpal of the Luck Cardinals for allowing me to write this article for *The Point After II*. It is truly a great publication that gives the reader tremendous content in every publication.

Early August in 2000 I approached then head coach, Don Kendzior, to see if he would allow me to volunteer to coach with the Luck Cardinal football team. My son Travis was going to play that year and I wanted to be a part of that. Coach K didn't really know me other than I was already an assistant boy's basketball coach at Luck. Coach K welcomed me with open arms and asked me one thing "What are you going to bring to the team?" Now that was a really good question, for which I really didn't have an answer. I had not been involved in any football for 20 years and the last experience I had was when I was playing on the fields of Luck High School back in 1979. Coach K's question was something I really had to ponder.

I showed up at the first practice not having a clue about how things were run in regards to practices and all that goes on with football in the preseason. Coach K told me to speak my mind and he would be open to listening to any suggestions. He also said that it doesn't mean that he would agree with me but he would certainly listen. Needless to say, the way football practices were run compared to twenty years ago was vastly different and I found myself being the "rookie" on the field. I paid attention to everything that was going on every day in practice and learned how the practices were run. The biggest thing that I realized during that time was a lack of special training for punters and kickers. I brought this up to Coach K. and he agreed with me and asked "What are you going to do about it?"

I bought all the books I could find and watched training films on how to coach and correctly implement fundamentals for punters and kickers. I am a firm believer that Special Teams specialists are extremely important and not

enough time is spent on those particular positions.

Now that I had a mission I planned on learning everything there was to know about punting and kicking. I went to a fantastic kicking camp in River Falls to learn from the pros and brought that back to practice. I also watched to see where I could possibly be of service to Coach K. to help alleviate some of the mundane, yet necessary, everyday tasks so he could concentrate more on actually coaching. I studied how the practices were run and tried to be sure that all equipment needed was where it needed to be and at the correct time Coach K. asked me to help with running backs receivers, QBs, corners and safeties because that was what I was familiar with from my experience on the field. I found numerous new drills for all of these positions so that we could continue to improve on the fundamentals yet keep the practice interesting with those new drills to produce the same result. I also noticed that there was not a lot of experience when it came to taping of the players. I should remind you that those were the days when there were not trainers in our small school. So, I studied some basic taping skills and brought those to practice so that he didn't have to worry about that I can't begin to guess how many ankles I taped that first year and years following, but it was for the greater good.

The first years were extremely eye opening in regards to how the game had changed over the previous 20. The players were bigger, faster, and stronger. The offensive and defensive playbook was way beyond my current knowledge and I really had to pay attention. When I played, we had about 10 plays and now there were many different plays from many different formations, not counting all of the different defensive schemes involved. It made it so interesting and exciting.

As Coach Kendzior asked me 20 years ago "What are you going to bring to the team?" Now I have had experience with all of the positions except for the line, I no longer do any taping since we have certified athletic trainers, I have coached JV offense and defense and I have worked with all of the special teams. I was able to coach the first JV offense in eight player football before we changed the following year. I have filmed games from the booth and currently do all of the stats for our team and WISS-PORTS. I got my CDL 6 years ago so I also drive the bus to all of the games. I am a photographer, so there are times when I am on the sideline taking pictures during our games, which then appear on our Luck Football Facebook page. I also co-commentate with my old high school coach at each of the home games and away games to be broadcast on *"The We Are Network."* I still work with all kickers, punters, receivers, backs, QB's, corners and

safeties. I feel my biggest contribution to the team has been scouting. I spend hours and hours studying film for each of our games throughout the summer for the following year and also during the year. I compile and provide all of that information to the co-head coaches, Dunlap and Humpal so they can devise their game plan for our next opponent based on that information.

If you are a new assistant coach or going to be, I would like to say this, learn all you can and do everything you are capable of to help the program and your head coach to make his position easier. It is so rewarding to be able to contribute to a program. In 2016 the WFCA awarded me the 8-Player Region Assistant Coach of the Year. This award was greatly appreciated but the real reward comes when you realize that the things you do for the program help it to be successful

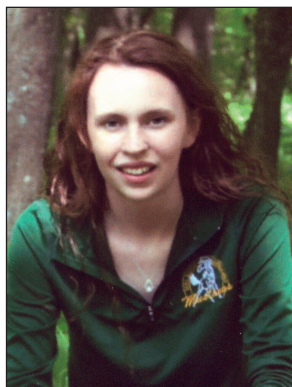
So throughout the last 20 years of coaching football at Luck High School I have learned so much not just about the game. but how and when to coach with some of the best coaches I could possibly be around. I truly believe that coaching longevity with the same coaches is really important. Co-head coach Matt Dunlap; co-head coach, Ryan Humpal; assistant coach, Joel Wells; and now Assistant coach, Don Kendzior; have been together as a coaching staff at Luck football for many years. We have become a really cohesive unit with a lot of knowledge about how to provide at great experience for our young athletes. This last year we realized a culmination of all that experience with the opportunity to bring home the 2019, 8-player Gold Football. What an honor!

**"You can be a hard but
good loser.
Any coach or team
that cannot lose
and treat opponents
with respect
has no right to win."**

—Knut Rockne

MANAGING THE MUSTANGS

By: Katie Hoeth, Manager, Melrose-Mendoro Football Program



Katie Hoeth

Seven years ago, my life changed. It wasn't anything big to anyone besides me, but we started our football unit in my fifth grade gym class. This caused my love for football. I spent time over the next couple of years learning more about football and asking questions that my dad couldn't answer. However, it wasn't until my freshman year of high school that coaching became a career for me to possibly pursue. And, it wasn't until my senior year of high school that coaching became a true possibility.

At the end of my junior year, I asked the Junior High football coach if I could help him with practices. He told me he didn't know if he would have much for me to do, and that I should go talk to the High School coach. I didn't want to because Coach Lockington is slightly intimidating. However, one day he stopped me to talk. We sat down to talk and decided that I would be a manager for the football team.

That year in June, I had the opportunity to travel with the team to a football camp. We went up north and combined with a few other high schools to work on the fundamentals of football. While there, I was able to walk around while they were working on different drills. Going into it, I understood the game of football, but by the end of it, I was able to understand more by the point of view of a coach. Not many members of our football team were at the camp, but it was remarkable to see the changes in the guys that were there. They were able to work with other coaches and players, and because of this they were able to get an idea of things from a different standpoint.

Come August, the first day of practice started. Like most teams, the first few weeks were spent conditioning, learning the basics, and reviewing fundamentals. As for me, it was in-

credibly awkward, not only had I never played football in my life, I wasn't too sure what I was supposed to be doing. At some point during the first few weeks, Coach Lockington put me in charge of a conditioning station. This was my first real time being put in a "coach" position. As the weeks went on, the first game was approaching. I was up in the booth and filmed it. I was given a headset, but I didn't say anything. Over the next few weeks I got to know all of the coaches more and told them that I wanted to be a coach someday. Coach Lockington then told me to draw a play. I drew one for him, but it wasn't one we ended up ever using. Instead, I pushed and pushed for the idea of the reverse. Finally, we implemented one.

As the season went on, I became more involved with my role on the team and was hit with the ups and downs of the season. I was able to play call scout offense, speak my mind in the booth, call some plays during the game, and even coach players more. With more time working with the players, I was able to understand the game more and more. The season started out awkward, but by the time the last game came around I was able to call the first play. I'll never forget the opportunity the Mustang Football program offered me!



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FOOTBALL AND LIFE LESSONS LEARNED FROM PHIL DATKA

By: Mike Pfeiffer, Assistant Football Coach, Germantown High School

Author's note: I wrote the following essay in the weeks following the passing of Phil Datka in the winter of 2015. Looking back, I realize it was more of an exercise in coping with the sudden loss, rather than an attempt to write an article for "The Point After II". However, Jake Davis our Head Coach and Dave Branske our Defensive Coordinator, encouraged me to submit these thoughts. If it seems a little sentimental or emotional, it can be attributed to my feelings at that time.

I would also like to take the opportunity to express my thanks and admiration to John Brodie, my high school coach, and Jerry Golembiewski my first head coach when I got out of college. They, like Phil, were true leaders and mentors not only to me but the many players who were lucky enough to play for them.

After the sudden and unexpected passing of Phil Datka in December and the huge outpouring of remembrances, sympathy, love and respect for Phil, I thought it would be a good idea to share some bits of wisdom I learned from Phil over the 20+ years I had the privilege of knowing him. He always encouraged me to write an article for *The Point After II*, so this is my own small way of remembering Phil and my own way of thanking him for the role he played in my life.

I would also like to thank the Datka family: His wife Mary and children Alison, Doug and Jesse. The basis of this article was from a list they shared at the funeral entitled Things I've Learned.

I was hired by Phil in 1993 to coach the JV defense and Inside Linebackers and Defensive Ends. I was one year out of college and I was by far the youngest person on a veteran staff. When I came to the first staff meeting I was expecting to spend a long time being taught the Germantown system. Instead, Phil introduced me, gave me the defensive playbook and told me to go coach.

Lesson #1: Surround yourself with good people and let them do their thing.

Over the course of those first few years, I knew Phil was watching what I was doing and as a young coach, I was always expecting him to correct me on technique, coaching style etc. I, as a young coach, was of course gung ho, loud and probably over the top. But aside from some suggestions, and input on personnel, he let me coach and allowed me to develop. He did however express to all of us lesson #2.

Lesson #2: If you really chew a player out, before either of you leave for the day, put your arm around that kid and explain why you did it, and explain to that kid he is an important part of the team.

One of the favorite topics of conversation in the coaches' office was Food. Looking back at the pictures of the coaching staff in those days was certainly proof of our love of food. Everyone liked to join in this discussion, and Phil often said we should begin to exchange recipes.

Lesson #3: There is nothing better than chicken on the grill, cook it low and slow.

In the early 2000's we were preparing for a level 2 play-off game against the number 1 seed in our bracket. Those were the days when you played Level 1 on a Tuesday, and played again on Saturday. I remember distinctly that day at practice, a cool sunny, perfect autumn morning (It was teacher's convention) as we were running through our position time, special teams, and team time. It was an excellent practice on both sides of the ball. After practice Phil asked everyone to stay a few minutes longer. As we gathered together he said to each of us, what a great job we did; how lucky he was to have us on staff and that he was so impressed that we were all working our tails off along with the kids. (We ended up winning that level 2 game by the way). He also said that he wished the superintendent, principal and school board could have seen that practice. "You guys are great teachers."

Lesson #4: Learning doesn't just occur in the classrooms.

Lesson #5: The best teachers are coaches.

Lesson #6: Good Teachers Care

During my time with Phil, we watched game film on Saturday mornings, and went home to do our scouting work over the weekend. Monday was either a Varsity Reserve game, with a brief introduction of the next opponent, and usually the kids lifted. After our discussions of the upcoming team, we would talk about our weekends. Phil's weekend aside from watching film consisted of an intense description of what he ate...

Lesson #7: Don't burn a good steak

... I would respond with a description of what my three girls would be doing. He would laugh and chuckle over my time spent playing with Barbie Dolls or hosting tea parties. He would often ask about them, he would make sure that I brought the girls to his house for trick or treat, where they got WAY too much candy, and generally showed a real interest in their lives. When I would bring the girls to school, he would always tell them to "Thank God you look like your mother rather than your father." My girls always thought that was funny.

Lesson #8: Children are the most precious commodity.

Lesson #9: A child's smile is priceless; in fact, all smiles are priceless.

Lesson #10: Listening is more important than talking.

For a number of years in the late 1990's and early 2000's we had great teams. Year after year we were contenders in our conference and in the play-offs. After we won the 2003 State Championship, Tom Kujawa began putting together a great retrospective of that year with game highlights and interviews of the players and coaches. One of the things Tom asked us to think about before we went on camera was: What were some of the reasons we were successful?

In this process we all had different ideas, such as: almost all the coaches were in the building, great players, great community support, the expectation of winning and great commitment from players. But one key thought emerged, from a coaching point of view, they knew and embraced their role. The success was not exclusively due to Phil, but it was truly a team effort. Put your ego aside and ask yourself, what can I do to help these young men and the team in general? In my eyes, that was one of Phil's greatest accomplishments, he was able to get eight very Type A personalities to work together for a common goal.

Lesson #11: Great players make great coaches.

Lesson #12: Share the Stage.

The first few years I coached at Germantown, I was always surprised at the simplicity of Phil's pre-game speeches. As a young coach I was expecting great oratory, vivid imagery and motivational speeches. Besides his very quiet prayer he recited before we took the field, his pre-game talks were usually short, and to the point. Play hard, out hit the other team, you have worked hard for this moment, go out and get it done. My first few games, I have to say I was a little disappointed. But as I came to realize, our kids generally did play hard, they did not hit their opponents, and more often than not, did get it done.

Lesson #13: Less is more

As you know, Phil was a long-time Assistant Principal, and during his time in that role he came in contact with students that had tremendous problems. He often told me the best part of his day was stepping out on the practice field, where the problems he faced were much simpler. But, that does not mean he ignored the problems of students he dealt with. In fact he would often return to his office after practice, feeling refreshed and ready to help these students who really could care less that he was the head football coach. One of the things I particularly admired about Phil was his fierce advocacy for kids that had problems and had no one to advocate for them. He took it as his personal mission to do whatever he could to give a troubled kid the opportunity to succeed.

Lesson #14: Advocate for all kids

I realize that I have spent a lot of time on lessons not totally related to football. But I think that is one of the reasons Phil was such an important figure in so many people's lives, a lot of what he taught was about being a good person, a good employee, a good friend or a good father. As he said many times, it is on these things we will be judged. But since this is *The Point After II* I would also like to add some strictly football related lessons.

Lesson #15: Run the option.

It puts pressure on the defense and you can win with lesser talent.

Lesson #16: 3rd and long, Run trap.

He was a master at teaching the trap and knowing when to run it.

Lesson #17: Don't be afraid to gamble.

Phil would not hesitate to run a trick play or go for it on 4th down.

Lesson #18: Keep practices organized and short.

Make them work hard and get them off the field. He really did not like conditioning, he always felt sorry for the big kids.

Lesson #19: Be thoughtful practitioners.

Don't be afraid to change or adapt. You can always learn something new.

Lesson #20: Enjoy the experience.

It's not the destination, it's the journey.

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A FOOTBALL FAMILY

By: Reggie Larson, Head Football Coach, New Richmond High School

First of all, I would like to thank the WFCB for giving me the opportunity to write an article for *The Point After II*. I've always loved reading this publication and I'm excited to contribute some of my personal experiences to it.

I'd like to start this story with a flashback to my childhood - where I grew up in Somerset, Wisconsin. Since a young age, football has been one of the biggest aspects of my life, and my family's lives. Some, or most, of my earliest memories involve football. I remember my dad, Bruce Larson, throwing a nerf football to me in the living room trying to improve my hands (it was no secret that I was going to be a lineman at a young age). I remember going up to the practice field in the first week of August and painting the lines on the field with my dad and my brother, Rocky. I remember setting all of the pads up and my friends and I tackling each other into them. I remember youth football with the Varsity players I idolized coaching our drills on Saturday mornings. I remember in 2002 when my dad was coaching for his first state title and the snowy, freezing practice the night before the game. I remember the calmness in the dark room where the players were listening to music and getting ready to go before the game. Heck, I would get just as focused and excited as them and my only task of the night was to grab the tee off the field after our team had kicked off. And of course, I remember Friday night games, looking up to the varsity players and dreaming about when it would be my turn to play under the lights. These are some of my fondest memories, and they all stem from the wonderful game of football.

My love for football didn't stop with those memories. As I got into high school those feelings only intensified, and the game brought our family closer together. In 2009, my freshman year of high school, my dad was the head football coach. Rocky was the senior starting quarterback. My sister, McKell, was the team manager. And my mom, Kelly, was the rock that held everything together by sitting at the 50-yard line for games, making meals, and being the most supportive football mom a family could ask for. Unfortunately, I wasn't good enough to play varsity football with my brother, but this was the start of something that would be a life-long journey for our entire family, all centered around football.

Fast forward two years to 2011, my junior year of high school. My dad is still the head

coach, my sister is still managing the team, and my mom is still sitting at the 50-yard line of every game. However, my brother's role has now changed; he has decided not to play football at the collegiate level due to an injury. Instead, he transitioned into a coaching role. He served as a student assistant under John O'Grady at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls (UWRF). This transition did not change anything for our family, all it meant was there was another football game to attend on Saturday afternoon after the Somerset game on Friday night. My brother still came to every one of our games, and my family still went to every one of my brother's games. This was also the time that

about topics that were new to me, like recruiting, study tables, and having players from all over the country on the same team. During this time I was like a sponge. I loved every aspect of it. This is also the time I realized that coaching would be in my not so distant future.

After my time at Somerset High School I was fortunate enough to receive an opportunity to play college football at UWRF for my brother. At the time, he was a position coach on the other side of the ball, so he never truly coached me. Having my brother at UWRF was the biggest draw in my decision to go there, which made this move a natural transition. Having just come off a state title victory at Somerset



I really got into the coaching side of football. My dad and I would dive into the Xs and Os of football and the 'why' to the way we do things during each given week. My dad would routinely talk with me and the rest of the players in my grade about character development, leadership development, weight room buy in, and the importance of being a multi sport athlete and how they all can positively shape a successful program. One on one, my dad and I would talk about personnel and who we thought would fit in where, going into the next season and how successful of a year we could have if everyone continued to work hard and believe. While all of this was going on, I was also able to get a snippet of what the college football world was like through conversations with my brother. I knew that I was going to want to play college football, so it was always awesome to get a snapshot of what that would look like through my brother. We would get to talk about the physical demands and time constraints of a college football player. We would also get to talk

High School, I was under the assumption that same success would just follow me to UWRF - boy was I wrong. In my first year of college football, we went 0-10. To go from the pinnacle of the sport, winning a championship, to the lowest of the low, not winning a game all season, was a very difficult thing to do. This is when I learned how difficult the game of football really is and to never take any success that you have for granted, because it can disappear in a hurry. While that was a very difficult first year of college, my teammates and I wanted to leave the

program better than we had found it by the time we left. The next year, we went 3-6. The following year, we went 4-6. And in my senior year, we finished 4-6 and in the top half of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) for the first time in 14 years. While we had a record well below .500 and never won a championship, that Senior season brought almost as much joy as the year we won the state championship in High School. We had left the program better than we had found it. This was the first time I realized you don't need to have an undefeated, championship winning team to have a successful season. In my time at UWRF, Rocky was eventually promoted to be the defensive coordinator and I got to see first hand how he motivated my teammates/friends and got them to play their absolute hardest. He was hard on them, but they knew he loved them, and their efforts reflected that. He showed me that age isn't the thing that makes a good coach; it's things like passion, preparation, and relationship building that make a successful coach. Of

course, during this time my dad would come to every single game and spring ball practice. We would talk almost nightly during our respective seasons about both of our upcoming opponents. We would also talk about the direction of both of the programs we were in. This is when I started to pick and choose the parts of each program that I would want to have in a program that was my own.

When it was finally my turn to pursue coaching, I made sure to highlight those exact experiences with my dad and brother and the successes they both have been able to accomplish and the idea that coaching has deep roots in my family. And while I didn't have a lot of direct coaching, and zero head coaching experience during my job hunt, I had been around coaching my whole life and had a very good idea of what I would want my own program to look like through what I learned at Somerset,

from my dad, and what I learned at UWRF, from my brother. Because of that, in the summer of 2018, I was fortunate enough to be named the Head Varsity Football Coach of New Richmond High School at the age of 23. Without a doubt, one of the main reasons I got hired stemmed from my dad and brother both being in the coaching ranks and the experiences I'd pulled from them. Now that I have my own program I try to instill things that I learned from both of them. In my program, we talk about character development, leadership development, have a commitment to the weight room during all seasons, and push the importance of a multisport athlete to all of our players, all of which I learned from my dad. I try to show passion, prepare like a mad man, and develop relationships that reach beyond just the game of football, just like my brother. There are countless other things that I've learned from both of them, but

those are the ones that I feel are evident in the person and the coach that I've become.

As it stands today, my dad, my brother, and I are all currently Head Football Coaches. My dad just finished his 19th season as the head coach of Somerset High School. In that time, he has compiled a career record of 176-67, with 3 state titles. My brother, who is 28 years old, was just hired as the Head Football Coach at Mayville State University earlier this year. Prior to that, he was the Defensive Coordinator at UWRF from 2016-2019, where he was hired at 24 years old. As for myself, I've just finished my 2nd season as the Head Football Coach at New Richmond High School at the age of 25. Football has been the biggest part of our family for as long as I can remember, and that isn't going to change anytime soon.

CO-OP FOOTBALL: PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES

By: Jason Gorst, Head Football Coach, Spencer High School



Jason Gorst

I would like to thank the WFCa for allowing me to write this article and for all they do to promote the sport of football in the State of Wisconsin. The opportunity to play football is something that I think all young men should have. I was fortunate to be afforded this opportunity while attending a very small high school in Granton in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While I never excelled as a player on the field I still look back at the lessons I learned and the experiences I had with the Neillsville/Granton Wardogs under the late Coach Brad Westphal as some of the most positive and character building times in my adolescent life. There were not many players from Granton, but Coach Westphal and the Neillsville School District's willingness to provide us an opportunity to play is something that has shaped my life and I will be forever grateful for.

Coach Adam Yaeger was the head coach that was one of the driving forces in the creation of the SC (Spencer/Columbus) football co-op that began in 2002. After several successful seasons Coach Greg Oestreich, took over and continued to maintain a strong co-op before I was given the great honor of becoming the third

head coach for SC Football. I have a great deal of gratitude to both of these men who have served as my mentors and as great ambassadors for the game of football.

SC Football just wrapped up our 18th season. I have had the pleasure of being the head coach for nine of those years. I would like to share as much information as possible about the logistics of our program so that others considering entering into a co-op can utilize us as one of the examples of how to create football opportunities for young men.

We typically have a total of 40-45 players with about 75% of them from Spencer and about 25% coming from Marshfield Columbus Catholic. Every day after school several of the Columbus players car pool to Spencer (sometimes with the help of parents or coaches) for practice. Once in awhile we are able to have a walk-through practice at Columbus, but with equipment and transportation concerns we feel that it is best to host our practices at one location. We have historically played one game a year in Marshfield for each level. While some coaches might view the idea of having two homecomings as a headache, we have embraced the idea of being able to celebrate the football program at both schools and in both communities. Last year we experimented with our first ever combined homecoming game. We also play one JV and one middle school game per year in Marshfield.

Currently our youth football programs still operate as separate entities. Spencer and Columbus each host tackle youth football for grades 3-6. A few years ago we began co-oping at the middle school level for grades seven and eight. We run that level similar to the high school with the practices hosted in Spencer. There is a bit more of an obstacle when it comes to transportation, but the coaches and parents for Columbus have played an integral role in providing the op-

portunity for the middle school boys to play. Speaking of coaches, we strongly prefer to have coaches from both schools and communities. While this has not been the case every year, we have had a good run of it as of late. We have been very fortunate to have Joe Konieczny from Columbus, one of the best basketball coaches in the state, work with us as our middle school football coach. Without the efforts of Coach K as an AD our program would not be where it is today.

I have fielded questions through the years from coaches who are considering co-ops. The questions usually involve transportation, finances, division placement based on combined enrollment, and other logistics related to having a co-op. While all of those aspects are certainly important, my message is pretty consistent: you can figure all of that stuff out, the primary focus is on providing young men the opportunity to participate in the greatest sport ever. At some point in the lives of most of the people reading this article football has influenced them. Many of our lives might look quite a bit different if it was not for the coaches and teammates who helped shape all of us. I would sincerely urge anyone who is presented with the opportunity to provide a football experience to young men to make it happen. Whether it be in the form of a co-op, 8-player football, or various levels and types of youth football, we can all serve as stewards of the game to pay it forward to the next generation of young men who will impact our society. Logistics can always be figured out. Eighteen years ago a small rural and a small Catholic school came together to forge a partnership that has benefited countless young men from both schools. We look forward to many more years of providing an excellent football experience for those who choose to play. If anyone has any questions about co-op football please do not hesitate to reach out to me at jgorst@spencer.k12.wi.us.

TRANSITION FROM 11-PLAYER TO 8-PLAYER FOOTBALL

By: Robin Rosemeyer, Head Football Coach, Gilman High School



Robin Rosemeyer

I would like to thank the WFCa and long-time Luck coach, Don Kendzior, for the opportunity to contribute an article regarding Gilman High School's transition from 11-player to 8-player football. Gilman has played 11-player football since the early 1950s, so making that decision to move to 8-player did not come easy.

Following the 2018 football season, Gilman High School had to make a fairly quick decision on committing to make the move to 8-player football. With school enrollment decreasing and some smaller, female dominated classes coming up, we realized the potential of having to make the move was a real possibility. In late November of 2018 we recognized a decision had to be made by early December to meet the WIAA deadline in order to play 8 man in the 2020 season and be playoff eligible. The following is some of the process we went through in preparing for 8-player and some thoughts after completing our 1st season of playing it.

THE DECISION TO MAKE THE MOVE

- We discussed as a school if we wanted to try to stay 11-player on our own, develop a co-op with a neighboring school to keep playing 11-player football or play 8-player on our own. We decided we would rather not co-op and stay the Gilman Pirates and that 8-player gave us the best opportunity. Future enrollment showed us we would have about 33 boys in the high school in a couple years due to smaller classes and female dominant classes.
- Like many other schools, there is a lot of community pride with football. I believe the community was happy we were able to stay the "Pirates" and play as our own school team.
- We played our last year of 11-player in 2019 with 18 players. We did have to finish a couple of games early in the season with 15 healthy players but for the most part we were fortunate and stayed injury free. We were expecting numbers in the middle teens for the 2020 season and ended playing the

2020 season with 15, only having to play a game or two with 14 total.

- We were looking forward to attending the WFCa clinic in Madison in the Spring of 2020 in order to learn more about the 8-player game but that cancellation forced us to do most of our research online. Watching other 8-player games on YouTube offered some of the best information we could get. Many area coaches were also willing to provide us with information to help us make a smooth transition.

DEVELOPING A SCHEME

- As coaches, sometimes you only know what you know so it was somewhat important to keep our scheme similar to what we did in 11-player to make the transition simple for our players and coaches.
- Every year coaches have to slightly adjust their scheme to the talent of their players. We had to do the same but also adjust our scheme to the NUMBER of players.
- Although 8-player football is a little more "wide open," you still need to scheme your offense and defense week-to-week to what your opponent does.
- With less players on the field it was easier to identify problems individually and scheme wise both in practice and games.

OFFENSIVE THOUGHTS

- Is this the time to change our offensive scheme from Wing-T to something else? We decided we could run our Wing-T scheme which helped the transition for coaches and players to keep change to a minimum. We were able to keep the trap, belly (iso), pitch, boot keep and counter run plays that we had previously run. We did use more I-Formation sets to do this but that did give us the flexibility to run plays either way. Some split back and double wing formations were also implemented throughout the season.
- We were fortunate that we had tight ends who were capable blockers and good receivers. They were physical enough to block defensive linemen and middle linebackers and quick enough to hook a defensive end to help us to get to the outside. This allowed us to stay in a double tight formation and still run play action passes off of our run plays.
- Although the majority of our offense was with the QB under center, we also employed some shotgun formations. We were able to execute similar running plays and play action plays out of these sets which minimized different offensive line blocking schemes while still giving other teams several formations to prepare for.
- We did need to change our pass protection slightly since Wing-T plays do have some guard – tackle cross blocking on play action passes. Two less offensive linemen took that away from us.

DEFENSIVE THOUGHTS

- We ended up playing a base 3-man front defense but did modify that depending on the other teams' offense and strengths. We have always preferred playing predominantly zone coverage and stayed with that philosophy with some cover 2, cover 3 and cover 4 being played. We had enough tough, athletic players that gave us very good flexibility week to week.
- We didn't have a lot of size to begin with, but defensively we preferred players who moved well versus size. Players who can read keys well also tend to look faster than they really are.
- The 3-man front allowed us to play with a penetrating nose tackle with our defensive tackle/defensive ends playing more lateral. DEs/DTs weren't able to get upfield to refrain getting trapped.
- Leverage, Leverage, Leverage. No matter the defense we play, we feel it is very important to know who your defensive leverage person is. The 8-player field is narrow and good leverage can make it even more narrow.
- When on a hash, the ball is only 15 yards from the sideline so boundary versus the field is an important element to consider. Slanting the defensive linemen to the field or having proper defensive back alignment to the wide side are two aspects to help your defense be in proper position.

SPECIAL TEAMS

- Our punt return, kickoff return and punt formations were similar to what we used in the past with slight adjustments due to less players.
- Edge rushers are closer on punt and field goal formation. Field goal formation is the most different because you kind of have an extra player to put wherever you want. Not many teams seem to kick extra points in 8-player. We were lucky to have a couple different kids who could kick extra points fairly well but we usually went for two after touchdowns.
- More teams seem to onside kick in 8-player compared to 11-player from what we experienced. We liked to kick as deep as we could with the goal to keep the opposing team inside the 30 yard line to begin their drive.

PRACTICES

- We didn't change much in our practice routine. With only 15 players though, we didn't do as much individual time as previously. Starters and backups needed to be able to play different positions so group run and group pass sessions – offensively and defensively – were given a bigger preference. Having only 15 players allowed us to keep practices relatively short also.
- Defensive team time was helped by coaches (8 in all when they could make it) stepping

in and playing any and all positions where needed. That allowed our defense to see a full offensive alignment.

- We haven't tackled live in over 2 seasons. We do different form tackle drills and different drills on how to approach a tackle with proper angles and speed. I believe this has helped us become better tacklers without lining up and banging on each other so as to avoid injuries in practice. In our last year of 11-player in 2019 we shut out 6 opponents in our 12 games and in 2020 we shut out 4 opponents in 8 games. I think a large part of that was our ability to tackle well.
- The majority of our run game practice was done with half line going against mock defenders. Pinneys, bags and coaches standing in place were used as defenders. This allowed us to focus more on first step execution of plays and seeing different defensive align-

ments quickly. We did run full team plays when more offensive players were directly involved at the point of contact – counters, 2 guards pulling on certain plays would be examples of that.

- Our passing game was mostly against air. We would go live on offensive line vs. pass rush about once a week. Reviewing blitz pick up was also done a couple times per week.
- The only time we did an offensive huddle in practice this past year is when we worked on our hurry up offense. This was done against no defense.
- We haven't been able to field a JV team for the past 3 seasons. Not getting that game action is probably not ideal for our younger players, but they do get more quality reps in practice when overall numbers are low. We haven't yet noticed a dip in their development from not having these games.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Our players enjoyed playing 8-player football this past year and hardly any discussion came up about them missing playing 11-player. To them, football is football! We had a fun, successful season going 7-1 with our only loss coming in the last game against a very good Belmont team.
- We did have 23 players in our 6th-8th grade middle school program this past year, so there is a possibility that going back to 11-player could happen for us in the future. More area schools our size are moving to 8-player so that will play a factor in our decision of how we proceed in the upcoming years.

Good luck to all teams in the spring season and hopefully things are back to normal for the 2021 fall season.

“DAD, I WANT TO TRY FOOTBALL”

By: Mike DeGuire, Sr, Assistant Football Coach, Racine St. Catherine's



Mike DeGuire, Sr.

The phrase I had been hoping to hear since the day my son was born. I never wanted to push him into it. Support what he enjoys; I tell myself. And I did. He was always the largest kid in every group, every class in school, and he wears his heart on his sleeve. His Grandmother always referred to him as “a gentle giant”. He grew up at the softball diamond, having three older sisters who love to play. He started in T-ball like the rest, but it became apparent that baseball was not his sport. Volleyball, nope. Not his sport either.

It was the summer after 6th grade, and he drops that phrase on me. “Dad, I want to try football.” My heart skipped a beat. It was my sport; maybe it'll be his as well. I searched online for local youth leagues and was pleased that I recognized some of the names of some of the coaches. Sounds promising. I signed on the line, paid the fee, got the physical... he's playing football. We arrive for equipment pickup and the team meet and greet in July. I am definitely more excited than he is, but I can't show it. Calm down. You don't know if it will be for him. “You want to help coach?” the seventh grade head coach asks. “I remember you played back in the day, and we could use help on the

line.” Ok, unexpected but intriguing. Check with the spouse, check with the son. He's playing; I'm coaching.

As the first practice draws near, I find myself asking lots of hard questions... Is he tough enough? Can he be coachable? Can he be violent? Can he take a hit? In no time at all, he proved that every answer was yes. Open field blindside block; his very first de-cleating; pancaked - Yikes. I stood 30 feet from him as he lay mask down in the grass. Come on kid, get up.... get up... get up kid.

He slowly pushes himself up off the ground and gets to his feet. No sway, no confusion, looks like he escaped concussion. Wait, is he smiling? I think he has found his sport.

Be coachable. Be respectful. Listen and ask questions. Give your all every single repetition. He was like a sponge soaking up all the lessons this great game has to offer. During those two years playing youth football, I watched my gentle giant start to become a man. He learned to be aware of his body, exercise and diet being critical to his success. Off-season work was not optional but necessary to be successful - his eighth grade team won the championship. He understands that the title was won long before the game was played. It was won in the off-season.

Enter high school, and I have the pleasure of moving with him. On the JV staff, I get to see his continued growth as a football player and as a good young man. He is getting better every practice, every game, more and more he is becoming the hammer and not the nail. Hard work pays off. Starting center as a sophomore. Ugh, I hear those fears again. Can he handle the pressure? Know all the blocking assignments and blitz pickups? Be coached up by the older players blocking beside him? Can he physically match up? And again, he answers all my mind's questions with a resounding yes.

Junior year. Second year snapping the ball, flanked by seniors on both sides and one of the

most talented teams the school has ever seen. Expectations are high and the pressure is even higher. The energy is palpable through the team, the school, and the community. Win after win piles up and the focus remains. Be coachable, be respectful, listen and ask questions and give 100% every single rep. Get knocked down, get back up. 14 wins. Victory at Camp Randall. I reached up and hugged my son; those fears and concerns were a distant memory. He has found his sport. He has found his way. He has risen to the challenges of a grown man and stood at the mountain top.

The dust has settled. Now he's a senior; the default leader of the front line. He faces a new challenge; the student must become the teacher. He's now the one his teammates look to. Proper diet and exercise all summer-committed to being the best he possibly can be. First play from scrimmage and I see it happen - he's cupping his left hand. “I'm fine, I'm fine” he says. “I can go.” Three series later, his team up 19-0, and he finally goes to the trainer.... a pin and eight screws later he's coming out of surgery. Come on kid, get up. Get up... get up kid.

Now it is a matter of when, not if. Surgeon assigns him weeks of OT and tells him he is out 4-6 weeks. My son asks the question before the thought can form in my mind, “How can I get back sooner? My team needs me.” Do therapy and see you in a month. This time there are no questions, fears or doubts in my mind... having been proven wrong time and time again. He puts everything into OT; he is out on the field doing cardio and coaching up his teammates. Get up, kid. Keep getting up.

He's back in 4 weeks, playing the game he loves. We love. He didn't get to the mountaintop again. As it goes in life, you take some licks and get knocked down. It is arguably the greatest lesson this game can teach. Life is rough. Bad things happen. Be coachable, be respectful, listen, ask questions and give 100% in everything you do. Get up kid.... get up!

I know he will. Every single time.

WELCOME TO COACHING 101

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



Brody Dell

This is for all the new coaches out there that are just getting started. My name is Brody Dell and I am the Director of Football Operations and Wide Receivers coach at the University of Wisconsin Platteville. I am new to the WIAC and Wisconsin football. I am from Indiana. I recently graduated and finished up my playing career at Hanover College. Today I would like to share some of the key essentials to being a new coach and a brief look into what we do here at UW-Platteville for wide receivers.

Being a new coach can be challenging, frustrating, tedious, and hard at times, or all the time. As the young coach, you are often asked to do a lot of the stuff no one wants to do. I encourage you to take on the task with a smile. One thing my coach says is “you are never too important to pick up the broom.” The message behind that saying is nothing is below you. Don’t feel entitled, be able to say yes to doing the “dirty work”. It could be taking inventory of all the player gear (which takes hours), opening up the stadium thirty minutes early every day or as little as sweeping the offices if you see its dirty. You must be willing to do anything and be open to learning new things early in your career. Do more listening than talking, absorb it, and take in all the knowledge around you. Know when you can chime in and give input, but also know when to bite your tongue. This will save you a lot of problems early in your career.

BE EARLY every time and all the time. Being early is a way to ensure that you are amply prepared and it shows you care. Here at UW-Platteville we have something called Pioneer Time. Pioneer Time is showing up a minimum of five minutes early to any team function. This prepares our guys not only for football but for life. Being early does not guarantee you anything, but it does give you the opportunity to out work your opponent or coworker. If you are fifteen minutes early

every day and the first person your boss greets everyday versus the guy that always walks in five minutes late. Who do you think will get the promotion? Who do you think he will trust and be able to count on? These are the little things we preach to our guys, if you can’t be accountable with showing up how can we expect you to do your job as a student and a player in our program.

Don’t take short cuts! There are so many things where it is a lot easier to take a short cut or take it easy on a job. When you are watching film, just don’t break down the last game of the opponent, break down all of them. It’s about showing your players you are going the extra mile in all that you do, so when you asked them to do the same they will follow your lead. Champions don’t cut corners, so don’t take the easy way out.

Now for the goods, if you stuck around this whole time I’m going to give you a little on what we preach at wide receiver and a good drill to go with it. In our offense, I coach the wide receivers under the offensive coordinator Ryan Munz and head coach Mike Emendorfer. Our three biggest things we preach for our wide receivers is effort and attitude, blocking, and making big plays. As you know wide receivers prefer to get the ball and score. Not as many want to do the hard work of blocking and keeping great effort and attitude when they don’t get the ball. This is a keystone to our program because of how much we RPO. If we do not have guys willing to dedicate to blocking our offense becomes limited.

Effort and Attitude

Some coaches will say you can’t coach a bad attitude. Here at UW-Platteville we take the initiative to help mold and improve the attitude and effort of the young men in our program. One thing we do during our camp is read a book for personal development. This year’s read was a book called “Kick in the Attitude” by Sam Glenn. Having something like this in your program is crucial. This book talks about how attitude affects your success and outlook on life. It talks about what is your focus on. If you are focused on the negative that’s all you will see. You won’t see any positive. When you invest in your players more than just on the field, you will see results on and off the field. Your players have to trust you before they will believe in you and what you are doing. Here at UW-Platteville we take pride in developing the man and the student and that is our highest priority. Another thing we do is our Thank You Thursdays. We encourage our guys to send thank you letters to a few people who have had a positive impact on their life and express their

gratitude. It teaches your players that life is bigger than football. It gives them the chance to give back and show appreciation for those involved in their life. Implementing little things like this can be very beneficial to your program.

Wide Receiver Blocking

Blocking for a Wide receiver is like doing the little things right as a coach. It might not always be the prettiest or most appealing job or assignment but it’s best for the team. Getting into our choice “RPO” game is a big part of our offense and blocking is a huge part of that. There are many techniques and drills that go with it. One of my personal favorites is the towel drill. This is where you simply have one defensive back and one wide receiver line up across from each other. The goal of the drill is to give wide receivers a realistic blocking look. The coach will stand behind the wide receiver and throw a towel to the right or left. The defensive back will try to get the towel. The wide receiver is told to stalk block and take the defender the direction he goes. On the first whistle the defensive back back peddles, on the second whistle the coach that is behind the wide receiver and in front of the defensive back throws a towel on the ground. This can bring some energy to practice or a competition period if you are starting defense vs. starting offense. We use our scout for practical purposes. You can do two lines at the same time to get more reps. I am a huge believer in this drill and it has proved very beneficial to our team.

The block technique we use is to gain leverage on the defender. Get between him and where the ball is going to end up. We get leverage by alignment and technique. Once our guys have determined who their man is in our blocking scheme they attack the shoulder or the defender closest to where the ball is going. We demand that our guys deliver the blow first, instead of catching the defender. Initiate the contact. The only time we catch is if the defender is not looking or on a crack block due to the new NCAA rules. We try to make the game safer. Most receivers do not get too excited about blocking so here at UW-Platteville our motto is “No Block, No Rock”. If you cannot block you cannot play for the Pioneers. We ask our guys to be well rounded and versatile.

I would like to thank the WFCAs for all the great things they do for Wisconsin football. For drills and more information about what goes on here at the University of Wisconsin Platteville Football you can contact me with my Cell# 765-210-9590 or by email dellb@uwplatt.edu.



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.

CARRIER

Houston Casualty Company

POLICY PERIOD

August 1, 2020 – August 1, 2021

LIMITS OF INSURANCE

\$1,000,000	Each Occurrence
\$2,000,000	General Aggregate (per Member)
\$1,000,000	Products/Completed Operations
\$1,000,000	Personal & Advertising Injury
\$ 300,000	Fire Damage
\$ 50,000	Sexual Abuse (per Member)
Excluded	Medical Payments

COVERAGES

- ❖ Educator Professional Liability
- ❖ Participant Legal Liability for insured members
- ❖ Liability assumed under insured written contract
- ❖ Defense Cost outside limits

EXCLUSIONS

- ❖ The use of automobiles, buses, watercraft and aircraft
- ❖ Property of others in the care, custody, and control of the insured.
- ❖ This insurance does not apply to members that coach at an All-Star game that is not approved by your state coaches association.
- ❖ This insurance does not apply to any loss, cost or expense arising out of infectious or communicable disease.

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.

PURCHASE INSURANCE

- ❖ Camp Insurance Request form is available on our website www.loomislapann.com

INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR



www.loomislapann.com

(P) 800-566-6479 | (F) 518-792-3426

Greg Joly
Lori George
Karen Boller

gjoly@loomislapann.com
lgeorge@loomislapann.com
kboller@loomislapann.com

Disclaimer: This is an insurance overview for summary purposes only; for complete policy terms and conditions please refer to the NOCAD Master Policy.



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Fundraising Coach

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dbushmaker@united-fundraisers.com

Dave Schmidt

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920-360-0807

dschmidt6@new.rr.com

Todd Hanke

Fundraising Coach

414-305-6876

thanke@att.net

Travis Gust

Fundraising Coach

920-428-4280

tgust8@gmail.com

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