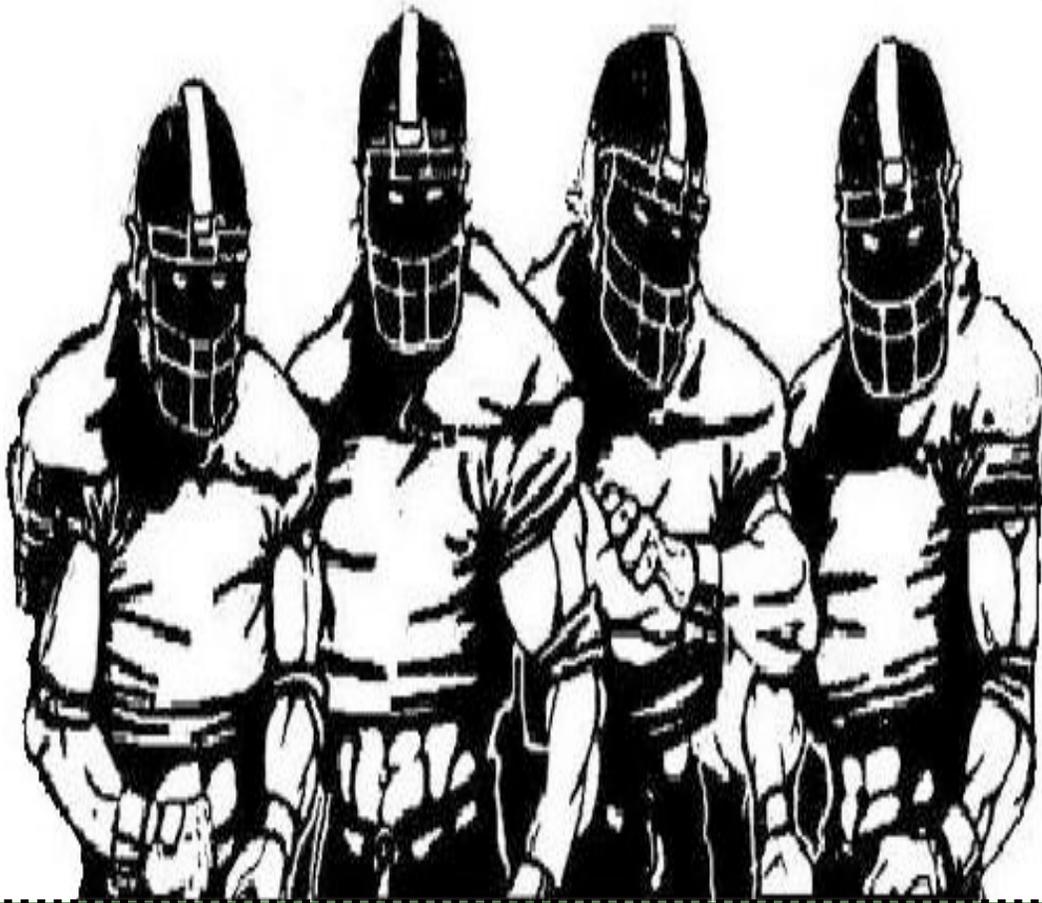


# COACHING A DOMINANT OFFENSIVE LINE



[www.CoachSomebody.com](http://www.CoachSomebody.com)

# PHILOSOPHY

*“Successful offenses start with successful blocking.”  
“Focus on Intensity, Execution, Technique.”*

That sums up my core belief of offensive football. It all starts with the ability to block well and do it aggressively no matter what you face. You look at any successful offense that performs game in and game out throughout an entire season and it is because they could block any defense they faced and they did it with high intensity, flawless execution and proper technique. You **MUST** instill the belief in your team that blocking is all-important and it will be the base of your offense. Without it you will rarely beat more talented teams. I believe that our blocking schemes must do certain things well if we are going to succeed.

## **BLOCKING SCHEME KEYS TO SUCCESS:**

- Protect the inside gap and negate leakage across the entire front. Interior penetration kills production. Outside pressure is easier to run from.
- Give smaller linemen a technical and physical advantage. Many of our schemes actually work better with smaller quicker more aggressive linemen.
- Keep assignments simple to allow for aggressive play. The less our linemen have to think about, the easier it is to just fire off and whip somebody. And the time we save in practice can be used to work on technique and aggression.

## **INSTILLING PRIDE IN OUR OFFENSIVE LINEMEN:**

We constantly work to teach our linemen that they are the most important players on the team. There are many ways to express this to your linemen:

- Always be certain the HC spends more time with the linemen than the backs.
- Always have more linemen than backs as team captains on game day.
- Always show them special attention whenever possible.
- Always talk about what they will do or what they did do to help us win before discussing anything else during pre-game and post-game speeches.

## **CREATING BETTER, FASTER, STRONGER OFFENSIVE LINEMEN:**

- Speed & Agility Drills for linemen are a MUST.
- Incorporate L.E.G. steps into EVERYTHING we do.
- Muscle memory drills build core strength and increase flexibility and stamina.
  1. LEG Progressions
  2. Footfire Drills
  3. Chute & Sled Work

# ALIGNMENT RULES

Alignment is the first thing I look at when judging a team's discipline and attention to detail. If a team lines up sloppy, they will have sloppy play execution. They will run, block and tackle sloppy. They will play sloppy football.

## **WE ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT PLAY SLOPPY FOOTBALL!!!**

We believe that every player on every play must be in a proper stance and must be aligned correctly. Early in the season we spend a lot of time and effort working on Stance, Alignment & Technique (SAT). This disciplined approach to the game is the first thing that separates us from the 'sandlot football teams'. These teams are undisciplined and sloppy so they make a lot of mistakes and they tend to fall apart late when the game is on the line. This attention to detail also breeds confidence in our players, parents and program. Confidence is so important that anything we can do to increase it gets immediate priority.

**LINE SPLITS** ~ Zero inches is preferred but usually we are around three to six inches. We do not 'overcoach' this unless we find a player who is spreading out too wide (rarely a problem as most kids tend to bunch up naturally).

**STANCE** ~ We use a balanced three-point stance with 1/3 of the body's weight being equally distributed between each leg of the 'tripod'. That is 1/3 of the body's weight on the left foot; 1/3 of the body's weight on the right foot; and 1/3 of the body's weight on the down hand. The feet are shoulder-width apart, and when I say that I mean the outsides of the feet are not wider than the shoulders; we like skinny stances. At the younger ages sometimes we will go with a two-point stance that is very similar to our three-point stance but with the down hand just grazing the grass. Obviously, the weight distribution in a two-point stance is 1/2 of the body's weight on each foot.

**LINE DEPTH** ~ Shoulders are aligned to the hip of the center. This is about half the legal depth. You can have the head just break the plane of the center's hip and it is legal. We do this because we often pull our backside linemen and the added depth helps us get them down the line of scrimmage (LOS). And when they pull our TE usually cuts the defenders across from the pullers so the depth of alignment helps him get across in front of the defenders he is cutting before they can penetrate. Our final reason for this depth is to ensure we get our 2<sup>nd</sup> step down before contact with the defender. A lineman's 2<sup>nd</sup> step is his power step.

# SHOULDER BLOCKING

The shoulder block has been our preferred blocking style for many years. It's the best way for youth players to maximize their power and block with a low profile. Use the shoulder instead of the hands because the low man wins the war on the line of scrimmage and it's very difficult to stay low if you are 'chicken fighting'. Most of our blocking schemes use the shoulder as the primary 'contact surface'.

Then we make the 'contact surface' larger by using our forearms in conjunction with our shoulder. The larger the blocking surface, the harder it is for the defender to disengage our blocker and make a play. Using the forearms with the fists clenched and touching also makes it tougher to hold a defender.

We also stress helmet placement every day in practice. A properly executed shoulder block forces your head to move to one side of the defender. Ensuring your head is between the defender and the ball carrier will again increase the amount of time you can stay engaged with that defender successfully. We teach the far armpit as an aiming point. If you can get your facemask across the defender into his far armpit, you will be in the best possible position the vast majority of the time. Getting our head across into the far armpit also allows us to pinch the defender between our helmet and shoulder. Obviously, this isn't an overly powerful technique but every little bit helps.

If the block occurs in any amount of space, our blocker must swivel his hips to keep his body between the defender and the ball carrier. We may not be stronger and we may not be able to 'drive' the defender but we **can** keep our body between the defender and the ball carrier, creating a better block.

Finally, we teach our players about 'pivot points' (hip and shoulder joints) and how we can control a defender by pushing or striking one or more 'pivot points' during a block. The 'pivot points' of the human body are the hips and shoulders so this is what we aim for during our different blocking methods. Sometimes this ends up being the waist or armpits but we show our blockers that this refers to the hips and shoulders.

All of the above techniques will help our blockers maintain their blocks longer. And the longer a blocker stays engaged with a defender means less opportunity for the defender to make a play on the ball carrier.

**Therein lies 'the method to our madness'.**

# T.K.O. BLOCKING

TKO is a track and kick out system where the play side blockers from the Center to the 'AT' man (blocker at the point of attack) block down on defenders at angles ranging from 30 to 50 degrees. It is a simple scheme that is easy to teach. The simplicity allows your linemen to be aggressive and concentrate on attacking the defense rather than cycling through a set of blocking rules at the LOS before the start of each play. Just line up and 'attack the block'.

We begin teaching TKO by showing our Center how he should attack the backside of the LOS by taking 2 diagonal steps and then stopping. We want him to stop so we can build a diagonal wall with our Center as the base of that wall. If he is engaged with a defender, we want a stalemate after 2 steps. If he is not engaged, then want him to stop after 2 steps so he doesn't make it too difficult for the other linemen to reach their landmarks. The 2 steps also allows the BSTE to execute his shoeshine block down to the Center's hip without cutting the Center or creating an illegal chop block. With our 'zero splits' the Center should get a good block on a backside 1 Tech or 2 Tech against an even front. If the defense is in an odd front then his first 2 steps are a little more downfield so that his downfield shoulder catches some of the NT, making the PSG's job easier to drive that NT down to the wall.

So, the C takes 2 steps and sets the wall. Now the G, T and TE on the play side each fight to hit their landmark; which is the outside shoulder of the man to their inside. They do not worry about 'who' is in their track, they simply get from point A to point B as fast as possible without letting anyone cross their face or get between them and the man to their inside. Now, if a defender is in their track or enters their track, they will drive him to the landmark point. We want the wall to form starting at the center's pivot and extending downfield. This means that the OG has a track about 2 yds long, while the OT's track is about 3 yds long and the TE about 4 yds long, all to get to their landmark. When this is successful, we have a string of 4 OL setting a wall that is almost impossible to break thru and stretches about 4 yds downfield. A great way to give young players a visual idea of how the TKO Wall is supposed to work, is to put a couple of 'defenders' behind a fence gate and point out that the hinge is the Center and then open the gate. When the gate is open 45 degrees, it will effectively 'wall off' the defenders and 'open' the hole for the runner.

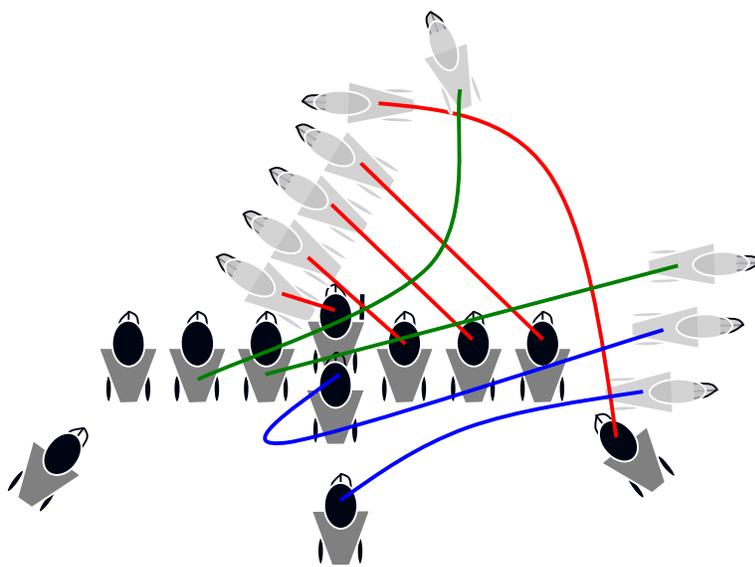
# T.K.O. CONTINUED

Play side Blockers, who are outside the 'AT' man, should skip through to the second level and then work their way to the top of the wall. Once they get to the second level, the responsibility of these blockers is the first defender to their inside (usually an OLB or ILB). If there is no LB between them and the wall, they should get to the top of the wall, turn toward the backside and catch anyone who tries coming over the top. Sometimes the LB prevents this, but we try for a perfect wall. This is our ultimate goal. To set a wall starting from the LOS and have it stretch 4-5 yds down the field sealing everything inside toward the middle of the field.

With the inside sealed up nice and tight, we use the FB and QB to form a wall outside. The FB kicks out the first to show; this should be the DE or OLB and should happen on or near the LOS. The QB sets up just above him, to seal the CB or any defender trying to come over the FBs kickout.

Finally, the backside, pulling linemen can turn up into the alley we created and find 'ugly jerseys'. The pulling guard is looking 'outside-in' in case of anyone going over the top of our exterior wall. The pulling tackle is looking 'inside-out' to pick up stragglers who have either run all the way around the wall or slipped through a crack somehow. Now we have a wall set on both sides of the hole with multiple lead blockers.

**POWERFUL STUFF !!!**



# SUPERMAN BLOCK

The Superman Block is a complimentary scheme that is essential to our success when we pull linemen. Our offense gets much of its power from our ability to pull linemen from the backside and even the front side of our formation. And with pulling being such an important part of our offense, we need a way to ensure that the defense doesn't get penetration through the holes vacated by our pulling linemen. This is why our Superman Block is so important. It is designed to close down the space vacated by a pulling lineman. It is not really a cut block. A cut block is a block designed to 'cut down' a stud defensive lineman that is overpowering or bull rushing an offensive lineman. A cut block usually happens straight ahead or at a slight angle to the right or left.

Our Superman Block is done at a 90-degree angle parallel to the LOS. The player executing this block must replace the pulling lineman or linemen with his body long ways and his aiming point is very important. He should be aiming at the Center's hip and this should basically put his body long ways between the spots where the pulling lineman's feet and hands were located in his 3-point stance. This is key to ensure that we don't trip our pulling lineman by landing on his feet as he pivots and pulls. If our Superman blocker aims to land in front of the puller's feet then we should be ok. This is another reason why it is important for our linemen to line up off the LOS at least 1/2 of the legal depth allowed. It moves the feet of our pullers back away from the LOS, allowing Superman Blockers to FLY down the LOS without tangling up the pulling lineman's feet.

At the midpoint of this technique our blocker should be stretched out in a manner that resembles Superman flying (easy to show and explain to kids). It is also a boost to the ego of our smaller Tight Ends who perform this block quite often. Then when he lands on the ground we want him to immediately get as tall as possible by pushing up into the pushup position. This will trip the guys who 'get wise' and try to jump over our Superman. We must be careful not to contact our Center's legs or the legs of the defender that the Center is blocking to avoid an illegal 'chop block'. This technique when done quickly and correctly has never failed in 6 years to slow down or stop the backside defenders penetration thus preventing them from making any type of play on the ball.

# WEDGE BLOCKING

The Wedge is a very simple blocking scheme that can be built into a highly successful series of plays. This can be especially helpful at younger ages where multiple blocking schemes can be difficult to teach. Some of the younger teams use the WEDGE as their base play and they package it up with a Sweep and a Counter or Bootleg play and before you know it, you have a complete series of plays that can get you through many games at that age.

Of course, the Wedge can also be a complimentary play that you run under play action for something that hits outside or off tackle. The Wedge play has many features that make it an attractive play for use in our offense. And because of its power, we will spend a considerable amount of time perfecting it.

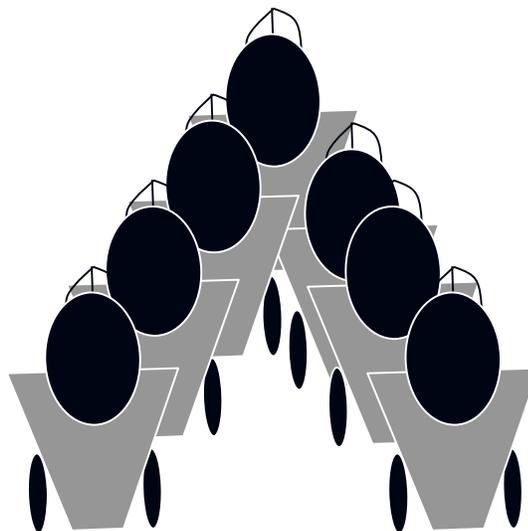
- Ultimate teamwork play builds confidence and unity in your o-line.
- When properly executed it is extremely powerful.
- Defenses must 'sell out' to stop the Wedge; opening up other plays.
- The actual technique each lineman uses is the same so your linemen become interchangeable.
- Since the key component of this play is the offensive line, weaker runners can run in the Wedge, making this play ideal for your second string offense or to get carries for linemen or defenders.
- This play emotionally breaks many defenders because they can't stop the play and it is consistently smashing them. This fits in with our philosophy on offense because we want to smash the defense over and over and over again until they surrender physically and mentally.

The Center is key to the success of your wedge play. He has to fire out low. He must hit and lift the NT. Then he must get moving forward to allow the Wedge to form behind him as he moves. Otherwise it will just turn into a logjam and our runner will be stuck inside. If there is no defender over the Center he should aim for the end zone straight up the field. He must fire out and then chop his feet to let the rest of the line form the Wedge and drive him up the field. High knees and feet pumping are obviously paramount for all of the linemen but none more than the Center. Most Defensive Coaches say the easiest way to stop the Wedge is to cut down the Center. So our Center must 'forklift' that NT and keep those high knees pumping. Obviously, it will help your Wedge if you have a better than average Center. And you will definitely benefit even more if he is a vicious beast that eats railroad iron and craps out nails.

# WEDGE CONTINUED

The Wedge Fit is very important to the success of the Wedge as well. It allows the unit of blockers to move as one and allows no penetration. The Guards out to the Tight Ends must step inside (slide inside) laterally and get their inside shoulder into the near rib cage of the man to their inside. Their inside arm should create a flipper so that most of the flipper is fit tightly to the lower back of the man to their inside. And their outside hand should push on the near shoulder pad of the man to their inside. It might take the Tackle and Ends two or three steps to get fit. The Wedge is a very effective play but you have to stress the little things for it to work. The blockers must slide inside and behind the center and lock shoulders quickly as they drive forward. They must get that flipper on the lower back and press (Mesh). And they must not engage any defenders while doing this. Preventing penetration by getting your Wedge Fit quickly and tightly will ultimately decide the fate of your Wedge.

As they get fit they must move up the field. It should be one fluid and instantaneous movement. Slide and move up field in two to three steps as a unit. The Wedge must always be moving forward. Once the Wedge slows or breaks apart all the blockers should target a defender and block that defender; like a sunburst of blockers with the runner breaking through the explosion for the open field. We teach our better fullbacks to yell explode when they feel the Wedge slowing down. And as the blockers explode out it will become easier for the runner to find a seam and get more yardage.



# REACH BLOCKING

Reach Blocking is a complimentary scheme that we use to run outside against defenses that 'read' at the LOS or 'crash' down to stop our TKO and Wedge plays. These tactics make it easier for a blocker to get to the defender's outside shoulder because they are not attacking up the field. So when defenses do this, we call our Reach play and attack outside.

Blockers on the playside of the offense count defenders from the boundary to the inside. The first blocker (usually the WB) is looking for defender #1 or the closest defender to the sideline. Each successive blocker takes the next defender as you count toward the inside. So the PSTE takes #2, the PSOT takes #3, the PSG takes #4 this and the C would take #5. Each playside blocker moves at whatever angle will allow him to get his helmet across the defender's outside shoulder. The blocker then runs with the defender working to get his body around the defender and turned toward the middle of the field so the runner can get to the corner. If the defense is stringing the play out successfully, then the runner will find a seam and turn up field without getting to the corner. Either way we should be able to gain a few yards because the defense isn't trying to penetrate.

We want our PSG and Center to make contact with their defender, ride him for a couple steps and then release up field to seal off the backside pursuit of LBs or even to pick off the safety. Many teams don't worry about blocking anyone from the playside B gap back to the backside but I would much rather have our PSG and CENTER get on their blocks initially and then work their way up field for a secondary block.

BSG and BST work up the field by going through the inside shoulder of the defender directly in front of him whether this defender is on or off the LOS. This technique won't actually block anyone but will slow down any backside pursuit enough to ensure that none of the backside defenders will make the play.

The BSTE will run a crossing pattern behind the linebackers. We can teach our runner to look for him on a Pitch & Pass type of play but mostly this is to keep the safety too busy to fill the seam when the runner turns up field.

# LOAD, EXPLODE, GO

**L.E.G. ~ LOAD, EXPLODE, GO** - This is the absolute most important thing we teach our linemen and in fact all of our players. We teach this to the entire team because we believe it is helpful in many aspects of the game including all of our blocking and most of our tackling techniques. You will notice how we incorporate it into most of our drills. It is paramount to our success coming off the LOS but it is equally important when blocking on the run. We want our players to attack with a low to high motion, power steps, rolling hips and an explosion of shoulder, forearms and the entire body into the defender. And the more often we can practice these steps and these techniques, the easier it will be for our linemen to get their second step down quicker than the defender they are blocking. Most offensive line coaches will tell you that this is the key to striking the defender before he can strike you. And obviously the first player to strike has a distinct advantage in a one on one battle.

**LOAD** - 3" Step with your 'lead foot' (right foot when blocking to the right or left foot when blocking to the left). Get it up and get it down. Quick feet make great blocks. Keep your back flat during this step and violently **LOAD** your arms back past your hips. When we practice this step we want the players chest on his knee here. This is the first step when coming off the LOS into a defender and it is the last step prior to contact if you are running and blocking in space.

**EXPLODE** - 6" Step with your 'back foot' while you **EXPLODE** your forearms and shoulder into the defender. Get it up and get it down. Quick feet make great blocks. Your head is up and your eyes are aiming for the far armpit so that your helmet gets across in front of the defender. Roll your hips for power and elevation. A great way to teach rolling the hips is to press your navel against the defender after contact. Not only do you roll your hips, but you also continue to roll your forearms up along the defender to get elevation. We want our blockers to hit 'low to high'. Low To High.

**GO** - Power Stomp your feet with a wide base and all seven cleats in the ground and **GO** until the 'echo of the whistle'. It doesn't have to be fast but you must maintain contact with the defender. If you are TKO blocking, you must **GO** to your landmark. If you are Reach blocking, you **GO** to the outside shoulder of the defender. If you are pulling and /or blocking in space, you **GO** into the defender until he falls over backward onto the ground. **GO** is a very powerful word and we want to use it often when coaching our players to teach them our aggressive attitude towards hitting and blocking.

# O-LINEMEN KEYS

## **L.E.G. ~ LOAD, EXPLODE, GO**

This is the absolute most important thing we teach our linemen.  
You will notice how we incorporate it into most of our drills.

## **ALWAYS USE GREAT FUNDAMENTALS & REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:**

- Attack each block with extreme physicality.
- The low man with a good wide base will always win.
- Use the largest possible blocking surface.
- Keep all seven cleats in the ground as you 'power stomp' your feet.
- Keep your knees high and your feet pounding.
- Get your helmet across the defender into his far armpit and turn your hips to seal him away from the runner.
- Non-stop blocking from the snap to the echo of the whistle on every play.
- Always be the first to move and the last to stop moving. Our attitude is that we work harder and longer than our opponents so we deserve our victory.
- Lazy linemen kill drives.
- Pull fast, pull flat and get out of the way.
- You're the motor in this car ...  
... if you don't run, we don't run.

# COACHES KEYS

**“Some people try to find things in this game that don't exist but football is only two things -- blocking and tackling.” Vince Lombardi**

- S.A.T. ~ Stance, Alignment, Technique – As long as these are wrong, nothing else can ever be right.
- A.B.C. ~ Attitude, Behavior, Character - In this area above all others, your players will reflect their coaches. If you handle adversity poorly then so will they. “Attitude Reflects Leadership” ~ *Remember The Titans*
- L.E.G. Blocking ~ Load, Explode, Go - Work these progressions DAILY and incorporate them into your drills.
- Our offense belongs to our linemen. This ownership breeds pride and commitment. So remind them as often as possible.
- Use a low number of schemes and high number of repetitions to develop proficiency. Simplicity + Repetition = Confidence
- The average football play lasts 7 seconds. Make certain that as many blocking drills as possible last 8 seconds so your blockers get used to sustaining blocks until the play is over.
- Each coach should watch one player every repetition and every play. Then either praises that player for performing a perfect block, tackle, technique, etc. or explain what will make it perfect next time.
- Nothing you do can replace hard work and giving 100% effort. If you give 100% effort to the team, then you will get 100% effort in return.

# **EVERY DAY DRILLS**

*This is a mix of dynamic warm-ups and muscle memory drills. These drills are also what we call EVERY DAY DRILLS. An EDD is exactly what it says. It is a drill we do EVERY DAY !!!*

*Dynamic Warm-ups will get us warm and ready to work hard. You will notice there is no static stretching in our warm-up. Static stretching actually breaks down cold muscles and damages them. For obvious reasons we don't want to do that at the beginning of practice. We will however try to incorporate some static stretching periods at the end of practice when the muscles are warm and pliable and more easily stretched. It is also quite therapeutic to stretch the muscles after a hard workout so that they recover more quickly and the players are ready for the next practice.*

*LEG is our most important muscle memory drill. We use the same body mechanics in our blocking and our tackling. And these are the 2 most important things that we need our players to be good at if we want to be a successful program. LEG breaks down the mechanics of hitting into 3 easy to learn segments that we can teach separately at first and then easily combine them once our players get it right. Once the players train their bodies to use these 3 steps when making contact, the actual blocking and tackling of an opponent becomes quite easy.*

# WARM UPS

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Set the tone for an organized practice as we get the blood flowing and the muscles loose while building strength, speed, agility and quickness.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- We start with two lines of cones 20 yards apart (start line & finish line).
- Each line is made up of 7-10 cones with about 3 yards between each.
- Each line should have no more than 3 players if possible.

## **DRILL:**

- Each warm-up cycle consists of a dynamic movement. To start Cycle #1, the first group of players gets into a breakdown stance and then on the whistle moves toward the finish line cone in the listed manner (ex. High Knees). Halfway (about 10 yards), we switch from Right to Left on some exercises and on others we will sprint the rest of the way. When the first group is halfway, the next group will step up, breakdown and on the whistle move to join the first group using the same movement. This continues until each group has moved down to line up at the finish cones. Cycle 2 will bring everyone back to the start. Etc. Etc. Etc.

- ~ Cycle 1 - High Knees (all 20 yards)
- ~ Cycle 2 - Butt Kickers (all 20 yards)
- ~ Cycle 3 - Drum Majors (all 20 yards)
- ~ Cycle 4 - Frankie Walks (all 20 yards)
- ~ Cycle 5 - Side Lunge Right (switch to Left at 10 yards)
- ~ Cycle 6 - Tapioca Right (switch to Left at 10 yards)
- ~ Cycle 7 - Carioca Right (switch to Left at 10 yards)
- ~ Cycle 8 - Back Pedals (Turn and sprint at 10 yards)
- ~ Cycle 9 - Bear Crawls (Explode up and sprint at 10 yards)
- ~ Cycle 10 - Frog Jumps (all 20 yards)

- The groups now spread out toward the finish line evenly so that the first group is on the finish cones with the last group still on the starting cones.
- Stance Drill - everyone holds perfect breakdown stances for 60 seconds as Coaches adjust poor stances. Repeat with 3 and 4-point stances.
- Cadence Clap Drill - players place hands in front of chests with palms facing in. Have them clap in unison on each cadence call. Coach or QB calls cadence ... 'On Go' - 'Ready, Set, Go' - team claps on the G of Go.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- We like to start and finish this segment with TEAM NAME JUMPING JACKS.
- We also like the 1st group to be returning players or team captains.

# L.E.G. PROGRESSION DRILL

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill proper Load, Explode and Go footwork.
- To teach and drill powerful hip roll and explosion.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- We stay in our spread out warm-up formation when we finish our warm-ups so the HC can stand up front and see everyone while the ACs walk up and down the rows working with the players on proper form.
- At first we will do these progressions on 1 knee then the other knee. Next we will work from both knees and finally from a good solid 3 point stance.

## **DRILL:**

- On the command 'RIGHT KNEE DOWN - READY' - players get ready.
- On the command 'LOAD' - players drop chest to knee & load arms behind hips.
- On the command 'EXPLODE' - players explode arms up to the sky as their arms form 'chicken wings' by touching their fists together ... hips roll forward with chest out.
- 5 Reps then move to the Left Knee Down and do 5 Reps.
- When you go to Both Knees Down we want to see the players roll their hips forward so hard and fast that they are forced to fall forward on their stomachs. 5 Reps.
- On the command 'BREAKDOWN - READY 3 POINT' - players get into a 3 pt stance.
- On the command 'LOAD' - players take a 3" Load Step while keeping the back flat, the head upright and violently loading their arms back behind their hips.
- On the command 'EXPLODE' - players explode arms up to the sky as their arms form 'chicken wings' by touching their fists together ... hips roll forward and players jump straight up in the air to overemphasize the explosion. 5 Reps.
- To finish up this progression, we will repeat the last set without jumping into the air.
- On the command 'BREAKDOWN - READY 3 POINT' - players get into a 3 pt stance.
- On the command 'LOAD' - players take a 3" Load Step while keeping the back flat, the head upright and violently loading their arms back behind their hips.
- On the command 'EXPLODE' - players explode arms up to the sky as their arms form 'chicken wings' by touching their fists together.
- On the command 'GO' – players 'power stomp' in 6" steps for 10 yards.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- We do these progressions in full formation after warm-ups with the entire team because our entire team must know how to block for our offense to be successful. We also need very similar body movements when we tackle on defense so this progression helps on both sides of the ball.

# **FOOTWORK & STRENGTH** **DRILLS**

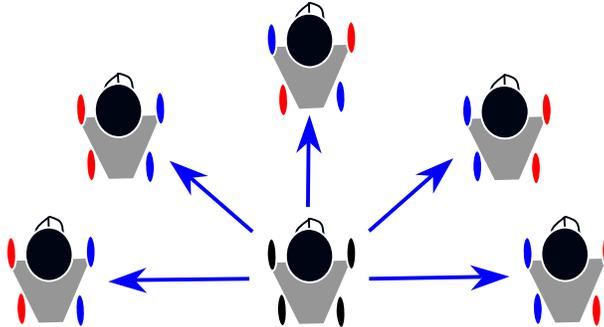
*We call these skill drills, but actually they are a mix of speed & agility builders and core strength exercises. Whatever you want to call them, they are all important to build a better, faster, stronger offensive line.*

*These drills will give your linemen faster feet and better strength in their arms, legs and core. It is amazing how much better a lineman will be with just a few weeks of footwork drills.*

*Speed & Agility Ladders are not very expensive. They can be easily made or replicated with PVC Pipe and nylon straps or just some paint on the ground. Whatever you use it will help the footwork of your linemen tremendously.*

*Step-over Dummies or Low Hurdles can also be replicated pretty easily using a little PVC pipe.*

# FOOTFIRE DRILLS



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach our players to be comfortable in a very low position.
- To teach and drill a 6" 'power stomp' with all 7 cleats in the ground.
- We don't want a high kick to get power so keep the steps clean and low.
- To strengthen the core, as well as the arms, legs and inner thighs.
- To increase flexibility and strength in the ankle and instep.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- We stay spread out after our LEG progressions with the HC up front while the ACs walk up and down the rows working with the players on proper form.

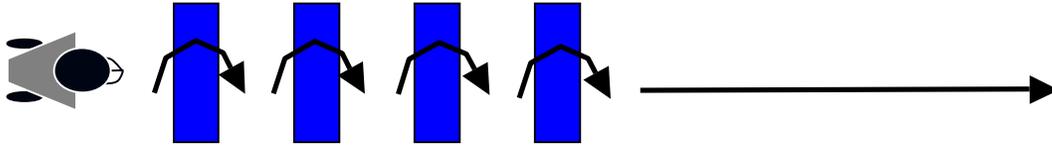
## **DRILL:**

- As you can see from the diagram, we work this drill in several different directions. During each step of this drill we will always move 1 hand and 1 foot simultaneously. This is color coded in the diagram. When moving forward we want to move opposite hand and foot together. However, when moving diagonally and horizontally, we move the hand and foot on the same side of the body together.
- On the command 'READY' - players all breakdown.
- On the command 'DOWN' - players get down in proper 3 pt stance.
- On the command '4 POINT' - players put other hand in 4 pt stance.
- On the command 'FORWARD ~ STOMP' - players start with RH & LF and 6" power stomp forward ... command 'STOMP' and players move LH & RF, taking a 6" power stomp forward ... continue through at least 10-15 forward stomps.
- On the command 'TO THE RIGHT ~ STOMP' - players start with RH & RF and take a horizontal 6" power stomp to the right ... command 'STOMP' and players bring their LH & LF back underneath them with a 6" power stomp ... again continue through at least 10-15 stomps to the right.
- Repeat this process in all 5 directions. If your players are lined up in even lines front to back and side to side, you want them to finish in clean even lines as well.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- At this point we will usually (not always) allow the backs to go with the backs coach and begin working on indy or core strength drills for backs.

# HURDLE HIGH KNEES DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill our linemen to keep their knees high at all times.
- This drill is great for footwork and overall quickness in the pit.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a proper 3-point stance about 3 feet away & facing the dummies.
- Place 3-5 half round dummies in a row with a two foot space between each dummy. If you don't have half round dummies, full rounds, hand shields or even home-made hurdles will work. I made my hurdles from 3/4" PVC pipe about 6 inches tall and 30 inches long.

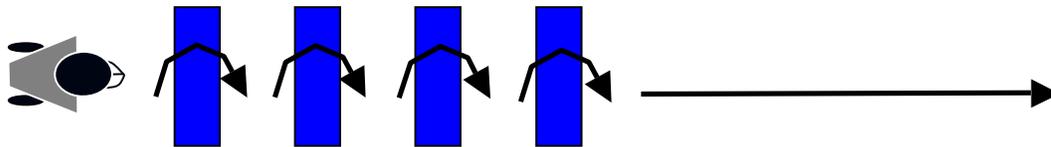
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, the player will LOAD, EXPLODE, GO toward the first bag and run through the bags while executing high knees over each bag.
- Only one foot will touch down between each bag.
- The player will push off of alternating feet all the way through the drill and after clearing the final bag, he will explode for a 10 yard sprint.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads.
- You can also throw the ball on the ground at the end of the drill to simulate a fumble or loose ball.
- Once your linemen are proficient at running through the bags without landing on or kicking any of them, you can work on having the linemen keep their eyes up to look where they are going instead of looking down at their feet. This will help them become comfortable with their footing without looking at the ground.

# HURDLE HOP DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To strengthen our linemen's legs.
- This will help their explosion off the ball as well as their power when they make contact with a defender.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a proper 2-point stance about 1 foot away & facing the dummies.
- Place 3-5 half round dummies in a row with a two foot space between each dummy. If you don't have half round dummies, full rounds, hand shields or even home-made hurdles will work. I made my hurdles from 3/4" PVC pipe about 6 inches tall and 30 inches long.

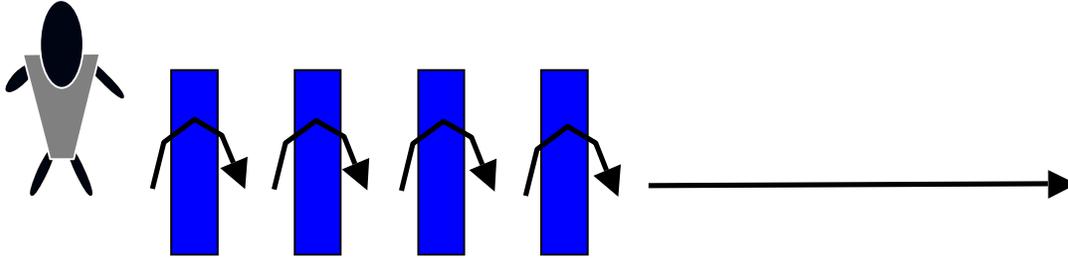
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, the player will explode off of both feet, up and over the first bag repeating the process until they have hopped over each bag.
- Both feet will touch down simultaneously between each bag.
- The player should reload and explode as quickly as possible and after clearing the final bag, he will explode for a 10 yard sprint.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads.
- You can also throw the ball on the ground at the end of the drill to simulate a fumble or loose ball.
- Once your linemen are proficient at hopping through the bags without landing on or kicking any of them, you can work on having the linemen keep their eyes up to look where they are going instead of looking down at their feet. This will help them become comfortable with their footing without looking at the ground.
- This drill can also be done where the player will explode off of both feet to clear the first bag but will then alternate hopping of one foot and landing on the other. This is similar to 'high knees' but hopping instead of running.

# HURDLE SIDESTEP DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill our linemen to keep their knees high at all times.
- This drill is great for footwork and overall quickness in the pit.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a good breakdown stance about 2 feet from the dummies.
- Place 3-5 half round dummies in a row with a two-foot space between each dummy. If you don't have half round dummies, full rounds, hand shields or even homemade hurdles will work. I made my hurdles from 3/4" PVC pipe about 6 inches tall and 30 inches long.

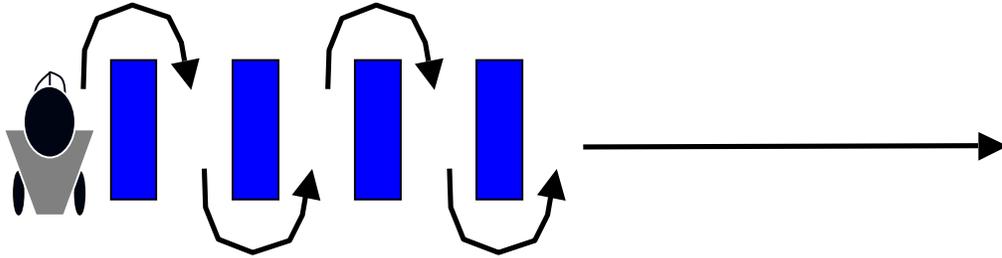
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, the player will explode sideways toward the first bag and pushing off the outside foot he will execute high knees over each bag.
- Both feet will come down between each bag.
- The player will push off of the same foot all the way through the drill and after clearing the final bag; he will turn and explode for a 10-yard sprint.
- Be certain to run this drill in both directions so that the players get to work on pushing off with BOTH feet.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads.
- A great changeup for this drill is to have a coach use hand signals or the ball to change the player's direction back and forth during the drill.
- You could also throw the ball on the ground at the end of the drill to simulate a fumble or loose ball.
- This drill can also be done with a hopping motion instead of the high knee steps described above. Try it with both feet together and bounce or hop over each bag to the finish.

# WEAVE FRONT 2 BACK DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To work on our linemen's ability to change direction while maintaining a low center of gravity by keeping their knees bent throughout the drill.
- This drill is great for footwork and overall quickness in the pit.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a good 3-point stance about 2 feet from the dummies.
- Place 3-5 half round dummies in a row with a two foot space between each dummy. If you don't have half round dummies, full rounds, hand shields or even homemade hurdles will work. I made my hurdles from 3/4" PVC pipe about 6 inches tall and 30 inches long.

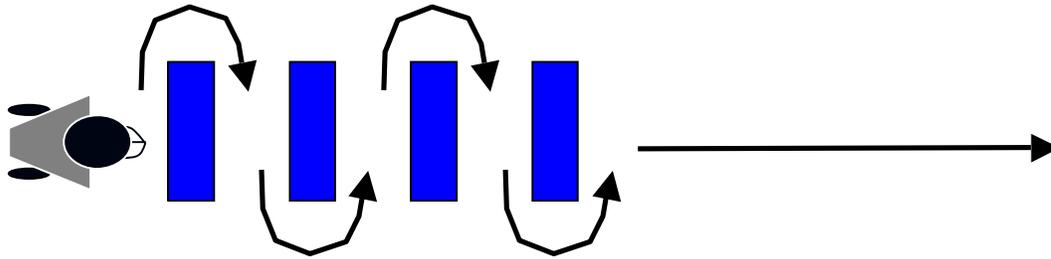
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, the player will explode forward past the end of the first dummy/hurdle where he will slide sideways for one step to get lined up between the dummies.
- Now the player will backpedal past the end of the second dummy/hurdle and against slide sideways to get lined up for the next stage.
- Another forward explosion through the 3rd stage and backpedal through the fourth stage will get the player near the end of the drill.
- To finish we want to explode forward to the midpoint of the dummy and plant the foot closest to the dummies to change directions and sprint out to the side for 10 yards.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- Be sure each player is running and backpedaling with good form. Low to the ground, arms pumping and good solid plants each time the player changes direction.
- This drill can be done in or out of pads.
- You could also throw the ball on the ground at the end of the drill to simulate a fumble or loose ball.

# WEAVE SIDE 2 SIDE DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To work on our linemen's ability to change direction while maintaining a low center of gravity by keeping their knees bent throughout the drill.
- This drill is great for footwork and overall quickness in the pit.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a good 3-point stance about 2 feet from the dummies.
- Place 3-5 half round dummies in a row with a two foot space between each dummy. If you don't have half round dummies, full rounds, hand shields or even home-made hurdles will work. I made my hurdles from 3/4" PVC pipe about 6 inches tall and 30 inches long.

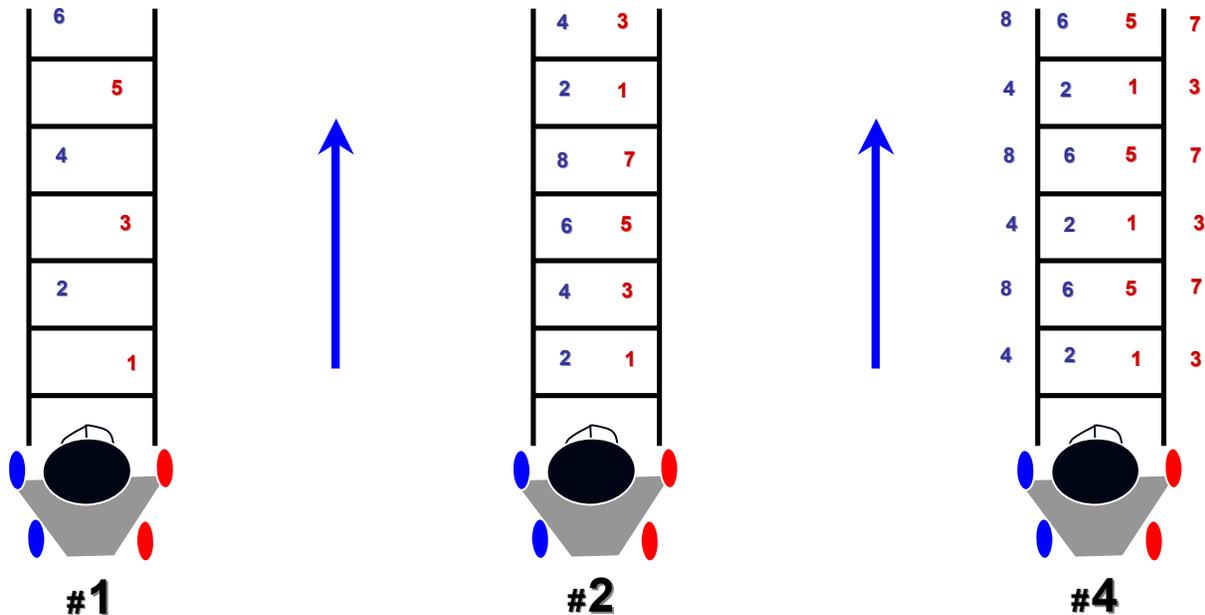
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, the player will explode on an angle past the end of the first dummy/hurdle where he will plant with his outside foot and slide sideways between the dummies.
- When he passes the end of the second dummy, he will again plant his outside foot and begin to slide back between the dummies.
- Plant and slide through the dummies one more time before approaching the end of this drill.
- To finish we want to slide to the midpoint of the dummy and plant the lead foot to change directions and sprint out to the side for 10 yards.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- Be sure each player is sliding with good form. Do not cross your feet, stay low to the ground, hands out in front and good solid plants each time the player changes direction. Eyes should always be down the field.
- This drill can be done in or out of pads.
- You could also throw the ball on the ground at the end of the drill to simulate a fumble or loose ball.

# FORWARD FOOT DRILLS



## OBJECTIVES:

- These drills are strictly aimed at helping our linemen to be quicker and more agile. Better footwork can only help a lineman and faster feet can be the difference between a good lineman and a great lineman.

## ALIGNMENT:

- Using as many ladders as you can, separate the linemen into the same number of lines and start one lineman at a time per ladder.
- Each player should start about 5-6 feet from the start of the ladder in a good 3-point stance. This distance allows them to fire out of their stance and get a good approach before starting each drill.

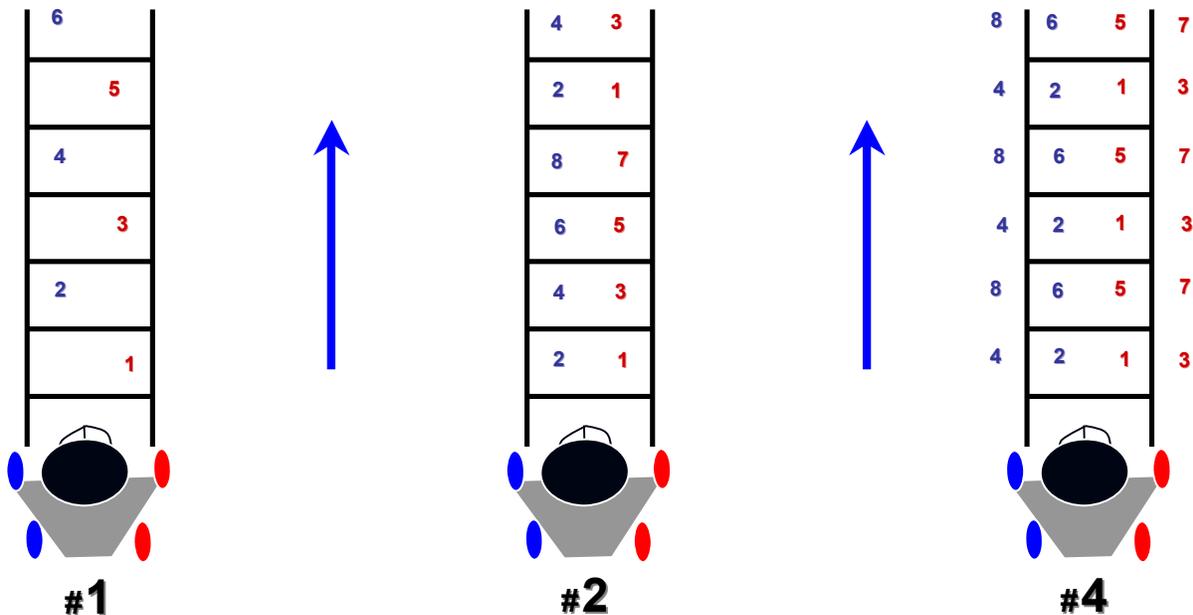
## DRILL: (drills are named for the number of steps in each square)

- #1 - One step at each level of the ladder. Alternating left and right.
- #2 - Two steps at each level. Same foot leads into each new space.
- #4 - Four steps at each level. Right foot in ... Left foot in ... Right foot to the side ... Left foot to the side ... repeat this pattern at each level.

## COACHING NOTES:

- You definitely want to change up which foot leads from Right to Left so that the player gets equal work with both feet.
- Make sure players focus on good form and not stepping on the ladder. Knees bent, butt low and arms pumping.

# FORWARD HAND DRILLS



## OBJECTIVES:

- These drills are designed to strengthen our players' arms, chest and core muscles. They also make them more comfortable staying low off the line of scrimmage and operating with a low pad level and good wide base.

## ALIGNMENT:

- Using as many ladders as you can, separate the linemen into the same number of lines and start one lineman at a time per ladder.
- Each player should start at the start of the ladder in a good 3-point stance. This distance allows them to fire out of their stance and get their first hand down into the first level of the ladder.

## DRILL: (drills are named for the number of steps in each square)

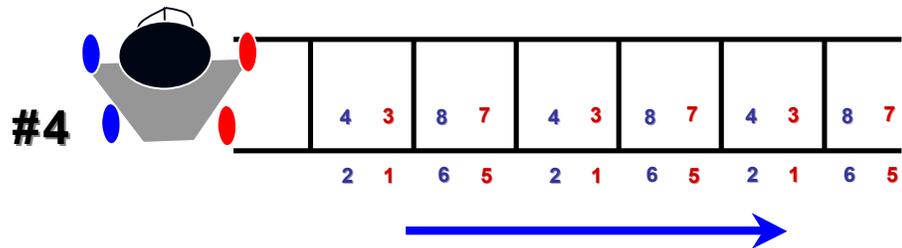
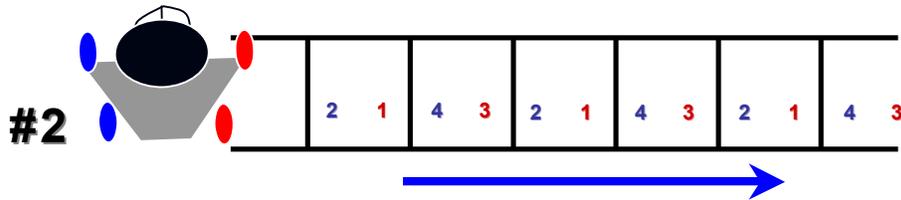
- #1 - One hand in each level of the ladder. Alternating left and right.
- #2 - Two hands in each level. Same hand leads into each new space.
- #4 - Four hands at each level. Right hand in ... Left hand in ... Right hand to the side ... Left hand to the side ... repeat this pattern at each level.

## COACHING NOTES:

- You definitely want to change up which hand leads from Right to Left so that the player gets equal work with both hands.

Make sure players keep their feet wider than the ladder and chopping in time with their hands. Keep 7 cleats in the ground, driving off the instep.

# SIDEWAYS FOOT DRILLS



## OBJECTIVES:

- These drills are strictly aimed at helping our linemen to be quicker and more agile. Better footwork can only help a lineman and faster feet can be the difference between a good lineman and a great lineman.

## ALIGNMENT:

- Using as many ladders as you can, separate the linemen into the same number of lines and start one lineman at a time per ladder.
- Each player should start at the start of the ladder in a good breakdown stance. This distance allows them to get into the first level of the ladder with their first step.

## DRILL: (drills are named for the number of steps in each square)

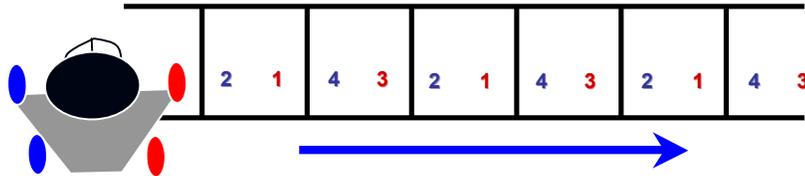
- #2 - Two steps at each level. Same foot leads into each new space.
- #4 - Four steps at each level. Right foot out ... Left foot out ... Right foot in ... Left foot in ... repeat this pattern at each level.

## COACHING NOTES:

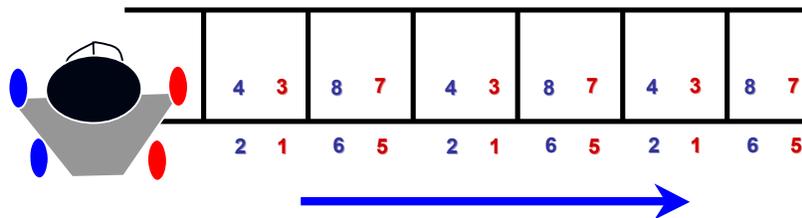
- You definitely want to change up which foot leads from Right to Left so that the player gets equal work with both feet.  
Make sure players focus on good form and not stepping on the ladder. Knees bent, butt low and arms pumping

# SIDEWAYS HAND DRILLS

#2



#4



## OBJECTIVES:

- These drills are designed to strengthen our players arms, chest and core muscles, and they also make them more comfortable staying low off the line of scrimmage and operating with a low pad level and good wide base.

## ALIGNMENT:

- Using as many ladders as you can, separate the linemen into the same number of lines and start one lineman at a time per ladder.
- Each player should start at the start of the ladder in a good 4-point stance. This distance allows them to reach out and get their first hand down into the first level of the ladder.

## DRILL: (drills are named for the number of steps in each square)

- #2 - Two hands in each level. Same hand leads into each new space.
- #4 - Four hands at each level. Right hand out ... Left hand out ... Right hand in ... Left hand in ... repeat this pattern at each level.

## COACHING NOTES:

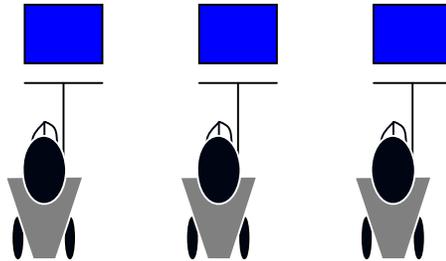
- You definitely want to change up which hand leads from Right to Left so that the player gets equal work with both hands.
- Make sure players keep their feet wider than their hands and chopping in time with their hands. 7 cleats in the ground, driving off the instep.

# **BAG DRILLS**

*Contact during drills is very, very important but we don't want to get our players too beat up to compete on game day. So buy, borrow or build some blocking dummies. Having dummies will also make it easier for some kids to really unload and hit as hard as they can.*

*You might also run some of these drills in a 'chute' or at least under a broomstick or a piece of PVC pipe. Use whatever it takes to keep your linemen firing off low and hard.*

# SHOULDER BLOCK DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill the L.E.G. blocking progression.
- To teach and drill the perfect fit of the 'contact surface' on the bag.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a proper 3-point stance.
- Slightly offset on the bag with helmet about 6 inches from the bag.

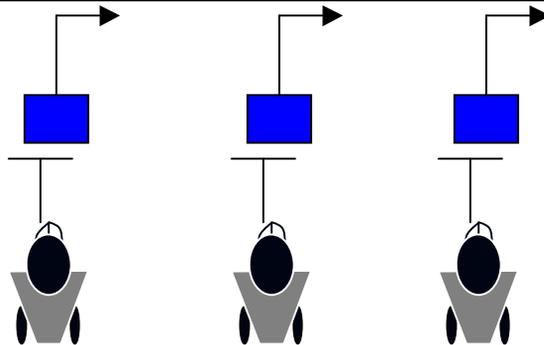
## **DRILL:**

- On coaches command of **LOAD**
  - 1.Players take 3" step while violently loading arms.
  - 2.Look for a flat back with no rise from the 3-pt stance.
- On coaches command of **EXPLODE**
  - 1.Players take 6" step while exploding shoulder & forearms into the bag.
  - 2.Look for a perfect fit of shoulder and forearms on the bag.
- On coaches command of **GO**
  - 1.Blockers will begin to stomp and drive bag.
  - 2.Look for 7 cleats in the ground, maintaining good form and firm contact between 'contact surface' and the bag.
  - 3.When operating at full speed be sure to block for 8 seconds.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once you are happy that everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.
- Try this drill from inside a chute or using a sled.
- Try this drill using hand shields and on contact the shield holder releases the shield so that poor technique or failure to maintain contact will result in dropping the shield.

# RUNNING SHOULDER BLOCK DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to block on the run (pulling or blocking down field).
- To teach and drill the **LOAD** step during the approach to ensure contact.
- To teach and drill the **EXPLODE** step to ensure a perfect fit on the defender.
- To teach and drill the **GO** step while they turn their hips to shield the runner.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, head up and 5 yards from the bag.
- Someone should hold the bag upright so it doesn't just fall on contact.

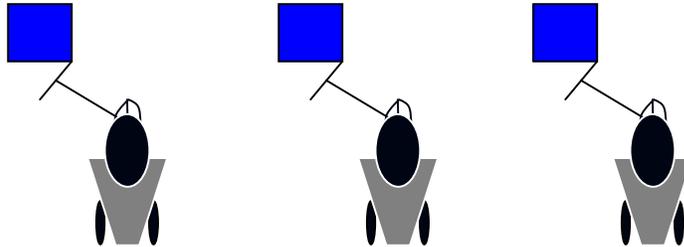
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count
  1. Players take off low and hard for the bag.
  2. 'Shimmy down' with short steps right before contact.
  3. Last step before contact is a 6" **LOAD** step.
  4. Look for sinking hips and good hit position.
  5. Players should make contact using a 6" **EXPLODE** step.
  6. Players will begin to stomp and drive bag. Call it the **GO** steps.
  7. Look for 7 cleats in the ground, maintaining good form and firm contact between shoulder and bag.
  8. After several steps, the players should swing their hips to practice sealing the defender away from the runner.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once you are happy that everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.

# DOWN BLOCK DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to block a Gap Defender.
- To teach and drill how to keep a Defender from crossing your face.
- To teach and drill how to get your head across the Defenders far armpit.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance; offset diagonally one body width from the bag.
- Someone should hold the bag upright so it doesn't just fall on contact.

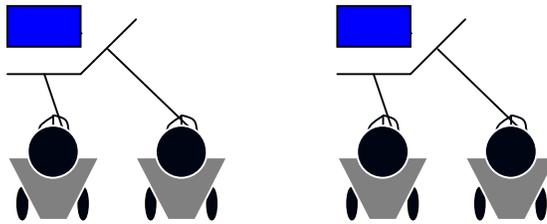
## **DRILL:**

- On coaches command of LOAD
  - 1.Players take 3" step with near foot while violently loading arms.
  - 2.Look for a flat back with no rise from the 3-pt stance.
- On coaches command of EXPLODE
  - 1.Players take 6" step with back foot while exploding shoulder & forearms into the bag. Facemask should be aimed at the 'far armpit'.
  - 2.Look for a perfect fit of shoulder and forearms on the bag and head across the bag to prevent penetration. This last part is very important, as penetration on the play side is very dangerous to this offense.
- On coaches command of GO
  - 1.Blockers will begin to stomp and drive bag down the line.
  - 2.Look for 7 cleats in the ground, maintaining good form and firm contact between 'contact surface' and the bag.
  - 3.When operating at full speed, be sure to block for 8 seconds.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.
- Try this drill using hand shields and on contact the shield holder releases the shield so that failure to maintain contact will result in dropping the shield.

# DOUBLE TEAM DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to double team a tough defender.
- To teach the post (inside) blocker to stand up the defender.
- To teach the track (outside) blocker to drive down on the defender.
- To teach both blockers to squeeze the defender between their helmets and squeeze their hips together to keep the defender trapped between them.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, with the bag head up on the post blocker.
- Someone should hold the bag upright so it doesn't just fall on contact.

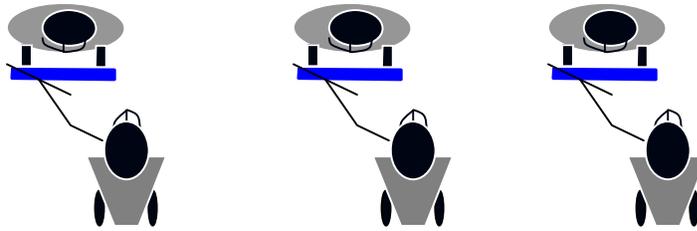
## **DRILL:**

- On coaches command of LOAD
  1. Players take 3" step with near foot while violently loading arms.
  2. Look for a flat back with no rise from the 3-pt stance.
- On coaches command of EXPLODE
  1. Players take 6" step with back foot while exploding shoulder & forearms into the bag. The post blocker's facemask should be aimed at the armpit on his side while the track blocker's facemask should be aimed at the armpit on his side.
  2. Look for a perfect fit of shoulder and forearms on the bag and heads squeezing the bag together. Also look for the blockers to squeeze their hips together to prevent the defender from splitting the double team.
- On coaches command of GO
  1. Blockers begin to stomp and drive bag back to the TKO Wall. Often it will be necessary for the post blocker to swing his hips farther toward the track blocker in order to keep from opening a hole to his inside and keep him on his track.
  2. Look for 7 cleats in the ground, good form and pressure between 'contact surface' and bag. Also look for the blocker's hips to remain tight together.
  3. When operating at full speed be sure to block for 8 seconds.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once you are happy that everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.
- Try this drill using hand shields and on contact release the shield so that poor technique or failure to maintain contact will result in the shield falling.

# REACH BLOCK DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to hook/reach a Defender with outside position.
- To teach and drill how to get your head across the Defenders far armpit.
- To teach and drill how to get your hips around once you make contact.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, offset diagonally from a defender holding a shield.
- The defender should work to get outside at the same speed that the blocker is using to make the block. So 1/2 speed means 1/2 speed for both.

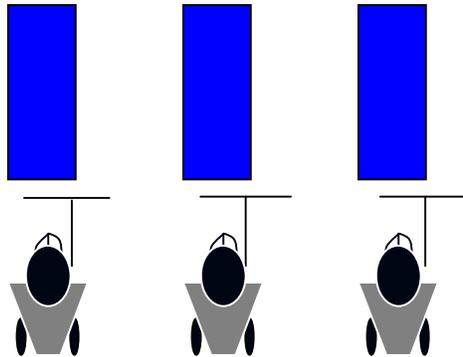
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count players take a diagonal LOAD step toward the 'far armpit' of the defender. This step is very important to get leverage for the block. The angle of this step depends on the defenders alignment.
- Second step is an EXPLODE step and punch to the outside shoulder of the defender to stop his momentum. It is important to get a good punch and stop the defender's momentum or the blocker will never get his hips turned to seal the defender.
- The GO steps of this block involve maintaining that original contact while working to get the hips around to seal the defender inside. The faster or harder the defender works to get outside, the faster and harder the blocker works to get his hips turned.
- Note that the lengths of the steps are omitted. This is because they will change depending on how far outside the defender is located. It might even take several steps before the LOAD or EXPLODE steps can take place.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once everyone is getting a good fit and their footwork looks good, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.
- We don't use this block very often but some defenses load up inside and crash down on us so much that we need something like this to get outside.

# BULLDOZER DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill our technique against submariners and froggers.
- To teach and drill the perfect fit of the shoulder on the bag.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a proper 3-point stance.
- Slightly offset on the bag with helmet about 6 inches from the bag.
- Place the bag lengthwise with the butt end facing the blocker.

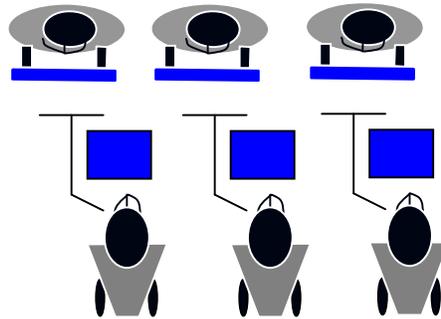
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count
  - 1.Players take 3" step while getting both hands on the ground.
  - 2.Players should now be in a 4-pt or bear-crawling stance.
  - 3.Players second step is also 3" while shoulder is making contact.
  - 4.Look for a perfect fit of shoulder and wide base of hands and feet.
  - 5.Blockers will begin to stomp and drive bag.
  - 6.Look for 7 cleats in the ground, maintaining good form and firm contact between shoulder and bag.
  - 7.When operating at full speed, be sure to block for 8 seconds.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Early on we have someone holding the far end straight and slightly off the ground so our blockers can concentrate on their hands, feet and shoulder placement instead of working so hard to keep the bag straight.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left Shoulders. Once you are happy that everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.

# DIP & RIP DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to allow a Def-Lineman to cross the LOS unblocked.
- To teach and drill how to get past a Def-Lineman and to the LB level.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, head up with the bag.
- Someone should hold the bag upright so it doesn't just fall on contact.
- Align some LBs with hand shields for the blockers to block when they get to the LB level.

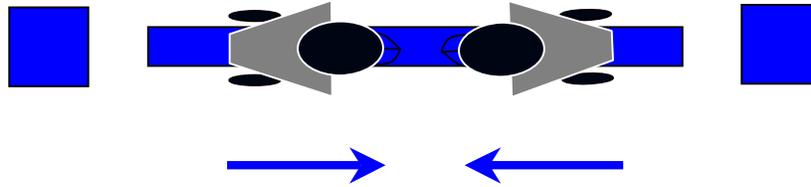
## **DRILL:**

- Assuming we are trying to get to the left of the Def-Lineman.
- On the snap count
  1. Players take a slide step with the left foot while LOADING his arms.
  2. On the second step, the player should dip his right shoulder and use his right arm and rip it forward EXPLODING up toward the sky.
  3. The dipping and ripping motions should turn the players body sideways which will help him get skinny and create a smaller target for the Def-Lineman to try and jam on the LOS.
  4. Using the left hand, the player will pull his way through the gap and GO to the linebacker level.
  5. Our LEG steps are somewhat different with this technique but we find that it helps the players understand.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once you are happy that everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.

# KING OF THE BOARD DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill blockers to keep a wide base and drive 'through' the defender and really finish off a block.
- To determine who are your top one-on-one blockers, whether it is due to athletic ability, proper technique or just good old competitive spirit.
- To give the coach close-up looks at the technique and the 'inner fire' of each and every lineman.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Two opponents straddle the board in a proper 3-point stance facing each other with their helmets about 8 inches apart.
- You can use an 8-10 inch wide board or half round dummies for this.
- You also want to stand a blocking dummy behind each competitor.

## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count both blockers will fire off using the L.E.G. steps and attempt to drive his opponent back along the board.
- First player to drive his opponent into the standing dummy is the winner.
- Use a slow whistle to allow pancakes to happen when the loser falls backward over the dummy that his backside knocks down.
- We like to use a double elimination style tournament at least once a week because kids will always give 100% in a game when they might not during other drills. Repeat until the King claims his crown.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- A twist on this drill is to have both players down in a low 4-point stance with their shoulders fit tightly together. Using our footfire drill technique, each player attempts to drive the other back into the blocking dummy.
- I like to have the remaining linemen standing on both sides cheering. But you could also have the linemen standing on either side holding hand shields to 'remind' the competitors to stay straddling the board.
- You may want to have a trophy or a special armband or hand pad that the winner gets to wear until the next King of the Boards competition.

# **CHUTES, SLEDS & STAMINA**

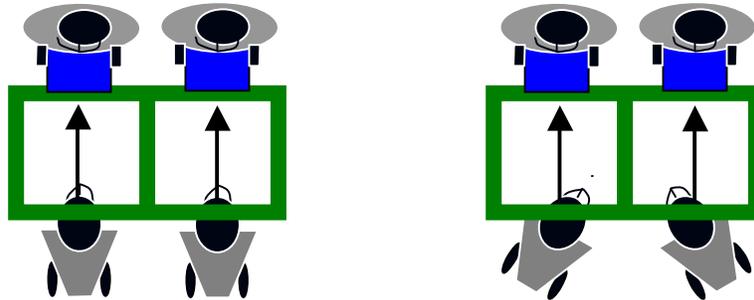
*Obviously, not every youth team has access to a chute and a sled.*

*But you can easily make a chute from PVC pipes. If you can't make a chute from PVC pipes, you can always use Coach GetLow and Coach StayLow. Coach Ron Word from Nashville TN, uses a couple of broom sticks to show the players how low they have to 'get' and how low they have to 'stay'.*

*And if you don't have a sled, you should still get blocking dummies or hand-shields and work these drills the best you can. We even used some 'couch cushions' once when we didn't have blocking shields. It can be done if you want it to be done.*

*Blocking stamina must be earned through repetition.*

# CHUTE DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to LOAD, EXPLODE & GO with speed and accuracy.
- To teach and drill how to start at the optimal point in the snap count so that their first step is down by the end of the count.
- This drill is about SPEED, SPEED & SPEED. We are looking at their technique and footwork but the drill is to make our players fire off as fast as possible.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, with the linemen's heads under the edge of the chute.
- You can also turn the players on a 45-degree inward angle to work on down block angles. Simply switch lines to work on both shoulders.

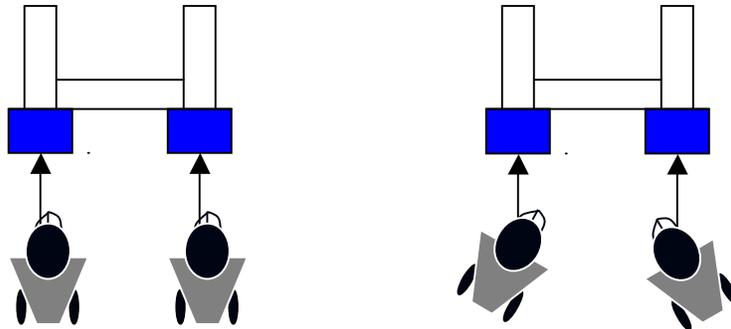
## **DRILL:**

- On coaches command of READY the players get in a stance.
- On coaches command of GO the players use LEG steps to attack the bag with speed and power.
- We want our linemen's first step to be landing by the end of the cadence. So if we are going on the word GO, they should start on the 'G' and this will get that first foot down by the end of the 'O'.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- Start at walk-thru speed working Right then Left shoulders. Once you are happy that everyone is getting a good fit on the bag, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions with both shoulders.
- Be sure to remind the players about 'elevating' the dummy as they drive it out of the chute. Belly Button into the dummy.
- This is a great drill no matter if you prefer 'shoulder blocking' or 'hands blocking'. We have used both to great effect.
- The chute will keep your blockers low and lean during the first two steps.

# SLED DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to LOAD, EXPLODE & GO with unity, like a machine.
- To work on hitting 'low to high' and 'elevating' the defender. The key to this is pushing the 'belly button' into the dummy to get that 'hip roll' that we want in all blocking and tackling.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, with a lineman head up on each of the sled pads.
- Try to have one coach who is responsible to run a stopwatch for 8 seconds.
- Try angling the blockers inward so they can work on firing off on their TKO track. Make sure they switch lines so they work both angles.

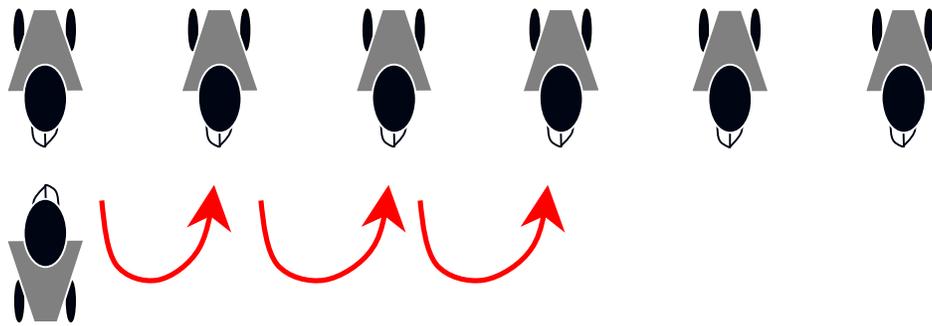
## **DRILL:**

- On coaches command of READY the players get in a stance.
- On coaches command of GO the players use LEG steps to attack the sled and elevate it while driving it forward for 8 seconds.
- We want our coaches watching for good form and good elevation from the sled during this drill. We are also looking for all 7 cleats being in the ground with good foot stomp so that our blockers are stronger when driving a defender.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- We want this to be a rapid fire drill. So the next group of linemen must be ready to jump in and get set as soon as the 8 seconds is over.
- We want to get at least 6 repetitions of this drill for each player each day. 2 straight, 2 angled right, 2 angled left.
- This is a great drill no matter if you prefer 'shoulder blocking' or 'hands blocking'. We have used both to great effect.
- Remember the sled won't lie; the player driving stronger and faster will turn the sled every time.

# HIT PARADE DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill the L.E.G. blocking progression in a rapid-fire manner.
- This drill is also great for stamina and working on our linemen to continue working all the way through an entire play.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Start by lining up all of your linemen (or the entire team if you prefer).
- Take the first player, move him out in front of and facing the second player. They should both get into a good 3-point stance. The player out front will be the blocker and each player in line will be a defender.

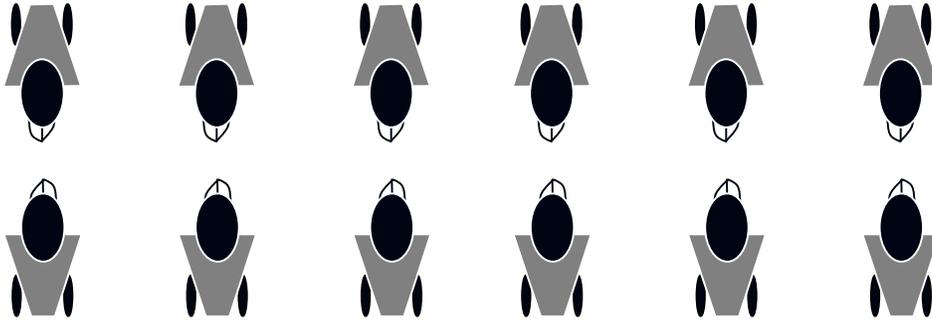
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, the blocker will fire off using good LEG footwork and get a good blocking fit on the 1st defender in the line.
- On the whistle the blocker will stop and go line up in front of the next defender. Both of them will get down into good 3-point stances.
- This will continue until the blocker reaches the end of the line, where he will get on the end of the line and become a defender.
- When the blocker reaches the 3rd or 4th defender in line, you can move the 1st defender across and make him into a blocker so that the line can begin to rotate through. Have a coach follow each blocker down the line.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- Each time a blocker messes up; inform the group that they will continue until the offending party gets through another round without a mistake. And each time a new blocker messes up; you no longer have to worry about the last guy. This should get the peer pressure going strong enough to ensure everyone is trying his best.
- Try this drill at 1/2 speed to watch for a quality fit only, or go full speed to see actual blocking and work on stamina.

# KNOCK AROUND DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill the "reason, and effect" of loading and exploding arms.
- This drill is also great for stamina and working on our linemen to continue working all the way through an entire play.
- You can work a lot on core strength with this drill by holding off on the signal to explode the arms because blocking with only the chest and shoulders builds core strength.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Start by putting all your linemen or even the entire team in two lines. Everyone should have a 'partner' facing him from the other line.
- Have each player in the fit position with the man across from him and everyone's arms should be 'loaded' behind their backs. Basically this will have each pair leaning into each other with their chests touching.

## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count, they drive each other with ONLY shoulder and chest contact. After several seconds the coach will either call out a players name if it is only two, or call out left/right depending on the side you want to EXPLODE and on the signal the player or players should 'explode' their arms into the chest plate of the opponent to lift and drive him.
- After a few times the players will understand the 'reason and effect' of bringing the arms with bad intentions and your line blocking will improve. Because in this drill it is almost a guarantee that the one who explodes his arms will begin to take over the block and if he was already winning he may very well pancake his opponent.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- You can start by only working one pair of blockers at a time and then after everyone understands how it works, use everyone at the same time.

# **PULLING DRILLS**

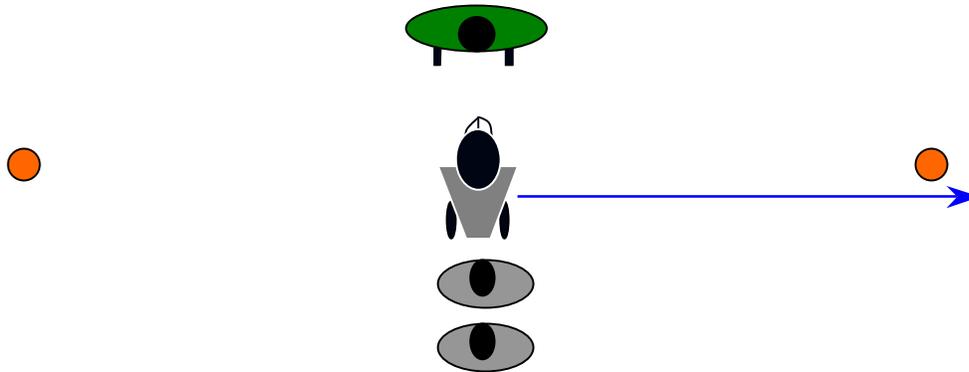
*Pulling is very difficult for some players, especially the bigger ones. Lateral movement is not natural so it must be worked on every day. Timing is also a big part of pulling and a big part of this offense and requires repetition to perfect.*

*Even though we prefer to flip our line and we have one side that does the most down blocking while the other side does most of the pulling, we make sure that everyone works on pulling drills just like everyone will work on down blocking drills.*

*The footwork for pulling is something that we actually change every other year or so based on the players we are coaching. So these drills are written up with one specific type of footwork that seems to work the best the most often but don't hesitate to change if you have players or coaches that prefer something different.*

*Either way the drills are still a staple of what we do to teach and get repetitions for our players.*

# PIVOT & PULL DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to Pivot and Pull effectively.
- This will be used as our first step whenever we pull, trap or kickout.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Align in a 3 pt stance, with cones 5 yards to either side.
- Coach should stand out in front to watch footwork and arm swing.
- Remainder of the linemen get in line behind the participant.

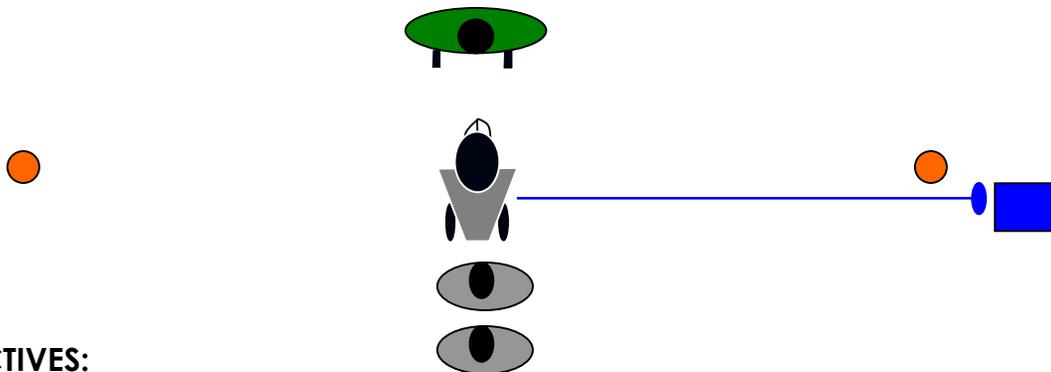
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count (directions are to pull Right, reverse for pulling Left)
- Blocker pivots on Right Heel & Left Toes.
- Blocker will simultaneously throw Right Arm back to pivot body.
- Now drive off of the Right foot like a sprinter out of the blocks.
- Look for blockers to remain low in a good hit position.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed pulling Right then Left. Once you are happy that everyone is pivoting properly, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions in both directions.
- Remember to allow some flexibility from player to player. The end result is what counts and in the end we just want our pullers to get where they need to be and make a solid block when they get there.
- Some players might need to use a short drop step with the 'near foot'.
- We also want this drill to move quickly once they get the hang of it so make certain the next blocker is getting down and set while the first blocker pulls.

# KICKOUT DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to kickout defenders for Counter & Trap.
- To teach and drill the LOAD step during the approach to ensure contact.
- To teach and drill the EXPLODE step to ensure a perfect fit on the defender.
- To teach and drill the GO step while they turn their hips to shield the runner.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- 3 pt stance, with cones 5 yds to each side & a bag outside one of the cones.
- Someone holds the bag upright and steps across the LOS on the snap count.
- You can add a 'splatter mat' behind the bag for explosive blocking practice.

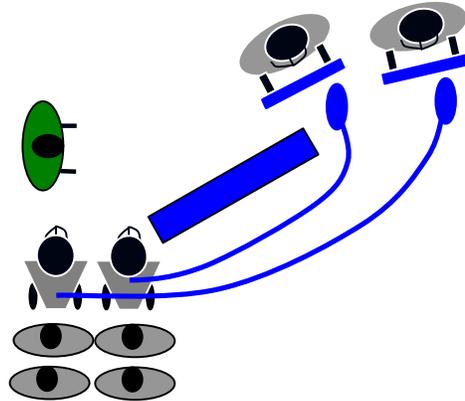
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count
  1. Players pivot and take off low and hard for the bag.
  2. 'Shimmy down' with short steps right before contact.
  3. Last step before contact is a 6" LOAD step.
  4. Look for sinking hips and good hit position.
  5. Players should make contact using a 6" EXPLODE step.
  6. Players will begin to stomp and drive bag. Call it the GO steps.
  7. Look for 7 cleats in the ground, good form and firm contact on the bag.
  8. After contact, the blocker should swing his hips to seal the defender away from the runner.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- Remember to have the blocker use his Right shoulder to block with when kicking out to the Right and use his Left shoulder when kicking out to the Left.
- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- Start at walk-thru speed pulling Right then Left. Once you are happy with the footwork and blocking, you can go 1/2 speed and work your way to full speed repetitions in both directions.

# PULLING DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill how to pull and get up through the hole quickly.
- To teach and drill how to locate and block the first ugly jersey you find.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- 2 Linemen in a 3 pt stance, with a blocking dummy laying at a 45-degree angle imitating the TKO Wall that we strive for on the playside.
- 2 Shield holders lined up as linebackers who move to the top end of the dummy when the drill begins. We let them change where they start and finish to simulate the many different defenses we will run into.

## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count
  1. Both blockers pivot and pull, getting down the backside of the wall.
  2. Eyes should immediately be on the lookout for who you will block.
  3. 'Shimmy down' with short steps right before contact.
  4. Last step before contact is a 6" LOAD step, sinking hips & good hit position.
  5. Make contact using a 6" EXPLODE step, aiming for the far armpit.
  6. Players will begin to stomp and drive bag. Call it the GO steps.
  7. Look for 7 cleats in the ground, good form and firm contact on the bag.
  8. After contact, the blocker should swing his hips to seal the defender away from the runner.

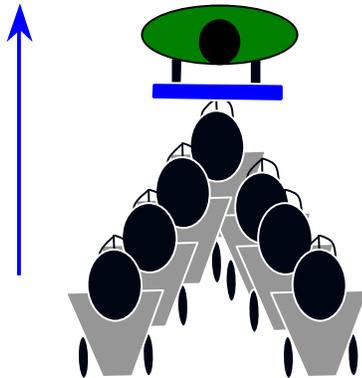
## **COACHING NOTES:**

- This drill can be done in or out of pads, with or without hard contact.
- We also like to run this drill without the blocking dummy. Instead we use live blockers and let them work on building the TKO Wall against air.

# WEDGE DRILLS

*This is one of the toughest things we teach our players each year. But when we get it right, it is a beautiful thing to watch. No matter how fast you get it right, you must continue to practice this skill all year or it will go away just as fast.*

# WEDGE PROGRESSION DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To teach and drill the proper Wedge fit.
- To teach and drill how to Wedge block.
- This very simple progression teaches them first how the Wedge feels, then how the Wedge works and finally how to put it all together.

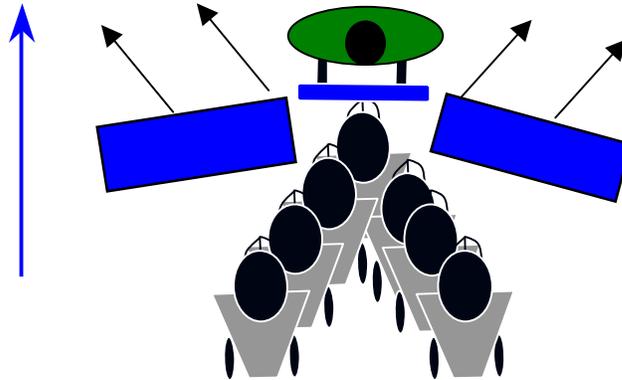
## **ALIGNMENT & DRILL:**

- Step 1 - O-line forms Wedge on LOS facing a NT (coach holding a shield). Shows them how the wedge feels. Work for 5 then 10 yards.
- Step 2 - Formed Wedge "Eyes Wide Shut" on LOS facing NT. Center's eyes are open. Teaches them to stay together by feel. Work for 10 yards.
- Step 3 - From LOS, get into the Wedge and freeze. Work on first step, then second step, and then getting a tight mesh.
- Step 4 - From LOS, run Wedge full speed on NT. Work for 10, 20 & 30 yards.
- Step 5 - From LOS, run Wedge full speed on NT "Eye Wide Shut". Work for 5 yards. If they can go live from a 3-point stance and do this drill then you will have an awesome Wedge on game day.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- If possible with the younger kids, find a Mom to come out and hold the bag. The kids get a real charge out of it and most Moms don't feel the need to bow up and stuff the little guys.
- We do most of our Wedge practice in drill time instead of scrimmage time because we don't want to run Wedge against our players to keep anyone from getting hurt when they get run over.

# WEDGE HIGH KNEES DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To drill the proper Wedge fit and Wedge block.
- To teach and drill how to stay in a tight Wedge formation while staying low with a proper fit, stepping with 'high knees' to avoid tripping over the bodies.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Linemen in formation on the LOS.
- Two blocking bags lined up horizontally on LOS with top at the guards outside hip and the extending towards tight ends.

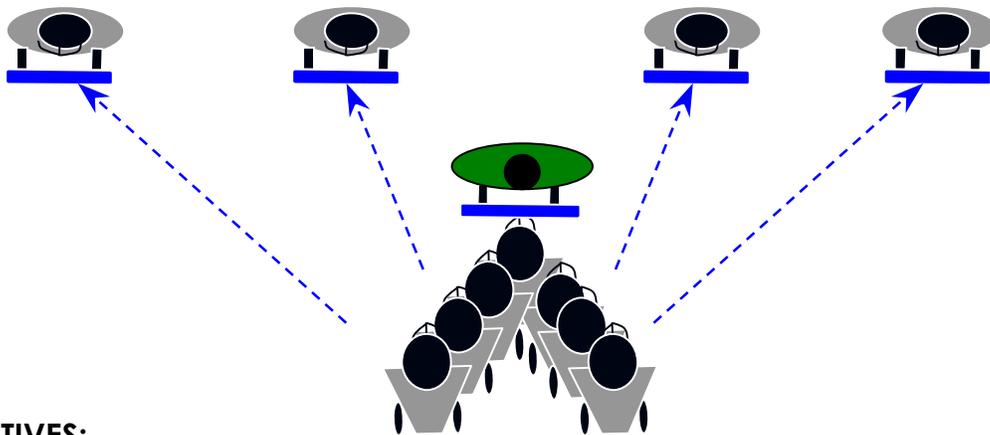
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count:
- Offensive Line will fire out and form the Wedge
- Staying tight, they will drive the NT downfield.
- Using 'high knees' to avoid tripping over the dummies.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- If possible with the younger kids, find a Mom to come out and hold the bag. The kids get a real charge out of it and most Moms don't feel the need to bow up and stuff the little guys.
- We do most of our Wedge practice in drill time instead of scrimmage time because we don't want to run Wedge against our players to keep anyone from getting hurt when they get run over.

# WEDGE EXPLODE DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To drill the proper Wedge fit and Wedge block.
- To teach and drill how to 'explode' and find downfield blocks when the Wedge slows and begins to break apart.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Linemen in formation on the LOS.
- Four players or coaches should line up 10-15 yards downfield with hand shields so the linemen have targets when they 'explode'.
- We like to let our Fullbacks run inside the Wedge during this drill. Not only for the opportunity to practice running inside the Wedge but also so they can 'feel' the Wedge begin to slow and they can call 'EXPLODE' when it does.

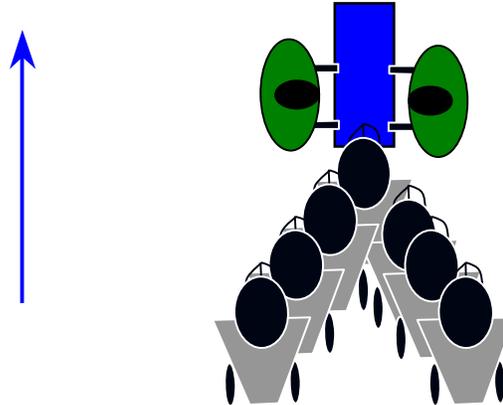
## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count:
- O-Line will fire out, form the Wedge and drive the NT downfield.
- At about 5 yards, the NT should 'bow up' and slow the Wedge.
- When he feels this happen the FB should yell 'EXPLODE'.
- Uncovered blockers should release downfield from the Wedge, and block the first bad guy he finds. This creates seams so the FB can run to daylight.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- If possible with the younger kids, find a Mom to come out and hold the bag. The kids get a real charge out of it and most Moms don't feel the need to bow up and stuff the little guys.
- We do most of our Wedge practice in drill time instead of scrimmage time because we don't want to run Wedge against our players to keep anyone from getting hurt when they get run over.

# WEDGE FORKLIFT DRILL



## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To drill the Center how to forklift a frogging or submarining NT, while the WEDGE fits together and begins to drive down the field.

## **ALIGNMENT:**

- Linemen in formation on the LOS.
- Two coaches holding a blocking dummy long-ways with the end closer to the Center lifted off the ground and the far end resting on the ground.

## **DRILL:**

- On the snap count:
- Center will simulate a snap and load his free arm. On his EXPLODE step, he will fire both arms up under the end of the pad and lift the pad.
- Offensive Line will fire out and form the Wedge.
- Staying tight, they will drive the pad downfield.
- The coaches should give ground but attempt to keep the near end of the pad as low as possible to simulate a frogger or submariner.

## **COACHING NOTES:**

- The coaches should start out the season with the bag lifted nearly as high as the Center's helmet, but as the Center gets better, the bag should start out lower and lower so the Center continues to get better.
- We do most of our Wedge practice in drill time instead of scrimmage time because we don't want to run Wedge against our players to keep anyone from getting hurt when they get run over.