Youth Football Drills

Angle Tackle Drill

Purpose: Combines tackling skills with proper pursuit and leverage and position.

Procedure: Align two cones five yards apart. Divide defenders into two single file lines five yards apart facing one another and designate one group as the ball carriers and the other group as the defenders. The coach stands behind the first defender and signals the direction to the ball carrier. On the coach's cadence, the ball carrier takes off the designated cone. The defender closes the distance and executes a proper angle tackle. The drill should be conducted so that all defenders work angle tackling to both the right and left sides.

Bag Drill

Purpose: Teach players how to receive a proper handoff and keep the head up to make the proper read and cut.

Procedure: This drill involves the center, quarterback and running backs. The quarterback takes the snap from the center and hands the football to the running back. The running back has his eyes upfield running towards a dummy, (the defender), held three yards away by a coach. As the player approaches the dummy, the coach will move it to the right or the left, indicating that the back should cut in the opposite direction. Players should be running at full speed.

Beat Your Man Drill

Purpose: Teaches good fundamentals of blocking, holding the block, and fighting through the block.

Procedure: Set-up bags or cones on both sides of the players 5-6 feet apart. This limits the lateral distance each player can move.

The coach stands behind the defensive player and assigns the direction he wants the blocker to take the defender. The defender needs to read the block and fight through the pressure to the hole.

Body Position Drill

Purpose: Teaches proper body position for pass blocking.

Procedure: The defensive lineman aligns in a challenge position with his hands grabbing the shoulders of the blocker. The blocker assumes the proper lock out position. Align a cone in the backfield, representing the quarterback. On the coach's command, the blocker shuffles his feet, maintaining an inside position as the defender moves side to side and toward the passing point.

Bull In the Ring Drill

Purpose: Good defensive drill for working on tackling the ball carrier.

Procedure: All place form a circle around 1 player (for large groups can create 2 or 3 circles to keep drill moving). The coach tosses the football to a player standing in the circle. The player who catches the football must try to run to the other side of the circle. The player in the middle of the ring must stop the runner with a good solid heads up tackle. If the runner makes it across the circle the player in the middle stays in the middle if the player in the middle makes the tackle then he takes the runners position in the circle and the runner becomes the tackler in the middle and the drill continues.
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Cross Drill

Purpose: To teach receivers to concentrate on the football while having their vision obstructed.

Procedure: Divide the receivers into two groups facing each other on a selected line of scrimmage. One receiver will run across the field behind the defensive man crossing from the opposite direction. The quarterback or coach will throw the ball to a point where the two players are about to cross. Instruct the defender to wave his arms and try to distract the receiver.

Finish Alive Drill

Purpose: Teaches proper leverage, hand thrust, along with hip and foot movement to finish a block.

Procedure: Place players into three lines. Have line one step out and face line two. Line one (defense) will face line two. The coach will stand behind line two and give line one a hand signal in the direction he wants them to move after the initial contact. On command, line two (offensive) will carry out the entire drive block from start to finish.

Full Gauntlet Drill

Purpose: To teach receivers the fundamentals of catching the ball and tucking it in before contact.

Procedure: Position players in two parallel lines facing each other approximately two yards apart. The first receiver stands at one end approximately five yards away. On cadence, the receiver runs towards the gauntlet, receives the pass, tucks the in and runs through the gauntlet. Instruct players on both sides to try and rip the ball loose.

Good Balance Drill

Purpose: Teaches linemen and blocking backs to keep their feet apart and keep their bodies from being pushed, pulled or tipped from side to side.

Procedure: Have the players lineup across from each other and grab the shoulder pads of the player opposite them. On the coaches command, one of the players, the defensive player, tries to get his opponent off balance by pushing, pulling and tipping from side to side. This forces the offensive player to get low, get a wide base, and move his feet to keep his balance. Switch offensive and defensive players and continue drill.

High Knee Drill

Purpose: Develops high knee running and body awareness.

Procedure: Setup five bags in a row, five feet apart. Have a back run at full speed over each bag in succession. Make sure runners keep their eyes downfield and knees high. Check for proper ball carrying throughout the entire drill. Variation - at the end of the last bag place a coach or player with a shield hit the runner coming over the last bag.

Lock on Drill

Purpose: To teach the blocker to maintain contact in the follow through phase of blocking.

Procedure: Align the offensive blocker under the chute in a three-point stance, standing at the edge of the board. Place the defender one foot away in a two-point stance. (Alternate the defenders between two and three-point stance). On the cadence, the blocker will fire out of his stance and drive the
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defender down the board. The defender will collide with the blocker and give resistance as he is being driven back. As the drill progresses, vary the distance between the blocker and the defender. When the defender reaches the end of the board, the coach will give a direction to spin. The blocker must continue to fight pressure where he feels pressure, lock on, and finish the block.

One on One Read Drill

Purpose: To teach proper reads and reactions to uncovered lineman.

Procedure: Placed two defenders three yards apart and designate a defender to play the offensive lineman position. Position the lineman in between the two cones and align a linebacker in base alignment. The coach designates the lineman’s blocking technique (i.e. base, down block, zone scheme, pull, trap, pass set) On the cadence, the lineman carries out his technique and the linebacker reacts accordingly. The drill should be conducted until all linebackers receive a sufficient number of repetitions.

Over the Shoulder Drill

Purpose: Works on proper techniques and fundamentals involved in catching the football over the shoulder.

Procedure: Divide receivers into two groups. Align the first group on the right hash mark. On the quarterback’s cadence, the receiver executes a take off route. The quarterback takes a short drop and throws the ball over the outside shoulder of the receiver. The quarterback alternates throwing to each line and the receiver should switch lines every time.

Punch Drill

Purpose: To teach the correct method of delivering a blow when pass blocking.

Procedure: Pair up offensive linemen on a line of scrimmage. The blocker aligns in a three-point stance with the defender in a challenge position. On the coach’s command, the blocker sets up in the proper pass protecting position. From the set position, the blocker will punch the defender using proper technique (The punch should be made with the butt of the hands to the inside framework of the defender’s body.). The drill should be conducted so that all linemen receive a sufficient number of reps.

Pursuit Drill

Purpose: Teaches defensive personnel proper pursuit angles and provides conditioning.

Procedure: The defense huddles on a selected line of scrimmage. Align two cones, one on each side of the field on top of the numbers. Position a running back on each hashmark, five yards behind the selected line of scrimmage. The coach calls out the defensive play. The defense lines up accordingly in proper stance and alignments. On the cadence, the coach either drops straight back and throws the ball deep or turns and simulates a toss sweep. If the coach drops straight back, the defensive line rushes and the secondary and linebackers drop to respective zones. The coach throws the ball deep, and the defender intercepts the football at its highest point and returns it up the near sideline. The remaining defenders set up a wall leading the ball carrier into the end zone. If the coach simulates a toss sweep, the ball carrier on the hashmark sprints around the cone and down the sidelines.
Quick Hit Drill
Purpose: Teaches linemen and blocking backs to quickly get from their stance to a blocking position.
Procedure: Players lineup in a circle in a good stance. On the coach's command, they pop up into a correct pass protection position, taking a quick step with the outside foot, putting their hands up in a punch position, and assuming a squat position, ready to strike a blow. Have the players continue to repeat drill - up, down, up.

Rapid Fire Drill
Purpose: Works on pass rush techniques in a controlled environment
Procedure: Divide defensive linemen into two groups. Position three defenders in a single file line, three yards apart. The defensive player will face the first of three blockers in a line. On the coach's command, the defender will consecutively engage and execute a pass rush technique on each of the blockers. The drill should be conducted until all defenders have had sufficient number of repetitions.

Check for proper form and technique in each of the defender's moves.

Read and React Drill
Purpose: Teaches the defensive lineman to read and recognize the type of block of the opposing offensive lineman by the first head movement.
Procedure: This is a progressive drill:

First have 3 defensive linemen at a time lineup and face the coach, who will do the head motions. The defensive lineman must react quickly to the head movements.

Next pair up the defensive linemen, and a coach standing behind the designated defensive lineman signaling the kind of block and snap count to the designated offensive lineman. Have the defensive lineman react to the movement of the opposing offensive lineman.

Finally, lineup one defensive lineman against three offensive linemen to work on correct reactions to away and combination blocks. Again the coach will stand behind the defensive lineman and signal block and snap count.

Ready Stance Drill
Purpose: Teaches proper stance for each position.
Procedure: Have players line up, each in their proper stance for their position. Inspect each player's stance, making the necessary adjustments. Then the players fire out for 5 yards and properly execute a designated skill from the stance.

Receiver Concentration Drill
Purpose: Works on getting the receiver to focus on the ball and watch it all the way into the hands, even though they know they are going to get hit.
Procedure: Have three players holding hand shields lineup 10 yards deep and 3 yards apart from each other in an equal triangle. Have a receiver run a pattern into the middle of the triangle. As the receiver enters the triangle the coach or quarterback should throw the receiver a high pass. The receiver
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Set, Find and Fire Drill

Purpose: Improve the quarterbacks reaction upon setup.

Procedure: The quarterback takes a quick drop and sets up to deliver the football. Station three or four players downfield, facing him in a horizontal line spread evenly across the field. Each player has an assigned number. The coach calls out a number, the quarterback must quickly set his feet in the direction of the designated player and throw the football.

Shuffle Drill

Purpose: Teaches linebackers to keep their shoulders square and develop feet agility.

Procedure: Linebackers stand in a single file line behind the cone. The coach gives a "set" command and the first linebacker steps up to a good football hitting position. On the next command, "hit", the linebacker shuffles over the bags leading with his right foot. As the linebacker crosses the last dummy, he turns and sprints past the cone. Make sure you work the drill to both sides.

Skeleton Drill

Purpose: To teach and practice the proper fundamentals and techniques for reading the defensive coverage

Procedure: This drill is scripted both offensively and defensively. Divide the offense into two groups (Group A and B). Group A huddles and calls play one on the offensive script. Group B huddles and calls the play one of the defensive script. The drill is scripted for 30 plays (10 on each hash mark) and 10 plays in the middle of the field. This drill is run at full speed.

Turn Drill

Purpose: To force the receiver to get into a position to see the ball and concentrate on catching it.

Procedure: Form two lines of receivers on each side of the field, with a quarterback throwing to each line. The first receiver in each line has his back to the quarterback. The quarterback yells "go" as he passes the ball to the receiver. On the "go" command the receiver must snap his head around quickly, locate and catch the ball, tuck it in, and turn up field. Receivers should change lines after each throw.

Football Tackling Drill #1

Fit Position

Objective - Teach proper tackling form.

Action - Separate your defenders into 2 groups: ball carriers & defenders facing each on a line of scrimmage. On the coach’s signal, the defender’s engage the ball carriers in a fit position and hold on as the coach checks for proper form - feet about shoulder width apart for good base, knees bent, back flat, butt out and arms wrapped around the buttocks.

Coaching Details - Check for proper fit form during the football drill. Be sure defenders hit with their shoulder or chest with the head up.

Football Tackling Drill #2

Fit Follow Through
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Objective - Teach the follow through action of the tackle.

Action - For this football tackling drill, separate your defenders into 2 groups: ball carriers & defenders facing each on a line of scrimmage. On the coach's signal, the defender's engage the ball carriers in a fit position - then on the second signal, the defenders should roll their hips and bring the ball carriers up and back about 5 yards.

Coaching Details - Emphasize hip roll and leverage.

Football Tackling Drill #3
Form Tackle Drill

Objective - Teach proper form tackling technique.

Action - Section defenders into two groups that face each other, about 5 yards apart. One group of players are the ball carriers and they begin moving toward the defenders as the defenders move in for a proper form tackle. The ball carriers shouldn't resist the tackle during the football tackling drill.

Coaching Details - Check for proper tackling form.

Football Tackling Drill #4
Goal-Line

Objective - Teach proper form tackling technique.

Action - Separate your defenders into 2 groups: ball carriers & defenders. Place 2 cones on the line, spaced about five yards apart. The first defensive player in line lines up with his feet on the line of scrimmage. The first ball carrier lines up about 3 yards away from the defender. On the coach's signal, the ball carrier attempts to get past the defender between the cones. The defender, of course, steps up and makes the tackle before the ball carrier can do so. The ball carrier should get creative and do whatever it takes to score during the football tackling drill.

Coaching Details - Check for proper tackling form.

Football Tackling Drill #5
Angle Tackle Drill

Objective - Teach fundamentals of the angle tackle.

Action - Section defenders into two groups that face each other, about 5 yards apart. One group of players are the ball carriers and others are defenders. Place two cones about five yards apart and halfway between the first ball carrier and defender in line. The coach should stand behind the defender, points in which direction the ball carrier should go. On the coach's signal, the ball carrier begins the football tackling drill by running to the designated cone while the defender moves in to make an angle tackle. Proper technique is to get the head across the runner's body.

Coaching Details - Check for proper tackling form. Be sure the defenders don't over-run the play and that they stay on the backside of the ball carrier.

Football Tackling Drill #6
Open Field Tackle Drill

Objective - Teach defenders how to tackle in the open field. Action - For this football tackling drill, set up three dummy bags in a line (length-wise) on a line of scrimmage close to one another. Then place a cone down the line of scrimmage and five yards away from and to either side of the bags. Then place one cone about 3 yards upfield and away from the middle bag, then another on the other side (4 cones used total, forming a diamond shape around the three bags).
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Separate your defenders into 2 groups: ball carriers & defenders. The ball carrier starts behind one of the middle cones and the defender behind the other middle cone. On the coach's signal, the ball carrier runs toward the middle cone, then breaks to one of the side cones set up on the line of scrimmage. The defender must read this action, then close quickly and make the open field tackle.

Coaching Details - Check for proper tackling form. Emphasize staying under control as the defenders close in on the ball carriers.

Football Tackling Drill #7

Objective - Teach defenders to shed the block and make the tackle during this physical football tackling drill.

Action - Separate team up into 3 different groups:

1) Centers & guards vs. linebackers & nose guards.

2) Tackles & tight ends vs. defensive tackles & defensive ends.

3) Wide receivers vs. defensive backs

Each group has 2 dummy bags positioned about 3-5 yards apart. Each group also has a quarterback and a running back. On the coach's signal, the quarterback hands off to the back, who tries to make it through the space created by the bags. The defender attempts to shed the offensive players block to "kill" the running back.

Coaching Details - Make this a very competitive football tackling drill. Pit the offense vs. the defense and challenge each side to do better. Keep score for bragging rights. Many teams begin camp with this drill to set a physical tone right from the start.

Football Tackling Drill #8

Objective - Teach defenders to strip the ball when trailing the ball carrier from behind.

Action - Separate your defenders into 2 groups: ball carriers & defenders. Each line is in single file: ball carriers at line of scrimmage & defenders alongside but staggered 2-3 yards behind. On the coach's signal, the first ball carrier starts the football tackling drill by running about half speed down the field while the first defender sprints up and attempts to strip the football as they come up behind the runner.

Coaching Details - Run the football tackling drill from both directions and give each player sufficient reps as a defender. Be sure your defenders don't sacrifice a good tackle as they try to strip the ball. They should come down on the ball or attempt to punch up through the ball as they begin to bring the ball carrier down.

Football Tackling Drill #9

Objective - Teach defenders, especially linebackers & defensive backs to strip receivers of the ball as soon as the catch is made.

Action - Align your defenders into two groups about 5-7 yards apart on the sideline. One group is the receiver group and the other will be the defenders. Put the defenders about a yard or two out from the sideline. The coach, positioned at the numbers and about 10-12 yards from the receiver group, throws a pass to the first receiver who has run a pattern across the field. The defender breaks on the receiver and attempts to strip the football as soon as the receiver makes the catch.

Coaching Details - Give both groups a chance to be the defender group and run the football tackling drill from both directions. Pass the ball out in front of the receiver and teach your defenders to break for the interception point and strip the football by bringing the outside arm down on the receiver's upfield arm.