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INTRODUCTION

by: Coach Tom Bass

As you develop your offense and defense it is also very important to spend time evolving the parts of your kicking game [special teams]. When working with younger players, it is important to have a sound kicking game that is easily understood by each of your players.

One area that is unique to specials teams is that the personnel of the teams will be made up of a combination of offensive and defensive players plus one, two or three players who need to have special skills.

The goal of special teams is usually to change field position or to try to score. To reach these goals, the special teams must:

1. Learn to cover [sprint down field] properly and to tackle in the open field.
2. Block correctly so the team has time to make the kick.
3. Field the kick properly and return it up the field.
4. Block correctly on any return.
5. Have an organized scheme for blocking any kick when it can.

In addition, the individual specialist must:

- Be able to execute both a long [punt] and short [PAT/FG] snap.
- Have the ability to catch a short snap and place the ball on the tee correctly [holder for PAT/FG].
- Be able to kick the ball held by the holder from the tee [PAT/FG].
- Catch a long snap from the center and kick the ball down the field [punter].
- Kick the ball from the tee [kickoff].
- Have the skill to catch either a punt or kickoff and the ability to return the ball up the field, hopefully, to score a touchdown.

The various parts that make up special teams will have special terminology that you may be very familiar with but, in the beginning, may be foreign to your players. Make certain to take the time to explain each term so that your players understand what they are being asked to do.

Playing special teams and especially cover teams where players are asked to sprint down the field involves using proper technique plus great desire. Impress upon your players that many games are won or lost with special teams play. Remember, with young players, having successful special teams may not be as high a priority for them as it is for you so be positive and offer encouragement.

Keep in mind that the majority of your players are there to play and have fun. Having a burning desire to win each week may be number three or four on their list. You must also realize that as a coach you will spend much more time than your players thinking about your special teams, when to punt, what return to use, using an onside kick, trying to block a punt and any little changes that you can make to take advantage of the opposing special teams you are facing.

Just as the offense faces the defense, each phase of special teams has an opposing phase.

1. Kickoff Team versus Kickoff Return Team
2. Punt Team [fake punt pass or run] versus Punt Return Team [Punt block]
3. PAT/FG Team [fake kick pass or run] versus PAT/FG Block Team
4. Onside Kick team [Kickoff - squib or pooch]] versus Hands Team [Onside kick return team]

There are several areas you can consider as you try to arrive at the various special teams you will teach to your team.

Areas to consider when designing your special teams:

1. The background each of the coaches brings to special teams, including the knowledge of how the system works and the skills needed for your specialized players. Each coach may bring a different football background to the staff. There are many successful kicking schemes. The key is pick one and not try to grab this from one and that from another. It is important to decide early on who will be making the decisions [often the head coach] concerning the kicking game during the game and give this coach more responsibility in deciding which special teams scheme your team will teach and run.
2. The overall experience your players bring to the team. If you have players who have played in an organized setting, you can assume that you will be able to become more complex in your special teams. With beginning players, everything will be new. Try not to assume that they know anything. Putting on the uniform correctly can be a challenge. Cover everything completely from coming on the field to going off and everything in between.
3. The skill level of your players as the season begins. Try not to fall into the trap of designing special teams plays that your players physically cannot perform. Finding players who can perform the special kicking skills needed for special teams is crucial. Try to identify players on your team who have promise in making the long and short snap, players who can act as the holder and of course players who can either punt or kick the ball. Asking your players to do something on the field that you feel will ultimately result in failure, will only cause frustration for yourself and the players on the team who are put in that position. Keep all phases of your kicking game well within the skill level of your players.
4. The total amount of time that you will have to introduce your kicking game to the team, especially when you have players going both ways. Mental mistakes can cause failure for your special teams just as much as physical mismatches. Make certain that you are going to have enough time to completely cover all of the assignments and teach each technique that will be required by your players when running any phase of your kicking game. A good rule is, "If you do not have time to run the play in practice, do not attempt to run it in a game".
5. A projection of how your offense should perform versus the special teams that you will face during the year. You can often project the challenges you may encounter on special teams if you have some prior knowledge of the special teams your opponent's may run against you. Try early in the year to build special teams plays that have a chance of being successful against any opposing play that you may see and avoid waiting until the week of the game versus a certain opponent to introduce new plays that your players are not comfortable with and experienced in running. Be prepared to add variations to your base special teams but resist the temptation to teach a new special teams scheme to your team each week because you feel it may have an advantage versus a certain opponent.
6. Is your special teams adaptable with changes in personnel and alignments that allow you to increase the problems for the opponent with little learning by your special teams players? In your special teams design, it is good if you can run the same play from different formations or using different personnel in the game. This can involve shifting a player, using motion, substituting in a special player

for a special play. Each of these adjustments presents an added problem for your opponent, but often does not require additional learning except for one or two players on the special teams.

Does your basic kicking game allow you to function effectively during all of the different situations that you may face during the game? During a game, try to make certain that your base kicking game can function in situations that may come up during the game. Plan to teach any fake kick or onside kick you may need to execute when it is essential to keep possession of the ball. Also practice and prepare to block any kick or to cover any onside kick that the score may dictate you using.

From now on in the following pages of this special teams section of our Coaches Guide we will continually be making additions to each section as we cover:

- [Basic Kicking Alignments](#)
- [Special Kicking Personnel Groupings](#)
- [Special Teams Technique - Kicking Off](#)
- [Special Teams Plays - Coverage and Return](#)
- [Placekicking](#)
- [Kickoff Coverage](#)
- [Punt Protection and Coverage](#)

Good luck in designing your special teams, successfully teaching it to your players and executing the phases of the kicking game versus your opponents. We hope the information we present to you will be of assistance as you prepare your special teams plays. Remind your special teams players of the importance of this part of the football game and that their individual desire is really important if the special teams are going to be a success. To have success in the kicking game, impress upon your players during every practice that they must line up properly, run the play using correct technique and execute their individual assignment for each play.

As you go along, please feel free to ask me questions as they come up by clicking "Let's Talk Football". I will always try to be of assistance to you and hopefully together we can enhance the performance of your team.

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SPECIAL TEAMS ALIGNMENTS

by: Coach Tom Bass

Deciding on your basic SPECIAL TEAMS alignments is something you will want to do right away. There is no one best alignment to select for the various phases of your kicking game. Some may give you better protection for your kicker and some may be better for fielding each kick. Ideally you will try to have a kicking game that has a good balance and allows you to have success in each phase.

Below are some of the special teams alignments to consider for your kicking game. In addition to the base diagram, we will discuss how you might call the special team in your huddle or at the sideline and look at the strengths and keys for each alignment.

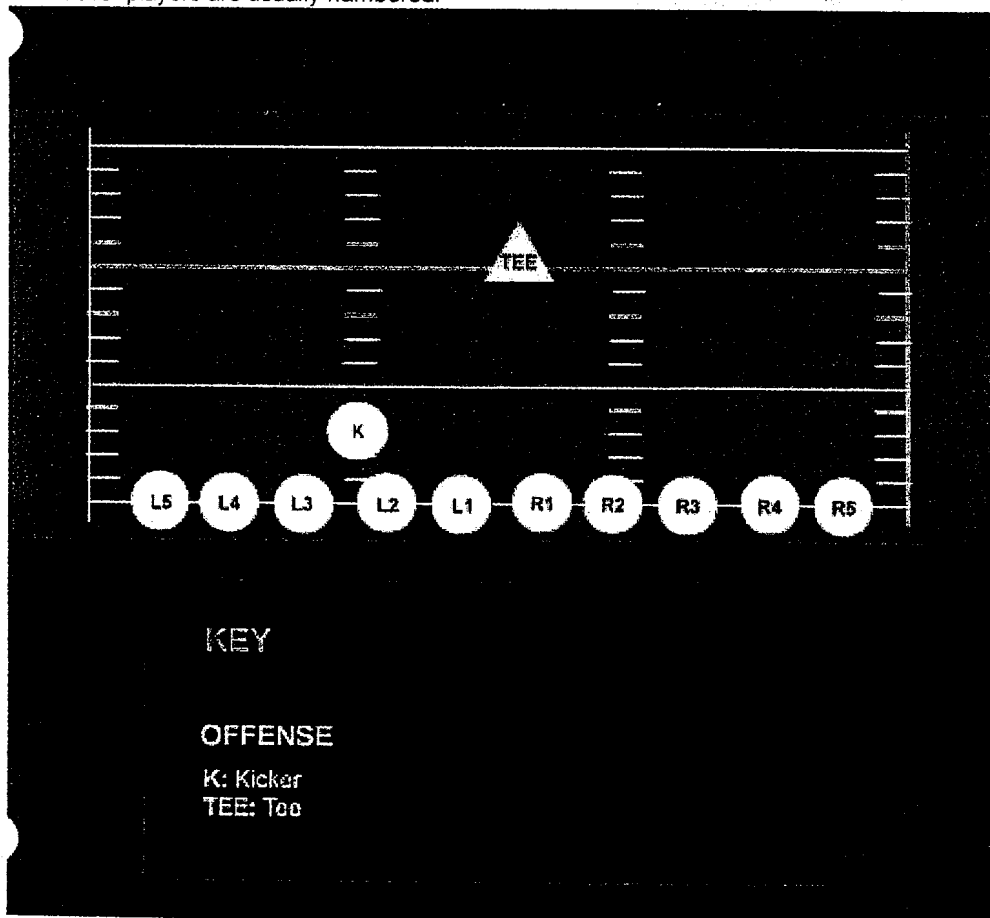
One method of calling the different phases of the kicking game is:

1. To call out the actual special team that needs to be on the field [kickoff, punt, PAT].
2. To follow the team with the direction of any return [kickoff return right, punt return left].
3. To follow the team with any special type of blocking or method to block the kick [punt team tight formation, field goal block left].
4. To follow the team with any variation of the team called [punt team – fake, pass right, kickoff team – reverse left].

Following are starting alignments that you can consider when planning your special teams.

CALL - Kickoff Team

In this basic alignment you will have 10 cover players plus one player who will be the kicker. The cover players should line up behind the kicker and start moving forward as the kicker moves to kick the ball. Alert all players that they must stay behind the kicker until he kicks the ball. Cover players are usually numbered.



PURPOSE OF THE ALIGNMENT: This type of alignment gives a balance of players across the field and provides good field of vision for each player as he sprints down the field. Ideally the cover players will have some speed and be good tacklers.

with each phase of the kicking game you will need an opposing phase of the game. To match up with the kickoff team you would produce the kickoff return team.

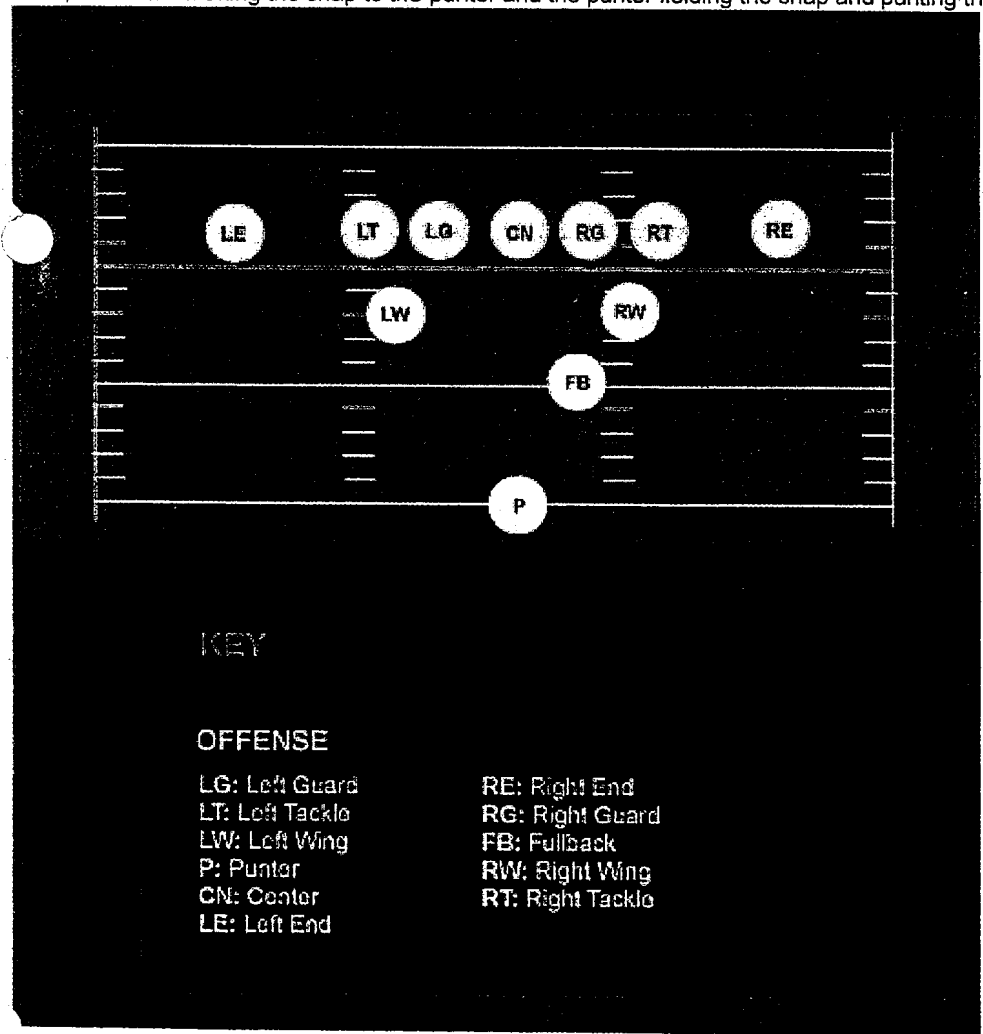
Another phase of the kicking game will be the punt and punt return teams. In this section we will present a spread punt formation. In this phase of the kicking game you will need to focus on three specialized skills that certain individual players must develop.

These skills will include:

1. A player who can serve as the center and snap the ball back to the punter who will be lined up ten or more yards directly behind the center.
2. A player who is the punter, who can catch the snap from the center, regardless of where it is, and properly punt the ball high down the field.
3. On the return team you need two players who can catch a punt and have the running skills to return the ball up the field.

CALL – Spread Punt Team

In this alignment we have one center who must concentrate on making the snap, then help with the blocking and finally sprint down the field once the ball is punted as part of the coverage team. In addition we have seven players who must serve as blockers until the ball is punted and then immediately become part of the coverage team and two player who are lined up wide on the outside and can sprint to cover the instant the ball is snapped. The remaining player is the punter who must make certain to make the punt. Remind your blockers that they must hold their blocks and wait until the ball is kicked before sprinting down the field. The center and punter must work as one team; the center making the snap to the punter and the punter fielding the snap and punting the ball correctly.



PURPOSE OF THE ALIGNMENT: This type of alignment gives a balance of players across the field and provides good field of vision for each player as he sprints down the field. The two players spread out on each side of the ball can leave on the snap and go directly at the

return men. Inside players must be able to block and then sprint down the field to help with the tackle. Punter and fullback [FB] can serve as safeties on opposite sides of the field after the punt.

The other basic alignments that we will cover in this section are the point after and field goal [PAT/FG] alignment and the corresponding block alignment.

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SPECIAL TEAMS TECHNIQUE - KICKING OFF

by: Coach Tom Bass

Coaching this skill can be developed over time, but you may want to let any player give it a try during pre-season workouts. Once you have identified three or four players who have a strong leg and natural ability to kickoff, you can have them begin to work on improving this skill

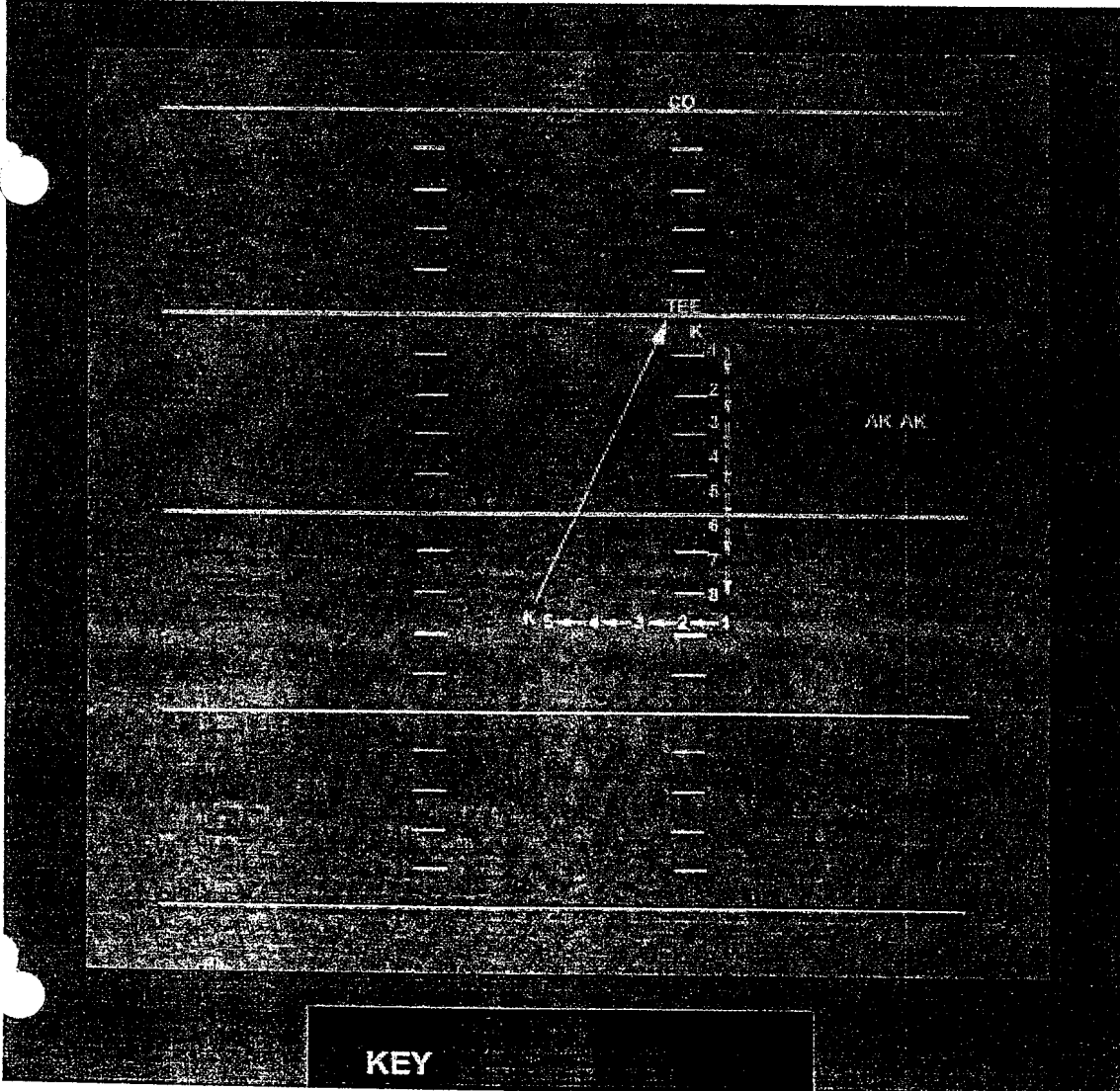
LINING UP - Lining up to make the kick is one of the first things that you will need to teach your kickers. They need to establish set steps and procedures to get lined up to make the kick. Have the kicker:

- Place the tee on the ground at the intersection of the hash marks and a yard-line if possible, so that he has a good point of reference.
- Face the coach with his kicking foot behind the tee and his non-kicking foot at the side of the tee.

From this position have the kicker:

- Turn around and take 8 steps away from the tee in a straight line.
- Then turn to the side of his non-kicking foot and take five more steps.
- Then turn and face the tee and the coach.

MAKING THE KICK - KICKOFF PRACTICE DRILL



KEY

K: Kicker **TEE:** Tee
CO: Coach **AK:** Additional Kicker

TAKING A PRE-KICK STANCE - Once the kicker is in this position, he can then prepare to get into his stance. Facing the tee, the kicker should:

- Take a 1/2 step forward with his kicking foot toward the tee.
- Assume a comfortable stance.
- Position his hips over his feet.
- Have his shoulders leaning slightly forward of his hips.
- Allow his arms to hang down in a comfortable manner.
- Have his head up and his eyes focused on the tee and the ball.

MOVING TO MAKE THE KICK - The coach can blow a whistle or call out "GO" to alert the kicker that he should start forward toward the tee to make the kick. Have the kicker begin his movement toward the kicking tee by taking:

- A short 1/2 step with the non-kicking foot.
- Slow steps for the next four yards and then attacking the tee for the remainder of the distance.

Often in order to emphasize the kicking motion and not the actual kick, it is good to have the kicker go through the correct kicking motion, first without the ball and then with the ball added to the drill. The coach should observe the kickers lineup, stance, and movement to the ball and make corrections as the kicker goes through his sequence of movements.

STRIKING THE BALL - On the kicker's final step check, he places his non-kicking foot [plant foot] three inches behind and six inches outside of the tee. If the plant foot is even with the ball, the kicker will usually make contact with the bottom of the ball resulting in a high kick with little distance. When the plant foot is too far away from the tee and the ball, the kicker will usually strike the top of the ball and drive it into the ground.

The toe of his plant foot needs to be pointing straight down the field. The kicker should have his head down, eyes focused on the tee, and his shoulders in front of his hips. The kicking motion should start with his hips coming forward to lead the kick.

Check that:

- His kicking leg is moving forward in a high arc.
- His knee is ahead of his kicking foot.
- He has the toe of the kicking foot pointed down.
- He moves forward so that the inside of the instep hits the ball just below the center of the ball.

Ultimately the kicker may learn to generate enough forward momentum and power that he will actually be lifted off the ground at the moment of the kick.

Make certain that the kicker is not leaning back with his head up or stopping his forward momentum at the moment of the kick.

PRACTICING THE KICKOFF - In setting up the drill, it is good to have each kicker go through the kicking motion a couple of times without the ball and then have each kicker kick three or four actual kicks downfield with the ball. The first few actual kicks should be for form, and then the last one can be for distance if you want to have them really attack the ball. Remember in the beginning, the techniques of a young kicker may suffer anytime the ball is added to the drill. In your drill, you may want to have your kickoff return people back catching the kicks so that they can benefit from the practice session.

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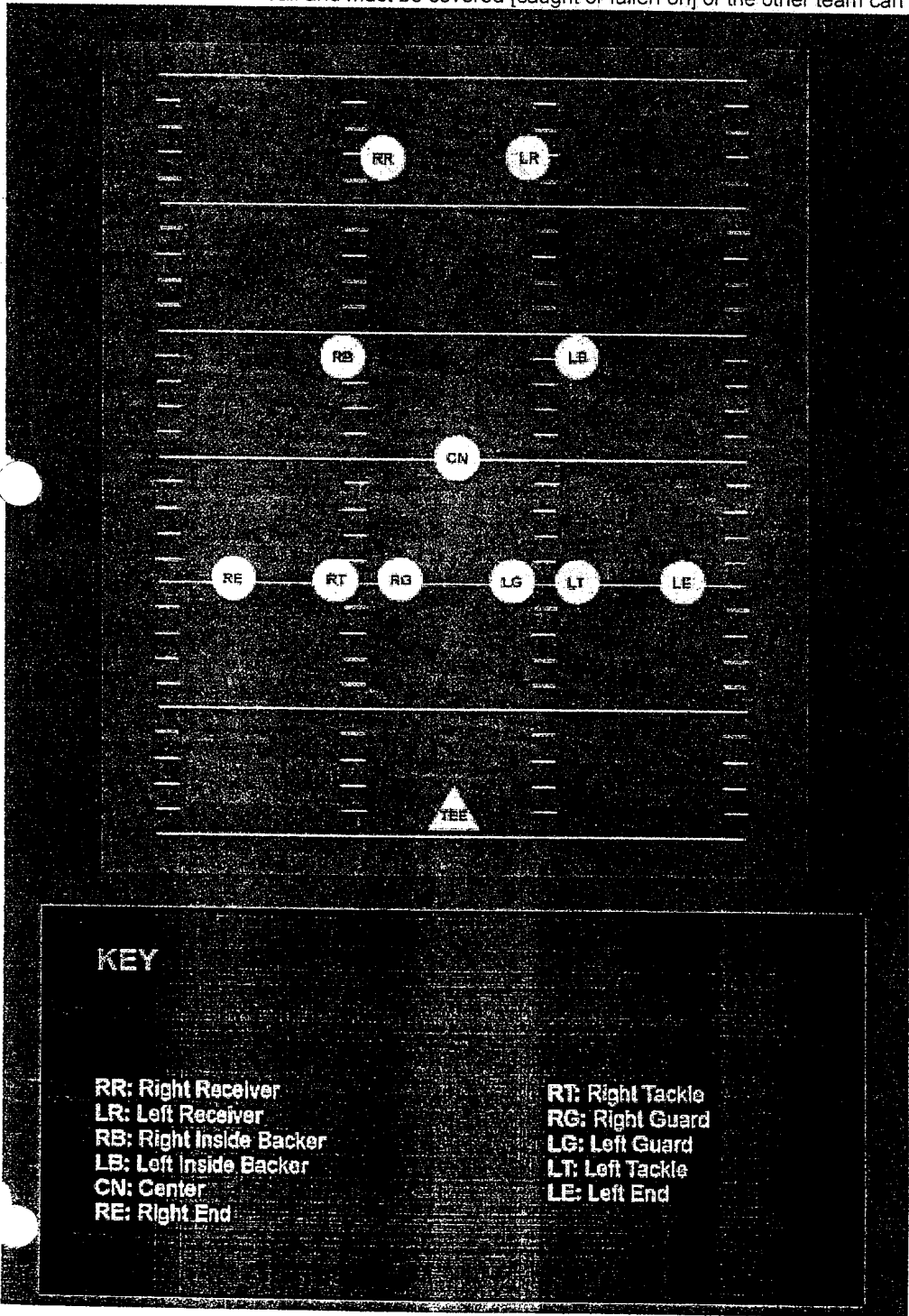
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SPECIAL TEAMS

by: Coach Tom Bass

CALL - Kickoff Return Team - The depth of these two players should be determined by the ability of the opposing kicker. The six players nearest the ball must make sure the ball is kicked deep before starting to drop back to block. Alert all the members of the return team that a kickoff is a free ball and must be covered [caught or fallen on] or the other team can fall on it and gain possession.

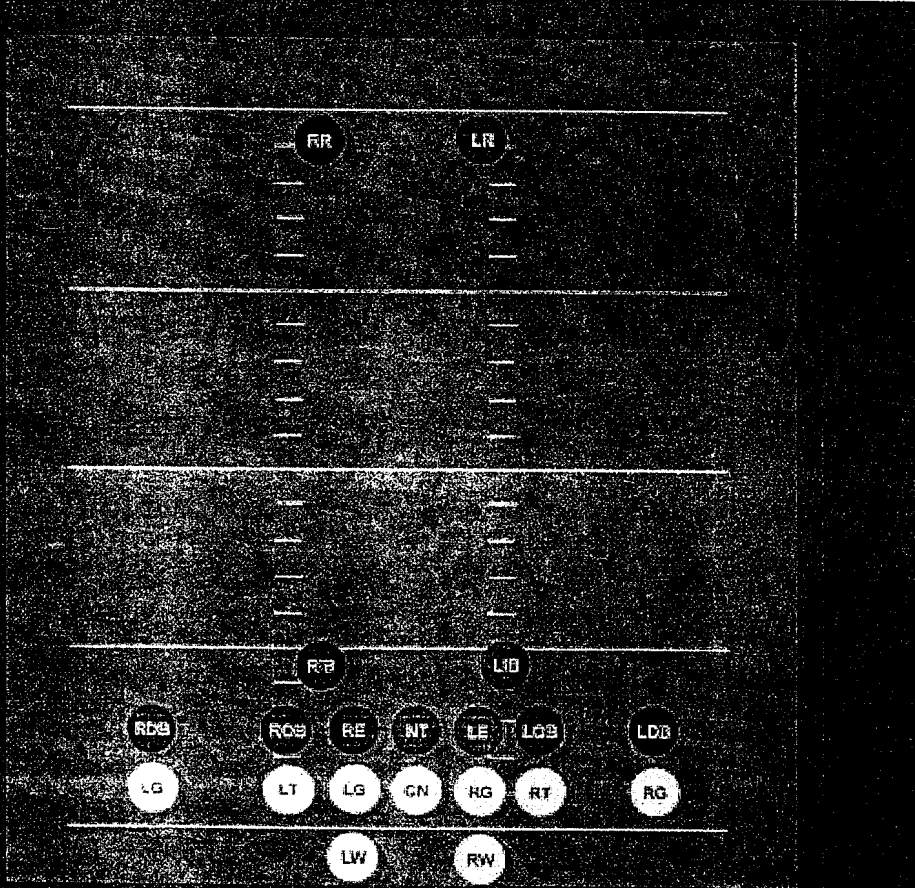


KEY

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| RR: Right Receiver | RT: Right Tackle |
| LR: Left Receiver | RG: Right Guard |
| RB: Right Inside Backer | LG: Left Guard |
| LB: Left Inside Backer | LT: Left Tackle |
| CN: Center | LE: Left End |
| RE: Right End | |

PURPOSE OF THE ALIGNMENT: This type of alignment gives a balance of players across the field, position players for any onside, block, or short kick and provides good field of vision for each player as he sprints back to get into position to block. Ideally the front nine players will have some speed and good balance to move into position to block their assigned cover player. The alignment allows the two return players to see the ball, make the catch, and return the ball in the designated area.

CALL - Punt Return Team - In our base punt return alignment, we have five players who line up on the line and can charge across the line on the snap, two players [RDB & LDB] who move out on the two outside men and try to keep them from running down field, two inside players [RIB & LIB] who line up off the line and have responsibility for the two wing backs, and two return players [RR & LR] who line up down the field and must decide who will field [catch] the punt and who will lead the punt return player up the field. The distance the return players line up should be based on the punting ability of the opposing punter, but never deeper than their own ten-yard line.

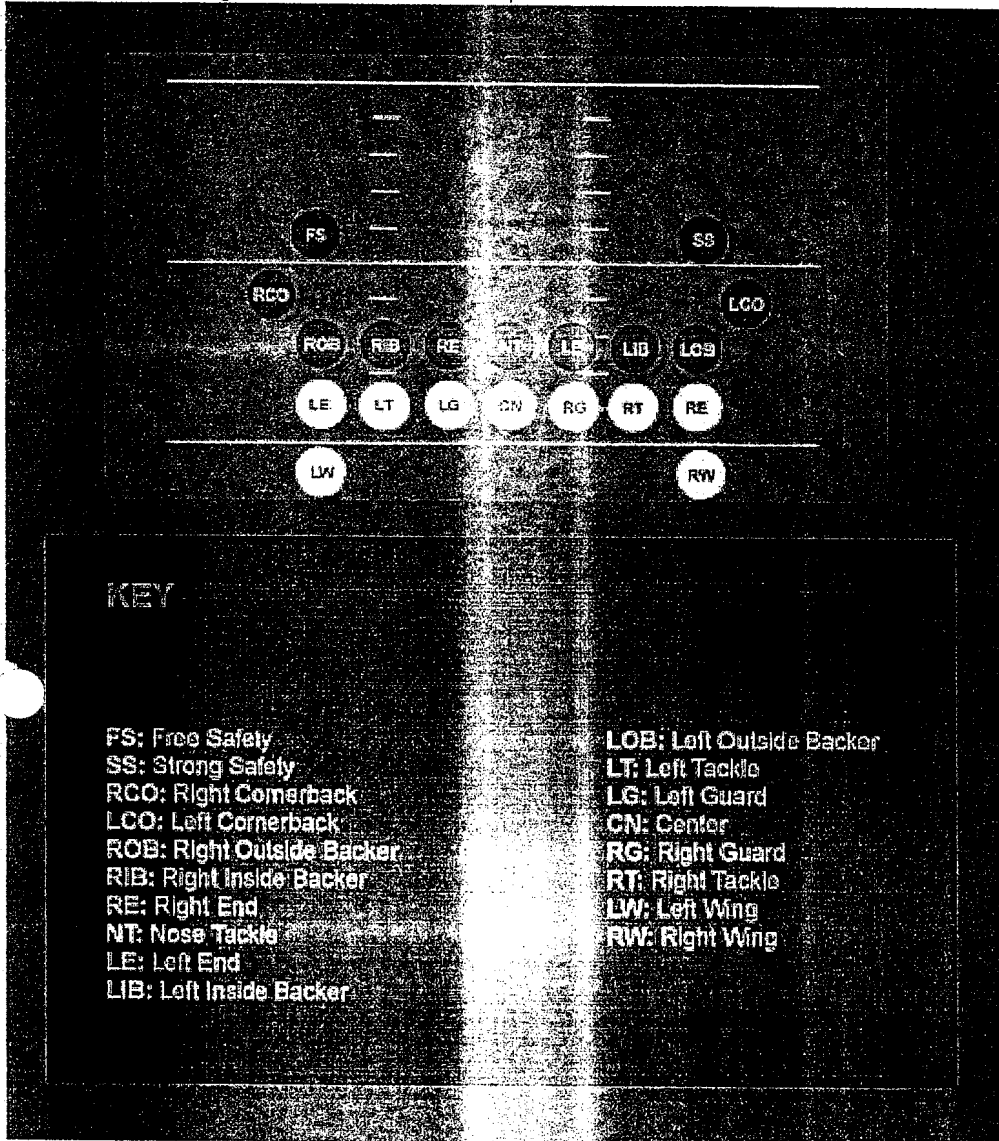


KEY

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| RR: Right Receiver | LDB: Left Defensive Back |
| LR: Left Receiver | LG: Left Guard |
| RIB: Right Inside Backer | LT: Left Tackle |
| LIB: Left Inside Backer | CN: Center |
| RDB: Right Defensive Back | RG: Right Guard |
| ROB: Right Outside Backer | RT: Right Tackle |
| RE: Right End | LW: Left Wing |
| NT: Nose Tackle | RW: Right Wing |
| LE: Left End | |
| LOB: Left Outside Backer | |

PURPOSE OF THE ALIGNMENT: This type of alignment gives a balance of players across the field and provides our return team with the ability to pressure the punter, impede the movement for the outside men toward our return men, allow the players to move into position to block for the return, give good vision for the two return men to see the ball, and also put our team in position to cover any fake punt.

CALL - Field Goal Block - In this basic alignment, we have three interior defensive linemen [RE - NT - LE] to rush up the middle, four linebackers [ROB - RIB - LIB - LOB] to be in position to rush from the outside, and four defensive backs [RCO - FS - SS - LCO] to either aid the rush or cover eligible receivers in case of a pass.



KEY

FS: Free Safety	LOB: Left Outside Backer
SS: Strong Safety	LT: Left Tackle
RCO: Right Cornerback	LG: Left Guard
LCO: Left Cornerback	CN: Center
ROB: Right Outside Backer	RG: Right Guard
RIB: Right Inside Backer	RT: Right Tackle
RE: Right End	LW: Left Wing
NT: Nose Tackle	RW: Right Wing
LE: Left End	
LIB: Left Inside Backer	

PURPOSE OF THE ALIGNMENT: This type of alignment gives a balance of players across the field and provides our block team with the ability to pressure the kicker by rushing up the middle and from either side by adjusting the position of our defensive backs. This alignment also puts our block team in position to cover any fake kick [run or pass] or bad snap from the center or fumbled snap by the holder. Alert the players that any kick that is blocked and does not cross the line of scrimmage can be picked up and run for a touchdown. Any kick that does cross the line but is not good should be left alone and not returned, it will be your ball.

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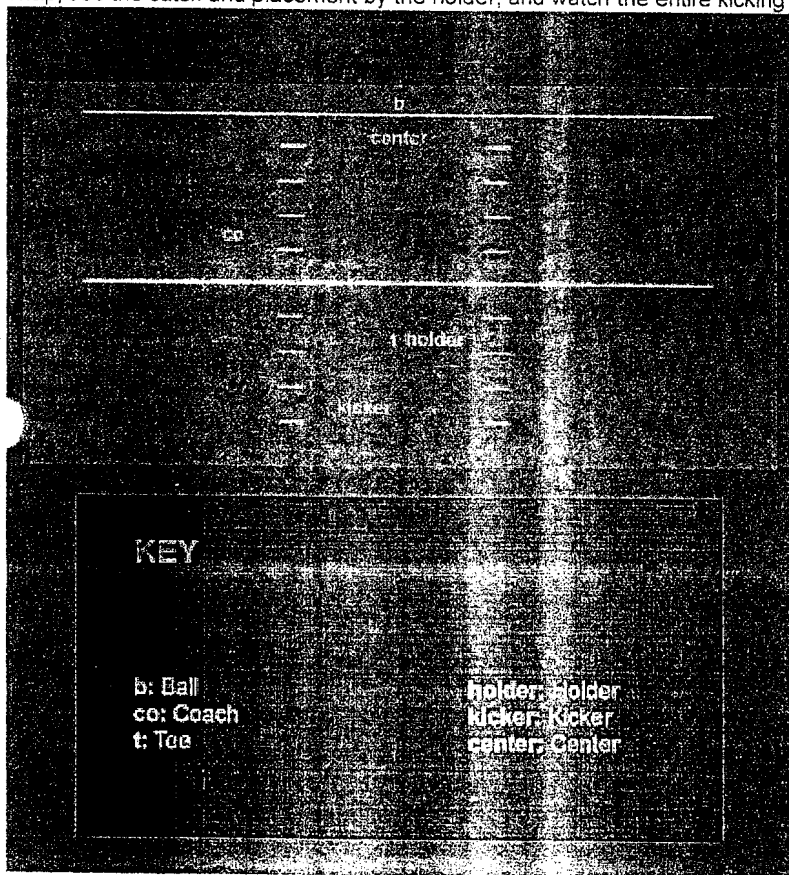
COACHING THE SPECIAL TEAMS SPECIALIST - I - PAT/FG

by: Coach Tom Bass

PLACEKICKING

Each phase of your special teams will have players who are required to perform special skills in order for that phase of the kicking game to be successful. When attempting to kick a point-after touchdown or field goal, there are three players who have this responsibility: the center who is the short snapper, the holder, and the kicker.

These three players must work as one smooth unit in order for the kicker to have success. Position yourself so that you can observe the center snap, see the catch and placement by the holder, and watch the entire kicking motion of the kicker.



We will break down the coaching for each of these three positions in this article starting with the center, the short snapper. Have your offensive linemen, defensive linemen, and linebackers try out for the position.

THE CENTER

GRIPPING THE BALL - teach your short snappers the same grip that your quarterback uses on the ball when throwing a forward pass.

- Grip the ball near the center with the 1st finger near the tip of the ball off the laces.
- Place the 2nd and 3rd fingers over the laces on the surface of the ball with the little fingers on the laces.
- Have the thumb on the top panel in between the 1st and 2nd finger.

You can line the players up in pairs, seven yards away from one another, holding the ball over their head with both hands and then throwing it to their partner. This drill can be used when your short snappers are warming up for PAT or FG practice.

Once the player has a proper grip, you can have him line up in his stance, place the ball on the ground in front of him, and then have him reach

out and grip the ball.

- Place the snapping hand under and outside of the ball.
- Place the guiding hand lightly on top of the ball with the hand open and fingers spread.
Keep the most pressure just in front of the center of the ball.

SHORT-SNAP STANCE - with the ball placed on the ground, have the center move up and get into a stance to make the snap to the holder.
When the player is in the stance, check that he

- Has his feet even and slightly wider than his hips.
- Bends at the knees.
- Keeps his back level and shoulders and hips even.
- Has his shoulders square.
- Keeps the ball slightly in front of his helmet.
- Has the laces of the ball rotated down and outside of his snapping hand.
- Places his snapping hand under the ball.
- Rests the guiding hand lightly on top of the ball.
- Keeps the ball level for the snap.

MAKING THE SHORT SNAP - once the center is in a good stance and has a proper grip on the ball he should:

- Look back through his legs to the hands of the holder and determine that the kicker and holder are ready to receive the snap.
- Make the snap with both hands on the ball.
- Thrust both arms back through the legs toward the holder.
- Follow through with both hands directly at the holder's hands.
- Allow the palms of both hands to rotate out.
- Brace himself for the opponent's rush.

THE HOLDER

The instant the ball leaves the center's hands, the holder is the next specialist who must perform. The holder has the responsibility to:

- Make certain that the kicker is ready to kick.
- Signal the center that that the snap can be made.
- Catch the snap.
- Place the ball on the tee and position it correctly for the kick.

Try to have your holder be a player who is calm, has good hands, and is comfortable handling the ball. This player can play any position on the team, although the holder is often a wide receiver or quarterback.

STANCE - once you have selected your holder, you can have him:

- Line up on the opposite side of the tee from the kicker.
- Kneel down with his back knee seven yards from the center.
- Position his front foot with the toe pointing directly at the goal post.
- Lean forward to the center.
- Place the fingers of his front hand on the center's kicking tee.
- Extend his front arm and hand directly at the center.
- Keep his palm facing down for top part of target for center.

HANDLING THE BALL - once the holder is in this position, he should turn back and look at the kicker and:

- Ask the kicker if he is ready.
- Bring his hand off the tee, palm up.
- Allow the thumbs of his hands to touch and form a target area for the center snap.

The holder has now alerted the center that the kicker is ready and that he is ready to receive the snap and will:

- Be prepared to react for any off-target snap.
- Be ready to make the catch in both hands.
- Use one motion to put the top of the ball on the tee.
Try to have the laces pointing directly at the goal post.
- Rotate the ball with the fingers of his front hand if the laces are not in the correct position.



- Place the index finger of his back hand on the top point of the ball.
- Adjust the lean and balance the ball in the correct position for the kicker.

KICKER

The kicker's primary responsibility is making the kick. He needs to focus on only that job. Many players will think that they can kick, but you will need to carefully watch any players trying out, to determine leg strength, accuracy and finally how they kick under pressure.

ALIGNMENT AND STANCE - In the beginning, lining up a kicker and aligning him properly will require a great deal of attention. Once you have selected one or two players to do your kicking, they should have this phase of the kick become automatic. Coach the kicker to:

- Start with the instep of the plant foot even with the kicking tee.
- Place the kicking foot directly behind tee.
- Begin with the kicking foot and take three normal steps straight back from the tee.
- Take two steps sideways at a right angle with his plant foot.
- Turn slightly and face the holder and the tee.
- Have his kicking foot behind his plant foot.
- Lean forward and keep his shoulders in front of his hips.
- Allow his arms to hang down in a relaxed manner.
- Keep his head up with eyes focused on the tee.

Now the kicker is in position and is ready to move forward toward the tee and make the kick, once the ball is snapped. With good timing, the kicker should be starting forward as the ball is snapped to the holder. In the beginning, the kicker may have to hesitate until the holder becomes proficient at making the catch and placing the ball on the tee in the proper position. Hopefully this hesitation can be eliminated with practice.

STEPS - From his pre-snap stance as the kicker sees the snap, he should:

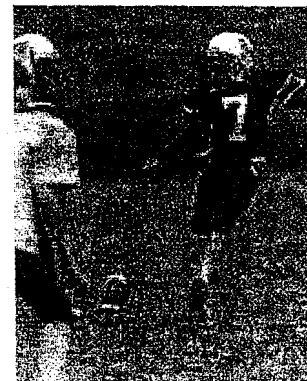
- Start to move with a normal forward step with his kicking foot.
- Take a second longer step with his plant foot.
- Bring his plant foot down even with and six inches outside the tee.
- The toe of his plant foot should be aimed directly at the center of the goal post.

The instant his plant foot makes contact outside the tee, the kicker should be in position to successfully make the kick.

MAKING THE KICK - to complete his kick the kicker should:

- Move his hips forward to generate power for the kick.
- Allow his kicking leg to move in a full arch.
- Keep his toe pointed down and ankle locked on the kicking foot.
- Have the toe of his kicking foot move to the opposite side of the tee.
- Allow the center of the inside of his kicking foot to pass over the tee.
- Make contact with the ball with the top inside of his kicking foot.
- Keep the entire body moving toward the goal post.
- Maintain a forward lean with his shoulders in front of his feet.
- Widen his arms to help have good balance.
- Keep his head down, and both eyes on the ball.
- Allow the kicking leg to follow through lifting him off the ground.

During a game it will be essential that all three players work as one coordinated unit. You may find time during practice when all three players are not available. During these instances, you can have the center and holder practice together or have the holder and kicker practice together or you can work on only the techniques of one player of the group. Try to have all three players work together as one unit at some time during every practice.



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SPECIAL TEAMS TECHNIQUE - KICKING OFF

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Coaching this skill can be developed over time, but you may want to let any player give it a try during pre-season workouts. Once you have identified three or four players who have a strong leg and natural ability to kickoff, you can have them begin to work on improving this skill

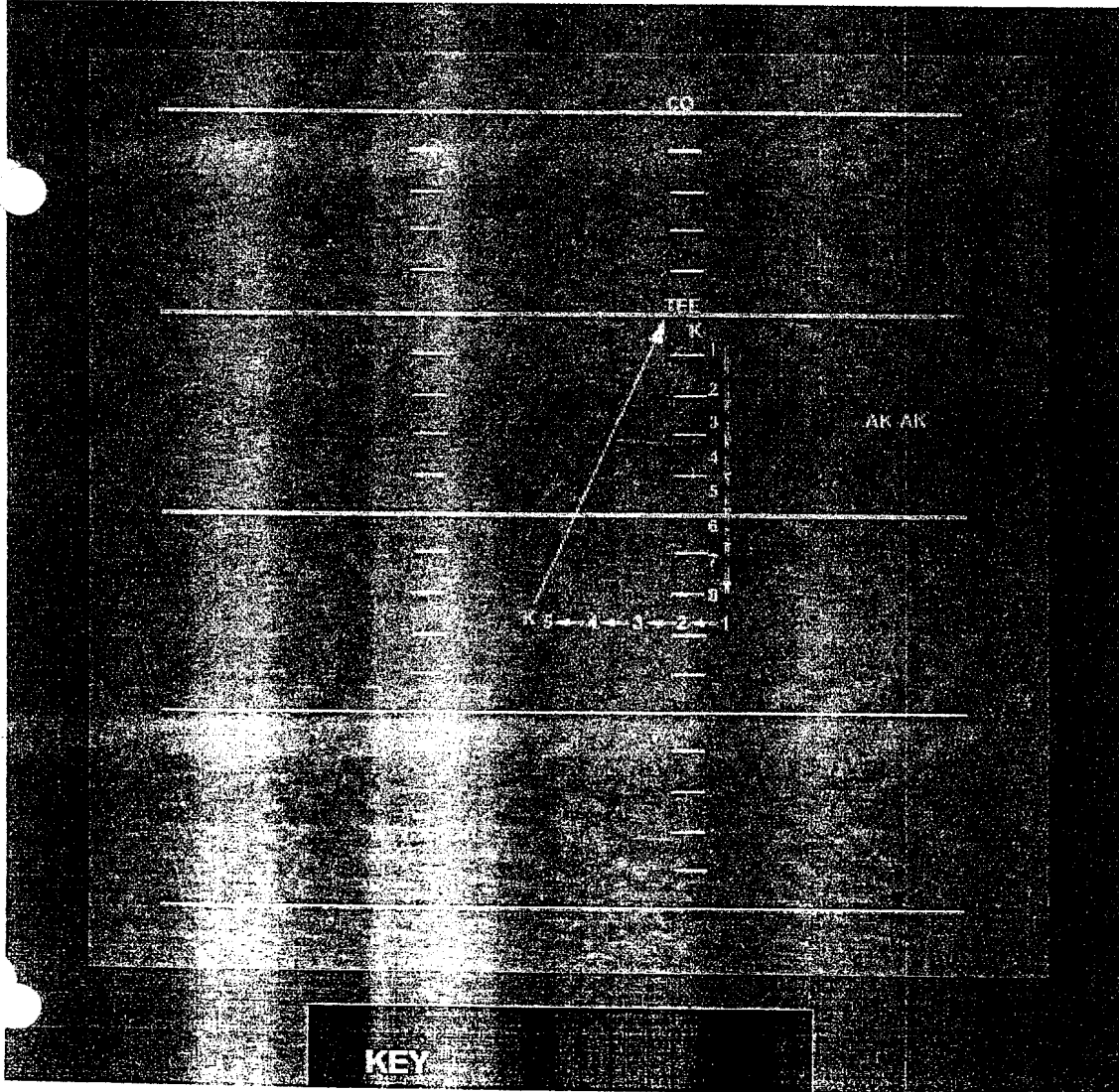
LINING UP - Lining up to make the kick is one of the first things that you will need to teach your kickers. They need to establish set steps and procedures to get lined up to make the kick. Have the kicker:

- Place the tee on the ground at the intersection of the hash marks and a yard-line if possible, so that he has a good point of reference.
- Face the coach with his kicking foot behind the tee and his non-kicking foot at the side of the tee.

From this position have the kicker:

- Turn around and take 8 steps away from the tee in a straight line.
- Then turn to the side of his non-kicking foot and take five more steps.
- Then turn and face the tee and the coach.

MAKING THE KICK - KICKOFF PRACTICE DRILL



K: Kicker **TEE: Tee**
CO: Coach **AK: Additional Kicker**

TAKING A PRE-KICK STANCE - Once the kicker is in this position, he can then prepare to get into his stance. Facing the tee, the kicker should:

- Take a 1/2 step forward with his kicking foot toward the tee.
- Assume a comfortable stance.
- Position his hips over his feet.
- Have his shoulders leaning slightly forward of his hips.
- Allow his arms to hang down in a comfortable manner.
- Have his head up and his eyes focused on the tee and the ball.

MOVING TO MAKE THE KICK - The coach can blow a whistle or call out "GO" to alert the kicker that he should start forward toward the tee to make the kick. Have the kicker begin his movement toward the kicking tee by taking:

- A short 1/2 step with the non-kicking foot.
- Slow steps for the next four yards and then attacking the tee for the remainder of the distance.

Often in order to emphasize the kicking motion and not the actual kick, it is good to have the kicker go through the correct kicking motion, first without the ball and then with the ball added to the drill. The coach should observe the kickers lineup, stance, and movement to the ball and make corrections as the kicker goes through his sequence of movements.

STRIKING THE BALL - On the kicker's final step check, he places his non-kicking foot [plant foot] three inches behind and six inches outside of the tee. If the plant foot is even with the ball, the kicker will usually make contact with the bottom of the ball resulting in a high kick with little distance. When the plant foot is too far away from the tee and the ball, the kicker will usually strike the top of the ball and drive it into the ground.

The toe of his plant foot needs to be pointing straight down the field. The kicker should have his head down, eyes focused on the tee, and his shoulders in front of his hips. The kicking motion should start with his hips coming forward to lead the kick.

Check that:

- His kicking leg is moving forward in a high arc.
- His knee is ahead of his kicking foot.
- He has the toe of the kicking foot pointed down.
- He moves forward so that the inside of the instep hits the ball just below the center of the ball.

Ultimately the kicker may learn to generate enough forward momentum and power that he will actually be lifted off the ground at the moment of the kick.

Make certain that the kicker is not leaning back with his head up or stopping his forward momentum at the moment of the kick.

PRACTICING THE KICKOFF - In setting up the drill, it is good to have each kicker go through the kicking motion a couple of times without the ball and then have each kicker kick three or four actual kicks downfield with the ball. The first few actual kicks should be for form, and then the last one can be for distance if you want to have them really attack the ball. Remember in the beginning, the techniques of a young kicker may suffer anytime the ball is added to the drill. In your drill, you may want to have your kickoff return people back catching the kicks so that they can benefit from the practice session.

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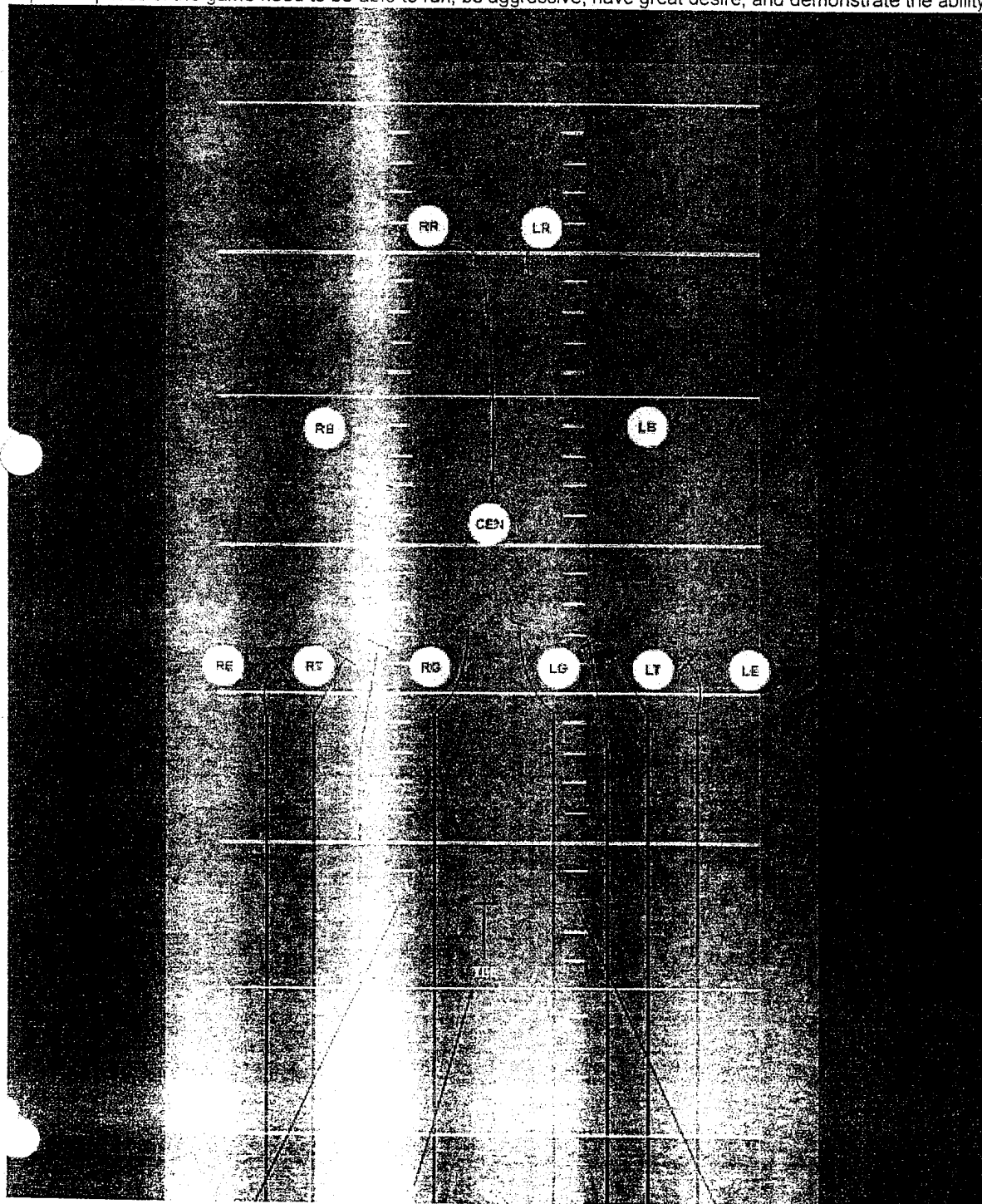
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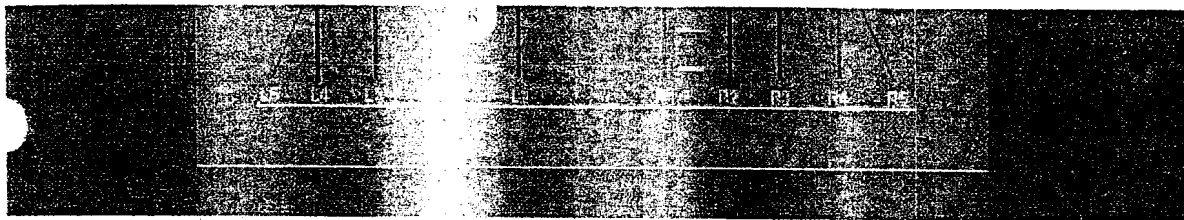


SPECIAL TEAMS - KICKOFF COVERAGE

by: Coach Tom Bass

KICKOFF: Winning the field position battle will often result in giving your team a great advantage in winning the game. It is important that your kickoff coverage teams try to keep the kick returner pinned as deep in their end of the field as possible. Players selected for this important phase of the game need to be able to run, be aggressive, have great desire, and demonstrate the ability to tackle.





PURPOSE OF KICKOFF DRILL: To teach the entire kickoff team to work as one unit while covering the kickoff correctly.

RUNNING THE DRILL: Position the coverage players [10] and the kicker in the proper position on the field with five coverage players on each side of the ball. Start teaching the drill with only the two kick returners on the field to catch the kick and bring it up the field. On the whistle, the kicker should kick the ball and the coverage people need to move down the field to make their coverage. The kick returner making the catch should run the ball up the field in the direction called out by the coach prior to the kick and continue to run until the whistle blows.

- Every coverage person should try to touch the return man with the ball before the drill is concluded.
- It is not necessary to have the coverage people tackle the ball carrier as long as they break down, come under control, and are in position to make the tackle.
- The coverage team should exit on the sideline so that the next group of players on the coverage team can line up for the next kick.

TECHNIQUE:

- All coverage players should start with a forward run with the movement of the kicker and be running at full speed as the kicker strikes the ball.
- Each player must run in their correct coverage lane as they sprint down the field.
- The players should try to keep the ball on the same side of their body as it was prior to the kick.
- Players need to avoid any blockers (when blockers are added to the drill) on the side of the ball, as it is returned up the field, and then quickly get back into their coverage lane.
- Players should be coached to never run in the footsteps of a fellow player.
- Players need to shorten their stride, widen their base, come under control, and be prepared to tackle the return man.
- Check that the kicker and the safeties [L5 and R5] are in position to stop any long return, should the return man break free by moving to the side of the return.

In the beginning, once the blockers are added to the drill and they are assigned the coverage players to block, you should run the drill with only one side of the coverage team going at a time so that you can focus your coaching and make necessary corrections.

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COACHES' SECTION

SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

COACH: Punting has to be one of the most difficult skills for you to teach and the athlete to master. The following areas should be considered when selecting personnel.

- I. Philosophy for Developing a Good Program.
 - A. Competent kicking specialists can give their team a considerable advantage during the course of a game. The kicking game is one-third of the team's total picture. Therefore, when selecting a player to execute what I consider to be one-third of your football game, you should know what to look for. Remember, never be satisfied with the present, look also at the future; especially in developing a good kicking program.
 - B. Select your personnel one or two years in advance if possible. Start looking for youngsters in 7, 8, or 9th grade, depending of course on your program. This will provide coaches with an experienced kicker year after year.
 - C. College coaches can recruit kickers - thereby getting a proven product. However, these so-called proven products still must make improvements and adjustments. College punters must work on consistency, and be able to punt in specific situations, (punting out of bounds, etc.).
- II. Desirable Physical Qualities for a Punter.
 - A. Flexibility - The potential punter should possess freedom and ease of movement of muscles and joints. His athletic performance will be improved through gains in flexibility, because body parts are allowed to move through a greater range of motion with more freedom and ease.
 - B. Strength - Strength is the force which a muscle is able to exert. If the punter can, with proper punting mechanics, properly transfer the strength in his leg to explosive power, the transference of forces will be imparted with greater efficiency.

- C. Balance - Body balance is essential for good results. If the punter does not begin on balance he will not finish on balance. Remember at the end of the punt the punter is balancing on one foot.
- D. Rhythm of Movements - Punters at higher levels of competition are usually good athletes. These athletes will be very coordinated. Therefore, at all levels of competition sensory-motor integration is relative to achievement. The punters' muscles must not only have sufficient strength, speed of movement, endurance and power, but also the ability to apply the proper amount of muscular tension with timing and direction to achieve success.
- E. Consistency - The coordination of the preceding qualities will determine how consistent a punter is going to be. Tests for consistency are usually determined by: 1) punting average, 2) hang time, and 3) accuracy.

NOTE: Coaches should not over-teach or try to make too many corrections at any one time. We can all remember several major league baseball players who had awkward stances and swings but were still excellent hitters. The same will be true of some punters. It should be understood that professionals get away with some bad habits, because they are professionals, and have a lot of God given talent. The most important thing is consistency. If an athlete is successful and is consistent, don't worry too much about his style.

IDEA: A very good teaching technique would be to video-tape your punter. Then show his recording and compare them to certain shots in the film. The students will get a better mental picture of what they are doing.

III. Desirable Personality Traits.

- A. An athlete that is coachable.
- B. An athlete that has the desire to master the basic fundamentals.
- C. An athlete that is dedicated.
- D. An athlete with strict concentration.

IV. Looking for Personnel

- A. Gym class.
- B. Intramurals.

- C. Soccer clubs.
- D. Punt, pass, and kick contests in your area.
- E. Holding tryouts. (Suggestion; Instead of using a football let them punt a soccer ball. It's hard for most people to have success punting those funny shaped balls anyway. If you find an athlete with a strong leg he can be taught how to hold, drop and punt a football at a later date).

SCRIPT CONTINUED

Part II

KICKING MECHANICS

It is very important for the beginning punter to master the basics of punting. Included in Part II are various kicking mechanics such as: stance and step pattern, body position, molding of the ball, grip, placement and drop of the ball, plus several other important points to consider. While learning the basics the punter should discover a style that is comfortable for him. COACHES BE SURE TO SET UP GUIDELINES BASED ON THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

- I. Factors to consider before selecting stance and step pattern.
 - A. Handling time - The time it will take to punt the ball after receiving the center snap.
 1. Without center snap, time should be:
 - a. Excellent 1.2 - 1.3
 - b. Good 1.4 - 1.5
 - c. Poor 1.6 and above
 2. With center snap a time of .9 - 1.1 sec. should be added to other time. This will depend on the ability of the center snapper. Readings including center snap should be 2.2 - 2.3.
 - B. Yardage used - The number of steps taken or yardage used taking those steps.
 1. The punter should use only 2-2½ yards if possible, never exceeding 3 yards.
 2. The closer a punter advances to the line of scrimmage the greater his chances will be of getting his punt blocked.
 - C. Other important considerations.
 1. Coaches should continuously time their punters, and note their "handling times". The coach should start his clock when the ball touches the punter's hands for molding (adjusting laces) and the clock should be stopped when the ball leaves the punter's foot.




SCRIPT CONTINUED.

2. High school punters should position themselves 11-13 yards behind the line of scrimmage. College punters should be back 13-14 yards. Pro 14-15 yards. The center is one of the biggest factors influencing how far the punters can be from the line of scrimmage.
3. Coaches, the center is just as important as the punter. The center will give the kicking unit timing. The center's job is to get the ball back to the punter. In order to do this properly the center's target should be the inside thigh of the punter's kicking leg. Punters should hold their hands accordingly.

NOTE: The beginning punter should be taught step by step and as simply as possible. If the athlete has the natural swing of his leg and rhythmic action in meeting the ball, his ability can be improved further with coaching and practice.

II. Pre-Kicking Mechanics

A. Stance and step patterns

1. Two step approach - (punting foot forward) 
2. Two step approach - (feet parallel) 
3. Three step approach - (non-punting foot forward) 
4. Check points for coaches
 - a. Make sure punters use only 2½-3 yards in step pattern.
 - b. Punter's handling time.
 - c. Watch the punter's back body lean due to over-striding.

NOTE: Positioning of feet is a relative factor in the amount of time it takes for the athlete to punt the ball, (greatly affects blocked punts). Coaches, continuously time your punter.

B. Body position and balance

1. It is essential for good results that the punter begins and finishes on balance.
2. The punter should be relaxed and have a comfortable foot position.
3. The punter's knees should be slightly bent.

SCRIPT CONTINUED

4. The punter should bend at the waist with his upper body slightly forward. (While the degree of erectness is an individual matter, the punter should never assume a stiff-erect position.)
5. Punters should be alert and ready to move in any direction.

C. Position of hands, receiving high and low center snaps.

1. Punters should have arms extended so that the centers target is the inside thigh of punter's kicking leg.
2. High center snap - when catching the ball above the head, the hands should receive the ball with the thumbs in and palms facing out.
3. Low center snap - when receiving the ball below the waist, the punter should catch the ball with his thumbs out and palms facing upward.

NOTE: A low center snap is easier to handle than a snap that goes over your head!

NOTE: The punter with strict concentration should have his head up with his eyes focused on the ball from the pre-kick position to contact. The punter should know game situations (how many yards for a first down), and be ready for anything.

D. Mcld ng the ball (This term is used to describe the action of catching the center snap, positioning the laces upward, and preparing the ball for the proper placement and drop.)

1. The punter should catch the ball with his hands and use just the fingers to adjust the ball properly.
2. The punter's arms should be extended while doing this.
3. As soon as the ball hits the punter's hands he should begin his approach.

NOTE: Too many punters catch the ball and bring it into their chest. This needless in and out movement takes time. This unnecessary movement will increase a punter's handling time.

E. Grip

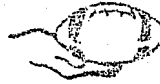
1. There are many ways to hold the ball; the most important point is to have a correct and consistent placement and drop, with whatever grip is utilized.

SCRIPT CONTINUED

a. Top or over grip.



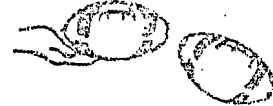
b. Under or cradle grip.



2. Punters try to keep both hands on the ball as long as possible. This will insure better drop control.

NOTE: Punters who use the under grip frequently hold the ball at one end too far. Many times the ball will not drop flat; but the nose will drop off quickly.

F. Placement of the ball



1. The ball should not be tossed or pushed out away from the punter. The placement should be as follows:

- a. Waist level - However, this will differ under certain game and weather conditions.
- b. Directly in line with the punting leg.

2. A placement too far out to the side of the punter's leg or too much to the inside of the punter's body will cause the punter to cross-over on his follow through leg swing.

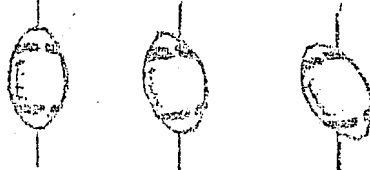
NOTE: Ninety percent (90%) of the punt is = to the placement, drop, and contact of the ball to the foot. Everything that is done prior to actually punting the ball is EXTREMELY important to the net result.

G. Ball-Foot contact point for spiral and maximum distance.

1. The ball should be placed in direct line with the punting leg, not tossed or thrown out.
2. After placement, the ball should be dropped so that the fat part of the ball meets the fat part of the foot. (The spot on top of the shoestring).

NOTE: A spiral may also be achieved by contacting the ball to the outside of the foot, however, the transference of forces from the foot to the ball will not be as great. The film will show the proper contact point if the punter is to achieve a spiral and attain maximum distance.

NOTE: The angle of the ball across the foot or shoestrings will be determined by the individuals natural foot position and swing of leg. (The punter in the film holds the ball almost straight ahead, however, note the flexibility and straight leg swing.)

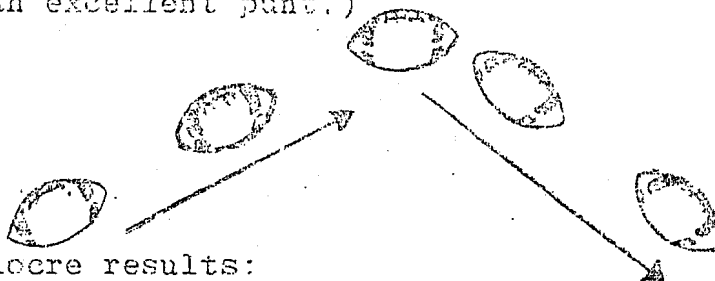


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H. Pointing toe (Question asked by many punters and coaches. How do you get the ball to turn over on a spiral and get that extra distance.)

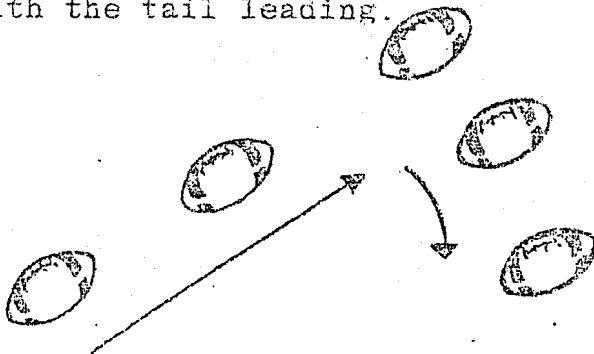
1. For maximum results:

- a. The toe should be kept depressed throughout the entire punt until the foot is above the head.
- b. This leg action will result in the ball traveling through the air so that at the top of its flight, the nose or point of the ball that went up first will also come down first. (This usually results in an excellent punt.)



2. For mediocre results:

- a. The toe of the punter will relax and come back immediately after the ball is contacted.
- b. This action will cause the ball to travel through the air, so that the point or nose of the ball will go up first, however, the ball will float downward with the tail leading.

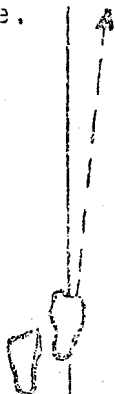


I. Approach

1. The punter should immediately after receiving the center snap begin his approach.
2. As the punter is approaching the line of scrimmage he is molding the ball with his finger tips and is preparing to place and drop the ball in direct line with his punting leg.

SCRIPT CONTINUED

NOTE: Many punters will have what is known as a drift approach (approaching a little off center). The right footed punters will hedge to the right and the left footed punters will move to the left. This is natural to a certain degree. However, if you do not keep stressing a straight approach in practice coaches, the punter will continue to drift outward more and more.




J. Planting of non-kicking foot

1. This foot should be straight ahead because it is the aim foot. (Just as a bowman or marksman must aim properly to hit his target so must a punter.)
2. The ball will travel in the direction of the aim foot.

NOTE: Most punters because of lack of flexibility can not get their punting foot above their head and at the same time keep the non-kicking foot straight ahead. Therefore, most punters point their non-kicking foot out to the side. This will result in the punter being off balance for a split second. The results will be since the punter is off balance to the left the ball will be pulled off to the left. Another problem occurs if the punter has been placing the ball to far outside of his right punting leg. He, again, will be off balance to the left. This will force him to reach for the ball and shank it off to the extreme right. (Example was for a right footed punter.)

K. Follow-through

1. Watching non-kicking or plant foot. (side view) 
- a. The punters non-kicking foot should momentarily support the weight of the body, while up on the toe.
- b. The movement of the punting leg carries the body upward and forward.
- c. This should be a natural movement.


SCRIPT CONTINUED

NOTE: Don't imitate the pro's!!! Concentrate on punting the ball correctly and the follow-through will come as a natural consequence. (Coaches, do not stress more upward and forward movement.)

2. Punting leg follow-through if viewing from the front or back. (Not included in the film)
 - a. The punting leg should come into the ball in a straight line, meet the ball, and follow-through in a straight line.
 - b. Use the line-drill to check the follow-through. The punter should end up with his punting foot on the line and his hips and belly button facing straight ahead.

NOTE: It is natural for the punting leg to come slightly across the midline of the body as it continues to rise above the chest. This is related to the anatomical construction of the human body. Ray Guy of the Oakland Raiders has one of the best follow-throughs. His punting leg comes straight through, so that his knee comes right up to his face.


L. Factors which determine placement, drop and contact point are: 1) wind, 2) desired distance, and 3) desired height.

1. PUNTING UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS (no wind, maximum distance, maximum height).
 - a. The ball is held in direct line with the punting leg.
 - b. Arms are extended, holding the ball so that the ball will be placed parallel  to the ground at approximately waist level.
 - c. The ball should be dropped parallel to the ground. Hopefully, the drop will not be more than 12-16 inches.
 - d. The ball should meet the foot at approximately knee height.

NOTE: When practicing this drop, the ball should hit the ground and bounce back with no rotation on the ball.


SCRIPT CONTINUED

2. PUNTING WITH THE WIND.

- a. The ball is held in direct line with the punting leg.
- b. Arms are extended, holding the ball slightly higher than the waist, nose up slightly. 
- c. Again, with a limited drop, the ball and foot should make contact at a point just above the knee cap.
- d. Punters let the wind carry the ball when there is a strong wind behind you. The wind will tend to push the punt downward. (So get it up)

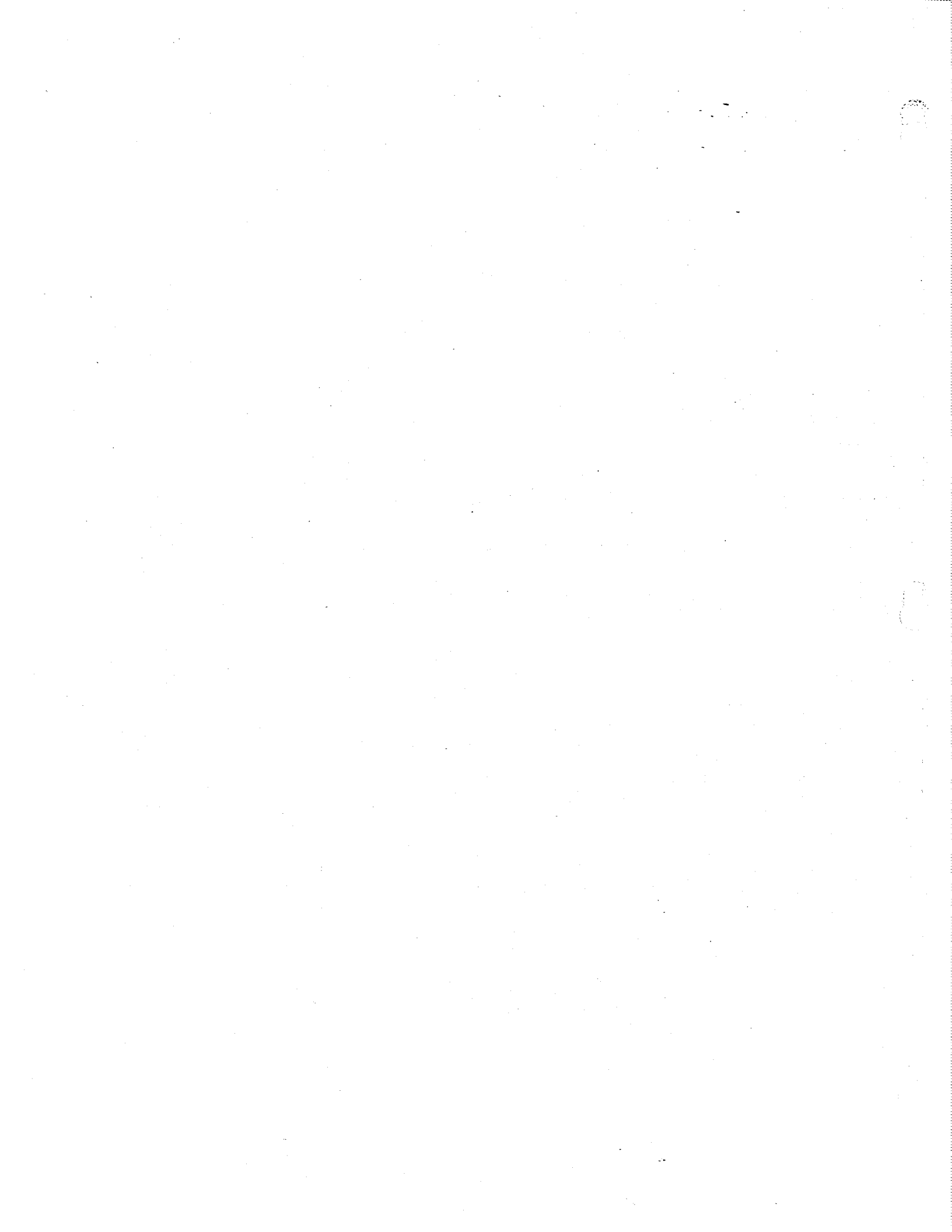
NOTE: When practicing for this drop the ball will hit the ground and bounce away from the punter.

3. PUNTING INTO THE WIND.

- a. The ball is placed in direct line with the punting leg.
- b. Arms, are extended, but the punter must bend over to a greater than normal degree to insure a lower drop. The nose should be down slightly. 
- c. The ball should be dropped from the middle of the thigh or lower.
- d. The ball and foot contact point is now below the knee.
- e. Try to get a very limited drop of the ball from the hands to the contact point. (On windy days, the greater the distance the ball must drop the greater the possibility of the wind affecting the ball.)
- f. The ball should be held so that the nose is down slightly.

NOTE: When practicing for this drop the ball should hit the ground and bounce back to the punter with a slight rotation.

NOTE: When punting into the wind, if the punter kicks the ball so that the nose travels slightly upward, the wind will blow the ball backwards. Aero-dynamics, keep the ball low punting into the wind. If a punter kicks a spiral, it will travel through the wind more effectively if kept low.



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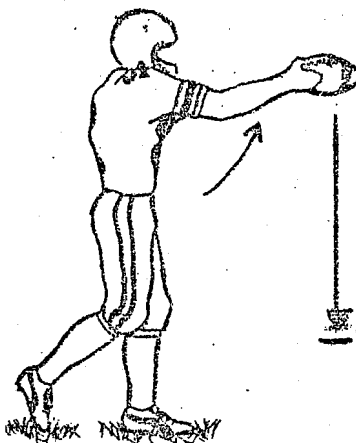
PART III

COMMON ERRORS

From my research and years of camp experience, the following errors frequently lead to inconsistent punting. Remember, one mistake during punting performance will affect the outcome of the punt.

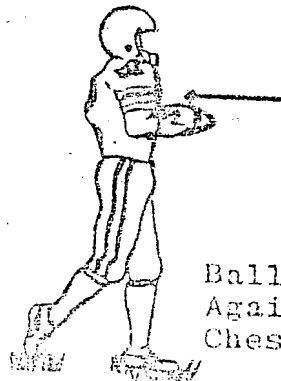
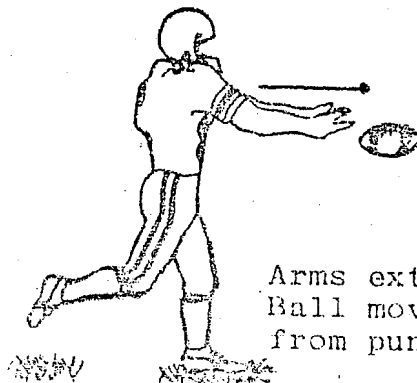
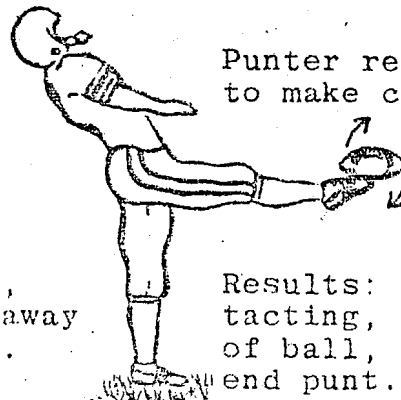
I. Incorrect Techniques

- A. Extra movement of arms - After receiving the center snap it is incorrect for a punter as he approaches the line of scrimmage to lift the football upward. This additional upward arm movement results in the punter dropping the ball from his chest or eye level. The extra distance the ball must drop in order to make contact with the punting foot results in inconsistent ball-foot contact and erratic punting performance.



2 to 3 foot drop

- B. Tossing the ball out away from the punter - Improper ball-foot contact results when a punter receives the center snap and either brings the ball into his chest or tries to catch the ball against his chest. This improper receiving action forces the punter to adjust the laces with his hands, straighten his arms out and drop the ball to his foot. The problem is, the outward movement of the arms. The punter's forward motion basically stops on his final step. However, the football continues forward, as a result of the initial outward motion of the arms.

Ball
Against
ChestArms extend,
Ball moves away
from punter.Punter reaches
to make contact.Results: If con-
tacting, backside
of ball, end over
end punt.

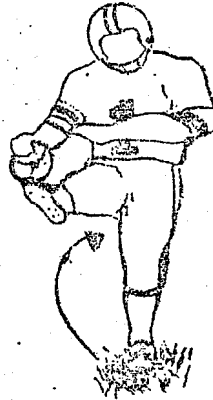
RESULTS: As the ball continues to move away from the punter, the punter must reach with his entire body in order to make contact with the ball.

C. Not placing the ball in direct line with the punting leg.
This type of placement can cause the punter to:

1. Reach or over extend to the outside, in order to make contact with the football.
2. Wipe at the ball with his foot, (arc swing). This wiping motion reduces the transfer of force from the foot to the ball. The end result is loss of punting distance.
3. Cross-over with his punting leg on the follow-through. This leg action plus the ball-foot contact, results in many punters hooking or slicing their punts.



Ball placed outside leg.



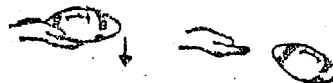
Outside ball placement causes leg to cross-over on the follow through.

D. Uncontrolled drops.

1. One handed placements: Many punters try to control the ball with one hand too early in their approaches. An uneven drop results because the punters one hand can not control the ball as well as two.



2. Under grip using one hand: If the one hand controlling the ball is too far towards the backside of the ball, the nose of the football will drop drastically upon release.



NOTE: (90%) of the punt is = to the placement, drop, and contact point of the ball to the foot. The above errors all effect that 90% of the punt.

- E. Relaxing ankle: A punter must keep his toe pointed throughout the entire punt. If the ankle relaxes, allowing the toe to come back towards the punter, the ball will not turn over at the top of its trajectory. Proper results on Pg. 23.

SCRIPT CONTINUED

PART IV

DRILLS

There are many punters that punt the ball well in practice, however, have trouble punting consistently under game situations. These punters are inconsistent because they do not practice their punting rhythm under game situations and are therefore not use to pressure punting or game rhythm punting.

An athlete will perform the skill of punting more efficiently in a game if he also drills under game situations and stress in practice. Coaches must continuously stress the timing of their punters and game rhythm punting.

COACH: After your punters have mastered the basic fundamentals, put them under as much pressure as possible during practice. ALSO:

1. Rush team personnel at the punters. Have people run past the punter waving their hands and screaming trying to distract his concentration.
2. Put a live rush at him with your linemen.
3. Create situations at the end of your practice. Example: if the punter or place-kicker misses or blows a specific situation the kicking team should run extra sprints.

PUNTER: The spring and off-season is the best time of the year for practicing drills and improving strength and flexibility. Your punting skill will improve in proportion to the amount of practice time and dedication. Come to the first day of practice ready to show your skills not practice them!!!

I. The following drills will not only stress certain punting mechanics but also the punters consistency in punting.

A. Placement and drop drill: The punter must be able to consistently place the ball in correct alignment with the punting leg. Remember: directly in line with the punting leg and waist level. Fig. 1, pg. 31.

1. The punter must place the ball repeatedly in the correct position noting the proper ball-body relationship, for the proper placement.

NOTE: Punters, use a full-length mirror to check yourself.

2. After mastering the first part of the drill the punter should add a drop. The ball when dropped correctly will bounce back off the floor - flat and with no rotation. Fig. 2, pg. 31.



Fig. 1

The ball is in direct line with punting leg and at waist level.

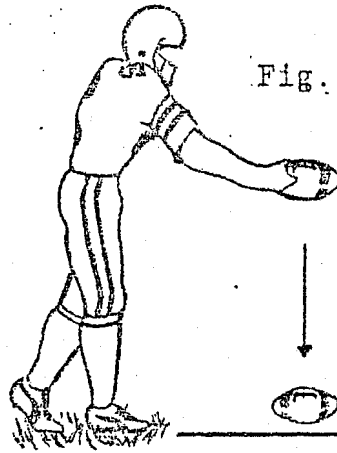


Fig. 2

Flat drop.

The placement and drop drill can be done either in place or with the entire step-pattern. If using the entire step-pattern, practice punting spirals, five to ten yards downfield. This drill should be done 100 to 200 times a day in the pre-season.

B. Molding drill: The purpose of this drill is to adjust the laces quickly and place the ball in the proper punting position. **STRESS**: Keeping the arms extended, while receiving and molding the ball with the finger tips. Fig. 3.

1. The punter can either toss the ball up to himself or have a partner throw the ball to him. When receiving the ball the punter should practice his molding technique.
2. Practicing the molding drill will help to eliminate unnecessary arm movements, which only add seconds to your handling time.

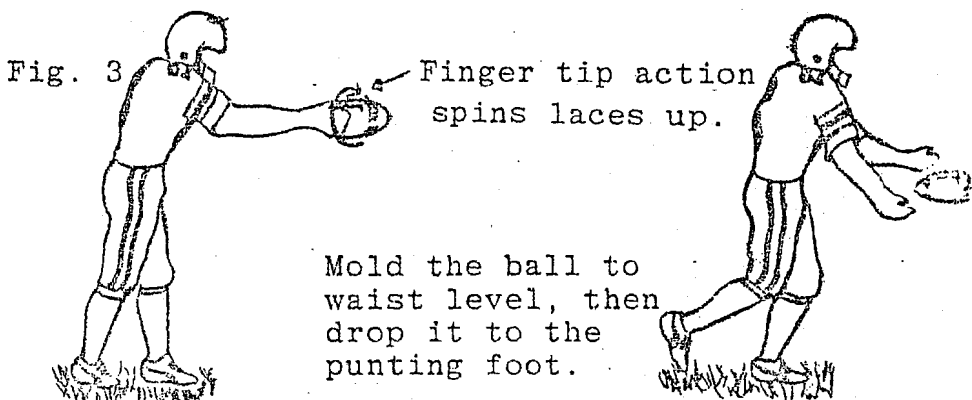


Fig. 3

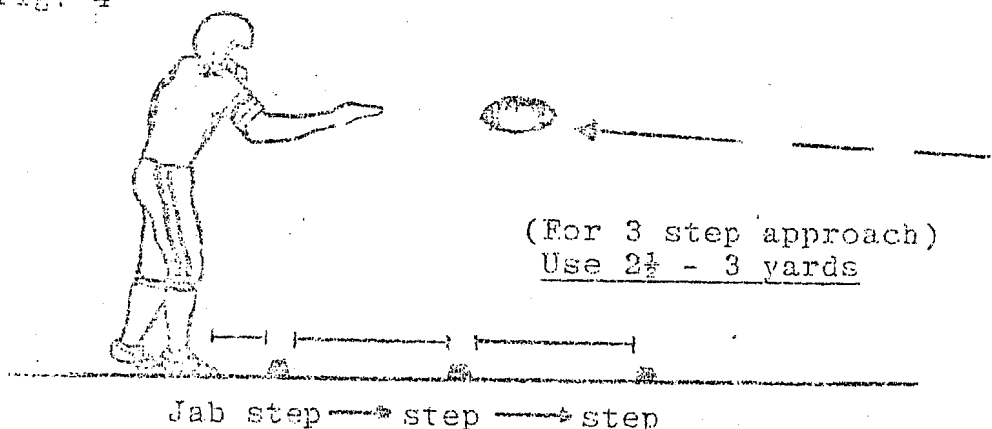
Mold the ball to waist level, then drop it to the punting foot.

NOTE: Punters should combine the placement-drop and molding drills occasionally. If using the entire step pattern, the punter must start his approach as soon as the ball touches his hands.

C. Step pattern drill: The punters step pattern should begin as soon as the ball touches his hands. The punters steps must be consistent and rhythmical. No matter which step pattern a punter utilizes, the first step should be relatively a short step. (Sometimes known as a JAB step). The remaining steps will be longer, however, these steps should never be exaggerated to a point where the punter is over-striding.

1. Place either cones or markers at specific spots on the ground where the punter should step. The cones will reinforce proper and consistent steps.
2. The punter should then move through his entire step pattern after receiving a center snap or catching the ball, after tossing the ball up to himself.
3. While doing this drill, the punters step pattern should never exceed three yards.

Fig. 4



COACH: Stressing a small first step will help to eliminate problems.

NOTE: Over-striding can force the punter to be off balance to the point where his punting rhythm will be altered.

D. Ball-foot contact drill: The goal of this drill is to make proper contact between the ball and the foot and achieve a spiral. Remember, how important transference of force from the foot to the ball is. Stress proper contact, not how far you can punt the ball!!!!

1. Stationary drop:

- a. Holding the ball at waist level, the punter should be standing with his body weight on his non-kicking foot.

- b. The punter should then extend his punting foot out in front of himself, so the punting leg is extended at a 45 degree angle.
- c. The punter must aim the ball to his punting foot.
- d. As the ball is dropped from the punter's waist, he should bring his punting foot up to meet the ball at knee height. Fig. 5 below.
- e. The fat-part of the ball, should make contact with the fat-part of the punting foot, which is the top two or three eyelets of the punting shoe. Fig. 6.

Fig. 5

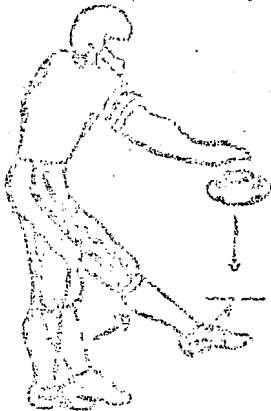
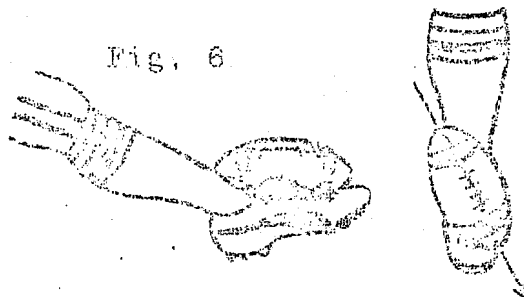


Fig. 6

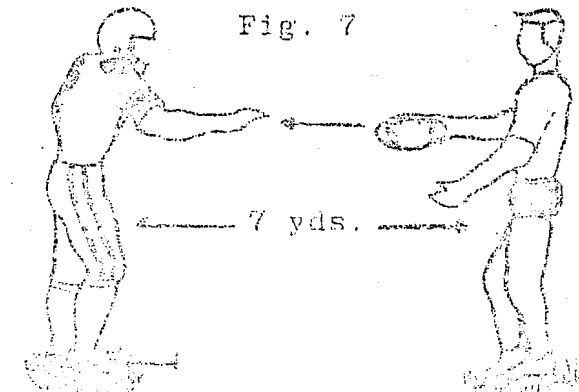


Angle of ball
across the foot is
an individual preference

2. Play catch drill, using only one step:

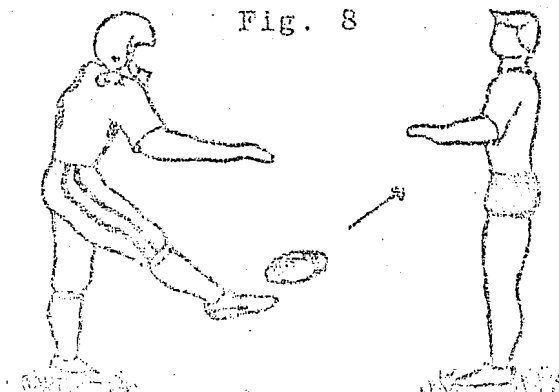
- a. While standing in a ready position, have a partner toss a football to you from seven yards away. Fig. 7
- b. Mold the ball quickly, then place, drop and punt the ball back to your partner. Reset yourself quickly and prepare for another center snap. Fig. 8
- c. The punter should remember to take only one step. Set your feet accordingly!
- d. Only use one ball. The drill should only be stopped if the ball is punted away from your partner or after 10 - 15 punts. **HOW MANY SPIRALS IN A ROW CAN YOU GET!!!**

Fig. 7



Step with left foot and kick

Fig. 8



E. Bad center snap drill: While the punter is standing in a ready position, have a partner toss the football in such a way, that it simulates a bad center snap,

1. The punter must then field the bad snap and align his body, so he is facing straight down field.
2. If the center snap is real bad, (over the head, etc.), don't worry about form, just get the ball off quickly! JUST LIKE IN A GAME.

F. Line drill: This is my number one, and most used drill in camps. Punting on a line will reinforce doing all mechanics in a straight line. If the punter is drilled to approach the line of scrimmage, in a straight line in practice, he will also approach in a straight line during a game. Punters, continually stress punting accuracy. As you punt the ball down field the line extended will become your target.

For the coach to view and the punter to perform, the line drill will emphasize correct: 1) ball placement, 2) approach, 3) leg swing, and 4) follow through.

1. Ball placement: The punter should start with his punting foot on the line extended. As the punter receives the ball, he will begin his approach. As he moves forward, he should mold and place the ball in direct line with his punting leg. Coaches view, Fig. 9. Punters view, Fig. 10.

Fig. 9

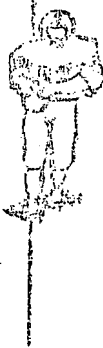
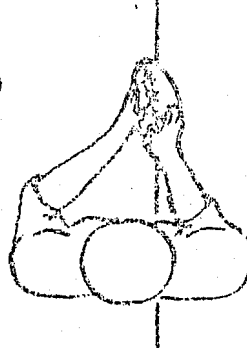


Fig. 10

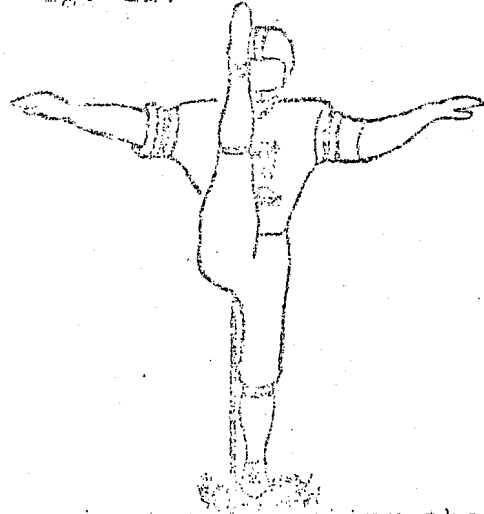


2. Approach: The punter will approach the line of scrimmage in a straight line. As the punter approaches, his punting foot should step on the line, while his non-punting foot steps inches off center.



Two step approach.

3. Leg swing: The leg swing should coincide with the line of the ground, straight ahead. The coach should view his punter from the front and back to make sure the punter's leg is swinging directly into the ball. Fig. 11.



4. Follow through: After punting the ball the punter's leg should continue forward and upward in a straight line. Coaches front view Fig. 12. Coaches rear view Fig. 13.

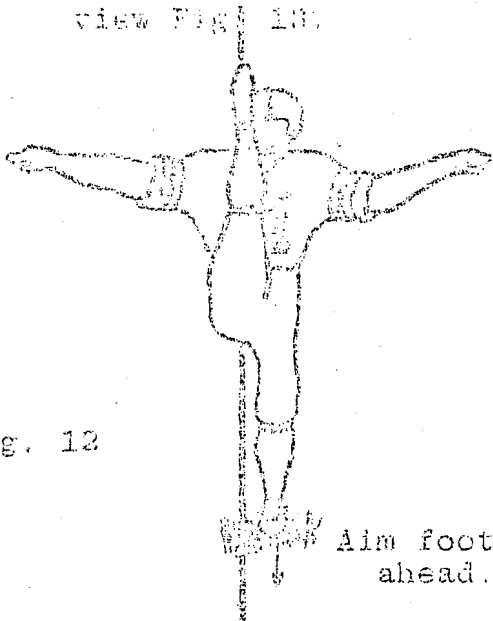


Fig. 12

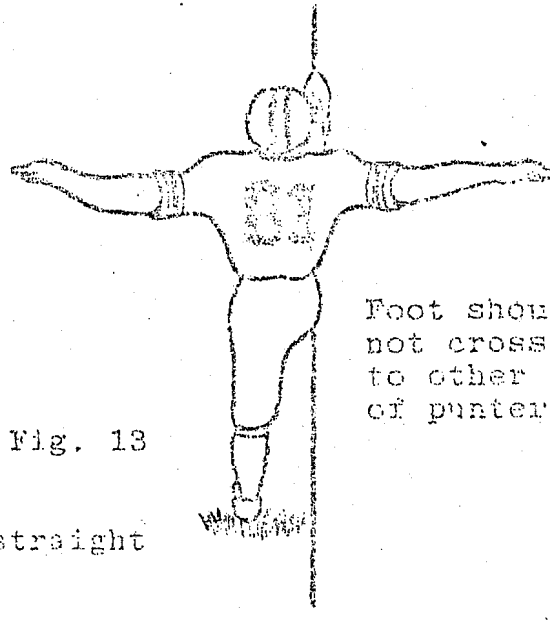


Fig. 13

Foot should not cross-over to other side of punter's head.

Aim foot straight ahead.

NOTE: The ultimate goal for a punter, is to get the punting foot (toe) above the head, while standing solidly on his balance foot.

- C. Accuracy: Accuracy should be stressed in every drill. Never punt the ball without aiming for a target. Accuracy is the key to success.
1. Punt the ball to receivers running pass patterns.
 2. Punt the ball to squared off sections on the field.
 3. Punt the ball out of bounds (Aim for yard markers).

cones

4. Line drill using cones: Place a cone three yards on each side of a yard line. The punter should punt the ball down the line extended, trying to punt the ball inside the six yard target zone. Place the cones between 45 to 55 yards down field.

punter

THINKERS!!

1. If there is an exceptional punt returner on the opposing team, try to punt the ball away from him.
2. If you're an accurate punter, tell your outside coverage people, where you are going to punt the ball. This will give your team better punt coverage.
3. On windy days, wait as long as you can before calling for the center snap. You have 25 seconds from the time the official blows his whistle to get the punt off.
 - A. Watch trees or the flag pole to see if the wind is going to subside. This way you will be able to punt with less wind resistance.
 - B. Be a smart punter: Huddle longer when your team is going against the wind, and hurry things along when your team has the wind. This is so the offensive team can get the ball back as soon as possible and utilize the wind advantage.
4. Check the linebackers and safeties to see if they are going to put on a good rush.
5. Never be afraid to suggest things to your coach during a game. Sometimes coaches get so involved in the game, they just don't think about the kicking game. Kickers should know all rules related to the special teams.
6. Study other teams' tendencies: Punt rush, returns, and quick kicks, etc...
7. Altitude and humidity affects the distance of your punts.
8. Don't rush your kicks, rely on timing and rhythm.

THE KICKING GAME WILL NOT BE EFFECTIVE WITHOUT CONSISTENT PRACTICE!

GOOD LUCK!!



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ABOUT THE SPORT

Spanish

SAFETY TIPS

Preparation is the best way to handle the responsibility of keeping players safe on and off the field. [HEART CHECK](#)
 Detailed heart screening of young athletes, beyond the typical sports physical, is becoming more prevalent across the country.

FIRST AID SAFETY KIT

In any sport or activity, safety is the number one concern of parents, coaches, athletes, and fans. That is why it is crucial to be prepared for anything from a turf-burn to a torn muscle.

HELMET REMOVAL

Never remove an injured player's helmet unless directed to do so by a medical authority or to provide lifesaving care.

FOCUS ON SAFETY

As involvement in football, both organized and recreational, continues to grow, knowing the benefits and safety issues that surround the sport of football is very important.

HEALTH & SAFETY TIPS TO REDUCE INJURY

Football injuries are preventable. Adhering to the following safety tips can help keep players healthy and reduce unnecessary injuries.

CHECK-CALL-CARE

Using the check-call-care system gives players and coaches a defensive strategy to tackle emergency situations.

CARING FOR BRUISES AND ABRASIONS by: Russell L. Ellis, M.D., Lawrence J. Lemak, M.D.
 Abrasion and bruises are common and simple to treat.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

An Emergency Action Plan helps coaches develop a winning plan to save lives. Be prepared for potential emergencies.

WHEN AND HOW TO CALL FOR EMERGENCY HELP

Knowing when and how to call for emergency medical help (9-1-1 or the local emergency number) can save lives.

DOCUMENTING INJURIES

Completing forms for medical emergencies is the proper play for coaches.

CONTENTS OF A FIRST AID KIT

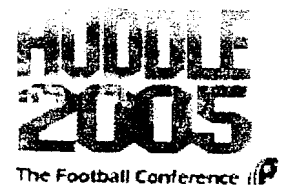
Being prepared for football emergencies means having a first aid kit.

INJURY PREVENTION CHECK LIST

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EVENTS





As the season rolls on, ensure that all the following safety steps are taken during training and competition and after the season ends.

PREVENTING OVERUSE INJURIES by: Michele D. Pescasio, M.D., Lawrence J. Lemak, M.D., American Sports Medicine Institute

Prevention is the key to overuse injuries; avoid too much too soon.

PREVENTING WEATHER-RELATED INJURIES

Don't endanger lives by playing games with weather safety rules.

PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

As the season approaches and the weather becomes more intense in many parts of the country, it is wise to keep these tips in mind when running a football practice this summer.

PREVENTING DISEASE TRANSMISSION

Using the proper precautions can prevent serious disease.



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HEALTH & SAFETY TIPS TO REDUCE INJURY

Football injuries are preventable. Adhering to the following safety tips can help keep players healthy and reduce unnecessary injuries.

Pre-Season Tips

- Before the training begins, make sure players have been to the doctor for a routine physical exam, so that any health risks a player may have will be noted.
- If a player wears eyeglasses, ask a doctor about the proper sports eyewear.
- Proper footing will help players avoid unnecessary injuries. Find out what kind of cleats are appropriate for the league in which the player participates.
- Keep on top of the latest safety equipment available. Ensure that equipment is available and properly fitted for players.

Practice Tips

- Coaches and parents should take the same safety precautions during practice as they would for a game.
- First aid must be readily available at all practices. Ensure that a first aid kit on site contains all fundamental items.
- Coaches must schedule frequent water breaks for players, especially during hot weather.
- Insist that players put on all the proper and required safety equipment at practice. Tackle football players must wear: a helmet, shoulder pads, hip and tailbone pads, knee pads, and a mouth guard with a keeper strap.
- Require players to warm up and stretch before practice.
- Football practice should be a fun, learning experience for all players. Push too hard and a player's risk of injury increases.

Game-Day Tips

- Coaches and officials must enforce all the rules and regulations of the game. Coaches and officials must never allow illegal blocking (pulling a player down by the knees or grabbing the face mask), blocking from behind, or "spearing" (using the top of the helmet to tackle).
- First aid must be readily available at all games. Ensure that any first aid kit on site contains all fundamental items. Identify any trained medical personnel in attendance. Designate someone to help coach in case of an emergency.
- Players must understand the importance of reporting any pain or injury to the coach. Emphasize the importance of not playing through pain. Make certain to follow the doctor's orders for recovery and be sure not to allow players to return to participation before the doctor's approval.
- Require players to warm up and stretch before a game.
- On game day, winning must not be the primary focus. It should be a fun learning experience for all players. Pushing players too hard can increase the risk of injury.

Links

[Equipment - Cleats](#)

[Equipment](#)

[First Aid Kit](#)

[Hydration](#)

[Equipment thumbnail](#)

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