



Constructing A Position Package of Drills

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'93,'98 KARE11 Coach of The Year
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'98,'01,'02 Sec. 6AAAAA Coach of The Year

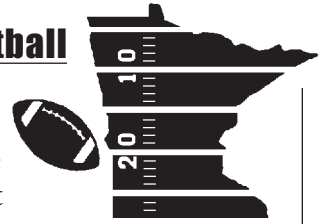


Principles Of Drillwork And Teaching Offensive Line Techniques At Maple Grove Senior High School

Throughout my collegiate playing days and the first part of my coaching career I was fortunate to work under two of the best head coaches I have ever known, Chub Reynolds (Bethel college) and John Hansen (no relation, Osseo H.S.). The one thing I learned from these experiences, and what has been proven to me over and over since, is that kids love to learn HOW to play football. More specifically, kids love to learn the techniques that go with their position. The big picture of playing a position in football can be broken down into small steps that can be more easily accomplished. Confidence grows as they learn and see themselves perform at their position.

Following is an outline of several principles related to drill work that I have learned and taught over the years. Next is the teaching progression and accompanying drills we follow in teaching offensive line techniques. Included are coaching points or "Look-fors" and key words. This same type of progression is followed by our defensive staff in the teaching of tackling and other techniques.

- DEFINE WHAT/WHO YOU ARE!
e.g. Maple Grove is a Technique Oriented Football Program.
- Technique allows us to compete with a more talented opponent.
- Technique allows us to play and execute with more confidence.
- All players can learn and show improvement in their technique regardless of talent.
- Assistant coaches; tell me how you will teach your position area's techniques.
- Game film grading/player evaluation is technique based. e.g. post grades (+ 's/- 's).
- Techniques must be related to scheme.
e.g. Maple Grove is an Inside Veer OFFENSE.
e.g. Two goals for the Offensive Line:
 Be the Quickest Line Off the Ball!
 Be the Lowest Line Off the Ball!
e.g. WHY/PURPOSE?! To Create Movement at the L.O.S. for the Veer.
- Teaching technique builds confidence and self esteem!!
*see it/feel it/hear it (small steps of improvement)



- *measure it (grading)
- *film it (2-a-days, games; varsity, IV, sophs, frosh)
- *Improves confidence in Hitting, being Physical, execution

Philosophy:

- *We believe teaching technique gives our kids a chance to succeed.
- *Teaching technique requires a TIME commitment in practice and film!!
- *What is the message you want to give??

Principles of Drill Work:

- Never just TELL players what to do and expect it to get done. You must SEE the players do it right many, many times.
- Do it once correctly -- I know you know how. Do it right many, many times -- I know you HAVE IT!
- Make the connection between Game Skills and Practice/Drill Skills.
e.g. Game films and practice drills. Note when the particular skill you are viewing is worked on during practice.
e.g. "Stay low and keep your feet". Note Hip Strength: squats, cleans, dead lift.

Key: We are not going to do anything in practice that we are not going to do in a game. I will not waste your, my or our time together.

* CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF LEARNING! *

Principles of Offensive Drill Work:

- START on verbal command (defense starts on movement key).
- END (FREEZE) on a whistle. Players must end in "Perfect Position". Players do not move until released by a second whistle.
- Never practice a negative. "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect!"
e.g. Finish your rep perfectly. Perform as you would in a game. Practice Self Discipline.
e.g. "SHOW ME" where you are supposed to be. You are teaching a

CONCEPT. Rather than repeating instructions, have the player show you what he is to do.

Key: Put players in a position to be successful.

Build their confidence.

e.g. Contact/Hitting - start close then increase distance for difficulty or challenge.
e.g. Predetermine who wins in this drill (offense 2/3's - defense 1/2 speed). No player is ever humiliated. This is a teaching time.

Blocking Concepts: (Concepts Of Playing Football)

- "Keep Your Pads Over Your Toes!" or Have a "Toe - Knee - Chest" (relationship).
- FEET/HIPS/SHOULDERS must be kept Square to L.O.S.
e.g. Who's going to turn their hips first, the offense or the defense?
- HIP STRENGTH - Your ability to stay Low and Keep Your Feet. e.g. Squats, Dead Lift, Power Clean
- The 1st Step is the Most Important Step in football.

OFFENSIVE LINE "ONE ON ONE" TECHNIQUE PROGRESSION

- STANCE
 - Feet no wider than armpits apart, parallel, square to L.O.S., stagger should be no more than toe to instep with a "toe to knee to chest" relationship.
 - Hands/Arms - FINGER TIPS only on down hand placed where your eyes meet the ground from your ready position. The off arm should rest with the wrist on the side of the knee and elbow in creating a sprinters start. Equal weight distribution on all 3 points, no cheating or tipping.
 - Back/Hips - flat back is a must, with the "tail up"-hips above shoulders.
 - Head UP - "Keep your eyes on your



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work", "Turtle the Neck", "look through your eyebrows", "See the LB's knees", "See the Hit"-contact point.

*DRILL "STANCE AND STEPS" Line players on yard lines to check feet, etc., Work on pulling steps one at a time, etc.

"STANCE AND STARTS" (chutes) Work team take off, coming off level. Key: position yourself at different points around the chutes checking player's backs, eyes, head position, steps, arms and arm movement, etc. Work on cadence.

- 1st STEP "Directional step", short 6 inch step to "playside" toe, under your chest.

*DRILL "ONE STEP DRILL" (chutes) Lead step is toe to playside toe of opponent. Start with full cylinder bags using the holder's toe for an aiming point.

- CONTACT POINT "Contact Point is the "playside HIP" (or whatever you determine you want). Key: walk players up into the contact point, fit them into it perfectly. Show them where and how they should be with their head, back, feet and arms.
E.g. "turtle the neck", "see the hit", "eyes on your work".
- 2nd STEP Is a "Power step" to the CONTACT POINT. It is a short, quick 6 inch step. Use your quickness off the ball to get this step down before your opponent can. Key: players must maintain a "toe to heel" relationship with their feet while keeping their toes under their chest" (hence Hip Strength).

*DRILL "TWO STEP Drill" (chutes) Stance to contact point. This is an aggressive drill. Players line up in chutes arm distance from bag. Have them point to their contact point. Use athletic tape for height, etc. They explode on your command and freeze after two steps. Bag should jump back from the blow.

Here is where you will make many corrections to their form, and feet.
E.g. double stepping or false steps,

ducking their head, arms overextend, etc.

*DRILL "THUD DRILL" (chute) A further progression of the Two Step Drill. Toss the bags and put the holder down into a two point stance, then increase difficulty to a three point stance (getting Lower). Have defensive man use his forearms to deliver a blow and then catch the offensive lineman after his two steps. This helps the players to work through defensive resistance or the Thud. Again, you will see many bad habits to correct in their feet, head, back, arms, etc. Start slowly and increase intensity as you go.

- FIT & FINISH The defense works on Pursuit drills, we work on Finish drills. Here is where we "Keep our feet" or "Stay Alive" in our blocks and execution. The concept is the lineman has worked through the contact point and, like making a good tackle on defense, "Locks In" with a good neck and shoulder squeeze with the neck turtled and head to playside.
You are teaching them what and how you want them to be after contact and through the remainder of the play.

DRILL "6 SECOND DRILL" (chutes) Have players in chutes and walk them up into contact point on the bag. On command they drive through contact to the Fit position (neck and shoulder squeeze), roll hips, pump elbows and knees ("run through your armpits") driving the bag full speed for 6 seconds.
You are working leg acceleration or the ability to move the man off the L.O.S. "Pound Ground to Gain Ground", "Arms Move Legs", etc. RETAIN FORM. Here you will see their feet cross, head goes down, tail goes up, arms lock and hold, etc. Worst of all, you will see all the players stop after 3 seconds the first time you do this. Thus, the reason we lose our blocks and the defense can pursue. This drill is probably the most significant thing we do to help our execution on offense.



Much of this drill and technique work originated from lectures and articles by Buck Nystrom and has been adapted to fit our players and program each year. The great coaches I have learned from all had a common belief in the emphasis on being a teacher of technique. The area of technique is the one common denominator for all the kids on your team, regardless of skill level. Kids can see and feel

themselves improving week to week throughout the season. This keeps the kids believing and motivated in practice. At times the improvement is monumental, but most often, it is in small steps. It is these small steps that we coaches need to continually recognize and reinforce to keep the kids believing in themselves.

Power Training for Football

By: Bill Ihrke, Plainview / Elgin-Millville High School



P/EM *Bulldog* staff (left to right): Kevin Lamb, Bryan Brighton, Craig Ihrke, Ron Randall, Ben Peter, Bill Schultz and Bill Ihrke.

In 1999, our football team was 8-3 and finished as the Section 1AAA Runner-up. We completed a good season, we were in every game we played, but could not seem to turn the corner against the perennial powers of southeast Minnesota. As a coaching staff we took a long, hard look at what we were doing with our athletes. I felt our players were well-coached and prepared fundamentally,

but we were not winning some key individual match-ups physically and that was preventing us from advancing.

I came to the realization that in our league (Three Rivers Conference) we are not going to “out coach” many teams. . . everyone is well coached, they know sound fundamentals, and are prepared. If we are going to give our kids a leg up, we must