Developing a Dominant Line in Youth Football Step-by-Step
Winning Youth Football

Developing a Dominant Offensive Line, Step-by-Step

By: Dave Cisar
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Dear Coach,

Thank you very much for your interest in helping your team develop a more effective offensive line, it is sincerely appreciated. I congratulate you on taking the time to make yourself a better youth football coach, especially in an area that is often times neglected the most, the offensive line. When your players look back on their football playing days, they are going to remember you and it’s up to you as to what kind of experience that’s going to be for him. That goes double for those underappreciated offensive linemen. Hopefully this book will help you instill a love and appreciation for the game in every one of those kids.

You will find this is a very easy to read book and an excellent resource for not only the new coach trying to get his feet set on the offensive line, but the experienced coach looking to get better both in technique and scheme. In the book you will gain access to our legendary practice plans, drills, schemes and techniques that will allow you to excel on defense. Our step-by-step approach will also allow you to successfully implement the skills, drills and offensive line schemes. Don’t be afraid to print out and take some of the drill and scheme information with you to practice as a quick cheat sheet reminder.

Our hope is that this will be a tool to help you be a better coach. This book is dedicated to the all players whose lives we touch by coaching. It is dedicated to all the coaches that coach for the right reasons, to train our youth in “the ways they should go.” Our prayer is that you will use this information to become a better coach and better leader. We hope that you use your leadership position to inspire your kids and help shape them into reaching their full potential not only as football players, but also as people.

Dave Cisar
Chapter 1

Developing a Dominant Offensive Line in Youth Football

Blocking and tackling are what youth football is all about. If you block and tackle better than your opponents, your teams will win most of your games in youth ball, simple enough. This e-book is going to help you determine how you are going to approach teaching your players how and who to block as well as tips and tricks on blocking schemes, how to implement blocking schemes, how to develop aggression, how to evaluate linemen, how to develop linemen quickness and how to develop a love for playing the offensive line.

If you can’t remember everything in this book and DVD, don’t worry about it. We now offer 3x5 embossed playing cards with every drill diagram, picture and concept on them. Great for a reminder or just hand it to your coach and tell them to do what’s on the card.

Don’t be intimidated about coaching the offensive line. Many very successful youth football coaches were in the very same boat as you. They weren’t scoring many points, their offensive lines weren’t playing well, weren’t blocking well and their offenses were in disarray when they didn’t have to. It’s no fun coaching a team that isn’t scoring very many points and has a bunch of unhappy kids and parents. It’s especially no fun to coach those teams that have kids that hate playing on the offensive line.

It just doesn’t have to be that way. Coaching the offensive line isn’t like you are building atomic bombs. It’s coaching youth football. With a little effort and direction, you can have a competent offensive line. Put a lot of effort into it and many seasons you can take a group of average kids and have a dominant offensive line. My own teams have gone 149-21 using our approach and have led the leagues we’ve played in scoring most seasons. What we don’t have are great running backs or even big kids most years, what we do have are very consistent offensive lines who keep us in games by getting first downs and moving the football. Offense is much easier to fix with average or less talent than defense.

Linemen as Second Class Citizens

Many youth football players and parents view offensive linemen as second class citizens. It’s where you get put if you are super fat, super slow or if you aren’t good enough to play a “skilled” position. If you were to line up 25 kids in the typical youth football team
and you asked the players who WANTED to play offensive line to raise their hands, you are probably going to see just one or two hands being raised. Why is that almost always the case? Why do parents think you hate their children if you assign them to the offensive line? Why do some kids quit playing because they are assigned to the offensive line?

There are many reasons people feel this way and it’s not all about today’s “me first” approach in our present day society. Many youth football teams don’t emphasize the offensive line, many times the weakest coach is assigned to that task. When people see teams don’t value line play, they won’t value it either. Many youth teams are in schemes or use blocking techniques that put kids into a position where failure is almost guaranteed.

When your scheme is to complex or expects your offensive linemen to be athletic, your kids are going to fail, you aren’t going to score many points and the offensive linemen are going to lose faith and interest. Many youth football teams teach techniques that are not age appropriate. When the kids fail with these age inappropriate techniques, the players experience both personal and team failure. Lack of recognition is common for offensive linemen. Everyone knows who scored the touchdowns, few know who the players were that paved the way for that back to score his coveted touchdowns. Many youth football players have not been taught the value of selflessness, teamwork and delayed gratification. All of these factors contribute to why most kids and parents look at playing the line like they would look at a plate of dirty laundry being served to them on a plate at Applebees.

If you don’t have a team Chemistry and Character Development Plan in place, you are probably lacking in this area as well. Like it or not in most youth football teams, especially those with minimum play rules, the weak are sent over to the offensive line group. Most coaches don’t want to play those kids on defense, in most leagues special teams snaps don’t count. Coaches don’t want to put them at the running back spots, so offensive line it is. There are ways to solve this problem, but it takes a plan, effort and follow through. We are going to show you how to address all of these issues in this little book and DVD.

**Stance**

The stance is something that varies a bit from scheme to scheme and personal preference, but is always a fundamental building block that must be perfected in those first few practices. In youth football it’s usually a good idea to work off of a standardized stance. Whatever stance you decide on, make sure all your coaches are teaching it the same way. Nothing is worse than seeing a youth football team four games into the season and still in poor stances. Weak stances will reflect poorly on you as a coach, so make sure to teach it well and hold the kids accountable to perfection when it comes to stances.

Unfortunately just because you’ve played football before and maybe you were even a pretty good player doesn’t mean you are going to be a great coach. It doesn’t matter what you know, it matters what your kids know. I’ve seen and even had a few ex college
players that knew how to play the game real well, but were awful teachers. On the other hand I’ve had some guys that weren’t very good players at all, who made great coaches because they took the time to learn how to teach the game.

Some of what happens on the field is intuitive, but most of it isn’t. Much of what comes natural for an adult when it comes to football is not natural for a child and that goes double for football stances. That is why you see so many frustrated players and coaches, you think something is simple and your player is looking at you like you’re asking him to solve a quantum physics problem. In reality 97 times out of 100 it is a coaching issue, not a kid issue. So many youth coaches ask their players to learn and execute multiple movements all at once.

This is never so evident when I see how most youth football coaches teach the stance. Usually it consists of a coach lecturing his players on about 7 different points of the stance, head up, feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, back flat etc and of course most of the players are either lost or bored after the second sentence and have tuned the coach out before he gets to the good part. Then the coach wonders why his kids stances look so awful and why he has to many frustrated kids.

Progression teaching says that we are going to break down every movement into tiny pieces and then we are going to perfect each of those tiny pieces as we add them on top of our foundation until we have a perfectly constructed end product. In youth football I like to add a bit of humor into what we teach. Humor lightens the mood a bit, face it some of your kids aren’t sure about football just yet. They may even be pretty descent athletes and are still determining if football is their thing or not. You also have some nervous Nellies who aren’t very good at most athletic things and are worried they are going to get left behind like they do at everything else they’ve tried. You may even have some good athletes who just don’t process information very well. Progression teaching can help all these kids and insure that each point of emphasis is being covered.

Here is an example of something we would do when we teach the stance, this is me talking:

Guys the stance is very important, so we are going to take it one step at a time to make sure everyone gets it down well. First our feet need to be shoulder width apart and your feet need to be straight. I then put my feet out about 5 feet apart to show what to wide is and then right next to each other to show too tight.

In football we have our feet straight and shoulder width apart, in ballet, the little girl ballerinas have their feet closer and their toes are pointed out. I demonstrate this stance. Fellas, we aren’t ballerinas, we are football players. So when you hear the word no ballerinas, you are going to get into this position. By associating movements to pictures you have created in that players mind, he is going to have a MUCH easier time remembering the movement. The more interesting and unusual that picture is, the more apt the player is going to
remember. Just think about it, are kids going to remember those 7 static and boring points you are trying to get them to remember on their stance or are they going to remember that picture of the ballerina you’ve implanted in their heads? You can have one foot offset, to the heel or mid-heel, many do. We don’t because we are foot to foot and if we went foot to foot with an offset back or front foot we wouldn’t be even across the line. Because we run a lot of unbalanced line, we would be in an illegal formation. By rule you MUST have at least 7 players on the line of scrimmage. Those players helmets must be at the Centers waist of closer to the line of scrimmage, once everyone is set.

Have each player assume this position of shoulder width apart. This is something we do in our warm up group as a team. Make sure every coach has a set number of players, if there are 25 kids and 5 coaches, each coach is coaching a set group of 5 players. It is imperative those coaches only coach their 5 kids and that the boys are held to a perfect standard.

So all the kids are standing, I yell out “no ballerinas”, the kids stay frozen in those stances as the coaches inspect each player to make sure his feet are shoulder width apart and feet are pointed straight and are even, not staggered. I then yell out “good job” and clap, once I’ve started clapping the players can now move out of that frozen state. Repeat again so the kids are conditioned to respond to the words “no ballerinas”. Make SURE they stay frozen until you clap and say “good job”.

Now it’s time to describe the second step. This is the picture I like to paint; Guys how many of you have been to a Nebraska football game in Lincoln? Well if you have gone you know that the stadium seats about 86,000 people and the stadium has been sold out for every game since 1962. The stadium was never built with enough bathrooms to begin with so the lines are always very long. Imagine this, you went to last weeks game in a game that they didn’t allow any women to attend, all 86,000 people are guys. Also imagine that every bathroom in the entire stadium with the exception of a single toilet was broken and closed down. Imagine that all the men that day that needed to use the restroom had to use that one toilet. Now imagine that you ate two pieces of Valentinos pizza during halftime and now it’s the end of the game and you have to go number two. You know you can’t wait and the closest restroom is over 20 minutes away, you have no choice, you have to use that one filthy toilet. Are you doing to sit down all the way down on the filthy seat, are you going to drop bombs from 10,000 feet or are you going to hover just above the seat? Of course the answer is hover.

Ryan demonstrates the “outhouse” position, where the knees are bent; head is up, elbows resting on knees. Now to teach it, yell “no ballerinas” as each player freezes in the no ballerina position. Make sure all the coaches look at the kids and make sure they are in the correct position. Clap and encourage. Then yell out “outhouse”, the kids are now frozen in the second position you taught them. Again each coach looks at the 5 kids in his mini team and makes sure they are in the correct position. Clap and encourage.
The third progression is the hand placement. Now it’s story time. Imagine that when you are in outhouse your left eye popped out of your head and landed on the ground right in front of you. Those little wire things are still attached to your head and your eyeball is just touching the grass. You are going to delicately grab that eyeball with your three middle fingers so you can put it back into your head. Ryan demonstrates as you show the players you want little to no weight on those fingers. You want to keep your head up, because there is a troll walking around that likes to steal eyeballs, you need to keep a look out for him.

Now you go through the progression again, “no ballerinas”- good job, clap, encourage as your coaches coach up their 5 players. Then “outhouse”- good job, clap, encourage, then finally “eyeball”, clap encourage, “good”. Good tells the kids it is ok to come out of the movement, they no longer have to stay frozen. The kids have to stay frozen in order for your coaches to do their quality control.

The last step is “paper”, paper tells them to imagine that one sheet of paper is being slid between their heel and the ground. This helps the players get to the balls of their feet. You don’t want the player to be up on his toes, you don’t want him flat footed either, so just a single sheet of paper. So now the progression is; no ballerinas, outhouse, eyeball and paper.

The body is bent at the hips, not waist, with knees bent, butt down, head up and back straight. The center of gravity is the hips with most of the weight still on the legs. The down hand is slightly in front of player with knuckles or fingers firmly touching the ground to get a body lean. The player is on the balls of his feet and ready to go. By using this method all the kids are going to be in perfect stances by the second practice, most of them in the first. More importantly they are going to remember how to do it for the entire season.

You can break almost any movement down to tiny pieces and reconstruct it one building block at a time. If you get a little creative you can create some of your own work pictures to help your kids remember.

**Get Off Cadence Claps**

Before you start on Get Offs, your players need to understand how they interact and respond to the cadence. Whatever cadence you use, it has to be consistent and melodic so the kids can anticipate the snap count. The offense always knows what the snap count is,
the defense doesn’t, use that to your advantage. The offensive lineman has to be trained to come out on the first sounded utterance of the snapped count. If you snap count is shift, down, ready set go and you are snapping on go, the offensive linemen need to come out on the G of go, not the o of go. They should be able to time the snap to the point they are coming out just as the Quarterback utters the first part of the g sound of go.

Stand your linemen in their base formation and have them clap one time as you utter the cadence. If your cadence is shift, down, ready set, go, they should all be clapping in unison on the G of go. At first it will sound like applause, lots of claps not synchronized. Once you get good at it, everyone will clap as one. The key is to make sure your Quarterbacks are all using the same melodic cadence with the same inflection and pauses. If you are using the “no play” don’t forget to practice that as well during Cadence Clap drills.

**Get Offs**

Offensive Players must be taught to move on the cadence. So one of the very the first thing you should work on is stance and get-offs. The players are all in one line and facing a cone downfield at about 6 yards. The coach has the ball set on an imaginary line of scrimmage that no player is crossing prior to ball movement. The stance is the same standard 3 point stance we taught earlier. Every player is held accountable to be in a perfect stance.

When a player comes out of his stance on the get off he has to come out low, stepping with the inside foot first. Players on the right side of the line will step with their left foot, players on the right side of the line will step out with their right foot. The Center will work stepping out with the left and the right. He can’t stand straight up and run, he comes up slowly like a sprinter.

If you see the player taking a false step, this must be corrected. A false step is when a player takes a step back prior to taking a step forward. This wasted movement will come back to haunt him when you play stronger, quicker and more athletic teams. If a player is false stepping ask him to pigeon toe his stance just a bit. He will need to bring in his front toes about 2 inches is all. He will also need to flex the inner part of his knees inward about an inch or so. When he does this, it is physically impossible for him to false step. If you want quick linemen, the first thing you need to solve is false stepping.
Linemen splits will vary depending on your offense, athleticism and your personal philosophy or preference. As a general rule of thumb, the more athletic your linemen, the wider your splits. If you have a very un-athletic line, your splits are narrower to make sure there are not large distances to cover in order for your offensive linemen to make the block on their opponents. After coaching a variety of offenses over the last 25 years, from Veer and Multiple I, to Spread, Double Wing and Single Wing and experimenting a wide variety of splits, we are big fans of no splits at all. Our kids are foot to foot.
The reasons why we like foot to foot splits:
Neutralizes blitzes
Less distance to cover for offensive linemen to make contact
Less distance to pull
Double team blocks- players are already hip to hip
Easier to fill gaps for pullers
Creates larger edge (if you have athletic players)
Easy to wedge block fit
Hides the football

To be perfectly frank in many ways the youth game is a bit different than the High School, College or NFL game. You won’t see many High Schools sending 8 on defense, you won’t see any College or NFL defenses sending 8 either. But in youth football, expect to see 8 a lot of times, heck you may even see 9 or even 10. When you are foot to foot you can neutralize those blitzes rather easily.

In the College and NFL you see lots of 300 lb offensive linemen that run 4.9 or even 4.8 40 yard dash times and can bench press 225 lbs 30 times. These are amazing athletes who can dunk basketballs. If a player in the NFL isn’t good enough, he’s cut. In college football if a player isn’t good enough he isn’t recruited or he sits the bench. In youth football, that player is not only going to be on the team, in most leagues he’s going to play. In youth football you will have a few fairly good athletes on your offensive line, but you are also probably going to have some of the slowest, least athletic and weakest players on your team playing offensive line. It’s not out of the ordinary to see kids outweighed on the line by 100 lbs in youth unlimited leagues. You simply can’t compare these equations to each other.

Recessing Linemen

Recessing offensive linemen makes a lot of sense in youth football. Some coaches like to crowd the line of scrimmage with their linemen, others prefer recessing. Recessing from the line of scrimmage simply means the players are set back from the tip of the football. The deepest you can recess is to the hip of the Centers body, when the Center is in his stance. When you recess linemen, you allow them the ability to create better angles than when they are up as far as legally possible. It can also help the offensive player when facing a much quicker opponent, or filling for a puller. You must have 7 players on the line of scrimmage in order to be legal, so make sure if you do recess, that your players have their helmets at or past the hip of the Center when they are all set in their stances. When you are tight to the line of scrimmage there is always the possibility they will be aligned off-sides as well. My personal preference is recessing to the point the Guards toes are at the heels of the Center and everyone else is foot to foot from the Guards out.
Chapter 2
Getting Started

Everyone has their favorite offensive line drills. Here are some of the individual type drills we use most. They can be classified into evaluation drills, every day technique drills, technique drills, athletic development drills, group drills and scheme drills.

Warm-Ups

No matter what type of drills you are working on, you need to start out with a warm up. Most of the better youth and High School teams no longer spend 20 minutes doing elaborate calisthenics and stretching routines. There have been many studies that have shown that short dynamic warm ups are ideal for preventing injury and preparing youth players for contact.

We start our dynamic warm ups with two lines facing each other, just two lines. Why bother wasting five minutes lining kids up in 4-5 lines? I used to do that too, we see so many coaches taking roll etc and sending kids out to the cal square one at a time, stealing precious practice time. Do roll while the kids are lined up in their cal lines, while they are doing their movements. Only mark off the kids that are missing. If you don’t recognize a kid in the cal line, walk over to him and quietly ask his name, it’s a great way to learn names and NOT WASTE TIME.

The “Formation”

After you have the two lines facing each other about 10 yards apart, have everyone get into a stance. If you have 25 players and five coaches, assign a coach to every five kids, no coach crosses over to another coaches 5 kids. Each coach makes sure his five kids do every drill perfectly. When you introduce a drill for the first time, have a coach demonstrate the drill, then have one of your experienced players demonstrate the drill. After the kids are in perfect stances, come out on the “go” cadence, and do high knees at a very slow pace to the center of the area. Remember we are going from still in a low intensity mindset during warm ups, our goal is blood flow to the muscles while we also learn football skills. The kids jog slowly towards the other line of players, then turn around and jog back. You are looking for proper arm swinging movement, and very high knees, it’s a very slow drill. Do that movement 2-3 times on the cadence, with a designated player calling the cadence.

We like to practice our “no play” play during this segment, by calling a secret code (black). This tells the kids to stay in their stances and NOT to fire out on the cadence of “go” we are trying to draw the defense off-sides with this play. The kids are only allowed to come out of their stances once they hear the coaches whistle indicating either a penalty.
or a time out has been called. We call timeout if we can’t get the other team to jump the
snap count. We teach the “no play” in the first 10 minutes of our very first practice, yes
the kids know a real play that we will run in every game we play in at the end of the first
10 minutes of the very first practice. We then do butt kicks, same two lines, now the
players come out of their stance and run so that when they bring their legs back their feet actually touch
their behinds. There is no high knee action here, again looking for good arm movement and again at a very
slow pace.

The Warm Up Routine

Next do five jumping jacks, together using a unified shouted out count. That’s it, no pushups, sit-ups,
agility or grass drills. The kids are going to get plenty winded running your practices out at a very brisk pace. Move right to angle form-fit-tackling, see it in the tackling section. If angle form tackling is run properly at a brisk pace, you have two or more groups going and the kids should be breathing a bit heavy. About one rep every 6 seconds is what you should be aiming for. Too many coaches know a lot about cals and agilities and use up too much time in this area, they need to get smart about the football part and drill that. Remember we are playing football; we are not in a pushup contest or cross-country race.

Just think about the guy doing 25 minutes of cals and stretching, compared to your 8 minutes. Over the course of 1 week of 3 per week practices, he would have lost 45 minutes of practice time to you. Over the course of a 14 week season, he would have lost 10.5 hours which is more than 5 full practices. All these time losses add up pretty quickly. Are you beginning to see why some teams look so much better prepared than others even when they may even practice “less”?

Choosing Linemen for Positions

Where you put the players allotted to you will depend on your offensive scheme, blocking schemes and approach you take to blocking. If you’re a Spread team and run a lot of zone and passing out of 2x2 type sets, your tackles are probably going to be your best athletes. If you are a Markham style Double Wing team your most athletic lineman are probably your Left Guard, then Right Guard. If you are an Unbalanced Single Wing team like my teams run, your most athletic offensive linemen are going to be your Right Guard, then Power Tackle. Just make sure you understand your offense well enough to develop and write down detailed position descriptions for every one of your offensive line positions, including Tight End. If you have Tight Ends, they should be spending the vast majority of their indy practice time with the Offensive Linemen. The detailed position descriptions should include attributes like quickness, aggressiveness, power, football smarts, consistency and temperament.
Evaluating Players While Having Fun

Even if you are not in the position to choose an “A” team or do a draft, you will have to evaluate the players that eventually end up playing on your team. A reasonable evaluation process can help you make the right decision as to who plays where. What is important is that the evaluations do not dominate your practice time and that they are fun. No kid likes to stand around in long lines to be timed in the 40-yard dash by some dad that may or may not get the time done correctly. I’m not so much concerned by what time anyone has, I’m concerned about how they stack up against other players on the team. I am going to have to cobble together a team of the kids from this group no matter the talent, so I have to know how they compare to each other. When I have my personal team of 22-24 kids, I know what I’m looking for and make my decisions after watching two fun team building drills, the towel game, the deer hunter game and then the gauntlet drill. If I were coaching for the first time or if I had the “A” team where I have to choose from over 100 kids, I might use the following more scientific approach;

Fun Team Building and Evaluation Drills

Football should be fun for the kids; practice should be something they look forward to do every time, not something to dread. We have found the following games not only are fun, but also build real football skills and expose various components of any players’ abilities. While we use the following drills to evaluate all of our players, we use these specifically to help determine not only where kids play on the offensive line, but which players are better than others.

**Sumo Drill**

*Goal: Have fun, teach players to stay low, and help determine who the aggressive kids are.*

Put all players foot to foot in a big circle. Put two weaker kids in the middle in two-point, low stances, with their hands on the chest of their opponent. On the signal they are to push and drive the other player to the edge of the circle. The player whose foot touches the edge loses: send him to be a member of the circle, then put the next better kid in the middle. Keep the winner in until he loses, no twisting or turning is allowed, it’s all straight up power. You will find the player that stays low, gets his hips under his opponent and uses his legs in short choppy steps, wins. Sound familiar? When done, this is your “King of the Hill” drill. If time permits do some match-ups against similar skilled players, or demonstrate how a smaller player with good technique crushes a big player with poor technique.
Another way to do this drill is to set up say 2 circles of 12 players each. Start with all the players over 100 lbs in once circle and every player under 100 in the other or something to that effect. When a player wins, he moves up to the over 100 lb circle, the loser goes to the under 100 lb circle. Keep making matchups and moving kids around until you figure out who your top 12 kids are.

**Towel Game**

*Goal:* To have fun, help players understand need to stay low and never give up. Helps you determine who the strongest and toughest kids are.

Take a large bath towel, roll it tightly the long way and tape off the ends by wrapping white athletic tape around the end 8-9 times. Also, bind up the middle in same fashion. It now looks like a puffy rope. Now take three cones and space them off in a triangle about 5 yards from the, towel in the middle. Select three fairly evenly matched kids and have each grab the towel at a taped area, one on each end and one in the middle. Make sure one cone lines up with each player, again about 5 yards away. Now the player must drag the other players toward their cone and touch the cone with one hand, while keeping hold of the towel.

To win, the player must touch his cone AND have hold of towel. The keys are to stay low, use your legs, keep your feet wide, use short choppy steps and never give up, sound familiar? If a player loses contact with towel, he can get back in game as long as the game has not yet declared a winner by another player touching their cone. As an added twist, we like to have the remaining players get behind the cone of the player they think is going to win, if they choose wrong, have them run a short lap, while those that chose correctly sit smugly by. This is very fun and team building if done properly. You will see lots of cheering and jeering on this one and many happy parent faces.
**Dummy Relay Races**

*Goal:* Determine the core strength of players while having a fun competitive relay race. Divide the team into 4 equal groups and line them up in a column behind a cone. Line up all 4 teams in columns that are even. Set another cone out about 10 yards from the starting line cone of each team. Set a tall blocking dummy in front of the line of each team. The first player on each team must pick up the dummy and carry it 10 yards to the cone, go around the cone and come back to the starting line where he passes the dummy to the next player in line on his team. There are no rules as how the dummy must be carried but most just bear hug it and run. Most players hold the dummy upright, close to their chests. The losing team must run a short lap or do 10 pushups etc. This one will get the players and parent howling. To spice it up, pair two teams against each other and have just one cone 10 yards away set up for both teams to “share” the cone. Now have your relay race with no restrictions on contact at the intersection cone, be ready for some awesome demolition derby type action as the players slam into each other with their dummy in front for protection kind of like one of those inflatable sumo wrestling games.

Mind you while mom and dad and the kids are thinking we are just playing a fun game, I’m looking at which players core strength allows them to carry a 30+ pound awkward dummy 10 yards and back on a run without losing their balance. Find kids that can do this well and you’ve found your athletes. They may not have won any straight speed race, or strength test, but they will be able to carry themselves on the football field. This is one of the very best evaluation games you can do.
**Deer Hunter**

*Goal:* To get some conditioning in and determine who your athletes are.

This is a great drill to wrap practice up with and to find out in the first week who your best athletes are and maybe sneak in some conditioning. Map out a square or circle with cones, the square is usually 30 yards by 30 yards or so. Choose four kids (hunters) and put yellow shell jerseys on them to distinguish them from the other players. Put the four hunters in the center of the square and ask everyone else spread out anywhere they want in the square. Then take four soft small round balls, like mini nerf soccer balls, and give them to your center guys, the “hunters”. The hunters throw the balls at the other players, the “deer”. If the ball hits a deer, he goes to the outside of the square and sits in a designated area or goes right to another game you have set up. Only allow the hunters to throw and the last four deer still left standing are the new hunters. Those deer that survive are almost always your best athletes. If you do not have nerf balls you can do it by having the hunters tag the deer with their hand. Coaches need to supervise and make sure “killed” deer move to outside the square. If you don’t want to mess with the balls, just have the hunters tag the deer with their hands.

You will find that when the last 2-3 survivors are fighting to stay alive you will witness some of the most elusive start and stop football moves known to man. Play this game and you will be nodding knowingly of who your best true athletes are in just 10-20 minutes. The kids LOVE this game and even though they will be sweating and breathing hard after the game is over, they will beg for more. When was the last time your kids begged to do more conditioning sprints? Your parents will love this one as well.
**Hawaiian Rules Football**

*Goal:* Build teamwork, speed, conditioning and see which players have body control and pass catching skills.

Map out boundaries of reasonable length 30 x 50 or so. Divide up players 6 or so per side, it can be 4-5 or 7-8 to a side, but it does not work well over 8. If you have 24 kids, you should have four teams of six players. Two teams play each other head-to-head, so you can have two games going at same time. They have four “downs” to score. All snaps are shotgun style; a player must not take more than two steps before he releases the ball. It can be a forward pass, shovel pass, toss or lateral, etc. Beginning rush is “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two”, then rush. If the ball carrier takes more than two steps, the play is dead. The play continues until the ball hits the ground or until a player holds the ball past a count of 5. If it was an incomplete pass, the original line of scrimmage or in the event of multiple passes, the point of the last “passers” feet. Once the play is dead, a new down is started. All offensive players must start each play at or behind the line of scrimmage. Each player must rotate, to start out as the quarterback for a down. There is no tackling, the defenders look more like basketball defenders.

Coaches need to referee and do ball placement to keep the game moving fast. In the event of interception, remember the players can only run two steps then they have to get rid of
the ball. Always encourage lots of short passes and laterals rather than going for a bomb each play. Keep it fast paced, Shirts vs. Skins, it only moves well with better athletes. For teams age 8-10 it’s best to include a coach or two on each team. It should look like a fast-moving rugby game when done right. There are no kicks, extra points, etc. after a score; the ball is placed on the 10 yard line to start a new series.

**Sleds and Chutes**

Sleds and blocking chutes can be an asset to a youth football program, they can also be a curse if overused or over relied upon. You don’t need blocking sleds or chutes to develop a strong offensive line, but they can help if used in moderation. What is almost a must have are cones, shield dummies and a couple of tall blocking dummies. If you don’t have the funds for that, ask the local high schools or colleges if they have any leftovers that you can have. It’s amazing what a little duct tape can do to extend the life of an old blocking dummy.

Blocking chutes fall into the same category as blocking sleds. The main value of blocking chutes is it forces players to come out of their stances low. Unfortunately most of the chutes I’ve seen are built of High School sized kids and are too high off the ground to do youth kids much good. If you are struggling with this you can build or have your parents build a makeshift blocking chute out of PVC pipe and canvas. One of our parents built two of them for us several years ago with materials that cost less than $50 total. You can get similar results by just having a couple of dads hold a piece of rigid PVC in front of and just over the heads of your linemen as they do come out or fit drills. The nice thing about the pole drill is you can easily vary the height of the pole based on the size of the player.

Most multiple man blocking sleds aren’t terribly productive for youth football. Some coaches absolutely love them and swear by them. If that describes you and your offensive line is consistently dominating, by all means keep doing what you are doing. While they are a nice tool for getting kids to work together as a team, with the diverse speed and strength disparities in younger kids, most times the sled is careening off in one direction or another. What it does do well is help you determine which kids are faster and executing their first two steps and making contact. Of course the same could be said of having 5 tall bags set across from your line, but that is a trade off in manpower and materials.
Chapter 3

Blocking Rules and Base Blocking

Blocking rules are base blocking assignments that help players understand who they are supposed to block. The “who” is just as important as the “how” when it comes to blocking in youth football. The problem with most offensive linemen that are not playing aggressively is that they don’t know who they are supposed to block. When a player is extremely confident of who he is supposed to block and reasonably confident in his base blocking technique, he has the ability to play fast and the potential to play aggressively.

Back in 2008 a friend asked me to come watch his age 11-12 team play. They weren’t playing very well in spite of having a team chocked full of good athletes and very good size. The head coach felt his kids were “playing scared.” When I drove into Omaha to watch them play, I headed to the field and arrived midway through the first quarter of the game. My friends team was huge and very fast, but they were ended up being behind 20-6 at the half. Their only score coming on a miraculous one man show Quarterback sweep.

The coach wanted me to speak to his kids, but in my mind I was only there to observe and offer advice to the head coach on how to solve his problem. At the half I asked the Right Guard what his blocking assignment was on the play they scored the touchdown on. He was a good looking athlete, about 5’9” and maybe 160 lbs. He replied, that his blocking rule was to “not block anyone in the back.” I told him while that was an important rule, what I meant was, how did he know who he was supposed to block. His answer changed to, “I just block the guy in front of me.” Well if you have a player on your inside gap, your outside gap and then another player straight on you at Linebacker, how would the poor kid know who to block? The old no blocking scheme blocking scheme is still alive in well in the poorly coached youth football community. Of course the poor kid wasn’t playing aggressively; he had no idea who he was supposed to block on every play. The coaches problem wasn’t weak kids, it was weak coaching and no blocking scheme.

Blocking Rule Choices

Blocking rules can be as simple of complex as you want to make them, it’s up to you. There are all types of base blocking rules like OIL on inside Linebacker, GOL Gap on Linebacker, GOA Gap on Area etc The simpler the base blocking rules and schemes are, the better the kids are going to be able to execute them to perfection.
The simpler the blocking rules are, the easier it is for kids to be interchangeable at positions. Just think about your teams of the past. Was your second team Right Tackle your best non starting offensive lineman, or was it your backup Right Guard? Let’s say you are playing in the championship game and you have very complex blocking rules that require lots of calls and specialization at each position. Let’s also imagine that your starting Right Tackle gets hurt in the fourth quarter and that your worst backup lineman is your Right Tackle. If you have a complex system, you won’t have much choice but to play your weakest kid. However if you had a very simple system with universal blocking rules and steps, no matter what position a player is playing, he can sub in for another with little loss in productivity. For my own teams, if my Right Tackle got hurt, I put in my very best offensive lineman to replace him, not just go automatically to the second team Right Tackle.

While greater sophistication in blocking rules, with a lot of calls and adjustments may help you pinpoint double teams and mismatches, what they gain in accuracy, they may give up in losing aggressiveness. The more a player has to think, the more tentative they are going to play. Blocking rules and schemes are a balancing act, only you can decide what makes the most sense for your particular team and situation.

**Why GOD**

We have used about every blocking rule and method out there over the last 25 years and have had the most consistent success with GOD as our base rule. Why did we settle on GOD?

It protects the inside gap first, the most dangerous gap in youth football
It puts linemen on linemen, see below for more detail
Accidental double team blocks. Many times at the point of attack
Down blocks, the easiest block with the most leverage
Allows minimum play players to have individual success and add team value
Simple- allows players to play aggressively without thinking too much
Interchangeable players- allows us move players around with little loss in effectiveness
Gets us away from reach blocking, which in youth football is very difficult with wide 9 and 8 technique Defensive Ends. Especially with minimum play players.

**Linemen on Linemen**

Just think about it, where are your fastest and most nimble athletes playing on defense? They are playing Linebacker and are off the ball 4-5 yards in most cases. They are FAST, AGGRESSIVE, ATHLETIC, HAVE GOOD BODY CONTROL AND ARE PLAYING IN SPACE. While most of us coaching the average youth football team will have a few good players and a few average players, we are all going to have some weak players on the offensive line to get snaps too as well. While we are going to coach those weaker kids till the cows come home and help them get better, we have to be realistic.
If you use a system that requires most of your linemen to block Linebackers you are asking some of your least athletic players to block the other teams most athletic players in space on the run. Your linemen will not be able to make those blocks, you will waste a player and you will have very frustrated linemen. We like the double-teams that the GOD rule gives us. Our linemen are driving the defensive linemen to the second level to give us huge running lanes and to take the Linebackers off their pursuit paths to the ball. We block the Linebackers and Defensive Backs with our best athletes, our backs and pulling Right Guard.

That’s the main reason I’m not a fan of zone blocking or even track style blocking at the youth level. For the high school, college and pro game it makes a lot of sense. At the youth level with smaller squad sizes, player size and athleticism variations and the requirement or goal to play everyone at least a few meaningful snaps, GOD makes a lot of sense.

**Base Blocking Progression**

The base-blocking rule for GOD stands for; inside gap, on, down. On most of our blocks including double-teams, we are stepping inside and protecting the inside gap. All of your lineman need to be able to shoulder block, protecting the inside gap. We are not believers in chest-to-chest, hand, or push-blocking at the youth level. When players get involved in one on one pushing matches with their hands, invariably they play high and the bigger guy wins. If that’s the way you’re teaching it and your teams are scoring a lot of points, stick with it. If not, consider maybe doing something differently this season.

We quite often have undersized lineman that need to have full use of the leverage of their legs and the ability to get under the defender to drive him off the ball with pad level lower than their opponent. They simply do not have the upper body strength and maturity, especially the pre-pubescent kids. Using GOD and a base shoulder block has been the most productive for us. Most of this technique was learned from Todd Bross a very successful youth coach in Pennsylvania and Dr. John Ward a hugely successful high school coach in North Carolina.

After you have taught the players and mentally repped the GOD rule teach the base block. Line all the linemen and tight ends in one long horizontal line, all facing the coaches. Make sure to divide the kids up evenly as each coach is responsible for X number of kids to watch and coach up. It is imperative that the coaches know where the breaks are so they can coach every boy in their group.
**First Step**

Teach a step to the right, first from just a two-point stance. It is just a tiny 6-inch step at a 30-degree angle to the right, with their right foot. The player must concentrate on staying low, and you want their right knee touching their chest. Tell it, demo it, and then do it. Tell the players to hold their hands 6 inches apart so they can visualize how short that first step is, that’s how far you want that first step.

Many will step too far or not at the right angle or are too high. Have them freeze in place after the first step and don’t release each player until you see everyone has it down and you’ve made the proper adjustments. Tap the player on the shoulder to release him from his “frozen” position.

The kids need to step quickly on the “G” of “Go” and step down together. That has to be a very quick and short step. Your goal is to make sure your kids second step is down while the defender is still on the move, to his second step. This first step drill also helps you determine who your quickest linemen are.

**Adding the Draw**

Next add the “draw” from a two-point stance as your lineman makes his first step. Again you have them take that first 6” step to the right leaving on the “G” of go, knee to chest. Now have the player draw his hands to his sides like he is drawing imaginary six shooters from imaginary holsters. Ask them to do this from a 2-point stance, again making sure all the steps in step one are covered. Then go to a three-point stance and have them do the first step and draw together. Have them freeze so you can observe proper foot, knee and hand placement.

**Second Step**

Now add the second step and explode to contact. Have the player take a second step in the same 30-degree path to the right, trying to place his left foot right between the imaginary defenders two feet. It is then, as that left foot comes down, that the player brings the arms up together and delivers a blow, while placing the left shoulder into the defenders midsection.

Ask that the blockers head pinch in toward the defenders right side. The player’s arms come up together, with the flat of the arms creating a nice wide blocking surface, with the fists coming together. Ask the player to freeze here again to check that he is low, at a 30-degree angle and his feet are shoulder width apart, his head up, his fists together, the flat part of his arms facing to the defender and his shoulder.
parallel to the ground. The actual block is made with the shoulder, the arms are just creating a surface that makes it more difficult for the defender to slide off the block.

**Progression**

Next put a defender across from the lineman to the right, like a gap player. The defender stands straight up, then start the progression. Say “Go” and have all the lineman freeze after the first step, check the coaching points, then say “Go” again and they take their second step and freeze in place again. But this time it’s on the defender, with the offensive lineman splitting the defenders legs with the offensive lineman’s left foot, left shoulder on the defenders left side, head on the defenders left hip, arms making contact with the defenders midsection or just under the defenders shoulder pads if the defender is playing low. Now you are ready to go to the heavy bag.

Use the same progression as above but take a heavy bag and place it to the right as a gap defender. Again have the offensive lineman freeze after their all-important first step, then freeze after making contact with the dummy on their second step. Then add the short choppy steps to the progression and slowly but surely shorten up the amount of time between the two steps to the point there is no delay from step one to step two.

Then do the same for the left side. There you switch sides; it is a right shoulder block. You step first with the left foot, then the right splitting the defender, head on the inside. One of the best drills for developing that muscle memory is to get the kids to perfect those two quick steps as a group, in their positions. Set the group in a line, in their respective positions and get into their splits. On go, they take the first step and freeze, then the second step. All the linemen on the left are stepping to their right; all the linemen to the right are stepping left, the center going both ways. Once the group has that down well, go without the freeze on the first step. Make sure you are holding the kids accountable to knee to chest, correct angle and most importantly lightning fast first two steps on the “G” of go.

The shoulder block is still widely used today with one of the most widely used and prolific offenses in the country at the High School level, the Wing T and is still the building block of most blocking techniques. At the youth level the shoulder block allows even smaller players to gain leverage and win battles by utilizing leverage and leg strength to move larger defenders. It’s important that when shoulder blocking that the “feet must follow”, meaning your players can’t over extend they must keep their hips and feet under them as they make contact. The kids have to make sure they are making contact when their toes are nearly on top of the defenders feet, which will help insure the blockers head is up and he gets a good hip roll movement.
With the great blocking angles the Single Wing Offense gives you, the shoulder block gives you the most bang for your buck. Once a lineman has leverage on the defender and has him on the run, your lineman can finish the block off with a hand shove to take the defender to the ground. But do this only to finish the defender off, you don’t want shoving matches going on out there. Shoving means the bigger and stronger guy wins and if your teams are like mine we don’t always have the biggest or strongest kids.

**Adding in a Blocking Dummy**

Drill the above progression on dummies, with just the left side lineman getting into a long vertical line on one dummy, where they are practicing left shoulder blocks stepping to the right. The right side linemen are in a different vertical line, stepping to their left, executing right shoulder blocks. The centers are alternating lines because he has to be able to step in both directions. Do it this way because most of the time the lineman are going to be stepping with that inside foot and you want to maximize the number of reps you do in a very short period of time.

**Key Blocking Techniques**

**Stay Lower Than the Defender**

Your players must fire out low and make sure their shoulder pad level is under the defenders shoulder pad level. Practice coming out of the stance so the knees touch the numbers. While this may be a bit lower than you need, by emphasizing it, you will often get the results you are looking for. If the lineman comes out high, he is finished. The knees must be bent as well as the hips. The lower your player he is, the better leverage he has and more power can be derived from his trunk and legs. You can use chutes if you have them or even just a piece of PVC pipe held at the proper height by a couple of dads. Anything you can place that will safely force the offensive lineman to come out and stay low to contact is helpful.

**Second Step Wins**

Whatever player gets their second step down first usually wins. De La Salle High in California with 151 consecutive wins, stresses this over all else. De Las Salle does this with lineman rarely over 210 pounds. Our players’ first step has to be short and quick, the second step has to be quick and split the defender’s legs. If we get that second foot down before the defender does, the battle is won.
Hips Under the Defender

Players must follow through with their hips under the defender, denying him the center of gravity, creating more blocking surface and creating control over the defender. Your player can only do this if he makes initial contact when his toes are nearly on the toes of his opponent. If your player makes initial contact with his feet far away from the defenders feet, your player will be overextended, with a poor center of gravity and will be easy to fend off. Your linemen must drive their belly button into the defender as they engage. This, along with driving their feet and staying low, places the blockers center of gravity under the defenders and gives the blocker control and leverage.

Wide Base and Short Choppy Steps

The blocker must keep his feet wide enough to maintain balance and control of the defender. Short quick choppy steps rather than long strides are more effective in controlling and moving the defender. A long stride can put the player off balance and he can easily be shrugged off by the defender.

Finish Off the Block

This offensive system requires your lineman to finish off their blocks, by either taking the defender to the second level or pancaking them. After making initial contact and gaining control, with the hips under the defender and feet moving, they must continue until the whistle blows or the player is on the ground. We have no problem having linemen finish their blocks off with their hands.

GOD Rule Blocking

GOD is our base blocking rule for most plays, for some of our linemen it’s the only blocking rule they will have to remember in addition to wedge and GOO on passes. GOD stands for Inside Gap, On, and Down. This is a very easy progression that our linemen use on most plays to determine who they will block. We always tell our kids, if in doubt GOD is right so they just GOD block.

GOD insures your kids will know who they are supposed to block on each and every play, they have the tried and tested GOD rule. No searching for someone to block or trying to chase down pesky Linebackers. Quite often the rule will dictate that they double-team block with another player, right at the point of attack. By the rule these are what some call “accidental double-teams”. On the off-tackle play we usually get two double-teams on the play-side using this blocking rule.
This rule also helps our pulling linemen to get coverage in the space they have vacated. Other than our Right Guard on some plays and the Left End on the 31 trap, we like our less mobile linemen to block other lineman, not Linebackers that in most cases they won’t be able to make a block on anyways.

Teaching the GOD Rule

Like everything you do in youth football, teach the GOD in small bite sized progressions. Then add to the foundation until you have you have your end product.

First

Line the players into their positions and ask the player to look to his inside gap, who is between you and the man to your inside? Inside is defined as the direction towards the center. If there is someone there in that inside gap, you block him. Line up the players in their positions and have each player point to the ground of his inside gap. Have them repeat what the G in GOD stands for, inside gap.

To rep this make sure the offensive linemen’s head is in front of the defender and that he steps hard to the inside with the inside foot per the first 2 step drill. There are a number of exceptions for the Center listed in the playbook. We do not have the linemen put their heads between the defender and the ball, it is always on the inside.

Second

If no one is in your inside gap, look to who is “on” you. “On” is defined by a defender that has his helmet between your shoulder pads. It’s not who is on your outside shoulder or outside of you. If no one is in your inside gap, and now someone is “on” you, this is the person you block. With the players in their positions, have them point to on. Again, get your helmet in front of the defender by taking your first step to the inside with your inside foot. To qualify as “On” the defender must be within 1 yard of the line of scrimmage. Have them repeat what the O in GOD stands for, on.

Third

If no one on your inside gap or on you, your next rule is to block down, the “D” in the “GOD” rule. The down block is the very next person to your inside, keep going inside until you find another lineman to block. The lineman must take a fairly flat and quick step to the inside in order to make this block. Often on the down block, you are
working a double team block with another player. With the players in their positions, have them all point to where down is. Have them repeat what the D in GOD stands for, down.

**Drilling GOD**

You rep this by putting your linemen in their positions with coaches or dads standing across from the offensive linemen in various 5 and 6 man fronts. Ask every player to point to his inside gap. Then ask him to point on, lastly ask him to point down. Then ask the players to kneel in their positions and tell you when their blocking rule is GOD, which of the dads they would block.

When a player points to the person he is to block, ask him why. He would have to answer in this exact progression, it might sound like this from the player: coach, “I would block Coach Harner” Why? “Because I don’t have anyone in my inside gap, I don’t have anyone on me and Coach Harner is the next person down on my inside”. Don’t let the lineman just answer who he is supposed to block, even if he answers correctly, make him go through each step of the progression as he delivers his answer to you. Do this type of drill after you have run through a very physically demanding drill and use this as a “rest break” if you will. Use this “drill” quite often in the first two weeks of the season and maybe even the first month with rookie kids.

**Gap Block Drill**

Align players into their positions and call out the cadence. Align 6 players or dads, coaches etc in every inside gap, standing passively straight up. On the snap count the offensive lineman comes out of his stance using his proper first step, second step and fits on the defender. You are looking for correct lead steps, inside head placement, toes on toes, pad level just under the nipples fitting on the defender and wide feet and good blocking surface with the forearms. You can do a first step freeze, second step freeze and then graduate to doing them without freezing after the first step.

You can go live with this drill with defensive scouts set in position. But remember to work the fits in freeze mode too. Sometimes it’s difficult to improve the quickness and technique of your offensive linemen if everything is done live.
**On Block Drill**

Align players into their positions and call out the cadence. Align 7 players or dads, coaches head up across from every offensive player, standing passively straight up. On the snap count the offensive lineman comes out of his stance using his proper first step, second step and fits on the defender. You are looking for correct lead steps, inside head placement, toes on toes, pad level just under the nipples fitting on the defender and wide feet and good blocking surface with the forearms. You can do a first step freeze, second step freeze and then graduate to doing them without freezing after the first step. Note that the first step is at a steeper angle than the gap block step.

You can go live with this drill with defensive scouts set in position. But remember to work the fits in freeze mode too. Sometimes it’s difficult to improve the quickness and technique of your offensive linemen if everything is done live.

**Down Blocks**

Align players into their positions and call out the cadence. Align 5 players or dads, coaches head up on every player but the Tight Ends. The defenders are standing passively straight up. On the snap count the offensive lineman comes out of his stance using his proper first step, second step and fits on the defender. You are looking for correct lead steps, inside head placement, toes on toes, pad level just under the nipples fitting on the defender and wide feet and good blocking surface with the forearms. You can do a first step freeze, second step freeze and then graduate to doing them without freezing after the
first step. Note that the first step is going to be at a flatter angle than the gap or on block first step. The Center isn’t blocking on this drill, have him making snaps.

You can go live with this drill with defensive scouts set in position. But remember to work the fits in freeze mode too. Sometimes it’s difficult to improve the quickness and technique of your offensive linemen if everything is done live.

**GOD Fits**

An effective way to get the kids comfortable with blocking the correct player is using GOD fits. Set up dads, cones, trash cans or even player across from your linemen. Then have them first step freeze, second step freeze, staying frozen on the defender they have blocked until you tap them on the shoulder and release them. Reshuffle the deck on defense so the offensive players get used to fitting on a variety of fronts. Remember to coach up everything, leading with the correct first foot, 6 inch step, correct angle of attack, pad level just under the nipples, head inside (with exception of outside man on double teams and head up.
When you do our fit and freeze drills, you can ask the linemen who they will block based on the rule prior to even walking or fitting the play and require them to go through the very same verbal progression when they answer. Once they get the hang of this, don’t bother with the verbal test just let them do fits. They aren’t allowed to come off the fit until they get a tap on the shoulder from you, letting them know if they were ok or not. If you have enough tall bags, you can then even let the kids go “live” on bags.

**GOD Fits Live**

Once you have GOD fits down to the point the kids are doing it consistently well, it’s time to go live. Play to a whistle of 6-7 seconds. Don’t forget to make sure you have some of the defenders bear-crawl or frog because you are probably doing to see some of that once league play starts. You want your kids to be prepared to play against what they are most likely to see in games and most likely they are going to see some frogging or bear-crawling.

**GOD Versus Various Fronts**

Lets see how the 16 Power from my offense does versus various fronts using the base GOD rule: Against a Wide Tackle 6 as we usually see it lining up versus our unbalanced:

**Versus 6-2**
**Versus 5-3** This is how we see most 5-3’s lining up against us. We have even seen a few 5-2’s with cover 2, but not for very long.

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**Second Level**

Second level is an advanced adjustment for teams that are doing very well and have a Power Tackle who is handling his man well and a Right End who can play in space. When the Right End has no one in his inside gap and no one on, and the Power Tackle is consistently handling his man, it may make sense to give the Right End the green light to go to the second level and look inside for a Linebacker to seal off. In my offense, we block that first Linebacker inside with the Wing, so our Right End goes to the middle or backside Linebacker. This approach makes a lot of sense when you see lots of froggers or bear-crawlers.
No

No is a simple adjustment that just tells your puller not to pull. When you are playing GAM teams or 7 Diamond type teams, there won’t be anyone for your puller to block once he gets there, so just call “no.”

Domino

A handful of teams out there may try to use your blocking rules against you, by having their Defensive Tackles slant outside and have their Linebackers come inside off of that slant. If your linemen follow that outside slanter, it could pose problems if your puller wasn’t able to pick up the leakage. The domino call will help you with that. Domino is a call that for us means that everyone will step to his inside and block whatever player is in that gap for the duration of the play. If you are experiencing problems with this type of defense and your pulling guard can’t pick up the leakage, use domino. You can also use domino combined with No and not have your puller pull, since there wouldn’t be a defender there for him to block if he did get there.
**Domino Drill**

Set up your Offensive Linemen in formation. The Offensive Linemen block on a track to their inside gap. Whoever is on that track is who the Offensive Linemen will block. Have your Offensive Linemen 1 step and freeze, then 2 step and freeze along that inside gap angle which is at about 30 degrees.

Then align static defenders in various defensive formations along with a single Linebacker in about the 6 hole. Have the widest Defensive Tackle, slant to the outside very slowly, while the Linebacker who is in the 6 hole stunts to the inside, very slowly. Fit and freeze on static, then slow moving, then live defenders using this alignment, then experimenting with others. You are looking for correct first step, with the inside foot, knee to chest, quick second step, pad level fit inside the nipples and head to the inside.
Chapter 4
More Offensive Line Drills

There are a wide variety of blocking drills you can use to help you meet your goals. The problem is you have limited practice time and often times not a tremendous amount of time to get your players selected and to teach them the basic techniques and schemes. The coach with the best results in youth football is the one who can figure out how best to utilize his valuable practice time and sparse resources. This chapter gives you some of the best drills that have helped our offensive lines dominate the line of scrimmage.

Pole Drill

The pole drill will help your offensive linemen come out low off of the cadence. Buy some rigid PVC and have some dads hold it just below their nipples about 1 yard off of an imaginary line of scrimmage. Buy a piece that isn’t sagging too much and about 16 feet in length so your entire offensive line can get under the pole. The goal is for the offensive linemen to come up gradually rather than standing straight up. You can do this with Get Offs, with GOD Fits, with 2 Step Drills, you name it.

Tennis Ball Drill

As the season progresses, after about one month of practices I use a drill to try and improve the quickness of my lineman getting their second step down. Put the kids in a vertical line with a coach at a 30-degree angle to whatever side they usually step to. The linemen on the left side of the line step right, the linemen on the right side of the line step left. We then take a tennis ball and drop it just beyond the players grasp. The lineman must take the first step correctly, draw back and catch the ball as they put their second step down along the same angle. Increase the distance to improve quickness, push them to get those steps down, boom boom as quickly as they can. This is a drill De LaSalle High School uses, you know, the guys with the 151 game winning streak. They use this drill to make their offensive line one of the quickest in the country, they get off the ball like their linemen are being shot out of cannons.


**Tennis Ball Contest**

The Tennis Ball Contest is same as the Tennis Ball Drill with the exception of you only drop 1 ball with players stepping in from both sides. Whoever catches the ball wins. It’s best to do this as teams, with the first team getting to 5 points winning, the losing team has to do 5 pushups or something minor like that. Adding a competitive game type component to any drill always helps drive effort.

**Board Drill**

The Board Drill is a great drill once the base block has been established. We put a 1x 4 x 16 or so piece of lumber on the field. We have two linemen face to face about 1-foot apart. On “go” they each perform a left shoulder block, stepping with their right foot first.
They stay low, drive their feet and drive the other player off the end of the board. The first player driven one off the end of the board looses. They can’t push players off sideways or they start again. If you don’t have a piece of wood you can paint a line in the grass, but the board helps the players keep their feet wide. A half or quarter round pad is much safer than the board and is recommended if you can afford it.

A great way to develop competitions in this drill is to set up 3 groups in a row doing this at the same time. If you lose you move to the left group, win go to the right group. At then end of 10 minutes all your best players are going to be in the group on the far right.

**Oklahoma**

The Oklahoma drill is an oldie but a goodie that has lasted the test of time. Set up an offensive lineman against a defensive linemen in-between 2 cones set about 3 yards apart. The coach is standing behind the defender and he motions which way he wants the offensive player to move the defender. A running back is stationed behind the offensive lineman. On the cadence the full speed, full contact drill is started. The defender uses his bull rush, shrug, swim or rips moves to try and destroy the block. The goal is to drive the defensive player away from the point of attack and put him on his back. Blow a whistle once the tackle has been made or 6 seconds have passed.
Three Level Oklahoma Drill

This is a drill you can do later in the season after we have a good number of players proficient at open field tackling and the “3 slot challenge”. Set up three groups of players at a starting point, then spaced 7 and 15 yards from the starting point. The first group will consist of Linemen and Nose Tackles, the second group will be Defensive Ends and Linebackers, the last group are Defensive Backs.

Set up a “funnel” with cones so the beginning part of your drill is bounded at about 3 yards, the middle of the drill at about 7 yards wide and the back of the drill about 12 yards. Set up a boundary with cones so it looks like a funnel. Now line up a pair of evenly matched Defensive Linemen or Nose Tackles face to face at the starting point of the drill. At the second line of the drill at 7 yards have a pair of evenly matched Linebackers about 3 yards apart. At the last line of the defense set up two evenly matched Defensive Backs about 5 yards apart. Align a “running back” behind the starting line. On the whistle the defensive player of each of the three groups must try to beat the block of the player across from them and try to make the tackle on the ball-carrier. Encourage gang tackling and playing to the whistle. On subsequent reps rotate the players within each group to ensure reasonable matchups.

This allows you to get seven players involved at one time in a blocking and tackling drill while giving the head coach a chance to see who can make plays on defense. This is
always one of the drills the players love to do the most. You can also put anyone in carrying the ball on this drill which is always popular with the linemen.

Splatter Blocking Drills

Splatter drills are a great way to work on blocking technique and explosiveness without taking players to the ground. It is the way we prefer to slowly introduce full contact to
our players. It is something we learned from Hugh Wyatt, a pioneer in the Double Wing world. It can be done with both blocking and tackling. It is always the last progression before we go to full live contact.

The drill is simple, lay out 3-4 long blocking dummies side to side to create a landing pad. Make sure and have a dad or coach there to have his foot bracing the pads so they don’t come apart. Next have a player stand up with his heels up against the pad holding a shield in front of him. He is to not provide resistance, but let the blocker/tackler take him into the pad. Line up your blockers/tacklers 5 yards away in the appropriate stance. Make sure and have a coach standing behind the landing pad to make sure the dummies are pushed back together after each rep.

**The Progression**

1) Have blocker/tackler walk up and freeze on the dummy/shield making sure he has the right footwork, foot placement (toes of the defender), pad placement, body lean and head placement.

2) Same as above but run up and freeze on the dummy shield holder.

3) Full speed, taking shield holder into the mat, with blocker/tackler landing on top of the shield holder.

4) Do not rotate the shield holder every time, it takes too long. Have a coach help him up every time and rotate the shield holder after 10-12 reps. It’s best to have players in a horizontal line so they can see those that are doing it well. Make sure and have a coach at the back of the landing pads to make sure the dummies don’t come apart.

**Open Field Blocking**

Open field blocking is an advanced skill many youth football players struggle with. The keys to open field blocking are:

- Don’t go for the kill shot
- Keep your feet in front of the defender
- Don’t get outflanked, mirror the defender by running your feet, footwork is key
- Bend at the knees and do not get over extended
- Break down and approach under control only making contact when your toes are at the defenders toes
➢ Maintain contact with hands rather than shoulders, but most importantly impede the defenders progress to the play
➢ Keep the head up
➢ Maintain outside leverage with head on the outside
➢ Don’t hold

**The Diamond Drill**

Use this drill to help with developing open field blocking drills: Set up a diamond with cones with the diamond borders being 10 yards apart. At the top of the diamond put a defender holding a blocking shield. On the opposite tip put a blocker, Place a rag or scrimmage vest in the midpoint of the diamond. On the whistle the defender must run around one of the two horizontal points of the diamond, where you have placed cones about 5 yards from the center of the diamond. The goal is to get to the center and pick up the rag. The blocker must attack the defender and keep him away from grabbing the rag. The key points are the blocker must not get outflanked; he needs to run his feet and maintain a low center of gravity. The defender can use any type of move he wants to after going around the pylon at the horizontal tip of the diamond. Blow the play dead after 5 seconds if the defender can’t grab the rag.

**Diamond Drill**

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**Keep Away Drill**

Another good open field blocking drill is the keep away drill. Put a blocker and a ball carrier in a circle that’s circumference is about 6 yards. Put a defender at one
edge of the circle and the offensive players at the other. The defender has 5 seconds to fight off the blocker and make the tackle. The offensive blockers goal is to lower his hips, make contact and keep the defender from making the tackle.

The entire circle can be used by the running back to keep away from the defender. Call out the time loudly, 1 Mississippi, 2 Mississippi etc and blow the whistle on 5. You can make this a team challenge contest, dividing the group into teams with the first team getting to 10 wins, the losing team has to do 5 pushups or something like that. This is a good drill to work on open field blocking, foot placement, maintaining low hips, good pad level and on defense, shedding blocks and open field tackling.
Double team blocking is important for many youth football schemes and especially important to most Single Wing teams. It is the key block for our base off-tackle play. But when I go to Orlando every year and watch other National and Regional tournaments, the teams who run off-tackle well are the teams that are winning titles. It doesn’t seem to matter if they are “I” Formation, Wishbone, Veer, T, Spread or Single Wing. The teams that run off-tackle well usually win. This play has to work for your team to do well, period. Your offense typically won’t do very well without good double team blocks on this play if you have average athletes.

The goal of the double-team block is to drive the defender to the second level, not to just neutralize him. You need the defender moved off the line of scrimmage to insure your pullers can get to the point of attack. If you get movement to the second level you can also take the linebacker slightly off his pursuit path, which is often all you need to get our goal of 5 yards on the off-tackle play. The key coaching points are that the hips of the double-teamers must stay together, the inside players head is to the inside of the defender, the outside players head is to the outside of the defender. The double team must not allow the defender to split them. They must work together with short choppy steps to get movement on the defender to the second level.

You shouldn’t do double-team drills until you know what positions the kids will be in. The offensive linemen have to work with those they will be paired up to double team block with. In the Single Wing the key is the Right End and Power Tackle. Other pairs are Right Guard and Center as well as the Left Guard and Center.
As is with everything you do the double-team block is taught using a progression. Start by pairing up the lineman with the person they will double team with. Put the pairs foot-to-foot with a coach holding a standing long dummy in between or on the inside player.

1) The inside player takes an inside step and gets his head inside the defender. The outside guy pins his hips against inside guy and gets his head outside of the defender while taking an inside step. Have them both take a first step and have them freeze, look for the correct head and foot placement and hips together and of course knees to chest.

2) Now make sure that on their second step each player makes contact and that each player has the correct upper arm movement. Make sure contact is made with your players feet under him, that he is not overextended. Require that the hips are low and together, and that each player has the correct head placement. Have them freeze after the second step.

3) Now add short choppy steps, but your kids should be able to get some acceleration on the dummy.

4) Shorten the time between freezes until there is no freeze delay.

5) Now do it live with a live defender. Set up cones to make sure the defender does not go too far outside or inside. Set up long dummies as barriers if needed.

**Crab/Cut/Shoeshine Blocking**

Crab blocking is a required block in our version of the Single Wing offense. It is a great block used to neutralize a charging or stronger lineman and is effective even with much smaller players. In the Single Wing, you will use this often on the backside of your powers, sweeps and reverses to cover the gaps of our pulling linemen.

**The Progression**

The crab block looks like a simple block and it is, but it is a block that is very misunderstood by many youth coaches. This is not an illegal chop block. A chop block is an illegal block done by two offensive players against a defender where one player goes high and another goes low. A below the waist block is allowed in the free blocking zone (just wider of tackle to tackle) for any player who starts on the line of scrimmage when there is no other blocker blocking high on the same defender. If you are in Texas or Massachusetts where they use NCAA rules you are allowed to block below the waist all over the field, but again you are not allowed to high/low any defender.
Here is how we teach this very important block:

1) Place the players in a vertical column. Put a long stand up dummy to their right on an imaginary line of scrimmage and two yards to their right. On a count from a three-point, stance they throw their left arm to the right and parallel to the line of scrimmage. They step hard to their right with their left (outside) foot, at a 90-degree angle and aim their head to the far corner of the bag. They make contact with the bag, but don’t concern yourself with making an impact block, concentrate on getting that outside arm and elbow in front of the dummy. The goal is to stay in front of the dummy with the butt up to create a stalemate.

2) Next step, same as above, but have players keep feet moving after impact and maintain contact with dummy.

3) Do it to the other side, switch the arm throw and first step.

4) Next, take all the players and put them into a vertical line. Set up 2 cones 4 yards apart. The blocker is on the right cone facing defender on the far left cone. On the count, the blocker must cut/crab block the player across from him. The defender must go straight ahead only and try to beat the crab blocker to get to the other side. Adjust the distances to make it a fair contest and make the offensive guys hustle to make the block. Make sure they keep their butts up and maintain contact, staying on all fours.

5) Same as above, switch defender to right cone, offense on left. Practice your crab blocks during our offensive line skeleton drill by putting parents/coaches as penetrators using dummies.

Crab blocks can also be individually called is you have a lineman that is getting eaten up by a stronger opponent. All your linemen and ends need to know how to crab block to neutralize these studs. This does not need to be a devastating block, all you are trying to
do is create a barrier the defender had to jump over to penetrate. With foot to foot line
spits this gap is very small and the crab block is a very effective way to clog those gaps
even when the offensive linemen is overmatched. It has been the difference maker in a
number of games when we have had big mismatches of players.

We have played our non-select teams against huge unlimited weight select programs that
choose from over 150 players and we have played in big out of state unlimited weight
tournaments. In both those cases we have had offensive linemen outweighed by 50 and
yes sometimes 100 pounds. Using the crab block not only helped our kids survive but
compete and win those games. In 2005 may age 8-10 team played a team in Kansas City
that had two defensive linemen that were in the 190 pound range, they were tall kids, not
fat Freddies. Our starting center was out, so we started a 71 pound first time starter at
center that day, my son. Fortunately for our running backs my son was a great crab
blocker. He was instructed to crab block every play but wedge, the huge Nose Tackle
never made a tackle the entire game and got very agitated, as did his coach, in a game we
ended up being ahead by 3 touchdowns at the half.

**Reach Blocking**

Reach blocking can be quite difficult for many youth football players. In
youth football, the sweep is a play every defense must be designed to stop
as a primary threat. That isn’t the case with college or NFL defenses. It
has been many moons since the sweep was the main threat in the NFL or
college game. In youth football most of us are going to see wide
defensive ends, who are next to impossible to reach block, even by well
trained players.

With that said, for a few of my teams we will teach the reach for use late
in the season. We only do so when we have athletic edge blockers. It is an
approach that works best against teams that are slow playing or crashing inside. It works
poorly against teams that come up the field aggressively to the outside.

The rule for determining who you block on the reach is all blocks are in the direction of
the play. On play-side that would mean outside gap, on, unconditional outside. The target
is the outside number of the defender. The footwork is outside foot at the flattest angle
needed to allow you to make contact. The head is to the outside. Once contact is make the
feet widen, run your feet and swing your hips to the outside to gain leverage to drive the
defender to the inside. In the below example if you were running to the right, the
assignments would look like this:
Many reach blocking teams will send the backside players to the second level to try and seal off Linebackers. That approach makes a lot of sense with jet sweep type plays where there is no chance the backside defenders can make a play. That may not be the case with other plays especially if you see athletic Defensive Tackles or a lot of blitzing Linebackers.

Teaching the reach block is like everything you do, start by first step freezing it, with the outside foot going first and hands loading at the hips. On the second step contact is made with the inside shoulder, forearms out creating a larger blocking surface. The third component of the reach is to run the feet, turn the hips to the outside to gain leverage. Eventually eliminate the freeze steps to do it “live” against the tall bags. When the kids really get the hang of it, go live against players one on one.

Set tall bags up with coaches or players holding them to outside gap of each player to their right. Put 2 feet of space between each player.

The target is the imaginary outside number of the defender. The footwork is outside foot at the flattest angle needed to allow the player to make contact. The head is to the outside. Contact is make with the left shoulder just below the nipples on that outside number. On contact the feet widen, run the feet and swing the hips to the outside to gain leverage to drive the defender to the inside.

Switch sides.
Then go live vs defenders in those same spots.
Then get into your offensive formation and run reach against various Live defenses.
Cross Blocking

Cross blocking can be a very effective blocking approach in youth football. It can give your players better angles especially if you play teams that like to align head up on your players. Most teams that cross block run isolation type plays between the players being cross blocked, using a “parting of the seas” approach to the play. The key points are the outside player goes first, attacking the outside number of the player to his inside. He steps with his inside foot first and fits with his inside shoulder. The inside player goes second with a flatter angle, stepping with his outside foot first, fitting with his inside shoulder attacking the inside number of the player to his outside. It is imperative that this be practiced in pairs so the cross blockers can work well in tandem.

Here is another example of how to run a cross block scheme. Instead of having a back kick-out the end man on the line of scrimmage, you now have an additional lead blocker at the point of attack.
To rep the cross block, start with it on tall bags, first step, second step freezing. Then move on to live against the bags, then live against players.

Set 2 tall bags head up on two offensive lineman, coach or player holding the bag. Team up players who may cross block together like the Right End and Power Tackle or Left End and Left Tackle etc.

The key points are the outside player goes first, attacking the outside Number of the player to his inside. He steps with his inside foot first and fits with his outside shoulder. If this is your Right End, that is his right shoulder, head on inside- protecting most dangerous gap. The inside player goes second with a flatter angle, stepping with his outside foot first, fitting with his inside shoulder attacking the inside number of the player to his outside. If this is your Power Tackle, that is his right shoulder.

It is imperative that this be practiced in pairs so the cross blockers can work well in tandem.

After you do bag fits, go live.
Chapter 6
Pulling Linemen

Pull lineman to overwhelm our opponents at the point of attack. If you think you can’t pull at even very young ages, you are mistaken. Many teams including my own, do it very well even down to age 6. Many coaches don’t think they can teach young kids to pull, or they will try and implement the Single Wing offense without pulling. That’s like having a Corvette outfitted with a lawnmower engine, it may look good from the outside, but once you start it up, it will have little power.

Many coaches look at my game film and see the puller not getting a great block every time. Guess what, many times we don’t need a great block from the puller for him to add tremendous value to the play. The pulling helps your team on a number of levels, first it greats confusion, the defenders have a tough time figuring out who in the mass of humanity heading towards the hole, has the ball. Many times the puller has to just get between the defender and the ball carrier to impede the tackle, in the old days we called this “running interference”. Many times the puller just has to take the defender a step off his path to do his job, it doesn’t have to be a smashing blow, but often it is. Getting a lineman with a head of speed to take out a tough crashing Defensive Tackle with a trap blocks does wonders for the psyche of your line and that Defensive Tackle. Getting a lineman with a head of steam on a Corner or Linebacker quite often gets that defender to play soft or just sit back and be satisfied with playing for a “pass” play on every down.

With reasonable coaching, nearly any player can pull effectively. You do not have to be a great line coach to teach kids to pull effectively. We have pulled effectively down to age 6 and I’ve seen great film of teams younger than that pulling effectively. Tony Holland from Baltimore, Maryland sent me film of his team running the prettiest 31 trap I’ve ever seen. That play uses a pulling lineman and Tony’s team averaged nearly 20 yards a play with it in 2008 with 5-7 year olds. If the play calls for 2 pullers, pull them both, unless you diagnose something in the troubleshooting area that specifically calls for not pulling a player. Be vigilant in making sure the pullers take the correct steps.

Teaching Lineman to Pull

Teaching pulling is very easy if you do it in a step-by-step progression. First start by putting all your lineman in a horizontal row facing the coaches. The progression: Take each step one at a time demonstrating it, then add the step to the previous one, making sure to freeze and check for perfection at each step. Slowly decrease the time in between steps to the point that it’s fluid.

1) Two-point stance. First step to the right with the right foot, a 6-inch step, 6 inches directly behind the starting point of the right foot and parallel to the line of
scrimmage. Make sure the player stays crouched (low) and that the shoulders stay parallel to the line of scrimmage.

2) Add the elbow throw, at the same time as the 6-inch step. The right elbow is thrown back and kept close to the body, to swing the body around so it’s now parallel to the line of scrimmage. The left foot stays planted and acts as pivot.

3) Put them in three-point stance and go through the same progression.

4) Have them step and freeze, with the coach looking for proper foot and elbow placement, then sprint 10 yards parallel to the line after pulling to the right.

5) Next do it all without freezing, but keep an eye out for the right initial movement. Have them “sense” their path while keeping an eye at Linebacker level, keeping the shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage. You don’t want them looking at their feet or a landmark, they need to keep their shoulders relatively parallel to the line of scrimmage with eyes toward the line of scrimmage, not towards the hole.

6) Put the players in a vertical column. Add a long blocking dummy standing up at about 4 yards to their immediate right; about one yard behind the line of scrimmage have them block the trapper by pulling and getting their head inside. We are repping the trap block here.

7) Next do same drill with hand held dummies at about 4 yards across from them and about 5 yards wide to the right of them (Linebacker depth). Put cones at where you feel the funnel will be created by your Tight End and Power Tackle, at
approximately 3 ½ yards. The puller needs to seal the Linebacker off to the inside with head on the outside.

8) Now switch sides, same progression to the left.

9) Next add the “splatter method” to the drill to give the lineman the feel of taking that Linebacker to the ground.

1) Place players in one line facing you. Two-point stance. First step to the right with the right foot 6-inch step, 6 inches directly behind the starting point of the right foot and pointing parallel to the line of scrimmage. Shoulders stay as close as they can- parallel to the line of scrimmage.
2) Add the elbow throw, at the same time as the 6-inch step. The right elbow is thrown back and kept close to the body, to swing the body around so it’s now the hips are pointed towards the sidelines.
3) Put them in three-point stance and go through the same progression.
4) Have them step and freeze, with the coach looking for proper foot and elbow placement, then sprint 10 yards parallel to the line after pulling to the right. Players eyes should be towards the line of scrimmage, not the sidelines.
5) Do it without the freeze and sprint 10 yards. Then switch sides.

**Pull Spy**

Pulling linemen will often times miss their target because they are so concerned about getting to the point of attack, once they get there, they can’t find the player they were supposed to block. If they keep their shoulders relatively square to the line of scrimmage and “spy” their target along the way, they will have a much better chance of making proper contact once they get to their designated spot.
A simple but very effective drill for this is the Fingers or Pull Spy Drill. The coach is at Linebacker depth with a shield in one hand. On the snap count the player uses his proper pull steps with his shoulders square to the line of scrimmage and his eyes on the coach. The coach flashes 1, 2 or 3 fingers up, while sliding to his left. The players shouts out the number of fingers the coach has flashed, while feeling the hole and fitting on the coach with the blocking shield. Head on the outside.

At the age 10-11 age group, shoot for a 70% hit ratio on Linebacker pulls. Even when your man doesn’t make contact, he is usually providing “interference” where defenders at least have to run around him in order to make contact with the ball-carrier.

The G pull is a very effective block in youth football. It typically stands for playside Guard kicking out end man on line of scrimmage. It can be especially ferocious when a Defensive End is looking for a kick-out block by a Fullback, but instead is ear-holed by a pulling Guard who comes out of nowhere. This is nothing more than a longer trap type
block, with the coach at about 4 yards. When the blocker makes his fit his head is on the inside.

**Trap**

The trap can be a very effective blocking scheme against aggressive Defensive Tackles. It is a poor choice against weak Defensive Tackles who aren’t penetrating. When you play non penetrating Defensive Tackles, you wedge and double team them. When you play aggressive Defensive Tackles who come hard and like to get up field, you trap them.

Rep this with a coach with a heavy bag at Defensive Tackle and coach with a Shield at Linebacker. Align your offensive line in formation. The End and Power Tackle make sure to avoid making contact with the Defensive Tackle at all costs. The End fits on the outside Linebacker. The Power Tackle fits on the middle or far Linebacker. The Left Guard pulls using his drop step and elbow whip and executes the trap block on the penetrating Defensive Tackle coach. Do this drill to both sides.

![Diagram](image)

**Advanced Concepts**

Once you have your plays in, you don’t do many pulling drills like these. Drill pulling by setting up our entire line and running each play without backs. Set coaches with dummies at the point of attack so your left guards get used to pulling right and right guards to the left etc. Also do pancake/splatter drills with the players pulling to get them used to exploding off the edge. Pullers that are having problems getting to the hole can also use their non-elbow throwing hand to help propel them past the next lineman over by using this hand to pull him past this players butt.

Another advanced drill is to make the puller make a choice. The Right Guard will sometimes see more than one defender in the hole. He has to make a choice as to who he is to take. We ask him to take the first threat. To drill this, go through the above progressions but add two Linebackers as the blocking targets. Both are moving targets toward the hole, the puller must choose one to seal to the inside. Have the defenders stagger their approaches so that sometimes the outside then inside defender is first to the hole. What you are looking for is for the puller to make a choice seal, and drive.
**Trap Blocking- Dip Rip**

In order for trap plays to work effectively, the players to the outside of the trap must be able to avoid contact with defensive linemen and get to the Linebackers. One way to do this is to widen the splits a bit to allow the defenders more room to penetrate without being touched. Other methods include swimming, getting skinny or dip and rip.

**Getting Skinny**

Sometimes the best method for an offensive linemen to avoid contact is to just get skinny. If he steps with his inside foot, dips his inside shoulder and turns to his side he can make himself such a small target that many times he can slide inside a gap. To rep this technique stand 2 tall bags about 12 inches apart and static and use cadence to get started. Next bring the bags in to just 6 inches apart and provide resistance with the bags. Once the player makes it through he sprints to coach holding a shield simulating a Linebacker at 4 yards of depth. He fits on the coach with his head to the outside.

![Diagram of Getting Skinny](image)

**Swim**

The goal of this drill is to teach evasion using the swim technique. Start with 2 rows of player standing 1 yard apart face to face. In slow motion demonstrate the base swim punch and over technique. In the below diagram the left hand of the defender will punch the near side ribcage of the offensive player with an open palm. Demo this one step at a time and have the groups repeat that movement on a tall bag. The next step is to have the right arm come over the top just over the shoulder pad or if there is already separation, the near back of the defensive player.
The second hand should come in quickly after the first and be used to push off of the offensive player to gain separation. Do this on a tall bag to start then move to a rep on a static player, then go live. Start with the left hand, then go with the right. Once the offensive player makes it past the defender, he fits on the coach simulating a seal off block on the Linebacker at about 4 yards of depth.

**Dip and Rip**
Goal- to teach how to get past a Defensive Lineman to block a LB.
The first step is a slide step to the side you are going to pass. The Shoulder closest to the defender is dipped, then the arm on that side rips under the armpit of the defender to gain separation.
Think uppercut with inside arm through the armpit.
In this diagram it is left foot, right shoulder dip, right arm rip.
Start with a stationary defender offering no resistance, fitting on coach at Linebacker depth with a handshield.
Eventually go live.

Dip and rip is the most commonly used approach to avoiding defenders and getting to Linebackers in the upper levels of football. The first step is a slide step to the inside shoulder on the inside of the side you are going to pass is dipped, then the arm on that side rips under the armpit of the defender to gain separation.
Chapter 7
Pass Blocking

On pass plays our blocking rule change to GOO, or gap, on, unconditional outside. While many Single Wing Teams may hinge block or even pull and lead, at the youth level, we stick with GOO with the exception of wedge or buck wedge passes, where we wedge block. On GOO, we first look to our inside gap, if no one is there, we look “on”, if no one is there, we block to the outside unconditionally. We do ask the linemen to look for Linebackers that are lining up real close to the line of scrimmage, if the Linebacker is within one yard of the line of scrimmage, consider that he is coming and treat him as a down lineman, if the rule dictates, we block him.

Pass blocking is the last concept to teach your linemen. To drill this, do your offensive recognition drills, just with the linemen. Set up your line and have coaches or players lined up in various defensive fronts. Tell your linemen it is a pass play and ask each lineman who they would block and why. You don’t want guesses; you want to know the logic each player used to come up with his answer. If the players answer to who he was going to block was, “The man on his outside gap”. His answer should read like this: “First no one was in my inside gap, second no one was “on” me, so I went to the player to my outside”.

Technique

Allow your offensive linemen to use their hands when pass blocking. While you still want them to get a shoulder on the defender, you are looking for separation. If the defensive player is moving away from the play and your offensive linemen can “ride him out” you do not try and separate. Drill it by first teaching the punch.

The Punch

The punch must be taught and perfected to pass block effectively. Step with the inside foot first, bringing the hands to the breastplate as you bring the hips upwards to gain
leverage underneath the defensive player. Strike with the palms, release and reset to strike again. Do this first with the offensive player in a stance against a tall bag and then with a defensive player standing upright and passive. Next move to offensive player in a stance and the defensive player in a stance, coming out passive. Then go live using cadence to start the drill. You can also start this drill from the kneeling position and do as a group as well, until you get to the live portion.

**Mirror Drill**

The next step is teaching your offensive linemen to maintain inside leverage while staying with the defender. Have defenders go side to side with your offensive linemen using their hands to keep separation with the defender using short two handed shoves to the chest, butts are low, while keeping their head up, feet chopping and in a wide base. Your goal here is to stay in front of the defender and not get out-flanked.

The players do not make contact until the defender makes his move and crosses the imaginary line of scrimmage. Once the defender makes his move, you want your offensive linemen to maintain shoulder contact, move his feet and run the defender out of the play as far as you can. In this blocking drill you are emphasizing the feet, making sure the offensive lineman is not getting outflanked by using short choppy steps and lowering the hips.
Mirror and Go Drill

The next step is the Mirror and Go Drill. The players do not make body contact until the defender makes his move and crosses the imaginary line of scrimmage. Both players start just like the Mirror Drill, across from each other with the defender sliding from side to side. Once the defender feels he has the offensive player outflanked, he makes his move. You want your offensive linemen to then make and maintain shoulder contact, move his feet and run the defender out of the play as far as you can. In this blocking drill you are emphasizing the feet, making sure the offensive lineman is not getting outflanked by using short choppy steps and lowering the hips.
In all offenses the Center has an important job. Nothing positive happens for the offense until the ball is put in the hands of the Quarterback. In the Single Wing offense that I run, the Center may be the most important position on the team. He is responsible for accurately snapping the ball to three different players, while holding his own blocking. He doesn’t need to be your best lineman or even your toughest; but he needs to be fairly smart and relatively tough. I’ve had very big ones and average sized ones, skinny ones and tubby ones, tough ones and not so tough, but all were fairly bright and not big worry-warts.

We are going to talk about the short shotgun snap which is what we use in my offense. In many Single Wing or Spread offenses, the Quarterback is 4-7 yards deep. In my version of the Single Wing the backs up tight, and no further back than 2 1/2 yards. We like them at 2 yards. The further back the backs are, the higher the snaps. The second biggest key is having the backs very low with their finger tips touching the ground setting up for a good low target. This also adds to the deception of the plays, the Linebackers and DB’s can’t see who the ball is snapped to and must follow or tackle all three backs.

Make sure and have your centers work with your backs more nearly half of most offensive practices. When your Quarterbacks are doing their passing progressions or your backs are working on ball protection drills, get your Center in there to make snaps. Your pre-practice warm ups should always include plenty of Center snaps to throwing quarterbacks, punters and kick holders. Your back drills and play reps should almost always include a snapped ball from your center.

One way to make sure your Center gets used to contact is to have a coach standing over the Center with a tall or shield bag, he gives the Center a little tap after each snap. We prefer our Centers to excel at crab blocking after the snap so we always align a coach either on or over a gap or two any time the center is snapping. On the snap the coach will try and penetrate at full speed with the tall bag, the Center of course just cuts him off. This gets your center used to snapping and crabbing, snapping and crabbing. It becomes second nature to him. By using these ideas your Centers should be making anywhere from 120-200 snaps in most offensive practices. We’ve had countless games where teams have put their best player over our center and tried to disrupt the exchange, it has never worked, as our Center simply snaps and executes a simple crab block in tight quarters to neutralize the other player. In fact we LOVE it when teams try and do this, they trade one of their very best players for one of our average ones, a trade you will want to make any day of the week and twice on Sundays. In 2011 a rookie Center at age 10-11 had just 2
poor snaps for the season, none of which resulted in a turnover. Both were a result of him hearing the play wrong and snapping to the wrong player.

The Grip

The Center can grip the ball any way he feels best with. We start with a two handed grip, with dominant hands fingers over the laces like you would when you pass the ball, other hand next to it, thumbs touching. Some kids feel more comfortable with one hand or a different grip, we don’t care, and whatever works is fine with us. Ask the Center to set up so that he has to reach slightly forward to grasp the ball on the ground. Remember the Center can be offside if he has his head in front of the ball. The knees must be bent (if they aren’t the snap goes over the backs head) so that the player’s seat is fairly parallel to the ground.

It is critical that the centers knees are bent. If his knees are bent when he lifts his arm back to snap, his forearm will collide with the inner part of his thigh before his arm has a chance to get too high. Invariably any Center that is snapping the ball high is not bending his knees and his snapping arm is getting too high before he releases the ball.
The Snap

The Center is to look between his legs to the player he is snapping it to. The key is for the Center to make sure his knees are bent; stress that on every snap. Early on, we have the ball carrier that we are snapping it too to wiggle his fingers to signal who the ball goes to, until the Center learns the plays. The snap is a little faster than a lob, but not much faster, soft enough that the ball has a natural drop to it. To try out your prospects at center just demo the stance and snap and without pushing the kids see how many snaps out of 10 they can hit the target naturally on their own. You can also just take 30 minutes before practice and have each candidate snap 5 times to you. Narrow your choice to 3 players, making sure that this player is not your right guard and meets the criteria in the position descriptions. I usually know who my 3 Center candidates are after the first practice and just try them out after practice.

He can work on that snap on his own at home too. Once your Center has a reasonable comfort level with the snap, add a player standing over him, face to face. Next have that player use a shield and pop the center after each snap. Next have the Center fire out on this defender with a shield. Next, have the defender with the shield come at the Center from either side. Once your Center is picked and he has become fairly proficient at the wedge and drive blocks, keep him with the backs about half the time. Early on, he needs to show up early and work with the backs with his snaps. Make sure and have at least 1 or 2 good backup Centers.

Troubleshooting

If you’re having problems with your snap, 9 times out of 10 your backs are too deep. Next is the Center is not bending his knees, third is he’s afraid of the lineman across from him and lifting his head. In the last case, make sure and have your Guards pinch in tight and help the Center. The Center should be getting help from other offensive linemen on nearly every play. As a last case resort, tell the center not to worry about blocking, to just throw himself down in the direction he’s is supposed to block and try and execute a crab block, I’ve only had to do this a handful of times and in every case it was very successful tactic.

Snapping to the three-back takes a bit of practice. The three-back must move over a half step towards the Center and back a half step and be ready for the snap. It’s a very short, very low, lob snap; don’t worry about this snap until your Center feels pretty good about the regular snap to the one and two backs. The Center can try and move the ball slightly to his left to give him a better angle for the snap.
Chapter 9
Putting In Plays

When you are ready to put plays in, always teach the play with the backs and line separate. Explain the play, walk the play, then first and second step freeze the play on air. Lastly go ahead and fit it against cones full speed with a freeze on the end, coaches/dads standing in place, trashcans or players. Below is the 16 Power. Make sure to align different defensive fronts against your line and if they are doing well, don’t be afraid to go live a few reps at the end. As always coach up the correct first step, angle of attack, head placement and pad placement.

In Unison

The first step in repping plays with your offensive line is to make sure they are working well together as a unit with their base GOD blocking rule. You can never do enough 2 step drills. The most effective way of doing them after the players have gotten a good handle on the base technique is to do it as a unit. Align the players in their formation and say the cadence. Start with first step freeze, second step freezes, then let them loose for doing both steps as fast as they can, freezing at the end until you tap them on the shoulder and release them. This is a rapid pace drill done on air.
**Power**

In our nomenclature a Power is a 6 hole power play. The linemen don’t care what the backfield action is. The play could be 16 Power, Spinner 26 Power, Flash 26 Power, Mouse 16 Power, Rocket 16 Power, power is power. Everyone blocks GOD, with the exception of the Center and Right Guard. The Center steps playside, the Right Guard pulls inside the kick-out block and blocks the Linebacker.

![Diagram of Power Play](image-url)

**Base Sweep**

Everyone blocks GOD, with the exception of the Center and Right Guard. The Center steps playside, the Right Guard pulls outside the pin block of the Defensive End by the Wingback and blocks the Linebacker. On a Reach Sweep the entire offensive line reaches to the side of the sweep, see the reach blocking section.

![Diagram of Base Sweep](image-url)
**Counter**

Everyone blocks GOD, with the exception of the Center and Right Guard. The Center’s rule is MOMA, man on, man away from the play. The Right Guard pulls inside the kick-out block of the Defensive End by the Blocking Back and blocks the Cornerback.

**Trap Weak**

Everyone blocks GOD, with the exception of the Center, Left Guard, Left End and Right Guard. The Center’s rule is MOMA, man on, man away from the play. The Right Guard pulls to trap block the unblocked Defensive Tackle. The Left End avoids contact with the Defensive Tackle and blocks near Linebacker. The Left Guards rule is inside gap, down, He must get out of the way of the Defensive Tackle.
**Trap Strong**

Everyone blocks GOD, with the exception of the Center, Right End, Power Tackle and Left Guard. The Center’s rule is MOMA, man on, man away from the play. The Left Guard pulls to trap block the unblocked Defensive Tackle. The Right End avoids contact with the Defensive Tackle and blocks near Linebacker. The Power Tackle avoids contact with the Defensive Tackle and blocks the middle or far backer.

![Diagram showing trap block](image)

**Scrimmaging**

Scrimmaging can and often times is overdone. When I did my 2 year study of the best and worst teams in the area, the consistently poor teams always spent a large part of their practice time scrimmaging. While on the other hand, the consistently strong teams did a lot of individual and group technique work. Most of the consistently strong teams didn’t do a lot of full team scrimmaging.

You just can’t get very many quality reps with your backup kids playing scout team, not to mention how slow the progress is. Most youth teams get off 1 play every 2 minutes using backups as scouts. Then the look they get isn’t very realistic due to the fact that what’s left over in a squad of 25 kids just isn’t terribly strong. By having coaches at the Linebacker and Corner positions, with hand shields you can more accurate and aggressive looks.

When players block those coaches or dads, they just fit on the shields. Have the defensive players’ just wrap up the backs, not taking them to the ground and go with fits on the line with the defenders just standing in place. Once your kids get the hang of that you can go live on the line only, with your very best backups occupying the interior line positions. Once you get what you need out of those reps it probably makes sense to go
100% live 11 on 11. After the first 2 weeks in pads, we live scrimmage with 100% effort on both sides of the ball just 20-30 minutes per week. Many weeks late in the season we do won’t scrimmage at all.

Make sure your coaches running the scout defense, look for specific keys and coach up specific positions as they run the defense. Have every coach responsible for specific players on the offense. For the offensive line, one coach takes the Left End, Left Tackle and Center. Another coach takes the Right End, Power Tackle, Right Tackle and Right Guard. Go no huddle with all coaches wearing wrist coaches so you all know what the play is ahead of time, so you know what to look for. Always coach up the stance, proper first step, angle of attack, pad level, head placement, proper assignment and effort.

While most of your full contact work should be done in indys and group, there is value in putting it all together and running the offense against a full 11 live for short periods of time. Remember to align in the defenses you will see the most often; 6-2, 6-3, 5-3, 5-3 Monster, GAM, 3-5-3 and even some 4-4 or 4-3 teams. Also work on showing some stemming and stunts to confuse and fluster your linemen.

Obviously come game time we are going to force the defenses we play into certain defenses. Very few teams will stay in a 3-5-3 or 4-4 against us, unless they want the ball back quickly on a kickoff return. If you play teams that like to jump around a lot or stem and twist, a first sound wedge play will quickly take them out of that approach. Practice for it, prepare for it, but know there are simple ways to take teams out of using those techniques.

**The “Compete Drill”**

One of the many things youth football coaches have a problem with is having their team ready to play on game day. Many coaches tell me they see their kids coming to games lethargic and not ready to play. I’ve even seen some of my own teams in very early morning games maybe being less sharp than normal. This can cost your team, you can get down early, have a few breaks go against you and before your team finally wakes up out of its funk, the game can be out of reach.

The key is to be able to train your kids to be in “game mode” at the drop of a hat, hence the “compete” drill. At any point practice, blow your whistle and yell, “compete.” The team runs full speed to the 10-yard line (or designated area) and goes full speed, full contact for 10 minutes, with everyone yelling and whooping it up the entire time. On offensive days, that means your offense against the scout defense, or better yet the next age group ups second team offense versus the younger teams first team defense. Always remember to keep the matchups reasonable and safe. The kids always know where to line up on offense and defense when we yell compete, they sprint to the predestinated area and we get after it. We no-huddle with wristbands and go all out for those 10 minutes.

If you use those scrimmage caps that fit over the top of the helmet rather than scrimmage vests, you can get set up in less than a minute. When “compete” is yelled, everyone,
players coaches etc run full blast to the designated area. For an added twist when you are running your first team offense against the remaining players, put all the remaining players on defense. If you have 25 kids, that would mean you can put 14 kids on defense. Just think how much better that makes the matchup.

The key is to run this drill when the kids least expect it. In the middle of individual instruction, in the middle of a water break, in the middle of our first little talk at the end of warm-up and even after they thought practice was over. We never tell them when or even if we are going to run the “compete” drill. What seems to help is to be able to get the kids mentally conditioned to compete at a moments notice, anytime, anywhere.
Chapter 10
Wedge Blocking

Teaching/Drilling the Wedge

The wedge play has been around for decades and is still used at every level of football. In the NFL and college you probably won’t see it very much until a team is down near the goal line. In youth football it can be a very important part of your offense and can be used anywhere on the field. We’ve averaged as much as 12 yards a carry on our more elaborate backfield action wedge plays and in one season scored 31 of our 66 touchdowns on wedge plays. At the 7-8th grade level it is still an important part of our offense and often times makes up 8-12% of our offensive snaps. Wedge is a core play for many Double Wing, Wing T and Single Wing teams but you can easily run it out of the “I” formation if you sneak the Fullback in tight to the Quarterback.

Many youth teams try putting in the wedge without teaching it properly and then of course it fails. We have found that a step-by-step detailed progression works best when putting in the wedge. If you don’t put it in this way you are going to have a team that has a poor wedge and you are going to have egg on your face in front of your players, coaches and parents. Please take the time to put this in properly; it is critical to your team’s success.

Start with a set offensive line in their probable positions, preferably 2 full lines one in front of the other facing the coach. The splits are very tight, toe-to-toe, with the guards’ toes on the heels of center, but not directly behind the centers heels so the center doesn’t trip.

Progression Drill

You are always wedging at the strong guard, he is the point of attack. The Right Guard always just steps directly forward with two short steps, with fists touching, flippers out at shoulder level. Just think of the blockers on your old electric football set, that’s how you want him.

This is our step-by-step progression for teaching the wedge:

1) From two-point stance all linemen take the first step with the inside foot towards the inside, putting that inside foot just behind and inside the outside foot of the man to his inside. The exception is the Right Guard, he steps forward two short
steps leading with his left foot. The Center fits to the right guard with the Centers right foot in-between the legs of the Right Guard. The Right End has his left foot in-between the feet of the Power Tackle; the Left End has his right foot in-between the legs of the Left Guard etc.

2) From two-point stance same as above, now add the inside shoulder. The inside shoulder of every player goes to the rib cage of player to his inside. Look to make sure that the first step is being followed with the feet along with the shoulder to rib cage fit on the second step. Make sure that each lineman has his inside foot behind the outside foot of the player to his inside. Make sure the linemen go directly to the player to the inside and do not stand up before placing their inside shoulder into the ribcage. Standing up makes for a very slow wedge fit and will significantly hurt the production of your wedge.

3) Now add the arm movement. The inside arm stays in, hanging to the side. The outside hand goes to the outside shoulder of the inside man you are pushing on. He places his palm on the players shoulder and does not grasp the jersey. Interlocking is joining arms as well as grasping jerseys, that is a penalty. This outside hand to outside shoulder along with the leg drive creates the push. Start by having all the linemen raise their outside arm (center raises his left arm) and having them place the palm of that hand on the outside shoulder of the man to their inside. The Left End, Left Guard and Center all use their left arm; The Right End, Power Tackle and Right Tackle all use their right arm.

Then get the kids back into their two-point stances. On “go”, they all slowly take that step to the inside looking for proper foot placement and shoulder to ribs fit along with the outside arm/hand to the outside shoulder placement. Make sure the player is staying low and his head is up. The ends will have to take more than 1 step to make a good fit, they must be quick.

4) The next progression, do a three-point to a wedge fit and then freeze. Here you are looking for shoulder to rib cage, feet placement and hand placement. Make sure all the kids are frozen and you have a tight fit. The wedge has to be tight at its inception.

5) The next progression, from three-point, once you have the tight fit, and have them freeze on it to check for a tight fit, have them take three steps forward on your count, slowly 1, 2, 3, making sure they stay fit together, with the strong guard leading. Early on, your counts will be very, very slow. As the kids progress, make the counts quicker.
6) The next progression is to speed up the counts, but only after making sure you have a very tight fit. Make sure you have a great fit, and then start your count. Start slowly then as they got better, go to ten pretty fast. It’s never at a run, just quick and methodical. Make sure they stay low and keep it together for about 15 yards.

7) Next, put a blocking shield dummy with a coach on the Right Guard, providing resistance. Remember your kids are pushing on each other to launch your Strong Guard into the secondary. They block no one, they push on the inside guy next to them. You must stress that they can never break the wedge to block ANYONE.

8) Have the kids close their eyes tightly shut (except for the Right Guard), and run the entire progression until they can stay with each other against resistance for a ten count. They should be able to stay fit to their counterpart.

9) Lastly, throw hand shields at the feet of the lineman and backs as the wedge moves downfield. This helps them get used to stepping over bear-crawling or fallen opponents. As we get very good at the wedge we even will put the Fullback into the drill and throw the large dummies at their feet to encourage all players to keep their knees high.

This entire progression may take a week to put in. it depends on your kids. With some teams, I’ve been able to get steps 1-7 put in one day. With other teams we got through steps 1-4 on day one and the rest took a full week. Remember this is a scheme that takes a lot of time to make work well, but it is definitely well worth the investment. Be warned it will not look good early, you will have kids tripping over themselves and it will look ugly. You may get a nasty e-mail from those watching your practice it, because it is going to look ugly. By week three you start to see the light and by week four it is usually humming right along. Don’t lose patience with the wedge it takes time.

Remember your linemen are not allowed to link arms or grab each others jerseys, that is called interlocking and is a 15 yard penalty. Be vigilant in making sure your kids don’t do it. Be sure to demo your wedge prior to every game for the referees so they can observe that you don’t interlock. In 16 seasons so far running this, we have had just one interlocking penalty called against us and even that one I’m not sure was justified. To see this put in step by step pop in your “Developing a Dominant Offensive Line in Youth Football, Step-by Step”, DVD.
Troubleshooting

If you’re having a tough time getting the wedge to come together quickly, look to see if the linemen are standing up or coming up high before stepping or getting high before they put their shoulder into the ribcage of the player to their inside. Each lineman has to come out of his stance low and fit immediately to the ribcage of the player to his inside. If you are having a problem keeping the wedge together, make sure you have quick enough kids on the ends, if not make a change.

If you are seeing the wedge being split, look for players whose inside arms are not hanging at their sides, but are in the “chicken wing” position. When a player has his inside arm crooked, it creates space between him and the player to his inside. Shoulder to rib cage equals no gaps, shoulder to chicken wing creates a gap that is very easy to penetrate against.

If they still can’t stay together, start your wedge fit drills with only wedging the Right Guard with a player on both sides. When you get that down, keep adding players to both sides until all seven are there. I like to put two long dummies about 3 yards in front of the line, perpendicular and tighter than the formation by 3 feet on both sides. Run the drill and make sure you are getting enough compression to get through the dummies. It needs to look like a V. You have to drill the wedge every day even for a short time. We found even though we ran the series very well, when we went away from it, the kids struggled with the play.

Again, don’t get discouraged if your wedge doesn’t look good that first week, ours never does. It takes about 30-35 days for the wedge to come together. Expect to get some funny looks when you first start running the wedge. It won’t look pretty and it a bit out of the norm from what many are used to seeing. It will be worth the practice time you invest in it, if you are vigilant. It will force defenses to aggressively defend those “A” gaps very low with multiple defenders or suffer the indignity of getting pounded up the gut with the wedge all day long.
Chapter 11
Developing an Attitude

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges many youth football coaches face is just getting kids to play on the offensive line without quitting. I’ve actually heard of youth coaches losing their teams due to mass defections of players who just refused to play on the offensive line. For those teams being sent to the offensive line group was akin to being sent to a leper colony.

Even in today’s spoiled me first society, this problem can be easily avoided if you follow a few simple steps. First of all make sure during your mandatory parents and players meeting the 30 minutes prior to your first practice you share with the parents how you select players for positions. Football is a team sport, no one position is more important than the other. Positions are chosen for players based on their abilities and the needs of the team. Many players will play positions this year that they won’t play next year due to the fact that every team dynamic and grouping is different. Kids also mature at different speeds so that factors in as well to a consistently changing team dynamic. We don’t leave position assignments in the hands of the players, we let the players and parents we will decide what’s best for the team and put them in the appropriate position to maximize our team potential.

Linemen Are Special

If you want your players and parents to think offensive linemen are not some forgotten unwanted leper colony of misfits who can’t play anything else, you need to make them feel special. Assign the head coach to coach the offensive linemen. If the offensive linemen are truly the backbone on which your offense is going to succeed or fail, why not have him coach the group? When I had 16 teams in my program in Omaha, every head coach was required to coach the offensive line. When the top guy coaches the offensive line, the parents and kids get how important that position grouping is. When you make it a priority because of your actions, they understand it is important. When you relegate the job to your least experienced coach and your head coach spends all his time with the backs and receivers, the offensive line group is going to feel like second class citizens.
Privileges

The running backs and receivers already have their privileges. They get to carry the football, score the touchdowns and live in the limelight. The offensive linemen toil away in obscurity, so why not help them feel special with a few privileges of their own?

Water

When it’s time for water break, tell the entire group, “offensive linemen water”, then 10 seconds later let everyone else go for water. This gives the offensive linemen a head start on the group and allows them to retrieve their water bottles ahead of the mob. While it isn’t much, the subtle benefit shows the team how important you think the offensive line group is.

Lines

In youth football it seems like we are always standing in lines. Lines to pick up equipment, lines to pick up information sheets, lines to pick up t-shirts and helmet stickers, lines, lines, lines. Why not always put the offensive linemen ahead of everyone else in line? Again, a little less subtle, but a little benefit that shows how much you value your offensive linemen. We also have to carry our gear about 50 yards from the parking lot to the practice field. No offensive linemen are allowed to carry gear, that falls on the backs of the receivers and running backs. Again something small, but it’s a real and tangible benefit.

Write Ups

Do you do write ups on your games for the local paper or your web site? If you do, always make sure to put your offensive linemen names front and center. You rarely see offensive linemen names when it comes to college and NFL teams. In fact only the most loyal and knowledgeable fans even know who they heck are the starting offensive linemen on their favorite teams. Everyone knows who the receivers and backs are, that’s for sure.

Peer Praise

When your running backs score touchdowns, the reason why they scored on most plays was due to good offensive line play. Require your backs to give high fives or knuckle bumps to all of the offensive linemen after every score to show their respect and appreciation.
Private Praise

When your team takes that opening drive down in 11 plays and scores on a nice run by one of your backs, don’t forget your offensive linemen. I like to go out on the field after the PAT and meet them as they come off the field. Every offensive lineman gets a big smile and a whispered “way to go, nice job” from along with a knuckle bump. My praise for the back will happen later in the day.

Take the time to find your linemen after a practice or game and just tell him how proud you are of him. Let him know you appreciate him and are just tickled to have him as part of your team. It doesn’t have to be a long speech. A look into his eyes, a pat on his shoulder and an “I’m really proud of you” can go a long way.

Back in 2008 I was coaching a 7-8th grade team. It quite possibly was the tiniest 7-8th grade team in youth football history. It was just a very odd grouping of kids so small that our 5-6th grade team was bigger than them. The first day of practice I panicked as did our entire coaching staff. What we had designated for our starting offensive line from Tight End to Tight End was: 115 lbs, 113 lbs, 120 lbs, no one, 212 lbs, 114 lbs and 115 lbs. We had no choice but try and scramble to get capable bodies onto the offensive line. We were literally afraid for the safety of our kids, they were so tiny. How were we going to compete in an unlimited weight 21 team division and survive, let alone compete? Our best option was to take a 140 lb back up Blocking Back and put him at Right Guard for starters.

After practice that day I talked to the Blocking Back we wanted to move and told him what a great job he had been doing in practice, but that for now and the foreseeable future he would be playing second fiddle to another player at Blocking Back. I let him know I thought we were very small on the line and for us to have any chance at being competitive, we needed him to play the offensive line. I let him know how important the Guard spot is in our offense and how I felt he could excel at the position while helping him become an even better blocker in his natural Blocking Back/Fullback position.

He didn’t smile much and toed his shoes together a few times during the conversation. The next day at practice I was half expecting him not to show up, but he did. He did ok, not great in practice that day, but he efforted and wasn’t pouting. After practice I just put my hand on his shoulder and looked into his eyes and told him how proud I was of him. During the team breakout session I let the entire team know how proud I was of this player and how lucky they were to have someone that put the team first instead of themselves. This came from a player who was a pretty good back and who had played well in the backfield the previous year.
In subsequent years this player went on to start at Linebacker and Fullback in high school for a pretty good team in the second largest classification in the state. He always makes a point to say hello to me when I see him around town or at a practice or sporting event. He has volunteered to help coach at a number of our camps. He almost always ends the conversations we have with, “I really miss playing on the Eagles, it was so great.” He never played a single snap on the line in high school. Funny thing is his first 2 years in the program he was one of the most self centered and arrogant kids we had.

At the beginning of practice the day after I had praised this kid for changing positions, a third team Wingback who weighed about 120 lbs came up to me and said, “I know we are small on the line, if you need me to move, that’s ok with me.” He had never played the line before, but by midseason he ended up being our starting Power Tackle due to injuries. He wasn’t great, but he did well enough to be a serviceable player at that position. We played teams that had 4 kids over 200 lbs on them. We finished a VERY surprising 9-1 that year which included a win over a huge inner-city select team from Omaha. They were visibly laughing at the size of our kids in the pre-game warm ups and their coaches let me know they wouldn’t take it too hard on us. We won that game 30-12 after leading 24-0 at the half.

How did we do it? We created a team culture that valued the team over selfish desires. Our Team Chemistry and Character Plan and Awards taught and reinforced the virtues of selflessness, team work, delayed gratification, coachability and perseverance to name a few. The program can be found on the winningyouthfootball.com web site and sells for $20.

**Public Praise**

During your team wrap up, always give your offensive linemen a little love in front of their peers. Nothing lifts the spirits of a player and their parents than hearing your name waxed on positively by the head coach in front of the entire group. Make sure all of your offensive linemen are mentioned by name at least once a week in these sessions.

**Fraternity**

Make your offensive linemen feel like they are part of some exclusive prestigious fraternity. You can do that in a lot of different ways like special t-shirts, helmet stickers or weekly awards. What I like to do is to make them feel special in a humorous way. When the offensive linemen are with me and we are away from the earshot’s of the parents I let them know I chose them because they were smart and I prefer coaching smart players. I told them that because they were linemen, that when they grew up, they were going to get better jobs, marry better women and be more successful than their
running back counterparts. It became a mantra, that whenever I spoke it, the kids just kind of giggled and knowingly nodded and smiled to one another. If we were short a blocking dummy I would tell one of our linemen to go grab one from the backs, they didn’t ever hit anyone anyways and that when they came back, make sure they didn’t infect us with anything like whimitis he could catch from the backs. All done with a knowing smile and nod.

**Carrying the Football**

Most of your offensive linemen are never going to touch the ball once they go to high school. Why not give them a chance at toting the rock at the youth level? Whenever we get up by 3-4 touchdowns and feel like we have the game well in hand we start spreading the ball around to our backup running backs. Once they have all gotten at least a carry or two, then it’s time to get around to the offensive linemen. When you are a direct snap team like us, there isn’t any need to teach those kids how to take a proper handoff or run a series of plays.

They simply align next to the Fullback, the Fullback helps them get set, the Fullback calls the cadence, the ball is snapped directly to the lineman who is now in the Quarterback spot and they run the ball off-tackle to the strong side. Then we send another offensive lineman in to do the very same thing. Who cares if the defense knows where the ball is? At this juncture the game is well in hand and it doesn’t matter whether we score again or not. Using this approach in the last 3 years every single one of my non stripped players have been able to carry the ball and 36 different players have scored touchdowns. Yes, there are some very permanent memories being made for those kids. Just think how doing something like that would affect the morale of your youth football team? You have everyone rooting on the kids that never get to touch the ball; it really brings the kids together in a very meaningful and powerful way.

**Conclusion**

We don’t feel this is the only way to work with offensive linemen or that this is even the best way. What we do know is that it has consistently worked for us at multiple age groups, in different leagues and in different cities and demographics. Just look at our scores on the winningyouthfootball.com page or the testimonials from all over the country. It has worked for us and others; it’s up to you to determine what makes sense for your program. Remember it’s not about you or how much you know, it’s for the kids experience and how much they know.

If you have any questions or need for clarification please don’t hesitate to ask us via e-mail at coachdave@winningyouthfootball.com
Also remember to go to the web site and keep checking back to the blog, there are over 600 free coaching tips for you there. Best of “luck” and let us know if we can help you.

Don’t forget to look into the “cheat cards” that include all the drills from this book and DVD. They are great reminders and also help you in practice. Just hand out the cards of the drills you want run and let your assistants run with it.
Chapter 12
Practice Plans

Offensive Line Practice Plan Examples

Practice Schedule Week 1
Age 8-10

**Monday- No Pads**
- 5:30 Parent and Player Orientation
- 6:00 Cals- Stance, cadence review, Butt kicks, high knees, 5 Jumping Jacks, 5 lunges
- 6:15 Angle Form Fit tackling
- 6:25 Snap Progression Drill
- 6:35 Break- discuss and drill back numbering system only
- 6:40 Deer Hunter Game and Evaluation
- 7:00 Sumo Game and Evaluation
- 7:15 Towel Game and Evaluation
- 7:30 Done

**Tuesday- No Pads**
- 5:30 Cals- Stance, using cadence: Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, 5 lunges
- 5:40 Angle Form Fit Tackling
- 5:50 Gauntlet Drill and Evaluation
- 6:05 First and second step base blocking drill
- 6:25 Break-discuss and drill hole numbering system
- 6:30 Dummy Relay Race Evaluations
- 6:45 Base Block on Dummies
- 7:00 Cadence Claps
- 7:05 Ball Get Offs
- 7:15 Hawaiian Rules Football
- 7:30 Done

**Thursday- No Pads**
- 5:30 Cals- Stance, using cadence: Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges
- 5:35 Angle Form fit Tackling
- 5:40 Line: Base Blocking Drill-GOD Review
- 6:00 Line: Base Pulling Drill, Center snap tryout with 5 snaps each
- 6:25 Break- discuss and drill the play calling system putting backs and hole together
- 6:30 Defensive Indys
- 7:15 Deer Hunter Game
- 7:30 Done
**Week 2- With Pads**

**Monday**
- 5:30 Cals using cadence every time: Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges
- 5:35 Angle Form Fit Tackling
- 5:40 Splatter Blocking Drill
- 5:55 Line: Review GOD, GOD Fits
- 6:15 Line: Learn “Power” tag via installation progression- First 2 Steps and Freeze
- 6:35 Break- Review play numbering system and tags
- 6:40 Cadence Claps
- 6:45 Ball Get Offs
- 6:55 Gap, On and Down Block Drills
- 7:15 Team 16 Power on air
- 7:30 Done

**Tuesday**
- 5:30 Cals-Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping jacks, lunges
- 5:35 Angle Form Fit Tackling
- 5:45 Defensive Practice Day
- 7:30 Done

**Thursday**
- 5:30 Cals- Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges
- 5:35 Angle Form Fit Tackling
- 5:45 Line: Base Blocking First 2 Steps, 2 Steps Bag Fit
- 6:00 Line: Board Drill, Teach Sweep tag- 2 step- then fit and freeze
- 6:20 Line: Wedge Progression
- 6:45 Break- review defensive positions and alignment
- 6:50 Team- 16 Power, 22 Wedge (first step), 18 Sweep, all on air then dummies POA
- 7:20 Fit and Freeze walk on a “scout defense” 16 Power, 22 Wedge, 18 Sweep
- 7:30 Done
Week 3

Monday
➢ 5:30- Cals- Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Fit Tackling
➢ 6:00: Line: Wedge Progression, GOD Rule Review
➢ 6:20 Break- discuss trap and illegal man downfield penalties
➢ 6:25 Line: Double Team drills, Board Drill
➢ Line: Install “reverse” tag
➢ 6:55 Team: 16 Power, 22 Wedge, 18 Sweep, 31 Trap/32 Wedge, 43 Reverse, on air, then walk through on scout defense, then full speed with coaches & dummies at POA
➢ 7:15 Live Versus Scout Defense
➢ 7:30 Done

Tuesday
➢ 5:30 Cals-Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Fit Tackling
➢ 5:40  Defensive Practice Day
➢ 7:30 Done

Thursday
➢ 5:30 Cals- Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, high knees, Angle Form Fit Tackling
➢ 5:40 Special Teams Practice Day
➢ 7:30 Done

Week 4

Monday
➢ 5:30- Butt kicks, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Fit Tackling
➢ 5:40 Line: Mirror Drill. Mirror and Go
➢ 6:00: Line: Wedge, Crab Blocking Drills
➢ 6:20 Break- review coin flip
➢ 6:25 Line: Double Team drills, Crab Drills
➢ 6:40 Line: Install GOO pass blocking, bird dog pass blocking rules
➢ 6:55 Pull Spy
➢ 7:05 Team: 16 Power, 22 Wedge, 18 Sweep, 31 Trap, 43 Reverse, all on air, then walk through on scout defense, Nasty and Tunnel adjustments then with coaches and dummies at POA. 16 Wedge, 16 Pass, 32 Wedge, 18 Sweep Pass, Practice subbing
➢ 7:15 Offensive “Compete”
➢ 7:30 Done
Tuesday
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, high knees, Angle Form Fit Tackling
- 5:40 Defensive Practice Day
- 7:30 Done

Thursday
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Fit Tackling
- 5:40 Special Teams
- 6:10 Line: Mirror, Mirror and Go Drill
- 6:35 Break- partner questions, working with referees
- 6:40 Team Offense on air with subbing
- 7:10 Team Defense
- 7:30 Done

Week 5
Monday
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: G Install, GOD Fits
- Line: Wedge Progression, Crab Blocking Drills
- 6:25 Break- review sportsmanship
- 6:30- Gap, On and Down Drills
- 6:45 Team Offense-Formationing, Double, War, Split
- 6:55 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:15 Offensive “Compete”
- 7:30 Done

Tuesday
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Tackling Circuit Drill
- 5:55 All- 3 Level Oklahoma
- 6:15 Defensive Practice Day
- 7:30 Done

Thursday
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Special Teams
- 6:25 Line: Wedge
- 6:35 Break- partner questions
- 6:40 GOD Fits Live
- 6:50 Team Offense on air with subbing from 20 yards
- 7:10 Team Defense on air with subbing from 20 yards
- 7:30 Done
### Week 6

**Monday**
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: First step tennis ball drills, GOD Fits
- 6:05 Line: Wedge, Mirror, Crab Blocks
- 6:35 Break- review “perfect effort”
- 6:40 Pole Drill
- 6:50 Team Offense on air, Bird Dog Fit and Freeze all plays versus scout defense
- 7:20 Offensive “Compete”
- 7:30 Done

**Thursday**
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Defensive Practice Day
- 7:30 Done

### Week 7

**Monday**
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: Wedge
- 5:50 Oklahoma
- 6:00 Pull to Splatter Drill, Mirror and Go
- 6:20 Break- review subbing
- 6:25 Board Drill, Keep Away Drill
- 6:50 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze on scout defense, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:05 Offensive “Compete”
- 7:15 Slam Dunk game
- 7:30 Done

**Thursday**
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Special Teams and Defense Practice Day
- 7:30 Done

### Week 8

**Tuesday**
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: First and second step tennis ball drills, Crab Blocking
- 6:05: Line: Wedge, GOD Fits
- 6:30 break- review overcoming adversity
- 6:35 Offensive Compete
- 6:45 Reach Block
- 7:05 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze on scout defense, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:30 Done
**Thursday**
- 5:30 Cals - Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Defense and Special Teams Day
- 7:30 Done

**Week 5**

**Monday**
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: Board Drill, Crab Drills
- 6:00 Line: Wedge, Pass Blocking Drills
- 6:15 break - review being the perfect teammate
- 6:20 God Fits live
- 6:30 Cross Blocks
- 6:45 Trap Drills
- 7:00 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze on scout defense, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:20 Offensive “Compete”
- 7:30 Done

**Thursday**
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Special Teams and Defense
- 7:15 Done

**Week 10**

**Tuesday**
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: Double Team Drills, Crab Drills
- 6:00 Line: Wedge, Pass Blocking Drills
- 6:20 break - review subbing
- 6:25 Sumo
- 6:35 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze on scout defense, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:05 Live if doing well
- 7:15 Done

**Thursday**
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Defense and Special Teams Practice Day
- 7:30 Done
Week 11

Tuesday
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: Board Drill
- 6:00: Open Field Blocking Drills
- 6:15 Wedge, Pass Blocking Drills
- 6:35 Break- review subbing
- 6:40 Pull Spy, Gap, On, Down Blocking Drills
- 6:55 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze on scout defense, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:15 Hawaiian Rules Football
- 7:30 Done

Thursday
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Defense and Special Teams Practice Day
- 7:30 Done

Week 12

Tuesday
- 5:30- Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Line: Double Team Drills, Crab Drills, Board Drill
- 6:05 Line: Wedge, Mirror and Go
- 6:25: GOD Fits Live
- 6:35 Break- review subbing
- 6:40 All plays installed so far on air, fit and freeze on scout defense, with dummies at point of attack
- 7:05 Offensive Compete
- 7:15 Hawaiian Rules Football
- 7:30 Done

Thursday
- 5:30 Butt Kickers, high knees, Jumping Jacks, lunges, Angle Form Tackling
- 5:40 Defense and Special Teams Practice Day
- 7:30 Done
About the Author

“Winning Youth Football, a Step by Step Plan” was written by Dave Cisar. Dave is the founder and President of the Screaming Eagles Organization. It was started in 1998 as a free program for at-risk youth in inner-city Omaha, Nebraska. In 2004 Dave started up the Lincoln, Nebraska area program and continues to coach there. The Omaha program became independent in 2007. His programs have served over 3,000 children ages 6-14 with programs in academic accountability, football, baseball, weight training and basketball.

He has coached over 20 years at all levels of youth football. His teams have played in 5 different Leagues in 2 different cities. Since moving to this system his teams have gone 149-21 and won multiple division, league and State Titles. He has spoken at over 100 youth coaching clinics all over the country including the Nike Coach of the Year Clinics and the Frank Glazier Mega Clinics. He has been on the same venue as Bobby Bowden, Les Miles, Ken Niumatalolo and Jeff Tedford to name just a few. He has worked with youth football programs in every state and several in Canada and has been brought on as a consultant to several High School football programs.

Dave is a former business owner in his forties and is a proud family man. He played college football at the University Nebraska at Omaha before transferring and graduating from Texas A&M University where he did not play sports. He gave his life to Christ in 1996.

Additional Materials:
To order additional materials go to www.winningyouthfootball.com

Installing the Single Wing Offense For Youth Football: $49.95
2 DVDs nearly 2 hours - White board instruction by Dave along with play clips inserted from his last 8 teams. You get practice tape clips, so you can see the plays and techniques in action as they are being discussed on the white board. Includes base blocking rules, detailed coaching points, implementation tricks and instructions to install the entire offense. Professionally developed by Reliant Video.

Winning Youth Football, a Step by Step Plan: $29.95
274 pages. This is the paperback book. We give you everything you need to succeed in coaching a youth football team. This isn’t written in “coach talk” and is easy to understand. We take you from the preseason coaches meetings through the last game of the season. This includes our practice plans and practice methodology as well as our drills, techniques and implementation break down steps. It includes our schemes and plays on offense, special teams and defense as well as the reads and adjustments. It is a comprehensive guide to coaching effectively using the Single Wing Offense that anyone can use. It also contains some much needed team and program management material as well.
Developing a Smothering Defense in Youth Football, Step by Step on DVD- $39.95
Dave’s base defense as well as attacking “Viper” defenses are featured along with the defensive drills his teams use to smother the willpower of opposing defenses. Includes: position descriptions and responsibilities, techniques, drills, alignments, stunts and blitzes. Over half of this DVD are game and practice footage clips. 80 minute run time. Professionally developed by Reliant Video.

2007 & 2008 Games DVD: $29.95 on DVD
See an entire season, every snap of an age 10-11 year old team. Includes the base offense and defense. See the Jet Series in these DVD’s including all 6 plays in the series. This is an excellent resource with subtitles and with the games narrated by Dave. The 2008 Games DVD are 2 games each of Dave’s age 7-9, 10-11 and 12-13 year old teams. Produced by Reliant Video.

Game Day Management
Becoming a Good Game Day Coach $39.95 on DVD
Learn how to effectively manage your game day, something that takes most coaches years develop. Learn how to effectively manage the pre-game, scouting, setting goals, spotting, making adjustments, managing playing time, play call sequencing, no-huddle methodology, clock management, coaching an effective halftime as well as a good post game wrap up. Included are Dave’s “Cheat Sheet” for effective play-calling based solely on his simple pre-count method. He reviews his easy to install game day scouting method to determining plays to be called and players to be coached up. Learn how to get the most out of your team and to “steal” games from more skilled opponents, through game day coaching. Includes both white board and game day clips of the 2006 season. Produced by Reliant Video.
The Practice Organization, The Perfect Practice $39.95 on DVD
Cut hours off your weekly practice grind using Dave’s practice methodology, while at the same time improving the skill levels of your players and team. See how he makes practices both fun and instructional so the kids beg to come to practice, not dread it. See his secrets to developing players and teams from scratch using progression teaching methods and his ease into contact approach. His player selection process and fit and freeze methods have helped his teams and many others make tremendous progress. These methods, games and drills make any youth coach look like a genius. Includes both white board instruction and lots of practice footage. Reliant Video product.

Single Wing 303- Advanced Single Wing Concepts : $44.95
DVD nearly 2 hours – Take your team to the next level with new plays, adjustments and game day strategies. Includes 217 page addendum with playside and complementary coach keys for every play. Includes the Spread Single Wing passing game, Buck Series and more advanced plays for the Jet, Spinner, Mouse and Base Series plays. Includes Hudl tutorial. For the advanced Single Wing coach who has had success and is looking to take your team to the next level. White board instruction by Dave along with practice and play clips inserted from his last 4 teams. Professionally developed by Reliant Video.

Developing Chemistry, Character and Confidence in Youth Football: $19.95
116 Pages e-book Download – Learn how to develop the most important factor in your teams success, Chemistry and Character. Includes how to do it step-by-step with Dave’s tips and tricks along with coaching tools like the Link Program and 15 Character Lessons that you can choose to e-mail to your players and parents. See your team come together and play selflessly while your parents love you for caring beyond “football.”

Implementing the Single Wing Offense Cheat Cards $29.95
These are 28 3x5 embossed playing cards with the plays drawn out on one side and the players assignments on the other. Great for helping you or your assistant coaches install the offense. Just hand the card to your assistant of the play being installed and you don’t have to worry about it being put in wrong.

Practice Organization, the Perfect Practice Cheat Cards $29.95
These are 26 3x5 embossed playing cards of our most popular evaluation drills, team development drills and base drills. The drill or concept is on the front in either drawings or pictures and the details are on the back in text. Great for helping you or your assistant coaches run a more efficient practice. Just hand the card to your assistant of the drills you want run and forget it. Great for coaches who need reminders or for the poorly committed assistant who failed to attend any of your clinics or read any of the books or watch any of the DVDs you sent home with him.
Coaching Clinics
Go to the web site http://winningyouthfootball.com for more information about the Coaching Clinics Dave will be speaking at this year. He usually does about 20 public clinics at various locations across the US as well as a handful of private clinics. He and his “Dream Team” of Pop Warner and AYF National Championship winning coaches will also do team camps and “interventions.”

Go to www.winningyouthfootball.com to order by Visa/MasterCard or Call 402-730-8151 to order by phone.