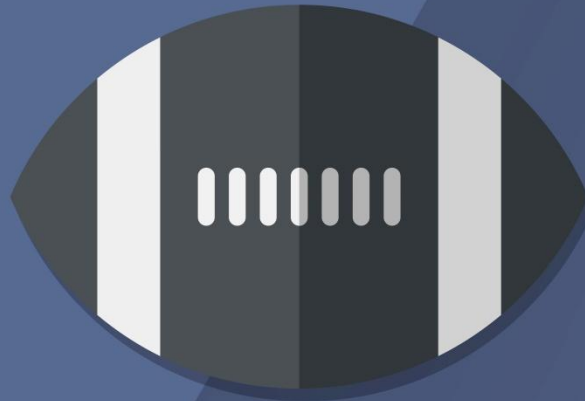




ESSENTIAL FOOTBALL PASS RUSH DRILLS



**FUNDAMENTAL DRILLS
OR OUTSTANDING PASS RUSH TECHNIQUE**

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INTRODUCTION

Few things are more disruptive to an offense than a good pass rush.

In this mini-book, we have included 11 pass rush drills that will dramatically improve your players' ability to not only get to the quarterback but also bring running backs down behind the line of scrimmage.

To help you better understand each drill we have included the skill level of each drill (beginner, intermediate and advanced) as well as its purpose, what is needed to run it, how it works and the expected result of the drill.

We have also included coaching tips to help you get the most out of each of the drills that you choose to run.

Perform these drills consistently with an attention to basic fundamentals and soon offenses will hate to play against your disruptive defense.

D-LINE FIGHT DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Helps defensive linemen develop the quick reaction skills they need to get back to their feet and into the play.

What you need:

You can run several stations at one time, and each one will have a defensive lineman and either another player or coach with a tackling dummy. Put a pylon behind the player with the tackling dummy and have a flag or other object on the pylon for the player to grab.

How this drill works:

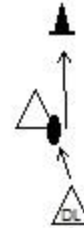
Defensive lineman will start in the prone position (on the stomach), with the player holding the tackling dummy above them, securely holding the dummy. On the whistle, the defensive lineman tries to get back on his feet, while the player holding the tackling dummy tries to beat him back down to the ground. The defensive lineman needs to get to his feet, or to his knees and make it to the pylon to grab the flag.

Result:

Defensive linemen often find themselves on the ground with an offensive lineman on them. This drill teaches them how to get up and find their way back into the play.

Coaching Tips:

- Watch for effort on this drill, your D-linemen should be battling with all their might to get back to their feet.



Defensive linemen battle to get back to their feet in this drill.

THE BULL RUSH DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Teaches defensive lineman one of the one of the best pass rush moves and penetration skills that they can learn.

What you need:

Pair up defensive linemen against each other. They should be approximately the same size.

How this drill works:

With the two defensive linemen matched up with one another, one needs to be the 'offensive' lineman to start, as the other practices the bull rush. The player that starts as the offensive lineman will turn his back to the defensive lineman to start the drill. The offensive lineman will provide resistance to the defensive lineman by pushing back as the defensive lineman pushes forward.

Result:

Defenders get better with their bull rushes and begin to build the strength they need to collapse the pocket on pass plays.

Coaching Tips:

- In the beginning the offensive lineman should just give limited, but firm resistance. Then, he should drop quickly into a sit position so that the defensive lineman not only needs to hold him up, but needs to push him forward.



The defensive player surges forward against resistance in this drill.

ATTACK THE QB DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Defensive players get to rush the quarterback.

What you need:

You won't need a QB for this, but a tackling dummy will suffice as the QB for now. Tackling dummies on the outside will act as offensive lineman for defensive lineman to execute their moves.

How this drill works:

Defensive lineman will lineup in their stance opposite the standing tackling dummy. On the snap, the defensive lineman will execute a quick move around the tackling dummy (spin, swim, bull rush) and then take an angle of pursuit at the tackling dummy that is a quarterback.

Result:

Improves the defensive linemen's repertoire of moves to that they are able to put more pressure on the quarterback.

Coaching Tips:

- Remind players as they are learning these moves that they need to keep in mind that some of the moves can put them out of position for the run.



D-linemen can practice spin, swim and bull rush moves in this drill.

RIP, SWIM AND BULL RUSH DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Young players learn three basic defensive line maneuvers.

What you need:

Two lines of defensive linemen with a coach and a tackling dummy (offensive lineman) opposing them.

How this drill works:

At the snap of the ball, the defensive lineman has one step forward before he has to make a move on the offensive lineman. Coaches should teach the following basic techniques – the rip (using the offensive lineman's momentum to 'rip' him forward; the 'swim' when the DL uses his arms to lift and then 'swim' around the offensive lineman, and the bull rush, which is a straight ahead charge forward to the hole or lineman they are supposed to be against.

Result:

Players learn moves they can utilize to avoid being locked up with an offensive linemen and neutralized on a play.

Coaching Tips:

- Stress to players that as they execute these moves they need to keep their eyes on where the play is headed – sometimes a move may work, but it takes you right past the opposing offensive players and out of position.



In this drill, players work on developing basic D-line moves.

HANDS UP DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Teaches a pass rushing defensive lineman to get his hands in the air to cover potential passing lanes for the QB.

What you need:

You can run this drill with a defensive lineman and a coach with a tackling dummy or with an offensive lineman. You will also need a quarterback or a coach to throw the ball.

How this drill works:

On the snap of the ball, the defensive lineman (square) will rush (3/4 speed) to the tackling dummy. The dummy will push back to simulate an offensive lineman blocking. The quarterback will take a three step drop and throw the ball in the direction of the defensive lineman. The idea of this drill is not to necessarily knock the ball down, but to help the defensive lineman read where the ball is going to go and then get the timing down for putting their hands up in the air.

Result:

Helps D-linemen anticipate throws by the way a QB sets up in the pocket and teaches them to get their hands up to close passing lanes.

Coaching Tips:

- To start, you might just want to run this drill with a coach or another player on the tackling dummy. Then you can add difficulty later by using an offensive lineman.



Defensive linemen work on getting their hands up when the QB throws the ball.

FIRST TO THE QB DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Fosters quick reaction and a desire to get into the backfield among your defenders.

What you need:

You can set up tackling dummies for each defensive player to work with on the offensive line (held by players, etc.)

How this drill works:

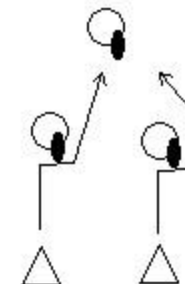
The coach will call out the cadence, and upon the snap of the ball, each defensive player gets one quick move against the tackling dummy and then they have to get to the quarterback.

Result:

Players learn to break off of the snap of the ball, make a move and get to the QB.

Coaching Tips:

- Emphasize making one quick move. Players who try to make too many moves will not usually get to the QB.



One quick move and then to the QB is the message behind this drill.

STUNT MEN DRILL

Level:

Intermediate

Purpose:

Players learn various stunts that can be performed on the defensive line.

What you need:

You can have the players line up on the defensive line in their normal positions. Lie tackling dummies on the ground to denote offensive lineman. Stand a tackling dummy in the area where the stunt should finish (say in the backfield).

How this drill works:

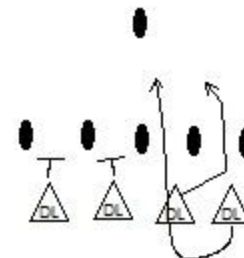
Set the linemen up and then have them run a stunt. They will cross, twist, etc., as you have shown them, in order to get to the tackling dummy that is standing up. Try all sorts of different stunts for all of the players to get into the action.

Result:

Defensive linemen learn how to excel at stunts.

Coaching Tips:

- Before running this drill for the first time, be sure to explain to players the purpose of a stunt, how it works, etc.



Players learn how to run stunts, which are a great way to get pressure on the quarterback.

TARGET BLITZ DRILL

Level:

Advanced

Purpose:

Blitzing linebackers learn to secure an area of the field.

What you need:

Use a tackling dummy or a colored rag or towel to denote the area to which the linebacker needs to run (about 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage). Separate the different gaps by using tackling dummies.

How this drill works:

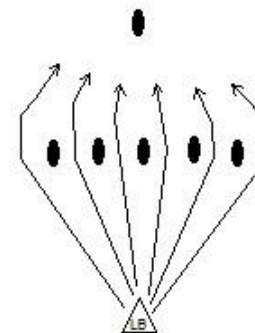
When the whistle blows (or the coach delivers a cadence), the linebacker has to sprint from his position, through the proper gap to the area on the field where he is supposed to blitz.

Result:

Linebackers learn where they should be going so they can get to a blitz area much faster off the snap.

Coaching Tips:

- The linebacker should not hesitate once the whistle blows to get to the blitz area. One bit of hesitation can cause the blitz to be ineffective.



Linebackers sprint through the proper gap to get to the quarterback.

D-LINE CHOP DRILL

Level:

Advanced

Purpose:

Helps defensive lineman recognize where the offensive lineman's hands are in order to prevent getting locked up with him.

What you need:

Pair up defensive lineman and one of them should hold a small arm shield during the drill.

How this drill works:

The player with the arm shield will try to move the shield towards the defensive lineman – either to the right or left side. The defensive lineman must use his hands to chop away the arm shield, as though he is pushing the arms of the offensive lineman away. He should do this before the arm shield makes contact with his body.

Result:

Defensive lineman are more adequately prepared to handle an offensive lineman that is extending his arms to keep the rush at bay.

Coaching Tips:

- Have the player with the arm shield vary the direction and area where the arm shield is going, in order to provide a defensive lineman with a variety of angles and appearances.



Defensive linemen learn how to avoid an offensive lineman's hands in this competitive drill.

BLITZ THE QB DRILL

Level:

Advanced

Purpose:

Players learn which one is going to blitz the quarterback on different plays.

What you need:

Line up your defensive line and linebackers in a standard formation. The coach will be in the backfield.

How this drill works:

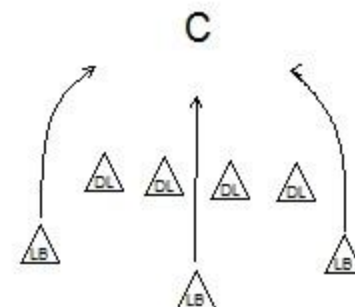
The players line up as though they are getting ready for a play. The coach in the backfield points at one of the linebackers, and that linebacker needs to blitz the line as hard as he can in order to get to the quarterback (coach) as fast as possible, where he should tag the coach. The player should not hesitate when the ball is snapped, they should go straight through the line to the coach, for the tag.

Result:

Younger players get the first experience blitzing as a linebacker.

Coaching Tips:

- Vary where they need to get to for the blitz
- You can also teach players to try and time the snap count so they can get a good jump on the ball



Players learn to blitz the QB from the linebacker position.

QUICK STUNT DRILL

Level:

Advanced

Purpose:

Players learn to stunt on the line in order to create confusion with the offensive line.

What you need:

You can set up a mock offensive line with tackling dummies to start, and then try the real thing as players learn their responsibilities.

How this drill works:

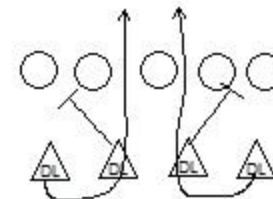
In the stunt diagrammed at right, the defensive ends cross down in to the gap between the guard and the tackle, drawing both the guard and the tackle into a double team. At that point, the defensive tackle stunts to the outside and takes an angle of attack to the quarterback (or the runner). This is only one example of a defensive line stunt, and others can be run in this drill to perfect the timing.

Result:

Players learn to get a jump off the ball and to execute stunts with proper timing.

Coaching Tips:

- This drill can be run with any designed stunt. Use practice dummies first, then use offensive linemen.



Players perfect their timing on a variety of stunts in this drill.

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