

Offensive Line Secrets Coaches Study Guide

RUN BLOCKING

© 2007 All Rights Reserved

Copyright Notice

The material enclosed is copyrighted. You do not have resell rights or giveaway rights to the material provided herein. Only customers that have purchased this material are authorized to view it. If you think you may have an illegally distributed copy of this material, please contact us immediately. Please email knowledgesupport@gmail.com to report any illegal distribution.

Copyright 2007 All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or by information storage and retrieval systems. It is illegal to copy this material and publish it on another web site, news group, forum, etc. even if you include the copyright notice.

Legal Notices

While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein. The publisher wants to stress that the information contained herein may be subject to varying state and/or local laws or regulations. All users are advised to retain competent counsel to determine what state and/or local laws or regulations may apply to the user's particular operation. The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information. Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, federal, state and local, governing professional licensing, operation practices, and all other aspects of operation in the US or any other jurisdiction is the sole responsibility of the purchaser or reader. The publisher and author assume no responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials. Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations is unintentional.

Consult Your Physician

The techniques, ideas, and suggestions in this document are not intended as a substitute for proper medical advice! Consult your physician or health care professional before performing any exercise or exercise technique. Any application of the techniques, ideas, and suggestions in this document is at the reader's sole discretion and risk.

The author and publisher of this document and their employers make no warranty of any kind in regard to the content of this document, including, but not limited to, any implied warranties of merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose. The author and publisher of this document and their employers are not liable or responsible to any person or entity for any errors contained in this document, or for any special, incidental, or consequential damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in this document.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
RUN BLOCKING - PART 1 - THE BASICS.....	5
RUN BLOCKING – PART 2 – DIRECTION / FOOTWORK..	7
Drive Block.....	7
RUN BLOCKING – PART 3 – ZONE BLOCKING.....	9
RUN BLOCKING – PART 4 – REACH BLOCKING.....	11
RUN BLOCKING – PART 5 – ADVANCED PART 1.....	13
Down Blocking.....	13
Combination Block (Double Team).....	14
Fold Pull.....	14
RUN BLOCKING – PART 6 – ADVANCED PART TWO....	16
Long Pull.....	16
Open or Trap Pull.....	16
Skip Pull.....	17

Introduction

One of the hardest positions to coach is the offensive line. You aren't always working with the most athletic or most gifted players on the team, yet the offensive line is relied upon to win ball games time after time. So, preparing the players with good technical coaching is probably the best way to get the most out of them.

In this guide on **Run Blocking**, we are going to go through some of the main run blocking areas and describe them to you point-by-point, so you can help your players learn the best technique for playing this position. We have broken it down into core areas of run blocking and gone through many of the different types of run blocking – from straight ahead drive blocking to pulls and traps.

Here are a few general tips for coaching offensive line:

1. **Teach in a progression** – Sometimes it is tough for a young player to grasp an entire concept all at once. That's why it is important in coaching for you to instruct the player every step of the way. Good offensive line play is the sum of all of the basic parts: footwork, stance, hand movement and more. Each of these elements needs to be coached one thing at a time. Build your players from the ground up and they will have an easier time learning and executing the fundamentals.
2. **Teach safely** – Football is a fast-moving collision sport. Players should be taught in a manner that provides for a safe and effective learning environment. No one wants to get injured, and by teaching the players to conduct themselves in a safe fashion on the field helps to prevent some of those unfortunate incidents.
3. **Variety of drills** – Since you want to teach your players in a progression-style fashion, you can work on a variety of things before actually getting to the game-like situations. You can work on the kick-set, hand punches, sink protection, edge pressure drills – there is no shortage of basic, skill-building work you can do. Keep the practices fresh and your players will respond.
4. **Not always a need for contact** – This goes hand in hand with the last tip. Your players are going to get worn out if they are constantly working on hitting the guy across from them. Have them work the bags with punches, or practice footwork – rather than always locking horns with the defensive lineman.

Most of all, have fun with your players while teaching them the fundamentals of great offensive line play!

Run Blocking - Part 1 - The Basics

- Break down the skills in a progressive fashion – don't go right to the end block and expect the players to execute effective blocking. Take it one step at a time, one skill at a time. This will help the player learn the fundamentals and graduate to further skill levels.
- The first key to good blocking, regardless of level of play is the offensive line stance. A balanced stance allows the O-lineman to move forward, backward side-to-side or to pull.
- No wasted movement for the offensive lineman. Not always the most athletic players on the team, so you don't want them to have to make any movements that are not focused on the blocking goal.
- First thing is understanding how far off the ball the player needs to be: crowd the line, even with center, off the ball (deeper). Use simple terminology to help lineman understand initial position: A- **Crowd the ball**; B – **Even with Center** (head has to break the hip of the center); C – **Deep as possible** (without being illegally in the backfield).
- Balanced stance with feet shoulder width apart. Feet should be staggered in this fashion: Outside toe to inside instep.
- Break the huddle and keep the head up to see what the defense is doing. Offensive linemen should be taught to look at what is going on in the defense so they can react and adjust their blocks accordingly.
- Scan the defense to see if you have a down lineman in front of you, or a linebacker over top.
- The '**splits**'; (distance between linemen), will vary according to the play called. Basic plays would use a 2 foot split.
- Approach the line, drop the outside foot 6 inches back. Must be able to move any direction.
- Squat down in a three-point stance. Outside hand is put down for the three-point stance. As if picking up their outside eyeball, the o-lineman reaches straight down.
- Balance is important – not too much weight forward, not too much backward.
- Weight distribution should be as follows: 60% of weight forward (toward line of scrimmage), and 40% back. Too much weight forward gives the defense an idea of which direction you are headed and how they are going to come at the defender.
- When the hand is put down, the o-lineman wants to have a good balanced tripod on the hand, so they can move any direction from the stance.

- No fists or two fingers; tight, five fingertip stance allows the player to explode rather than push off with the knuckles (remember no wasted movements).
- Down in three-point stance, the back should be flat – like a tabletop. No humps or arches in the back. This forces the player to lift (wasted movement) up before they move forward. A flat back keeps the movement fluid and powerful.
- Teach power angles in the ankles, knees, hips, neck, elbows and shoulders. Power angles allow the players to move forward to their blocks with power, without losing any force with wasted movements.
- The off-hand elbows should be tight to the knee, raised back so the upper arm is flat like the back. Not hanging back – off hand needs to be ready. Key is comfort for player and effective use (no wasted movement).
- In stance, they should have a credit-card alignment – which means you should be able to just slide a credit card underneath their heels. That means not too much weight back and not too much forward. If it is too far forward and player has to go backward – they have to take a false step (wasted movement) before they can set up back from the line.
- The eyes should be up looking at the defense.
- The stance should be solid using all of the main points described so far – and the lineman will be ready to execute the block.

Coaches should use little tools (like credit card alignment) to help players understand the basic skill asked of them. Use a variety of these types of coaching tips and hints and the players will pick up the skills much faster – and before long it will be second nature.

Run Blocking – Part 2 – Direction / Footwork

Drive Block

- One on one head up. Take him off the ball. Power angles at the knees hips, elbows.
- With the staggered stance you want to step with the outside foot first. Gain ground by taking a 6" step with the outside foot. Never want to be over-extended – so no first step on the inside.
- Step with outside foot, and then squeeze toes on the inside foot. No gather step with the left foot – wasted movement
- Grab the grass with the toes – coaching buzz word
- No more than 6" – otherwise the lineman will stand up. No over extension.
- No hitting with the crown of the head – see what you hit. No blind hit as injuries can occur.
- No standing up – good body position.
- Taking the first step, the hands should not wind up for the initial pop. The hands should lift from the stance immediately forward to hit the defensive lineman.
- Hands make contact on the inside step (second step). You need to make contact by the second step on the drive block.
- The man who makes the **third step first** is usually the one that wins the line of scrimmage.
- Down the middle is the aiming point. Take the player straight off the ball. Strike through the man opposite you.
- Lineman should strike defenders as though they are incline bench pressing their opponent. A quick pop forward.
- Put the hands right at the armpits with the thumbs up. Hands cannot be outside the frame – otherwise they will call holding.
- Aiming point is right down the middle.
- Heel to toe replacement on the steps. This means, when the outside foot takes the first step forward, the heel should be at the plane of the inside foot's toe. This keeps excellent balance and good body control.

- Low pad leverage
- Strike through the defender
- With a linebacker the technique is the same, however the number of steps will be different.
- Coach a great finish through any of your blocks.

Run Blocking – Part 3 – Zone Blocking

- Getting the defense to stretch in order to help you make the block.
- Get lateral movement from the defense
- Know your aiming point and strike point in this type of blocking.
- On an inside zone play, you want to take the first down lineman on the play side.
- You want good movement from the defender in order to set up the block. Don't step right at the blocker, or he will make the play. First movement needs to make defender believe the offensive player is going to outflank him.
- Head placement is on the play side number. So the aiming point will take the offensive lineman to the number that is on the side where you are going to run the play.
- Defensive lineman will move with the offensive lineman.
- Move on a 45 degree angle. First step in this type of blocking is 45 degrees toward the defender.
- 6" first step. No drop step – just a quick first step.
- Second step is with inside foot – also at 45 degrees in order to maintain good body balance and control.
- Third step should be 45 degrees, but just to the outside of the defender.
- Also called the scoop, drive and square steps (for first, second and third steps).
- You can also come up with your own step names in order to match your philosophy.
- Key is to get the defender to move laterally.
- Once the defender is moved laterally, the offensive lineman can make hard contact and drive the defender back. Easier to drive a defender that is moving laterally.
- "Run the tracks" – offensive lineman should run as though they are in a set track of 45 degrees – to hit the first thing in the running lane when they are zone blocking.
- Strike on the second step. Arms should not reach out, as the defender can use this as leverage.

- Keep the arms low as the first step is taken. On the second step, arms should be prepared to strike defender when the square (third) step is taken.
- Step on the toes of the defender – this means you are gaining ground on the line of scrimmage. Keep the feet driving towards the defender in order to knock them off the ball.
- Block what comes to you in the zone blocking scheme.
- Trust the man next to you. Stay in your path or 'track' in zone blocking.
- Everyone has to trust that you are running the same path.

Run Blocking – Part 4 – Reach Blocking

- Outside perimeter plays
- Stay between the ball and the defender. Must get around the defender to prevent them from reaching the ball carrier.
- Aiming point for zone block is play side number; on the reach block the aiming point is the play side shoulder.
- Stay in front of defender so they don't go around you – back door to the inside.
- The first step is actually a short drop step with the outside foot. Lineman should kick out while keeping the body square, instead of looking to the sideline where they will lose power.
- Six-inch kick out step, and keep the toes facing forward. This keeps the shoulders square so you are ready for contact.
- Lose a little bit of ground in order to gain leverage.
- Second step is a cross over step; this is not often taught for offensive lineman – except on the reach block.
- The second step brings the two feet parallel facing forward – and the body stays square to the line of scrimmage
- The third step swings the right foot forward to square the entire stance up along the line of scrimmage
- Don't take these steps too quickly toward the aiming point. The defender will sweep in behind the player. If the defender isn't following the reach block (as they should), then the lineman needs to slow their steps down.
- Third step will square the body to the defender and at that point is when contact should be made.
- The contact should initially be made with the inside shoulder as the lineman makes the third step.
- Reach for the sternum of the defender. Get the head of the play side defender.
- Strike through the player and drive him as player continues the block through the play.

- For an off-side play (left side run for a right side offensive lineman), the lineman still needs to get the head to the play side shoulder. This is often referred to as a **cut-off block** rather than a reach block.
- The inside foot must drop back further because it is closer to the LOS. It is still a kick step back with the toes facing forward.
- The second step is a longer crossover with the body still aiming at the play side shoulder.
- Third step squares the body around and at this point contact is made with the inside shoulder as the lineman strikes forward through the defender and then drives them forward.
- The only difference between reach block and cut-off block is the length of the first step.
- Teach this skill literally one-step at a time so the lineman understands what they need to do with each step and what they are trying to achieve.
- Give them the three-step progression and make sure they understand the aiming point.
- Teach in the classroom, meeting room and with video before the players get on to the field. This will help them understand the steps.

Run Blocking – Part 5 – Advanced Part 1

Down Blocking

- Outflanked by a defensive player in a pulling or exchange blocking situation.
- No penetration from the defensive player – if they get penetration from the first step, it will be tough to make the block.
- First step is critical. It must be forward with the inside foot. Step to the man – do NOT step underneath or take a false step to meet the defender. This means they have already penetrated into the backfield.
- Point the foot right towards the defender for the first step.
- The second step squares the body around – keeping the body in between the defender and the ball carrier.
- Contact is made at the second step.
- The aiming point for contact on this block is putting the head right in the 'V' of the neck (keep the head up at all times to see where the block is)
- The middle aiming point prevents the defender from playing straight ahead and also prevents them from coming over the top.
- Left hand contacts the far shoulder for control of the defender.
- Right hand plays what is called 'high outside hand'. The outside arm works to block the man inside, and to prevent any counter move or spin to the play side.
- The third step is through the defender to drive them back. Remember, whoever gets to the third step first is usually the winner at the line of scrimmage.
- Move the defender away from the direction of the play.
- Keep the pads down with a good bend in the knees. Try to step on his toes.
- Essentially becomes a drive block once contact is made. Always watch for counter move to the play side.

Combination Block (Double Team)

- When two offensive players are going to take on one defender.
- The first step protects the gap between the offensive linemen.
- Block the defensive linemen to the backside linebacker.
- In a RG RT double team, the first step taken by the RG and RT will actually be a six-inch lateral step with the inside foot towards the center. This is to counter any inside penetration made if the defender is slanting across to the inside on a stunt. This step ensures that the RG controls the 'A' Gap between center and guard.
- A forward first step can over-extend the offensive lineman, creating a gap that can be penetrated by the defensive lineman, or by a blitzing linebacker.
- The second step for the guard is right through the defender. The entire body doesn't need to be on the defender, because he has outside help with the tackle.
- The second step for the tackle is a cross over, stacked almost on top of where the first foot position was before the snap. This swings the body around for good position to seal off the defender.
- Both linemen need to fight to stay square to the defender.
- Keep the inside arm free, so the offensive lineman doesn't get too much of the defender. Use the outside arm for control.
- The third step is where the contact is made. Both players can make contact at the third step.
- This basically becomes a down block once contact is made for the tackle.
- As soon as one man is freed up, then they need to make their way to the next level of blocking – which would be the linebacker.

Fold Pull

- A down block on one side of the play usually means that someone is pulling on another side.
- 4 different kinds of pulls: **Fold** (one player down blocks and the inside player blocks immediately off the outside player; a tight block). Tight enough to steal the down blocker's wallet.
- The fold block is an exchange between a block on a down lineman to a linebacker. Can be against two down defensive linemen.

- The first step for the fold puller is similar to a reach step. It is a kick step back about 6 inches.
- Second step is a crossover step with a slight turn in the direction of the pull.
- The third step will square the body up right at the point where the tackle's outside hip was.
- Once around the hip, this block becomes a running drive block.
- Set up a marker for players to pull around so they can learn to stay tight. Give them a reference point downfield to aim for once they begin the running drive block.
- Show them the ideal path to run once the initial footwork is complete. This path will depend on where you want the play to develop.
- Clear the down block, keep tight, and then square the body up to meet the defender with a running drive block.

Run Blocking – Part 6 – Advanced Part Two

Long Pull

- This is often a pull that your tackles will use.
- Not a tight exchange pull – like the ones that you use for guards.
- Usually from the opposite side of the line to the play side or offside linebacker.
- The first step is a drop step with the inside foot.
- The shoulders are turned to the direction they are going to run.
- The shoulders can turn to the sideline, but it is important for the pulling tackle to see where his defender is – in order to make sure they can get into position for the proper block.
- Always need to find the linebacker. See what the defense is doing.
- Get depth from the line of scrimmage with the first step. Just behind the down blockers on the line.
- Square around with the second step.
- Stay tight to the down blockers (steal their wallet), and keep the head up to see where the block is. The defender may come around (kick out block), or they may come through the line on a blitz, or they may get blocked by another lineman – the puller needs to keep the head up to find the block.
- Look for the kick out block to create the hole for the running back. Cut up off the down blocking tackle to find the block downfield.
- Strike forward off the down blocking tackle to make contact with a defender.
- Teach the players the terminology (fold, long, etc) so they understand the different pulls and the movement that is associated with it.

Open or Trap Pull

- This block is often run by a guard that is going to move quickly along the line to kick out a defensive end.

- Drop step with the inside foot to gain depth from the line of scrimmage.
- Shoulders should square up
- The path for the pulling guard is at a slight angle into the line of scrimmage.
- On trap blocks, the pulling player wants to get the head on the inside shoulder of the defender they are about to block.
- Do not let the defender outflank and come underneath the offensive lineman.
- Pull the hand out of the ground – “Pull the Plug” out of the ground. Start the lawnmower to start the pull, turn the shoulders and give direction down the line of scrimmage.

Skip Pull

- This is the most difficult one to teach.
- Players must cross their feet over.
- The rest of the line will down block.
- The pulling player will drop back with the outside foot this time on the first step, while still keeping the shoulders generally pointed forward to the line of scrimmage.
- Get good depth off the line of scrimmage in order to clear the down blockers, but stay tight to them when making the pull.
- The second step is made right next to the first step, but with the inside foot. This is the ‘skip’ in the skip pull. The lineman will skip out of their stance. The skipping is almost like a karaoke movement
- One of the only blocks that you will ask a player to lift slightly from their low pad position – as they move out of their first or second step.
- The body stays square to the line of scrimmage while ‘skipping’.
- The third step is forward toward the hole they are going to drive block through.
- Important to sink the pads lower as the player is targeting a player to block and then make the strike and drive through the player.
- Teach the player one step at a time – progression learning is the easiest way to help your players learn to block well.