

TOP 5 ***DEFENSIVE BACK*** ***DRILLS***



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Drill #1: Pursuit Drill

Purpose:

This drill will help players learn the proper angle of pursuit on the ball carrier. It will also help the defense learn to react to a play. Finally, the ball carriers in the drill can also drill receiving a pitch and running with the ball down the sideline.

How It Works:

This drill will use a full defense (all 11 players), 2 potential ball carriers, and a coach with a few footballs.

A cone will be set on each side of the field between the hash marks and the sideline at the line of scrimmage.

The 2 potential ball carriers will line-up on each hash mark about 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage.

The coach will line-up on the line of scrimmage with a football. The defense will align in the called formation and will play the called defense.

The coach will simulate the snap and either drop back to throw the ball or pitch the ball to one of the ball carriers. If the coach drops back to pass then the defense should drop back into their zones. The coach will throw the ball deep and high.

The defense should try to intercept the ball at its highest point and then return the ball. The other defenders should form a blocking wall for the return.

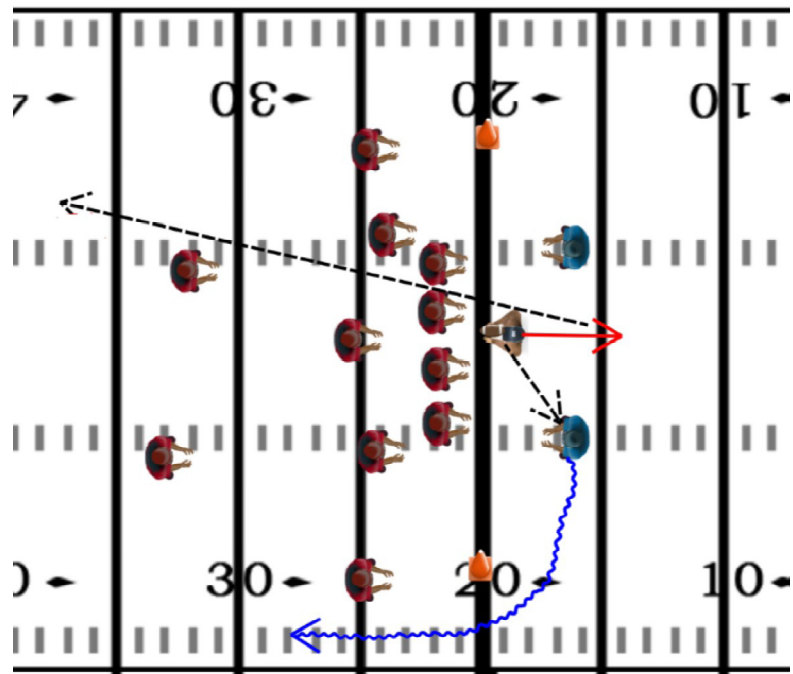


Figure 1: Pursuit Drill

The coach could also pivot and pitch the ball to one of the ball carriers. The ball carrier will take the pitch, place the ball in his outside arm, and run around the cone to the sideline. The defense should not react until the ball carrier has the ball. Then they should pursue using the proper angles.

Coaching Tips:

Coaches should make sure all the defenders are reacting properly and playing the proper angles. Also, the coach should make sure the ball carrier is receiving the pitch with his hands and tucking the ball away properly.

Drill #2: Modified Passing Tree

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is for the quarterback and receivers to work on all the different routes and throws while being defended.

How it Works:

This drill is run with a center, a quarterback, two wide receivers, and two defensive backs at one time.

All the defensive backs and wide receivers should take turns taking part in this drill.

The wide receivers will take turns running all the routes that the quarterback will be required to throw.

For example, the wide receiver on the right might run a 5 yard out, then the wide receiver on the left might run a slant, and then another wide receiver on the right might run a 15 yard out.

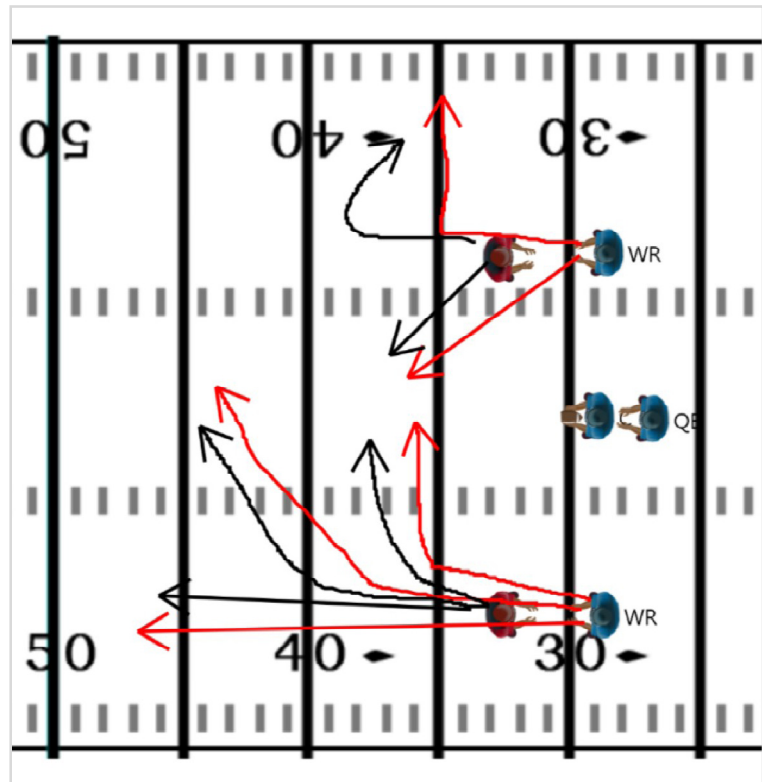


Figure 2: Modified Passing Tree

The purpose of this drill is for the quarterback to work on every throw in the offense and for the receivers to work on running every route. Also, the defensive backs will get work with man coverage.

However, they should not try to make a play on the ball. They should simply try to break the receivers' concentration as the ball is coming in. The defensive backs can do this by shouting and waving their hands in front of the receiver.

Coaching Points:

A coach should make sure that the quarterback is taking the proper drop back (3-step drop, 5 step drop, etc.) and that the ball is coming out in rhythm and on time. The receivers must run precise routes. The defensive backs need to have good coverage and be sound fundamentally (turning hips, etc.).

Drill #3: Play Centerfield

Purpose:

This drill helps a safety read a quarterback's eyes and helps the safety to break on the ball and defend long passes.

How it Works:

This drill uses a quarterback, two receivers, and a safety.

The safety will play about 15 yards off the ball in the center of the field. Both receivers will run fly routes on opposite sides of the field.

The quarterback will throw to one of the receivers. The safety must break on the ball and deflect the ball before it gets to the receiver.

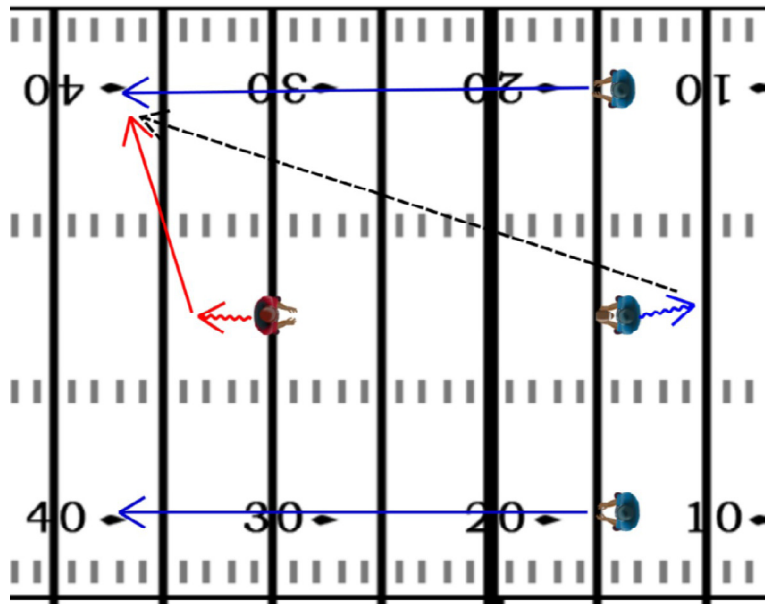


Figure 3: Play Centerfield

Coaching Points:

The coach should make sure the safety is moving backward while watching the quarterback. The safety must keep the play in front of him.

Once the quarterback throws the ball, the safety should turn his hips and sprint to where the ball is going to come down. The safety should read the quarterback's eyes for a clue as to where the ball is going.

Drill #4: Chase Drill

Purpose:

Often a defender has to run a play down from behind. This drill will help teach the proper technique for chasing a ball carrier down and making the tackle.

How It Works:

For this drill you need 2 lines of players and 2 cones. 1 cone should be placed about 5 yards from the sideline.

The other cone should be placed about 2 yards behind and 3 yards to the right of the 1st

cone.

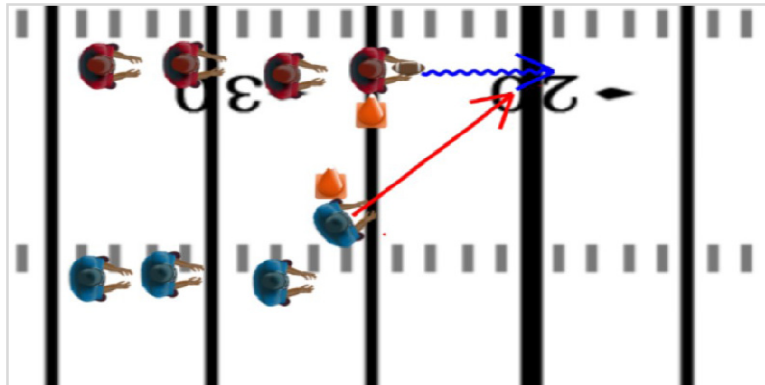


Figure 4: Chase Drill

A line of ball carriers will line-up at the cone nearest the sideline and a line of tacklers will line-up at the other cone. On the whistle, the ball carrier will run at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed down the sideline and the tackler will chase him down. The tackler should chase down the ball carrier and make the tackle from behind.

Eventually this drill can involve the ball carrier running at full speed too. However, the tacklers need to understand the proper angle of pursuit first and the inside cone may need to be moved more toward the middle of the field.

Result: Coaches should make sure the tackler is chasing down the ball carrier at the proper angle. Also, the tackler should wrap the ball carrier correctly and not try to make the tackle too soon (before he's close enough to wrap properly).

Drill #5: Wide Out Stock Block

Purpose:

Good run blocking by receivers is essential for a good ground attack.

How It Works:

Put a defensive back up against a wide receiver. You can add a runner for drill's sake later on. When the coach blows the whistle, the wide receiver will attempt to block out the defensive back. While this is not a drive block, like an offensive lineman would execute, the essential tactic for the wide receiver is to get in front of the defensive back and screen him out of the play – without holding him.

Receivers must try to stay engaged with the defensive back for at least 7 seconds – the estimated amount of time it would take for the running play to get to that side and past the defensive back.

The defensive back tries to fight off the wide receiver and make the play.

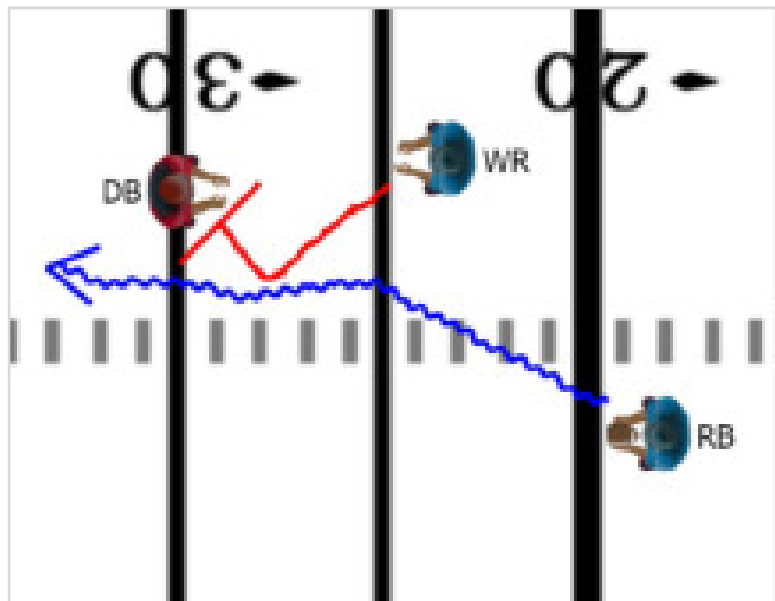


Figure 5: Wide Out Stock Block

Coaching Tips:

More work on blocking for the wide receivers will show in your ground game, as defensive backs will be prevented from making plays on the ball.

BONUS Drill: Double Move Defend

Purpose:

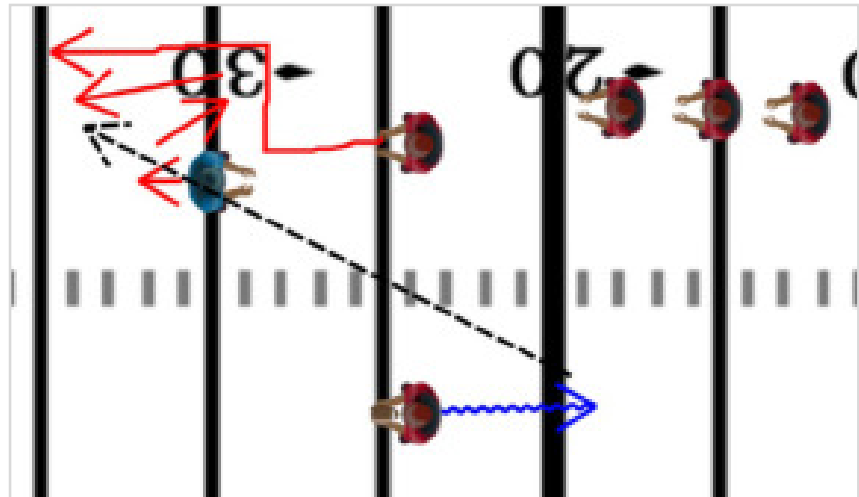
Cornerbacks can get burned on a double move. Teaching players to notice what the quarterback is going to do when he passes the ball should help that.

How It Works:

Set a line-up of receivers and defenders along with a quarterback. Set up and execution in the diagram below.

This is a drill where the cornerback must divide his attention on the quarterback and the receiver. The receiver will run out about 7 yards, do an out pattern, but then turn it up field.

Many cornerbacks can get sucked in by the out, hoping to get a good, clean break on the ball to either intercept it, or to try and make a quick tackle.



This can create problems, as the defender commits to the pass and the receiver turns his route up field and right by the defender. So, the defender needs to watch the quarterback out of the corner of his eye – to see if the shoulders are aimed his way, if he has both hands on the ball, and if the QB takes a step forward.

Coaching Tips:

In this drill, the QB should attempt to throw the out pass occasionally, but then try the deep ball. The defenders need to learn to be patient, and that a short 6 or 7 yard gain is much more appealing than a long touchdown pass over their heads. Once a defender knows what to expect from a wide receiver and the QB, they will have a greater success ratio against a double move.