

TOP 5 ***DEFENSIVE LINE*** ***DRILLS***



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Drill #1: 3 on 1 - O-Line vs D-Line

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to teach the proper set for an offensive lineman against defensive lineman lined-up in all different formations.

How it Works:

For this drill you will need all the offensive linemen and all the defensive linemen. There will be one offensive lineman taking on three defensive linemen.

The coach will call out the cadence and stand where the quarterback would normally be so the players have a reference point for where to attack / protect.

Before the drill the offensive lineman will get into his stance. The defensive players will line-up opposite the offensive lineman.

One defender will be head-up on the offensive lineman, one will be on his outside shoulder, and the final defender will line-up on his inside shoulder.

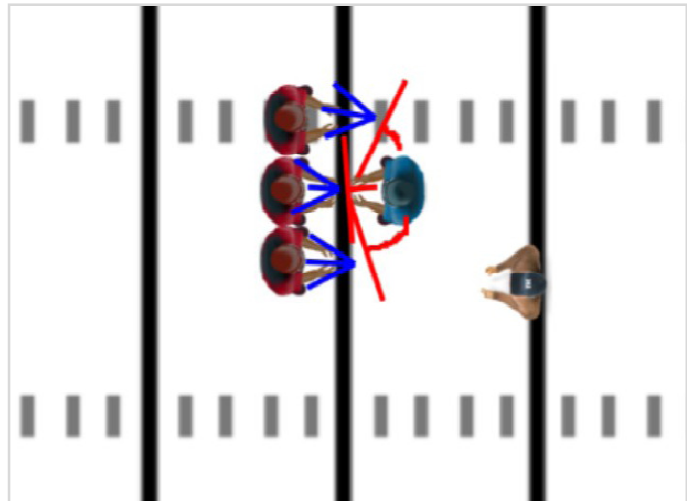


Figure 1: 3 vs 1 Drill

When the coach calls out the cadence the defender on the outside will rush.

The offensive lineman will set and punch the rusher and use the short set, kick set, or power set (depending on the defender's alignment).

Once the first punch is done, then the outside rusher will stop and the middle rusher will go. Once the punch is done on the middle rusher then the inside rusher will go.

Coaching Points:

The coach should make sure that the offensive lineman is using proper footwork and is employing the proper blocking technique. The offensive lineman's feet should stay should width apart and the offensive lineman should initiate the contact without losing his balance or his position.

Drill #2: Scramble and Throw

Purpose:

This drill helps a quarterback become comfortable evading a pass rush and throwing the ball, while helping your defensive linemen improve their pass rush skills.

How it Works:

For this drill you need a quarterback, a center, a wide receiver, a defensive back, and a defensive lineman.

The quarterback will line-up in the shotgun. The wide receiver will line-up wide right or wide left, the defensive back will cover the wide receiver, the center will snap the ball, and the defensive lineman will rush the quarterback.

The center will snap the ball to the quarterback and then allow the defensive lineman to rush the quarterback.

The defensive lineman can either rush the quarterback or use a rushing move as he goes by the center and then attack the quarterback.

The quarterback will take the snap, evade the rush of the defensive lineman, and throw the ball to the wide receiver.

The wide receiver should run a specified route (a hot route) or break the route off to help the quarterback. The defensive back should work on covering the wide receiver.

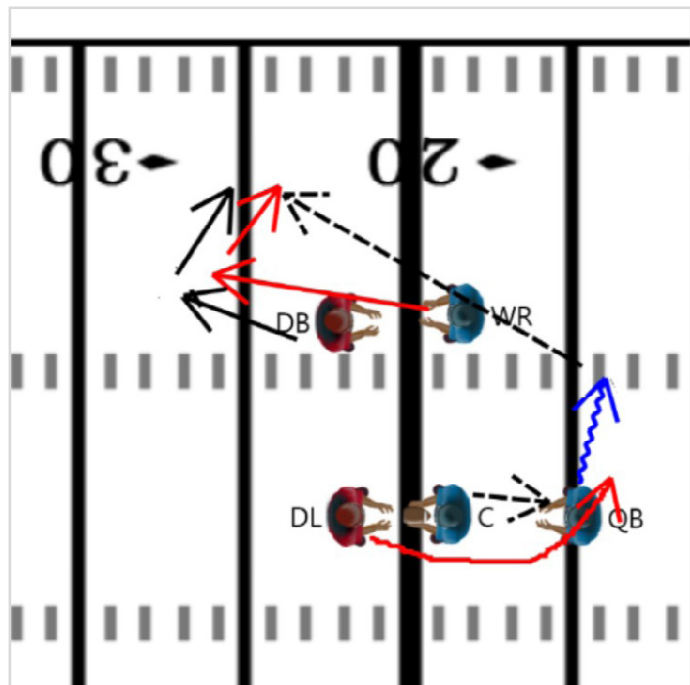


Figure 2: Scramble and Throw Drill

To make this drill more challenging a second receiver and second defensive back can be added. A second defensive lineman can also be added and the center can be assigned to block one of the defensive linemen.

Coaching Points:

The coach should make sure that the receiver is running the proper route and cutting the route off to help the quarterback.

The quarterback needs to scramble with two hands on the ball. He needs to secure the ball. He also needs to be aware of the rush and elude it while keeping his eyes downfield looking to throw the ball.

Drill #3: High Speed Chase

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help the defensive line recognize the direction of plays and the type of plays and then to react accordingly.

Since this drill is fast paced it will also help with conditioning.

How it Works:

For this drill you need four defensive linemen, all five offensive linemen, a quarterback, and a running back.

For this drill there will be three plays run in quick succession.

There will be a dive with the running back, a sweep with the running back, and then a swing pass or a wheel route to the running back.

The defensive line must try to make the tackle on all three plays. On the dive and the sweep the defensive linemen should try to tackle the running back.

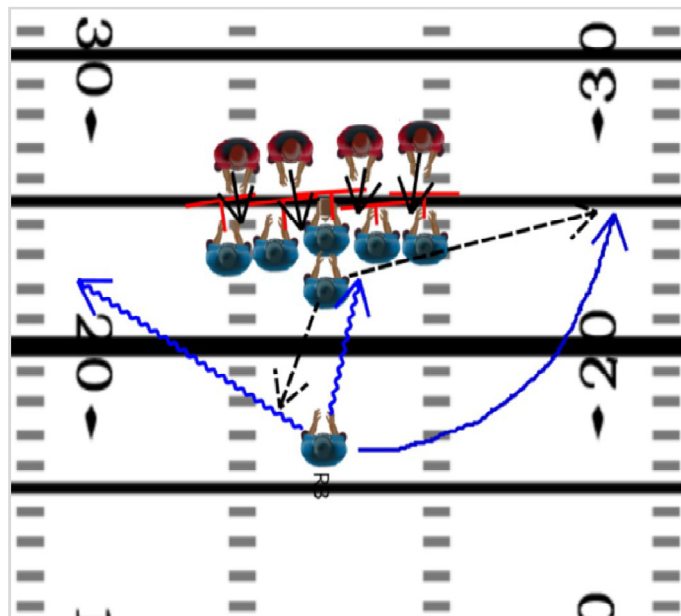


Figure 3: High Speed Chase

On the pass play the line should try to break through and sack the quarterback.

As soon as one play is done then the players should immediately line-up and run the next play. All three plays should be run in quick succession.

Coaching Points:

The coach should make sure that the players aren't cheating and leaning toward where a play is going. If necessary, the order of plays can be changed so that the defense is kept honest.

Drill #4: 2 v 2 Chute Drill

Purpose:

This drill will help players with a variety of things. It will help offensive lineman block, defensive lineman take on a block, defenders read the ball carrier and tackle, and it will help ball carriers run with the ball.

How It Works:

For this drill players will line-up about 6-8 yards apart and they will face each other.

The 2 rows of players will form a chute for the drill to take place in.

There will be 2 offensive players at one end of the chute and 2 defensive players at the other end of the chute. Each player will have a role.

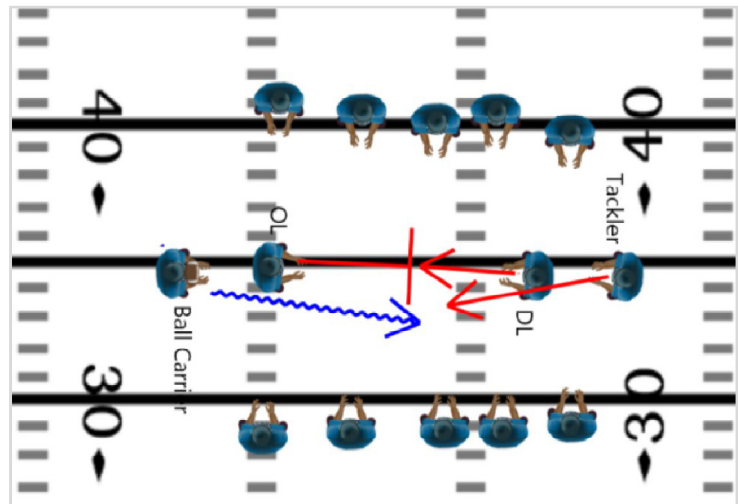


Figure 4: 2 v 2 Chute Drill

Of the 2 defensive players one will take on a block and the other will be free to try to make the tackle.

One offensive player will block for the other offensive player who will carry the ball.

On the whistle the blocking offensive player will block the first defensive player in the chute. The ball carrier will cut off the block and then try to get past both defenders. The defense will try to tackle the ball carrier.

Coaches should assign players their roles so that the correct players are against each other and taking part in the right part of the drill.

Coaching Points:

Coaches should look to make sure all players use solid technique. The blocking and taking on the block should be analyzed as should the ball carrier cutting off the block and taking on the tackler.

Finally, the tackler should properly read where the ball carrier is cutting and should tackle the ball carrier with proper technique.

Drill #5: Step-Up and Fill

Purpose:

This drill will help defenders with pursuit, stepping up in a hole that a running back is hitting, and tackling.

How It Works:

This drill can be run at $\frac{1}{2}$ speed, at $\frac{3}{4}$ speed, or at full speed. It should be taught at $\frac{1}{2}$ speed and then the speed can be increased as the players become familiar with the drill.

You need 6 cones for this drill. The cones should be in a line and spread out over 10 yards.

You will have 2 lines of players – a line of ball carriers and a line of defenders.

On the whistle the ball carrier will run parallel with the cones. Then he will pick 2 cones to run between.

Meanwhile the defender will pursue down the line (being sure not to cross his feet).

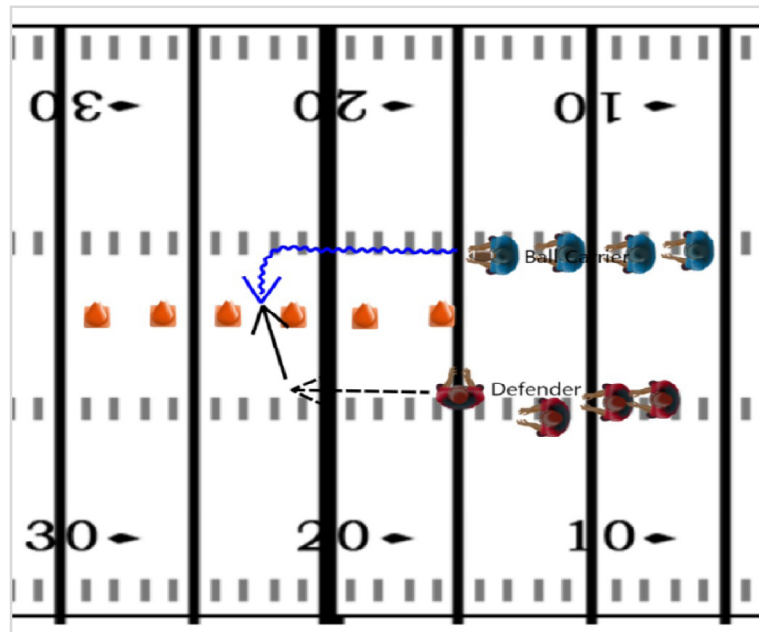


Figure 5: Step Up and Fill

When the ball carrier tries to run through the cones, the defender will step-up and fill the hole. He'll take on the ball carrier and tackle him in the hole (the space between the cones).

Coaching Points:

The coaches should make sure the defenders are pursuing the ball carrier properly. They should pay attention to the footwork, the defender staying low, and the shoulders staying parallel to the line of scrimmage. The players should use the proper technique to tackle as well.