

TOP 5 ***LINEBACKER*** ***DRILLS***



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Drill #1: Short Yardage Drill

Purpose:

This drill works on a running back getting a couple yards and short yardage situations (such as goal line) and the drill also works on linebackers tackling in such situations.

How it Works:

This drill requires a quarterback, a running back, a center, a linebacker, and a defensive lineman. The ball is placed at the two yard line of the defense.

The defensive lineman lines up over the center, the linebacker lines up behind the defensive lineman, the quarterback is under center, and the running back is behind the quarterback.

The quarterback will take the snap from center and handoff to the running back.

The center will block the defensive lineman, the running back will go to the left or the right of the center and the linebacker will attack the running back.

The defensive lineman will also try to tackle the ball carrier. The two defensive players will try to stop the running back for no gain while the running back must try to get the two yards to the end zone.

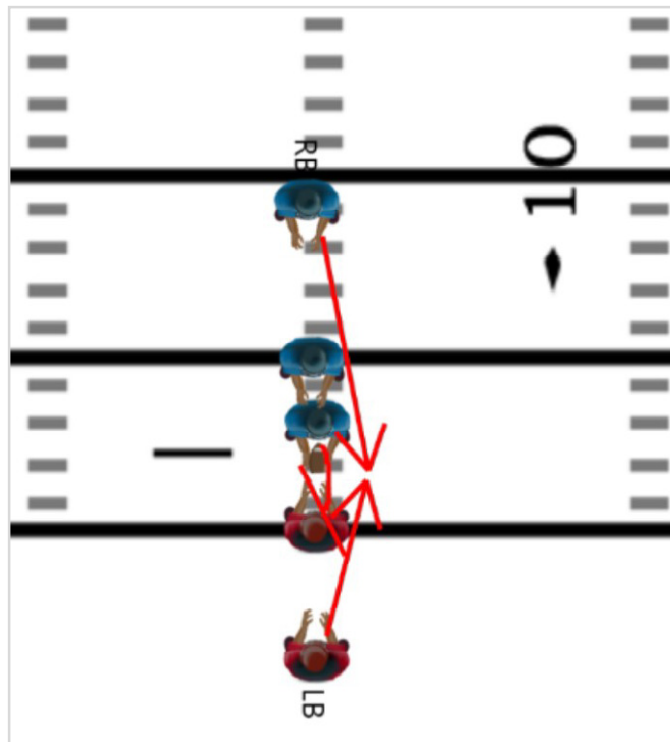


Figure 1: Short Yardage Drill

Coaching Points:

The coach should look for the running back protecting the ball. Also, it's important for the running back to get low and drive forward. The running back should fall forward and get as much yardage as possible.

The linebacker should attack the running back and get his pads low to make a tackle. Not only should the linebacker hit the ball carrier hard, but he must also wrap-up.

Drill #2: Pick-Up the Blitz

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to work on the running back picking up the free blitzer.

How it Works:

For this drill a running back will go against a blitzer. Set-up three dummy blockers. Have a line of linebackers and defensive backs on the defensive side of the ball and a line of running backs on the offensive side of the ball.

The first player in the defensive line will go to the right side of the blocking dummies; the second defender will go to the left side, and the first player in the running back line will step-up.

The coach will stand behind the running back and signal which defender should blitz.

On the whistle the running back will take two steps to the inside (to protect inside first) and decide which defender to pick-up as he takes his two steps.

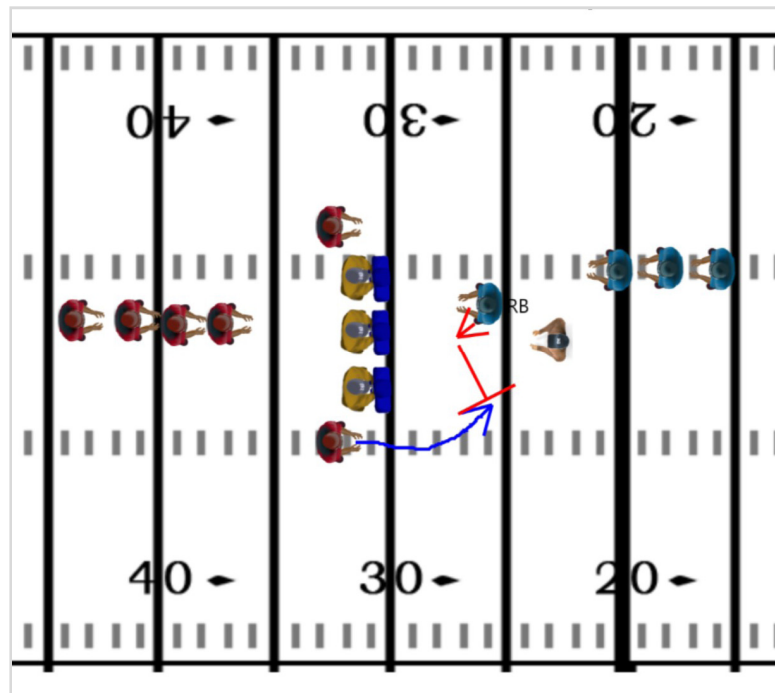


Figure 2: Pick Up The Blitz

Then he needs to move over and pick-up the blitzer. The defender who blitzes will go back to the end of the defender's line while the next player will step into his place.

Coaching Points:

The coach should make sure the running back is taking two steps to the inside (blitzes should always be picked up from the inside to the outside). The running back should recognize where the blitz is coming from and keep a solid base as he moves over to make the block.

Drill #3: Lead the Sweep

Purpose:

This drill helps offensive linemen pull and block, it helps running backs learn to follow a block and cut off a block, and it helps linebackers to step-up and take on a blocker and then try to make a tackle.

How it Works:

This drill requires a coach (or quarterback), offensive linemen, running backs, and linebackers. It also requires a cone to be placed near the sideline just inside the numbers.

One offensive lineman will get into his stance. A running back will line-up behind him.

The coach (or quarterback) will line-up to the right and ahead of the running back.

But slightly behind the offensive linemen. A linebacker will line-up outside the cone and about 5 yards back.

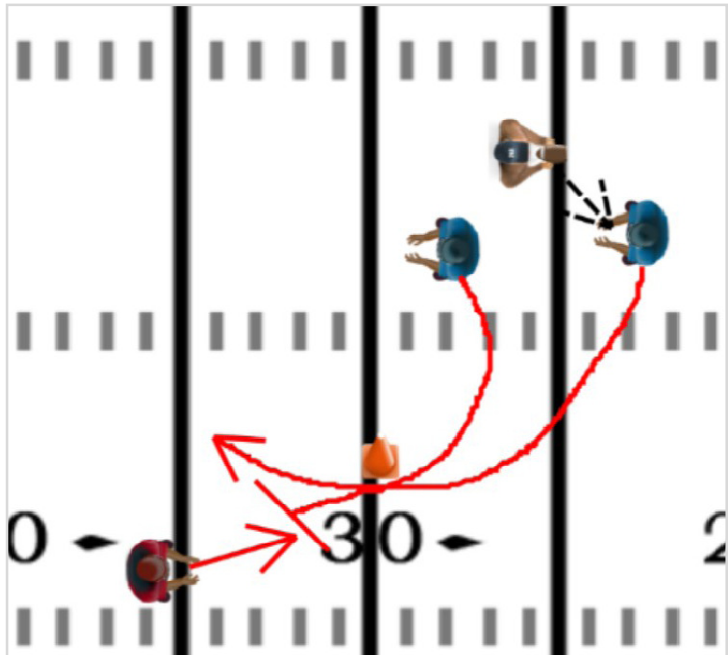


Figure 3: Lead the Sweep

The coach (or quarterback) will call out the cadence, simulate the snap of the ball, and pitch the ball to the running back.

The offensive lineman must pull around the cone and block the linebacker. The linebacker will step-up and meet the block. The running back will sweep around the cone and cut inside or outside depending on the block.

The linebacker must try to shed the block and make the tackle, while the offensive lineman must try to maintain the block long enough to allow the ball carrier to come clear.

Coaching Points:

The coach should make sure the offensive lineman isn't leaning before the snap and tipping off the direction of the play. The coach should also see the lineman hustling to the edge to make the block.

The linebacker should step-up and take on the block with a strong base.

The running back should be patient and follow the block of the lineman. Then the running back should hit the corner hard or stick his foot in the ground, and cut inside.

Drill #4: Linebacker Challenge

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help the linebacker make all the necessary defensive plays.

How it Works:

For this drill you need a center, a quarterback, a running back, and a linebacker. There will be three different plays all run in succession.

First the running back will take the handoff from the quarterback and then run to either side of the center (it's the running back's choice), the center will snap the ball and not block, the quarterback will handoff to the running back, and the linebacker must step-up and make the tackle.

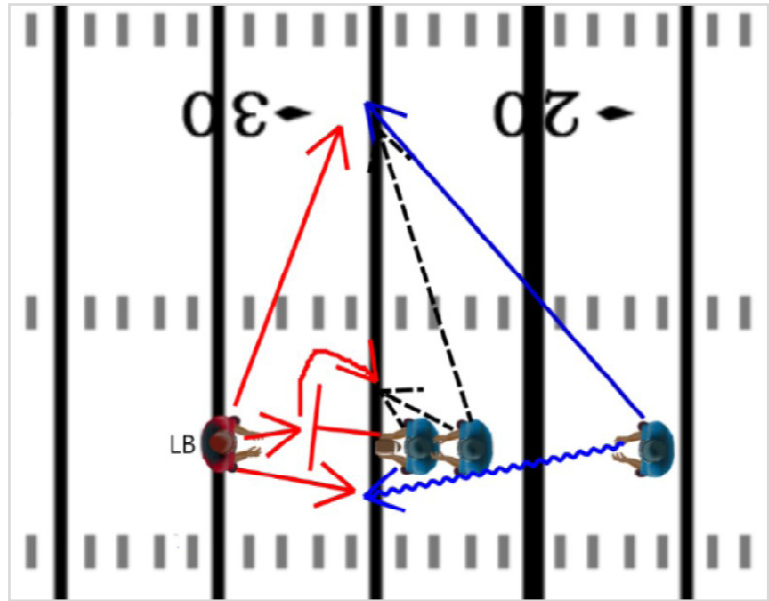


Figure 4: Linebacker Challenge

Once the play is over, all players will hurry and line-up again, the linebacker must get back into a set position, and the running back will go out for a pass and the linebacker must cover him.

The next play begins immediately and the quarterback takes the snap and rolls the ball on the ground. The center will block the linebacker. The linebacker must shed the block and recover the ball.

Coaching Points:

The coach should look for the linebacker to step-up and fill and make the tackle on the first play. Then the linebacker should stay with the running back on the second play. Finally, on the third play the linebacker should take on the center's block, shed it, and recover the simulated fumble. Also, the coach should make sure that the linebacker is getting back into his stance between plays.

Drill #5: Fumble Recovery Drill

Purpose:

This is a great drill to help players become more aggressive. It also helps players learn to go after a fumble with reckless abandon.

How It Works: For this drill 2 players will try to recover a loose football.

You will need 2 lines of players. You may want to pair up players of similar size and age.

The 2 lines should be about 8 yards apart. The coach will have footballs and stand between the 2 lines of players.

The first player in each line will step up and wait for the coach to throw the ball out. The coach can either throw the ball or roll the ball out in front of the players.

The coach should try to get the ball out away from the players and an equal distance from each player.

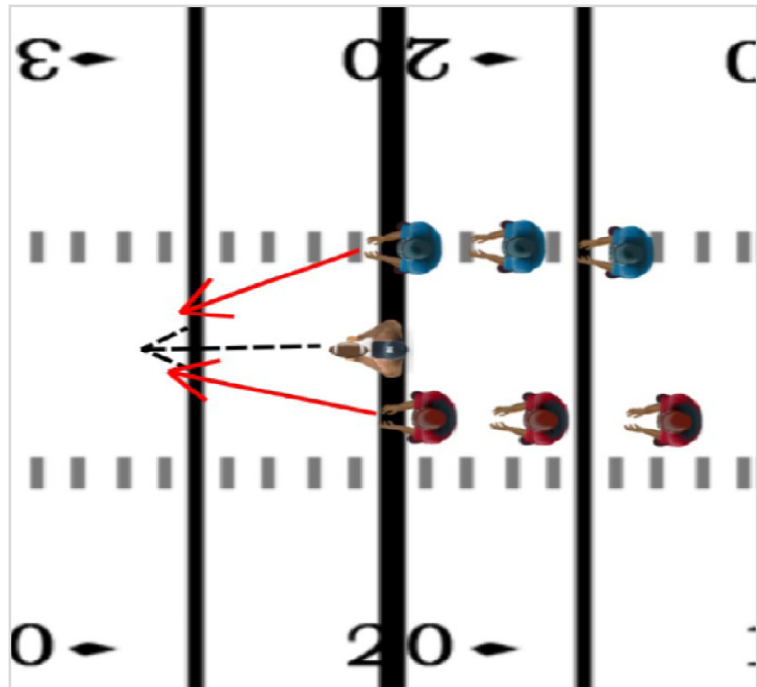


Figure 5: Fumble Recovery Drill

Both players will charge after the ball and try to recover it. The coach can elect to make the player who doesn't recover the ball run a lap or do a similar activity.

Coaching Points:

Coaches should look to make sure both players are aggressively going after the ball.