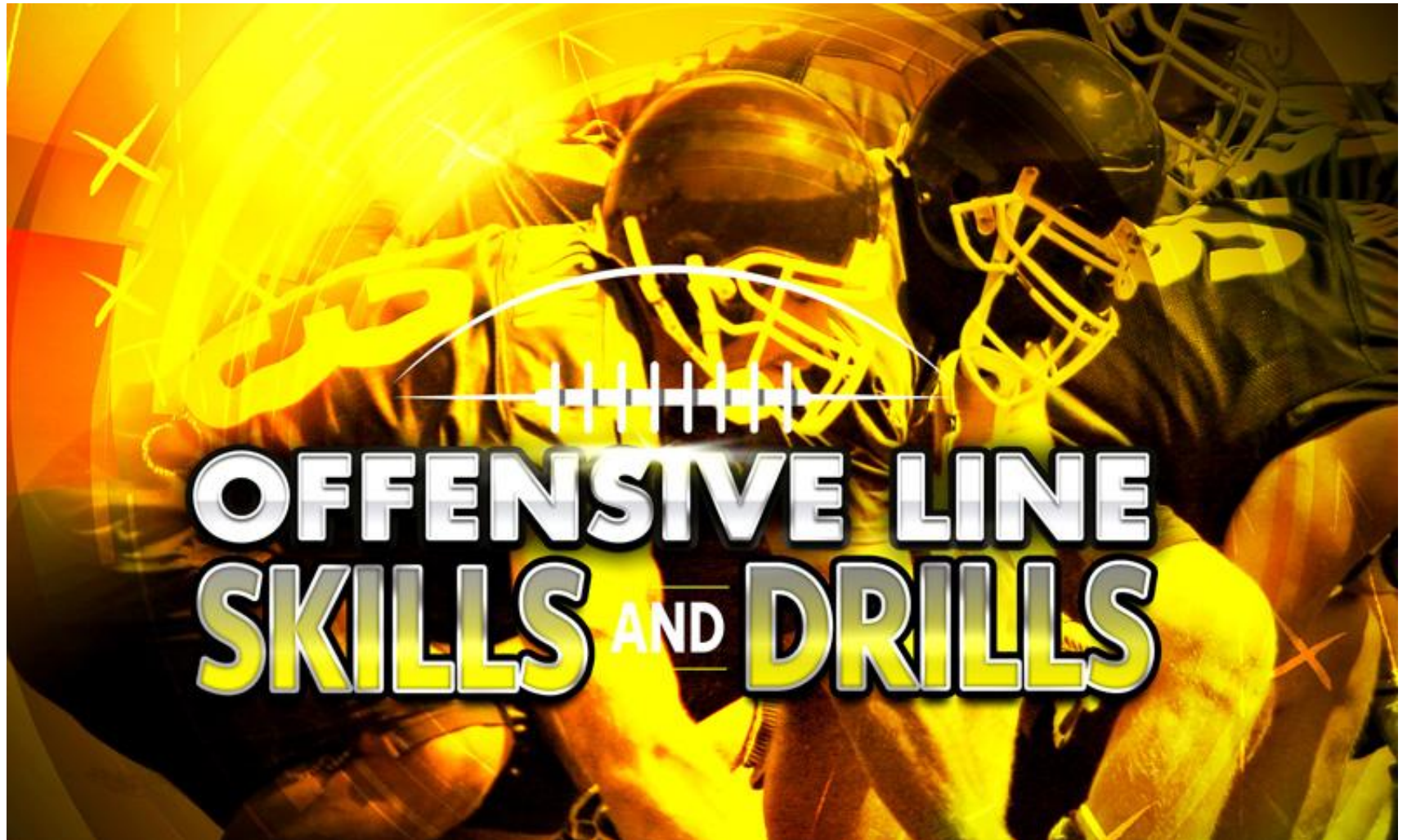




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INTRODUCTION

We've all heard that "quarterback is the most important position on the field" and that "defense wins championships" but an argument could also be made that the positions along the offensive line are the most important on the field and that great offensive line play wins championships.

After all, you can have a terrific defense but if the offense doesn't score any points its going to be tough to win. Likewise, you can have a great quarterback but if he is constantly on his back it's going to be hard for him to complete any passes or make any great runs.

Nearly all successful football plays first require the offensive line to either open a hole or protect the quarterback.

That's why "it all starts upfront" is just as important as any of the other quotes mentioned earlier on this page.

In this guide, you'll find drills for basic blocking techniques your offensive lineman must master if your team is going to have success against the opposing defense.

Practice these drills, ensure performing these blocks becomes like second nature to your offensive lineman, and watch your points and yards per game soar.

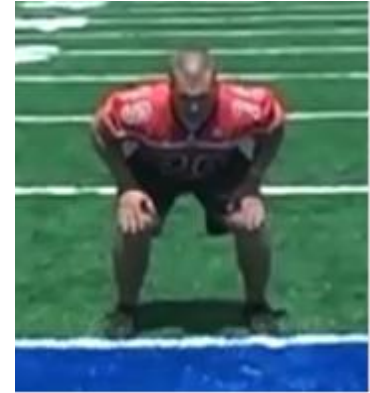
O-LINE POSITIONS

The **Pre-Set**, **Stance** and **Hitting** positions are the foundation an offensive lineman will build from. Players must master the mechanics of these positions to ensure successful blocks and reduce the risk of injury.

Pre-Set Position:

This starting position gets a player ready to comfortably and steadily move into a **Stance** position.

- Feet at shoulder width apart.
- Toes pointed inward or pigeon toed.
 - This allows for some movement with the feet as he works into a stance and the feet straighten out.
- Heels ¼" off the ground.
 - Never flat footed- this will give away whether it's a pass or run.
- Hands on thigh pads.
- Drop tail and sink hips.

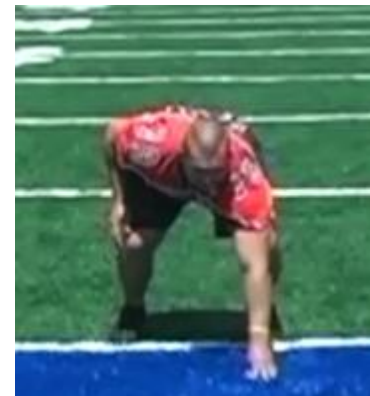


Pre-Set Position

Stance Position:

Getting into the proper **Stance** position is important. Players must be able to do this quickly and naturally. From this position a player should be able to either run block or pass and set block.

- Tail slightly above head.
- 50% of weight on balls of feet, 50% on fingertips.
- Look through the eyebrows.
 - Do not pull the head back and strain the neck.
- Hand down, even with knee with fingertips on the ground.
- Off hand is cocked beside knee.



Stance Position

See all these drills demonstrated on video → <http://www.football-tutorials.com/p/oline-upgrade>

O-LINE POSITIONS

(Continued)

Hitting Position:

Getting into the correct **Hitting** position is essential to utilizing a player's strength and reducing the risk of injury.

- Create a tripod from the hairline of the head to the heels of the hands.
- The head should always be up.
 - Never drop the head down as this is a player's weakest position.
 - Think of a "Power Line" from the feet all the way up through the top of the head. That "line" is broken when a player is bending over with his head down.
- Turtle your head as you get ready to make contact.
 - Shrug the shoulders up around neck.
 - This will protect the head and neck.



Correct Hitting Position



Incorrect Hitting Position



Turtling Head

See all these drills demonstrated on video → <http://www.football-tutorials.com/p/oline-upgrade>

DRILL #1 - STANCE TO START

Purpose: A player must be able to get out of the **Stance** position quickly and efficiently. It is important to master the first step taken out of the this position. It should be a small, controlled step.

Setup: This drill can be performed by any number of players standing anywhere on the field. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

Right or Left Foot Pick Up Step

1. The players should begin in the Pre-Set position.
2. The coach will say "**Down.**"
3. The players move into the Stance position.
4. The coach should walk around the players evaluating form and make corrections where they are needed.
5. The coach will say "**Go.**"
6. The players take a pick up step and freeze in that position.
 - Thumbs come toward breastplate (like cocking a gun).
 - Pick up the indicated foot and move it slightly forward.
 - Set it down and freeze.
 - Keep a flat back.
7. The coach will again evaluate form and make corrections.
 - Hands should be open with thumbs cocked up.
 - The player should be balanced.
 - Pads are parallel the over knees.

Coaching Tips:

- This should be a high repetition drill. The more it is practiced the faster a player will create muscle memory.
- The worse thing to do on the first step is to overstep. If his step is too wide and he makes contact with a DL, he will corkscrew and come off the block.
- Always have both feet on the ground when making contact with a DL.



Stance to Start Drill – Freeze After
Pick Up Step

DRILL #2 - TWO STEP POP WITH CATCH-UP STEP

Purpose: This drill builds upon the Stance to Start Drill by adding the next step – the catch up step.

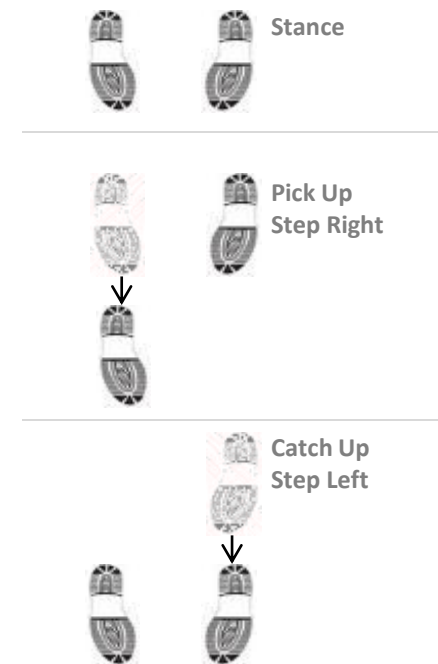
Setup: This drill can be performed by any number of players standing anywhere on the field. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. The coach will call “**Right pick up**” or “**Left pick up**” indicating which foot to start the drill with.
2. The players should begin in the Pre-Set position.
3. The coach will say “**Down.**”
4. The players move into the Stance position.
5. The coach will say “**Go.**”
6. The players take a pick up step.
7. The players quickly take a catch up step with the other foot and freeze.
 - Bring foot parallel with the first.
 - Roll hips under.
 - Pop the arms by punching the hands out and slightly up and locking the elbows.
8. The coach will evaluate form and make corrections.

Coaching Tips

- When evaluating form, make sure the player’s shoulder pads are over his knees and his hips are tucked under.
- Emphasize how important it is not to overstep with that first pick up step. Keep the stride shallow and solid.



Two Step Pop with Catch Up Step Drill – Freeze After Catch Up Step

DRILL #3 - DRIVE BLOCK VS. HEAD-UP DEFENSIVE PLAYER

Purpose: This drill practices the most basic block- the drive block. This block should be used against a head-up defensive player. Part one of this drill is the same as the Two Step Pop, but utilizes a bag so the player is able to practice making contact. Part two has the player doing a full drive block against the bag with forward motion.

Setup: This drill can be performed by any number of players standing anywhere on the field. Each player will need a partner to hold up a bag. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

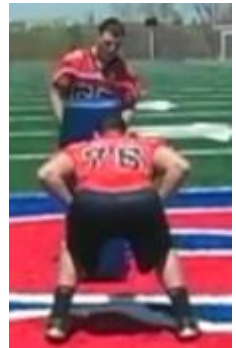
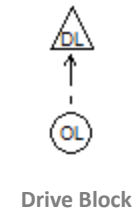
Execution:

Part One

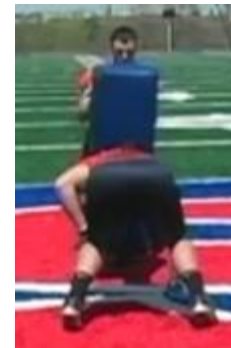
1. The coach will call **“Right pick up”** or **“Left pick up”** indicating which foot to start the drill with.
2. The players should begin in the Pre-Set position. His partner should be standing a few feet in front of him holding the bag.
3. The coach will say **“Down.”**
4. The players move into the Stance position.
5. The coach will say **“Go.”**
6. The players take a pick up step.
7. The players quickly take a catch up step with the other foot, punch into the bag and freeze.
 - You should see and hear the impact of the punch into the bag.
8. The coach will evaluate form and make corrections while the player is holding the freeze position.
 - Look at the player’s “base.” His feet should be parallel and shoulder width (or slightly wider) apart.

(Continued)

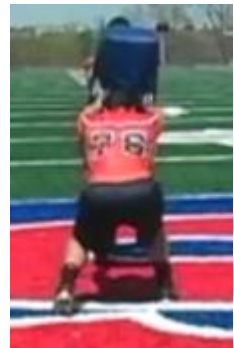
See all these drills demonstrated on video → <http://www.football-tutorials.com/p/oline-upgrade>



Pre-Set



Stance



Freeze

DRILL #3 - DRIVE BLOCK VS. HEAD-UP DEFENSIVE PLAYER

Part Two

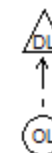
1. Follow steps 1-6 of Part One.
2. The players quickly take a catch up step with the other foot and punch into the bag.
 - Lock out arms after the punch.
3. Drive the bag forward while keeping the feet moving.
 - The feet should be pounding the ground quickly (like pistons).
 - Keep a good base while driving the bag.
4. The coach will blow a whistle to end the drill.

Coaching Tips:

- Always make sure the player has both feet solidly on the ground before he makes contact with the bag.
- Make sure the partner is standing close enough so the player does not have to lunge in order to hit the bag.
- In a game situation the player will lead with the same foot in which the ball is travelling. If the ball is headed to the right, he uses a right foot pick up step.



Drive Block – Part Two



Drive Block

DRILL #4 – REACH BLOCK

Purpose: This drill practices the reach block which is important to use when a defender is using an outside technique because using a drive block may accidentally force the defender into the ball.

Setup: This drill can be performed by any number of players standing anywhere on the field. Each player will need a partner to hold up a bag. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

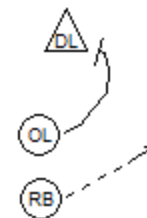
Execution:

1. The coach will call **“Right pick up”** or **“Left pick up”** indicating which foot to start the drill with.
2. The players should begin in the Pre-Set position. His partner should be standing a few feet in front of him holding the bag in an outside technique.
3. The coach will say **“Down.”**
4. The players move into the Stance position.
5. The coach will say **“Go.”**
6. The players take a pick up step toward the defenders outside knee.
 - Do not overstep and lose the base.
7. As he takes his second step, his face and hands should be aiming for the defenders outside shoulder pad with his body at a slight angle.
 - Holding him at his outside shoulder will severely limit his ability to make a tackle.
8. The coach will have the players alternate practicing freezing in this position and continuing the block by moving the line of scrimmage until the whistle is blown.

Coaching Tips

- The reach block is not a position step. It should always begin with a pick up step at a forward angle up the field, not directly to the side. If you move to the side first, you’ve lost the line of scrimmage.
- Once he has made contact with the DL he should be careful not to swing his hips as he may inadvertently get in the way of the running back.

See all these drills demonstrated on video → <http://www.football-tutorials.com/p/oline-upgrade>



Reach Block



Pre-Set



Stance



Freeze

DRILL #5 – DOWN BLOCK

Purpose: This block is used against an inside defender. A defender using an inside technique is usually trying to penetrate the line of scrimmage so we are trying to block that player while continuing to move the line of scrimmage.

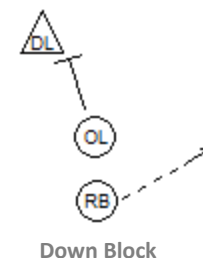
Setup: This drill can be performed by any number of players standing anywhere on the field. Each player will need a partner to hold up a bag. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. The coach will call **“Right pick up”** or **“Left pick up”** indicating which foot to start the drill with.
2. The players should begin in the Pre-Set position. His partner should be standing a few feet in front of him holding the bag as an inside defender with the bag turned at the player’s outside eye.
3. The coach will say **“Down.”**
4. The players move into the Stance position.
5. The coach will say **“Go.”**
6. The players take a pick up step toward the defenders head (or middle of the bag).
 - Do not overstep and lose the base.
7. As he takes his second step, he punches up into the bag.
8. The coach will have the players alternate practicing freezing in this position and continuing the block by moving the line of scrimmage until the whistle is blown.

Coaching Tips:

- The biggest mistake made during this block is called “stepping under the head.” When a player is trying to make a down block, like a center blocking back for a guard on a trap, he doesn’t step at the defender’s head, instead he twists his foot which leads to “stepping under his head.” This will allow the defender to penetrate the line of scrimmage.



Down Block



Pre-Set



Stance



Freeze

DRILL #6 – SCOOP BLOCK

Purpose: This is a good block for any option attack team. In this drill the center is working against a zero nose and is playing down on all four's. This cuts off the zero technique from sliding down the line of scrimmage.

Setup: This drill can be performed by any number of players standing anywhere on the field. Each player will need a partner to hold up a bag. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. The player should begin in the Pre-Set position. His partner should be standing a few feet in front of him holding the bag
2. The coach will say **"Down."**
3. The players move into the Stance position.
4. The coach will say **"Go."**
5. The player takes a step at a 45 degree line, trying to get his head across the knee of the nose man.
 - Watch that his first drop step moves forward, not to the side.
6. He stays down on his hands and knees and works on all fours as hard as he can go.

Coaching Tips:

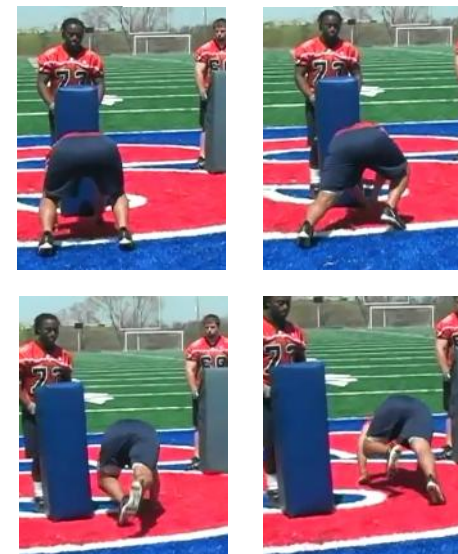
- After all players are comfortable with the basic blocks, begin running drills where players are each using different blocks at the same time.

Examples:

A. The center will run a scoop block, the play side guard will run a reach block, and the offside guard will run a down block at the down lineman.

B. The center and offside guards both run scoop blocks against the zero while the play side guard runs a reach block.

Scoop Block Drill



Example B: Scoop, Scoop, Reach



DRILL #7 – CENTER & GUARDS VS. 40 STACK

Purpose: This drill has a center and two guards against two inside players and two stacked linebackers. This drill protects the A side play gap.

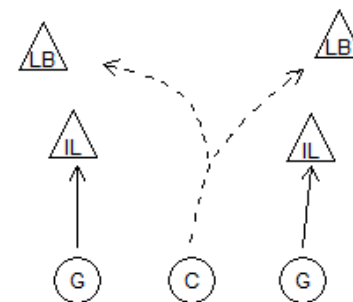
Setup: This drill is performed by seven players standing anywhere on the field (3 offense, 4 defense). The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. The players should begin in the Pre-Set position.
2. The coach will say “**Down.**”
3. The players move into the Stance position.
4. The coach will say “**Go.**”
5. When running the play to the right:
 - The guard has a 3 technique and will be making a reach block against his inside man.
 - The center is going to drop step play side, as he steps if the right side LB runs the A gap then that’s his block. However, if the LB steps away then he will turn backside and block the left side LB.
 - The offside guard covers the 2i by going down on all fours with a cutoff scoop block.
6. The coach blows a whistle to end the drill.

Coaching Tips:

- The center always steps play side gap with his near foot.
- If at any time you see a player using an improper technique, blow the whistle and tell everyone to freeze. Go around and make corrections.



Center & Guards vs. 40 Stack Drill



DRILL #8 – GUARD AND TACKLE SCOOP BLOCK

Purpose: This drill simulates a game time situation against a 4-3 or a 40 stack defense in which the center is uncovered so the primary scoop block will happen between the guard and the tackle.

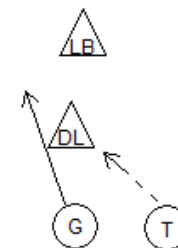
Setup: This drill is performed by four players standing anywhere on the field (2 offense, 2 defense). The defensive players will hold bags. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. The offensive players should begin in the Pre-Set position. The defensive players will be holding bags.
2. The coach will say “**Down.**”
3. The players move into the Stance position.
4. The coach will say “**Go.**”
5. The guard will come off the football and release with his inside pad through the inside pad of the down lineman. Make sure to stay close to the lineman to maintain the line of scrimmage.
The tackle will step to the head of the down lineman. If the lineman moves away, he will go for the backside linebacker to free safety.
6. The coach blows a whistle to end the drill.

Coaching Tips:

- It is the guard’s responsibility to communicate to the tackle that he has an inside technique.
- It is important that the tackle steps straight to and has his eye on the down lineman’s head. If the head moves away from him, he continues on that track because that gives him a chance to cut off the backside linebacker and also puts him on a straight line to be interference down the field.



Guard and Tackle Scoop
Block Drill



DRILL #9 – VEER BLOCK

Purpose: The veer block is used by all of the different positions, so practice this one with everyone at the same time. The goal of this block is to prevent the defensive player from getting access to the top of the shoulder pad, pushing the offensive player inside and closing the veer lane. Instead the offensive players want to turn their shoulders so that the defensive player gets the flat part of the back of the shoulder pads and glances off.

Setup: Line players up in a straight line across the width of the field. Players should have some target (real or imaginary) to point towards during execution of the drill. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. Players should begin in the preset position
2. The coach says “Down.”
3. Players move into the Stance position.
4. Coach says “Go.”
5. Players take one pick-up step toward the target (the linebacker) and freeze.
6. Do this several times to ensure players have the target in mind.
7. Now have players do a two-step and freeze.
8. As players take their second step they should roll their inside arm and shoulder
9. The coach blows the whistle to end the play.

Coaching Tips

- Players should focus on “dipping and ripping” their shoulder while keeping their elbow close to their body so that the defensive player can’t hook it.
- Things to watch for during the drill: Make sure players are in a good stance, execute a good pick-up step toward the target, that they rip and roll with the inside shoulder and shoulder pad while stepping up the field. If both steps go inside the player will be pushed inside and the veer lane will be closed.

The Veer Block – An Aggressive Escape Technique



Players in set position.



Dipping and ripping the shoulder in a veer right block.



Players perform a veer left block

DRILL #10 – ARC BLOCKING WITH TIGHT END

Purpose: This drill is specifically for tight ends. In this drill they learn how to get outside and block the force player (the defensive player who is coming up to take the pitch).

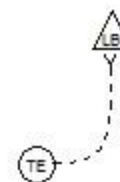
Setup: Line up your tight ends parallel across the field. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. Players begin in the preset position
2. When the coach says “Down,” the players move into the Stance position.
3. The coach then says “Go” to start the action.
4. The drill starts out with players taking one open step parallel to the line of scrimmage and freezing.
5. Next they take two steps, an open step and a crossover step, and freeze, being sure to keep their heads up the entire time
6. Players now take three steps – the open step, the crossover step and the plant step and freeze, this is the point, were it a game, that they should have identified the force player
7. When the coach is confident the players understand the fundamentals, he should run the drill all the way through. Players take the three steps, get their shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage and head up the field (to engage the defensive player)
8. The coach blows the whistle to end the play.

Coaching Tips

- One of the most common mistakes made by tight ends with this block is to move up the field instead of going parallel which causes them to lose outside leverage.
- Tight ends must establish outside leverage on the force player to give the running back the sideline to go down or an inside/outside cut option.



Arc Block With Tight End



Arc block right.



Arc block left.

DRILL #11 – GAP CALL/VERTICAL DOUBLE TEAM

Purpose: This drill teaches offensive linemen an auxiliary block to use when there is an inside defensive player trying to take advantage of a line split.

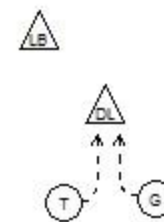
Setup: In this drill you will need two offensive linemen and two defensive players. The two offensive players should be lined up opposite a defensive lineman with the second defensive player lined up off the line of scrimmage in a linebacker position. The coach should be nearby to call commands.

Execution:

1. Players should begin in the preset position
2. The coach says “Down.”
3. Players move into the Stance position.
4. The coach says “Go.”
5. Each offensive player does a roll-step and goes inside and up, creating a vertical double team on the defensive player
6. The offensive players are striving to get their face and hands on the breast plate of the defender at the same time so that they can drive the defender backward
7. The coach blows the whistle to end the drill.

Coaching Tips

- Be sure your offensive linemen move inside and up and never slant to the defensive player, which could allow the defensive player to split the double team.
- Timing is crucial with this block, players should aim to hit the defensive player at the exact same time.



Gap Call/Vertical Double Team



Gap call alerts players to create vertical double team.



Players double team the defensive lineman.

DRILL #12 – FOLD BLOCK/TIGHT END AND TACKLE

Purpose: This drill is designed to teach the tackle and tight end how to fold block and widen the B and C gap.

Setup: In this drill you will need the tight end and tackle lined up against a defensive lineman with a linebacker in his position off the line of scrimmage.

Execution:

1. Players begin in the preset position
2. When the coach says “Down,” the players move into the Stance position.
3. The coach then says “Go.”
5. The tackle becomes the kickout blocker, using a down block with inside technique to engage the defensive lineman
6. The tight end becomes the fold blocker, he takes a bucket step to clear his hips and let the tackle come clear, then he rips his shoulder and proceeds up field to block the linebacker
7. Drill should be run a few times with offensive lineman taking two steps and freezing to ensure proper technique, then it should be run all the way through, ending with the tight end blocking the linebacker.
8. The coach blows the whistle to end the drill.

Coaching Tips

- Be sure the tackle steps right to the head of the defensive lineman and drives the line to widen the gap as much as possible.
- It's vitally important that the tight end takes a good bucket step to clear his hips and allow the tackle to come clear.



Fold Block on left side with Tight End and Tackle



Tackle kicks out on DL, tight end folds under and blocks LB.



DRILL #13 – FOLD BLOCK/GUARD AND TACKLE

Purpose: In this drill, the guard and tackle learn how to fold block to increase the A and/or B gap.

Setup: The guard and tackle are lined up against a defensive player, with a linebacker lined up off the line of scrimmage.

Execution

1. Players should begin in the preset position
2. The coach says “Down.”
3. Players move into the Stance position.
4. The coach says “Go.”
5. The guard goes first, using a down block to engage the defensive lineman.
6. The tackle takes a bucket step, then veer releases and proceeds up field to block the linebacker.
7. The coach blows the whistle to end the play

Coaching Tips

- Things to watch for include: the fold blocker should have square shoulders, a solid base and a good turn of the shoulder pads so that he doesn’t get clogged up in the guard’s down block. The guard, when making his down block, should start with a pickup step, keep his head up and then drive the line.



Fold Block with
Guard and Tackle



Guard kicks out, tackle
folds underneath.

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