

DEVELOPING A QB

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Coaches,

I do not have the knowledge or expertise of you guys; but here are some of my thoughts on this topic.

Starting with basics, your QB should be:

- 1) A leader
- 2) Exude confidence
- 3) Command/earn respect from others
- 4) Set an example
- 5) Be positive

We always instruct QBs to always be upbeat, to encourage teammates; to be the type of guy who in the huddle on 3rd and goal at 2 yard line says to teammates; "we're running off left tackle and scoring!" He's the guy who tells a teammate that "we'll get it back" when something bad happens to that player. He is the leader of the team.

A lot of what I list here is what you might do in the offseason with the freshman QB, if it is possible:

Warmups before any workout should include lots of the basics. One of my favorite warmups, is having the QBs throw back and forth to each other from a distance of 5-10 yds with both feet parallel (on yard line). Each QB is turning shoulders and hips; just working on mechanics/follow through. Emphasis on mechanics here—not oomph. Other drills that we like to do include right foot forward and left foot forward drills. We also like placing two QBs about 10 yds apart; one QB holds the football with both hands and trots towards the other QB. The other QB backpedals, at 5 yards, the QB moving forward turns shoulders and, focusing on proper mechanics, throws to the other backpedaling QB; the backpedaling QB then starts trotting forwards and the other QB begins to backpedal. This continues until the two get tired.

A key thing that we have focused on with QBs is their footwork (especially in offseason). We have found that footwork is a BIG part of being a successful QB. A QB MUST have quick feet. They have to be able to setup quickly and be in proper position in order to throw the ball with accuracy. I have found that if a QB has proper footwork and body positioning, then good things will result. I recommend doing lots of footwork drills, such as dot drills, to improve foot speed and dexterity (in the offseason). Also, have QB's do lots of setup type drills (3 and 5 step drops); and keep in mind that these set-up drills should reflect or complement the types of passing plays that are included in your playbook.

For example, a Wing T QB might practice footwork/setup and throwing using Waggle and Belly Keep passes. The QB practices his footwork and body positioning for these plays; he then adds passing by making throws to different depths (e.g., short flats to FB, 12 to TE, and fade to SE on a Waggle-type play) for each of the plays included in your playbook. The objective is to try and combine setup mechanics and passing as much as possible with the plays included in your playbook. Do not waste practice time. These are also what we call "end of route" drills. Place a receiver or coach at or near to the end of the route; the spot where player and ball should meet.

Work on grip (need daylight inside hand) and ball velocity. The more revolutions; the tighter the spiral, and greater velocity.

Work on the touch of ball from fingertips and wrist. The tip of the index finger is last to touch the ball. Some coaches use the hammer and block of wood drill (hit a block of wood with hammer without moving elbow or arm). This helps with flexibility of the wrist.

We also like to use goal posts in training QBs--alot. We find that they are useful for practicing intermediate depth passing and for improving accuracy. We like to have a QB line up at various positions (start at 5 or 10 yd line and work backwards) within hash marks and throw to precise locations behind goal post. Our goal posts have three slots (two horizontal bars with three slots), so we also have the QBs try and throw the ball above selected slots. We start them close (5 yd line) and then move to 10, 15, 20 etc. We also move east to west between the hash marks. Here, we typically throw from a 3-step drop. The purpose here is to gain accuracy and zip. BTW, I'd love to have a net that we could hang from goal posts. The net would have a series of targets. And again, when possible, we try and incorporate some of our plays when working with goal posts.

Some notes on technique problems that I have picked up over time:

Overthrow:

Releasing behind top of arc; possible overstride

Underthrow:

Releasing in front of top of the arc; possible understride.

Tail of Ball Wobbles:

Jerky motion. Palm not rotated down. Elbow too wide. Grip too far forward or back on ball.

Ball Floats:

Points too high. Loose grip.

Point too high:

Point up on grip

Point to low:

Point down on grip

Inability to throw with velocity:

Weight not transferred to front foot (which as Malcolm states, is angled slightly).

Poor hip and shoulder rotation.

Not pulling down on the ball.

No hand acceleration.

No follow through.

Throwing across the body.

Inaccuracy:

Initial step not at target.

Throwing across body.

Not pointing fingertips at target.

Poor concept of receiver routes.