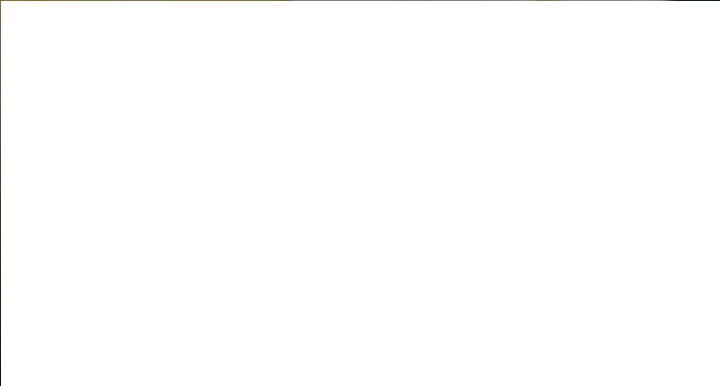


AFCA[®] MAGAZINE

FOUNDATIONS *OF FOOTBALL*

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018 VOL. 8, NO. 1



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Break Biological Barriers With New Speed Training Tools

Here's the truth. Many of today's football coaches are placing a decreased emphasis on how much their players can lift and are increasing their emphasis on how fast their individual players and their overall team can move.

The reality is, speed kills, and next generation training tools like the S-Drive and S-Force Performance Trainers from Matrix Fitness are shattering preconceptions about the way coaches train athletes for speed and what's possible for each athlete's ultimate speed potential.

Phil Campbell (M.S., M.A., C-PT) is a speed technique coach and creator of The Sprint 8® Protocol. He says that taking advantage of the breakthroughs provided by the S-Drive and S-Force can give teams the edge they need to make game-changing plays and achieve more on the field. It's an uphill battle, because athletes must overcome inherent traits locked into their own DNA.

"The body always tries to do things with slow-twitch muscle fiber, even at the professional level," says Campbell. "In many respects, your brain thinks it is doing you a favor by not recruiting fast-twitch muscle fiber and conserving that fiber in case you need to 'run away from a bad guy.'

"What we need to do is put the body in a perfect mechanical position – the S-Drive and S-Force do this. When we put you in that 'speed position,' the body is forced to recruit fast-twitch muscle fiber. You are forcing your brain to recruit all three muscle types and that gets you where you are going faster."

The brain isn't the only culprit preventing athletes from attaining maximum speed. The main role of the middle ear is to keep athletes from falling. The middle ear wants athletes to run upright without a forward lean. This causes the middle ear to "put on the brakes," says Campbell.

"The middle ear doesn't care if you are trying to score a touchdown or make a game-saving tackle," he says. "We quite literally must train the middle ear to keep the brakes off. That's one of the things the S-Drive and S-Force do perfectly. They reprogram your brain to keep the brakes off."

Using The Right Tools

The S-Drive and S-Force were specifically created to get athletes to practice precise athletic movements at faster-than-game speeds. With the ability to simulate sprinting, sled pushing, resistance and parachute training, the S-Drive helps athletes build speed, strength and initial explosiveness.

New speed protocols specifically created to maximize the potential of the S-Drive use scientifically validated techniques

to accelerate every phase of movement. Precision-designed body positioning drills help internalize perfected upper- and lower-body sprint mechanics. This direct reprogramming of the brain and nervous system recruits the superfast muscle fiber essential to unlocking each athlete's ultimate speed potential.

The heart and lungs are then forced to oxygenate more muscle fiber, improving overall athletic conditioning, and the bursts of exertion release a natural human growth hormone in

a way that traditional protocols cannot. This means that even as athletes become faster, they will also be building muscle at a significantly higher rate.

"On top of all that, coaches can get down beside the athlete and talk about sprinting mechanics and techniques, because the S-Drive and S-Force are stationary," says Campbell. "It improves a coach's ability to work with players one-on-one."

Results Matter

Campbell says that athletes who utilize the S-Drive will see improvements in their 20-meter dash time after a single workout, not because their bodies improve in such a short period of time, but because they are retraining their brains to get comfortable in an uncomfortable position.

"We can take an entire football team and make them faster by changing what they do in the drive phase of sprinting," he says. "Most treadmills will do fly phase, which is upright running. That's great for cross-country or even special teams, but for most football athletes, we are trying to get them to go 20 yards much faster. This is the only treadmill that I know of that will train athletes for drive phase."

Scott Sinclair is director of strength and conditioning for the University of Georgia football program. He agrees that the S-Drive helps his football athletes better understand the mechanics of sprinting.

"We use the S-Drive for running mechanics," says Sinclair. "For any of our players who over-stride or have a hard time understanding how to apply force to the ground, we put them on the S-Drive. For the belt to move, you must apply force to make it move. It becomes a great teaching tool."

Campbell agrees, saying that athletes aren't lazy, but they are fighting their own biology in an effort to get faster.

"You can make your entire team faster in a very short amount of time with the S-Drive and S-Force," he says. "It even works for the fastest guys on your team. You just have to train the right way."

Learn more about the S-Drive and S-Force from Matrix Fitness at www.matrixfitness.com.



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From The Desk Of

COACH BERRY



By Todd Berry, Executive Director, American Football Coaches Association (AFCA)

Our Members, Our Voices

We are in a time of significant change. This era of change is a result of past inaction, slow processing of ideas, and new social and economic impacts. We have many ideas about the directions that must be considered. The NCAA Football Oversight Committee was formed three years ago to address many of the perceived problems in the collegiate football model.

As I entered this position in February 2016, many of the thoughts had reached decision time and others were still being vetted. I mentioned last year that we needed to move from a reactionary group to a proactive group. At last year's convention, we were forced to be reactionary based on the new legislation that was already in the pipeline. Your involvement last year as an AFCA member was important because we were able to make changes to parts of legislation that we collectively felt were not good for our student-athletes or the game.

The following is this year's list of agenda items we must consider. I would like you to give some thought to these topics and express those thoughts in your divisional meetings. These items are either on the legislative docket at the NCAA Convention or are items that the Football Oversight Committee has expressed interest in resolving.

- **Support Staff — FBS** — The Football Oversight Committee has proposed to not put a limit on the number of support staff, but rather limit the engagement of this group on game day, during practice and during recruiting.
- **Pre-Season Model — FBS & FCS** — (Although other divisions may fall in line due to the involvement of the medical community) — Proposed 25, one-a-day practices.
- **5-For-4 Model (Redshirt Rule) — All Levels** — Proposed allowing a student-athlete to play in up to four games during a season and maintain their redshirt status for that year.
- **Collegiate Camp Modifications — All Levels** — No proposed changes to last year's model, but there is interest in cleaning up problems that arose with the new model.

- **Transfers — All Levels Including Graduates And Undergraduates** — Proposed loss of permission to contact replaced by a notification to transfer; proposed increase of penalties revolving around tampering; potentially allowing a one-time transfer if their coach leaves.
- **IAWP Legislation — All Levels** — No proposed changes, but an interest in defining the problems with last year's legislation, understanding that our sport is different from basketball.
- **Spring Contact — All Levels** — With the new signing window and official visit window, should contact be allowed in spring or January of junior year?
- **Squad Size — FBS** — New legislation that would allow an increase from 105 to 110 players in the pre-season.
- **Allowance Of Coaches To Be More Engaged In Off-Season Activities — FBS & FCS** — There are concerns that there are too many health issues that are occurring when there is no football coach present.
- **Targeting — All Levels** — There is an acknowledgement by all that the players and coaches are making a concerted effort to improve, yet each year the occurrence of targeting fouls is increasing. This begs the question, are we asking the impossible of our athletes in many targeting issues, and if so, should there be different levels of targeting?
- **Blocking Below The Waist — All Levels** — It comes up every year and there is interest in simplifying the rules.
- **Length Of Games — All Levels** — No new proposals, but there is concern about the overall length of games. Interestingly, the FBS and FCS game times have increased while the Division II and Division III games have not. The argument that the game has changed, causing major impact on the length of games, is not relevant as the same systems are being utilized.

Once again, your engagement is significant and your vote is important. Our one voice can resonate and protect our student-athletes and the game.

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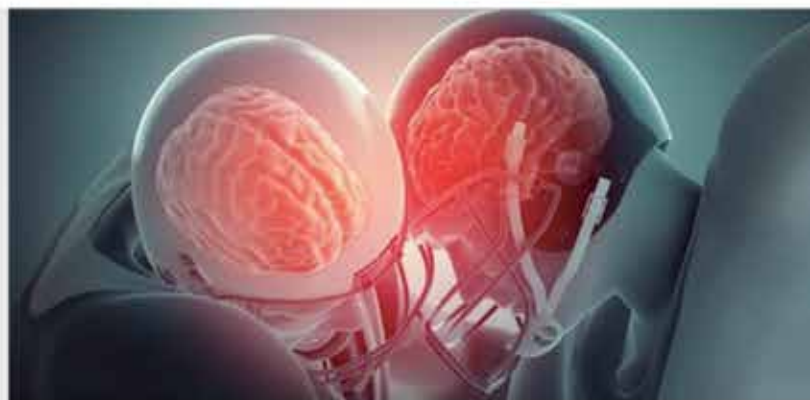
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Flexible Weightlifting Bar Provides Fresh Adaptations For Proven Exercises

The modern Olympic barbell has been a centerpiece of modern strength and conditioning since its invention in 1928.

For all the evolution that has occurred in strength and conditioning in the last century, the Olympic barbell has remained relatively unchanged, or rather it had remained unchanged, before the Tsunami Bar® arrived.

This state-of-the-art, flexible composite barbell is a co-mingling of athletic performance knowledge and materials science acumen. The bar actively fights players as they lift, engaging the core and significantly increasing the active tension in the stabilizer muscles, by destabilizing the weight at the end of the bar.

Director of strength and conditioning coach at Furman University, David Abernethy, a Master Strength and Conditioning Coach certified by the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association, partnered with composites engineer and retired U.S. Navy Captain Gordon Brown to begin developing the bar in 2011. Their finished design won the Best of Show award in 2013 from the American Composite Manufacturer's Association.

Since the completion of the Original Tsunami Bar®, the bar has grown into a whole family of flexible barbells and other innovative weightlifting products that help players improve proprioception, sensory reception and force production.

Abernethy says the goal was never to replace traditional weightlifting equipment, but complement and enhance it. The most unique thing about the bar is, "Anything you can do with a traditional bar, you can do with the Tsunami Bar," he says.

"As you move the bar, the bar fights against you," Abernethy says. "The more force you apply to it, the faster the bar gets and the more impulse force you generate...In a

perfect world, moving the bar over three feet per second, you can generate almost four or five times the weight on the bar."

Perhaps the most enticing thing about the Tsunami Bar® for football coaches specifically, is that it easily lends itself to transferring weight room exercises to the field of play. The bar replicates many of the off-balance movements players must execute to win their one-on-one matchup, and gives them the opportunity to improve those skills while

at the same time increasing strength and power.

"It's like wrestling with somebody," Abernethy says.

"The harder you fight, the harder they fight back against you.

"The sport is unpredictable, so this is unpredictable. As you move it, you have to react to its movement. So, with that proprioception taking place, and those sensory receptors engaged, that's going to reduce reaction time."

As a former player, Abernethy's goal was to find an easier way to train faster hand

speed for linemen. Coaches use a variety of different tools to try and help players process information faster, make decisions faster and ultimately, play faster. Abernethy says the Tsunami Bar® simply adds the convenience of training quickness to exercises already proven to improve strength and power.

A piece of equipment this revolutionary can cause skepticism among coaches. It's human nature for coaches to be wary of new techniques, especially something that looks so different from any other barbell they have ever seen.

Abernethy understands why coaches may not be believers, but challenges those coaches to give it a try before they dismiss it.

"Once they get used to it, and they see it and get their hands on it, they have a totally different mindset," Abernethy says. "You have to feel it to believe it. When it gets ahold of you, it just changes your whole mindset."

For more information, visit www.TsunamiBarbell.com.



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WELCOME TO THE CONVENTION

The following pages will help guide you through the 2018 American Football Coaches Association Convention held at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Registration is required for all members who attend the annual Convention. Name badges, necessary for admission to all events, and pre-paid tickets are distributed at Registration. Registration will be held in Exhibit Halls AB of the Charlotte Convention Center.

REGISTRATION TIMES

Sunday, January 7, 9am-5pm
Monday, January 8, 9am-5pm
Tuesday, January 9, 9am-Noon

IMPORTANT UPDATE

MEMBERS REGISTERING ON SITE:

- If you actively coached during the 2017 season, you will register according to the division of your school.
- If you actively coached during the 2017 season, **but are currently between schools**, you will register according to the division of your most recent school.
- If you **did not** actively coach during the 2017 season, you will register through the line marked "Other".

PRE-REGISTERED MEMBERS

Go through the QuickPass or Mobile areas of Registration to print your credentials.

PASSING THE PRESIDENTIAL TORCH

University of Arizona head coach Rich Rodriguez led the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) as its president in 2017, succeeding outgoing 2016 AFCA President Lee Owens, who is the head coach at Ashland University.

In 2018, Georgetown College head coach Bill Cronin will be the AFCA's new president. After graduating from Indiana University in 1978, Cronin got his start in coaching at Carmel Junior High in 1978. After three years, he moved up to the college ranks as an assistant coach at Anderson College in 1981. In 1982, Cronin began his association with Georgetown College, working as an assistant coach under head coach Kevin Donley for 11 years. He helped guide the Tigers to the 1991 NAIA national championship.

Cronin moved back to the high school ranks as head coach at Madison Central (Ky.) High School from 1993-96. In 1997, Georgetown called him back, this time as head coach. In his 21 years as head coach, Cronin has amassed an overall record of 190-52. He guided the Tigers to an impressive four-year run from 1999 to 2002. Georgetown went to the NAIA national championship game four straight years, claiming the title in 2000 and 2001. The Tigers record during that four-year span was 52-3.

Cronin has led Georgetown to eight outright or shared Mid-South Conference (MSC) titles and seven MSC East Division championships. He has been named MSC Coach of the Year eight times and has taken the Tigers to the NAIA playoffs 14 times. He earned NAIA Coach of the Year honors during the Tigers national championship seasons of 2000 and 2001, and is a two-time AFCA Regional Coach of the Year winner.

Cronin was elected to the AFCA Board of Trustees in 2007 and served as first vice president in 2017. He is also chairman of the AFCA NAIA Coaches' All-America Team Selection Committee.

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2018 CONVENTION SCHEDULE

For the most current information and room numbers, please check the on-site program or download the AFCA Convention Mobile App.



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12

SUNDAY • JANUARY 7

RESOURCES

7am-9pm	Information Desk
7am-9:30pm	Coat Check
7am-8pm	AFCA Resource Center <i>Provided by Coaches Choice</i>
8am-5pm	Ticket Sales
9am-5pm	Registration / Exhibits
9am-5pm	Foundation Booth

1

MEETINGS

8am-8:50am	Exhibits Committee Meeting
8am-8:50am	Foundation Booth Committee Meeting
8am-8:50am	Registration Committee Meeting
8am-8:50am	NAIA Assistant Coaches Committee Meeting
11am-Noon	NAIA Assistant Coaches Forum
11:30am-1pm	International Committee Meeting
12:30pm-4:30pm	Rules Committee Meeting
1pm-1:50pm	Convention Services Committee Meeting
1pm-1:50pm	High School Committee Meeting
1pm-1:50pm	PDS Committee Meeting
1pm-1:50pm	Meeting Room Committee Meeting
3pm-3:50pm	NJCAA Meeting
3pm-3:50pm	Program Committee Meeting
3pm-5:50pm	Division III Football Council
4pm-4:50pm	National High School Coaches Forum
4pm-4:50pm	ACCFCA Meeting
4pm-4:50pm	First Timers Meeting
4pm-4:50pm	Honors Luncheon Committee Meeting
4pm-4:50pm	Minority Issues Committee Meeting
4pm-4:50pm	Public Relations Committee Meeting
4pm-4:50pm	Technical Manual Committee Meeting
6pm-10pm	High School Executive Directors Forum
6pm-7:50pm	Assistant Coaches Committee Chairmen Meeting
8pm-8:50pm	Strength & Conditioning Forum
8pm-8:50pm	Minority Issues Forum

Registration & Foundation Booth & Exhibits: Make sure your first stop is Registration. AFCA badges are required to attend all events. Stop by The Foundation Booth and pick up an AFCA cap or visor for \$10. Over 200 Exhibitors make the AFCA Tradeshow floor a **DON'T MISS** event!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

The Professional Development Series (PDS) covers every lecture at the Convention and all attendees may participate. Convention attendees can earn professional development hours by participating in the PDS and/or High School Coaches Academy (HSCA). Those who attend the required number of lectures receive a Certificate of Completion identifying the number of professional development hours earned. See the on-site program for more information. **Bold items in this schedule are sessions that count toward PDS/HSCA.**

For those attending the AFCA Convention for the first time, be sure to include the First Timers' meeting in your itinerary. Coaches who attend the meeting learn how to navigate the large number of speaking sessions in the midst of thousands of attendees at the AFCA Convention.



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EDUCATIONAL & INTERACTIVE SESSIONS	
10am-4:30pm	Skills & Drills Field 2
Noon-2pm	NAIA Breakout
2pm-2:50pm	High School Coaches Academy 1A & 1B
2pm-2:50pm	High School Coaches Academy 2A & 2B
5pm-5:50pm	Kickoff Speaker 3
6pm-6:50pm	Buzz Sessions 4
7pm-7:50pm	Buzz Sessions
SOCIAL EVENTS	
8pm-9:30pm	Wives Ice Cream Social <i>Presented by The Jason Foundation</i> 


Skills & Drills Field:
Featuring interactive real-field simulations. Located in the Exhibit Hall.



Kickoff Speaker: You won't want to miss the first speaker to KICK OFF the 2018 Convention. We promise an informational and entertaining event to begin your Convention experience.

Buzz Sessions:
X's and O's by position. Multiple sessions at 6pm and 7pm.


Divisional Business Meetings:
A platform for all coaches to come together as the voice of football.

General Session 
presented by TeamSnap
The Pulse of the Profession by AFCA Executive Director, Todd Berry; a welcome by AFCA President Rich Rodriguez; followed by several intriguing speakers on various topics; and the presentation of the Power of Influence Award.

(1) Tackling Social Media: *Learn how to successfully promote your team's brand through multiple social platforms.*



(2) Happy Wife, Happy Life: *Panel discussion with husband/wife teams at various stages of marriage and career.*

MONDAY • JANUARY 8	
RESOURCES	
6am-7pm	Information Desk
6am-TBA*	Coat Check *closes 30min post-game
7am-7pm	AFCA Resource Center <i>Provided by Coaches Choice</i>
8am-12pm	Ticket Sales
9am-5pm	Registration / Exhibits 1
9am-5pm	Foundation Booth
MEETINGS	
7am-9am	FCS Executive Committee Meeting
8am-8:50am	Division II Assistant Coaches Forum
8am-8:50am	Division III Assistant Coaches Forum
8am-8:50am	FBS Assistant Coaches Forum
8am-8:50am	FCS Assistant Coaches Forum
8am-8:50am	Division II Assistant Coaches Business Meeting
8am-8:50am	Division III Assistant Coaches Business Meeting
8am-8:50am	FCS Assistant Coaches Business Meeting 5
9am-10:30am	NAIA Coaches Business Meeting
EDUCATIONAL & INTERACTIVE SESSIONS	
8am-10:50am	High School General Session
8am-10:50am	Junior College General Session
8am-10:50am	International Session
9am-1pm	Skills & Drills Field 2
9am-10:50am	Graduate Assistant Career Forum
1:30pm-5pm	General Session  6A <i>Presented by TeamSnap</i>
5pm-5:50pm	Tackling Social Media 7
6pm-6:50pm	Happy Wife, Happy Life

THE CONTENT



OFFENSE **3 x 1 Passing Concepts**

Todd Dodge, Head Coach,
Westlake High School



DEFENSE **Double Mug Blitz Package**

Mike Pettine, Former Head Coach, Cleveland Browns, Defensive Coordinator, New York Jets and Buffalo Bills



PROGRAM BUILDING **Practice Smart**

Rob Weiner, Head Coach,
Plant High School



SPECIAL TEAMS **Attacking with Special Teams**

Matt Hennesy, Head Coach,
Locust Grove High School

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CONTENT PARTNERS:



SOCIAL EVENTS	
10:30am-11:15am	Honors Luncheon Line-Up
11:30am-1pm	Honors Luncheon <i>Presented by Amway</i>
6:30pm	Tailgate Party <i>Presented by FieldTurf and Catapult</i>

Honors Luncheon 

presented by Amway:

Join us as we honor a few coaches who are setting examples and making strides in the profession.

8

9

TUESDAY • JANUARY 9

RESOURCES	
7am-6pm	Information Desk
7am-10pm	Coat Check
7am-7pm	AFCA Resource Center <i>Provided by Coaches Choice</i>
9am-Noon	Registration / Exhibits
9am-Noon	Foundation Booth

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

8:30am-11:50am	General Session <i>Presented by VICIS</i>
Noon-1:50pm	NCAA Recruiting Seminar
2pm-3:50pm	Breakout 1
2pm-3:50pm	Breakout 2
2pm-3:50pm	Breakout 3
4pm-5pm	Victory Formation Speaker

SOCIAL EVENTS

8pm-9:30pm	American Football Coaches Awards Show <i>Presented by Amway</i>
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Tailgate Party 
sponsored by FieldTurf and Catapult:

This FREE EVENT features delicious food, cold drinks, and massive screens to watch the college football National Championship Game with other coaches.

General Session 
presented by VICIS

More Football Philosophy from exciting speakers, plus a special presentation to the new Club 35 Inductees.



Breakouts:

Interesting segments covering X's and O's and beyond!

Victory Formation

Speaker: Informal, interactive Q&A with a Championship Coach.

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 10

RESOURCES

6:30am-Noon	Information Desk & Coat Check
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MEETINGS

7am-10:30am	FBS Head Coaches Breakfast/Meeting <i>Presented by Catapult</i>
-------------	--

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

8am-10:50am	Chalk Talks
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Awards Show: AFCA members and their guests receive FREE ADMISSION. Awards presented include the AFCA Coaches' Trophy presented by Amway (The Crystal Ball), the Tuss McLaughry Award, the Amos Alonzo Stagg Award, FBS Regional Coaches of the Year, FCS National Coach of the Year, USA TODAY Sports Coach's Play Call of the Year, and the FBS National Coach of the Year.

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5 STEPS TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL OFF-SEASON PROGRAM

The Strength & Conditioning program is one of the most important pieces of a successful football program. Shaping and molding a team throughout the year in the weight room will lead to teams that are strong, fast, and powerful on Friday nights. The off-season is the time of year where we have the most time to work with our team to develop them physically and mentally for the next season. I believe the following principles lay the foundation for building a Strength & Conditioning program that will deliver big time results!

1. NEEDS ANALYSIS: Determine what areas your team is lacking in such as strength, speed, ability to change direction, or toughness. Once you have determined where you would like to improve then you can begin to design your program.

2. TRAIN MOVEMENTS NOT MUSCLES: Training certain movement patterns each week will assure that your Strength & Conditioning program is well rounded. Also, breaking your programs into movements will allow you to pick and choose exercises that fit your programming. The movements that should be trained each week are the following:

- Vertical Push
- Horizontal Push
- Vertical Pull
- Horizontal Pull
- Squat (Bilaterally, Unilaterally)
- Hinge (Bilaterally, Unilaterally)
- Loaded Carries

3. MASTER THE BASICS: It is easy to get bored with the basics and rush kids into lifts and movements that they are not prepared for, which often leads to injury, decreased results, and poor technique. Remember that we are working with high school athletes who have a low training age and experience in the weight room. The following should be mastered before moving to advanced techniques:

- Athletic position
- Ability to decelerate and accelerate for power production
- Ability to decelerate and accelerate for agility
- Running and acceleration technique
- Relative body strength

One of the major factors to continued improvement is self-education, taking time to attend conferences, read books and network with other coaching staffs. This will ensure that you are staying on the cutting edge and delivering the best results for your athletes and coaches.

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GET MORE INFO AT WWW.GLAZIERCLINICS.COM

4. PLAN AND PROGRESS: Every detail of your Strength & Conditioning program should be planned out. Putting together the phase, exercise selection, reps and percentages as well as supersets are all crucial to the off-season program running smoothly. Proper planning ensures that your program is progressive and leading towards the goals that you are trying to accomplish as a team.

5. TEST AND EVALUATE: Designing a testing system for your team will give you data on whether or not your program is accomplishing what you want it to. Testing also serves as motivation for your players to improve and reach "standards" that have been set by current as well as former players in your program. The following test are used at Apopka High School for our Super Darter Test:

- Power Clean: Total body power and strength
- Parallel Back Squat: Lower body strength
- Bench Press: Upper body strength
- Overhead Jerk: Vertical power
- 40 Yard Sprint: Linear speed
- Pro - Agility Shuttle Run: Change of direction of capabilities
- Bench Hops for Time: Lateral quickness and explosiveness
- Stadium Circuit: Conditioning and toughness

New Technology Raises Bar For Player Safety, Saves Staff Time

Although 97.5 percent of players wore helmets that require regular, weekly reinflation, nearly 90 percent of them failed to maintain their bladders on a weekly basis, according to a recent study of over 250 high school players in the Intermountain West Region conducted by Idaho State University. More troubling still, the study found over 40 percent of participants didn't reinflate their bladders at all during the entire football season.

In today's hyper-sensitive player-safety culture, it's shocking that programs have not taken steps to ensure every player has a properly fit helmet at all times. Part of the reason for this oversight is the time-consuming process of checking each helmet's fit and inflating the bladder with archaic hand-operated air pumps.

Enter HelmetFit — the hand-held, automatic air pump that quickly and accurately inflates the bladder in a player's helmet with the push of a button. Utilizing smartphone technology and an intuitive, convenient app, HelmetFit saves coaches and equipment managers the headache of inflating each player's helmet by hand while the player is wearing it.

Coaches have the players wear the helmet for their initial fitting, and the application then stores the data for each player's ideal fit for quick, accurate reinflation.

"It really eliminates the guessing games for the coaches, the trainers and the equipment guys," Head Football Coach of Vista Murrieta High School (Ca.) Gene Miranda says. "For me, not only as a coach and an equipment guy, but as a parent that's the key. 'What can I do to make sure that my son and my players are properly fitted?'"

While it remains unclear if there will ever be a permanent solution for the concussion riddle, coaches like Miranda can rest easier knowing they have done everything in their power to at the very least mitigate the risks of head trauma.

In the current football culture, the players are ultimately responsible for ensuring the proper fit of their helmet — a dangerous practice for anything regarding a young person's safety, especially when they are focused on the desire to stay on the field at all costs.

This added layer of safety has captured the attention of some of the game's most elite programs. Ohio State University has signed on for the 2018 season, as well as the San Francisco 49ers.

The founder of HelmetFit, Michael Weatherby, had his own struggles with concussions during his playing days, and was confused as to why no one had taken steps to make sure the responsibility for properly fitted helmets wasn't up to the individual players.

"I always thought the whole process was backwards, and there has to be an easier way of doing this," Weatherby says. "With HelmetFit, we put the power back into the hands of the people who should be making these decisions."

HelmetFit gives coaches and trainers an easy, objective means of keeping players safe, without relying on a player's subjective opinion. But, it also provides a competitive advantage by keeping players in the game, even when they need a quick adjustment.

"I don't have the time or the manpower to go around and check their helmets while they are on their heads," Head Athletic Trainer for North Shore High School (N.Y.) Mike Gonzalez says. "This allows me to do it when they aren't around, and it also takes their bias out of the picture."

"Once you get over that initial fit it really does reduce your time. When a player comes up to you during a game or during practice, you literally just have them take a knee, you find their name, and you let the pump do the rest."

After the initial legwork of establishing each player's baseline,

HelmetFit gives a staff the unprecedented advantage of being able to reinflate every helmet in the locker room without requiring the players to get involved. Every helmet can be checked and refit with ease and accuracy, and bladders which have been punctured are easily identified.

All these advantages are combined with the peace of mind of having a log of every adjustment made for every player over the season. With the ability to generate formal fit history reports, HelmetFit also serves as a valuable risk management tool, begging the question: Why wasn't this technology implemented years ago?

"I've been in this industry over 35 years, and I think this is something that's long overdue," former President & COO of Riddell and former Director of Product Development for Schutt Sports, J.C. Wingo says. "It's a product that should be in every locker room."

Coaches spend countless dollars on the very best helmet technology available every single year, yet many don't take the time to make sure their players always have the proper fit. With HelmetFit, every coach can have confidence their players are being protected by the equipment they rely on the most.

"It's extremely important to get the proper fit, and not only get the proper fit — but maintain it," Wingo says. "All athletes at every level want to make adjustments as necessary in order to perform better...It puts the player at ease knowing they have the right amount of air in their helmet."

For more information, visit www.HelmetFit.com.





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(502) 425-2937
e-mail: lesto@nikecoyfootball.com

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Oakton, VA 20150
(703) 272-7330 - (703) 942-5517 FAX
e-mail: jvanacker@nikecoyfootball.com

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ORLANDO - Feb. 23 - 25, 2018
Wyndham Resort Hotel
For Reservations Call: (407) 351-2420
Chris Wells, Clinic Director
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Windermerse, FL 34786
(407) 816-5800 - (407) 876-1604 FAX
e-mail: Orlando@nikecoyfootball.com

NIKE Staff Presentations by: Jim McElwain-Florida, Pat Narduzzi-Pittsburgh, Derek Mason-Vanderbilt, Ed Orgeron-LSU, Willie Taggart-Oregon, Dabo Swinney-Clemson, Justin Furrer - Virginia Tech

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(412) 478-6535 - (412) 884-2367 FAX
e-mail: Pittsburg@nikecoyfootball.com

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NEW ENGLAND - March 1 - 3, 2018
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For Reservations Call: (860) 680-7500
Frank Bionardi, Clinic Director
1330 East Street
Southington, CT 06488
(860) 690-681-7473
e-mail: Ne@nikecoyfootball.com

NIKE Staff Presentations by: Mike Leach - Washington State, Tim Mingo-Harvard, Steve Babers-Dyckson, Dave Hodgson-West Virginia, Clay Helton-UNC

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Holiday Inn Conference Center
(610) 961-1060 Use Code: GEN
Steve McNeil, Clinic Director
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(610) 417-6307
e-mail: Allentown@nikecoyfootball.com

NIKE Staff Presentations by: Buddy Teevens-Queensland, Pat Narduzzi-Pittsburgh, Butch Jones-Tennessee, Art Briles - Purdue, Kirk Ferrelle - Iowa, Larry Fedora - UNC

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Craig Johns, Clinic Director
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St. Paul, MN 55107
(644) 690-6100
e-mail: SanDiego@nikecoyfootball.com

NIKE Staff Presentations by: Bret Beal-Idaho, Gary Anderson-Oregon State, Mike MacIntyre-Colorado, Rocky Long-San Diego State, Gary Patterson - TCU

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Use Group Code: AFCA18
Chris D'Amico, Clinic Director
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Cranford, NJ 07016
(212) 704-7008
e-mail: NewJersey@nikecoyfootball.com

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For Reservations Call: (503) 256-5090
Drew Johnson & Bob Younger, Clinic Directors
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Albany, OR 97321
(541) 926-2700
e-mail: Portland@nikecoyfootball.com

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Doubtless by Hilton Norfolk Airport
For Reservations Call: (757) 457-6940
Lance Van Arden, Clinic Director
1437 Norfolk Way
Gatesville, VA 20150
(757) 272-7530 - (703) 942-5517 FAX
e-mail: hamptonroads@nikecoyfootball.com

NIKE Staff Presentations by: Mike Norvell-Memphis, Jimbo Fisher-Florida State, Jesse Cougle-Tulsa, Larry Fedora-UNC, Matt Campbell-Iowa St.

LAS VEGAS - March 6 - 18, 2018
Garden Nugget Hotel & Casino
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Craig Johns, Clinic Director
Nike Coach of the Year Clinic
P.O. Box 31468
Memphis, TN 37530
(901) 415-0800
e-mail: Vegas@nikecoyfootball.com

NIKE Staff Presentations by: Tony Sanchez-UNC, Chad Morris-EMU, David Shaw-Stanford, Kirby Smart-Georgia, Rich Rodriguez-Arizona, Matt Wells - Utah State

LOS ANGELES - March 30 - 31, 2018
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At The John McKay Center USC Campus
Nolan - Robinson Matthews L.A.
For Reservations Call: (213) 748-4141
Jeff Helton, Clinic Director
540 West 55th Street
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(213) 740-4204 - (213) 821-2472 FAX
Register at: www.lights.com
e-mail: SoCal@nikecoyfootball.com

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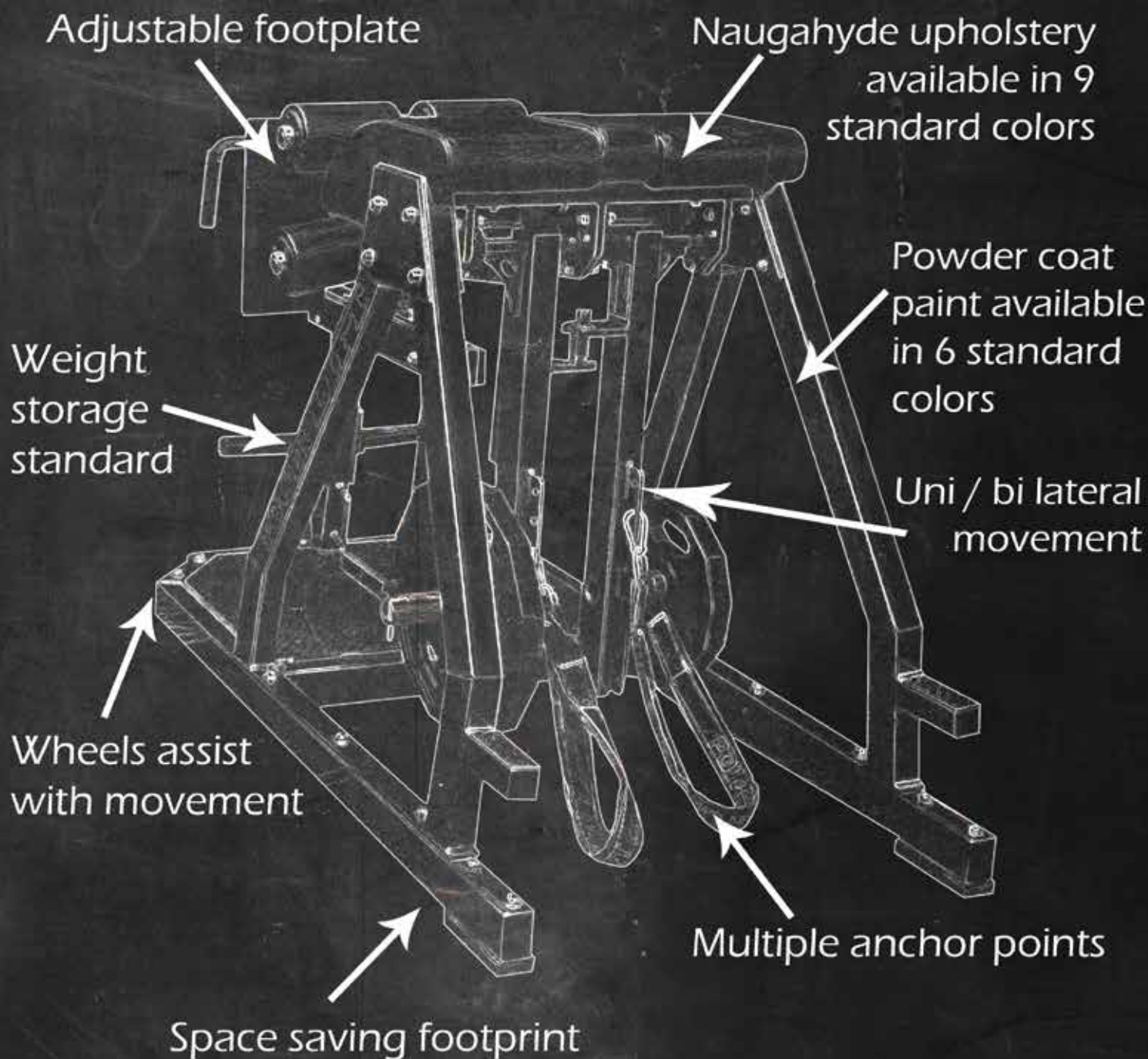
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Accusplit
Booth: 310
Stopwatches, timers, pedometers



Booths: 1309, 1311, 1408, 1410
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www.jumpforward.com
Coach recruiting and management software

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Alienman Technologies, LLC
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Booths: 1900, 1901
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All-Star Inflatables
11120 Grader Street
Dallas, TX 75238
888-349-4386
www.all-starinflatables.com
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9115 Harris Corners Pkwy
Charlotte, NC 28269
704-632-7925
www.allstate.com
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Alpha Jewel
Booth: 130
Championship rings



Booth: AFCF Booth

American Football Coaches Foundation
100 Legends Lane
Waco, TX 76706
254-754-9900
www.afcf.us
Foundation

Andy Talley Bone Marrow Foundation
Booth: 1833
Non-profit: College football teams host marrow drives

Anthony Travel
Booth: 113
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ARMS Software
Bay 1639
Industry-leading recruiting pipeline and team management software



Area 1429
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APT/AstroTurf/ProGrass
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800-723-8873
Synthetic turf



Area 1229
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Atavus
1560 1st Ave South
Seattle, WA 98134
253-740-7857
www.atavus.com
Tackling analytics and consulting

AthleteEquip
Booth: 1323
Online strength and conditioning software



Booths: 404, 406, 408
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The Athletic Edge by Pivotal Health Solutions
1050 Owen Loop South
Eugene, OR 97402
800-743-7738
www.aelockers.com
Athletic lockers and sideline treatment tables

Athletic Equipment Managers Association
Booth: 524
Association of equipment managers

B Sport Lockers
Booths: 1817, 1819
Athletic wood lockers

Badger Sport
Booths: 1715, 1814
Athletic apparel and uniforms

Balfour
Booths: 700, 702
Championship rings

Baron Championship Rings
Booth: 213
Championship rings

Battle
Booths: 242, 244
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Battle Front Software, LLC
Booth: 347
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Big Game USA
Booths: 139, 238
Leather game footballs/commemorative footballs

BigSigns.com
Booth: 825
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Booths: 1820, 1822
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Special Plaza 1405
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Bluechip Athletic Solutions
5885 Glenridge Drive, Suite 115
Atlanta, GA 30328
404-941-2510
www.bas-llc.com
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Booth: 1331
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www.brain-armor.com
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BSN Sports
Booths: 805, 807, 809, 904, 906, 908
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CARBONTEK
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Catapult
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Coaching Technology



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Special Area 1617
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www.coachcomm.com
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Booth: 1942
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CoachMePlus
Booth: 225
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CoachTube
Booth: 1313
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Bay 405
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Collegiate Sports Data
Booth: 1325
Recruiting data

Collegiate Sports Travel, Inc.
Booths: 328, 330, 332
Travel agency

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Booth: 1928
Quarterback/wide receiver training

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CytoSport
Booths: 112, 114
Muscle Milk

Dexalytics
Booth: 1924
Body composition software solution

Diamondback Sport
Booth: 141
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DJO Global
Booth: 1801
Bracing and supports, electrotherapy, laser

Douglas Pads & Sports, Inc.
Booths: 421, 423, 425
Football protective equipment

DreamSeat
Booth: 1920
Custom logo Xzipit furniture



Booths: 1921, 1923, 1925
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Drymax Technologies
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Atascadero, CA 93422
844-239-2555
www.drymaxsports.com
Socks, sleeves, chin savers, apparel

DVSPORT, Inc.
Special Area 517
Coaches' video software and technology

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Booth: 147
Weight lifting equipment and racks

Dynamic Fitness & Strength
Booths: 212, 214
Strength equipment

Eastbay, Inc.
Booths: 442, 444
Team uniforms, footwear and equipment

The Emblem Source
Booth: 320
Embroidered emblems (patches)

Endzone Video Systems
Booths: 221, 223
Telescoping towers

Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Booth: 1701
Coaches ministry

FieldTurf
Area 929
Artificial turf

FirstDown Playbook
Booth: 239
FirstDown Playbook 2.0 - digital playbook editing tool

FIRSTFORM, Inc.
Booth: 118
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Fisher Athletic
Special Large Bay 529
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FLVS
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Area 104
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www.frogfitness.com
"The FROG" total body training device

FutureIs, LLC
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Patent pending scout team jersey and full apparel company



Booths: 539, 638
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Gamebreaker
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256-585-2847
www.gamebreaker.com
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www.riponathletic.com



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Booth: 424
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GearBoss by Wenger Corporation
Booths: 337, 339, 341
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Get It Right
Booth: 439
Training simulations

Get Recruited Consulting
Booth: 1914
Place high school football players into college



Special Plaza 1640
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Gilman Gear
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Gilman, CT 06336
800-243-0398
www.gilmangear.com
Football practice equipment

Glazier Clinics
Booths: 217, 219
Coach education

Global Football
Booths: 105, 204, 206
International tours and games



Booths: 305, 307
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GNC Live Well
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877-462-4700
www.gnc.com
Sports nutrition, vitamins, health supplements

GoArmy Edge
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Free football coaching/training app

GoBigRecruiting, LLC
Booth: 538
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GoRout
Booth: 1501
On-field wearable technology

Green Gridiron
Booth: 308
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GreenFields USA
Booth: 1406
Synthetic Turf

Gryppers, Inc.
Booth: 311
Smart, wearable performance solutions and apparel

GuardGrip, LLC
Booth: 446
Mouthguard holder

Guardian Athletics, LLC
Booth: 237
Protective safety device

Guardian Caps
Booths: 436, 438
Padded football helmet cover



**Booths: 1416, 1418,
1420, 1422**
See our ad on P. 45

Hadar Athletic
P.O. Box 218
Humboldt, IA 50548
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www.hadarathletic.com
Football practice equipment

Hanlon Sculpture Studio
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www.jostens.com
Championship rings & jewelry, Heisman ring

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JUCO recruiting

Jugs Sports, Inc.
Booth: 319
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See our play
diagrams on P. 66-81

Just Play Sports Solutions
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www.justplaysolutions.com
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Nutrition

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Area 1421
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Venus, TX 76084
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www.longhornlockers.com
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www.matrixfitness.com
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Booth: 345
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www.power-lift.com
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Booth: 1911
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201-247-2274
www.prismaticusa.com
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Booths: 1305, 1307
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www.prolook.com
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Booths: 815, 817, 819, 821, 823
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Booth: 928
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Booths: 1329, 1428
See our ad on P. 49

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www.sportsattack.com
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Sports Laundry Systems
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Booth: 109
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Booths: 229, 231
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Booth: 235
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TAG, Inc.
Booth: 309
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TAGTOPS
Booth: 1918
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www.thetug.net
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USA Football
45 N. Pennsylvania Street, #700
Indianapolis, IN 46204
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www.usafootball.com
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Booths: 922, 924
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570 Mercer Street
Seattle, WA 98109
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www.vicis.co
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914-337-2167
www.vokkero.com
Wireless communications system

Whistle Recruiting
Booth: 111
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WSI Sports
Booth: 1403
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Xenith
Area 738
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AFCAMAGAZINE

FOUNDATIONS OF FOOTBALL

It is with great pleasure that we at *AFCAMagazine* bring you our Foundations of Football issue. These 12 men represent some of the best minds in the game over the last 50 years. We all know that to be a great coach, you must know your trade. In today's game, proficiency in scheme and technique can mean the difference between a win and a loss. At the same time, if you want to accomplish something greater than the sum of its parts as a football coach, you must also master the intangible aspects of coaching.

Each exclusive interview with these masters of their craft represents a different element of successful coaching. It is our hope that by providing these lessons from some of the best coaches of the last 50 years, we can help create a roadmap for success that stretches far beyond the game of football and positively impacts the lives of our student-athletes, our colleagues in coaching, and our families.



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Be Yourself, Not Someone Else

By Michael Austin

Photo: Christopher Holder

Bobby Bowden never tried to be anyone but Bobby Bowden. The ever-lasting images of the legendary Florida State coach show an experienced leader with his wide-billed hat, maroon (technically, the color is garnet) Seminole windbreaker jacket and a couple national championship rings adorning his fingers.

But when Bowden started his first stint at Florida State as a wide receivers coach in 1963 (after stops at Samford, South Georgia State College and Samford again), he didn't quite possess the same swagger or belief in his ideals.

He tells the story of being sent to Green Bay in 1963 to watch Vince Lombardi lead the Packers, so he could pick up some winning ideas.

"Lombardi would get on them, yell and scream," Bowden recalls. "So, we saw that and saw how successful he was, and think that's how to do it."

On the way back from Green Bay, he opted to take a side trip to Cleveland to watch Paul Brown's coaching style.

"Brown coached with a whisper, never raised his voice and got the same results. The point is, you have to be yourself and not be someone else.

"I believed in leading them, not beating them."

For Bowden, being himself also meant playing fast ... well before it was common. No one in 1993 was rushing to the line after every play, but Bowden knew he had a special quarterback in Charlie Ward, so he used a spread, no-huddle offense to maximize his abilities.

"We put him in shotgun and we'd just go three or four receivers, and we'd go as fast as we could without a huddle. Once we saw what Charlie could do, we'd let him run and pass," Bowden explains. "We had a term called 'Kentucky Derby' and that'd mean we'd go as fast as we can go."

And, long before assistant coaches started holding up giant boards with pictures on them to signal to the players on the field, Florida State went with single-word play calls at the line. It seems simple, but it worked.

"We'd just use words. A sweep to the right was called 'Bobby' because the coaches knew I loved sweeps. 'Bowden' was a left-side sweep," he recalls. "Wideouts, a running quarterback and going as fast as you can, it's the style people are having fits with today ... and we were very successful because people weren't ready for it."

The Seminoles' successes under Bowden are well-documented: two national titles, 13 ACC titles (including nine in a row) and 14 consecutive bowl appearances without a loss (from 1982-95 with a tie in 1984).

All of those victories raise the profile and increase the expectations for a program, and with that comes harsher criticism. It's surprising to hear that such a successful and confident coach considered giving up the game due to the constant negative feedback.


"The one thing that hurts when you coach is criticism. During my years of coaching, there were several times I considered getting out of coaching [because of the negativity]," Bowden admits. "I'd always come back to the fact that I'd rather do this than anything else. It's a part of the game, so you just live with it."

As he adjusted to the criticism, Bowden also says he had to change with the times when it came to his players. He recalls when he started coaching in 1953, you told a player to do something, "and he wouldn't bat an eye."

As he reached the end of his career, things changed.

"Nowadays, they look at you and ask why?" he says. "You have to explain it to them ... you have to sell it to them."

No matter the tough losses, the criticism or the changing players' attitudes, Bowden says no one had to sell him on coaching and knows there is nothing else he'd rather have done with his professional life.

"I coached 57 years and I can't remember a single day that I hated to go to work," he says. 

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Vince Dooley

Emphasize Safety For Student-Athletes

By Michael Austin

It's a game of individual battles, assignments and responsibilities, but when football is boiled down to its basic parts, it's a team game more than anything else.

And that's why Vince Dooley, 85, the head coach of Georgia for 25 seasons (1964-88) and winner of one national title, dedicated his life to the sport.

When Dooley is asked about what fueled his passion for football, he doesn't hesitate to say, "being a part of something and being a responsible part of something that's bigger than oneself. The greatest satisfaction and the thing I miss is that moment in the locker room after a big win, and beating a team you weren't supposed to, and seeing the celebration of the team, the managers, the trainers and whoever else is a part of it.

"I used to just sit back and watch, and really enjoy it as a satisfying moment."

Dooley earned a lot of those satisfying moments in his career with 201 victories (all at Georgia), six SEC titles and eight bowl wins. He says football coaching never was "work" to him, it simply was part of his life — a part of his life that almost never came to be.

Dooley gives a great deal of credit to his high school (McGill Institute) coach, Ray Dicharry, for his career path. It's a testament to the positive influence high school coaches play in the lives of their players.

"Outside of my parents, no person had more influence on me than my high school coach because, at that time in my life, sports made the most sense," Dooley recalls of his time growing up in Mobile, Ala. "You respected and admired your coach, and you learned from him. He had the positive influence that I needed at a time in my life when I was finding my way."

What Dooley wants players learning from coaches — beyond the life lessons that stick with them for the rest of

their lives — is that they know how much their coaches care for them and want them to be safe. He's encouraged by the lengths coaches are going to make the game safer. Dooley describes football as a "spartan" game in which physical toughness is required. Despite this, there are ways to make the game safer to keep players on the field and reaping the benefits of football.

"I was on the rules committee and chaired it, and safety always has been at the top of the list," Dooley says, while adding that he's pleased with how medical staff members now are more actively involved in player evaluations.

"You're a football coach, you're not a medical doctor. Those decisions need to be made and left to the doctors and trainers, so there's no question," Dooley explains.

He adds that the increased awareness of player safety has forced coaches to go back and teach tackling the proper way — with the shoulder — and the head to the side. As young players learn these techniques, they become less at risk for injury and the game becomes healthier in the long run.

This sentiment circles back to his idea of coaches being positive influences on their players and the game. He sees the sport as an opportunity for so many young men to find purpose and learn lessons that stick with them through adulthood.

"It was through this sport that I was even able to go to college. It provided me an opportunity," Dooley says. "The championships, the bowls, the winning, will never be lessened, but as one grows, you realize the players become increasingly more important.

"[As a coach] you are such a positive to influence people. You have that responsibility and you constantly need to be reminded of it." **AFC**

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AFCA Magazine | Ja

Keep Your Priorities Straight

By Adam Reed

Photo: David Stituka / Wisconsin Athletic Communications

University of Wisconsin Director of Athletics Barry Alvarez worked his way to the top of the football world over 40 years as a coach and player. After resurrecting Wisconsin football in the 1990s, he was unanimously inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2010.

Alvarez always envisioned being a Division I head coach at a major program, and eventually taking on an administrative role, but his storied career isn't a product of a long-term agenda. He took the old-fashioned road to the top, by keeping his head down and focusing on the task at hand.

"If you want to move up the ladder, do a good job and people will recognize that," Alvarez says. "It's not about calling people and worrying about the next job – it's coaching the guys that you have."

Alvarez says coaches short-change not only their own development, but the development of their players when they don't give the job their undivided attention. Coaches have more than enough to keep them busy, and even when the program is running well, it can be a challenge to keep the needs of the players in perspective.

Even coaches who are solely focused on making sure their current team is headed in the right direction can sometimes fail to ask where their players are headed after they leave. Coaches must guard against viewing players only as players, never considering the role of the team in their personal and professional development.

"We are so organized and so structured that some of our athletes, as they finish their playing careers, they haven't learned to make some decisions on their own," Alvarez says. "They're in a routine. It's a comfortable routine. It's a safe routine. It's hard for them to cut the cord and move on."

Every player's window slams shut eventually, and coaches are charged with the privilege of making sure that when it does, players are ready to take on the real world. Luckily

for coaches, good football programs provide players with life skills by their very nature. At Wisconsin, for example, players are taught time management skills and the ability to deal with adversity in pursuit of both athletic and academic excellence.

"You have to deal with more time demands. You have to deal with competing at an extremely high level in athletics," Alvarez says. "So, you're getting a better education. You're learning more. You're picking up different values that you can carry on for the rest of your life."


In addition to the rigors of being a Big Ten student-athlete, Alvarez says Wisconsin has a program called Beyond the Game that makes sure his players are equipped with all the tools to be successful.

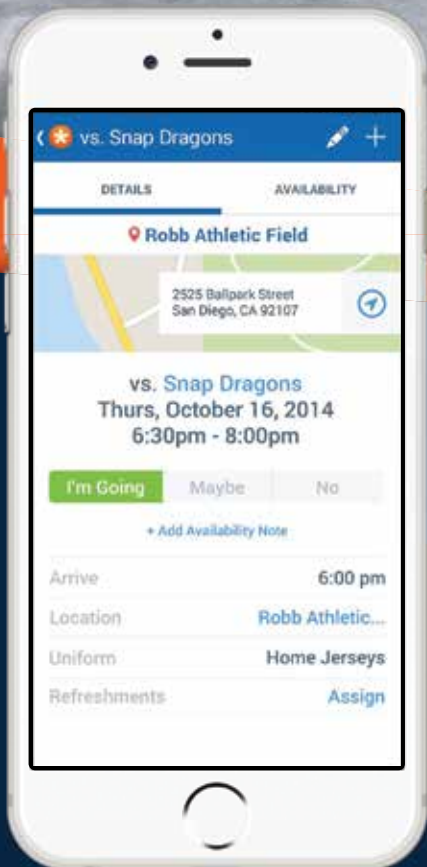
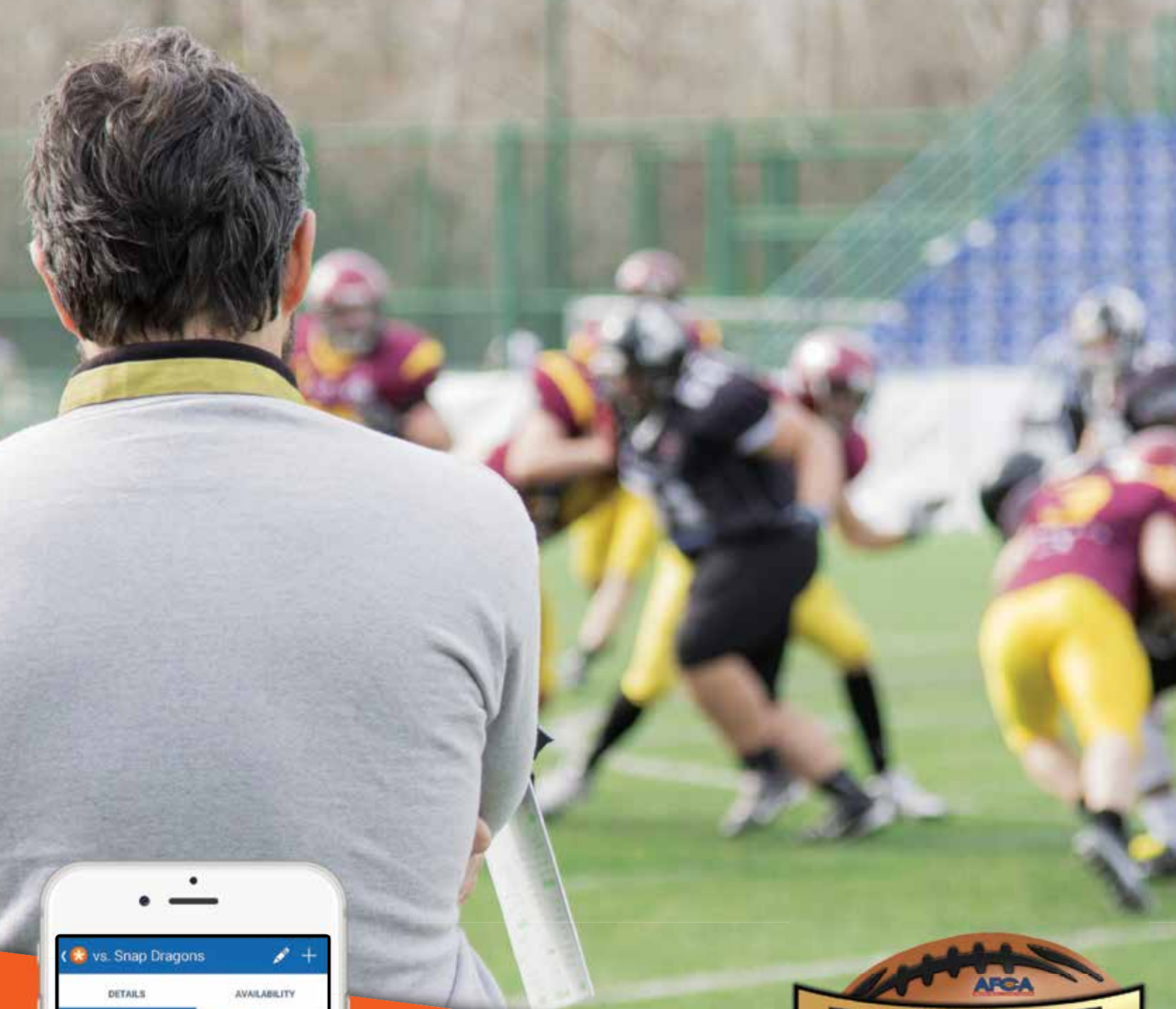
Today's game is big business, meaning big money for coaches who can compete at the highest level. Unfortunately, this big business can be a big distraction.

"There are people in this business who are more concerned with their next job, and hitting the jackpot at their next job, or hitting the jackpot as a coordinator or a head coach, rather than being in this profession to help kids," says Alvarez.

Coaches who fall victim to this mindset face a harsh reality. Much like young players hoping to make it to the NFL, the numbers show the vast majority of coaches will never earn the huge payday they seek.

This reality emphasizes the purest motivation for being a football coach – setting up players to be successful in life. Money alone will never validate a coach's career, or bring a coach fulfillment, but watching players go out into the world and make a difference certainly will.

"There are very few people who affect as many lives as coaches do," Alvarez says. "When you see that, it justifies all the time that you put in." 



HELPING COACHES GET BACK TO COACHING



Mack Brown

Understand What Toughness Means

By Michael Austin

Mack Brown says the notion that someone is tougher than someone else on a football field is a misnomer. If you're on a football field, you clearly are tough. It's about being "tougher longer than your opponent." It's something he preached to his players during his 31 seasons as a head coach ... and something he attributes to the profession of coaching as well.

As a head coach, especially in a high-profile environment (such as his 16 years leading the University of Texas), you are called upon to be tough for the benefit of players, assistants and the overall program.

"Toughness for a coach is handling that press conference after the game. It's trying to pick up your team and staff after a tough loss, so you don't let one loss beat you twice. It is going to speak at a funeral of one of your players who was lost in a car wreck. It is going to see a parent and young man who ruined his knee in his senior year, and he was so excited about leading his team as a senior and the possibility of an NFL career," Brown remarks. "It's having to fire a friend, when you are at a point when it is no longer good for the university for him to stay, but you love the guy."

Brown says he appreciates the profession and those in it even more now that he's off the sidelines (he coached his last game in 2013). He calls coaching a "lonesome life" because there are so few people around you who truly understand how much the job entails.

Brown knew the demands of the job before ever leading his first program at Appalachian State in 1983. Brown's father and grandfather had been football coaches and superintendents of schools in their home state of Tennessee. Brown always had been around athletics and even started


coaching a Little League baseball team when he was just a teenager playing on a Babe Ruth squad.

Beyond the demands, however, Brown also gained early exposure as to the impact and difference a quality coach makes in players' lives. He says as he grew up, he was around a lot of his grandfather's former players.

"They talked about the influence he had on their lives ... by turning them into men and giving them an opportunity to be better prepared for life after high school football," Brown recalls. "That message carried through with me. When I took that role as head coach, I felt a lot of pressure to make sure it was more than just winning football games. I had to influence young people's lives."

Of course, Brown won games — a lot of games — 244 to be exact, including the 2005 national title. He achieved this greatness on the field by inspiring and leading players from all walks of life. He sees the sport of football as "the best melting pot" in our society.

"Coaches have to care about teaching kids and caring about the whole. They ask the parents to give them their most prized thing in their lives. When you take someone's child out of their home and commit to take care of them, you don't think about what color they are," Brown explains. "You just think they are a young person who you want to help grow."

It's why he loves athletics, and football in particular, as he sees it as a way to help the healing needed in our country. He's troubled race relations in this country haven't progressed and hopes athletics can play a role in some much-needed healing. "It's one of the things I love most about sports — and especially football — is that it brings down a lot of walls and barriers." 



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Lee Corso

Integrity Above All

By Adam Reed

Photo: Indiana University Athletics

Lee Corso has spent the last 30 years as an always-entertaining member of ESPN's College Gameday program, but it was the simple truths he learned while coaching that propelled him to his successful and worry-free broadcasting career.

The basis for Corso's success stems from the time he spent with his players. Building relationships over his years as a coach motivated Corso to come into work every day and give it his all. But, those relationships served as more than motivation – they helped Corso form sacred bonds of trust and responsibility every coach should strive to achieve.

Corso draws a comparison between what he does in the sports entertainment industry and what football coaches are trying to accomplish. He views himself as an entertainer; college football acts as his vehicle. Likewise, he says coaches are primarily teachers of life lessons, and they have the same powerful vehicle for teaching them.

"You have a responsibility to teach players life lessons," Corso says. "That's more important than anything else. You teach life lessons along with football."

But some coaches have it backward. They feel as though winning football games is their primary job description, and the life lessons are just a bonus.

Building relationships with players isn't just a means of getting the most out of them. There needs to be a mutual trust and respect that can only be developed when players are shown that the coaching staff truly cares about them as a person, and not just a player.

Players will reach new heights as a byproduct of this relationship, but it shouldn't be the coach's focus. Corso says he finds no greater fulfillment than knowing his players respect him. "The greatest compliment a coach can have, is the players play hard for him," he says.

Corso's players demonstrated the type of relationship they have with their former coach earlier this year. On opening night in Bloomington, 91 of his former players paid the price of admission out of their own pocket to honor Corso at halftime.

"That was one of the great thrills I've had in my life," Corso says.

Respect and admiration like Corso has earned can't be produced by winning alone. Caring for each individual is critical, but being worthy of their respect is of even greater importance.

The laughing and smiling Corso admired by college football fans all over the country isn't just a persona being acted out for the cameras. Corso's demeanor certainly reflects his amiable personality, but it also reflects his integrity.


"Never prostitute your integrity," he proclaims, over and over, when he shares his thoughts on his coaching legacy. Corso made it a priority in his career to coach the right way, all of the time, regardless of whether anyone was watching.

"Never prostitute your integrity to get a job or to keep one," Corso says. "That's the one piece of advice I give all of my players, every time I see them. If you ever do prostitute your integrity, you're finished."

Corso says in all his years as a coach, he never had an NCAA investigator talk to one of his players. His emphasis on integrity resulted in a career free of scandal, and more importantly – a clear conscience. It's much easier to enjoy coaching when you aren't constantly looking over your shoulder, worrying about covering some sort of rule bending.

The excuses for prostituting one's integrity seem enticing and even justifiable in many cases. Coaches have high-pressure jobs, and the higher up the ranks a coach climbs, the more temptations there are.

Corso is no stranger to these pressures. He admits to being fired over wins and losses – something which constantly hangs over the head of every coach. But, his decision to play by the rules and deal with the consequences hasn't caused him to lose any sleep.

"It's not worth it to cheat and be a winner, because ultimately you will get caught," he says. "It will always come back to haunt you. You might get ahead sometimes by doing it, but you will fail eventually." 



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John Cooper

Treat Them Like Your Own

By Michael Austin

When considering the list of programs upon which the foundation of college football has been built historically, it doesn't take long to reach Ohio State. The scarlet and gray. The dotting of the "i." The Horseshoe. The helmet stickers.

John Cooper had the privilege to lead the Buckeyes for 13 seasons (1988–2000), but if not for his high school football coach, he may have been working at a gas station in his hometown of Powell, Tenn.

"I was one of six kids and raised way out in the country. When I was in high school, whatever job you got out of high school, that's basically what you did the rest of your life," Cooper explains. "One day in passing, my high school football coach, John Clabo, was introducing me ... and said I'm the quarterback of the football team, but it was like having another coach on the field. Then he said, 'matter of fact, John, you might make a good coach.'

"He planted the seed, and I took it and ran with it. Up until he made that comment, I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't know if I was going to pump gasoline or follow my dad and become a carpenter."

Luckily for the game of college football, and for programs such as Tulsa and Arizona State (the two programs he led prior to Ohio State), Clabo believed in Cooper and communicated that belief. It's the power of influence coaches hold and it's stronger than they think.

"High school football coaches have a tremendous influence over their players," Cooper continues. "They don't make a lot of money, but you have influence over your players."

As with most coaches, it wasn't the easiest path for Cooper to move up from the football fields of Powell High to the pristine setting of the Horseshoe, but his passion for

the game, ability to process football information and an innate mental toughness, created opportunities for him to move up the coaching ladder. He started with an offer of an unpaid position coaching the freshman team under head coach Clay Stapleton at his alma mater, Iowa State, in 1962 on one condition.


"I said I'd do it if I could sit in on his meetings and he could teach me how to be a better coach," Cooper says.

That initial Iowa State offer led to assistant-coaching positions at Oregon State, UCLA, Kansas and Kentucky before landing the head job at Tulsa in 1977. Moving around the country requires a coach and his family to be mentally tough, which is a trait he sought to sharpen in his players.

"If you play football, you're tough. The coach's job is to get student-athletes to play hard, practice hard and get better in the offseason," Cooper explains. "You don't have to go out there every day and prove how tough you are [and coaches] don't have to go out there and pound on the players every day."

That love for his players — whether it was instructing his own son or building up the confidence of the last athlete on the roster — is what kept Cooper coaching for almost 40 years.

His son, also named John, played for him at Tulsa. He says he treated every player just like John.

"Later on in my career, I had a reputation as a good recruiter. The message I'd tell the mothers when I was in their homes was, if you send your son to play for me, I'll make you one promise — I'll treat your son exactly how I treated my son. It's pretty strong. That's what I believe in, and that's what we did." 



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Do It “The Right Way”

By Michael Austin

Virginia Tech played 103 seasons of football before 1987 and only won one bowl game in six tries.

Frank Beamer took over the Hokies in 1987 and when his 29-season run ended at the conclusion of the 2015 campaign, Virginia Tech had appeared in 23 consecutive bowl games.

It's clear Beamer is synonymous with Virginia Tech football as he built the foundation for the program's prominence and launched the Hokies into the national conversation during the last few decades.

“There are very few programs that you can change the status of the program, but Virginia Tech is thought of differently today than we were 15, 20, 25 years ago,” Beamer says. “I'd like to think we changed the status of Virginia Tech, but we also did it the right way.”

Beamer says “the right way” means the players and coaches worked hard, conducted their business within the rules and remained respectful of all competitors. He says these are the foundations upon which the Hokie program now stands.

“You have to be respectful of other people. You may not agree on things, but you respect their opinion. You work hard, but you always are going to be honest in how you go about your work,” he explains. “Those are the foundations. It's not going to change. In the end, the people you played against, did they respect you and did they think you did it the right way? That is fundamentally important.”

Beamer's teams were respected not because they won every game — although he did finish his career with 280 victories — but for how they responded to adversity.

In 1999, Virginia Tech won 11 games and a conference title, but lost a shot at a national championship with a defeat in the Sugar Bowl. The Hokies bounced back in 2000 with

another 11-win season. In 2010, the Hokies won 11 games but lost in the Orange Bowl. The team came back in 2011 with 11 more wins and a berth in the Sugar Bowl.


“Relentless is a word I always loved. We were always going to come back,” Beamer says. “Regardless of what happened the play before, we always came back and played with as much effort as we possibly could.”

Beyond the wins on the field and the respect of his opponents, Beamer lasted 43 years in the coaching profession — with stops at Maryland, The Citadel and Murray State before Virginia Tech — because of the quality time and influence he had with players.

He says competing and taking the field on Saturdays are feelings that are tough to describe, but “the real highlight of this business is being around the people and the players.” Beamer loves college coaching due to the opportunity to positively affect a player's life for decades.

“At this age, it's an age when they really start thinking about who they are, where they are going and how they are preparing to get there,” Beamer explains. “The effect you have on people's lives and what they become is the real satisfaction in coaching.”

That effect is something coaches cannot take lightly. Whether it's realized or not, players constantly are looking toward their leaders and role models to mirror their behaviors, especially if they come from a less-than-ideal home situation.

“They're looking for someone to follow. Their home life may not be as stable as you would like,” Beamer says. “In a lot of cases, they're just looking for the right thing to do and the right way to act. You must be an example. You can't say one thing and act another, and expect to have any influence over players.” 

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Bill Curry

Unify Your Teams, Communities

By Adam Reed

Bill Curry spent 50 years as both player and coach, each year going through the process of forming a team all over again. Curry's experience as a coach taught him the incredible power of the game of football to teach young people lessons that will last them a lifetime.

Curry says coaches have a responsibility to wield their influence to teach young people positive life lessons.

"That child remembers every word you say," says Curry. "When you implant positive self-image, and when you implant love for all people regardless of what they look like or what the color of their skin is, or what their religion is — when you do that, it doesn't go away," he explains.

Football unifies players regardless of where they are from or what their unique experiences in life have been. Many players treasure the sport because it provides them an opportunity to feel like they belong for the first time in their lives. When players run out onto the field and huddle up with their teammates, they see 10 other players who are counting on them to do their job. They realize the value they bring to the rest of the team. They find purpose in their shared struggle.

"The great thing about the football huddle, particularly, is that it's the only sport I'm aware of where every player needs every teammate on every play just to survive," Curry says. "The United States of America is structured similarly, but we have forgotten that. Our country has forgotten that, but we'll come back to it. There have been times where we have rallied and become a team before, and we are going to have to do it again."

Curry recalls a time in American history when people stood united — in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. He was working as an analyst

for ESPN at the time, and still vividly remembers a conversation he had with a football fan while passing through the tiny town of Attalla, Ala.

The man recognized Curry and asked if the weekend's games would be cancelled. After Curry told him the games were off, the man told him, "In Attalla, Alabama, come Friday night, we're going to play football. Because it means a lot to us."


The interaction with this passionate fan left Curry searching for answers.

"Why did it matter in Attalla, Alabama, that we play this often foolish game, with 11 guys on each side running into each other?" Curry wondered.

He soon came to realize there were towns all over the country just like Attalla counting on this "often foolish" game. They needed the game to help them come together, sit together, cheer together, curse together — they needed the sense of community and hope football provided them once a week.

"People cheer and hug each other. People who wouldn't even speak to each other on the street are crying and hugging when they win a big game because their kids did it together," Curry says.

It is difficult to remember a time in recent history when Americans have been more polarized on the political and social issues of the day. Curry's message of unity and the important role football can play is needed now more than ever.

"We must continue," he says. "We must make it safer for the players. We must set the example for this country in the locker room and on the field and in the huddle, because nobody else is doing it." 

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Dick Vermeil

Coach People First, Players Second

By Michael Austin

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Growing up in Calistoga, Calif., Dick Vermeil quickly learned there were only three topics in which he could connect with his father: working in the garage, wine and football. So, when he wanted that bonding time, the two talked about the gridiron and how powerful the game's influence truly is.

"He said you could live your life at a high standard if you lived it the way you played football," Vermeil recalls.

If it was his father who set the spark for football, it was Vermeil's high school football coach who ignited the flame.

"I wouldn't have been a football coach if it hadn't been for my high school football coach Bill Wood," Vermeil proudly says. "It was his first coaching job; he came to Calistoga and we had 150 kids in the school. During the season, he said I could play college football if I wanted. I never gave it a thought before that because no one ever told me I could, especially being in that little school and in that environment."

Wood's inspiration led Vermeil to change his life path.

"I never took college prep in high school, I was going to work in my dad's garage," he says.

Instead, he attended a junior college for a year and a half before walking on at San Jose State. He eventually earned a scholarship, graduated and began his coaching career at Del Mar (Calif.) High School, while always remembering the influence of Wood.

"I just admired the guy. We named our daughter, Nancy, after his wife because we couldn't call her Bill," he says with a chuckle.

Vermeil's sense of humor is well-known, as too is his coaching success at the NFL level. But well before his time in the pro ranks, Vermeil climbed his way up the ladder from high school to junior college (College of San Mateo and Napa Junior College) to Division I assistant (Stanford and UCLA) to NFL assistant (L.A. Rams) before taking over the UCLA program in 1974 and the Philadelphia Eagles in 1976.

He doesn't distinguish one level of football from the other and says he loves all four equally. The best and most important job in your career is the one you have at that exact moment, he explains.

"It's all relative to the time you're involved. I can remember coaching in my high school championship game as well as the Super Bowl. At the time, that high school championship game was as important as the Super Bowl XXXIV win," he says.


To succeed at every level of the game and work your way to the top takes hard work, which sounds cliché, but it's not if it's a major part of how you live your life.

"I taught kids that hard work is not a form of punishment," Vermeil says. "It's a solution to everything you want to do in life. The only limitation you have when you're born is how tall you are going to be — not how smart, not how good and not how successful."

What's amazing about Vermeil's career path, especially when considering the passion he holds for the game, is that he spent 14 years in the broadcast booth rather than coaching on the sidelines.

He says he picked up a lot of on-field strategies while watching other coaches do their jobs. He also learned about how players are motivated and what they want out of football by spending time talking to them in the locker room before and after games.

"When I came back after 14 years of broadcasting, I had a revamped philosophy, a more realistic approach to coaching," Vermeil recalls. "I had more of an understanding of the values in the game other than the X's and O's and how you hit."

"My philosophy of coaching was that I don't coach football — I coach people who play football. I tried to work hard at the values to build better football players and at the same time produce better people." 



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Steve Spurrier

Win Every Day Your Own Way

By Adam Reed

There's only one Steve Spurrier.

The same could be said about any iconic head coach, but in a profession full of copycats, Spurrier stands out as an example of someone who found his own way. In the process, he helped transform football into the game it is today.

Spurrier says he never planned on being some sort of pioneer. He simply chose the path fitting of his personality. It just so happens his personality is unlike anyone else's.

"I tried not to talk like the other coaches," Spurrier says. "Seemed like when I was coaching, almost every football coach in the world would use the words 'great,' 'football' and 'excited' in the same sentence all the time. So I tried to find some new adjectives."

Candid media interviews and good-natured banter became a Spurrier trademark over the years, but his individuality goes far beyond his superb vocabulary. At a time when the SEC was known for lights-out defense and running the football, Spurrier brought Duke's "Airball" offense with him to Florida. The scheme soon became known as "Fun and Gun," a fitting term for a coach whose approach seems to stem from the old cliché of working smarter, not harder.

"There are two ways to be successful in life: you can do it like everybody else does and try to outwork them, or you can do it differently," Spurrier explains. "I definitely thought differently was the best path to success for our teams."

What may strike some coaches as a relaxed philosophy is really nothing more than Spurrier being himself. Spurrier says his teams always tried to conduct their business "the right way," but he found no reason to run his staff into the ground chasing a competitive advantage.

"I used to say we worked more 'smarter hours' than the competition," Spurrier says. "Not longer hours, but 'smarter hours.'"

"You can watch film all night. You can sit there and watch one game for two or three hours and call that work, or you can watch that same tape for 35 minutes and feel like you have a good feel for the competition."

Coaching football successfully is hard work no matter how you approach it, but it only becomes harder when coaches try to be someone or something they are not. While coaches may criticize Spurrier's philosophy, it's hard to argue with his results.


Countless coaches have found success by outworking their opponent. Piling up the hours represents one successful coaching approach; Spurrier's way is another. But there is no limit to the number of successful coaching philosophies, any more than there is a limit to coaches' personalities or backgrounds. Maybe that's why one of the hardest tasks as a new football coach is finding a style that meshes well with the individual.

Coaches spend most of their careers working to bring people together, but at the end of the day, every team is made up of individuals — including the coach. Spurrier encourages coaches who choose to approach the game with a workaholic mindset to make sure they remember to take time to care for themselves.

"Get away from your job. Find some stress-free activities," Spurrier says. "Don't be consumed 100 percent with your job the whole year. Have 'get-away time' so you can recharge your batteries and get ready to go full speed when the season starts."

Winning football takes year-round commitment, and coaches who feel they are too busy to have some fun are often the coaches who need a break the most. Proper recovery is just as critical for coaches as it is for players.

Spurrier has received countless accolades over his storied career. He is a Heisman winner, a National Champion, and the fourth person inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach. Yet, with all these bullet points on his resume, his greatest accomplishment may be his uncanny ability to just be himself. The highest levels of success never changed the "Head Ball Coach."

"I've been blessed way beyond my wildest expectations," Spurrier says. "For some reason I've had a bunch of awards and honors, and I'm thankful." 



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Be Loyal And Build Your Program

By Michael Austin

Johnny Majors was a teacher, a listener and a football coach. But, most of all, Majors was a builder. He took struggling programs and left them much better than when he arrived on campus.

His first coaching job took him to Ames, Iowa, in 1968 where he took over an Iowa State program that was coming off consecutive two-win seasons and never had been to a bowl game in its 78-year history. By Majors' fourth season, the Cyclones won eight games (the most since 1906) and played in the Sun Bowl.

Majors made the jump to the University of Pittsburgh for the 1973 season with the Panthers coming off a 1-10 campaign. Majors led the program to four straight winning seasons and capped it with a 12-0 record and national championship in 1976.

The Tennessee job in 1977 was a little different as the Volunteers were above .500 the year prior (at 6-5), but Majors allowed Tennessee to make the leap. He took the team to seven straight bowls from 1981 to 1987 and won five of them. The team then went on to win 29 games in a three-year stretch from 1989 to 1991.

To do this kind of building — or rebuilding — Majors had to be patient, listen and stay open to suggestions throughout his coaching career, regardless of the success he had attained.

"I never knew too many know-it-alls who really knew it all. A lot of them were egotistical and not nearly as smart as they thought they were," Majors says. "I was a listener. I wanted to learn. I was smart enough to know I didn't have all the answers."

Majors always had one answer for which he was certain: be loyal. No matter the situation and no matter the awkwardness ... be loyal to your staff, your players, your program and your head coach.


Before he was winning a national championship or rebuilding big-time programs, Majors started his career as a defensive assistant at Tennessee, Mississippi State and Arkansas. During one of those stops, he says, he had a disagreement with the defensive coordinator about going to a three-defensive-back philosophy (Majors was in favor of it).

Rather than side-stepping the coordinator, Majors says he spoke to him, expressed his views and flat-out told him he was going to approach the head coach about changing the defensive philosophy.

"Being loyal is never talking behind a coach's back. If you have a disagreement, you talk to him face to face," Majors explains. "If you work for a head coach, you go in like a man and ask to talk to him privately."

This way of handling his business, and handling his assistants, had a lasting effect on the game of college football. Clearly, Majors knew what he was doing, especially when you consider the extensive list of assistants who worked under him and went on to lead their own programs, including Dom Capers, Jon Gruden, Jimmy Johnson, Jackie Sherrill and Dave Wannstedt, among others.

He credits being up-front, loyal and dedicated to making programs (and players) better as why he had such a successful career, which includes 185 wins, nine bowl victories, a national championship and three SEC titles.

"I go back to Ames or Pittsburgh or the University of Tennessee, and the people treat me great," Majors concludes. "They realized I worked hard and gave credit to good assistant coaches who made me a better coach. I can't complain about the way I've been treated in my entire life, and I'm 82 years old." 



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Dennis Franchione

Response Defines The Man

By Michael Austin

Dennis Franchione spent four decades in the game of football, and while he always knew he wanted to be a coach, he never saw it as his dream job. He didn't see it as a "job" at all.

"It never was a job for me. It was just what I did. It was me. I was blessed to do it for 40 years and have the ride I was able to have," Franchione says of his career, which includes 213 college victories, being named the NAIA Coach of the Year twice (1986 and 1987) and Division I head-coaching stops at Southwest Texas State (now Texas State), New Mexico, TCU, Alabama and Texas A&M.

Beyond the victories and accolades, Franchione saw his position as head coach as more than just someone who tallies wins and losses.

"You have to win some games along the way, but a coach takes young boys and turns them into men. I always looked at it as I needed to take young people where they couldn't take themselves — academically, athletically, socially and maybe spiritually," he says. "I always looked at myself as a teacher and my classroom was the football field. I had a captive audience because they liked my subject."

He adds that teaching life skills, such as teamwork, sacrifice, discipline and commitment was something in which he took pride, as his goal was to prepare his players for their careers, whether that involved football or not.

"Football teaches you to stick with it and fight when things aren't going well. These are qualities you're going to need to have with you through the rest of your life when things aren't easy," Franchione explains. "You get defined by how you respond."

Franchione wants the game of football to be defined by its response to recent uneasy topics, especially critics who blast the game for being unsafe. Despite some of this negative press, he says the game always has its outspoken contrarians.

"As I grew in the profession, football was always under attack from something. There always are problems to deal with ... but it's a good thing," he says while explaining the recent criticisms have paved the way for expanded player safety. "It's not the first time that football has gone through a cycle of something difficult to deal with and it won't be the last."


Franchione is proud of how those involved in football have worked to improve the game for the benefit of protecting the player. He sees upgrades in equipment as a major change since when he started coaching in the 1970s. He also commends the rules committees for changing with the times.

"The rules committee has done a great job trying to penalize or bring to light the things that are physically harmful in the game, such as protecting the deep snapper, the quarterback's legs and helmet-to-helmet collisions," Franchione says.

These are the kinds of changes the game needs so it can grow and remain a viable, thriving option for young adults as they develop the skills they need to become contributors to society.


"Football is a constant team game. There is no other game that plays (and affects) 70 to 75 people in a single evening," he explains.

And it's those individual player experiences that make all the time and effort dedicated to the coaching craft worth it. Franchione recently attended a reunion of Pittsburgh State players (he served as head coach of the Gorillas from 1985–89) and had an interaction that made him appreciate this profession even more.

"I had a young man come up to me and say, 'Coach, you changed my entire life.' It was very humbling," he concludes. "Those are the kinds of stories you relish." 



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Coaching What You Cannot Control

Eating, drinking and recovering like a champion has proven to be a critical component of any successful strength and conditioning program. It requires coaches to get creative about demonstrating how players should take care of their bodies.

By Adam Reed

Football coaches like to be in control. They excel at teaching players how to execute their assignments to their full potential and work within the established scheme to produce consistent results.

But what about all of the factors beyond a coach's control? Coaches attempt to mitigate the negative effects of factors like poor officiating, inclement weather and injuries, but sometimes there isn't much a coach can do to combat these issues.

Strength and conditioning coaches deal with similar hurdles in the weight room. It can be a constant struggle to keep players at their ideal weight, properly rested and recovered, and motivated to excel in their training.

Georgia Tech director of player development for football, John Sisk, embraces the challenge of helping his players operate at peak performance. He says one of the primary goals of his staff is teaching players how to take care of their bodies when they aren't around the coaches.

"If you want to be great, you have to work when no one is watching," Sisk says. "Not just on your skill development, but on how you eat every day, and how you recover, and getting your sleep. That's stuff we as coaches cannot control."

For the most part, players at the college level are used to conducting themselves properly within the football

environment, but sometimes have a hard time making good decisions when they are away from the positive influence of their coaches.

Players often think about training from a flawed perspective. Many feel like the hard work begins and ends in the weight room or on the practice field, but coaches know that being an elite player is a 24/7 commitment.

"It's not always outrunning people or outlifting people," Sisk says. "It's how you are eating when no one is watching, or how you take care of your body when no one is watching. That's the key."

Performance Plates

Sisk says his staff teaches players about proper nutrition as the first step toward empowering them to take care of their own bodies. Good eating habits not only make a lasting impression on the lifestyle of players, they also give players a competitive advantage.

"It's hard to outwork people, because everybody has nice weight rooms now, and everybody has strength coaches at the collegiate level," Sisk says. "The thing our athletes have a chance to be great at is how they eat."

Competition has forced football programs to evolve in so many areas. The scheme on the field, the technique in the weight room, and the quality of technology, equipment and



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facilities has improved drastically since the game's inception. The food players eat and the way they consume it, on the other hand, hasn't improved at the same pace.

The improvement of nutrition has been lagging behind for a good reason in many cases – good food has been slowing down progress for many players. Coaches wrestle with convincing players that food that tastes good, but isn't necessarily good

for you, isn't the right choice. Sisk says when it comes to home cooking, it's a particularly slippery slope.

"We're all human beings and there's a lot of moms who cook very good food," Sisk says. "You can't go back home and say, 'I'm not going to eat that.' Moms would respond, 'Well you ate it for 19 years of your life, but now you can't eat my food?'"

Sisk toes the line between encouraging healthy behaviors and the

impossible task of convincing players not to indulge in the foods they love. His solutions consist of smart compromises and educating players on how to eat for peak performance.

Compromise becomes easier when coaches tell players how and why to eat the right things, rather than what they can't or shouldn't eat. Players need coaches to show them what to eat, instead of telling them. The Georgia Tech staff calls this concept "performance plates." They put example plates of food together, and give the players options of how to mix and match what they like, while still giving their body exactly what it needs.

"Our nutritionist does a good job of giving our players ideas, and we try to put stuff in the weight room for hydration, and teach them how to recover and how to eat for performance," says Sisk.

Showing them what to eat and what a performance plate looks like also involves showing them how to shop for food. Players can't, and more importantly won't, get everything they eat straight from the school's meal program or nutrition bar.

Sisk and his staff put the extra effort in to show players exactly where to look to find what they need at reasonable prices, and where to make cuts when time or budget restrains players from making the best choices.

"When you go to the grocery store and take players shopping, the worst stuff is in the front of the store," Sisk says. "So when they get a chance to buy their own groceries, are they buying the correct stuff?"

When coaches arm players early on with the knowledge they need to make good decisions about how they are fueling their body, it pays dividends for the rest of their athletic career. Coaches wouldn't expect players to know how to execute a complex lift or technique on the field without demonstrating it, but somehow programs all over the country fail to demonstrate proper nutrition to their players, year after year.

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There's no easy way to gain a competitive advantage once an athlete is in the weight room. A 45-pound plate will always weigh 45 pounds, but the plates athletes are using at the dinner table can make all the difference. If coaches are looking for an untapped competitive advantage, nutrition is a great place to start.

Rest and Recovery

Sisk also helps his players to become better athletes by taking an active role in their rest and recovery habits. The football season demands a lot from a player's body. While the training staff is able to provide tremendous support for players, they cannot be with them around the clock.

Sisk says he tries to encourage good habits during the time he has with players, in the hopes they will continue them on their own. Coaches often tell players to get a good night's sleep, but don't actively encourage them to do so, or show them how to improve their sleeping environment.

"I do bed checks during the season so I see the guys who are asleep and those who aren't," Sisk says. "We encourage them to turn the TV off and the lights off, to try and encourage them to turn their phones down. So we give those little pointers to them to help them recover."

Sisk doesn't force players to do anything, but without positive reinforcement, some players never develop good sleeping habits. A well-rested player trains harder, fostering


growth and increasing performance. The clear competitive advantage is enough to motivate players, but only if coaches are willing to take the time to demonstrate the importance.

Aside from actively encouraging the proper rest and recovery routine during the season, Sisk also tells his players to take advantage of every opportunity to get away from training or practice. Once the season starts, these opportunities are few and far between.

"I tell our players that if they do what they are asked to do, and we have the kind of season we can have and want to have, we aren't going to get a lot of breaks," Sisk says. "So when we take a break — take a break. Get away from it. During the summer when we have a weekend where guys can get away — get away from it."

"This generation multi-tasks tremendously. They have to process a lot of stuff over and over and over, and I don't think they ever get away from it."

Sisk tells his players to get out of the weight room and away from the practice facilities when there is a rare opportunity to do so. He also says players should spend time with the people who support and inspire them to be successful, and enjoy themselves.

If coaches will add these simple off-the-field techniques to their toolbox, the culture of their program will reap the benefits of players who look after themselves when no one is looking. 



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Wash, Sanitize, Store, Repeat

By Sam Trusner, E.M., C.

Athletic equipment and apparel care and maintenance has grown to be one of the most time-consuming responsibilities encountered by coaches at every level of competition. Professionals and large schools are fortunate enough, in most cases, to afford hiring a full-time person to handle these duties, but many smaller collegiate, high school and youth programs must rely on coaches, students or volunteers.

As the popularity of various helmet colors and decorations, special “throwback” uniforms for special games or causes, and added protective padding to protect the athletes increases each season, the added need to clean, disinfect and store these items forces those responsible to become more creative in how to effectively perform these tasks.

Most programs are not given larger areas to store these massive quantities of gear, so it is important that everyone understands the fundamental issues that must be considered when addressing equipment sanitation and storage.

Keeping It Clean

Newer, lighter, moisture-management fabrics have heightened the performance of football uniforms and apparel, while contributing to the need for better care to ensure proper sanitation and cleanliness. Moisture management fabrics demand more frequent and thorough washings to remove odors and bacteria, while spandex products break down if dried improperly or washed in hot temperatures.

Here are a few guidelines to follow:

- Always follow the manufacturer’s washing and care instructions.
- Try to arrange for uniforms to be laundered on a scheduled basis, preferably as soon as possible after use.

- Have the laundry done by the same person(s) to ensure constant water temperatures, machine cycles, detergent consistency and drying temperatures. Having players “do their own” leads to fading, bleach accidents, improper cleaning and many other problems.

Coaches can eliminate costs by contacting local cleaning services to seek out their assistance in exchange for free ads in your program, signage or delivery assistance by your players. High schools with home economics programs can sometimes work together to build school spirit and guarantee better care and more consistent cleaning. Many companies have cleaning products especially designed for sport-specific dirt and grime, but many of the off-the-shelf products are effective as well.

A little research can deliver cost-effective and proven methods for stain removal and odor reduction, as well as ways to reduce many of the common issues athletes, moms and coaches face on a weekly basis. Many companies offer programmable laundry systems and chemicals that address deep stains and excessive sweat accumulation for programs with the means to purchase them. At the same time, elbow grease and an understanding of the basics of how to get things clean can go a long way for those with limited resources.

MRSA outbreaks and contagious staph infections have brought an increased awareness of the need to make sure that we develop proper protocols for disinfecting helmets and shoulder pads on a regular basis. Many retail products are readily available to assist with controlling the spread of germs and harmful bacteria, but some simple, inexpensive practices can go a long way in minimizing these dangerous locker room situations.

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- Have athletes carry their pads and helmets into the shower with them on a weekly basis and rinse off dirt, grime and sweat. This doesn't necessarily kill the bacteria, but it helps destroy the environment that they thrive in. Air-dry this equipment by hanging it in their lockers.
- Spray some type of germ killing disinfectant on these items on a regularly scheduled basis. Contact the manufacturer, or a local expert, regarding the suggested frequency of these actions, as well as what is safe for the products and the athletes.
- Limit the sharing of equipment, towels and apparel as much as possible. Outbreaks have been known to limit an athlete's ability to participate/compete, have cancelled contests between teams, and have even lead to fatalities if not handled properly and in a timely manner. No need to panic, but take every case seriously.

Know Your Storage

Athletic storage systems run the gamut from custom-designed, team-logoed, stainless steel to shop-class-built plywood boxes. Each style has its benefits and place for different situations, but the final objectives should always be the same. Proper athletic equipment storage should provide:

- Accessibility
- Protection
- Organization
- Portability
- Security

The current trend in athletics leans toward open, wired units on wheels that allow equipment to be transported for in-season use and then moved to larger areas for off-season storage. Many programs may not have this option, but it can offer the opportunity to use areas previously untapped or cluttered with junk. These units may be more affordable than you might think and may even provoke ideas on DIY projects for shop classes, booster clubs or local carpenters.

Having a company like Montel, GearBoss, Spacesaver or any one of the many vendors who sell products specifically designed for the sports market come in and measure your space and offer design suggestions on how to utilize that space most effectively is a worthwhile endeavor. Many of these units are on wheels, providing portability of equipment and uniforms — all organized with easy access.

The open wire concept also allows for adequate air flow that discourages the growth of bacteria and mold. Storage units like this also contribute to added security by limiting the number of individuals who have uncontrolled access to the inventory.

Coaches must establish some sort of check-in/check-out system for their equipment. Not only does this ensure adequate accountability, it makes end-of-season inventory much easier and much more accurate. By knowing exactly what you have, and its condition, you can make better purchasing decisions and stretch limited budget dollars.

Proper inventory protocols will contribute to establishing manufacturer's suggested reconditioning cycles for helmets

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and shoulder pads, saving budget dollars and ensuring athletes are issued safe, properly certified protective equipment. This process also allows the coach to visually inspect the equipment for any defects that might otherwise go undetected.

Proper storage methods are important to extending the life of protective equipment and should never be ignored. Shoulder pads stored on their arches and/or stacked extremely high often leads to the pads becoming flattened out, which will cause the pads to not fit correctly, be uncomfortable and deteriorate faster.

Football helmets stored in large stacked piles may also lead to materials breakdown, pads/masks becoming disfigured and the blockage of optimum air flow, which encourages germs and bacteria to thrive. Racks specifically designed to store these items are available from various vendors, but resourceful DIY-types can lean on shop classes or local carpenters to design and build inexpensive units that serve these purposes just as efficiently.

Do The Job Right


Football coaches are stretched for time with game preparations, practices, public appearances and other expectations that take them away from their families. Taking proper care of their equipment is just another added responsibility, but one that can be spread out among staff and student managers.

Establishing sound, consistent protocols regarding responsibilities and expectations for issuing, retrieving, laundering and storing equipment and apparel creates accountability and longer-life expectations of that equipment.

This goes a long way toward stretching dollars and providing safe protection.

Hiring an individual to oversee this process is the soundest solution, plus devoting one person's main responsibilities to this area will show added benefits. Students who have been injured but want to remain part of the team and retired individuals with the ability and interest to be part of the program are proven options to consider.

Having a couple of sewing or laundry "experts" can relieve the coach of these time-consuming tasks and give him the peace of mind that the job is being done well. Never overlook resources at the school, such as home economics classes, shop classes and local tradesmen to donate a few minutes of their time (sometimes in exchange for an advertisement in a program, special mention at the end-of year banquet, a team hat/T-shirt, etc.).

Proper equipment and apparel storage and cleanliness does not have to be an expensive investment. Use what you have and be creative. 

Sam Trusner, E.M.,C. is the National Office Manager for the Athletic Equipment Managers Association (AEMA) and has served as its Certification Steering Committee Chair, District 5 Director, Continuing Education Chair, and was part of the initial committee that established the Certification standards. Trusner has also been named District 5 Equipment Manager of the year twice. For more information on specific issues, or questions, please feel free to contact any AEMA member in your area. Visit AEMA's website at www.equipmentmanagers.org



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Offensive Line Technique And The Fullback Off-Tackle Play

By Bo Schembechler, Former Head Coach, University Of Michigan

In discussing offensive line blocks, it has always seemed more pertinent to me when it is done in connection with a particular play which typifies the offense being used. When I was an assistant coach at Ohio State University, our basic offensive play was the Fullback Off-Tackle play, which we ran about 25 percent of the time.

Since this play is so much of our offense, we developed our blocking over the years so that we can consistently run the play against almost any defensive alignment. In our discussion, we will talk about our offensive stance, line splits, starting count and the four blocking techniques that we feel we must master: the one-on-one block, the double-team block, the cut-off block and the cross-field block.

Stance

Our offensive linemen operate from a balanced stance with their feet approximately the width of their arm pits and staggered no more than heel-toe with toes pointing straight down the field. The hand is down directly in front of the rear foot with fingers cupped and some weight on this hand. The lineman's back is parallel to the ground and the head is cocked slightly. Distribution of weight is the most important factor in the offensive stance. Weight should be distributed on the hand that is down, the up-foot with slight weight on the back foot. Depending upon the lineman's assignment, he will adjust his weight without telegraphing his purpose to opposing linemen.

Any time our linemen are blocking men who are over some part of them, they will drive off the up-foot and their first step will come from the rear foot. If they are called upon to block a man who is a full man removed, they will always lead with the foot nearest the opponent, whether it is the rear foot or the foot that is up.

Splits

In running the Off-Tackle play, we would like to take maximum splits to spread the defense. We will only sacrifice these splits for blocking angles or because we are being hurt by men penetrating our gaps. As I will show you later, some penetration will not hurt our play because of our quarterback pivot and the course of our fullback. Our balanced stance has enabled us to keep good gap control.

Start Count

Our line charge is triggered by a non-rhythm starting count. We feel that the non-rhythm count gives us an explosive line charge, and yet has almost completely eliminated offside penalties. We try, as much as possible, to avoid any anticipation of the count by our offensive players. As our quarterback comes to the line of scrimmage, he looks over the defense and identifies it to our linemen. Most often, he will give a dummy call, pause, and then trigger the offense with the word "Go." We will either go on the first or second "Go" and, in some ball games, we have gone on one count throughout the entire game. We are absolutely sold on the non-rhythm count. We use the

seven-man sled to develop a coordinated line charge – about four hits apiece for each lineman every day.

One-On-One Block

The one-on-one block is the most important single technique in offensive line play. Most of our time spent in offense individually is used to master this block.

Our offensive linemen block higher than most teams. We have two reasons for blocking into the numbers of opposing linemen. We are better able to sustain our blocks, and we are in better position to pick up linemen who are veering or looping.

From our balanced stance, we work one-on-one with our linemen driving off the up-foot, keeping their steps relatively short and exploding just above the belt of the opponent, bringing the legs up quickly and sustaining the block for 5 yards. We think it is imperative that a player block with his head up in order to avoid any possibility of missing contact and going to the ground. We aim into the middle of the opposing lineman, whether he is lined up directly over or in either gap.

After contact, we widen the base and strive to stay in front of the opponent and not attempt to move him laterally in any direction. We take him where he wants to go. We call this "option blocking" and do this because our fullback is a discriminating runner and will cut according to the way the defensive man is being blocked.

We develop this one-on-one blocking through individual drills in which we control the defensive men so that we can develop proper technique.

Double-Team Block

The double-team block is designed to eliminate one man in the defensive alignment and make the hole created too big for adjacent linemen to fill. The post man on the double-team fires straight into the defensive tackle and aggressively performs the one-on-one block until he feels contact by the drive man, at which time he will swing his body to the drive man creating parallel lines of force and driving the tackle back at a 45-degree angle.

The drive man, in this case our offensive end, will lead with the foot nearest the man being driven and explode into the opponent with his head up. Then they make contact just above the hip, hitting with the same foot and shoulder, driving the tackle to widen the hole. Our ends and tackles spend considerable time executing this block and also picking up the cross charge when the tackle veers down the line and the defensive linebacker attempts to fill the off-tackle hole. Our end must keep his head up, adjust and block the linebacker, in and out, and give our fullback room to run.

Cut-Off Block

At the point of attack, movement on the line of scrimmage is the most important factor. Away from the point of attack, we feel that our linemen must first get position. Movement on the backside is not necessary. That is the purpose of the cut-off block. In the cut-off block, the offensive lineman



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shoots on all fours to the side of the play, avoiding contact on the opponent and bringing his legs up quickly so that he can “build a fence” around the opponent and prevent his pursuit to the ball carrier. This block is of great importance to the guard on the side away from the play.

Cross-Field Block

The cross-field block is a technique performed by the end and the tackle away from the point of attack. We teach these men to release low and hard, aiming at the outside leg of the defensive lineman to their inside, raise gradually and take a shallow course for their cross-field block. As they approach the man they are blocking, they will get as close as possible and throw a long body block in the direction the defensive man is moving and roll at least three times to either tie the man up, knock him down or force him to take his eyes off the ball carrier.

Blocking Adjustments On Off-Tackle

By design, our blocking adjustments for the Off-Tackle play are quite complicated and deserve special attention. We number the defensive men the same as many other teams and we use rule blocking in many of our plays. However, to ensure that we are blocking the Off-Tackle play the best possible way, we use tackle calls to determine our blocking pattern.

As we come to the line of scrimmage, the tackle looks over the defense and makes a call which involves the end and guard on either side and the halfback directly behind him. The adjustments and blocking ability of these four men will determine the success of the play. The backside lineman will be blocking according to his rule. As an example, let us take the Off-Tackle play against the Oklahoma defense and show our blocking adjustment (See Diagram 1).

Let us say that through scouting and film study, we have decided to use a double-team block on their No. 2 man. Our tackle would make the call, “rack it,” which calls for the double-team with our halfback turning out on the No. 3 man. Our right guard would hit straight into the linebacker, who is the No. 1 man, and would sustain his block and take the man wherever he wants to go and, in most cases, it will be across the hole.

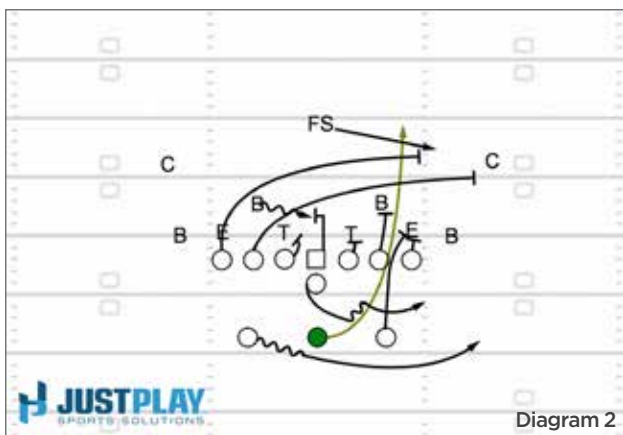
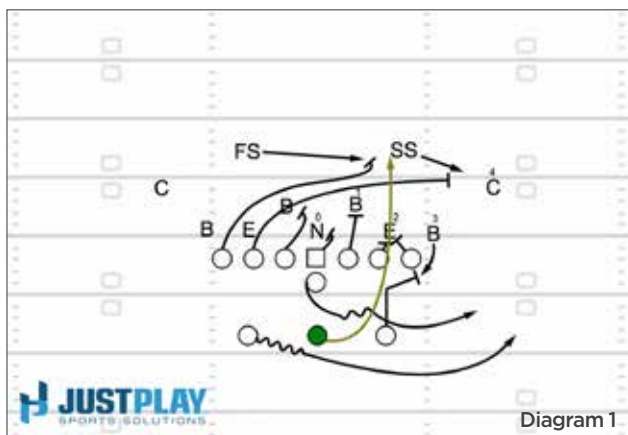
Our halfback would take two steps straight ahead for position and then will turn out on the end, blocking him high and deep with his outside shoulder. The center will drive with his left shoulder at the zero man and take him wherever he wants

to go, and in many cases, we have broken the Off-Tackle play behind the middle guard. Backside guard shoots for a cut-off on the backside one and he will many times end up driving the linebacker across the hole, particularly if he is flowing fast on the movement of our fullback. Our backside tackle will release inside the No. 2 man through the outside foot of the linebacker and take a shallow course for a cross-field block on the deep man on the play side. Our end will release shallow through the outside foot of the defensive tackle who is inside and work for position in getting a downfield block on the deep man on his side. Now, if our linemen on the front side of the play are doing a good job of controlling the line of scrimmage and have good line splits to begin with, this play will break anywhere from just outside the defensive end to right over the ball.

This is accomplished by the course our fullback will take in running this play. He takes what we call a compromise course in aiming at the outside foot of our offensive tackle. He does not take a straight angle to the hole. He does not take a square corner in going to the hole. Rather, he will take a lateral step with his lead foot and run a curved course at the outside foot of the tackle. Our fullback accepts the ball with his inside arm up and at all times is looking through the hole and picking the spot where the defense has been broken down or where it has over-committed to stop the play. The course of the fullback is a most important factor in running this play.

The quarterback reverse pivots and is responsible for properly seating the football in the fullback’s pouch. By using the reverse pivot, it brings our quarterback off the line of scrimmage where slight penetration will not cause a fumble and also puts him in position to hand off the ball while the fullback is still approximately 1 to 1.5 yards from the line of scrimmage. This enables the fullback to make his shallow cut and run the play at the weakness of the defense.

For example, suppose the defensive tackle in Diagram 1 had taken an out charge and forced our end and tackle to drive him out, rather than in. Then, naturally, we want the fullback to run inside the double-team and, in many cases, behind the block of the right guard on the No. 1 man and the center on the No. 0 man, if they too, are angling to the play. Through “discrimination running” by our fullback and controlling the line of scrimmage by our linemen and our lead halfback, we have been able to make this the most consistent play in our offense.



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Diagram 2 is the way we would block it against the wide tackle six. Since the tackle is now not in double-team position, we must call for one-on-one blocking with the guard on No. 1, the tackle on No. 2, the end hitting straight into the No. 3 man and our halfback leading through the hole and helping the end with the No. 3 man so that we end up with virtually a double-team on the defensive tackle. We do not figure to block the No. 4 man, for if he is threatening the off-tackle play, then we should be running the outside belly, the roll-out pass, and the power sweep to force him to play wider.

Where wide tackle six teams have fired the No. 3 and No. 4 man down the line, we have used an adjustment we call "Plus-it." This means that our tackle will turn out on No. 3 and our end out on No. 4, with our halfback leading through the hole. This adjustment is shown in Diagram 3.

If the wide tackle six is ending up in virtually a gap eight, we will use "Run-it" blocking with the halfback turning out on No. 4 (See Diagram 4).

We have developed the technique of stepping our front-side guard around the block of the tackle on the No. 2 man versus a split-six look. Diagram 5 shows our blocking adjustments. This would be a regular Run-it call with one-on-one blocking and our end and halfback on the No. 3 man.

When stepping the guard around, our center checks to the front side to make sure that the linebacker does not shoot straight ahead. Our backside guard shoots for the cut-off on the backside No. 2. Our backside tackle, who normally releases inside two for a cross-field block, now must shoot down the line and cut off the No. 2 man on his inside gap. This adjustment has proven quite successful. It sometimes looks like a wedge play with our halfback and guard leading through the hole almost shoulder-to-shoulder and the fullback right on their heels looking for daylight.

Against any defense that is gaming to free a linebacker, our tackle will use the Run-it call with our halfback picking up the linebacker coming into the hole. As a general rule, if our tackle blocks out, our halfback will block in. If our tackle blocks in, our halfback will block out. Following this general rule, our halfbacks have cut down considerably on missed assignments.

Off-Tackle Play Consistency


In essence, this is the way we ran the Off-Tackle play for a good many years and we considered it the finest play in

our offense. It has gained us consistent yardage and, just as important, has forced teams to defend it in such a manner that they have over-committed their defenses and left them vulnerable to other plays in our offense.

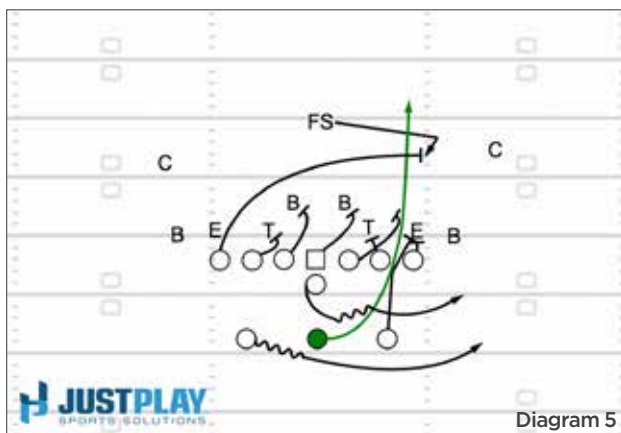
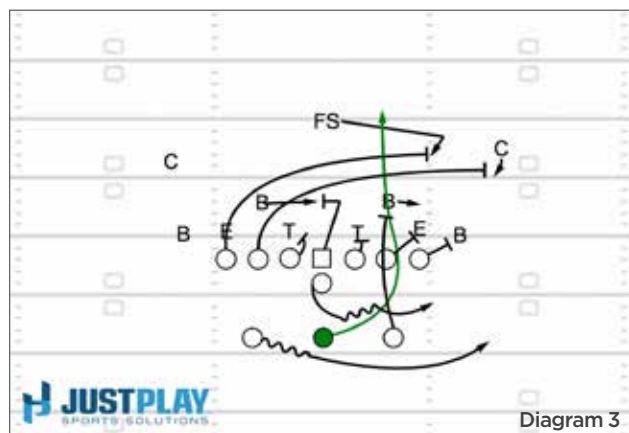
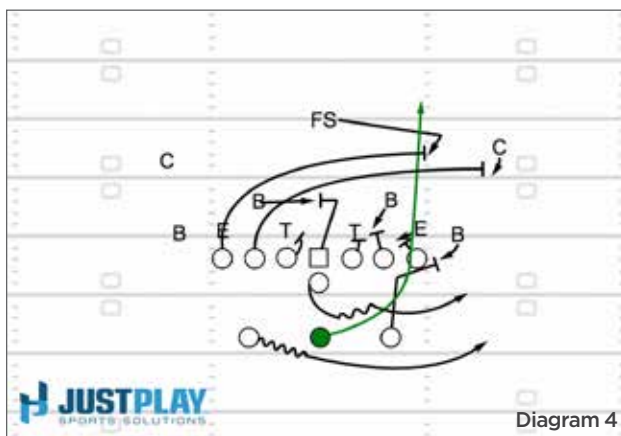
The basic ingredients of a successful Off-Tackle play are:

- Movement at the point of attack
- Discrimination running
- Discrimination blocking
- Cross-field blocking

Since our offense is based primarily on power, we feel that the deception in our attack is in our line blocking and not our backfield action. In analyzing our offense, we try to determine what influences are being exerted on the opponent's linemen. For example, a man playing over our offensive right guard may be blocked straight ahead by the guard, may be trapped by the far guard, may be blocked in by the offensive tackle, may be double-teamed by the guard and tackle, may be blocked back by the center or may be fill-blocked by the tackle when the play is going to the opposite side.

It is deception such as this that makes our offense go, and yet by keeping the pressure on the defense with a great power Off-Tackle play, our traps, sweeps and roll-out passes have been made even more effective. 

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Stopping Them The Hawkeye Way

By Hayden Fry, Former Head Coach, and Bill Brashier, Former Defensive Coordinator, University of Iowa

It has always been our belief that the most important thing about run support is the position that the defensive backs assume and keep on the ball. If they understand the position they must have and then do everything they can at that position, the chances of a long run are greatly minimized.

The following diagrams and comments illustrate the basic principles that we try to adhere to regardless of the coverage we may be using.

It is very important to understand that although this article deals with the position of the defensive backs, the front seven must remain on their feet and pursue with good angles to allow the defensive backs to get to their desired position.

Primary Objectives

1. Funnel the ball into the YES areas. (See Diagram 1)
2. Do not let the ball into the NO areas.
3. All secondary coverages will be designed to funnel the ball in the areas that the defense wants the ball in.
4. All secondary coverages will be designed to have defenders in

position to force the ball into the desired areas.

5. The quicker we can force the ball into desired areas, the better off we are.
6. All defensive secondary support depends on proper pursuit from the front seven.

Defensive Secondary Run Support Wide Play Defense

1. Primary Run Support:

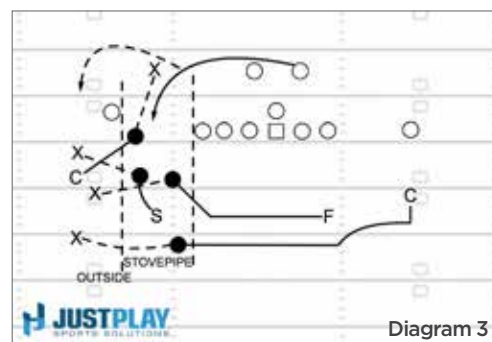
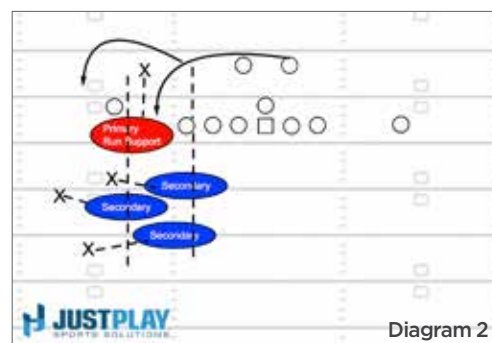
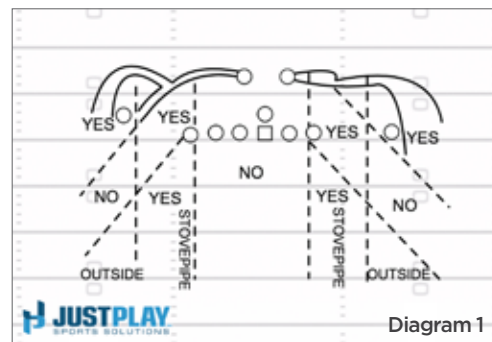
The player responsible for taking the pitch or forcing any wide play back to the inside. This will be a defensive back or a defensive end. (See Diagram 2)

Defensive Secondary Run Support Theory

2. Secondary Run Support:

The defensive backs are responsible for the following.

- a. Keeping the ball from going inside the primary support and back to the outside.
- b. Keeping inside position on the ball as you approach the stovepipe.
- c. Last man — Make play deep in the stovepipe or on the boundary (See Diagram 3).



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To learn more about Amway's partnership with the AFCA, visit www.amway.com/coachespoll.



3. Here are the desired results of playing with this technique:

- a. Force the ball inside with position on both sides of the stovepipe to make the ball go perpendicular to the line of scrimmage.
- b. Force the ball to bounce outside deep, allowing the secondary run support to make the play on or near the line of scrimmage.

Strong Or Weak Side
(See Diagram 3 and Diagram 4)

Run Support - Cloud

Play-Side Cornerback: He has primary run support and plays the pitch according to the block. He squeezes the stovepipe, playing the sweep aggressively, forcing the ball inside or bouncing it outside deep.

Play-Side Safety: He has secondary run support. The ball must not go inside the cornerback and back to the outside. If the ball bounces outside the cornerback, he must make the play on or near the line of scrimmage.

Backside Safety: He has secondary run support, always with inside

position on the ball. He comes flat across and starts his approach to the ball as he passes the center. He should be able to get to a quarterback keeper and should always be in the stovepipe on any wide play.

Backside Cornerback: He has secondary run support and is the last man. He must make the play deep in the stovepipe or on the boundary.

Run Support - Cloud

Strong Safety: He has primary run support and plays the pitch according to the block. He plays the sweep aggressively, forcing the ball inside or bouncing outside deep.

Strong Cornerback: He has secondary run support. The ball must not go inside the strong safety and back to the outside. If the ball bounces outside, he must make the tackle on or near the line of scrimmage.

Free Safety: He has secondary run support and always has inside position on the ball. He comes flat across and starts his approach to the ball as he passes the center. He should be able to get to a quarterback keeper and he

should always be in the stovepipe on any wide play.

Wide Cornerback: He has secondary run support and is the last man. He must make the play deep in the stovepipe or on the boundary.

Weak Side (See Diagram 5)

Weak End Pitch

Weak End: He has the pitch-play according to the block he is facing. He plays the sweep aggressively and forces it inside or bounces it outside deep.

Weak Cornerback: He must not allow the ball to go inside the defensive end and back to the outside. If the ball bounces out, he must make the play on or near the line of scrimmage. The weak end and the weak cornerback use a Veer call versus a tight end and play according to the end's block.

Free Safety: He has secondary run support and inside position on the ball. He approaches the stovepipe aggressively. If the ball bounces outside, he supports outside.

Strong Safety: He has secondary run support, coming across with



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enough depth to make a play. He attacks the stovepipe as he passes the center. He must make his tackle in the stovepipe or on the boundary if the ball bounces outside.

Strong Corner: He has secondary run support and is the last man. He must make plays deep in the stovepipe or on the boundary.

Strong Side (See Diagram 6)

Strong End Pitch

Strong End: He has the Veer call. If the tight end releases, he has the pitch/sky according to the block he is facing. If the tight end blocks down, he plays the first threat in the area (dive or quarterback).

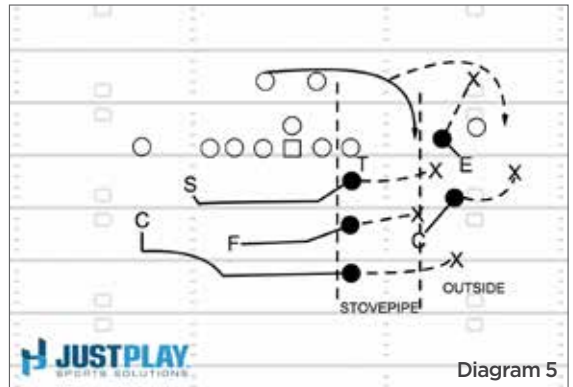
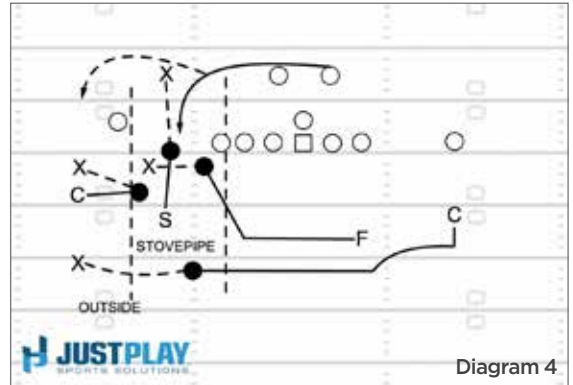
Strong Safety: He has the Veer call. If the tight end releases, he plays the dump pass first then supports the inside defensive end for the first

threat. If the tight end blocks down, he has the pitch. He plays according to the block he is facing. He plays the sweep aggressively, forcing it inside or bouncing it outside deep.

Strong Cornerback: He has secondary run support. He must not let the ball inside the primary run support (strong end or strong safety) and back to the outside. If the ball bounces outside, he supports outside on or near the line of scrimmage.

Free Safety: He has secondary run support, always maintaining inside position on the ball. He makes his approach to the ball as he passes the center. He should be able to get to a quarterback keeper and must be in the stovepipe on all wide plays.

Weak Cornerback: He is the last man. He must make the play deep in the stovepipe or on the boundary.



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Inside Run Support

(See Diagram 7)

Inside Run Support Theory

Though the prior assignments have focused on strong- and weak-side assignments, defensive backs must also understand similar fundamentals to support inside run defenses. Here are the objectives defensive backs must learn.

1. Always keep the position on the ball that they have on their initial alignment, which is going to be an outside position.
2. They must keep the ball in the "Yes" area at the bottom of Diagram 7. They must never allow the ball into the "No" area.
3. The stovepipe must be squeezed down as much as possible while maintaining proper position on the ball. See the stovepipe at the top of Diagram 7.
4. Their positions are going to move as the stovepipe moves.

This is illustrated by the X-movements at the top of Diagram 7. These X's show how the positions move as the ball moves.

5. This theory applies in any coverage of an inside run.

In summation, it is our sincere belief at the University of Iowa that, if worked on faithfully and explained properly, the positions described in this article will enable your defense to keep the ball in the areas you want it. This should greatly reduce the chances for a long run or big play. **AFC**

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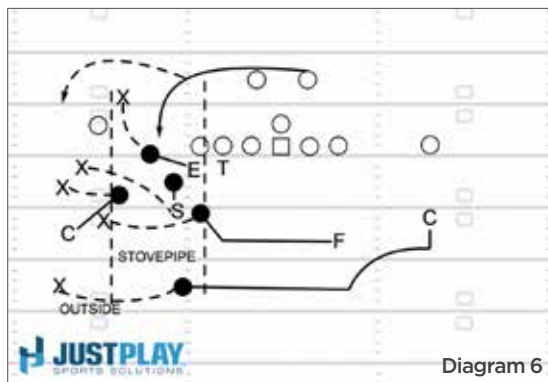


Diagram 6

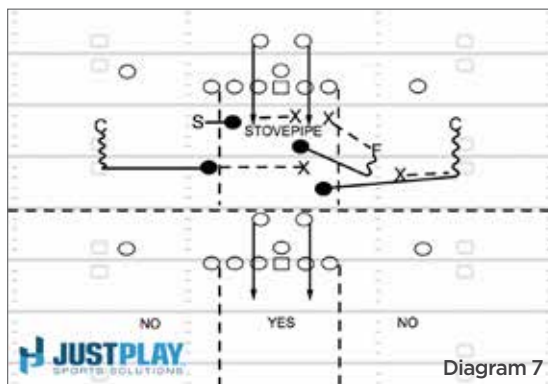


Diagram 7

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Use The Kicking Game For The Winning Edge

By Spike Dykes, Former Head Coach, Texas Tech University

Football is still divided into three categories: offense, defense and the kicking game. Certainly, if there is one area that gets slighted, it's the kicking game.

That old adage that between three and five games per season are determined in the kicking game holds true. Just check the records if you have the least doubt concerning this. It will startle you if you aren't aware of it.

The approach to the kicking game that we take at Texas Tech is a common-sense approach. When I say that, I mean we understand the importance and the value of a good kicking game, so we involve our very best players in the kicking game.

Defensively, we are responsible for the following areas: kickoff coverage, punt return, extra point and field goal blocking, and punt protection and coverage.

On punt return, you have no choice but to use your defensive players, and the same holds true for extra point and field goal blocking. On the kickoff team, we usually employ defensive backs, linebackers and defensive ends, just as we do on the punt protection/coverage team.

Kickoff Coverage

In this article, I will talk about kickoff coverage and punt protection and coverage. Our kickoff principles differ from some of the theories in that we kick off from the exact middle of the field. We want a high, straight kick to the goal line. We use the waterfall approach in alignment so we can all hit the line running full speed. Our alignment can be seen in Diagram 1.

We have three potential safeties on each kickoff: No. 3, the kicker (No. 6) and No. 9. We begin coverage by spreading across the entire field. Each player must maintain his relative distance between his teammates. The farther and deeper the ball goes, the longer we stay in our lanes.

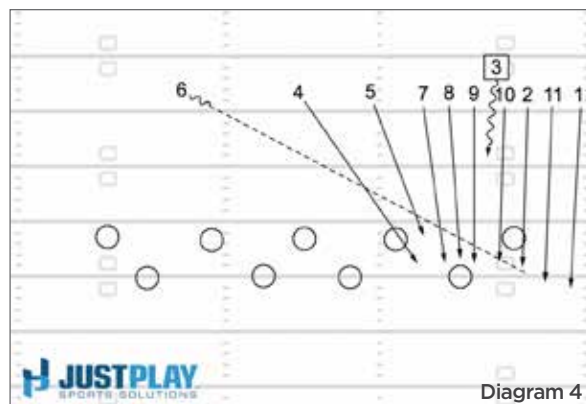
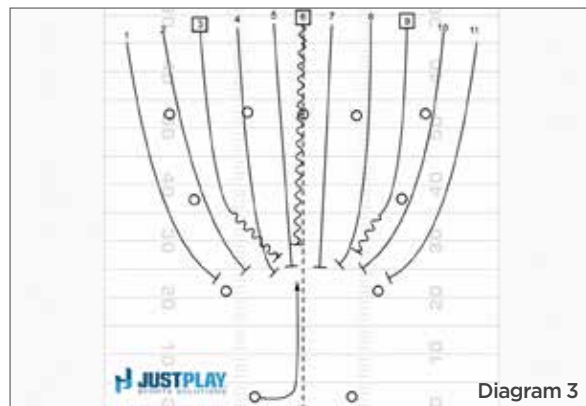
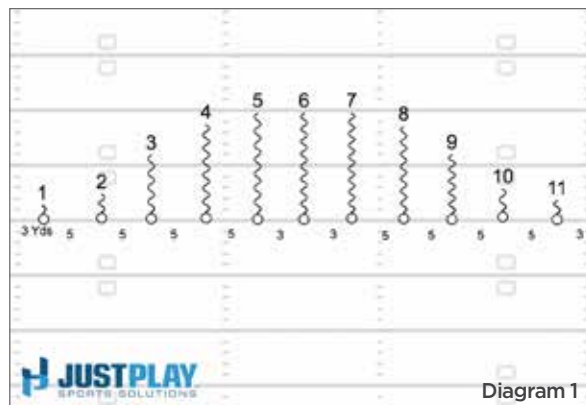
In the event we get forced out of our lane, we work hard to get back into our lane. Players must be aware of who is blocking them and beat those blockers or escape the blocks.

Once the ball is fielded and starts in a direction (left, middle, right), we start converging on the football (See Diagram 2). This is the key to coverage, other than busting your tail down the field.

The safety opposite the return (right or left) pulls out and keeps outside leverage on the football. The outside two coverage men fill the hole created by the safety pulling out, maintaining the normal coverage lanes one gap inside. The safety to the side of the return is no longer a safety. He is a lane runner that is totally involved in coverage.

The kicker faces up with the ball at a depth of approximately 8 to 10 yards behind the coverage team.

If the ball comes up the middle, the kicker is the middle safety and both safeties pull out of coverage after the ball has committed to the middle and maintain outside leverage on the football.



In our coverage, No. 5 and No. 7 maintain their respective leverage on the ball, even if the ball is returned up the hash mark. The closer the ball gets to our coverage, the more we converge to the ball. We all squeeze down, maintaining proper spacing with our teammate and proper leverage on the ball. The point of emphasis is to have the ball kicked high and straight. (See Diagram 3)

We attempt to kick each kickoff so it will be returned. This coverage team has a tremendous amount of pride and works hard to make the team. This is a highly competitive situation that is healthy. All of our defensive starters want to be on the kickoff team.

Onside Kick

The next phase is the onside kick. This is something that we only use when our “backs are to the wall.” The success or failure of the onside kick can be the determining factor of a football game.

Our approach is that in order to have a chance, we first must have a perfectly executed kick. Without the proper kick, you have no chance. Never should the ball be kicked less than 10 to 12 yards. This is the No. 1 point of emphasis with the kicker. We strive to get a big hop out of the ball. You can see our onside kick alignment in Diagram 4.

The major point of emphasis is to not allow the kick to go out of bounds. This is the responsibility of No. 1. He

plays just like a shortstop covering the boundary.

Another major role belongs to No. 3, which is a safety. He must not allow a lineman to catch a clean kick and return it for a big gain.

The remainder of the coverage attacks all out. This is the key to forcing a mistake by the receiving team. Down through the years, this onside kick has been highly successful for us.

Punt Protection And Coverage

The last phase of coverage is our punt protection and coverage. The quickest way to lose a football game is to get a punt blocked or a punt returned for a touchdown. This phase of the kicking game must be executed properly in order to be a successful football team.

We use the spread punt with zone protection. Again, we work hard to get the ball kicked straight downfield. Our alignment and splits are illustrated in Diagram 5.

The execution of the protection starts with the center. His job is to make the perfect snap in the range of seven-tenths or eight-tenths of a second. The center must pop his head up and get his feet in a position to anchor the line.

After his snap, he pops up with a good base, then starts thinking about coverage. The guards' split is 2 feet from the center. Both guards hinge 45 degrees, each working his butt into the hole. His blocking assignment is from his inside foot to the inside foot of the tackle. If two people

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penetrate the gap, block through the first man to the second one. The hardest job for the guard is keeping his butt in the space between himself and the center.

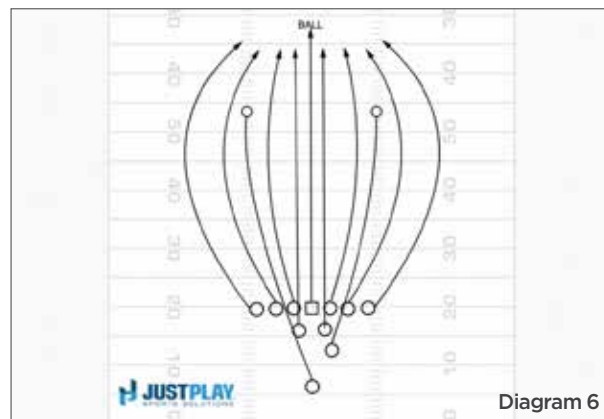
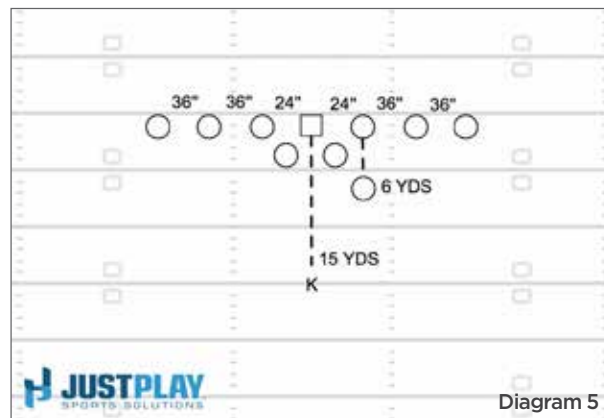
The tackle's job is the same as the guard's, except positioning his butt into the hole is not as strongly emphasized as the guard. He must keep his inside foot planted as long as possible with the same principle as the guard with two threats in the gap.

The end hinges the same as the tackle, keeping his inside foot planted as long as possible. The end must re-route the rush of the outside man.

The up-backs have the responsibility of the gap between the center and guard. There are two major points of emphasis. Make sure the up-backers are lined up 1 yard deep and any threat (charge) in the gap must be stopped. If two people come in that gap, the up-back must make himself big and get between the two men.

The personal protector, which we call the "searchlight," lines up 6 yards deep behind the prospective guard (left or right depending on the left-footed or right-footed kicker). The searchlight must be aware of overloads and must use good judgement, never taking a backward step. His job is to block any immediate threats to the kicker. He shouldn't go anywhere unless there is a reason to go. After the ball is kicked, the searchlight is a safety to our right.

The kicker's job is to field the snap, know whether there is a rush, concentrate and kick the football. If we have a choice,



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we will use a two-step punter. We align the punter 15 yards deep and work hard on stepping and fielding the ball simultaneously. This is very important.

We strive to get the punt away in no more than 2.3 seconds. After the ball is kicked, the punter is our safety to the left.

We change our containment coverage players week to week. Usually, and as a basic rule, our containment is by the ends. There is a need to have flexibility built into your coverage so you can change up the containment every week, or even punt to punt.

I must stress the importance of a high, straight punt. Any hang time of 3.9 or over is key to our coverage. Our basic coverage is illustrated in Diagram 6.

We sincerely believe that special teams are an integral part of a football team. Sell the value of special teams to the point that you feel like this can be the edge in the close games, because it will mean the difference many times during your upcoming season. **AFCA**

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Move The Chains

By Mike Podoll, Associate Publisher

Passing The Torch Of Wisdom To Today's High School Football Coach

The wisdom and knowledge coming from the true coaching legends of college football featured in this issue are lessons that all coaches can put to use at any level of the game.

Specifically, for today's high school football coach, it's more important than ever before to heed the words and understand the perspective of those veteran prep coaches who have been along for the ride as football has grown and evolved into the No. 1 sport in America.

Bob Burt, former high school (Cypress High School, Hemet, Calif.) and college coach, 55 years in coaching, 2013 AFCA® Power of Influence Award Winner: First of all, the main thing that I would stress to the coaches of today is to hold your players accountable in every way. They need to be held accountable in the classroom, in the community, on your team and in your program.

So many times these days, young players are not held accountable. Now, this doesn't mean harsh discipline. But players need to understand that they have choices. They make choices *every day* of their life – every minute of every day.

If you're a football player, then that means you choose not to enter into some other activities. And if you make other choices, then you will be held accountable, by whatever the definition of accountability means to each particular coach.

For me, that means that players have a choice. They can either play football or they can goof off in the classroom. They can't do both.

If players don't learn how to make the right choices as student-athlete football players, then they may end up making the wrong choices in more critical aspects later on in their lives.

My job as a head football coach is to teach players how to make the right choices, then hold them accountable if they do not, no matter how talented the player may be.

Coaches also need to communicate this message with parents and let them know that while they care about one player, as a coach, you care about 80 of them. As such, you need to avoid special treatment and circumstances.

I would also urge today's coaches to become more professionally active in their profession by joining associations — such as the AFCA and their local, state association. And don't just join them, but also serve as an active member within the association and look to serve on committees. Attend coaching clinics and talk to fellow attendees. These types of activities allow you to mingle and interact with many different coaches who work in a variety

of programs. I guarantee that the more coaches you know, and the more you interact with them, the more coaching knowledge you will absorb as a byproduct.

I see today's young coaches forming less interpersonal relationships with one another. To me, that's part of a high school and college coach's responsibility — to be involved with other people in the profession.


The sport of football is under attack more than ever before. If we don't ally with one another, how are we going to defend the game as a whole?

Ott Hurrle, head football coach, Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School (Indianapolis, Ind.), over 45 years in coaching, 2014 AFCA® Power of Influence Award Winner: My main message to football coaches today is to have FUN with it. Enjoy every year and every second of your coaching career — because it all goes by way too quickly.

Develop strong relationships both with the coaches on your staff and with opposing coaches, as well. The public puts so much emphasis and pressure on winning that I'm afraid that some of the younger coaches of today become almost afraid to share too much of anything with other opposing coaches. I like to call it “competitive animosity.”

That's a shame, really, because it's a lot more fun going up against a buddy — a guy who knows you and knows how you think as a coach — than it is going up against an opposing coach who doesn't like you and you don't particularly care for him, either. It's just not as much fun.

To grow closer as a staff, every Thursday during the season, after we've put our work in for the week and we're ready for Friday's game, I take my staff out and socialize for an hour or two. It has become a bonding thing for our staff. For me, it gives me a chance to share stories with the younger coaches on my staff and provide a perspective of what it was like at our program before they got there.

It's the one time during each week of the season where we know that the work is done and we aren't worried about what drills we're going to run in practice, what defense we're going to run on Friday or how much game film we need to study. The prep work for the game is done and that Thursday night we can go out as a coaching staff, talk to one another, decompress and have fun. It helps us grow closer as a staff. 

Mike Podoll is the Associate Publisher of AFCA Magazine. Email: mpodoll@threecyclemedia.com. Follow on Twitter: [@fcDaily_Podoll](https://twitter.com/fcDaily_Podoll)



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